

Exploring the World and Meeting Its People

Overlanding, A Chick's Perspective

Open Mind + Experiences = Growth

Stephanie Hackney

www.hackneys.com/travel



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Why Do You Want to Travel?

- Is your travel about:
 - Who (you, your partner, you as a couple, people you'll meet?)
 - What (what you'll be doing/seeing/experiencing while out, what you can bring home from this experience?)
 - When (this chapter in your life, your availability, the period of time you have available?)
 - Where (your interests, or life list-driven?)
 - How (the mode of travel, the "methods" you'll use to explore?)



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What: What Are *YOU* "Looking" For?

- The Everyday vs. The Extraordinary
- The "Hot Spots" vs. The "Unheard Of"
- Adventure vs. A Safe Bet
- Photo Opps vs. A Portfolio
- Stories to Tell vs. Stories You'll Sell
- Pursuing Current/Develop New Interests/Skills
- Personal Growth
- Connecting With Others vs. Enjoying Private Experiences
- Cultural Education
- An Opportunity to Give Back
- An Escape from "Real Life"
- Or perhaps, more than one, or all, of the above?



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What: What Do You Fear?

- What are your fears about traveling?
- What are your fears about leaving your "normal" life behind?
- What are your fears about your relationships, including that of you and your partner?
- Do you have any life-long fears that could interfere with your (or your partner's) enjoyment of the journey, or perhaps even your ability to participate?



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What: What Are *YOUR* Needs?

- What Do YOU Need In Order to Feel Happy and Fulfilled?
- How Will Your Needs Be Met? Are You Open to Unconventional Means?
- Are You Willing to Give Up Any Needs?



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When: How Much TIME Do You Have?

- Will you be taking baby steps, "getting your feet wet" with short trips until you are able to pursue a bigger/longer adventure?
- Or, do you plan to go out for a longer, but still well-defined period of time?
- Or, perhaps you'll just go out, with no "end" in mind?
- How will you handle being faced with less time should that happen?



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Where: Are “Life Lists” or Interests Driving Your Destinations?

- If you are selecting destinations from a life list, it's important to think about how you will feel should you not reach all of those destinations. Will your experience be negatively impacted by the one or two places you didn't visit?
- If you are pursuing an interest while on the road, is it THE most important aspect of the journey? Does your partner share this interest? If not, does he/she have his/her own interests he'll/she'll be pursuing as well? If not, how does he/she feel about your pursuit of your interest(s)? If he/she also has interests they'll pursue, how will you balance the different pursuits in terms of time and destinations so neither of you feel slighted?



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How: Connected, Disconnected; Part-Time, Full-Time

- Will you travel full-time or part-time?
- Will you keep a “home base,” a place to come home to, while traveling?
- Or, do you prefer to throw caution to the wind and just go for it, to check-out of your life as you currently know it?



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How: Which Suits *YOU* Best?

Depending on how you answered the questions on the previous slide, your options for travel could vary greatly between:

- Basic
- Comfortable
- Luxury

It's all possible...

but which option suits *YOU best?*

(it's important to be really honest now!)



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How: Daily Life on the Road

- How do you intend to spend your days? And, your nights?
- Do you want/need to plan like crazy or can you be happy just "winging it?"
- Are you a guidebook zealot?
- Does "bad" weather bum you out?
- How much are you willing to spend?
- How do you plan to get from place to place?
- Will you seek out hotels/hostels/B&Bs or camp?



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How: The Costs

- Do you know about the “hidden” costs?
- Have you prepared a budget or spending plan?
- Are you willing to make changes to your travel based on changes (unforeseen or otherwise) to your financial situation?



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Managing Expectations

- Stated Expectations vs. Reality
- Defining Roles, Changing Roles
- Cross-Training
- Changing Circumstances & Expectations



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Checking Out

- Shutting Down the Old Way of Life
 - Your Home Base...and all that goes with it:
 - Vehicles
 - Home/ Apartment
 - Utilities
 - Insurance
 - Ongoing/Background Expenses
 - Taxes
 - Healthcare
 - Mail
 - Relationships, Daily/Weekly Interaction



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Who and What Are Your Leaving Behind?

- Kids, Family
- Pets
- Friends/Support Network
- Career & Colleagues
- Community
- Lifestyle
- Hobbies/Interests
- Comfort (or Discomfort)
- Normality, Your Routine
- Favorite Hang-outs
- Access to Your Favorite Stuff, Events, TV Shows
- Etc.



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Are You Prepared?

- No, not with stuff and plans - have you thought about the reactions to your plans from others?
- Do those reactions matter? How important are they?
- How might your relationships change, immediately and over time? Can you live with those changes?



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The Stuff

A Secret....

It's Not About the Stuff!



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Discovering Your Rhythm

- What Works, What Doesn't
- Making Adjustments to:
 - Needs and Wants
 - Expectations
 - Roles
 - YOU!
- How Flexible Are You?



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Vacationing on the Road vs. *Living* on the Road

- Vacationing:
 - Go
 - See
 - Do
 - Repeat...same 'ol, same 'ol
- Living:
 - Go, maybe
 - See, maybe
 - Do, maybe
 - Experience another way to live? Highly likely!
- This is largely influenced by your and/or your partner's: Travel Styles, Past Experiences, Time Spent Traveling, Goals and Interests, Destinations, and Circumstances, but most likely determined by your Personal Desires, your Attachment to "Home" and the Amount of Time you have available.



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It's An Adventure! Inconveniences vs. Crises

- Case Study:
 - You planned to visit Machu Picchu by train from Cusco, but all trains for the next month are sold out. Your only option is to drive several hours to a nearby valley and see if space opens up over the coming weeks.

Crisis or an inconvenience?
- Case Study:
 - You have two flat tires in a matter of days, the tires can't hold up to use even after being repaired, and you have run out of spares. You have 1 week before your visas run out and you must leave the country. The closest tire shop is in the opposite direction of where you were headed, meaning you'll miss a wonderful journey down a very scenic road, and you'll have to drive fairly fast to get out of the country before your visas expire.

Crisis or an inconvenience?
- Case Study:
 - The country you are visiting is holding elections and things are getting violent. Visitors are being turned away, all foreigners are being flown out and you are stuck in a remote town with engine trouble. To top it off, you now realize you left your passport at the last border crossing and your credit card has just expired without your being aware of it. You **MUST** leave the country in the next 24 hours or your safety is severely compromised.

Crisis or an inconvenience?



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Visiting vs. Going Home

- "It's so great to see you!" vs. "Did you hear what your brother/sister/cousin/ aunt/uncle did?"
- Hotel rooms and/or guest bedrooms vs. your own space
- Non-stop visiting and health check-ups vs. occasional visits, as desired, and doctor visits, as necessary
- Outside-looking-in view of life back home vs. living in the fishbowl



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Re-Entry: "Normal" Life

- Is it really "normal?"
- What do you talk about with others?
- Where do you fit in?
- Has everyone else "moved on?"
- Is it a life you still want?



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Traveling Safely

- Personal Safety – Gut Instincts Rule!
- Documents
- Money
- Theft
- Interacting With Locals
- Managing Encounters With Local Authorities
- Natural Disasters
- Civil Unrest
- I'm An American – Do They Like Americans?

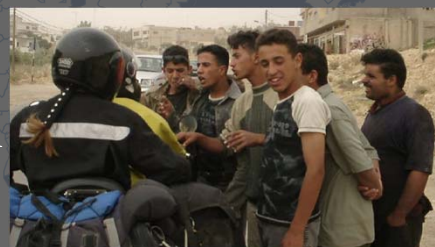


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Staying Healthy

- Water
- Foods (Allergies, Restricted Diets, Cooking, Etc.)
- Insects & Animals
- Hygiene
- Vaccines & Medications
- Medical & Dental Care
- Health Insurance
- Exercise



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OK, *Some* Stuff Is Necessary

- What Do I Pack?
- What Do I Leave Behind?
- Where/How Do I Shop?
- What Does Stuff Cost?
- How Do I Get A Bargain?
- How Do You Not Buy Every Cool Thing You See and Love?



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Meeting the Locals

- Language
- History
- Culture
- Poverty
- Male-Dominated Societies
- “Outside Looking In” Biases
- Taking Pictures, Giving Pictures
- Getting Off The Beaten Path
- American Ambassador vs. Ugly American



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Meeting the Locals (cont.)

- Language
 - Do you attempt to learn the local language, even if just to be able to say “please” and thank you?”
 - Do you inquire about how to say things whenever possible, and thank those who help you learn their language?
 - Do you share your language with those you meet, teaching them words or phrases when they appear interested in learning?
- Understanding & Knowledge
 - Do you take the time to research the places you’ll visit? Do you read about the history, the people and the culture?
 - Do you attempt to learn as you go, taking every opportunity to learn from the local people or other tourists?
 - Do you attempt to understand why things are as they are and to be open-minded?
- Acceptance
 - Are you open to other ideas, to other ways of life?
 - Do you try to understand cultural differences and to be accepting, whether or not you agree with another person’s beliefs or way of life?
 - Do you keep an open mind, even when you know you could not live within the social norms of that society?
- Representing Your Country
 - Do you act appropriately, at all times, when you visit other countries?
 - Do you show respect for other people’s way of life by adapting to their customs?
 - Do you share the best our country has to offer with those you meet? Do you answer their questions honestly, even if the answer is one you might be somewhat ashamed of?



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Giving Back

- What do you have to give?
 - What skills/talents can you share with others?
 - What resources (money, goods, people, etc.) do you have at your disposal?
 - Could people you meet benefit from learning of experiences you have had?



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Giving Back (cont.)

- Can you provide what the recipients NEED?
 - Have you asked the intended recipients of your efforts/time/money what THEY need? Or, are you busy offering what YOU think they need?
 - What kind of “red tape” stands in the way of your successfully delivering on what you offer? Do you have the resources and/or strength to overcome such obstacles in order to make good on your word?
 - Have you researched past projects such as yours to see how they worked, or didn’t?
 - If you were required to sacrifice your integrity to deliver on your promises, would you be willing to do so?
 - Is what you are offering sustainable, without your participation in the future?



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To Sum It Up

- What do you recommend for someone who has never traveled like this and/or has had very little travel experience?
- What are the things that no one thinks about before taking off?
- What was the best aspect of this kind of travel?
- What was the worst?
- Did you think the experience was worthwhile, and would you do it again?
- What are three most important things for me to learn/know?



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Opening Your Heart

- It's important to remember, when dealing with your partner and the people you'll encounter along the way, that we all have different hearts. Try to keep your heart open as you travel – let others in and share openly – and this will likely be one of the most rewarding aspects of travel.



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In Closing...

Thanks for your time and for allowing me to
share a bit of my experience with you

I wish you all the best in your journey and
hope you'll share what you learn as you
travel and/or when you return

I welcome your questions and
comments...any time



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