

## **Live Your Road Trip Dream**

### **Travel for a year for the cost of staying home**

It's early January. It's raining out -- what else in Oregon? -- and I am sitting down with a cup of coffee to pay the bills. I come upon a renewal notice for "Golf for Women" and mechanically begin to write out the check. "Wait!" my subconscious says to me, "why are you doing that? You won't be here to read it! You're going on a yearlong trip, remember?" And so the serious decision making of preparing for "The Trip" begins. At first the tasks seemed almost overwhelming. So many things to think about—it's enough to make you cancel the whole idea before you get started! With that first small step of not renewing subscriptions came a torrent of activities.

### **Make it your trip**

Everyone has dreams. What we hope to do is to help you turn your dream into reality. Not our dream--your dream. What we did on our trip is not really important. How we went about it can help you turn your vision of the perfect trip into your reality. Everyone has issues and concerns that make them drag their feet. The difference between whether you can make it happen or whether you can't is not how many obstacles you have, it is how badly to you want to do something totally life-changing -- totally for yourself. We will give you the tools to change your dream into reality, but the rest is up to you. Our hope is to get you off the couch and believing that you too can do this.

### **Small trips versus one big trip**

One thing you may be asking yourself is, "Do we really need to commit a year to this? Couldn't we just do a bunch of smaller trips?" And of course, the answer is yes. But there are several really good reasons to consider one larger trip -- and whether it is a full year or not depends on what you want to accomplish.

As we learned, there are real financial advantages to doing one long trip. Freeing up your income stream to spend on the trip is a necessary part of the planning for most people. Some of the strategies we employed wouldn't be available if you were taking a series of shorter excursions. Then there is the whole idea of planning and actually getting out of the house. After you've read the book, I think you will agree that you don't really want to go through this amount of detail more than once!

If you do decide that a series of trips is the way to go for you, then we would strongly encourage you to plan them all at once -- and then stick to your schedule.

Can this be done in a series of trips? Absolutely. Will you gain the same benefits we found from taking one long trip? Probably not.

### **Be a kid again**

Finally, the factor that we feel speaks the loudest to doing it in one long sweep is the "kid" factor. How long has it been since you could basically leave your responsibilities behind and focus on just doing what you want to do? Only a trip of extended length can allow you to be that kid inside again. Before we left, we had no concept of how freeing this would be.

We had done enough planning that we really could let most things happen on "autopilot" and we could explore, experiment, and try new things every day. Once we got the rhythm of being on the road, we could feel our curiosity begin to creep out of someplace deep inside us. We were less inhibited -- we'd strike up conversations with people almost anywhere and stop to look at something "just because." We also found new perspectives about the way things are in this country. There is no doubt that in some way you will come back from this experience a different person from the one who left.

Related to the whole idea of freeing yourself to experience the trip fully is the notion of focus. If this is just an extended vacation of sorts, you will not truly "leave it all behind." You will make compromises with yourself -- "Oh, I can handle that, I don't need to make arrangements for this to be taken care of" -- and pretty soon, you will be focusing on home obligations and not fully on experiencing your trip of a lifetime. You will inevitably have to take some of your life with you, but minimize that in order to focus on yourself.

Although our vision for our great adventure focused on the United States, the techniques we learned could be applied equally well to a trip in a foreign country or an around the world sailboat trip. The choice is yours, and the planning is basically the same -- just some of the details will vary.

By now, you are most likely beginning to formulate your own ideas of how this could work for you--what your trip could include. But the nagging voices are already talking to you -- the roadblocks are beginning. Acknowledge them as items that you will have to address and work through. Do not let them become reasons to forget the whole idea. You can make it happen. We'll show you how. The rest is up to you.

(Excerpted from *Live Your Road Trip Dream: Travel for a year for the cost of staying home*, RLI Press, July, 2004, [www.roadtripdream.com](http://www.roadtripdream.com), pictures by Carol White)