

TRAVEL TRIPS FROM JIM BLACKERBY

Based on twenty plus years of travel to 5 continents and many countries and I learned a lot about types of travel, about myself, and people throughout the world. It is an enlightening way to experience life. In addition to those serendipitous experiences that make for an unforgettable journey, there will be trials. Hopefully the former outweighs the latter.

I think there are basically 3 types of travelers – the adventurer; the independent traveler; and the group traveler. Once you know what suits you best and then focus on that type of travel, you will realize your best experience. Regardless, whatever type of travel you take it is important to approach it with an open mind, a positive attitude, and sense of excitement.

To possibly help in that approach I would like to provide a summary of what I feel are important considerations. These are of course my opinion and all travelers have their own perspectives:

1. Pack as simply as possible regardless of types of travel; a basic couple pair of pants/skirts and then a few tops to match plus necessities; it is ok to wear the same outfit a couple of days (or several); also, layer clothes to avoid taking bulky coats etc.
2. Don't take too many shoes; take those that serve multiple purposes;
3. Roll your clothes for packing vs stacking;
4. Day backpacks are terrific for day trips and bringing home some items you buy;
5. Rick Steve's provides the best guide information for most places; covers a wide range of travel itineraries; good to use even if you are taking a group trip;
6. You can create your own trip using kayak or trip advisor; google maps and booking.com; play with that even if you are not taking a trip to see what you can do;
7. Plan and read about where you are going; past National Geographic magazines provides great information; available on line
8. For individual travel you probably do not need a travel agent; those should be used more for group travel or specialty travel (i.e. African safari; adventure trips; etc.)
9. For group land travel I highly recommend using Rick Steve's Travel; other considerations are National Geographic and Road Scholar;
10. For cruises I recommend Viking for both river and ocean; but I have not taken larger cruises, so others would have to comment;
11. Think what more you could do that is near the core trip. By being flexible we ended up seeing some of our more exotic places almost as after thoughts – the Lofton islands in Norway, north of the arctic circle; Zanzibar after a photo safari in Tanzania; Lake Titicaca while in Peru; Angkor Wat in Cambodia while visiting Hong Kong; hot air balloon in Cappadocia Turkey
12. If you are doing independent travel hire a guide whenever possible in various locations; it brings great depth of experience;
13. Whenever possible get experience in the local culture and meet locals even if you can't speak the language; you will have some of your funniest experiences and laugh with someone from another culture;