

How to Run Away from Home and Bring Your Family with You

Adam Dailey

Adam Dailey is a conscientious marketer, and as such he has asked top reviewers to look at this book. I accepted and I am impressed. I am impressed on many levels.

Adam and his wife Jessica took a great gamble in taking their family on a one year sabbatical vacation all around the world. If any reader of this review has done anything similar, please add a comment saying so. I do not think there will be such a comment. This was a rare and a brave thing that they did.

Right off the top, it required human qualities that few people have. It took the guts, the chutzpah to go into unknown situations confident of not only surviving but benefiting from the experience. Adam had more than a decade of experience as an entrepreneur in sports marketing businesses. He was familiar with cold calling and making deals. This adventure required a great deal of both.

He and Jessica knew a couple of foreign languages, Spanish and Italian, at least enough to get by. They had had quite a bit of previous travel experience in Europe. In addition to knowing languages, they knew how to get along fairly well without a knowledge of the language. That is a skill in itself.

Although they had not planned it this way, it turned out that their trip took place at a time when Adam's business had absolutely cratered. A more cautious person – those of us in the 99% – would have wanted to put his life on a more steady foundation before embarking. Adam was a seasoned entrepreneur confident that he could get started again when it was all over. He was not afraid to spend down what was left of a bankroll that had been severely diminished by business setbacks. He knew he would get it back somehow.

At this point in the review most readers will have concluded that although this is a fascinating story, it is not something they would be likely to do with their own lives. This is absolutely true. However, there are aspects of the Dailey's adventures that might be accessible to more people, so reading this is nonetheless a great opportunity to stretch your imagination about what might be.

Dailey could not have known in asking me to review this that I had traveled and lived with a young family in most of the countries he mentioned. His experiences will resonate more with me than with most readers. In modern America, simply having four children, whatever the circumstance, is already highly unusual. To travel with four children under the age of seven would be unthinkable. But imagine, as I'm sure Adam and Jessica do, how well prepared those children will be when they reach adulthood in two decades. They will have seen the world, they will have taken on a lot of responsibility at the tender age, and they will have seen a seasoned entrepreneur, their father, dealing with life at a very immediate level. That is an education that would simply not be available through any other channel.

His family's itinerary for the one year sabbatical was quite ambitious. They started off in Costa Rica, which Adam says is one of their favorite places. It is certainly one of mine. Though he doesn't provide a map, the places that he names are familiar to me. A couple on the coast, one that is famous for its wildlife – he mentions the monkeys especially, the parrots, toucans and other exotic birds stick in my mind – and another which must be on the Nicoya Peninsula is a refuge for over-the-hill hippies. He mentions the Hot Springs – must be Tabacon - where children have a wonderful time splashing around in 30 some odd pools. Already, on their first stop, they have provided information worth far more than the cost of the book.

They visited Seattle and Vancouver. Both are beautiful, but both are relatively expensive, as he relates in the book. My grown children's memories of these places are not nearly as vivid as those of Costa Rica. Hawaii is likewise beautiful, but still and all it is America. It is not that exotic.

The family spent time in Thailand, which is genuinely different. The children stayed with babysitters who spoke no English and survived to tell the tale. This is a truth worth repeating, and Adam handles it well. The world is not as dangerous as Americans fancy it to be. Thais in particular are agreeable, intelligent and conscientious people. Using native babysitters not only gave mom and dad an evening out, but it certainly built the children's sense of self-confidence as well. Thailand, as noted, will challenge the children's palates. The food is all quite unusual and some of it is spicy.

They spent some time in Germany visiting old friends. I had visited Germany when my children were roughly similar ages. His kids loved romping with the Germans. My kids' best recollection of the whole trip was going to the local swimming pool. The German kids would bomb down the waterslide and land on top of my kids, after which my kids, laughing with glee, would climb the ladder and do the same for them. This is the kind of experience that builds international goodwill. It also demonstrates that kids usually have more common sense than we might suspect. They managed not to hurt each other.

Adam and Jessica spent quite a bit of time in Barcelona. They were comfortable there speaking Spanish. Actually, Barcelona has changed. Forty years ago Spanish was the language; today it is resolutely Catalan. Their children were there long enough to pick up a few words of greeting. That's another advantage of traveling with children. They are absolute language sponges up until about the age of 12. Even if they don't remember much of the language, if they can get a sense of the pronunciation at an early age it will put them in good stead later.

Adam writes that their objective was usually to find an AirBNB lodging someplace close to the center of the city from which they could walk. This is extremely important in cities like Rome, Lisbon and Paris where the major attractions are fairly close together. Adam doesn't talk as much about public transportation as I would. The essential things to do in a new city are to get maps – Adam says that they kept theirs on iPads – and a sense of the public transportation.

Adam did not travel to Eastern Europe on this outing. As a ten year resident of Ukraine, I would recommend adding Poland, Hungary and Ukraine to such an itinerary. Enough people speak English that the traveler can get by, and vacationing here costs well less than half of what it does and Western Europe. Another advantage of Eastern Europe is that the native peoples have not been displaced in the cities. In downtown Warsaw all you see is Poles, in Kyiv it is Ukrainians. The tourist does not stand out as much.

Adam writes about modes of travel. He absolutely loves overnight ferries. It is a wonderful experience for children to get out on the ocean, even if they're only crossing the English Channel or the Bay of Fundy. His next favorite would be trains. Again, I will second that. Kids like to wander around. An outgoing child will enjoy starting conversations with the other passengers, which is easier to do if they are not strapped in. Kids need to go to the bathroom frequently, which is easier to do in a train than an airplane or a bus.

There is a question what to see in the cities. The traveler of course has to see the major attractions. He mentions the Pantheon in Rome as one such. Kids may or may not remember such historical sites. I would add zoos. Just about every big city in Europe has a zoo, and kids never seem to tire of seeing new animals. Many cities are located on rivers and lakes; the family can take a motor cruise, or rent a paddle boat. These are among the favorites for every visitor to Kyiv. We have company coming from California next week, and my five-year-old is salivating at the prospect of renting a rowboat and going fishing again with Uncle Denny.

This review is almost as long as the book. It was an exciting read. Absolutely five stars.