

A TRAVEL
BLOGGER’S
ADVICE FOR
SEEING THE
WORLD ON
A DIME



TOP:
ON THE COAST OF ICELAND
AFTER LIVING IN A VAN
FOR 14 DAYS
35 MM REVOLOG FILM
ICELAND, WINTER 2014.

BOTTOM:
A NONDESCRIPT ROAD
IN ICELAND
35MM REVOLOG FILM
ICELAND, WINTER 2014.

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FOUR YEARS AGO, Randi Delano was like many other young professionals in New York: burdened by an unfulfilling nine-to-five corporate job, forced to work on projects she didn’t care about, and allowed only two weeks of vacation to break the monotony. But one day in 2014, Delano had had enough. She packed one backpack and left New York behind, setting her sights on Central America, Europe, and Asia.

What she discovered was life-changing. Travelling on a dime was easier and actually cheaper than her life in New York—so much so that she was able to turn travelling into her full-time job. Today, she runs the travel blog **Just a Pack** with her travel partner, Michael. The blog, which focuses specifically on affordable, responsible travel, has been featured in National Geographic, Marie Claire and The Huffington Post. Through their firsthand experiences all over the world, the duo offers advice for those who want to travel as passionately—and cheaply—as they do.

As with many parts of life, the key to inexpensive travel is prioritizing. The biggest piece of advice Delano has for aspiring budget travelers: Redefine your definition of traveling. “Years ago I would spend thousands of dollars on a vacation that lasted a week or two,” she says.

“I had a very narrow viewpoint of what it meant to travel and how to go about it.”

But now she realizes the high-profile, comfortable places she was visiting, like Paris, Rome, or Madrid, were actually draining her funds and financially limiting her experiences in these destinations. She started traveling to Eastern and Central European cities like Brasov, Romania, Budapest, Hungary, and Wroclaw, Poland instead, which enabled her to stay longer in one location. As a result, she was able to explore equally beautiful cultures with rich histories that were much easier on the wallet. On one trip to Romania, she saw beautiful, crumbling 19th-century buildings all over the city, often covered in lush green ivy. She recalls how they were in various states of decay, each with a different story to tell. She and Michael began taking city tours and asking friendly locals if they could offer any insight about the buildings. Ultimately, they discovered that the buildings’ current states are essentially due to bureaucratic red tape that limits funding for restoration. But despite this, these structures were just as beautiful as something you might see in Paris or Rome—and all the more special because they weren’t tourist sites, but rather more authentic reflections of the changing cityscape.



IF DELANO DOES find herself in a location that is unexpectedly pricey, she limits her time there and leaves for a cheaper destination to balance out her spending. She stopped staying in expensive hotels and started opting for hostels, apartments for rent on Airbnb, free accommodations on Couchsurfing.net, and rooms in much cheaper family-run hotels. This decision led to a more intimate understanding of the locals and gave her the opportunity to make lasting friendships with people from around the world. She made one such connection at a hostel during her first month in Mexico, and they’ve been in touch ever since. As Delano explains, developing these types of friendships is great for a number of reasons, one being that visiting them usually means free accommodations. This is ultimately what led her to Malmo, Sweden, a destination she otherwise wouldn’t have been able to afford, because Scandinavia is famously expensive.

As for the other main expense of travel—food—Delano discovered that dining abroad doesn’t need to cost a lot. For instance, she can get a nice two-course dinner with a beer or

wine for about \$10 in Prague or a delicious lunch from a street food vendor from \$2 to \$4 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. As a vegan, she hasn’t found this lifestyle choice to be any more expensive than it would be stateside. It does force her to get creative in order to stick to her dietary choice, but it’s nothing that can’t be remedied by research ahead of time.

As far as budget traveling as a woman, she doesn’t find it to be any more challenging than luxury travel. Like most women, she is more aware of her surroundings at night, which pushes her to err on the side of safety and opt for a taxi back to her hostel or apartment, instead of walking or using public transportation. She reads reviews of each hostel or apartment she books and makes sure the surrounding area doesn’t give her a bad vibe, which is good advice for all travelers, budget or luxury. The only extra preparation she takes as a woman is accounting for feminine hygiene products, which can be much more expensive abroad. For this reason, she’s embraced the menstrual cup, which is a cheaper option that she found surprisingly easy to use.



THE BIGGEST
PIECE OF
ADVICE RANDI
HAS FOR
ASPIRING
BUDGET
TRAVELERS:
REDEFINE YOUR
DEFINITION OF
TRAVELING.



A BUTT IN JOSHUA TREE
35MM PORTRA 400
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK, CA, SPRING 2015.



TOP:
**FROM THE CAR WINDOW IN
JOSHUA TREE**
5MM LOMO 400
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK, FALL 2016.



BOTTOM:
THE COLORS OF ICELAND
35MM EKTAR 100
ICELAND, WINTER 2014.

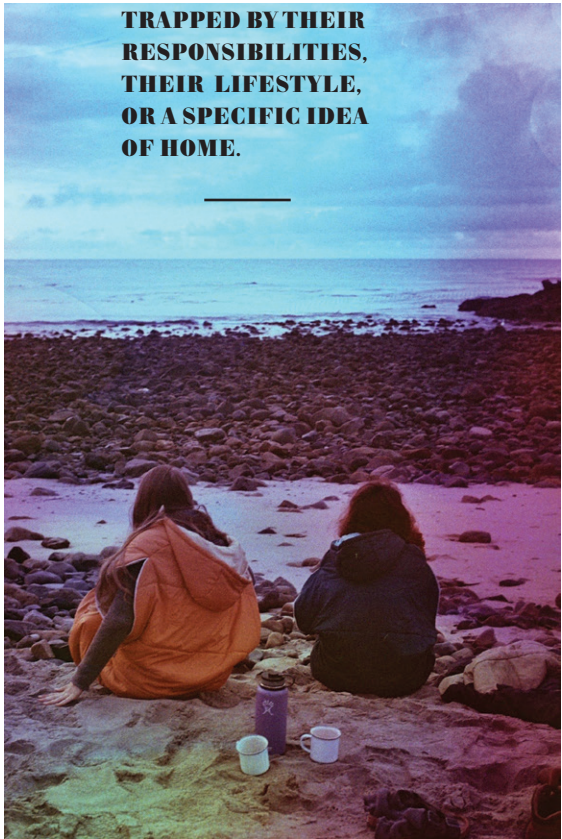
**TAKING LEAPS
CAN BE
LIBERATING
AND EVEN
LIFE-CHANGING**



TOP:
RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE
35MM EKTAR 100
GREAT SAND DUNES,
CO, FALL 2014.

BOTTOM:
RAVEN IN JOSHUA TREE
35MM REVOLOG FILM
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK, CA, SPRING 2015.

PEOPLE CAN SO
FREQUENTLY FEEL
TRAPPED BY THEIR
RESPONSIBILITIES,
THEIR LIFESTYLE,
OR A SPECIFIC IDEA
OF HOME.



FROM TOP LEFT
TO BOTTOM RIGHT:

COFFEE ON THE BEACH
35MM LOMO 100
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA,
SUMMER 2016.

A GOOD PLACE TO SLEEP
35MM LOMO 100
MALIBU, CALIFORNIA,
SUMMER 2016.

PEARL IN TEXAS
35MM PORTRA 400
HAMILTON POOL,
TEXAS, SPRING 2014.

OUR SECRET SPRING
35MM EKTAR 100
ECONFINA SPRINGS,
FLORIDA, SUMMER 2016.

IN SEARCH OF HOT SPRINGS
35MM EKTAR 100
ICELAND, WINTER 2014.

HELLO AMERICA represents artist Kristen Blanton's time on the road during her early 20s. "From Florida to California, I've left my heart in the dirt, behind tents, in fresh water springs, in the desert and along nondescript roads."

TRAVELING FULL-TIME as both hobby and career has helped Delano learn what she needs to be happy and sustained, and what she can live without. It's easy to see everything we own as necessary and vital to our livelihood, but Delano has found out that all she really needs is her passport, ATM card, and clothing. She recalls watching an episode of Rick Steves' travel show where the famed travel writer talked about packing. He said that everything you might need while traveling can be purchased on the road. If it can't, then you probably don't need it anyway.

These words have resonated with her all these years—so much so that she hopes to never

have a mortgage or own anything that can't be replaced for less than \$100.

People can so frequently feel trapped by their responsibilities, their lifestyle, or a specific idea of home. But Delano's story is a reminder that taking leaps can be liberating and even life-changing. As for her favorite place? Prague. "In the last two years I've spent 14 months in Prague," she says. "I've fallen in love with the people, their customs, the city, and the beauty of this country. The Czech Republic feels like home more than anywhere else I've been in my life." As she's discovered, sometimes it takes leaving your life to find where you belong.

