

The Boomers' Guide To Going Abroad

to Travel
Live
Give
Learn



Doris Gallan
The Boomer Travel Coach

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Visit Doris Gallan on the web at: www.BabyBoomersTraveling.com

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INTRODUCTION

“If a man for whatever reason has the opportunity to lead an extraordinary life, he has no right to keep it to himself.”

Jacques-Yves Cousteau

Of everything in the world that can make your life extraordinary, you have the most power and opportunity to make travel happen. You can plan, research, and book practically everything for travel, and by doing so, set the stage to have the amazing life you’ve always dreamed of.

Where does this power and opportunity come from? You’re at a point in your life when you have more knowledge and experience than ever to help you figure out what you want and how to get it.

You’re also part of an enormous group of people—baby boomers—who are finally starting to attract the attention of the tourism and travel industries. And you now have all the information at your disposal to realize your travel dreams, thanks to the internet, this book, and the resources on the companion website.

Is This Book for You? You Bet Your Sweet Bippy!

You’re 1 in 100 million (that’s 100,000,000!) baby boomers in the English-speaking world. There are 78 million in the United States, 10 million in Canada, 7.6 million in the United Kingdom, and 4 million in Australia. And guess what? Along with you, another 99.9 million (give or take a few) boomers have discovered they’ve got a lot more leisure time. They’re taking trips, exploring the possibility of living abroad, and going on volunteer and learning vacations.

You may be thinking, “How can they do that?” We’re bombarded by news about not saving enough for retirement, older worker job-loss statistics, and the impending Social Security bankruptcy. Is it possible for people to travel or live abroad, even in light of these dire

predictions? Yes! This book and companion website are all about giving you the information you need so you can find ways to do it.

Where Do Boomers Fit?

Before we go any further, I've got good news and bad news. First the good: There's help out there, and that's what this book is about. Now, the bad news: Traditional travel books aimed at mature adults focus on up-scale offerings, while newer publications center on the youth market. Boomers find themselves somewhere in between, wanting some of the comforts of the first combined with the lower-cost adventures of the second.

The same goes for travel products and services. Except for a few offerings I'm familiar with, most marketing targets seniors (Golden Agers) and these are mostly from luxury operators—think casinos, spas, cruises, some tours, and so on. Boomers seem to be left with the multi-generational vacations at the mouse palace that include grandparents, parents, and children. But where do you look when you need ideas to get away from your responsibilities as the cheese in the sandwich generation?

The news isn't a whole lot better when it comes to living, giving, and learning in foreign countries, since the majority of products target youths in their "gap years." There's a slew of books and programs on retiring abroad—often focusing on buying real estate—that may provide some information, but not everyone has tens of thousands of dollars to plunk down on a Central American property.

Back to the good news: This book is written entirely with the needs and concerns of baby boomers in mind. It's designed to give you information so you can research and plan your own trips, move to other countries, and go on volunteer or learning vacations—and save thousands of dollars by doing it yourself. Even if you do decide that you need the help of a travel agent, you'll be better informed going in and get better results. The companion website provides you

with many resources to help you plan your travels, whether independent or through tours.

And Just Who the Heck Am I?

I'm a baby boomer (born in 1959), with decades of experience traveling and living abroad, who got fed up with the lack of helpful information out there. I give you the no B.S. goods on what you'll find when traveling, living, giving, and learning abroad. *The Boomers' Guide* is full of ideas, instructions, tips, and my travel stories to guide and inspire you, whether you're brand new at this or a longtime traveler (because there's always something new to learn).

I've traveled to more than 50 countries and lived in five, visited every continent, made a 26-month 'round-the-world trip, learned to speak three languages fluently (including my own), and stumbled through another half dozen well enough to get by.

I've been a journalist, corporate communicator, government analyst, management consultant, and director in a nonprofit organization. I retired from my corporate career at 46—just as the world entered the *Great Recession*—and now dedicate myself to my passions: traveling, writing, and coaching people how to do both. I've been on tours, cruises, overlanding, and camping and have probably used most forms of transportation known to travelers.

But it's not all about me. My partner in crime is my boomer husband Jacob (born in 1955), who developed expertise in specific areas of travel and the expat life and who also provides the male perspective.

With a Little Help From My Friends

This book is filled with contributions from hundreds of other boomers. Advice and questions were culled from discussions I've had while we were traveling, as well as from those posted on my website, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. I also pulled information from articles I've written for a number of online boomer and travel sites.

Doris Gallan

You'll find the results of these discussions and tons more information throughout this book, as well as on the companion website, including stories about our travels and lots of resources on traveling, living, giving, and learning at home and abroad.

Rather than include a long list of resources in this book—that would become out of date almost from the date of publication—I've placed these on the website, where they can more easily be updated. Please visit the resources page to find much more information of interest to boomers traveling. If you know of any other sites you'd like me to include, please send me a note through one of the contact methods below.

Now, let's get you started creating an extraordinary life through living, traveling, giving, and learning!

Doris Gallan

www.BabyBoomersTraveling.com

www.facebook.com/babyboomerstraveling

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BABY BOOMERS: TRAVEL * LIVE * GIVE * LEARN

“Life is what we make it, always has been, always will be.”

Grandma Moses

Travel is nothing new to boomers. In fact, we’re the most traveled generation in history. We started young in the back of the family station wagon, sustained by Pop Tarts, Tang, transistor radios, and spot-the-license-plate games.

Many backpacked on \$5 a day through Europe or followed the hippy trail in Asia after high school or college. We earned tens of thousands of air miles on business trips and often used these bonus travel vouchers to fly our families across oceans on vacations.

Our travel habits aren’t likely to change now that we’re entering the life stage where career and children don’t take up all our time and money. People in their 50s and 60s continue looking for opportunities to keep active—physically and mentally.

For many of us, that means taking trips that offer new knowledge and experiences, allow us to rediscover old interests and latent talents, and give us the chance to make a difference in the world in ways that are new to us.

Why You Travel: Defining Your Dreams

This is the best time in our lives to travel! I’m not kidding. We’re young enough to move around but old enough to be free of a lot of the responsibility of earlier years.

Think about it: You know yourself better now, so it's easier to decide what interests you and what you want to pursue in your travels. You've got more time and, hopefully, more money to take journeys you've been putting off because of your commitments to children, work, parents, and others.

Even with these advantages, you may be stymied by an undefined sense of what you want and by obstacles, such as indecision and people's reactions to your plans. You need to know your motivations for travel. What do you hope to get out of your trips? Peace and quiet or adventure? Or both? If you don't know, no one else can help you find what you're looking for.

Once you're clear in your reasons to travel, you can establish where you want to go, how much time and money you'll spend, who you'll travel with (if anyone), and tons of other details you may find confusing if you don't have a good sense of your needs and desires.

That's why it's so important for you to have done your own research before you talk to anyone in the industry. You're less likely to be sold something that doesn't fit your requirements when you have a good idea of what these are.

To plan your travels, you need to know: a) what inspires you to go, and b) what's holding you back. There are real limitations, such as a shortage of time and money. But these are sometimes false barriers because with planning and budgeting, these can be dealt with in such a way as to make your travels possible sooner and more often.

What's Stopping You?

Potential barriers to your travels may be people's concerns for you or even open disapproval of your plans. You may also be going on trips that aren't really of your choosing, so you're spending your limited resources on trips that aren't right for you.

Bad trips are usually those that aren't thought through. One of the first examples we encountered during our 'round-the-world trip—and turned out to be the dawning of my travel-coaching

career—occurred at Copper Canyon in northern Mexico. We met up with a bus of young seniors and boomers who were obviously frustrated with their tour.

One of the men on the tour was surprised to find that we were traveling on our own in an area with few facilities: “We were told there was no way to do this without a tour. And now we’re stuck with a group for two weeks. How did you manage it?” he asked.

Years of experience in research and strategic planning for a number of organizations gave me the skills and stick-to-itiveness to continue searching until I found the information I needed. I searched travel websites, government sites, blogs, and travel guidebook sites, and cobbled together enough information to plan the trip.

Reaching Your Travel Goals

Doing your own research and planning puts you in a better position to analyze travel opportunities and decide whether or not they’re right for you.

What does a wrong trip look like? How about a colleague you’re not crazy about asking you to join her on a cruise so she won’t have to pay the single surcharge? Or your crazy brother who wants to be the first to explore a war-torn country just after the signing of a peace accord?

Lay out your reasons for wanting to travel so you’ll have a better sense of your needs. Jot down a few notes to yourself and keep these in front of you as you read this and other books, do research, and create your travel plan.

In no time you’ll find you’ve become:

- More focused when doing research, so you’ll cut down on a lot of needless work.
- More decisive about what’s right for you so you’ll waste less time and money on the wrong trips.

- More confident through travel and living abroad so you'll greatly reduce your need for the safety net of needing to have everything preplanned and prepaid.

Tips: Getting Started

- Think of the advantages of your stage of life in terms of self-confidence, knowledge, skills, experience, time, and money.
- Write down your reasons to travel. Make sure you never lose sight of these as you plan your journeys.
- Look at your reasons not to travel and see these not as impediments but challenges to be overcome.
- Review opportunities to travel with a critical eye so you don't end up on a trip that's not right for you.
- Be ready for critics and skeptics to voice their fears, objections, and qualms about the travels you want to undertake.
 - If you've thought about what others are likely to say, you'll be ready with your good reasons for taking the trip and won't let them dissuade you.

My Travels: Finding Humor in People's Reactions

After decades of dreaming, years of planning, and months of holding it a secret, my husband Jacob and I began telling people that we were about to start a 'round-the-world trip to celebrate our upcoming 25th wedding anniversary.

Our friends and family were as excited as we were because they knew how much it meant to us. It was a little different with acquaintances and work colleagues less familiar with our long-held dreams. We announced we were quitting our jobs (Oh, No!) and selling our house (Are you nuts?) to travel the world for two years (Seriously?!?).

They politely asked where we were going, how we had planned it, and the details of our schedule. None of them voiced the question foremost on their minds, but we could tell: Are you insane going just as the world is about to dive into a recession like we haven't seen since the Great Depression?

I started collecting their questions—they were that fascinating—and we made up answers during our travels. Below are just a few of these with the responses we gave (or, sometimes, wished we had):

- “What are you going to do for a doctor?”
 1. There are well-trained doctors in most countries we'll be visiting (and it's a bit offensive to think there aren't).
 2. A good reason to travel now is to do it while we're still in good health since—unlike 30 years ago—we don't feel quite so invincible anymore.

- “Did you buy an RV? Remember that movie?”
 1. The movie was *Lost in America* with Albert Brooks and Julie Hagerty: The couple sells their home and buys an RV to travel across the USA. The bummer is she blows all their funds at their first stop in Vegas. I'm not Julie, and my husband's not Al.
 2. You can't cross the ocean in an RV (it's a 'round-the-world trip, remember?).

- “How are you going to pay your bills?”
 1. Having sold our house, we have almost no bills: no electricity, gas, phone, or mortgage; no car, house, or regular health insurance; and so on.
 2. All other bills (student loans, travel insurance, credit cards) can be paid online securely if you set up accounts before you leave.

- “You can’t go: What will you do with your cats?”
 - We found good homes for our three cats.
 - Yes, we’ll miss them, but they will adapt quickly.
 - We knew that Babe, Mijo, and Mija (the cats) wouldn’t want to stop us from seeing the world (and, sorry, but even if they did—they couldn’t stop us).

- “What are you gonna do with all of your stuff?”
 1. We sold it all to help pay for our travels (freedom from stuff is so liberating).
 2. You can’t let your stuff stop you from going, plus we get to collect wonderful new stuff from around the world (and, boy, did we ever).

The sorriest excuse given for not traveling was: “I could never do that. I would miss all my TV programs.” I often said to my travel-partner husband, as we looked outside our train or bus window, that we were watching real travel TV.

The difference was that we were living it—actors in our own reality TV program, feeling, smelling, and tasting life as well as watching and hearing it. What could be better than that? Okay, so the odor of elephant manure we could do without, but you know what I mean.