

Around the World Traveler Interview: Dave from Dave's Travel Corner

November 27, 2012 | Posted by: Kathryn



Dave of Dave's Travel Corner in Palau

Dave is an International travel & wine writer who was born and raised in California. He founded [Dave's Travel Corner](#), an International travel community in 1996. One of his proudest accomplishments was co-founding a collegiate solar racing team which designed & built a solar racing car from scratch.

His latest endeavor is [The Napa Wine Project](#) which has taken 6 years to date and is expected to be an initial 10 year project that involves wine tasting at all Napa Valley wineries/commercial wine producers. He has personally visited, tasted with & written reviews of 700+ Napa wineries to date. His first book titled "The Freeways of Los Angeles" was published in 2010.

1. How much does your luggage typically weigh when you're doing a multi-country trip?

Irregardless of the length of the trip – my carry-on on small backpack usually weighs between 12 and 13kg. I pack differently of course for a cold weather destination than a warm weather one. Like right now I am in North East China where the day time high temperatures are well below freezing. I still only took a small backpack with a small extra plastic bag for my thick jacket.

I have an extremely thick lightweight down jacket that does very well in cold climates – and I always take several layers of fleece if I am going to be traveling in a cold climate. Warm climates are easy – I just take shorts, t shirts and I always have room left over in my backpack. My heaviest items are my SLR Camera and my ultrabook (which comes in under a kilogram).

2. Where was the warmest, clearest, calmest ocean you've ever swum in?

This would have to be a tropical island destination. There are several I could name but the remote coral atoll of Kayangel in Northern Palau (Micronesia) would have to be my choice. The dazzle of the sparkling aquamarine and turquoise waters are breathtaking. There are beautiful white sand beaches surrounded by lagoons. But even more inspiring in today's world of mass tourism that often over runs places like these – is the fact there are just no people here!



Dave in Chennai at a Wedding

3. What has been your all-time favorite place to stay (accommodation)?

Again I have to reference a tropical island destination! Zitahli Resort & Spa Kuda-Funafaru on its own private island in the Maldives. To get here requires a 55 minute Seaplane ride flying over aquamarine waters and small islands. You touch down next to the welcoming pier among some of the most incredible island beauty I've seen. Impeccable service, food and a stunning location. The water bungalows are private and each one has their own swimming pool above the lagoon. You can watch fish swim in the shallow clear waters – we even saw small sharks swimming under our bungalow!

4. What's the best afternoon you've had while traveling?

I have severe problems when climbing mountains due to the altitude – I would have to say my best afternoon was climbing in the Andes – making it up to 5000 meters and feeling incredibly “high” from the altitude as well as the fact that I was not suffering from my usual altitude symptoms. I had acclimatized for nearly 2 weeks prior – hiking high up and then sleeping much lower, so my body was adjusted. And we were hiking to one of the most impressive alpine lakes I've been to – Lago 69 (look that one up!). Waterfalls cascade down the sides of the cliffs into the lake – which is aquamarine in color from the nearby glacial melt. Stunning jagged ice covered mountains tower above the lake. This is truly one of the planet's special still “undiscovered” spots.

5. What one money saving tip do you most wish you'd known much earlier? What was the last time you used this tip (describe)?

Stay away from using your home cell phone providers plan while roaming internationally. I've learned the hard way several times, incurring hundreds of dollars of roaming charges. Alternatives include purchasing a SIM card or using WiFi connections to call inexpensively using either Google Voice or Skype.

6. What's the best travel advice you ever got?

Pack light! I've had too many problems with luggage being lost or delayed in the past when I check it in at the airport. There are also security advantages to be in control of your possessions whenever possible. You can keep it with you in say a taxi (rather than putting it in the trunk) and generally keep it with you on buses. It is also much easier on the back to be carrying something light.

7. What common travel advice do you disagree with?

That most of the jet lag pills will produce desired results. I've tried several of the jet lag remedies but they haven't really seemed to work for me. I try to stay hydrated as that helps and if flying to a place like Thailand where massage is everywhere – I've found the best way to deal with jet lag upon arrival is not to fight it – but rather to get a massage and succumb to the sleepiness!



Dave in Skopje, Macedonia.

8. What do you wish you hadn't packed?

Extra clothing – clothing can take up a lot of space and most trips I find I just don't need that much in the way of extra shirts or pants. Of course I am doing laundry more often.

9. What splurge was worth the money?

A first rate mountaineering company to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro a few years back. There are many outfitters that you can climb the mountain with but nearly all climb at an accelerated pace which does not give you a chance to adjust to the altitude. The company I went with (Mountain Madness) has a high porter to climber ratio and they even brought a heavy high

altitude pressure bag (HAP) to the summit – which I ultimately ended up using because of terrible altitude symptoms!

10. Which places have you found disappointing?

I've been to all the countries in Central America – but other than a few locations I have yet to be inspired by travel here. Also visiting the Everglades in the middle of July in Florida was not a wise move. It was incredibly hot and humid but the worst part were the mosquitoes – every time I got out of the car I was followed by black swarms. I remember running as fast as I could into the bathroom to escape – but once inside they were still everywhere. Oh, and we were camping without tents – just blankets to cover us – double the nightmare!

11. What destination (that you're yet to go to) is absolute top of your travel bucket list (if it's a big country, please mention a specific city/island).

That would be Papua New Guinea – I've heard so much about the wildlife and the cultural activities here. The best cultural immersion for a short visit – is to stay in a village. It is not an easy country to get around by land transportation as the roads are rugged and very limited in their coverage.

Papua New Guinea has some of the best preserved underwater marine life and ecosystems in the world. I scuba dive and have seen some of the photos of the marine life and corral here – it looks fantastic! The good news is I will be visiting in January of this coming year – so check back then for my thoughts on the country. Can't wait! Other regions that are very high on my must visit list are any country ending in 'stan' – especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Want to be an interviewee?

If you've done an around the world trip and/or you can answer the questions above, email us to volunteer to be an interviewee.