

THE TOP TRAVEL BLOGGERS OF 2015



2015 is coming to an end, and what a great year it's been. To celebrate the end of 2015 and the start of a New Year we have caught up with some of our favourite travel bloggers from around the globe, to find out what has been their highlight for 2015!

We asked 23 of our favourite travel bloggers from around the world "What is the most interesting/unusual thing you have seen whilst travelling this year?" The responses we received have been fascinating. Each feature includes a short bio of the blogger and their response to their favourite travel moment of 2015.

As a luxury tourism destination, at Samujana we have a keen interest in knowing what these prolific travel writers felt was their highlight.

So, without further ado, here's our top travel bloggers sharing their most interesting travel moments of 2015.

1. Gary Arddt From **Everything-Everywhere.com**

Gary has been travelling since 2007 and has a wealth of exploration under his belt. He has visited all 7 continents, over 175 countries, states and territories around the world, including all US states, Canadian and Australian destinations.

“This year it would have to be experiencing the flight deck of the **USS Harry S Truman**. I had the privilege of landing, taking off and staying overnight on a nuclear aircraft carrier. I was able to witness the flight operation first hand, being only a few yards away from F-18 fighters being catapulted off a floating runway.”



2. Laurence Norah From **FindingTheUniverse.com**

Laurence has been travelling since 2009 and set up his blog ‘Finding the Universe’ as a way of documenting and sharing his travel

experiences. This has become one of the world's most popular travel blogs. Laurence has travelled across Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia and most of Europe and the US.

“The most interesting thing I’ve seen this year has to be the Great Pyramids of Egypt. They absolutely blew my mind in terms of size and age – nothing can really prepare you for seeing them up close and exploring the complex. They were without doubt the highlight of my recent trip to Egypt!”



3. **Monica Stott** From **TheTravelHack.com**

Monica founded The Travel Hack in 2009 when she left the UK to travel around Asia and Australia for two years. Since then she has become a professional blogger and has travelled around the world in search of stylish adventure and travel. Monica has recently had a baby and is now determined to prove that travelling with a baby is possible!

“The most interesting and unusual thing I’ve seen while travelling this year was pretty much everything I saw at Festival No.6. Festival No.6 is a quirky, boutique festival in the village of Portmeirion in Wales, UK.

Portmeirion itself is a really interesting village because it's a mock replica of a quaint and colourful Italian village and you feel like you're a million miles from North Wales.

The festival takes place over 4 days in the summer and is filled with every weird and wonderful act you could imagine. I watched dancers, performers, magicians, musicians, comedians, speakers and artists at this unique venue. I got lost in the woods while searching for hidden stages, danced on floating pontoons amidst a lake filled with bubbles, I watched a gospel karaoke session while I bounced on an enormous trampoline and I ended the weekend watching Grace Jones put on an incredible show."

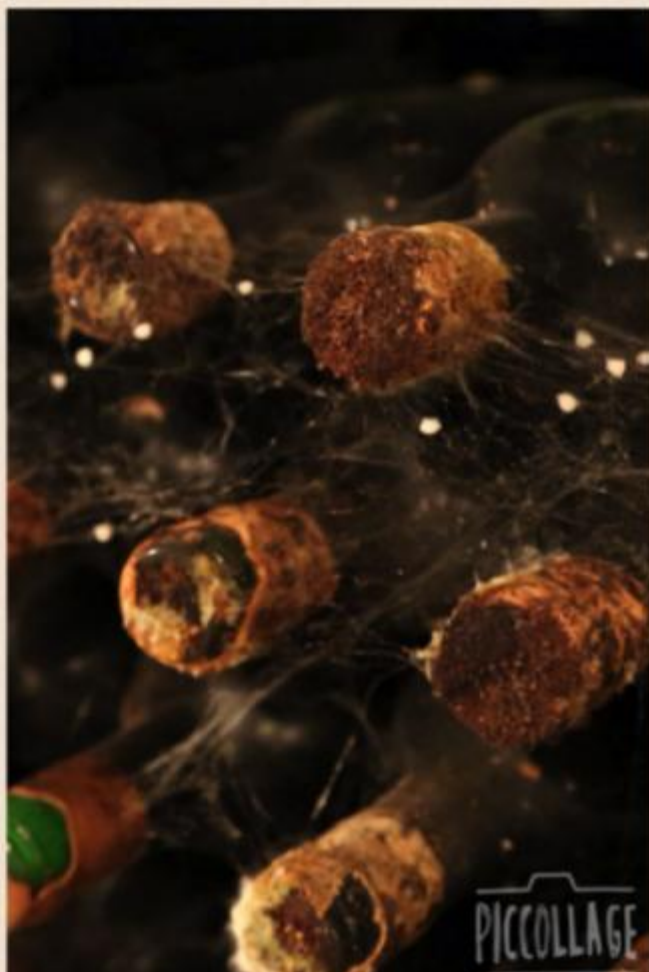


4. Dave Thompson

From **DavesTravelCorner.com**

Dave set up his Travel Corner blog back in 1996 after a life-changing trip to Nepal trekking near Everest Base Camp. Whilst he was in Nepal he documented his experiences in a journal, which later became the foundation of his blog Dave's Travel Corner. Today the blog is one of the leading independent travel and lifestyle platforms.

“I visited Milestii Mici Winery in Moldova – the world’s largest underground winery – with 200km of tunnels of which only about 60km are currently in use. Normally when you visit a winery you take a walking tour, not so here, based on the sheer volume of tunnels a tour guide rides with you as you drive through select parts of the winery. Milestii Mici Winery also boasts the largest collection of wine in the world, coming in at over 1.5 million bottles!”



5. Michael Turtle

From [TimeTravelTurtle.com](https://timetravelturtle.com)

Michael has been travelling for 4 years now. He has visited 50 countries and has shared 600 stories of his experiences along the way. Michael set off travelling when he turned 30 because of his keen interest in the wider world and his desire to share his experiences with likeminded people led to the creation of his blog the Time Travel Turtle. What we love about this blog is that it immerses itself in the people, the cultures and the stories behind the travel brochures.

“Without a doubt, the best place I’ve been this year is a rock, but not any old rock. I’m talking about the Trolltunga rock in Norway. The name means ‘troll’s tongue’ in Norwegian and that’s just what it looks like, a tongue protruding from a cliff and hanging out over a 700 meter drop down the ground. The only way to get there is by trekking 11 kilometers up mountains and through snow, and to get back? Well, you need to trek back the 11 kilometers again. The landscapes along the way are incredible and almost as spectacular as the final destination. It’s not an easy day and the whole walk takes about 8 hours. But it is definitely worth it, especially for the photo standing at the tip of the tongue!”



If you would like to read more about Michael's trip to Norway and his trek to the Trolltunga rock, you can read the story [here](#).

6. Yvonne Zagerman

From **JustTravelous.com**

Yvonne set up Just Travelous and starting travelling the world after quitting her job in TV journalism in 2010. She has since travelled to Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America and South America to name a few.

Yvonne is an adventurous girl and from reading her blog we can see that she has done some very exciting and unique things on her travels, so when we asked her what was the most unusual thing she has seen this year, we knew we were in for a surprise.

“The most unusual thing I’ve seen whilst travelling this year, was the neck of a yak while riding it in the Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan on a sunny but ice-cold day in 4000m altitude.”



7. Ferdz Decena From ironwulf.com

Ferdz Decena is an award-winning travel photographer, writer and blogger, writing for Ironwulf. His works have found print in publications such as Singapore Airlines's Silver Kris, Philippine Airlines' Mabuhay, Cebu Pacific's Smile and Seair InFlight.

When we asked Ferdz what was the most interesting or unusual thing he had seen this year, what he showed us what truly breathtaking.

"To answer your question the most interesting and unusual thing I've seen this year is the "Sardine Run" in Moalboal, Cebu. I knew there were going to be lots of fishes but nothing could really prepare one in this visual overload."

<https://youtu.be/kyU3eqWCQIc>

8. Nellie Huang From **WildJunket.com**

Wild Junket is a travel blog that focuses on adventure travel. It was created to inspire people to diverge from the conventional trail and seek out extraordinary experiences. Nellie Huang is one of the founders of Wild Junket and is a professional travel writer.

“The most interesting thing I’ve seen this year has got to be the 1950s American classic cars that roam Cuba. For a long time, these were the only cars that people had access to (as a result of the US trade embargo and other factors). With the recent economic reforms, Cubans are allowed to get their hands on imported cars but they seem to still have a love affair for these yank-tanks. I can see why – they’re so full of character, I wish I can get one home!”



If you would like to read more about Nellie’s trip to Cuba, you can read her blog on “How Will Cuba Change?” [here.](#)

9. Dave & Deb From **ThePlanetD.com**

Dave and Deb founded ThePlanetD after cycling the continent of Africa in 2008. Now well-known travel personalities both online and in the mainstream media, they recently won their second consecutive Gold Medal for Best Travel Blog at the Society of American Travel Writers. Having travelled to more than 100 countries on all 7 continents, Dave and Deb showcase their experiences through storytelling, video, and award-winning photography.

“The most unique thing we did this year was visiting Northern Manitoba in Canada where we walked with polar bears and kayaked with belugas whales. I had always wanted to see polar bears, but I always thought I’d only be able to see them at a safe distance behind the glass of a high tundra vehicle. When we went to Nanuk Polar Bear Lodge on the Hudson Bay, we actually hiked from our Tundra Rhino (as they call it) to view several polar bears in an up close and intimate manner. It was an incredible experience to see them in their natural habitat from such a close view. We then topped off that trip with kayaking with beluga whales in Churchill. The belugas bumped and played with our boats. They followed us as we paddled and they checked out our GoPro camera under the water. They were so curious. This trip was one of the most magnificent wildlife experiences we have ever had.”



10. Yasmin Pullman

From **LuxuryTravelDiary.com**

Yasmin is the founder of the second best luxury travel blog voted by the readers of USA Today. Yasmin and the guys and girls at Luxury Travel Diary review the best destinations, hotels, swimwear, lingerie, fashions, essential style items and other gadgets needed for luxury travel.

“I love taking water taxis in Venice, skiing down alpine slopes in Lech and cuddling up with my hubby and son fireside in the Cotswolds. I have had many wonderful and odd experiences in 2015. Right now I am at the Kristiania in Lech and am sitting next to the oddest painting I have ever seen- it appears to be of a folded up piece of paper with something inside the fold that I can't see which is terribly annoying! (I can send a picture). Other strange moments include hearing footsteps crossing the room in the middle of the night at the Baliscroft hotel in West Sussex and being woken by a wasp sting in the middle of the night at the Tudor Farm House near the forest of Dean. To be honest, ending the day with a beer in an inspiring environment is what makes me happy -travel is all about the experiences

but sometimes it is the mundane that is a special when it is enjoyed somewhere new...”

11. Ayngelina Brogan

From **BaconisMagic.ca**

Dave and Ayngelina from Bacon is Magic are not your ordinary pair of travel bloggers; their goal is to inspire people to lead an adventurous life by travelling to delicious destinations and cooking amazing food at home. Ayngelina set up her blog 5 years ago on a quest to explore the world through food, following her stomach and discovering new cultures.

When we spoke to Ayngelina about her most interesting and unusual experience this year we were surprised to find it wasn't completely food related. This is what she had to say:

“One of the most interesting things I did this year was foraging mushrooms, learning to identify what is edible in a forest and what to stay away from. We couldn't pass up a weekend in Southwest Ontario to go foraging for edible mushrooms and zip-lining.”



If you would like to read more about Dave and Ayngelina's trip foraging for mushroom, you can [read their blog here](#).

12. Johnny Ward

From **OneStep4ward.com**

Johnny set off on his travels in 2006 when he decided there must be more to life than a 40+ hour working week, a bland social calendar and a 2 week break in the sun each year. His blog One Step 4ward was born when Johnny headed to Australia to work and save. Now Johnny has travelled to over 170 countries and has one of the most successful travel blogs online today.

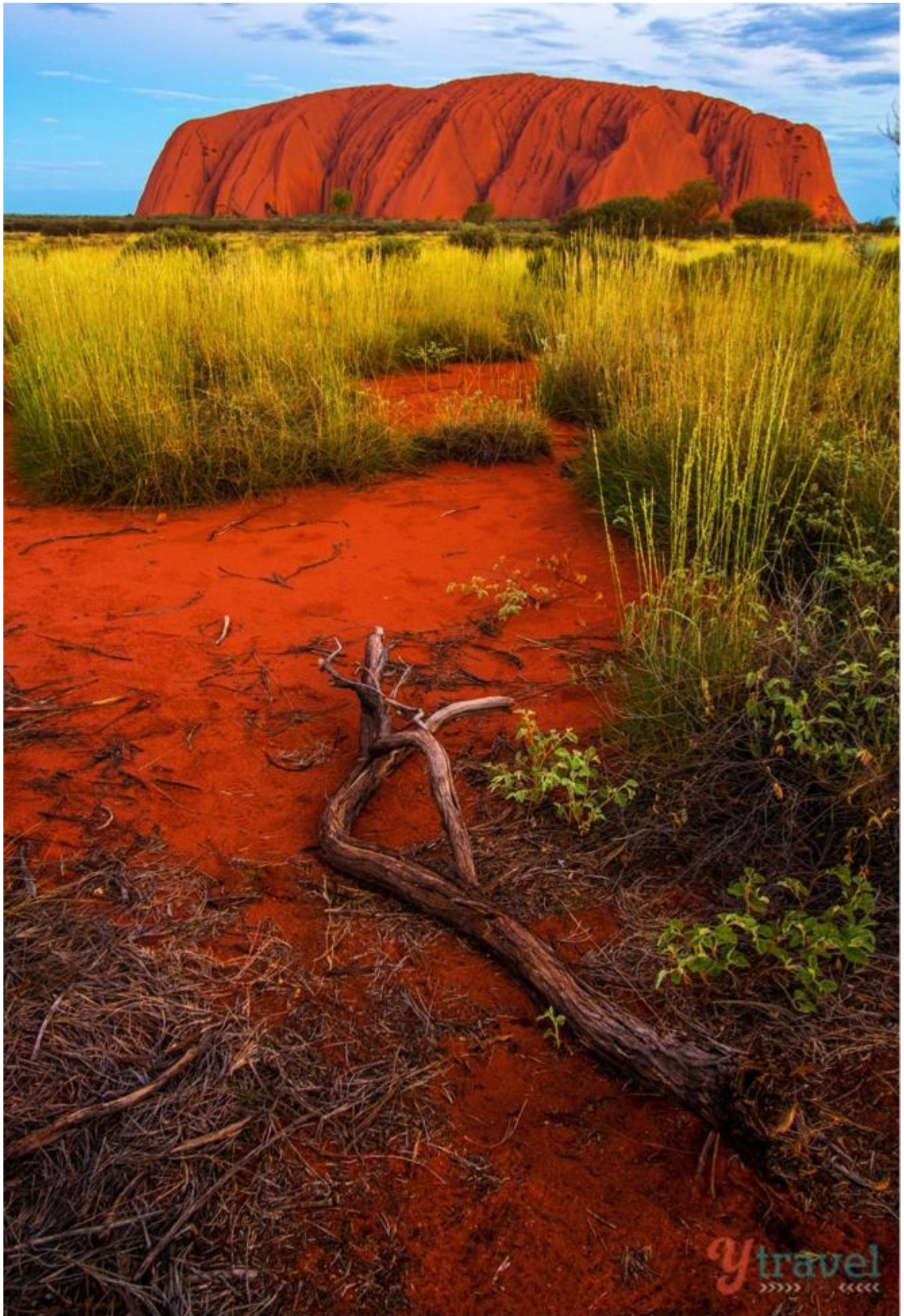
“I spent time in June in North Africa, and I stayed with a wonderful local family in Algiers, Algeria for some time. It was the Ramadan festival at the time, so I tried to fast with the family to respect their Muslim faith, and each evening we would break fast with ‘Ftour’, the big meal for the whole family. It was delicious every single night, and such a relief after a day with no food or drink. Then, later on in evening, even after midnight, we’d head into Algiers city centre and seemingly the whole city came alive, people eating and drinking together, new friends and old friends. It was one of my favourite ever travel experiences.”

13. Caz & Craig Makepeace

From YTravelBlog.com

Caz and Craig caught the travel bug 16 years ago, and have been travelling on-and-off ever since. Their absolute passion is to help others follow the same bliss, and they’ve been changing people’s lives on their travel blog since 2010. Caz and Craig are serial travel addicts and have lived in 5 countries and had adventures throughout 52.

“The most interesting thing we’ve seen this year was Uluru. It’s such an unusual and spiritual place. A giant rock surrounded by desert, right in the middle of Australia. It holds such mystery and mysticism. You just know you’re visiting a special place that speaks ancient wisdom.”



14. James Clark

From **NomadicNotes.com**

James is a long-term traveller originally from Melbourne, Australia. His life as a traveller began in 1999 when he moved to the UK on a two-year working holiday visa and it was here that James discovered that he was a travel addict. This was also the year that he became fascinated with the internet and wanted to find a job that incorporated both travel and surfing the web and thus the idea of making travel websites as a business seemed perfect. From this idea Nomadic Notes was born; a travel blog from the perspective of the long-term traveller. The site features travel guides, travel tips, and useful notes on places around the world.

“The sand dunes near Swakopmund in Namibia were one of the most interesting things I saw this year. I wasn’t really looking forward to seeing it as I thought it would be just a bunch of sand. We visited an hour before sunset and the colours were so spectacular. The sand appeared to change colour from yellows, to oranges, and reds, while the shadows grew longer as the sun set. Truly a magical place to watch a sunset.”



15. Sebastian Canaves From **Off-The-Path.com**

Sebastian is half Spanish and half German and grew up on Mallorca, where he spent his childhood hiking, swimming and sailing. After 14 years living on the island, he moved to Germany. After Sebastian finished high school he decided to fly to Australia to work for a company in Brisbane, and ever since he has been bitten repeatedly by the travel bug! Off the Path was set up in 2011 when Sebastian decided to live his life the way he wanted and turn his passion into a job.

“I spent two weeks in New Zealand this year, driving in a camper van through the South Island. This trip was absolutely amazing and I totally fell in love with country. One of my highlights was Lake Tekapo, a glacier lake in the middle of the South Island. I’ve never seen water that looked so unnaturally turquoise. It really looks like something out of a box of paints!

And the scenery with the snow-capped mountains behind it is absolutely stunning. Definitely a must-go if you're planning a trip to New Zealand!"



16. Amy West

From **AmyWestTravel.com**

Amy is the founder and creator of her very own travel blog Amy West Travel. Amy is based in Jacksonville, Florida and has travelled to New Zealand, China, Malta, Germany, and Brazil to name a few. As a travel and lifestyle expert Amy writes for USA Today's **10Best.com** and regularly appears as a guest on several other media outlets

"Probably the most interesting thing I've seen on my travels this year were whales in the Pacific Ocean when we were visiting Northern California. Where I'm from on the east coast, so we get to see other sea creatures but I had never seen whales from a swimming distance before. Quite the majestic scene."

17. Mark Wiens

From migrationology.com

Mark set up Migrationology after he finished University in 2008, he wanted to travel the world and discover delicious new foods along the way. Mark not only believes that food is tasty but that it's a great way to connect people.

When we asked Mark about his most interesting or unusual travel experience this year, this is what he said:

"I travelled to Osaka with a couple of friends (none of us spoke or understood Japanese). We were hungry, so directly from the airport we went to a restaurant. Their menu was all in Japanese, and the waiter, in broken English, said they had sashimi, and grilled chicken skewers. We said we'd love it all. When he mentioned sashimi, we were all thinking we'd get a lovely plate of sliced fish and seafood... but little did we know we had stepped into an ALL-chicken restaurant. So we ended up getting a whole plate of raw chicken – despite my mother telling me all my life to make sure chicken is always well cooked – and it was delicious!"



18. Cassie Kifer

From EverInTransit.com

Cassie is the founder and editor of Ever in Transit, a food and travel blog where she shares her travel tips, stories, recipes, and quirky adventures in California and around the world.

“Probably the most unusual (but beautiful) landscape we saw this year was the tea fields in the mountains of Kerala, India, near Munnar. The highly manicured tea plants have an intense bright green colour and really unique shapes. I loved seeing them cover the rolling hills.”



19. Jennifer Miner

From thevacationgals.com

Jennifer is one of three girls that make up the Vacation Gals, launched in 2009. All three girls are professional writers and mums of children ranging

from 1-16. Their site covers a big variety of family travel destinations, as well as kid-free trips, local fun, outdoor escapes, healthy living, favourite gear, comfy clothing, and much more.

“This past summer, my family and I went to Amsterdam. While this was hilariously eye-opening for my daughters, the most unusual thing we saw in Amsterdam was when we arrived at the Medieval Torture Museum. There were many ghastly devices there, such as an Iron Maiden, which really makes you reflect on how terribly we humans can treat each other. One item, though, was truly bizarre: the Flute of Shame. It supposedly served as a tortuous punishment for musicians who played so incompetently that their guild felt the need to punish them for it. Those finger holes were tightened in accordance with how badly the musicians played their instruments! That was the most unusual thing we’ve seen while traveling this year, and, perhaps, ever.”



20. Daniel Noll

from UncorneredMarket.com

Daniel Noll and Audrey Scott are a husband-and-wife storytelling team. 14 years ago they began with a one-way ticket to Prague, Czech Republic and an insatiable curiosity about the world and its people. More than 90 countries later, they're still going...and still married!

“This past summer, we did a 14-day, 210 kilometer cross-border mountain trek in Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. It was a modified version of the relatively new Peaks of the Balkans circuit. One of the changes we made was to hike through the Karanfil Mountains from Albania into Montenegro. When we woke up that morning the clouds were heavy and we were dodging rain. In an effort to outlast the weather, we spent a long lunch at the top of Mt Teljanka ridge, and eventually the clouds cleared for a short time. And we were surrounded by dramatic granite peaks like these. So beautiful.”



21. Bonnie Rakhit

From **TheStyleTraveller.com**

Bonnie Rakhit is the founder of The Style Traveller. A fashion editor's guide to the world's most stylish places. The Style Traveller has been voted in the Top 5 luxury travel and lifestyle blogs in the UK.

"My most unusual travel experience this year was swimming with the pigs in the Bahamas. We took a boat trip out to the white sand, dessert islands of the Exumas. As we approached our destination we could see a number of small pink and grey creatures swimming excitedly towards our yacht. As the animals got closer we realised they were the infamous Caribbean swimming pigs! They were so cute; there were a few adult pigs and a little gaggle of baby pigs that had just been born. As well as feeding them we even had time to get in the water and go for a little swim with them."



22. Annette White

From **BucketListJourney.net**

Annette is a freelance writer, social media influencer and founder of the award winning travel & lifestyle blog, Bucket List Journey. She is checking world destinations off her bucket list one adventure at a time.

When we caught up with Annette to ask her about the most extraordinary thing she has seen this year whilst travelling. This is what she said:

“My most interesting travel experience this year happened high above the valley of Romania, in the principality of Transylvania, where there lies an unusual castle that is said to have once been occupied by count Dracula himself. You will find the gothic Bran Castle near the town of Brasov, which has long been linked to this ancient vampire, though Dracula probably won't be there when you arrive.

There was a mystical atmosphere surrounding Bran Castle when I arrived, especially with the bitterly cold, snowy weather. From the exterior, it looked like the perfect setting for a vampire novel, perched on top of a hill and surrounded by a bed of white. The dozens of tunneled stairs, dark wood paneling and stark white walls made for an eerie walk through the interior. Plus, interesting Dracula facts and vampire information was strategically placed throughout, along with relics from the royal family who previously resided there. Even sans Dracula himself, this was worth the stop.”



23. Kiersten

From **TheBlondeAbroad.com**

Kiersten is the founder of the award winning female travel and lifestyle blog The Blonde Abroad, featuring travel tips, fashion and photography from around the world. Kiersten left her career in corporate finance to become a world traveller and since then she has travelled to 40 countries and has knocked off some big adventures of her bucket list.

When we asked Kiersten what her most interesting travel moment of 2015 was, this is what she said:

“My most interesting travel moment was when I hiked ‘The World’s Deadliest Hike’ on China’s Mt. Huashan this past year. ”

Shortly after the most terrifying cable car experience in my life, we decided to take on one of the world’s most dangerous hikes. We made our way around a cliff edge along a rickety wooden plank not more than a foot wide. Ofte, I had to rely on my balance as I scaled the actual mountain,

placing my feet in small holes carved out of the rock face. The scariest part wasn't that the plank was the only thing between me and a 5,000 ft drop- it was the insane amount of people crossing in both directions along it. Often taking off BOTH of their safety lines to get around people. It was absolute insanity. This photo still makes my stomach drop."



A massive thank you to all the travel bloggers who took time out of their busy schedules to contribute to this round-up. Wishing everyone an adventure filled 2016!