

Leaving on a Jet Plane?

Travel writer, editor, and blogger Ed Wetschler '68 has some advice.

Interview by Karen McCally '02 (PhD)

As a travel writer and blogger, in any typical month, I'm like a centipede trying to walk in 50 different directions. I travel at least once a month, and when I'm home, I'm working on four or five stories at once. I'm also doing a lot of social media. Tripatini.com, of which I'm a co-owner, is a social network for travelers.

The people we're writing about fund the travel in most cases. From a realistic point of view, that doesn't give you a lot of faith in what you're reading, nor should it. That's why you read so much praise. That's why people get mad at me when I come home from a trip and say, "I'm not writing about this." I believe I'm under an obligation not to write about a place if I don't like it. Unless it's really high visibility, and then I should because people think it's great.

In the Caribbean, there's some great history, and people want to get away from the stereotype that it's only a place to sun yourself on the beach.

There are millions of tourists who will go to the Caribbean to an all-inclusive, stay within their hotel gates, and drink all day. But there's also

a growing demographic who are saying, "I want to get off campus." And the prime minister of Grenada was saying just the other day, "People want to see more of us and know more about us."

On St. Kitts, in the West Indies, they've just installed a historic train ride, a rare thing in the Caribbean.

And for our 25th anniversary, my wife and I are going to Puerto Rico, to San Juan. We like the history there. There are these great fortress walls, and within the inner part of the city, this centuries-old colonial town. You see the kind of buildings that you can't see north of the Rio Grande.


I think Baltimore is spectacularly underrated as a tourist destination.

The fabled waterfront restoration and development, which began around 20 years ago at the time the Camden Yards stadium was built, just

keeps getting better and bigger and more beautiful.

They just put up a Four Seasons Hotel that's fabulous, as is the food there. Elsewhere in the city, the American Visionary Art Museum is one of the most interesting museums you'll ever see, because the artists are these crazy people who didn't know they were artists and made extraordinary things. The Baltimore Museum of Art—it's amazing for a museum of this caliber to charge no admission. They have the world's largest Matisse collection, and that's counting a little country called France. The Pinball Museum really is a hoot, because you get to play. In 2014, it'll be the bicentennial of Francis Scott Key's penning of "The Star Spangled Banner" at Fort McHenry. It's just amazing how well-preserved the fort is and how wonderful it is. And I happen to love the American Museum of Dentistry. It's crazy. Who would have thought?

In some ways, the recession has helped tourists.

Airlines cut back on flights. The result is that hotels in Mexico, the Caribbean, and other destinations that rely on American business are offering deep discounts. I'd recommend to any traveler a subscription to a newsletter like cheapcaribbean.com. 

Ed Wetschler '68

New York City

Executive Editor, Tripatini.com
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Most offbeat travel experience:

"In 1973, I went to Mykonos and I ran into an acquaintance—a bumbling guy who never seemed to have a date. He'd built a bamboo hut on a beach and he was spending the summer there with two stunning young women. Who knew?"

