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A world of inspiration: Pay It Forward

This edition of 'A World of Inspiration' is brought to you by Alex Berger who hails from Arizona. This story is set in Croatia and is about the simple kindnesses that one never forgets.

Pay It Forward

3:00AM. The evening before, I'd made an important decision. After a brief period of indecision I decided to follow the advice the owners of Fulir Hostel in Zagreb Croatia had given me. With an animated charm that shared their love for their country they insisted I pause at Plitvička jezera on my way south from the Croatian capital of Zagreb. I'd resisted, having already purchased my bus ticket, but after an hour of drinking and conversing I learned that Plitvička jezera – the waterfalls were along the bus route to Split, which made it simple. I'd ride the bus to the falls, leave my bag in the luggage room, explore and then continue my trip to Split.



At 8:00AM that same morning morning I dumped myself out of bed, joined a group of 6 or 7 others who were also heading to the falls and raced across the city. We caught our bus and before long were wandering through one of the world's wonders. The waterfalls were incredible – but that is a story for another day. I finished my exploration, eventually caught the 5:00PM bus and nervously watched the countryside drift by as dark settled in. I'd made my hostel reservation at Split Hostel for 7PM. I was going to be late. Even worse, the website said that the hostel's reception closed at 8PM.

Tired, hungry and anxious I arrived in Split. The city of Split itself is fairly large, much larger in fact than I expected. The old town however is tiny and significantly smaller than I expected.

The good news was the bus station was located right by the ferry station/port which is immediately next to the old city. In typical form I was riding my the seat of my pants. No guide book, no map, no directions and

no Croatian dictionary. Heart racing I quickly found an over-priced internet cafe, paid for 10 minutes, printed a blurry map off their website and set off to find the hostel at a near run (it was already 8:40).

Split is a fascinating city, it's also incredibly confusing with a warren of ancient, winding alleyways, dead end streets and small courtyards. Despite a decent sense of direction I quickly became lost.

Not expecting much I asked a local who happened to be walking by where I was, and if he'd heard of Split Hostel. Much to my astonishment he dropped what he was doing and insisted on helping me find the place. With a hearty handshake and huge smile he shared with me that he recently started English lessons and was eager to gain a little experience talking to me. He wasn't sure where the hostel was, but together we wandered around the heart of the old town.

Equally confused he eventually flagged down another local who joined up and also set to helping locate the hostel. The newcomer split off after taking us to another square and seeing things were in hand. This left the original local and I trying to find the small alley hidden behind a magazine stand that held the hostel.



About Keith Jenkins



I'm Keith Jenkins. In July 2008, I left my ten-year banking career to travel around the world. I've not looked back since.

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Relieved to be there and to have met such incredibly warm and friendly people, I said my thanks and wandered up the stairs to the hostel. Luckily the place was still open. The whole experience left me profoundly touched. It reminded me how powerful simple, benevolent actions can be. To this day whenever I see someone with a confused look on their face I remember my Croatian guides and step forward, eager to volunteer my help – be it for 5 seconds or 15 minutes.

I have them to thank for reminding me to pay it forward.

About this week's guest writer

Alex Berger is passionate about fly-fishing, video games, web and software development, and ballroom dancing. A recent graduate of the University of Arizona, Alex founded FusionVirtual.com and spends his time researching the relationship between video games and ballroom dancing with business models and tools. In between, he pursues his other passion: traveling, and writing about it on his blog, [Virtual Wayfarer](#).



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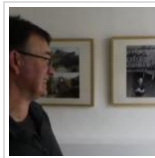
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Andrew Meyers

05/09/2009 1:44 am

Very inspiring article Alex. Whether or not Karma exists or not, personally I get huge amounts of gratification from helping others. It makes me feel like a better person and it also makes me feel good reading stories like this knowing that there are others like me out there. Thanks for sharing this story with us Alex!



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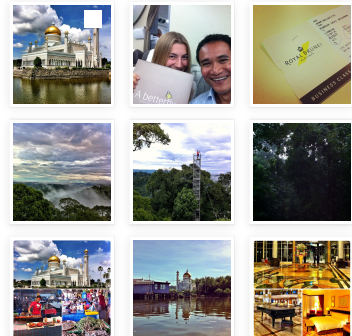
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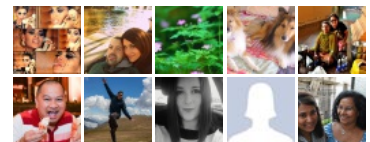
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#	
 traveldesigned 05/09/2009 12:34 am #	<p>What a beautiful post. It reaffirms what I truly believe: There is more good in life than evil. We must seek and be more aware of the good, strive to be more good and support one another throughout this journey called life.</p>
 velvet 20/07/2009 5:49 pm #	<p>Hi Rebecca, Thank you for your comment! Cheers, Keith</p>
 Travel-Writers-Exchange.com 20/07/2009 5:19 pm #	<p>Great post. It just goes to show that there is still kindness in the world if you are open to it. I had a similar experience in Edinburgh, Scotland. Grant it, I've been to the UK 3 times, but this was my first time on my own and staying in a hostel. People gave me directions, and I found my hostel in no time. Everyone was really friendly and didn't mind helping me out.</p> <p>I do my best to help people out whenever I can. I live in the Phoenix, AZ area and the state is spread out; you need a car to travel to places. I usually end up helping locals out and they've been in the state longer than me 😊</p>



 Karen Bryan 17/07/2009 4:26 pm #	<p>I was in Croatia twice in April 2009, in Zadar and then Istria. The locals are really friendly and helpful and you don't get the impression that they are trying to rip you off with inflated prices. One of my travelling companions didn't have change for the ferry row boat in Zadar and the ferryman just said not to worry about it. She felt bad as she was the only passenger so returned later to pay him.</p>
 velvet 17/07/2009 4:30 pm #	<p>Hi Karen, Thank you for your comment. I really should make a trip out there. I've heard so many great things about Croatia.</p> <p>Cheers, Keith</p>
 velvet 17/07/2009 12:42 pm #	<p>Thanks Alex for sharing this wonderful story! You're a star!</p> <p>Cheers, Keith</p>
 Alex Berger 17/07/2009 9:22 am	<p>Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to participate in this fantastic series and share this story.</p> <p>Gloria – definitely dive into Croatia, it is an oft' overlooked jewel.</p>

#	
 <p>velvet 16/07/2009 8:13 pm #</p>	<p>Thanks for your comment Gloria. We have that in common: I've never been to Croatia but would love to go! It's definitely closer for you!</p> <p>Best regards, Keith</p>
 <p>Gloria 16/07/2009 8:04 pm #</p>	<p>Another great post! I have always want to visit Croatia: one more good reason to go!</p> <p>Gloria</p>

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