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Welcome to the second in our ongoing series of interviews with our selected group of professional travel bloggers. This month we are featuring **Alex Berger**, who says this about his lifestyle: "Travel captivated me at an early age but it took me a long time to truly become comfortable travelling on my own. So far it has played a huge role in my life and shaped who I am today."

Alex has a masters in Communication and Cognition from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, and is also a business professional and graduate from Arizona State University. He regards himself as an entrepreneur with extremely diverse interests, and enjoys lecturing and presenting to audiences of all sizes. You can read more about his adventures [here](http://virtualwayfarer.com/) (<http://virtualwayfarer.com/>) on his blog.

Beach bum, culture vulture or adrenalin junkie?

I absolutely love spending time on the ocean and try not to get too far from it, but I'm definitely not a go and sit in the sand for a week type of guy. If there's snorkeling to be done, fishing, and the like...then count me in. If it's just a beer, book, and beach volleyball I'll join for a day or two...max. Culture vulture? hah, I love it. My preferred way to explore a city is by wandering, mostly lost, while randomly stumbling onto fun events, great hole-in-the walls for good food, and the odd museum. Adrenaline junkie? At first I'd say no, but given the photos of me swimming with sharks, or with my feet hanging off the side of a 1,900 foot drop or squeezing through skin tight underground caves...I suppose I've been known to give it a go from time to time. I know I was supposed to choose just one but...well...travel is a rich

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by
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Indian Ocean

12/3/13 3:06 PM



Swimming with sharks

Best accommodation?

A good hostel, at a ridiculously cheap price, filled with amazing people in a fantastic location. The inherent social nature of hostels and the wonderful social side of the experience has always drawn me to them even when there were hotels available for the same price.

What is your best travel experience and why?

When I was 11 my parents pulled my 8 year old brother and I out of school. We rented the house, left the dog with my aunt, and fit our lives into our backpacks. Then...we set off for Europe for an 11 month tour that took us from the windmills and canals of Amsterdam to the ancient Phoenician fortifications in Crete. It was the gift of a life time and laid the foundation for all of my future travels.



Cinque Terra on the Italian Riviera

What is your worst travel experience and why?

I don't know. Honestly, I can't be bothered to focus on them...and in truth most of the worst

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Nature

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<http://www.tropicalsky.co.uk>

Is there anywhere in the world that you prefer not to travel to and if so why?

In general anywhere where it is fairly likely I get shot. Also, I've tried to avoid areas where there is intense human suffering. For a long time Africa was also on the bottom of my list...and yet, I'm leaving for a month on the continent in 2 days and have become incredibly excited about the opportunity. So, there you have it! I'll find my way to Africa before making it over to Asia which was much higher on the "list".

What is the most moving/emotional/spiritual experience you have had whilst travelling?

The joy of travel as a whole shapes me. It is more than just one set experience. It is the combination of magical moments that highlight just how spectacular, complex, and varied this world is. There are times where the people you meet rock you to your core. Other times it's just a feeling of pure bliss. One such moment was on a tiny island in Belize. I remember laying on my back in the sand next to the embers of a campfire. As I looked up at the stars, which seemed more vibrant and closer to me than I had ever seen before, a meteor shower started. The universe is an awe inspiring place and I truly felt lost in time for a while.



San Marino

Which 3 songs would you have as the soundtrack to your travels?

I know it sounds a bit odd, but #1 would likely be the [Shire from the Lord of the Rings soundtrack](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK6KK7NhdQU) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cK6KK7NhdQU). Perhaps it's the association between it and Tolkien's poetry about the nature of travel and adventure. #2 is Today by John Denver. For #3 it's hard. Honestly so many of John Denver's songs resonate with me (eg: [Rocky Mountain High](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwARpaKHx_w) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwARpaKHx_w) as I come from Colorado originally and it embodies a fun mixture of home and a sense of adventure and exploration) but for the sake of a third artist, I'm going to be a bit unoriginal and go with Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole.

What is your 'dream trip'?

For a specific destination? Right now I'm salivating over a trip to Antarctica. For an actual trip? I'd love to do a year-long round-the-world adventure focusing on Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America.

If you could travel through time, when and where would you go and why?

3 of 7 Heading back in time, I'd go to Athens at the peak of the Greek Civilization. So long, that is, I was only visiting. Heading into the future, I'd aim for about 80 years from now in the hope

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Travel Blogging - Finding amazing new developments in space travel and lunar/martian settlements that were still caught up in the excitement of their exploratory phase.

If you could travel with any celebrity or historical figure who would it be and where would you want to go?

George Clooney seems to have a passion for travel, be incredibly well educated, love history and have a strong interest in current events. I suppose this is the question where I should pick a drop-dead gorgeous supermodel but...well, I'm sure with George around there would be plenty of those anyhow and the travel experience itself would be far more enjoyable. Besides, I'm sure he has some amazing drinking stories.

Recommended holiday reading?

When I travel I geek out. I prefer light reading that I can pick up or put away at the drop of a hate. So, for me, I usually opt for High Fantasy. In light of the focus it has been getting on account of HBO's rendition, I'll suggest Game of Thrones. But if you find you like that sort of thing and/or want something a bit less bleak, the Sword of Truth series is delightful.



Mount Fitz Roy, Patagonia Argentina

What is your travel motto/mantra?

"Just say yes!" – or, in slightly longer form, when presented with opportunities to do something outside your comfort zone that are relatively safe, don't make excuses and pass. Say yes and go for it. This is surprisingly much harder than it sounds, especially when you've got a schedule to keep!

Name one thing that scares you.

Snakes. Indiana Jones hated them with good reason. As a kid I loved them. Then a few of them decided to see how I tasted. Now...we're at war. I'm winning.

Name one thing that inspires you.

The open road.

What are your best and worst food experiences whilst travelling?

Best is impossible to say, so I'll go with exotic. When I was sitting on the back of a boat while sailing along the barrier reef in Belize the captain pulled a long, clear, spaghetti-like tube out of the conch he had just caught and was cleaning. He slurped one down. Then handed me the next one. Later, I came to realize that it was actually the male Conch's reproductive organ. It did NOT taste like chicken...but it did taste decent.

Worst? I made the mistake of thinking the local Rum I had already drank would make me invincible. So, I decided to satiate my (not so) late night hunger by eating a bread pudding. By itself, not that big of an issue. Unfortunately this was a bread pudding purchased from a kid with a 5 gallon bucket, wrapped in tinfoil at 8PM at a small beach bar in the middle of nowhere. You can guess how I spent the next 24 hours.



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Caving in Budapest

Greatest travel luxury?

Socks and underwear. I pride myself on packing light and having a backpack that works as carry-on luggage. But, one area I tend to splurge on is extra pairs of underwear and socks. It means I have to do laundry less often and am far less likely to travel bathed in my own, shall we call it... cologne?

What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I would love to work at a high tech think tank. Particularly one focusing on reforming the way we engage in distance learning and web-based university coursework. That, or one focusing on political/international/economic/social policy.

If you could travel with another travel blogger, who would you pick?

My little brother. He blogs on <http://davidberger.net> (<http://davidberger.net>) about his experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer in rural Zambia right now. We travel well together and realistically, who better than your kid brother to get into trouble with?

As a side question and one that we will use as a final thought for the blog post:

What do you think makes a travel blog exceptional?

The things that make a travel blog exceptional, aren't exactly the ones that build audience. A travel blog should tell a compelling story, one that is told from the heart and which resonates with an emotional response. Beyond that though, it should showcase the places and things being discussed with high quality photos and where possible rich video content. An exceptional blog is one that delves deep into moments and issues that matter and isn't confined to a 300-500 word limit. It is a blog that uses a mixture of brutally simple, and eloquently complex language to convey the essence of travel. In short, a message that comes from the heart.



If you would like to know more about Alex, you can follow him on [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/AlexBerger) (<http://www.twitter.com/AlexBerger>) or like his [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VirtualWayfarer) (<https://www.facebook.com/VirtualWayfarer>) page.

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