

# The Progressive Orthodontist

... CHANGE IS GOOD!



*Special Travel Edition*

Q2 2019

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The reason I started The Progressive Orthodontist all those years ago was that no one in the industry would publish an article that didn't have teeth pictures or show something clinical (save Dental Economics who did touch on business occasionally). My how things have changed. This is the tenth year The Progressive Orthodontist Magazine has pushed the envelope, asked the hard questions, explored where the profession is and, more importantly, discussed where we

should be headed. Ten years is a good run but all good things come to an end.

This is it!

This is the last issue of The Progressive Orthodontist Magazine and it's a special travel edition as well. As we put this project to bed and travel off into the sunset we hope you enjoy this final edition. We also hope you take your family and go! ¡Adiós!

Change is good...

-Ben Burris



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The **Progressive** Orthodontist magazine and study group are your educational resources for new trends, progressive insights and best practices for building a successful orthodontic practice in 2019 and beyond.

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# CONTRIBUTORS

## BERKELEY BURRIS



Berkeley is 9 years old, her favorite activities to do are art and traveling. When she grows up she wants to be a famous artist in Paris. She has always wanted to travel around the world, and also wants to pass down the tradition to her children. Berkeley has been doing art since she was just three! Her favorite place in the whole world is Paris, her favorite part about Paris are the macaroons. Berkeley hopes her creative mind will someday lead to greatness.

## WILLIAM BURRIS



William Burris is an 11 year-old boy that lives in Windermere FL. William is in the fifth grade and has a sister that is in the fourth grade. William likes to travel, fish, and go to his family's farm. The reason he likes to travel is because he likes to explore new areas. The reason he likes to fish is because he likes to see all the different kinds of fish he brings in. The reason he likes to go to his family's farm is because his family's farm is his favorite place that he's ever been to. Williams favorite food is lasagna. When William grows up he wants to be an orthodontist like his dad because orthodontists have a lot of free time and make a lot of money.



CHANGE IS GOOD!

## DR. COURTNEY DUNN



Dr. Courtney Dunn graduated from the University of Michigan Dental and Orthodontic programs in 2001 and 2004. She received the Milo Hellman award for her research and has presented at many local and national meetings. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics, holds leadership positions in the Arizona Dental Association and is past president of the Arizona State Orthodontic Association. Dr. Dunn is in private practice with her husband, Matt, in Phoenix, AZ. She spends most of her free time being a proud swim mom.

## DR. DANIELA LOEBL

Dr. Daniela Loebel is a second-year orthodontic resident at the University of Colorado. She received her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Michigan in 2012 and completed her formal dental training at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry in 2016. She is originally from Miami, Florida and enjoys going to the beach, traveling to new countries with her husband Steven, hiking, and skiing.



## DR. DAVID MAJERONI

Dr. David Majeroni has a private practice in Alamo CA and founder of the non-profit "It takes a Village" where he provides orthodontic treatment to children with a missing or deceased parent.



## DR. DAVID WALKER

Dr. David Walker completed undergraduate, dental and orthodontic degrees at UNC-Chapel Hill. He practices in his hometown of Morehead City, NC as a partner in a group practice. He is married to his college sweetheart, Leeanne, an attorney with UNC School of Medicine. They have one daughter, Madeline, age 2.



## DR. LARRY SCARBOROUGH

Lover of people. Experienced conservationist. Photography enthusiast. Wannabe Philanthropist. Believer in the power of a smile. Dr. Scarborough attended the VCU School of Dentistry for both his dental training and orthodontic residency. Dr. Scarborough and his family live and practice in Richmond, Va. He is a dedicated husband and father and in his spare time he enjoys spending time with his wife, Emily, and their two kids, Jackson and Sophia.



## DR. PAYAM ZAMANI

Dr. Zamani grew up in Palos Verdes, CA, earned a BS in biology from UC Irvine, studied in Madrid, Spain and also worked as an elementary school teacher before entering dentistry. He obtained his DDS from USC in 2012 and his orthodontics certificate and MDS from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015. Dr. Zamani lives and works in Los Angeles, loves to travel with his new wife, Natalie, and is an avid USC Trojans football and Real Madrid sports fan.



## DR. KEITH DRESSLER

Dr. Keith Dressler is an avid entrepreneur who has over 30 years' experience as a practicing orthodontist. In 2000, Dr. Dressler co-founded OrthoBanc, LLC a cloud-based automated accounts receivable platform, that is currently serving over 4,000 healthcare providers. Dr. Dressler also co-founded Elite Physician Services, a national healthcare patient finance company, which grew to over 200 million in sales before it became the Citi Health Card in 2003.



## DR. ANDREA FONT RYTZNER

Dr. Andrea Font Rytzner grew up in Palma de Mallorca, Spain and graduated dental school in Complutense University in Madrid after an exchange year in Ludwig Maximillians University in Munich, Germany. She continued her education at Case Western Reserve University, completing her Masters and a 3-year Orthodontic Specialty Residency. She lives and practices in San Antonio, Texas. Currently a director in the Texas Association of Orthodontists and a Board-Certified Orthodontist, music, history and travelling are her other greatest passions.



## NICK DUNCAN

Nick Duncan holds degrees in accounting and finance. After starting his career as a CPA in Boston, he returned to his native Australia to form The Invisible Orthodontist (TIO) with his father Dr. Grant Duncan. Over the past 7 years, TIO has built an international network of more than 100 doctors and worked with them to significantly increase their Invisalign cases. Through his leadership at TIO, Nick has developed a diverse set of skills encompassing marketing, technology and business development.



# Are you ready to be *Fully Engaged?*



There are tons of orthodontic study groups out there and I firmly believe that this is an excellent development for individual doctors and for orthodontics. The increased connectivity among orthodontists is revolutionizing our specialty and helping us cope with the increasing pace of change. Some of these groups are older, some are bigger and many are awesome but none are comparable to ProOrtho FE. I'm not being ugly, it's just a fact. I have been or am part of several awesome groups and if you can't get into ProOrtho FE there are several I'm happy to recommend. That being said, if you want to be at the epicenter of modern orthodontics, you owe it to yourself to join FE. You've heard the names of many of our members but there are quite a few bad-ass orthodontists with killer results and monster practices that you won't get access to unless you're inside the circle of trust!

Becoming an FE member is not easy or cheap but nothing worthwhile ever is. You can request more information about joining Fully Engaged at [info@theproortho.com](mailto:info@theproortho.com) or [theproortho.com](http://theproortho.com). FE membership is \$15,000 a year, please know this before you spend time applying to join us.

-Ben



# William Burris' Chinese Adventure

## DAY 1

We woke up and packed up our bags to go to China. At the airport we checked in, went through security and headed to the airport club to wait on our flight. We always show up early because if anything happens on the way to the airport we won't miss our flight. The first flight was from Orlando to Washington, DC. It was easy and only two hours. Our second flight was 15 hours from Washington DC to Beijing, China. My sister and I really liked the second flight because they had a lot of movies, lay down chairs and they fed us good food.



The people who worked on the plane didn't speak English very well but they took good care of us. They spoke Chinese because the flight we took was with Air China but they spoke English well enough to understand and take care of us.

## DAY 2

When we arrived in Beijing, we headed to immigration. When we arrived at the customs line we figured out we needed to use a machine to record our fingerprints and print a pass as well as fill out paperwork for everyone in the family. I went through customs with my dad,

Berkeley went with my mom and Nana was on her own. The customs person was serious but nice and he waived us through after taking our photograph. We collected our luggage and exited the airport through the "nothing to declare" line. They did an x-ray on all our bags and then we went outside the terminal. Our guide was there waiting for us holding a sign with our last name on it. Her name is Coco and she is really nice. She speaks English and Chinese very well. She is very smart. We went with Coco and Mr. Ju to the van and headed to the hotel which was about an hour away. Beijing has about 25 million people so traffic can be very tough but it was not bad that night. At the hotel we saw lots of pictures of pigs, statues of pigs, food shaped like pigs and realized it was The Year of the Pig in the Chinese calendar.



The Chinese New Year was only a couple weeks ago so they still had all the decorations up like red lanterns and other things to celebrate the new year. We were very tired so when we checked into the hotel we took a shower, brushed our teeth and went to bed!

## DAY 3

We woke up at 5:30 am because we were jet-lagged. Beijing is 12 hours ahead of Orlando. It was 13 hours ahead before daylight savings time! We had breakfast which was delicious and we tried several new things like steamed buns, dumplings and egg rolls. The buns were delicious and felt very nice when you squished them in your fingers. We kept playing with our food! Coco and Mr. Ju picked us up at the reception. We drove about 45 minutes to the AI Camp. Our guide and driver couldn't figure out how to get into the park area so we drove around a while and one time we were trapped behind a gate because the attendant went to the toilet and just left this sign.



We finally parked at a hotel and walked about a mile to the building where the AI camp was located. The park was very large but there was almost no one there. At the AI camp we saw many robotics like dancing robots, art bots, bots with grapple arms where you tried to pick up toys and put them in a box, battle bots that each had their own balloon and you tried to pop the other balloons, spider bots and my favorite, mind controlled cars.

You had to concentrate very hard to make the cars go fast and if you lost concentration the car stopped.



We also played with a remote control car that climbed mountains, crossed bridges and lots of other things. We played laser tag and it was me and my mom against my sister and my dad. After laser tag we got to drive some Chinese battle bots. They were very fun and looked really cool. The last thing we did at the AI center was to ride some Chinese hoverboards. The Chinese hoverboards were different than the ones we know because you controlled them with your knees instead of just your feet. We rode these all the way back to the car!

After the AI center we went to a Hutong. A Hutong is a neighborhood where people live in traditional houses. When we first arrived we were waiting on a rickshaw and some Chinese ladies from the country side saw my sister's blonde hair and started taking pictures of her. It was funny to watch. We rode the rickshaw into the Hutong. Only two people fit in each rickshaw so I rode with my Nana, my sister rode with my dad and my mom rode with Coco. We could not drive a car there because the streets were too narrow and the houses too close together.



We visited a house where a family had a restaurant and had a great meal of traditional Chinese foods. I really liked the dumplings. After lunch we rode the rickshaws back to the van but we took a different way. We rode by a large lake. It was windy that day so the lake was very choppy. It was fun to see all the people as we rode by.

Next we took the van to 798 which is an art district. It used to be a bunch of factories but the government closed the factories down to help cut down on pollution and the artists moved in and created their own shops. It wasn't all that interesting but my sister liked the fans. On our way back to the van we saw a miniature tornado made of dust and leaves. I called it a "dustnato". It was cool to see it but we were glad it didn't hit us!

From 798 we drove about an hour to a place called "the silk market". It used to be outside in stalls but now it is in a 5 story building. There are hundreds of shops that sell all kinds of things. At the silk market you never buy what they are selling at the prices they ask because their prices

are crazy high. Instead you negotiate. My father has been coming to the silk market for over 20 years and he has gotten very good at the Chinese way of negotiating. They have hand signals for numbers and my dad knows these so it makes the sellers aware that my dad knows what he is doing. It is funny to watch the negotiations. You walk down the hall and everyone tries to get you to come into their shop and you ask them how much and they give you crazy prices so you keep walking. Eventually we went into some shops and talked about prices in detail. My dad says you have to find out how much things really cost by seeing if they will let you walk away. If they let you walk away you are under the minimum price. If they agree too quickly to your offer, then you paid way too much. My mom and dad wanted to buy gifts for their employees so we spent some time on this. We ended up making a deal. I learned a lot about negotiation from watching. My dad likes to say, "life is all about negotiation" and he encourages me and my sister to negotiate on everything. Except when he gets tired of negotiating with us and says "stop negotiating"! and we all laugh. I think it is because I'm getting good at negotiation!

We were very tired and wanted to go to the hotel but my dad said no way. He said that if you want to get over jet lag then you need to stay up until at least 7:00. So we went to have Peking duck for dinner. The Peking duck was delicious.



They had many other foods as well and we had a nice dinner. My sister fell asleep in my dad's lap so we went back to the van, drove to the hotel, brushed our teeth and went to bed!

#### DAY 4

We woke up at 1:45 am and were wide awake! Jet lag is tough because we are 12 hours ahead of our home time zone. The good news is that Daylight Savings Time is no big deal when you are used to travel and dealing with jet lag! We had fun talking as a family, did some homework, worked on our travel record and eventually went back to bed about 4 am. We woke up at 6 am and went to breakfast. We sure eat a lot on vacation. Mostly because the food is so good! Now we are packing up and getting ready to go to Tiananmen square, the Forbidden City and the Great Wall of China. We will move to a new hotel tonight.

We met our guide and driver and checked out of our hotel. Today we had a different guide her name was Sara. We drove about an hour and got out at Tiananmen square. The guide explained that there is a people's representative meeting and we could not go on the square itself but we got to see the monuments (the big one in the middle of the square is a monument to fallen soldiers) and Chairman Mao's tomb and the Great Hall of the People. We walked to the entrance of the forbidden city.



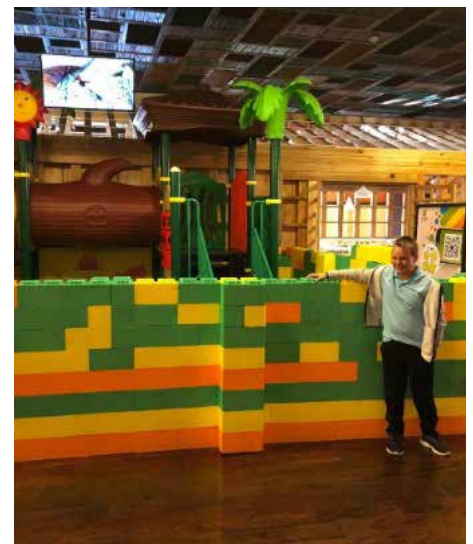


Tiananmen square is actually the square for the entrance of the Forbidden City. There were thousands of people there even though it was very cold and windy. This is a very popular spot. We saw many things in the forbidden city like the treasure hall, the imperial clocks, the imperial jewelry, and we enjoyed learning about the architecture. We learned that the city was built of wood and had burned down and been rebuilt several times over the centuries. It was originally finished in 1420. The palace buildings had yellow tiles - yellow tiles are only for the emperor and empress. No one else can use the yellow roof tiles. Also we learned that the dragon represented the emperor and the Phoenix represented the empress. The forbidden city is surrounded by a wall and a moat.



We walked all the way from one side of the city and then the driver picked us up and took us to lunch where we had Peking duck again!

After lunch we drove 3 hours to Simatai where we checked into a new hotel. When we got to the hotel we noticed a kid's play area with a huge wall of foam LEGO blocks so I decided to move some blocks around and make some new things. My dad laughed and said "No Chinese kids would dream of doing that. We will see what happens".



He has been to China many times and he knew that the staff would freak out when they saw me messing with the blocks even though that's what blocks are for. Sure enough a lady came running across the lobby waiving her hands in the air and making it clear she was not happy. My dad laughed and I helped the lady rebuild the wall and it all worked out. My dad says that's the difference between the USA and China. He loves China and has many Chinese friends and he says our ways are not right or wrong, just different and it's fun to see the difference in action. I'm not totally clear on what he means but I'm learning. Our room had a view of the Great Wall. We were supposed to go to a laser light show but we went to bed early because we were so tired. We woke up at 2 am again and had family fun talking about the day. Tomorrow we will climb the Great Wall!

DAY 5

This morning we woke up and got dressed and ready for extreme coldness. We went outside and went to breakfast at the new hotel. It was really good and my favorite thing was the noodles in chicken broth. Noodles for breakfast was a first for me!



After breakfast we met our guide in the lobby and went to the Great Wall of China. We rode a cable car most of the way up the mountain and then walked a good ways up and down and up and down to get to the wall. The Great Wall was extremely long and ran along the top of several mountains. It was kind of scary being up so high. We got some great photos and had a lot of fun.



My mom and dad were celebrating their 15 year anniversary today so we told them happy anniversary on top of the Great Wall! We walked back to the cable car, rode back down the mountain and then we went back to the hotel to get our swimsuits so we could visit the hot springs. The hot springs were in a spa and had several pools. Some of the pools were hot and some were cold and some of them were even different colors. We had a lot of fun trying out the different pools. We also had some excellent ice cream. After the hot springs we came back to the hotel

and read for an hour and then we went to lunch at a hot pot restaurant. Each person gets a metal pot with their choice of soup. The soup is boiling because there is a flame under the pot. You order several kinds of meat and vegetables and you make your own sauce from the sauce bar. You cook your own food in the pot and enjoy it. The food was very good and I only burned myself once.



From lunch we went to a kite making class. On the way we saw several different things like a man making animals out of sugar he blew into and shapes. I got a dragon and my sister got a bunny.



My sister also entered a jump rope contest and won! At the kite making class we chose our kite shaped and decorated it, made the frame and attached a string. We made butterfly kites and had fun.



We had a long fun day so we headed back to the hotel for an early bed time.

#### DAY 6

This morning we woke up and packed and got ready to go to the train station. We are going back to Beijing to the Beijing West station and it was huge. We went through security and found a place to put the bags and my dad stayed with the bags while we went to get lunch. We had Chinese KFC and Chinese McDonalds. They weren't as good to me as the American ones but they were still good. We boarded the train and took a 4 hour ride to Zhengzhou - "small town" of only 9 million people. At Zhengzhou we met our new guide Jack who took us on an hour and a half drive to our new hotel in DengFeng. We were tired so we went to bed without dinner.

#### DAY 7

Today we are going to the Shaolin Temple. We had another great breakfast and then loaded up in the van. We went to the Bank of China on the way so my dad could exchange money. Chinese money is called the Yuan or RMB. My dad says the exchange rate is about 6.7 Yuan to the dollar. He says that China keeps the value of the Yuan artificially low so that their exports are

affordable to other countries. Exports are a big part of the Chinese economy. On the way to the Shaolin temple we saw lots of kids in red uniforms practicing martial arts. Jack said that they attend a martial arts school and that Chinese people send their sons to study and go to school at these places for 3 years. He said there are a lot of martial arts schools in DengFeng.



We arrived at the Shaolin temple and waited in the courtyard for Jack to get tickets. While we were there some people asked me if I would be in a photo with them. I said no problem. Then they wanted photos with me and my sister and my family. Once we did a couple photos then lots of people wanted photos. It made them happy and we didn't mind. Jack says that Chinese people treasure having photos with people like us. They don't see blonde hair or tall people that often and they find it interesting.



We took the electric vehicle to the Pagoda Forest. The Pagoda Forest was the resting place for the most important monks and leaders of the Shaolin temple. There were more than 200 Pagodas and some were hundreds of years old.



We walked from the Pagoda forest to some temples that were very colorful and had statues of many people/gods. We walked from the bottom of the hill to the top of the hill and there were several temples along the way. The higher we went the more important the temple. In China there are three main religions Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism and all three are represented in the Shaolin temples.



Next we went to see a martial arts show. The boys who performed were very talented and did tricks with spears and swords and one threw a needle through a pane of glass to pop a balloon.



Also there was a man who did calligraphy and then people raised their hands to buy the paper he drew on. They said he was a master.



After the show we went to look at some stores and we really liked the swords. I told my dad I needed a couple of swords and he said "we will see". While we were walking around we saw signs with crazy sounding words on them. I think it comes from someone who doesn't speak English trying to translate Chinese into English.



Then we went to lunch and it was awesome. We ordered a lot of food and I especially like the noodles.

After lunch we met with the master calligrapher and he gave us a lesson. Calligraphy is hard and takes many years to learn but it was fun to try and the master was nice. He didn't speak any English but our guide helped us understand what he said.



We were supposed to do a Kung Fu lesson but I didn't feel well so my parents decided we were done for the day. We went to the hotel and went to bed.

#### DAY 8

This morning we packed our bags for the trip to the Longmen grottoes. It was about an hour drive and when we arrived we took an electric vehicle across the river to the World Heritage site. The site consisted of about 1 kilometer on the west side of the Yi River. We walked up a bunch of stairs and looked at caves with huge carvings of Buddha in them. There are about 120,000 Buddha carvings on this side of the river and more on the other side. We walked up and down and up and down and saw all the major statues.





The last one was the biggest and it was 17.4 m tall. The smallest ones were only 4 cm tall. There were lots of people at the Grottoes because it is a very famous and popular place. When we finished looking at the statues we got some ice cream and then took a boat back to the parking lot. There were some shops there so we looked at what they had. My dad let us buy two sticks that were actually knives that stuck together and we also got two fidget

spinners. My mom and nana bought some scarves. We had lunch and then we went to the train station and took an hour ride to Xi'an. We went to the hotel and went to sleep!

**DAY 9**

This morning we got up early and had breakfast and then we went to see the Terra Cotta Warriors. On the way we stopped at a factory that makes modern versions of Terra Cotta warriors from very small to very large. We got to put clay in molds and make our own warriors. It was fun.



My mom and dad bought a piece of furniture for my sister and it will take three months to get to our house by ship! After the factory we went to see the real warriors. The Terra Cotta warriors were made to protect the emperor so he didn't have to kill his soldiers and bury them with him. I bet his soldiers were happy about that. There are 3 pits with warriors and they were discovered by a farmer trying to dig a well. The well barely hit the first pit and if he had dug the well only a few feet away he would not have found the pit. The farmer reported the find to the government and the government

took the land from the farmer and all his neighbors. The other farmers were mad at the farmer for reporting the find but eventually they were happy because of all the tourists and jobs the discovery brought to the area. The farmers who discovered the Terra Cotta Warriors are very famous now. There are 8000 terra cotta warriors and all of them but one were broken because the wood ceiling rotted and fell in and the weight of the dirt above crushed the clay soldiers.



The scientists put the pieces back together like a giant jigsaw puzzle with no directions or picture to look at. We looked at all three pits and also saw the weapons found and two bronze chariots. It's hard to imagine they are 1500 years old.



We also learned that the warriors were brightly colored with paint when they were made and that opening the pit allowed the air to destroy the paint. The guide said that every face of every soldier is unique so no two are the same.

Next we went to lunch but on the way my sister and I got some crazy reversible paper hats that we really like.



Next we got in the car and drove to the museum. The museum was huge and filled with items that were over 3500 years old. It was interesting but it was super crowded and we already had a long day so we didn't stay too long. We went back to the hotel and rested for a while and then we took a ride to visit a family who taught us how to make dumplings. My sister and I love dumplings and it was so much fun to make them and then eat them. The family was a mom and dad and an 8 year old boy who's western name was Nicholas. We had fun talking to Nicholas. He speaks some English, more than we speak Chinese, and he likes to swim and draw just like me and my sister do. Berkeley drew a tiger for Nicholas because he said that was his favorite animal. It was really good and the family asked her to sign it.





I think I need to be more thankful for how good my family and I have it. This Chinese family was very happy and they all lived in a tiny apartment and the grandma lived there too. Plus the dad works some kind of construction and goes away for two months at a time. We went back to the hotel and went to bed.

#### DAY 10

This morning we went to the Xi'an city wall. It is one of the only city walls still standing and it goes for 14 km and circles the city. Most city walls were torn down in the 1950s to make room for progress and because Chairman Mao thought that the walls represented corrupt rulers but the people in Xi'an said no because they liked the wall. The guide said that the wall protected them when the Japanese bombed Xi'an because the wall is solid and the people made caves in the wall to hide in during the bombing so they wouldn't let anyone tear it down. The wall is very large and wide and it has a mote that surrounds the outside. We went up to one of the original main gates. There were originally 4 gates – North, South, East and West – but now there are 18 to allow for car traffic. The main gates had two gates one behind the other with archery towers. Every 120 meters all the way around the wall there are smaller archery towers. The guide said this distance is because the arrows of the day could fly up to 60 meters. We rode bicycles on the wall. My mom and Nana rode one together and my Dad and Berkeley rode together but I got to ride by myself. We went down the wall in one direction for a while then turned around and came back. When we got back I asked my mom if I could ride in the other direction for a while and she said yes so "I went the extra mile"!



From the city wall we went to what they call the Muslim Quarter. This was a series of streets where they sold all kinds of food and other stuff. It was really neat and fun to watch people making things. We got a fancy cotton candy and watched the man make it then we got some ice cream that a man made by pouring the cream on a very cold plate then scraping it up into rolls. Then we tried some grilled octopus and squid. It was good but it was very spicy so I got some pomegranate juice which was delicious. We saw people hammering on candy and pulling taffy and cutting fruit. We bought some of the fruit and it was delicious. We also tried fried crabs on a stick and they were tasty. The ladies went into a jewelry store so my dad had me try some little red fruit on a stick and they were sour but very good.





After the streets with the food in them we walked through some alleys where they had stalls selling all kinds of things. My sister and I got fidget spinners and my mom and sister got some hair pins and we walked back to the car to head to the airport. You had to be careful because there were men on motorbikes that kept riding through the narrow alleys. The motorbikes were electric so you couldn't hear them coming so you had to pay attention.

The airport was huge and it was easy to get to the gate for our plane. We caught a plane to a hub and that took two hours. Then we took another plane to Zhangjiajie. We met the new local guide and driver at the Zhangjiajie airport and drove about an hour to Wulingyuan where our hotel is. It was after 10 pm so we were tired and went to bed.

#### DAY 11

Today we woke up and got ready to go to the place where the movie Avatar was filmed. It is a national park and very popular so it is always very crowded.

At the hotel, we went to breakfast and met our guide then went to the mountains.

To get to the top of the mountains we had to take a 20-minute bus ride to the world's largest elevator. While we were trying to get to the top we took a lot of photos because the landscape is beautiful. Next, we had to walk for an hour and fifteen minutes, then take another bus ride but this one was two minutes.

When we got near the top we took a rest at a local market where my sister got some watermelon while I got some pineapple. After we stopped at the market we climbed even higher and walked for another hour. Our guide took us some ways that other people did not know so we got the place all to ourselves and lots of the best views.

On the path, there were some monkeys they were very cute and got close to us because they were being fed by other people. I knew better than to touch or feed wild animals but they were fun to watch. Once we made it to the top



we were quite hungry so we took a bus ride that was 40 minutes. The road was very twisty and had a lot of sharp turns. When we got there, we had lunch – at McDonalds! We don't often eat at McDonalds but it was different and interesting and fun so we did. After lunch, we all were very tired so we decided to head back down. We took the cable car down and it took a long time. Coming down the scenery was the most amazing thing ever and my dad took many photos. Once we got down we took the bus back to the van this experience was very enjoyable.



#### DAY 12

Today we went outside after breakfast and was much hotter than yesterday so my parents decided that we were not going to do our original tour. Instead we were going to go walking in the city center and shopping at the local's stores. The first place we went to was near the mountain we were at yesterday. My mom first looked at jewelry then we looked at the local's scarves. My mom bought more scarves so that we would have enough for friends. After that we went to another street where there were many shops and it had a large creek which had many waterfalls. My sister and I liked throwing things down the waterfalls. It also had this large target that you had to throw knives at it was very fun.

Next, we bought some pastries and went to a food market where we saw many fruits and vegetables. After that we bought my sister some really nice earrings. Then we went to the supermarket to see the difference to what we are used to at home. At the supermarket, there were toads, fish, and turtles. There were also many foods that I have never heard of. Then we went to the hotel and ate our pastries for lunch. They were the most delicious pastries that I have ever tasted until 5 o'clock. At 5 o'clock our guide picked us up for dinner and took us to a hot pot. After dinner, we went home and went to bed.



DAY 13

Today after breakfast we met our guide in the lobby, and he took us to this place where they make art out of different colored sandstone dust. The teacher made it look easy but it was not! I'm sure I could get much better with practice but I did well for my first time. I even did better than my sister who is kind of a pro artist!



After the art lesson we went to a cultural park where we climbed up to look at a palace that was built into the side of the mountain. It was made to look like the leader of the local minority group had before they became part of China. It was interesting but not the best thing we did.

Next we went back into the national park to see Tienman Mountain. This is the most famous mountain in this area and we took a cable car ride for 35 minutes to get to the top. It was very foggy but it was beautiful. At the top of the mountain we walked for about 15 minutes to get to a glass walkway that was on the side of the mountain. It was so foggy that you couldn't see 10 feet in front of you. I called this "pitch white". It was creepy but lots of fun. After the glass walkway we took about 22 escalators down to the famous part of Tienman Mountain that has a giant hole in it. We couldn't see much due to the fog but it was interesting. We took a bus ride for about 30 minutes on a very windy road. The drivers were very skilled and went down the road very fast even though it was incredibly curvy.

After the mountain visit we had lunch at a place where we picked out our own fish and they cooked it at the table. After that we went to the airport to take a plane ride to Shanghai. We had several hours to wait on the plane so we took it easy and caught up on our travel journal. We flew to Shanghai, met our new driver and learned that not all Chinese drivers are as good as the ones we have already had. This driver was very bad! We don't think he knew how to drive and it was so funny that we all laughed but my dad told the guide we needed a new driver. She agreed.





DAY 14

We didn't get to bed until 1 am! In the morning we met the guide and the new driver for a trip to the local walking street. There were tons of people selling things and walking around. It was very interesting. It was not as good as the Muslim Quarter in Xi'an but it was fun. We went to the local pearl market where my mom and nana and sister picked out a lot of jewelry and then me and my dad were called in by the ladies to do the negotiation. I'm getting good at negotiation and when the lady selling the jewelry said a price, I told my dad the price we should pay. Turns out I was right! We did this two different times. My mom would pick out jewelry and my dad and I would negotiate. It was good practice for life my dad told me. I also picked out some bracelets for myself and got them for a good price.

After the market we went to a Chinese family's house to learn to make different dumplings. It took some practice but I was very good at it by the end. The dumplings were fun to make and delicious to eat. After lunch we went to the hotel to relax for a while and then we went to dinner on The Bund at a restaurant called Mr. and Mrs. Bund. The restaurant was a fancy French place but the best part of the restaurant was the deck that had a great view of The Bund. The Bund is the famous Riverwalk in Shanghai and you can see all the boats and famous buildings. My sister and I had fun playing on the deck and then we had an excellent meal! On the way home we were amazed to see all the people on the street. It was incredible and busier than any place we had been before.



DAY 15

Today we went to a giant Chinese arcade. They had lots of video games as well as the games with the claw where you try to pick up a prize. I usually win at the claw games but I didn't win any this time and it made me unhappy.



My dad explained that the claw games are set by the owners to only allow so many wins per try. It is not a skill game he told me so it made me feel better. He also told me that playing these games is like going to the movies where you pay for being entertained and that you are better off to go to Target and buy toys if that is what you want because you get way more for your money doing that. I still like to play video games and even the claw games though!

After the arcade we went back to the walking street and to the pearl market because my mom wanted to get some more gifts for friends and family. I got a new watch because the one I got yesterday broke.



On the way out of the market we got some pig pastries and some roller skates that attach to your shoes.

Next we headed to the Shanghai airport where we caught a plane for Beijing. In Beijing we caught a flight to New York. The flight was 12 hours but it was fun because we got to sit in the front with the lay down seats and our own video screens. We landed in New York at midnight, went through customs and then went to a nearby hotel.

#### DAY 16

We slept for a few hours and then we got on the hotel shuttle at 4:30 am to go to the airport for our flight to Orlando. It was easy and the flight was only 2 and a half hours. In Orlando we got our bags, got in the car and went to pick up my Nana's dog Max. Max was so excited to see us and it looks like he is twice as big as he was when we left. He came to see me first when he saw us and this made me very happy.

#### DAY 17

It's 3 am and we are wide awake so we took a shower and got ready for school and made breakfast. My parents are up too. Jet lag is so weird. My dad says it will get better in a day or two. 🎮



# Berkeley Burris' Chinese Adventure

## DAY 1

We woke up on Saturday morning and we drove to the Orlando airport to get on our plane heading to Washington, DC. In Washington, DC when we got off the plane my dad got me a pretzel and it was the best pretzel on earth. Next we walked to the airport train and took it to the A concourse where we looked at the map to find a lounge club so we could wait the 4 hours for our next flight to Beijing, China. The map was very difficult to understand but eventually my brother figured it out and we walked to the Turkish Airlines lounge. When we walked in they had a bowl of Turkish Delight in all sorts of colors. My brother and my Nana tried them all – William said they weren't the best but Nana loved the Turkish Delight

and went back to get more several times. We spent 4 hours waiting for the next plane – we arrived early in DC to make sure we didn't miss our flight to Beijing.

On the plane we took some family photos.

William and I were in seats next to each other so we talked about jokes and watched movies for the entire 15 hour flight. I personally watched 10 different movies! The people on the flight didn't speak English very well because we were flying on Air China but they took very good care of us. We ate two meals and had some snacks as well. I drank a lot of milk and orange juice. The people thought it was strange that I wanted "cold milk" instead of warm milk.

## DAY 2

We landed in Beijing and we walked to the customs checkpoint. Only when we got there we realized we had to scan our finger prints on a machine and fill out paperwork. This took a while but we got it done and then stood in line for the customs officers to check our passports and paperwork. I went with mom, William went with dad and Nana went by herself. The customs officers were very serious but nice and after looking at our passports they told us to go ahead. We collected our luggage and went through the "nothing to declare" line where they x-rayed our bags but let us through with no problems. Our guide was holding the "Burris" sign so we knew it was her. Her name is Coco and she was very nice. She speaks both Chinese and English very well. We followed Coco to the van and drove from the Beijing Airport to the hotel. The hotel was an hour away in the middle of Beijing and is called Shangri-La. It sounded like a Chinese version of our neighborhood's name to me. There were lots of pigs around because 2019 is the year of the pig on the Chinese calendar.



The Chinese new year was only a couple weeks ago and there is still a lot of decorations up. Things like red lanterns and pigs were everywhere. We tried to go to a restaurant in the hotel but they were all closed so we ordered room service. William and I tried dumplings and lobster lasagna and both were very good. We were so sleepy and so we went to bed right after eating, taking a shower and brushing our teeth.

### DAY 3

We woke up at 5:30 am on the next day because there is a 12 hour difference between Beijing and Orlando. We had fun with our parents and Nana and then we went to breakfast. Breakfast was the best breakfast I have ever had! There were so many different kinds of delicious foods that I couldn't choose. I tried steamed buns for the first time and they felt very soft and satisfying but they tasted even better than they looked and felt. My brother and I went outside and around the hotel garden a few times. I did some cartwheels, dances and had lots of fun. Next it was time to meet Coco and the driver Mr. Ju to go to AI Camp. We drove for 45 minutes and spent some time trying to figure out how to get into the camp. We parked at a hotel and walked about a mile to arrive. It was a huge park but there was almost no one there to enjoy it. The people we saw were all working on cleaning up the place. At the AI Camp building I liked everything but my favorite thing was getting a chance to control race cars with a mind control system. You had to concentrate very hard to make the car move by itself. If you lost concentration the car would stop. We also did laser tag, battle spiders, balloon popping robots, digital sand pit, used robots to try and pick up stuffed monkey toys and put them in a box, and we got to drive Chinese battle robots.

Finally we rode Chinese hoverboards. They were not the same as the hoverboards we know. To steer these you used your knees and put them one way or the other way to turn. We drove the hoverboards all the way back to the hotel

where the car and driver were waiting. I think the people from the AI camp drove the hoverboards back after so they didn't have to walk all that way.



We took the car to visit a Chinese Hutong. A Hutong is a traditional neighborhood. Once we got there, there were a group of ladies who spotted my hair and started taking pictures of me. They were from the countryside and usually they don't see blonde haired people so they wanted to take a picture. I smiled and waved at them and they smiled back. We got on a rickshaw which is a bicycle attached to a two person shaded bench. The whole thing had 5 wheels and moved because a man on the bike was pedaling.

We rode the rickshaw to a restaurant that a family had in their home. The food was absolutely delicious but it still wasn't as good as my breakfast. We had vegetables, vegetable dumplings, pork,

chicken and all sorts of delicious things. In Northern China, they make vinegar and use it on everything. I tried some vinegar on a dumpling and it was pretty good. My mom realized that the lady who owned the house who was in the kitchen also took a picture of me and my hair but I didn't notice. We rode back on the rickshaw but we took a different way. We went by a big lake and the wind was making the lake very choppy. The wind was very cold so I used the blanket that was on the rickshaw bench and stayed very warm.



We got back in the van and Mr. Ju took us to an art area called 798. It used to be a bunch of factories but the government closed them down to limit pollution several years ago and the artists set up shops there. We looked at fans in one store and walked through some other shops. From 798 we took the van to a

place called the Silk Market. It was very interesting and the prices were very high on everything. My dad and mom had to get gifts for their employees so we walked around asking for good prices and not high ones. You do not pay the price they ask at this place you have to negotiate to get a good price. It took a while but we found what we were looking for and a shop that would give a good price. The lady who ran the shop was named Susan and she was a good negotiator but my dad has been to this place 14 times over the last 20 years and he knows about how to negotiate with everyone. It was very interesting to watch how my dad got Susan to give us a good price and I was glad he did it. Susan kept saying she was “losing money” but we all knew that she was a smart business lady and she would not sell something without making money. Negotiating in China is very different from anything I’ve ever seen before. One day I’ll be a good negotiator. My dad likes to say that “life is all about negotiation” and he encourages me and William to negotiate all the time.

We were very tired but it was only 4:30 pm. We wanted to go back to the hotel and sleep but my dad said NO! He said that to get over jet lag we had to stay up longer and not go to bed. I was so tired but we went to dinner and had Peking Duck. Peking Duck is a very special meal and I learned how it is prepared, sliced and served.



Dinner was very good but I fell asleep in my dad’s lap before it was over.

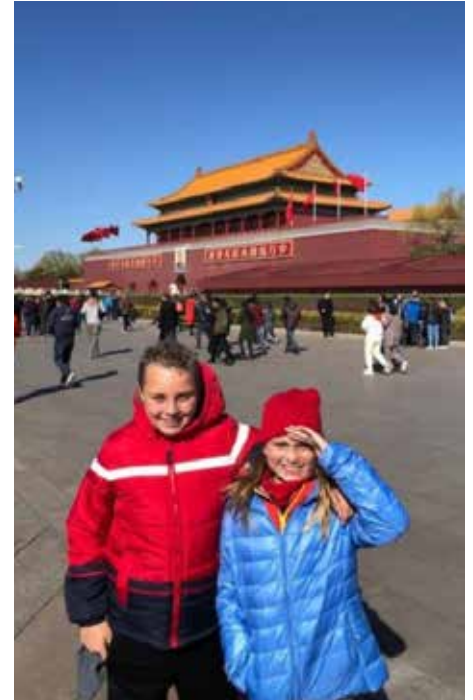


We finished dinner and took the van back to the hotel where we brushed our teeth and went to bed! Of course we were still jet-lagged and so we woke up at 1:00 am and couldn’t go back to sleep so my dad and I spent some time writing this story. I think I will go back to bed now... Tomorrow we are going to Tiananmen Square and The Great Wall of China. Correction. Today we are going because it is 2:53 am!

#### DAY 4

This morning we packed our suitcases because we are going to a new hotel near the Great Wall today after we visit the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. We had breakfast at the hotel again. I love the breakfasts here because there is so much to choose from and I like to try new things. After breakfast we checked out of the hotel and got in the van for the 40 minute trip to Tiananmen Square. The driver dropped us off and we walked along the side of the square while the guide explained things to us. There is a huge monument in the middle of the square that is for fallen soldiers and Tiananmen Square is where college students protested in the 1980s and were run over by army tanks for doing so.

We could not go on the square today because the People’s Congress was in session. We saw Chairman Mao’s burial place and we walked across the street to the front gate of the Forbidden City.



We walked under the street through a tunnel because the streets are huge and very busy. It was very cold and windy but there were thousands of people going into the Forbidden City because it’s very popular. We took some photos of the square and the front gate. Tiananmen Square is the courtyard of the Forbidden City and there are two gates with one in front of the other to enter the city. They built it this way so even if an enemy got through one gate they still had another gate and wall to deal with. We learned from the guide that the Phoenix is the symbol of the empress and the Dragon is the symbol of the emperor. We learned that yellow roof tiles are only for the emperor. We learned that turtles and the number 9 are good luck. We learned that many Chinese homes have two lions outside their door and how tall the lions are means how high in status the person who owned the house was. Also there is a male and female lion and we learned how to tell them apart.





It was very cold so we stopped and got some of the best hot chocolate we have ever had. The place we bought the hot chocolate used to be a Starbucks but the Chinese people were mad that there was a western coffee shop in the Forbidden City so they closed the Starbucks and it is just a regular shop now. We got to see the imperial clocks, the imperial jewelry and the treasure rooms. We learned that the Forbidden City was made of wood and burned down and had to be rebuilt several times since it was completed in 1420. We learned that the huge metal pots that are everywhere were for storing water in case of fires but it was not a good system. We walked from one side of the Forbidden City to the other and when we came out of the back gate we could see the wall and the moat that surround the entire Forbidden City.



The driver picked us up and we went to lunch. We were in a small room and the food was very good but the people in the room next to us were very loud and smoking a lot so we could smell the smoke. Lots of people smoke in China. I don't like smoking or smelling smoke! We drove from Beijing to Simatai after lunch and it took three hours to get there. While we were checking into the hotel my brother William saw a big wall of huge, foam LEGOs around a kid's play area. William decided to remove some of the blocks from the wall to build something else. My dad said, "No Chinese kid would dream of doing that. We will see what happens." I didn't know what he meant but after a while a woman came running across the lobby waving her hands and

telling William in Chinese to stop! My dad laughed and William helped the woman replace the blocks and all was fine. My dad said that's the difference between China and the USA. He loves China and has many Chinese friends and says that neither of our ways are right or wrong just different. I don't really know what he means but I'm learning and it seems to have to do with how we think about things and ask questions. Also when we checked in we had to have our faces scanned for a facial recognition ID system. It didn't work very well especially on my dad because of the beard he has.



Simatai is an ancient village at the foot of some mountains where the Great Wall is on top. You can see the wall from the village and even from our room.

We were supposed to go see a laser light show and have dinner but we were so tired that we just went to sleep. We woke up at 2 am and had fun with the family talking and playing with my brother. Tomorrow we will climb the Great Wall!

#### DAY 5

We woke up and had breakfast. It was awesome but not as awesome as the hotel in Beijing. After breakfast we got ready, put our heavy clothes on and met the guide. We walked to the cable cars and rode up about half way to the top of the mountain. From there we walked the rest of the way up to the Great Wall. It was a long, long walk up and down and up and down. When we got to the wall, it was very high and I was scared of the heights and the narrow stairs. I climbed The Great Wall up and down anyway. We took some pictures of the wall. You can see it go for miles along the top of the mountains.



It is amazing that people could build this in a time when there were no modern machines or electricity. Once we were finished taking pictures, we took the long path back to the cable cars and rode back down to Simatai. In Simatai we went to the hot springs that was across the street from our room. The hot spring had a bunch of hot and cold and warm pools of water that were kind of shaped like a flower. My brother and I tried all the pools and had fun. Our favorite pool was the hottest pool. It felt very good. We also had some awesome ice cream! After the hot springs we came home and read for an hour then we went to lunch at a hot pot restaurant. How it worked was that each person got a metal pot with their choice of soup. The soup was boiling because there

was a burner under each pot. We also made our own dipping sauce and that was interesting. We ordered meat and fish and vegetables and dumplings and noodles and mushrooms. Then we decided what we wanted to eat and put that in our pot to cook. Most of the foods were instantly cooked but the dumplings and noodles took a while. I liked the beef and noodles the best and I only burned myself twice!



After lunch we walked to our kite making class but on the way I entered a jump rope contest and won!! We also got sugar animals that a man made for us. I got a rabbit and William got a dragon. They were really neat and fun to eat. At the kite making class we chose our kite shape, decorated it, made a framework and attached a string then we flew our kites. My kite was a butterfly and when it flies it looks like it is flapping its wings. After the kite class we headed home for an early sleep!

#### DAY 6

This morning we woke up and packed our bags. We are taking the van back to Beijing and then getting on a train to Zhengzhou in the Henan province. Zhengzhou is considered a small town in China as it only has 9 million people. The car ride was long but our parents let us play video games so it was not too boring. The train station was huge and this was not even the main Beijing train station it was the Beijing West station. We went through security and found a place to put our bags. My dad waited with the bags while we all went to get something to eat. We went to a Chinese KFC and I had popcorn chicken and it was very good. We sat in the train station for a long time.

After a few hours I wanted something to eat so my dad took me and William to try the Chinese McDonalds. We used the computer screen to order so it was fun. Suddenly my mom called and said we had to get back to the bags right now because the train was boarding. We got our bags and followed the long line of people boarding the train. The seats on the train that we had were very comfortable and there was a plug under our seat so we could charge our iPads. We had fun talking and looking out the window and reading and playing video games during the three hour train ride. At our stop we had to carry all our bags up to the front of the Zhengzhou train station where we met Mr. Jack who is the local guide and the new driver. Coco was still with us but Mr. Jack is the local expert. He was nice and funny and he played some songs on his flute for us. We drove for about an hour and a half to the hotel where we stayed in Dengfeng. We were tired so we went to bed early. Tomorrow we go to the Shaolin Temple.

#### DAY 7

We woke up and had breakfast at the hotel. It was very different from the breakfasts we had before but it was also very good. You could get eggs in the shape of a heart and they had lots of pastries. I really liked the orange juice! My dad and brother found some noodles so they were happy. We met Mr. Jack and the driver and went to the Bank of China so my dad could exchange dollars for Chinese money. Chinese money is called the Yuan or the RMB and my dad says the exchange rate is about 6.7 Yuan to one Dollar. Dad says that the Chinese keep the currency artificially low and unofficially pegged to the US Dollar because it is good for China's exporting economy. I didn't understand it all but he said that if the Chinese money was too expensive to other countries then people in other countries couldn't afford to buy the things they make in China and sell to other countries. He says China's exports are a huge part of their economy.

Next we rode to the Shaolin Temple. On the way we saw several large buildings with empty spaces in front of them where boys were exercising and practicing martial arts.



Mr. Jack said that they are martial art schools and that people send their sons there for 3 years to learn martial arts and study in school. He said there are lots of those schools here. At the entrance to the Shaolin Temple we waited in a big courtyard for Mr. Jack to get tickets and while we were standing there some people asked if they could take a picture with my dad. My dad said yes and they took pictures and laughed and smiled. Then they wanted to take pictures with me and William. Once a few people did it then a lot of other people wanted to take pictures with us. It was like paparazzi or something but it was fun and it made the Chinese people happy so we were glad to do it. Mr. Jack came back with the tickets and explained that Chinese people are very proud to have a photo “with people like us” and that they treasure those photos.



The Shaolin Temple had a lot of land around it and there was a lot to see. We took an electric car to the Pagoda Forest. The Pagoda Forest is a graveyard for the head monks of the Shaolin temple and there were over 200 of them. Some were



very old.

Next we walked through several courtyards and buildings looking at the different temples and statues. I asked my dad about the people burning little sticks and he said that they offer the incense up to their gods in prayer. I decided I wanted to light one and place it and my dad said that was fine so I did. It smelled strange but kind of good.



While we were walking around we noticed signs with strange things on them. My dad says it is someone who doesn't speak English trying to translate Chinese into English. Sometimes they are funny to read.



The next thing we did was watch a martial arts show. The boys were very good at martial arts and did all kinds of tricks with swords and spears.



One boy threw a small needle through a big piece of glass to break a balloon. Also there was a man doing calligraphy. They said he was a master and the characters he did looked interesting. People who were at the show raised their hands and bought the work he did. I think he is considered an artist.



On the way out of the show we looked at stores. There was one store that had a bunch of swords. I like the swords and I would like to have one someday.



Next we had lunch and it was very good. The food here in China is always good.

After lunch we met with the calligraphy master and had a lesson. He didn't speak any English but our guide helped me and William understand what he was saying. Making calligraphy is hard and you have to study many years to do it right but the master said that I was very good at it and a promising student. I think calligraphy is like art and I'm good at art.



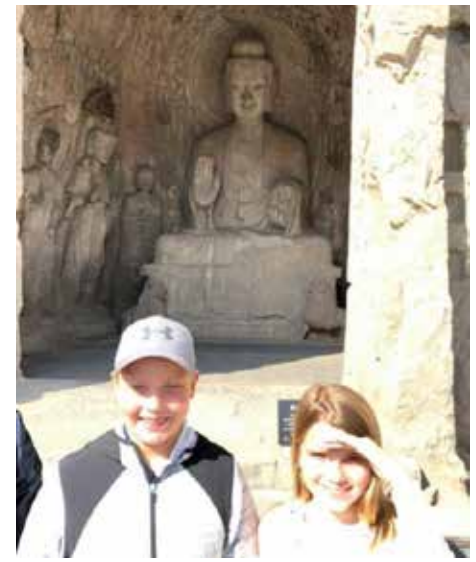
We were supposed to have a Kung fu lesson but my brother was not feeling well and my parents decided to take everyone back to the hotel instead. I wanted to do the lesson but I understood they have to take care of my brother. Tomorrow we go to the Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang (another city in Henan). My dad has been there before and said it is really neat. I can't wait.

**DAY 8**

We woke up at 4 am and were wide awake. We watched our iPads and had fun hanging out. After breakfast we got in the van and went to the Longmen Grottoes. This is a World Heritage site. These were big caves on the banks of the Yi river and in the caves were carvings of Buddha and other gods. There were over 120,000 Buddhas carved in the rock and were as small as 4 cm and as large as 17 m tall. We got to the caves by climbing a bunch of very steep stairs. There were huge crowds of people on the stairs and looking at the caves. The Longmen Grottoes are a World Heritage Site so they are very popular. Some are up to 1500 years old! I can't imagine carving 120,000 statues but my dad says that the best way to do it is... one at a time.



Lots of people kept staring at me and many wanted to take my photo. Some of them tried to be sneaky about it but others asked if they could take a photo with me. One girl kept staring and pointing and she went behind me and my dad saw her take a picture but I was faking like I didn't see. Another lady kept looking at me and pointing at me so my dad told me to go over and say hi. Her husband took a photo of us. Another family with a 9 month old baby asked if they could take a picture with me and I said yes of course. My dad took pictures of me posing like a Buddha and a bunch of people cheered and also took pictures of me. I also got a photo with an example of the local jade – it is called peony jade because it looks like flowers in the rock.





We walked the length of the grottoes but we took a boat back to the parking lot but before we got on the boat we bought some Chinese ice cream. The trip coming and going was interesting and fun. When we got back to the parking lot my mom wanted to buy some gifts for friends so we went shopping. Mom bought some scarves and I got some really cool spinners and a double knife that I really like. My brother got the same things. We went to lunch and then on to the train station. We are going to Xi'an tonight and will spend the night.

DAY 9

Today we went to see the Terra Cotta Warriors and on the way we went to a factory that makes modern terra cotta and other things. We had fun trying to make our own clay soldiers and I liked the feel of the clay we used so I got a ball of the clay to play with while my parents looked around. My mom bought me a beautiful cabinet with Sand Hill Cranes on it and it will come to Orlando by boat so it will take three months to get there. I'm super excited about the cabinet for my room!



We left the factory and went to see the real warriors. On the walk into the museum we got a chance to look at the blooming trees that are all over the place. They are very pretty.



The emperor had the clay soldiers made so he didn't have to follow the tradition of killing his own soldiers when he died so they could be buried with him and protect him in the afterlife. I bet his soldiers were happy about that. None of the soldiers are the same. Each face is different and there are different kinds of soldiers that do different things. Some have swords, pikes, bows and some drive horses. All but one of the 8000 terra cotta warriors were broken when the wooden ceilings broke because they rotted. The one that didn't break is called the lucky man. The rest are put back together by scientists like a giant jigsaw puzzle. There are three pits with soldiers and the first one was discovered by a farmer digging a well. The well barely caught the edge of the pit and if he had dug a few feet away he would have missed the pit. The farmer took the broken pieces to the officials and the government seized the land and all his neighbors' land too. They were all mad at him at first but they were soon happy about it because the warriors brought tourists which brought money and jobs to the area. This site is also a world heritage site so there were thousands of people here. My dad came here 15 years ago and he said when he visited there were almost no people and that he is glad that more people get to see it today.



We walked out of the museum into a town and had lunch. On the way we bought some colorful paper hats that we really liked. My brother and I had fun wearing them.



After the terra cotta warriors we went to a museum that had lots of artifacts and items from over 3500 years ago. It was interesting but very crowded and we were kind of tired so we went back to the hotel to rest for a little while.

Later that evening we went in the car to visit a family who taught us how to make dumplings. I love dumplings! The mom and the dad and their 8 year old son Nicholas taught us how to make dumplings and it was lots of fun to make them and to eat them! Nicholas likes to draw so I drew him a tiger because that was his favorite animal. He and his parents really liked the tiger I drew and asked me to sign it for them. After dinner we went back to the hotel to sleep.



DAY 10

Today we took the van to the city wall of Xi'an. There are very few city walls left in China because most were torn down in the 1950's by Chairman Mao's followers who believed the walls were symbols of the mean rulers of the past. The people of Xi'an refused to tear theirs down because they liked the wall because they hid inside it in tunnels they made when the Japanese bombed the city. We went up on top of the wall where we could see the gates and the moat and then we rented some bicycles. I rode with my dad and we went down the wall a long way and took some pictures then we rode back. The ride back was downhill so we went fast and I was a bit nervous so I asked my dad to slow down.



After we went to the city wall we went to the Muslim Quarter where there are a bunch of streets where people are selling food and other things. It was awesome and we had a lot of fun and we tried a bunch of new things like fancy cotton candy, ice cream made on a cold plate, squid, octopus, dragon fruit, pomegranate juice, rice cake, crab on a stick and other things. It was fun to walk down the street and see the people making the food. This was one of our favorite things we did.





and columns. It was very exciting and beautiful and also it had the tallest outdoor elevator that was we rode to the top of the biggest mountain! It took a minute and a half to ride to the top. When we arrived at the top of the largest mountain, we found a lot of people trying to make a living in little shops selling food. In China people are always selling things no matter where you go – in temples, in nature parks and even at the top of a mountain. After we were done at the market, we went on a long hike through the park and to take some family photos in the mountains. While we were walking, we stumbled over families of wild monkeys! I saw many of them getting fed from the other people around us. One of them asked if I wanted to feed monkeys zucchini but I know better than to feed wild animals. I even saw a baby monkey almost fall off the mountain! I was having so much fun. A while later we all took a break and got a snack, I got watermelon for my snack and that lasted for a while but I didn't have to share it with the monkeys. We were getting a little tired, but we are still moving on as we had to walk from one side of the park to the other and we could not stop half way.

Once we crossed most of the park by walking, we went on a 40 minute bus ride on a very windy road. I was not feeling good on that ride, I felt like I was going to throw up... a lot. I had that sick feeling because of the windy twisty road but after walking a while I felt much better.

Then Eric (our guide) told us that there was a Mc Donald's nearby on top of another mountain. Now, we usually don't eat Mc Donald's, but by that time we were STARVING, so we had no choice but to go there. It was different but it was good.

After lunch we walked around a bit more and then decided to ride the cable cars back down to the bottom. I absolutely loved the experience of the cable cars, and how we saw all the beautiful trees with white flowers. I also loved the view of the mountains in the distance. When we got to the bottom we hopped in the van and went straight to the hotel and slept a good night.

We walked back to the car down some alleys where people were selling lots of items. I got a fidget spinner and some hair pins. We took the van to the airport. The airport was huge and it was easy to get to the gate for our plane. We caught a plane to a hub and that took two hours then we took another plane to Zhangjiajie. We met the new local guide and driver at the Zhangjiajie airport and drove about an hour to Wulingyuan where our hotel is. It was after 10 pm so we were tired and went to bed.

DAY 11

Today we woke up early to go to this place where they filmed the movie Avatar. It is a national park in Wulingyuan and has a lot of strangely shaped mountains







DAY 12

This morning we were scheduled for our guide to take us to a different part of the national park but we didn't go because I picked up my brothers cold and the whole family needed a break. So instead of going to the Pandora mountains again we walked around the town to see what we could see. There was a walking street downtown and it was very interesting. We played in the stream that flowed through the area, found a lot of toy stores and we got water gun umbrellas. We tried out throwing knives and throwing stars. We also found a lot of mini waterfalls and we filled up our water gunbrellas in them. While we were walking my grandma saw some birds that could say " Ni Hao " (hello in Chinese). We also found a bakery with freshly made desserts. We found so many delicious things!

After that we went to the market down stairs, it mostly had vegetables and a giant zucchini. Next we went into a Chinese supermarket. The supermarket had lots of strange and different things but also some tasty ones. Once we were done with that we went into a jewelry store and mom got me a pair of mini hoop earrings with blossoms on it. When we were finished getting jewelry we decided to go back to the hotel.

Once we were back William and I chilled for about 3 hours while my grandma, dad, and mom got a long foot massage. At about 5:00 pm we were ready for an early dinner at a famous hot pot restaurant. Right next to the hot pot place there were these ladies banging giant drums while dancing in wavy silk dresses. The food at the hot pot was amazingly delicious! That night when we went to the hotel we went straight to writing this story.



DAY 13

This morning we met our guide Eric and went to try some sand painting. It was much harder than it looked and our teacher made a beautiful painting while the ones that William and I did weren't so great because it was our first time. Oh well, there's only one way to get good at anything – work hard and practice!



Next we went to a cultural park which was an example of how the king of the local minority group lived before they became Chinese. It was a huge house built in the side of a mountain. It was kind of interesting but none of us love it.

After the cultural park we went to a different part of the national park called Tienman Mountain. Mrs. Coco and my grandma didn't go because they were too tired plus my grandma doesn't do so well with windy roads. So my mom, dad, brother, and I went up the 35 minute cable car ride to the top of the mountain. It was very interesting and beautiful. We walked for about 15 minutes and we went to the glass walk but it was extremely foggy, which made it even more creepy!



After the glass walk we rode 21 escalators that led down the mountain! It took about 20 minutes to get halfway down the mountain to where there is a big hole in the mountain. We could not see the hole because of the fog but it was still interesting. On the long 30 minute bus ride I got a little car sick so I sat in the front seat with the driver because being able to see well helps me feel better. Then we took another, short bus ride to get to the car, to meet Coco and my grandma there.

A few minutes later we went to lunch at a nice restaurant, and we got to pick our own fish upstairs to cook at the table. After we had our lunch we went to the airport and got settled. A few hours later we got on our flight for Shanghai.



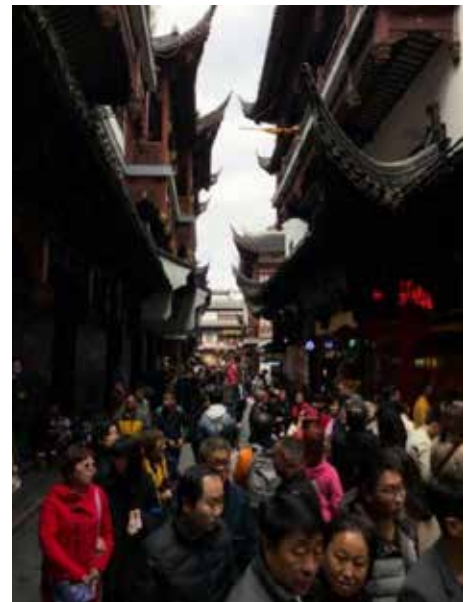
**DAY 14**

We were picked up at the airport by a driver who we think was new to the job. He didn't do a very good job of driving and we weren't sure he knew how to! It was funny and we laughed about it but my dad told Coco that we needed a different driver in the morning. We arrived at our hotel in Shanghai at 1 am. We were sleepy so we went to bed. We all had a very good night sleep because we were finally on the Chinese time zone. My dad says travel is always that way, you get on schedule just in time to go back home and have to get back on schedule there. He says that time change is part of traveling so just get used to it.

We went to a walking street with a bunch of people hanging out and shopping and eating and having fun. We walked around for a while and had fun trying some local things like this giant

chive butter crepe. It was delicious. We also went to the local pearl market where my mom got a lot of different kinds of pearls and even got me some earrings. My mom picks out the pearls and then she tells my dad to negotiate a good price. It takes some time to negotiate and the people selling the pearls said my dad is a good negotiator. After that we went to a local family's house to learn how to make dumplings. It took some practice to make the dumplings right but it was fun and the dumplings and the rest of the food was delicious. We also had fun talking to Mrs. Ding our neighborhood guide.

After lunch we went to the hotel to rest for a while before going to a fancy dinner at Mr. & Mrs. Bund. It is a French restaurant with good food but the best part about it is the view of The Bund. The Bund is the famous river walk in Shanghai where you can see lots of boats go by and all the buildings. I had short rib and ice cream and my brother had steak for dinner. They were delicious! We got to play on the porch and take some pictures and have lots of fun. This was our last night in China so we wanted to make sure we enjoyed it. We stayed at dinner a long time. On the way home we were amazed to see all the people walking around in the Bund area. The streets were full of people and it was kind of crazy.





#### DAY 15

On our last day, we went to a huge Chinese arcade with lots of video games and the claw games where you try to pick up prizes. I won two prizes in the claw games – a giant whale and a sailor pig. They were so cute. After that we went back to the walking street and the pearl market and got some more presents for my cousins. Walking out of the walking street we got some pig cakes and also we bought some roller skates that attach to our shoes.

We went to the Shanghai airport where we boarded a plane for Beijing. In Beijing we had a 4 hour wait to get on the big plane to head to New York. The plane ride back to the USA was a lot of fun because we got to sit in the front with the seats that lie down and our own video screen. I watched movies and took a nap and the next thing I knew we were landing at JFK Airport. It was midnight so we stayed in a hotel overnight.

**DAY 16**

Today we caught a 6 am flight from New York back to Orlando. It was super easy and the flight was only 2 and a half hours. We got our bags and drove to pick up my Nana's dog, Max. He was huge! I think he doubled in size while we were gone. My Nana was happy to see Max and I was too. We went home and unpacked and spent the day trying to get back on our home time zone. We had a great family trip to China and I can't wait for the next family trip!

**DAY 17**

We woke up at 3 am and couldn't go back to sleep. Even my parents are awake! So we took a shower and got ready for school and had breakfast! Jet lag is kind of a pain but it is part of traveling. 🎲



# THE ULTIMATE MARKETING BLUEPRINT

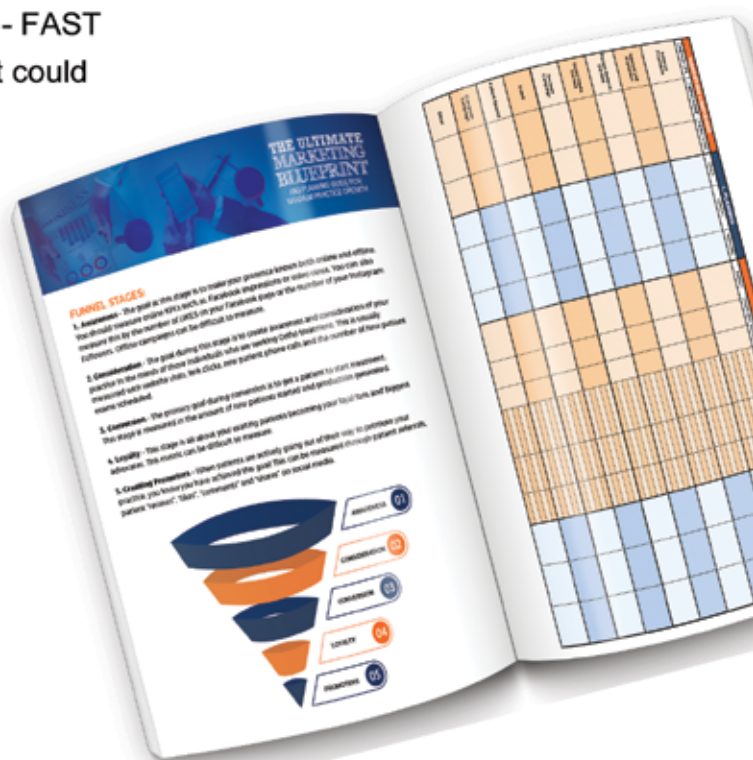
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# A Quest for a 10 Pound Bonefish

By Dr. Larry Scarborough



What began as a fishing trip with a close friend quickly and unexpectedly turned into a spiritual and historical lesson about a family and their passion for bone-fishing in the Bahamas.

I've chased bonefish for 15 years, a love that began when another was solidified, marriage to my wife, Emily. The following week we honeymooned on Pine Cay, a small island in the Turks and Caicos. A great fishery in its own right and the place where I caught my first bonefish.

Growing up freshwater fisherman, I was intrigued by the contrasting beauty and picturesque scenery that is the Caribbean. Fly-fishing small streams in Virginia for the opportunistic resident Brook Trout, albeit amazing in its own right, was a far cry from the expansive flats and finicky Bonefish nearly 1000 miles from my home waters. The challenge was inspiring and led to the eventual quest to catch a 10+ Pound Bonefish.

Cristian Wicha, a seriously talented artist and close friend, and I set out on what would be our maiden voyage of hopefully many trips to come. Destination: the North Bight of the Andros Islands, Bahamas. With a specific and calculated quest: land a 10+ pound bonefish. After much research we set our sites on a small lodge called Broad Shad Cay, owned and operated by Andy Smith, one of the most well know bone-fishing guides in the world.

Andy Smith, a son of the late Charlie Smith, came from a long history of bone-fishing. His father, Charlie Smith, was know as the god-father of the flats, guided the likes of Joseph Kennedy and Ernest Hemingway. Also the creator of the most widely used bonefish fly-fishing history, the Crazy Charlie, know by Andros locals as the "Nasty Charlie."







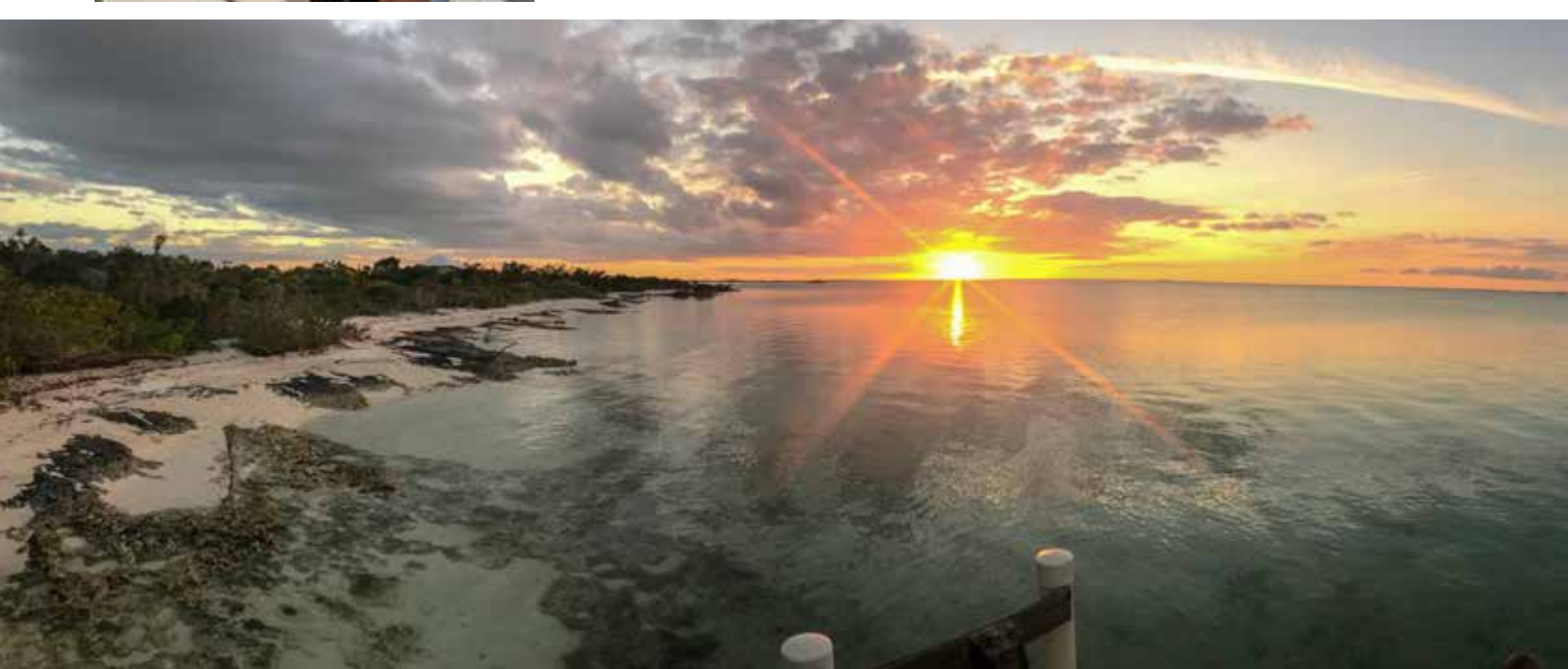
Upon our arrival to Fresh Creek, Andros Island, we learned of Andy's father's passing just one week earlier. Needless to say, the impact on the fly-fishing community was great. Much of the flats community would be visiting over the next few days and celebrating his life at his funeral the week of our visit. We spent an amazing few days reminiscing and sharing with Andy and his family. Laughter was more common than tears as the family honored a great man. Father of 15 sons and 9 daughters, guru of Fly-fishing and a story teller that would light up any room. R.I.P. Charlie Smith.

It was obvious that Andy had learned a



lot from his father. It was also obvious that Andy had accomplished as much, made his own way and had a similar impact on his community. Andy's passion for fishing and bonefish are unlike any I've ever witnessed.

The next three days would be the single best experience on the flats I've ever had. Although my goal of a 10+ pounder was not fulfilled, I had my shot. With many catches under 5 pounds and casting to schooling fish 5-25 in numbers successfully, my chance at a 10+ came on a flat that stretched near 300 yards in length. We were now in deeper water and after a monster.





Andy explained, the fish we are looking for are “the kind you only want to come one at a time.” Sure enough, moments later a single bonefish showed itself, 100 feet off the bow of the boat. I waited as calmly as possible, meanwhile my heart racing, as I had visual on the largest bonefish I had seen period. I made my cast. The fish followed. Pause. Slow strip. Pause. Slow strip. Pause, and the fish turned away. I had missed my opportunity. An opportunity I would greatly anticipate a return to attempt again.

I came with a goal of a 10 pound bonefish and I left with a trophy memory and plenty of motivation to return and continue the quest.

Broad Shad Cay is the only lodge in 20 miles and is only accessible by boat transfer. The lodge was completed in

2009 and all structures built by Andy and his family. The accommodations are comfortable and the company excellent. All meals are provided and the Bahamian-style meals cooked by Andy’s sister, a

local chef, and trained by her father, the late Charlie Smith. Andy’s wife, Sharon, is the lodge manager and will welcome you likely with a hug. Broad Shad is fishing focused lodge with outstanding scenery. 🇧🇸





# TRAVELING TO THE GREEK ISLANDS

By Dr. Daniela Loeb

If you're looking for a vacation with countless beaches, cultural immersion, spectacular food, and some ATViing on the side, look no further than the Greek Islands. My husband and I honeymooned there last summer, and are counting down until we can return.

I very much like to plan my own itinerary when I travel, but we did use a travel company called Key Tours to take care of things like hotel reservations, ferry tickets, and transport to and from the ports. In my opinion, it made these parts of the trip (nearly) flawless and took a lot of stress away from having to book separate ferry tickets and rides and fumbling with a foreign alphabet. In terms of places to stay, there are many

luxury hotel and villa options in Greece, especially on the islands, but having recently graduated from dental school forced us to stay on a slightly tighter budget.

## ATHENS

Before heading to the islands, be sure to enjoy Athens for at least a day. There is so much history to see and appreciate. We stayed at the Fresh Hotel, which had a small rooftop pool and amazing view of the Acropolis at night! Be sure to walk around the neighborhood of Plaka at night for great restaurants, bars, and shopping. The next morning it was time to catch a ferry to stop #2: Mykonos.

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*“Places of interest:  
 Acropolis, Parthenon,  
 Temple of Zeus, Dionysus  
 Theater, Filopappos Hill  
 (for a great view), Plaka  
 neighborhood  
 Restaurants: Dionysus,  
 Ama Laxei, Electra Palace,  
 Seychelles, Eat at Milton’s.”*  
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## MYKONOS

What a stunning island. We were fortunate enough to spend 3 days in Mykonos and it was perfect. Upon arriving to our hotel (Hotel Lady Anna in Platys Gialos), we worked with reception to rent an ATV for 24 hours. I highly recommend renting either an ATV or scooter (for couples) or a car (for families) to see the entirety of the island. Scooters are harder to rent if your license doesn't specify you are licensed to operate motorcycles, so we opted for an ATV. We went ATVing to the town of Mykonos which is on the west side of the island, admired the sunset from a bar in Little Venice, and had dinner at a tiny traditional restaurant called To Mairero- highly recommend!

Day 2 was adventure day- we went ATVing all over the island and ended up finding beautiful and remote beaches. First was Lia beach (a scuba diver's paradise) and then Panormos beach, which is well known for its beautiful ocean colors. From there, we headed to Kiki's Taverna for lunch, where we expected to wait in a pretty long line. The restaurant is open from 12-7 and is always full- expect a wait- but is extremely worth it. We stuffed ourselves with the freshest octopus, grilled feta, fresh catch of the day, and Greek salad. Not to mention the location and view are spectacular as well.

On Day 3, we decided to stay local and enjoy Platys Gialos beach. At that beach there is a boating company that offers boat tours to Dragonisi Island, an uninhabited island with coves and caves you can swim in. They also take you to a beach on the east side of Mykonos and offer masks so you can appreciate the clear waters, coral, and curious fish and sea creatures.

The next day, we enjoyed a quiet morning at the hotel and caught a ferry mid-day to stop #3: Paros.



INTIMATE KIKI'S TAVERNA WITH AN AMAZING VIEW

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*"Places of interest: Dragonisi Island, the windmills, Little Venice for sunset drinks, Lia Beach, Panormos Beach, Paraportiani, Paradise Beach and Scorpios (if you like to party)  
Restaurants: M eating, Kiki's Taverna (lunch), To Mairero, Remezzo, Nikola's Tavern, Funky Kitchen."*

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THE COVES OF DRAGONISI ISLAND

## PAROS

Another stunning island. Definitely less busy than Mykonos or Santorini but its popularity is growing fast. We only had 2 days in Paros but wished for more. Upon arriving, we checked in to the beautiful Paros Agnanti Hotel on the west side of the island, close to the main town of Parikia. We spent the first day enjoying the town and getting lost in the winding, shaded streets. We stopped by the Church of 100 Doors (Panagia Ekatonpiliiani) and the Frankish Castle, which was built in the 1200s and definitely stands out among the Cyclades architecture of white walls and blue doors. After watching the sunset off Parikia's main road, we headed to Levantis for dinner and enjoyed delicious fresh seafood.

On the second day, we rented an ATV to explore the rest of the island. Our first stop was the mountain town of Lefkes. On the way, we stopped by the ancient marble quarries in Marathi; it is believed that the marble of the Venus de Milo marble was extracted from here. Lefkes itself is a quaint and quiet town—we felt like we had it to ourselves. Be sure to take in the amazing mountainous views, including views of the neighboring island, Naxos. From Lefkes we headed to Kalogeros beach, known for its abundance of natural spa-like clay. Let the clay dry on your skin and head into the ocean for a quick dip, and emerge feeling extra smooth.

Our next stop was Naoussa port, an authentic and traditional village on the northern part of the island. Although seemingly quieter than Parikia, Naoussa boasts a nightlife scene and is dotted with taverns and clubs. We strolled by the myriad fishing boats toward the still-standing Venetian fortress, constructed in the 15th century. Then we enjoyed a nice lunch right on the water at Taverna Glafkos before heading to one of my favorite beaches: Kolymbithres beach. This beach is definitely unique: various rock formations lead directly to the crystal clear waters. It's a fun place to enjoy the water and watch the various boats go by.

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*"Places of interest: Parikia town, Kolymbithres beach, Kalogeros Beach, Naoussa Port, Lefkes Village, Panagia Ekatonpiliiani, Lefkes, Marble Quarries  
Restaurants: Levantis, Taverna Glafkos, Aromas, Happy Cows"*

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A TYPICAL QUIET STREET IN PAROS



VIEW FROM KOLYMBITHRES BEACH

**SANTORINI**

When people think of Greece, they usually imagine the picturesque blue domes of Santorini. Despite being the most popular (and crowded) island destination, we decided to make Santorini our last stop. Santorini has a unique story, as it was formed by volcanic activity centuries ago, which resulted in a flooded caldera formation surrounded by a ring of islands. One of my biggest regrets is not staying in a villa overlooking the caldera. Still, our hotel was very nice (El Greco Hotel), but a little isolated and you couldn't appreciate the views. After checking in, we walked to Fira, Santorini's main town, and enjoyed the incredible caldera views. We hiked out to Skaros Rock, an ominous-looking rock formation that protrudes out into the Aegean Sea, from the neighboring town of Imerovigli. It was a beautiful trek and offered even better views. After that, we set out to find a prime spot in Fira to enjoy the famed Santorini sunset, and later enjoyed a nice meal at Argo.

On the second day, we (once again) rented an ATV to get around the island. The beaches of Santorini aren't as typical or popular compared to the other islands due to its lack of white sand—the sand is actually mostly red or black due to the volcanic origin of the island. Our first stop was the Red Beach, which was a little underwhelming, followed by the Black Beach in the town of Perissa. Then we saddled up for a long ATV drive and headed to Oia, Santorini's other famed village. We headed straight down to Ammoudi Bay and enjoyed fresh octopus at Ammoudi Fish Tavern. After a short digestion period, we walked along the bay to a well-known swimming and cliff jumping spot and got some good GoPro footage in. Afterwards, we went back up to Oia and wandered the narrow streets until it was time for a final sunset dinner at Pelekanos. Restaurants with rooftops tend to fill up in the high season, so reservations are strongly recommended!

*"Places of interest: Red beach, Black beach (Perissa), Cliff jumping at Ammoudi, Skaros Rock*

*Restaurants: Argo, Ammoudi Fish Tavern, Pelekanos, 1800, Ginger, Da Vinci, Ambrosia "*



SKAROS ROCK OFFERS STUNNING VIEWS OF THE CALDERA



THE SUN SETTING ON THE CALDERA

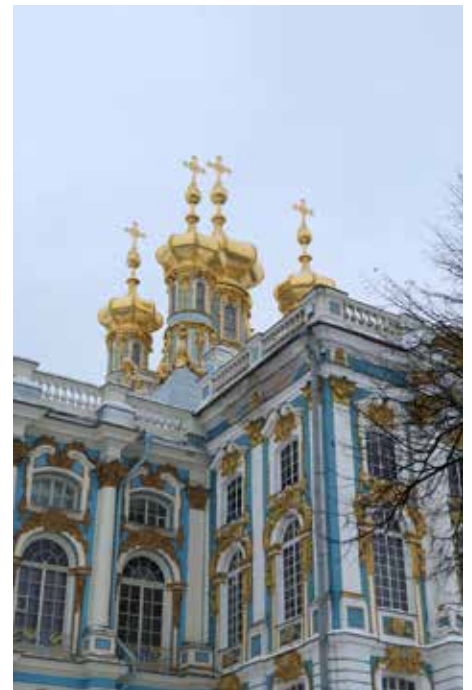
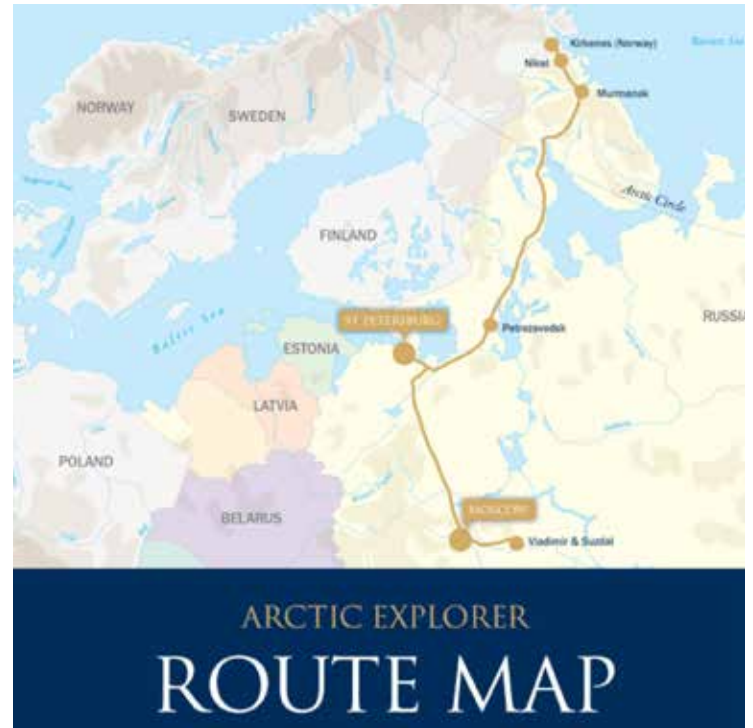


VIEW FROM KOLYMBITHRES BEACH

# Russia in The Dead of Winter!

By Ben & Bridget Burris

I've always wanted to experience Russia. As children of the 80s, Russia played a huge part of our coming of age as it was our country's central focus for decades. In February I finally got a chance to compare all those images we saw on TV to the real thing and I was not disappointed! The journey started in St. Petersburg, Russia where we met the rest of our group and stayed at the Belmond Grand Hotel Europe. It's a great hotel in an excellent location and the Sunday brunch is to die for! Our first outing was to the Catherine Palace – the summer residence located in the town of Tsarskoye Selo (Pushkin) – it was worth the bus ride and the hour wait in the snow to get in. The upside of visiting Russia in the winter is experiencing the fabled Russian winter and the reduced crowds. The downside is that getting into attractions is hindered by the removal/storage of winter wear and the application of booties to one's feet as well as the drastic difference between the freezing outside and the broiling inside. It's important to layer so one can survive 10 degrees while waiting in line and 85 degrees once you get in! The palace itself was impressive and gave a sense of how the nobility lived in a time when peasants were tied to the land and essentially their property. Words fail to capture the grandeur but I've included a couple photos and encourage you to go see it for yourself!



The next day we visited the Hermitage Museum and I found the architecture as well as the exhibits to be excellent – as good as any museum I’ve visited. I’ll let the photos do the talking here but if you only have one day in St. Petersburg this is the place to go.



That evening we visited the Fabergé Museum and it is small but well worth the time to visit. They have a huge collection of Fabergé eggs and one must see them to believe the craftsmanship and artistry.





That night we headed to the train station for the main attraction in our Russian adventure. We boarded the Golden Eagle to begin our Arctic Explorer trip. The trains are very well appointed, the lodging is very acceptable given that we were on a train, the food/beverage was excellent and featured authentic Russian fare and the staff was fantastic. There are a multitude of different trips and itineraries to choose from and I look forward to trying some other routes. You can find all the details here <http://www.goldeneagleluxurytrains.com>

Traveling by train was very relaxing and being jetlagged and off the normal local schedule didn't seem to matter as much given the ability to wander around the train. There is virtually no cell service so being unplugged was also enjoyable.

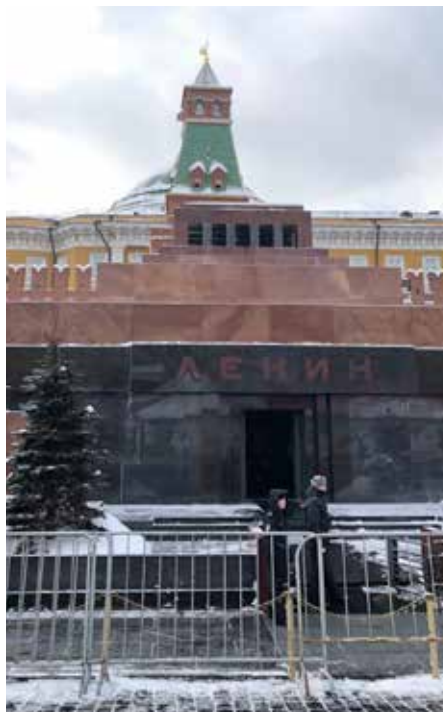


The train stopped in Nikel and we took a bus to Kirkenes, Norway. Exiting Russia and crossing the Norwegian border was an experience in and of itself. The contrast between the extremely efficient and friendly Norwegian border patrol and the, well, not so much Russians was drastic but both were entertaining. We spent a couple nights at the Thon Hotel Kirkenes – a perfectly acceptable hotel with a nice restaurant and view. We actually saw the northern lights a couple nights from our hotel window and despite the city's light pollution the aurora were so bright we could still see them well. While in Kirkenes we learned, first hand, about dog sledding and catching the massive ocean crabs that were transplanted from the Pacific Ocean decades ago. **WARNING!** Eating crab legs and claws that were in the ocean just minutes before will ruin the local seafood bar for you... We enjoyed our visit to the local ice hotel as well. Lots to do in Kirkenes – go check it out!



From Kirkenes we crossed back into Russia by bus, boarded the train and took the short trip to Murmansk, Russia. Murmansk is an incredibly important city to the Russian people and has played a huge role in their history. Though the city is dreary and losing population, the retreat of the polar ice cap means that Murmansk may play an even bigger role in Russia's future. Murmansk was the Russia we'd been told of as children during the Cold War and, for me, embodied everything I'd imagined being Russian in the 70s and 80s would be. We visited the Icebreaker Lenin, had a delightful lunch and wandered around the town during a local festival where the locals seemed to be immune to the cold. I guess humans can get used to anything but it was a sight to see little ones playing in the snow on what was considered a mild day as it was "only" 10 degrees Fahrenheit.

From Murmansk we took the train to Moscow, retracing much of the track that we took north. It was terribly relaxing to be unplugged and traveling the Russian winter wildness in such a well-appointed train. We were based in the Four Seasons Moscow and explored the city for the next couple days. The Kremlin, Red Square, Lenin's tomb and The Seven Sisters were incredible to see. Moscow delivered on expectations as an icon of the Cold War but also as a modern, metropolitan complex of 12 million people. When I go back to Russia I'll spend several more days exploring the capital.



As a whole I cannot recommend a Russian excursion enough. Of course I only experienced it in the winter and understand it is a totally different country during the short summer. Pack your bags, gather the family and GO! Somewhere!

It's a big planet and you're not getting any younger... 🎲



# TRAVELING TO PERU

By Dr. David Walker

A short flight from the Peruvian capital of Lima, and a mere 12 miles from the ancient Incan capital of Cusco, lies the Sacred Valley of the Incas. Formed by the Urubamba River flowing through the Andes, the Sacred Valley is most famous for including the ruins of the Incan city of Machu Picchu but also contains an array of sites and activities that make it an eco-tourists dream destination. From hiking through the backcountry,

interacting with llamas and native Quechua speakers, riding ATVs through the Andes, and sleeping in clear pods suspended atop a 1200 foot cliff, a visit to the Sacred Valley is sure to keep you entertained!

Two accommodations in the Sacred Valley deserve particular mention. The first, Explora Valle Sagrado, is a Chilean hotel “chain,” specializing in challenging what it means to be

an all-inclusive. Explora focuses on providing what they term “the luxury of the essential,” and they promote themselves as a place to disconnect from your day-to-day life and connect with your natural surroundings.

Gourmet meals and an open bar satisfy the traditional expectation of an all-inclusive, but the true value of Explora Valle Sagrado is found in the daily explorations you design in



MIDWAY THROUGH AN 8 HOUR HIKE TO THE REMAINS OF THE HUCHUY QOSCO PALACES; LED BY OUR EXPLORA VALLE SAGRADO GUIDE, THIS TREK REACHES OVER 14,000 FEET OF ELEVATION.



ACCOMMODATIONS AT SKYLODGE ADVENTURE SUITES, SUSPENDED FROM THE SIDE OF A 1200FT MOUNTAIN WITH A 300 DEGREE VIEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL VALLEY BELOW

conjunction with their knowledgeable guides. These explorations include such things as a guided visit to Machu Picchu, mountain bike treks, and high altitude hiking. All activities are catered to fit the experience and desires of the guest. A truly amazing hotel and one of the best examples of customer service you will find.

The Sacred Valley is also home to the soon-to-be-famous Skylodge Adventure Suites. The Skylodge consists of three clear sleeping pods and one relatively large dining pod suspended from the side of a cliff face overlooking the valley below. To reach the skylodge guests must first ascend a 400 meter via ferrata, or cable assisted rock climb. The climb itself takes around 90 minutes to two hours depending on the number in

the group (limited by there only being three sleeping pods) and how often you stop to admire the amazing views of the Urubamba river below. Dinner is prepared and a bottle of wine provided for each group when you reach the top. The pods are relatively spacious and beds comfortable; the views are unbeatable! The following morning breakfast is provided before beginning the descent, via a series of zip lines!

The Sacred Valley is unique in that it is remote, but not distant and the major Peruvian cultural hub of Cusco is only a short car ride away and makes for a great addition to a visit to the valley. For those interested in outdoor adventure and cultural immersion this is definitely a trip worth taking. 🎲



PRIVATE ATV TOUR THROUGH REMOTE ANDEAN VILLAGES TO VISIT INCAN RUINS



ASCENDING TO THE SKYLODGE REQUIRES GUESTS TO TRAVERSE A 400M VIA FERRATA, A CABLE ASSISTED ROCK CLIMB



# KRAKOW: A POLISH JEWEL

By Dr. Andrea Font Rytzner

When you think of traveling around Europe, perhaps other typical stereotype cities come to mind. A city full of life, history, and art. I had the pleasure of visiting the second largest city in Poland in late November with a friend. An authentic jewel in the middle of Europe.

In the past years, inter European travel has increased. Certain destinations in Europe have had a peak in tourism, partly due to low-cost airlines such as Ryanair that make it affordable to travel. If you are planning a trip to Europe, a very cost-effective way to travel around Europe would be to investigate low-cost airlines and explore what countries/cities they fly into (Ryanair.com and Wizzair.com)

I grew up in Europe and have had the privilege of traveling extensively around several countries. However, planning the trip to Krakow was slightly different than what I was used to planning. I was going to stay in the same city for a few days, which would allow me to get to know the city better. I was ashamed to find out that I didn't really know that much about the country of Poland and decided to investigate a little about one of its main cities and its surroundings before heading there.

## ABOUT THE CITY:

Krakow became a city of European importance in the 14th century, especially after establishing Krakow University, one of the oldest Universities in Central Europe. It flourished in the 15-17th century.

Now, it has an extremely large student population, as well as Erasmus students from all over Europe, therefore creating an international diversity to the city. Erasmus is the largest educational exchange program in the world, where you can study and learn from a different perspective and integrate culturally, socially and educationally in another country.

Historically, the city's limitations have changed more than once, since several towns were once independent and have merged over the centuries to become constituents of what we know today as Krakow. I will talk about the historical districts of the Medieval Old Town, where the Main Square is located, Wawel Hill and Kazimierz as well as what day trips you can take around the city.

Every time you go to visit a different city/country, the free walking tours or a sightseeing bus tour will probably offer you the best overview of the city. Personally, I enjoy the free walking tours, usually a 2.5-3h walking tour



OLD TOWN CITY CENTER



SIDE STREETS NEAR THE MAIN SQUARE



OLD MEDIEVAL CITY WALL WITH LOCAL STREET ART DISPLAY

with a guide that you tip at the end what you consider appropriate, since the guide will be paid by the tips of the group – a good estimate would be around 10 euros a person. I would also highly suggest finding a tourist information center and get some maps of the city and some useful information. In this case, the tourist center is located just outside the main square.

Krakow is an inexpensive city, I recommend accommodation close to the Main Market Square, since a lot of the walking happens around that area or in the Jewish Kazimierz. We stayed at an Airbnb in Kazimierz that allowed us to go walking to the Main Square, a beautiful 15-20min walk.

I did two free walking tours: the first one covered the Old Town and Wawel Hill and the second one was exclusively in Kazimierz, the beautiful Jewish historical district. All the Old Town tours start from the Main Square, there are several companies

that do this. Usually they have two different departure times every day. Check online, as times change depending on the language or the day of the week.

**MEDIEVAL OLD TOWN/  
HISTORICAL CENTER:**

You can easily spend a whole day wandering the streets that border the Main Square. Street art vendors surrounding the city walls, little shops and cafés wrapping around the plaza. In the Square, there are a few important buildings that you can go inside and visit. The Gothic St. Mary’s Basilica stands out, where you can appreciate the largest wooden altarpiece in the world, designed by Veit Stoss, as well as hourly listening from the outside to the traditional trumpeter that plays from the top of the tower. Careful if you go in tourist season, it gets crowded around mass times. They also have scheduled live concerts inside the Basilica, I would

recommend you get tickets in advance since these are popular and may get sold out.

The square is one of the biggest main market squares in central Europe, bigger than Brussels, Munich, or Prague. In the center of the square you see gigantic Renaissance building, the Cloth Hall declared UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1978. The building used to be a trade center exporting lead, salt, textiles, imported silk, spices, leather.

The building itself now hosts a couple of museums and you can see vendors at the street level under the building arches and shops at the sides of the building which is perfect for souvenirs! You can find the National Museum of Krakow filled with great art and you can probably view the two large rooms in less than 1 hour. Inside the museum which is on the 2nd floor of the building, so the entrance might be a little tricky to find, there is also a small terrace café, where you can appreciate the view of the square.



STREET ART IN KAZIMIERZ



VIEW OF WAWEL CASTLE FROM THE RIVER

The peculiar thing is that underneath the street level, you will find the Rynek Underground museum, a hi-tech museum that opened not too long ago in 2010 after they discovered tunnels in an excavation in 2005. There seems to be a maximum number of occupants at a time, so make sure you write your name in the list, and they will give you a time slot. We were running out of time, so I didn't get to experience Rynek Underground museum, but reviews were pretty good, and it gives an oversight of the history of the city and its culture.

Depending on the season you are thinking of going, the square will have different activities planned. As the cold approaches central Europe so does the Christmas spirit. The typical Christmas markets, warm gluhwein - a spiced warm wine, local artisan crafts, vendors and street food flood the market square. Music fills the streets and the place is buzzing with people wanting to enjoy the Christmas spirit despite the cold.

The University is just a few streets away from the main square. The free guided walking tours also take you there and explain the history of the Krakow University while walking around some of its premises. Founded in 1364, the second largest University in central Europe (after Prague), also known as Jagiellonian University, honors incredible alumni such as Copernicus, two Nobel Prize literature recipients, and Pope John II.

You can actually walk in front of the Bishop's Palace gardens which is

about a 5-10min walk from the main square, the second largest palace in Krakow after Wawel and famous its "papal window" and for it being the residence of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla before he became Pope John II.

The Wawel Castle is also walking distance from the city center. It is worth the walk up the Wawel Hill since the castle represents several architectural styles that are typical in central Europe: a mesh of medieval, renaissance and baroque styles. The once residential castle is now one of the most important art museums in Poland. It is also important because it is a center for the conservation of art pieces. Unfortunately for me, you needed a special ticket on the Sunday that we went because it was open and free to the public. The old historic free walking tour finishes here, which is perfect if you take the early tour, so you can now go inside the church located at the top of Hill and enjoy the museum.

As far as restaurants around the historical center, I encourage you to go make reservations at the restaurants that are on the main streets that lead to the square. You cannot go wrong! Food is incredible, inexpensive fancy food, we were extremely impressed with the ambiance of the restaurants. I had never had polish food before and I was delighted! Try local beers, pierogis, Zurek, soup in rye bread, and meats that are well prepared and always with a touch of something sweet.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KRAKOW ART GALLERY



CLOTH HALL IN THE MAIN SQUARE AT CHRISTMAS TIME



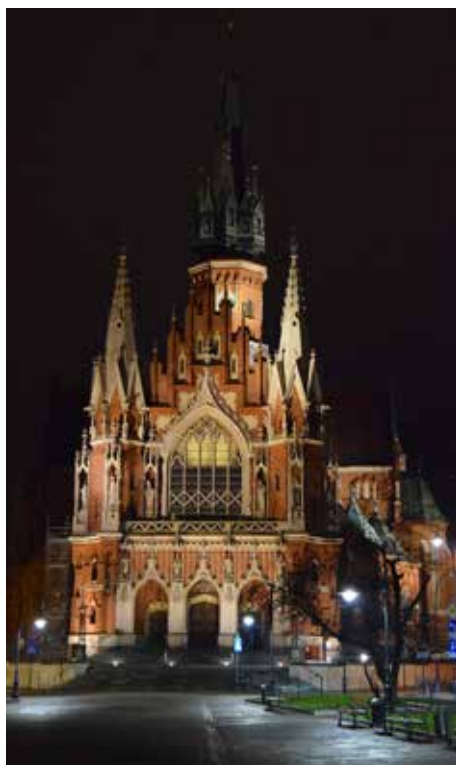
WAWEL ROYAL CASTLE AND ROYAL CHURCH



FOLKLORE LOCAL STREET MUSICIANS



THE OLD SYNAGOGUE, KAZIMIERZ



ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH

### KAZIMIERZ:

Kazimierz was founded by King Casimir III, the same king who founded the University and built the Castle, and it is known for its Jewish community, history, and culture. I believe it is important to know the history of such a remarkable district since it will play an important part in World War II. Jewish and Polish lived peacefully side by side in Kazimierz when it was first founded. In the 15th century, Jewish prosecution began across Europe, and Krakow was no exception. They built walls around the city and was thus known as the Jewish City. The walls were only surrounding part of the district, but more than half of its inner population lived within the walls. Jewish scholars and artists lived here, and it became the center of the religious and the cultural Jewish community.

At one point in time, there were over 120 synagogues in Kazimierz. Some of them are still there and are worth the visit to appreciate the architecture both from the exterior and interior. You can visit the Old Synagogue which is the oldest synagogue in all of Poland and is now part of the Jewish History Museum, exhibiting Jewish life and culture. The High Synagogue which has photographic exhibits of which some are permanent, some are temporary as well as other exhibits. There is also quite a large bookstore inside where you can find books if you're interested in the Jewish culture, tradition or World War II. There's also the Remah Synagogue, located in the center of the district and a good

start point for a walking tour if you're going by yourself with no guide on 40 Szeroka St. The Old Jewish Cemetery is located right next to it and is visible through the gates and walls as you walk around the block. Many tombstones were hidden and saved in the basement of the Synagogue, so Nazi's couldn't sell them or place them as paving stones at the entrance of death camps.

When Krakow was acquired by Austria in the 18th century, Kazimierz became a district of Krakow, and was no longer an independent city, many rich families left the overcrowded district center and moved to Podgorze, a nearby district across the river. During World War II, Podgorze was turned into a ghetto, overcrowded. Unfortunately, most people were either killed when the ghetto was liquidated or got sent to the death camps.

You can walk across the Vistula River towards Podgorze, a beautiful walk across one of the several bridges that connects with the center of Kazimierz. We crossed with the walking tour and had enough time to take great pictures from the bridge. The great St. Joseph's church is located here. You can walk around Podgorze, where the old ghetto was established. There are touching inscriptions at street level in some buildings that still remain standing. You can also find the last fragments of the remaining part of what used to be the old ghetto walls at 25 Lwowska St. and 62 Limanowskiego St.

In 1941, the borders of the Podgorze ghetto were closed and over 15,000



Jewish were confined to 320 buildings where 3,000 used to live, centered around the Peace Square. The ghetto was exterminated in 1943. The peace square, now named Plac Nohaterow Getta, hosts a monument honoring the ghetto victims, giant bronze chairs, yes, you can sit on them and take a picture. In the corner of the square where the chairs are located, you can still see the only Pharmacy run by a Polish man named Tadeusz Pankiewicz, that provided all kinds of help to the people in the ghetto as well as a cover for the Polish resistance that tried to help Jews in the ghetto. It has now become a tiny museum honoring the hero and his personnel, but I didn't get to go inside because it had already closed. I recommend checking times online, as it depends on the day, but it's usually open every day till 5 pm.

In the eastern side of the district, you will find Schindler's Factory and the Museum of Modern Art which in my opinion was not worth the time since it was extremely arbitrary

art. Personal recommendation to visit Schindler's Factory, now an interactive museum. Famous for Steven Spielberg's movie Schindler's List in 1993, an event that has boosted tourism in Kazimierz. The museum is pretty extensive, and goes over life in Krakow before it became the Nazi headquarters outside German territory, where Nazi's were deployed to the city, how life was during these hard years, what was Oskar Schindler's role, what inner battles and struggles were going on during the time and all the political movements around important events. Excellent museum for World War II lovers.

There is so much to see, it's almost overwhelming to decide what museums you want to visit. Most of the smaller museums we ran into while we were walking around. I would suggest doing the walking tours (it's a must!!) and then you can plan to go back and see what you enjoyed. I would recommend to just get lost in the streets of Kazimierz and get

seduced by the ambiance of the streets, the excellent Jewish restaurants, the new artsy café's and lounges, the bohemian lifestyle, the local stores and street art, the respect for the culture and the history of its buildings. A piano bar, where your tables used to be old sewing machines, or an old Jewish house, where every room is kept as it once was and has lounge style seats in each room making it a unique and cozy bar.

Highly recommend traditional Jewish restaurants, Klezmer Hois or Starka, at Josepha 14 St. are excellent options, where they serve their own flavored Vodka. Ask for recommendations to your server, they will suggest certain vodkas to accompany certain foods. Call in advance to make reservations. Tip: if you didn't make reservations, still go to the restaurant, they only book every table once a night, so you might still get a table if people are leaving at the time you walk in.



OSKAR SCHINDLER'S DESK, LOCATED IN THE SCHINDLER'S FACTORY MUSEUM



POLISH DINNER AT STARKA RESTAURANT

**WIELICZKA SALT MINES :**

Good for half a day trip. Either plan it in the morning or around lunchtime, otherwise it gets too crowded with tourist buses that get dropped off. You can go by public transport, but its only 20-25 minutes by taxi which is inexpensive, although the tour buses take you there too. Opened in the 13th century, they have stopped producing salt in 2007 but are currently under renovations. It is one of the world oldest salt mines operating still. Underground chambers, lakes, art and a way of life. Part of the UNESCO World heritage. Do not go if you can't go downstairs. You need to go down over 300 steps of stairs to get in, don't worry, the elevator takes you up! Very well organized and the entrance already comes with a tour included.

**AUSCHWITZ:**

Plan for almost a day tour. You will find some tours combine with the salt mines, but it ends up being a 12h day. I preferred to explore the city and go to the Salt Mines on my own, so I wouldn't be rushed. We didn't go to Auschwitz because we had already seen a camp when my friend and I lived in Germany, and as we were on a tight schedule, we opted not to go. I would suggest taking a bus tour because it is over an hour and a half away from the city. If you know you are going in advance, check their website to book a guide online. They have limited spaces. It is a shocking and emotionally sad journey. There is a museum included once you get inside.

I was impressed by this country, its history, and its culture. I didn't know about Krakow, it's well-dressed men, beautiful women, polite society, and impressive food. I will go back. 🎲



ONE OF THE LARGEST CHAMBERS IN WIELICKZA SALT MINES DEDICATED TO ST. KINGA



ST. KINGA'S CHAPEL



SUNSET IN VISTULA RIVER

# Traveling Through Brazil & Peru

By Ben & Bridget Burris

## BRAZIL – MANAUS, BARCELLOS AND THE JUNGLE!

It's been a lifelong dream of mine to go Peacock Bass fishing on the Amazon River. This year I finally got the chance! We flew out of Miami to Manaus on American Airlines where we were met by our guides and taken to a local hotel. We took a commuter flight from Manaus to Barcellos where we boarded the Blackwater Explorer – the boat we would live on for the next week while traveling the Rio Negro up towards the equator. The Blackwater Explorer is awesome, holds up to 16 fishermen and has an incredible crew to take care of everything you could need. Though Bridget, the kids and I were not their typical clientele, the guides and crew took excellent care of us and spent a good deal of effort making sure the kids had a great time.

The fishing was fantastic. Peacock Bass are everything you've heard they are – numerous, relentless and beautiful. Typically we would take two small boats for the family each day. I'd leave early to fish and Bridget and the kids would join

me later in the other boat for some family fishing time. In this way I was able to get my fishing fix without forcing the family to be out in the heat and sun all day long. It worked extremely well and we all got to do exactly what we wanted to do. About four days into the trip I had to stop fishing for Peacocks. I was bruised from knee to shoulder on my right side, my right arm was numb (when it wasn't burning) and I was truly afraid I would hurt myself if I kept up the 150-200 bass per day pace the guides had me on for four days straight. If I go again I'll do some warmup for several months ahead of time. It doesn't seem like much but with the amount of casting and the aggressive reeling/lure action, the repetitive motion and the furious strikes can take their toll so preparation is a good idea.

The kids enjoyed catching peacock bass but their favorite activity was spending time on one of the many sand bars in the river, swimming and catching piranha. We did all three things in the same area and I was proud of the kids for not buying into the popular, irrational fear of these

infamous fish. Plus, they are quite tasty! We did several shore lunches and had a wide array of fish expertly cooked for us both in the jungle and on the Blackwater Explorer.

At the end of the week the Blackwater Explorer docked in Barcellos and we took a flight back to Manaus where we spent 24 hours before catching the flight to Miami. Since we had time in Manaus we decided to make the most of it. We got to see and feed the pink dolphins, visit a local tribe's traditional village and checked out the fish market in Manaus. All three were awesome and worth the effort should you find yourself in Manaus.

I am so happy we decided to go to Brazil as a family. Though many suggested this was not a trip appropriate for the family, we had a blast and I'm so glad that our kids got the chance to see and experience the Amazon basin for themselves. Don't wait. Go see for yourself and take the family with!

P.S. Acute Angling is who we used for our trip. It was excellent all around. Find them at [acuteangling.com](http://acuteangling.com).





## PERU - LIMA, CUZCO AND MACHU PICCHU

“Trip of a lifetime” is thrown around a great deal. As orthodontists we are very fortunate that we have the time and resources to support our families, support great causes AND to travel the world. Never take that for granted! If you’re looking for an awesome trip for the family we can’t recommend Peru highly enough. Whether you go for a quick trip to Machu Picchu or you take some extra time to see more of Peru, go! We flew out of Orlando through Panama City to Lima on Copa Airlines. Lima is pretty much like any modern city and we didn’t really spend any time there because of this. After spending the night in a hotel right next to the airport we took a Latam Airlines flight to Cuzco. Now, I have to admit to a serious error on my part and a good bit of ignorance at this point in the game. I’d heard of the altitude issues and sickness from people who visit Machu Picchu but I didn’t get it. I’d looked up the altitude of Machu Picchu and it was only about 8000 feet above sea level so I was confused and unconcerned since we spent the week before in Beaver Creek, CO. What I failed to realize is that the jumping off point for just about any trip to Machu Picchu is Cuzco and Cuzco sits at 11,200 feet above sea level and you can certainly feel it! The local tea and pure oxygen are said to help but we didn’t really partake – probably mostly because of my lack of respect and knowledge! I’d certainly plan on doing so for at least the first couple days were I to go again. Sleeping the first night was the biggest issue but after a couple days we acclimated.

Cuzco is a great, historic and interesting city. We thoroughly enjoyed our time exploring the central city (where our hotel was located) as well as the field trips we took to surrounding areas such as the local ruins, the Moray salt pans and the sacred valley. After a few days in Cuzco we took the train to Aguas Calientes –

the town at the foot of the mountain where Machu Picchu is. There are several ways to get to Machu Picchu and many choose to hike overland for several days but we really enjoyed the train. Be sure to get the upgraded tickets that put you at a table in a car with huge windows on the sides and top as it is certainly worth the extra money to get to see the scenery on the way. Once in Aguas Calientes we boarded a bus that took us up close to Machu Picchu. After a week-long buildup in Peru and a lifetime before that I was worried that laying eyes on Machu Picchu would be anticlimactic. I am happy to admit that this worry was unfounded. As an avid traveler I’ll admit that some places live up to the hype and others do not... this was much more the former than the latter! We will let the photos speak for themselves though they still don’t do it justice. Suffice it to say that you need to go see this for yourself and take your family with you. I’m interested to see what impact these experiences will have on our kids as they grow and learn. We can only imagine that having a relatively broad experience base and world view will be a huge advantage but time will tell.

Travel well!

P.S. This is who we used to plan our trip. He did an excellent job.

James Gilmore

Travel Advisor

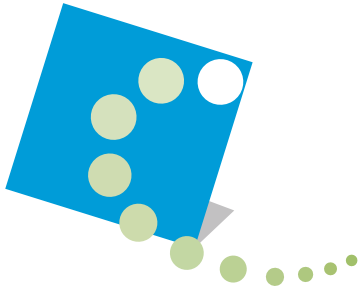
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# PRO TRAVEL TIPS

By ProOrtho Staff

Traveling, especially with family, can be stressful. But this is an artificial construct in our minds! Relax and remind yourself that it used to take a lifetime to cross the globe or even the country. Know that if you travel much at all, delays are inevitable for any number of reasons AND airline employees are there to help you. Getting upset only raises your blood pressure and reduces the chance that you'll get great service. Reduce stress by leaving an hour earlier for the airport than you think you should. Avoiding upsets and conflict with your family is key to getting your trip off on the right foot. Once through security enjoy the show. Airports are a great place to people watch. Print out your itinerary and your tickets before you leave the house. Most of the time the app on your phone will work and it's rare that the airline will make a mistake but when either goes wrong you'll be glad you have a hard copy. Taking photos of everyone's passports and your credit cards, front and back, is a great idea. That way if they are lost or stolen you have the info you need to take action. Remember that airports and airplanes are often cooler than your home so consider adding a jacket or scarf to your carry-on is

a great idea. Hand sanitizer is also a great thing to carry with you but make sure it's a small bottle so you can get it through security. Make sure your Kindle, iPad, phones, etc. are charged and ready to go. It's a great idea to download shows for everyone – you can do so on Netflix, Amazon and on most premium cable apps like HBOGo. Do not put your medicine in your checked luggage. Birth control pills and any daily medication are especially important to keep on you in case your bag gets lost!

Check and see if your local airport has a valet service. Many do and this is a great way to start your trip off stress free. Frequent travelers who are loyal to one airline get premier status that allows them to use shorter lines for check in, check bags for free and get upgrades. Or, of course you can purchase premium/first class seats to get these perks instantly. Some credit cards also offer priority perks and even airline status and are well worth having. Which one depends on what airline you fly. The points guy is a good source of info.

If you travel much at all take the time to get Global Entry certified. The

process used to be arduous but now it's easy and you can do it on a layover in any major airport. With global entry you'll get TSA pre-check almost every time and that's nice! Be sure to add your trusted traveler number to your airline reservation or to your frequent flier account. Clear is a great service and very reasonable depending on how often you fly and where. When approaching the security checkpoint know that you'll need a boarding pass for every passenger and an ID for everyone but children if flying domestic and a passport for everyone if flying international. Have these out and ready so you don't delay your fellow passengers.

General rules for passenger screening on US domestic flights.

Normal screening - you must remove your shoes and any coats, scarves, hats. You must take your laptop and tablets out of your carryon and place each in a separate bin. Remove everything from your pockets and take off your Bluetooth headset. Don't take any liquids, gels or aerosols of more than 3 oz and put the ones you have in a ziplock bag that you remove from your luggage. You don't need your ID or boarding pass out so

put those away. Ideally while standing in line or before you'll get most of this done and be ready to remove shoes and laptops so you don't delay your fellow passengers. Wearing shoes that are easy on off, wearing socks so you don't have to go barefoot, avoiding belts with large metal buckles and generally knowing what is coming and being prepared will make your day easier.

**TSA pre-check** - If your boarding pass says TSA pre-check you don't have to remove your computer or toiletries from your bag. You don't have to remove your shoes. The best bet is to take any jewelry and everything from your pockets and place them in your carry-on baggage.

First class passengers and frequent fliers with top-tier status get access to airline lounges. These are quite useful and convenient and it's a good idea to search the airports you'll be traveling through to find out what lounges there are. Lounge buddy is a great app for that. If you are flying coach and don't have top airline status don't worry as many credit cards will get you into various lounges. Priority pass is very useful and comes as a perk with several American Express cards. There is a priority pass app that is useful. Also, American Express lounges are becoming more numerous and most cardholders get free admission. Finally, you can pay for a day pass and depending on how long you'll be stuck in an airport this might be worthwhile

since these lounges generally offer food and drinks included in access to the club.

Thoughts about boarding the plane and general courtesy to fellow passengers while flying:

Remember that backpacks stick out behind you so don't forget that when you try to turn in the aisle and smack people in the face. If you can't lift your carry on above your head then check it. Checking baggage is much easier and more courteous than expecting others to do your heavy lifting. The space under your seat is your fellow traveler's foot space. Sometimes passengers want to stuff their belongings below the seat they are sitting on. Don't be that passenger.

Don't use headrests as handles - whether walking down the aisle or getting in or out of your seat, remember that grabbing a headrest and using it like a handle disturbs your fellow passenger. Especially on overnight or international trips when they're trying to sleep. It's much more courteous to put your hands on your armrests to get in and out of your seat or on the overhead bins when walking down the aisle. Use of your tray table, video monitor and seat back pocket impacts the person in front of you. Every time you tap the screen, raise and lower the tray table, or utilize the seat back pocket you are moving the seat of the passenger in front of you so remember to use appropriate force and limit the number of times you perform these tasks.





Infants cry. That's what they do. Understand that the parents are likely much more upset about this fact when traveling with an infant than you are. A great way to make the situation better for everyone is to travel prepared with ear plugs, noise-canceling headphones and a white noise app on your phone AND be sure to smile at the parents or even offer to lend a hand if it's obvious they are in need of one. This is especially nice when a parent is traveling alone with one or more infants or young children.

When in coach remember that there are more arms than armrests. In a three-seat arrangement, traditionally the aisle and window passengers surrender the middle armrests for the person stuck in the middle seat. In a two-seat configuration, we must share or take turns (usually one person ends up predominating). The thing to avoid is allowing our elbow to cross over the armrest and into the ribs of our fellow passenger. This is especially common when using a laptop so remember to be courteous. If you need more room, buy a first class ticket! Parents - especially tall ones - can increase their room in coach by taking the middle seat and putting a child on either side. That way you paid for all three seats and can encroach on them as you like.

Conversation is great when it's mutual but sometimes fellow passengers have work to do or want

to get some rest. Keep this in mind and be sure to carry those noise canceling headsets! Tapping feet to the music, playing music on headsets loudly and excessive fidgeting impacts your fellow traveler.

On overnight/red-eye flights and on international flights it's a good idea to leave your window shade down. This gives your fellow passengers the best chance to sleep. Modern planes regulate light during the flight to minimize jet lag but one passenger opening a window will destroy this attempt to make your journey more pleasant. Also on these sleep intensive flights, it's a good idea to keep conversation to a minimum as voices carry a great deal when passengers aren't moving around or talking much.

Flying commercial means being in a closed space with others for an extended period so avoiding heavy cologne or perfume, foods that are highly aromatic and anything else that will negatively impact your fellow passengers is always a good idea.

When you arrive at your hotel the first thing you should do is secure your valuables and travel documents in your room safe if you aren't going to keep them on your person. Leaving these things lying around your hotel room - even for just a few hours - can have catastrophic consequences. 🗳️



# TRAVELING TO EUROPE

By Ben & Bridget Burriss



In late September and early October, we took the family for a week in Florence and the surrounding area. We flew Norwegian Air from Orlando to London Gatwick and can't say enough good things about the flight. The first-class cabin is much like an upgraded domestic first class cabin and for the price, we were blown away by the value. We plan on using Norwegian often in the future when going to Europe. We had a fantastic time and highly recommend a European trip for travelers of all ages. Here are the highlights:

## FLORENCE HIGHLIGHTS

We stayed at the Palazzo Vecchietti Suites and the location was perfect. The Piazza della Repubblica is less than a block from the hotel offered a convenient place for the kids to run around at any time day or night - they loved the carousel and the street performers. Everything we wanted to do in Florence was a short walk from the hotel and our trip was built around that fact. We used Italy Luxury Tours to plan our activities, transport us and provide local guides.

**PISA** - We did a day trip to Pisa on our first day in Florence. The hour and a half car ride gave an opportunity for napping since we were all jet lagged so that was nice but we had no problem staying awake once we arrived. Unlike many famous places we have visited the tower lives up to expectations and we had a blast taking the kids up to the top. Be sure to reserve your time ahead and show up at your appointed time as they are serious about who gets to go up.

**COOKING CLASS** - This was a big hit with everyone. The kids especially enjoyed "getting to do stuff" instead of just watching. There were 6 of us so we did a private course

but they have group classes as well. The chef was incredibly good at engaging the family, teaching as well as being an excellent cook. We learned a great deal that we use at home and we made a family memory that will last a lifetime. In Tavola Cooking courses is who we worked with.

**SAN GIMIGNANO** - This little town was one of our favorite parts of the entire European trip. Picturesque, clean, not overrun with people and tons to see and do. We spent a half day here but we should have spent the day or even spent the night. There are some great little hotels there and next time we go we will SFSU one night in San Gimignano. This little city is fantastic and embodies the image we had in our heads of a quaint Italian town set among vineyards. There is a good deal to do and next time we travel to Florence I bet we spend one night in San Gimignano. The kids had a blast walking around town. There is a world-famous gelato shop, some great local artists selling original watercolors and oil and some excellent photo opportunities.

From San Gimignano, we went to a winery where we learned about wine and vinegar making in the region. This was not our favorite part of the trip and we wouldn't do it again but the food was good and the experience pleasant.

**WINE** - Local wines are plentiful, cheap and fantastic (except at the winery tour).

**VINEGAR** - the vinegar is an experience in itself and worth investigating. There are a myriad of options. Try them all.

**SIENA** - Worth the trip for sure to see the site of the horse racing in the central square as well as walking the streets. We enjoyed our half day there.

**FOOD TOUR** - We has a guide for a food tour of Florence and it was another

highlight. Truffles, pastries, coffee, wine, cheese and a wide array of pastas along with some insight into local history made for a great half day. The Mercato Centrale was fanatic and the kids had a blast exploring. We gave them a handful of euros and sent them off to buy chocolate. They had to figure it out or do without chocolate so guess what happened? Great life lessons...

**LEATHER GOODS** - next to the Mercato Centrale is a labyrinth of vendors selling leather goods among other things. Beware the famous “double-sided leather” which is how local vendors embellish unlined leather goods. Of course everyone has their own taste but the best leather goods we found by far (and we looked at every stall and store) was Adriano Firenze. We bought bags for ourselves and our friends and ordered our Christmas gifts from Adriano as well.

Letting the kids range and engage was a big part of having them in Europe. They are 8 and 9 and though our tendency is to limit them, every time we give them latitude we are shocked by how capable they are. Mark Twain once said “Never let school get in the way of a good education” and we couldn’t agree more. The experience and confidence they gained is invaluable and will serve them well.

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*“The richness of the history and culture in Florence are incredible and reminds us of how young a country the US is.”*

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We picked up several original pieces of art in Florence and love having these little reminders of our trip displayed in our home. There are styles to fit all tastes and budgets.

The richness of the history and culture in Florence are incredible and reminds us of how young a country the US is. Whatever your interest you can find what you’re looking for. We particularly enjoyed learning about the Medici in their hometown.

The cathedrals are fantastic and numerous but honestly after you’ve seen a few hundred you’ve seen them all... We hit the major ones but left the others alone. We try hard not to do the obligatory just because everyone else does – especially with the kids along.

Not far from our hotel is the famous Il Porcellino. Be sure to stop by and touch the snout for luck and put a coin in the pig’s mouth to see how it falls. The kids loved it.

Ponte Vecchio is the world-famous bridge in Florence lined with jewelry stores and surrounded by all other forms of shops. The views are great, the people watching entertaining and we even picked up a few things we couldn’t live without.

Pay attention to the traffic signs in Florence and you’re in for a treat. There’s a Banksy style graffiti artist who defaces signs in interesting ways.

**DAVID** - No trip to Florence is complete without seeing David. It’s as impressive as you can imagine and mind-blowing to think that one man carved this masterpiece without modern tools or much planning. It was interesting to see the statue in person, note the strangeness of proportions and wonder if it was intentional (and why). Another memory the kids won’t soon forget.

**UFFIZI MUSEUM** - A must and you can spend a great deal of time here if art is your thing. Know that David is in a different museum and you’ll want to see both. Having our 8 and 9-year-olds with us was challenging but we solved this by taking them to see Botticelli’s works and then I took them out for gelato and carousel rides while Bridget and her mom explored the museum more thoroughly. The kids were impressed seeing the Birth of Venus and they were delighted to inform me that



Venus came from Uranus... They thought this part of mythology was particularly fun to tell me and I don't care as long as they are taking an interest!

At the end of the week, we sent Bridget's parents and our kids home and boarded the high-speed train from Florence to Venice.

**VENICE HIGHLIGHTS**

**TRAIN TO VENICE** - We enjoyed the train ride and thought the extra cost for business class well worth it though we hear coach is more than acceptable.

The grand canal was bigger, more impressive and much busier than we imagined. We got a solid eyeful on the water taxi ride from the train station to our hotel. We stayed at the Baglioni Luna Hotel and were very happy with the accommodations but the location was the best part of this hotel. The entrance to St Mark's Square was a few paces away and we spent a good deal of time there. It wasn't what we expected exactly but the square and all its flourishes exceeded expectations. The cathedral was interesting in the way that all of them are. Probably our favorite time on St Mark's

square was when we sat at an outside table with a view of the Grand Canal, listened to the bands playing on the square and watched the people go by. We particularly enjoyed watching one of the many rose salesman ply his trade by "giving" a flower to a lady passing by and then demanding payment from her companion. We watched for a couple hours and never got tired of it.

Venice's commerce area is Mercati de Rialto and like just about everything else, it is in easy walking distance of the hotel. We enjoyed just walking around and people watching. The fish market was particularly enjoyable but know that it's not open on Sunday or Monday so plan accordingly (and eat steak instead of seafood on Monday!)

While walking the narrow streets of Venice it's easy to follow the crowd and take the same routes over and over but we'd encourage you to intentionally explore the less traveled streets. You never know what you'll find.

**GONDOLAS AND WATER TAXIS** - We did a gondola ride because that's what you do but honestly we enjoyed the water taxis

much more. Both are heavily regulated, protected and very expensive. A short water taxi or gondola ride cost us more than the flight from Venice to Paris but when in Rome... or in this case Venice, both are worth doing.

*“Three days is plenty of time to stay in Venice in our opinion as long as you stay in the heart of the city so you can explore by waking.”*

**MURANO** - This little island is a must see. We did a day of island hopping via water taxi and started with the glassmaker's shops on Murano. The island is beautiful, the shops lining the canal picturesque and Bridget found a few things that she just couldn't live without. It's fun having some



glass pieces to remind us of our time in Italy.

BURANO - We'd never heard of this island until we visited but we really enjoyed our time there. Burano is known for cookies and lace and we tried a bit of both. Great photo opportunities so come prepared.

RESTAURANTS – We tried several and they were all great. It's hard to go wrong but you'll want to make reservations ahead of time.

We took a day trip to see Padua and Treviso and we wouldn't visit either town again or recommend that others take the time to do so.

Three days is plenty of time to stay in Venice in our opinion as long as you stay in the heart of the city so you can explore by wading. It's worth the cost to stay in a great location as transportation costs will kill you otherwise. We took a water taxi to the airport and caught an EasyJet flight to Paris. We were surprised by how easy and inexpensive our trip was. In Paris, we used Uber to get to the hotel and around in general. We love Uber because there is no language barrier, the transaction happens automatically and it's highly unlikely that your driver will take you the long way to pad his fare. Taxis in Paris not so much...

### PARIS HIGHLIGHTS

We stayed in the Shangri-La hotel just across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower. We've stayed in Shangri-La hotels all over the world and they never disappoint. Having a view of the Tower from our room made the two days we spent in Paris seem like much more.

Montmartre, the hill upon which Sacre Coeur sits, is a must and we spent a morning there mostly looking at all the original art by local artists. As is our custom we took a bit of Paris home with us!

Arc de Triomphe is another icon of the city or lights and a walk down Champs Elysees is never disappointing with all the people watching and chic shops.

No trip to Paris is complete without visiting the Eiffel Tower and, in addition,

there are two restaurants to choose from if you plan ahead. This time we chose Victor Hugo's - a Michelin starred eatery with great service and an unmatched view.

Notre Dame and Sainte-Chapelle are not too far from the Eiffel Tower and we'd recommend both despite my lack of affinity cathedrals.

We decided to take a bicycle rickshaw at one point during our trip and learned a valuable lesson - be sure to read the fine print on the price list (prices are for one passenger) and agree upon a total fee before sitting down. Small stuff but annoying. Oh well, education is expensive.

The Louvre and Il Jaconde (Mona Lisa) are something we never tire of and worth the trip downtown. You could spend weeks in The Louvre so pick your strategy of what to see and plan on coming back again.

We took the high-speed train from Paris to London and again it was a very pleasant experience. The accommodations and food in business class were worth every dime and we plan on utilizing the train system much more on our next European excursion. Uber in London was as expected and we spent the next couple days at The Luton Hoo with our friends from The Invisible Orthodontist. Bridget and I talked to a fantastic group of orthodontist and team members about how to improve our customer service and patient experience in an ever-changing world. Can't say enough good things about our British colleagues.

As you may have guessed this entire European trip was created around the speaking engagement in the U.K. Honestly we had no intention of going to Iceland but while searching for return flight from London we discovered that Iceland Air's first class cabin (again it's like a domestic first class, not a lie flat) was very reasonably priced and they allow up to a ten day stopover in Iceland for no additional charge. This made visiting Iceland a no-brainer! We hired Nine Worlds to plan our Iceland adventure and were well satisfied with the results.

### ICELAND HIGHLIGHTS

Upon landing at KEF airport, we were met by a driver and taken to the Blue Lagoon hot spring spas. It was an interesting experience and worth the trip but a few hours is plenty of time there. After hitting the springs (and running into an orthodontist and his family) we had dinner at the onsite restaurant which was very good. It's hard to go wrong with seafood or lamb in Iceland!

From the Blue Lagoon, our driver took us 2.5 hours along the coast to Skalakot Country Lodge. This hotel is a working sheep and horse farm and the owner/operator is a true craftsman. He built the hotel and you can see the work of a master in every stick of wood and every tile. The food and service are first class and they have a nice selection of wines.

We were amazed at the number of sheep in Iceland and how much sheep influence the people and the economy. Again the lamb is fantastic. The next day we went for a horseback ride to a local waterfall and did some hiking. The views are fantastic and the landscape was unlike anything we'd seen before.





Waterfalls are a dime a dozen in Iceland and each more beautiful than the next.

The following day a local guide picked us up in a massive customized 4WD vehicle and took us to hike a glacier. This was a new experience, to say the least and it was interesting to learn how the glaciers are receding a good deal in the last couple decades. The glaciers grow and shrink as they have for millennia but they are definitely getting smaller of late so you might want to go sooner than later to check them out!

From the glacier, we took the short drive to the black sand beach. The beach is black and more pebbles than sand because Iceland is a relatively young piece of real estate and there has not been time yet for water and waves to do their work on the land. The rock formations of the beach are stunning and represent all the different crystalline patterns basalt takes on due to varying rates of cooling. If geology is not your thing I'd recommend reading up or watching a few YouTube videos on how volcanic eruptions form land, the Mid Atlantic Rift and basic types of rock because you'll get way more out of your trip if you have some basic knowledge.

The next day we drove I overland in the guide's vehicle to visit Thor's Garden - a favorite camping and hiking spot among locals. You need a serious vehicle to get here and it takes some time to cross all the rugged terrain and rivers but we highly recommend the effort. After a great day in the wild, our guide drove us back to Reykjavik where we stayed at the Canopy by Hilton hotel in the heart of downtown. We wouldn't recommend staying there unless you plan to party into the wee hours and not get much sleep because it's LOUD. We are prepared travelers and we had our white noise app and foam earplugs but it's still incredibly loud. The service and the room and the food and the wine selection at the hotel were excellent though. The noise wasn't the end of the world but I'd have done it differently if I'd known better. Honestly, there's not much to downtown Reykjavik anyway.

The next day we drove to the airport and took a 4 hour, private helicopter tour. It was certainly expensive but we could have cut our Iceland trip to 3 days total if we'd known what we are doing and how good the helicopter tour was going to be. As an aside, we are taking the kids to Iceland this summer on the way to Europe and have an awesome itinerary planned now that we have some context. The helicopter covered a tremendous amount of ground and landed three times for us to get out and have a look. The landscape was literally unbelievable - photos and even video don't come close to doing it justice. It would take weeks if not months to do what we did in 4 hours if you tried to do it via car and hiking. I cannot recommend the helicopter tour strongly enough - hotels and food and everything else in Iceland is very expensive so cut down on your days then spend that money on a helicopter tour.

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*“The landscape was literally unbelievable - photos and even video don't come close to doing it justice. It would take weeks if not months to do what we did in 4 hours if you tried to do it via car and hiking. I cannot recommend the helicopter tour strongly enough ”*

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We did the Inside the Volcano tour and it was interesting. The wind was blowing 30 knots, it was cold and raining and the “45-minute walk” was more like an hour

and a half hike each way but it was worth the effort to go into a volcano. I wouldn't recommend this for young kids or older folks as it is not an easy excursion.

Greenhouses are plentiful in Iceland - flowers, tomatoes, and other vegetables do very well because of the cheap, renewable electricity and abundance of fresh water. Most greenhouses utilize geothermal heat - another big advantage. We did lunch at a tomato greenhouse and it was awesome to see the details of planting, the use of bumblebee colonies, upkeep of the vines and all that. A massive undertaking run like a Swiss watch and well worth the time it takes to see.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

**TRIPADVISOR** - If you don't use it, start. This app has "things to do" in every city and is a great source of items for your itinerary.

**POWER CONVERTERS** - It's vital to make sure you have them - many converters have multiple plugs that will work in just about any country. We take them with

us from the US but we are in the habit of buying a multi-port USB charger in the country we are visiting for our phones, iPads, and kindles.

**CONNECTIVITY** - Italy, France, and the U.K. have high-speed internet and WiFi just about everywhere. Iceland not so much outside of Reykjavik.

**PHOTO APPS** - We use a couple different apps to get our photos from our phones to our walls at home. We like both of these. If you have better ones please educate us. Mixtiles and Keepsake are the apps we use.

**CURRENCY** - Before leaving home get your local bank to exchange money for you if you want some cash (and you will). While in country, use your ATM card or credit card to draw the local currency at any of the plentiful ATMs. You'll get the best exchange rate this way - much better than currency exchange places. If this is not possible then in Italy the local post office is your best bet for currency exchange.

The weather at the end of September in Florence and Venice was not overly warm

in the evening and a couple days when it rained we were glad we had our gear for Iceland with us. Same goes for the U.K. I thought it was very pleasant but Bridget needed a jacket most of the time. Something to keep in mind when taking advantage of the colder season to visit when things aren't so crowded.

Google translate is a great app to use and you can download a language for use offline. Cell phone coverage was great everywhere we went and it was 10 dollars a day extra (for days we used our phones) on AT&T to access our normal data plan in any of these countries.

Booking tickets for major attractions in Europe like The Louvre and the Eiffel Tower are best done ahead of time and easy to do on sites like Viator. As mentioned TripAdvisor is indispensable for things to do and ratings. Download the app and do your homework before going. Photos posted by visitors are much more telling than the official photos.

Get out there and have fun! 🎲





# TRAVELING TO SPAIN

By Dr. David Majeroni

My wife and I are lucky to be around so many great lovers of life. The inspiration for this specific trip started from one of my patients. He's constantly doing these baller trips like going to Saint-Tropez, France or sailing the Aegean Sea. So I asked him, "Hey, we're going to Spain, where should we go?" He said, "Without a doubt, go to the Costa Brava."

Costa Brava is north of Barcelona up to the France border, and it's on the Mediterranean. We flew into Barcelona and rented a car (Sixt). Be sure to come prepared with an international drivers license, you can get one from AAA.



Me and My daughter in front of our Spanish home (600 years old).

When we landed, we drove an hour north to a 300-acre winery called Mas Pages that also acts as a Bed and Breakfast. There's even a pool on site. Mas Pages is run by a Belgium couple. The husband was a CEO of a big company and when they both retired, they wanted a new project so they started a winery. Once they realized how long the winery business cycle was they decided they

needed some additional income, so they turned their 600 year-old landowner home into a bed and breakfast. We stayed there for 8 nights and used it as our base camp for day trips and it was amazing.

They had an incredible breakfast with fresh-squeezed orange juice and garden fresh tomatoes that were insanely good. They would also have chefs come in and cook a gourmet dinner in the evening. Dinner in Spain starts between 8:00 and 10:00 at night and it's a two-to-three hour event. It's amazing, totally different than the dinners here in the states. The first night was filled with laughter and fun meeting the other couples that were staying. Most places in Spain that are high-end do not allow children but this place allowed us to bring our daughter. She ended up being the little star of the house.



Fresh fruits and tomatoes picked from their garden every morning.

Day two we headed off to a beach 10 minutes away called La Fosca. La Fosca is a white sand beach with Spanish families everywhere. There's a two-mile walk along the water that is really cliffy and mountainous. As you follow the trail it goes by some Roman ruins and we were the only one out there. There were these

hidden beaches along the path and you could walk down these beaches and have it all to yourself. It was unbelievable.



The trail along the water from La Fosca. On the upper right and to the left are Roman ruins you can climb on.

We also went to the Town of Begur, it is a very small town 20 minutes away. It's on a hill that overlooks the ocean, and there's a lookout point with a castle tower that's 2,000 years old. The streets in Begur are really small and really narrow. It's a medieval town.

In Begur, there are a couple beaches. There's one called Sa Tuna. You drive down this canyon for 20 minutes and you arrive at this opening in the canyon with the most incredible beach. You can park on the side, pay 3 dollars and go down the canyon to the beach and snorkel and jump off the cliffs. The water is just perfectly warm. Going to Spain at the end of August is the best time.



Sa Tuna beach - down a canyon, one of the coolest beaches I've ever been to. It's about 40 yards wide with large flat round rocks.





View from castle looking out over the town of Begur



Narrow street in Begur

Day four, we went to the medieval town of Pals. In Pals, the whole town is medieval and nothing has really changed. There are other surrounding villages within this entire area another one we enjoyed was Siurana, Alt Empordà. The uniqueness of this area, in contrast to other more well-known areas, is that there are so few people. You have these villages almost to yourself. You can just arrive in the town and find things to do, it doesn't have to be overly planned. Each town with its history takes an afternoon to explore fully. We would typically get up around 10 am, have breakfast, go out and explore,

come back around 3 pm for our daughters hour nap, then go back out around 5 pm, typically to a local beach. There are so many beaches. Here are some of our favorites: Sa Tuna, Cala Aiguablava, Tamariu, Platja d'es Codolar, Playa Les Muscleres (which is in front of an ancient Roman city). These beaches almost never have lifeguards and little rules unlike in America. People are super clean and respectful in Spain so the beach culture is outstanding. There is almost always cliff jumping, snorkeling and ice cream at the beach bar. Then we would go to the town centers around 9 pm, eat and walk around and return home around 11 pm or 12 pm. Kids are out everywhere at these hours as this is the culture.



Walking at night in Palafrugell - life begins around 8 pm and doesn't really get going until 10 pm or 11 pm.



Castle at Tossa De Mar - This town is remote and propped up on the side of the mountain.

We then went further north to a city called Empuriabrava. Empuriabrava is the Venice of Spain, it's one of the

largest cities on water. It wasn't nearly as romantic as Venice, but it was nice to see how they do boat life in Spain.

The entire Costa Brava is geographically divided. There are massive steep mountains everywhere that divide villages and beaches. Over the furthest North Mountain Range is a charming coastal village called Cadaques.

Cadaques is a beautiful fishing village that is isolated. Long ago pirates would attack and plunder the village so the town never grew to more than a dozen people or so. As the government became stronger, the pirates no longer attacked and over the last 200 years its grown into a beautiful quaint fishing village with amazing beaches.

We'd walk the streets at night and families are everywhere with kids running around. Little kids are selling things on the streets because families are on vacation and in the evening around 10 pm we'd buy little bracelets or whatever from these kids. The people of that area are just wonderful and are so nice. We really got into drinking coffee, overlooking the water, and having great conversations.



The local kids make and sell their crafts. This is their lemonade stands!!!

We spent three nights right next to Salvador Dali's epic house. Salvador Dali was a crazy, ahead-of-his-time artist that put large eggs on his roof. He was into things that portrayed fertility so his pool was designed in the shape of, well, I'll let

your imagination go there. He's just crazy, tripped out. He lived in this town called Portlligat and was practically the only one there for a hundred years. We stayed at the same hotel that the friends of Salvador Dali would stay at. It's literally a hundred feet from Salvador Dali's house.



At the pool of Salvador Dali. He was extremely eccentric.



Taking us into caves. The fisherman's boat we chartered knew the coast well.

We chartered a private boat out to the furthest point into the Mediterranean called Cross de Cruz. The boat had no life preservers. The guy was a fisherman, smoking and missing half of his teeth, and he took us out on his paddling boat. You go out there and you see the coast and the water's just emerald.

You can have him drop you off at a private or hidden beach you see along the way, but good luck on getting back. Since our daughter wasn't even two, we would make her these little play pools from the rocks or sand.



We found a great beach. The beaches in Spain come in two varieties, rock and sand. This was a rock one, we built a "hot tub" for our daughter to play in because the water can get deep. While we were there a boat came up serving fresh mojitos. He would crush the mint. We talked to him and he was a guy that converted a boat into a concession stand and he would travel up and down the coast going into these coves and serving the people. What a nice life!

We went to a town called Pubol, where Salvador Dali's wife had a castle. The castle, the history of the castle, and what happened there is fascinating. She wanted an Italian castle. Instead, he bought her this castle, and when he bought it, she said, "The only way you can buy me this castle instead of an Italian castle, is if every time you want to visit me you have to ask for permission." It was a really interesting relationship.



Instead of normal fish for the fountain he thought it would be funny if they were piranhas. Salvador Dali was unique...



This is a fountain of an elephant with mosquito legs. This guy was a genius.

There's a museum in Figueres that he designed to be one of the craziest places that you've ever walked into, almost like a Disneyland or Willy Wonka palace. He was so ahead of his time. He was into 3D art and virtual reality. The guy was just a genius. There's even a room he made of Mae West. When you're up close it looks like furniture, but when you step 50 yards back you can see how the pieces make a picture of Mae West. This museum is also where he was buried.

Then we drove down to Barcelona where we remained for the rest of the trip. We stayed at a hotel called La Praktika Bakery Hotel, so it's a bakery on the first floor and up above is the hotel. When you're sleeping, you can smell the bakery and the breakfast was phenomenal.

The best thing to do in Barcelona is to take a private tour. It's well worth the money to have a tour guide drive you around, drop you off in front of all the sites to see then pick you up once the sightseeing was over. We spent a couple days on the beach in Barceloneta, which is a new post-Olympic town.



One of Dali's masterpieces. This was built at the turn of the century. He could foresee that the cars being made in America would eventually need a place to park so he built a parking garage in this building. Way ahead of his time. This was early 1900's. Look at the curvature to the building. He was incredible.



Our return flight got canceled so they rebooked us from first class to coach because I had to get back for patients. It was a long 13 hours, we almost lost our minds!!!



La Sagrada Familia is a masterpiece designed by Antoni Gaudí. He designed the glass to represent nature. You literally feel like you are in a forest when you are in this building. It is an engineering and artistic masterpiece of the world. They have been building this for over 100 years.

Park Guell is another Gaudí masterpiece. He was one of the first to use recycled building materials. Every one of those pieces was collected at night from broken plates, the garbage in the city, and more. This was also one of the worlds first out-of-city developments overlooking the city.



Walking the Gothic part of the city. Eily was mezmorized by it all.



Our tour guide for the city. He was incredible.

Overall we were in Spain for 22 days. I asked a friend to cover for me in case of any patient emergencies and I have a great team to take care of the practice and patients.

Getting away from the practice for longer periods of time is centering. We currently take 16 weeks off a year. We have reversed engineered our life and practice. We start with what we want and then work backwards. My mentor Rael Bernstein taught me to be obsessive about seeing patients, do whatever you can while you are seeing them, same day starts, same day appliance removal, the works. I was lucky enough to do it from day one of opening my practice. I've met many along the way that say they can't do this or that for one reason or another. If you keep telling yourself that then you are right. In my mind, one can do whatever they want.

Also, thanks to Ben for constantly questioning everything we are all doing and for inspiring all of us to really take control of our practices and our lives. 📺



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# Croatia: Jewel of the Adriatic

By Dr. Payam Zamani

*"Croatia is the next great thing. If you have not been here, you are ... an idiot!"*

These were the words of the late and great Anthony Bourdain after his adventures in the jewel of the Adriatic Sea. I decided to follow in Bourdain's footsteps this past July.

Before making my way to Croatia, I started my travels in Italy -- admiring the history and ruins of the Roman Empire, driving through the Tuscan hillsides and enjoying truffle dishes and the famous Brunello wine, and finally admiring the beauty and architecture of Florence. I then departed Florence by train to Venice, where I took a cheap flight to Croatia.

My stay in Croatia included 3 nights in Dubrovnik, 3 nights in Hvar, and one full day in Split. The Croatian people were warm, very friendly and excited about the new tourists visiting their country.

The Croatians I encountered were very knowledgeable about world affairs, and eager to share their views about their recent history and the political unrest they endured with their neighbors.

With some of its cities featured in the Game of Thrones megahit show, Croatia has become a popular travel destination and has been hit with a massive wave of tourists in the past several years. Croatia has experienced an annual 10% increase in tourism that has resulted in improved infrastructure and economic growth, but which has also led to a severe increase in costs for both locals and tourists. Despite the crowds, it is still well worth the visit.

In particular, I would start out in Dubrovnik. Nicknamed the "Pearl of the Adriatic," Dubrovnik is located in the most southern tip of the Dalmatian Coast and is easily accessible through its airport just 30 minutes away from the main tourist attraction: the Old Town.

## WHAT TO DO IN DUBROVNIK:

The Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the main

attractions of Dubrovnik. It is built entirely of white marble and is most famously known as the filming location of King's Landing from the Game of Thrones show.

Even though the old city is filled with tourists, you will be in absolute awe of its architectural splendor once you enter, feeling as if you had just time-traveled back to the medieval times. You need at least one full day to see the Old Town properly and your introduction should begin with the famous ancient city walls walk. No need for a tour of the wall -- just show up at the main wall entrance right next to the Great Onofrio's Fountain and pay the \$30 entrance fee. The wall surrounds the entire city and takes about 1.5 hours to complete, since you will be making plenty of stops to enjoy the most breathtaking views of the sea, ports, beaches and bird's eye view of the old city center. **PRO TIP:** The wall has many steps and no shaded areas, so it may not be enjoyable for very small children or the elderly.



Next, walk the city to explore the many restaurants and bars, and to take in the unique city design. Did I mention that it is made entirely of white marble? And if you are a diehard Game of Thrones fan, you can even sign up for a walking tour of the most iconic show scenes (yes, I traced Cersei Lannister's famous walk of atonement)!

Lastly, enjoy the crystal clear waters by renting kayaks or jet skis from your hotel. If you are a thrill-seeker, you can try cliff diving from Buza restaurant and bar, which is located in a hideaway in the ancient city wall. If you're not too adventurous, you can sit back and watch the cliff divers while enjoying a drink at the restaurant. **PRO TIP:** Take water shoes or swim shoes to enjoy the beaches, since they're rocky!

#### WHERE TO STAY IN DUBROVNIK:

I would recommend staying at a hotel on the peninsula just north of the Old Town. My hotel, Valamar Dubrovnik President Hotel, had absolutely breathtaking views, fewer crowds, access to a private beach, and large swimming pools overlooking the Adriatic Sea. It was an easy 10-minute Uber or shuttle into the Old Town from this location.

#### WHAT AND WHERE TO EAT IN DUBROVNIK:

Eat seafood! You will not be disappointed by the fresh seafood that Dubrovnik has to offer, and there are lots of great places overlooking the sea. Two restaurants that I really enjoyed were Victoria Restaurant and Lounge Bar -- serving Peruvian/Adriatic fusion dishes with an amazing ambiance, and Levanat -- located on a beautiful seaside pathway on the peninsula. Levanat is really best for a sunset drink and some appetizers -- try the grilled squid!

After three nights in Dubrovnik, we took a very comfortable 3 ½ hour ferry to the island of Hvar. **PRO TIP:** Don't wait to book the ferry last minute, as ferry tickets sell out -- in which case you will be forced to take a long bus ride to Split in hopes of finding a ferry.



**WHAT TO DO IN HVAR:**

Hvar is all about scenery, water activities and partying! Indeed, if nightlife is what you are looking for, the famous Carpe Diem party island is a 5-minute boat ride away. (But be warned, expect a lot of 20 something year-olds and a lot of house/dance music.)

The main attractions of Hvar are the green and blue caves that are located on small islands about 45 minutes away by speedboat. The “green cave” was a bit underwhelming for most people as you



pay \$10 to swim in and out of a fairly small and not-so-green cave. Although the “blue cave” is much more popular and beautiful, we opted to skip it as there was a 2-hour wait just to enter the cave by boat (and you can’t swim from the port) -- there were masses of people sitting under a tent waiting their turn to enter.

**PRO TIP:** Rent a private boat (instead of a tour) from your hotel or from one of the many shops in town, which comes with a captain and 12-hour rental time to do whatever you want for the day! We visited five different islands, hung out at various beaches, had lunch and relaxed all on our own time. I recommend visiting Palmizana beach.

Nightlife is also a big part of the experience with Hula Hula Beach Bar and Carpe Diem, but these places attract the “spring-breakers” crowd, which a lot of couples do not find entertaining.

**WHAT AND WHERE TO EAT IN HVAR:**

Just like many other coastal cities, prepare yourself for lots of seafood. Due to the high tourist population of this island, you can still find many international restaurants as well, with most situated in a beautiful plaza or beach-side with outdoor seating. If you visit Palmizana beach, check out Toto’s Restaurant.

In Hvar Town, my favorite meal was at Black Pepper, serving modern Croatian cuisine. We received amazing service in a very warm and unique atmosphere seated in an outdoor stairway surrounded by ancient stonewalls, bougainvillea flowers and colorful window shutters. **PRO TIP:** Try the octopus stew!

**WHERE TO STAY IN HVAR:**

You can really stay anywhere near the town center and have easy access to the main island attractions. I recommend Amfora Hvar Grand Beach Resort. It is located ten minutes walk from the main town center, has great ocean views and is specifically known for their family-friendly pool. Although this is one of the nicest and pricier hotels on the island, don’t expect the most luxurious rooms, as Hvar is still an island and not known for luxury hotels.

There are so many more places in Croatia that we wished we could visit. If you have more time to travel, look into visiting Krka National Park and the majestic waterfalls outside of Split, or even take a quick trip to Montenegro -- a short drive from Dubrovnik. And please feel free to email me at [pz.zamani@gmail.com](mailto:pz.zamani@gmail.com) if you need any more recommendations or have any questions about my travels. Croatia is a beautiful country and Croatians are friendly people -- I hope you’ve been inspired to visit Croatia! 🇨🇷



# Family Fun in Europe!

By Ben & Bridget Burris



There are few things in the world that are better than traveling the world as a family. As orthodontists we have two huge advantages – control over our schedule and funding – that makes family travel very doable. This summer we went to Europe for just under three weeks and had a blast. Instead of just reading about places in geography, social studies and history, our kids get the chance to see these places in person. Not only does this expand their educational perspective but we believe it gives them a larger world view, greater understanding of diverse cultures/belief systems and expands their minds.

We are big fans of self-directed travel. The internet makes it possible to research potential sites, get access to reviews and create an awesome itinerary. We use TripAdvisor and Google to figure out where we will go and where we will stay in a given city or area and then we find local guides to do day trips from our central location. We have had excellent luck finding great places to stay and awesome experiences by relying on the reviews. If a place or event has a ton of reviews then you can usually trust them but a few high ratings doesn't tell much. The other thing to remember is that lower priced places and experiences tend to get higher ratings so depending on what you're after, keep that in mind.



Speaking of lower cost, at 6'5" I'm not much on flying coach on long trips but I'm also not up for paying 6-8 k for a first-class flight from Orlando, FL to Athens, Greece. I just can't bring myself to spend that kind of money on transport and may never be able to – especially when the kids are with us! We have found a solution though. When we visit Europe we fly Norwegian Airlines. They have several flights from the US to Europe and we take their direct flight from MCO (Orlando) to LGW (London Gatwick Airport). Norwegian' first class seats are basically just like US Domestic first class with a little more room and better service. For the 8-hour flight to Europe this is more than enough space, we ride together as a family and the flights don't cost much more than a coast to coast US domestic flight (and sometimes less). While on the subject, Iceland Air has the same setup in their first-class cabin and offers free layovers of up to a couple weeks in Iceland (we did this last year and it was great). Once we get to London, it's cheap to travel around the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean on EasyJet or one of the other discount airlines and the flights are generally less than 2 hours so who cares what seat we get as long as we are all together?

Since we arrive and leave Europe through London we almost always plan a day or two of adventures there. London is a great town and this year we took the kids on a tour of the Houses of Parliament, checked out Big Ben, saw Buckingham Palace, went on the London Eye, attended Beat the Retreat and generally milled around London on foot checking out all it had to offer. We also met some friends and had high tea at the London Ritz. Bridget actually talked me into wearing a coat and tie for the first time in years to do so but it was well worth it!





For this trip we stayed at The Trafalgar St. James London hotel and it was great. We tend to pick our hotels for location more than anything and The Trafalgar was spot on in that respect as well as being a nice place. Staying in London is pricey no matter where you are so you may as well stay close to the stuff you want to see. Speaking of getting around, Uber is fantastic in London as well as most of the rest of Europe. It's pricey but you can maximize your time seeing and doing instead of waiting on public transit options.

After a couple days in London we stayed at a hotel near LHR (London Heathrow Airport) so we could take an early flight out for Athens. It's important for first time visitors to London to realize there are two international airports in London and they are very far from one another. I can't tell you how many horror stories I've heard of people booking flights into one and out of the other in a matter of hours and there is no way you can pull this off. Don't rely on your travel agent to know the difference either as I've heard of agents doing the same to unsuspecting clients. Our flight to Greece on British Airways was uneventful and we arrived in Athens about noon. While in Greece



we joined some friends on a Disney Adventures tour. It's been a very long time since the Burrises have done a group tour that wasn't self-directed but we wanted to spend time with our friends and this was the plan. On the upside we had a fantastic time with our friends, made some new friends and the kids had other kids to play with on the tour. The downside of the Disney Adventures experience is that it was by no means a Disney experience. We live in Orlando, we are season pass holders, we have done the private tours of the parks... we love Disney! BUT I can wholeheartedly say that I do not recommend traveling with Disney Adventures for a litany of reasons. For what we paid we could have stayed in top hotels, eaten at the best restaurants, done several private tours a day and covered the same ground in less than half the time. The hotels Disney Adventures chose ranged from ok to terrible and all shared one common trait – they were miles from where you want to stay in Athens, Santorini and Crete (so at least they were consistent). But enough about that. For obvious reasons I'll skip the review of the hotels and the logistics on the Disney Adventure segment and stick to the things we did that were cool.



Speaking of cool, the Acropolis, the Parthenon and all the other structures surrounding it were well worth seeing. Athens is just a city and didn't offer much other than visiting the Acropolis and eating at restaurants that had a great view of the Acropolis at sunset.

There was a cute little shopping area at the base of the Acropolis called Plaka. The Acropolis Museum is nice but honestly the best Greek collections are in other museums in other European cities. But all that aside it is well worth the trip to Athens to see the birthplace of democracy in person. One more important note... it's vital to stay near where you want to be in Athens because the Greek taxi cab drivers SUCK and Uber isn't allowed.



From Athens we took a bus to Delphi to visit the Temple of Apollo. I've long wanted to go see the place Alexander the Great visited before setting off to conquer the known world. Delphi was interesting and worth the trip. For someone who was obsessed with Greek history and Greek mythology it was cool to stand where it all went down thousands of years ago.

We made our way to Santorini on one of the local airlines. Santorini is as awesome as we have been led to believe and we really enjoyed the island. It's the rim of an old volcano that mostly destroyed itself centuries ago and presents excellent eye candy! Again I would highly recommend staying where you want to be as getting around is not straightforward and walking is a much better option. Every evening we walked to the rim of the caldera and enjoyed the views as a family. The food was fantastic as were the excursions – we cruised the caldera and visited one of the islands in the middle of it, visited a vineyard, visited the black beach, went parasailing and did some flyboarding. All in all a great time! One thing I wouldn't recommend is Akrotiri the so called "Pompeii of Greece". We love some archeological sites but this one was not all it was cracked up to be.



From Santorini we took the fast ferry to Crete. The ferry ride was enjoyable and the ferry certainly was fast! Consider getting upgraded seats – well worth it.

In Crete we enjoyed great weather and a lot of water sports. Mostly we just hung out at the beach and in the water. We skipped most of the official Disney Adventure excursions but we visited some of the small towns and an olive farm which were delightful. We also found some fantastic little restaurants through our usual online research. Overall Crete was great – kinda like the Caribbean is here in the US. From Crete we took a flight to Rome where we spent four awesome days.





Bridget and I visited Rome a couple years ago but we wanted to take the kids to experience one of our favorite cities. We stayed at The Inn at the Spanish Steps because of the location and reviews and we were not disappointed one bit. The family villa we had included a balcony that overlooked the Piazza di Spagna where there was always something going on. One of the great things about Rome is that you can experience so much just walking around. The afternoon we arrived we set out on foot and saw the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, several awesome squares, statues, obelisks, took a carriage ride, saw some great street performers and had a fantastic meal. We have a rule that the kids must try at least one new thing every day we are on a trip and this usually relates to food but not always.

The kids love it and we try to give them as much independence and freedom as humanly possible. It can be stressful to let them range a bit but the rewards are obvious.

The next day we took a guided, private tour of Rome. We hit The Flavian Amphitheater, several churches, and monuments, did a tour of the Vatican grounds, saw St Peter's Cathedral and the Sistine Chapel. Berkeley is quite the little artist and she was even more thrilled than the rest of us for the experience. That night we went for a walk along the Tiber river and enjoyed all the riverwalk had to offer. It's fun to pick a spot and just go see what there is to see.





The next day we took a day trip to Positano on the Amalfi Coast followed by an afternoon visiting Pompeii. Very different places but both incredible in their own right. The time we spent at Positano was delightful as were the views of the Amalfi coast on the trip there. We have decided that a boat trip on the Amalfi Coast is in our near future! But the kids' favorite thing of the entire three-week trip was our visit to Pompeii. They had read about Vesuvius and Pompeii and they were excited about the trip but to see it in person seemed to fire them up even more. We had another private guide who was also an archeologist and teacher and she was fantastic. We couldn't have asked for more! It takes about 3 hours drive to get to Positano and Pompeii but it makes for a great day trip from Rome. If you have more time it would be awesome to stay on the coast and have more time to explore.





We spent the last day wandering Rome and then caught a flight back to LGW where we stayed in a hotel attached to the airport. We flew home on Norwegian the



next morning and that was probably the best international flight we've ever had as a family. I am unsure why but it seemed to pass in the blink of an eye!



It doesn't matter where you go, how long you stay or what you do but traveling with our family is one of the most rewarding things we do. Get out there! Soon your kids will be grown up and have better things to do... 🎲



# The Future Of An Orthodontist: Closing The Loop On Virtual Treatments

By Nick Duncan

It wasn't so long ago that the treatment of an orthodontic patient relied entirely on events that occurred within the practice. From new patient exam to bands off, the vast majority of the 'work' was tied to the practice. Whether we realized it or not at the time, this was a great thing for orthodontists. It was simply a model that was very hard to disrupt. Sure GP's dabbled in orthodontics, but in order to really compete with specialists, they had to make serious adjustments to their practice model before they even started to worry about learning new clinical skills. Similarly, the early orthodontic DSO's struggled with the inevitable reality that so much of their success was dependant on the performance of the specific doctor and team in each clinic.

## INVISALIGN AND WHAT IT CAN TELL US ABOUT THE FUTURE

By now we all know the story of Invisalign. These days most specialists recognize the validity of aligner treatment and are well and truly on the Invisalign wagon, but boy did it take a long time to get here. I remember when my father Dr. Grant Duncan and I launched The Invisible Orthodontist back in 2010 (13 years after Invisalign was created). He would often lecture around the world showing the amazing results he had achieved with Invisalign. The amount of times doctors would put their hands up and proclaim that 'we all know Invisalign doesn't work' less than 10 minutes after seeing the results of cases that had in fact 'worked' was truly a sight to behold. I was new to the orthodontic industry at the time and so to me, it was simply confusing. We would be having dinner

after an event and I would ask him, "Hey Dad, when that guy said that Invisalign can't treat open bites right after you showed an open bite case, what was he talking about?" He would usually just laugh and give me the same answer, "It's just how disruptive technology works Nick. Ten percent of people will get it the first time they hear it while the other 90 percent, no matter how hard you try, won't believe it until it's too late". He would then often give other examples of disruptive technology and how this was just the same old story, so as not to take it personally when people didn't listen.

## SMILE DIRECT CLUB. THE DISRUPTER THAT DOESN'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK

One of the interesting observations about the Invisalign story is that no matter how much money Invisalign spent on consumer advertising, the doctors still controlled the game. If you've ever spoken to anyone in the marketing department at Align, you'll know that this has been their biggest challenge since the first dollar they spent. Even if patients came in the door asking for Invisalign, they would only get it if the doctor said so and in many cases, the doctor didn't say so. Smile Direct Club obviously didn't have this problem from day one, but the other thing that has happened is that they have acted as a catalyst as far as how Align views their marketing. Simply put, Align has realized that regardless of what doctors think, they can't afford to give up the direct to consumer ground to other companies.

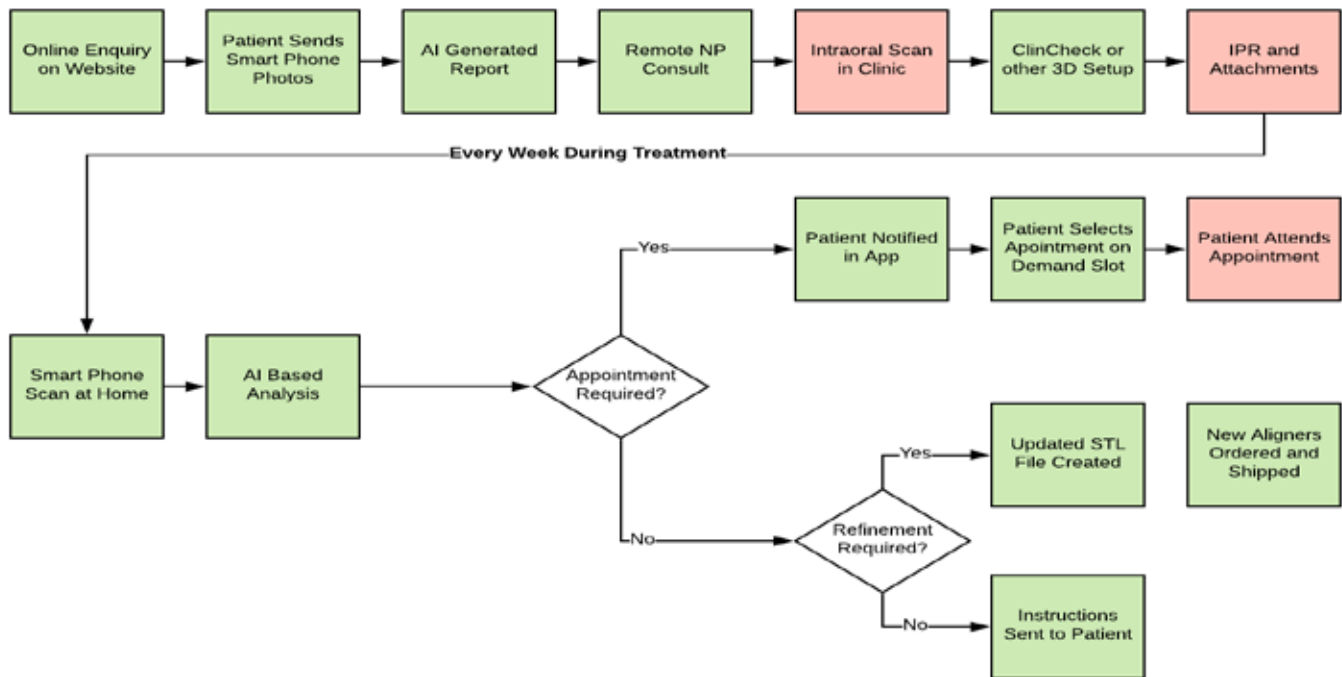
The moral of the story is that a new wave of disruption is upon us. Unlike the last one, this one is consumer-led and fast moving.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND REMOTE ORTHODONTICS

Apart from inventing the notion that teeth could be moved with plastic, what Invisalign really did is allow for the virtualization of an orthodontic treatment plan, and that's really important to understand right about now. See Invisalign opened the loop that AI and teledentistry are now starting to close. Unfortunately, the term 'AI' is so overhyped and misunderstood that it causes many people to instantly zone out. So for the purposes of this article, I'll focus on what this technology can actually do without any doctor involvement, based on nothing more than photos captured from the patient's own smartphone.

- ◆ Compile a diagnostic screening report that can then be used to communicate customized treatment options.
- ◆ Update the initial STL file acquired from an intraoral scanner.
- ◆ Alert the orthodontist to a variety of potential problems that would normally only be observed during their regular scheduled appointments. This includes aligner fit issues, broken attachments, hygiene issues, etc.

When you combine the above with regular old computer programming and automation, you start to see where the industry is going. Simply put, this technology means that the treatment of aligner patients is far less reliant on doctor time, staff time and therefore, the size of an orthodontic clinic. I've included a diagram that highlights the difference between old and new.



**RISK OR OPPORTUNITY? THE DECISION IS YOURS**

Unfortunately, the wave of disruption is moving very quickly which means unlike the early days of Invisalign, we aren't going to have 10 years to capitalize on the opportunity. The reason for this is that ultimately, we are no longer alone.

Most orthodontists will see the risk is that this technology is not only available to individual doctors, it's available to industry disruptors also. So while these orthodontists sit back and conclude that direct to consumer orthodontist is no major threat due to the inherent limitations, these companies are realizing that they can, in fact, penetrate this barrier, and provide patients with better outcomes without sacrificing their price-focused business model.

On the flip side, at the heart of the opportunity is the realization that there are still many competitive advantages that specialists have over these disruptors, and that the key to long term prosperity is to, therefore, optimize and amplify these advantages.

For many orthodontists, the most impenetrable advantages they have over disruptors are as follows.

Their brand in the local community. All of those established relationships with

patients and their families, local dentists and other local businesses are worth a lot.

The ability to treat patients with braces. As you may have noticed, most of the disruption in orthodontics is focused on aligner treatment. The reasons for this are likely obvious for many, so I won't dwell on it, but the flip side of this is that there are still many patients who would be better served by braces, combo treatment or who just simply want braces.

**ENTER SMILEMATE. THE VIRTUAL ORTHODONTIC PRACTICE**

For the past 12 months, a team of engineers and I have been working to develop the first virtual orthodontic clinic. The concept is simple, we want to take all of this technology that largely already exists, and tie it together in a way that allows specialists to scale their businesses efficiently using virtual clinics. A virtual clinic is essentially a portal that allows a GP clinic (and potential other partners) to use AI and remote dentistry to manage the onboarding and treatment of an orthodontic patient in much the same way you would in your own clinic.

Ultimately, my view is that the orthodontist of the future will essentially use this technology to amplify their competitive advantages and build a moat

around their business. The end result will look something like this:

- ◆ Very high load of virtual aligner cases treated remotely. These will earn you less per case, but there will be a lot of them and they'll take very little of your time
- ◆ Much higher referrals from GP's via the SmileMate system.
- ◆ Many more word of mouth referrals from patients. This is purely because your virtual clinics will give you the ability to reach more people over a wider area.

**TODAY IS THE FIRST DAY OF THE FUTURE**

Much of what I've written here will be seen as controversial, and whilst that viewpoint is certainly valid now, there's no doubt that it won't be 10 years from now. Why? Well, it's a similar story to the one my father told me about the planes flying overhead as the rail barons proclaimed that air travel was fanciful. You see at the heart of all of this is the simple reality that if consumers want it and it's technically feasible, it's going to happen. Both of those criteria have already been satisfied, so the question isn't if it's going to happen, it's when. To stay up to date with the launch of the SmileMate software, please visit [www.smilemate.com](http://www.smilemate.com)



# I Complained Loudly About the AAO and This Happened

By Dr. Courtney Dunn

When I decided to become a more vocal presence online, there were two issues regarding the AAO which I was most passionate about: the CAP and the fact that the AAO seemed to serve older, white men quite well and nobody else seemed to matter as much. Fast forward a few years and after I rattled some cages, pissed off a lot of people and inspired others to speak up, both issues are finally starting to get some attention. I was honored to be elected by the PCSO (BTW – bravo for having the courage to elect such a non-traditional candidate) to serve on the Council on Communications.

This year, I was also appointed to serve on the Task Force on Women Orthodontists. I write this article with a fair amount of optimism that the slow changing AAO might actually be moving in the right direction.

When I started complaining about the CAP, I was more than just a little frustrated. I felt that the extra \$800 that showed up on my yearly dues statement was doing nothing for me or my profession. To make things even worse, when I spoke up, my concerns were not addressed by the leadership at that time. To refresh your memory, the AAO retained a professional advertising

company that spent our money on traditional media: cable TV ads, magazines and PR campaigns with lesser known celebrities. The message was clear – orthodontics is good. There was very little about orthodontists specifically, as the TV ads were some version of a teenage girl smiling while she skipped through a field as the wind softly tousled her hair and it would close with the tired “My Life. My smile. My orthodontist” tagline. It was beyond infuriating. The AAO consumer website had minimal traffic and the message was muddled at best.







With some new blood on the committee and some turnover in general, things are finally moving in a productive direction. The advertising company is no longer in charge and the AAO has hired a “dream team” of in-house digital marketing experts. Traditional media has been replaced by an all-digital campaign and the consumer website has been redesigned. Here are a few highlights of what’s happened with the CAP in 2018:

1. 8.9 billion views of the AAO consumer website
2. 3.3 million direct clicks on AAO ads
3. 75,000 Doc locator uses

This is just scratching the surface of the improvements in the campaign. I highly encourage you to read “The Parent’s Guide to Orthodontics”, which is our most popular content on the consumer website with an average of 14 minutes spent on the page per user. The current campaigns are directed at trusting the professional (anti-DIY or direct mail aligners), becoming the resource for the best information regarding orthodontics and to bring consumers to an AAO

orthodontist for treatment. As more and more companies are bidding for these ads, this is becoming increasingly expensive and the council is doing all they can with the resources provided to them. If you have questions regarding the CAP, please contact your COC council representative or call Katie Maassen at the AAO.

The Task Force for Women Orthodontists has been meeting via conference calls for the past 6 months to address issues facing female doctors and to help guide the AAO to become more inclusive in general. Members of this task force include: Dr. Valerie Martone, Dr. Bryn Cooper, Dr. Courtney Dunn (me), Dr. Nellie Kim-Weroha, Dr. Katie Klein, Dr. Marie Lathrop, Dr. Jeri Stull and Lynne Thomas Gordon.

One of the most immediate issues discussed was making annual session a better meeting for all members. After a couple of calls, the task force collaborated on a letter to all meeting planners to suggest changes for immediate implementation. Some of the following were suggested: more female doctor speakers and creating a family checklist (nursing rooms, stroller parking, baby

friendly spaces). There is also much discussion on changing the requirements for leadership/volunteering to make it less daunting for a woman (and men for that matter) who have many other responsibilities, but want to make a difference in the AAO. The current time commitments required for leadership in the AAO make it almost impossible for anyone with a private practice and young family to make it work. This makes leadership less representative of the population they are supposed to reflect and results in decisions that are not always in the best interest of the members (remember when the AAO health insurance didn’t cover maternity care – I do).

Because we are a task force, we have put together recommendations and are even considering formulating resolutions to make the AAO more inclusive and to make leadership more diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and location of practice. We realize that this task is not a small one and there will be much resistance to change, but the AAO would benefit greatly if they took the time to listen to these fierce women! 🗣️



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# How to Compete with DIY Teeth Straightening Companies by Offering Teleorthodontic Services Yourself

By Dr. Keith Dressler

If you're like me, you've seen those ads for SmileDirectClub or one of its competitors, promising straight teeth without ever stepping foot inside an orthodontist office. Are you worried about losing business to competition like this?

You can either be afraid of change and take a wait-and-see attitude for what the future holds, or you can embrace change and take action. I adopted the latter tactic and will share my experiences, which has brought new patients and higher revenue to my practice.

At its heart, these do-it-yourself (DIY) orthodontic companies are practicing teledentistry. The typical patient has already had braces but then lost their retainers or failed to wear them. Most patients are in their 20s and 30s and are lured in by convenience, a low monthly payment (\$80/month), and 6 month or less treatment time.

I can't compete on price, as I charge \$2800 to \$2900, but I can offer \$50 a month payments for 60 months through GreenSky Financial. And I can offer the services of an actual board-certified orthodontist with minimum in-office visits. Orthodontic treatment can be accomplished in two or three in-office visits, which is convenient for most people. Best of all, I can install permanent retainers that will hold the final results better and longer.

Our DIY competitors rely on family dentists and orthodontists that the patients will really never have an intimate relationship with. And the patients have to do much of the heavy lifting (impressions, etc.), which can leave room for error and many questions.

But they certainly are convenient, which can be a challenge for a typical ortho practice. But I don't have a typical ortho practice. I've embraced social media and a unified, HIPAA-compliant teledentistry communications platform where patients can contact me wherever they live. They can communicate with my practice just like they communicate with their friends and family. Rhinogram's platform allows patients to text directly to the same number they call, send Facebook messages or send a message directly to my office from a web form, if they are on my website. Even when the practice is closed, patients can contact us and will get an automated reply about when they can expect a personal follow-up.

Starting treatment can be as simple as the patient sending three selfies of their teeth. After reviewing the photos, I can recommend a treatment plan, give them a cost and start date in 80% of cases. The other times patients need dental work that precludes orthodontics at present.

Insurance card, new patient forms and other paperwork can be securely completed in advance, so treatment can start with the first in-office visit.

I advertise on Facebook to the tune of under \$750 a month for all types of treatment, including orthodontic retreats. Conservatively, that ad spend consistently yields more than \$50,000 in new business a month. Put another way, I'm spending \$9,000 a year and getting \$600,000 worth of new business by leveraging technology and existing staff.

Think about it: these companies are actively marketing and raising awareness of products that we also offer. Instead of hunkering down and waiting for the storm to pass, you can play off the money already being spent on marketing by tailoring your practice's message to your target patients.

These DIY companies don't scare me one bit. And they shouldn't scare you either. 📱



# Brush Up On Your Reading

## Straighter: The Rules of Orthodontics



Drs. Marc Ackerman and Ben Burris are announcing the publication of their book...

## Straighter: The Rules of Orthodontics

It is a radical departure from the traditional approach to clinical decision-making and practice management. Drs. Ackerman and Burris reject the warmly held idea that these two areas are mutually exclusive. The book rests on the premise that orthodontics is in large part elective and falls under the category of enhancement healthcare. With that in mind, the authors suggest that orthodontists treat consumers rather than patients and these consumers are seeking an orthodontic intervention that is effective, efficient, fair priced, and easily accessible. Readers will gain insight into the current market trends in orthodontics and learn how to modify their mindset and office systems to align with the needs of the consumer.

For more information about the book, check out [orthopundit.com](http://orthopundit.com)