

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

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Is the expat life for you?

If you want to experience living in another country, here are some tips to help make it happen

By Niece Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Ever dream about ditching your American life and taking your family to live in a foreign land? My husband's nephew, Andrew Weinstein, and his wife, Christina Berkemeyer, did just that, moving their two children (ages 2 and 4) and two Rhodesian ridgebacks to the beachside jungle in northwest Costa Rica. For less than the price of renting out their Washington, D.C., townhouse for a year, they are ensconced in a five-bedroom villa overlooking the Pacific in Nosara, a surfing and yoga mecca.

Making your dream a reality is indeed possible, though it takes a lot of research and

planning. Of course, the expat life is easier to achieve if you work for yourself, or your company allows you to work remotely, as Weinstein and Berkemeyer both do. On a recent visit, they offered insight into why they have taken this journey, and what it takes to make it happen.

"We wanted an adventure. We wanted the kids to know life out of D.C. and the United States. Friends in Guatemala have kids similar ages to ours, and they made it look desirable. We're aiming for quality of life change," said Berkemeyer.

"Choosing a place to relocate is a combination brain and heart. We started with the brain part — logistics — and then visited a number of different places until we fell in love," said Weinstein.

Make a list of what you want

In order to zero in on the perfect location for your expat life, it's helpful to know exactly what it is you want. Weinstein and Berkemeyer made a list including that the destination be Spanish-speaking; a five-hour-or-less flight from home; safe; a warm climate; near a beach; have a strong expat community; affordable childcare; and good telecom infrastructure. Once you define your own requirements, you can narrow your search to specific locations.



Take scouting trips

No matter how much you research places online, you still should check them out in person before making a commitment. Like a dating service, destinations that look good "on paper" may disappoint in ways you can't predict.

"You need to see if a place speaks to you," said Berkemeyer.

Scouting trips are the perfect opportunity to

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Abigail and Elijah Gilbert, at Playa Guiones with dad Caleb Gilbert, are visiting cousins who relocated to Nosara, Costa Rica, to spend a year abroad in a nearby rented villa (top).

At Playa Guiones, Elijah Gilbert examines shells and rocks along the beach.



Multigenerational family travel isn't for the birds

By Katie Quirk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Stepping out of our casita's stone shower with windows facing onto the lush forest, I jumped at the sound of my 7-year-old's panicked voice.

"Mom, you have to come right now! There's a Collared Aracari down at the breakfast place, and Sal said she just saw a toucan."

I threw on a sundress and raced after my ecstatic son toward our guest house's breakfast deck. There, leaning over the porch rail, were my husband, older son, and parents known to their grandchildren as Sal and O'da. In front of them in the yard were bamboo platforms, tied to trees, laden with bunches of bananas and the most amazing birds I had ever seen: Collared Aracarids with their bright red rumps, yellow chests, and serrated beaks; and Costa Rica's largest toucan — the Black-mandibled — measuring in at about 2-foot long with its cartoonishly large beak.

We continued to gasp at birds for at least a half hour before any of us remembered that we, too, were there for breakfast. When I finally settled into

my chair, sipping a glass of frothy soursop juice, I smiled. While planning this trip, the ease of a kid-friendly Costa Rican beach resort had certainly occurred to me, but instead I had decided to capitalize on our group's new, and perhaps fleeting, ability to explore the outdoors together. At 6 and 9, my kids could finally keep up on any moderate hike, and in their late 60s, my parents were still quite active. So far, our multigenerational naturalists' trip was proving a success.

Birds beyond our wildest dreams

After meeting up with my parents at the airport in Liberia, we aimed for Bijagua, a town in Costa Rica's cowboy country just south of Nicaragua. The lure of this region is Rio Celeste, a mineral-infused river located in Tenorio Volcano National Park.

Though our plan had been to head to the park first thing in the morning, three hours after racing down to the birds at breakfast we were still leaning over the railing, perusing our hosts' homemade bird ID cards and enjoying some of their smaller avian neighbors:

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KATIE QUIRK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

A Rufous Motmot welcomed the family.



Inside GETAWAYS BRANCHING OUT
Life is Good hits the road this summer with its own vacations
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THE VIP LOUNGE | CRAIG CAMPBELL

Life is a song when he's away with family

Country singer Craig Campbell said he's happy vacationing anywhere, as long as his wife, Mindy, and daughters, Preslee, 10, and Kinni Rose, 7, are with him. The Georgia native, who lives in Eagleville, Tenn., a small town south of Nashville, is coming to Boston for an April 9 benefit concert at Loretta's Last Call. Proceeds will go to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. "My dad was 36 years old when he died from colon cancer, so it's been a mission of mine to do everything I can to help when it comes to raising money or awareness for any kind of cancer or sickness," said Campbell, whose hit songs include "Family Man," "Fish,"

and "Keep the Kisses Comin'." We caught up with the 39-year-old crooner, whose newest single, "See You Try," was released a few weeks ago, to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? I don't necessarily have a favorite vacation spot, just as long as my entire family is with me. That is what makes vacation awesome for me.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? I live by the motto "travel global, drink local," so I drink locally when I travel. I love a good steak paired with a good bottle — notice I didn't say glass — of bold Cabernet. It all depends on where we are as



to what we eat and drink.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? I have always wanted to go to Ireland and Scotland. I don't know for sure, but I think my family tree runs back to Scotland, so I would

like to go there and see what I find.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? My computer bag. Not only is my computer in there, [but] it also has my "electronic survival kit"

with multiple phone chargers, batteries, and cables. I travel with my own stash of coffee creamer in my computer bag as well.

Aisle or window? I prefer to sit by the window on a plane because no matter how much sleep I got the night before, I always fall asleep for the first 30 minutes of a flight. So I will sit by the window to lay my head against the wall.

Favorite childhood travel memory? We didn't travel much as a family outside of local events. One of my favorite memories is going to Gatlinburg, Tenn., with a friend and his family when I was about 12.

I don't remember the specifics but I do remember we had a great time. I remember being in a gift shop and seeing, for the first time, a key chain with my name on it. I had never seen "Craig" on a gift item like that. It rocked my world. Also, I had never seen the mountains before that trip.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Sleeping in a little longer than I would at home.

Best travel tip? Plan ahead and ask questions about where you're going. Have an itinerary before you leave. That takes all the guesswork out of the trip.

JULIET PENNINGTON



PHOTOS BY NEECE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



From top: The road to Playa Guiones; families enjoy supper at La Luna in Nosara, Costa Rica; a howler monkey in the trees near the villa being rented by Andrew Weinstein and Christina Berkemeyer.

organizations that provide insurance for international travelers, including services such as general travel insurance (for lost baggage, canceled flights); and medical insurance including air ambulance, medical evacuation and escort service coverage. travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/your-health-abroad/insurance-providers-overseas.html

Visa requirements

Again, the State Department website is a great resource for visa information specific to individual countries. Some expats make "tourist runs," and check back into the United States every 90 days, or whatever is the host country's authorized travel limit. Some apply for a longer term residency, usually through the host country's embassy.

Tax implications

Search out expat tax service companies to figure out accounting and tax implications when living abroad. Questions to consider: Will you be subject to double taxation and foreign filings? Will your visa or immigration status affect your taxes? If you're on a work visa, you may think you're not a resident but the tax agency of your new home country may disagree.

Pets

Moving your pets can be a logistical challenge, both traveling to and, in particular, returning home from your destination. Animal health export requirements are determined by each country, and can change frequently. The USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service website covers all requirements for all countries. Once you know your destination, it is recommended that you contact your local veterinarian to assist with the process, such time frames for obtaining a health certificate, updating vaccinations, diagnostic testing, or administration of medications and treatments. www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/pet-travel

Once your pet's medical needs are met, you will need to

consider transport. Large pets can be problematic because some airlines don't have appropriate crate sizes, and, depending on the destination, they won't take pets in cargo if the temperatures are too high when landing. There are pet shipping companies that can be used as a fallback option.

Other considerations

The devil is in the details, as the saying goes. Some other issues that need to be addressed include forwarding mail, putting belongings in storage, renting out your home, buying the things you'll need for living in a new place, arranging travel for your family and pets, and the transportation you will need once you arrive, such as buying a car. The most important thing is to do your homework well in advance of the move.

"Try to make the transition seamless. The more you do before you get to your destination, the more you can enjoy it when you arrive," said Weinstein.

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Home sweet home away from home

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check out schools, real estate, medical facilities, and the general ambiance of a place. When kids are young, good schools are not as critical a consideration, though they are a great resource for finding and making friends in the community. While on the trip, it's also helpful to seek out and talk to other expats. Social media is another good option for finding answers to specific questions you may have. Try searching Facebook for local expat groups in towns you may want to go. They are often a good place to find advice on everything from where to get cheap gas to reliable plumbers and childcare services. They are better than general expat websites that Weinstein describes as "99-percent useless."

aged prices. On your scouting trip, it's best to find and work with a local agent.

Safety concerns

Check with the US Department of State to ensure your time abroad is both enjoyable and safe. Their travel website offers a checklist of things to consider before going, such as safety and security information, and the risks of visiting a particular country or region. Some US citizens with special considerations, such as students, women, and LGBTI travelers, may face additional challenges. It can also help plan for what to do in a potential crisis situation. travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html

Health

Investigate whether your health insurance has global arm, and make sure you determine whether your specific symptoms are covered in the country you plan to reside. On your scouting visit, check out local medical facilities and doctors to make sure they meet your needs. Do they have ambulance services? A pediatrician? In addition, search out private

Real estate rentals

When starting your research from home, look for US rental company brands located in the town you hope to reside. They might not do year-round rentals, but you can use pricing information for research purposes. Also, look at Airbnb to calculate year-round rentals based on high and low season aver-

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