



## Wherever You Travel — Go Local!

by TFB EDITORS on NOVEMBER 8, 2012

By Jan Ross

My husband and I been taking a lot of car trips lately. It's less expensive than flying and we find that we really enjoy the time together on the road, talking and laughing and possibly having a teeny tiny argument about the fact that the GPS has now taken us up a gravel road to nowhere...

These car trips have become an exercise in learning about traveling "locally," and we've had some of the most wonderful experiences with local tours, locally owned shops, the locals' favorite restaurants, and the people and experiences specific to that location. We've enjoyed it so much that we think everyone should consider "going local" when you travel.



*Ask any native of New Orleans where to get the best (and cheapest) N'awlins food and they'll send you straight to Coop's Place.*

Now, make no mistake: "Local travel" doesn't mean just a car trip to some place nearby. **It means immersing yourself in the local experiences of the place you're visiting — wherever that may be.** It's about discovering the local heritage, culture, community, food, fun, and people. Here are some suggestions for ways you can "go local" when you travel.

**Avoid the chains and sleep well:** We always try to avoid big, chain hotels if possible (despite the ability to use hotel rewards points at the chains). Instead, we look for interesting, local alternatives. We've stayed in a beautiful little beach house in Tybee Island, Georgia, a log cabin in Dahlenega, Georgia, a boutique hotel in downtown Montreal, Canada, and a lovely bed and breakfast in Tucson, Arizona.



*The one-of-a-kind Lake Street Cafe*

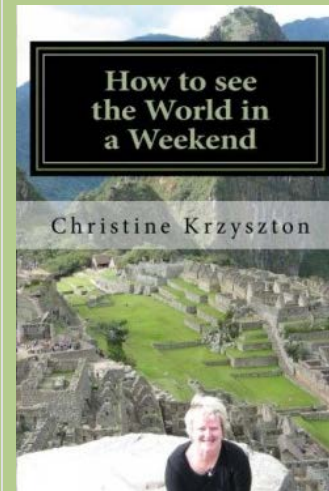
**Avoid the chains and eat well:** Don't even think about dining in a chain restaurant you could visit anywhere. We've been amazed by the quality of food we've found in small, locally owned restaurants. (Travel For Boomers' editor, Kim Weiss, notes that her husband only wants to eat where the locals eat wherever they visit.) We had wonderful seafood at Coco's Sunset Grille on Tybee

Island, the most incredible date appetizer at The Oar House in Dahlenega, Georgia, and a gourmet repast at [The Lake](#)

+1 +7 Recommend this on Google



TFB's OWN: CHRISTINE'S NEW BOOK!



*The lovely Maxwell Hotel in Seattle is locally owned and operated.*

BLOGROLL

[Boomerisque](#)

[Boomerisque](#)

[Street Café](#) in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. We are also very interested in eating in restaurants that use local produce and other locally sourced items on their menu. This is good for everyone and the food is usually delicious.

**Have fun:** Check with the local Convention & Visitors Bureau, or the equivalent, for fun experiences specific to the area you're visiting. Or ask the people you meet at your hotel, restaurant, or shop. We've been kayaking in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, hiked to gorgeous waterfalls in Dahlenburg, Georgia, and visited a chocolate factory for a tour in Cologne, Germany — all based on local recommendations.

**See the sights:** We love local tours. We've done bus tours and the like, but we recently enjoyed a bike tour of Atlanta, Georgia, a Segway tour of Savannah, a trolley tour of Asheville, North Carolina, and a special bus tour of Memphis, Tennessee, conducted by a Memphis musician!



*How about a horse-and-buggy tour of Charleston, SC?*



*There's no name on this locally owned open-air store in Cozamel, but the colorful merchandise spilling out onto the sidewalk in front makes it easy to spot.*

**Shop till you drop:** Shopping is serious entertainment as far as I'm concerned! I love to explore those little, one-of-a-kind shops in whatever location we're visiting. (Why on earth would you go to a mall or shop at Banana Republic, for example, when you can do that back home?) I've bought incredible costume jewelry at a small shop in Amelia Island, Florida, a great jacket at a store in Juneau, Alaska, and a beautiful pottery bowl in Cozumel, Mexico. We even bought long-sleeve shirts and hooded sweatshirts in downtown Dahlenburg, Georgia, recently when we realized it was much colder than we had planned. Many towns also have Farmers Markets, which are wonderful places to pick up fresh fruits and veggies and some fresh flowers to brighten your hotel room.

Wherever we're visiting, we've learned to ask the locals about the best of their town. Who should know better, right?

**Do you make a point to "go local" when you travel? What has been one of your greatest experiences? Please share them with us in the Comments section.**

Tagged as: [car trips](#), [go local](#), [hotels](#), [restaurants](#), [shop locally](#), [shops](#), [tours](#), [travel](#)

Leave a Comment

Name \*

E-mail \*

Website

\* Copy This Password \*

[FlyerTalk](#)

[Free Frequent Flyer Miles](#)

[Freelance Tourist](#)

[Just Another Points Travelers](#)

[Miles Momma](#)

[My Itchy Travel Feet](#)

[The Frugal Travel Guy](#)

[Traveling Well For Less](#)

[Travelzoo](#)

[View From The Wing](#)

[Wanderlust Wonder](#)

[Your Friend In Italy](#)

Google™ Custom Search

[Privacy Policy](#)

RECENT POSTS

[Wherever You Travel — Go Local!](#)

[Pahang: Malaysia's Virgin Forest and Highland Retreat](#)

[Baby Boomers' Guide To Visiting Jamaica](#)

[MAKE MY MONDAY!](#)

[Share The Love](#)

[Ten Tips For Packing The Perfect Road Trip Food](#)

[The Frugal Joys of Car-Tripping: Sedona, Arizona](#)

[Frightening Moments While Traveling: You Tell Us](#)

[Authentic Turkey On A Budget](#)

[MAKE MY MONDAY!](#)

[TFB Week In Review: What Did You Miss?](#)

[Perek: The "Silver" State of Malaysia](#)