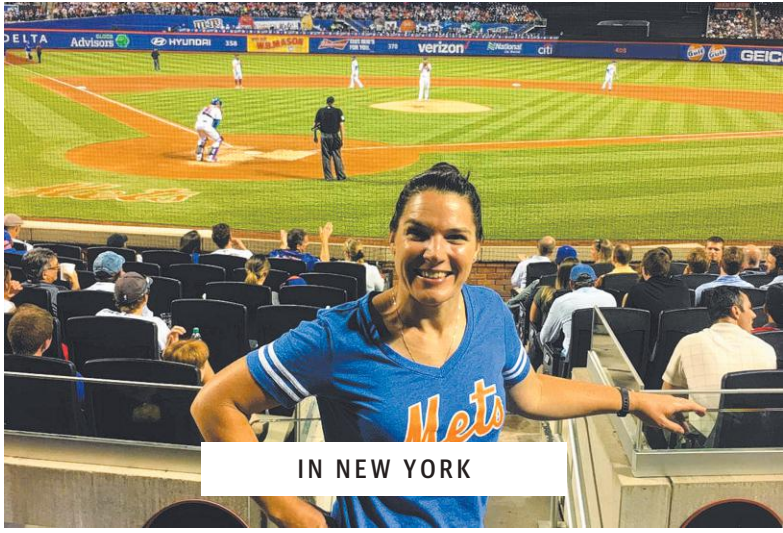


MY TRAVEL CV



IN NEW YORK

like a peanut. Not something I would order again but interesting to try.

My next destination is a five-week trip on the *Trans-Mongolian* and *Trans-Siberian* railway from Beijing to Moscow, then to Norway and Iceland, then a few days' stopover in Spain and Hong Kong to break the journey back to Australia. This trip has been on my wish list for many years and I can't wait.

The place I want to visit most is Cuba. I would love to see the vibrant coloured buildings and classic 1950s cars and experience the beachside bars, Cuban music and dancing.

Some day I would love to teach English in Japan and immerse myself in the culture. I love the local traditions, the food and drink. The

rural areas are simply beautiful and the cities hum 24/7. Locals are extremely welcoming and friendly.

I manage my currency in multiple ways. I carry some cash in small denominations, usually some Australian cash and the currency of the country I'm visiting. I also carry a credit card, debit card and a pre-loaded travel card for emergencies.

When I'm on the plane I order a gin and tonic, put on my noise-cancelling headphones and settle in for a movie marathon. I take plenty of snacks and drink lots of water on the flight. I always book a window seat as I love seeing colours of a sunrise or sunset.

My packing style is practical. I take only what I need for whatever type of trip I am taking. Layers are important,



JAPAN

and versatile items that can be used for more than one purpose are useful, for example, I often use a sarong as a scarf. I think carefully about the best luggage to use. If I am taking lots of public transport, I will take a backpack but if I am using transfer vehicles from airport to hotel, I will take a suitcase.

My travel superstitions are always buy the local lucky charm and pay the donation to enter the church or temple – I consider it additional travel insurance!

The worst thing that's happened to me while travelling was when I was a young, pre-smartphone backpacker. I took a bus from Madrid to Carcassonne, France. In the middle of the night, pouring rain, the bus stops and the driver yells

“Carcassonne”. I get off the bus and realise we are in the middle of nowhere. I ask how to get to town and the bus driver says matter-of-factly “your family collects you”. The bus left and I trudged to a toll booth where workers called a taxi for me. The taxi took me to a hostel only to find it closed for the winter, tried another hostel and it's under construction. With that I get kicked out of the cab, walk to the train station and buy a ticket to Marseilles.

The advice I'd give to young travellers is look up from your phone! Allow yourself to immerse yourself in the local culture. I feel lucky to have travelled in a time when the internet and smartphones were non-existent, when you used printed maps, guide books and you had to talk to others to find out information.

Once, when returning home after many months backpacking around the world, a customs officer drilled me about where I had been and asked if I travelled on another passport. After responding to all the questions, the officer apologised and said I looked identical to a girl from Canada who was a drug mule they were trying to catch.

My worst solo travel experience was in Yangon, Myanmar, when a monkey which had escaped from the zoo attacked me leaving gaping wounds on my legs. I was rushed to a local hospital in a taxi. After waiting a painful four hours, a nurse finally secured a rabies vaccine and I was patched up and flown home to Australia for immediate surgery.

The best upgrade I've ever had was on Canada's Via Rail sleeper service from Vancouver to Winnipeg. It was almost winter and there weren't many passengers on-board so the Prestige Class Carriage was made available complete with bar, charging stations, unlimited snacks, tea and coffee, a comfortable lounge and glass-top carriage. Perfect.

The best hotel I've ever stayed in was L'Alya Ninh Van Bay in Vietnam, booked through an *Escape* travel deal. Staff asked the level of service you desired including the type of music piped in the room, the wine stocked in the minibar and the level of attentiveness from the butler – yes that's right, a butler! Beautifully appointed villas, including a pool, indoor/outdoor shower, indoor swing and views.

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