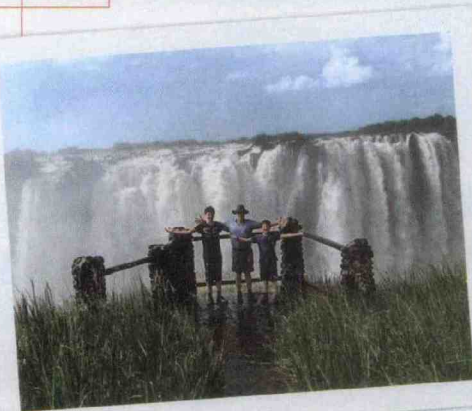


THE AGE OF TRIBAL TRAVEL



MAGIC MOMENT
Peter Godwin, flanked by his sons with the mighty Victoria Falls as backdrop, at an outlook in Zambia.

RECENTLY, NEARLY 70 PERCENT of those with travel plans told the American Express Spending & Savings Tracker survey that they'll be traveling with their immediate families—up from 45 percent only three years ago. That's a huge shift. Why?

I can offer one reason. My children don't really remember their first trip abroad—one was five, the other only three—but I sure do. Their company made a place I love, Italy, infinitely more vivid because for the first time I was seeing it through their eyes as well as my own—a very special augmented reality. Who knew the true sublimity of pasta, of gelato, of the room-to-roam genius of a Renaissance piazza. And without my kids, I'd never have stumbled upon this Roman jet-lag cure: If it's 2 A.M. and you can't sleep, don't fight it—just go to the nearest fountain (ours was in front of the Pantheon), stick your hands in, splash around, try repeatedly to fall in; it will be dawn before you know it.

From then on I couldn't imagine traveling without them, and as they grew older, their memories shaped their sense of self. Poland, Thailand, Israel, Jordan, Bora Bora, London, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, France, Zambia, Egypt, the Czech Republic, China, Japan, India—these are just some of the places that became for us another, more thrilling kind of home, where, shed of our daily routines, our eyes were wide open, our senses alive, our minds energized.

You can feel this effect in "Almost Home" (page 82), as Peter Godwin, born in Africa, takes his two New York City-raised sons, ages 10 and 13, to that vast continent for the first time. They do things that are—well, unusual. In Botswana they sleep one night under the stars, sheltered by nothing more than white mosquito nets—"no one has ever been attacked" under them by predators, their guide, Ralph, promises. In the Kalahari Des-

ert, one of the aboriginal Zu/'hoasi Bushmen invites Godwin's older boy to participate in a trance dance, and Thomas, shy at first, ends up spinning and stomping around the flames for hours. The same Ralph assures Godwin that it's safe to let his sons swim in the supposedly crocodile-infested Okavango River. Before caving in to his sons' pleas, the author imagines how this would look if things went wrong: "He allowed his children to do what?" Watching his sons swim and splash, he realizes that he is "already deep in the familiar thrall of the continent, where life feels more vivid surrounded by predator and prey . . . the drama of living infused by the proximity to dying." Africa, he writes, "is a place that, like nowhere else I know, can get you out of your own head. . . . And I wonder . . . if they are beginning to feel it too."

It's not so long ago that such transporting thrills seemed confined to iconoclastic solo adventurers bravely striking out into terra incognita. These days, we're taking the kids. And the parents. And friends. Part of it is sociological: two-income families finding travel the best way to have time together; longer life spans making multi-generational travel possible. But there's a deeper symbiosis between travel and family. It pulls us out of our self-absorbed bubble, shifts our focus, makes us keenly aware—not always in an entirely comfortable way—of being part of something much larger. Tracy Young goes with family and friends to Cuba (page 104). It is, she says, like seeing up close a sibling one has spent decades hurling insults at across the Straits of Florida and whose messy, dilapidated beauty and similarities are in the end oddly stirring. "We have to help these people," Young's friend says again and again. "We have so much in common." For Nicole Krauss, a family holiday at the luxurious Amanara resort in the Turks and Caicos (page 98) becomes so much more than a day at the beach with the kids. Her blissed-out, recharged state inspires her to consider the essence of paradise and its connection to our genetic tribal nomadism. There is much, much more in *The Informer* (page 41), with 20 ideas for trips for families of all kinds. We were meant to wander, not alone but together. That way happiness lies.

TIPS GALORE

You'll find page after page of family travel advice in this issue, and still more tips online. For my family travel secrets—and those of *Condé Nast Traveler* editors—go to condenasttraveler.com/family. Every day, we'll share a personal recommendation or solution learned on our own family vacations.

WHAT IS TRUTH IN TRAVEL?

Travel publications often accept free or discounted trips and accommodations in exchange for editorial coverage. *Condé Nast Traveler* does not. In "The Audit" (page 18), you can see a sampling of Lauren Lipton's expenses for her six-day trip to Walt Disney World. Our editors and reporters pay the same prices you pay and travel unannounced, except in rare cases where it is impossible to do so. This ensures that we experience travel the way you do—with no special recognition, treatment, or obligation—and are free to report our findings honestly, with no conflict of interest or ulterior motive. That's truth in travel.

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