

Barbaralicious

Thank you for signing up for my newsletter! I hope you enjoy the sneak peak of my very first book *MY TRIP AROUND THE WORLD – A DREAM COME TRUE!* This is the prologue:

Who am I?

I begin quite deliberately with that difficult question - because this book records a phase of my life in which I wanted and needed to find and get to know myself. I have a Master's Degree in Romance languages with the main focus on Italian and Spanish, and I also worked, in parallel to my studies, as an interpreter at the exhibition in Frankfurt. At this time I knew exactly what I wanted to do: to set up a language and exhibition service. It was only when I added a Master's in Conference interpreting and professional translating in these two languages that the seeds of doubt about myself and my abilities were sown.

What had been clear to me for so long suddenly seemed impossible for me to achieve. I felt that my plans were no longer appropriate for me and my life. I wanted to breakaway and thankfully could immerse myself in my work as a Zumba® Instructor. But at the same time I knew that I didn't want to do that full-time and forever. Toward the end of my Master's degree I found some small satisfaction in my blog Barbaralicious, which I had started for fun, but soon realized that I wanted to do it professionally. Writing was a passion that I had long suppressed in this form.

Through blogging, I gradually met more and more bloggers, and this led me, sooner or later, to the digital nomads. These are people that need nothing more than a computer and the internet to run their online businesses and earn a living. Right away I felt like I had been a digital nomad for ages without being aware of the expression.

At this point I realized what that meant for me: that I had to shape my life differently with travel and a free, self-determined lifestyle in which I could develop as a blogger and translator. As you will soon learn, my world trip had been planned for some time. This was the perfect opportunity for me to finally find myself again and, at the same time test out this new way of life. Another positive side effect was that my family, who had not been at all sure about the undertaking, slowly became used to the idea that their daughter, sister and aunt would, from now on, be in the country less frequently.

Did it actually work out that way? That you can find out if you read on!

My world trip

My world trip started on the 5th of November 2014. However, the story behind the story began much earlier. On which day exactly I can't remember but it was about two weeks before Christmas 2009. That was the year of my semester abroad, which I spent in Florence, and my internship abroad which I spent in Salamanca and also the year in which I flew further than ever before. For February 2010 I had booked my very first flight to America – and thus earned quite a few miles with Miles & More.

A family friend was visiting as I aired my frustration out loud: I felt certain that despite the many flights I had taken I would still not have enough miles in time to redeem them against flights. With the standard Miles & More Card collected miles expire after three years.

“Then get yourself a Miles & More Credit Card“ the friend proposed, “That way you earn additional miles every time you use it – and what's more, they don't expire!”

That was the answer to a Maiden's prayer!

So, no sooner said than done.

Before the New Year had even begun I already had the M&M Credit Card in my hands. Proud as Punch I began to look more closely at which flight awards were available to me. Until then I had only ever glanced at the number of miles required and in disappointment quickly closed the browser window again.

Before long, in addition to the normal flight awards, I discovered the so-called *Round the World Ticket*. I was instantly hooked. 180,000 miles were needed. A tough call, but why not? After all, it meant access to a ticket with up to eight flights. Depending on how many segments one exceeds (the longer the distance or the more stopovers, the more segments), the number of flights decreases.

I had just finished my interim examinations at University and decided to add a Master's degree in translation and conference interpreting.

I worked out roughly how long it would take me to finish. The result: By the time I finished my studies, I should have the necessary number of miles together to allow me the trip around the world at the end of this part of life.

And in fact I passed the 180,000-mile mark in June 2014 and achieved my Master's degree in September of that year. It came together perfectly.

On 2nd of October, I called the *Round the World Ticket Desk*. When you redeem your air miles against a ticket, you can only make the booking by telephone. Unfortunately, my preferred destinations were not available, since one is dependent on contingents. A little flexibility is therefore required. It took a while until we had sorted everything out so that it suited me and I could secure all eight flights. I had to pass on Hawaii, for example, since it

would have cost four segments and I would have ended up with only six and not eight flights.

The final routing looked like this:

5. November 2014 Frankfurt → São Paulo
28. January 2015 São Paulo → Washington D.C.
16. February 2015 Washington D.C. → San Francisco
10. March 2015 San Francisco → Auckland

31. March 2015 Auckland → Sydney

20. April 2015 Sydney → Bangkok
1. June 2015 Bangkok → Colombo
20. June 2015 Colombo → Frankfurt

I had worked on this for five long years. I included my whole family: they all made their internet purchases via my credit card, so that my Miles account would grow steadily. Alone, I would have needed many more years and would probably have finally given up.

So at this point I would like to thank everyone involved. Especially my parents, without whom I might never have made it.

And to all those who laughed at me during those five years thinking it to be the craziest idea of the century, I have hopefully shown that one can realize one's dreams. Even if no one believes in you, go ahead with your thing! Stay focused, be stubborn and ignore anyone who tells you that your dreams are too big or too naive, or anything else – no matter hard as it gets. Only you can realize your dreams. Only through your own actions can you be happy.

Departure day

I had given notice on my apartment five weeks earlier and moved back to my parents' house. Then, two weeks before departure it all started: I increasingly had the feeling that my parents were unable, or unwilling, to look me in the eye, and seemed irritated by everything I said. I really thought I had done something wrong! Until I finally asked them what was going on, and with tears in their eyes they told me that they could hardly bear the thought that I would soon be gone for so long. And that, even though they had supported me for five years to enable me make my dream of a world trip come true.

After some of my acquaintances suggested it might be useful to write a will, I sat down at my desk during the night of the fourth to the fifth of November, searched for a template on the internet, and began to write. My twelve-year-old niece was still awake. She wanted to sleep with me on my last night and I could not bring myself to refuse her. I had asked her to read a bit and not play with her cell phone, and she followed my request, just as I had followed hers.

It was simply awful as my hand scurried over the paper. I looked at my niece time and again, knowing that I would no longer be there to fulfill her wishes if the envelope destined to contain this piece of paper ever needed to be opened. I could only suppress my tears with difficulty, but I did not want to worry her unnecessarily. I put the envelope between the pages of the book *1000 Places to see before you die* -which seemed appropriate to me, and then went to bed.

When the fifth of November finally came, the atmosphere was scarcely bearable - I had stomach ache all day and was so close to tears that I could not say a word, so frayed were my nerves. And I certainly did not want to fuel my parents' worries with tears and signs of my sudden fear.

Never before had eight months seemed so long. My perception of the time-frame before me had turned almost 180 degrees overnight. Right up until the previous day, I had been firmly convinced that eight months were actually far too few.

In desperation I wrote to different girlfriends and asked them to remind me why I was doing this at all. To be honest, my memory of this day is associated with many feelings, and I can almost feel the stomach pain, the dizziness, the nausea. Every few minutes I would glance at the clock on my MacBook, which I did not want to take along for safety reasons, and began to count the hours and minutes until departure.

I just felt like being sick. I don't want to try to gloss over this. I was in panic and was deeply regretting that I had ever booked the trip.

At the airport the tension became immeasurable, as my siblings and my niece showed up more or less spontaneously to bid me farewell. My sister gave me a cuddly dog to protect me. I hugged them all one last time then turned around and walked through the barrier. I have no idea what the airport officials thought of me as I passed through the security controls towards the gate. But I must have looked a mess with my tear-stained eyes. And it still took a while before my sobbing finally ebbed. I had not been prepared for this outbreak of anxiety, and it hit me quite hard.

Once I had finally gained control again, I made my first short video "Last greeting from Germany" for my blog. I have made one of these so-called Vlogs at every stop on my trip. You can view them on my YouTube channel. Although in a way I was lost for words I thought I came through the situation quite well. Still today I can feel how hot my cheeks were and how my heart was beating.

At eleven hours the flight was by far the longest of my life, but we didn't run into any turbulence and time just seemed to fly by. I watched two films, ate and then slept for a few hours. When I woke up breakfast was being served and shortly thereafter we were already making our landing approach.

Meanwhile, I had a grip on myself again and looked forward to my adventure with a light heart and a mischievous smile...