

BY CHRISTINE CIARMELLO

# HOW TO MOVE TO AN ISLAND

Bequia, Vieques, Maui, Tasmania and our  
**40 picks** for your next move

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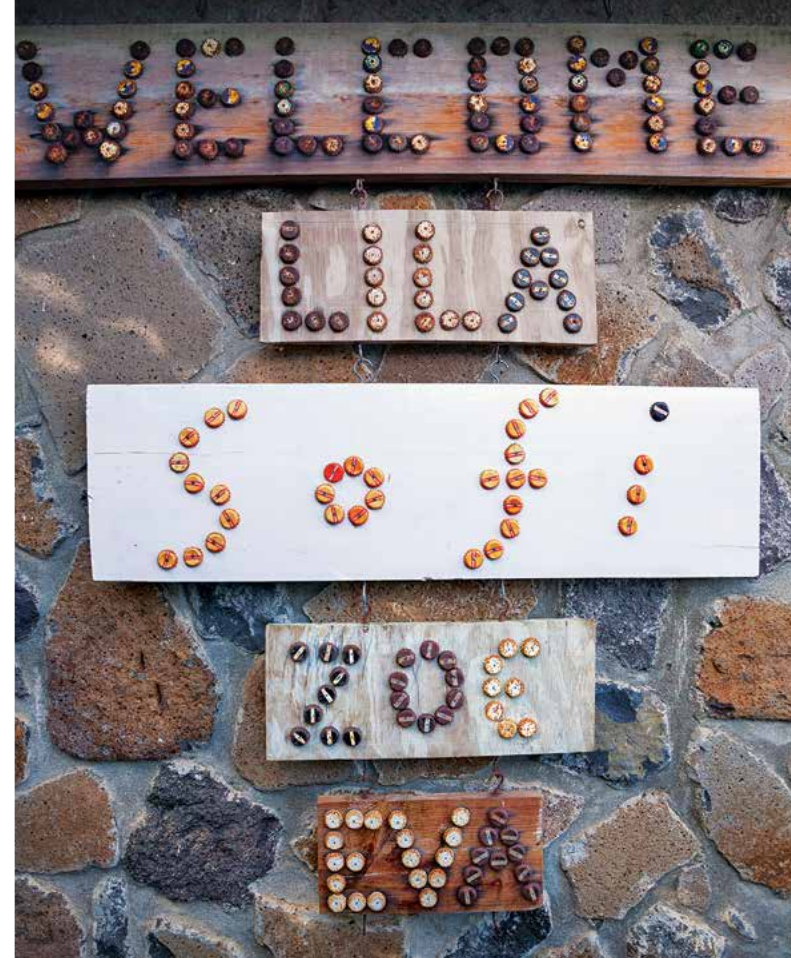
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BEQUIA, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES





When Heather Evans' daughters (names on wall) went off to school, she embraced a new baby: Sugar Reef, Bequia.



HOW TO  
MOVE TO AN  
ISLAND

# Take Over an Inn

BEQUIA, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

There are no linens. No kitchen stove. Guests arrive in three days. Heather Evans never dreamed of running an inn, or that she might roll her personal stove down a hill to do so. Five years ago, the 49-year-old investment banker had semi-retired to Bequia. Here, she enjoyed a sunny deck and lots of good books, as she'd planned. But her eyes drifted off their pages in 2012. An inn was up for lease. How cute ...

Just eight rooms. The ocean at its doorstep. It needed work, but Heather saw potential: Tin lanterns swaying in the breeze; loaner cruiser bikes for guests. All of it near her home on Bequia (*beck-way*), a tiny Caribbean island she fell for on vacation in 2003 and visited till 2009, when she, her husband, Emmett, and her two younger daughters moved here. Now, with her youngest off at school, the nest was empty. What a sweet little inn.



**THE MOVER:** Heather Evans, 54  
**FROM:** Brooklyn, New York  
**WHY SHE MOVED:** To downshift, simplify her life and read books ... so she thought.  
**MONEY SITUATION:** Retirement savings (undisclosed), helped by the sale of her town house.

Of course, its water heater could go without warning, computers fizzle in the salt air, the ant problem in room 12 — all very expected. But this inn is only eight rooms, on a beautiful 65-acre property. Oh, and there's a restaurant.

Did she really want to take all this on? She had come to the island to slow down, to downsize. Her old life in New York had "huge overhead." Four kids in private school. A tutor. A town house.

"We were consumers in the States," recalls Heather. "Here, we're not. We eat at home. There are no heating costs. A doctor's visit is \$38. The great thing about Bequia is there's nothing to buy."

Except, perhaps, a lease agreement for an inn and restaurant. The property screamed for an overhaul. It would tap

her retirement savings.

Still, why couldn't her island life evolve? She was a New Yorker, after all. She had toiled long hours at a Wall Street investment firm, then caught the subway home to Brooklyn, where she raised her four daughters. A quaint little inn and restaurant on sleepy Bequia? This she could handle. Right?

She presented a business plan and secured the lease. She had her inn. Now what?

She spent a week living on the property to get a feel for the space. She interviewed former guests, spoke with hospitality professionals and sought out a name for it, careful to be sure its Web URL would be available. She flew out an interior designer, and her dream to reopen the inn and restaurant — evoking the Caribbean of the '50s and '60s — was off and running. Projected launch date: Dec. 26, just nine short months away.

Fast-forward to November. The chef Heather secured for the restaurant has backed out. The monogrammed sheets and the appliances



ZACH STOVALL; INSET: SOFI BAUMGARDNER





## Doors hadn't been built ... bat poop ... grimy tile floors ... "What have I done?"

she'd ordered are locked in St. Vincent and the Grenadines' customs. The doors have not been built, leaving open gaps to the outside. What little painting has been completed is the wrong color.

"What have I done?"

The question had loomed over Heather for months. The former banker who had called the 2008 economic crisis "the biggest financial disaster ever" now questioned whether she'd embarked on her own spiral. It bottomed out Nov. 30.

"The place was filled with bat poop. Each night, the bats left a trail of fresh poop, pee and almond shells over the floor. Worse, the old tile floors had a layer of grime that wouldn't budge, even after I spent a week experimenting with chemicals."

Meanwhile, the grand opening crept closer. The website Heather had created for her newly minted (but hardly mint) Sugar Reef Bequia had attracted bookings. In less than a month, Sugar Reef's first guests would arrive.

### LESSONS LEARNED

**BEWARE OF AN INN  
WITH RESTAURANT**  
Both are separate challenges that, when combined, can be deadly. Heather finds overseeing a restaurant the tougher task, and where she spends more time.

**EMBRACE THE  
INTERNET**  
It remains the great equalizer. A small hotel's website can attract bookings just as effectively as a larger one's. Heather launched a campaign on Adwords, Google's advertising arm, and tracked performance daily.

**SEEK ADVICE**  
Attend industry conferences (see page 30) and meet with consultants.

**BRACE YOURSELF**  
Overseeing a successful inn is not retirement.

But Heather had faith. The doors were eventually finished. The bats were shut out. A painter treated the grimy tiles with muriatic acid and Mop & Glo. ("Who knew?" says Heather.) A day before opening, as she debated rolling her personal oven down the hill, a Christmas miracle: Her container with linens and appliances was released from customs. The inn opened on schedule.

Now, more than a year since taking on Sugar Reef, her workday has shrunk from 16 hours to 12. Hardly semi-retirement. But she has no regrets.

"Once my daughter went off to school, I needed to do something."

These days, that "something" means securing more help for the restaurant, which Heather finds far more challenging than running the inn.

She has also learned to make tea the British way, after an English guest — few guests are American — chided her.

No, running an inn isn't a sunny deck and a good book. But she did that already. The lesson? "I can't spend that much time reading." **• HOW TO DO IT >**

ZACH STOVALL



If you only knew  
what this room  
used to look like ...  
Heather and her  
husband, Emmett  
(above), remember,  
and saw it through.



# HOW TO OPEN AN INN

## Where to do it:

1 **BAHAMAS** Close by, A-list appeal with celebs, and 1.4 million arrivals in 2012. Plus, conch. 2 **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** All-inclusive crowds flock to Punta Cana. Nearby Samana beckons. 3 **ARUBA** Loyal visitors, big-name hotels — and your boutique alternative? Bon bini. 4 **KO CHANG, THAILAND** Arrivals are on the up. Inns are popular. So are elephant tours. 5 **BALI** Aman has five resorts in Indonesia, and may add a second in Bali, which is rebounding.

**Go in Depth:** [islands.com/bitlo](http://islands.com/bitlo)

## If you do it:

1 **FOLLOW** Best to let big luxury brands explore new island frontiers, establish infrastructure and air service. Then follow. Also, search online for an island's tourism arrivals and hotel occupancy rates. 2 **NETWORK** Attend the Hotel, Motel + Restaurant Show and (Heather's favorite) the New York International Gift Fair. 3 **SHOP** Find hotels for sale at [cbre.com/regions](http://cbre.com/regions). Note the photos there. Good ones will be key for your inn's website.

JON WHITTLE



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



HOW TO  
MOVE TO AN  
ISLAND

# Start a Business

VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

Marc DeLucia has never heard of Vieques when a friend on the small Puerto Rican island invites him to visit. This is August 1999. Marc is hanging out in Austin, Texas, a college graduate wondering where a degree is about to take him. Like perhaps to a bed and a beach on ... how do you say it, *Vee-eh-kez*? Isn't that the place the Navy is still using as a target range for bombs? "I'm coming," Marc tells his friend.



Marc packs for a weeklong stay. Turns out the obligatory post-graduation trip changes Marc's life. Just not right away. His route to being an outfitter in the Caribbean will take 12 years, with a few turns along the way, and one immediate hitch in reverse.

"That first trip, I had to go back home after three weeks on the island," he says, not specifying if it was his decision or his friend's. "But I had already fallen in love with the place."

Love is often the driving force behind our boldest decisions, especially as young adults. Marriage. The car we can't afford. A move to an island laden

with leaning palm trees and a sleepy job market. So Marc returns to Texas just long enough to sell some of his stuff and to gather all the cash he has to his name: \$3,000. And then he takes off for Vieques again. This time he knows how to pronounce it, and this time he finds employment at a hotel. Truth is, the early days are not total bliss. Marc is tempted to return to the States after less than a year because of, among other things, his difficulty adjusting to the very island pace that attracted him in the first place. But he sticks it out. Without realizing it, he is slowly becoming an expat.

"What I really liked was riding my bike around the island," says Marc, now 42. "I'd look at the colors of the water and search out new places."

Being outside. Discovering beauty. Yes, the scenery that has been an object of Marc's affection from the start will bear fruit for him. In time.

The job at the hotel (now called Bravo Beach) leads to a position with a start-up, Evamer Cottages, which rents vacation villas on the island's north shore. He decides to get a Vieques resident card, which entitles him to discounts and "first dibs" on the ferry over to Puerto Rico's main island when the ferry is full. (As a resident of Puerto Rico, he can no longer vote in the U.S.

**THE MOVER:** Marc DeLucia, 42  
**FROM:** Austin, Texas  
**WHY HE MOVED:** A friend invited him to visit the island after college; the natural and tropical surroundings persuaded him to make a move.  
**MONEY SITUATION:** Came to Vieques with \$3,000 and a very loose job commitment.

ZACH STOVALL



Marc bought his first paddle board 12 years after moving to Vieques, not knowing it would spark a business.





There are no traffic lights, leaving the wild horses and the color of the water to make people stop.

## His move with only a little cash came after watching his dad lose his pension and earnings.

presidential election, since Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory and not a state.) And then the path from college to his own business finally opens wide, by accident, in 2012. The impetus is a deal Marc finds on Facebook. One of his friends on Vieques is leaving the island (he was what locals call a “bomb boy,” an expert who comes to defuse bombs left behind by the Navy after its test program was shut down). The friend doesn’t want to pack his expensive stand-up paddle board and posts it at the fire-sale price of \$750.

“I didn’t have the money to buy a boat,” Marc says. “I figured the board would be a way for me to go about a mile out to snorkel on some reefs, and be there in 10 minutes. It also allowed me to see parts of the island I couldn’t otherwise get to.”

The paddle board opens up more than just splendid views. Visitors see Marc on the board and ask if they can give it a try. He realizes that he’s on to something. Six months later, he buys another board and starts leading SUP tours for \$50 per person. It goes so well that in December he buys a third board. By the end of winter he has seven paddle boards and a business he describes as “lucrative.” It helps that Marc is considered a local on an island whose name he once could not pronounce.

Marc admits that his move to Vieques with only a little cash and barely a job opportunity came from a “carpe diem” attitude he adopted while growing up. He watched how his dad had to adjust after being laid off from a job and losing his pension and earnings.

“I figure why wait your whole life for something that might not be a guarantee after all?” Marc says.

You could say he’s living the dream backward. He made the island move before starting a career. He plans to use his profits to buy a nice little house in the States where he can spend summers. In the meantime, though, the little island with wild horses and bad roads will be his meal ticket, his passion and his home. ● **HOW TO DO IT** >

### LESSONS LEARNED

#### GIVE IT TIME

It takes about a year to get acclimated to a small island. Your mind and body need to shift into the island pace.

#### ADJUST THE BUDGET

In the Caribbean, calculate your annual income based on eight months of earnings. Business is slow from August to November.

#### CLAIM VEGETABLES WHEN YOU CAN

Do not take red tomatoes and green lettuce for granted. They show up once in a while at the grocery store, and disappear fast.

#### FORGET THE CAR

It’s less expensive to buy a used car on the island than to transport your own from the States. Remember, cars get dirty and salty.





# HOW TO GET STARTED

Where to do it:

- 1 **AMERICAN SAMOA** Tourism is in its infancy here. They use the U.S. dollar, and water activities are hugely popular.
- 2 **ST. JOHN** No language or currency barriers. More than half the island is national park.
- 3 **COZUMEL** It's experiencing an upswing in American entrepreneurs. Flexible visa policies.
- 4 **FLORIDA KEYS** Easy to scout. Home to more than 50 dive shops alone.
- 5 **GUAM** Gets 1.2 million visitors a year, and has been called a theme park for the Japanese.

If you do it:

- 1 **LOOK FOR EXPATS** Places with large expat populations need services and businesses that cater to expats. And expats tend to support each other.
- 2 **HIRE LOCALS** Government officials usually look favorably on those who want to invest in the country and provide employment.
- 3 **BE INVOLVED** The best way to meet people and gain trust is to volunteer. Clean up the beach. Adopt stray dogs. Participate in childrens' programs. You'll make friends.

Go in Depth: [islands.com/bitlo](https://islands.com/bitlo)



JON WHITTLE

AMERICAN SAMOA





## BEST ISLANDS TO LIVE ON FOR ...

### Retiring Early

❶ **BELIZE** New housing is priced to attract expats, and the language is easy: English.

❷ **PHILIPPINES** Long-term visas are available. Stress and cost of living are equally low.

❸ **MALTA** Property taxes are nil, and lots of old farmhouses are begging to be refurbished.

❹ **CYPRUS** A visa can be secured by proving a \$7,500 annual income for retirees.

❺ **ROATAN** Islanders look favorably on American expats. Lots of volunteer ops.

### Easy Transitions

❶ **PUERTO RICO** The isle's west coast is safe and accessible, and has expats from all states.

❷ **HAWAII** Make a trial run to check the housing situation. If it only lasts a year, so what?

❸ **PENANG** Medical care gets high marks, and it has an expat office to help ease the move.

❹ **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** Affordable flights and affordable housing in every direction.

❺ **GRAND TURK** Vibe is worth permit fees (\$1,000 to reside; \$2,500 to work as an editor).

### Starting Over

❶ **HVAR** Croatia's sunshine isle is no longer hidden, but it's still cheaper than most of Europe.

❷ **NEW ZEALAND** The 4 million people are spread over a land mass the size of California.

❸ **LOMBOK** If you missed Bali's expat migration, its second run is to this part of Indonesia.

❹ **TUVALU** Near Fiji, but far more remote. Locals care about making friends, not wealth.

❺ **PALAU** World's fourth least populated country has strong American ties, like the U.S. dollar.

### Raising a Family

❶ **MAUI** Hawaii has America's longest life expectancy (81); one of the lowest violent crime rates.

❷ **JAPAN** Near the top of the Global Peace Index; just don't fall into a 60-hour work week.

❸ **BAHAMAS** Kids grow up in a cultural melting pot without being too far from extended family.

❹ **FIJI** English is widely spoken (even in schools) on islands where family truly comes first.

❺ **USVI** Field trips to sea-turtle nests; snorkeling every day. Do homework on public schools.

Meet the Expats: [islands.com/bitlo](https://islands.com/bitlo)

ZACH STOWALL





Tasmania allowed the couple more biking and hiking, but not more fish tacos. They decided to change that.



COURTESY PAIGE LANSING; OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ANDREW PEACOCK/CORBIS; DAVID MATHESON/CORBIS; ZACH STOVALL

## HOW TO MOVE TO AN ISLAND

# Simplify Your Life

TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Blossoming careers. A great apartment. Their own parking spot in the city. Nothing on paper spoke to why Paige Lansing and Carlos Valle would dare leave their lives in San Francisco. Not in a down economy. Not with a job at a Silicon Valley start-up. And most certainly not for an island they'd arrive at unemployed. So what could spark their improbable move? A bottle of whiskey. Well, at least that part adds up.

Not just any whiskey: Tasmanian whiskey. A gift from Paige's dad, David, an *Islands* contributor.

It was December 2011, and Paige and Carlos had been Googling the world for a place with good biking and good food, where their passions could flourish. Paige always dreamed of living overseas. She never felt weeklong vacations got to the heart of a culture. With a bottle of Lark whiskey in hand, they added Tasmania to their search.

The Australian island checked all their boxes, and new ones. For example, the island allowed younger workers like them temporary visas. Still ... *Tasmania*? Prior to the whiskey, Paige couldn't find it on a map. She was a marketer for Whole Foods, handling 35 stores. Carlos was an engineer at a high-tech start up. The Bay Area was their fast track: two Type A's racing for the good life. Or not.

"Our lives were too busy," Paige says. "We'd be up at 6 a.m. for fitness boot camps, then commute to work, then work overtime and then have a full social schedule. We had no free time."

Sound familiar? Yet among their 30-year-old peers, their dream of a simpler life didn't instill much envy.

"It's deemed irresponsible to leave

good jobs in today's market," she recalls.

They pressed on, and applied for Australian work-holiday visas (\$230 each) — anticipating a long wait for their applications' acceptance.

"It took 14 hours," Paige says, smiling.

But there was also the matter of overseas health insurance. It was required for their work visas.

"Just \$75 per month for both of us." More smiles.

With momentum on their side, they bought one-way plane tickets for \$1,300 each. Just like that, Tasmania was real.

They pared down their belongings and began searching Gumtree, like an Australian version of Craigslist, to get a feel for the island's cost of living. They also secured an apartment in Hobart, the island's capital, through Airbnb.com.

But they had no jobs. Not yet, though employment wasn't a major concern. This was not intended to be a career move. Their visas were temporary. Australia's minimum wage was a staggering \$16 USD per hour. They'd find work soon enough. Work that enabled them a life far beyond it. Besides, bigger challenges remained in San Francisco.

"The most difficult part of the process was quitting our jobs," says Paige,



**THE MOVERS:** Paige Lansing, 27  
Carlos Valle, 31  
**FROM:** San Francisco, California  
**WHY THEY MOVED:** A bottle of Tasmanian whiskey, and to pay less rent and work fewer hours.  
**MONEY SITUATION:** \$10,000 in savings. They had work permits; no jobs.



**They consider themselves “casually employed” because they do so much more.**

citing a stigma among her age group. A stigma that attaches success to jobs, and jobs to higher education costs and the loans they entail — anchoring younger generations of would-be expats. Walking out on a good job? At their age? It just isn't done.

But Paige and Carlos did it, arriving in Hobart with bikes and big duffel bags. Almost immediately, Carlos found a job as a head bike mechanic. Soon after, Paige landed a marketing/bartending job for Lark whiskey distillery. Yes, that Lark whiskey.

Of course, they work hard. But they consider themselves “casually employed” because of what else they do: biking, camping, exploring Australia, and steering clear of their former life's habits.

“We don't buy things like \$18 yoga classes, so we don't have to work harder to afford them,” Paige says. “We also rarely go out for dinner.”

Cue the Tasmanian-red sunset, and triumphant expats strolling onto its horizon, if only for a year's work visa. Except Paige and Carlos aren't the type to stroll, and not all their Bay Area habits died easily. Namely, their love of Mexican food. They knew they'd be leaving it behind. But free time in Tasmania meant doing something about it. Enter Cocina de Mama, their pop-up Mexican restaurant, opened with help from a local friend.

If Australia and enchiladas seem an unlikely mix, it's for good reason. Chiles, for example, are a tough find. But the couple is determined. At their last pop-up event they sold 200 tacos. And as improbable as it sounds, the tacos have them thinking like Tasmanians.

“I went to the butcher to buy pork lard,” Paige recalls, “and the butcher said, ‘Why don't you just make your own?’ The thought never occurred to me because I never had the time.”

But in Hobart, time is its own currency, allowing the two to purchase a slower life of long weekends with new friends, most of whom (thanks to Australia's high wages) are homeowners.

“It's all so contrary to the life we used to live in the Bay Area,” Paige says. Except for the whiskey. **● HOW TO DO IT >**

## LESSONS LEARNED

**SECURE CHEAP DIGS** Prior to moving, Paige and Carlos utilized Airbnb.com to book a fully furnished apartment for a month at just \$35 a night. This gave them time to scout out permanent accommodations.

**PACK LIGHT** They pared their belongings to just \$500 in excess baggage fees. Not bad (they flew with two bikes).

**BRING PHOTOS** A fully furnished apartment or house may or may not be decorated to your taste. Paige and Carlos wished they'd brought more photos to personalize their living space.



Friends questioned why the couple left. Tasman National Park offers one answer.



# HOW TO SIMPLIFY (IF JUST FOR A YEAR)

**Where to do it:**

- 1 **NEW ZEALAND** Work permits in Auckland lead to cheap rent, and ops in yoga, food and wine.
- 2 **TAIWAN** Teaching English is in demand and red-tape free. Search jobs at [tealit.com](#).
- 3 **IRELAND** Chefs and tourism workers are needed. Enjoy low rent, rolling hills, Guinness.
- 4 **KO CHANG, THAILAND** Growing expat population; a low-cost paradise; beautiful.
- 5 **SAN BLAS, PANAMA** It's affordable and has plenty of expats to help the transition.

**If you do it (legally):**

- 1 **CHOOSE WISELY** Young Americans can get working-holiday visas in certain island nations (restrictions apply). They include: Singapore, New Zealand, Ireland and Australia.
- 2 **VOLUNTEER** The Peace Corps lets you become part of a local community. Roughly 84 percent of its participants are between the ages of 20 and 29.
- 3 **TEACH ENGLISH** The path of least resistance to a job abroad. Asian countries are always on the lookout. [teachaway.com](#)

**Go in Depth:** [islands.com/bitlo](#)



PELICAN ISLAND, SAN BLAS, PANAMA

MASTERFILE



HOW TO  
MOVE TO AN  
ISLAND

# Sail Away, Alone

ISLANDS OF THE WORLD

Like so many newlyweds, Rick and Suza Goltz boarded a boat for their honeymoon. But Rick and Suza just returned to Florida this summer — their honeymoon at sea lasted *14 years*. Living on a 44-foot yacht was at times like living in a children's book (sandy islands and weeks spent alone on the ocean). But there were other times. "It could be like living in a washing machine," says Suza. Yes, they have stories.

A year sailing the Caribbean. It's the ultimate cruise for most, but for Rick, 41 at the time, and Suza, 40, it's merely a warm-up. This is 1999. They've retired early from their engineering posts at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Compiled a gift registry at West Marine. Exchanged vows. And now, with 10 years of planning and two pet cats in hand, they're gone. Headed around the world on a 44-foot yacht.

"The first year we were just getting comfortable on the water," says Suza.

So the Caribbean becomes their kiddie pool. This is pre-Wi-Fi. The \$250 chip that contains nautical charts for the entire world in 2013 doesn't exist in 1999. Rick and Suza have to buy paper charts at \$15 each. Just to get from Florida to Trinidad, they need 100 charts, for a grand total of \$1,500. Hence, the West Marine wedding registry, and the annuity from which they will draw a monthly allowance.

"Our plan before leaving was to live on \$30,000 per year," says Rick.

But the Caribbean cruise is just a rehearsal for the voyage to South America and into the Pacific. Every time they raise the anchor, they're looking at an average of 600 nautical miles to the next anchorage — at least five days and nights. The longest passage between two lands in this swing is from the Galapagos to the Marquesas. The route is almost 3,000 miles, takes 23 days on the horizonless blue ocean, and is perhaps the couple's biggest test in the early stages of the honeymoon.

"I was done at day 17," Suza says of the rough passage with her husband of barely one year. "Nothing can prepare you for that much time at sea with one person." She takes the night watch during this leg. They make it. And that's really the whole idea for the next decade. Making it. Landing on islands

#### THE MOVERS:

Rick Goltz, 55  
Suza Goltz, 54

FROM: Cape  
Canaveral, Florida

WHY THEY MOVED:  
To see the world at  
their pace, alone

MONEY SITUATION:  
Transferred their  
401(k)s into IRAs;  
drew \$2,500  
monthly from one  
that was dedicated  
to an annuity.



ZACH STOVALL; COURTESY RICK AND SUZA GOLTZ



The world is smaller since Rick and Suza cast off in 1999 (far left) without Facebook, smart phones or any return plans.





They could try to maneuver around the storm, but the boat's steering cable breaks.

few of their friends even know how to pronounce: Langkawi, Chuuk, Hiva Oa, Chagos.

Rick and Suza get best acquainted with Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. It's there where they spend almost six years working because the winds seem to be conspiring against their sail to Fiji — they cancel it twice. Who knows, though, what might have happened in Fiji? Maybe Rick would have developed a severe kava habit or gotten into a fight with a chief. It had to be something, because it seems like, for the most part, the couple is able to dodge bad things. Really bad things.

Near Papua New Guinea a microburst appears. They could try to maneuver around it, except that the boat's steering cable breaks. Rick is able to fix it as they escape possible doom.

In Thailand Rick and Suza plan to join a rally organized to sail the coast of Africa, only to back out and take a much longer route. They find out later that pirates have captured some of the sailors in the rally.

## LESSONS LEARNED

### FORGET SPEED

Things move real slow at sea. There's no such thing as multitasking. You can't read the paper online and order pizza. When you're on a boat, you say things like, "OK, today we're going to do the laundry," or, "Nope, we don't have any fresh water for that."

### BOATING IS AN OUTDOOR SPORT

It's a lot like camping. When it rains, you get wet. When it's hot, you sweat. Each time we raised the anchor in the Pacific, we were looking at five days and nights at sea. **ISLANDS CHANGE** We almost didn't recognize some Caribbean ports when we came back through after 12 years. Don't wait. Go now.

"We never regretted the decision to add 10,000 miles to our trip," says Rick. "In fact, that's how we got to see the Maldives, Chagos and Madagascar."

Taking time to enjoy those islands is when the real honeymooning happens, because life aboard the boat, on the move, consumes more time than you might imagine. Rick and Suza are the full-time crew. Which is why her six-volume set of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* will not be read. Even given 14 years to do so.

As they return to Florida, and end their honeymoon, Rick and Suza say they wouldn't trade the experience for anything. They've stepped onto islands accessible only by boat. They can describe the world's best snorkeling spots like no one else. But they wouldn't do this again. They're ready to sleep on beds that don't move and to read something other than ocean currents — like those books about the Roman Empire. And to start telling stories about one amazing honeymoon. **● HOW TO DO IT >**



(Clockwise from top left): Riding out the rain, paddling Borneo, snorkeling the Maldives, exploring South Africa, moored in the Bahamas.

ZACH STOVALL; COURTESY RICK AND SUZA GOLTZ





# HOW TO SAIL AWAY

## Where to do it:

- ① **TONGA** Friendly to humpback whales and sailors. How about a pig roast in the marina?
- ② **BVI** Great cruising waters with favorable winds, scenic bays and the best painkillers.
- ③ **MICRONESIA** The islands near Yap are preserved. Bring a gift for the chief on Ifalik.
- ④ **SEA OF CORTEZ** Sailors with an adventurous itch might wind up in the Galapagos.
- ⑤ **DOMINICA** Pick one local boy in a dinghy to bring bread and ice. The others will go away.

## If you do it:

- ① **SAVE** Rick and Suza figured they'd need \$30K a year to live on. It would cost \$20K every third year to haul out the boat. It took them 10 years to save enough money to go.
- ② **LEARN** Beth Leonard is a two-time circumnavigator with one of the most helpful web-sites: bethandevans.com.
- ③ **PRACTICE** Rick and Suza prepared for the 14-year cruise by living on a boat for five years. It gave them time to downsize. "Once you get rid of stuff," says Suza, "there's freedom."

**Go in Depth:** [islands.com/bittlo](https://islands.com/bittlo)

SCUBAZOO/CORBIS

TONGA