



ArcticTerns

Worldschooling Newsletter

Worldschooling on a budget

Worldschooling is possible on every budget. In this newsletter Jenna explains how to keep the costs down while travelling. Read her experiences how this family makes it work!

Every Worldshooler has a story to tell

Every traveling family has a unique background, experience or knowledge, that they can share with other to expand and inspire.

In our newsletter we offer a platform to all the different stories that are out there.

In this newsletter:

- Jenna Emmerson, about how to travel on a budget

- Traditional Sinterklaas Celebration Netherlands
- This week in Worldschoooling Bansko

Jenna Emmerson, about how to travel on a budget

Could you tell us a bit about yourself and your family?

We are a family of 4 - Chris, Jenna, Reed (11) and Sadie (6). Originally from the US, our travel story began in Istanbul, then continued for 16 years in Singapore, both places where Chris taught science in international schools, and we all enjoyed life in the tropics, hiking in the rainforests, swimming to beat the heat and occasionally fighting off monkeys trying to pilfer food from our apartment. Last June, we left Singapore to travel on a gap year before repatriating to the US.

What made you start traveling as a family?

I can't remember a time when we haven't traveled. With long school breaks for Chris and the

kids, and me working remotely, we've traveled for nearly every school holiday (other than during the pandemic) since moving abroad. We have always had wanderlust and were thrilled when the kids seemed to enjoy exploring the world as much as their parents. Reed's first flight was the 22 hour journey from New York to Singapore at 5 weeks old. Sadie's first trip was to one of our favorite destinations, Dunsborough, Australia at 3 months old. They were both intrepid travelers from the start.



How do you make it work financially?

We've always used a variety of strategies to keep costs in check to travel more often. We knew that traveling for weeks (or now many months) we couldn't travel on the same budget as if we traveled 2 weeks a year. On this trip, we've cooked at home more often than dining out, or enjoyed lunch or happy hour at a highly rated restaurant rather than a splurgy dinner. We also tend to walk as often as possible between attractions, or take advantage of public transport, rather than taxiing. Free or discounted attractions, rather than the more expensive options, tend to be our go-to in more expensive locations. Our number one tip for affordable travel, however, is our approach to accommodation, something that has been invaluable in making this gap year possible.

How do you keep accommodation costs down?

Exchanging our home through [HomeExchange](#), and pet sitting through [TrustedHousesitters](#) has been a game changer for us. We have been doing home exchanges through HomeExchange for more than 13 years, when a former colleague told us about the platform. We immediately signed up and have been home exchanging ever since. But our first home exchange was actually through Craigslist back in 2008. It was a leap of faith, but it turned out fantastically, with a visiting grad student staying in our home for a summer, while we stayed in her gorgeous apartment in Union Square, NYC.

For this travel year, we have used HomeExchange as often as possible, including a fabulous stay in Paris, overlooking the Seine, a home with a garden in Aix en Provence and several exchanges throughout Spain. We also started pet sitting through Trusted Housesitters, and have fallen in love with some incredible pets and wonderful family homes. Pet sitting has also

given the kids a good dose of the responsibility that comes with having a pet. It's been a great test-run for the idea of adopting a pet in the next, less nomadic phase of our lives.

Without these free housing options, we could not have afforded to travel for this extended period of time, or this comfortably. Staying in homes that people actually live in, rather than homes designed for renters means we've had fully equipped kitchens, shelves full of books and toys, and perhaps most importantly, comfortable beds for quality sleep!



What are your plans for the future?

This summer we plan to repatriate to the US to live near family after many years away, and for Chris to start a second career after teaching. We plan to continue using pet sitting and HomeExchange to travel during school holidays, exploring places closer to home and further afield. Our gap year has given us so many incredible memories and will live large in our collective memory.

You can follow our travels on Instagram [@familyramble](https://www.instagram.com/familyramble) or www.familyramble.com.

What is **your** story? Share it with the Worldscool world.

Traditional Sinterklaas Celebration Netherlands

One of the most typical Dutch celebrations is Sinterklaas.

Sinterklaas is the Dutch version of Santa Claus, and basically the Dutch celebration of St. Nicolas day. However St. Nicolas day is December 6th, the Dutch celebrate it the evening before, on December 5th. But the real celebrations start weeks before. Mid November Sinterklaas arrives to the country by boat, together with his helpers the Pieten. The story goes that he comes sailing from Spain where he lives, and every year he comes to the Netherlands to celebrate his birthday. The arrival of Sinterklaas in the country is a big event, that all the Dutch kids have been looking out for for weeks. The whole town is involved and it is a big celebration. After the arrival in the country, Sinterklaas and his Pieten will be seen regularly in the Dutch streets. They will appear in schools, sport clubs, shops, neighbourhoods etc etc.

From the moment Sinterklaas has arrived in the Netherlands Dutch kids are invited to put their shoes in front of the fire place in the evening, to hopefully find a nice treat in it in the morning. This tradition goes on until December 5th, when, in the evening a loud knock on the door alerts the whole family, who will then find a bag with gifts in front of the door.



During Worldschoolling Netherlands we will experience many of the Sinterklaas traditions first hand. We will join the arrival of Sinterklaas in the country, put our shoes in front of the fire place and get to try all the typical Dutch Sinterklaas candies, and if we have been good we might even meet Sinterklaas in real life!

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This week in Worldschoolling Bansko

We had a busy week again at Worldschoolling Bansko!

Monday kicked off with a skiing session, and the fun continued throughout the afternoon: The kids became police detectives trying to solve a murder and find a stolen car. The parents and teens had a Bulgarian cooking session, creating a delicious lutenitsa, followed by a skill share session on how to start a business. For the youngest members, the Kids Club Disco was a

highlight, while older kids had fun pebble painting. In the evening, another round of D&D adventure unfolded while the teens and parents had fun playing board games.

Tuesday brought more fun with swimming, a special teen restaurant visit, and the highly anticipated sledging adventure down the 7 km ski road. The day concluded with a heart-warming potluck, where families shared delicious dishes together.

Wednesday's highlights included more skiing adventures, farmer's project for the little ones, and 3D drawing for the artsy teens. The kids also made spaghetti in the Kids' Restaurant, and the teens got their leadership coaching. While the kids were kept busy, parents discussed how to finance worldschooling. The evening ended with a dip in the hot springs.

On Thursday morning, many volunteered for Bansko Street Dogs, taking the doggies on a walk in the city park. In the afternoon, the families went for a mountain walk in the beautiful nature that surrounds Bansko. Later, while the kids enjoyed a movie night, and the teens embarked on Dungeons and Dragons adventures, parents had a fun night out at a nice restaurant!

Friday was just as exciting with a skiing session in the morning followed by lots of activities in the afternoon. There was a puppet show, face painting, secret club, science class and the kids also made videos about their experiences. Parents had the opportunity to give feedback and bond with the help of a fun connecting activity. In the evening, parents gathered for a heart-warming evening of hot wine and chat, while the kids got their devices out and spent the night gaming or playing board games with each other.



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ArcticTerns

Mr de beerenbrouckstraat 25A,
Dongen
Netherlands

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