



ArcticTerns

## Worldschooling Newsletter

### ArcticTerns, how it all started

ArcticTerns and its events are now a staple in the Worldschool world. But how did it all start? What made our family decide to start this adventure now called Worldschool hubs, and how did it develop?

#### In this newsletter:

- ArcticTerns, how it all started
- Worldschooling Netherlands - about to finalise!
- Our upcoming Teen Events

### ArcticTerns, how it all started

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March 2020, the pandemic. Me and my children were in Mexico, in the same town, in the same neighbourhood, 3 streets from where I am sitting right now. There was panic. Like everyone else in the world we did not know what was happening, was this the apocalypse coming? I continuously received emails from my home country's government that they had rescue flights coming up and that this might be our only change to get back to the Netherlands. When things in Mexico started locking down we decided to book the flight, back "home".

Once in the Netherlands we settled in our studio, consisting of a bedroom a bathroom and a small hallway. Not an ideal situation for a mom with two kids, one of them going through puberty. We saw it as a temporary hide out and I was looking for where to go next. In our family we make these kind of decisions in a democratic way, but literally everything I suggested was turned down by Derisha, who was not in a good place at that moment. Until I mentioned skiing, and that was the only thing that Derisha not only said "yes" to, but that also made her eyes light up. Dominic was up for anything, so skiing it would be.

I reached out in one of the Worldschool groups in Facebook and asked what would be a good place for us to go skiing. On a budget. In Europe. People suggested all kind of ski resorts all over Europe, a list of about dozens of

ski resorts became to appear. And two of them were Bansko. If two say Bansko, let's go to Bansko. That was about my reasoning at that time. We picked up our car from Spain, where we left it before our travels and where it had been parked for about 10 months now, even housing a bee family. And we left on a slow road trip to Bansko, through Andorra, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and finally Bulgaria.

We arrived in Bansko in the late afternoon, exhausted. And immediately the culture shock hit me. OMG what had we done? Why did we not do our research before just driving somewhere? This was way different than what I had expected. We had a good meal, went to bed, and just realised that arrival in a new place after a long travel is always hard and that I just need rest before I can form my opinion. It took me 2-3 days of getting used to the town this time. And then I started loving it. And I have loved every bit of it ever since.

In the post on Facebook where so many suggestions for ski resorts were given, there were also a lot of people who said they wanted to join. Having just left our then flourishing community in Playa del Carmen, we were very happy to organise a gathering in Bansko. My family needed to find a community back, especially my 12 year old. In the following months me and Derisha worked equally hard on getting to know Bansko, creating a program, letting the world know what we were going to do, preparing interesting families for Bansko, find them housing, and on December 31 2020 we celebrated New Years together with the Worldscool families to then start our program a day later, on January 1st 2021.

Our first season was a very light program. We organised activities 3 times a week and asked families to take on part of the activities. We rented a space and asked families to contribute €60 per month to cover rent and materials. This turned out differently, as me and Derisha had to take on the vast majority of the activities by ourselves, and number of activities had expanded to 4, sometimes 5 days a week. We decided we needed to change the program. So for the second season we adjusted the program according to the needs of the first years families. And we kept adjusting according to the needs of the participating families. Leading to a full activity program for the whole family in an amazing complex where everybody can be part of the one thing we all came together for: Community.

After two seasons in Bansko we were ready to expand. As I am originally from the Netherlands, but my kids had not seen much of our country yet, I really wanted them to learn more. And we decided to invite other families along. This became Derisha's solo project. However I told her good sites to visit and used my veto in that, she organised everything. She coordinated with activity providers, accommodation, transport companies, and more. And even though they might have sometimes suspected to be dealing with an intern, these professionals did no way realise that they were emailing or calling with a 14 year old. Derisha created an itinerary, well planned out, found lunch locations, bus pick up spots, supermarkets nearby and so many extra information to make the families feel at home.

But as a teen, Derisha also created peers for herself. In a special Teen Camp where the teens would be joining a co-living situation with other teens, going through challenges of freedom and responsibility, growing as a person and as a group. It was one of the best experiences in Derisha's life. And of the other teens. They made so much connection and are still best friends.

At this moment we are preparing our fifth season. And to be honest I am so excited about it, looking forward to both Worldscooling Netherlands and Worldscooling Bansko. A lot of work still has to be done, because such an incredible amount of work goes into organising these events, and at the same time making preparations for at our sixth season in which we want to expand with a program in Playa del Carmen.

Derisha will say goodbye to us soon. It is uncertain if she will join us in Bansko this year and if so, she will most probably not join us in our travels after anymore. However she will continue to help from a distance. Will I then continue to organise Worldscool hubs for me and Dominic to enjoy? I am not sure yet. Like last year we will make a decision when we are running our program. Because when we have to do all the preparations, I sometimes feel like this should be the last year. But when we experience the hubs and all the beautiful families, and the great time we have together, I might again change my mind and go for a new season.

## Worldschooling Netherlands - About to finalise!

Worldschooling Netherlands has space for 3 more participants, either in the Family Program or in the Teen Camp, before we will finalise this season. Worldschooling Netherlands needs a certain amount of participants to start, and we have almost reached this number. After we finalise the program there will still be options to sign up, but in that case it will be a customised proces. We will then have to request the accommodation if more housing is available and if so, if they can go at the same fee. It can be that there will be no more space and it can be that the fee will go up. Add to that the fact that we have an early bird discount expiring August 1st, now is the time to book.

### **Does that mean that a family of 4 can no longer book?**

Also larger families still have the chance to book.

Once we have reached the 3 participants we will finalise the program with whoever has signed up at that moment. Even after registration it takes about 1-2 weeks for us to be able to finalise, so however registers in between is still able to join.

Family Program

Teen Camp

## Our upcoming Teen Events

As a mom of a 17 year old teen I found out 4 years ago how the focus of Worldschooling changes once they become teens. It changed the way my family travels and mostly, who we travel with. More than ever my teen needed community around. A group of peers going through the same stage of development, characterised by a hunger for social connections and independence. Exactly the two things that might be challenging to give them while travelling.

Four years ago we started building teen community in the Worldschool world. We included a special teen program in Bansko that has created friendships that have lasted for years after the ski season ended with many teens travelling together or meeting up afterwards. Also we initiated a special Teen Camp in the Netherlands where teens can join by themselves or with their family, and grow in their freedom and independence in a guided and safe environment.

### **Teen Camp Netherlands**

November 1-22 2024

A co-living experience with other teens building independence and leadership through an in-depth cultural immersion in the Netherlands.

Teen Camp Netherlands

### **Worldschooling Bansko - Teen program**

January 5 - February 15

February 23 - April 5

Creating life lasting friendships with other teens in a special teen program with tons of activities in the ski resort town Bansko.

Teen Program Bansko

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### ArcticTerns

Mr de beerenbrouckstraat 25A, Dongen  
Netherlands

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