

Global Scavenger Hunt



“Win a Free Trip Around the World!” the subject line said.

Because I suffer from wanderlust, I apply to every travel giveaway that comes across my inbox, and, when I saw this message, I thought it would be the same: enter my e-mail address and cross my fingers.

But I was wrong.

This was an event, a little like *The Amazing Race*, where 15 two-person teams are sent to 10-plus countries completing hundreds of scavenges to claim the title of “World’s Best Traveler.” The prize? A free trip around the world, the next year. When I saw the price tag, I had a minor stroke, and I put the



thought out of my mind.

That was, of course, until it crept back in — and by crept, I mean blinding light and a voice from a burning bush saying, “YOU MUST DO THIS.” Let me explain some scavenges of the past:

- In Cambodia: Buy supplies (20 tubes of toothpaste, a dozen bottles of shampoo, tins of cookies, maybe a few soccer balls) and personally deliver them to Lighthouse Orphanage
- In Malaysia: Visit the Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Farm and help the trainers wash them.
- In Kathmandu: take a meditation lesson at a Nepali Meditation Center
- In Viet Nam: Take a four-hour morning cooking class that includes a trip to a local produce



market.

The premise of this competition is to get people “trusting strangers in a strange land” and building relationships, and it occurred to me that I might be able to give back in a bigger way.

First of all — if you haven’t noticed — I’m a writer. So there’s that. But this could be more than just a cool story; I wanted to share this experience by including my friends and family and community, to create connections, and to spread kindness into the world in tangible ways.

That’s how my teammate (whom I’ve never met, by the way) and I came up with our team name, “Global Scavengers on a Mission.” We’re both competitive people and plan to go all out, but it’s important that we make the trip about more than just winning or even self-discovery. We decided to support three

organizations that are making a positive impact in areas of great need: Musana (caring for orphans and providing education); Charity: Water (providing clean water for people worldwide); and Samaritan's



Purse (offering aid to refugees and displaced persons).

I know that money is a touchy subject — who ever has enough? — but I read a quote today that said, “If you drink anything but tap water, you have money to spare.” If you have an extra few dollars to spare this week, would you consider visiting our crowd-funding site globalscavengers.com and helping us to spread kindness? We’ll be blogging along the way, and we want you to join the journey: my blog is fushilou.wordpress.com and my teammate Mark’s blog is megaaroundtheworld.blogspot.com.

And — if you’re worried — I promise there will be food. As a food writer I’ve learned the best way to build relationships is to share a meal together, and I know I’ll be taking Rhode Island with me as I dine.