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A SPECIAL METRO REPORT
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OUT OF THE ORDINARY

GET AWAY TO A WORLD OF ADVENTURE AND FUN

**SURVIVORMAN LES STROUD
TALKS ADVENTURE TRAVEL**

bp 3

MAKE YOUR FANTASY TRIP A REALITY

bp 4

ADVENTURE TRAVEL TAKES YOU ALL OVER THE WORLD



Deb and Dave on the Mongol Rally in Kazakhstan

And nobody knows it better than Vancouver's Dave Bouskill and Deb Corbeil.

The adventure-seeking couple has spent the past 13 years climbing, paddling and trekking across five continents as "Canada's Adventure Couple" and travel bloggers for The Planet D.com. Metro caught up with them in Russia during the über-challenging Mongol Rally, which goes from England to Mongolia. They are driving a "small, inappropriate car" 15,000 kilometres and are about 1/3 of the way through the epic journey.

"Only half the teams make it to Mongolia and we are going strong so far without any major mechanical failures or even having to pay any bribes," the couple joked during an email interview.

Deb and Dave travel to push themselves beyond their limits. "Climbing to the summit of Kilimanjaro or cycling the continent of Africa makes us feel more alive and content with our lives than at any other moment in time," they said.

HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR SUGGESTED TRIPS AND TIPS:

HIKE THE HIMALAYAS

Deb and Dave hiked to the Everest Base Camp and were blown away by its



HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

immensity. "Walking in the footsteps of Sir Edmond Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa made us feel as if we were a part of history."

WHEN IN THAILAND...

"A super way to experience a great adventure is to try something unique to the country you are travelling to," they said. Last year, they trained in Muay Thai Kickboxing in Thailand. "It was an amazing way to learn about a sport that is ingrained in the Thai culture."

THEIR MOTTO: "ANYONE CAN DO IT"

"What we love about travel is that anything can be an adventure." For Deb and Dave, a great part of the adventure is finding creative ways to pay for their journeys. Right now, they're using their new Gold Rewards Card to rack up travel points as they drive to Mongolia. — *By Jon Tattrie*



Follow the adventure at theplanetd.com and on Twitter at [@theplanetd](https://twitter.com/theplanetd)

GIVING BACK

Travel can provide a great opportunity to give back while experiencing a new culture, whether it's building schools in Ecuador, saving turtles in Costa Rica or teaching in China.

The American Express Canada Room

for Thought program will give Canadians the opportunity to turn their ideas around "giving back" into reality, whether at home or abroad.

The winning idea will be an innovative solution, says Craig Kielburger, a mentor for the Room for Thought program's Community category

and co-founder of Free the Children and Me to We, two organizations that provide people with the opportunity to travel to developing countries and give back through volunteering.

For more information about Room for Thought, visit Facebook.com/AmericanExpressCanada.

WHAT'S YOUR BIG IDEA?

American Express Canada has launched Room for Thought, a program that will help three lucky contest winners turn their big ideas into reality through mentorship and support. There are three entry categories — travel and adventure, community, and music. The person with the best idea in each category will work with special mentors of the program — Survivorman Les Stroud, Marc and Craig Kielburger, co-founders of Free the Children and Me to We, and musician Emily Haines — to develop the idea and make it come to life. To vote for finalists' ideas, visit Facebook.com/AmericanExpressCanada from Sept. 14-28. The winning ideas will be showcased in November at the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto.

INTO THE WILD

LES STROUD TAKES TRAVEL TO THE EXTREME

Over three seasons of the hit television series *Survivorman*, Canadian survival expert Les Stroud used his knowledge and skills to survive for up to seven days, alone in remote locations across the globe.

SO WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE SURVIVORMAN?

"It's 40 years of life experience and learning different things," says Stroud, who started off in the entertainment business and believes his success is due to a mixture of skills. This year, Stroud is also a mentor in the Room for Thought program, where he will lend his survivor expertise to reaching other types of goals, specifically bringing a great idea to fruition.

For many, adventure travel leads to rich, unforgettable experiences with positive life lessons. One of the most memorable

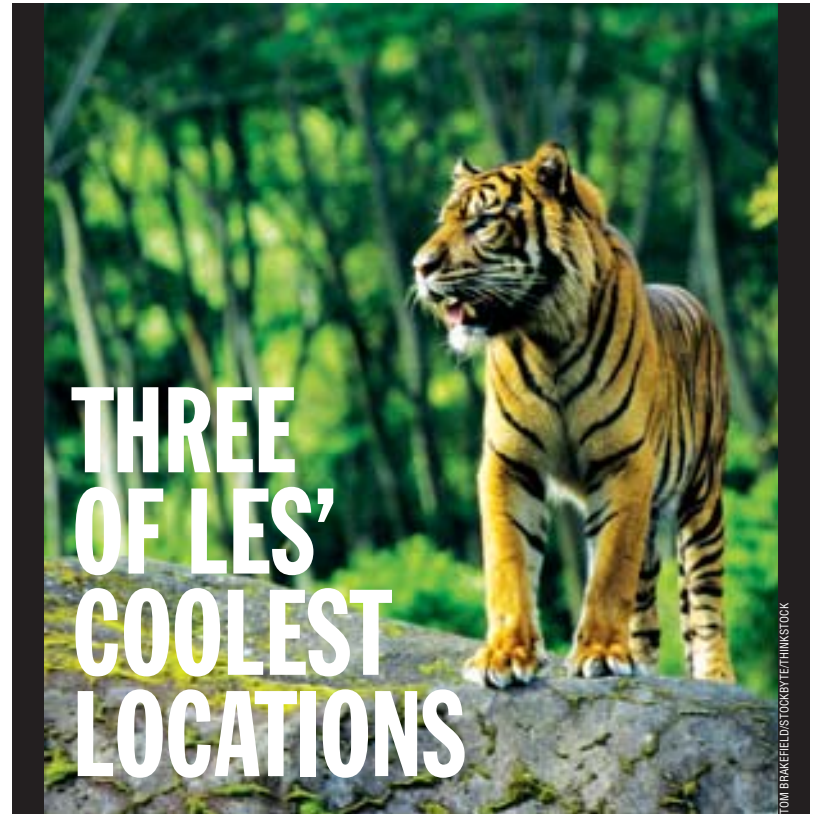
experiences in Stroud's career was participating in a tribal ceremony. "It was my time in Indonesia with the shamans in the middle of the jungle, the Mentawai, and being tattooed with a rusty nail. Ironically and coincidentally, it was the final show, but it really stood out for me, it was a very special moment."

Contemplating your own extreme vacation? Learn some survival skills, says Stroud, and that starts with a bit of research and planning.

"You want to have a guide and then second to that, you want to make sure that you've got a reputable guide," says Stroud, who recommends that you organize your transportation before you get on the ground. "When you get into remote places transportation is tricky, especially the timings of things."

Stroud has come to know the importance of planning ahead and being prepared at home and abroad. "I like to be able to go into a remote situation with my crew and know that if nothing was there and no one was there to help us, we're self-contained for at least a week."

— By Duncan McAllister



THREE OF LES' COOLEST LOCATIONS



ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

1 INDONESIA
This tropical location is one of the largest and most biodiverse jungle areas in the world and home to the Mentawai shamans.



HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

2 THE KALAHARI DESERT
A challenging location for the survival traveller, with its extreme hot and cold conditions, this arid plateau is located in southern Africa.



MEDIAIMAGES/PHOTODISC/DIGITAL VISION/THINKSTOCK

3 PERU
Explore the Andes mountain range, with its myriad species of plants and animals and home of the last of the Incas.

WHAT HAPPENS IF...

Travelling abroad and can't find your card? "Have a good look, but then trust your instinct and report it missing," advises Marc Hollenberg, vice president of Customer Experience at American Express. If someone else starts

shopping on your cancelled plastic, American Express immediately credits unauthorized charges back to you, even before investigating.

Hollenberg says more than 400,000 Canadian travellers in trouble call the travel emergency assistance line each year. The 24-7 phone number offers travellers assistance in reporting and

replacing lost or stolen cards and passports, as well as sourcing medical, legal and translation services. This service is complimentary with many American Express card packages.

HOLLENBERG'S TIPS

- Buy medical travel insurance or ensure that your card company

provides it.

- Slide the help phone number underneath the nametag on your luggage label so it is not lost if your wallet is stolen.
- Remove any unneeded ID, cards and cash from your wallet.

For more information, visit americanexpress.ca



STOCKBYTE/THINKSTOCK

ALWAYS WANTED TO DO A HIKING TOUR OF ITALY?

While it's fun to dream about what these once-in-a-lifetime trips would look like, making them happen can be challenging. Here's how to make your fantasy trip a reality.

READY NAIL DOWN THE BASICS FIRST

This includes deciding as what region of the world you want to visit. "And you have to figure out whether you're going for three weeks or three months," says Sean Shannon, managing director of

Expedia Canada. "For a lot of the upfront planning, you have to figure out who you are. Otherwise you'll spin your wheels a lot."

Maybe plan a trip around a past time. "Hobbies can help 'focus' your holiday and meet like-minded people in a unique setting — if you've tried rock climbing and gotten hooked, travel to Railay Peninsula in Thailand for instruction in paradise," says Toronto-based Leslie McNab, who spent more than two years travelling Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia.

Start saving for your trip well before you plan to go... you can save money and you can also collect air miles. With the American Express AIR MILES Credit Card, for example, you collect

reward miles when you make card purchases with air miles sponsors, and there are lots of bonus miles available too.

SET BUYING A TICKET

Doing this in advance forces you to save, says Vawn Himmelsbach, Toronto-based co-founder of chicsavvytravels.com. "I once booked a one-way ticket to Southeast Asia a year in advance," she says. "To save, I figured out how much it would cost to buy a car, then put that money aside in a travel savings account instead."

Once you know what you want to spend on accommodation, double that for your daily budget, or triple it if your

trip's purpose is experiencing food, alcohol and shopping.

GO CAN'T FIND SOMEONE TO GO WITH?

"Don't wait to find a travel partner, or you may never go," says Himmelsbach. "Some adventure or niche travel companies offer trips specifically for solo travellers, so they book transport and accommodation for you."

And leave some room in your plan once you arrive. "Over-planning doesn't leave any room for spontaneous encounters," says Himmelsbach. "For me that was being an extra in a Thai mini-series with a famous Muay Thai boxer. Yep, true story!"



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