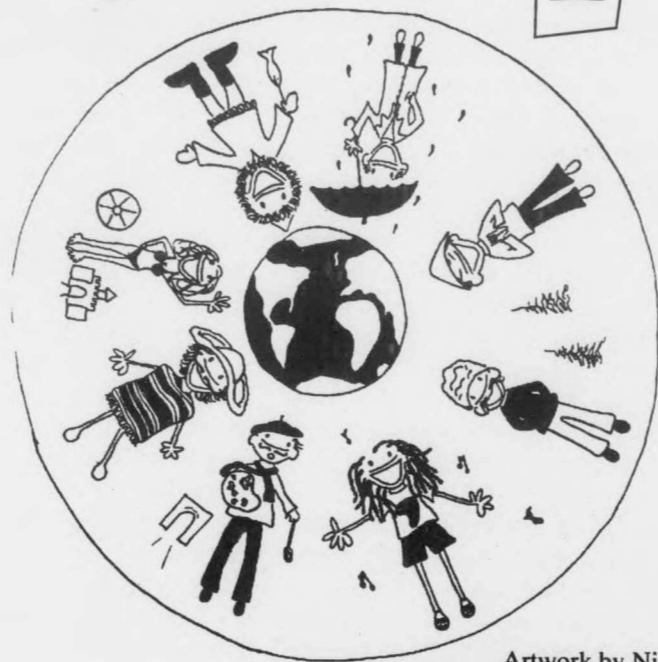


d i s t r a c t i o n s



Artwork by Nina Botten

Tommy Travels

A Deaf, Dumb and Blind Travel Guide For The Debutante Traveler
by Murray Thorpe

One evening in the not so distant past, I was thumbing through my vinyl collection and picked up *Tommy* by the Who. While listening to this album, I decided that it would be a catchy title for a travel column.

The purpose of this column would be to answer any travel destination question that the Brunswickan's readership may have. Please leave your question in care of Tommy Travels at the Brunswickan Office. A select number of these questions will be answered every week.

Since this is the first week for the column, there are no letters. So this week's column will be concerned with the steps in planning the perfect vacation. Here is a checklist that will be by no means complete, but it will help you make your own suitable checklist.

1. Budget
2. Itinerary with countries and length of stay
3. Airline Tickets
4. Health/Travel Insurance

This is a must even for short trips in the US.

5. Eurail Tickets

These must be bought outside of Europe and the length of the pass is up to you. If you are over twenty-five, you must buy a first class ticket. This may be worth the extra money because if a night train has a first class section, you will have a compartment to yourself.

6. Passport

My recommendation is to start your travels with a clean passport. Some countries will not allow you entry if you have the stamp of certain other countries. You may want to inquire with the countries you are visiting.

7. VISAs

Some of the countries requiring VISA's from Canadian citizens are Australia, Czech Republic and Spain. This list is far from complete so it is best to check with the embassy of each country you wish to visit. Getting a VISA is usually no problem but it should be done well in advance of your trip.

8. Health Concerns

- a. Shots

It is a good idea to have a record of all your shots you have had and to make sure you have all the required shots for the area you are travelling in. Even with the shots, you must take every precaution to avoid contact with the disease. For example, using straws and ice cubes or eating leafy food that has been washed in the local water is not a good idea in countries where the tap water is not potable. For more information on this see the appropriate International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT) pamphlet.

- b. Prescription Medication

It is a good idea to take enough for the entire trip and to make sure the medicine is properly labelled.

- c. Malaria

Depending on where you might go, malaria may be a problem. Take mosquito netting and repellent and cover up just after sunset. It is better to just avoid the mosquitos as best as you can. The anopheline mosquito which carries malaria strikes just after dark. To further reduce the possibility of having malaria for the rest of your life, you can take chloroquine or a similar brand. However, some strains of malaria are resistant to it so another type of drug, such as proguanil hydrochloride, must be taken daily. This may cause

unpleasant side effects such as cramps. This type of drug is not available in some countries such as Indonesia since it is not produced locally. The Indonesian doctors will tell you that the chloroquine produced locally is good enough. This may stem from the fact that while using both drugs, you may still get malaria although the odds are more in your favour than just with chloroquine alone. For more information see the appropriate IAMAT publication.

- d. Hospitalization

When travelling in some areas with less than ideal medical facilities, it may be a good idea to carry your own syringes in sealed packages. You should also have at least two different antibiotics and any other medication your Canadian doctor will deem appropriate. Finally, a plan for air evacuation in the event of a serious medical situation is a must. For example, Singapore would be a good place to fly into to have emergency surgery done in South-east Asia.

9. Backup Documentation

This will consist of the following:

1. photocopies of your passport, driver's license and credit cards with, of course, the expiry date removed.
2. the serial numbers of your traveller's cheques with denominations and the number to call in case the cheques are lost or stolen.
3. The number(s) to call to cancel the credit card(s).
4. photocopies of your health insurance and health records.
5. The name, phone number and address of an emergency contact.

One copy should be left with somebody in Canada and the other copies should be hidden in your pack and on your person. Having a set of the backup documentation left in Canada is a good idea since you can always get a copy of your passport faxed to you. This may give you some time while you order a replacement for the lost one.

As mentioned previously, this checklist is just a start and you will be pleasantly surprised how much more enjoyable a vacation will be with just a small amount of planning. Future columns will concentrate on requested destinations as well as the occasional tip relying on both personal experiences and travel books.



Photos by Warren Watson