





# NORTH AMERICA

I've always thought that North America would be one huge metropolis, full of skyscrapers, steel bridges, and technological wonders. But the fact is that the continent is in many places still wild, immaculate, and dangerous to people. So I didn't hesitate for a minute and decided that I simply can't miss out on the local natural marvels. Maggie whom I got to know right at the airport then showed me what's the best thing about America: the combination of natural rarities and human spirit!

## In the bad water basin in the Valley of Death

This place really exists – in California. In fact, it's the lowest-lying spot of North America. There, we reached the end of our tether when we decided to cross this vast salt pan in blazing weather. Although you can find tiny little lakes there, their water is extremely salty. No wonder that the locals advise the tourists to come only in colder months!



## → Ride a bobsleigh like an Olympian

In the Utah Olympic Park you can personally try out many sports, but your best experience will probably be with a bobsleigh ride – at least for Maggie and me it was. We swept through the racetrack so fast both of our hats got blown off – but whatever, it was worth it!



## Skiing with the wind in our back

Do you believe you know every single winter sport there is? Then you definitely have never been in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan! In the snowy mountains, we were welcomed by an instructor of snowkiting – sort of adrenaline skiing while you are suspended from a paraglider at the same time. Wow, what a ride!



## ← Pretending to be bats

When we were in Louisville, we couldn't miss out on one remarkable attraction – the Mega Cavern, located in a former limestone mine. Apart from the unorthodox underground road for mountain bikes, or courses in rope climbing, we also took part in a wild ride on ropes, hung all the way up by the ceiling. Although a sturdy snap-hook kept us fastened to the ropes and we wore helmets as well, I kept asking myself from time to time whether it would have been a wiser idea to just leave this experience to bats!

## RECORDS IN GEOGRAPHY:

### The largest sea:

Caribbean Sea, **2 776 000 km<sup>2</sup>**, a part of the Atlantic Ocean.

### The largest island:

Greenland, **2 130 800 km<sup>2</sup>**.

### The largest desert:

The Great Basin in USA, with a surface area of **490 000 km<sup>2</sup>**.

### The tallest mountain:

Mount Mc Kinley in Alaska, **6194 m**.

### The longest river:

Mississippi – Missouri, **6212 km**.

### The deepest lake:

Great Slave Lake in Canada, **614 m**.

## ↑ To meet a tornado!

This was probably the craziest idea I and Maggie actually turned into reality. Imagine hearing that there's a tornado approaching. You'd naturally take to your heels. There are people, however, who consider the very opposite a great adventure – in the summer where a great number of horrible tornadoes rage around Oklahoma City, these madmen get in the car and go meet them! We and our friends-adventurers had an opportunity to check out a whirlwind from such a close distance that most of us got dizzy!



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1.

## The well of Thor, the god of thunder and rain

We were sitting in the basket of our hot-air balloon, floating above the coast of the Pacific Ocean, when all of a sudden we saw it: a huge hole in the ground which looked like it was aggressively swallowing every drop of water around! This mysterious place in Oregon is known as Thor's well. But don't worry, there's no wizardry involved. It's basically just an ordinary sea cave whose ceiling collapsed one day and plunged into the depths.

2.

## Rodeo in Colorado

There are no real cowboys left in USA, you say? Oh, come on! In Colorado, we went to a rodeo where brave men and women compete in riding wild bulls or horses, roping piglets, knocking down bull calves by jumping on them from the saddle, and in other dangerous disciplines which made me obsessively think that I suddenly found myself in the Wild West. Staying in the saddle and not getting trampled on by the hooves of angry bulls is quite the art form!

3.

## The malicious captain

The granite rock known as El Capitan is one of the most frequently visited places in the mountain range of Sierra Nevada, Yosemite national park. After conquering Mount Thor, we thought that a "mere" 915 meters tall flat rock would be just a minor distraction for us. How mistaken we were! The local terrain was very hard and we had to wear suction pads on our hands and feet in order to surpass the skills of the best local climbers ...

4.

## Toronto right in front of us

While travelling across the world, I'd seen many towers standing right in the middle of large cities, with restaurants or museums at the very top – but a pavement placed 356 meters above ground, without any safety railing?! The Toronto CN Tower offers precisely such an experience. The pavement circles the top of the tower and is only 1.5 meters wide.

5.

## Highway to the past

The renowned Route 66 goes from Chicago, Illinois, all the way to Los Angeles, California. But don't think of it as a highway full of lorries and personal vehicles; this road has been pretty much abandoned for more than 30 years. We didn't want to miss out on this legend, and what a good thing that we didn't! We kept driving by old petrol stations, motels, and stores which looked like taken right out of 1980s – the best way to get to know all the faces of USA.

6.

## Following the trail of mammoth hunters

When Maggie asked me if I really intended to go through the entire Mammoth Cave, I confidently answered: "Sure thing! I'm no sissy, after all!" But, dear friends, this system of underground passages is more than 630 kilometres long! This makes it the longest cave in the whole world. In the end, I made do with sailing the local underground river of Echo.

7.

## Beware of alligators, cyclist!

Florida's wetlands are renowned for their unique flora and fauna which includes alligators and crocodiles. You're guaranteed to encounter them in the national park of Everglades, and if you're lucky (or unlucky?) maybe you'll even stumble upon the endangered Florida panther. We took the local cycleway, and I must say that it's true – I've never seen a crocodile's jaws from this up close!

8.

## Alaska in all its wilderness and beauty

It's customary for tourists visiting American national parks to stick to delimited paths. Allegedly, this is for safety reasons. But we travelled all the way north to Alaska, to the Denali national park where you can check out the wilderness on your own. However, you may be "slightly" inconvenienced by a couple of uninvited guests – moose, wolves, but mainly brown and grizzly bears!

9.

## Skiing from a helicopter

You can find exactly 174 glaciers with 475 ski paths around Whistler in the Canadian province of British Columbia. That's where I and Maggie tried heli-skiing, a sport which involves taking a ride in a helicopter up to inaccessible slopes, jumping down with skis attached to your feet, and going down. I'm not saying that the jump was easy for me, but there was nothing bad to say about the ride through immaculate mountain wilderness that followed!

10.

## Where Arctic foxes say good night

Brr, that was some cold! We visited Greenland because polar bears, Arctic foxes, narwhals, walruses, and whales can be found there, living in a relative peace. One feels small and insignificant in this untamed kingdom of ice. On the road to the village of Ittoqqortoormiit, one of the worst accessible human settlements on the planet, we tried riding a dogsled. The trip truly was one of a kind!

11.

## On a steep wall

While on the faraway Baffin Island, a piece of Canada's territory, we once again tested our mountaineering skills. Mount Thor, named after the Scandinavian god of thunder, was pretty much urging us to do it. Among other things, there's the longest vertical wall in the world, numbering 1250 meters in length! Who in our shoes wouldn't be tempted?



# TO START THINGS OFF

What are the things we can NEVER do without? Water! This compound of hydrogen and oxygen is the alpha and omega of absolutely everything. The reason for this is twofold: without drinking water, we're just scuppered – while we can do without food for longer than a week, all it takes is for us to die is to go a couple of days with no liquids. And secondly, running water can lead us to civilization in many cases – just follow it and hope to be lucky.



## ↓ What can come in handy?

Mirror – it reflects sunrays and sends out a light signal. This can alert search teams to the fact that you're around. Pet bottle – to carry water around or filter it in the sunlight. Magnifying glass, or glasses – a great tool to start a fire. Piece of string – useful anytime, anywhere...



## → Other tools for travelling

A small knife, matches, raincoat, head cover, sleeping bag, compass, flashlight. But who can remember all that, or carry it constantly around, right? Anyway, try to bring along at least some of it.



!

## Is hunger truly the best teacher?

Never eat anything without knowing for sure if it's edible, even if your stomach is already cramping. And how do you know whether it's a good idea to eat a fruit you've never seen before? Follow these five steps.

?

## ADVICE WORTH THE PRICE

Why is it better to have at least one friend around in case of emergency?

1. You'll support each other.
2. You'll pump each other up.
3. Two people manage more and do it better – everybody's good at something different.



1.

## The smelling test

Is there no pungent, sour, or intense smell? In that case don't hesitate moving onto the next part.

2.

## The skin test

Have you squeezed a little bit of the juice on your forearm and no rash appeared? Congratulations, you can move onto the point number 3.

3.

## The lip test

Did you manage to spread a tiny amount of the pulp on your lips without them cracking or burning like crazy? Then it's time for the fourth step.

4.

## The tongue test

Does the juice or pulp taste good? See the section below.

5.

## A general test

Take a bite and leave the fruit lying for 15 minutes in your mouth. Did nothing unpleasant occur? Feel free to swallow. If you don't become sick within eight hours, then it seems you can finally have your snack.

# LOST IN AN IMPENETRABLE JUNGLE

Not two drops of water are made alike. There's no lack of water in the jungle. You can find it in pools or rivulets and a lot of it is retained by plants – try the trunks of bamboo, banana trees, or grapevine, for example! But watch out! Not all water is good. If it has the colour of milk, a tart stench, and/or a bitter or sour taste, chances are that drinking it might poison you. And I bet none of you wants that.



## Keep calm!

In the jungle, you have to carefully think about each move you intend to make – you'll miss every bit of wasted energy in the heavy tropical climate. Take my word for it – you'll appreciate all the saved-up strength once you're running away from a jaguar.

## ↓ Watch out where you're going!

In the jungle, it definitely isn't a good idea to follow directly one's nose. You might get even more lost than you already are, and step on a venomous snake or scorpion, along the way. Oops!



## ← Multivitamin juice at your fingertips

Kiwis, bananas, dates, avocados, pineapples... All this fruit that you know only from supermarkets actually grows in the tropics. If you are hungry for meat, you might try your luck and hunt down a monkey, for example – don't set your hopes up high, though. However, finding and catching edible insects isn't that hard – ants are a good choice. And all the protein they contain...

## ← A plank bed wouldn't go amiss

While in the jungle, never sleep directly on the ground – your body heat and scent could attract venomous snakes, beetles, and other vermin. At the very least, build a sturdy ground layer and cover it with palm trees. Watch out for coconuts! It might seem like a good idea to make your bed directly under a palm, until a coconut falls directly on your head. Also, avoid sleeping near water – a strong tide could wash you away in a jiffy.



## ← Don't sell your skin short

Although it might seem like a bunch of nonsense, you should wear long-sleeved shirts in a dense tropical forest cover, as well as long trousers and sturdy shoes. You'll save yourself having to deal with scratches caused by sharp plants, and you'll be somewhat protected from troublesome insects, maybe even from a snake bite.



# LOST IN A DESERTED ISLAND

Mission: find a brook. If there's a brook or river with drinking water on your island, you can almost declare victory. If there isn't any, no need to fret – at the very least, you can still call a draw. So what should you do? Try to gouge a hole in the trunk of a palm or other tree. Or remove the salt from sea water.



## HOW TO GO ABOUT IT?

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### CLEARING SEA WATER OFF SALT

You'll need:

- two water containers, one smaller and the other one larger
- plastic film, alternatively a tarp or something similar
- shoelace or a piece of string
- pebble, not too heavy, but not too light either

1.

Pour sea water in the larger container.

2.

Place the smaller container in the water in a way that prevents any water from actually getting inside.

3.

Spread the plastic film out on the larger container, attach it with the shoelace and weigh it down with the pebble, creating a small hollow.



### The island of lost treasures?

The first thing you should do is explore the island. It's kind of a world on its own, you know? Did you manage to find fruit trees, drinking water, and a nice cliff with a view of the setting sun? Great! Such treasures are much more useful to you in your time of need than a chest full of gold could ever be.

4.

Place the apparatus in the sunlight and try not to think about how thirsty you are while you wait.

5.

Voilà, there's now salt-free water in the smaller container!

← Would you like to have a banana, or a perch?

Are you hungry? There's fruit, insects, fish – the menu is long, all you need to do is place an order. And another great advantage – you don't have to tip! But there's one big disadvantage as well: if you don't pluck, gather, or catch your food, you simply won't have anything to eat.



↓ *Homo homini lupus*

Have you read the story of Robinson Crusoe? And do you remember how he became friends with the native Friday? That's right, he rescued him from the jaws of cannibals. I don't mean to alarm you, but... if you happen to hear the terrifying sound of drumming and human screams, don't wait a second longer and hide..





# ADVENTURES AROUND THE WORLD ..... with Lily

Written by Helena Haraštová  
Illustrated by Jakub Cenkľ

Just because I wear a tulle skirt and like pink doesn't mean that I'm a scaredy-cat. So says a little girl called Lily, as she and her adorable scooter set out on a great expedition to the most adventure-packed places in the world. Some are pretty dangerous, too. A dive with sharks? A walk across a glass bridge? A drive in the Ferrari of death? All no problem for our dainty explorer. Dare you go with her? You do? Then leave your fear at home and open the book at the first page. Adventure calls!



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