

Travel Adventure: Alaska to Argentina

1 Many people dream of going on a great travel adventure.
Most of us keep dreaming; others make it happen . . .

5 Gregg Bleakney's dream was to travel the Americas from top to bottom. He got the idea after he finished a 1,600 kilometer (1,000 mile) bike ride. Gregg's friend, Brooks Allen, was also a cyclist.¹ The two friends talked and slowly **formed** a plan: they would travel from Alaska to Argentina—by bike.

10 To pay for the **trip**, Gregg and Brooks worked and saved their money for years. Once they were on the road, they often camped outdoors or stayed in hostels.² In many places, local people opened their homes to the two friends and gave them food.

15 During their trip, Gregg and Brooks cycled through deserts, rainforests, and mountains. They visited modern cities and **ancient** ruins³ such as Machu Picchu in Peru. And everywhere they went, they met other cyclists from all over the world.

20 In May 2007—two years, twelve countries, and over 30,500 km (19,000 miles) later—Gregg **eventually** reached Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world. (Near Guatemala, Brooks had to return to the U.S., and Gregg continued without him.)

The trip taught both men a lot about traveling, **especially** if you travel **abroad**. What did they learn? Here is some of Gregg's **advice**:

25 **Travel light.** The less **baggage** you have, the less you'll worry about.

Be flexible. Don't plan everything. Then you'll be more **relaxed** and happy, especially if there are problems.

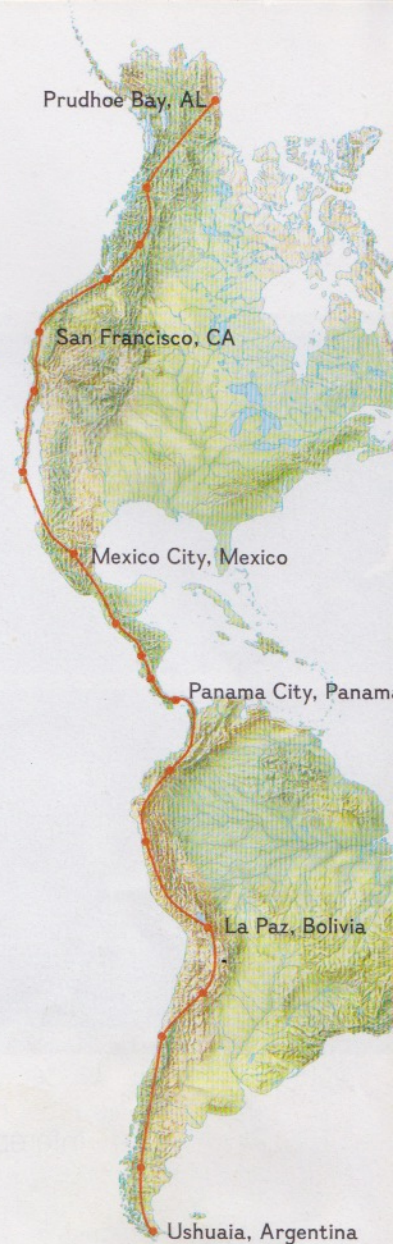
30 **Be polite.** As one traveller told Gregg, "Always remember that nobody wants to fight, cheat, or rob⁴ a nice guy."

¹ A **cyclist** is someone who rides a bicycle.

² A **hostel** is a cheap place to stay and sleep when traveling.

³ The **ruins** of something are the parts of it that remain after it has been broken.

⁴ If someone is **robbed**, they have money or property stolen from them.



▲ Gregg and Brooks (right) cycle past ruins in Tikal National Park, Guatemala.

Extreme Destination:

VANUATU

1 Vanuatu is an island nation in the South Pacific. It is also one of the smallest countries in the world. But for those interested in adventure and sport, there is a lot to do. Some of the best snorkeling and sea kayaking can be found here. Vanuatu's islands also offer visitors
5 two of the most exciting—and dangerous—activities in the world: volcano surfing and land diving.

Volcano Surfing

On Tanna Island, Mount Yasur rises 300 meters (1,000 feet) into the sky. Yasur is an active volcano, and it erupts¹ almost every day, sometimes several times a day. For **centuries**, both island locals and
10 visitors have climbed this mountain to visit the top. Recently, people have also started climbing Yasur to surf the volcano. In some ways, volcano surfing is like surfing in the sea, but in other ways it's very different. A volcano surfer's **goal** is to **escape** the
15 erupting volcano—without getting **hit** by flying rocks! It's fast, fun, and dangerous—the perfect **extreme** sport.

Land Diving

Most people are **familiar** with bungee jumping, but did you know bungee jumping started on Pentecost Island in Vanuatu and is
20 almost fifteen centuries old? The original activity, called land diving, is part of a **religious** ceremony.² A man **ties** tree vines³ to his legs. He then jumps head-first from a high tower. The goal: to touch the earth with the top of his head—without breaking the vine and hitting the ground hard. Every spring, island **natives** (men only)
25 still perform this amazing test of **strength**.

▲ Yasur Volcano, Tanna Island, Vanuatu



▲ A man jumps from a tower on Pentecost Island.

¹ When a volcano **erupts**, it throws out hot rock called *lava*.

² A **ceremony** is a formal event such as a wedding.

³ A **vine** is a plant that grows up or over things.