

Many people go away on holiday and discover as much about themselves as they do about the places they visit.

1. Hugo

When my eldest daughter, Alice, was ten, she asked for a holiday with me — just the two of us. I have four children so it can be difficult for Alice to get a word in, and I understood what she wanted. I decided to show her Venice and Alice was curious to see it. We arrived at night, which was completely magical. The water gives the city a sense of mystery. Even if you've been down a street before, the next time you find it you see something different and that stops you recognising it. So you constantly get lost. Alice loved Venice. We laughed a lot, and the best thing for me was seeing her excited face.

2. Danie

I went to Jamaica with a friend. We had so much fun — it was one of the best holidays I've ever had. Everyone and everything is very relaxed in Jamaica. The thing you hear most often is 'No problem, man'. At first I thought they were just saying it, but then you realise nothing is a problem because the whole place is so relaxed. And that attitude makes you relax and forget about all the things you usually worry about. We spent one day at a port watching a cruise ship come in. When that happens, all the shops double their prices and you have to bargain for anything you want to buy. You look at something and shake your head and they lower the price and you still shake your head, but you eventually find out at what stage you should agree on a price. I bought some really great wooden statues for half the original price!

3. Krystyna

I thought I would try an activity holiday last year as I reckoned an activity holiday would help me discover hidden talents. Perhaps I would turn out to be a brilliant canoeist, mountain climber or skydiver. The trouble with holidays like this is that you may not like what you discover. I had forgotten that I would be with a group of people each day. It had never occurred to me how competitive some people would be. Whatever we did, they had to be first. They will also have the loudest voices and make the most irritating remarks. Such daily companions can come as a shock if you are more used to quiet conversations with your best friend.

4. Robin

We arranged to go on safari. Part of the holiday included a canoe safari on the Zambezi river. In our canoe there was just my friend and myself and the guide. I'm not terribly athletic and when I got into the canoe I managed to tip it over and we all ended up in the water. I was quite frightened because of the crocodiles there. We couldn't turn the canoe upright but the guide was very calm. He pointed to a rock in the middle of the river and told us to swim to it as fast as we could, while he went to get help. Then he came back with another canoe, but after that I refused to go back on the water. I was quite surprised by my reaction. Not that I'd thought of myself as a particularly brave person, but the shock of what happened left me feeling very nervous.

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Which person found the atmosphere reduced their usual anxieties?

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