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Around the world the Hughey way: alum takes yearlong around-the-world honeymoon

When you are adventurous and planning a honeymoon, you might think of   visiting a romantic city such as Paris, France, relaxing on an exotic beach such as Thong Nai Pan beach on Ko Phangan Island, or taking a train to a remote section of the Great Wall of China. When Shanna Singh Hughey and Derek Hughey ('93) planned their honeymoon, they chose all of those options and many more. After their September 2007 wedding, they left on a yearlong around-the-world honeymoon which has taken them on nineteen flights, twelve boats, four trains and seventeen buses only two months and three days into their trip.

To prepare for the trip, both lawyers became homeless and unemployed. Derek left his partnership at Nashville's Bass Berry & Sims, where he had worked for ten years. Shanna left her position with a Federal judge in Nashville and delayed for a year her job at the O'Melveny & Myers LLP firm in Washington, D.C.



They packed up their homes, bought fake wedding bands to travel with and left with only two large and two small backpacks. They budgeted \$48,000 for the year which averages out to about \$131.50 a day to spend on lodging, food, transportation and miscellaneous expenses.

Part of the trip involves relaxing as the couple break free from the stresses of the world and revel in the joy of travel itself. On September 16, Derek blogged about the art of doing nothing. He wrote: "I was truly worried that neither Shanna nor I would be able to relax because we're so used to being productive. That fear was quickly allayed after laying in a beachside hammock for about 5 minutes." He later wrote about their time in Thailand, "I haven't worn socks in 7 days, and I have no intention of wearing them any time in the near future...I was overwhelmingly surprised when I set foot on Thong Nai Pan beach on Ko Phangan Island. The beach is still pristine, the water is crystal clear and beach-front bungalows can still be had for less than \$10 a night. There is also a secluded, laid-back feel here that would make Gilligan and the Skipper feel right at home. During the day, the few people that are here lie on the beach and sip coconut shakes in the many beach cafes."

Part of the trip also involves the thrill of the adventure. Derek and Shanna are definitely not staying on the normal tourist routes for the entire trip. At times, they seek out uncharted journeys through



the jungle or unique flavors of local lands not trampled by thousands of tourists.

On September 29, Derek wrote: "We flew to Bario - a remote 'town' in the Kelabit Highlands only accessible by plane. The



first Westerner arrived here after World War II by parachuting into the area. While a lot has changed in the past 50 years, the jungle is still alive and well (although threatened by the logging companies that are quickly approaching the area)...We set off on an 8-hour trek through the jungle. We enlisted the assistance of a local guide named Marshall, who came prepared for the hike with a machete and a 12-gauge shotgun. Marshall is the kind of man that doesn't really exist in the West anymore. A true jungle man that could crush Indiana Jones with 2 fingers. Marshall grew up playing in the jungle, learning how to survive in the environment. To this day, much of the food he eats comes from the vegetation and the animals that live there. Since access to the area is only by plane, there's no real supermarket in Bario - the jungle is his Kroger."

From China, Shanna wrote, "We've just emerged from a 600 year-old village in Southern China, where we climbed countless hills and took a truly embarrassing number of pictures...Called Ping'an, the small-but-ever-expanding locale where we happily passed two days is situated on the main ridge of an engineering feat known as the Dragon's Backbone Rice Terraces. Farmers apparently started constructing these terraces, which wrap around the steep Chinese hillside like never-ending ribbons, as early as 1271."

For Shanna and Derek, part of the trip also involves giving back. They plan to work with AIDS patients in South Africa and homeless children on the beaches of Cambodia, among other charitable endeavors they build into the trip along the way. In China, for instance, they gained permission to



volunteer at the Social Welfare Institute of Yangxi, an orphanage in the southeastern part of China. In a blog about the experience, Shanna wrote: "We spent a couple of hours folding what must have been thousands of cloth diapers. And then we got to meet the babies...In our estimation, the Institute houses about 60 babies, 58 of whom are girls. (The remaining two are boys who appeared to be mentally and physically challenged.) It seems that their basic needs are being met. They appear to be well-fed. Their diapers and their clothes are changed on a regular basis. The institute is clean. I'm not sure how much more one could legitimately expect...With that said, the babies spent the great bulk of their time in small cribs made of metal bars and rough, wooden planks. (Yes, they sleep on wood.) They often have only a towel for a blanket...We saw no mobiles, no stuffed animals, no books. We saw neither soap nor baby wipes.

My heart ached every time I entered the rooms where the babies lived, and I found myself wanting to hold each one long enough to instill in her the memory of being touched. It was not easy, and we left with heavy hearts. We also left on a mission to purchase a mattress for each crib... If Derek and I weren't going to be on the road for the next eleven months, I'd say there's a fair chance that, sometime during the last four days, we would have adopted a Chinese daughter."

Many adventures remain for the newlyweds. They still have mountains to climb, beaches to roam, jungles to tame and meals to share along the way. You can follow their quests through blogs on their website, www.oneyearonearth.com.



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