

EXPLORING PLACES NEAR AND FAR

WALK CLARK STREET IN CHICAGO | SEE ICE SCULPTURES IN D/FW | STAY IN LUXURY DIGS IN MIAMI | SHOP UNIQUELY IN NEW YORK | DRINK IN THE PUNCH-BOWL SCENE IN L.A.

NOVEMBER 15, 2012

AMERICAN AIRWAYS

AMERICAN AIRLINES + AMERICAN EAGLE

VIVA THANKSGIVING

You won't be lonesome tonight when you spend your holiday in **LAS VEGAS**

LAS

+

LIVING IN THE PAST
These history buffs live rent-free inside historical landmarks



TWICE MONTHLY

ENTER
for a chance at
50,000+ ADVANTAGE MILES
(Pg. 14)



Here We Are

SOUNDS STRANGE, but every once in a while I look around and ask myself, “What on earth am I doing here?” Odd question, especially because I’m the one who put myself there in the first place. I undoubtedly have a very good reason for being there — wherever “there” is. And every time I ask myself that question, I shake my head at the obvious rhetoric because the answer is always, at that particular time, “I don’t know.”

Perhaps I marvel at wherever it is that I am because “there” isn’t exactly what I thought it would be, or perhaps it’s because simply having

the freedom to travel anywhere I want is a providential American right. I also marvel at the ease with which I can get “there.” With each new airport and route and with every new road and bridge, even the farthest reaches of the Earth are seemingly all within reach. And once you physically and mentally commit to having a peripatetic lifestyle — be it for business or pleasure — all you need is to see it through. As any good poker player will tell you: If you’re in, you’ve got to be all in. Any good road warrior will tell you the same.

And so it goes that I put myself all in every time I’m on the road, which is often these days. I’ll take in the sites that are sources of pride for a particular city or region because that gives me a sense of its values and ethics. Then I’ll purposefully get lost and rely on the locals to point me in the direction of what they think an outsider should experience. Like clockwork, after a few hours, I’m no longer an outsider to them, nor are they strangers to me. There’s an unspoken appreciation for one another when you’re inherently interested to learn and they’re inherently interested to teach. Your effort and enthusiasm will be evident and, in time, your travel experience will be heightened. With practice, you’ll become an authority on travel. When people ask your advice, your tips will make their trips better. When someone asks you about traveling in Paris, you’ll encourage her to make her best attempt at speaking French with the people because Parisians appreciate the effort. When you’re in Panama and see a woman wearing a colorfully patterned two-tier full skirt, you’ll know it’s called a *pollera*.

Remember, of course, that no matter how

much you travel and how much you know about a region or a country or a major city, small towns out there still have their own way of doing things. The folks in those towns are all too happy to invite you in and make you part of the family. Take a recent happening I experienced in tiny Brady, Texas, for instance. The townspeople there invited me to partake in the 39th annual goat cook-off, which was about as foreign an experience for me as a moonwalk. Yet it was one of the most memorable experiences I’ve ever had, and it made me appreciate the people, the town and the contestants, many of whom have been attending this event since before I was born.

As we gear up for the holiday season, and as we prepare to travel near and far to share experiences with loved ones and strangers alike, please consider the underlying theme of this issue of *American Way*. It has a name: *placefulness*, a term coined by Dr. Rob Britton, who holds a doctorate in economic geography and is about as seasoned a world traveler as they come (page 50). Placefulness is as unique as celebrating Thanksgiving in Las Vegas (page 54), making your home inside a historical landmark (page 64), watching professional basketball in Brooklyn (page 36), walking through a garden of ice sculptures in Dallas (page 32) or exploring the intricacies of a street in Chicago that you’ve traveled a dozen times but may not have taken the time to really get to know (page 34). And then there’s a Brady, Texas-esque journey that took our columnist to the home of the last remaining Pilgrims — sort of (page 102).

Make this holiday season an adventure. Travel somewhere you’ve never been, even if it’s not too far from your own backyard. Engage the locals. Partake in their customs. Eat their food. Meet their families. Go and get lost for a little while. Then come home safely.

Happy Thanksgiving, America.

Adam Pitluk
ADAM PITLUK
 Editor



GETTING HIS GOAT: Adam (in the blue shirt) with the Waco Boys cooking team in Brady, Texas

-  **Want to talk to Adam?**
Reach him at editor@americanwaymag.com
-  **Want to sign up for email**
notification of Adam’s column or to read his past columns? Visit www.americanwaymag.com/whatsnew