

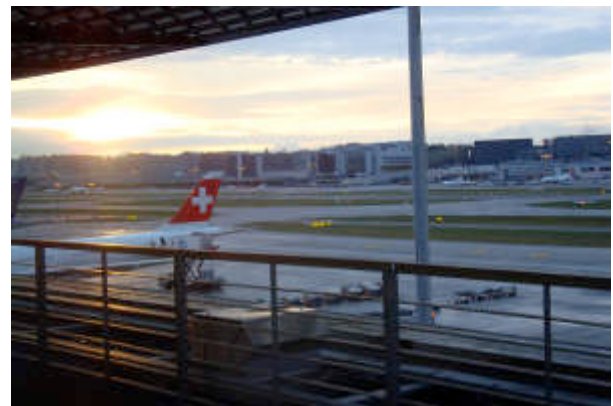
GVI Jaguarprojekt in Costa Rica (25. November 2010)



At the moment I'm sitting under the sea in the direction of drawing white clouds, which leave at least blue spaces. In the night it rained again and again, sometimes the drops drummed softly on the tin roof of our hut with the four bunk beds, then again it poured like from buckets.

Under my mosquito net, directly under the hut roof, I also felt safe from the circling bats and the other beeping animals. In addition, five of the beds were occupied, one of the young people came late at night, the others left already at 4.30 for breakfast, then at 5.00 clock on the jaguarwalk going on. The silence in the room surprised me, but also the statement of one of the guys done well: who is here in the project, sleeps, even if someone ignites the flashlight or tramples through the room. I actually experienced it that way. Now almost everyone is on the move, looking like they have escaped from an office, in shirts and blouses. Only the cleaning crew is still here, with rags and buckets on the way. It is 6:30, nobody sleeps anymore. But in the evening early bedtime - at least for those who can afford it.

My arrival here was comfortable and already an experience. On the flight to New York was my neighbor Rachel Fischer, she played in Space Dream and in We Will Rock you the lead role. She told a lot about her life and so our flight was very entertaining. The change in New York was a bit long-winded, as expected, but otherwise extremely unspectacular. The departure was delayed



because bags had to be sorted out again and so we arrived late in San José. There was a Canadian-Australian-German group of passengers for our Backpackers Costa Rica Guesthouse and that was casual. Da Guesthouse was cheap and OK, my suitcase is still waiting for me there. In the early morning - the time difference and the exciting book did not make my sleep easy - I set off to search for breakfast. And was already around the first corner. For three dollars there was Gallo Pinto, coffee with the bag hanging from the cup, tortillas and eggs. After that, I soon started on the first of three city tours, on which I still bought mosquito net, blocks and everything else necessary. It had a lot of people and I liked San José better than expected, a mix of old and new. It was not until the next day that I learned that, as in New York, what Rachel told me was Black Friday, with lots of

promotions and promotions, which attracted many people.



I drove by taxi in the morning to Gaudys, where I was already expected. Ian sat there grinning at me and soon told me that only both of us would travel to Jalova. By taxi we drove to the bus station, then from there to Quirries (?), From there the Schüttelstrasse at high speed to Cano Blanco, where we could get into the ship of the station and Jon and Rich met. With a barrel of gas on board, we made the not-so-long journey down the Jalova River. In San José, we still boasted the glorious sunny day, but not for long, the joy lasted and the boat poured on the boat like a bucket, everything was getting dripping wet. It will not be the last time!

The reception here was very cordial. Similar people as in the Intravalid camp, but from all over the world, full of initiative, contagious laughter, informality. Nut Ian is one of the older ones at the age of 43, but he was also on the other coast for talks about his career at GVI. Today, the entry is announced. Yesterday I had a lesson in safety and emergency prevention, this goes on today, then follow the presentations on the Jaguar and in the evening I'm allowed on the Nightwalk - which starts at 19.00 clock. The sea is roaring in front of the camp, we have four houses here in a clearing, surrounded by coconut palms and covered with low grass. Lizards and birds I have already spotted many, now hopefully many other animals come to ...

I learned a few things yesterday, about the turtle controls - which are out of date at the moment, only the nest controls, about snakes and about cows, who want the best places on the beach and drive people out of the hammocks. It was a quiet day yesterday, hot and humid and almost a bit boring. Many of the camp were on the Jagwalk, which leads the fifteen miles along the beach to Tortuguero. The group started in pouring rain, then the sun cooked them. But everyone has managed to see many traces of jaguars and a dead turtle.

Finally we could start too. Five of us headed south, where Jaguar tracks were spotted in the morning. First, in a hurry through the coconut plantation, then very slowly in the

control section. Armed with the super headlamp, lots of water and a team notebook that keeps track of what's being seen and where.

Barely a meter inside the forest we saw in the same place three eyelashed vipers in different colors, two of them - the biggest that Jon has ever seen! - bright yellow, the others more like earthworms or stalking.

In addition to the snakes we encountered in our gradual penetration in the dense vegetation various huge Heugümpfern, frogs from fingernail to big toad, various spiders, crabs and an unknown Rascheltier that scared us, but only led to the supposition that it was not the Jaguar, but most likely an armadillo was.

At the end of our journey, of which I have no idea how far he was, except that he lasted for an hour and a half, and I could barely breathe at this time of tension, we saw the imposing imprint of a Jaguar paw in the middle of the road. At the same time Mattie was bitten by ants and drew attention to them. We made our way home at a fast pace and almost steaming, I crawled onto my mattress. In the middle of the night I had to go to the toilet. No problem. But as I sat in the seat, my feet began to burn like fire, and a look of control showed many small black dots crawling around. Mini ants, but the hell bite or something.

In the morning I was able to sleep in again - the right of beginners ... After the morning and a chat began at 7.00 clock presentation on the mammals, but of whom you hardly see anyone. On a certain area we searched and checked for traces. Then, in fact, three of us set off in the pouring rain. We did not get very far until the water in the puddles was so deep that it ran into the rubber boots and we turned back.



One more lap around our place, some explanations from Arno to Jalova and the observation paths and then we returned to the base. Barely back and emptying the gumshoes, hang the pants and put on dry clothes, now the sun begins to shine. There will be another walk this afternoon. I look forward to it!

The presentation of the mammals was supplemented by a treatment in the "garden". We watch many birds, the frigatebird and the brown pelican occasionally fly over the ocean looking for turtle babies, and next to them we see many flycatchers, woodpeckers, kiskadies and more. You could constantly observe, there is so much to see.

The evening is unfortunately accompanied by rain again, so that the frog and Echsentour, which I would like to have made, drowns. But we play until all night, means until eight o'clock, then is bedtime, because the morning starts tomorrow morning - the first time with a big walk.

During the night it rains heavily and constantly. Accordingly, the way to the north looks like the morning. Our task is to search the mammals and to measure and register their traces on a particular section. We walk a few miles in a quick step, we are on the road for almost an hour until the path leads inland for one kilometer from the sea to the Tortuguera Canal. This path is so submerged that we are above the knee in the water. Not a single track we discover, but it is really an experience to experience the jungle so. We spot some spider monkeys all the way, then we return home for the afternoon. It tastes once more perfect, many celebrity chefs seem undetected.



After a nap, we meet again at two o'clock. The troop goes up the Nordweg fast and there the Jaguar cameras are equipped with new batteries. No spectacular action. On the way back, which we travel back very fast, we see nothing, but meet with another observation group, which comes slowly to meet. I join this now. Several monkey groups, Roar and Spider, we meet and watch them for some time amused. Finally it also stops raining and we enjoy the leisurely walk four of us - the oldest of the troupe - and come back to the night (there is something like Swiss rösti, which I suggested at Reto) back to the camp. As a next highlight, Jon shows us some short video footage of lizard-catching snakes that do not always end up as you expect. Now it has begun to thunderstorm, but above all it is raining again ... And tomorrow we go to the turtles, but of which no more come, but only last hatchlings leave the nest ...

Wednesday afternoon. We are once again in the rain. During the night it has flashed and thundered. Still, we started four this morning at half past five to check for the nest. Some nests of green sea turtles were tagged by GVI, the eggs were counted during the laying

process, and there you now check whether the turtles hatch. They did not do that today - in these nests. But many other nests have incubated their 65 days and the little ones want out of the nest. The beach is covered with empty egg shells. Where we discovered holes in the ground, we dug down about fifty centimeters, to free at best "hatchlings". After a few hundred meters we found a hole in the soaked beach, near the vegetation, where the edge had broken in and sat under the exhausted hatchlings who did not get any further. We carried them to the beach and enjoyed the sight of the paddling crumbs that were thrown around by the waves and then disappeared into the new world. If they survive, they will come back here in about thirty years to lay their eggs. We found more and more nests in which poor little prisoners sat, sometimes almost crushed by the concrete-hard sand. We could not save a whole nest, all the babies were dead.



More than four hours we were on the beach. Again and again it rained violently, but you drops are warm and very soft, considering that it is snowing in Switzerland, gorgeous. In addition, my Migros rain cover for travelers proves perfect, because it is simply made of plastic and therefore really waterproof! Now we have once again enjoyed a fine afternoon and the afternoon is at leisure. No idea what will happen. The camp is under water, it rains on.



Another thing about the team here. The age distribution is quite good, from 18 to me. To my generation, it is less and less, actually only Ian, who belongs to the staff and told on the journey of his new job in Quito. Many staffs are estimated to be between twenty-five and thirty-five, well mixed male and female. They are here for six months, while most of us are ten-week volunteers, some of whom take on a staff job after studying in Nicaragua or come to another project in Costa Rica. The team is made up of Amigirls, an Australian, a Swede, a Belgian, two Canadians, a Swiss, an Irishman the rest are Englishmen, one of them from Tanzania with Indian parents, but now living in England - so really out of all World. Not very easy with English, because there are really all dialects and slangs!

Meanwhile, the water reaches the drinking water and it rains and rises and rains. All activities are canceled for the moment, the water has to go back first, before everything is too dangerous. We are playing and waiting - probably some time!

The whole night on Thursday it was almost raining and even today it is cloudy, gray and raining constantly and violently. It's almost like sitting in a ski hut when it snows. The water is rising, our cabin is in the middle of a lake, we are all in rubber boots and I am grateful that Manfred encourages me to take my own.

In a phase with less rain, I probably enjoyed an hour by the sea, watching the brown pelicans slowly and majestically gliding over the high and wild waves and the other seabirds. The sea is very high, the whole beach is flushed, which is why the nest check is canceled. You sink and the edge can break. The nests are undermined, many eggs are on the beach. The birds have a feast, from afar I saw them fly to a point a little further ahead and land there. Certainly there are Hatchlings on the way and make a paradise for the birds. Suddenly Harriot, standing next to me, points a little forward, where you can see some small turtles running to the beach. The three of us marvel at how they crawl out of a crater like a volcano and aim to crawl towards the sea. They do not always find the easiest way and in between they fall on their backs and have to beat their fins around them to come forward and leave their funny tracks on the sand. What must it be like for them to first get out of the egg to the other siblings, then break through the crust of sand and breathe the air and barely be whirled by the wild waves a few minutes later and feel the freedom in the right element - or the Teeth of the waiting fish?

Already it is Saturday evening. We were almost forced to (inactivity, because our camp was a little under water, but above all, all roads were so wet and swampy, that it was impossible to go on the prowl, so we stayed a whole day just on the basis or On Friday, there were some walks possible, but I had Camp Duty and was allowed to scrub toilets and showers and cook three times for every 23 people: for breakfast there was a rice

pudding for the first time Oatmeal went out, just as there were not many foods left, so there was spaghetti with white sauce for the afternoon, lentils and rice with curry sauce for lunch ... It was not bad ...



This morning I finally got back to the exploration. We made a long and exciting northbound trail and discovered 22 Eyelashed Pit Vipers, the largest remaining birds (Goams), along with many small things like leafcutter ants, spiders, lizards and many birds, including the Trogon. Above all, nature is always impressive. You go under oversized houseplants. It is so green, so diverse, smells good and has soooo many mosquitoes! My back looks horrible, because every time we observe something with the binoculars, some sit on my shoulders, elbows, and back, where it is not covered by the straps of the backpack and began to suck blood. I have to gather in hell to avoid scratching all the time.

In the afternoon I was based here, getting my things ready for the big day. 15 miles and a little more to Tortugero With five liters of water (which I'll probably never drink) in the deep sand, looking for jaguar trails and turtle carcasses. I am curious how I will create this Challenge.



Sitting on the beach and enjoying the waves, I was glad that a group was still on a water bird walk and I could join. So I finally saw a little more of the river delta and herons of various kinds. Soon we have to pack our pick-nick for tomorrow, early is then bed time, because at 5:15, after a morning, which is probably even necessary tomorrow, we run to five Come on.

Monday, December 6th

A little hip pain is still there, but otherwise I feel great. What I always wanted to do, an endless march on the deserted beach, I could do yesterday. I had more respect for it than was necessary, it was actually quite modest.



At about half past five, punctually with the sunrise, we left the camp half a mile in the direction of the River Mouth, then mile after mile divided into four tasks to Tortuguero. It was primarily to search for turtle carcasses or traces of egg-laying green turtles, next to the tracks of the jaguars, which have the turtles as a staple food and the beach patrolling miles and miles as we do. Hundreds of turtles are killed and eaten by the jaguars, of course, the blacks and vultures profit from this as well. The season is definitely over: we may find two turtle tracks, but none was caught by the Jaguar. But its traces show us impressively the way through the sand. The heat is really great, especially in the part where you scan the craters and the scent of dead animals for four miles in the vegetation zone. This is my second part, the first one is just below the vegetation, with the GPS on which the miles and the data of the dead turtles are registered - there are hundreds, which are noted here on these 15 miles.

Despite the stinging suns we are jagged, dripping wet with sweat, the backpack with the prescribed five liters of water, the picnic and clothes on your back. My head and neck are protected by the ugly foreign legion-like Tschäppi, which I already dragged along on countless mountain tours as we rejected too ugly to put on - here it is worth gold. Over my shoulders hangs a sarong, my batman wings, which carry me. Dance music accompanies me on the last miles and gives me the good rhythm to keep up well with my boy Gspänli. It's no harder for me than this, every dance evening and dog walk now helps to condition. We break the record and finish in the shortest time of the season. Now I know what the wooden pegs put into the beach are with numbers, marking the miles between Toruguero and the Jalova. What a jubilation of our group on reaching the goal, what a joy then, at the mouth of the first cool beer!



A fine meal and then the highlight. In a beautiful Beizli directly on the canal's fiene milkshakes and free internet connection! I enjoy both and call Skype with home. The calm, the nature, the sun - despite not optimal weather forecast I decide to spend the

days after the camp in Tortuguero. It makes no sense to drive to San José, anywhere else I do not feel like it, so I enjoy the peace and nature down here. In addition, I can then once again do office work and maybe wash.

The drive home on the canal is another adventure that I enjoy. In the sunshine and the most beautiful light from here, the jungle is even more impressive than when you are in the middle. The wind is good and in front and behind me my colleagues sleep on the ship's bottom.



The evening is a little bit special. On the one hand, people who are here in the project for half a year leave tomorrow for a two-week language stay in Nicaragua, on the other hand, some have their birthday in the next few days, and there is a cake and, before that, fine food and a beer. But I'm almost too tired to enjoy it and go to eight o'clock - later it will not usually be here - in my four-poster bed with mosquito net, where I still hear a little music and then sleep. I will not say goodbye this morning - a pity, I would have liked to say goodbye to Melissa and Simon and they were really nice! - but it's good. I enjoy it until almost eight o'clock, then I finally get up, sit with a kafi a little at the sea, watch the fowl pelicans and gulls, and unleash a mass panic at an ant nest, in which I nick it. Actually, at nine o'clock I would have Jag-Data, the registration of our observations, which we entered into a botiz book in the Compi, but the two young men are still asleep! Obviously, the Jag-Walk has done more than me! That's good. I enjoy chatting in Swiss German again, with Reto a little about Costa Rica, the camp and the people gossiping. We are both proud that we went alone on such a journey into the unknown and would recommend this to all ...

Yesterday's hit was right at the entrance of the coconut plantation to the camp: A Vine snake grabbed a lizard. After a long fatigue fight, the lizard did not move anymore and was slowly but surely sucked into the mouth by the snake - how the snake managed to turn the lizard is still a mystery to me, as she first grabbed her across the belly. The lizard tried to cling to leaves with claws and mouth, but failed. That's how she already looked in the snake's stomach, but as the snake rode to the last bite, the lizard made a quick movement, it buckled and cracked as if crushed, but perhaps it was the serpent's jaw bones. After a quick twitching of the lizard, it fell to the ground and disappeared as fast as lightning. The disappointed snake squirmed on the leaves, stopped there and bent her jaws back into place. A similar spectacle Jon had already shown us on the video, but to live it was different again. And no one would have even set a rump on the survival of the lizard!

Yesterday afternoon we were here in the area on the walk. "Incidentals" - observation of everything one finds. It was not much that Arno, Erik and I could observe, but it was still an experience. Once more.

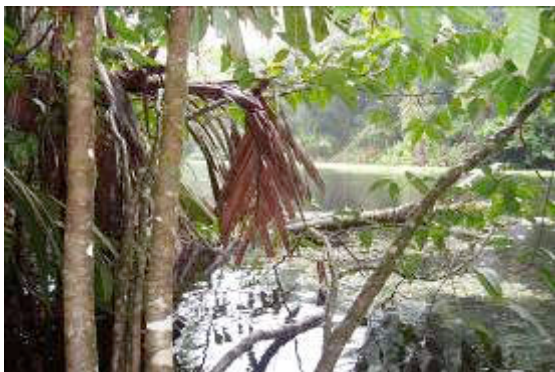
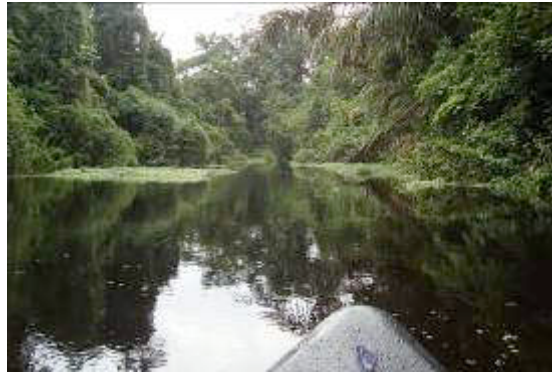


Primeval forest with few birds, but showing beautiful colors (we discovered on the Southtrail for the first time the Trogon and the red capped Manekin), a sloth and a pit viper. But waddling with the rubber boots in Kingsfisher Creek, slipping under the lianas has a lot of appeal for me. As well as here to sit and write by the sea, in between to take a look at a group of brown pelicans gliding over the waves.



After a night in which it just rained, what it could, in which I woke up every now and then, because I changed the bed and now, although down, but on a board with a thin mattress instead of on a wooden shelf with just such a lie and my hip bones were struggling with it, it stopped raining in the morning punctually to the departure at 5.00 o'clock. We boarded the boat, drove to the Jalova Ranger station, where we loaded the canoe, then chugged up about an hour up the canal, searched and found some birds, for example the green

ibis, several herons and the Kingsfisher, then we got in small boat around and six we paddled through the peace of the forest.



Birds could hardly be seen, but the weather was now too bad. It was raining and still cool. Thanks to sleeveless and long-sleeved T-shirt, fiber fur and rain suit I was probably one of the few who were neither cold nor drenched. I just enjoyed it. Tranquility, green, diversity ... Wonderful! Also the lunch was fine, tasted the same as always: we have rice and spaghetti. Each with vegetables and spiced differently. But it always tastes good.

Thursday, late morning. Unbelievable how fast time has passed - already my project time is due to expire.

The evenings were always fun, we played five card games, a kind of "exercise" in which you have to predict the bites, the number of cards is reduced from ten to one ... Yesterday I had another hard day. In the morning we went early to the nestcheck, the marked nests of the turtles control. There are only about ten more boys to crawl out of. However, the numbers are impressive: on the 3 miles between June and November, about 24,000 green turtles buried their average of one hundred eggs each, sometimes completely into the trees. The beach is therefore repeatedly dug up and looks ragged, many deep and about meter-diameter craters testify to the nests. Sometimes hundreds of small tracks and a twenty or thirty centimetric exit hill prove the hatching of the boys. But we have not seen any, they prefer the night time. Impressive were the traces of the jaguars, directly at the base, at about three hundred meters, very close to the cowherd's hut and the cows. Yesterday we traced the footprints of three jaguars to the end of the nest check, mile 15, three miles long. They are around the palm of your hand and follow for miles the tracks of the quad, the two girls of MINEA (Energy and Environment Ministry of Costa Rica) drove after visiting us to Tortuguero.

In the afternoon, five of us went to the Incidentals march. Some vipers, some echoes, of course birds, a sloth, monkeys were the yield, no pictures were captured on the Jag

camera. I was sitting with Ian for about an hour before noon and we discussed team and project development because he will be responsible for two projects in Ecuador, one of which is to rebuild, and he wants to use new and participative methods. One of the projects will be on the Galapagos, the other in the Amazon - so both sound not uninteresting. But I think that Africa will be more exciting to me - just because it is drier there ... and yet has some more animals that I would like to meet closer.

I leave very satisfied from here. I could have endured it longer, it has not lost its charm in these two weeks in any way and observing people and animals is just exciting. Running has done me good, my back is fine, I feel great, that the rhythm of life with the early Aufsteh- and bed times I was comfortable I already knew. I enjoyed the many solitude, but also the games and now and then the discussions. English is not easy, although I speak well enough to explain my work in a way that could be of benefit to GVI. That would make me happy and who knows, maybe KON-SENS will work internationally? Of course, there was also a feedback session, which I could deposit instead of on the form directly with Stephen, responsible for Costa Rica - in German.

This morning there was still a nest check, during which the others already started cleaning. Tons of garbage had to be carried down to the Rivermouth, a large part of the beachclean once completed. The day I did not miss much when I had kitchen duty.



For many, a good time passes by here, they have been here for five or ten weeks, have fallen in love and have to travel back to different countries. Reto, my Swiss Gspänli has another week with Katie, then she flies back to the USA.

I am looking forward to the days in Tortuguero, but I would be happy about a little sun. On washed clothes and on fine Costa Rican food, on the one or other fine drink and on the mails and a little work.

Friday, 11.12. Yes, the mails are processed, in my stomach sit a fine omelette, a pineapple juice and a banana shake. Only - it has been raining almost without interruption since the morning, so it is also rather cool, at least if you sit outside in the Buddas Café and be blown by the wind. Still, it feels good to be here. Last night it seemed like a big job, I thought I had too little money, you can not get any ATP money out there, I was pretty nervous. In the morning we packed up, cleaned up and at 8 left all but the four remaining there (Jon, Joao, Emily, Molly) the camp to go to San José. It was a bit moving despite the brevity. I did the dishes myself, squatted a bit on the threshold, pondered and took my leave before Emily accompanied me to the boat and I drove to Tortuguero with my chauffeur. Fortunately, the boat was covered and I saw a little something of the

magnificent nature through the approaching windows. The safe was still enough money, I found a casual hotel, directly between the canal and the beach, in which I can pay with the card and where I now enjoy the aloneness in my triple room. Yes, after you always lived in a room with six or four, you really enjoy it again. But it was also nice to be able to surf the internet again and find a sweet mail from the treasure and many other good signs. A request from Lucerne has come for a mediation that sounds exciting and I hope that this can be arranged. I'll call Thomas as soon as possible to know the basics.

Tuesday, December 14th

It was almost like coming home today: I'm back at the Costa Rica Guesthouse, where it all started. No more nervous but relaxed, so much richer!

In Tortuguero I spent really quiet days. After all, I ate in three pickling Znacht, once only in the hotel room chips and Guetzli ate, three other afternoon cafes I also met. Buddas is and remains my favorite, right on the water, overlooking the canal and the other shore, the ships and with a really beautiful atmosphere. On the poster in front of the note, that you can enjoy here and should .. I did, especially the fine Batidos con leche with different fruit flavors. Mmmmh!

Every day I went for long walks, tracking the Jaguar tracks from Tortuguero. Unbelievable how close to the village you will find them. Too bad that it almost always rained except on Sunday and was also quite cool. So there was a lot of time left for Treasure Island and Dr. To hear Jekyll and Mister Hyde.

This morning then drive to San José. At twenty to six, I stood at the dock for the boat, right in front of Miss Junie's hotel. I almost missed it because I did not wave enough - but then it took me and after we had picked up all the scattered passengers, we took fast and lively course through the channel to Pavona. There we got on the bus and on a rough road we reached Cariari. Another bus meandered away from the Caribbean and through the misty hills, to the capital where it's just cold and windy at the moment. Deenoch I enjoyed a fine afternoon in my little Strassenbeizchen. Terror of the day: three missed calls from Manfred - he had to go to hospital for kidney stones on suspicion, luckily there was an all-clear and hopefully he will be able to travel without any problems. I'm looking forward to it now. Traveling alone was a good experience, I now know too: I can do it, but it's even better for a couple ...