

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

SHE WROTE  
THE BLOG ON  
GOING SOLO

By Diane Daniel  
Globe Correspondent

Kate McCulley was a 22-year-old with an English degree working at an office job in Fort Point Channel when she read a blog about a man circling the globe by himself.

“Until then it had never occurred to me that someone could travel the world alone,” said McCulley, who grew up in Reading (Reading Memorial High School, Class of 2002). My heart was thudding and I thought: This is what I need to do.”

In 2010, at age 26, she launched *AdventurousKate.com*, chronicling her own solo travels, which started with a six-month tour of Southeast Asia. Since then, McCulley has logged 79 countries across seven continents and fully supports herself on her publishing income. Her site attracts more than 200,000 monthly unique visitors and she has about 56,000 Facebook fans and 98,000 Instagram followers. In 2017, she was named one of *Forbes’s* 10 Most Influential Travelers.

McCulley is now based in New York City and still spends a good deal of time on the road. Below are edited excerpts from a phone interview with McCulley.

**Q.***Much of your blog focuses on safety as a woman traveling alone. Is that a big concern among your readers?*

**A.** So much of travel safety is the same kind of issues women face anywhere. But, yes, I’m often asked about places, “Is it safe?” I started the blog as a way to encourage women to travel solo, so I always address safety in my detailed travel guides. People get so worried about traveling in certain places when they shouldn’t.



KARL WATSON

Yes, there are areas or neighborhoods where it’s not safe, so don’t go to those neighborhoods. One reason I like Mexico is that people are always around late into the night. That makes it safer.

**Q.***Do you see any notable differences in female solo travel now vs. when you started the blog?*

**A.** There’s so much more information on the Internet now than a decade ago, when there was very little. So I don’t think it’s as foreign of a concept to travel solo. I also think there are more women traveling to interesting and less-easy destinations than before. For instance, I’ve recently been to Lebanon and Guyana. I hope to go to Brazil and West Africa later this year. I just got an opportunity to visit Baku, in Azerbaijan.

**Q.***Any specific reason for venturing into more remote*

**Q.***What’s an example?*

**A.** I think that Mexico in particular has the worst PR among Americans and the worst inaccuracies. People say, “You’re going to get raped and murdered there.” But unless you’re going to Mexico to fight with cartels, that’s like saying you shouldn’t go to LA because there’s gang violence in South Central.



ELIZABETH GOLINI

Kate McCulley of *Adventurous Kate’s* solo female travel blog on Table Mountain in Cape Town (above) and at Shirley Heights in Antigua (inset left).

*and less-traveled lands?*

**A.** A huge part is a reaction to the travel blogosphere. Everyone, it seems, goes to Iceland, Bali, and Barcelona. Not only are they huge favorites among travel bloggers, those destinations have major over-tourism. I really feel the urge to break away. That’s why Ghana is on my list, for instance. That said, I adore Italy and am visiting all 20 regions.

**Q.***You’ve gone on group press trips and sponsored trips that a destination pays for. How are you able to cover solo travel that way?*

**A.** Most of my travel is solo and paid for by myself. Several years ago I took a lot of press trips, but got burned out on them. I still travel solo when sponsored. It doesn’t make a difference with how I function when I’m out and about.

**Q.***You’re opinionated not only about places, but also about politics and people. Isn’t that unusual in the travel blogosphere?*

**A.** Yeah, among bloggers I’m known as the girl who’s controversial. I’m very vocal about my political beliefs and I point out things that I think are wrong. The other day, I wrote about how we need to stand up for children on the border. I spoke out about the TBEX conference for travel

bloggers when they partnered with Zimbabwe while Mugabe was still in power. I got so much flack for it. But you know what? They ended up postponing the conference.

**Q.***What are some common misconceptions about your work, and when people ask what you do for a living, what do you tell them?*

**A.** I say I’m the publisher of a travel website that teaches women how to travel safely. Publisher is a word I like, and it encompasses a lot of what I do. Just because there’s no barrier to entry doesn’t mean it’s easy to make a full time living at it. I think the most important thing is you need to have an ability to captivate an audience. It can be developed, but it can’t be taught.

**Q.***What’s the next adventure for Adventurous Kate?*

**A.** I’ll keep traveling, of course. I don’t need to go to all countries in the world, though I’d like to get to 100. Later this year I’m going to launch a travel podcast and I also want to do something to help female digital entrepreneurs across all businesses because so many resources are tailored to men.

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HERE

SUMMER SAVINGS  
ON THE DOWNEASTER TRAIN

Travel between Boston’s North Station and Brunswick, Maine, on the Amtrak Downeaster and you can read a book, work, or enjoy the scenery instead of dealing with traffic and parking. Summer deals include the Train to Maine BOGO promotion, when you can take a friend for half price when you buy one adult full-fare ticket (use promo code v158, good for travel on train numbers 681, 683, 688, 691, 693, and 698) and the Discover Maine Rail Pass, which gets you 10 one-way trips on the Downeaster between any Maine stations within a seven-day period for just \$19 per person. Or take the number 685 train between Haverhill and Brunswick or points in between for \$5 one way. Specials must be booked in advance and run through Sept. 30. Anyone 65 and older, between 2 and 12, or with disabilities get half off one-way fares year-round. The train includes free Internet and a cafe serving snacks and beverages. 800-872-7245, [www.amtrakdowneaster.com](http://www.amtrakdowneaster.com)

PHOTOS HELP FOSTER  
SOCIAL CHANGE

See an exhibit by activist photographer Dona Ann McAdams at Vermont’s Brattleboro Museum & Art Center through Sept. 23. “Dona Ann McAdams: Performative Acts” features black-and-white photos drawn from four decades of the artist’s work, including images of avant-garde performers, cloistered nuns, racetrack workers, and pioneers of gay liberation. Civil rights icon Harvey Milk in-



spired the budding photographer in the 1970s, and she used her camera to encourage social change. McAdams, a longtime New York City resident, now lives on a goat farm in Sandgate, Vt. Admission \$8 adults, \$6 seniors 65 and older, \$4 students over 18, free for members and anyone 18 and younger. Open every day except Tuesday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 802-257-0124, [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org)

THERE

SEE NYC BY HISTORIC  
TUGBOAT

Hop aboard a wooden tugboat and cruise around lower Manhattan on a new tour offered by the South Street Seaport Museum. The 45-minute ride on the W.O. Decker takes passengers around lower Manhattan, offering views of the city’s skyline, Battery Park, the Castle Clinton National Monument, and One World Trade Center. The boat, considered the last working New York-built wooden tugboat, operated as a steam

tugboat from the time it was built in 1930 until it was refit with a diesel engine in 1986. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and now offers public sails on Saturdays and Sundays. \$35 adults, \$29 seniors 62 and older, \$15 children 10 and older (no kids under 10 on boat) booked in advance, includes museum admission; museum-only tickets \$20 adults, \$14 seniors and students, free 8 and under. 212-748-8600, [www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org](http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org)



DON’T MISS THIS DENVER MUSIC AND  
FOOD FEST

See KC and the Sunshine Band, Kool and the Gang, and more than 30 other national and regional artists at Colorado’s largest music and food festival, a free event over Labor Day weekend, Aug. 31-Sept. 2. A Taste of Colorado, produced by the Downtown Denver Partnership, takes place in Civic Center Park in downtown Denver and showcases the city’s diverse cultural traditions and western heritage. The renowned event, now in its 36th year, features global cuisine; kids’ activities including a climbing wall, laser tag, and obstacle courses; and an Arts and Crafts Marketplace with more than 175 local artisans. Other top performers include Dwight Yoakam, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Taylor Dayne, and Scott Stapp of Creed. Purchase a Capital VIP Experience ticket and get access to a special viewing area near the stage, two drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic), a meal ticket, access to private indoor

bathrooms, and laminated credentials. [www.atasteofcolorado.com](http://www.atasteofcolorado.com)

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TRAVELS

Throw the Leatherman Signal in your glove compartment, backpack, or checked luggage, and you’ll have 19 useful tools for your adventures. This multitool, rereleased in multiple colors to celebrate Leatherman’s 35th anniversary, has standard tools such as pliers, a



saw, knives, and wire cutters, but also offers other handy features, including a fire-starting ferrocerium rod, a safety whistle, box wrenches, a bottle opener, and a mini hammer (great for driving in tent stakes). The Signal weighs just 7.5 ounces and folds down to 4½ inches long. It’s made of stainless steel and comes with a heavy-duty nylon pouch that slips on your belt or backpack straps. \$119.95. 800-847-8665, [www.leatherman.com](http://www.leatherman.com)

KARI BODNARCHUK