



Encounter

Oars up, paddle on

During the annual Blackburn Challenge, a 20+ mile race around Cape Ann for rowers, kayakers, and canoeists, there is little time for pondering passersby. Paddling strong swells, even on such a crowded day, is solitary pursuit. Sweat, suffering, and sucking wind.

Yet less than an hour after the staggered start, somewhere east of Annisquam, came one particular kayak passing fast. There was little to do but watch: The kayaker's arms arced smoothly. The paddle flashed high. The boat tracked a steady line.

Greg Barton, two-time Olympic gold medalist and many-time world champion, swept onward until, after only minutes, he was again smaller than the sea.

TOM HAINES

Globe-trotting

NOTES FROM OUR BLOG

American takes fees to a higher level

American Airlines said last week that it will start charging \$15 to most passengers to check a first bag, and that it plans to cut its schedule by as much as 12 percent. American also said it would raise other fees from \$5 to \$50 for a range of services from reservation help to oversized bags. This comes just a month after American joined other big carriers in charging \$25 for a second checked bag. This means that if you arrive with two bags, the tab will be \$40 each way. The fees will kick in for flights booked starting June 15. But it won't affect some American frequent-flyer program members or those paying full fare or international passengers. American put the details on its website, aa.com. Delta reacted almost immediately, saying it was not planning to adopt the first-bag fee, but United said it would consider it.

PAUL MAKISHIMA

 **NEWS, DEALS, DISPATCHES**
Boston.com/travel/blog is where to go no matter where you want to go.

Gearing up

Track your photos

It can be frustrating trying to remember just where you were when you photographed that beach, that building, or that exotic bird. GISTEQ's PhotoTracker Lite, a tiny global positioning system, records your location as you travel. When you get home, upload your digital photos and GPS data, and the PhotoTracker mapping software syncs the information and tells you exactly where and when your pictures were taken.

You can even upload this information and view your travel route on Google Earth. The PhotoTracker works with all digital cameras and runs on one AA battery. It retails for \$99 at Buy.com, Amazon.com, and other online sites listed at gisteq.com.

KARI J. BODNARCHUK

Fanny pack? Gawking at a map? A thousand times no!

By Richard P. Carpenter
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Money isn't the only thing you should try to save while traveling abroad. You also want to save your possessions, and perhaps your neck. One way to do that is not to look like a tourist.

Mobal Communications, which sells and rents world phones at mobal.com, recently surveyed its subscribers and came up with a variety of suggestions. Even if you don't blend in completely, you will at least appear to be a savvy tourist. Here, with a few interjections of our own, is some of the advice:

- **Ditch the white athletic shoes.** There perhaps is no surer way to announce, "Look at me! I'm an American tourist!"
- **Ditch the fanny pack.** Writes one Mobal contributor, "I've never seen a non-American wearing a fanny pack."
- **Wear black.** As one observer notes, "Folks in Paris, London,

and other European capitals tend to wear lots of black, and as a tourist, you tend to blend in if you're wearing it, too."

- **Put on a few local accessories.** Wearing a scarf in Europe, for instance, helps women blend in.
- **Use hotel concierge services.** Having a good idea where you are going prevents you from looking like a lost soul.
- **Don't forget the basics.** These almost go without saying: Avoid piling on the jewelry, wearing shorts and T-shirts in cities, studying maps in public, and wearing your camera around your neck.
- **Learn a few words of the language.** All right, this won't camouflage your tourist identity, but it may be appreciated by the people you deal with and even get you better service in restaurants.
- **Make the ultimate sacrifice.** This is the thing I find hardest to do, but I steel myself and leave the Red Sox cap at home.

A reader's tip
Prompted by our recent column on Quebec City, Russ Osborn, who grew up in Amesbury, suggests dining at the restaurant (not the cafeteria) in the Quebec Parliament Building, which overlooks the St. Louis Gate. The restaurant, he writes, "is just delightful with an outstanding menu at reasonable prices with great service and an enjoyable ambience of a very tall dining room with large pillars." Another favorite is the restaurant atop Le Concorde hotel.

10th anniversary
The Pitcher Inn and Spa in Warren, Vt., the state's only Relais & Châteaux property, is celebrating its 10th anniversary with a Ten Package, valid through July 3. Guests get 10 percent off all rooms, wines and spirits, cuisine, and spa treatments plus a \$10 certificate per guest toward purchases at The Warren Store. Rates start at \$425 per night, per room, and include full breakfast daily

and afternoon tea. Other packages are available.

Visit pitcherinn.com or call 802-496-6350.

Ride 'em, cowperson!
Gateway Canyons resort in the southwest Colorado community of Gateway offers the Ranch Hand Package, with instruction from wranglers and an introduction to ranch life. Prices start at \$255 per person and include two nights' accommodation, riding instruction, lunch daily, and guided trail rides each day.

Visit gatewaycanyons.com or call 866-671-4733.

Gas savings
Best Western has gasoline promotions at many of its properties across the country. In Rockland, Mass., there are two. With the Gas Saver Package, available Sunday-Wednesday, you book a two-night stay at \$109 a night and get a deluxe continental breakfast each morning and a \$25 gas card. Book

a three-night stay and receive breakfast plus a \$50 card. The Memorial Day Gas Saver Package is for a two-night Friday-Saturday stay. Guests get a \$25 gas card plus a deluxe continental breakfast daily and a \$25 gas card. For a three-night Friday-Sunday stay, they get a \$75 card plus the breakfasts. Rooms are also \$109 a night.

Visit bestwestern.com or call 888-878-5660 or 781-871-5660.

Food, wine, and the Cape
The Cape Cod Life Food & Wine Festival runs June 1-4 at various locations. Several hotels and inns across the Cape are also offering packages that include discounted rates and amenities such as complimentary wine, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and journals. Prices vary.

Visit festival.capecodlife.com and click on accommodations or call 508-375-4044.

When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

Abroad in the world, lose that ball cap and those sneakers.

add significantly to the price of a trip. Most prices quoted are for double occupancy; solo travelers will usually pay more. Offers are subject to availability and there may be blackout dates. Richard P. Carpenter can be reached at carpenter@globe.com.

Destinations

FOOD



Vendors selling grilled sausages won't be hard to find at the Taste of Chicago, a 10-day extravaganza of food.

A bite of Chicago, with extra relish

JUNE 27-JULY 6
CHICAGO
Taste of Chicago: This is the City of the Big Shoulders, so dubbed by poet Carl Sandburg. But it's also the city of mega celebrations. The Taste of Chicago is a 10-day whirl of activities in Grant Park, including lots of music, arts and crafts, road races, and other contests — and of course, food. Not only will there be vendors selling everything from grilled sausages to ice cream and cotton candy, but more than 70 restaurants will offer samples. And on a special stage a steady stream of well-known chefs, TV personalities, and cookbook authors will demonstrate their recipes and give tastes of their cuisines. Chicago-area chefs include Jimmy Bannos of Heaven on Seven; Rick Tramanto of Tru; Willy Wagner of Honky Tonk Barbeque; and Alfonso Avila and Lidia Benitez of La Cocina de Frida. Entrance to the festival is free; food and beverage tickets are \$8 for 12. 312-744-3315, tasteofchicago.us.

JUNE 26-29
TELLURIDE, COLO.
Telluride Wine Festival: With the spectacular San Juan Mountains as a backdrop, this 27th annual celebration of food and wine includes culinary demonstrations, wine tastings, gala dinners, and festive lunches. Participating chefs include Bob Scherner of Alfred's and Honga of Honga's Lotus Petal, both in Telluride, and Paul Bartolotta of Bartolotta Ristorante di Mare at Wynn Las Vegas. Prices range from \$50 for a culinary demonstration to \$850 for a weekend package of all wine and activities. telluridewinefestival.com.

JUNE 15
SONOMA VALLEY, CALIF.
King of the Castle at Ledson Winery: Fathers will be honored on their day at this winery housed in a castle. The celebration includes barbecue, wine, and a jazz band. The grounds of the castle, an hour north of San Francisco on Highway 12 in Kenwood, will be open for the day. Cost is \$25 and \$20 for Ledson wine club members; no prior registration necessary. 7335 Sonoma Highway, 707-537-3810, ledsonwinery.com.

Where they went

TOKYO AND KYOTO

WHO: Michael Zimman, 58, his wife, Ellen Rovner, 59, their son, Sam Zimman, 18, all of Brookline, and Michael's brother, Jon Zimman, 53, and his partner, Glenn Roberts, 42, both of San Francisco.

WHERE: Japan.

WHEN: Ten days in March.

WHY: To attend the Red Sox season opener and sightsee.

THE BIG IDEA: "My brother promoted this," Michael Zimman said. "He thought it was an unusual opportunity and could get tickets through the Oakland [Athletics] organization." The brothers, who grew up on the North Shore, are huge Sox fans, as is Roberts, who is from Connecticut.

TRANSCENDENT VIEWS: In Tokyo they stayed on the 46th floor of the Park Hyatt. "It's where 'Lost in Translation' was filmed," Rovner said. "I don't know how Scarlett was bored there," she said of the character played by Scarlett Johansson. "The views are amazing. Wherever you were, it was like floating among the skyscrapers. There are windows everywhere. At night it was just spectacular."

PREGAME SHOW: "When we got to the game, they had the World Series trophy on display, with armed guards, and there were literally hundreds of Japanese taking photos," Zimman said. "The opening ceremony was quite the extravaganza," Rovner said. "They had these kids in traditional costumes, wearing bright colors, and it was very choreographed."

SOUND AND FLURRIES: "There were about 2,000 Americans out of 55,000 total in the stands. They were selling



Ellen Rovner and Michael Zimman sampled scallops on a trek in Tokyo.

each. "Kyoto is physically more beautiful, though Tokyo has some incredible new buildings," Rovner said. "Tokyo at first was overwhelming, but after a few days, when we could get around, we thought, wow, this is great."

SEAFOOD SENSATIONS: After visiting the giant Tokyo fish market, where they saw huge tunas wheeled around in motorized carts, they came upon a vendor. "They were grilling these giant scallops, like the size of a small orange. No one spoke a word of English, but a flight attendant who was there ordered a couple for us," Zimman said.

FLOWERING FINALE: On their last day they happened upon blooming cherry trees. "All the Japanese were taking a gazillion pictures of them," Rovner said of the blossoms. "It's such a part of their culture."

DIANE DANIEL

 **SEE WHERE THEY WENT**
For more photos and to share yours, visit boston.com/wheretheywent. Send your suggestions within two weeks of your return to diane@bydiane.com.

JUNE 21
YAKIMA, WASH.
Sunshine & Wine: Washington wine lovers take a casual approach at this annual event at State Fair Park. Wineries from throughout the Pacific Northwest will offer samples, along with wine competitions and lectures. An auction will offer such prizes as a car trunk full of wine, valued at \$1,100, and a private goose hunt in northern Alberta, Canada, valued at \$1,600. Cost for the day is \$75. 509-248-7160, sunshineandwine.com.

JULY 3-6
MANDEVILLE, LA.
Mandeville Seafood Festival: An old-fashioned outdoor party like this requires at least four days. This is the 30th year for this all-volunteer festival, which has moved to a larger location in Fontainebleau State Park. Louisiana seafood of all kinds, served fried and fresh; New Orleans-style po' boys; and other foods such as sausages and burgers will be served in 20 booths. There will be contests for adults and children, plenty of music, and arts and crafts booths, as well as other entertainment. Entrance is \$10, but is free to small children, seniors over 65, and members of the military. 985-624-9762, seafoodfest.com.

PLAN AHEAD
JULY 10-12
CORDOVA, ALASKA
Copper River Wild Salmon Festival: Sustaining the health and continuation of Copper River salmon is the aim of this annual festival of all things fish. The three-day event in the rustic location of Cordova has many outdoor elements including road races and fishing demonstrations. But there also will be plenty of opportunity to taste salmon, to watch a salmon cook-off, and to see how to properly fillet the fish. General admission free with fees up to \$15 for music and other events. 907-424-3632, copperriverwild.org.

ALISON ARNETT

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; call or check online to confirm. Alison Arnett can be reached at alacarte59@aol.com.

Rave

Worldly, yet price-wise

LOS ANGELES — The words "walking" and "Los Angeles" may seem like an oxymoron, but that's not the case on West 3d Street. This slightly gritty, fun, urban walking district, located between La Cienega Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, is filled with funky vintage stores, specialty boutiques, chic furniture shops, cafes, restaurants, and even a bookstore that specializes only in travel.

An LA pal, who has a critical eye when it comes to shopping, sent me off to explore this strip, but even she hadn't yet discovered Krisol. Open since last summer, this small storefront boutique sells high fashion at surprisingly affordable prices. Owned by Tahirah Felton and Kaj Palsson, who met while teaching English in South Korea, Krisol represents brands from all over the world.

For men, you'll find the lines Genera, Artful Dodger, John Varvatos, and Trunk Ltd., and for women there's Tracy Reese, Embe, Custo Barcelona, and Louis Verdad, to name a few. Besides clothes suitable for evening attire, Krisol also sells upscale T-shirts, jeans, and accessories like belts, sunglasses, jewelry, and handbags.

"Krisol comes from the Spanish word for melting pot. We want to bring all the fun things about LA into the business," said Felton.

Krisol, 8312 West 3d St., Los Angeles, 323-966-5808.

NECEE REGIS



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE