

A winter landscape in Finland featuring snow-covered trees and a body of water. The scene is captured in a soft, golden light, likely during sunrise or sunset. The foreground is a snow-covered path leading towards a cluster of trees, some of which are heavily laden with snow. In the background, a calm body of water reflects the light, with more snow-covered trees on the opposite shore.

**FINLAND**  
**MY FIRST**  
**ADVENTURE**

*Travel Dave*

ESTABLISHED 2005

**Finland My  
First Adventure**  
By Travel Dave A.K.A  
Dave Brett

# Finland, My First Adventure

Today, I'm writing this book in a coffee shop in Chiang Mai, Thailand and looking back at 10 years on the road.

My mind always goes back to my first solo trip, an adventure to Finland in 2005.

It was a trip into the unknown and I had no idea what it would lead to.

I took a risk and I'm forever thankful for that decision, as it's the reason I am where I am today, doing what I love.

I remember these special moments like they were yesterday and that's why I chose to put together this ebook to share with you my first adventure to Finland.

The first trip will always stick with you for a lifetime.

This is my story of how I started travelling and got bitten by the travel bug.

I've told this story countless amounts of times and it never gets old.

You can create your own story, too.

We all start somewhere and that's why I felt it important to share my first travelling experience.

So here is my first adventure and how it all started. I hope it inspires you to pursue your own travel goals.

Looking back at the last 10 years, I wouldn't change a thing.

Here's to the next 10 years of travel!

# **EuroJam Scout Camp 2005, Essex, UK**

At the young age of 15 I attended a scout camp in Essex, called Eurojam.

It was my first international scout camp and I was really excited; we had spent the past year fundraising in order to attend this event.

We arrived early, after a 30 minute drive, and waited for the overseas visitors to arrive.

As we built our campsite, scouts from all around Europe arrived one-by-one. They were from Iceland, Spain, Finland, Guernsey – it was rather exciting, as I'd never really spoken with anyone from outside the UK before.

# Meeting the Finns

Once everyone had moved in and the tents were set up, I decided to go and say hello to my new neighbours from Finland. Finland?! What a bizarre, out of reach place, I thought to myself! In fact, it was my first international interaction ever!

I felt like a spaceman on my first mission. I was so nervous and didn't even know what to say. After noticing they were around my age and might be interested in meeting a local, I plucked up the courage to introduce myself.

“Hi!” I said as I entered their gateway. I was greeted with silence...nothing. Well, that could have been the moment when I could've been put off travelling altogether. It's weird to think how one decision can change the path of your entire life and everything you live for. I could have just turned around and said, “screw international friendship, I'm sticking to the UK, they talk to me here!”

As I looked around at the group of 30 or so, I found it rather odd that nobody wanted to talk to me.

After living in Finland for a year, I know now what Finnish people are like. Not once did I speak to my neighbours while living there (they chose to wait until my door closed before they would depart from their

own house). Needless to say, they probably weren't the best people to attempt my first international conversation with. I would have been better off going to say hello to the Portuguese, although it would've been difficult to make them stop playing the guitar long enough to say hello.

Just as I was about to turn around and walk out of the door feeling rejected, in the background I heard a quiet voice. "Moi?" Her name was Elina and she was from Sienajoki, a small town in the middle of Finland. After we got talking about what it's like to live in Finland, the whole group got drawn into the conversation and I tried to remember all of their Finnish names, which was next to impossible. In the end, I started to give them all nicknames related to their funny sounding names and after much laughter we couldn't stop talking. In fact the scout leader had to shout "Lights out! Time for bed. See you in the morning" to get rid of me.

I could have stayed there all night talking about how bizarre life in Finland is and how funny their language and accent was compared to mine. I headed back to my group, who were full of grinning faces pointing out that they could hear all the laughing going on with the Finnish girls and how it sounded like I had secretly become Finnish all of a sudden.

In fact, during the whole camp experience I spent most of my time with the Finnish scouts and become

very good friends with all of them. It was really sad to see all of them get on the bus back to Finland, as I had made pretty awesome friends with a lot of them. In particular, I had a crush on Elina, the girl who first said hello to me, and was really sorry to watch her leave.

# The EU & Technology

During the same camp, the European Union had put up a cultural learning tent for scouts to go along to pick up maps of Europe and learn about all the different countries and cultures that were within arms reach.

These maps got the travel bug going in me, and I started to plan out routes, stumbling across the interrail scheme that allows you to hop across all the countries in Europe with a single train pass. Travel was starting to become tempting.

This was all in 2005, when laptops and the internet were still gaining popularity for home users. Finland was very technologically advanced at the time, so I vouched to keep in contact with my new friends after the camp via the internet.

# Goodbye for now, but the Start of an Adventure

After such a great camp and making so many new friends I was mesmerised by how globally connected we are through technology and the internet. Keeping in contact with all the new friends from all around Europe, particularly Finland, was amazing.

After talking for a few months, it was coming up to Christmas and I wasn't doing very well in my first year at college. I found it hard to be given the responsibility of deciding what to do for the rest of my life at that age and struggled to decide on the right courses for me.

I feel really strongly about this as I feel young people have an incredible chance to really make something of themselves with the correct guidance and aspirations. But, being asked the question "what do you want to do with your life?" as if your entire future depended on that decision, was horrible for me. I struggled with the work demand and deadlines. I had

essentially enrolled into something that was too difficult for me, with no escape.

I was lost and confused. This was when I went to the library and found an out-of-date Lonely Planet guide book for Finland. Rather than working on my assignment during free time, I read the whole thing from start to finish. I was engrossed in it, as it reminded me of my friends and how interesting their culture was. This led me to wonder if it was possible to go to Finland; to travel there on my own. Before this it had seemed impossible, or so I thought.

Don't you have to be older to travel? Don't you need lots of money? And don't you need the time?

Christmas break was approaching and I had just £96.10 to my name. I was not enjoying life and difficult work that I was behind on was growing to Mount Everest-proportions.

When I got home and talked to my new Finnish friends about the possibility of visiting them, they all leapt at the idea and thought it would be brilliant. They all wanted to show me their unique country and, most importantly, wanted to show me off to their friends and bring back the great summer memories.

# Flights to Finland Booked

It might have been foolish, but I'm so happy I did it. After searching around, I found a cheap flight to Finland with Ryanair, a £50 return ticket. That left me £46.10 for everything else. After reading that this was the daily recommended budget, I was in a tricky situation. Should I go to this unknown place, leaving the UK on my own for the first time? Should I run away from home (as my Mum clearly stated that I wasn't allowed to go)? Would I want to return to further my education or would I simply drop out?

With all of these fears surrounding me, I had plenty of voices telling me to not go. But all I could think about was the fantastic time I had with my Finnish friends in the summer. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I didn't like the thought not going and kicking myself for it later in life.

# Time to Fly

On the day of my departure my Mum threatened to call border control to report me as a runaway. My Dad argued that Finland had one of the lowest crime rates in the world, that I was going to be staying with scouting friends and their families, and that I was now growing into an adult. Eventually, she came round to the idea!

As I lugged my massive wheelee bag to the check-in desk and discovering that it was massively overweight, all the while watching my Mum look at me with her “I told you so” face, I couldn’t believe that it was actually happening. I was just a kid and I was going on one of the coolest adventures of my life. I was also getting to see my distant friends again, and experiencing their culture, but first-hand this time!

Once I passed through security (my mum took a whole bag of clothes back to the car with her), I was finally on my own. It was a weird moment for me, my first taste of independence and solo travel. I was free to do as I wished, and no-one was there to tell me what to do. However, I also had a lot of responsibility, as my family had put trust in me to allow me to make such a trip.

# A Landing I've Never Forgotten

I'll never forget the landing as I approached Tampere airport, with the amount of snow I could see surrounding all the trees and falling down as we landed. It really was magical. This was a moment I would treasure for the rest of my life; the feelings and unique experiences that travel can give you. I'd never seen so much snow, let alone been to such a cold country!

As I arrived at the airport and waited for my massive bag to come through, I could see my first Finnish friend Jenni waiting for me with her father. It was like someone was looking over me and these kind people were looking forward to make my adventure just what I wanted it to be.

This was not only my first ever time travelling abroad on my own, this was the first of many trips to come.

# The Start of my Finnish Adventure

For the next month, I travelled around Finland staying with my scouting friends. Luckily, because of my age, I could buy child rate tickets and it was Christmas, so I asked my relatives for spending money for my trip instead of gifts that year. That worked a treat, allowing me to buy all the tickets I needed.

I stayed with Jenni in Sahalati, just outside of Tampere, over Christmas, then went to Sienajoki to see Elina and work on her family's cow farm. After that, I went onwards to Oulu for New Years Eve with Anni, then up to Rovenemi to see Father Christmas, before returning to Tampere. All of the time I stayed with Finnish families, went to Finnish schools and learned all about their culture and way of life.

# My First Cultural Experience: The Finnish Sauna

My first cultural experience was one I will never forget. After arriving at Jenni's house, which her parents had built themselves (very impressive), I was invited to stay in the sauna guest house outside. It was a mini wooden house that I instantly fell in love with. Artu, Jenni's brother invited me to visit the Sauna with him and his father, which I had read about in my out-of-date Finnish Lonely Planet. I was unaware of the exact procedure, but politely accepted and decided to go with the flow. Surely Finnish people don't get naked with guests?? It's just a family thing right??

Low and behold, moments after meeting Jenni's family, they were stark naked in front of me. I didn't know whether to run away and get the next flight home or just go with the flow. I remember thinking in, 'oh well, when in Finland' and then 'screw it'. I got stark bollock naked and joined in. I have to say if you're ever invited by a Finnish family to go to the sauna, always accept!

It's the most incredible experience and a very rare opportunity. In fact, it really was so unique to me. After 10 minutes or so the whole being naked thing didn't cross my mind, and we were just a few lads chilling out drinking a nice cold beverage, talking about life in Finland and the UK. This was such a humbling experience that I could have taken the whole wrong way and embarrassed myself!

After a while, it was really hot and I wanted to cool down. Artu told me that he had specially prepared an ice hole before I had arrived. I have to admit I was a little confused, but nodded my head and decided to join in.

Stark naked, I ran out of the sauna house, along the jetty and plunged into a hole in the frozen lake. I couldn't speak even if I tried, the rush of heat from the sauna compared to the sub-zero lake was such a crazy contrast, but it really worked! As I tried to get out, my hand froze to the ladder pole and I wouldn't come off. I tried talking to Artu, but I couldn't quit mumbling. He laughed, but really I was screaming for help. After a while he clocked on to what I was trying to mumble and poured a bucket of water over my hand so I could run back into the sauna house.

Never in a million years would I ever have thought that I would be doing something so crazy.

That's the joy of travelling; you have no idea what is around the corner, the adventure and experiences.

# The Endless Possibilities that Travel Brings

Endless possibilities are within your reach simply by jumping onto a random flight and meeting up with some locals for an evening. It's much better than just staying at home, watching TV and letting the world pass by.

When I cast my mind back to the end of my Finnish trip, I remember getting a phone call from my college after the holidays had ended in the UK like it was yesterday. I was sitting on Jenni's decking during a mystical sunset, looking out to the frozen snow-covered lake as birds flew around and elks were running in the distance. It was like a scene from a movie. They wanted to know if I was returning or not. I just looked at where I was and thought to myself, "this is one cultural experience I will never forget and there must be loads of others waiting for me around the world".

I told them I wouldn't be returning to college and they invited me in for a meeting to discuss it further the following week.

It was at that moment, after a month of travelling, that I realised what I had achieved. I felt like a Pokémon evolving to the next species. If I have such an amazing experience in just one month in one country, what could the other 200+ countries bring? How will I have time (at the age of 15) to explore it all?

I could spend the rest of my life having just this experience and it would be the most incredible way to live.

Back home, after I had the meeting at college, I decided to drop out and get a job to fund my European rail adventure. It sparked a travel bug in me and I haven't looked back since. We all have that one first great experience that we hold dear, that changed our perspective, and will remember forever, - Finland was mine.

# Go and Start your First Travel Adventure

I wanted to share my first travel experience with you as I feel it's important to lay down the foundations and tell the story of how it all began.

I have told the above story over a hundred times - it can take a good few hours to tell over a coffee or beer, but everyone I tell this story to has been blown away by how I first started travelling.

Even I forget I was only 15 at the time, it seems crazy now. I started very early compared to most solo travellers.

When you take that first step towards travelling, you're breaking away from a lot of fear, which is very common for first-time solo travellers.

But once you're bitten by the travel bug you'll never look back.

If you don't enjoy it, well at least you can say you gave it a go, which is more than most people will ever do.



# About the Author

My name is Dave Brett. I'm 25 years old and I was born and raised in Chingford, East London in the United Kingdom.

I have travelled to 85+ countries, studied in Finland, Wales and The Netherlands, and worked and lived in Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand and the USA. This has all been made possible by being frugal and sticking to a backpacker budget. I have no plans to stop any time soon.

I started a travel blog back in 2005 because of an agreement with my mum. Being 15 at the time, travelling solo was out of the question. I had the desire to do it, but my Mum was not happy with me travelling alone around Scandinavia. I agreed to keep my mum up-to-date daily with what I was getting up to if she would let me go.

So, it was either start travel blogging or don't go on the trip at all. I ended up choosing travel blogging and [TravelDave.co.uk](http://TravelDave.co.uk) was born!

From the start, Travel Dave was about my personal journey and travel tales. It wasn't until 2010 when taking a course in Entrepreneurship at Vaasa

University, Finland, that I decided to turn Travel Dave from a way to share my travels with friends and family into a business. I did this by turning Travel Dave into a travel resource for like-minded travellers seeking helpful advice for their own budget backpacking adventures.

Currently, I live a nomadic, location independent lifestyle which allows me to move anywhere around the world and freely go wherever I wish. I'm extremely mobile and never have a permanent location. I sold all my possessions some years ago and travel with a hand luggage-sized backpack that holds everything I own. I spend most of my time backpacking around multiple destinations over a set period of time using travel hacking techniques to save money and extend my travels. Between these big adventures I like to stop travelling for a little while and set up a temporary home for a few months in a new location. All I need to blog is wifi and coffee, which can be found all over the world (very handy). I plan on living this lifestyle until 2019 when I hope to settle down somewhere in Sweden - that's the dream!

# Contact The Author

It's great hearing from readers, please feel free to send me an email: [dave@traveldave.co.uk](mailto:dave@traveldave.co.uk)

I'm happy to help answer any questions you may have or if you would like to further discuss any points brought up in the book.

I love social media and you can reach out to me in many different ways:

Send me a [Tweet](#), @Traveldaveuk

Post on my [Facebook page](#)

Follow my [Instagram feed](#) @Traveldaveuk

Pin on my [Pinterest](#)

Plus me on: [Google+](#)

Watch me on: [YouTube](#)

Snapchat: @Davebrettuk

[Periscope](#): @Traveldaveuk

*Many different ways to connect!*

The best way to keep up-to-date with Travel Dave is to follow my [Monthly Newsletter](#). It's full of useful information about how to travel on a budget as well as following my personal adventure.

# Digital Nomad: Work online, Travel the world, live a location independent lifestyle

Are you looking at creating an online business that allows you to live in a location independent lifestyle and travel the world?

Not sure where to start?

Feel free to check out my other book on the Amazon Kindle: [Digital Nomad](#)

Anyone can easily create a lifestyle focused towards setting up a business, making money online whilst travelling the world.

## **This book will help you:**

- Kick-start your Business
- Discover Work available online
- How to Work from the road
- Set your Goals
- Build an audience

- The Art of Adapting to the World
- Learn how to invest your first £100 investment
- Research your market
- Finding a Place to Stay
- Organize your productivity

## **Also explains:**

- Creative Generation
- Concept of a Nomad
- What a Digital Nomad is
- Ways to earn money online
- SEO
- Keywords
- Automation
- Passive income
- Creating Schedule's
- Analytics
- Importance of Email List's

## **Special sections surrounding:**

- Creating content to engage an audience
- Chiang Mai, Thailand starter guide
- Basic Gear guide For Digital Nomads
- Setting up a Bank Account
- Setting up a Mobile Phone Abroad
- Pomodoro Technique

- Bullet Journal
- Round the World Flight (RTW)

## **Issues addressed in this book:**

- Morning rituals
- Killing Procrastination
- How to make friends on the road and create a global social circle
- Visa restrictions & Tax for digital Nomads
- How Traditional Employment is Shifting
- How to manage Customer service remotely
- Time to Establish Yourself

Interested to read more? Follow this link to the Amazon Kindle Page: [Digital Nomad](#)

Thank you and best of luck with your journey.

# Backpacking on a Budget & Travel Advice

I hope you enjoyed reading my book, If you would like to read more about How to travel the World on a Backpackers Budget, I wrote a whole book about this subject called "Travel Hacking".

This book will help you:

- Sell unwanted junk to help supplement your travel funds
- Pack like a pro and explain which gear you should take with you
- Find cheap flights in the most cost effective and time saving way
- Explore affordable travel options such as rail passes
- Buy food on a budget
- Manage your travel budget so you can go longer and further

It also shows you how to:

- Book Round the World flight tickets

- Use air mile schemes to purchase free flights.
- Use Couchsurfing for free accommodation
- Which methods are best for booking Hostels

### Special sections concentrating on:

- Alternative sleeping options, such as sleeping in airports
- Looking into travel Insurance options
- How to study abroad
- How to Teach English abroad
- How to arrange Working Holiday Visas for Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, USA and Canada
- Should you travel alone or with a friend
- Keeping on top of health whilst travelling

### Issues addressed in this book:

- Choosing travel as a lifestyle choice
- What it takes to be a backpacker - exploring the backpacker mentality
- Travel philosophy and beating conformity
- Using a minimalist approach to travel better

If this sounds awesome, you can buy Travel Hacking for Kindle, just click on this link:

[Travel Hacking By Dave Brett](#)

# Have a spare minute? I would be extremely grateful for a review

Thank you for reading, hope you found all the information useful and I wish you the best of luck on your new adventure into a location independent lifestyle. It would be great if you could help spread the word by leaving a review to help other readers discover this book for themselves.

If you enjoyed this book be sure to spread the word, tell a friend who you feel could benefit from this book, or share the book on Facebook or Twitter and help others to discover it.

Thank you for your support in advance, it really means a lot!

Kind regards,  
**Dave Brett**

# Disclaimer

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# Need an Editor?

Quality of writing is key to a successful eBook, so I use an editor to tidy things up once the content is ready. If you have a great idea for an eBook, but know that your writing isn't perfect, I can highly recommend using a proofreader or editor.

My friend, Simon, provides a professional proofreading and editing service at an affordable price, so I use him for all of my eBooks. He can handle anything, from blog posts and eBooks, to technical writing (he's got a Chemistry PhD for goodness sake).

Email him at **simonpartridge86@gmail.com**, with a few details of the work you need done and he can give you a quote - tell him Travel Dave sent you!