

# How to Become an Adventurer

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Snowboarders in snowy Colorado, kayakers in the South of France, and hot air balloonists in Scandinavia all made the choice to pursue their dream of adventure. But is it still possible to be an adventurer in an age where most of the world has been discovered, mapped, and trampled through? Is it possible to make a career out of it? Read on to find out how to define your adventure and gain the necessary skills to make adventure your life.

## Things You'll Need

- ☐ Reference materials, internet access
- ☐ Equipment as per your adventure, and clothing, etc.
- ☐ GPS, cell phone, maps, compass, all the things that help you find your way
- ☐ Funds and a solid budget
- ☐ Vacation time or unpaid leave from work (unless you're independently wealthy or willing to change occupations and live on the cheap)
- ☐ Blog or website to keep everyone informed
- ☐ Camera, To record your adventure in pictures.

### Part 1

## Part 1 of 3: Finding Your Adventure



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**1 Define adventure for yourself.** An adventurer is typically someone who seeks out unusual and uncommon situations. If you want to make a career out of adventuring, how you choose to define "adventure" will shape the plans, methods, destinations, meanings and purpose of your career.

- Wanting to be an adventurer doesn't necessarily mean you have to embrace rock climbing if you're interested in the toads of the Amazon. Channel your interests into an adventurous career, and choose something personally fulfilling and meaningful.



**2 Consider the outdoors.** Were you the kind of kid who had to be dragged inside for dinner? Who picked handfuls of dandelions and daisies? Who loved the poetry of nature? Did you escape to the woods every chance you got? Maybe you love taking early morning swims in the cool chill of a lake.

- If the idea of hiking in the mountains among clear streams fills you with tranquility and not a panicky desire for antihistamine, adventure for you might consist of wildlife conservation, eco-tourism, or scenic recreation.



**3 Count up your scars.** Were you a tree-climber and a daredevil? A skinner-of-knees? The first to volunteer in gym and the last to back down? Always on the move, maybe you feel cooped up while sitting in class. Maybe the idea of working at a computer in a drab office fills you with nameless dread. Maybe you have no fear of riding your bicycle fast in heavy traffic and think scuba diving sounds like a relaxing weekend activity. White water? Bring it on.

- For you, adventure might consist of extreme sports, outdoor endurance activities, or exploration.



**4 Consider cultural exploration.** Does discovering new music, trying new food, and being lost in an unfamiliar land seem exciting to you? Maybe the history of a place interests you. Maybe you've always wanted to learn Japanese, see what Siberia looks like from a train, or spend the day sipping red wine and sampling goat cheeses.

- For you, adventure might be archaeological research or journalism. It might be culinary, historical, or artistic. Also consider anthropology and sociology, if you've an aptitude for research.



**5 Think about helping people.** If there was an injured rabbit in your backyard when you were a kid, you took it in a shoebox and cared for it. Do you always keep up with the news abroad? Does poverty fill you with a sense of injustice and a desire to create change? Do you want to give back to the world and contribute your talents in a way that makes it a better place than you found it?

- Humanitarian and philanthropic adventures are right up your alley. Consider legal or medical fields.



**6 Dig out your bug collection.** Are you fascinated by animals--their names, their classifications, their different peculiarities? Have you always kept pets? Maybe you've always had an unexplainable fascination with rocks? Volcanoes set your mind awirl. You could name all the dinosaurs when you were a kid. Never afraid to pick up frogs or touch snakes, maybe you always felt at home with other species.

- Scientific research adventures are for you. Consider biology, zoology, paleontology, or geology as potential fields.





**1 Study.** The life of an archaeologist seems glamorous in Indiana Jones, but that's because there are no scenes of him revising 30-page research articles about tertiary religious ceremonies in ancient Sumeria for an editing review with an academic journal so he can get tenure. Before you go off digging African velociraptors, you have to lay the ground work for success. There's no way to "major in Adventure," but you can study something that will allow you to travel and give you the foundations for doing what you want.[1]

- If you're interested in scientific adventures, study biology or other related life sciences. Chemistry will keep you in the lab and on the computer, while marine biology will get you into the field.
- If you're interested in travel, hospitality and tourism programs would be a smart investment. Study a foreign language as an added bonus in marketing yourself down the road.
- If you're interested in outdoor sports or other activities that involve being in nature, ecology programs with all sorts of specialties are available all over the country. Talk to an academic advisor to find out what's right for you.
- After graduating, you can apply for Fulbright Fellowship or other grant program to fund a research or teaching experience in another country. They field all manner of different project ideas, from teaching music forms in Russia to poetry in South America.
- If college isn't in the cards for you, never fear. Keeping yourself informed about your intended adventurous field doesn't necessarily need to be any more complicated than getting a library card and doing the work yourself. Developing a good set of skills, like videography or photography can likewise be a particularly useful skill. Someone needs to know how to operate those high-definition video cameras in the arctic. Why not you?



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**2 Sign up for the Peace Corps.** One great way to have a guaranteed and semi-organized experience abroad for up to two years is to sign up for the Peace Corps.<sup>[2]</sup> This can be a good way to pay back student loans, develop the skills necessary to travel, and build connections in other places. It's also an extremely satisfying way to give back, as you'll be participating in humanitarian aid of the most necessary sort.

- Combine Peace Corps work with your own side travels over the course of your time there to make the most of it. Take a weekend to jaunt up to the Mediterranean and explore the cuisine, or to check out the scenic Scandinavian hiking trails. It'll leave you rejuvenated and ready to get back to the hard work you'll be doing.





**3 Look for an au pair or nanny job abroad.** In Europe, it's common for young and unemployed women to work abroad in the childcare industry. It can be a fairly lucrative short-term opportunity, giving you the chance to immerse yourself in a new culture and make some money.

- Staying in close quarters with a family is a great way to learn the culture and language, too, as well as building a long-term relationship with a family that you can follow up on later in your adventuring career. If you work in Germany with a family for a year, that's one friendly group of folks you'll always know when you're passing through with a backpack and need a warm place to sleep.



**4 Teach English.** English skills are in demand worldwide. In Southeast Asia, especially, the demand for English teachers is on the rise. Most programs that facilitate your teaching experience, hooking you up with a job and the necessary qualifications, will require a BA in any field, but not all. You might be able to find a gig teaching private lessons yourself, but an organization that specializes in placing American teachers in positions abroad is the safest and easiest way to go about getting a gig.



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**5 Sign up for a mission trip or a study abroad program.** If you've got the time and the resources, your church or your school may organize yearly trips abroad that will give you some of the flavor of the kind of adventure you seek. Even if it's only for a couple weeks and even if the work is hard, building houses in Guatemala or Peru, you're earning your way and building the necessary skills. Any adventurous job you'll apply for down the road will look on this kind of experience warmly.

- This can be especially great for anyone with an interest in humanitarian work, though you'll be at the mercy of a travel group, which may end up on the touristy side of things. Plan side trips and create your own fun.



- 6 Take a "gap year" and plan an adventure yourself.** Just go. Couch surfing organizations and opportunities on organic farms are available for anyone who has the time to invest.<sup>[3]</sup> <sup>[4]</sup> This will give you experience traveling, living in another culture, and the support net available might develop into a long term opportunity you'd never have known about otherwise. Even if it's a couple of weeks to take a bike trip from Minnesota to New Orleans, you're laying the foundation for future stories and successes by just getting out and going.
- When you get back from your adventure, use the experience as an "in" for getting a job. now that you've got DIY experience, you're a much more marketable adventurer.<sup>[5]</sup>



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**1 Get a job doing what you want.** Recreation workers, trail guides, scuba instructors all have salaried positions you can get with the proper experience and certifications. The experience you've gleaned from traveling abroad, adventuring on your own, or studying in your desired field should open up a variety of options doing the type of thing you want to do. Get a job with the state at your favorite park, or start your own business teaching kayaking lessons.

- If you're getting paid to teach other people about what you love, every day can be an adventure. Get a job at a ski resort teaching snowboarding lessons, or work your way up at an aquarium. You don't necessarily have to be a marine biologist to work with animals.



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**2 Seek funding for your expeditions.** Your ultimate goal is to do something you love and get paid for it. If adventures are what you love, getting someone else to pay for your mushroom-gathering expedition to France or your next snowboarding trip to Switzerland is the dream.

- National Geographic provides a variety of funding for research proposals, from the media-driven to the hypothesis-driven. Explore your funding options on a trip-by-trip basis and work on publishing or selling the results when you return. If you write a best-selling book about your cross-country train journey that was paid for in the first place, you're in great shape.



**3 Document your adventures.** Write about your adventures. Consider updating people about your adventurous experiences via a [blog](#), websites, or other social media networks. Film your exploits. The best way to get other people interested in your adventures and to get your name out there as an adventurer in need of funding is to market yourself and your particular set of talents.

- Selling freelance photography or your videos is one of the best ways to get a foot in the door for a full-time job with a publication or media service.<sup>[6]</sup> Got great pictures of the great horned owls you saw on a hike? Try sending them to magazines. If you've got a great story about your time in Istanbul that needs to be told, try to get it published. If it's marketable, you may get a job offer.





**4 Get a job where the adventure is.** If being in Australia is an adventure for you, then whatever you're doing when you're there is adventurous, and will allow you to explore on your own in your own neighborhood. Get a job leading sightseeing tours or doing manual labor in a place you love and work for the weekend.

- Many agricultural areas will hire seasonal labor, picking fruit, pruning grape vines, or doing other outdoor work. It can be challenging and low-paying, but if it allows you to move around, pack up, and leave on a regular basis, it may satisfy those adventurers with wanderlust.



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**5 Get a job that requires travel.** Jobs that require travel, like salesmen, activity coordinators, musicians, or migrant laborers will ensure that you're constantly on the move and that every new day of work will yield an exciting and new experience.

- Alternatively, try getting a job that you can do from anywhere. Telecommuting work, like copy editing, programming, and other online jobs will allow you the ability to work from home, from abroad, or from wherever you like. Gather together as many opportunities as possible and make your own hours.



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**6 Stay in academia.** While a large portion of the year will be devoted to on campus and in-class work, there are a variety of research positions available that will provide you with ample opportunity to get into the field on salary, the opportunity for sabbatical trips, and the necessary support to do the work that you want to do, whatever it is. If you need to be at the Tower of London to do research for your next historical novel, the support of a university is one of the best chances you're going to get.



## Community Q&A

### Question

**How do I avoid taking an arrow to the knee?**



Community Answer

Duck, weave, and find cover from any literal or metaphorical arrows. (A shield wouldn't hurt either.)

Helpful 14 Not Helpful 1

### Question

**Can I do this as a child?**



Community Answer

Yes! Start by drawing maps of your neighborhood and house. Look for every different kind of tree, animal, or bird that you can find. Talk to your neighbors that you see outside and get to know them. Just be careful not to travel alone, too far from home, or at night; and don't go anywhere without telling someone where you'll be. Always put your safety first!

Helpful 18 Not Helpful 2

### Question

**I live in India. I want to become an adventurer so, what can I do? And what should I study?**



Community Answer

Adventure is what you make of it, not what someone else tells you. If I had to give a clear-cut answer I would tell you to study culture and language, join a humanitarian aid program and travel to Africa. Perhaps become a mountaineer and start an adventure tour company for tourists. Life is what you make of it, don't sell yourself short and try to become the person you want to be. Adventure is out there, you just have to find it for yourself.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 4

### Question

**How do I find out more about being an adventurer?**



Community Answer

Read fantasy, sci-fi, and adventure books. You can also search what adventurers do online.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 4

### Question

#### How can I learn about research, science and adventure?



Community Answer

Pay attention in science and history classes. Look for after school clubs that interest you and spend your free time in the library and outdoor places like state parks.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 3

### Question

#### How do I study for a job as an adventurer?



Community Answer

You would probably want to familiarize yourself with subjects like geography, history, biology, and earth science. This will help you get a good grasp on the makeup of the world and prepare you to travel and explore.

Helpful 5 Not Helpful 3



### Tips

- There are plenty of packing lists you can find online for any kind of adventure, so make use of those by doing a quick search online, to save reinventing the wheel.
- Ask the locals for information wherever you go. Guidebooks can only take you so far and they're subjective anyway. It's a great opportunity to talk to local people and find out a lot more than you would normally.
- Check for free ways to have real adventures like couch-surfing, language instruction, or vehicle transport for other party.
- Carry a light weight load. Your backpack should carry only a comfortable amount of weight.
- Wear your protection since you'll never be able to foresee what's out there until you go out on your adventure!



### Warnings

- Spontaneity will still arise as part of the adventure but not without your asthma medication, leech-proof socks, and rain poncho. Be prepared.

### References

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