

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

HIT THE ROAD WITH HELP FROM BIKABOUT

Cyclist, advocate, and entrepreneur Megan Ramey, based in West Cambridge (until she moves to Oregon later this summer), started Bikabout in 2014. The national on-line travel resource shares information on all things cycling, including bike-friendly lodging, tips on traveling with bikes, renting them, and where to ride them. She has published 24 free downloadable city guides, along with 43 self-guided tours (many with voice navigation), day trips, and weekend getaways. Ramey, 39, cycles with her husband, Kyle, and their 6-year-old daughter, Annika.

Q. What inspired you to start Bikabout? Are you a long-time cyclist?

A. I grew up in Wisconsin, where biking is just kind of in your blood. I biked to school, and later we moved to Peachtree City, near Atlanta, which has a series of golf-cart paths great for walking and biking. In college, my car was totaled and I had to bike everywhere. That completely changed my mindset of what transportation should look and feel like. I was inspired to create guides during a trip to Oregon, when we used the book "Hop in the Saddle: A Guide to Portland's Craft Beer Scene, by Bike." I could relax and let the book lead the way, my husband had his craft beers, and Annika got to nap.

Q. What do you want Bikabout to accomplish?

A. I want to make cycling attractive, accessible, and eliminate all the barriers. Some people will never bike, but a lot of people are curious about it, but they're either scared or sweat averse. They see it as an intense recreational activity, but I'm trying to simplify that, to show that biking is a way to visit a city and see all its nooks and crannies that you'd never see otherwise and is an efficient means to get to places.

Q. When you travel as a family, do you rent bikes or bring your own? And what are the best ways to carry young children?

A. We almost always rent. When Annika was younger, we preferred the mini seats in

the front with a windshield. She'd take four-hour naps while we were biking. Trailers are also great nap machines. Once Annika was out of the toddler stage she went in a seat behind the bike.

Q. Which North American cities are best for visitors on bikes?

A. In the US, Portland and Minneapolis. Minneapolis has these interstate highway of bikeways where you never have a car beside you unless you exit into a neighborhood. Also there's arts and culture and parks everywhere. Instead of the interstate approach, Portland has "neighborways," so you get the feel of the neighborhoods. Montreal and Vancouver are even a class above.

Q. What about overseas?

A. Amsterdam was the original inspiration for a biking city. I know that Copenhagen, Oslo, and Berlin are great, but I haven't been. Part of traveling by bike is that it's not really about the bike, it's that you want to feel like a local and have an infrastructure where you don't have to think about it too much. The Netherlands is definitely like that.

Q. What American city surprised you the most?

A. Greenville, S.C. It blew me away. It's a beautiful city. . . . They put a ton of money into Falls Park, the trail there and the Swamp Rabbit Trail, and so many businesses have popped up around it.

Q. What about cycling in Boston?

A. I've had some close calls. But what I also say about Boston is that because it's a great walking city, it can be a great biking city, with one caveat – you need to choose your routes very carefully for a low-stress experience. Take one wrong turn and you're in trouble.

Q. Your blog has a popular item about cycling to Logan Airport. Have you done that?

A. We cycled there when we went to the Netherlands and left our bikes for two weeks. The route involves taking the Blue Line, then it's 100 percent off road to the airport. At the new car-rental building, there's covered bike parking, and you can take a bus to the terminal, or you can park your bike at Terminal A or E.

Q. What's next for Bikabout?

A. We want to see Bikabout grow and become the destination bike-tourism website. In tandem, we want to open a boutique bike hostel in Hood River, Ore. Oregon is turning the Historic Columbia River trail into a bike trail. They want to make it like the Danube of America. It's very exciting.

DIANE DANIEL



HERE

CELEBRATE FARM LIFE IN VERMONT

You've most likely heard about farm-to-plate dining, and sampled New England's local bounty at your favorite restaurant. But have you ever experienced the working life of a farm? You can do just that at Vermont Open Farm Week (Aug. 15-21) when close to 100 farms across the state open their barn doors and garden gates for a behind-the-scenes look at the world of agriculture. Visitors are invited to learn about local food origins, authentic agritourism, and the importance of building relationships with local farmers. Activities vary from farm to farm, and may include milking cows and goats, harvesting vegetables, collecting eggs, tasting farm fresh food, scavenger hunts, hayrides, farm dinners, and live music. Check the online schedule for each farm's itinerary, and don't forget to pack your sunscreen and bug spray. www.diginvt.com



SAILS AND COCKTAILS IN RHODE ISLAND

The dog days of summer got you down? Cool off with the Dark & Stormy, Bright & Sunny package at The Attwater hotel in Newport. This add-on deal features a two-hour sail for two (with a chance to crew) with 12 Meter Charters aboard one of their legendary 12-meter former America's Cup yachts. Also includes two welcoming Dark & Stormy cocktails on the waterfront at Black Pearl, and a beach picnic kit complete with snacks and drinks, beach towels and chairs, and a beach bag that's yours to keep. Available through Aug. 31. Accommodations from \$309 (two-night minimum); add-on deal \$250. Call and mention deal, or book online and enter Dark/Stormy in notes section. 800-392-3717, www.theattwater.com

THERE

GOLF PACKAGES GALORE

Calling all golf-a-holics: Tee off in style with a quartet of tempting summer deals — at one of two Raymond Floyd-designed golf courses — at Turnberry Isle Miami. A Mediterranean-style resort, located on 300 tropical acres between Miami and Fort Lauderdale,



Turnberry Isle's golf packages feature varied perks such as complementary green fees, unlimited use of practice facilities, 50-minute Swedish massage per night, 20 percent off golf shop purchases, bottle of champagne upon arrival, complimentary range balls, buffet breakfast for two in CORSAIR, overnight valet parking, and more — depending on deal. Choices include Twilight Golf (from \$140 pp/night); UNLIMITED Golf (from \$174.50 pp/night); Fore the Love of Golf (from \$214.50 pp/night); and Couples Golf & Spa (from \$449 for two). Other resort

amenities include clay tennis courts, spa and fitness center, kid-friendly Laguna Pool (with 35-foot high water-slide and 800-linear-foot lazy river), adult lap pool, marina, and jogging trail. Packages available through Sept. 30. 866-612-7739, www.turnberry-islemiami.com

LUXURY SPA AND FISHING DEAL

For those who like a little luxury with their wilderness experience, Brooks Lake Lodge and Spa in Wyoming has announced a new "When the Fish Are Biting, the Spa Is Inviting" four-night all-inclusive package for two (Aug. 20-Sept. 13). Located near Jackson Hole and Yellowstone National Park, the 100-year-old historic guest ranch's package features four nights lodging, all meals, three days fishing on surrounding rivers and lakes, a massage at the on-site Rocky Mountain Spa, fishing license, use of fly and spin rods, and an experienced guide for all levels of fishing styles. In addition, the all-inclusive plan offers activities such as hiking, canoeing, horseback riding and archery, and use of the full-service spa. At 9,200 feet above sea level, one mile from the North American Continental Divide, the property offers sweeping views of the Pinnacle Buttes, Austin's Peak and Brooks Mountain.

\$2,260 per person. 866-213-4022, www.brookslake.com

EVERYWHERE

NEW SIGHTSEEING APP

Create custom sightseeing routes from any location with Strol, a new travel app designed to find the best scenic walking tours in cities around the world. Simply enter your destination — or select how much time you have for touring — and Strol will search its worldwide, crowd-sourced database to offer a tour — with photos — that includes interesting sights, famous landmarks, and hidden viewpoints. The app can also create looped tours that bring you back to where you started. Available for free in App Store and Google Play. www.strol.com

CLASSIC CAR GAMES FOR KIDS

Explore ways to re-engage kids and reduce screen time on road trips with the "Are We There Yet?" Survival Guide by Discovery Map International. Moms and dads can take a walk down memory lane with a printable list explaining classic car games such as "I Spy," "20 Questions," "Going on a Picnic," and the "License Plate Game" along with a geography quiz and pointers to help teach children how to read a map. www.discoverymap.com/are-we-there-yet. In addition, Discovery Map is giving away a \$100 gift card to one lucky Instagram user who posts an image, destination shot, or selfie from a Discovery Map location using the designated hashtag #discoverymap. One winner will be randomly drawn each month through March 2017. www.discoverymap.com/instagram

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