

**Q. AND A.**

## MARYBETH BOND has advice for women on the road.

Marybeth Bond was a pioneer in women's travel long before books like "Eat, Pray, Love" made the concept popular. In 1983, at the age of 29, she quit her high-tech job, sold her possessions and traveled the globe alone for two years.

Since then she has offered advice to other women as an author, speaker and founder of the travel blog [thegutsytraveler.com](http://thegutsytraveler.com). Her 12 books are among the first intended for women travelers, including "Gutsy Women" and National Geographic's "Best Girl-friends Getaways" series.

(Ms. Bond also speaks at travel conferences, including The New York Times Travel Show and the Women's Travel Fest.)

She has two daughters and lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, Gary Sheppard, whom she met in Kathmandu while preparing to trek to Mount Everest's 17,598-foot-level base camp in 1983.

### **Q. Tell me how you founded Gutsy Traveler.**

**A.** It was a continuation of my 1996 book "Gutsy Women" and dialogues with travelers that began during national book tours and speaking at travel conferences. I responded to women travelers who, with more money, time and freedom, feel more empowered to do and see what they want. My readers want up-to-date travel information, inspiration and advice about safety, adventure escapes, family bonding, solo travel, packing, best apps, best organized tours. [GutsyTraveler.com](http://GutsyTraveler.com) spotlights women who have done extraordinary things, such as a 90-year-old woman ending female slavery in Nepal.

### **What's your philosophy for staying together as a family through so much travel?**



JC SHEPPARD

Marybeth Bond, founder of the Gutsy Traveler and the author of 12 books, on a camel in the Australian Outback.

My husband and I both have curiosity, love of travel and the exotic. With children, start when they're young so they see how you handle things. As a travel writer, I often traveled with my girls to show them the world, including third-world countries, poverty, things outside the comfortable suburbs. I taught them how to read a map, ride a public bus, handle a canceled flight, how to navigate a city, talk to strangers, stay in people's homes and live with the locals.

### **What makes women an important force in the travel industry?**

The numbers and power of women travelers explain it. From women traveling on business to how women plan family travel, I'd say 80 percent of all travel decisions are made by women regardless of who travels, where you go or who pays.

### **Any safety tips for women travelers?**

Talk to women who have been there and do your research online before

you go. Trust your instincts. Pack lightly so you can move quickly. Don't be a target, distracted walking down the street by electronics, your cell-phone. Nowhere is 100 percent safe as a woman, but if you have lived in an urban environment in the United States you have probably developed good instincts and safety skills. Don't leave them at home just because you're on vacation. Women travelers need to be better informed regarding precautions they can take, like avoiding walking in streets after dark or taking public transportation or rickshaws. Don't hail a street cab, call a radio cab.

### **What are your favorite places to visit?**

Hard to pick one. For adventure, I recently kayaked in Antarctica, tracked wolves in Yellowstone and rode camels in Australia's Outback. For history, I cruised the Rhine then danced in Porto and Paris. Culinary, South Africa, Vietnam and France.

Mountains, I love the Himalayas, Canadian Rockies. And wildlife, Africa, Galápagos, the Grand Tetons. I love our national parks.

### **What are your best and your worst travel experiences?**

The best are any with family. The worst, which was a best, was a bicycle trip across the United States, 3,115 miles in three months with my daughter. Worst because of physical and emotional rigor: mountain passes, chigger bites, dog attacks, heat and humidity, and boredom. The best was bonding with my daughter accomplishing this, because I was 58. We dedicated the trip to research and education for osteoporosis.

### **What would you add for women who are apprehensive about travel?**

Don't let fear keep you at home, but it is more important now than ever to do your homework. There is never a perfect time. So don't wait, go now.

MICHAEL T. LUONGO