

- Home Page
- World
- U.S.
- Weather
- Business
- Sports
- Politics
- Law
- Technology
- Science & Space
- Health
- Entertainment
- Travel
- Education
- Special Reports

SERVICES

- Video
- E-mail Newsletters
- CNNtoGO

SEARCH

Web CNN.com

Search Powered by YAHOO! search

CNN HeadlineNews **buzz FACTOR** HEADLINE NEWS

Are you a 'Modern Nomad'?

By Christine Boese
CNN Headline News
Monday, March 17, 2003 Posted: 12:33 PM EST (1733 GMT)

(CNN) -- I thought I might be a "Modern Nomad" when I picked up the magazine by the same name. I flipped through, thinking, "Oh cool, a Gen-X travel magazine."



It seemed like the 'Zines from the early 1990's before the Internet took off. It was light on ads and chased a vision of *something*. What was it? I needed to figure out what a modern nomad was before I could figure out if I might be one.

Many of us dream of taking a year off to travel with no itinerary, a backpack and a list of youth hostels, maybe in Europe or maybe in very cheap third world countries. Are you daring enough to do it? To take off with no return ticket or safety net?

Story Tools

- SAVE THIS
- E-MAIL THIS
- PRINT THIS
- MOST POPULAR

So what is a 'Modern Nomad'?

Mainstream American culture gets few glimpses of these tribes of travelers on a shoestring. We get a peek in the Leo DiCaprio film, "The Beach." Scenes from Bangkok in the film remind me of the YWCA where I stayed in downtown Delhi.

Some people work hard at being counter-culture. They don't want to look like the slice of life that gets held up in media mirrors. At one time this rebellion was called the Generation-X movement, except Gen-X was against movements, so it was more like the Gen-X *anti*-movement. Except Gen-X was also against labels or categories, which was how it ended up with the generic label "X."

How do you identify a Gen-Xer? Since Gen-Xers deny being in any group or category, it's easy: A Gen-Xer is anyone who says she or he is NOT a Gen-Xer. (Don't look at the logic of that too closely, or you might decide my grandmother is a Gen-Xer.)

A Modern Nomad is like a non-subset of the non-category Gen-X. Besides moving around, a nomad is slippery, someone who won't sit still long enough for marketers to get a good fix. If she does, she can't still be a nomad.

"Modern" implies an aesthetic sensibility. A nomad with standards. No pricey tourist packages insulated from local cultures. No "sanitized for your protection."

Vagabonding

I've been digging into a whole genre of travel weblogs on the Internet. In a typical Web site, a young engineer tells the story of quitting his job and selling everything he owns to live lean and go vagabonding. He starts in New Zealand, and from cybercafés along the way he makes regular posts with digital pictures. He talks about his budget, hostels and the people he meets.

I follow him all the way through Australia, entranced, but trail off as I see he's

advertisement

heading toward Bali. I think he missed the October nightclub bombings that left more than 190 people dead in the region. I hope he did.

Do poor or lower middle class folks go slumming as third world vagabonds? If they don't, maybe there is an emotional safety net involved. The kind that keeps people who have nearly landed in a homeless shelter with medical bills or a bad divorce from ever *wanting* to look that boogeyman in the eye just for "fun."

Maybe I'm just a "Modern Nomad" wannabe. A guy I know just graduated college this past December. Knowing war may be coming, he's backpacking the entire Appalachian Trail. He swears he's not going to listen to radio for the next six months. I envy him, to be sure. I just don't think I could do it.

Story Tools

-  [SAVE THIS](#)  [EMAIL THIS](#)
-  [PRINT THIS](#)  [MOST POPULAR](#)

advertisement

[Click Here to try 4 Free Trial Issues of Time!](#)



ENTERTAINMENT

[ENTERTAINMENT NEWS](#)

It's a knockout for 'Million Dollar Baby'



- Box office 'Mad' for 'Diary'
- President, Catwoman get Razzies
- FCC rejects complaint involving 'Angel'

TOP STORIES

[CNN.com HOME PAGE](#)

'Million Dollar Baby' snags four top Oscars



- Source: Daughter not involved in BTK capture
- Syria hands over Saddam half-brother
- Volunteers search in rain for Florida girl

[International Edition](#)

[Languages](#)

[CNN TV](#)

[CNN International](#)

[Headline News](#)

[Transcripts](#)

[Advertise With Us](#)

[About Us](#)

SEARCH

[The Web](#)

[CNN.com](#)

Search

Powered by [YAHOO!](#) search

© 2005 Cable News Network LP, LLLP.
A Time Warner Company. All Rights Reserved.
[Terms](#) under which this service is provided to you.
Read our [privacy guidelines](#). [Contact us](#).



All external sites will open in a new browser. CNN.com does not endorse external sites.



Denotes premium content.



Add [RSS headlines](#).