

FINANCIAL REVIEW

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HD Traveller | Graham Perry

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First, **business** or economy?

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When I sit at the pointy end of a plane, the trip never seems long enough. I love first class but the reality is that it's only for upgrades. Our travel policy allows for long-distance **business**-class travel and economy for domestic. When I'm with my kids, it's economy all the way. I couldn't subject pointy-end travellers to children!

Most frequented destination

I've been in the travel money game since the days when people queued six deep to **buy** their travellers' cheques. Work has taken me to a lot of fascinating places, plus I have a personal addiction to travel. For pure pleasure, my family can't go past Fiji. Short plane trips are essential when you spend six months of the year travelling. My kids are young and Fiji's very child-friendly. It's a place in the world where we head to do very little. The tropical climate, warmth of the locals and beaches make it easy to become our second home.

For **business**, I travel far and wide in Asia, especially India, **China** and Japan. Japan's one of the most intriguing places on Earth. It's full of tradition and natural beauty yet it's incredibly modern and technologically advanced. It's very safe and clean. You have to watch the locals – I've seen unsuspecting colleagues unknowingly dine on horse meat sashimi for instance!

If I ran my own airline I would . . .

Refresh the TV programs more often. I'm overseas six months of the year. I've seen almost every program and usually the same ones for weeks on end.

Worst place you've been lost

I was in Shanghai, **China**, recently for an important **business** meeting. My Japanese colleague and I couldn't communicate with the cab driver, and it all went downhill from there. The trip was a comedy of errors – the cabbie first took us to a furniture home show and then to the airport. We missed the entire meeting.

Most memorable overseas dining

I've long had an addiction to curries, and I seek them out when I'm in India, Singapore and the UK. I adore Veeraswamy in the UK. It's the country's oldest surviving Indian restaurant and has been around for almost 90 years. If I had a choice of anywhere in the world for my final meal, that would be it.

In the suitcase

I have my own personal travel policy – keep it light. The essentials are my laptop, BlackBerry, two multi-currency cash passports, just one change of **business** clothes and some gym gear.

A spare afternoon in a strange city

I pick one thing I couldn't do at home and go for it. Doing something out of the ordinary is what setting foot in a new destination is all about. Walking the streets is the best way to soak up the vibe and it's those impressions – the kimono-dressed Japanese lady in a fast-food outlet or cows sleeping on the road in India – that will stick in your mind for years to come. If it's **wine** country, a sprint to a vineyard wins every time.

Tips

A lesson learnt the hard way . . . pay for a cab fare with a card because the receipt will help you track down any valuables you left behind in the back seat.

Best overseas purchase?

I'm typically shy of buying clothes overseas but my tailored **business** shirts from Mumbai are particular favourites.

Best tale

I'm ashamed to admit it but I was once detained in **China** for carrying old passport details. I was stopped by officials because my APEC **business** travel card didn't match my new passport. A quick SOS call to our London office, some official paperwork exchanges hands, and I'm granted a temporary visa and released.

Best thing about travelling?

The food! I never miss an opportunity to sample the local cuisine. One of the perks of **business** travel is eating where the locals eat. My international colleagues take me to some of their great local finds. Khyber in Mumbai is fantastic. but watch the staircase, there are no hand rails

Top travel gripe?

Providing the same hotel with all my details despite the fact I've stayed there at least 20 times. And waiting, for anything: luggage, queues ...

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