

About 2 Happy Nomads

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So, you want to know about us? We are the 2 Happy Nomads! We're two empty nest Canadians who discovered how to enjoy a lifestyle of travel, food, & drink, on a budget.

With Shawn being retired, and Jefferson operating a modest online business, it was important to live our dream without spending gobs of money. Through lot of research, and some trial & error, we've figured out how to live a better lifestyle on less. And we'd like to share that with you, so you can maybe follow in our footsteps.

Our Mission

We started this website and blog to share our tips & tricks to living a travel lifestyle on a budget. We visit exotic places, go on tours, dine in restaurants & bars, and spend lots of time relaxing. Sometimes we relax at the beach, other times we're on a patio. And on some days, we take comfort in a home cooked meal. Best of all, we do a lot of this with new-found friends. And, you can too.

If you do things right, and plan prudently, travel doesn't have to cost you thousands of dollars a month.

In fact, some might say we're crazy, but we've found it's cheaper to live abroad than it is to live in Canada or the United States. Yes, our lifestyle comes with a few sacrifices, but we've learned that living abroad is better than being tied to the necessity of two incomes and a forty-hour work week.

To do what we do, we've found a work/life balance that provides all the freedom we need to travel, dine, tour, and spend a lot of time just liming. Liming, you ask? That means chilling out.

The story of 2 Happy Nomads

We got started like this...

In 2013, I (Jefferson) returned from a business trip in Nicaragua with a newfound vision. During that trip, our group went on a side excursion after the business was concluded. We departed from the busy city of Managua to the quiet island of *Isla Grande del Maiz* (Big Corn Island).

Life on the tiny island was simple, things were slow, and the people were kindhearted. They managed to live happily in paradise, on very little income. Sure, some of them worked very long hours just to get by. But not all of them... some had found a way to live well on less.

It wasn't the first time we'd seen this. There are many places we had visited before, where the same was true. But this time, the notion stuck with me.

That realization got me thinking... how could I live like they do?

I returned to Canada with a fire in my heart, and a burning desire to change our lives. I shared my vision with my lovely spouse, and she agreed.

We were tired of a 40-hour work week. It was overwhelming to *need* two incomes, just to get by. Life in Canada was just too complicated, too demanding, too darn expensive, and a drain on our spirits.

So, we needed a plan.

How could we live better, for less?

We asked around. Nobody seemed to have an answer. There were lots of get-rich-quick schemes out there, but none of them seemed reliable.

Then I saw an advertisement for a magazine focused on living abroad and the expat life. They claimed it was possible for an expatriate couple to live on \$2000 USD per month in various places around the world. I was skeptical. But I had seen people living on far less, and they seemed a heck of a lot happier than we were.

I subscribed to the magazine to learn more. It provided me with a benchmark: A monetary amount that I needed to reach. If I could earn that much while abroad, the dream would be possible.

We looked at Shawn's career. She worked in finance for a business advocacy organization. In addition to a complicated financial setup and a board of directors to report to, it had several frequent community meetings and events to attend. Her job had a heavy requirement for her physical presence. It wasn't going to permit the freedom we required.

So, the responsibility to fund our dream lifestyle fell to me. At the time, I performed freelance corporate services work which included some bookkeeping. I certainly wasn't getting rich, but I had some freedom to schedule my own days.

Did I really need to be there?

I examined what aspects of the business were truly important for me to be physically present, and what could be done online. The results of that analysis shocked me. It turned out that very little of what I did, required my physical presence. Much of it could be done by telephone, video conferencing, online, and email.

So, I began to whittle things down. I phased out the services that required a physical presence. I let go of the clients who couldn't work with me remotely. For the ones that were ideal for remote work, I began to put practices in place to better allow a digital, nomadic work arrangement.

There wasn't enough income though. But I could build that up. And, I looked for other types of work that could be done remotely. This eventually led me to

copywriting. Copywriters write marketing messages. Best of all, they can do it from anywhere with an internet connection.

I took some requisite training. I learned what I needed to, and launched a new phase of my business. Admittedly, it didn't happen overnight. There were countless hours spent at the computer, writing ad copy, always learning, and marketing my services.

All the while, both Shawn and I were keeping our eyes and ears open for opportunities, news, and events to foster our dream.

Research, research, and more research.

We also used the time to research the most popular places to live as expats. We expanded our reading to include online blogs, expat forums, and travel news sites. A lot of the material we came across was geared towards retired folks with pension income. But this didn't really fit our situation. So, we continued to read and learn. Over time, we found other sources that discussed working location independently, as digital nomads.

It turns out there are a lot of digital nomads doing freelance work all over the globe. Places like Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, China, Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Portugal, Spain, Malta, Czech Republic, and various Caribbean islands.

We were still relatively young – Shawn still wasn't even fifty. We both were generally healthy. There were a lot of places we still wanted to see. So, when the time came to make a short list of places to explore, we opted to just explore. We would bounce around for a while. It would be possible to test drive a lot of different countries, regions, cities, and islands.

It sounds crazy!

We resolved that once the kids were finally old enough to leave home, we would sell almost everything we owned, and just go! It seemed a little crazy to our friends and family. But we'd done our homework and knew we could make it work.

When the time finally came, we held a couple of huge garage sales, listed household items on Kijiji, and gave some stuff to the kids. We also brought a few carloads of household stuff to the Goodwill donations depot, made some trips to the dump, and lastly, sold our vehicle.

We left Canada in November of 2018 with nothing but two backpacks and two medium-sized checked bags.

Our first remote home.

Our first destination would be the Caribbean island of Bequia, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The island ticked a lot of boxes for us. First, it was beautiful, tropical, and the people were reportedly very nice and easygoing. Second, it had a large expat community from the US, Canada, the UK, and even Germany. Third, it was a popular destination among sailing enthusiasts. Fourth, Bequia was off the typical hurricane track.

Best for our budget: Bequia was not on the big cruise ship circuit. It got some little ships and yachts, just enough to keep a decent tourist business going, but not so popular that all prices were horrendously exaggerated. Most restaurants and bars were reasonably priced. There was a lot to do and see. Groceries weren't too expensive. You didn't need a vehicle to get around, but if something came up, there were lots of taxis for a good price.

It was all about the budget.

Bequia provided our proof of concept. We were willing to live simply, meaning, not in a vacation rental on the beach. Instead, we rented an apartment, just a fifteen-minute walk from the harbor. The rent was just \$1200 EC's (\$600 CAD, or \$445 USD) per month. Living on Bequia for six months cost us an average of \$2500 CAD (\$1900 USD) per month, all in.

So, my fellow travel enthusiasts, it is possible to live the dream on a tight budget.

Our goal with this website is to save you a lot of the countless hours of hard work and screen time it took us to figure out how to live this lifestyle without a bunch of money.

The most important thing we've learned

Is our story relatable to you? We'd like to hear from you if it is. Heck, if even some of it strikes a chord with your inner wanderlust, then we hope to provide some value to you.

One thing we've learned on this epic quest, is the value of freely shared information.

Of course, the only reliable information is from people who've actually done it. Like us. And one day, maybe you too!

So, that's all about us, the 2 Happy Nomads.

Launching the 2 Happy Nomads website

Since starting our journey, many people suggested that we start a travel blog to share our stories and experiences. Since Jefferson enjoys writing, it seemed like a no-brainer to launch this site.

But we didn't want a blog that's just about us – that would be too self-indulgent. So, we've planned a website to share tips & tricks that we've learned while traveling, and we'll tell some good stories too. It's important to us that there is valuable information for you.

Up next

Wondering what to do next on the 2 Happy Nomads website? Our only advice is to explore. Absorb the information we have on our site and in our blog. Read the stories of others, who've taken their lives remote. Listen to the expats' tips. Learn

the life and travel hacks from digital nomads like us. Watch the videos of some travel blogging giants.

All you really need to do to get started, is to click on something interesting to you:

- Maybe you like the idea of [cooking some comfort food in a foreign country](#). If so, Shawn has some recipes to share.
- Perhaps you don't do much cooking and prefer to eat out. If so, we've can share some tips for [eating](#) and [drinking](#) on a budget.
- Finding the right food ingredients in different places, especially remote islands, can be a challenge. We have some [easy to find recipe substitutions](#) for you to use.
- Traveling from one place to another can be expensive, but there are always cheaper options. Finding those options is easier if you know where to look, and who to ask. Coming soon, we'll have a list of options to help provide more fun, adventure, and sightseeing opportunities for you!
- Not sure about immigration and travel visas? Coming soon, we'll have some convenient, one-stop visa advice on that too.
- Maybe you're just trying to decide on your ideal starting destination? If so, you can click on any of our [highlighted destinations](#) for more information.