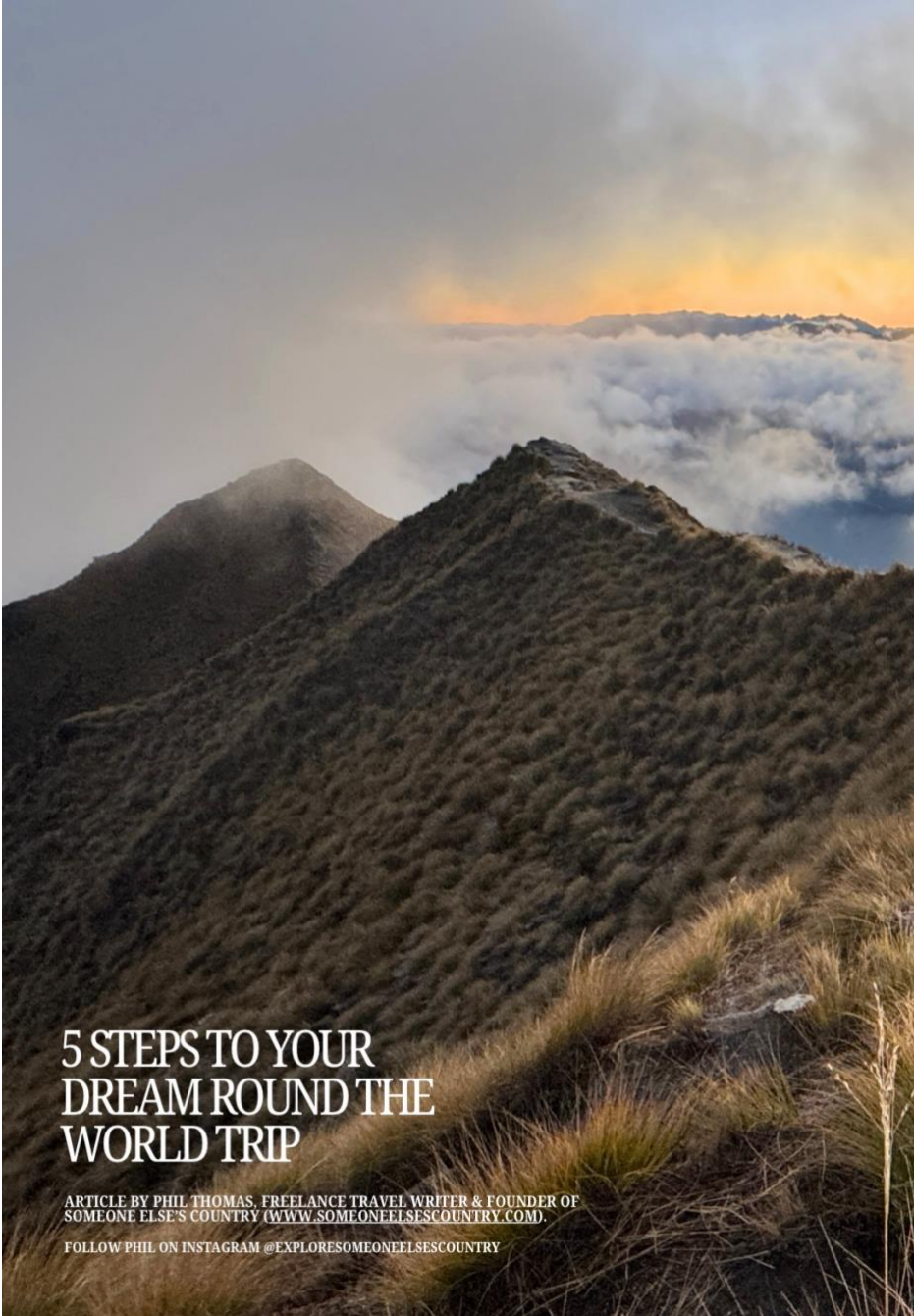




5 STEPS TO YOUR DREAM ROUND THE WORLD TRIP

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ROUND-THE-WORLD (RTW) FLIGHTS ARE MULTI-STOP TICKETS THAT LET YOU CIRCLE THE GLOBE ON A SINGLE BOOKING, USUALLY AT A BETTER PRICE THAN BOOKING FLIGHTS INDIVIDUALLY.

Ever since I was a kid, I dreamed of going around the world. A steady diet of Michael Palin travelogues and a cartoon version of Jules Verne's epic had me hooked early. Despite clocking over 100 countries as a serial traveller, I never quite had the time - or budget - until I hit 40.

After a decade in the corporate trenches, I asked for a sabbatical, half-expecting a polite no. Instead, I got a yes. With my out-of-office on and three months of freedom, I had a blank page and a head full of bucket list destinations.

But when the world's your oyster, where on earth do you start?

Here's how I planned the trip of a lifetime.

What Are Round The World (RTW) Flights?

Let's start with the basics.

Round-the-world (RTW) flights are multi-stop tickets that let you circle the globe on a single booking, usually at a better price than booking flights individually.

They're offered by airline alliances like Star Alliance or OneWorld (more on those later) and are perfect for career breakers, digital nomads, or anyone with a decent chunk of time off.

They typically include 4 to 10 flights, used for the big jumps, say London to LA or Bangkok. Once you're in a region, you can explore by train, local flights, or the occasional tuk tuk.

Your arrival and departure cities don't need to match - e.g. my first two legs consisted of flying into Buenos Aires and out from Santiago but most tickets follow one direction (east or west). Backtracking, while possible, will likely cost you.



UNLESS YOU'VE WON THE LOTTERY OR HAVE UNLIMITED LEAVE, YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL - AND THAT'S OKAY. PRIORITISE. TRAVEL TIME ADDS UP, AND SO DO THE COSTS, EVEN WITH BUDGET AIRLINES.

Ready to start plotting? Here are five steps to building your round-the-world adventure.

Build A Rough Itinerary...But Don't Overload It

Swimming the Great Barrier Reef? Exploring Easter Island? Feeding orangutans in Borneo? Now's the time to let your bucket list run wild.

List everywhere you've dreamed of visiting, then check how close those places are to major cities - where you'll be wanting to book your RTW flights. It's easy to forget how long overland travel can take. Bali and Borneo look close on a map, but you'll lose a day getting between them.

Unless you've won the lottery or have unlimited leave, you can't do it all - and that's okay. Prioritise. Travel time adds up, and so do the costs, even with budget airlines.

You'll also fall for places unexpectedly (for me that was literally everything on New Zealand's South Island), and want to stay longer. Half the joy is leaving space for spontaneity.

Check The Weather

Yes, really. I planned to start in Alaska, then quickly discovered April is peak slush season—everything's melting, and not in a charming way.

Rainy seasons (like September–October in Southeast Asia) and hurricane season (August–October in the Caribbean) don't mean "don't go," but you'll want to manage expectations...and be flexible with onward travel. No one wants to be stuck in a chain airport hotel desperately trying to rebook a cancelled flight.

Weather also affects your budget and forward planning requirements. February in Patagonia? Gorgeous - but pricey, you'll need to book hotels months ahead. Visit in March or April instead and your money stretches further, even if you pack a light raincoat.





Get Some Help

Once you've sketched out your dream route, it's time to make it real.

It's perfectly possible to book it all yourself - using airline websites, or checking out alliance tools like OneWorld (including BA, Iberia, Qantas) or Star Alliance (including Lufthansa, Air China, Air New Zealand). Skyscanner and Google Flights also let you build multi-stop routes flight by flight.

But after weighing both options, I found using an agency saved time and money. I went with Flight Centre, sent them a rough route and highlighting dates and where I could be flexible (and where not!) Within 24hrs, I had three curated itineraries, each with good options.

My final ticket even included extra time in New Zealand which I hadn't thought possible and a surprise business class upgrade from Sydney to Bali for a fraction of what I had expected.

Pay on a Credit Card Where Possible

Using a credit card gives you an added layer of protection - especially for big-ticket bookings.

In the UK, thanks to Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act, your card provider is jointly liable if things go wrong: cancelled flights, failed tour operators, bankrupt airlines. Debit cards don't offer the same legal safety net. When you're booking months in advance, that peace of mind matters.

I learned this first-hand when a South Pacific airline collapsed five days before my flight. A quick chargeback request, a couple of emails, and the full amount was refunded.

As a bonus, most credit cards offer points or cashback schemes. Just remember to pay it off promptly. And wherever you stay, choose hotels with free cancellation - you'll probably need it at some point.



IF YOU'VE GOT THE TIME, A WORKABLE BUDGET, AND A CRAVING TO SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY, THIS MIGHT JUST BE THAT TRIP.

With your RTW flights as the skeleton, it's time to add some flesh, flair...and maybe some dashing good looks to your plans.

My route headed south and west:

- Part One: South America: Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Easter Island (RTW Flight 1: London to Buenos Aires, then buses and local flights);
- Part Two: Across the Date Line to Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa (RTW Flight 2: Santiago to Sydney, with car rentals and hops between)
- Part Three: North into Bali, Borneo, the Philippines and Taiwan (RTW Flight 3: Sydney to Denpasar)
- Part Four: A glorious overland ramble through Southeast Asia: Penang, Bangkok, KL, Singapore (RTW Flight Four: Singapore to London)

RTW tickets can start under £2,000 (e.g. London-Singapore-Sydney-LA-London), though prices rise with extra stops and flexibility.

Kayaking beneath Sydney Harbour Bridge, watching sunrise from Mt Kinabalu, getting lost in Patagonia - some of my favourite travel memories ever, all in one trip. If you've got the time, a workable budget, and a craving to see the world differently, this might just be that trip. The one you always talked about but never thought you'd take.

Sidebar - Apps That Actually Make Travel Easier

- **Airalo** - E-SIM cards with global coverage. No faff, no roaming shock.
- **Triplt** - Keeps flights, bookings and addresses tidy in one app. Great for visa forms and sleep-deprived airport moments.
- **Welcome Pickups** - Pre-booked, reliable airport transfers. Especially helpful in cities without decent rideshares.
- **Uber, Bolt, Lyft, Careem**...Know what works where. Download and set up payment *before* you land.
- **Atlas Obscura** - For the weird, wonderful, and totally offbeat stuff the guidebooks forget.

