

Globetrotting family loving the nomadic life

Claudia Looi earns from her writings as she traverses the world with her family in tow. Although she doesn't have a fixed base, she puts in 10 to 15 hours of work every week

LIVING out of a suitcase is not everyone's cup of tea. But if your family loves discovering new places, a nomadic lifestyle may be for you as it has been for Claudia Looi and her family since February 2013.

After travelling through South America, they are now in New York City, and will head for Iceland in September, followed by Russia. They will then take the Trans Mongolian Railway to Beijing. They plan to live in China for a few months before flying to Hawaii.

The itinerary may leave you breathless, but this family thrives on visiting different countries where they live like the locals; sourcing fresh produce at the market and using public transport to get around.



BY ELIZABETH
CHONG

"Travelling is a personal passion, but the experience is important for my writing," says Looi, whose website, Travel Writing Pro, helps business owners establish content strategies to maximise the power of content marketing and increase their online visibility.

An online copywriter and content creator, Looi specialises in writing for the wellness and travel industries. She also maintains a blog that serves to remind the family of where they went and what they experienced at each place.

Although she has no permanent base presently, Looi manages to put in 10 to 15 hours of work a week. "With Internet, I can work anywhere and maintain my relationships with clients via Skype. I have found my passion. I really enjoy writing and love copywriting," says the Malaysian-born mother of two teenagers, who has made the United States her home for over 20 years.

A former travel consultant who



The Looi family posing in front of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

has been to 40 countries, Looi trained under a business coach for eight months, during which she learnt copywriting, blogging and marketing one's work. "It (the training) was an expensive endeavour but effective. I love copywriting but wasn't trained. Under this coach, I went from being a mom to a paid writer."

Travel Writing Pro was the coach's idea. The coach helped secure her first client in the wellness industry. Looi went on to bigger projects, but the first client still uses her service. "It's been three-and-a-half years since and I have developed more clients. Today, over half of my work is in the wellness industry."

In the travel industry, she has maintained one client for two-and-a-half years. She makes four or five blog posts per month for this client and also writes its weekly newsletter. "This is my best client; they are easy to work with

and they pay me well. Website traffic is good. Worldwide, they get almost a million hits per month," she says.

Wanting exposure in print media, she recently wrote three articles and supplied photographs for a travel magazine in Singapore. Unfortunately, the publisher has yet to pay her. Advising writers to work only with good paymasters, she adds: "That's why I usually don't do anything unless I am paid in full or half the amount before the project begins."

As a content creator, Looi says she has "lots of ideas" and "it's great to see clients catching on". She finds the process of generating ideas, implementing them and achieving results energising and fulfilling.

While travelling through South America, the family "lived like the locals", helped by the children's ability to speak Spanish. "The whole idea is

to have total immersion in the culture. When you live like a local, you tend to take the bus or train, not taxis.

"We also try the local food. In Ecuador, they like to eat guinea pigs. We tried it; yuck! They also like roast pork and the whole pig is mounted on a special stand for you to choose the part you want," says Looi.

The Looi family was supposed to remain in South America until November, but decided to leave earlier as Looi's Malaysian-born husband, Ken, has to work in the US to keep his nursing licence valid. "He is a travelling nurse. If he spends more than half a year not working in the US, he risks getting his licence revoked," she says.

Back in New York, where they lived before moving to Florida, the family became local tourists; visiting museums, checking out the local attractions and savouring the delights in various eateries, including a Malaysian-run restaurant in Flushing.

"We have spent a lot of money and sold almost all we had. Living a nomadic lifestyle is not easy. As a freelance writer, I constantly have to look out for projects. I have received more rejections than you can imagine but I have to stay strong. I hate rejection but love what I do so I move on," says Looi.

One of the things she enjoys about travelling is meeting people who are in the travel industry. "In Patagonia, I wrote to a company asking if I could help set up their Twitter account. They said yes, we set it up, taught them how to use it and in return we got a room free for one night. That was worth more than US\$250.

"In Ecuador, my son was chatting with a travel agent and mentioned what I do. Later, I wrote to her and she gave us a really good discount on a tour package in return for us teaching her to use Twitter and Instagram.

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Claudia Looi