



Exploring the World with **BORIS KESTER** Tales of Adventure, Insight, and Discovery

Boris Kester, global adventurer, shares insights from visiting all 193 countries: surprising encounters, risky moments, and advice for aspiring travellers. His books capture the essence of exploration and curiosity.

Exploring the world isn't just about collecting passport stamps; it's about delving into the fabric of humanity, discovering the intricate tapestry of cultures, and embracing the

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unexpected twists and turns that come with each journey. Boris Kester embodies this ethos of exploration, blending a diverse background in IT, political science, and languages with an insatiable passion for travel. His remarkable feat of setting foot in every one of the world's 193 countries is a testament to his unwavering curiosity and adventurous spirit. In our exclusive interview with Boris Kester for Reader's House magazine, we uncover the essence of his extraordinary travels and the profound insights gained along the way. From the remote islands of Kiribati to the bustling streets of Gabon, Boris shares tales of surprising encounters and

perilous moments that underscore the unpredictability of global exploration. Reflecting on his encounters, Boris sheds light on the transformative power of travel, urging aspiring adventurers to approach their journeys with open minds and open hearts. His advice resonates with wisdom gained from years of traversing the globe: slow down, savour the experience, and embrace the beauty of the world and its people. Beyond his exploits, Boris offers a glimpse into the art of storytelling, discussing the challenges of condensing a lifetime of adventures into the pages of his acclaimed book, *The Long Road to Cullaville*. Yet, even as he embarks on new adventures

and contemplates future literary endeavours, Boris remains grounded in the enduring allure of discovery and the boundless possibilities that lie ahead. Join us as we journey into the fascinating world of Boris Kester, a modern-day explorer whose wanderlust knows no bounds, and whose stories inspire us to embrace the journey, wherever it may lead. **What was the most surprising or unexpected encounter you had during your travels to all 193 countries?** Traveling in Kiribati (in the Pacific), I met a local guy who asked me where I was from. I told him, and since he didn't know the Netherlands, I said it

The Long Road to Cullaville - Boris Kester's captivating memoir chronicles his extraordinary adventures across the globe.

was close to Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. He then asked me how many hours it would take me to get to Germany by boat. I was surprised, and explained that you take a car, train, or bicycle to get across the border. He didn't understand this, and then asked



could travel all the way to China without ever taking a ship, and crossing many borders. He looked at me with a blank stare. At first, I wondered how he could not know that most countries in Europe share land borders. Then, it dawned on me. This guy was from a nation of islands, in a region of islands. The island defines your identity. Bigger nations in the region are island nations, too: Philippines, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia. Islands are clearly marked entities by nature. It put my whole project of visiting every country in a new perspective: I realized that borders are a human invention.

Can you share a particularly challenging or risky situation you encountered during your quest to visit every country?

When I refused to pay a bribe at a checkpoint in Gabon, and the (drunk) official didn't give me my passport, we ended up in a physical fight over the document. I was extremely fortunate that at exactly that moment, a convoy

of vehicles passed by. The Minister of Justice happened to be in one of the vehicles, and he summoned both of us to talk to him. He made a call, and within twenty minutes, several police officers arrived. They sorted out the situation. I have always wondered what would have happened in case that minister wouldn't have passed by. Destiny (or sheer luck) is an important factor in both travel and life, and as such one of the themes of my book.

What advice would you give to aspiring travellers who want to embark on a similar journey to visit all the count-

Global adventurer Boris Kester, embodying the spirit of exploration and discovery, shares insights from his travels to every country in the world.

me how much time it would take me to reach France by boat. Again, I told him that you can get to France by land and that there are no boats linking the two countries. I decided not to tell him that there's even another country, Belgium, separating the two. I went on to tell him that I

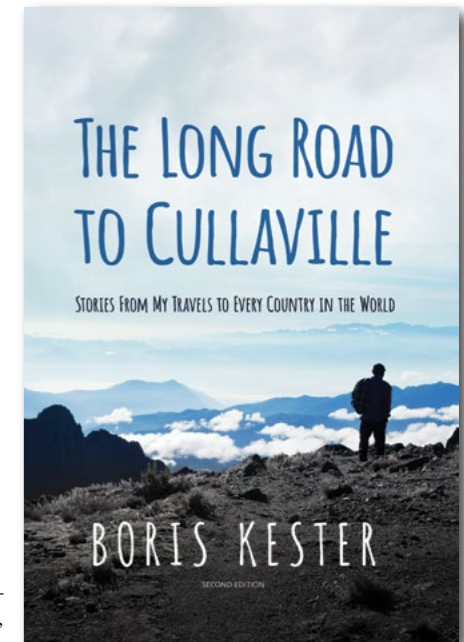
ries in the world?

I have two pieces of advice for them. First: leave your preconceptions at home. Embark on your journeys with an open mind, a curious mind, in which everything is possible. Be open to be surprised, and you will soon find out what an incredibly beautiful world we live in with equally beautiful people (most of the time). If you manage to travel this way, your travels will probably be the best teacher of life you ever had.

Secondly, I would tell all aspiring travellers to take it easy, and to take their time. I see quite a few travellers rushing through the world, ticking off countries, and I honestly don't see the sense of it. Enjoy your travels, take your time to get to know a country, to connect with people, to absorb what is happening around you. Travel is not competition, and if you don't make it to visit every country, that's perfectly fine.

How did writing your books differ from sharing your travel experiences on your website? Did you find it challenging to condense your adventures into book form?

I have shared my travel adventures since 25 years through my website traveladventures.org. Soon after visiting my last country, and completing my goal to visit every country in the world, I realized that the most exciting stories were hard or impossible to share through short stories on the internet. It was obvious that the best way to do so would be through a book. Anyway, it had been a child's dream to one day publish a book. Indeed, I loved the process of writing. I had all the space I needed to tell my stories, and I worked hard to turn my travel



adventures into literary words, as opposed to the internet where I write more like a reportage.

Now that you have visited all countries in the world, what's next?

I may have visited every country in the world, the main driving force behind my travels - curiosity - is still very much alive. I am still travelling like before, but without a clear goal in mind which, in a way, is liberating. I have a long list of places I want to visit. Through other travellers, I often get new ideas for places to visit. I do find, however, that I am avoiding touristy places. I am travelling to places where few people go, discovering obscure sites, enjoying breathtaking nature, while wondering why most people never get there.

Can we expect a second book from you?

Definitely! Shortly after my first book came out, I started writing my second one. First of all because many readers asked me for a sequel as they enjoyed the first book so much. Secondly, because I loved the writing process, and thirdly because I still have many more stories to share. My goal is to publish the second book in 2024. Besides, I am working on a third book as well, together with another traveller.