

# Adventure World

magazine

FALL 2024

# Paragliding

*Adventures in the Dominican Republic*

# ADVENTURE WORLD MAGAZINE

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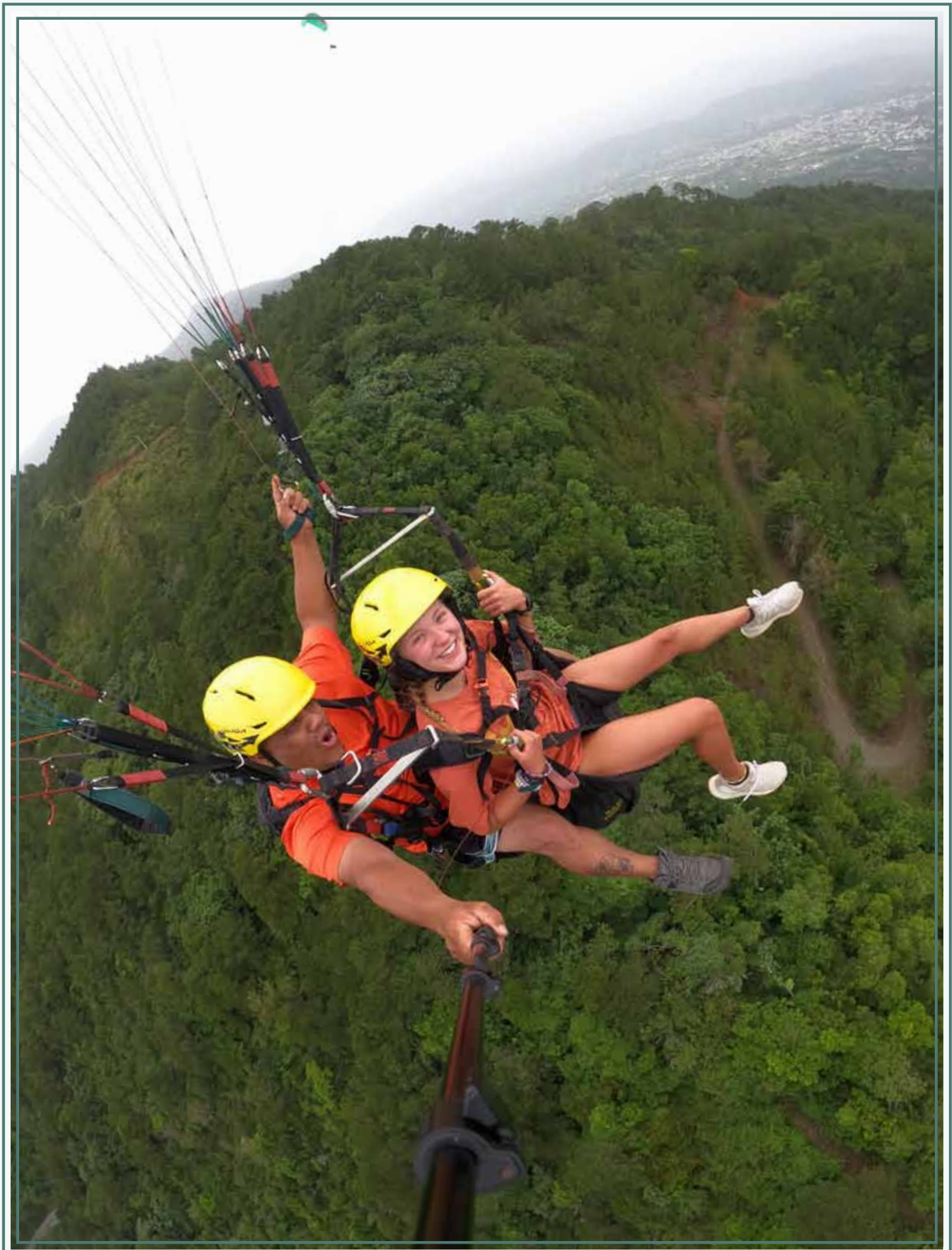
ADVENTURES WITH *Izzy!*

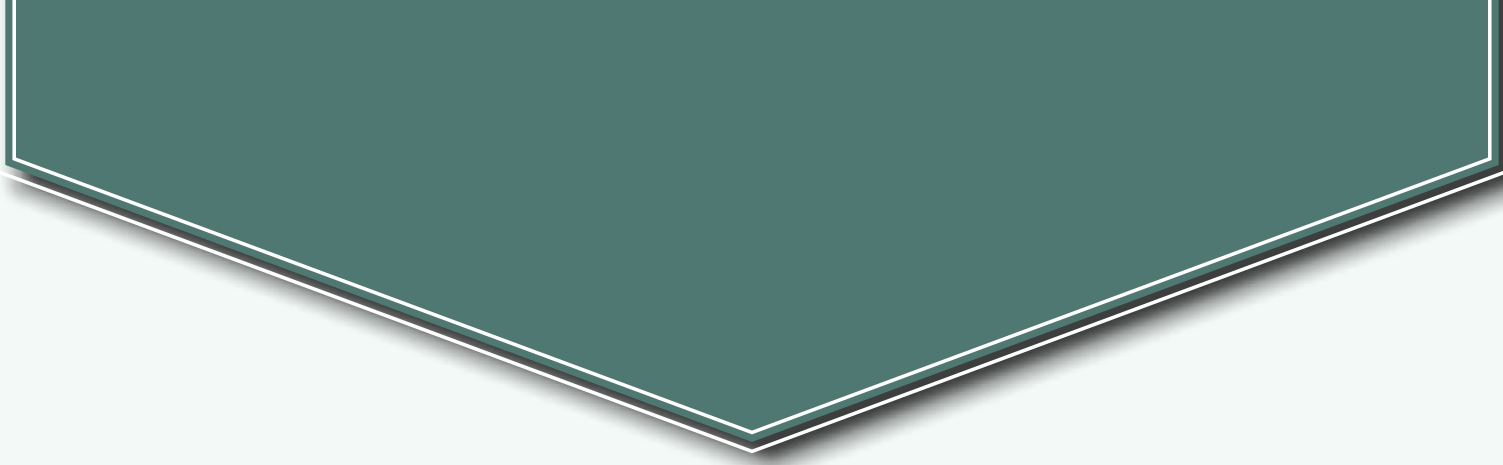
# PARAGLIDING

by Izzy Farrar



As an aspiring pilot, the idea of paragliding was intriguing to say the least. I've flown in several small and large airplanes, but the feeling of being completely out in the open air is very different than being strapped into an airplane. I had never been paragliding before so I was excited, but I was also a little nervous - especially with the whole running off a cliff to launch aspect. In order to launch we had to make our way up a mountain, then essentially run down a steep decline towards a cliff which was a little unnerving. The ride up to the top of the mountain included cramming 18 people and their respective paragliding gear into one Toyota Tacoma, but that just added to the adventure. After hanging on in the bed of a truck while we sped up some winding mountain roads, our crew arrived at the launch site. The launch site was nothing more than a field on the edge of a gently sloping overhang, but that was where we were to fly. I was given a helmet, clipped into a harness with my guide and it was pretty much time to go. We took a running start, wind filled the chute and we were flying.






There are no words to describe this adventure, it simply must be experienced to be understood. However, it really did feel like flying. Feeling the wind in your face while hearing the wind gust was so unique that I truly felt like I was flying. Not like in an airplane flying, but like I am a bird flying around this valley - if that makes sense. Contrary to what one might expect, paragliding is not scary or a huge adrenaline rush like skydiving, but actually incredibly peaceful and relaxing. Floating in the air was so tranquil while looking down at the valley and village life below. Seeing houses, people walking, cars driving and cows grazing from this open aired vantage point all looked like they were part of a cartoon. The view was unreal and the perspective of watching this while silently soaring above was breathtaking. At one point we even made some really steep turns, but they were fun and not scary at all.

Our flight was in a rural mountainous area with lush green vegetation which added to the gorgeous atmosphere. There was also a light mist, in fact we almost had to cancel our flight, which would have been disappointing, as we had already been rain delayed earlier in the day. The damp weather certainly did not dampen our spirits, and I believe it actually elevated the experience.

Looking back, paragliding was an experience completely unlike anything I've ever done before and I've had my fair share of adventures. Going paragliding further ignited my love of aviation and although floating in the air and flying in a plane are two totally different situations, I truly loved every moment of it. This girl is looking forward to the next time she can strap on her wings, or paraglider to be specific, and feel the wind in her face as she takes another amazing flight. **AW**



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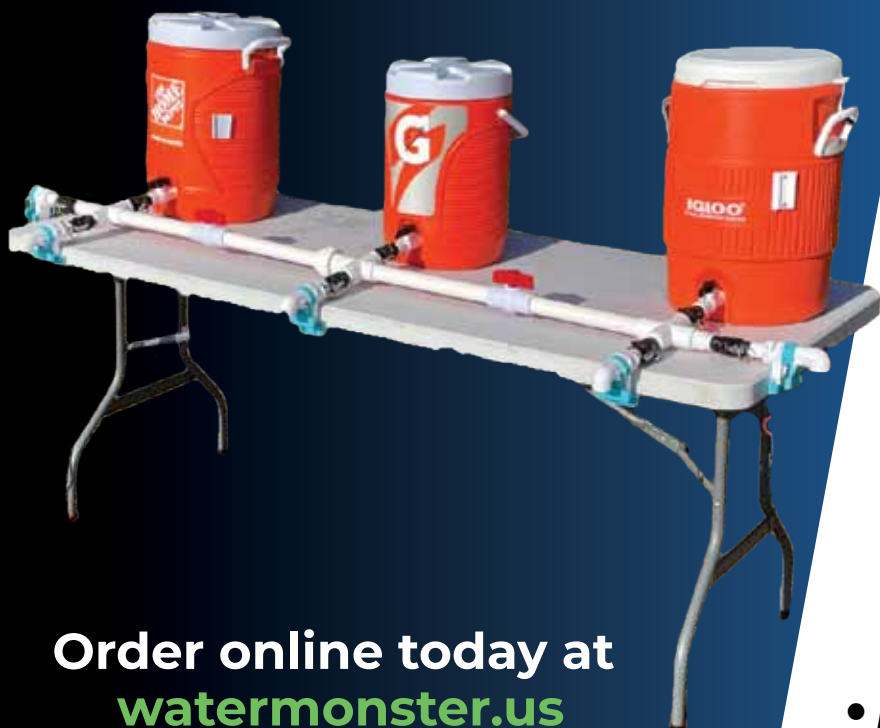
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# Hitchhiking in Peru

by Eliza Nelson







I never would have imagined myself finishing off 2022 by catching rides from strangers in South America and sleeping in the back of semi-trucks. In fact, if you would've told me a couple of years ago I would conclude my semester abroad hitchhiking up Peru's coast for a week with someone I had met only a few months earlier, I would've probably doubted your sanity. And yet, somehow by the time one of my friends invited me to join him on an unconventional trek north at the end of last November, saying yes felt like the most natural thing in the world.

The two of us met at the tail end of August 2022, crossing paths in Peru after both signing up to study abroad in Cusco through a program called ISA (International Studies Abroad). Instead of electing a University of Utah faculty-led program, I opted to travel to Peru through an affiliate organization, one which would allow me to live with a host family, take classes from local Peruvians, and go on a variety of included excursions. The instant I found ISA's program, I knew it was precisely the kind of experience I hoped to have, and in all honesty, I now consider the final four months of 2022 to be some of the most overwhelmingly beautiful, growth-promoting, and happy months of my life.

After spending my fall semester studying Peruvian culture in Spanish, making important friendships, climbing in the Sacred Valley, and backpacking through Peru's arid mountains and dense jungle, I found myself itching for more. It seemed the more rocks I climbed and the more ruins I wandered, the more intensely I longed to continue exploring. Something about the natural world tugged and pulled at me, and I just couldn't resist its gravity.



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Prior to leaving Utah, I intentionally booked my return flight a week after the semester concluded to allot myself extra time to travel independently. But here I was, with only a few days of classes remaining and no formal plans made. I had thrown



around a couple of ideas with different friends, but nothing sat right in my stomach; I just wasn't sure what kind of experience I wanted to have during my last week. But, when Kele mentioned he would love to have me join him for part of his hitchhiking trip from Cusco to Venezuela, something felt different. Bigger and more meaningful. The adventure he proposed wouldn't be easy, small, or effortless, but would instead entail uncomfortable firsts and a multiplicity of unknowns. There was something about the hugeness of the task that, though admittedly intimidating, was undeniably enticing; I couldn't say no.

In this moment of decision, I was reminded of an important truth I'd learned while reading Alastair Humphreys' book, *Grand Adventures* (a great read if you want to change how you think of traveling). Humphreys reminded me repeatedly that the most important step in doing something monumental after telling everyone you want to do it, is committing to it: quit your job, buy the flight, make shit happen! A couple of days later, I changed my flight to depart from Lima instead of Cusco, and then suddenly, it was settled: I had a plane to catch in a week and was 800 miles away; we needed to get moving.



On the morning of December 3rd, I bid my host family farewell, slung my backpack over my shoulders, and made my way to downtown Cusco with Kele. Despite feeling liberated in those first few minutes because everything I needed for the next week was on my back, I was also quite intimidated. I had never hitchhiked before and



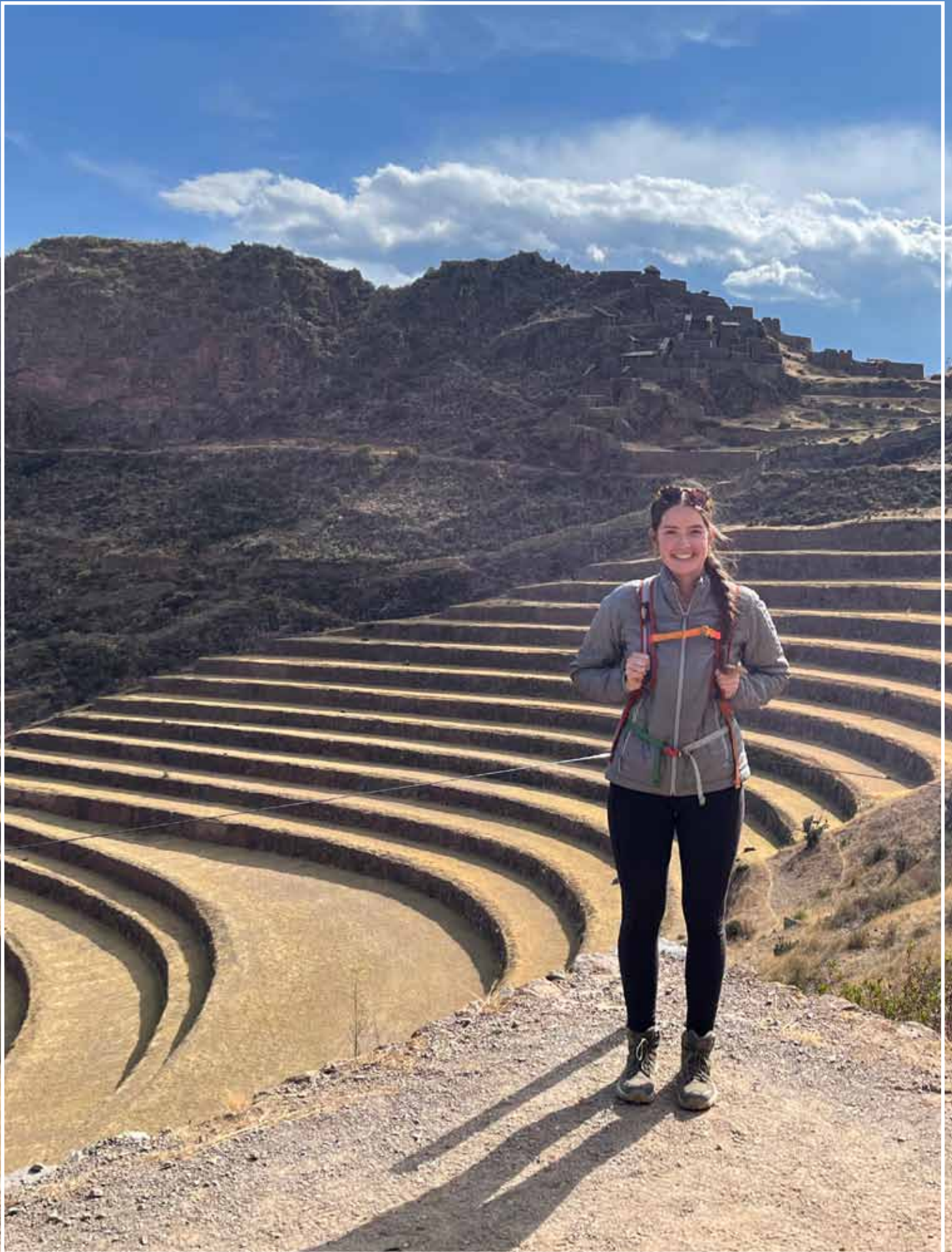
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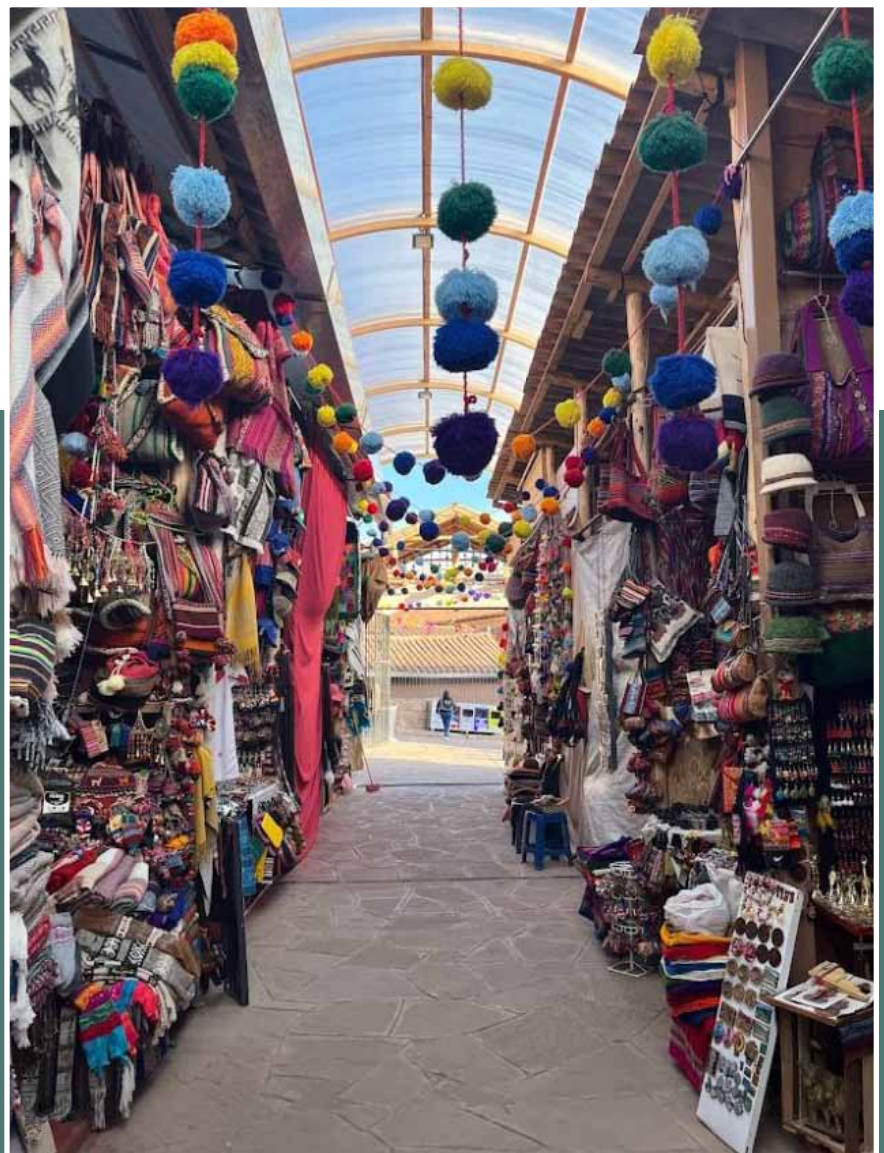




silently wondered how much of our trip might be spent walking. How difficult would it be to catch a ride? Was hitchhiking all the way to Lima even realistic? I had packed minimally but was all too aware of my bag's weight and the intensity of the midday sun. I wondered if this trip was something someone like me could even do.

After taking a bus for 40 cents to get out of the city, we found ourselves standing on highway 3S, cars whizzing past us at dishearteningly fast rates. This was where the hitchhiking would begin. It was a big highway, and I was nervous at the prospect of trying to wave someone down. Despite some initial rejections, to my surprise, after only about five minutes, a pickup truck stopped. After mentioning we were headed to Limatambo, a city about 79 km west, the driver hopped out and motioned for us to throw our packs in the back. Upon climbing in, I couldn't suppress the grin sliding its way across my face. I was in the middle of Peru, sitting in the pickup of a stranger and headed on an adventure with one of my best friends beside me. I could hardly believe this life was mine.

After about an hour and a half, we arrived in Limatambo, a small but busy town. After less than ten minutes, another driver stopped, kindly telling us to make ourselves comfortable amid an odd assortment of produce in the back of his truck. I sat on a bag of onions and stared out the back window, enjoying a new view of the Andes with each tight turn we took



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through the mountains. Roberto drove us 45 km before dropping us in Curahuasi, where catching a ride proved more difficult.

We attempted to flag people down for over an hour, but to no avail. Everyone laughed or simply smiled and shook their heads at the “crazy gringos” begging for a ride. It was dusty and hot, and we were disheartened. We tried waiting at several different spots but got rejected repeatedly. We did our best to keep our spirits up but became pretty discouraged as it grew later in the day. Eventually, we began a slow and dusty walk out of town, before Kele wisely proposed we stand next to a speed bump. It was here, a place where drivers conveniently had to slow down anyways, where we met our miracle.

Roger pulled his semi truck to the side of the road before cranking down his window to speak with us. After asking where he was headed, we hardly believed our good fortune as the word “Lima” fell out of his mouth. We couldn’t help but cheer; Lima was roughly 1,000 kilometers and 16 hours away from Curahuasi, and yet we had found someone willing to pick us up!

Roger proved to be a miracle over and over again. In addition to pointing out parts of the landscape we missed, teaching us



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new words in Spanish, and buying us Chicha Morada to share at dinner, he also offered to let us sleep in the back of his empty semi-truck that night. We awoke to the rumble of the engine around 4:15 on Sunday morning, quickly rolled up our sleeping bags, and started driving into the dark that slowly turned to dawn. We spent hours stuck in standstill traffic together, chatting and laughing and staying silent much of the time too. Roger didn't just share his truck and time with us, but his patience. In total, he drove us for a day and a half,

helping us cover over 700 kilometers before dropping us off near Paracas around 9 pm.

Kele was drained from the trip, and I was not only exhausted, but incredibly sick, having thrown up while crapping myself just a few hours earlier. We decided to splurge on a \$4 taxi ride to the beach where we camped for the night. Pictures had made us expect idyllic white sand and beautiful cliffs, but instead, we were greeted by a beach covered in trash, loud music, and the smell of piss. We were too tired to care, and simply collapsed into our sleeping bags before waking up coated in sand on Monday morning. We splurged again on a breakfast that wasn't worth it, bought groceries, and realized neither of us remembered to bring a pan. We had food, fuel, and a stove, but nothing to cook in. We spent the next couple hours walking from shop to shop, restaurant to restaurant, asking if anyone had a pan they weren't using. Eventually, a kind woman making arepas walked us over to her neighbors, Luz and Willy, who presented us with an old pot they could feasibly part with. It was rusty, with a lopsided screw hanging out the side instead of a handle, and it was perfect. We thanked our new friends profusely and headed on a hot and silent walk toward a better camping spot.

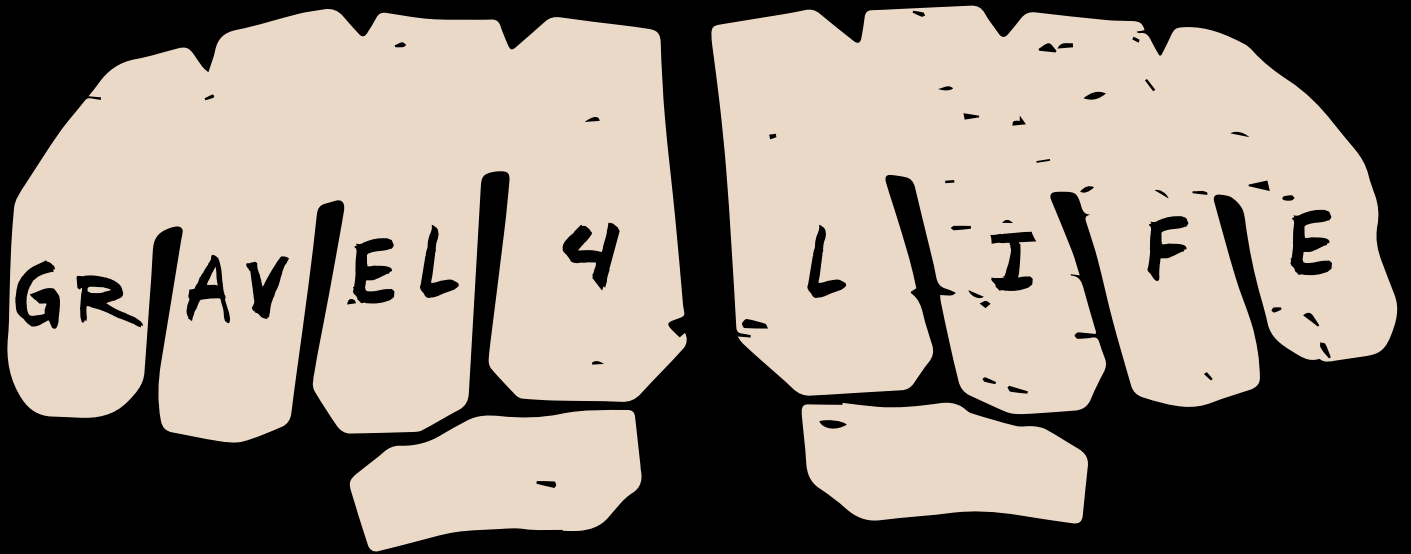


Eventually we crossed an empty lot and made our way to the water, opting to camp under a single palm tree in between several mansions sprawled down both sides of the beach. We wondered repeatedly whether someone would ask us to leave but were pleasantly surprised to remain undisturbed until the next afternoon, when one of our neighbors approached us. After asking what we were doing and where we were from, Herald offered to let us use his tent, telling us there were scorpions in the area. Upon retrieving it, he proceeded to set it up with us, ensuring we would be comfortable for the night and asking if we knew how to windsurf. After offering to teach us and leaving to arrange things, he returned, claiming he'd decided we'd be more comfortable staying in his guest house than on the beach. Thanks to Herald's immense generosity, we spent the next three nights living in luxury. We enjoyed delicious meals for free with his family, learned how to windsurf, and made unexpected friendships, before leaving for Paracas on Friday morning.





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After paying for a couple of taxis and deciding to spend \$7 each on a three-hour bus ride, we finally arrived in Lima on the evening of Friday, December 9th, where we stayed at a hostel before I flew home to Utah.

Hitchhiking through Peru taught me innumerable things, the most important of which is that the success of our trip would've been entirely impossible without the kindness of others. I was consistently in awe of the many people (named and unnamed) willing to so generously help us in a time of need while expecting absolutely nothing in return. I asked Kele repeatedly what it was we could offer our friends to repay them or express gratitude. His response is a charge I'm determined to take to heart: the best way we can express appreciation for what we receive from strangers on the trail, is by extending that same generosity to those in need we encounter ourselves. **AW**



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# Lost At Sea

by Troy Farrar

When husband & wife team Nathan & Kim Maker set out for a 4 day live aboard dive trip they had no idea that this day would become the biggest adventure of their life. They entered the water around 10 am on the final dive of the trip, which had a line for divers to hold onto while ascending and descending because the currents were very strong. Another diver lost her grip on the line and was being carried away by the current, so Nathan let go and went to help her get back to the line. He managed to get her back, but at that point Nathan was struggling to get himself back to the line. Like a Hollywood movie, as Nathan's wife reached out to help him, she was knocked off the line. Unable to get back, both divers were carried away from the line by the current. After unsuccessfully attempting to get below the current, they surfaced around 150 yards from the dive boat. Nathan & Kim inflated their SMB and blew their whistles but the dive boat never picked them up and eventually they were carried out of sight by the current.



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Nathan & Kim tethered themselves together and kept an optimistic outlook that the boat would find them within the next couple of hours. Nathan had been a firefighter for 22 years and his father was a Fire Chief who had taught Nathan to stay calm during stressful situations. This training certainly played a part in the decisions they made while floating alone in the ocean. Around 5 pm they saw the first coast guard plane searching for them, but the plane was too far away to signal. The first night they spotted a light in the distance which they thought was an oil rig, so the couple spent most of the night swimming in that direction. The 9 plus hours of swimming was exhausting, but may have been the only thing that kept the couple from getting hypothermia. During that first night, a big storm rolled in and by the time the storm passed, the light from the oil rig was no longer in sight.

The pair saw coast guard planes on and off during the next day, but the planes were always too far away to effectively signal. They did manage to get small drinks of water a couple of times during rain storms by holding their heads back and opening their mouths. At one-point Nathan started vomiting and Kim also had stomach issues, probably from accidental ingestion of salt water. As if being stranded in the ocean were not enough, they were also fighting off remora that were trying to attach to their legs and both suffered over 50 jellyfish stings. Nathan & Kim did see two different pods of dolphins swimming around them, which lifted their spirits and broke the monotony of floating in the ocean for hours.

On the second night, there was another round of trying to take the current and swim towards the lights of oil rigs with no success. Finally, around midnight, a coast guard plane came close enough for them to signal with their flashlights. After 38 plus hours in the ocean, Kim & Nathan Maker were rescued by a coast guard boat and taken to





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the Coast Guard cutter. Nathan commented on how great the Coast Guard team treated them, even giving the couple some of their own personal clothes to wear once aboard the cutter. Nathan and Kim Makers dive adventure had been rough, but had a happy ending.

Upon reflection of the incident, this couple was better prepared than most divers to have a safe and successful dive. They had inflatable SMBs and whistles to signal the dive boat once they surfaced. They also had flashlights, which ended up being the device they used for successfully signaling the coast guard search plane. One mistake the couple made was not having their dive computers/watches fully charged. It was the final dive of the trip and the devices had plenty of charge for the dive, so the Makers thought they would be fine. During the 2 days in the water the devices eventually ran out of power, rendering the devices and the tools they provided unusable. A key additional piece of safety equipment that the Makers are adding to their kit is a GPS signaling device, which can be used to alert rescue teams and provide them with your exact location. The entire dive community is glad the Makers story has a happy ending, but we want to help keep other divers from having the same experience. Make sure you are prepared for a successful and safe dive by having the proper safety equipment for any circumstances that may arise. **AW**



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# Must-Have Scuba Safety Equipment

Scuba divers are notorious for spending money on amazing gear, multiple dive licenses and wonderful dive trips while often forgetting essential safety gear that could make the difference between survival and disaster when things don't go as planned. We caught up with Nate Blanchard, the owner of Aggieland Scuba (an iconic Texas Shop) and 16-year scuba instructor to discuss some of the important safety gear and smart safety practices that should be a part of your dive plan.

Nate recommended taking a refresher course to hone your skills if there has been an extended period of time between your last dive. This is especially important for new divers who may have forgotten some of the essential safety skills they learned while getting certified. Another good habit is to practice one or two skills on every dive such as removing your mask or buddy breathing.

Nate stated that all reputable dive companies should start your trip with a safety briefing which informs divers of the location of the boats first aid kit and oxygen tank. They should also tell you the name of the boat and the radio channel they monitor in case you get picked up by another boat as well as any hazards you need to be aware of at your dive location such as strong currents. Finally, the boat should have a pre and post dive role call or a system with clip on tags insuring that all divers have safely returned to the boat after the dive. If you hear your name called twice when they are making the pre-dive roll call, change your name on the list to your last name. The last thing you want to happen is for another diver with the same name to answer "here" twice when you are not on the boat.





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Nate suggested that you discuss things such as hand signals and buddy breathing with your dive partner prior to the dive. Safe divers make a dive plan and insure that both partners are on the same page and understand the plan.

As a dive shop owner Nate often witnesses divers who purchase great equipment and then forget to perform routine maintenance to keep the gear running correctly. He reminded us that regulators should be inspected every year and rebuilt every 2 years and BCDs should be inspected and rebuilt every 5 years. Following these guidelines will help eliminate potential problems that can ruin a dive or put you in a dangerous situation. Nate also suggested taking an equipment specialist class that teaches you how to care for and maintain your diving equipment.

When it comes to gear, Nate's first question was "Do you remember what you learned in your open water training course?" That every diver should have both a visual and an audible signaling device at all times. A visual signaling device is critical when surfacing in big waves, stormy weather or strong currents which can make spotting divers from a boat nearly impossible. Conditions can change quickly so a diver should always be prepared with the proper visual signaling devices. An audible signal such as a whistle or horn helps get the dive boat and other divers' attention once you have surfaced and is another critical piece of safety gear. You want to have the right equipment so you have the best chance of being spotted and picked up by the dive boat in any condition.

Let's skip ahead to the worst-case scenario, the dive boat cannot find you and you are left alone floating in the ocean. That is when a GPS signaling device is crucial so you can both alert rescue services and provide them with your location. Without a GPS signaling device, your chances of survival are significantly decreased. Garmin has rescued over 10,000 people who utilized their GPS SOS signaling device to alert authorities that they needed assistance.



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## Visual Safety Devices

### Surface Marker Buoys (SMB) & Delayed Surface Marker Buoys (DSMB)

A SMB is filled once the diver has reached the surface. The DSMB is deployed using a reel and line while divers are still underwater and has an open end or an overpressure valve to release expanding air as the DSMB rises to the surface. Both alert boats that divers are surfacing and provide a visual aid so the dive boat can identify diver's location. All divers should have a SMB or DSMB.



#### Scuba Pro Surface Marker Buoy

The Scuba Pro Surface Marker Buoy is a compact SMB that will easily fit in your BCD pocket. The 7-inch x 4.5-foot durable 210D nylon SMB features HF welded seams, a small plastic D-ring on top for attaching a flashlight or glow stick, a 40mm stainless steel D-ring on bottom for attaching a spool and a bungee loop to keep the SMB securely rolled up when not in use. The safety orange SMB can be easily inflated with a hose or by mouth utilizing the one-way integrated valve and features an over pressure / dump valve. The Scuba Pro Surface Marker Buoy is a durable compact SMB that will provide years of faithful service. <https://scubapro.johnsonoutdoors.com/us>



#### Hollis Signal Marker Buoy with Sling Pouch

The Hollis Signal Marker Buoy conveniently stows out of the way in the provided pouch. The nylon pouch features 2 grommets for attaching to your BCD, a webbing loop for attaching to a weight belt and a drain hole for shedding water. Just grab the nylon handle and pull the DSMB from the pouch when you are ready to deploy. The 300 D polyester DSMB features a reflective strip, a clear glow stick holder and a nylon grab handle at the top. Inflate the closed cell DSMB by mouth or BCD which has a nylon webbing loop with attached stainless steel clip for attaching to a reel, an elastic storage strap, RF welded seams and an over pressure / dump valve. Available in Orange or yellow, the Hollis Signal Marker Buoy with sling pouch is a great piece of diver safety gear. [www.hollis.com](http://www.hollis.com)



#### Zeagle Signal Tube

The Zeagle Signal Tube is a compact signaling device that will insure you are safely prepared for your next dive outing. The sealed 6 inch x 60 inch tube features a glow stick sleeve, a one way oral inflation valve, a plastic clip and a velcro storage strap. Available in orange, yellow or orange & yellow, the signal tube has DIVER BELOW imprinted on the tube and provide 22 pounds of lift in fresh water. Improve your chances of being spotted even in the roughest conditions with the Zeagle Signal Tube. [www.zeagle.com](http://www.zeagle.com)



#### Innovative Scuba Concepts 6' Deluxe Cordura Signal Tube

The Innovative Scuba Concepts 6' Deluxe Cordura Signal Tube is a great visual signaling safety device for divers. The signal tube can be inflated using the oral inflator or with your regulator and features a unique internal membrane that traps the air inside until released by activating the over pressure / dump valve so the tube does not accidentally deflate during use. Available in orange or yellow, with DIVER BELOW written on the tube, the durable cordura signal tube features a weighted opening to help keep the tube upright, a dump valve, a velcro storage strap, a safety whistle and a vinyl light stick holder for increasing night visibility. Insure your dive boat can find you when you surface with the Innovative Scuba Concepts 6' Deluxe Cordura Signal Tube. [www.innovativescuba.com](http://www.innovativescuba.com)



## SubGravity Delayed Surface Marker Buoy

The SubGravity Delayed Surface Marker Buoy helps insure surfacing divers are spotted by boat traffic and their dive boat. SubGravity provides lots of options by making the TPU coated nylon DSMBs available in orange, hot pink or neon yellow and in 3.3, 4.9 or 6.6 foot lengths. Filling is easy using the one way oral / BCD inflator valve or the open bottom that can be filled with a regulator. The DSMB features an over pressure / dump valve, a stainless steel D-ring for attaching a reel, dual bungee retainer straps, Coast Guard approved SOLAS reflective tape, an elastic glow stick holder and a second stainless steel D-ring at the top. The SMB features a lifetime warranty on the RF welded seams and a lift capacity of 5, 12.5 or 26.5 pounds depending upon the size of DSMB. The SubGravity Delayed Surface Marker Buoy is a great visual signaling device and a must have piece of safety equipment. [www.sub-gravity.com](http://www.sub-gravity.com)

## DSMB Spools

A spool is used to deploy DSMBs while underwater, divers with DSMBs should have a DSMB Spool.



### Hollis 100' Finger Spool

The Hollis 100' Finger Spool is the perfect companion for your DSMB. The light weight plastic reel comes with 100 feet of 24-pound white braid cave line which can be used for a jump spool and a double ended clip for attaching to your DSMB. The Hollis 100' Finger Spool allows you to quickly and safely deploy your DSMB. [www.hollis.com](http://www.hollis.com)



### SubGravity Ridiculously Enhanced Spool (RES)

The SubGravity Ridiculously Enhanced Spool comes with lots of options and is packed full of useful features. SubGravity lets you customize your spool which is available in 3 sizes and 8 colors with your choice of 4 different colors of braided 18 or 24 pound nylon line. The RES is made from a durable, boyant POM thermoplastic and can be used for caving safety or jump spools along with deploying your DSMB. The textured RES features an Octagonal center to prevent line slippage, offset holes on each side for tightly attaching the included double end clip and the center hole designed to accommodate the SubGravity Free Spinning Spool Insert which makes deployment a snap. The SubGravity Ridiculously Enhanced Spool is a durable, customizable spool that will provide years of faithful service.

[www.sub-gravity.com](http://www.sub-gravity.com)



### SubGravity Free-Spinning Insert (FSI)

The SubGravity Free-Spinning Insert is the perfect addition to your SubGravity Ridiculously Enhanced Spool. The FSI is available for all 3 sizes of SubGravity spools and provides a low friction, free-spinning center section for your spool simplifying deployment.

[www.sub-gravity.com](http://www.sub-gravity.com)

## Signal Mirror

A signal mirror is used to signal a boat or plane to a diver's location, all divers should have a signal mirror.



### The Orion Safety Mirror

The Orion Safety Mirror is a compact visual safety signaling device for up to 10 miles. The lightweight 3 inch x 4 inch acrylic mirror will not corrode, floats, has a sighting hole and is practically unbreakable. The safety mirror comes with a lanyard.

[www.orionsignals.com](http://www.orionsignals.com)

## Dive Light

A dive light can be used to signal a boat or plane to a diver's location and are useful even during daytime dives for looking under shelves or into caves. All divers should have a dive light.



### Scuba Pro Nova 250 Dive Light

The Scuba Pro Nova 250 Dive Light is a compact light that is packed full of useful features. The 250 lumen Nova will run for 1 hour at 100% on a CR123 battery and has a 100% power, 50% power and Flash mode. The durable aluminum light is 3.9 inches long, weighs 2.5 ounces, has a 150 meter depth rating and features an over-pressure valve to release battery off-gassing. The Nova 250 comes with a removable shroud, a diffusing cone, a lanyard and an attachment strap. The Scuba Pro Nova 250 Dive Light is so compact that you will not even notice it is there, until you turn it on!

<https://scubapro.johnsonoutdoors.com/us>



### Tovatec Galaxy 1

The Tovatec Galaxy 1 is a powerful dive light with tons of versatility. The 2800 lumen light has a 2 hour burn time and features both a 2800 lumen wide flood light setting and an 800 lumen spot beam. But the features do not stop there, the Galaxy 1 also has a red light setting for approaching sea life, a green laser pointer and a UV light setting which really brings out the colors on night dives. The durable aluminum Galaxy 1 is 8.5 inch long and features 3 power settings of 100%, 75%, 50% which can extend your burn time. The dive light comes with a padded carrying case, lanyard, battery, USB cable and a pair of spare O-rings. The Tovatec Galaxy 1 is a versatile light that is equipped for just about any diving scenario.

[www.tovatec.com](http://www.tovatec.com)

## Diver Identification Lights

Diver identification lights are used on night dives so divers can be seen when their backs are turned to other divers. All divers should have a diver identification light on night dives.



### Innovative Scuba Water Activated Marker Light

The Innovative Scuba Water Activated Marker Light is the perfect attach and forget tool for scuba divers. Simply attach the marker light to your BCD and it will turn on when you enter the water and turn off once it dries after exiting the water. Available in blue, green & red, the disposable flashing marker lights are perfect for identifying your night dive partner or to help your dive boat spot you after surfacing from a night dive. The Innovative Scuba Water Activated Marker Light is an inexpensive, reliable marker light that will last up to 500 hours – which is a lot of dives.

[www.innovativescuba.com](http://www.innovativescuba.com)



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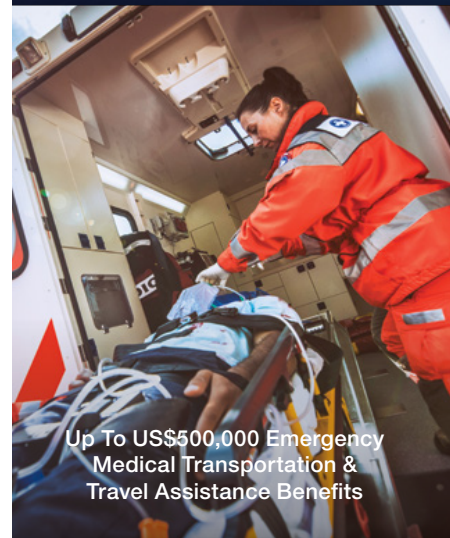
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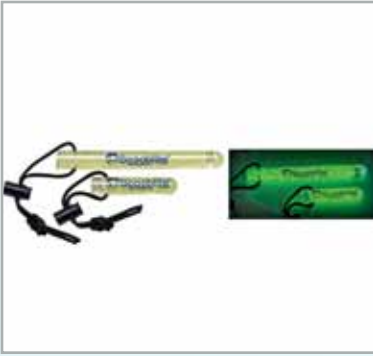
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## Innovative Scuba Scooblite

The Innovative Scuba Concepts Scooblite is the last “glow stick” you will ever buy. Made from rare earth minerals, the Scooblite can be charged from any light source and will consistently glow for over an hour and actually glow at a lower intensity all night long. You can even recharge the Scooblite while underwater with your dive light. Available in a 3 inch or 6 inch version, the environmentally safe Scooblite never requires batteries. For a reliable, reusable and rechargeable glow stick, that will last a lifetime, grab an Innovative Scuba Scooblite. [www.innovativescuba.com](http://www.innovativescuba.com)

## Strobe Light

Strobe lights are used to mark the ladder on the dive boat during night dives and effective as a visual signaling device for divers. All divers should have a strobe light.



## Tektite MARK-LITE STROBE

The Tektite Mark-Lite Strobe is a compact, high intensity strobe that is perfect for location marking and emergency location. The IP68M rated Mark-Lite features a waterproof double O-ring seal giving it a depth rating of 1,000 feet/333m. Available in 5 colors, the ABS & Lexan strobe is visible for over 2 miles and will operate for 11+ hours on 1 AA Alkaline battery. The powerful US made LED strobe is 200+ lumens, has 6 available lens colors and boasts a lifetime warranty. The Tektite Mark-Lite Strobe is a durable and reliable strobe that will perform in just about any condition. [www.tek-tite.com](http://www.tek-tite.com)



## Princeton Tech Aqua Strobe LED

The Princeton Tech Aqua Strobe LED is a great emergency signaling device for scuba divers. The IPX8 rated strobe is waterproof to 100 meters, will float upright and produces 60 flashes per minute. Available in black or yellow, a single AA battery will provide 12 hours of 100 lumen strobe. The Aqua Strobe comes with a lanyard and a velcro strap for attaching the strobe to your BCD. The Princeton Tech Aqua Strobe LED is a compact and powerful safety strobe that will increase your chances of being spotted during an emergency. [www.princetontec.com](http://www.princetontec.com)



## Tektite SOSeFlare

The Tektite SOSeFlare is a great all-around piece of safety equipment that can be used in a ton of differing applications from boating to scuba diving. The eFlare provides a triple threat combination of thermal signature, white and IR LEDs increasing your chances of being spotted during both day & night rescues. The SOSeFlare includes a distress flag and signal whistle which fulfill night, day and audible signal requirements. The ResQ Orange fluorescent eFlare provides 360° visibility for miles, floats up right, features a pair of elastic attachment straps, a self-cleaning twist-on switch and is double O-ring sealed which is waterproof to 500ft/152m of submersion and earns an IP68 rating. The eFlare comes with CR123 Lithium Batteries which have a 20-year shelf life and will run for 36 hours and provide a minimum peak equivalent fixed intensity of 75 cd for 6 hours. The Tektite SOSeFlare should be added to your mandatory safety gear for both water based and land adventures. [www.tek-tite.com](http://www.tek-tite.com)

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## Laser

Lasers are used to signal a diver's location to a boat or plane (optional gear).



### Greatland Laser Rescue Laser Flare Magnum Signaling Device

The Greatland Laser Rescue Laser Flare Magnum Signaling Device is an effective visual tool for signaling planes or boats from a long distance. Protected by a durable aluminum housing, the red handheld laser is visible from 1-3 miles during the day and up to 20 miles at night. The laser projects a line which is much easier for rescue teams to spot than a traditional dot laser, increasing your chances of rescue. We highly recommend adding the sight ring accessory, which makes it much easier to aim the laser. The laser is waterproof up to 80 feet and should be placed in a ziplock bag or waterproof dive bag if divers are going to greater depths. Boasting a whopping 10,000 hour life, the laser comes equipped with a lanyard hole in the end cap and can operate continuously for up to 72 hours on two AA batteries. The flare weighs 4.8 ounces and is 5 inches long making it compact enough to store in a pocket of your BCD. The Rescue Laser Flare Magnum Signaling Device will keep you safe and provide you with an effective long-distance signaling tool when you out on the water. [www.greatlandlaser.com](http://www.greatlandlaser.com)

## Flare

Flares are used to signal a diver's location to a boat or plane (optional gear).



### Frankensled Pocket Flare Mixed Signal Kit with Case

The Frankensled Pocket Flare Mixed Signal Kit with Case is a combination audio and visual safety kit. The red pocket flare will reach an excess of 150 feet and shine with over 15,000 candle power. The audio signal will fly 100 feet and then explode making a shotgun blast sound. The kit comes with a pocket pen launcher, a waterproof hard case, three red distress trailing flares, and two bangers/audible signals. The case is not rated for scuba diving and should be replaced with a diving approved container if the signal kit is to be taken on dives. Frankensled also sells replacement audio & visual signals so you can refill the kit after use. [www.frankensled.com](http://www.frankensled.com)

## Water Dye

Water dye is used to change the color of the water so boats or planes can identify the location of a diver (optional gear).



### Divesoft Fluorescein

Divesoft Fluorescein is an organic dye marker that colors the water yellow green and shines in the sunlight increasing your chances of being spotted by an airplane or rescue boat. Simply open the 20-gram Fluorescein tube and shake it the water to activate the dye marker. Throw a tube of Divesoft Fluorescein in your BCD pocket to help insure you are spotted in an emergency situation. [www.divesoft.com/en](http://www.divesoft.com/en)

## Audible Safety Devices

### Whistle

Whistles are effective and inexpensive audible signals for divers, all divers should have a whistle.



#### Storm Whistle

The Storm All-Weather Safety Whistle is made for wet, noisy outdoor conditions. The Storm utilizes a focused 3150 hertz frequency which is the most readily heard frequency over the noise of motors, crowds and even explosions, making it a perfect whistle for scuba diving. The storm can even be used underwater when diving, with an effective range of 50 feet. The US made Storm All-Weather Safety Whistle creates a clear, high frequency sound, which is what you want when you are trying to signal your dive boat in rough conditions. [www.stormwhistles.com](http://www.stormwhistles.com)



#### Fox 40 Sharx

The Fox 40 Sharx is designed to perform in wet conditions. The durable polycarbonate and co-molded elastomer whistle features chambers that are designed to self-clear when submerged in water. Available in 3 colors, the Sharx has no moving parts and the 120 dB whistle can be heard from up to a mile away. The Fox 40 Sharx is a great rescue whistle to attach to your BCD. [www.fox40shopusa.com](http://www.fox40shopusa.com)



#### Fox 40 Sonik Blast CMG

The Fox 40 Sonik Blast CMG has a distinct, loud and clear 120 dB sound that can be heard from up to a mile away. The Sonik Blast CMG has a cushioned mouth grip making it easy to keep the whistle in your mouth for long periods of time. Available in 19 colors, the whistle has no moving parts and the chambers are designed to self-clear when submerged in water. The Fox 40 Sonik Blast CMG is easy to blow and the harder you blow, the louder the sound making it a great dive safety whistle. [www.fox40shopusa.com](http://www.fox40shopusa.com)

## Additional Audible Signals



#### Dive Alert

The DiveAlert is a lightweight air horn that attaches to the BCD power inflator. Available in 3 different models for just about any BCD, the DiveAlert makes a piercingly loud sound that can be heard from over 1 mile away. The DiveAlert is the perfect tool for alerting a dive boat or others on the surface to a diver's location. [www.divealert.com](http://www.divealert.com)



#### Hog Scuba Edge Tank Rattle with Muffler Clip

The Hog Scuba Edge Tank Rattle with Muffler Clip allows you to quickly get your dive buddies or dive masters attention when you are underwater. The rattle is just under 5 inches long and features a clip for attaching to your BCD and a cover to prevent noise when not in use. Just rattle the Edge when you see something you want to share with your dive buddy or in case of emergency and you will get their attention immediately. [www.hogscuba.com](http://www.hogscuba.com)



## Additional Safety Gear

### Satellite or Radio Signaling Devices

Satellite and radio signaling devices are used to alert ships or rescue services and provide the location of the diver. All divers should have a satellite or radio signaling device.



#### Garmin inReach Mini 2

The Garmin inReach Mini 2 satellite communicator allows you to keep in touch when on your adventures without needing cell phone service. The Garmin uses global satellite coverage to communicate with family & friends, message another inReach user or contact the Garmin Emergency Response Coordination Center. With the inReach Mini 2, you can share your location, get weather forecasts, use Tracback routing to navigate back to your starting point and get a digital compass heading. The durable water and impact resistant Garmin is 4 inches x 2 inches, weighs 3.5 ounces, has a removable webbing loop and a slot for attaching a lanyard. The rechargeable internal lithium battery will stay charged for up to 1 year when powered off and provides up to 14 days use with a 10-minute tracking interval and up to 30 days use with a 30-minute tracking interval. Garmin offers flexible satellite subscription plans, unlimited cloud storage and trip planning when utilizing the Garmin Explore App. With the Garmin Explore App, the inReach Mini 2 can display automatic routing, satellite imagery, hydrographic features, national, state and local parks and much more. The most important feature is the ability to send an interactive SOS signal to the Garmin Emergency Response Coordination Center which also provides your exact location. The Garmin inReach Mini 2 is a must have piece of safety equipment for all outings and the perfect safety device for your next dive trip when paired with the inReach Mini Dive Case. [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)



#### Garmin inReach Mini Dive Case

The Garmin inReach Mini Dive Case is a water proof case the is rated for up to 100 meters. The case has an internal strap for attaching your inReach Mini 2 so the satellite signaling device cannot be dropped and lost in the water when the case is opened. The case comes with an extra webbing loop and attachment screw for your inReach Mini2, a tube of silicone lubricating grease and a pair of spare gaskets. Protect your Garmin inReach Mini on dive and boating trips and know it will be ready for action no matter what environment or weather conditions come your way. [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)



#### Nautilus LifeLine

The Nautilus LifeLine is a marine rescue device that uses AIS and DSC radio signals, which all commercial ships and most yachts are equipped with, to communicate directly with the ships around you. The unit can transmit your GPS position within 1.5 meters along with a man overboard distress message to all AIS equipped ships within 5-6 miles. The unit can also send a special DSC message to the marine radio on your own vessel with your location. The durable waterproof lifeline measures 2.9 x 3.8 x 1.5 inches, floats and is waterproof up to 425 feet. The unit will work for up to 5 years on a pair of CR123 batteries, provides 98 hours on a full set of batteries and does not require a subscription or registration fee. The Nautilus LifeLine is a reliable radio signaling device for divers and boaters that can communicate your location to ships and boats in the area. [www.nautiluslifeline.com](http://www.nautiluslifeline.com)

## Anti-Shark Device

Anti-shark devices are used to repel sharks (optional gear).



### SharkBanz 2

The SharkBanz 2 utilizes powerful magnetic technology to create an effective shark deterrent. One of the great features is that SharkBanz 2 utilizes magnets so the device is always on and never requires batteries or charging. How it works: Sharks use electroreception (sensitivity to electrical fields) to hunt. A shark's electroreception is created to detect very weak electromagnetic signals from its prey such as heartbeats and minor muscle movements. Sharks can even detect something as small as the movement of a fish's gills. The electromagnetic field produced by Sharkbanz is exponentially greater (over 1000 times) than anything a shark would have ever experienced and highly unpleasant – letting the shark know that this is definitely not food. SharkBanz 2 is analogous to having a bright light suddenly shined in your eyes in a dark room, the light would not cause any permanent damage, but you would turn away because it would be unpleasant. Grab a SharkBanz 2 and start telling curious sharks that you are not on the menu. [www.sharkbanz.com](http://www.sharkbanz.com)

## Waterproof Bags

Waterproof bags are used to store and protect gear from the elements (optional gear).



### aLOKSAK

The aLOKSAK is a water proof storage bag designed to protect anything from gear to food on your next outing. The US made re-sealable bags are made from a 6 mil durable polyethylene blended film, are food safe, can be washed with soap & water, feature a double locking seal and are 100% waterproof to over 70 meters. Available in 13 different sizes, they are perfect for protecting gear such as phones or electronics while you are diving and touch screens will work while in an aLOKSAK. Prevent spills and protect everything from firearms to maps from damage due to exposure to water, dust and humidity with an aLOKSAK. [www.loksak.com/home](http://www.loksak.com/home)



### OPSAK

The OPSAK is a water proof, air proof storage bag that adds odor proof to the features. Perfect for preventing animals like bears or racoons from smelling your food by trapping the odors inside the re-sealable bag. Use the OPSAK when traveling with a baby, for packing out waste or for protecting gear from the elements. The US made bags are made from a 5 mil durable polyethylene blended film, are food safe, can be washed with soap & water, feature a double locking seal and are 100% waterproof to over 70 meters. Available in 4 different sizes, they are perfect for protecting your gear and you can even add boiling water to the OPSAK to rehydrate food. [www.loksak.com/home](http://www.loksak.com/home)



### SUBSAK

The SUBSAK is a convenient way to store your aLOKSAK during your outings. Simply slip your aLOKSAK inside the nylon waist pack, zip it up, strap it on and go. The SUBSAK is available in 4 colors or can be customized with your logo or message. [www.loksak.com/home](http://www.loksak.com/home)

## Knife or Line Cutter

A cutting device is used for cutting fishing line or nets, all divers should have a cutting device.



### Scuba Pro Mako SS Dive Knife

The Scuba Pro Mako SS Dive Knife is a compact dive knife that is packed full of useful features including a bottle opener. The knife has a 304 grade hard-tempered stainless-steel combination straight edge and serrated blade with a line cutter on top. The 3.5 inch blade has a strong Tanto tip that can be used for prying without fear of breaking the tip. The sturdy plastic handle has a guard that is wide enough to protect both your index finger and your thumb combined with a finger slot that all work together to provide a great grip. The 7.5 inch Mako SS comes with a locking plastic sheath that is easy to open with 1 hand, a pair of straps for securing the sheath and a kit for attaching the sheath to your BCD. For a great dive knife that will provide years of faithful service, look no further than the Scuba Pro Mako SS Dive Knife. <https://scubapro.johnsonoutdoors.com/us>



### Zeagle Line Cutter with Sheath

The Zeagle Line Cutter with Sheath is a light weight but effective line cutter. The Zeagle has a serrated blade and comes with a plastic easy to attach sheath. The bright yellow textured handle is large enough to make it easy to grab with gloves. The Zeagle Line Cutter with Sheath will insure you are able to safely cut yourself or your partner free from any possible entanglement dangers. [www.zeagle.com](http://www.zeagle.com)



### SeaSoft Night Edge

The SeaSoft Night Edge is a 7-inch dive knife with a unique feature. The handle absorbs light and glows for up to 18 hours. Available in 4 colors, the 3.2 inch blunt tipped titanium blade is serrated with a line cutter on one side and a traditional edge on the other side. The plastic handle is grooved with a wide guard for a sure grip, has a hole for a lanyard and 2 quick release levers that unlock the knife from the sheath which is included. The sheath can be attached to your BCD using the pair of included straps, a 2 inch slot or with the included screw in pinwheels. The SeaSoft Night Edge has a lifetime breakage warranty and is easy to find if you drop it at night. [www.seasoftscuba.com](http://www.seasoftscuba.com)



### Aquatec Nightfall Knife Sold by Innovative Scuba

The Aquatec Nightfall Knife sold by Innovative Scuba is a large dive knife with a traditional shape. The knife has a 4.5 inch SUS 420 J2 combination line cutter, smooth and serrated blade with chrome electroplating. The polycarbonate handle features a large guard, a finger groove and notches which provide a secure grip in any environment. The 9-inch Knightfall comes with a plastic sheath that can be opened with 1 hand, a belt clip and a pair of elastic attachment straps. [www.innovativescuba.com](http://www.innovativescuba.com)



### Aquatec T-REX Sold by Innovative Scuba

The Aquatec T-REX Sold by Innovative Scuba is a handy minimalist dive knife. The 7.9 inch knife has a plastic handle, finger grooves, a guard for your index finger, a notched no slip thumb guard and a hole for a lanyard. The 3.5 inch 304 stainless steel combination serrated and smooth blade can handle just about anything you throw its way and it even has a line cutter on top. The T-Rex comes with an easy to use 1 handed plastic sheath, a hose connector, a belt clip and a pair of elastic attachment straps. Strap on the Aquatec T-REX and be ready for your next dive adventure. [www.innovativescuba.com](http://www.innovativescuba.com)



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## Compass

Compasses are used to navigate to a known area, all divers should have a compass.



### HOG Pro Bungee Mount Compass

The HOG Pro Bungee Mount Compass will help you successfully navigate to your destination. The luminescent glow in the dark compass features a recessed bezel, a rotating dial with dual index marks and a large side reading window. The 5.75 cm compass comes with extra-long elastic bungee cords making it easy to attach the compass to just about anything. The next time you need to navigate, grab the HOG Pro Bungee Mount Compass. [www.hogscuba.com](http://www.hogscuba.com)



### Scuba Choice Diving Dive Compass with Retractor

The Scuba Choice Dive Compass with Retractor stays conveniently out of the way until you need it for navigation. Simply clip the compass to your BCD, pull the compass out up to 31.5 inches and let it retract when you are finished. The glow in the dark compass is 7.5 inches long x 2 inches wide x 2 inches deep, has a rotating dial with dual index marks, 2 convenient clips and features a side view window. Make sure you have a compass when you need one with the Scuba Choice Dive Compass with Retractor. [www.scuba-choice.com](http://www.scuba-choice.com)

## Dive Computer

Dive computers are used to calculate safety stops, monitor ascension rate and provide surface intervals while recording dive information such as bottom time and depth. All divers should have a dive computer.



### Garmin Descent G1 Solar

The Garmin Descent G1 Solar is a formidable dive watch that is packed with a ton of other useful features. The 45.5 mm fiber-reinforced polymer watch is rated for 100-meters and has a sunlight-visible, monochrome, transfective memory-in-pixel (MIP) screen, 32MB of memory and can last up to 21 days on a single charge and 4 months with solar. The Descent G1 Solar has tons of preloaded activities such as daily life, health, training, gym, running, cycling, swimming and golf options. The back lit, auto start and end dive computer supports single and multi-gas dives, provides max depth, current depth, dive time, has audible and vibration alarms, a 3-axis dive compass and a useful dive ascent/descent rate indicator. The Descent G1 Solar has customizable conservatism and can provide safety stops, no fly times, has automatic altitude adjustment, automatically saves dive entry and exit locations and features a built-in dive log that can store up to 200 dives. The Descent comes with an extra-long adjustment strap for wet & dry suits and a USB charging/data cable. The Garmin Descent G1 Solar is an amazing tool that can be configured to do just about anything you would ever need from a dive / activity watch. [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)

## Anti-Fog

Anti-fog is used to prevent mask fogging and provide clear vision, all divers should use anti-fog.



### Sea Soft SEAVUE Anti-fog Spray

Sea Soft SEAVUE Anti-fog Spray will insure that you don't miss any of the cool sights due to a fogged mask when you are scuba diving. Sea Soft SEAVUE Anti-fog Spray was engineered for ARC which are the anti-reflective coatings on higher quality scuba masks. Simply spray it on (do not wipe or rinse off) and forget about fogged masks. [www.seasoftscuba.com](http://www.seasoftscuba.com) **AW**

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Exploring the

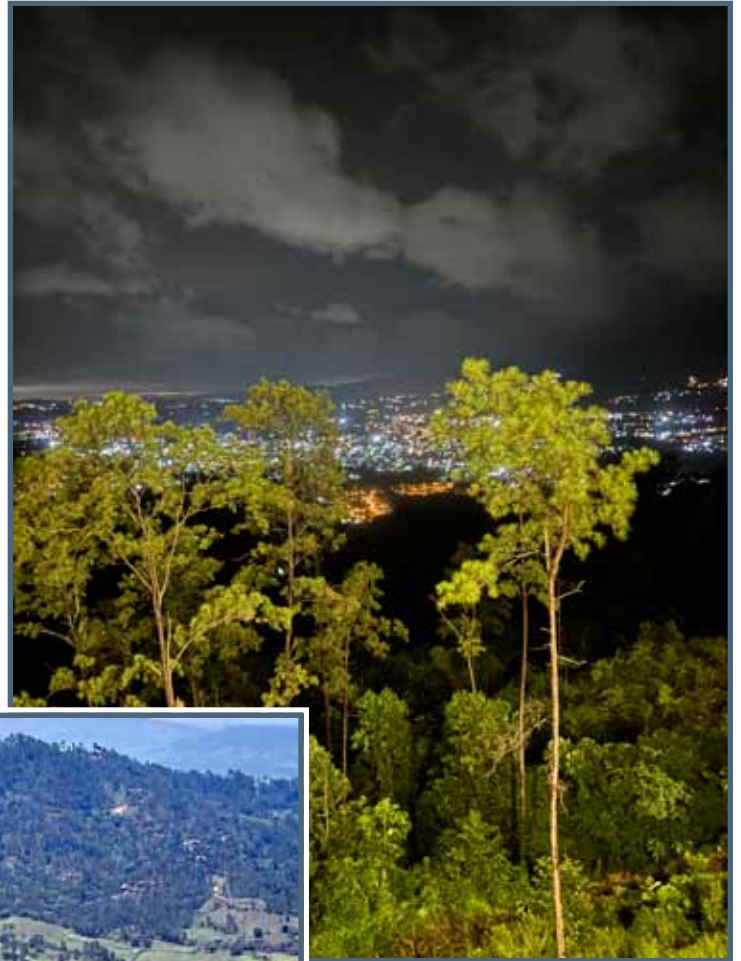
# Dominican Republic

*The Land of Adventure*

by Troy Farrar

Our family recently headed down to the Dominican Republic for a couple of weeks, packed full of amazing adventures. The Dominican Republic is diverse and we visited two different eco systems which both offered a ton of sensational activities. There are a seemingly unlimited number of adventurous activities to enjoy, the hardest part is deciding which ones to choose. We flew into Punta Cana, grabbed our rental car and headed to the mountains as fast as possible. Although the drivers are a little reckless, for the most part we did fine. If you are driving, be ready to get passed by motorcycles on both sides and sometimes even cars – it is a little wacky. We felt safe traveling around the country and everyone we met was friendly and seemed happy to see us.

Our first stop was Jarabacoa, in the mountains. The temperatures were cooler and the vegetation was lush and green making Jarabacoa a beautiful mountain destination. The downtown shopping area has plenty of restaurants and stores to choose from, make sure you visit umbrella street while you are there. Jarabacoa means “place of waters” in Taino and there are plenty of water-based adventures to be found in this region. There is canyoneering, white water rafting, tubing, swimming, waterfalls and horseback riding just to mention a few of the activities that are available in Jarabacoa.



## JARABACOA

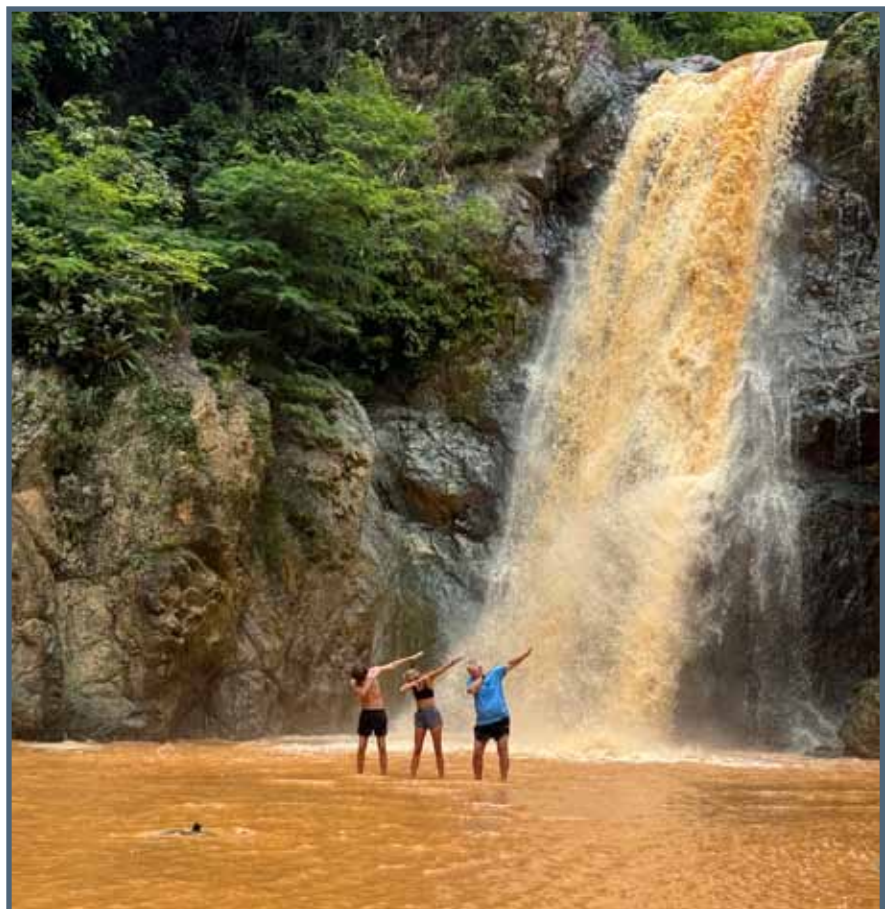
### The Domes Jarabacoa

The Domes Jarabacoa are a unique once in a lifetime place to stay on your visit to Jarabacoa. Nestled on cliffs above Jarabacoa, the domes offer an amazing scenic view of the valley below. The domes allow you to connect with nature by hearing rain, birds sing and the wind blow while enjoying the modern comforts of a traditional hotel. Each dome has a bathroom with hot water, linens, a comfortable bed, air conditioning, television, Wifi, kitchen, a deck with tables & chairs and a private jacuzzi. The Domes also have a restaurant & bar if you do not feel like cooking. The Domes are where you should stay when visiting Jarabacoa and promise to provide you with an extraordinary memory of your visit. [www.thedomesjarabacoa.com](http://www.thedomesjarabacoa.com)



### Salto de Jimenoa Uno

Salto de Jimenoa Uno is a beautiful waterfall and a fun hike. The hike is a bit steep going down and back up, but it is well worth the trip. The 60-meter, picturesque Salto de Jimenoa was used in the opening scenes of Jurassic Park and is a nice place to spend an afternoon. This is not the best waterfall for swimming, but it is one of the nicest waterfalls close to Jarabacoa.



### Salto Baiguate

Salto Baiguate is a second waterfall that is close to town and also worth visiting. The trail to Salto Baiguate is easy and can be done by children or older visitors. There is a staircase down to the river and a big swimming hole at the waterfall - you can even wade right up to the falls. The water was much browner than usual when we visited because of heavy rains that happened the day before, but Salto Baiguate was still a fun excursion.



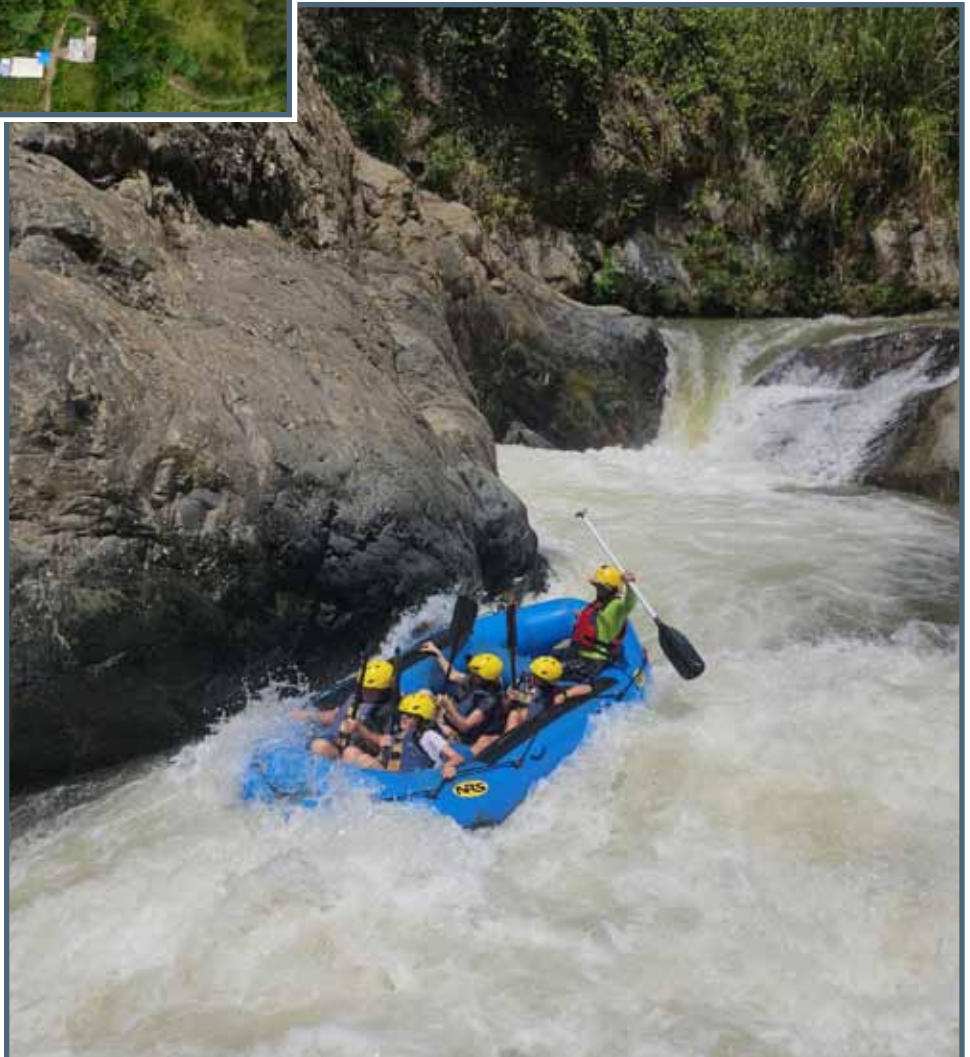


## Eco Parapente RD Paragliding

Tandem paragliding should definitely be on your bucket list while in Jarabacoa. Javier at Eco Parapente RD is one of the most experienced guides in the area and will insure you have a safe and enjoyable trip. Your flight will launch from the mountain tops and then you will enjoy a relaxing flight back down to Jarabacoa. The activity is appropriate for anyone from children to elderly and I guarantee that paragliding will be one of your favorite activities in the Dominican Republic. Don't miss the opportunity to have a bird's eye view of the Dominican Republic while experiencing a peaceful soaring experience over the valley with Eco Parapente RD Paragliding. [www.facebook.com/ecoparapenterd](http://www.facebook.com/ecoparapenterd)

## Jaraventura White Water Rafting

Go rafting down the Yaque del Norte River with Jaraventura. There is a mix from gentle to wild rapids mixed with relaxing sections of the river. The scenery is beautiful from lush forest to towering cliffs with mountains in the background. The guides make the trip safe and fun and keep you smiling during your adventure. There is even a stop for swimming and fresh fruit snacks along the trip. The Jaraventura white water rafting trip is an unforgettable adventure that you should experience while in the Dominican Republic. [www.jaraventura.com](http://www.jaraventura.com)





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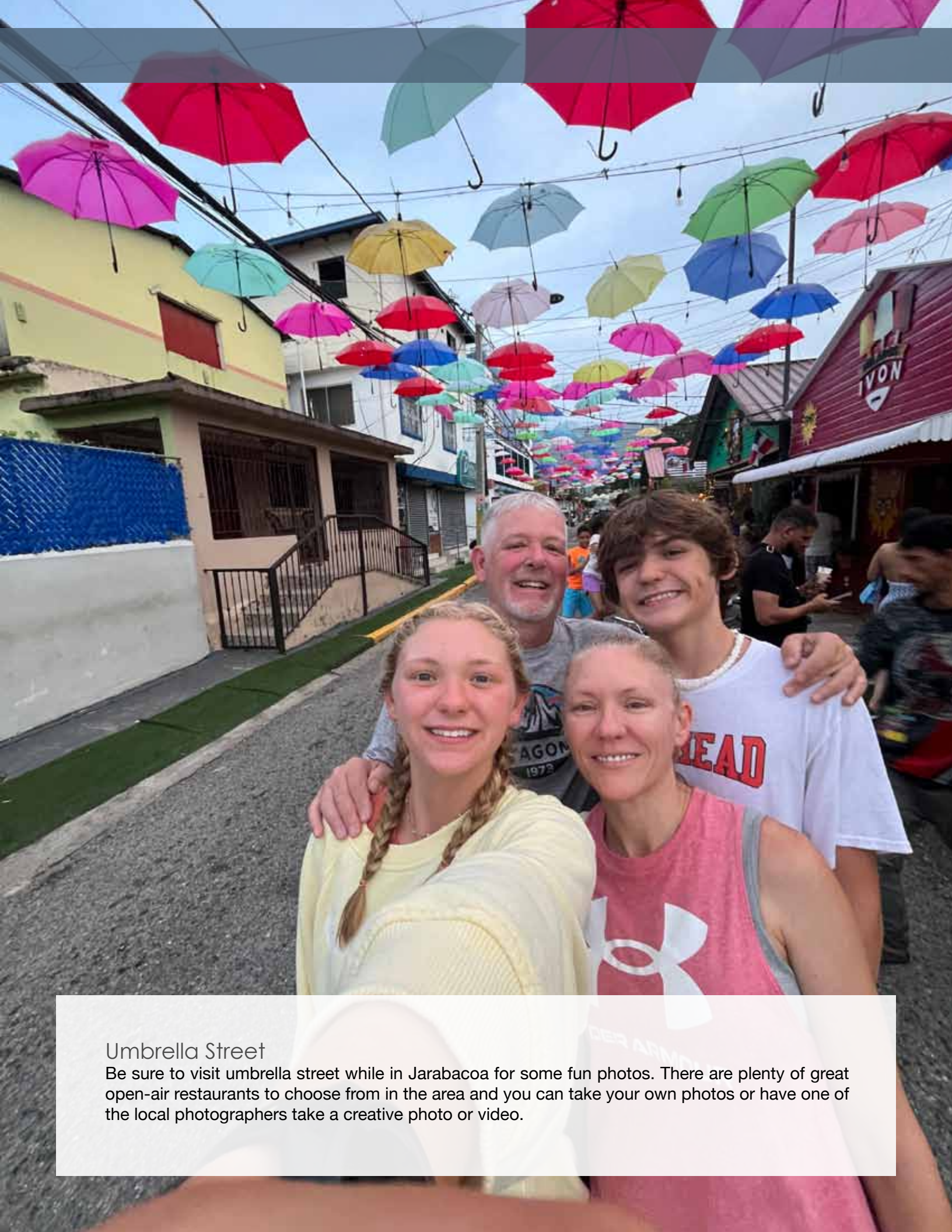


### Blika RX 7 Smartcore

With the Lupine's FrontClick quick-change system, your lighting will be more flexible than ever before. You can turn your headlamp into a helmet lamp, or swap your headlamp from one helmet to another in seconds, without tools.



[lupinenorthamerica.com](http://lupinenorthamerica.com)



## Umbrella Street

Be sure to visit umbrella street while in Jarabacoa for some fun photos. There are plenty of great open-air restaurants to choose from in the area and you can take your own photos or have one of the local photographers take a creative photo or video.

## PUNTA CANA

After a few days of adventures in Jarabacoa we headed back down to Punta Cana to continue our adventure where the Caribbean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. Punta Cana boasts one of the Caribbean region's longest white sand coastlines, a whopping 30 miles of sandy beaches, palm forest and crystal-clear water. The area is known as La Costa del Coco, or the Coconut Coast, which has a large concentration of all-inclusive resorts. There are tons of activities to choose from such as beach excursions, scuba diving, sailing, fishing and golf.



### The Macao Surf Camp

The Macao Surf Camp is the perfect place to learn how to surf. This camp was started by some of the OG Dominican surfers who are still involved and want to share their love of surfing with others. Instructors will progressively teach you the steps to surfing and guide you as you learn to surf. Macao Beach is the perfect place for beginners as the waves are not too big and are forgiving when you wipe out – which will happen. The Macao Surf Camp instructors are fun and encouraging and you will be surfing in no time. The Macao Surf Camp is a definite must do activity on your trip to the Dominican Republic.

[www.macaosurfcamp.com](http://www.macaosurfcamp.com)

### Taino Gourmet Cooking Lab

The Taino Gourmet Cooking Lab is a full immersion cooking experience that can be enjoyed solo or with a group. You will learn to cook local Dominican dishes from a chef in the fully stocked Taino commercial kitchen.

The Taino Gourmet Cooking Lab is a fun, hands on experience that will give you the knowledge and experience to take back home for future meals and you get a delicious meal at the end!

[www.tainogifts.com](http://www.tainogifts.com)



## Grand Bay of the Sea Shark Dive

Grand Bay of the Sea offers various dive trips from shipwrecks to reef diving and we were fortunate to experience their shark dive. Grand Bay of the Sea is a family owned dive shop with over 15 years of experience in the Dominican Republic and their friendly disposition made for a fun day on the water. During our dive we came face to face with over 20 beautiful black tipped reef sharks and a couple of nurse sharks. The shark dive will always be an extraordinary memory and was one of my favorite moments in the Dominican Republic. Grand Bay of the Sea offers the perfect trips for your Dominican diving adventure and will help create some amazing life long memories. [www.grandbay-puntacana.com](http://www.grandbay-puntacana.com)



## Fun Cat Caribe at Casa de Campo

The Fun Cat Caribe at Casa de Campo is an awesome way to experience a major tributary in the Dominican Republic. You will pilot your own 2-person catboat as a guide leads you down the Chavón River. Your guide will point out interesting sights such as the stairs of Altos de Chavón and local wildlife like the yellow and black Village Weavers who build interesting nests in the mangroves. You will also pass through several Hollywood movie locations from films such as Anaconda, Rambo and King Kong. The trip is peaceful and relaxing while providing a firsthand experience of the Chavón River and its inhabitants. After the tour enjoy a meal at one of Casa de Campo's excellent restaurants. The Fun Cat Caribe at Casa de Campo is a fantastic adventure and a great way to start the day with your group. [www.casadecampo.com.do](http://www.casadecampo.com.do)

# have more fun.



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## Scape Park

Scape Park is a great adventure for the whole family with tons of activities to choose from. There are ziplines, ziplines with water that end in a pool and trapeze ziplines that you ride and then drop into a pool. You can jump off a platform into a cenote or relax in a cenote that is underground. There is a monkey island, a high rope course, parrots, iguanas, a petting zoo, a cultural hike and more. You can go on a beach getaway, enjoy a sunshine cruise or take a spin on the getaway wheels. This involves cruising down dirt roads and through water and mud pits in two-person 4 x 4 Can Am off road buggies – so much fun! Top off your day at Scape park with a cave expedition as you explore and learn about the Iguabonita cave. Scape park has restaurants, snacks, a gift shop, showers, bathrooms and lockers for your extra clothes – because you will get wet. Spend a day at Scape Park and enjoy limitless adventures in this beautiful and fun Dominican setting.

[www.scapepark.com](http://www.scapepark.com)



## Saona Island

Take a trip to Saona Island with Isla Saona Tours for an exhilarating day in the sun. The trip starts aboard a power boat that stops on the way to the island for swimming and wading in the crystal-clear water. Once you arrive at Saona Island there is a buffet styled lunch, drinks, sand volleyball, swimming or just lounging on the beach. After a few hours of island time, climb aboard a catamaran for some dancing and a nice sailing trip back to the marina. The Saona Island trip is a wonderful way to spend a day on the water and at the beach in the Dominican Republic.

[www.islasaonatours.com](http://www.islasaonatours.com)



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## Punta Cana Tours 4 Wheel ATV Adventure

The Punta Cana Tours 4 Wheel ATV Adventure is a fun and exciting way to see some of the countryside on your visit to the Dominican Republic. We drove our ATVs past rice paddies, through small towns and even along a deserted stretch of beach. We stopped at the beach for fresh coconut water and to enjoy the palm forest and crashing waves. The trip was fun and gave us a peek of life outside the tourist area of Punta Cana. The Punta Cana Tours 4 Wheel ATV Adventure is an exciting trip for all ages and a fun way to explore some of the hidden gems in the Dominican Republic.

[www.puntacanatours.com](http://www.puntacanatours.com)



## Comadritas Restaurant

Comadritas Restaurant is a fantastic restaurant for local Dominican food and was our favorite place to eat while visiting Punta Cana. The restaurant is owned by a local family who are very friendly and want to share their Dominican cuisine with others. The menu is diverse and we loved everything that we tried – envision home cooked comfort food with a Caribbean flare. Put Comadritas Restaurant on your Punta Cana bucket list and if you are like us, you will probably visit Comadritas more than once.

[www.facebook.com/ComadritasRestaurant](https://www.facebook.com/ComadritasRestaurant) **AW**



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# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC GEAR REVIEW

## Stahlsac 34 Inch Steel Wheeled Bag

The Stahlsac 34 inch Steel Wheeled Bag is the Ferrari of dive bags and the must have travel bag to protect your dive gear. One of the key components this bag offers is flexibility. The huge main compartment can be separated into 3 layers with zippered dividers which layer the entire compartment. You can have 1 huge compartment, zip up both dividers for 2 compartments or pack gear between the two zipped-up compartments giving you 3 separate compartments. There is an additional large flat storage area and a roomy pocket for personal items that are both zipper accessible. This durable DWR coated water-resistant canvass bag has reinforced abrasion resistant material to protect the corners, large bottom rails, an add a bag strap for connecting a second bag and a waterproof bottom compartment for wet items combined with a breathable top compartment. The 148-liter bag also features 2 comfortable padded handles, heavy-duty water-resistant zippers with easy to grab pulls, compression straps, a retractable handle, large all terrain wheels and 4 sewn loops for attaching other items or lashing the bag down. And just in case those features did not sell you on the 34 x 17 x 12 bag, they included a no slip changing pad and the frame components are replaceable and backed by Stahlsac's lifetime limited warranty. The Stahlsac 34 inch Steel Wheeled Bag is hands down the best dive bag on the market and this bag is tough enough to endure any environment.

[www.stahlsac.com](http://www.stahlsac.com)



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## Oceanic+ Dive Housing

We don't go anywhere without our smart phones and believe it or not, the Oceanic+ Dive Housing gives us the ability to take our iPhones underwater to be used as a camera and a dive computer. Operational to 60 meters, the tough 2.15 pound reinforced fiberglass techno-polymer case features a large over molded rubber grip combined with a textured thumb grip, 3/8 inch threaded mount adapter, secure twist lock sealing mechanism, pressure valve with automatic vacuum pump, shutter button, 4 navigation buttons and a wrist leash slot. Oceanic + includes a rechargeable lithium battery that has a 100-hour runtime and charges in 45 minutes. The 9.7 x 4.4 x 2.7 inch housing is compatible with iPhones that have iOS16 or above and uses Bluetooth technology that allows users to navigate their phones while diving. Before and after each dive, the App guides users through an animated step-by-step process which includes the crucial automatic vacuum pump and integrated leak detector. The Dive Housing comes with a nice zippered EVA foam travel case, wrist lanyard, USB-C charging cable and a spare parts kit.



The Oceanic + Dive Housing is made for scuba diving, but has a free dive mode and can also be used for other wet environment activities. The Oceanic +Dive Housing and App allow for advanced photography features such as utilizing ultra-wide lens features on iPhones, the ability to record media files in both RAW and compressed formats, digital color correction filters and all media is stored directly on the phone making it easy to share with social networks. The housing has a clear back allowing users to see the full iPhone screen and it is easy to switch between photo and video while diving. The quality and look are phenomenal and we found the housing to be easy to understand and operate.



As if that were not enough, the Oceanic + Dive Housing also enables users to utilize their iPhones as a dive computer. The housing has integrated depth and temperature sensors and the App utilizes the Bühlmann ZHL-16C algorithm with gradient factors which can be customized. The computer can be used with just about any gas mix and provides standard dive information such as depth, max depth, elapsed and total dive time, time to surface, compass and GPS location. Crucial real-time safety data such as ascent rate, no decompression time, decompression stops, surface intervals and no fly time can also be displayed. The App can be adjusted for diving at altitude and even includes a logbook, gear locker and a way to share your dives with friends and family.

The Oceanic + Dive Housing is a well-made, easy to use underwater camera case for iPhones that is packed full of useful features which provide the user with the ability to take fantastic dive photographs while using their phone as a dive computer.

[www.oceanicworldwide.com](http://www.oceanicworldwide.com)

## Huk Rover Rain Jacket

The HUK Rover Rain Jacket is the perfect traveling companion for your next outing. The stylish light weight jacket features a corded waist hem, corded hood, vented back, a pair of zippered hand pockets and a zippered chest pocket. Available in 4 colors the waterproof HUK Rover Rain Jacket will keep you dry and look great while doing it. [www.hukgear.com](http://www.hukgear.com)



## KitBrix ToteBrix

The KitBrix ToteBrix was designed as an everyday bag with multiple possible uses and we found it made the perfect beach bag. The firm molded waterproof base helps hold the bag open when loading and keeps your contents dry when the bag is placed on a wet or muddy surface. The zippered ToteBrix features an internal water bottle holder, an internal zippered pocket for valuables and a zippered external laptop pocket which features a second bottom zipper to provide a convenient slide-over sleeve for hanging the tote on rollerbag luggage handles. The super roomy 28-liter tote has an ultra-tough 600D water resistant canvass exterior, measures 9.4" W x 15.4" L x 14.2" H, has a pair of webbing handles that are long enough to sling the tote over your shoulder leaving your hands free for other gear and even folds flat for storage. Available in 4 colors, the sleek ToteBrix is a super cool looking bag that is packed full of functional features that will make it your go to tote for just about any occasion. [www.kitbrixusa.com](http://www.kitbrixusa.com)



## Huk Women's Coldfront + Hoodie

The Huk Women's Coldfront + Hoodie is a great looking piece that is packed full of features. The stretchable hoodie is available in 4 colors and has anti-microbial technologies and a DWR water repellent coating. The adjustable hood, kangaroo pockets and plush brushed interior all work together to provide you with a warm and comfy pullover while protecting you from the elements. Slip into the Huk Women's Coldfront + Hoodie and know you will be warm and look great. [www.hukgear.com](http://www.hukgear.com)





## Huk Icon Pro Performance Pant

The Huk Icon Pro Performance Pant is an amazing fishing pant that is just as useful for other outdoor adventures. Available in 2 colors, the lightweight breathable pants have adjustable elastic cuffs and 4 way stretch making them comfortable in any position. The stain resistant Icon Pro pants are also water resistant and provide 50+ UPF protection when you are out on those long days. Storage is plentiful with a pair of back pockets, a pair of hand pockets and a pair of cargo pockets that even include built in plier pockets. The Huk Icon Pro Performance Pant were built for adventure and will insure you are covered on your next outing. [www.hukgear.com](http://www.hukgear.com)



## REI Big Haul

The REI Big Haul is a great roller bag for hauling gear on your next adventure. Weighing in at 9 pounds 11 ounces, this bruiser has 6652 cubic inches of storage capacity and is available in black or mountain moss. The Big Haul features rugged oversized wheels and a large main compartment with 2 zippered mesh storage pockets and 2 adjustable compression straps for securing your load. The recycled ripstop nylon bag is water resistant and has a hard-molded bottom with 2 slider rails for protection when being loaded. The Big Haul has an add a bag strap, a retractable trolley handle, 5 exterior grab handles, 4 exterior compression straps and 22 daisy chain loops for attaching extra gear or lashing the bag down. Load the REI Big Haul for your next adventure and know your gear will get to your destination safely. [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)



## Huk Coldfront + Performance Hoodie

The Coldfront + Performance Hoodie is one of the newest releases from Huk that is sure to become a classic. The technical stretchable hoodie features a DWR water repellent coating paired with a soft brushed interior to give you all day protection. Available in 5 colors, the hoodie features a kangaroo pocket and an adjustable hood. The Coldfront + Performance Hoodie is the perfect choice for a day on the water or a night on the town and will quickly become your go to cool weather hoodie. [www.hukgear.com](http://www.hukgear.com) **AW**

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# Be Prepared

## FOR YOUR NEXT BIG OUTING

Not having the right equipment or having the wrong equipment can throw a real damper on your plans. Whether it is an athletic competition, camping trip, tailgating or just a day at the park, having the right gear can make or break the event. We put together a list of some essential gear for your next big event that will help insure that your outing is successful.

### Shübug Active

Shübug Active insect repellent provides safe 12-hour protection against mosquitoes, ticks, and other pests. The unscented formula is composed of Picaridin combined with a blend of essential oils, including Geraniol, Lemongrass Oil, Peppermint Oil and Rosemary Oil. The US made Shübug dries quickly when applied and will not damage or stain clothes or plastic items. Shübug is available in active, natural and kids versions of insect repellents as well as a line of home insect protection products. Take Shübug Active along on your next outing for all day protection from those annoying pests. [www.shubug.com](http://www.shubug.com)



### Osprey Sojourn

One look tells you that the Osprey Sojourn was made for big adventures. The bag is built on the sturdy High Road aluminum chassis, that will stabilize your load on the rough and tumble environments of your next expedition. The 130-liter, 9.5 pound roller bag uses a durable bluesign approved, 100% recycled heavy-duty nylon fabric that has been DWR treated for water resistance. The huge main compartment has 3 interior cinch straps to secure your load and 4 zippered mesh & liner pouches to help organize your gear. A zippered boot bin keeps your dirty gear separate and an additional zippered storage pocket on the back of the bag with an internal zippered pouch provides extra storage. Once you are loaded, the padded StraightJacket compression straps protect your gear and stabilize the load. The Sojourn features a unique buttonless trolley handle, an add a bag strap, 5 exterior handles, a Travel Sentry luggage identification tag and oversized 110 mm wheels that can handle just about any terrain. If you are looking for a big, tough travel bag that can safely transport your gear to your next adventure look no further than the Osprey Sojourn – you have found the perfect travel companion. [www.osprey.com](http://www.osprey.com)

## Firman Power Equipment 2100 Inverter Portable Generator

The Firman Power Equipment 2100 Inverter Portable Generator is the perfect companion for your off grid adventures. The 45.9 pound gas operated generator has a .9 gallon tank that will run for 9 hours at 50% load. The 120 volt recoil start Firman generator also features a low oil shut off and provides low THD- clean power that is fine for running electronics such as a lap top. The sleek portable generator provides 2100 starting watts and 1700 running watts at a whisper quiet 59 dBs at 1/4 load which is quieter than human speech. Firman provides engine oil, oil funnel, spark plug wrench, screwdriver, 12V battery cable and a 3-year warranty. The Firman Power Equipment 2100 Inverter Portable Generator is perfect for running power tools, tailgating and camping and will provide clean power without all the noise. [www.firmanpowerequipment.com](http://www.firmanpowerequipment.com)



## Rollercam Hook End

The Rollercam Hook End has 2 parts, one has a 1 inch hook sewn onto one end of the strap and the cam buckle on the other end of the strap. The second part is a Straight strap with a 1 inch hook sewn into one end and woven in length so you can easily tell the length of the strap. The Polyester version is available in 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 or 20 foot straps with a choice of Yellow, Red, Blue, Green or Black straps. The Polypropylene version is available in 4, 6, 9, 12, 15 or 20 foot straps with a choice of Expedition Graphite or Classic Blue straps. Rollercam uses a unique roller that makes tightening the straps a cinch and blows away anything else on the market. The Rollercam Hook End will be the last set of straps you ever need, unless you need some additional Rollercams! [www.rollercam.com](http://www.rollercam.com)



## PEET Dryer

The Original PEET is a must have for athletes, hikers, cyclists and just about anyone else who goes outdoors. The Dryer uses convection technology to push warmed air through the specially designed AirChambers and DryPorts to quickly and quietly dry your footwear or gear. The dryer is safe and energy efficient so it can be left plugged in at all times. The PEET dryer is quiet and will dry most items overnight, extending the life of your gear. Peet dryers can be safely used on most materials including leather, rubber, vinyl, neoprene, canvas, synthetics, fleece and microfibers. Purchase an accessory and use your PEET Dryer for your helmet, gloves and even your hydration bladders. Made in the US, the Peet Dryer features a 25-year warranty. [www.peetdryer.com](http://www.peetdryer.com)



## Strike Pop Up Tent

The Strike Pop Up Tent is a super tough pop up that will add to your adventures for many years. The bones are a durable 40 mm commercial grade aluminum frame that is available in 10 x 10, 10 x 15 and 10 x 20 which weigh in at 30, 50 or 75 pounds. The skin is a water & U.V. resistant 500D dye sublimated canopy that is printed with your logo, favorite team or design at no additional cost. Set up times for the Strike Pop Up Tent up are less than 5 minutes and their tents are backed by Strikes lifetime warranty. Grab a custom Strike Pop Up Tent and have the perfect protection from the elements for all of your outdoor adventures. [www.strikenow.com](http://www.strikenow.com)

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### Motorex Dry Power Chain Lube

Motorex Dry Power chain lubricant is the perfect formula for riding in dry and dusty conditions. Dry Power is a biodegradable, fully synthetic oil wax-based lubricant that quickly penetrates and forms a homogeneous surface that will protect your chain against dirt and dust. Motorex Dry Power chain lubricant provides enhanced lubrication combined with outstanding protection against corrosion and wear while protecting your equipment by reducing abrasion. Use Motorex Dry Power Chain Lube and know that you are protected while exploring those dry and dusty roads. [www.eurolineusa.com](http://www.eurolineusa.com)

### Orange Seal Tubeless Tire Sealant

Orange Seal Tubeless Tire Sealant is one of the most important upgrades you can make to your bike. Compatible with most bike tire systems, the ecofriendly Orange Seal will keep you in the saddle by sealing large punctures up to 1/4 inch and slices up to 3/4 inch. The convenient injection system makes it easy to add sealant to your wheels and refill bottles are available in 4 oz and 8 oz sizes. Orange Seal even has a comprehensive Tubeless Conversion Kit which includes everything that you need to convert your wheels to a tubeless system. What are you waiting for, get your bike set up with Orange Seal and as they like to say at the shop, push yourself not your bike! [www.orangeseal.com](http://www.orangeseal.com)



### Camp Zero 40 Premium Cooler

The Camp Zero 40-liter Premium Cooler is a super tough cooler that was built for your next adventure. No matter what comes your way you can count on Camp-Zero to keep your food cold. The roto molded

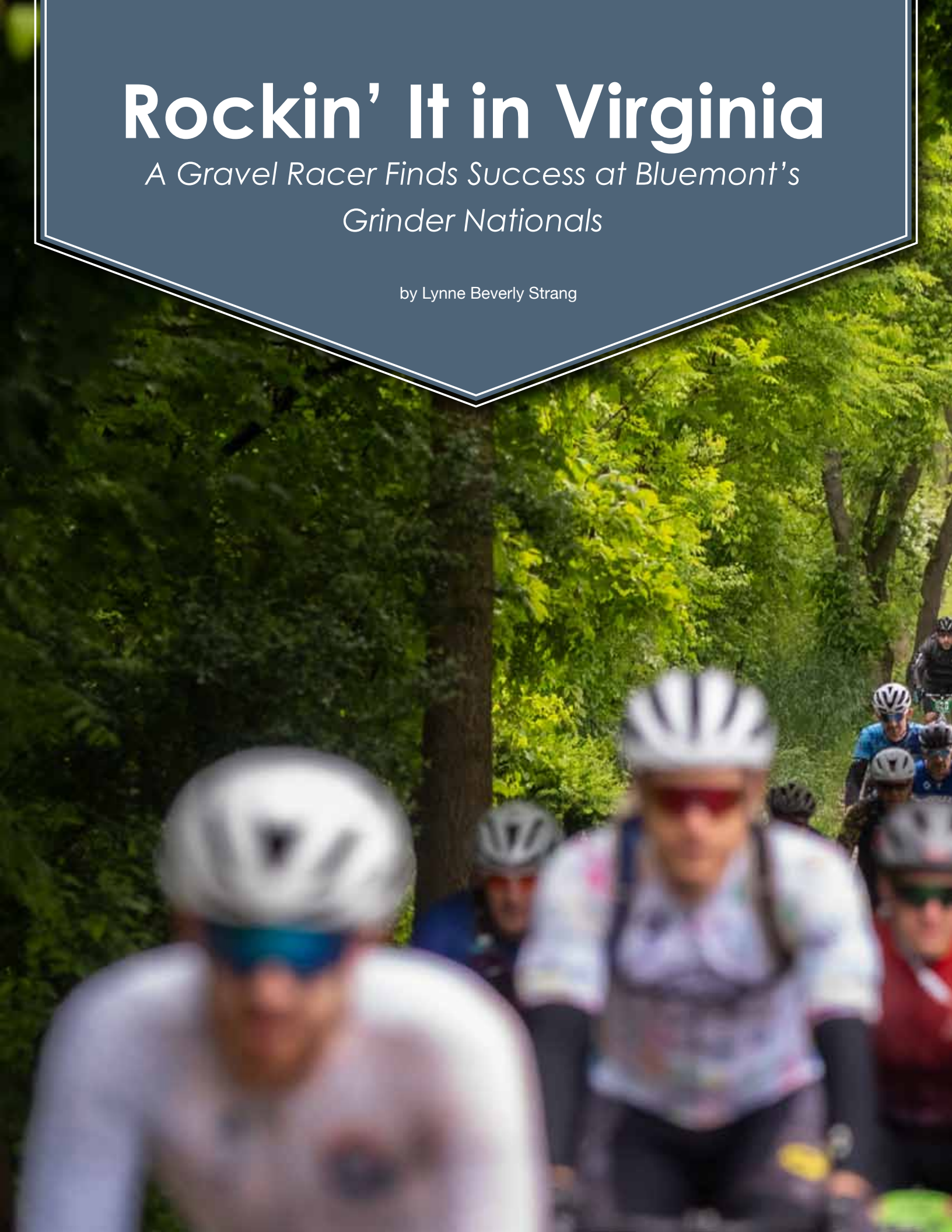
cooler features a secure latching and locking system, quick drain plug, integrated tie down slots, anti-skid feet, 4 molded cup holders, a non-slip textured lid and comfort grip handles. The Camp Zero is available multiple colors in 10, 20, 40, 60, 80 & 110 liter sizes and was built with commercial grade insulation and a freezer grade gasket to insure your food stays cold during your entire adventure. Step up to a Camp Zero cooler and spend your time enjoying the weekend instead of wasting your time making ice runs. [www.camp-zero.com](http://www.camp-zero.com) **AW**



# Rockin' It in Virginia

*A Gravel Racer Finds Success at Bluemont's  
Grinder Nationals*

by Lynne Beverly Strang





Sometimes opportunities to challenge yourself show up unexpectedly. Just ask Steve Cope, a cyclist who found this out not too long ago.

Last May, Cope, who lives near Charlotte, North Carolina, was planning a road trip to Northern Virginia to pick up a pair of bike wheels when a cycling buddy told him about the 2024 Gravel Grinder National Championship & Mini G taking place May 11 in Loudoun County.

A long-time roadie who had taken up gravel riding the year before, Cope's ears perked up at the mention of a gravel race. Held in Bluemont— a rustic village with a mix of old homes, former schoolhouses, and historic buildings—the Virginia gravel event featured three distances: the 20-mile Magnifispin, the 50-mile Mini G, and the 100-mile Gravel Grinder National Championship.





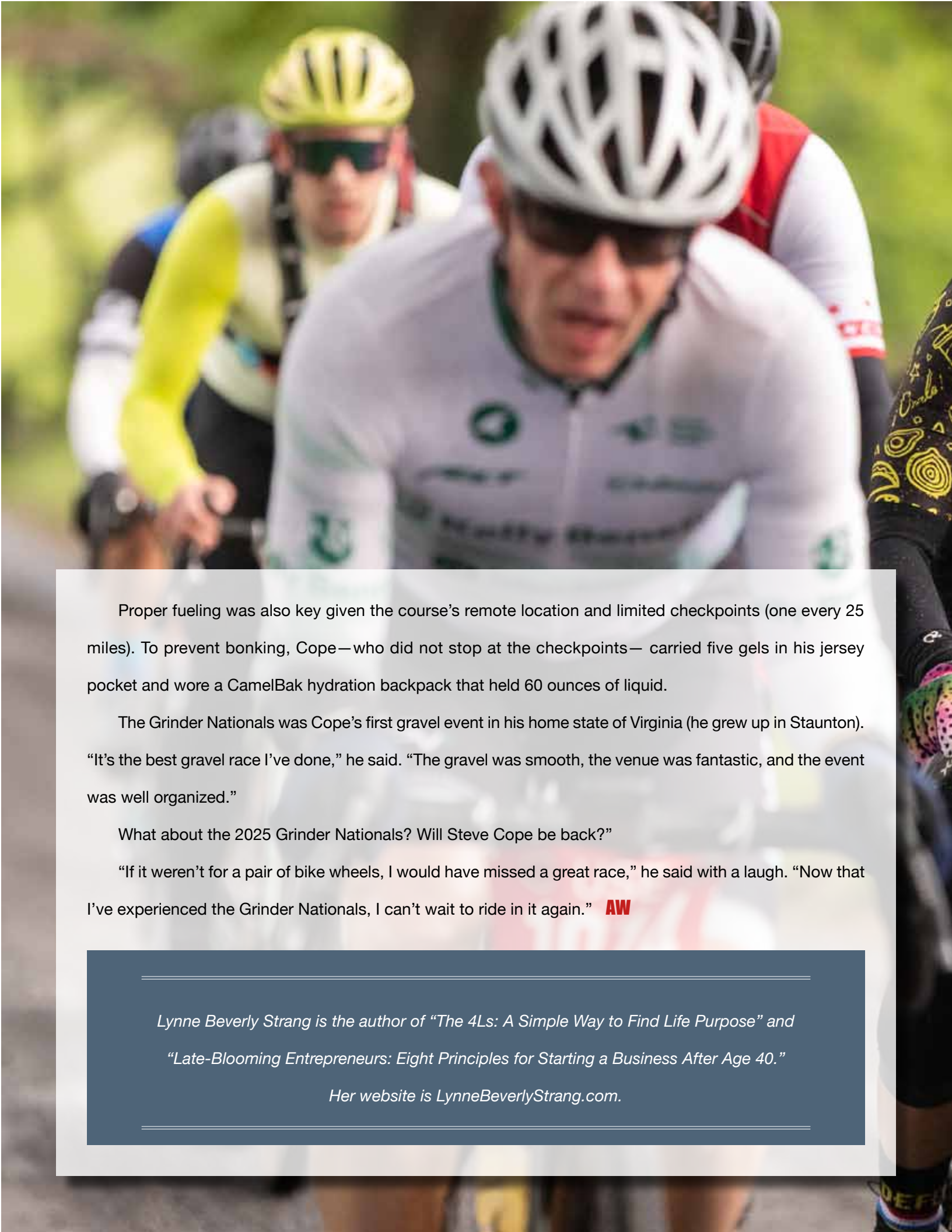
“You should ride in the National Championship,” the friend encouraged. “It attracts strong athletes and features a hilly course that will test your skills.”

Always up for a challenge (and a fun weekend), Cope took his friend’s advice and timed his Virginia trip so he could compete in the Grinder Nationals. That decision turned out to be a good one. Cope, 62, won his age category and placed 12th overall, completing the race in five hours and 17 minutes at an average speed of 19 miles per hour. Not bad for a guy who had only raced gravel a handful of times.

Cope credits his success to his strategy for the course, which consisted of two 50-mile laps. “As you ride in the race, you evaluate everybody’s condition,” he said. “During the first lap, I followed the main pack to learn the course. Then I picked where I was going to make my move.”

“Being small, I am good on the climbs,” said Cope, who is 5’5” tall and weighs 123 pounds. “I thought the finish looked tricky, so I wanted to separate from the group five miles from the finish line; that way, I could use my size as an advantage and climb the last hill before everybody else.”





Proper fueling was also key given the course's remote location and limited checkpoints (one every 25 miles). To prevent bonking, Cope—who did not stop at the checkpoints— carried five gels in his jersey pocket and wore a CamelBak hydration backpack that held 60 ounces of liquid.

The Grinder Nationals was Cope's first gravel event in his home state of Virginia (he grew up in Staunton). "It's the best gravel race I've done," he said. "The gravel was smooth, the venue was fantastic, and the event was well organized."

What about the 2025 Grinder Nationals? Will Steve Cope be back?"

"If it weren't for a pair of bike wheels, I would have missed a great race," he said with a laugh. "Now that I've experienced the Grinder Nationals, I can't wait to ride in it again." **AW**

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*Lynne Beverly Strang is the author of "The 4Ls: A Simple Way to Find Life Purpose" and "Late-Blooming Entrepreneurs: Eight Principles for Starting a Business After Age 40."*

*Her website is [LynneBeverlyStrang.com](http://LynneBeverlyStrang.com).*

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