

When I was *three...*

Kim and Simon Brown are sailing around the world – with their three-year-old daughter. We catch up with Kim to find out about life on board their yacht...

You're on a three-year sailing voyage with your three-year-old daughter Sienna. How's it going so far?

I'm not sure words can convey how amazing things have been so far! We officially started our journey with an 880-mile sail from Gibraltar to Malta. It took us a full week to make the voyage. We got storm-bound in Algeria, spent time with a pod of 50 dolphins, spotted one whale and had a stowaway bird that we named Freddie. Also one of our sails ripped, our generator stopped working and we discovered two leaks. It was definitely a baptism of fire but looking back the journey was a great way to break us in.

Were you worried about going on such a huge trip with a small child?

Of course I was worried and I still am. We're surrounded by water, there are risks involved with sailing and who knows who, or what, we might encounter during our travels. However, I'd be just as worried if we were back in the UK. I'm a mother and once you become a mother there's a small sense of anxiety at all times. But I think this trip will be an amazing experience for our daughter. She'll be able to meet different people from different cultures, try interesting foods, enjoy new traditions and get a true sense about how amazingly beautiful our world is. When reflecting on the benefits of our adventure, my worries pale in comparison.

You'll be (on-board) home-schooling Sienna on the journey – do you think she'll get as good an education as if she were in school?

I'm certain Sienna will get a great education. Instead of reading about the Romans in a textbook, we'll be taking her to see Roman ruins and to learn from real Roman artifacts. Rather than learning adding and subtracting in a classroom setting, Sienna will learn while we're at a market buying our fruit and vegetables. Instead of learning about volcanoes, oceans and mountains from books, Sienna will be learning about them as we visit the various areas.

When we were storm-bound in Algeria, several of the immigration, customs and local police paid us a visit. They educated

Sienna about the desert (Algeria is covered by 70% desert), the animals native to Algeria and gave us all a little history lesson. Sienna was taught how to say 'hello' and 'goodbye' and we spent time making a variety of flags out of coloured paper. How can a classroom beat that? I am 100% confident that all of us are going to get the most amazing education possible. And we're all very grateful for this incredible opportunity.

How do other people react when you've told them about the trip?

Most people react very positively. Every day I have emails from people who read our blog – people either say that they're a few months or years behind us and will be doing a similar adventure, or that they wish they could join us. My family has been very supportive. One newspaper in the UK took a somewhat negative slant to our story saying that we were being irresponsible for taking our daughter out of school. I think that the newspaper could take any positive story and spin it in the wrong direction. Sadly, some people like to read that kind of spin.



Embarking on the three-year journey

Do you think children have enough adventure in their lives?

No! They definitely don't! When I was a child I remember playing outside all day long. I remember riding my bicycle as far as I could go or exploring the woods. My friends and I were free to roam, build forts and find new



Able-seaman Sienna and mum Kim

areas. Nowadays it seems as if children are always kept within an eye's reach. Everyone is terrified about their children getting hurt or taken. I feel that 99.9% of the world is good with good people and it's unfortunate that the 0.1% cause us to stay home, keep safe, fail to explore.

☹ I don't want my daughter to find adventure through an app ☹

And of course there's the whole technology side of things. Instead of playing hide and seek with the neighbourhood kids, Angry Birds (or similar) has taken its place. I think that technology is great and I am finding educational apps on our iPad invaluable for Sienna, but there needs to be a balance. I don't want my daughter to find adventure through an app and I don't want her kept inside. I want her to see, hear, touch, smell and taste the world's magnificent offerings.

And finally, what tips would you give Adventure Travel readers planning a big trip with the family?

1. Make a list of all the positive outcomes you'll get out of the trip. When you're doubting your decision or have boring nay-sayers questioning your choice it will hold you in good stead.
2. Make a resolution that you'll see it through. Decide to go for it and then truly go for it. The universe will conspire to make it happen for you.
3. Don't get too bogged down in details or exact plans. That way when things change, as they always will, you'll be open to a new and perhaps better experience.

Kim and Simon are blogging about their adventure at www.sailingbritican.com. You can also follow them on Twitter (@Sailing-Britican) or find them on Facebook. **AT**