

Introduction

It's Monday morning in Prague, in the Czech Republic. Another workday has arrived. My commute was slightly trickier than usual this morning: I stubbed my toe on my backpack and spilled my mint tea on the floor as I walked from my kitchen to my home-office desk just beneath a skylight, through which glows a cloudless blue sky.

This is my commute every morning ... minus the mint tea mishap.

I am a digital nomad – a worker who earns his salary anywhere in the world that I want to be. It's an enviable lifestyle, for sure, because of the tremendous freedom I have. I work whenever I want. I play whenever I want. And so long as I meet my deadlines, no one cares. They don't care if I'm at my desk in Prague, where I moved to from Los Angeles in 2018. They don't care if I'm writing at a coffee shop or a pub. They don't care if I'm working from an airplane seat 35,000 feet above the Pacific, or on a train, or sitting on a lounge chair having a beer while I write on a beach at a resort on a Greek island. In fact, no one ever checks on me unless they have an idea for a project they want me involved with, or if they want me to switch directions and work on something else at the moment. Everyone is happy. I'm happy because of the work/life balance I've created. And those for whom I write are happy because they know they can count on high-quality work, on time, with no fuss.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, digital nomads existed, but we persevered on the fringes of the workaday world. Cubicle-farm workers who knew about us saw us as a collection of temperamentally unique individuals who somehow managed to thrive outside an office setting. Some of them coveted our lifestyle, but didn't know how to pursue it. Or they figured they couldn't learn to manage such freedom so that they would actually accomplish some work instead of playing all day.

Most of the managers and executives inside the corporate world, meanwhile, tolerated us, at best. They never knew if we were really giving 100% to the organization, or if we were wasting time watching soap operas at home or hanging out on that Greek beach when we should be working.

Today, all of that has changed. And in that change is a huge opportunity for those who understand what's going on, and who have built the skillset necessary for a work-from-wherever lifestyle.

Because of the coronavirus, work-from-wherever is no longer fringe. Almost overnight it became the defining characteristic of America's cubicle culture. The upshot of this is that the business world might never again return to normal. Sure, cubicle farms will still exist. But employers have learned that employees can be just as productive – even more so – when they're at home and they don't face the commute and the distractions of office life. Workers have learned that they can be just as productive – even more so – because they thrive with a better work/life balance. They can work earlier in the morning, and stop working later in the evening, while accomplishing throughout the day all the tasks they want or need to in order to better balance their work life with their personal life.

I sit down at my desk to begin writing every morning between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. I typically stop writing every night between 7 p.m. and midnight. But that's not to imply that I'm chained to my chair for 16 hours a day. Not at all. Throughout the day, I'm regularly out shopping for groceries, or I'm taking a long lunch at one of my favorite pubs in Prague, or I'm spending a couple hours painting, or I've gotten a hankering for a meal I miss from the States so I'm in my kitchen prepping and cooking.

Again, no one cares.

I live my life on my own schedule.

And my point is this: You can too!

That's precisely why I wrote this book: To help you pursue a digital nomad lifestyle, just as I've done.

But who am I? And why does my experience matter?

Well, as a writer residing in Prague and regularly traveling the world, I'm living the digital nomad life that so many people covet. In the last year, my itinerary has included Lebanon, Uruguay, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Latvia, a few Greek islands, Portugal, Russia, and the U.S. Currently, I have assignments or personal writing/travel plans that will take me to the Philippines, Georgia (country, not state), Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, Singapore, Vietnam, South Africa, Namibia, and Scotland ... and an

overnight train journey between Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Zurich, Switzerland, for a travel story I'm writing.

Moreover, I've been a work-from-home writer since 2004, when I was working as a financial reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, where I spent 17 years. I've written eight or nine books. I recently posted my first e-book on Kindle (this is my second). I make side-hustle income from various freelance websites and personal freelance contacts I've accumulated. And my daily life literally revolves around writing about e-income opportunities for a newsletter called *The Savvy Retiree*.

In short, I live this world and I know this world intimately.

And I can assure you that living the life of a digital nomad is not a lottery that only a lucky few of us win. If you want this lifestyle, it's yours for the taking.

Whether you want to quit your job and work from home ... whether you want to buy and refurbish an old van to travel America and Canada as a roaming digital nomad, earning your keep in wherever you alight ... or whether you want to travel from country to country earning money online through whatever skillset you have ... you can do it. That life is just waiting for you to take the first step.

Into Nomadistan is your first step.

Let me assure you right up front, however, that these pages are not going to tell you which employers to contact or how to contact them. They won't tell you which countries are best for this, that, and the other thing. All of those are personal matters tied to your skills, your knowledge base, and your personal wants and needs in a place to live.

Nor will this book tell you how to work and travel the world on the cheap by applying for 47,000 credit cards to collect 1.7 bazillion frequent-flyer miles ... or how to build a blog that earns you \$1 million ... or how to find the best affiliate marketing links ... or how to put together a successful drop-shipping site. Lots of resources exist all over the web, if that's what you're interested in.

Instead, this is a roadmap. I've written *Into Nomadistan* to help you plot your path from here to there. I want to help you move from that initial "I think I want to be a digital nomad" to the point where you can proudly tell everyone "I am a successful digital nomad."

Don't think this lifestyle is an impossible or unrealistic dream. Don't think you haven't the right skills.

It is very much possible. And given the wide range of freelance needs online these days, and the wide range of e-earning opportunities that exist today, you likely do have the right skills, or you can learn them. All you really need is the internal drive to pursue the dream you want to live.

Like everything worth having in life, pursuing that dream requires more than desire. I mean, I desire to have an Aston Martin DB5 like the one Sean Connery drove in the James Bond film, "Goldfinger." But I'm exerting precisely zero effort toward achieving that desire, so I'm quite confident I won't soon be driving an Aston Martin DB5.

Likewise with success as a digital nomad. If you want to earn money online and you want the freedom to live a digital nomad lifestyle in the U.S. or, like me, abroad, you have to put in the effort. You have to do the planning to help ensure your own success. And that's what *Into Nomadistan* is about: Helping you ensure your own success.

I can't help you with desire or effort – that's a you issue. But I can give you a five-step process that will help you prepare and plan for the dream you want to live. See, forethought is required here. Sure, you can just up and leave your existing life, and jump into the deep end of the ocean and try to swim. And you might succeed – some digital nomads certainly do.

But lots certainly don't. They end up disillusioned and broke on some forgotten beach in Thailand, begging friends for money to afford a plane ticket home. That's almost always a function of poor planning. That's just not the way to approach a fundamental lifestyle change. You need to think this through, plot out a course, plan your finances, and put in place certain building blocks that can bolster your chances of success.

Then, when you take that leap into Nomadistan, you'll have the infrastructure and the resources in place that can help ensure you not only survive, but that you thrive.

So, let's prepare you to start living the life you want here in Nomadistan...