

## Fleeing the Country...Without My Baby

Written by Jill Kerr Tepe

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No, I am not a weary soul seeking refuge from an oppressive government. I'm just vacationing out of the country for the first time without my one-year-old daughter.



I'm simultaneously filled with utter excitement and sheer terror.

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Having a baby has been my most extraordinary adventure to date. My daughter Elinor is the light of my life, and the apple of my husband's eye. But for this travel-lover, my first year as a mother has been an adjustment. Instead of an annual European adventure, I have been content to take Elinor on a few domestic trips. Florida twice to visit family; I went with my sister Jenny to NYC for two days when Elinor was four-months-old; Nick and I did a long weekend alone in Indianapolis when she was eight-months-old. We even tried a six-hour road trip in May to a mountain cabin to meet up with some good friends and their daughters. Elinor does great on these trips, but I confess I had wished to do more with her. I had thoughts of us taking her on a European cruise, or renting a small, affordable villa somewhere in a foreign countryside. Just doing something outside of the good ole U.S. of A.

Reality isn't quite as easy as that. I work for myself, so taking time off to have a baby, and then learning to readjust schedules to care for Elinor at home (with a little assistance from my own mommy) and work during her naptimes has presented its own set of challenges, not the least of which is an income change. Factor that into the equation of moving the week I gave birth into a house we semi-renovated and has needed countless repairs and improvements ever since, our travel fund has been less-than-overflowing. Not to mention, creating my daughter's college fund and obtaining all the gear and clothing required to raise a wee one. We're not hard up for cash, it's just that our home and daughter's future obviously take priority in the disposable income column.



