


## My life in travel Rick Stein

## 'I find Malaysian food particularly interesting'

The My Life in Travel column is produced in association with Andalusia Tourism. See [www.andalusia.org](http://www.andalusia.org) 

Rick Stein is a chef and television presenter

**First holiday memory?**

Apart from spending every summer in Cornwall, which I can remember since back until I was about four, my first memory of a foreign holiday was in Spain in the Cantabrian fishing port of Laredo, near Santander. I was eight and remember eating squid in ink sauce.

**Best holiday?**

Last April I went with my fiancée, Sarah, to the Sarojin resort, just outside Khao Lak in Thailand. It was my first South-east Asian holiday since filming the *Far Eastern Odyssey* series. What made it so memorable was eating very good Thai food without a camera pointing at me and having to say intelligent things about it.

**Favourite place in the British Isles?**

I'm lucky enough to live in Padstow. At this moment I am gazing out of my office window on a pale sunny afternoon in November with a spring high tide flooding the Camel Estuary all the way to Rock and the ferry from Padstow to Rock halfway across. I can think of nowhere else I'd rather be.

**What have you learnt from your travels?**

Don't drink local water out of a jug in a market in Bali.

**Ideal travelling companion?**

Apart from Sarah, who I don't get to travel enough with as I'm normally on my way to Australia or she's on her way to Britain, I prefer to travel alone.

**Beach bum, culture vulture or adrenalin junkie?**

I'm sorry but you've failed to ask me the obvious question – food fanatic!

**Greatest travel luxury?**

Turning left when I get on board a plane.



Rick Stein: 'Swimming in the sea in north Cornwall on a sunny summer's morning is pretty close to heaven' PA

**Holiday reading?**

I like to think of myself as a serious reader, but these days I don't read nearly enough. I have a pile of books people have lent me or recommended, which I try to catch up with on holiday. My reading for my next holiday – two weeks on Mollymook beach, south of Sydney where I have a modest beach house – will be: *Lifting the Latch* by Sheila Stewart, *The Sportswriter* by Richard Ford and *Medium Raw* by Anthony Bourdain.

**Where has seduced you?**

I'm captivated by Malaysia; the food is particularly interesting with its influences from China, India, Indonesia and even to a certain extent Europe. I love discussing food with

the locals, who all have opinions about their cuisine. I can't quite understand why the food isn't more popular in Britain.

**Better to travel or arrive?**

Apparently I'm a nightmare in airports, which is why I like travelling alone so I can keep the misplacing of passport and boarding pass to myself, which is rarely achievable as I travel with a film crew so often. However, I always look forward to a long-distance flight and once on my way I enjoy it – it's almost a cocoon of time and space.

**Worst travel experience?**

We were filming in India and got detained at Mumbai airport. Our equipment was impounded because we

didn't have the correct paperwork. They locked it in a room and said that unless we produced £64,000 as a bond, we would not get it back. We waited around for a day until a friend of mine in Goa wrote a cheque for us – that's friendship for you.

**Worst hotel?**

In Athens in the 1970s I twice found myself staying, with my ex-wife Jill, in a brothel (which we genuinely thought was a hotel). To do it once was unfortunate but to do it twice was just plain careless.

**Best hotel?**

Though certainly not the most deluxe hotel I've stayed in, the Metropole Hotel in Hanoi was by far the most interesting, with its French colonial past and clientele including Charlie Chaplin, Noel Coward, Catherine Deneuve and the revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh. The food is great and the wine list is one of the best in South-east Asia.

**Favourite walk/swim/ride/drive?**

I love swimming in Cornwall – to swim in the sea from one end of Harlyn Bay beach to another on a sunny summer's morning is pretty close to heaven. I have a waterproof MP3 player so I listen to opera en route, which I find special too.

**Best meal abroad?**

A plate of Iberico ham and a fino sherry at El Rinconcillo, the oldest Tapas bar in Seville, Spain.

**Favourite city?**

I love Sydney.

**Where next?**

Christmas in Andalusia with four day's filming up to Christmas for my next series, *Rick Stein's Spain*.

Rick Stein will be cooking live at the BBC Good Food Show Winter at the NEC Birmingham from 24-28 November. To book tickets visit [bbcgoodfoodshow.com](http://bbcgoodfoodshow.com)

## Something

## Destinations of the week

## Chicago

This all-American city has far better prospects for Christmas shopping than New York, with lower rates and easy access. For example, Expedia (020-3027 8682) is offering four nights at the Arts-style Palmer Hilton, two blocks from Macy's and the Art Institute for £552 per person on two sharing – and including non-stop flights from Heathrow. Try a test booking for flights out on 2 December. Shopping is only a mention; the city's architecture adds more. The Chicago Architecture Foundation

## Warning of the week

## Dengue risk in Australia

"Dengue fever outbreaks occur periodically in Queensland", warns state government. With the incidence of the mosquito-borne disease less than in other tropical locations, there have been cases in both Townsville and Cairns. "The only caution visitors need take is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes,"

## Bargain of the week

## Barbados and beyond

You can expect plenty of deals for travel to the Caribbean over the Christmas month, and as the season ends it is an excellent time to travel there before the Christmas peak. Currently the offers are for "only" accommodation. Trailfinders (0845 050 trailfinders.com) is selling a week at the three-star Conant Court Beach Hotel Barbados, with breakfast (and transfers) for £74

## Tip of the week

## Tivoli

The gardens at the Hotel of Copenhagen opened for the Christmas season yesterday. Until 23 December visitors to Tivoli can see Santa Claus and watch