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Bambino on Board

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Bambino On Board: Adventures in Europe With an Infant in Tow

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Jerry Soverinsky

relatively new husband, I should note), she didn't react as dismissively as my friends had predicted she would after hearing news of the travel plans. Cautious excitement best describes her reaction – enthusiasm for our impending adventure tempered by anxiety about traveling with our baby Max.

I did my best to reassure her that everything would be great.

"Everything will be great," I said. "Really great."

With that, Max let out a series of deafening screams and went on a crying jag. Jana cradled him in her arms and began softly humming, trying to soothe him. As his cries intensified, so too did Jana's humming. I stood by helplessly as this crescendo of competing sounds played out for several minutes. When Max's cries finally dissipated, Jana continued shushing him and fixed her gaze upon me with an expression I struggled to decipher.

"Really, really great," I added as final reassurance.

Six months later and only a few days after Max's pediatrician announced the rotavirus had finally passed through his system, Jana, Max, and I are on our way to Italy and Switzerland. We're flying – via Copenhagen – to Zurich, where we'll rent a car and drive to Italy's Chianti region, spending three weeks living in an apartment half-way between Florence and Siena, immersing ourselves in all of Tuscany's highlights.

On July 4, we'll return to Switzerland where we'll spend a week based in Interlaken, taking mountain and lake excursions while sampling everything rösti.

For Jana and me, our travel experiences are extensive. Weeks after graduating college, Jana began a two-year stint working on a cruise ship and several years later, after a stint teaching in Chicago, she moved to Mali, where she lived for two years, while teaching kindergarten and traveling through Africa.

While in graduate school, I founded an adventure travel company and from 1990 to 2004 I hosted several thousand travelers on European biking, hiking, culinary, and general sightseeing tours. For the past several years, I've worked as a freelance travel writer, covering everything from the posh and luxurious (Caribbean resorts, five-star hotel openings) to the basic and impoverished (building a house on an Indian reservation–Jana and my honeymoon).

The past nine months have been a blur of activity. Jana took a four-month leave from teaching beginning when Max was born last September then returned to work in January. It's been a stressful adjustment for both of us, balancing two full-time jobs and parenthood, along with chronic sleep deprivation and never-ending piles of laundry scattered throughout our house (clean, unclean ... who knows?).

Our hope is that we enjoy a month of intimate family time with Max, away from phone calls and smartphones and late-night trips to Target. And if we can squeeze in a daily stracciatella gelato and expertly poured espresso, all the better. In the meantime, we hope that we're setting the foundation for a lifetime of great travel adventures for Max.

And while Jana has trekked through the Sahara desert and I've cycled solo cross-country, I'm pretty sure neither experience has prepared us for the challenge of dealing with a trans-Atlantic flight with a 9-month old baby and his overactive bowel.

So join us over the next week weeks by checking out our adventures of traveling with a baby and follow [@jerrysoverinsky](#) for more insights, family travel tips and drama from Europe.



Jerry Soverinsky