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The **system of „Travel Quality“** is structured clearly: We measure the **numbers of highlights**. One main criteria. But the **highlights** are defined by 15 criteria. The **management of their visits** is based on 35 criteria in order to meet world-class standards. So the total system has 51 criteria for the definition of quality.

**Defining a Highlight List
15 criteria**

**The System of
Travel Quality**

**Managing the visit
35 criteria**

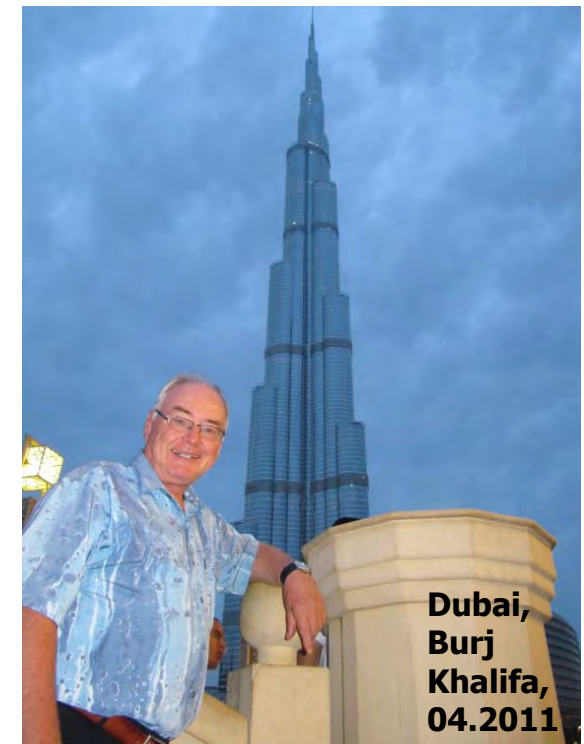
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General criteria for the sites

1. Represent all important forms of nature
2. Represent all important traces of mankind
3. Move or touch people with an open mind
4. Many travelers consider them as worthwhile for traveling
5. The sites must be accessible for a many travelers
- **Objectivity**
6. Have at least **one worldwide superlative**
7. Have several **regional superlatives** that make them worldwide unique
8. The superlatives are measured by **criteria** that characterize the site
9. Categorizing criteria form a convincing set of the **uniqueness**
10. Have an extreme evaluation of **acknowledged institutions** or people
- **Systematic**
11. Each site is categorized by about 1500 systematic **categories**
12. Each site is **ranked** within this category and has a top position

Criteria for the List

13. The totality of the highlights form a doable travel concept, **a traveler's life list**
14. The list has a maximum
15. Uses a systematic terminology, classifies the location and the access



Pre-Check

1. Develop a long-term concept for traveling globally
2. What is your level of aspiration? World-class? Or individual performance levels?
3. If you want to go for world-class, dedicate a major part of your life to traveling
4. Check if you have the spirit for leaving the beaten track sometimes and for going to geographical extremes
5. Check your physical pre-conditions
6. Check your financial means for an ambitious itinerary
7. Integrate your travel concept into your life concept seeing it with a holistic view

Go for

1. Go for a broad spectrum of travel objectives, not a specific category
2. Make sure that you want to learn traveling with an open mind
3. Include World Heritage Sites, the candidates, unique places and superlatives in your itinerary
4. Go for contents and not formalities, go for enjoyment and fun
5. Optimize your itinerary and watch the efficiency with regard to your overall concept
6. Cross all 7 continents and see every UN country
7. Cross all oceans and see their underwater world

How

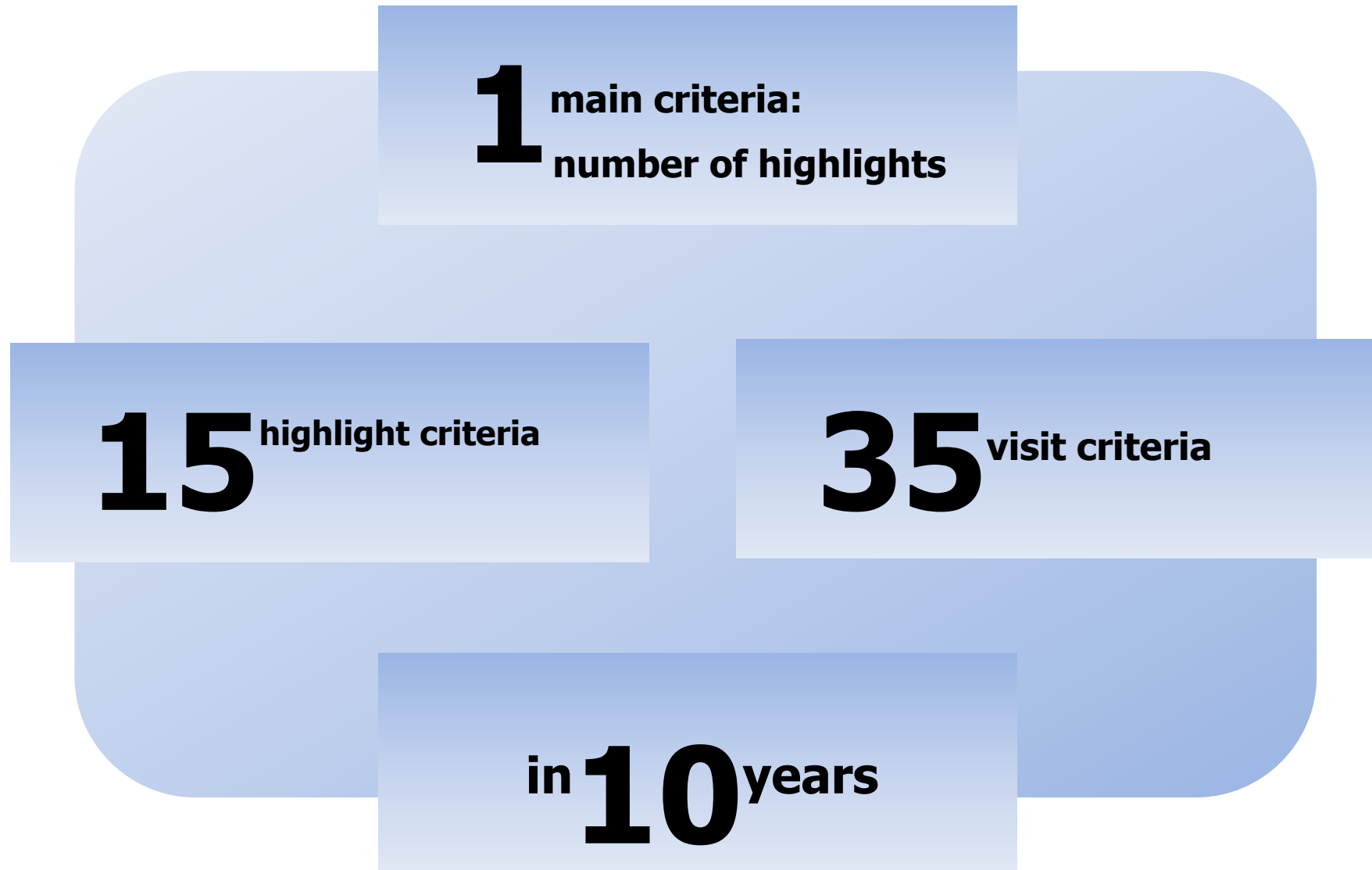
1. Assign a reasonable amount of time for a visit of your travel objectives, enough to experience each of them
2. Watch your travel plan even in difficult situations; flexibility is nice, but your overall goals are more important
3. Go for diversity in transport and style
4. Be flexible in spending - from free of charge to seven stars
5. Calculate the price-performance-ratio and compare
6. Cope with risks and stress, but you set limits so that the overall concept is not jeopardized
7. Be optimistic, keep always a positive attitude, even with adversities

Implement

1. Travel light and standardize packing and all hotel actions to ease the logistics
2. Select your guides carefully, get meaningful references
3. Get updated information about risks if necessary: In the morning for the day to come
4. Ensure that you experience your travel objective appropriately
5. Stay friendly even if the going gets tough
6. Travel health consciously
7. Reflect your travel day at the end of each day: What was the highlight? And why?

Document

1. Share your experiences: Fellow travelers, friends, social media – get other opinions
2. Make your contribution to the preservation of some visited sites, even the smallest amount will do
3. Reflect your experiences in a way that you can retrieve them years later, every travel objective must be retrievable
4. Document your travels completely and efficiently; planing and documentation should be integrated
5. Ensure that the essentials – the highlights - are documented verbally and visually
6. Mimerize others with your travel stories, write them for multi-purpose
7. Reflect your travel experiences in intervals, maybe every 5 years





In the Congo River, DRC, 2015, Frank and Teo

Frank Wigand Grosse-Oetringhaus

The best traveled - in quality - based on highlights

“...your travel quality is unique worldwide.”, Harry Mitsidis, founder of TBT, Athens

“...you are the best in quality travel...”, Valentin Sazhin, Lodestar, New York

„You are the most thoroughly traveled man in the world. Unique!”, Pinelopi Bizas, Athens

“No one has traveled to China so wide and thoroughly...”, Lissy Xu, Guilin, China

“Frank is the Patriarch of all travelers”, Babis Bizas, Greece

The scores of Frank:

June 2018

- **No. 1 in the cross-comparison of all 9 renowned lists, all clubs and ISO, UN**
- **No. 1 in Highlights: 4.700 of 5.000 places (2019)**
- **No. 1 in UNESCO World Heritage Sites: 940 out of 1052 sites and No. 1 in the UNESCO Tentative List: 558 out of 1.707**
- **No. 1 in the club „The Best Travelled“ (June 2015)**
- **24 projects in helping organizations to get onto the Tentative List of the UNESCO**

The claim to be best in quality is based on the **number of highlights** and a **system of 15 criteria for the highlights and 35 criteria for the visit**. As long as the 5000 list is not published the claim is **proven by a cross-comparison of all 9 renowned lists**. The 5000 list is only an add-on.

Four dimensions of travel quality: (1) Highlights – (2) of the whole world – (3) with passion - and (4) interaction.

1. Highlights - beyond quantity : “Most traveled” is based on quantity. However, “Best traveled” is ranked on quality. We believe that not the number of regions will make it, but the amount of highlights. They can be defined objectively and systematically. “Best traveled” are those who have seen most of the highlights – the unique places. Augustinus and later Marco Polo said: “The world is a book. Those who don’t travel read only one page.” - The “best traveled” have read the whole book. It can only be a book of highlights.

2. The whole world – comprehensive – in 10 years: We are striving for a list, complete with all countries, relevant regions, administrative units and all highlights: A System of the World Highlights. By investigating the relevant sources like the World Heritage List and by traveling we define a traveler’s life list, an objective and systematic list that answers the question: What is the whole world? We want to answer the core question comprehensively: What should you have seen if you want to say: I have seen “the whole world” - unique sites, superlatives, defined by clear criteria - the top 5 for about 1,000 categories - about 5,000 places. 2006 till 2016 we have proved that you can visit all of them in 10 years.

3. Passion: - dedicated to traveling and the UNESCO World Heritage: Traveling is the only thing we do, and it is fun... most of the time. It is the best we can think of, thus the passion. Traveling enlivens our mind to preserve the beauty of our planet. We are contributing to the preservation by supporting the World Heritage Sites. But our selection reaches much further - all inspiring and interesting travel destinations.

4. Interaction: - coping with intensity: The challenge of the intensity of our traveling is coping with the continuous inflow of information and

Summary: The Presentation on „Travel Quality“: Why and How?



Kepahiang, Sumatra, Rafflesia, 4.2012

Eight key messages:

1. Travel quality is based on highlights
2. They can be defined in a systematic and objective way
3. The World Heritage List is valuable, but covers only 20% of the „points of interest“, but they are all on our list
4. We have to find a comprehensive standard for a list that covers a much broader spectrum
5. 5.000 highlights is the total number to be considered, but for 10% we aren't sure if the definition is objective
6. 4.500 unique top places is the maximum an ambitious traveler can see after a „working life“ in 10 years
7. World-class traveling comes with intensity up to the limits; it is neither stress-free, nor risk-free
8. We share our experience with others; we support institutions which protect the beauty of our planet; we thank those who support us.

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Teodoro Murallon on facebook

Please note that we stopped travel

Summary: The Essence of „Travel Quality“: What is it?

We have explained our concept of travel quality. The system and the key aspects. 102 pages: What is „Travel Quality“? Can we condense it into two words? Yes, we can:



Teo in the Ice Tunnel under the Ice Waves in Antarctica, 12.2015
You want to follow? It is not easy! I didn't.
These colors are real, not enhanced.
This experience is unique and intense.

The base:

- Travel Quality has a **body** - **the highlights,**
- Travel Quality has a **mind** - **which selects them by uniqueness**
- Travel Quality has a **soul** - **the passion in striving for the very best and the most intense experience.**

Therefore:

Travel Quality is about
uniqueness and intensity

Compare Your Concept of Traveling (1)

101

General Concept

Our Concept

Your Concept?

Part 1 ---- Planning

➤ An answer to the question: Why do you travel?	We want to become the leader in travel quality by traveling for content and not formalities	
➤ For what content?	(1) 5000 highlights including all World Heritage Sites. (2) Secondary: All countries. (3) Restricted: All subdivisions for the biggest countries. (4) Remote places if there are substantial reasons for it, e.g. landmarks on a circumnavigation.	
➤ What is your travel style?	Systematic	
➤ Do you have a long-term concept for defining your travel objectives?	Minimum of 4500 highlights in 10 years	
➤ How do you gather your travel ideas?	(1) From all media (2) We interview the best travelers (3) We define our gaps by a data bank	
➤ Do you optimize your itinerary for efficiency? (in terms of objectives, time, climate and duration)	Our itinerary aims at efficient logistics with a continuous flow of highlights, we minimize days without highlights and travel time, we optimize according to local climate	
➤ How many formats do you use for planning, traveling and documentation? All different or all the same? Does your agent use your planning format or <u>only</u> his own?	We <u>always</u> use <u>one</u> format in Excel for the itinerary: One line per day: Day, date, from, to, transport (key data), activity (visits), service (transfers), highlights (candidates), overnight (hotels), meals, country (and provinces). The "itinerary" is the core for everything, especially the documentation. We separate hotel and contact lists: Only temporary.	



Part 2 ---- Attitude

➤ Do you travel with a spirit of a pioneer?	Our general concept "All highlights and all countries" includes remote and extreme objectives only as a supplement, so there are limits to being a pioneer	
➤ Do you travel with an open mind? Are you open for all kind of sites?	Traveling as generalist with a focus on World Heritage Sites	
➤ Do you accept a reasonable degree of risk?	Overall: 4 months of "Risk tourism" with a concept of "risk management" = an exception. The rest: Low risk	
➤ Do you accept a reasonable degree of stress? Are you aware of your limits?	Annual medical check-ups, average fitness, fit enough for both high altitude and for diving	

Compare Your Concept of Traveling (2)

General Concept

Our Concept

Your Concept?

Part 3 ---- Implementation

❖ Understand the context of the site and the development over time	We use <u>predominately</u> sources which show the context: World Heritage List, maps, guide books, rankings, private collection of materials on highlights
❖ Travel with enhanced intensity	We travel individually in principal, in groups only if there is no other option. We often rent vehicles, have guides, prefer hotels with easy access to the sites and we travel with the best possible timing, that is the "right" season
❖ Travel in luxury if this intensifies the experience and you can afford	In choosing hotels, we focus on the best view to an event or to the "heart" of the site, we go for price-performance
❖ Travel with minimal luggage	34 liter rucksack per person as the basic equipment
❖ Standardize the routines for efficient use of time	We standardize everything: Planning, hotel booking, hotel utilization, documentation – often we use agents.
❖ Derive simple guidelines for implementation; they show that your travel concept is not just theory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A bit more than one highlight per day as an average (2) We never stay more than 3 days in one place (3) We avoid changes of the itinerary at any cost (4) We never give our passport to anybody (except ships) (5) We try always to be friendly when in trouble



Kosak fort in Ochotsk, 7.2015

Part 4 ---- Documentation

❖ Document daily	Route, photos, diary, highlights
❖ Condense your experience to travel stories	We focus on uniqueness
❖ Regroup the travel stories by theme to understand the global context	Superlatives by theme: e.g. human development, search for gold, animal encounters etc.
❖ Contribute to the preservation of what you have seen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) We support environmental protection (HDI) (2) We work for the World Heritage Development (3) We campaign for "Empathy"
❖ Share your experience with others	We are present on Facebook almost daily. We frequently have contact with experts in their fields.

Paris, France: „**A Moveable Feast**“ by **Ernest Hemingway**

This book is about Hemingway's time in the Paris, 1920 with other Lost Generation expatriates. You will experience the locations and follow the footsteps of Fitzgerald, Joye and others.

Germany and more: „**A Tramp Abroad**“ by **Mark Twain**

Frankfurt and Heidelberg before the great wars? Twain takes readers on a humorous trip down the Main and Rhine rivers and beyond to Switzerland, eastern France and Italy.

South Pacific: **James Cook: The Journals** – Penguin Classics, 1999.

James Cook is arguably the most innovative and forward-thinking of all explorers of the 18th century. He also kept a vivid record of this groundbreaking voyages, in which he describes new territory in the southern hemisphere.



Arabia: **Arabian Sands** by **Wilfred Thesiger**. Published in 1959, Thesiger's account of a dangerous journey through the Arabian deserts has met with considerable critical acclaim since. Over the course of five years, the early explorer recorded the lives of the remote tribes. His tales of hardships and unlikely friends have a timeless appeal for all travelers.

Anhui, China: „**The Good Earth**“ by **Pearl S. Buck**

Nobel Prize winner Pearl S. Buck introduced western audiences to a Chinese family's life prior to WWI. She beautifully captures the ups and downs of living off the land, as well as life on the fringe in the streets of Nanjing.

South America: „**The Motorcycle Diaries**“ by **Ernesto „Che“ Guevara**

In 1950, Che and a fellow student traveled through Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. All that he witnessed on his travels had a great impact on his future political views. At its heart, however, it's a great travelogue.

USA: „**Travels with Charley**“ by **John Steinbeck**

Explore the United States of 1960, the year the country joined the Vietnam War, US/Soviet tensions were high and Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act. From New England to Montana and California to the Deep South - you'll get a feel for the country.

Thailand: **Alex Garland: The Beach**, Penguin Books, London 1997.

A great backpacker story – imaginative travel writing. From Khao San Road it leads to a dream land and ends in a disaster.

Europa/Asia: **Philippe Menard: Marco Polo**. The story of a legendary journey. Primus, Darmstadt 2009. The most famous travel ever, following a trade route, exploring China, reporting about the residence of Kublai Khan.

Allow us to close with a question: Who is the greatest traveler of all times?

- Who rediscovered a continent in a spectacular, systematic and scientific way?
- Who ever had deeper insights while climbing the highest mountain in the world (measured from earth's center)?
- Who revolutionized the understanding of nature ?
- Whose success in traveling was celebrated to a higher degree than anybody elses?
- Whose name has been given to more creatures, plants and phenomena on earth than anybody elses?
- Who has written the most comprehensive work on nature – a humungous work based on travels?

Andrea Wulf can answer these questions on an extremely well researched basis; my deep respect.

