

TRAVEL Q & A

A team with an enviable road record

Jeff Siegel and his son, Spence, are all-star sports fans: The father-son team from Chicago have visited every National Basketball Association arena and, come Friday, every Major League Baseball stadium in North America. At the end of their nearly 11-year quest, the duo will have ticket stubs from 30 arenas and 30 stadiums. That's a lot of peanuts and overpriced soda. Travel's Andrea Sachs caught up with Jeff and Spence, now bound for college, for a conversation before the pair set off to nab their final three — the Florida Marlins' Sun Life Stadium in Miami, the Philadelphia Phillies' Citizens Bank Park and the Washington Nationals' Nationals Park. (If you miss them in the stands, Jeff will be signing copies of his family travel book, "RelationTrips," next Sunday at Hooray for Books! in Old Town.) Excerpts:

How did this adventure begin?

Jeff: Almost 11 years ago, when Spence's mom and I divorced, it was really important for me to maintain the close bond. One evening, we were watching our beloved Chicago Bulls playing the San Antonio Spurs. On the bottom of the screen, they put up a graphic with the next two games on the Bulls' road trip, which were in Dallas and Houston. When an NBA team goes down to Texas, they play all three teams, known in the parlance of the NBA as the Texas Swing. Spence looked at me with those big, bulging 6-year-old eyes and said, "Maybe one day we can go on our Texas Swing. What do you think?" Over the next couple of weeks, I planned our own Texas Swing. We came up with the idea [of visiting every official arena and stadium] on the second or third trip.

Why did you choose sports venues as your challenge?

Jeff: It was a no-brainer because we are sports freaks.

How did you plan such an odyssey?

Jeff: Early on it was easy, because you're looking at a universe of 60 — 30 and 30. Years ago, we did the entire California coast over two weeks and hit five ballparks. We've done the East Coast and driven across Canada.

But when we moved further into the number of parks and arenas, we had to get a lot more strategic.

Do you have any favorite teams or cities?

Spence: I would start with Chicago, because that's our home town, and the United Center [the Bulls' home court], of course, and U.S. Cellular Field, because we are White Sox fans. But over time you start to gain a respect for which stadiums and which arenas you feel strongest about. I'd say PNC Park in Pittsburgh and Petco Park in San Diego.

Jeff: For me, the amazing memories were tied to events and occurrences that took place on the road. Some of them are silly little stories, like seeing tumbleweed while we were driving across New Mexico or coming across what we called the Carnival Graveyard. Out in this open part of Arizona, there were all these beat-up carnival rides for sale. Last spring break, we had to drive from Salt Lake City to Denver in one day, and we hit all kinds of weather coming across Wyoming, from sunshine to snowstorms to hail. We were expecting locusts next.

Do you have any rituals or traditions before you attend a game?

Spence: Before every game, we take a picture outside the stadium. An hour before the



Jeff and Spence Siegel with former Twins curveballer and 2011 Hall of Fame inductee Burt Blyleven at Target Field in Minneapolis.

game, we'll walk around the entire arena or stadium and see what they offer.

Did you ever tire of stadium and arena food?

Spence: One of the things we like to look for when we're making our rounds is different foods. When you're in Philadelphia, of course, there is Philly cheese-steak. When you're in Cincinnati, five-way chili. On the West Coast, they have garlic fries. We get that as opposed to the standard hot dog.

Jeff: When Spence was 8, 9, 10 years old, the question wasn't if he was going to have chicken tenders and fries at least once a day but whether he was going to have chicken tenders and fries more than once a day.

Did you try to get a sense of place outside the venue?

Jeff: We've pretty much been in every major city and seen every landmark and all the attractions. One of my greatest memories was when we were in Preservation Hall in New Orleans late in the evening after a

New Orleans Hornets game. And then we were on Bourbon Street taking in the sights and sounds and history associated with jazz.

Now that you've almost completed your challenge and Spence is heading off to school [Bradley University to study sports communication], what's next?

Jeff: He'll obviously be home for winter break and spring break, and while we've now hit all the existing ballparks and arenas, there are new ones opening up — the New Jersey Nets move to Brooklyn in a year. We're also infatuated with minor league baseball. We've already talked about fashioning trips around the entire minor league. And there are only — Spence, how many are there?

Spence: Probably around 120, I'd say.

Jeff: That should keep us busy until Spence maybe has a kid of his own, and then either he carries on the tradition or we can do three generations of relation-trips.

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WHAT'S THE DEAL?

This week's best travel bargains around the globe.

LAND

● Hawaii's Aqua Hotels and Resorts is offering a **first-night rate of \$10** on stays of three nights or more at any of its boutique properties on **Oahu, Maui, Kauai or Molokai**. Rates vary by hotel. At the Aqua Aloha Surf & Spa on Waikiki Beach in Oahu, for example, pay \$188 for three nights, instead of the usual \$267. Rate includes breakfast, daily newspaper and in-room high-speed Internet. Add about \$12 per night in taxes. Book by Aug. 31; stay Aug. 11-Dec. 22. Info: 866-971-2782, www.aquaresorts.com/aquas-10th-birthday-special.
● The newly renovated Rosewood Hotel Georgia in **downtown Vancouver, B.C.**, has a **half-price deal** on its superior rooms: \$204 per night double instead of the usual \$418. Rooms in the 1927 Georgian Revival property come with free WiFi and spa-inspired bathrooms with heated floors. Add \$29 per night in taxes. Two-night minimum required. Stay through Aug. 14. Info: 888-ROSEWOOD, www.rosewoodhotelgeorgia.com.

SEA

● Cruise Masters Travel is offering **special perks** on Azamara's Dec. 18-27 **holiday cruise from Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Aires**. Reserve a Category 8 ocean-view cabin and receive a free upgrade to a veranda room; round-trip **air from Washington Dulles** to Rio with a return from Buenos Aires; ground transfers; and a \$300 per-cabin onboard credit or one night's hotel stay before or after the trip. Cost is \$3,211 per person double, including taxes. Add \$260 per person for a Brazilian visa. Book by July 31. Booked separately, air runs about \$1,450. Info: 877-268-1111, www.cruisemasterstravel.com.

● On select cruises, Silversea is offering **reduced single supplement fees of 25 percent of the double occupancy rate**, compared with regular fees of up to 100 percent. Offer can also be combined with other deals, such as free airfare and onboard credits. For example, on the 10-day round-trip cruise from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to the Caribbean, which departs Feb. 26, the double occupancy rate is \$4,438; singles pay an additional 25 percent, or \$5,548, including taxes, and receive free air from

Washington Dulles or BWI Marshall. Info: 877-276-6816, www.silversea.com/singles.

AIR

● **Southwest** has a **systemwide sale**, with one-way fares starting at \$49, plus taxes. For example, flights from **BWI Marshall to Pittsburgh** start at **\$119** round trip, including taxes (fares on other airlines start at about \$140); flights from Washington Dulles to Chicago start at \$265 (vs. about \$290). Book at www.southwest.com by Aug. 1; travel Aug. 23-Dec. 14.

● AirTran is having a **systemwide sale**, with one-way fares from \$54, plus taxes. Sample round-trip fares, including taxes: **BWI Marshall to Bermuda**, \$253; to Cancun, \$332; to Nassau, Bahamas, \$291. Book by Aug. 1; travel July 30-Nov. 16. Other airlines are matching. Info: 800-247-8726, www.airtran.com.

● British Airways has last-minute deals on **Club World business-class flights** from Washington Dulles or BWI Marshall to **London Heathrow**. With the deal, one-way fares are \$1,055 from both airports, compared with \$1,447. Round-trip fare, with taxes, is \$2,409. Book by July 24; travel July 26-Sept. 4. Seven-day advance purchase required, instead of the usual 14 days. Info: 800-247-9297, www.ba.com.

PACKAGE

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— K.C. Summers

Submit travel deals to whatsthedeal@washpost.com. Include your phone number and e-mail address. Prices were verified at press time Thursday, but deals sell out and availability is not guaranteed. Some restrictions may apply.

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