

## Travelers Century Club (TCC)

My friend Dennis heard about the group in 2013 and suggested that their list of countries to visit was a reasonable goal. There were many smaller countries that were listed which had some interesting features and history. The group was actually founded in Los Angeles (hence the Charter Chapter is in Los Angeles). The list seemed intriguing and the criteria of counting countries seemed reasonable with setting foot in any country as counting as a visit. There were about 340 listed and special awards were given to people who and managed the entire list. I had no interest or capability in visiting every country, but I thought I should get some variety in my travels, so reaching 100 on the list to join the club seemed like a doable objective. The quest ended up lasting 10 years. After all, Chris had a full-time job with limited vacation time.

1. **Meetings** occur across the world. In the Los Angeles area, there are 4 in-person meetings a year, two in Los Angeles County and two in Orange County. I have also been invited to meetings in San Diego County. There are interesting presentations and interesting people at the meetings. People seem to show up from all over the world. There are also several online Zoom meetings with accomplished travel speakers that attract about 100 attendees.
2. **Centurian** "World Travel: The Passport to Peace through Understanding" shows up quarterly. The 8-page newsletter has a list of TCC events online, and around the world. There is a travel article, a summary of various chapter meetings, a photo contest, a list of new members reaching 100 or more countries, mention of well-traveled members that have reached 150, 200, 250, 300, or all 330 countries (not easy). Some mention of difficult countries to reach, and the "Just for Fun" quiz, where first correct entry wins. Over the past few years, I have done very well at the quiz, so I have to make sure that my entry is late.
3. **Country List** Looking through the list of countries has shown me where a lot of places are, and guided me to visit some places that otherwise I would not have even considered. I really liked riding a bicycle through the Aland Islands, and visiting the casino to collect chips from Lesotho. The stories of attempting to visit Pitcairn Island, Diego Garcia, Madagascar, and Congo are all interesting. I looked through the maps to find areas where a 5 or more countries could be visited on the same trip to reduce the amount of travel required.
4. **Bring Money/Time** I liked the presentation by the couple who sailed a boat around the world. However, many places require some sort of airplane travel. I have really tried to minimize time and distance on an airplane, but still have had several flights of more than 15 hours from Los Angeles. My guess on the minimum cost is about \$1000 per country (2023).
5. **Future Plans** I am happy to just become a member at 100 countries and have no plans to visit more. Certainly, I regard 150 as impossible for me and I have no interest even trying.
6. **River Cruises** This is my favorite mode of travel; I can sit on the deck and watch the world go by from close range and see how people are making use of the river now and what the history of movement has been in the area. I bring my bicycle along and ride through cities and back roads in the area.
7. **Travel Agents** It seems that travel agents arrange tours that appeal to a group of people and then keep them together. This means that tours are directed at the average tourist. Since I have a skin blister condition, walking any sort of distance is not feasible. Keeping up with a tour group is also not desirable. Several people that I have met through TCC use travel agents to arrange their visits to out of the way places. Experience with such places is helpful.