



# 2023 Review – Personal and blog, in numbers, in pictures...

By Floriane

This year, we're finally taking the time to write a **more personal article**. We're used to doing **annual reviews**, which allow us to take stock of how far **we** 've come and also to **prepare for the year ahead!** But we never took the time to write about it.

This is also the type of article we **love to read from other bloggers**, we often learn a lot and it always inspires us a lot. So we hope, in our small way, to do the same.

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## Personal assessment and travel 2023

If you've just arrived here and don't know us, we've written about our background in a [Who we are](#) article, and there are a few nuggets in the photos!

On vous explique en quelques lignes notre parcours, nous, c'est Floriane et Matthieu, nous sommes passionnés de voyages et surtout de **voyage au long cours**. Nous aimons nous imprégner de l'ambiance en limitant le nombre d'activité pour en profiter davantage. En 2016 et 2017, nous avons effectué un [tour du monde en sac à dos](#) d'un an.

Then back in France, after becoming parents in 2020, we decided to concentrate on exploring the **European continent**, which we explored for **14 months by motorhome**. It's a way of traveling that we love, because it's perfectly suited to small **children**. Our little adventurer was 1 1/2 years old when we left for the first time.

On the professional side, we'll detail our career path below. After having worked in a company, we now work on our own and remotely. This allows us to leave more often and for longer.

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## Travel: 4 months in Scandinavia

So where are we off to?

Nous commençons cet article par le truc cool de notre année 2023, notre voyage de [4 mois en Scandinavie](#) qui n'était pas du tout prévu. Nous avons d'autres projets en tête qui ne se sont pas concrétisés. Tout ça pour dire que nous avons aussi notre lot de galères comme tout le monde.

As our **motorhome** was technically ready, all we had to do was load it up and set off on our adventure. That's what we love most about this mode of travel, the flexibility it offers us. We can leave for Europe almost overnight, and then take the time to plan the itinerary as we go.

We had **3 destinations** in mind (we're never short of ideas for trips), but our final choice was **Scandinavia**. So we made up our minds just a few days before hitting the road, because going to northern countries in summer is not at all natural for us.

In the run-up to this trip, we read a number of reports from travelers in converted vehicles complaining that they had suffered from the fickle summer weather, especially in Norway. We spend most of our days outside, so the **weather** is always an important criterion in our choice of destinations.

**So why did we fall for Scandinavia in summer?** Many travelers rank **Norway among the most beautiful countries in Europe**. We wanted to form our own opinion, and indeed, we understand, why we totally validate it. A second criterion is the horrendously high cost of living in Scandinavia (the cost of living is around **30% higher than in France**) we knew that by leaving in a camper van without having to pay for accommodation every night, and by stocking up on food, we would drastically reduce the cost of a trip to these countries.

By way of comparison, we spent the same monthly amount as on our trip to southern Europe. We drastically limited our expenses, thanks to our full shopping list, without eating out and also, as this is a country with a lot of **nature reserves**, the good news is that hiking is still free!

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So which route did we take?

We quickly crossed France and Germany to get to the south of Sweden (Trelleborg) as quickly as possible. We spent ten days along the **south-west coast of Sweden**. Then it was on to 7 wonderful weeks in **Norway**, from the south to the island of Senja, of course with a huge stopover **on the incredible Lofoten Islands**.

Then, we needed to rest after our stay in Norway and wanted to take our time heading back home. We therefore explored Sweden again for about a month, including Stockholm, before spending around two weeks in Denmark with several days in the beautiful [city of Copenhagen](#). Finally, we wrapped up the trip with two full weeks in eastern France, a region we hardly knew.

We've started writing a full blog post about this road trip, which should be out soon.

So what's Scandinavia like in summer?

No suspense, it was just incredible, we enjoyed it! We fell in love with the [south-west Swedish coast](#), where we discovered that the **Swedish way of life** is very different from ours: more organized, more respectful, the love of beauty is omnipresent and children are considered as beings in their own right. In short, the Swedes have adopted an **art of living** that focuses on **well-being** and **happiness** in all its simplicity, and that has left a lasting impression on us. And there are numerous nature parks all over Sweden. This clearly made us want to move to Sweden. Read our guide to exploring [Sweden in a camper van or van here](#), as well as our article on [twenty must-see places in Sweden](#), some of them completely unusual. Our map will help you find your way around.

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And we were amazed by the beauty of the **Norwegian** landscape almost daily during our 7 weeks. This country offers an incredible diversity of landscapes: **fjords**, **lakes**, forests, waterfalls, **glaciers**, **heavenly beaches**, mountains... Not to mention all the animals we were lucky enough to observe in the wild, including a **moose and its baby** and numerous **reindeer**. Right up to our last day in Norway, we had our eyes full of it, and never got tired of it.

This country has gone straight into our ranking of favorite countries. It's also worth noting that we've had **incredible weather**, with only a few days of rain, which can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The weather was exceptional and we enjoyed it every day.

A trip isn't just about beautiful landscapes, it's also about **meeting new people**. We've also met some great travelers, both spontaneously and thanks to social

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networks. As we write this review, we have a big thought for our friends Justine and Rénaud, with whom we traveled for 6 weeks in Norway.

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## What's it like to travel with a 3-year-old?

This is obviously a recurring question: what tips do you have for traveling with a small child? In fact, we've already answered this question in our article on [our Tour of Europe](#). We traveled for 10 months with our daughter, who was 1? years old at the start of our previous trip.

So here, we're going to focus on the differences, as she was **3 years old at the time of our Scandinavian trip** and had 10 months of motorhome experience. All in all, this departure has been much easier for her, and for the whole family too. She already had her bearings, knew the motorhome and our way of travelling by heart. We consider our motorhome to be our second home, or even our main home, as we don't yet have a main residence.

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This is an age when children have strong demands for autonomy, so we've optimized our interior so that she can do things for herself. We've set up her bunk with her games so she can access them easily, and a space with her clothes so she can get into her pyjamas on her own, for example. We'll go into more detail in our article on our 4 months in Scandinavia.

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## Review of long-distance travel

It's a subject we don't usually broach, because we didn't necessarily feel legitimate or understood to talk about the difficulty of returning to a sedentary lifestyle. This is our third big comeback, and for once, it's one that feels a little sweeter than previous ones. It's a bit of a taboo subject, but coming back from a trip lasting several months is always difficult. After the bubble of travel, returning home often means a mountain of things to deal with: administrative matters, finding accommodation, adapting to a new rhythm, less time to enjoy yourself...

After our somewhat catastrophic return in the **spring of 2022** (after our 10 months in Southern Europe), and the **completely botched** one **in 2017** after our round-the-world trip), we learned from our mistakes and this time we wanted to be better prepared.

For those who also have trouble with the return from a trip or who will be returning soon, here's what we've tried to put in place

- **Finding a place to live:** If you don't own your own home, as we do, it's best to plan ahead for your return. In our case, we were only leaving for a few months, so we already knew we needed to live by the ocean. Before we left, we had found a base for our return to the island of Oleron.
- **already making travel plans:** we're planning a trip to the sun in February and a longer trip in a few years' time.
- try out **new activities:** we've tried surfing and long-distance sailing, and we've taken up sporting activities that we used to enjoy. It's a great way to take on new challenges and meet new people.
- **social life** : surround yourself with inspiring, positive people to help you move forward, this is a very important point not to be neglected.

Of course, we've also had our share of problems, and not everything happened overnight. The most important thing for us was to maintain our personal rhythm and our need for discovery.

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## **The island of Oleron our base**

As you can imagine, we found our base on the island of Oléron. We realized during our trip to Southern Europe that living by the water is pretty damn pleasant.

We rented a house for 10 months during the school year. This gives us time to think about the next stage of our adventures. In the meantime, we're taking full advantage of this incredible natural setting to work serenely.

If you'd like to explore this little corner of paradise, we've put together a series of articles to help you organize your [stay on the island of Oleron](#), with all our best addresses.

## **Professional assessment**

### **So how do you make money?**

As a reminder, before leaving on our **round-the-world** trip, we were living in Paris. Matthieu had set up his own business, and I was working in a media agency. When we moved back to Bordeaux, I became a teacher and Matthieu worked in an SEO agency.

Since **June 2021**, we've changed our lives once again, so you shouldn't be too surprised. Today, we are both self-employed. So we **can travel** as we please.

We became parents in 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, and very quickly felt the need for **time** and also **flexibility** in our schedules to be available for our daughter. If we have to fit into a box, we're a **semi-nomadic family**. We know that this mode isn't for everyone, but we love having variations/changes in our professional and personal projects.

Today, we juggle 3 professional activities, so our days are well-paced and we never get bored!

- Matthieu est **freelance dans le secteur du digital** depuis 4 ans maintenant, cette année a marqué un véritable tournant pour lui, car il a travaillé avec seulement quelques clients sur des projets plus importants. (35% de nos revenus)
- We both work on the **travel blog**, and I'm mainly in charge of writing and RS. Matthieu concentrates on the technical side and of course on SEO, keeping a close eye on our statistics. (45% of our revenues)
- We also have a **short-term rental real estate business**, which keeps us pretty busy! (20% of our revenues)

## Being independent

It wasn't always obvious (especially to me, Floriane). Not having a fixed salary every month is a significant source of stress, especially as we have 2 tourism-related activities and the economic and ecological context is not always favorable to us.

Reduce expenses

Thanks to **long-distance travel** and **our semi-nomadic lifestyle**, we've drastically reduced our expenses, buying most of our stuff second-hand. This has enabled us to develop our professional activities with peace of mind.

We don't own our main residence, so naturally we limit our spending on household appliances, decoration, renovation... As we spend most of the year in our motorhome, we try to buy only the essentials. We know that if we buy too much, we'll have to store it somewhere and the stuff won't get used.

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We also chose to spend part of the year on the island of Oléron, where most activities are available on a budget. Whether you're building **sandcastles** or **fishing on foot**, the good news is that it's cool and free. Since we live in an environment with a lot of outdoor activities, we're also less tempted to go away for the weekend to get away from it all.

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## Administrative

We won't go into too much detail here, but the **administrative and tax aspects** aren't exactly straightforward when you're self-employed and run several businesses! A lot of our stress is linked to the tax authorities, who don't always send us the right documents, and to URSSAF!

And the positive side?

We're going to end on a **positive** note that we'll never go back! It's also very **gratifying** to generate your own income. As well as looking for **new ideas to develop its business**. This allows us to develop new skills and learn new things. One final point that's very important to us is that we're free to choose our own **hours and movements**. For example, we've chosen to work **a little efficiently every day** (when we can) rather than concentrating our workload on specific days of the week. Last but not least, we now have a **network of entrepreneurs** with whom we love to exchange ideas.

This year, we managed to almost cut our activities for 1 month, we still had things to manage, for example our **menu on the blog** was no longer working, in the middle of July, during our break, we still had to take a look at it! This break did us a world of good!

## The travel blog in figures

2016 birth of the blog

We've been writing on **our blog since 2016**, the year of our round-the-world trip, so we very quickly got the urge to share our adventures. We're part of the team that **loves organizing its trips and looking for little nuggets to take us off the beaten track**. We didn't always find what we were looking for in the travel guides. At that time, we were reading a lot of blogs, and in turn, we were very quick to write to share with others.

Our **Instagram account** was also born around the same time, and Matthieu devoted a lot of time to it during our world tour.

We've always loved sharing here, we've always written a few articles, between 2016 and 2020 but we needed time to **feel legitimate** and **dare to share more**.

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2021 the return and professionalization of the blog

Then in 2021, with our **second long trip**, the desire to share **our adventures here more seriously** became more and more apparent. So, I spent many hours writing content in 2021 and 2022 as we traveled 10 months in Europe in 2021 and then 5 months in 2023.

On the other hand, developing a blog **requires a lot of time and resources**. We're fully aware that we're small players on the digital scene, so if we want our articles to be read, we have to write a lot of content on a subject so that Google considers us legitimate.

For example, we can't just write **1 article** about a major city and hope to move up the search engine... We need to study what people are looking for and answer the most important questions, while remaining honest and authentic ourselves.

An **article takes several days to write and research**. Over time, we realized that we liked **writing content on our blog** more and more, because unlike social networks, content has real staying power.

Last but not least, your **feedback and comments** have helped us to persevere.

### Traffic

We're very proud to announce that in 2023, **433,000** people visited our site, generating some **650,000 page views**. You were **4 times more numerous** vs. 2022, we are delighted that our last years of intensive work are bearing fruit, so **THANK YOU!**

### ***Number of blog visitors per week in 2023***

We have a **strong increase in traffic between April and September**, as 90% of our content is focused on Europe and France, and this corresponds to the vacation periods of the French in these destinations.

Like other bloggers, we were penalized by **Google's algorithm update at the end of the year**, which still affected us morally. We've identified a number of optimization avenues that seem to be bearing fruit, so we'll be keeping an eye on them in 2024!

### **Articles**

We've also written **60 new articles** this year, and it takes us 2-3 days to write an article, so that's a lot of time spent behind our computers. Clearly, we're not going to keep up this pace, as it's far too much, and we needed to reach a milestone in terms of the amount of content on the blog to make it sustainable.

The big news is that **Matthieu has written his first articles**, keeping up the pace of 2 a month, and 3 a month for me.

### **Update**

It's a significant amount of time, as we're among those travelers who like to return to the same places. Whenever we have **family or friends** traveling to destinations we've handled, we ask them to check certain points for us.

We also ask some of **our readers** who contact us via e-mail or social networks to

give us a quick feedback on their trip, where we ask them directly a few questions on points we'd like to update. And since we have nice readers, they're usually happy to give us feedback. Perhaps this is a mission we plan to delegate in 2024.

We take advantage of this to update around **30% of our content every year**. So that the information we give you is no more than 3 years old. We also integrate travelers' comments.

### **Social networking**

**2023 marked our return to [Instagram](#)!** We were very present during our world tour, then we abandoned our account over the years. We shared a lot during our trip to Scandinavia. We loved it and it gave us the opportunity to meet some great people during our trip. Today, we're just running out of time to share more!

One final reason for our **return to Instagram**, as we are now self-employed, we no longer have colleagues, so exchanging with other peers is important to us. It's also a great way to network with other **nomadic families** and **content creators**.

**Comments on the blog** are becoming rarer and rarer, and we honestly don't have the reflex to leave any ourselves. On the other hand, readers spontaneously ask us questions on Instagram after reading our blog posts. We're always happy to chat with you here or on RS.

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## Our blog income

We travel and finance our trips ourselves. We've chosen to focus solely on **passive income**. **90%** of our revenue comes from **affiliation** and **10% from Google advertising**.

**What is affiliation?** When you click on our links([Booking](#), [Getyourguide](#), [Fnac](#)...) to make a reservation, we earn a small commission, paid by the platform. You can also bookmark our links containing our login. After clicking on the link, all you have to do is make your reservations.

If you'd like to **support** us, one of the best ways to do so is to use one of our affiliate links. We've included a few **links in our articles to accommodations and activities that we've tested and approved!**

Of course, **you don't pay anything extra for supporting our blog and our work, so THANK YOU!**

This money enables us to finance part of the time we spend **writing travel guides**, our **work tools**, our **host**, our **domain name**, the activities we test to be as transparent as possible when we talk about them here...

## 2024 projects

### Travel

We especially want to take advantage of our daughter's growing up to travel with her during the school vacations.

- **In February**, we'll be flying out to the sunshine with Matthieu's family, something we haven't done in a long time!
- **Voyage en camping-car en avril 2024** : nous avons prévu de partir à [Amsterdam](#) pour redécouvrir cette ville que nous adorons.
- **Long trip next summer**, destination still being researched!

### Professional

We're going to concentrate on **the blog**. For our other projects, there will be no major changes in 2024!

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- **The site's redesign** speaks for itself, as it's badly in need of a makeover.
- **Social networks**: continue to post and exchange with you more regularly on **Instagram** in particular!
- **Newsletter**: this is clearly something we haven't developed enough. We subscribe to many newsletters from content creators that we like to receive. We figure it's a great way to keep in touch!
- **Find a new** travel-related **idea** outside the blog, why not write a book, or start a training course – it's all still to be written! Don't hesitate to give us your ideas! The idea is to be less dependent on affiliation...

## Balance sheet

It's a question we've been asked (thank you), and one we're delighted to answer!

What would we like to keep?

The turning point of our year 2023, and therefore the most important point for us, is to maintain our **geographical** and **day-to-day flexibility**. For us, it's essential to be able to live where we want. We like to **change location** and **environment regularly**. We also like to feel free to organize our schedules. For example, the

weather was fine for only **4 days in December 2023**, so we were delighted to be able to take advantage of those 4 days to spend as much time outside as possible.

What would you like to improve?

So there are **several areas for improvement**, and we're going to talk about the main ones here:

- **To be better organized** on the administrative side, we've changed address several times over the last 10 years. We've finally registered with **Courrier du Voyageur**, which means that our mail arrives in the same place and we receive it scanned. Nowadays, all our paperwork is digitized, which is really handy for finding a piece of paper when you're out and about!
- **To have a real place** to stay, as soon as we can afford it! And no longer continually living in boxes...
- When you're self-employed, it's not easy to **take** a break. Our month's respite this summer and our break over the Christmas holidays were important moments to recharge our batteries 100%.

What would you like to start and stop?

We didn't know how to answer that question! We've **found a balance** that works for us, with areas for improvement, but nothing that needs to be stopped completely or started right away!

## And finally!

We'd like to thank you for your loyalty year after year! Keep on leaving us comments, asking us questions by e-mail or writing to us directly on social networks to encourage us. It's **thanks to these exchanges** that we're still here and **feel really useful!**

We loved doing this review to honestly share with you the ins and outs of our lifestyle. Thank you for reading all the way to the end. We look forward to hearing from you in the comments, because your opinion counts and helps us move forward with our projects!

We wish you an excellent year in 2024, and we can only advise you to believe in your dreams and do your utmost to see them come true!

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