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## [Meet Brette Sember: Tasty Travel Tuesday](#)

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Brette Sember

Two weeks ago, you met five new contributors to A Traveler's Library. Today you meet a SIXTH. **Brette Sember** will be joining us each month for a feature called **Tasty Travel**. Do you plan your trips around food? Do you find yourself talking about the food on the trip when you get home? Do you like to recreate the dishes you sampled? Then **Tasty Travel** is for you. We could not have a better person talking to us about food and travel. The super-productive and energetic Brette is

launching **THREE** cookbooks this year. She has loads of other books to her credit, which you can learn about at her web site, linked above. **AND** she loves to travel. But let's talk directly to Brette and see what she has to say.

***A Traveler's Library:** Brette, you have had an interesting career—from lawyer to writer about food. Would you like to explain how that came about?*

**Brette Sember:** I need to start before law school to explain. First of all, I've always loved to cook and spent a lot of time in the kitchen with my grandmothers and mother, so food is just a huge, huge part of my life. As for my career path, I was the editor of my high school newspaper and literary magazine and I got my BA in English. So writing is my first love. I went to law school, practiced law for several years and then left my practice when my second child was born. I did the at-home mom thing, but started writing. I sold an essay (about at-home parenting!) and was invited to write a book about divorce in NY. My writing career took off with self-help law books, as well as a column I wrote about family activities. I did a girls' quiz book for American Girl, wrote a fun book about money for kids, and started writing about pregnancy. I did lots of freelance magazine work. My husband and I co-wrote some business books, and my self-help books started moving into the family issues area (adoption, parenting after divorce, senior rights, unmarried families). I also co-authored several college reading, writing, and study skills textbooks.

I then wanted a change of pace and really wanted to write about food, even if it was just for fun, so I started a blog called [Martha And Me](#) where I informally apprenticed myself to [Martha Stewart](#) for a year, blogging every single day with my progress through her recipes, crafts, and world in general. It was like going to cooking school and was a real education. From there, I started writing my own cookbooks. And now you find me here, morphing my love of food with my love of travel.

***ATL:** Is there a particular dish that just sweeps you back to a specific place?*

**Brette:** Steamed lobster with drawn butter, corn on the cob, and a little bag of potato chips. My husband and I ate that over and over at lobster pounds in **Maine** on our honeymoon. It tastes best when eaten at a picnic table right next to the ocean. I also summered in Maine as a kid, so lobster just means summer and ocean to me.



Fish and chips at a pub in London

***ATL:** What is the key to discovering good food when you travel?*

**Brette:** It's important to first do a little research to find out what is the specialty of the area. What are people cooking at home there? What do they serve at festivals and gatherings? What dishes do they consider to be their local specialties? Find that out and seek that dish out when you're there.

You also should think about what are the prime ingredients that you can find there. Don't go to Colorado and order salmon. Get trout or Rocky Mountain lamb. Sample the regionally grown, caught, or raised foods to really get a taste of the area. Then be willing to try things you stumble on. I have to admit I might have been afraid to try the Kahuku shrimp that is sold from trucks on the roadside in Oahu, but I'm glad I wasn't. It was the best shrimp I've ever had. Another tip is to ask the locals where to eat. And by locals I don't mean the concierge desk. Ask the sales clerk in a shop. Ask the cab driver. Ask the bellman.

***ATL:** Were you ever in a place where you just could NOT eat their favorite local dish?*

**Brette:** Yep. Puerto Rico. I just don't like rice and beans and I also can't stomach very spicy food. I sampled the Rocky Mountain oysters in Colorado (just one small bite). I did not taste the alligator in Florida though. Nor the haggis in Scotland!

**ATL:** *On your cookbook shelf right now, which one is the most dilapidated (from use)?*

**Brette:** [\*The Joy of Cooking\*](#), which my mom gave me to before I got married. It has fallen apart into about 5 sections and has no cover or back, but it's my go-to for basic recipes.

The cookbook I cherish the most though is not even on my cookbook shelf because it is so delicate. When my 99-year-old grandmother passed away, she left me her handwritten recipe notebook, which contains all of her specialties, as well as recipes she gathered from friends and family, throughout her entire married life. It's more than a cookbook. It's my heritage and my connection to her.

**ATL:** *Do you tend to splurge on good restaurants when you travel, go to local joints, or eat street food?*

**Brette:** We do all of the above. I enjoy good restaurants once in a while, but honestly I do get frustrated with them because I don't care if my food is tall or foamy, I just want it to be unusually good. What I'm really looking for is authentic, really, really outrageously good food. Sometimes you get that at a 5-star, but mostly I am happiest when I find something that blows my mind at a casual restaurant that just has darn good food. Hash House A Go Go in Vegas comes to mind as the perfect example. They serve "twisted farm to table" cuisine that is just delicious. It's casual but it's food you don't get anywhere else.

Thanks, Brette, for sharing this insider knowledge, and I'm looking forward to your yummy contributions to **A Traveler's Library**. We'll see you back here during Thanksgiving week. How appropriate!

To learn more about Brette, follow her blog about [cooking without pots and pans](#) (hint: paper is involved) and see her bio [here on the contributor's page](#).

*All the photos here are the property of Brette Sember. Where there is a link from a book title to Amazon.com, it was put there for your convenience, but if you buy something while you are at Amazon, A Traveler's Library earns a few pence. And it doesn't cost you a dime extra!*



Brette and her dogs

If you would like to join our conversation here, see the questions I asked you in the first paragraph. And if you would like to ask Brette something that I forgot to ask, please feel free to do so.

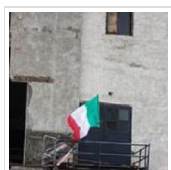
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1. [Edie Jarolim](#)

*Twitter:* [willmydoghateme](#)

says:

[October 18, 2011 at 5:13 am](#)

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Brette, I see we share two key interests — food and dogs! I'm very much looking forward to reading your posts on this site.

Edie Jarolim would like you to read..[Travel Thursday: Tailing John Steinbeck](#) 

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2. [wandering educators](#)

*Twitter:* [WanderingEds](#)

says:

[October 18, 2011 at 9:22 am](#)

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i don't like tall or foamy food, either. i DO like haggis, if i can stop thinking about what is in it. looking forward to reading your posts!!

wandering educators would like you to read..[Maya Roads](#) 

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3. [Alexandra](#)

*Twitter:* [chezsvn](#)

says:

[October 18, 2011 at 12:20 pm](#)

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Great questions, great interview! Will look forward to Tasty Travels. When I think of our trip to Portugal, images of the delicious food we ate float back into my mind.

Alexandra would like you to read..[Beauty To Take Your Breath Away](#) 

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4. [merr](#) says:

[October 18, 2011 at 12:41 pm](#)

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What a great addition and perfect for this blog. Brette has such a wealth of info. Congrats to both of you!

[Reply](#)5. [Roxanne](#) says:[October 18, 2011 at 12:51 pm](#)

0 0 Rate This

Funny. I live in CO, and I've NOT had rocky mountain oysters, but I have had gator in FL, rattlesnake (here in CO), and several other game meats like water buffalo.

Roxanne would like you to read..[2011 Greenhouse Brag](#)

[Reply](#)6. [Living Large](#) says:[October 18, 2011 at 1:19 pm](#)

0 0 Rate This

It is so cool that you have your grandmother's recipe notebook, Brette! I'll be looking forward to this installment. My husband told me when we travel, he thinks I look forward to the food more than anything. He's probably right!

[Reply](#)7. [ruth pennebaker](#) says:[October 18, 2011 at 1:31 pm](#)

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Wonderful addition! I've enjoyed Brette's writing for years and look forward to reading more of her here.

ruth pennebaker would like you to read..[You Can See the Milky Way From There](#)

[Reply](#)8. [Richard Mussler-Wright](#) says:[October 18, 2011 at 1:58 pm](#)

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Good interview. I love stories about people following their passion....in this case writing. -r

[Reply](#)9. [Alisa Bowman](#) says:[October 18, 2011 at 7:50 pm](#)

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I eat my way through countries. That's all I do. I don't travel to sight see. I travel to eat. I can't wait to see what Brette writes.

Alisa Bowman would like you to read..[6 Reasons Marital Advice Doesn't Work](#)

[Reply](#)o [pen4hire](#) says:[October 19, 2011 at 10:43 am](#)

0 0 Rate This

Ah, yes, Alisa. As you so amply illustrated in your [guest post](#) for A Traveler's Library.

[Reply](#)

10.  [Kerry Dexter](#)

Twitter: [kerrydexter](#)

says:


[October 19, 2011 at 12:02 pm](#)

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I've enjoyed reading about Brette's creative adventures at Martha and Me, look forward reading her contributions here. welcome Brette!

Kerry Dexter would like you to read..[Music of Healing: Arising from the Troubles from Tommy Sands](#) 

[Reply](#)

11.  [Susan](#)

Twitter: [urbanmusewriter](#)

says:

[October 19, 2011 at 12:10 pm](#)

0 0 Rate This

Great questions! I actually like rice and beans (though nothing too spicy), so I enjoyed eating the local cuisine in Puerto Rico, even mofongo which is this funny-sounding dish made from fried plantains. Yum!

[Reply](#)

12.  [Sheryl](#) says:

[October 19, 2011 at 5:57 pm](#)

0 0 Rate This

Great interview. It's always nice to read Brette's work – happy to see it here as well. Traveling and food always makes a winning combination.

Sheryl would like you to read..[Important Facts About Cantaloupes and Listeria](#) 

[Reply](#)

13.  [sarah henry](#) says:

[October 19, 2011 at 8:22 pm](#)

0 0 Rate This

I'm convinced that when people travel they like to do what they do at home only somewhere different. And we all have to eat.

Look forward to reading more of Brette's food and travel posts here — and would love to know what “twisted” farm-to-table food is.

sarah henry would like you to read..[Toast: A Slice of Nigel Slater's Life Comes to the Screen](#) 

[Reply](#)

14.  [MyKidsEatSquid](#)


Twitter: [mykidseatsquid](#)

says:

[October 20, 2011 at 8:31 am](#)

0 0 Rate This

I'm so with Brette on skipping asking the concierge for suggestions and going with folks who might give you a more honest, tasty option. Can't wait to read more!

MyKidsEatSquid would like you to read..[Ghost brownies](#) 

[Reply](#)



15. [Kris](#) says:

[October 20, 2011 at 7:15 pm](#)

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So cool! Can't wait to read more from Brette and ALL your new contributors.

Kris would like you to read..[The NFL and Breast Cancer Awareness: Unclear on the Concept](#) 

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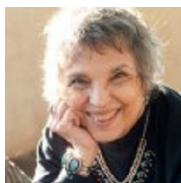
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[Contact](#) Vera Marie Badertscher

### Welcome to A Traveler's Library

A Traveler's Library is here to help you find books and movies that enrich your travels. [Vera Marie Badertscher](#), a freelance writer who travels when she can and reads all the time, partners with guests and readers to match up places and books.

**NEW--** Six **regular contributors** bring info on music, culture, movies, pets, family travel and food to A Traveler's Library.



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[Tahomablog.com](#) where Charnell Havens and I tell the inside story about the biography of Navajo artist Quincy Tahoma, AVAILABLE NOW! *Quincy Tahoma: The Life and Legacy of a Navajo Artist*

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Vera is in Dragoon, AZ  
and has traveled 80,140 mi to 47 locations

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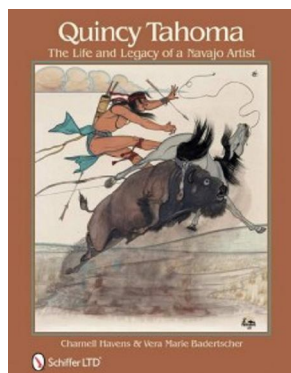
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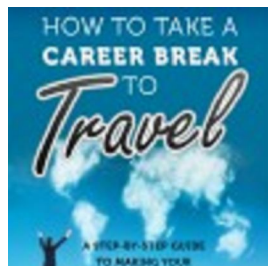


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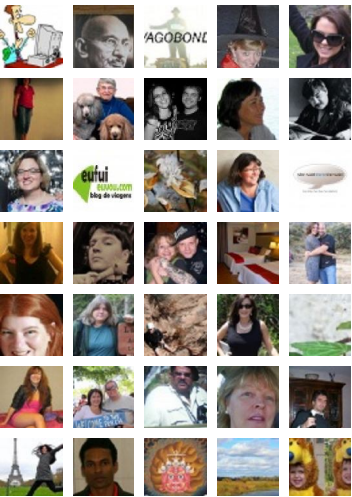
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