

TRAVEL

THE BUCKET LIST

Dominic West, who stars in *Colette* with Keira Knightley, shares holiday memories with *Holly Rubenstein*

What is your earliest holiday memory? I'm one of seven kids, and we used to go on cheap flights to Mallorca. We loved it there and stayed on the east coast in a town called Canyamel. I still love Mallorca and went there for my honeymoon, too.

What is your happiest holiday memory? Well, I find that the penalty for finding 'paradise' is that I've always been bitten to death by mosquitoes. But recently I had an amazing time in Jordan. I spent some time near Amman, then went south to Petra and Wadi Rum. The Lawrence of Arabia places. Jordan is small enough to drive around in a few days and Petra is one of the world's most astonishing sights. What's great is that after the tourist buses leave, you can have the whole place to yourself. I was there amid these red stone temples carved out of the mountain, pretty much on my own, as the sun was setting. Magical.



Ad Deir, The Monastery in the spectacular Petra



Sunrise on Mount Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas

WHAT'S AT THE TOP OF YOUR BUCKET LIST?

I want to climb Deo Tibba mountain in India, with a friend of mine. It's pretty high – about 6,000 metres – but it's not difficult to climb. We plan to climb up it with paragliders, and then jump off the top for an hour and a half's descent, flying down through the Himalayas. No one has ever done that before. I do like climbing mountains but normally you get to the top and think, oh goodness, I have to climb all the way back down again.



Dominic loves his quiet escapes in Transylvania

When you need to unwind, where do you escape to? One of the places I like to go, particularly to write, is Transylvania. There you can be completely undisturbed, looked after extremely well, live in a beautiful place and pay very little money. The Mihai Eminescu Trust is trying to save Saxon houses in lovely rural Transylvanian villages, and I stay in those. It's like stepping back into the Middle Ages.

The most amazing place I've been is...

The South Pole. I walked there with wounded soldiers for charity. We flew from Cape Town to Antarctica, and I think it was the most interesting flight I've ever caught. It was particularly great when I looked up to the departures board and it said, Antarctica. That's your flight!

Can you recommend us a hidden gem?

Co. Limerick, in the west of Ireland. Particularly this wonderful place called Glin - a town perched on the Shannon estuary. It's a non-touristy part on the Wild Atlantic Way, and there's a succession of really pretty little towns.



Kumbh Mela is the world's largest religious gathering

Where have you learnt something new about yourself? At the Kumbh Mela festival in India, when around 60 million people come together for a month. No one eats meat, no one eats onions and no one drinks. With the simple prohibition of those three things, it changes your life more quickly than anything else.



Dominic West and Keira Knightley star in Colette, set in 20th century Paris



Beautiful Budapest was the backdrop for most of the filming of Colette

Colette is set in Paris and rural France. Can you tell me about your experiences filming?

The majority of the film was shot in Budapest, which is a pretty cool city. I went there the year after the Berlin wall came down, when I hitchhiked from Holland to Romania. Back then it was pretty gloomy, with horrible food and rather dour people. When I asked whether my 19-year-old daughter would come and visit me while filming Colette, she was like, 'Yeah!' as I realise it's now the destination for youngsters who want to go revelling. It's also full of 19th-century Belle Époque architecture, which is why we were there with Colette. Gustave Eiffel designed a lot of the buildings, so in many ways it looks like Paris in the Belle Époque.

Do you have a favourite city?

Montreal is one of my favourites. The best cities are about a million people, and Montreal is the perfect size - a bit like Dublin. You can have a sense of the whole place, rather than, say, London, which is more a collection of villages. I really like the French-Canadians. They have all the civilised attributes of the French - cooking, wine, attitude to life - as well as the excitement of being not very far from America.



The bright lights of downtown Montreal



Little beats the beauty of the Peak District

COUNTRY OR TOWN HOUSE? COUNTRY. I GREW UP IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OF THE PEAK DISTRICT AND I NEED TO BE AMONG HILLS OR FIELDS OR I GO SLIGHTLY STIR CRAZY. I JUST LOVE BEING SURROUNDED BY PLANTS AND TREES. HOME FOR ME NOW IS RURAL WILTSHIRE.