



David Gandy's Travelling Life

David Gandy, the British fashion model, on catching piranha in the Amazon, the best thing about Essex and what he loves more than driving



David Gandy for Autograph swimwear collection - available now in selected UK stores and online

Interview by Soo Kim

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How often do you travel?

I've been taking about 90 flights a year for the past 14 years or so. I don't go on holiday as much as I'd like, but last year I went to the Maldives and I

won't be doing it again. After two relaxing days, I was too bored with nothing to do. My parents have always educated me through travel, taking me to the most amazing places, from Peru (where we walked the Inca trail) to the **Amazon**, so the Maldives just didn't compare.

What do you need for a perfect holiday?

Some form of activity. And the fewer people I see, the better.



Your favourite drives?

The Pacific Coast Highway in California, from **Los Angeles** to **San Francisco** or Pebble Beach, and the Amalfi coast.

Most exhilarating drive?

The **Mille Miglia classic car race** I did in Italy last month, driving from Brescia to Rome alongside 450 or so vintage cars. Jodie Kidd was my co-driver and we're both a bit unhinged when it comes to driving, so we were a good match.

Your ideal driving companion?

I'm more of a solo driver, as driving is my form of escapism. I'm fine doing long journeys on my own, especially with good music.

Your favourite driving tune?

It depends on the time of day and what car I'm driving, but it tends to be old school music. A bit of Tony Bennett or Frank Sinatra is probably better for me, as fast music is a proven recipe to make me drive faster.

• David Gandy's favourite road trips



Your earliest memory of travelling abroad?

Driving to Italy and other European family road trips (Austria/Swiss Alps). I used to call us the Griswolds [from the National Lampoon's Vacation film series]. My dad's always been the David Attenborough of the family and still is.

Favourite holiday destination?

I love Africa. My family and I have driven everywhere, from **South Africa** and **Namibia** to the **Okavango Delta** area in **Botswana**, the Atlas Mountains and through Uganda on a trek for gorillas.

- **The Okavango Delta: Trip of a Lifetime**



The remotest place you've been?

The Amazon rainforest. It's like no other place in the world. Also Brooks Falls, Alaska, for the salmon run.

What would people find most surprising about Essex, where you're from?

That north Essex, where my parents live, has been an inspiration for many artists and writers, most famously John Constable. It's where you'll find picturesque villages, rolling farmland, meadows and a variety of local

wildlife. The Stour Valley Path takes in the best of north Essex and the region bordering Suffolk, my favourite parts being the rolling countryside around Castle Hedingham and Great Henny.

Favourite city?

[Buenos Aires](#), which has a very European feel, and [New York](#). I still feel a great buzz each time I see the Manhattan skyline. I also love Boston, which I see as the “less crazy sister” to New York.

Your most relaxing destination?

Being with nature, away from the crowds, is relaxing to me.



Most romantic city in the world?

[Rome](#) on a summer evening. It's such a gorgeous city. A lot of people might say Paris, but I've never taken a liking to it.

Most stylish city in the world?

Anywhere in [Italy](#), especially [Milan](#), [Florence](#) or Rome. You can always tell when the Italians have arrived at an airport because there will be an influx of the most well-dressed people in the world. My style is also influenced by old Hollywood greats, such as Paul Newman and James Dean.

Most memorable shooting spot?

The Post Ranch Inn on the Big Sur coast in the US. They have various cliffside rooms where you feel as though you're sleeping on the Pacific.



Best clothes shop in the world?

New York has great shops for vintage pieces, such as at Tokio 7. I like to shop in the East Village. Century 21 in New York also has some amazing bargains if you don't mind the crowds.

Your favourite interiors shop?

I love home design as much as, maybe even a bit more than, driving. For antiques, I go to the Sunbury Antiques Market in Middlesex, as well as places on Lillie Road and Lots Road in south-west London. I usually want to buy everything at Restoration Hardware in New York.

Favourite restaurant?

Blue Ribbon Sushi in New York. In **London**, I go to independent restaurants on Fulham and Gloucester roads. I love Asian food and go to Sukho in Fulham for Thai.

Most memorable meal abroad?

Catching piranha in the Amazon and cooking it myself. I also had the most incredible lobster feast after a shoot in Maine.

• The Amazon: Trip of a Lifetime



Favourite hotel?

Dunton Hot Springs in Colorado, set near a waterfall and hot springs in an old mining town from the 1800s. All the guest cabins are original buildings that have been restored. You're basically in the middle of nowhere and it's lovely to watch the sunset sitting by the hot springs.

Favourite airline?

I have always found the service on Virgin second to none. Air New Zealand is also amazing. British Airways has been the opposite in recent years. The managerial staff are never apologetic about any issues you're having, which is really frustrating. Ryanair and easyJet can be pretty horrendous too.



Tips for looking fresh on a flight?

There's no big secret or ritual for me. I just drink plenty of water and get as much sleep as I can.

Best piece of travel advice?

Spending a little more on air travel or hotels can go a long way, if it will make your experience less stressful.

Where next?

I'd love to see **New Zealand** and Telluride in Colorado, and also drive up the Stelvio Pass in Italy.

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