



ready for an adventure

WITH AN EXCURSION KIT PACKED, YOU WON'T MISS A CHANCE TO VISIT THE NATURAL WORLD.

WORDS AND STYLING PIA JANE BIJKERK PHOTOGRAPHY CRAIG WALL

BEFORE RETURNING to Australia in early 2011, my partner Romain and I lived on a gloriously quaint Amsterdam houseboat for four years. It was a converted 19th-century steel cargo ship and while the small spaces could be bothersome, the overall experience of living on the canal was utterly joyful.

We would wake up to the sound of water lapping against the sides of the boat, peer out the portholes to marvel at the ducks, geese and swans casually paddling alongside our floating home. We were not just experiencing nature; by living on the boat we were a part of it.

Nature and I are in a long-time love affair that doesn't work at long distance. We need to be close and present, and I want the moment we connect to linger. I have always felt this affinity and it is the main muse of my work. Living in a house again has been lovely — the space! — but I make sure I go out every day to wander the quiet, leafy streets of our neighbourhood or visit bush reserves with Romain and our baby girl. Occasionally I pick up bits and pieces to use in my creative projects.

When I was little, my family camped every year near the seaside village of Tathra in southern NSW. It was always an exhilarating time, and filled my childhood with treasured memories of playing by the sea and being in the countryside with my cousins. Nature-based adventures are continually on my mind, and now that I've become a mother, I'm excited about the prospect of filling my daughter's life with some regular outdoor activities.

Lately I've been preoccupied with building my very own adventure kit after a friend told me she keeps an old wooden crate fully packed so she can hit the road at a moment's notice. By writing a simple list of items

tailored to your style of adventuring, this kit is ready to go, so all you need to do is pack appropriate clothing, gather your food supplies and leave.

My fledgling kit includes some essentials such as herbal tea, a secondhand teapot, matches and a Tilley lamp or kerosene lantern to provide a beautiful, soft glow in the evenings and some lovely vintage linen for a touch of bohemian luxury.

Perhaps many of you have storage boxes or whole cupboards piled with tents and torches, camp ovens and billy cans that you use a few times a year. What I love about the adventure kit is that there is no raking through chests or cupboards for hours before you begin your trip. No frantic cries of "Where's the fishing box?" or "Can you get the folding chairs? They're in the attic somewhere..."

While we can't have Huckleberry Finn-style escapades every day, we can definitely bring more exploration of nature into our lives. It might simply be setting up camp for a weekend seaside sojourn, or travelling into the hills for some crisp mountain air with the hope of finding a waterfall and a rock to perch on.

Here's to more adventuring, for us all. *

PIA'S LINK LOVE

For more inspiration, visit these sites:

- 1 www.junkaholique.com
- 2 www.arestlesstransplant.com
- 3 www.appliedobservation.com
- 4 www.newlywedhappycampers.blogspot.com.au

Pia is Country Style's resident blogger at blogs.homelife.com.au/countrystyle

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY OLGA BENNETT BLANKET AND CUSHION FROM THE COUNTRY STYLE BED LINEN RANGE ALL OTHER PROPS, STYLIST'S OWN