

Q+A: *Digging for the Truth* Host Josh Bernstein  
Insights from the city kid who uses his outdoor ingenuity to show armchair  
travelers the world's greatest mysteries.  
Text by Ryan Bradley Photograph courtesy of The History Channel



**NEW INDY: *Digging for the Truth* host Josh Bernstein seeks out the world's most intriguing ancient mysteries. The show's new season premieres on The History Channel on Monday, January 22, at 9 p.m.**

When he's not traveling the world unraveling ancient mysteries as host of The History Channel's [Digging for the Truth](#) (*DFT*), Josh Bernstein finds the time to run Boulder Outdoor Survival School, keep residences in New York City and Utah, become an author, and even sleep. Bernstein, 35, has just released a book by the same name as his popular television show (Gotham, \$27.50). The travelogue shares behind-the-scenes stories and photos from some of the program's greatest moments—discovering Inca treasures in the Amazon, moving a megalith, and building a Viking ship, among others. *Adventure* tracked down a busy Bernstein (currently on a national book tour) to find out about the upcoming third season of *DFT*, the new book, and his iconic hat(s).

**Let's get all Indian Jones comparisons out of the way: Tell me about your hat.** I've had several hats over the past 20-plus years, all named Henry (it's a long story). Henry I and II were Akubras, while Henry III through V were custom made for me by Steve King of Bounty Hunter Hats (III) in Telluride, Colorado, and Nathaniel Funmaker of Nathaniel's of Colorado (IV and V) in Mancos, Colorado. The newer models are 100 percent beaver felt and, therefore, not cheap. But they hold up *very* well to years and years of abuse and adventure. Sadly, I did once lose one on a trip. Henry III, may he rest in piece. I won't go into the gruesome details, but if people in Mexico City could keep an eye out, my name is written on the inside hat band.

**You grew up in Manhattan. Are there any lessons you culled from the city that apply to the jungle?**

In New York City, it's more about urban threats like oncoming cars or an aggressive bike messenger. In the jungle, one has to watch every step and be sure not to walk into a poisonous plant, or a huge spider web, or a jaguar. I find it much more exhilarating, as I'm constantly evaluating my surroundings. True, I do that in New York, too, but it's more of an automatic response for me having grown up in the city. The jungle is still new to me.

**In previous seasons of *Digging for the Truth*, you have been bitten by a brown recluse and peed on by a snake. How do you keep your energy high?**

Keeping my energy up is probably my greatest challenge. It hasn't been easy, but I do what I can: sleep, eat well, try to work out if possible. And then there's always a shot of espresso or two to jumpstart my dead battery.

**If someone has seen every episode of *DFT*, is the book going to feel too similar?**

Related, certainly, but no, not too similar. I wrote the book so that even if you've never seen the show, you could still enjoy what *Digging for the Truth* is all about—the worldwide pursuit of great archaeological mysteries. The book captures the first two seasons—what it took for me to travel over 250,000 miles [402,000 kilometers] through dozens of remote countries as host of the series. In addition to the highlights, I also share some of the behind-the-scenes moments that make television production. Based on what I've heard from people who've already read it, I think it will please a diverse range of people.

**There've been some tragic outdoor-related deaths recently (James Kim; Brian Hall, Jerry Cooke, and Kelly James). As the head of Boulder Outdoor Survival School (BOSS), what, in your opinion, is the most common mistake pros and amateurs alike make in survival situations?**

By now, I know better than to guess or generalize about what may or may not have caused specific outdoor tragedies. Each situation is different and requires separate analysis. But it is fair to say that two things people can do better are: one, prepare properly for potential inclement weather; and two, let people know when and where you'll be in the backcountry. Both are easy enough to do and can make the difference between coming home safely or not. And, of course, if people could learn basic wilderness survival skills, that's always smart.