

## Experiential Travel: Great American Days Lead to Culinary Nights

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Travel is one gift that still has a great return—an experience, a memory that will stay with you for years to come. As Father’s Day draws nearer we decided to check out Great American Days, an online company with locations across the United States that specializes in gifting adventures and experiences. These certificates offer an incredible way to have adventures while traveling, whether it be on a staycation or beyond and with the flexibility of buying a gift that can be redeemed however and wherever travel takes them.

We caught up with CEO Adrian Dewey, who left a career in finance when he co-founded Great American Days to find out the concept behind the company. “As I spent more and more time pursuing corporate goals, I began to realize that time was my most precious commodity, not money. It’s the things that we do that define us, not the things that we have. When you give an experience gift, you have the potential to take somebody out of their comfort zone and change their outlook to life forever. I think that’s what appealed to me the most about the Great American Days concept.”



Their offerings cover a myriad of pursuits: from wine tasting parties for curious winos to private cooking classes for the most discerning of foodies in their culinary category to incredible air travails (we tried their helicopter lessons in California for a once-in-a-lifetime thrill), to Formula and NASCAR racing for the need-for-speed enthusiasts (Dad should come to mind right about now.)



Mr. Dewey’s favorite experience? Paragliding. “I’ve tried lots of our experiences and will never forget the feeling of being driven at high speed in a NASCAR stock car. Those guys drive seriously fast! However, my biggest achievement was my first solo paragliding flight. I had just done a one-day course and didn’t really expect to get off the ground at all. I couldn’t believe it when I was soaring through the sky; it was incredible.”

### *A Great American Days Culinary Experience*

Of course we had to try a culinary experience to tell you all about. Imagine: a decadent feast prepared at home by a certified personal chef. Great American Days arranged for Pamela Croft to give us a taste of the “At-Home Cooking Class,” an experience available in many states. After an initial consultation, we decided on a Greek-inspired menu with a French dessert. Pam arrived with everything she needed to prepare the meal, and we made sure the dish washer was empty. If only all things in life were so sweet. Over the next two hours we interacted as Pam prepared spanakopita (spinach pie) and saganaki (an incredible appetizer of wonderful Greek Kasserli cheese en flambé!), and peppered her with questions to discover some of her kitchen secrets . . . i.e. “there can never be enough butter” and “frozen spinach is the way to go when making spinach pie.” The experience ended with satisfied stomachs, an immaculate kitchen (thanks to Pam), and leftovers for days. This is a wonderful



**Dinner  
at Home**

PAMELA CROFT  
CERTIFIED PERSONAL CHEF



*The Answer to “What’s for Dinner?”*