

MORE ABOUT THE PERSON JOSHUA SLOCOM

Sailing Alone around the World recounts Slocum's wonderful adventures: hair-raising encounters with pirates off Gibraltar and savage Indians in Tierra del Fuego; raging tempests and treacherous coral reefs; flying fish for breakfast in the Pacific; and a hilarious visit with fellow explorer Henry Stanley in South Africa. A century later, Slocum's incomparable book endures as one of the greatest narratives of adventure ever written.

Check out how awesome this Joshua Slocum dude is. He's old, he's on a boat, he's got a badass straw hat. He doesn't care that he looks like a doofus with it on, which makes him that much cooler. He was the first person to circumnavigate the world alone (and that means to sail all the way around it, for you greenhorn scallywags out there).

When he was nearly a few scores old, he shoved off from Newport, Rhode Island (without his wife/cousin Henrietta or his many children) in his trusty "Spray" to re-enact some of the Robert Louis Stevenson and Daniel Defoe novels he loved. He commented "*The Old Man and the Sea*", if you'll allow me the liberty of verbing nouns.



There are people today who do cool stuff like this. But they don't do it with nearly the style of this guy. Katie Spatz is a person, barely a score old, who rowed across the Atlantic Ocean by herself. But the difference is that she is merely accomplishing a feat of endurance. If she ever writes a memoir, this is what it will be: "I rowed across the Atlantic and it was really hard. My arms got tired and I got sunburned and I was really thirsty too and lonely."

But "this" guy... Let me just try to summarize a few of the highlights: "I was married to my cousin and I left everyone to sail around the world by myself. I tried to keep a goat on board but he ate the only map I had. I met a group of savages who had never seen a white guy and some of them wanted to eat me and some of them wanted to worship me. I met up with Fanny Stevenson (wife of Robert Louis Stevenson) in Samoa. I don't even use a compass; I just point myself in the direction I think my destination is and hope I get lucky."

What happened to that pure sense of adventure? Is there nothing left to explore in the world?

P.S. I almost forgot to mention one of the most compelling things about this dude. In 1909, he joined the *People "Who Have Disappeared without a Trace" Club*. He was on a routine voyage (alone) to South America and he never returned. Everyone thinks his ship must have been sunk by a whale, because he was too great a sailor and his boat was too seaworthy for any other explanation to be conceivable. But my guess is that he just decided he didn't want to come back. I'm willing to bet that he's still out there, sailing the seas and if you were to run into him today, he'd be 169 years old, but he'd look no more than a day over 120.

