



NOVEMBER 7, 2012

UP (AND BEYOND) YOUR ALLEY: BOWLING OUTSIDE YOUR LOCAL LANES



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By **Erik R. Trinidad** | November 7, 2012

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Bowling. You know the sport: rolling a 14-pound ball down a waxy, slippery lane, all for the sake of knocking down as many of the 10 pins at the other end as you can—or all 10 at once, if you're that skillful or just plain lucky. Bowling's origins date back centuries, and today it's a universally popular sport known around the world, transcending classes and creeds. Chances are there's a bowling alley near you—be it a humble, blue-collar hangout or one of the newer, flashy cosmopolitan joints. But the game and its customs still remain the same no matter where you are. In order to make the bowling experience a little more interesting, try striking beyond your local bowling alley.



Skinny Pins

Ever heard of candlepin bowling? It's all the rage in Canadian bowling alleys particularly in Quebec and Nova Scotia, but it's also played in Ontario and even some New England states—in fact, it was invented in Massachusetts. Unlike the 10-pin bowling you may be familiar with, candlepin bowling involves skinny pins that lack the curves of the normal ones, and a smaller ball without any finger holes. It's actually a lot more difficult to knock pins down—so it's a good thing you get three chances, instead of two, per frame.

Roll It Like Nixon

In the basement of the White House, under the North Portico, is the White House Bowling Alley, a small one-lane alley built in 1969 during the administration of bowling fanatic, Richard Nixon. (It replaced the original Truman bowling alley constructed in the West Wing in 1947 where the Situation Room is currently located.) If you're fortunate enough to get invited, and then are

deemed nonthreatening enough to get accepted in—I had to go through a prescreening, a background check, and a security checkpoint—make sure you bring your math skills up to par, because there's no presidential computerized scoring system.

Strike in Siberia

If you ever find yourself lost in the vast land of Siberia, you're likely still not too far away from a bowling alley. There are several developed cities along the Trans-Siberian Railway, including Novosibirsk, where I once found myself stumbling into a bowling alley—a modern one at that. It's just like a 10-pin bowling alley that you might find in America—complete with rental shoes sprayed with that deodorizing disinfectant—only everything is in Russian, using the Cyrillic alphabet.



Will It Float?

Why bowl in an alley, or indoors at all? With some patience and a little daring, you can take your bowling ball and pins outside, as I once did throughout the country of Israel, with its many different bodies of water, in order to see the ball splash after knocking down pins. Things got a little more interesting, though, once I got to the Dead Sea:



Of course, you could bowl anywhere else in the world—as long as you have pins to spare.

Erik Trinidad is an author, writer, designer, food critic, world traveler, and all-around "Freelance Renaissance Man," whose work can be seen on The Huffington Post, Food Network/Cooking Channel, and Discovery.com, as well as on his own travel and food sites, The Global Trip and Fancy Fast Food. Follow him on Twitter @theglobaltrip and @fancyfastfood; on facebook.com/theglobaltrip and facebook.com/fancyfastfood; youtube.com/theglobaltrip and youtube.com/fancyfastfood and at "theglobaltrip" on Instagram.

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