The route taken on a gap year is inevitably unique to each person, but here we'll give some general pointers that might help you choose what you would like to do.

Some choose to centre around Australia and New Zealand. Others aim to visit more exotic tropical locations. Then there are those who want to immerse themselves in nature and wildlife. At Gap Year Survival we gravitate towards South Asia and South East Asia for the cultural diversity, the weather, natural beauty and low cost, but everyone is different.

Two big questions are: What is your available budget? And do you want to work at some point during your gap year? These factors will have a huge influence on your chosen route.

As a rough rule of thumb, you can get away with a budget of about £20 - £30 per day in somewhere like India or Sri Lanka. This would cover food and basic accommodation. You might need slightly more in Thailand and Cambodia. If you would prefer to visit South America your daily budget is likely to be between £30 and £50 in Ecuador, Bolivia or Peru. Africa can cost a little more, at £40 - £80 per day. The activities, such as safaris, can also be costly. If you want to spend time in Australia or New Zealand, you are probably looking at £60 - £100 per day. However, a big advantage to these countries is that, with advanced planning, you can generally find work there (see our working abroad guide) and there are various schemes with subsidised accommodation.

Keeping these costs in mind, what are your interests / aims? Is your passion trekking in the mountains or jungle. Are you more interested in partying, simply being a beach bum, experiencing new cultures, beautiful temples and architecture, adventure travelling or working and volunteering? Think of your top aims, where you can fulfil these, then make a rough scaffold of places you want to go. To simplify things, you can list a number of 'hubs' from where you can use buses, coaches, trains or local flights. Southeast Asia is well served by Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, or Bangkok airports. If you would like to see India, then Delhi, Mumbai, and maybe Trivandrum would be great places to start.

Many Gap Year students buy a round the world flight. These start at around £3,000 depending on the number of stops. Allow for more if you are very keen on specific locations or want lots of stops. If you shop around and are prepared to compromise you might get a flight for as little as £1,500. Other travellers simply buy a one-way flight to their first location and then play it by ear. Do watch out for transits or transfers that involve short stop overs in countries that you don't actually plan to visit, and ensure that you have visas for these countries if needed. Airport transfers, taxis and visas might add up, making cheap looking flights less economical than you thought.

The duration of your time in each location is likely to be dictated by the length of your tourist visa, and possibly the season, so do ensure that you have factored this in. Some places can be hellish during the monsoon or wet season. In other places the wet season really isn't that unmanageable, with bouts of heavy rain only during the late afternoon.

Two classic routes are the 'Banana Pancake Route' in South East Asia, or for the more nervous and those wanting to work while away a trip centred around Australia and New Zealand.

For what it is worth, one suggestion might be to fly to Delhi in India, visit the Taj Mahal, Rajasthan and the Himalayas, then head by train or internal flight to Goa and Kerala to experience the colonial religious sites and the beaches. We might then travel cross country to Pondicherry and fly to Sri Lanka. This is likely to take six weeks, maybe a couple of months. We would then catch an international flight (or our round the world flight) to South East Asia. There are plenty of options. If you wanted to include Malaysia, then head for Singapore or Kuala Lumpur airport. Otherwise maybe head straight to Bangkok and travel overland around Thailand and Indochina for a couple of months. To top up funds we might stop in Australia or New Zealand for a few months before heading home via South America or Central America.

This is one of countless different plans. Do your research and visit all those places you dreamed

As always, it would be great to hear what adventures and routes have worked for you, so that we can share it with others.