Ep #173: How We Planned Our Family Safari in Tanzania

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

Points Talk®

Ep #173: How We Planned Our Family Safari in Tanzania

Jess: Imagine flying your family to Africa in lie-flat business class seats, sipping champagne in the lounge in Doha, and paying a fraction of what those tickets normally cost. That's exactly what I did to get my family to Tanzania for a safari using points and miles. And if you're in the camp of saving your points and flying economy, Megan is breaking all of that down for you, too. Today we're detailing the exact flights we booked, how we got there, and the safari itinerary that made this trip absolutely incredible.

Welcome to *Points Talk*®. We are three moms who've discovered how to leverage credit card welcome offers to get hundreds of thousands of dollars of travel expenses for nearly free. We've used credit card points and miles to take vacations to places like Hawaii, Paris, Greece, Maldives, Japan, and so much more. And the best part? We each still have 800 plus credit scores. Imagine being able to take the vacation of your dreams for nearly free. It's totally possible, and we're here to show you how.

Pam: Hey everyone, I'm Pam.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points.

Pam: So Megan and Jess both recently returned from safaris in Tanzania with their families. Today we're going to discuss their itineraries in detail, and next week in part two, we'll break down exactly how you can make a safari more affordable with points and miles.

Jess: All right, so I am going to kick it off with how we got there on points. First of all, I want to say I completely stole this idea from Megan. So, Megan originally basically booked this exact trip for her and her husband's 40th birthdays. And then I was like, wait a minute, I'm turning 40 next year too.

Pam: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. But who went first? Let's give credit where credit is due to the first person.

Jess: Pam is the original trailblazer. And then Megan, Pam went to TAASA in 2022, 2023, somewhere around there.

Pam: Mhm, 2022.

And then Megan decided she wanted to go on a safari for her and her husband's 40th birthdays. She was like, Hey Pam, where did you stay? She got the ball rolling on that. And then I said, Hey, I'm turning 40 next year too. I've always wanted to go on a safari. Megan, tell me everything you've done. So, you know, it's kind of, we're kind of just all benefiting from the knowledge that the other one has learned from each other.

All right. So, I started planning this trip. I wanted my entire family to go. Unfortunately, one of my stepdaughters was not able to go because of work commitments, and she's probably really kicking herself since she watched all my stories covering the trip on Instagram. But so there was five of us total.

And I'm about to tell you how we got there and how we got home. And you're going to fall into one of two camps. You're going to think, Jess, you're freaking nuts, or you're going to think, Jess, you're a genius. So I'm curious to see which one of these you fall into. And before I get started, I'm only able to do this because my stepkids are older. They are adults. We were able to split up on multiple flights. Obviously, if you have young kids like Megan, this isn't going to be possible for you.

Megan: You'll be in economy with us.

Jess: Yes, this isn't going to be possible for you, but a silver lining of having adult stepchildren is, so I knew I wanted to fly Qsuite. I was like, this is my 40th birthday. I'm going all out. I want to fly Qsuite. The problem with that is Qatar only releases two business saver award tickets per flight. Okay. And there were five of us.

So Ted was like, well, I want to fly Qsuite. At first I said, okay, me and Molly will be in Qsuite, and Ted, you can be in economy. And he was absolutely not.

Megan: Poor Ted.

Yeah, Ted was like, absolutely not. That's not going to work. I want to be in Qsuite. So there's one flight that leaves out of Houston every day, and then there's two flights that leave out of Dallas. And so Ted was like, I'll fly to Dallas so I can fly Qsuite. I don't care. It's like a 45-minute flight from Houston. And

then Ella and Charlie were both like, Hey, we want to fly Qsuite too. And I told, I told Charlie, I said, you can either go on the same plane as Ella and Ted, and you can fly in economy, or you can be by yourself and fly Qsuite. And he was like, oh, I want to be by myself and fly Qsuite.

So, Molly and I flew out of Houston, Ted positioned to Dallas. And the thing is Ella and Charlie, they live in Missouri and Iowa. So they're going to have to position no matter what. So them positioning to Dallas was not a huge deal. So all that to say, I got tickets for me and Molly to fly all the way from Houston to Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, with a layover in Doha for 85,000 Avios each and around $300 in taxes.

And then I had to book Ted, Ella, and Charlie separately, just to Doha and then from there to Kilimanjaro. We were all on the same flight from Doha to Kilimanjaro. So it was 70,000 Avios and around $230 in taxes for all three of them to fly from Dallas to Doha, and then around 17,500 Avios and $100 in taxes to fly from Doha to Kilimanjaro. And like I said, we were all on the same flight to Kilimanjaro. Ted and I were in business class, and Molly, Ella, and Charlie were in economy for that flight.

The nice thing is, though, that we had a very, this is not the nice part. Molly, Charlie, and I had around an eight and a half hour layover in Doha. And so, but it wasn't overnight. You know, it wasn't like, Hey, let's go to a hotel. It was like in the afternoon into the early morning hours. And so, but the nice thing is all five of us were able to get into that Al Mourjan business class lounge in Doha, even though three of them were flying economy onwards because all five of us flew Qsuite to Doha. We were all able to get into that lounge.

And so we had showers. They have a spa. I got a massage at the spa. I did have to pay, but I feel like the prices were really reasonable. We had probably three meals each. We rested in the in the sleeping pods. And so it's very easy, if you're going to have to kill eight hours in a lounge, this is the lounge you want to be in.

Pam, were you going to say something?

Pam: Well, I wasn't sure if they had the sleeping pods or not. And so I've only been there when I've had two or three hours. And let me just say, you have not been to an airport lounge until unless you've been to the Al Mourjan business class lounge. I mean, it is really, it's breathtaking. It is, it is the lounge of lounges. It is so glitzy, so gorgeous, so big.

Jess: It's like a museum.

Pam: So amazing. It is. Yeah, it's crazy.

Jess: So once we got in there, I was like, okay, this is not, like spending eight hours here actually is not going to be that bad. And it's so funny because this was Charlie's first time ever flying business class. And so I have set the bar quite high because Qsuite is widely known as like one of the best business classes out there.

He was texting us from his seat, and he was like, there are so many little things. Like, I don't know what to do. And I can just eat whenever I want. Like if I'm hungry, all I have to do is press the button. And he's he said, they were really examining my documents closely when I boarded the plane. And I said, yeah, they're probably wondering how a 19-year-old afforded this seat. Like, little do they know, we just paid a few hundred bucks in taxes, but they were probably so confused as to how someone 19 years old is sitting in Qsuite.

And so he, his life was made and he was like, I don't care what the safari is like. This was this was worth it just to fly in this seat. So that was really fun to be able to treat like my entire family of five to Qsuite.

And Ella, a lot of people are like, that's a lot of points. That's a lot of Avios. It is a lot of Avios. But Ella has gotten into this, and so like she covered her flight with her own points that she has earned from opening credit cards. So lots of silver linings to having kids old enough to open their own credit cards and kind of contribute for their tickets.

And then coming home, we did the exact same thing. Ella and I went to Zanzibar for a few nights, which I will get to a little later on the episode. So we flew all the way from Zanzibar, layover in Doha to Houston for that 85,000 Avios and around

$382 in taxes. And then Ted and Molly flew from Kilimanjaro to Houston. Again, Qsuite business class, 85,000 Avios and Charlie flew uh Kilimanjaro to Dallas.

And so we were all, you know, Qsuite in business class round trip. If you have the points, I think I think for how far you get, like 85,000 miles to go all the way to Africa is a good deal. You know, I know it's a lot of points, but for that long of a flight, it's a good deal.

Now, if you're someone who is like, I'm not spending that many points, I just want to get there even if it's in economy for nearly free, Megan is your girl because she is going to cover how her family of five did this in economy if you want to save your points.

Megan: Yeah, so actually, the funny thing is, so my our, Tim's parents came with us too, but they like booked their own way. We booked our own way. So they got the two saver fares on the Qsuites both directions.

But if you have a bigger family, I think even if you have four, you can do two saver and then two at the flexi rate, which is like 140,000 points. So if you're a family of four, that's not a terrible idea, but I don't think there's I think there's only two flexi rates maybe. There's not many because I couldn't get five. Once I did five, we were at like 800,000 miles each way and I was like, nope, not happening.

Jess: No, that's a good point though. Like if you're a family of four and if you're in Qsuite, you can get the little quad of four seats. And it's not again, for how far you're flying, I know 140,000 sounds painful, but, you know, for like a once-in-a-lifetime celebratory trip, it could be worth it.

Megan: Yeah. So we actually positioned to DC, and we just booked flights on AA for 8,000 miles. It was like a 40-minute flight for us from New York. And then once we got there, we stayed overnight just at an airport hotel, the Embassy Suites.

And then the next morning we headed to the airport and could use our Chase Sapphire Reserves® to get into the Etihad lounge, which is now the sign said it was a Chase Sapphire Lounge®. So I think either that's partnering, they're not

really accepting Priority Pass™. They were like, you have to have a Sapphire Reserve card to get in here really.

Jess: Interesting.

Megan: And that's a really nice lounge. Like it was and it was not crowded. Last time I was there when it was full Priority Pass, you couldn't even find a seat. And we got there and all five of us just like went upstairs and had a whole like couch area. We had it all to ourselves. It was really nice.

So we flew from Dulles to Doha and we paid 35,000 points per person on Qatar. And we got so lucky. I think Jess, you missed it. There was a 20% transfer bonus that happened. I think Jess booked and then a couple of days later the transfer bonus came out, and I was able to get it because I was like, oh, we're booking economy, there's plenty of options.

Jess: Yeah, that was a big bummer because a spoiler, all the points we used were transferred from Amex®. So there you go.

Megan: And then we actually ended up only in spending two nights in Doha, and we stayed at the JW Marriott, Doha City Center. And you can book this. It's actually a pretty good deal for Marriott points. It's 27,000 to 37,000 points per night, depending on when you book. But the cash rate was only like $140 to $250, depending on the room.

So we booked a one-bedroom suite for our family of five. So instead of getting two rooms, and then they upgraded us to a two bedroom, and then we had a washer and dryer. So like we were able to spend two days in Doha, wash all of our travel day clothes and be able to like start completely fresh from that point in the trip and that was also very good.

Jess: That's amazing.

Megan: Yeah, and the hotel was really nice. The location was great. It was super easy to get around Doha. We just used Uber everywhere and no problem with Uber XL for all five of us. We checked out some like the market and the museum and like the riverfront, the Corniche area, and it was very, it's a very clean and

quiet and it was a really nice just couple of days to kind of like reset our clocks before we were crazy for eight days in Tanzania, like being in a truck all day.

Jess: The other thing that's nice about Doha is if you have the Amex Platinum® or Business Platinum and you have those Fine Hotels + Resorts® or Hotel Collection credits, those go really far in Doha. I actually looked into this because even the really nice hotels there are really reasonably priced. So you can get two nights at one of these really beautiful hotels and maybe not have to pay anything, or just like a minimal amount out of pocket with that $300. So that's another option, if you want.

Megan: Yeah, and then you would get the free breakfast and…

Jess: Yeah, and I know a lot of us have more hotel credits than we know what to do with at this point. And so that would be a really good use of something like that too.

Megan: Yeah. So then we flew from Doha to Kilimanjaro from there. And we, so there's two saver fares, and we paid 17,500 for two flights. So I booked Tim and Rose on one booking, like with his points. And then I booked me and the twins for 35,000 points each. And so that was because when you do five people, it automatically just gives you the 35,000 point rate. So you have to book the two saver fares separately.

And then I just went in and I paid to pick our seat so that the five of us would be together. I it sounds like they have a really good family option where they're like, we guarantee you'll sit with your children under 13. But I don't like to risk it. I would like to guarantee I am sitting with my under-12-year-old children and not have to like ask somebody to change or ask a flight attendant at the last minute, and it's not worth it for me.

Jess: Yeah, for sure.

Megan: Yeah. And then coming home, we went straight from Kilimanjaro back to Doha to JFK. And same thing, our flights were 35,000 points per person. I think that since gone up, it's like 42,500 now.

But we did, so Jess gave a tip that in the Qatar Doha airport, if you're booking Qatar Airways and you have an eight-hour or longer layover, they will provide a free hotel room for you. And our layover was like, we arrived at like 6:00 p.m., and we were leaving at like 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning or something like that. So for me, I was like, okay, I'm going to book this. And they gave us two rooms for the five of us, and we were able to like go and shower and sleep for like four hours, five hours before coming back to the airport.

Jess: And you got that for free?

Megan: It was free. All we had to do is check into a desk when we got there, we landed. They gave us like these certificates and we were right at the Oryx Garden Hotel that is inside the airport. So we didn't have to go through security again. It was so nice.

Pam: And it's pretty nice, I think too.

Megan: Yeah, it was.

Jess: I learned about this from Reddit, Crime Dog doing her Crime Dog thing. I'll actually link in the show notes where you can read more about this, but I filled it out for us because we also had an over eight hour layover, but they were going to give us an offsite hotel. And I didn't want to have to like leave the hotel. You have to get like a temporary visitor visa to leave the hotel, and then you have to go back through security. And I was like, I don't want to mess with all that. Like I'll just go to the lounge, you know? But if they had given us the airport hotel, I would have 100% done that. So that's really nice.

Megan: It was, it was really nice. They gave us two rooms and then when we checked in, the attendant at the front desk was like, you remind me of my family with three daughters. And she was like, I will guarantee you get connecting rooms. Like so she worked really hard to like make sure our rooms were connecting. And the only downside we ran into is this was that big snowstorm in New York City.

So our flight got delayed six hours leaving Doha into JFK, which was great because we didn't get canceled. But the hotel, they could only honor our

certificate that printed that like our we were supposed to leave at like 3:00 and 3:00 in the morning or something like that. So we did have to check out and we had still had like four or five hours at the airport. But it was fine.

We used our Priority Pass and went to one of the, one of just the Priority Pass lounges and it was really good. There was tons of people sleeping there. So I'm like, I'm sure lots of people have long layovers here and they just kind of find were anywhere they can to sleep a little bit. It was really nice to have a hotel.

Pam: So Megan, I'm really curious what you thought about economy class on Qatar.

Megan: It was good. The food, it was like hit or miss. Some things were really good. Some things were not that good. The kids barely ate any of the actual airport like the food. They would just be like, can we just get the sides? And they would eat like the roll and like the dessert and like, but overall, I think it was just like, it wasn't anything special. It was very just standard economy. I would say comparable to like all the Air France, KLM, Delta flights that we've had before.

Jess: So if you were going just you and Tim, would you try for Qsuite, the two, the two saver fares?

Megan: Yeah, I definitely would if it was just two of us, but it was not happening for five of us. I'm like, I'd rather just book another trip.

Jess: Okay, go back, go back once your kids are adults and you can fly on separate flights like we did.

Megan: I know that's the real hack here.

Jess: One more point I want to make about the Oryx hotel though is we did actually, so Ella and I stayed there on our way home, and then Ted, Charlie, and Molly stayed there on their way home also because we did, we had the overnight layover that way. And although I couldn't get us the Oryx hotel for free, we each used our Delta stay credit, our Delta Hotel, yeah, like if you have the Delta cards, they often come with a stay credit.

And so Ted and I each have the, we each recently got the business gold card, which comes with $150 Delta stay credit, and it can be any hotel bookable through Delta, so it doesn't have to be in a special collection, and you can use it for just one night. And so I didn't get it for free, but I did get each of our rooms for $150 off. So that's just a little tip if you have a Delta card that comes with one of those stay credits.

Megan: Yeah, and nothing beats just being in the airport. Like it was so nice.

Jess: It was so convenient. Because that was the thing is we got in late and we left early. And so I didn't, you know, it was it was enough time to get some sleep, but it wasn't enough time to like go venture out in Doha, you know?

Megan: Yeah. And like the airport is like, in itself is like a destination. There are so many shops and restaurants and not even like, like there's some really unique things, but there's a lot of like very American things, which I thought I found was interesting. Like, I don't know, it was really cool. You could just spend hours walking around.

Jess: Totally.

Pam: It's like going to Las Vegas. It's crazy.

Megan: It really was. It was. We said the same thing.

Jess: All right, then how did you get home?

Megan: And then so coming home we just did all the way back to JFK from Kilimanjaro through Doha. And then we actually since we positioned to JFK, we actually since the snowstorm our flight got canceled. I had originally booked five Delta flights through Virgin Atlantic for only 37,500 miles. So 7,500 points per person.

Jess: Wow.

Megan: That actually I waited long enough so like I just let they canceled it and then they just automatically refunded the point. So I didn't have to worry about doing anything there. And then we just did a one way rental car because it's only like a five to six hour drive from JFK for us. So we were like, we're not waiting

around. I'm not staying another night in a hotel. Like we need to get home. Everybody needs to go back to school. We had already been traveling for like almost two weeks at that point.

Jess: It's the worst because you're like, I just want to be home and the weather is not cooperating.

Megan: Yeah.

Jess: All right, well that was good. That it's like, I feel like you got even though you were in economy, you got a steal of a deal with the amount of points required for a family of five all the way to Tanzania.

Megan: I would book it again. Yeah, it's a long flight. Coming back it was like 14 and a half hours to JFK. And like that's a long flight, but everybody did just fine.

Jess: And you're six feet tall. Megan is six feet tall. Like she was crammed in this seat and she's such a good sport about it.

Megan: I know, that's why I wanted the middle and I like stretch out across their leg space. That's my like that's my biggest trick. Once they're adult size, I'm in real trouble.

Jess: All right, so Megan tell us how this trip came like came about, why we both, we were there within a week of each other. Like I went and then as I was leaving, Megan was arriving and she did her week. And so, you know, people probably want to know like what time should I go if I want to do a safari? Like what why did you choose February? It seems kind of random. So why don't you tell people?

Megan: So for our specific itinerary, going to Tanzania and we started in like Southern Serengeti and like worked our way north. February is just the best time to do that because it's calving season. So from like mid January to the end of February, all the babies are being born, like wildebeest, zebra, gazelles, like we saw literally, I think every animal we saw, we saw in baby form also. Like

Jess: Yup. Same.

Megan: Even like even the big five, we saw a baby rhino, we saw baby lions, baby cheetahs, baby leopards. Like it was crazy. So and that's like the very beginning of the great migration. So the calving season in January and February, and then starting from like March 1st to the end of May is rainy season. So we were kind of, I think Jess you had really great weather your week. We started getting some rain the next week, and we were there President's Day week. So that's the third week of February.

Jess: Okay.

Megan: It started getting real muddy in some of our drives. I was like, this is, I was like clenching my teeth like very nervous. But we had wonderful guides and drivers the entire time and at no point did we feel unsafe or anything, but it was just stressful getting in and out of mud. Like eventually sometimes we'd have to like back up and then run it again, tried to like create some traction in the mud.

Jess: I did not have any of that. We had periods, so I was there, we got we were there February 7th to the 15th and I would say like every afternoon around 3:00, it would rain for like an hour, not heavy rains, just kind of like consistent rain for an hour and then that was it. And so and that was the time where we were like just taking a nap or like chilling in our tent and so it was fine. But yeah, you sent me some videos and I was like, oh, it looks a little more rainy there this week.

Megan: Yeah. But so being in like the southern Serengeti, that was the best part of just seeing like all the baby animals, all the wildebeests are like congregating and like we'll get into it later. like when we did some of our stuff but like you could literally see the great migration happening. And I just thought that was so, such a cool and unique experience that you could only get in that like six week window.

Because otherwise you're going to be at in summertime when you see all those videos of like the river crossing like up near the Masai Mara, like up in Kenya. But then you see like thousands of safari trucks. So the other thing that was really great is the crowds were really low. We saw like other trucks, but it wasn't crazy. Like you could easily get close to the animals, you could easily see everything. And the trucks were really good about like taking their time and then their people would see and then they would move and then the other trucks

would move in. But I can't imagine if it was summer, like summer traffic, like I'm assuming that would be way wilder than what we saw.

Jess: Summer is definitely peak time to visit Tanzania and Kenya, if that's what you're looking to. Like June, July, August, it's also going to be the most expensive time. It's the dry season and so you're not having the rain worries as much, but you're having the money worries because it's the most expensive time to go. Unless you're paying with points, and then it doesn't matter.

Megan: Yeah. And then the other thing that really worked for us in February is that my kids have the week of President's week off every year. And then I think you said Molly has a break in February too.

Jess: Yeah, Molly has uh, Molly has a week off in February and a week off in March. And so that's when I called Roane, which we're going to talk about in a second. We both use the same travel agent. I said, I can either go this week in February or this week in March. And she was like, well, March is going to be rainy, so you should come in February and it's calving season. And I was like, and my birthday is in February. So, you know, we can it worked out.

Megan: The stars aligned.

Jess: Yeah, it worked out. So Molly only had to miss, I think like two days of school because yeah, she had that entire week off. So it worked out well.

Megan: Yeah, my girls did miss five days of school. We missed two days at the beginning and three at the end. But I think if we would have skipped those two days in Doha, they really would have only missed one or two days and we still could have fit the whole trip in.

Jess: Yeah, we'll get into the itinerary now and you're going to hear that we didn't take those two days in Doha. We actually Megan and I switched places for this trip because Megan is typically the go, go, go, and I'm the let's ease into it and we kind of switched roles on this trip.

But okay, so Pam, like we said, had stayed at TAASA Lodge before. TAASA is owned by the Roane family and they own Roane Travel, which is a travel agency. They are not exclusive to Tanzania. If you wanted to do a safari

anywhere in Africa, they could help you out. But so Megan had reached out to Roane and talked to Elizabeth at Roane Travel, got really great vibes from her, like and so I was like, okay, I'm going to call, I'm going to set up a time to chat with her. I had no idea what I wanted to do.

Like we get on the phone and she was like, so where do you want to do your safari? And I was like, I don't know, you tell me. Like I, the whole this ended up working out so well though because I didn't have to use my mental energy on any of this. You know, they say it's funny, like if you go, we're going to put a link in the show notes, if you want to inquire about a safari or just look into Roane Travel more, but their whole thing is it's all inclusive from the time you arrive to the time you depart. And so transportation between lodges or your game drives are included. All your lodging is included, all your meals and your drinks are included, all your activities other than we each did a hot air balloon that wasn't included, but everything is included.

Megan: Your visas. They applied for yeah, we didn't even have to do that.

Jess: Yeah, they applied for our visas to enter Tanzania for us. Like everything other than I brought cash for gratuities for people and that was, and souvenirs. That was the only thing I had to bring money for. And so it was really, really nice. You know, Megan, I know I think you're the one in your family who's usually in charge of the trip planning. I'm the one in my family and so it was a true birthday treat to not have to like have everything.

They just had our entire itinerary lined out, when we were leaving, when we were getting picked up, what's up, you know, and we could customize whatever we wanted. And so that was amazing.

Pam: I just wanted to add, we had a couple other really crazy things that happened on our trip that they covered that, you know, you don't even think, just not the normal stuff. So we get there and on our flight there, my husband started having pain. Lo and behold, he develops a kidney stone on this trip

So not only did they cover all the normal stuff, we were there with friends, we were supposed to go one day to TAASA Lodge, fly in on the bush plane. They flew them there. They had someone stay right with us the whole time. We

stayed another night. They got all that. They took us to the hospital. They were there every time we had to go back to the hospital. They were there for that, they got when we got and I mean it didn't pass. And so I mean he it was a miserable trip for him. But he didn't want to go home. And so when we were there at TAASA Lodge, they had like the village doctor come in. And then when we left there to go to Tanzania, to Zanzibar, he lost his passport.

Jess: Oh no.

Pam: They did everything they could. They found that passport on the bush plane where it had fallen out, got it to Zanzibar to us. I mean, we didn't have to worry about anything. Any problem was not too big for them to solve. I cannot say enough things about good things about them. It was amazing.

Jess: Yeah, so that's the thing is like we didn't use points, neither Megan or I used points for this portion of our trip. We paid cash or in my case, I think in Megan's too, I met a bunch of minimum spends because I charged it to my credit cards that coded as travel, just FYI. So, we met a bunch of minimum spends and you can 100% do this trip cheaper than we did.

Like it's not like you have to go luxury or you can't go at all. You can 100% do it cheaper, but if this is like a bucket list once-in-a-lifetime trip for you, I cannot recommend using a travel agent enough. This is a big trip. You know, piecing all of this together myself, and I'm a seasoned traveler. I have done this before. With something like an African safari, piecing all of this together would have been stressful for me.

Megan: and I totally agree. So like when I first started doing the research, I had this like huge long working list of like travel agents that I had found from like Facebook groups and like tour operators. And I was like, I can totally do this. I've done a million trips, like no big deal. And then it's like, okay, well I could book our accommodations, but then how do I get from place to place? Like now I need to figure that out. And I would and I am not one to get overwhelmed with trip planning. Like I can figure anything out.

But I got to the point where I was like, I think I need a professional. I need somebody that like knows how to do this. They have a ground team that they

work with on a regular basis that they can contact and help us make this work out. And like when I, I contacted a bunch of them and I talked to a couple, but then Elizabeth at Roane really was just like, she knew exactly what I wanted.

I was like, these are this is my goal. Like I gave her an outline of what I wanted. And she's like, here's what we can probably make happen. Let me get you some pricing. And like that was that. And I was like, this is it was totally worth it for like a once-in-a-lifetime trip. I don't think I would pay this much again to do it with all five of us. Maybe like leave the kids at home and do it again. Or like if we did like a girls trip with somebody, like I would do that. But I just I can't say enough good things about how easy they made it and how much they understood family travel too and not just like adults only luxury travel.

Jess: For sure. And that was my thing too. So like if you're Megan and you know what you want, or if you're me and you're like, I don't know, I've never tell me what I want because I don't know what I want. They can help you out with the planning. I think both of us started this process around 15 months in advance. You don't have to do it that far in advance. You know, Megan and I are planners, we have no chill. We started 15 months in advance. I think we were also able to maybe lock in lower rates by doing that. But you do not have to plan that far in advance. So yeah, Megan booked it in October 2024. I booked it in November 2024 and we traveled in February 2026.

Megan: Yeah, so we locked in those lower rates because the prices do go up. Everything gets more expensive every year. But we were also able to make payments. Like I made like, I think there was only like you had to put a deposit down and then final payment was due 60 days before your trip. But I made like multiple payments throughout that time period and was able to just do it little bits at a time and make it make it way easier and then like one big like crazy payment at the end.

Jess: No, every time you signed up for a new card, you're like, all right, time to make a payment.

Megan: Yeah, just a little bit just to help. And I will note that, so they do have some pricing, like sample pricing on their website, and I in my experience, my kids are all under 12, they were about half the adult price. So the pricing on their

website is like the adult pricing, and think of if you have a kid that's probably like three to 11, I think it would be about half that. And I think under three, most are free most places because they would be considered like an infant or toddler.

Jess: Yeah. Because like we said, all your food and your drinks are included in the price and so, you know, kids typically eat less than adults do and they're not drinking alcohol. And so, yeah.

Megan: One thing I wanted to touch on is age-wise, I think eight, like my twins are nine, they're like nine and a half, and Rose just turned 11 in January. As much as we have traveled with them, I don't think this trip would have been as enjoyable if we did it any younger. I think we would have missed out on a lot or like not have been able to do some of the really like all day crazy things that we did if we had younger kids. Maybe people out there are tougher than me, but I just found that like…

Jess: Uh, no one out there is tougher than you, Megan.

Megan: I just found that probably like eight and older for my kids would have been the perfect like age for this.

Jess: Yeah, I agree. I think you brought up the point like you didn't need car seats or booster seats, you didn't need to like go back for nap time, although, you know, we adults went back for nap time every day. But you know, there are parts where like the days are long, you know, there were a lot of days where we were in, we were doing a game drive from like 7:00 a.m. to noon, and then we'd go back and have lunch, and then we're game driving from 4:00 to 7:00 again, and then we're having, you know.

And so long days in a vehicle, there are parts where you got to be quiet. You know, like if you're looking at certain animals, you can't be making a lot of noise. And for, you know, I know Molly at a younger age wouldn't have done really well with that. She probably would have gone stir crazy in the car. And so I do think, you know, if this is like a big once in a lifetime trip, I agree with Megan that like eight or older is probably ideal.

Megan: Yeah.

Ep #173: How We Planned Our Family Safari in Tanzania

Jess: All right, we're going to get into our exact itineraries now and uh, spoiler, we have almost the exact same itinerary, just a couple of little differences here and there. But like I said, so we flew in, we left on a Thursday and arrived on a Sunday. So that is what the time, that's what, you know, the long flight does. We arrived at like 7:30 a.m. on a Saturday.

And I did not want to, I wanted to just start going. I was like, I don't want to go to the hotel at 7:30 a.m. and just sit around for an entire day with nothing to do. Like I just want to get started. We didn't have a ton of time. Like I said, Molly, Molly had a week off, but that's it.

And so they literally picked us up from the airport and we started our first game drive at Lake Manyara National Park, which was amazing. It's so funny though. We pulled into this park and we see these baboons and we start taking pictures. And I'm sure the driver was like, y'all, chill out. Like, let me go a little further and then you're going to see elephants and giraffes and zebras and like we saw hippos attacking each other. I mean, it was after we were there for probably a couple hours and then we headed to our hotel for the night. But Ted was like, man, if we left tomorrow, I would have been like, that was worth it. I saw like I saw what I needed to see and then it only got better from there.

So, no nights in Arusha for us, which is the typical place where you stay if you do want to stay a night. We went straight to Ngorongoro Crater. This is a crater that was formed, I think two and a half million years ago, and when I was planning this trip with Elizabeth, she said, so like what kind of like what kind of lodging are you looking for? And I was like, it's my 40th, we're going bougie. And she was like, yes, ma'am, I got you.

And so we stayed at the Ngorongoro Lodge, which is part of the Belia collection of hotels. And it was absolutely incredible. We had views of the crater from our it's right on the crater rim and so it's super convenient. We had views of the crater. I had one from my shower. You know, the kids had one from their room. And so we got two rooms. We were there for two nights and so Ted and I were in a room with a king bed and then the kids were in a family room with a king bed and a roll away. And so, yeah, it worked out really well.

Cannot say enough good things about the crater. The crater was amazing. We the next day, we did a full day game drive in the crater, not full day, five or six hour game drive in the crater and it was amazing the things we saw. So, highly recommend like Ngorongoro Crater in my opinion is a must do if you are going to Tanzania for a safari.

Megan: Yeah, I totally agree. So we actually spent one night in Arusha at the Four Points Sheraton, which you can book on Marriott points. It's 13,000 points to 22,000 points per night or $200 to $350 cash. We had two rooms here. It was nice, it was updated. You wouldn't even know it was in the middle of this like bustling city. And it was just it was really great for just a quick like one day. We kind of like reset everything and then got on the road the next morning to the same area.

We went straight to Lake Manyara like Jess did. And then we stayed at the Acacia Farm Lodge and this is like, they grow all of their own vegetables and fruit and they grow their own coffee. And this is it was like maybe 15 or 20 minutes from the Ngorongoro Crater like entrance. So it was still like very close to the area. It was and I think originally we were booked at Jess's hotel and I was like, can we bring the price down a little bit? And so this was like the next option. like this was the next step down.

Jess: I mean it looks beautiful though. I saw your I saw your videos and I was like, dang, that would have been nice too. Like the thing is there's so many options with these places with these with these places that Roane is choosing for you. Like you really can't go wrong with any of them, you know?

Megan: Yeah.

Jess: But yeah, and that is a steal from Marriott, you know, 13,000 Marriott points a night. I mean, you don't really get much better than that. And I saw your videos of the Four Points Sheraton also and I was like, oh, that looks really nice. And I think Pam, you have stayed at this Four Points Sheraton in Arusha.

Pam: Yeah, we stayed there. We stayed there an extra an extra night than we wanted to because of the kidney stones. But yeah, it was great. It was a great

hotel. I again, it's like you look around in Arusha and you're going, wow, this is just kind of plopped down there and it was it was great.

Megan: Yeah. And it's actually, like fun fact, it's the oldest hotel in that area of Africa. So I was like, that's pretty cool. It's been there a very long time. It's had many faces over time, but it's been a Marriott for a while now.

Jess: That's awesome. All right, so you enjoyed Ngorongoro Crater as well. The really nice thing, I was going to talk about the surprise lunch that Roane threw for us. And so, you know, we assumed that we were going to have just like a packed box lunch here. So we're like going, we see all these people eating their box lunches at the picnic tables and I just assume that's where we're going. And then the driver keeps driving and I'm like, what's going on? Where are we going?

Megan: You're like way off the road.

Jess: Yeah, we were way, we were off-roading quite a bit, and then we pull up to this setup and Roane had surprised us with a hot lunch. And so it was a chef with a with a grill and they had like skewers and rice and potatoes and vegetables and dessert and wine and beer and sodas and it was and it was just our family. You know, it was the same for you, Megan where it was for us, it was just the five of us. For you, it was the seven of you. And it was just so amazing to just like be in the middle of the bush having this hot lunch. And so, you know, another little fun surprise that they threw in.

Megan: Yeah, something I wouldn't have booked for my own family that my travel agent did for us.

Jess: No, I would have been like the box lunch is fine. Let's save the money. The box lunch is fine. But yeah, it was just like nice little touches like that were that were really nice.

Megan: Yeah. And in the Ngorongoro crater, I also thought it was really great because it's so like vast and flat. You can see every animal like so easily. But the only thing that's a little different is on these in these national parks, you have to like the drivers have to stay on the paved or like the dirt roads, like the approved

paths. They can't go off-roading and get close to the animals, which also kind of it protects the area and it keeps it a little less crazy. Our driver was really good with like, he was like basically networking. He would like pull up to a truck and basically be like, have you seen anything? What have you seen? Like where can you where should we go?

Jess: No, we had the same experience. So I think that's pretty common among them.

Megan: Yeah, so it was really cool. And so Roane partners with Leopard Tours and that's who like our ground crew was. And we were with our driver for like five days. Our driver was so great. He was like, he was just full of information. Like he answered every question and then even when we weren't asking questions, he had things to share and to teach us. And I was like, I just thought it honestly was so amazing and I feel like we all just walked away from so with so much.

Jess: Yeah. This is, so the crater is where we saw, we only saw one rhino the whole time we were there, but the crater is where we saw the rhino. And like you said, the reason we were able to see it is because it is flat and so it was kind of far away. So we brought the binoculars out. Definitely recommend bringing binoculars if you're going on a safari.

Megan: We brought a pair for everybody.

Jess: Yeah. So got the binoculars out, but it was really, it was really, really cool.

Megan: Yeah.

Jess: And so you did two nights at Acacia Farm Lodge also, right?

Megan: Okay.

Jess: So same with us, two nights, and then the next after two nights there, we drove to TAASA Migration Camp. And so this is actually, like it, like the name suggests, it is a camp that moves locations three times during the year depending on where we are with the great migration. Okay, so we were both in

the Ndutu region for our stay at TAASA Migration Camp. It's pretty new. I think it opened summer 2025.

Megan: Yep, just last year. So less than a year old.

Jess: And it is amazing. Like when you go there, you're like, they move this? Like it had like your tents have an actual bathroom, like with a toilet and a shower, and it I was like, this is crazy that they move all this. It must take forever. But so it's new. Excellent option for families because they have a couple of family tents. They had two, right?

Megan: It was two of them, I think.

Jess: Because you stayed in a different one than we did. Basically, the pro of a family tent is it's two tents that are connected by a walkway, a covered walkway. And so at all of these camps, you're not supposed to venture out alone after dark. You need to have an escort with you. And it's like this person that has a spear in case…

Megan: …with poison on it.

Jess: …in case an animal were to come out and try to get you. So with the family tents because it has that covered walkway, you're able to go between tents after it's dark at night and not have to ask for an escort. So with families, it came in clutch.

So Ted and I were in the tent with a king bed, and then Ella and Molly were in the family, connected family tent with two twins. They actually gave us three tents. Charlie had his own tent with a king. I think originally they were going to put us all together and so I'm I'm thinking maybe they just had an extra one and they're like, let's give him his own space, which he greatly appreciated. But you fit all three of your kids in.

Megan: Yep. So they gave us a roll away bed for the third single bed. So the one room had like three single beds, and then the other tent had a king bed. And these are like real glamping tents. Like they're on platforms and they have porches and they gave us like mud boots to wear and umbrellas to carry if we needed them. And that was all provided. So it they thought of everything.

Jess: Yeah. And I will say that like Molly's a picky eater. That was one of my biggest worries with this trip, was the food. Ella is pescatarian and they more than catered to both of them. There was always a pescatarian option at every meal. They made Molly pizza, they made her a burger, they made her pasta, you know, and so if you have a kid that's more of a or an adult that's more of a picky eater, they can pretty much cater to anything you need.

Megan: Yeah. And the staff was really wonderful. We had Suli and Evans like assigned to our tent. And we came back from like a long game drive the one day and they were like, go, go sit, go relax. And they like took the girls and played like giant Jenga and like were teaching them card tricks and like they are just so thoughtful and like we don't normally stay at places that do stuff like that. So it was really nice.

Jess: Well, and every night from like 6:30 to 7:00, there's like a cocktail hour around the fire and you can get like wine or a beer or a mocktail, and just sit around the fire with your blanket and I don't know, like they just thought they just thought of everything.

Megan: Yeah.

Jess: This is also where we did the hot air balloon safari. All, you know, we did it. Well, me, Ted, and Ella did it. Molly and Charlie are scared of heights and so they sat this one out. But it was nice for them because they were able to just stay at the migration camp and sleep in. And then join us for our game drive later on. And then Megan, I think your entire family got to do it.

Megan: We all, all of us went, even my in-laws went, which I was a little nervous when we got there because we had a very muddy drive. And you're so we get picked up at 5:00 a.m. because we have to get there for sunrise. And so we were driving in this truck and we got stuck in the mud so many times. So my heart was like already in pieces when we got there. I was like, okay, like trying to calm myself down because I was like, I'm not going to be the one that chickens out on this when I was the one that planned everything.

And then like when we got there, it was sunrise and they have like, they had toilets so everybody could use the bathroom. They had like coffee and granola

bars if you needed something to eat. And also at the migration camp before we left, TAASA set up a whole table. They were making us coffee and hot chocolate and they gave us like little bags of snacks to take with us to eat in the car. So that was really nice too. And we all did it and the girls, they weren't even scared. I don't know how because it was…

Jess: I didn't think it was scary. I'm I mean, I, y'all know I'm a I'm an anxious flyer. I did not think the hot air balloon was scary at all.

Megan: I think it was more of the buildup in my head.

Jess: Yeah, the anticipation:

Megan: But like once we did it, I was like, it was so smooth and so quiet, and the staff was so professional, and they I totally trusted our pilot with our lives. Like he was really great.

Jess: Yeah. And it was just amazing. Like seeing the great migration from above is just amazing. And then afterwards, we had a breakfast, they provided a champagne toast or, you know, they had a non-alcoholic version for kids or non-drinkers. And then we had a full-on breakfast in the bush with I had avocado toast and mimosas, and it was just, I think it was $500 a person and I thought it was, I thought for what, for the whole experience, I thought it was a very reasonable price.

Megan: 100% because we were with them for multiple hours, like five or six hours for the morning. And the interesting thing is like, so the hot air balloons take off and then your truck driver that brought you there basically chases the hot air balloon the whole way and then they meet you when you land. So that was really interesting too because we were like, how do they do, like how do they even know where we're landing?

Because our pilot was like, so I think they try to shoot for being in the air about an hour. We were at about an hour and 25 minutes and our pilot was like, I think that was probably my furthest we've ever done on this on this route. And he's been doing this like for 10 years. So, we had really great weather and our truck drivers just met us and then they drove us to the breakfast, which was maybe

like 45 minutes, like 40 minutes maybe, but you're driving through this Serengeti. So you are seeing animals and you're seeing things along the way too.

Jess: Yeah. All right, well, so after two nights at TAASA Migration Camp, we both left for TAASA Lodge. This one did require a small bush plane, and I was anxious about this flight. It ended up being completely fine, but this is by far the smallest plane I've ever been on. I think there were seats for maybe 10 people. And there was a pilot and a first officer, and the first officer literally gave the safety briefing from his seat. And so, and they passed out little mints.

But it was a beautiful flight. Like you could you're flying over the Serengeti, you know, so you're seeing like giraffes and elephants from the plane. You don't go very high. I think we were at like 9,000 feet high altitude at the highest. And it was like a 30 minute flight. And so it was that was another thing where like I was super anxious because of the anticipation and then when I did it, I was like, oh, that wasn't bad at all. That was actually kind of fun.

Megan: Yeah.

Jess: So, do it scared. Don't let the fear prevent you from having these incredible experiences. But like I said, next three, I think did you spend three nights at TAASA Lodge? Okay.

So next three nights we spent at TAASA Lodge. So this is another lodge owned by TAASA in the Northern Serengeti, but this is an actual lodge and so it does not move. But it's similar setups in that there's luxury tents and they have the family tent option. So we had a family tent. I think Megan, you had a family tent here also. So again, the covered walkway between that you could go between the tents. And yeah, it was just amazing. Like I think this was probably my favorite of the three that we stayed at. I don't know, what do you think Megan?

Megan: Yeah, if we were ever to go back, I would go back to TAASA Lodge and probably spend like four or five nights just there. Like that's how much I love it.

Jess: I think that's what Pam did. I think that's what Pam did. Y'all just did TAASA Lodge, right?

Pam: Yeah, there wasn't, I don't believe there was a migration, there wasn't a migration camp then. So, yeah, we were at TAASA Lodge for, should have been five nights, but we were there for four nights.

Jess: So here it's really nice because the jeeps that you were the safari vehicles you ride in are open at the other two places they were closed, you could open the windows and like the top popped up so you could like stand up and see out of there. At TAASA, it was completely open.

You get a guide and a tracker. And so there's there's a person dedicated to just looking out for animals and then there's a driver guide and we just thought this was the best experience ever. They're able to truly off-road here and you're you're not competing with other vehicles. Like I think we saw maybe one or two other vehicles the entire time we were there and they were other TAASA vehicles. So it was just so much more private.

I will say I think that at the crater, there was we saw more. You know, like at TAASA Lodge, it takes a little more effort to find the animals, I feel like. But just an amazing experience. We did, we did a late night game drive here and so we left after dark and we went out and it was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. There was a park ranger with a gun that rode with us in case we needed someone.

Megan: Yeah, same here.

Jess: I know a lot of you messaged me on Instagram. You saw my video of like two male lions attacking and killing a warthog. So RIP Pumba, but that was one of the most incredible experiences I've ever seen with my own eyes and I was shaking. I was like, this is so cool, but also like please don't let me die tonight.

And then we went to both of us, they have, you know, TAASA is really involved in the local community. A lot of the people they hire are from the local Maasai villages. We actually got to go to the Maasai village of our tracker one day. I know Megan, you and your family did the same thing. We got to go to the village and learn more about the Maasai tribe and their culture. And then we got to go to a local school. We got to visit with the kids in the school. They sang songs for us. We asked them questions, they asked us questions.

And then one of them said their favorite animal was an elephant. And so Ted promptly said, oh, she does a really good elephant impression. And so I got to do my elephant noise for this class of students and they were just shocked. They were like laughing and clapping. So it was just amazing. Megan, I think y'all went on the weekend so school wasn't in session, but your girls got to play games with the kids.

Megan: And like my kids were blown away. So this school has like a thousand students at it from that local area. And a lot of the kids live there as like boarding school kind of situation. And so we were there on the Saturday. We pull in and there's not a single adult in sight. And there's hundreds of kids just doing their laundry, like washing it and hanging it, eating their lunches, like playing soccer. And my kids were like, this would never happen at our school.

Like, and so it was just really, really cool. And then eventually one teacher came out and he was like, oh, most of the staff are at a training today. He's like, I'm really the only one here. And he was like, let's go out to the field. And like they ran races and they played basketball and they played soccer and they like they he like organized all this stuff and he was like asked for volunteers and but he was like, he's like, I don't need more, he's like, I don't want boys, I need more girls because I have three daughters. So he like wanted to make sure that they were playing against the other girls.

And I was like, what a cool experience that our kids got to have and we got to have being there with them and for them to just see how different it can be, but all these kids are also still just at school learning, you know, like it was just so nice to just open their world a little bit more.

Jess: No, it's it was amazing and it was one of the highlights of the trip for us because just, you know, showing Molly like, hey, this is how people live on the other side of the world and like this is, I don't know, just like experiencing their culture and going into their world was like really, really cool experience.

Megan: Yeah. And our tracker took us to like his house and like so his wife went inside and then invited us in and then our driver, Janet, who by the way, we saw hundreds of safari trucks on this trip and not one woman driver. We get to TAASA Lodge and we got the only woman driver we've seen all week. And my

girls just lit up knowing that we had a girl driver. They thought that was the coolest thing.

Jess: No, we had the same one and I was obsessed with her and we follow each other on Instagram now and she's so cool.

Megan: She was really, really cool. And like it was so funny the one morning the staff members were like at TAASA were asking the girls like, oh well they were like, we don't want to leave. And they're like, oh, you can work here. What job do you want? And they're like listing off all the jobs and all three of them were like, we want to be a driver like Janet. Like they just wanted to be like her. Like it was it was really great.

But so she translated for us inside our tracker's home with his wife, literally the five of us sitting like around their little fire and she was like through Janet being like, you can ask any questions, like what do you want to know? And so we would ask questions like what do you eat and what do you like to cook and what do the kids do for fun? And our tracker's four older kids go to boarding school in Kenya, so they only have a three year old at home. So she was able to share like where they sleep.

And it was for me, I felt like a life-changing experience where like I was like, I don't think I ever would have experienced something like this if I wouldn't have taken this trip. And just to show like how similar families are all around the world even though we live very differently. Like it was just amazing.

Jess: No, 100% life-changing. I'm so glad we did it. All right, so three nights at TAASA Lodge and then we said, well Ella and I didn't sadly head home, but other people sadly headed home. We went back to, we flew on the tiny plane back to Arusha where we started and my family spent the night at Siringit Villa.

So we actually booked this through Roane, but come to find out, it is an SLH property and so you can use Hilton points or free night certificates to stay here. I believe it was 70,000 Hilton points a night if you wanted to do that. Megan, again, stayed at the Four Points Sheraton. Siringit Villa was really nice. It's only six rooms. It's like basically a house. They have a pool. They have a golf course. Ted and Charlie went golfing and like they had impalas on the course with them.

They were like, when are we ever going to have impalas playing golf with us? Ella, they have a spa. Ella and I got massages.

And so it was a really nice way to kind of wind down the trip. Aand then the next morning we went back to the airport, the other three flew home and Ella and I flew on to Zanzibar. So Megan, did you want to say anything else about your last night in Arusha or was it pretty much the same as the first night?

Megan: So we did have a little issue on the bush plane coming back. So we were going from the Lobo airstrip near TAASA Lodge back to Arusha. But the bush planes operate more like a bus system. So like they'll stop at other places. So they like take off, land, pick up more people, take off and then you land at your final destination.

So when we landed to pick up more people, our airplane blew a tire. So we had to wait and just they were like, so we have two options. We have another plane that's empty coming here that we can put you on that's going to Arusha. And they're like, but also we have another plane that's coming and they're bringing an engineer with a tire replacement. And they're like, whoever gets here first is the one that we're going to go with.

And I but they handled it so well. It was no big deal in the end. We were delayed maybe like an hour and but it's like it was sunny and warm and they gave us bottled water at the little like outdoor airport. And then we made our way back. And then it was no problem getting back to the Four Point Sheraton. And then our flight was like 6:00 a.m. the next day or yeah, so we had to leave, we left real early the next morning. It was still dark out and we made it to the airport. It was no issue getting back through or anything. It was nice and easy.

Jess: Yeah, so Ella and I flew to Zanzibar for a few nights. We flew Precision Air. I booked our flights through the Capital One portal for using my $300 travel credit. So that was that was nice. And then we stayed three nights at the Park Hyatt Zanzibar because I was like, if I'm going all the way to Tanzania, I have to go to the Park Hyatt Zanzibar. It was amazing. We stayed three nights there. It was 25,000 Hyatt points a night. So 75,000 Hyatt points total and zero.

Megan: That's a steal.

Jess: Yeah, it's a steal. The hotel was beautiful. I used to sweet upgrade award. They gave us a sweet with an ocean view. It was amazing. This is one of this Park Hyatt has free breakfast for everyone. I have never heard of a Park Hyatt having free and it was amazing free breakfast. Like it was a buffet or you could order all a cart or both. And so loved the Park Hyatt.

We did a whole lot of nothing. We watched Love is Blind. We sat by the pool. We went to the spa. I got an amazing 90 minute massage for $100. You know, I mean, so really good, really good pricing there. We did, I booked one Airbnb experience, walking tour of Stone Town that was really interesting that we enjoyed. We went and bought Tanzanite at a jewelry store in Stone Town.

I will say that like whenever we would leave the Park Hyatt, we would immediately start getting like haggle, hassled by people like let us give you a ride or like come into my store, buy this. I did find that annoying. And so, I don't know, granted, we did not see all of Zanzibar. There's a lot of Zanzibar we didn't see. The Park Hyatt is located in Stone Town, so we were basically in that area the whole time. There's a whole other side of the island that we didn't see. The Park Hyatt was amazing.

Would I go back to Zanzibar? I don't know. Like it kind of it's kind of one of those things where I'm like, I did it. I saw it. Aagain, the Stone Town history was amazing, but it wasn't my favorite place I've been. But five stars for the Park Hyatt. And I know Pam, you've stayed at the Park Hyatt Zanzibar also.

Pam: Yeah, and I thought it was beautiful. I got eaten up by mosquitoes, which really kind of ruined things for me a little bit. I thought it was I thought I really liked it. I felt the same way about Zanzibar. We did go over to the coast, to a Hilton Double Tree, I believe, and we were really, you know, it was more beachy. But by then I had been bitten up by mosquitoes. They that kind of messes up with your trip. I kind of had the same thought as you. Enjoyed Zanzibar, glad I went. It's a one and done though.

Okay, well, you know, these guys went on these trips and it was just like nostalgia week for me. I could just remember everything that they did, everything that I saw. I was feeling so nostalgic and wishing I was there. I remember the last night, or the when you leave, they give you, well, there's a

they give you a send off when you leave it. I was bawling like a baby. That's how much I loved it.

You know, I mean, I it really, there is nothing like going to Africa. There is nothing at all like going and I think the thing for me is that they have so much less than we have in life, but they are the happiest people and they are so content with what they do have and they touched my heart, they touched my life forever.

So even though Jess and Megan didn't use points for their lodging, they saved tens of thousands of dollars on their flights to Tanzania for each of their families of five. So stay with us though, we're not done with Africa. We're going to continue.

Next week we're going to break down some tips and tricks for making a safari on points more affordable when it comes to both flights and hotels. You'll hear about my upcoming trip to Kenya, the safari that didn't happen in the past. And it spoiler alert, it is done entirely with points.

So if you enjoyed today's episode, be sure to leave a review, share it with a friend, let a friend know we're going back to Africa next week.

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