

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Alex Payne, Jess Field, and Pam Lorg

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Alex: Once you've traveled to many of the popular points and miles destinations, it's natural to start looking for somewhere different. There's something exciting about going somewhere that isn't all over Instagram. Today, we're talking about destinations off the beaten path.

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.

Alex: Hey, I'm Alex.

Pam: And I'm Pam, Alex's mom.

Jess: And I'm Jess. Let's talk points. We've traveled to many of the most popular vacation spots all over the world. Our question today is this: is getting off the beaten path actually better, or are popular destinations popular for a reason? So, Pam is going to kick us off with some of the pros of going to those lesser-known, off-the-beaten-path destinations.

Pam: Yeah, this has been I've been wanting, I've been thinking about this now that I've been to so many different places, so many of the real popular places. There are certain places I love to just go back to. I will always want to go to Greece. I will always want to go to Italy, but there's been a couple times we've gone to little towns that were kind of not as popular, and they were just like we went for a day and I go, "Oh, I'd love to come back there and spend a week, and just kind of become a local and have it be chill and stuff."

So, there are some real pros to doing this. One of this is that you're going to have a lot fewer crowds. Those of you that have been to Santorini know that it can be insane in Santorini when you are going there in the middle of the day. You've got all the cruise ship people there. You've got everybody out and you can hardly walk. It's insane.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

But there are a lot of Greek islands that aren't really frequented by a lot of people, where there's a lot fewer crowds. And if you have fewer crowds, it means you're probably not going to need to get restaurant reservations a week ahead. The attractions, the places you're going, are just going to feel more relaxed. That's how I felt when I went to Cascais. Did I pronounce that right, Alex?

Jess: Cascais, I think.

Alex: Cascais.

Pam: Cascais, okay. And you're less likely to spend your vacation standing in lines. I'll tell you, I don't know about you, but standing in lines is not my favorite thing to do. Standing in lines to go see the Colosseum or standing in lines for the Vatican, all those things are not that much fun. So, you can really have a much more relaxed feel on your vacation if you go to lesser-known destinations.

Another thing is that you have a more authentic experience. Restaurants and shops will cater more to the locals than tourists. And I think you can even have this even if you go to a crazy place. You can still frequent, find out about some of the restaurants that are off the beaten path. You can even do off the beaten path even in a big city. Just do it. Don't go to all the tourist traps.

Alex: Find a local.

Pam: Yes. You can get a better feel for everyday life in the destination. Now, I remember my first trip to Cinque Terre, and that is another place lots of travelers go. But when everybody, in the evening, when all the cruise ships have gone back, it becomes this little it feels like this little tiny village. And I loved the feel of it. It was so relaxing. It was, I just loved the feel of it.

I always have said, "I want to go back there and spend a week and be more like a local, not going around to all the tourist stuff and everything until they leave." That's what I said when in Cascais. That's how I felt, too, is that I am dying that is probably my one place I want to go and I want to go spend a week or two. It's

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

definitely off the beaten path, but a vibe that I love, and it spoke to me and I need to do that.

You can also it potentially can be a lot less expensive. Hotels, meals, activities, and transportation can cost less. Your points may stretch further if there are good redemption options. Now, we're going to talk about some of the cons, and one of them is that you may not find as many good redemption options. But if you do, probably a lot less in points and miles.

And then you get the fun of discovering something new. I love it when I feel like I've discovered a place. Like, I went to Mallorca, and I'm not saying that's not really off the beaten path—a lot of people go to Mallorca—but nobody that I knew had gone there before. So, to me, it was off the beaten path. It wasn't a major place of all my friends.

Alex: It's for Americans, probably. It's not all the places. Americans are like, "We're going to Rome, and we're going to Paris, and we're going to London."

Pam: Yes. But for me, I just thought there was a different excitement because I didn't know exactly what every viewpoint or hotel was going to look like. It was all fresh. It was all new. And you may come home recommending a place your friends have never considered. And that's how I felt about Mallorca. I'd love to go back there. I thought that, to me, it was off the beaten path. And there are lots of small little towns you can go and visit. It's not as busy. I've spoken to lots of people about how much I loved that.

So, those are some of the pros of not going to all the major places. Like I said, there are some cons, and Alex is going to address those.

Alex: Yeah. So, first, I love your pros, and I agree. I have kind of been noticing with myself that I love going to the big city for a day or two. Go to the city, do a full-day tour, see the things, and then I love to get out and go see other areas. That's what my husband and I were talking about when we went to Portugal this summer. We went to Lisbon, we spent two days, and then we went to the Azores. We're in this...

Pam: No, you went to the Algarve.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Alex: I mean, not Azores, we went to the Algarve. I'm thinking of Azores because I'm going to be talking about that in a bit.

We went to the Algarve and we were in Lagos, and it is a touristy, beachy place, but more for Europeans, and we were there at a slower time. So, it's just so much quieter than big-city life. And I realized that's what I really like is the smaller towns. Big city for a day and then go see the smaller towns. So, I'm hoping to do more of that sort of travel.

Okay, but for the cons, points and miles can be harder to use. Like my mom was saying, there might be fewer Hyatt, Hilton, Marriott, or IHG properties. Award flights might only get you to the major gateway city, and then you've got to figure out, "How do I then get to this other area?"

So, for myself, when we went to the Algarve, we could have flown down there from London. There was flights. We went from London. They were way, way more expensive than if we flew to Lisbon and rented a car and drove.

And so that's that factor of getting to those smaller areas are going to cost you more. So, and then you may end up paying cash for smaller hotels or Airbnbs. For us, we actually did stay in an Airbnb for that very reason. But then there's also that pro of, for a family of six, Airbnb situation was pretty nice, cooking our own meals. There are hotel options there, but for me, I was very like, "I want to stay in an Airbnb, so we have to go to the grocery store, so we have to go walk and do these things, so we can do some of the things that the locals do and have that experience of cooking and living, not as much a tourist life." So, that was kind of part of the experience for me.

Another thing is transportation can get complicated. You might need a positioning flight, train, ferry, or, like I mentioned, a rental car or a longer transfer. And that can also cut in. If you only have a limited amount of time, it makes it so your trip gets longer when you have to factor in these days it's going to take you to go to those maybe off-the-beaten-path locations to reach that destination. So, just keep in mind, if a destination looks close on a map, it could take you an entire day to reach, or it could take you a train ride and some transfers.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Another con could be the less tourism infrastructure. You might find fewer English speakers, and maybe that's something that stresses you out or you worry about, "How am I going to navigate this?" Google Translate will be your friend, but that is something to consider if you do worry about that. There is going to be less public transportation, fewer tours, maybe not as many restaurant choices. Luxury hotel options might be limited.

Sometimes the beaten path is beaten for a reason. Paris, Rome, London, Hawaii, the Greek islands- they attract millions of visitors because they are really wonderful. And I go back to Santorini, like you were saying, Mom. I've heard so many people be like, "Oh, I'm not going there. It's way too busy," or they went on a cruise, and they were like, "Oh, it's just there's way too many people. These other islands are way better. I'd rather go to these other Greek islands that are off the beaten path," which I get.

But I will stand by that Santorini is a place you should visit. You only need two or three nights. You don't need to stay there very long. But when the cruise ships leave, it's magical. I just have never been anywhere like that where you have those views. So, is it busy? Yes. But there's a reason why, and it's because it's incredible. Going somewhere obscure just for the sake of it being different doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be better. All right, Jess, you're next.

Jess: All right, so here are some reasons why you might choose to go off the beaten path. Pam sort of covered this one already, but it's that you want fewer crowds. Popular destinations can be popular for a reason, but fighting the crowds at every single turn takes some of the fun out of the trip. This is one... I don't mean to dog on Venice every single episode, guys, okay?

Alex: I knew it was coming.

Pam: It was raining, Jess.

Jess: It was raining. It was raining, but also—

Pam: I've been to Venice three times. I still love it. We're going to get in a fight.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Jess: Overtourism is a huge issue in Venice, okay? So, if I were to go back, which I am open to doing, I would not go in the summer, okay? Because Italy anywhere, especially Venice, Florence, Rome, you will not catch me there in July or August, right? A, it's going to be hot as heck, and B, it's going to be overcrowded.

A lot of times, even somewhere on the beaten path during a shoulder season can give you a better experience than going when everyone else is also there, right? So, if I were going to go back to Venice, I would probably go in April or late September. Give it time to maybe not be quite as crowded as it was when I was there.

Another reason is you've already visited all the big destinations. I think Pam checks this box off out of the three of us. She has started to go to some more off-the-beaten-path destinations a lot, and I think it's because she's literally gone everywhere else already. So, there's not that many more options for her to choose from that she hasn't been to.

London is somewhere I'm going three times this year. I could go to London every year and be totally fine with that. A lot of it also just depends on what type of traveler you are.

You want something that feels more authentic. This is an issue I'm going to talk about in a little bit, but I have been to... I live in Houston. I've been to Cancun over a dozen times in my life. If I never went to Cancun or Cozumel or any of those places again, I would be okay with that. And it's because you fly into Cancun, you take a shuttle to the resort, you stay at the resort the entire time. You're not getting an authentic experience. And so if I never went there again, I'd be okay with that. I'm trying to...

Alex: Wait, even a Park Hyatt? Would you go to try it?

Jess: I'm going to the Park Hyatt Cabo with these two later this year, but we're doing our work retreat, which is basically where we hole up in a room regardless of where we are. So, Mexico is actually the perfect place to do that, because that's pretty much what we would do anyways.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

So, you want something that feels more authentic. You want your money to go further. A lot of these really on-the-beaten-path big destinations are also very expensive because they know they can charge that amount of money because the tourists are going to come regardless.

You want adventure. You want to discover somewhere new. Maybe you want a little bit of a slower trip. You don't want the big-city hustle and bustle, taking public transportation. You want to do a little bit more slow travel, exploring on your own. You want something different to talk about. You want to be like, "Hey, guess where I went?" and it not be somewhere that everyone else you're talking to has also already been before.

The popular destinations are just getting more and more popular because of social media. They're getting more and more expensive because these places know that people are going to come regardless. Award availability may also lead people to these bigger destinations. And I 100% am guilty of this. A new hotel will open somewhere, and I'm like, "Oh, I want to go stay there." And even if it's in New York or Paris or Rome or London, like when the Park Hyatt London opened, I was like, "I have to go stay at the Park Hyatt London."

Japan is also another really, really popular option in the award travel community. There are a lot of really great options on flights to Tokyo. There are a lot of really great award hotel options in Tokyo, in Kyoto, in Osaka. A lot of times in our community, at least, the award availability leads people to these very popular destinations.

And then the other thing is maybe you've become a more confident traveler. Once you've done the big cities, I feel like you gain confidence and you're like, "Okay, I'm good to go somewhere where I don't speak the language or where I'm going to need to rent a car instead of relying on public transportation or something like that." And so I feel like the more confidence you gain, the more you're willing to branch out on where you go, and that can lead you off the beaten path.

All right, so, Pam, give us some examples of off-the-beaten-path destinations that you've either been to or would like to go to.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Pam: Okay, so these are two places I'd like to go to. Honestly, this is a shout-out to Carla, who was at our meetup. She's one of our students, and she was talking at our table all about Slovenia. Slovenia? Slovenia, yeah. And my ears perked up, and I go, "This place sounds amazing. I think I'd like to go there."

When we were thinking about this, I thought, "Okay, it's a very small country. It's small enough that you can go there, plus go to somewhere close to it." There's Lake Bled. I really am dying to go to Lake Bled. I've looked at pictures since she talked about it. Or the Julian Alps, and they can be an alternative, or they can be a place to go to in addition to Italy, Austria, or Croatia.

We are going to Croatia in July, my family, and we are going early and probably staying a little bit later. So, my first thought was, "I am going to Lake Bled before we go to Dubrovnik." Then I started looking, and I go, "So, we start in Dubrovnik and end up in Split." And I found out, no, it's closer to Split. So, that kind of changed.

Now thinking, "Okay, maybe we'll just stay a little bit longer and go over to Lake Bled for a couple days afterwards." You don't have to spend a really long time in most of these places because they're just smaller. So, that's kind of what I'm thinking that I want to do. I also thought about Montenegro, maybe before the trip.

So, these are places I've never been to, and to me, they seem off the beaten path. I may get there and go, "Whoa, everybody knows about this. What was I thinking?" But that's kind of what I want to do. Now, the con to my thought here is that I'm definitely going to have a lot more trouble with award hotel choices. I may be finding something in the portal or maybe paying cash for something, but I'm happy to do that.

I could go to Italy and Greece every year. Those are two countries I adore. Like Jess likes to go to London multiple times a year, I like to go to Italy and I like to go to Greece every year. I've been to Rome. I've been to Florence. I've been to Venice. I've been to Cinque Terre. I've been to the Amalfi Coast.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

So, now I'm thinking, "Let's go somewhere else. Let's go to a smaller town." I watched a really good show, I think it was on Netflix one time, and it was about Portofino. And I thought, "I want to go there." Or I've heard about Puglia, and I thought, "That would be really cool." You still get to Italy, I still get all the gelato I'm sure that I want to eat, but I get kind of a different feel. It's that small-town feel.

I think my only thing is that I get a little bit more nervous about am I going to need a car somewhere like that, because transportation isn't going to be as good. When I don't go with my husband, it's not like I want to drive a car all over Europe. And so I have to kind of get into it and delve into it a little bit more before I make that decision.

Definitely, I'm thinking that this next year is going to see me combining some big places that I'd like to go to with some smaller side trips into other places. Just got to figure out that whole transportation and where I book the hotels and stuff.

Okay, Alex, what about you?

Alex: Yeah, you know what I was just thinking is sometimes award travel can actually take us off the beaten path, too, because there's hotels we'll see that we're like, "Oh, we should try that." Remember, Mom, when we went to Switzerland, we just crossed over to the side, the other side of the border of Italy, and I forget what hotel it was. It's a small luxury hotel.

Pam: Villa Orselina.

Alex: Yeah, Villa Orselina. It's by Lake Maggiore, and really close to Lake Como, but on the Switzerland side, so you just go up that way. But that is one that I never was imagining, "Oh, I'm going to go to Switzerland, but I'm going to be in the lakes, by a lake, and not in the Swiss Alps."

So, that was, I think, one of those ones that I don't know anybody else that's been and stayed over where we stayed.

Pam: Definitely. And it was a great trip. We loved it.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Alex: It was a great trip, and I think that's just an example of how sometimes award travel can take you off the beaten path if you hear about a hotel. We were like, "Oh, well, we could fly into Milan, and then we just take a car." They drove us up there, and so that was a pretty cool experience in that regard.

Another one is the Azores, which is an island off of Portugal. It's actually a little further than you would imagine. I forget how long the flight was, but it was maybe 2 1/2 hours. I don't remember correctly, so don't hold me to that. But it's further away than people imagine, but it is part of Portugal, the country Portugal.

It is a completely different experience from Lisbon or the Algarve. It's very, very green, hot springs, hiking, dramatic coastlines.

Pam: They call it the Hawaii of Europe.

Alex: Of Europe, yeah. I personally didn't really feel like it felt like Hawaii, but it's gorgeous. I could see it being like the jungly part of Hawaii more, like the Jurassic Park views of Hawaii.

Pam: More like Kauai.

Alex: Yeah, the beaches are just different than Hawaii beaches, but they're beautiful. It's such a beautiful place.

The con is the flights. It's a little not as easy to get to. We started in Lisbon and then we flew on Azores Airlines to one of the islands there. Ponta Delgada is where we that island is the one we stayed at.

And then coming home, we did fly United, and I believe we had to go to I want to say I don't remember which airport it was, either Newark or EWR. Well, that's the same one.

Pam: You got it right with both of those.

Alex: I got it!

Jess: I'm pretty sure that's New York or JFK. I don't remember which one.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Alex: I think it wasn't JFK, right, Mom?

Jess: No, it was a joke. I was just saying the same thing.

Alex: No, I know your joke. I'm just actually trying to remember.

Jess: It was definitely Newark. I remember it being Newark.

Pam: It was Newark.

Alex: Okay. So, they do have a direct flight from Ponta Delgada to Newark, and then it was from there, my flight itinerary just connected me all the way home. So, United is an option if you do want to go to the Azores, but there wasn't a ton of other options.

I think there are some hotels that might be part of either SLH or what's the other popular one?

Jess: Mr & Mrs Smith.

Alex: Mr & Mrs Smith, yeah. Don't hold me to that. I know there was at some point, but I know properties can kind of go in and out of some of those things. There wasn't like, "Oh, here's a Hyatt hotel you can stay at," or, "Here's this other hotel property." So, we rented an Airbnb when we went. But there was also five of us and we all wanted to be together.

That's a very off-the-beaten-path, beautiful place to go. Another situation where 1,000% you need a car here, so if you're not comfortable with that, then it's probably not the place for you. But that is an option.

And then another one, Mom, you were mentioning Montenegro. You were considering going there, right?

Pam: Right. Thinking before Dubrovnik. I know it's a little smaller and I thought that'd be kind of cool. Again, I don't know if it really is off the beaten path, because I have heard of it.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

Alex: And I believe there is a Hyatt Regency around there. I've seen people post about it. I'm hoping I'm thinking of the right place, but it's along the bay there.

Jess: There's Hyatt Regency Kotor Bay. Is that what you're talking about?

Alex: Yes, that's the one I've looked at.

Pam: It looks really beautiful.

Jess: It looks amazing.

Alex: Yeah, it looks incredible.

Pam: Alex, let's do that before Dubrovnik.

Alex: Yeah, got to get our flights. Get that all figured out as long as we can get there. Yeah, but that would be amazing.

So, yeah. The only con with something like that, too, is just transportation can be slower. It's just getting there. I feel like that sometimes the hardest thing with these off-the-beaten-path locations is just getting there, but it's always worth it.

Jess: Okay, my first one, I don't really know how off the beaten path this is anymore because it's kind of blown up on Instagram. But when Pam first sent me her pictures from the Dolomites in Italy, what was it, two or three years ago, I was immediately like, "I have to go there."

This is an Italian alternative. It's in northern Italy, and so again, you could go in June, and you're not going to die of heat stroke the way that you might in Rome, okay? So, northern Italy, but honestly, I did not feel like I was in Italy. I felt like I was more in Switzerland than Italy on this trip. Incredible alpine scenery, cute, charming towns, hikes, playgrounds, cable cars.

This would be such an amazing trip for a family, or for a couple, or for a girls' trip. Pretty much any combination would be great for the Dolomites. I took my entire family of six. We had an amazing time.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

We flew into Milan and we flew out of Venice, and then you have to drive. Venice is definitely the closest if you wanted to fly into and out of Venice. It's about a two, 2 1/2 hour drive from there, but you could find some good award availability into Venice. We combined it with Lake Como, which is why we flew into Milan.

The big issue is there are not a lot of options for award hotels in or around the Dolomites. And where there are award hotels are the really crowded, touristy towns. We stayed at a vacation chalet, the same one that Pam stayed at. I felt like that chalet was definitely off the beaten path. It was in a much smaller, quieter area of the Dolomites versus the bigger towns.

It was just great. We had the whole chalet to ourselves. It had a hot tub that overlooked the mountains, two-minute walk to the grocery store, two-minute walk to the local coffee shop where I would go get a cappuccino and an apple strudel every day. It was just very much a place where you go and stay, and you feel like a local. You don't feel like—other than not speaking Italian part—you don't feel like a tourist in this area. And it's a much cheaper alternative to Switzerland. And so if you want Switzerland without the price tag, then the Dolomites is a really great option for you.

Another one, I talked about earlier how I'd be totally cool to never go to Cancun again, but I absolutely want to go to Mexico still. I'm dying to go to Mexico City. I've never been there. Mexico City is not exactly off the beaten path, but Ted and I went to San Miguel de Allende, what was it, a year or two ago? We went just the two of us, but it's very family-friendly. Would not hesitate to take a family there.

We stayed at the Numu Boutique Hotel. It is part of the Hyatt Unbound Collection. So, we flew United, we used United miles. We stayed at a Hyatt, used Hyatt points for that. And so this is another great option that's not as big and crowded as Mexico City, much different feel than something like Cancun or Cabo, but you're still getting amazing food, amazing architecture. It definitely feels like more of a cultural experience than something like one of the beach towns.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

The one con is that it is a little harder to get to. I'm fortunate I live in Houston, so we were able to fly into the nearest airport direct. And then it was about an hour to hour-and-a-half drive. We hired a private driver to San Miguel de Allende. Obviously, much less convenient transportation-wise than somewhere like Cancun or Cabo.

But just being able to wander the streets, get a churro, look at the churches, hear the music playing, it was amazing. I would go back there in a heartbeat, and I cannot recommend it enough.

Pam: Oh, I'm dying to go there. I want to go there. Each of us are going to answer a couple questions. One question we're all going to answer, and we're each going to take one other. So, mine is: how much inconvenience are you willing to tolerate to see somewhere new?

I think at this point, with all the travel that I've done, I feel pretty comfortable with my travel ability, and so I am pretty comfortable in tolerating that it's going to take longer to get somewhere. It's going to be a little harder. I'm going to have to take a train with two stops and maybe have to get off it. I'm going to So, I think that if I want to go somewhere, pretty much I'm going to figure out how to do it.

What's your biggest concern about going off the beaten path more? I would say at my age, it's healthcare. I think that I didn't ever think about this before, honestly. I've just kind of thought, "Oh, yeah, everything's fine." And then we went to Roatan, my daughter got the kidney stones, and I realized what horrible healthcare there was there, and all of a sudden, I'm like, "Yeah."

Alex: Well, that was your second time traveling with someone with kidney stones, because Dad got them in Africa on your safari. So, probably a little PTSD from kidney stones.

Pam: And that felt off the beaten path only because we didn't have great healthcare. We were, so that's my only thing. I kind of feel like it's not going to keep me from traveling these places, but I'm not going somewhere that I haven't done a little bit of research about what is available, have my phone numbers, and know what to do. Maybe I'm not going to go spend a week in Lake Bled. I'll

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

cross my fingers and spend two days and get out of there where there's more healthcare. So, I would say that's something that's probably something that is really recent for me in realizing that is a concern for me due to my advanced age.

Alex: All right. As you travel more, do you find yourself wanting more unusual destinations?

There's a lot of places I still haven't been. I have not been as many places as these two, especially my mom. I've never been to Italy except going to Milan and driving to Villa Orselina. That's it. And so I still have a lot of things I want to do and see.

But I do, like I mentioned before, I do find myself wanting to do more, "Okay, let's go to Rome for just a really quick trip, because I've never been there, but then let's get out of there and go to some of these smaller places where you get a real more a more sense of local life a little bit more." That's what I'm looking for more as I travel more is more culture and seeing how the people actually live in those places, not how what big-city life is like for more than a day or two.

And then, what's your biggest concern about going off the beaten path more? Oh, it's the same question. That's the one we all have.

Pam: Yeah, that's the one we all have.

Alex: My biggest concern, I would say a little... I'm not advanced age, but I do have a little bit of health anxiety, so I...

Jess: A little?

Alex: Hey! I sometimes think about that, too. And I think the problem is I didn't actually think about it until my sister had her kidney stones. And she had them before, and it was like 12, 13 years ago that she had them. Well, I had them before, and it was about 10 or 11 years ago. So, I'm like, "Oh no, is my clock ticking, and I'm going to be next?" I'm actually knocking on wood right now to be safe.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

So, that is something that does pop in my mind, but I'm not going to have it stop me from living my life because you can't live your life like that.

And then another concern, for me, it's just the time of how long is it going to take me to get there. Can I fit it into this trip? And so it's just kind of maybe being strategic on the destinations I'm choosing. Do they fit well with... is it fairly easy to get there from a major airport? How much time do I have that I can dedicate to this trip? Because I do want to see more of these off-the-beaten-path locations. It's just, do I have the time to make it happen?

Jess: All right, well, I'll answer that question, too, the what's your biggest concern, because you basically stole my answer.

Alex: Well, I didn't even know.

Jess: It's fine. It's the time is my biggest concern. I'm not at a point yet where I am traveling like I would say a week to 10 days is my max currently, and that's like once a year. I'm not going on multiple weeklong or 10-day vacations, and so it's like I don't want to feel I hate feeling rushed and overscheduled. We've talked about this before, right? So, I don't want to spend more time getting to a place than I have to actually enjoy that place.

And so I don't want it to be like, "I'm rushing to get there and spend time there, and then I'm there for a day and then I..." I don't like that. I'm more of a slow traveler and like getting to enjoy somewhere. So, it's really just a matter of how long is it going to take me to get there, and will I have enough time to adequately enjoy it?

And then the other question is: would you choose an amazing cash hotel somewhere unusual over a free Hyatt in a more popular destination?

Absolutely. Did that with the Dolomites. We paid cash to stay at that amazing chalet in this tiny little town where they definitely did not have any I don't know if they had any hotels at all. They definitely didn't have any hotels within one of the major chains that I could have used points at.

Ep #201: Beyond the Popular Destinations: Off-the-Beaten-Path Travel

So, I kind of look at it as I got six of us to Italy on points. I can splurge on a cute little chalet to have a more authentic experience there.

Pam: Yeah, I think that's the key is that everything doesn't have to be points and miles with us. We are saving so much money doing all of our points and miles travel that every now and then, I'm perfectly fine to pay like most people do.

Anyway, this has been really kind of opened up my eyes. I've enjoyed talking about this. I think while I've been to so many places, big places, and places that I will return to again and again, going to less-traveled places is getting more appealing to me to at least tack on a few extra days into a small town or village. I love that feel of, "Oh, I'm one of the locals here," even though I'm really not, and everybody can look at me and know I'm not, but I love to think I am.

If any of you listening have been to some places off the beaten path, please send us your suggestions, and we'll, I'm going to do a post about this.

Sometime, I'd love to add the suggestions of where you guys have gone, where you feel have been really wonderful places where you've had really good experiences.

And as always, please leave us a review and share our podcast with your friend. Thanks!

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