

Ruth Rieckehoff from tanamatales.com Travel Blog

Our interview with Ruth Rieckehoff from tanamatales.com Travel Blog:

Why did you start travelling?

I have been fascinated by distant countries, cultures and landscapes since I was a kid. I used to create my own 'travel' posters using images from the honeymoon section of bridal magazines (my mom was subscribed to those).

As an adult, my 'travel addiction' started after spending a month in Europe the year I graduated from college. I was captivated by the places I saw and the people I met. I felt like a new person since my perception of the world expanded in different directions. I knew I wanted more of that renewing and transformative power.

Since then, I have taken about two international trips per year plus many small gateways.

What is the most important during your travels?

One of my priorities during my travels is to connect with the locals. To me, that is the best way to learn the real deal about a place. As a result, I try to convert each contact into an opportunity. That is why I make an effort to talk to hotel staff, taxi drivers, market vendors and others.

In addition, I try to embrace every moment. I used to be a heavy planner when I

started to travel. That made the travel experience hurried and non-flexible. I was always worrying about not having time to see everything I wanted. Now, I go more with the flow and leave more space for exploration and spontaneous moments. That has helped me to savor each experience properly.

What is the most important experience that you had during your travels?

I have had so many awesome travel experiences!! I have ascended to the top of the Eiffel Tower, visited Thailand during the Songkran, zip lined in Costa Rica, climbed the pyramids of Gizah, saw Shanghai from the highest point and stood under the massive Pulhapanzak waterfall in Honduras.

However, people are the ultimate reason I travel. No monument, activity or sight, can obscure the human factor behind travel. My top travel moments always involve locals. For me nothing can beat the connection I can get with a person from another culture. I want to share laughs, conversations and points of view with them.

What is the most beautiful place that you have been to?

Ohh, that is a difficult question!

One place that totally surprised me was Hierve El Agua (“The Water Boils”) in Oaxaca, Mexico. The site contains a set of natural rock formations rising from a valley. They consist mostly of white rock which gives them a waterfall appearance. These formations are created by fresh water springs, whose water is over-saturated with calcium carbonate and other minerals. As the water scurries over the cliffs, the excess minerals are deposited and hardened. The spring water comes out of the ground bubbling or as the locals say “boiling” hence the name of the site.

In addition to the petrified waterfalls, the place has two turquoise-colored pools and it is surrounded by curvy mountains. The day I visit there were a lot of fluffy clouds in the sky. The panorama was surreal.

What do you avoid when you travel?

I avoid getting bummed by the negative experiences. Travel is about adventure. “Stuff” is going to happen no matter how prepared or careful you are. I avoid judging a specific trip or the overall travel experience because of the bad situations I encounter.

What is your biggest travel dream?

As many travelers, I aspire to visit many countries, regions and islands. I would like to try different dishes and visit many natural wonders. I feel like I want to go everywhere. Therefore, I have not prioritized the places I want to visit.

What I wrote in the previous paragraph is not very concrete but I have learned that my travel plans can change as fast as lightning. I think my biggest travel dream is to continue visiting new places as often as possible. Also, I want to travel more around the United States (more National Parks please!). And, it will be great to do a big road trip around Puerto Rico (to visit places I never visited while growing up there).

What are your favorite travelers? Which blogs do you read?

I read tons of blogs. Some of my favorites are: Globetrotter Girls, A Dangerous Business, Migrationology, California Through My Lens, The Road Less Traveled, Never Ending Footsteps, The World is a Book, My Marrakesh, The Blond Gypsy, Oneika The Traveler and That Backpacker.