

FEATURED , PODCASTER SPOTLIGHT

On her quest to visit a 100 countries in flip flops, Podcaster Joanne Hendrickson has visited 83 countries, 47 states, 5 continents till now!



by **Storytellers Unplugged**
a day ago



Today, we have the pleasure of interviewing **Joanne Hendrickson**, a world traveler, and the host of the '**Backpacker Flip Flops**' podcast. She is on a quest to see the world and visit over 100 countries – in flip flops!

Please tell us something about yourself.

I am a 36-year-old from New York. My goal in sharing my travel stories is to show others how accessible and incredible the world is.

How did you get into what you do right now? Please tell us more about your journey.

Growing up, my father traveled all over the world for work. Every time he came home, in addition to his interesting stories, he always brought me souvenirs. I fell in love with the idea of travel. The first purchase I made on my own was actually a globe, which I still have until this day. I used the globe to follow where my father traveled. In particular, my dad's stories about Denmark really stood out to me. When I completed college, I had the chance to move to Denmark and enrolled in a language certification program over there and decided to do it! While I was over there, I saw how easy it was to get around the rest of Europe. By the time I came home, I was already at around 15 countries visited. I aimed to reach 20, and then 25, and so on. Once I reached over 30 countries, I realized how rare it was what I was doing and decided to keep going!



Who are your role models?

My parents are my role models. My father inspires me with all the places he's visited and how he was able to create friendships with people around the world. My mother inspires me with how she can spot beauty in everything and every place.

What inspires you?

I love seeing and exploring the world and am driven with my desire to inspire others to see the rest of the world or even hidden gems around them. I am inspired by the vision of helping people to see the world through a new light.



Please tell us about your podcast 'Backpacker Flip Flops.'

I launched my podcast 'Backpacker Flip Flops' in February 2020. Each episode, I pick a different place and experience to talk about. In the first season, I spoke about everything ranging from touring Otto Frank's private office in the Secret Annex in Amsterdam to meeting a former US President at his church in rural Georgia, to eating lunch in the sky in Dubai.



What's your most memorable experience?

So far, the most memorable experience for me was analyzing the podcast's first season results. On the quantitative side, the podcast has been very successful! I have had listeners in over 25 US states, several countries, and 3 different continents. The qualitative side has been even more exciting – one organization I did an episode about has shared the podcast with its followers who want to know more about their program. Quite a few listeners have reached out to me, sharing that they have been inspired to see or learn more about a place thanks to my stories. Every day I hear more and more 'thank you for sharing about this experience – I visited and really enjoyed it!'



Which social media channels work best for promoting your work? What exactly do you do on the social media channel that makes it work for you?

'Backpacker Flip Flops' started as an Instagram travel account, and is where most people first hear about me, my journey, and my podcast – especially those not in the United States. Over the past few months, I have developed a YouTube channel under the same 'Backpacker Flip Flops' name that likewise has seen a lot of success. Followers have told me that they like the videos I share on both platforms as I am very relatable and friendly, and subscribe to my podcast to hear more in-depth stories. I also add the audio of my podcast episodes to my YouTube channel.

Looking back, what's one thing you wish you understood better before you ever got started?

My biggest fear when I was launching the podcast was worrying about saying everything perfectly, and spent a lot of time recording and then re-recording. I did the same thing when I launched my YouTube videos as well. I wish I realized earlier that people do not care if you mess up saying something – in fact, it makes you more relatable. I would have just 'gone for it' quicker without trying to be a perfectionist.



What are the strategies that helped you become successful in your journey?

What has helped me be most successful is asking my followers what stories they want to hear. The 'Backpacker Flip Flops' podcast was developed because so many people wanted to hear my travel stories, so it was critical I tell the stories that they are interested in hearing. I poll my audience through Instagram stories to help me pick between two upcoming potential topics and talk about the experience they want to hear most about. I also ask followers via Instagram stories to ask questions they have related to the place or experience I'll be talking about to make sure I hit the most important parts for them.

Any message for our readers.

Often, I hear people wait to travel, and the one lesson I have learned is just 'go for it – now!' There have been quite a few experiences had I waited, I would have missed out on. It's easy to think the opportunity will exist at a later date, but that is not always the case. If you want to do it, find a way to do it now! I also highly recommend 'travel with no regrets.' If you see a place you really want to go to – see it. If there is a souvenir you want – buy it. If you hear of a crazy dish or food, you are mildly curious about – eat it. Otherwise, as early as that night, and even more once you get home, you'll regret not doing/buying/experiencing it. And lastly, chase after your dreams, wherever they take you!

How can people connect with you?

You can connect with me on [Instagram](#) and my [website](#), or drop an email at joanne@backpackerflipflops.com.

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