

Interview With World Traveler And Podcaster Joanne Hendrickson

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The ambition and drive our next guest is truly remarkable. Joanne Hendrickson has had a tremendous experience as a world traveler, which has metamorphosized into even greater opportunities. She has definitely become a great source of inspiration in my personal journey and I'm sure her ambitious strivings will stimulate you to pursue your dreams. Fortunately, I had the blessed opportunity to interview Ms. Hendrickson as I'm sure that her journey will spark your own. Enjoy!



Warlock Asylum: In the tradition of the news page, I would like to express my deepest thanks for taking the time to answer a few questions and share some of your world with our readers. Please introduce yourself. Who is Joanne Hendrickson?

Joanne Hendrickson: Thanks, so much for the interview! I am a 36-year-old from New York and a daughter of two incredible parents who both continue to inspire me. I am also the ‘human mother’ to a three-year-old rescue dog. As a student, I earned my bachelor’s degree from the University of Wyoming and have two masters’ degrees from Western Governors University. As a professional, I help supplemental learning centers help students in math. As an athlete, I love running 5ks and I even started running marathons around one year ago. And as a visionary, I am on a quest to see the world with the goal of visiting over 100 countries – in flip flops!

Warlock Asylum: How was life for your growing up? Please tell us about your formative years.

Joanne Hendrickson: I was a very shy child who had an adventurous side! What I mean by that is that I did not like large group events, had a very close group of friends, and was scared to be the center of attention for whatever reason. However, I was very outgoing when it came to outdoor activities. I attended an adventure camp for several summers and hiked part of the Appalachian Trail, kayaked down the Hudson River, and was one of the first children to take part in competitive Hawaiian Outrigger canoeing when those boats were brought to the Northeast USA in the late 1990s.

Warlock Asylum: I must say that you’ve had an impressive journey of travel. As of February 2020, you are said to have visited 83 countries, 47 states, and 5 continents. What inspired you to embark on such a wonderful career of travel?

Joanne Hendrickson: Growing up, my father traveled all over the world for work, and every time he came home, in addition to his interesting stories, he always brought me souvenirs and I fell in love with seeing the world. The first purchase I made on my own was actually a globe, which I still have until this day. I've used the globe to see where he was and what was nearby his location, and etc. In particular, my dad's stories about Denmark really stood out to me. When I completed my undergraduate studies, 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, I realized how rare it was what I was doing and decided to keep going!

Warlock Asylum: What obstacles did you have to overcome in order to make a life of extensive travel possible?

Joanne Hendrickson: The biggest obstacle was time. When I was in Denmark, it was easy to schedule my classes so I had 5-day weekends and could pop over to another city or country pretty easily. Once I got a job, and especially with the limited vacation time most companies offer in the United States, I had to get creative with my time off. I also took quite a few cruises so I could get a taste of several countries and key attractions and decide from there where I wanted to go back to. My biggest workaround was taking off time around Thanksgiving so I could go away for a slightly longer time.

Ironically, I developed a love for celebrating Thanksgiving in other countries because those in the tourism industry knew it was an American holiday and were always so excited to be a part of my day! Many people think that the biggest obstacle to travel is money, but for a long time I would stay at the cheapest hotels or even hostels – the best 'deal' I ever found was an \$8/night room in Prague that included breakfast! Sometimes going 'cheaper' with the room allowed me more spending money for experiences, as well as future trips.

Warlock Asylum: One of the admirable things about your journey in travel is that you've created a great resource with the podcast "Backpacker Flip Flops". How did Backpacker Flip Flops come to life and how is the program formatted?

Joanne Hendrickson: For a long time when people would hear my travel stories, they would tell me 'You should write a book!' The problem is I found that part of the story gets lost on paper and people were more excited hearing me speak about it. Back in January, I was traveling around the Middle East and knew I had too many stories to share. I was listening to other podcasts during the trip and it finally clicked for me that I could tell my stories as podcasts. When I returned from that vacation, I began researching how to make a podcast, developed a website, picked out a podcast hosting platform, bought some equipment, and the podcast was formed!

Warlock Asylum: What are some of the key topics covered on the Backpacker Flip Flops podcast?

Joanne Hendrickson: Each episode I pick a different place and experience to talk about. The podcast will be wrapping up its first season shortly. This 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.

Warlock Asylum: Since its inception, how has the reception been for the Backpacker Flip Flops podcast?

Joanne Hendrickson: It has been very well received! I have had listeners in over 20 US states, several countries, and 3 different continents. 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. One of the best parts about the podcast is every month I pick a different charity or organization for the podcast to support – it has helped bring awareness to some incredible projects around the world and allowed the podcast to have a global impact!

Warlock Asylum: In what ways has your work as a career traveler shaped your relationships with family and friends, as well as your perception of those living in different cultures?

Joanne Hendrickson: My family has been extremely supportive of my travels. They are nervous while I am away – it's the curse of being an only child, even as an adult! But they also are very eager to hear about my trips as well as all the places I want to see.

The biggest question friends ask me is not 'how are you' but 'where are you.' Because of how much I travel, it can be hard at times to keep in touch with friends, but on the flip side, whenever they are planning a trip somewhere, I am the first call for recommendations on what to see and do in that area.

Travel has allowed me to see that at the end of the day, we are all people. We may dress differently, speak differently, believe different things, but there is a level of kindness and trust that extends across the majority of us, no matter where we are from.

Warlock Asylum: Out of all the locations that you have visited in the world is there any place in particular that you would embrace as your favorite?

Joanne Hendrickson: It depends on my mood which is #1 favorite, but I always have a consistent top 5: Denmark, Croatia, China, Germany, and Latvia. Because of the amount of time I spent there, Denmark always feels like home. When I am craving nice weather or beautiful scenery, Croatia tops the list. For a place that has unique architecture and forces me to push my boundaries, China wins. When I'm in the learning mood, all the history in Germany makes me return again and again. I spent the least amount of time in Latvia but found it has a great mix of all of those other places favorite traits as well as holds a bit of mystery and adventure.

Warlock Asylum: What are some of the life lessons that you've learned based on your journey in travel thus far?

Joanne Hendrickson: One lesson I have learned is just 'go for it – now!' So many people wait to travel until they have more time or money or a mix of both. But 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!

Another lesson I have learned is to '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 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.



Warlock Asylum: Over the past few months, the world has been enveloped in the COVID-19 pandemic. As a world traveler, what are some of the precautions that you learned to incorporate into your personal life in order to protect yourself early in your travel career?

Joanne Hendrickson: Pre-COVID-19 I was always worried about the cleanliness of areas. I constantly used hand sanitizer everywhere, and also limited what I would touch in places. I've been to many clean places but also quite a few questionable places that stand out more, so I tend to be extra cautious as a safeguard.

I also try to keep a safe distance from people, unless I know them. Perhaps it is my shyness coming back, but I think it is more as a safety measure – again, being cautious. I find that for physical safety reasons, it is best to stay a few feet away from others, if possible, in many situations.

Warlock Asylum: What can we expect to hear from Joanne Hendrickson in the near future? Any final thoughts?

Joanne Hendrickson: Once travel restrictions ease up, I am hoping to resume traveling and have a goal of hitting the 100-country mark before I turn 40. I am also planning to take trips to Montana, Hawaii, and Alaska, the only three US states I have not visited yet.

Until I can resume traveling, I have dived into YouTube and have created a channel to share travel photos and videos, as well as unboxing videos. I am also currently training for two World Major Marathons I am signed up to participate in this upcoming fall. Thanks so much for the interview!

*On behalf of Warlock Asylum International News, I would like to thank you once again for sharing a glimpse of your life with our readers and would also like to wish you all the best in your earthly and professional endeavors. Readers can keep abreast of

Ms. Hendrickson's progress by visiting her website and/or social media outlets.

Links:

Website: backpackerflipflops.com

Podcast episodes: backpackerflipflops.com/podcast

Instagram: [instagram.com/backpackerflipflops](https://www.instagram.com/backpackerflipflops)

Youtube: [youtube.com/backpackerflipflops](https://www.youtube.com/backpackerflipflops)

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