

TTM - Jackie MASTER (1)

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Narrator 00:02

From Curtco Media...Coming up on the show...

Jackie Caradonio 00:07

it was incredible and the sort of bizarre fanfare of it, that you have these animals but then you also have all these guys on motorcycles with actual rifles zipping around you from time to time. There's helicopters, because they obviously you know, have to make sure that I don't get eaten by a lion, or whatever.

Bruce Wallin 00:28

That's leading travel writer Jackie Caradonio, I'm Bruce Wallin, and this is Travel That Matters.

Bruce Wallin 00:45

Hello, everybody, and welcome to Travel That Matters. This is the podcast where we explore the world's most exceptional and meaningful travel experiences. And we meet some of the fascinating people who make them possible. My guest today may not technically be the person who makes those trips possible, but she has certainly inspired many of us to set off on adventures through her work as a travel editor, writer and photographer. Her name is Jackie Caradonio, and she's the former Travel Director at Departures magazine, Senior Editor at Robb Report, and she's also written for Travel + Leisure, Conde Nast Traveler, and many other publications. But Jackie isn't just any travel writer, or just any traveler, she has a very particular way of going about her business and venturing around the world. When Jackie plans a trip, she has very specific goals or a specific achievement in mind. It's her signature style, and I call it accomplishment travel. It's a close relative of transformational travel. But rather than you know, go into a trip hoping to be transformed. Accomplishment travel has concrete goals, you know, I'm going to scale that peak, I'm going to learn that language build that house, whatever it is now, can it be transformative? Absolutely. I've worked with Jackie for years, and I've always admired this quality in her. We're going to talk to her about everything from running a marathon and the Maasai Mara, to researching women's rights in Jordan, to going on an intense fitness retreat in the mountains of Malibu. And as we'll hear from Jackie, the benefits to this kind of travel can extend far beyond personal fulfillment, and can help make travel more meaningful and rewarding for everyone involved. Jackie Caradonio, welcome to Travel That Matters. Thanks for joining us.

Jackie Caradonio 02:32

Thanks for having me.

Bruce Wallin 02:34

Always nice to have a good friend on the show. So let's start before we get to the here now. Just give me a little bit of background. How did this all come together? How did Jackie Caradonio become one of the world's top travel editors and writers?

Jackie Caradonio 02:49

Well, it's kind of funny, because I wouldn't say that I came from a family that did a lot of traveling. But we did a lot of hoteling because my dad was a GM. So, so much of my childhood was spent in hotels, like literally living in hotels, but also just if we were going to see my dad on the weekends, we go to Sunday brunch at the hotel, it was a part of my life, it was an extension of my home. And so this this idea of being in hotels was something I was doing since before I can even really remember. But because my dad was in tourism, we didn't really travel a lot. And so the one big trip I would take independently would be my camps that I would go to every summer. And this was kind of like when I realized my potential for being one of the most type A competitive people in the world. Because I would, I would go to horseback riding camp, I would go to cheerleading camp, I, you know, I would go to tennis camp, I would just camp it out like you wouldn't believe and it would always be this opportunity for me to go make new friends be in a new place, but also to get really good at something. And so that was really what the idea of like an escape and a getaway that that was really where I got that from.

Bruce Wallin 04:06

Okay, so let's talk about this concept of accomplishment travel. Obviously, it started here at a very early age tennis camp, cheerleading camp, horseback riding camp, whatever it was, but it's certainly something I've noticed about you over the years. And it's that you are a goal setter, when it comes to travel. You all like every trip, it seems like you go there with a purpose. And you go there to accomplish something. You remember you went to Kenya to run a marathon, right? You went to the Maasai Mara to run a marathon. When I go to the Maasai Mara, I'm going to go on safari, go go see wildlife, you go to run a marathon, so I think it gets a much different priority. And I actually just want to ask you the fundamental question of why do you travel?

Jackie Caradonio 04:45

I think, you know, I do the accomplishment stuff. I'm a very goal oriented person. I'm a very type A personality. Like I said, I'm not really good at just sort of like showing up and seeing what happens. I really like to have a goal in mind, not just because I really want to run that marathon or you know, whatever it is. I think because when you have a goal, you have a series of steps you have to take in order to accomplish that. And it usually involves you really going outside your comfort zone and meeting people and going places, and kind of immersing yourself in a way that you wouldn't necessarily, if you were just kind of, you know, checking your Instagram and going to wherever looked cool. So for me, like, why travel, because it's awesome. I mean, it's amazing to see new places, and I'll never get tired of, of trying new things and meeting new people. But I also think it's, it's like a character building exercise, you know, so again, that's me being like, very goal oriented, but if I can travel and really get something out of it, and maybe be a better person, or a stronger person, or help somebody

else along the way, that's really where you start to feel that whole, like, you know, quote, unquote, transformational travel moment really hits you.

Bruce Wallin 05:57

Okay, and I think that that can apply to, you know, something like running a marathon in Kenya, or to something more culturally oriented, whatever, I think there's a whole variety of experiences that I've seen you do over the years that kind of accomplish that accomplishment, or that that goal, you know,

Jackie Caradonio 06:12

Hashtag goals.

Bruce Wallin 06:13

There we go. Okay, so here, talk to me a little bit about some of these trips that you've done. Let's start. I mean, we brought up the Kenya marathon. I want to hear about that. That sounds like an amazing experience. I remember you writing about it. But talk to me a little bit about what that was like.

Jackie Caradonio 06:26

Let's be honest, that one was definitely like something I want to be able to brag about for the rest of my life. And that got me through a lot of training, because no matter how much this sucks, I will get to be the girl who ran a marathon in Kenya, pretty famous marathon. It's the Lewa marathon in Kenya. It's literally out in the Savanna, you're running alongside zebras and giraffes. And naturally, when we starting, we got held at the starting line because a lion had killed an impala somewhere on an early part of the route. So obviously, they had to wait for that to clear itself out and take care of itself. I mean, it sounds amazing. And so I started training and definitely a challenging one to to be your first one. It's at 5,000 feet above sea level. And the actual elevation gain on the route itself is like something like 7,000 feet. So it's just insanely hilly, it's less oxygen, because you're so high up, and I mean, hot, hot as hell. So I went and the thing that kind of turned out to be incredible was obviously everything that happens, generally speaking, when it comes to bringing tourists to Safari or to Kenya or to you know, Sub Saharan Africa is there some sort of, you know, philanthropic element to it. And so all the money that was raised through this went to taking care of there's I think it was like 133, or there were at the time, black and white rhinos living there, which are obviously incredibly endangered, but then also bringing water to nearby villages. And so there was a lot of opportunity to see how my participation was really making a difference. It was honestly it was hell. It was awful. I hated it. It was pretty terrible. I literally started crying at one point. But the thing that was so cool is all of these incredible marathoners, like Kenya is the land of marathoners all over, they came out and they ran it with us. And it was a it was a loop a half marathon loops that you do twice. So while I am slowly making my way around the first loop, all of these like really famous runners are sweeping past me on their second lap finishing the actual race. So Elliot Kipchoge, who literally holds the world record for the fastest marathon, he ran it and I'm like running neck and neck, you know, in my head, neck and neck with these guys. And then they're done and I still have two more hours to run. It was incredible. And like the sort of like bizarre fanfare of it, that you have these animals, but then you also have all these guys on motorcycles with actual rifles zipping around you from time to time, there's helicopters, because they obviously you know, have to make sure that I don't get eaten by a lion, or whatever. So it was so unreal. And I remember I met this guy there who was doing a marathon on every continent, and he had already done Antarctica. And he

told me that this was harder than Antarctica, even though he was like, I literally almost lost a toe out in Antarctica. This was truly hellacious. So I don't know maybe those make the best stories, right. If it was frictionless, it wouldn't be as good of a story.

Bruce Wallin 09:37

See, now now you're getting into the kind of the crazy travelers the ones who like run a marathon on every single continent. I've actually had a little side note, I know a guy who did that. And in Antarctica, the weather was so bad that they canceled the marathon. So he just ran out a mile and back a mile 13 times out and back. He just ran out and back 13 times because the weather was so bad. People thought he was gonna get lost but he wasn't going to go home from Antarctica without that marathon.

Jackie Caradonio 10:01

It is kind of funny that you mentioned that because you get a little psycho. Anyone who wants to do this is already very goal oriented. But then once you're in it, it's all you can see. Because there's just no going back. Once you've got your mind, once you've really like booked that ticket, and you've told everyone you're doing it, and you've put the time in, there's just I'm not gonna not do it, you know, you have to do it.

Bruce Wallin 10:23

Accomplishment travel doesn't have to be about fitness or physical achievements. It can also have a cultural side, on one trip to Jordan, Jackie went in with very specific goals in mind. But, what she found was a country and a culture full of surprises.

Jackie Caradonio 10:41

There was a company called Intrepid Travel, and they had launched all of these women's journeys, and they were kind of in these places where you were just like, unbelievable, like Iran. And so I was like, yeah, I want to go like, let me let me go and do a story on this. And so I went to Jordan, and I bought all these clothes to make sure that I wouldn't offend anybody while I was there, you know, like the cloak and the scarf for my head. And, and then I like met all of these women, which is, quite frankly, not something that a Western woman is allowed to do. So, one thing in particular, that was just so amazing for me was we went to Wadi Rum and I had a guide, who was a woman who was very feminist woman living in Jordan, she introduced me to this woman named Um Muhammad and I went into her home, and I met her daughters, and we had tea. And you know, her daughter was wearing very western clothing, Um Muhammad showed me the beadwork on her cloak, or on her robe. And, and it was like, we were just hanging out, we were like, a group of chicks hanging out with each other. And usually, anytime women get together, and certainly like someone like me, you know, who you think like, oh, I probably have all of these very dangerous ideas. That's not how they looked at it at all, you know. And normally, there would have to be like a chaperone, men chaperoning our experience. So it was really kind of amazing, you know, like to talk to the younger daughter, who was about 18. And she didn't want to get married. And you know, it was so interesting to see how even in this one generation of separation and in Wadi Rum, it's not like they were in the capitol in Amman, they were kind of out in the sticks, you know, but the world has gotten so small, like she was on her phone all the time, just like I am. It was just, it was very eye opening for me to kind of have this preconceived notion that I might come here and just offend everybody with my very presence. I remember when we went to the Dead Sea, we went to

this beautiful resort that was right on it. And they had this pool that was for only the women. And it was completely surrounded by these huge thick curtains, so nobody could see what was going on in there. And then there was a regular pool that was for families and men and women and children mixing and mingling and so they're the women were wearing these swimsuits that were supposed to be kind of similar to like a burqa, and then I go behind this cloak and it is like oh my gosh, these women are wearing thongs and like they are all women having a fantastic time. And so, I just, I felt like I didn't know this ever would have existed here. I would have only expected that sort of like out in the open moment. And so yeah, it was really amazing. And I went back thinking we have no idea what we don't know and that's why we go.

Bruce Wallin 13:40

So did that make you want to explore more of the Middle East or North Africa whatever, whatever it is? When you came back what goal did you feel you accomplished? And then what did it make you want to do next?

Jackie Caradonio 13:52

Yes, I absolutely wanted to go back I think you know, there's there's so many amazing women empowerment movements that are happening in that part of the world and and I saw so many of them you know, women who were like making businesses for themselves and and I was meeting so many like that and it really makes you feel like you know, we're all women we're all in this together and so it did really make me want want to do more of that. And, and I think you know the goal in that was really ultimately telling the world about it because I did write about it and you know I think so many people were really blown away by the experience and I don't think a lot of people really think about going to Jordan for that type of experience. It's usually like Wadi Rum, Amman, and then you're on your way.

Bruce Wallin 14:35

Okay let's let's go to the complete other side of the Earth and and opposite end of the spectrum here and talk about something that is pretty much no cultural benefit but but it's kind of the classic week at a fitness retreat, a you know, wellness retreat, whatever you want to call it. Talk to me about one of these experiences and why you went. You're a fitness fanatic, I know that, but why did you go on one of these trips and what was that like?

Jackie Caradonio 14:56

I went to the Ranch at Live Oak which is actually quite famous, I think It's just called the Ranch now. It's out in Malibu, and it's kind of known for I don't want to call it forced anorexia, but you are not eating on this trip, you're certainly not eating well. But I went on this trip, they had sort of launched a more empirical version of it, where you can do like these VO2 Max tests, which basically tests how you metabolize your oxygen while you're running. And so I was really interested in that side of it, because like you said, I am really into fitness but but the idea of sort of like having this like quantifiable information about my body and how it works was really enticing to me. So that all being said, the programming was very similar, in that you are hiking and yogaing, and doing fitness classes about eight to ten hours a day. And then after your seven mile hike, they'll give you a pinch of salt and, and that'll be just enough to get you through the day.

Bruce Wallin 15:55

Sounds like more fun. Sounds like another really fun trip. Yeah.

Jackie Caradonio 15:59

This was actually sort of, you say it has no like cultural value, but it was almost like an anthropological study for me, just to sort of meet the people that were on this trip and, and kind of gauge like, why people go and I will be honest with you, almost all of them were incredibly fit. And I feel like a lot of people use these trips as an excuse to just get away from family and drop their phone somewhere and not look at it anymore. I would say that I did overall enjoy it, I was just a little bit hungry. And I did have a bag of Doritos in my car that I did break into like three days in, so I didn't fully accomplish that goal. You know that one, it is so much more of like the traditional concept of accomplishment travel. And I would hope that it's less about the accomplishment being you lost 10 pounds. And it would be more about you know, getting back on track with your health and taking a minute to detox from caffeine and sugar and all those things that they won't let you have there. And also just detox from your phone.

Bruce Wallin 16:58

Yeah, and kind of understanding your body going forward and how you should work out and all this. I mean, honestly, that is extremely appealing to me, not the not the not fun part, but the having that break, getting that kind of better understanding of fitness and everything. But then I also look at it like okay, that's seven days that I could have been in Italy or Costa Rica, or wherever it is. And I could go have a ton of fun somewhere else. And it's hard.

Jackie Caradonio 17:23

Yeah, that's why the minute I left there, I went and had a pitcher of margaritas and like five tacos. So you know, it's all about balance, right.

Bruce Wallin 17:33

Jackie's particular concept of life balance also has a very artistic side. In addition to a writer and editor, she's a designer and a professional photographer whose work has appeared in a number of top magazines. And one day, she decided to expand her artistic side by becoming an expert, an avid collector of contemporary African art.

Jackie Caradonio 17:54

So I was kind of like, this is going to be my new thing. I'm going to be really into contemporary African art. So, the reason that happened was because this this museum was opening this very, very extensive collection of contemporary art museum that's owned by this Jochen Zeitz, and he opened this museum in Cape Town. And so I went and I like tracked this guy down Joelle Ferreira, and he was like, the it guy for contemporary art galleries, I think like in the 90s in the 00s. And so I just sort of glommed on to him and said, can you just take me around with you? And like, can I meet people? And so he took me to all these galleries, pre-opening of the shows, to meet the artists, to the studios. You know, while everybody else was just at the museum, I was like, meeting these people. And it was really kind of crazy, because, you know, they were like, gods there. They were huge. And, and it was just a matter of me sort of sucking up to the right person, inserting myself into the experience, but I continually went back to Cape Town, and I collected art. So it was this thing where it was a weird goal where I said, I'm

going to be into this, this is going to be like my new thing. And I'm going to make myself be an expert. And instead of just, you know, going on the internet, I'm going to go there, and I'm going to meet the right people. And I'm going to kind of force them to be friends with me. And it worked. And now...

Bruce Wallin 19:22

Okay, so you talked about a couple things that I love. First of all, let me just say the name of the museum is the Museum of Contemporary Art, Africa.

Jackie Caradonio 19:28

It's the Zeitz Museum. Z-E-I-T-Z.

Bruce Wallin 19:31

Zeitz Muesum, okay, but I love your point that you made an extra effort to do something different, right? So you instead of lining up for the museum, like everybody else was doing because it just opened up, you went a different direction and tried to meet people who were actually going to get you in with these, you know, the artists themselves, the galleries, that it seems like a common thread through all your travels is making a little extra effort to do something different and that's something that I love. It's something that it opens you up to experiences that other people haven't had. And I think that, you know, look running a marathon in Kenya or hanging out with the artists in their private studios in Cape Town, whatever it is, because you've made that extra effort, you've been able to do something that most people aren't doing.

Jackie Caradonio 20:12

I think something that people maybe don't realize, obviously travel agents are really great for this kind of stuff with hooking you up. And hotels are actually really great to the gallerer Joelle Ferriera, I ended up meeting him through the One&Only hotel in Cape Town. So, the concierges is no everybody in hotels. So that's also a really good resource. But you'd be surprised how many people you can email out of the blue and they will absolutely talk to you.

Bruce Wallin 20:34

So do you think this type of travel is more relevant today? After everything we've been through in the past couple of years? Is it, Is there a renewed interest in like going out with a purpose in when you travel or I don't know, has the pandemic affected this at all?

Jackie Caradonio 20:49

I think we were all kind of aimless for like 15 months, and there was kind of this idea of like, A of course, I want to I want to travel, I got to get the hell out of here kind of sentiment. But I also think it was sort of like, I want to do something. I don't just want to go and see, I want to do. And I mean, a really good example of that. I know you and I have talked about this was the National Parks, we're just like killing it over the last year because people did want to go and they felt really comfortable outdoors. So it was this notion of, well, let's just go camping, or let's go, you know, spend five days at Grand Canyon when a lot of people just drive through Grand Canyon in a couple of hours and then go about their merry way. So yeah, I do think that you know, just sort of like the logistics of a lot of accomplishment travel being sort of this outdoorsy adventure, that obviously lends itself very well. But I also think you

know, as people are still kind of navigating this new world where we can do most of our professional lives over Zoom. I mean, I spent about six weeks at the beginning of this year to get out of the New York winter we went to West Texas, we were staying in an Airbnb about 45 minutes outside a Big Bend. And literally every weekend it was insane. You had to wake up at like three o'clock in the morning to like a lineup, because everybody wanted to be there.

Bruce Wallin 22:08

Speaking of everybody wanting to go to the National Parks, what is Jackie Caradonio, who does things differently now we know, what do we do now with everybody go into the —. It's actually been something I've been kind of, I want to go to all these places just like everybody else's, but I don't want to go there when there's if I have to line up at three in the morning, right?

Jackie Caradonio 22:24

Yeah, I get it. I mean, Big Bend was actually quite challenging. There were times when we just gave up and then we would sneak onto a private ranch and go hiking which is a dangerous thing to do in Texas where people have guns. But you know, I think one of the things that this is actually, Belize is a really good example of this, just go somewhere wherever is not already going. So I'm really interested in going to Belize because yes, we all know about Belize, but actually it's really not that popular of a tourism destination. It's kind of like Costa Rica in fact, it's very much like Costa Rica you have the jungle and you have the beach and I was actually talking to somebody who's from there and she was like you know we're we're like a drop in the bucket compared to Costa Rica. We're so little and nobody really knows about us and we're much smaller but like we have all the same things and it's just it's not built out the way Costa Rica already is. So yeah, my suggestion would be try somewhere else, go somewhere else.

Bruce Wallin 23:21

I will say with Belize too, like even within Belize, same thing, right? So a lot of people think of Belize as a diving destination so they go out to the keys they go out to the you know, the reef and they dive and they party on the on the islands. Inland Belize has so much to offer that people most people who go to Belize don't get to go up to the jungles, up to the Mayan ruins. There's a place called Blancaneaux Lodge. When you got to Belize you have to go there. It's a sister property of the Turtle Inn in Belize. It's an amazing experience. I thought the jungle, mountain, ruin experience in Belize was at least as good as the as the coastal experience. We're gonna take a quick break. But stay tuned for my wrap up when I share my favorite accomplishment travel tale, which involves tracking pumas in Patagonia.

24:09

[Ad Break]

Bruce Wallin 24:28

Welcome back to my chat with accomplishment travel expert Jackie Caradonio. Okay, so now that we know what type of traveler Jackie Caradonio is, where are you going next? Like what are you excited about now post-pandemic? What do you, you know, Belize is one but where else are you looking to go? Like what destinations do you feel like a really ripe for exploration right now?

Jackie Caradonio 24:48

The number one place I really want to go right now which is also very convenient because I think people are still sort of dipping their toe into the international travel is in Utah. It's the Sarika camp that Amangiri opened. It's on 600 private acres, it's literally just like pick a direction and hike and you could go for days. And there's only 10 tents. And so it's all very luxurious, of course, but it's literally in the middle of nowhere. And you're also close, I think you're within a couple hours driving distance of like five national parks if you do want to go that route, but you don't have to, because you have all of this private land where you can go hiking, and you can climb. And you know, it's just it's your playground, I mean, think about only 10 tents, that means there was a maximum of 20 people with that much space for themselves.

Bruce Wallin 25:34

I think to your point, that's one of my favorite, one of my favorite spots in California is just behind Yosemite National Park. It's an area that very few people go to, but it's the same thing. It's just the exact same terrain as Yosemite. It's just not in Yosemite. So there's no one there. And it's got, you know, hundreds of lakes and all these amazing hiking trails. And so finding those places, camp Sarika, it certainly sounds like one of those examples. Maybe they're private land, maybe they're their public land, they're just not a national park. Those are a good place to start right now.

Jackie Caradonio 26:02

Yeah, absolutely. Like pick the place you want to go and then move your finger across the map a few 100 miles, and then go there, because there will be fewer people. Another place I'm interested in, which sends me back to Kenya, and it's called Angama Safari camp. And it's the second property from this couple in Kenya that opened a lodge called Angama Mara in the Masai Mara. It's absolutely incredible. But the thing I love about this Angama Safari Camp is it's, it's called a mobile camp. So, it just goes wherever the wildlife is. So, it's very intimate. And they can literally pick it up and put it down pretty much anywhere. So, obviously, it's really sustainable, it's so nice that they can just pick it up and leave virtually nothing behind. The thing I love about this, and Bruce, I feel like you probably feel the same way, is after you've been on safari a handful of times, you kind of want to get out of the truck and you want to walk and you don't want to just sit and watch. You know, I'm always like, I don't want to just see I want to do. So this is literally like you're not just driving around and then coming back to your lodge. You're literally like doing a pilgrimage with the wildlife. And so it really lends itself to this sort of like off-piste experience where you're not just sticking to the roads. I mean, you know, this is really one of those experiences where you you feel like you're just so much more embedded in it.

Bruce Wallin 27:21

And Angama Mara, I if I'm remembering correctly, that's the camp that's located in like, it's like where they had their picnic in Out of Africa in that movie, right?

Jackie Caradonio 27:31

Yeah, exactly.

Bruce Wallin 27:31

The original campus set there. So it's a pretty good setting. It's up on that hill with the incredible views of the Maasai Mara. And so the the mobile camp is in the same areas and in private conservancy, is it?

Jackie Caradonio 27:42

So, it's down in a private conservancy, which I think I know, you know that that's really the best safari experience in the Masai Mara, but it can kind of go once you have access to that conservancy, you can certainly go anywhere within that. And so it really does have the freedom to follow within like a pretty significant range, it can go quite far. So you know, it really is like, you'll never have the same experience twice there.

Bruce Wallin 28:07

Right, we've talked about that before in the show. But, just the difference between the private conservancies and the public parks, I mean, even just one simple one is it in the Maasai Mara, in the National Park vehicles have to stick to the road, right? And you can't get out. You can't walk and everything like that. In the conservancy, it's not that all rules are off, because they're very careful about protecting the wildlife and the environment, everything. But it's much more immersive and adaptable and just flexible. You can go do what makes sense at that moment, which is so important on a trip like that. Okay, so we know you're liking the outdoor stuff, Utah, Belize, Kenya, what about? Are there any cities that you're dying to go back to? Or explore new? I mean, is there anything like culturally that you're very kind of interested in going after again?

Jackie Caradonio 28:50

Honestly, to start, I would love to just get to know my own city, New York City again. I think our cities have suffered so horribly over the last 15 months, that it is really important that we go back to those cities. Beyond that, I think it's sort of an opportunity to once again, appreciate what we have, you know, there was a lot of that going on with the national parks where we, you know, people were canceling their overseas trips to stay local and drive somewhere. But I think we also have to remember that we have some pretty amazing cultural hubs in our country as well.

Bruce Wallin 29:23

So that sounds like a change in focus in philosophy for you and like, how has this affected you? Are you are you going to travel differently going forward? And how?

Jackie Caradonio 29:32

You know, I think we're all a little bit more like aware of our impact now. And you know, whether it's environmental or social, you know, I am kind of looking at things differently. A good example would be, I remember one time, I had to go to Morocco, and then I came home and then like 12 hours later I went back to the African continent to go to like Rwanda. That is so incredibly irresponsible for me to just be wasting all of that time on a plane and you know, that's just obviously terrible for my carbon footprint. I don't think I would ever do something like that, again. My international travel is probably going to be maybe like once every 4, 5, 6 months, and I want to spend more time while I'm there, I don't I don't want to get in and get out. You know, I think that also speaks more to accomplishment travel where you go and, and you really spend your time and you take your time to do what you want to do and and

accomplish things and, and feel a little bit more immersed. But I think there is sort of like a new found sense of appreciation for my own country, which I feel like, Bruce, you and I were both kind of like, whatever I want to go over like, I don't want to go anywhere unless I need my passport.

Bruce Wallin 30:41

Don't lump me in with you on that one. But yeah, sorry, I get what you're saying, Alright, so okay, so where are you going? And what is the big I know, you're only taking a few international trips per a year. And I that absolutely is something I think we've all thought about. But where are you going next? Where's your next big international trip?

Jackie Caradonio 30:56

I'll be honest, this one was something I wanted to do from long before the pandemic, I really want to go to Zambia. I feel like Zambia is kind of leading the way for really sustainable and responsible tourism. And like very slow and careful development. I mean, I don't even want to call it development, because I feel like that's such an icky word, especially when you're talking about nature. So I do want to go there. And I think for this year, and next year, I know I feel this way and I think a lot of people feel this way, I don't feel like now is the time for me to really just chart new territory. I think it's kind of about returning to places we love and looking at them through fresh eyes, and very slowly wading into the pool of travel again. So obviously, the first step of that would be domestic travel. And then I think it'll be a lot of return to these Italian cities and Mexico and, and all of our favorite places. And then these sort of like Zambia, farther flung trips, I think that's probably going to resume more like later next year.

Bruce Wallin 32:01

Yeah, I think now more than ever, it's that that divide is is more clear is like that question of, do I go back to the places that I love? Or do I, you know, explore new places. And I think, in my mind, I want to explore new places, because I feel like the clock is ticking. I've got to get out there and see these places before it's too late. But then on the other hand, I think you're right, it's kind of but right now I kind of want to go to places that I'm I'm very comfortable with and that I miss, I miss these places.

Jackie Caradonio 32:27

Absolutely.

Bruce Wallin 32:29

Well, thank you so much. It's been wonderful to have you here great insights and we look forward to traveling with you again soon.

Jackie Caradonio 32:35

Thanks so much, Bruce.

Narrator 32:38

And now for the Wallin wrap up

Bruce Wallin 32:41

Lovely speaking with my friend and colleague about some of the great adventures that she has been on. Now. I have to admit, I'm not really an accomplishment travel type of person like Jackie is. I'm more of a kind of go somewhere and see what happens person but speaking to Jackie did remind me of one trip that I took a few years back where I had a very specific goal in mind. I wanted to see a puma. It was a trip to Chile and seeing a puma certainly wasn't my only reason for going, but it had this kind of ridiculous goal of seeing every big cat in the world. And so I signed on for this group trip to Torres del Paine National Park in Patagonia that was being led by a Chilean wildlife photographer. We were staying at the Tierra Patagonia which is one of my hands down favorite lodges in the world. And I was the only American in the group. There was like everyone else was from either Chile or Argentina. We had a great time we did all these you know beautiful hikes, a boat trip to see turquoise glaciers. We photographed Andean Condors flying below us from the top of a ridge just incredible stuff. And I think it was the third night when the photographer got up after dinner and said something about looking for volunteers to go out and track pumas with her the next morning and I don't know if I misunderstood her, my Spanish wasn't so great. And there might have been a couple of bottles of Chilean wine consumed over dinner, but I shot my hand up to volunteer and quickly looked around and realized I was the only one in the group who had done so. Nevertheless, she and I and one of the guys at the lodge set out the next morning at 3am We had a couple of high powered flashlights with us and we basically just drove around through the cold and completely empty Patagonia wilderness scanning the brush, hoping to see two round flashes of green looking back at us. But after three, four hours, nothing. A couple of, you know, rodent eyes maybe, but but no Puma. It was obviously disappointment but we set out that you know later that day on a great trail ride with Patagonian gauchos. And then sure enough that night, the photographer asked me again if I wanted to try the next morning. I was leaving at 9am The next morning to drive four and a half hours to the Punta Arenas airport where I would catch a flight to Santiago another flight to Lima than another to LA. It was going to be a hellishly long day regardless, so I figured why not. So again, we set out at three in the morning, drove through the dark with our flashlights for hours. And it must have been about 15 minutes before sunrise when suddenly, two brilliant giant green marbles, were looking right back at us. We stopped and this beautiful cat was just standing still barely seeming to notice us or even care. But she soon rose up, walked down from her perch, crossed the road right in front of us just so casually without a care. And then she headed down through the brush toward the shores of a lake below. It was simply magical. And the fact that I'd worked for it, that it didn't come easily made it all the more rewarding. And that's the beauty of accomplishment travel right? Effort is always going to be a part of the equation. So when you succeed, the payoff is all the more amazing. I'd like to thank Jackie Caradonio for joining us today on Travel That Matters. For more information on the trips and destinations we discussed please check out our show notes or visit Curtco.com The show is produced for Curtco Media by AJ Moseley and Darra Stone. Music by Joey Salvia. I'm Bruce Wallin, and we will see you down the road

Narrator 36:31

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