

Frequently Asked Questions

Description



Montenegro

We answer your most frequently asked questions

Frequently Asked Question #1 How did you decide to start a blog?

The idea was born by Ryan several years ago after our third trip to Europe. Joelle was initially less than enthusiastic, but he wore her down over time.

Travel was something Ryan had always dreamed of, but never in his wildest imagination, thought would occur. It was life-changing for him and one of his greatest joys after his son.

Joelle, a first-generation American born to French immigrants, had traveled much of her life. Travel fueled her soul, and she could never get enough. She had planned to fly somewhere at least once a month and maintained that for many years. Most trips (often business trips) were in the US, with at least once a year overseas.

Over the years, Ryan joined Joelle on family vacations or local trips when she was on his side of the country for business. Our first trip to Europe was only going to be a one-time thing. After leaving the active-duty Army, Ryan had a rough road and had turned things around. He had saved money for the trip, and Joelle was anxious to return to Europe. The timing worked perfectly.

An unlikely travel duo was born as we learned we shared similar travel styles and interests on that trip. Ryan, with his youth, brought energy, unbridled curiosity, and enthusiasm. His appreciation of history and culture was invaluable. With her years of travel experience, Joelle brought a mindset that made travel seem effortless. That, along with her love of adventure and the unexpected. We both learned we shared quite an obsession for castles too. Each with our unique strengths and weaknesses when we traveled, we balanced out nicely. Our trip taught us to think outside the box and open our hearts to unforeseen gifts for ourselves and others.

As a disabled veteran and still currently serving Army reservist Ryan had this warm-hearted idea that a blog could help other Veterans like himself find the joys of travel. He wanted to help them find what he had discovered and how traveling could positively and meaningful impact their lives. It was the selling point to get Joelle on board. He found her weak spot.

The process wasn't easy as neither of us had ever done anything like this or was tech-savvy. The learning curve was massive; there were many moments of doubt and some anger, but we stuck with it. We believed in our dream and committed to making it a reality.

A launch date of March 2019 was set. But it wasn't meant to be. The very same month of our scheduled launch, the Covid 19 pandemic took hold in the world. Our hearts broke as we watched the devastation that came with it. We put the blog launch on hold. This was a valuable time to learn the ins and outs of our platform and blogging. We discovered wonderful resources for new bloggers, and during this time, we took classes, read extensively, and studied hard! We would be prepared when the world was ready to reopen to travel!

At the beginning of 2021, the world began to see the light at the end of the tunnel after a challenging year. With that hope, people started making travel plans. It was the ideal time to provide a resource to guide them in making those plans.

In March 2021, we launched Wanderers Compass.

We were ready this time. The learning will be a never-ending process as the blog grows, but we now have the tools to adapt as we do.

Welcome to our journey. We are thrilled you are joining us.

If you would like to read more about our story and learn more about each of us other than the Frequently Asked Questions,

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click here to go to our [About Us](#) page.



Frequently asked question #2 How did you come up with that name, and does it have a special meaning?

Finding a name for our blog was a months-long feat. Whenever we had an idea we both agreed on when we searched, it was already in use in some form. Or maybe the website was available but not Facebook or Instagram. A quote Joelle gave Ryan for Christmas to put on his wall led us to Wanderers Compass. We both adored the word Wanderlust. Many variations of the definition exist, but our favorite was: A very strong or irresistible impulse to travel or wander. That spoke to us. We work hard to plan our daily itinerary but always allow time for spontaneity and wandering. Those have been our most memorable experiences, off that beaten path where tourists rarely go.

Two of us co-founded this blog, so Wanderers fit well. The compass fell into place as it guided us in our travels. We are the Wanderers who will guide you to use your compass to discover your next great adventure. Allowing the needle of the compass is your guide to exciting destinations while opening

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your heart to life-changing experiences.



Frequently Asked Question #3 What is your favorite place to travel?

That is a tough one and almost impossible to answer. As the number of countries we visit grows, we develop new favorites. For Joelle, France will always hold a special place in her heart, as her parents are French immigrants, French is her first language, and she still has a lot of her French family.

There is rarely a country that we don't love something about. Recent trips to Portugal and Croatia rose to the top of our list. Ireland was love at first sight and remains a favorite. Italy was amazing. Spain fascinating. Scotland breathtaking. The Nordic countries are striking—Iceland is spectacular. Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany are lovely. England, oh, the castles! You will always find magic if you visit everywhere with an open mind, heart, and eyes, absorbing the culture and the people. It might not be what you expected, but it shouldn't be because you are in their world, and it is

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there for your discovery.



Frequently Asked Question #4 What are some aspects of your partnership that surprise you?

It still surprises us that though we are the most unlikely of business and travel partners, it works well. We live on different coasts, so it is sometimes challenging and a struggle. Throw in the time zone difference and how busy Ryan is; we still pull it off. What helps is Joelle doesn't work full time anymore and can come east as needed. Ryan has not visited Joelle and her family in a few years and hopes to do so more soon with his son.

We are also surprised that we have identical travel styles despite very different histories with travel and being far apart in age. Neither of us ever expected that, but here we are living it. It is an absolute joy and has taught us to keep open minds to experiences.

We share some hobbies and interests other than travel. We both enjoy wine and microbrews and seek those out on our trips. Our families are the center of our lives. We love Rick Steve and his travel series. We enjoy lots of the same music, and on a recent drive, we played the Hamilton soundtrack a lot.

In other aspects, we differ a lot. Ryan is passionate about his Harley, and you will never find Joelle on a motorcycle in her life. Ryan is very artistic, with many talents, such as ceramics, woodwork, drawing, and mosaics. He makes Mead and writes poetry, short stories, and music lyrics. Ryan worked as an engineer on active duty, resulting in some impressive construction projects. His dream is to own a fully restored Old-style Wagoneer. He has one sitting in the garage that needs a lot of love, but the time is not there or the funds.

Joelle loves photography, but other than that can barely draw a stick figure. She loves cooking due to her French roots and has belonged to a gourmet cooking club for over 20 years. Landscaping and home design have always been fun hobbies. She and her husband built the home they raised their family in. Having worked as a Registered Nurse, she is passionate about healthcare issues, patient advocacy, and education. Joelle did extensive public speaking during her career. Her career was primarily focused on oncology in clinical and research settings. She keeps her hands in it, volunteering

on committees and auditing.



Frequently Asked Questions #5 Is the photography on this site your own?

Joelle is the photographer on this blog team. Ryan is a good photographer and often takes Joelle's Nikon to take shots in places more challenging for her. Mostly, all the photos on the blog are our own. Some countries visited long ago; the images were lost (Australia) or are not useable anymore (Bermuda). We will credit the site and photographer if we use stock photos.

Joelle is passionate about photography and spends a lot of time on it. It is her favorite hobby outside of travel. An average trip might have 10,000 images on the Nikon and iPhone; after all, it is said and

done. Ryan has many as well. The tedious part is examining all of them. It is an art and pure enjoyment in the end. We hope you enjoy our photography, and as we enhance the site and write posts, many more photos will come. Joelle's collection from travel is over 500,000 photos.

Photographs for the blog since 2022 are taken with an iPhone 14 Pro or on a [Nikon Mirrorless Z6II](#). Lens [Nikon 16-80 2.8-4E VR DX AF-S ED Zoom-Nikkor](#) with an adaptor.

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Disclosure: These two photography items contain Amazon affiliate links. If you use these links to buy something, we may earn a small commission at no additional cost to you. Thank you!



Frequently Asked Question #6 How do you juggle travel and hold jobs?

That answer is very different for each of us. Joelle is married and is a grandma to three sweet grandboys. She worked as an RN in the Oncology field her whole career and recently was able to retire earlier than she planned. Volunteering on committees keeps her engaged on the local and national levels and her mind active. She has her kids living near her and her three grandboys.

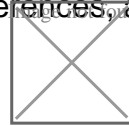
Along with her husband, they help watch the grandkids when they can. Over Joelle's career, she often traveled for business and will now continue to visit with friends and family throughout the US and have business meetings with Ryan. International travel is usually at least twice a year, with hopes to have more than that soon. With so much flexibility Joelle can juggle it all pretty efficiently.

Ryan is a single dad to a sweet and active four-year-old son. He keeps Ryan on his toes but adores every moment with him. Ryan holds a full-time civilian job with the Department of the Army, working the evening shift. He is also a Sgt First Class and Platoon Sergeant for the Army Reserves, traveling to a different state to attend. He is a very busy man!

On top of that, maintaining his home, property, art projects, and finding time to ride his Harley and Indian motorcycles, he doesn't get much downtime. Due to some of his disabilities from his military service, he has some days that can be painful. He is juggling lots of balls in the air. Ryan is limited with travel time due to work and finances. His vacation time is reserved for European trips or to visit family in nearby states.

The blog is a very shared effort, and since some parts can be challenging, we each take on specific tasks that suit us best. As we live on different coasts, many work conversations are on the phone or by text. We try to meet in person every two months, which is very valuable. There is a lot of team effort and unique challenges due to distance, time zone differences, and being in very different life stages.

We make it work, and we have lots of support as well.





Frequently Asked Questions #7 Do either of you have any travel phobias that would astonish us?

Joelle hates flying, as in she hates flying. She has a long history of being a terrified flier. Add some claustrophobia to that to add to the misery. Over a million miles later, it remains a love-hate relationship. Ultimately, her love of travel has won out her fear of flying. It was a battle hard fought. A worthy opponent that lost in the end.

The flight that broke the camel's back was to San Francisco. Due to severe weather, the plane had to circle for an hour in severe turbulence. It was terrifying. It was the closest to an anxiety attack Joelle had ever experienced, and an hour later, her heart rate was still 180. Her physician recommended Ativan for flight anxiety. It was magic. It is as if the mind and body are disconnected; she fully knows that flying sucks, but the body feels calm. It is never far from her reach when flying but acts more like a security blanket as she hasn't taken any in a long while. Knowing alone that you have that option is all that is needed now.

Ryan is fearful and anxious in situations he can't control. He doesn't like the unknown, big cities, and large crowds. A visit to New York City once triggered symptoms of an anxiety attack. Going to a foreign country where you don't speak or read the language, you would expect it to be accentuated tenfold. Add to that driving the roads often with different traffic rules, signs that don't make sense, and even going on the other side of the road. His first overseas trip was overwhelming, but he was okay with patience and sensitivity. He handled Paris as if he wandered it daily. He drove on the left side of the UK road and learned to drive a stick shift in France.

Fear of the unknown scares many travelers from taking the trip, planning their journey, or traveling independently. Taking ownership of the trip and planning puts you back in control and removes much of the unknown. Ryan does all our itinerary and planning. It also adds to the adventure and provides confidence in areas he felt vulnerable. The excitement that comes with planning. Reduces those vulnerabilities. Ryan thrives when traveling. His stature, confidence, demeanor, and smile are much greater overseas. It remains with him long after he returns home.

How did we overcome these barriers to travel? Refuse to let it win and not be afraid to ask for help. We are learning ways to recognize and manage problems when they arise. Everyone can overcome their travel phobias with determination and sometimes a little help from a friend. It might not be easy, and there will be bumps in the road, but we are fully confident of your ability to do so.

Joelle will write more on this and other health barriers when traveling.



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Vernazza, Cinque Terra, Italy

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We always check Expedia and Booking.com to verify prices. At times, one is sold out of rooms while another at the same place has rooms. We also often find some European hotels, especially smaller ones, on Booking.com but not on Expedia. It could be they are a Europe-based company. Try both before booking accommodations.

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[VRBO](#) is now under the Expedia group's ownership, which many were worried about, but it hasn't panned out to be a concern. It is a massive network with access to all lodging forms should issues arise. Joelle has used VRBO for many years with her family and has had no problems with it.

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