

**Matt Bowles:** My guest today is Johannes Voelkner. He is a location-independent entrepreneur, digital nomad, and the visionary founder of [Nomad Cruise](#), a one-of-a-kind travel experience designed for remote workers, freelancers, and digital entrepreneurs. Since embracing the digital nomad lifestyle in 2010, Johannes has been at the forefront of the movement, advocating for a work-life balance that is not tethered to a single location. Originally from Germany, he has now traveled to over 95 countries. Johannes, welcome to the show.

**Johannes Voelkner:** It's so great to be here today with you and to be on your podcast again.

**Matt Bowles:** It was five years ago, my friend. I remember it well, and if anybody has not heard your first episode, I want to encourage them to go and listen to that. It was episode #22 of The Maverick Show. We recorded it back in 2018. We were in Brazil together in Jericoacoara and we had an amazing conversation.

And in that episode, we went through a lot of your backstory and your initial journey, getting into the nomad life and a lot of your experiences up to that point. So, it provides some really good context for you. And I definitely want people to go back and listen to that interview.

In this interview, we're going to talk about pretty much everything that has happened since 2018. So, we've got a lot of very, very cool things to discuss, but let's just start off by setting the scene and talking about where we are recording this from today. Unfortunately, this time we are not in person. I am actually on the East Coast of the United States today. I am in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, North Carolina. And where are you?

**Johannes Voelkner:** I am in wonderful Bangkok in Thailand. And I just got here like two days ago. Two more days in Bangkok and then heading to the islands of Thailand.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, Bangkok is one of my all-time favorite cities in the world for people, though, that have never been to Bangkok. What do you love about it? And what would you recommend for people visiting Bangkok?

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, I have quite a special story with Bangkok as well, because this is also where my Asian backpacking day started in 2004. And I met here with nine of my friends and we went on a holiday together, which had an impact on the reason why I organized the [Nomad Cruise](#) in many ways.

And it's been changing so much. It's crazy because actually I was yesterday walking around here with my girlfriend and I said, you know, when I was here 20 years ago, it was all smoggy and like you had to really get your fresh air somehow. There is still a lot of traffic here. It's still quite busy, but it's also crazy developed.

I mean, the Adidas store, I walked in here yesterday. It's better than any of those stores that I've seen in Europe so far. And it's crazy how this city is picking up in development. And I find that actually very cool to see that from 20 years ago, how this city has changed. And yeah, for everyone who's coming here for a few days, what I would recommend is to get a nice hotel somewhere in the city center.

There are some great temples here. There's great shopping here. All kinds of shopping you can do. You can go along the river and just really enjoy all these things. A lot of local things to explore as well. It's just a really cool city. It's very easy to navigate around once you've found your way. And I think it's one of the most visited cities in the world with over 20 million tourists per year. Definitely worth a stopover.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, the last time you and I saw each other was actually earlier this year, and it was on a flight from Cape Town to Luanda, Angola. I was going to Angola to hang out for a month. You were just transiting on a layover through the city, but I know that the continent of Africa has had a really big part of your travel and your nomad journey.

And it has with mine as well. I've probably spent about two and a half years on the continent in different countries and so forth. I want to ask you what you love about the continent of Africa and maybe share a little bit about the role of the continent in your Nomad journey.

**Johannes Voelkner:** Basically, I ended up studying in Cape Town in 2005. And when I studied there, I also started to travel quite a lot around the continent. I went overland to Zanzibar from Cape Town twice, once by local transport, and once we were driving with our own car. And it's an amazing feeling to travel around there. I mean, there's incredible wildlife, incredible nature.

The people are super friendly, and I could just highly recommend everyone to go and check it out. There's a lot of development currently also around Zanzibar and the safari around Victoria Falls and that's just incredible as well. Great place to go and not many tourists around.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to ask you about your home country of Germany. It's actually a country that I have spent surprisingly little time in. If you can believe this, Johannes, I have never been to the city of Berlin. It is super high on my list. I want to go. I want to spend a lot of time there. I have not yet been. So, for me, and others like me that have not spent a reasonable amount of time in Germany yet.

I fly through it all the time, by the way, the Frankfurt airport is like my second home. It's like the hub for all of Europe. So, I feel like I spend time in Germany, but unfortunately, it's been mostly inside of airports. So, for digital nomads, let's say that want to go and spend time in Germany, what would you recommend in your home country?

**Johannes Voelkner:** I would definitely recommend Berlin and I was actually just there last month, and I met a lot of people that both of us know from the cruise times that we organized, and I was quite surprised how it's picking up with popularity these days. But it is doing that for a great reason because Berlin is an amazing city.

So, while the other cities are all cool and I would recommend spending some time maybe in Hamburg or Cologne, Berlin is a very special place and that is because of its history, right? So when the wall came down, basically there was half of the city that was way less developed than the other half and a lot of people left there and this kind of opened up the city for people from all around the world who started their new life there and who started, you know, to take over the city and started to organize parties and to just go crazy and this openness and the things that you can experience in Berlin.

I don't think that there are actually many other cities or any other city in the world where you can feel so free and have such experiences as in Berlin. That's for everything, pretty much. I mean, it really depends on, you know, what you want to do there, but it has got an incredible international vibe, incredible nightlife that you will find nowhere in the world, probably that's the reason why it's so popular and you can actually jump on a bike, and you can travel around everywhere. You can be at a party from Thursday all the way until Sunday night without stopping if you want. And yeah, but what I would really recommend if you went there is to go in the summertime.

So, the summer is definitely the best time because in the winter it all dies down a little bit and it can get pretty cold in Berlin. So. Anytime between the beginning of May until let's say end of September is the best time to go.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, it is super high on my list. So, I am going to further consult you when I'm ready to plan my extended stay in Berlin, my friend.

What I would love to do now, though, is talk a little bit about everything that has gone on with our travel lives since the last interview, which was five years. I cannot even believe it. That was right after [Nomad Cruise 7](#), which was a transatlantic cruise, and ended up in Brazil and we all hung out in Brazil for quite a while after that, which was such an amazing time since then I went on two more Nomad Cruises.

I did *Nomad Cruise 8*, which was a European area cruise, stopped in Morocco, and then went up the coast there to Lisbon, Portugal. And then I did Nomad Cruise number 10, which went from Greece all the way to Dubai, which was unbelievable. That was a 17-night cruise, if I recall. And we got to go to Oman. We got to go all over the place.

I mean, it was some really cool stops. And it was especially cool because it was primarily [Nomad Cruise](#) alumni who had done previous cruises. And so, most of us had already met. We already knew each other. And so it was really a very special community experience just to see all of those people and then have really cool experiences together.

And then of course, shortly after that, the pandemic happened, and I wasn't traveling anywhere. And one of the things that you did once. All the cruise ships were shut down as you shifted to this concept of nomad base and started doing events on land, one of which I went to in Playa del Carmen, which was very cool, but you did another event I was not able to attend, and you actually took hundreds of people to the continent of Africa.

You took them to Cape Town, and then you took them on an incredible Safari that I was watching on, I was following it on social media, and I was seeing pictures of it. But can you share a little bit about some of the stuff that you've done like that over the last couple of years?

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, when the pandemic hit, I was a little bit in trouble because my business model didn't work anymore, from one day to the other. So, I focused on some other businesses that I've neglected a little bit in the past, but the thing is, with regards to the community of [Nomad Cruise](#), I wanted to kind of let things live on, but my problem was that there were no more cruises, or it was hard to arrange any events there.

I did something that I had in my mind already for quite a long time because I didn't want to always organize all events on cruise ships. I wanted to go a little bit off land and not just use we are going from A to Z and then we go travel and work in the area where we are going, but actually organize on-land events.

And so we went to Mexico, we went to Cyprus, we went to Cape Town. Those were great events. And to Croatia, in Croatia, we also organized one event for one week. Those were great events, great events that were running for a week. The program was quite similar to a Nomad Cruise, where we had a lot of talks and then things happened in the evening.

I have to say, behind the scenes, it was incredibly difficult, because if you organize a conference in a different location for over 300 people, there are a lot of things that are very hard to control which made it

really difficult. But I think the community had a great time in those years going to different destinations, meeting up there, and we went to Cape Town, which is still one of my favorite cities in the world. So, I was super happy to take so many people there and show them this place. And after Cape Town, we organized a spontaneous safari. It was taking us from Johannesburg all the way to Victoria Falls. It worked pretty well. It was also quite a long trip. I think that we will do something like that again in the future.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, the cruises are back as of this year, which is super exciting. Let me ask you this before we talk about the upcoming cruise, which I am super excited to be a part of. I have watched it over the last five years. I've been part of the community. I've been part of the online community, been part of the in-person community, been speaking at the events, and really connected with a lot of the people.

And I have been amazed by the way that you have cultivated brand loyalty and the way that you have cultivated a commitment to this community by people in this community. I mean, as soon as you announce that you're doing something 300 people sign up immediately. There are people that will wear their Nomad Cruise bracelets for years.

You know, I mean, they'll just like to wear them after the cruise. They'll continue to wear them. I mean, people are really committed to the brand and they're committed to the identity of being part of this community. Can you talk a little bit, just reflecting on that now, how you did that?

**Johannes Voelkner:** Yes, I would say that the reason why this probably happened is that whenever I made a decision on a next cruise or the next event that we are organizing, I was thinking a lot, would our customers enjoy this with everyone who has been on the cruise before, like this type of the event that actually made it really difficult, right?

Because I could organize the same trip to Brazil every year. Maybe that would be much easier, but I was always thinking like, okay, can we run this trip? Next year again, what else can we do? Can we organize some kind of reunion? What can we organize after the trip to make it like this? And basically, by doing that, we created something that made it possible for people to actually really start real relationships, which is very difficult as a digital nomad. And that's also the reason why I started [Nomad Cruise](#) to make it easier for us to connect and also to be connected because what's the point of. Connecting a lot of people on one cruise and then we will never meet each other again.

This has been my problem as a backpacker and for me it was always a focus to not just create a community that meets on one ship, but that can meet again in the future. By organizing reunions and taking people to different places. I think that is what basically made this happen automatically.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, when I was preparing for this interview, I actually scrolled through all of my podcast episodes, 250 podcast episodes. And I counted the number of interviews that were with people that I initially first met on the Nomad Cruise. And there were 25 different people, which is 10 percent of the entire Maverick Show episodes are people that I met on the Nomad Cruise. So, anybody listening to this has heard interviews with a lot of people that are part of the Nomad Cruise community.

I also want to ask you, Johannes, if you can talk a little bit about Nomad Cruise' commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and for people of color who may be listening to this podcast right now and wondering if they will feel safe and comfortable and welcome on a Nomad Cruise, what would you say to them?

**Johannes Voelkner:** I would say that would feel safe and welcome due to the fact that when we have a cruise that where 500 people join, we have around 50 different nationalities who are on board, of course, because I'm German, because we have some countries that are more represented than others, but there is a mix of all types of countries and the diversity on the ship is incredible.

I would say that some countries are still underrepresented and we're doing our best to increase this. So far, Nomad Cruise has been growing because of word of mouth. So those people who joined initially spread their word, but it's a very, very international community. I don't think that from any other vocational programs that are running around the world that they have people attending from so many different countries in the world.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, let's talk about the upcoming cruise Nomad Cruise number 12, which is going to be from December 2nd to December 11th, 2023. It's going to go from the Canary Islands in Spain, all the way across the Atlantic to Brazil. And I want you to be able to talk about the different pieces of this. And let's just start with the first part of it, which is where it's departing from and what the pre-embarkation dynamic will be like in terms of when you encourage people to arrive and what people can expect before the cruise even departs.

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, the next Nomad Cruise departs in Tenerife, Canary Islands. Actually, Tenerife is one of the most popular digital nomad destinations. It wasn't really on the radar before COVID, but during COVID, it got a lot of traction because there's so much tourist accommodation that was there and a lot of nomads moved there.

It's a place very, very busy with nomads, many different co living places. So, for everyone who has got some time already in November, I would recommend going there as soon as possible. We are not necessarily organizing things all the way through November, but you will meet a lot of people who are part of Nomad Cruise and in that sense, you can already connect very well to people who are on board.

So in general, for someone who's joining Nomad Cruise for the first time, I think that it's very important to connect with some people already before you embark the ship because it can be quite overwhelming if there are 500 people and you don't know any one of them, you will find your way around, but it will take one or two days to get connected. And it's much easier if you actually come a little bit earlier and you already know some people and you have the little group that you meet for breakfast and that you can enjoy this whole experience with.

And what we will do actually in Tenerife is about 10 days before departure, we will have our first meet-up in the south of Tenerife. So, the south is actually the more popular part for digital nomads. So that's where we will have the first meetup, where you can already connect, experience that part of the island, and then in the north, which is one and a half hours drive, I think, roundabout in Santa Cruz, where the cruise departs, we will have a meetup about four days before departure to get everyone who already wants to get to know more people and wants to experience Santa Cruz a little bit.

So that will be about four days before departure. We are just organizing these meetups, but basically, there are a lot of things to do on the islands. And what we always see is people are in the chat and one wants to climb the volcano and the other one wants to take surfing lessons. So, there are basically way more things to do than you can actually handle.

**Matt Bowles:** I will be there in Tenerife. I am going to be on the cruise, so I will be up there. Anybody who is interested in coming through can definitely link up with me for sure in Tenerife, and then we can connect with the rest of the community there as well. And then let's talk about the actual cruise and the route that it is taking and where it is landing.

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, this will be the fourth time that we are going to Brazil. It's actually my personal favorite route to go because we are escaping the winter or the cold European continent. And we are slowly transitioning to Brazil. We have a little time zone shift that is on our side.

So, the days are getting a little bit longer. We can sleep in a little bit more. And still make it for the program in the morning. So, this cruise is going directly to Salvador in Brazil. It's a nine-night journey with some stops in Brazil before that in Fortaleza and Maceio. It's just an incredible experience.

I mean, some people might think that it's boring to be on a cruise ship for six days without seeing any land, but with such an incredible community that we have on board, we already have over 300 people who booked the journey and we still have three months to go. So, it's an amazing experience to meet a lot of people, learn a lot, and slowly make your way transitioning to Brazil and enjoy a little bit of warmer weather every day.

**Matt Bowles:** Having been on four different cruises so far, I can definitely tell you that the transatlantic ones do have an even greater community-building aspect built into them because you're not landing somewhere every single day. And getting off the boat for half the day and going on a thing being on that boat just somehow increases the community building aspect, because that's what you're able to do over the course of all of those days, just being on the boat together.

And it's really amazing when you finally land, how tight the community has become during that time. Can you share a little bit about what will actually be going on the boat in terms of the programming and the things to do on board the cruise?

**Johannes Voelkner:** We are currently planning the program, but basically, we will have around 50 talks and workshops.

The topics are very diverse. Famous digital nomad influencers will be on board as well, talking about business, talking about personal development. So, a very huge variety of topics that we cover on the ship. And then there will also be an unconference so everyone can organize sessions, a little bit smaller sessions on board.

And I think we will have around 80 unconference sessions. So, it's Nonstop learning and getting inspiration on a lot of real estate topics as well this time on the upcoming cruise that is happening during the day. And of course, you can always jump in the pool. You can always have a coffee and always go to the gym, but it's endless inspiration that you can get on board. And in the evenings, we have some shows. We have the piranha tank, which is a little bit like the shark tank, but for nomads and for our community, we have a talent show where we have the full theater of the cruise ship for us and bringing so many people across the Atlantic, we have incredible talent on board as well. So, a lot of great ways to meet, to learn, and at night to party as well.

**Matt Bowles:** Yeah, it's really amazing. And it's amazing how many different things are available for you to do. So, if you want to go to a nightclub every single night on the boat, they have that every single night on

the boat. If you want to go to a meetup where people are going to do a jam session with acoustic guitars out on the deck under the stars. You can go and do that. And people are singing live music all the time. Just people that get together and go and do that. Or people who want to have a meetup to discuss a particular topic.

There is a giant board, and everybody can put their meetup topics up there. And then you can meet me in this room at this time. And anything that you want to do, anything that you want to learn, anything you want to participate in people doing acro yoga. I mean, just everything. I mean, it's all there. It's pretty wild because you have hundreds of nomads from all over the world and they're all here together.

So, it's an amazing time to meet new people and you can plug into either community that you're already a part of. If you like salsa dancing or you like to do this or that, there are people that do that. Or if you want to learn about new things that you don't know how to do, there's like, hey, come and learn how to do acro yoga one-on-one for beginners.

And then you can go and learn that. Right? So, anything that you want to do is there, whatever your vibe is, whatever you're interested in, it's all available on board this boat. And it's a pretty amazing experience.

**Johannes Voelkner:** I want to add one thing. This cruise is called Nomad Cruise, but it's not just for nomads. I know that sometimes people think like, oh, maybe I'm not ready for this yet, or I would love to be part of this, but I'm not quite there yet. And they feel like, okay, because I'm not traveling so much. This is not for me. And that is absolutely not the case. We welcome also everyone who's just interested in this lifestyle because I've seen people change and get new jobs on the ship from other participants and just find the inspiration to maybe redesign their lives in different ways.

So, it's really for everyone and everyone who's just interested in learning. And interested in sharing and giving, I always like to say, give more than you take. That's the concept of the cruise. But basically, yeah, if you're interested in learning more to connect with this type of community, then you are more than welcome to join as well. So, it's not just a digital nomad event.

**Matt Bowles:** That's a really good point. There are a lot of people that come on this cruise that are sort of dipping their toe in and they're trying to learn. So they might be still in a full-time job, even if they just take a two-week vacation, they come on the boat because they want to immerse themselves, meet other digital nomads, go to the workshops, and learn how to do whatever it is they want to do, transition out of their corporate job, build a location, independent business on the side, et cetera.

And they're absolutely not nomads, but they want to learn. They want to dip their toes in. They want to find and surround themselves with people that are doing this. And so that's a really good point. There's an entire spectrum of people from that to people like me and you who have been full-time travelers for over a decade with no base.

I mean, you'll find everything in between on the Nomad Cruise. So that's a really good point. Let's talk about Brazil, can you share a little bit about where we are going to land and what the plans are after we're landing? And I should tell you this, Johannes, I have been to Brazil three times. It is one of my favorite countries on the planet.

I always name it in my top favorite countries in the world. I have not yet been to Salvador de Bahia. It is the top place in Brazil on my list that I have not been. It is the center of Afro-Brazilian culture. I know about it. A

lot of people have been talking about it and telling me about that have gone there and it's been on my list for so long.

And so, when I saw that the cruise was going there and that was the place where we were going to land and disembark, I was going to get to spend some time there. I was even more excited about the cruise but talk a little bit about Salvador and then also what you have planned after Salvador.

**Johannes Voelkner:** Yes. So, when we arrive in Salvador, I think everyone wants to recharge a little bit. Maybe they need to check their inbox again, check their emails, and just assimilate to the new environment where we are in. And Salvador is an incredible town with a lot of Capoeira culture and great things to see and do. So, I think that many people will stay there about two, three days, and those who want to work or need to do a lot of work and want to be a little bit in a bigger city will just stay longer there.

But we have one incredible thing that is happening right after the cruise as well, and that is that we are going to Morro de Sao Paulo. And that is only a three-hour boatride, even though it is actually on the mainland, you kind of go there by boat from Salvador, and it's a small beach town. It's quite a touristy place, but in December it's not so super busy because it's before Christmas, so that is usually a less busy time.

I believe that around 300 people or more will go there after the cruise and just kind of have the cruise after the cruise because it's incredible to just go with a lot of people to these towns and enjoy this experience just for a little bit. This is just really an incredible experience. And we've done this before in different places like Jericoacoara, where we had our last podcast recording, or put to the Galena's, which is close to receive where we landed with the cruise before. And it's really cool after the cruise because, on the ship, the internet is limited. So, it's a little bit hard to communicate and you can't always catch up with every person that you actually want to meet.

So, bringing so many people. Around the and on the ship, you will also hear about people, you know, who have the same interest, but that you haven't actually met yet. And this time, this one-week roundabout after we arrive in this really cool beach town is a full experience by itself. It's just part of the Nomad Cruise. It's just kind of like we just mentioned, like, just go to this city. So uh, I would highly encourage everyone who's got some time to just stick around at least for one more week after the cruise and come to this small beach town with us and just enjoy this and chill out and have some drinks there, do a little bit of work, but really enjoy and, you know, continue to connect a little bit more with the community and with those people that maybe you wanted to spend some more time with.

Later, after Morro de Sao Paulo, the next stop will be Rio de Janeiro. And Rio de Janeiro is also something that now we are organizing for the fourth time. You can come there already for Christmas, but the best thing about Rio de Janeiro around this time of the year is the New Year's at Copacabana Beach and that is the final highlight of our trip for those people who can extend over the Christmas holidays.

I know that the majority probably flies back, which is okay. And those who want to continue to stay longer will go to Copacabana and celebrate New Year's there together. It's just incredible to be there, go there with the whole community, and actually also experience Rio de Janeiro with so many people. There's a lot of things, a lot of meetups, stuff happening, you're always in a group, which makes the whole experience also a lot safer than you just going there as a solo person. It's just incredible.

**Matt Bowles:** So, I have spent about two months in Rio de Janeiro. It is an absolutely extraordinary city. I will tell everybody about Rio de Janeiro. But I have not been there on New Year's Eve. Can you describe to people what the New Year's celebration is like?

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, on the New Year's celebration, the biggest celebration in Rio de Janeiro is happening at Copacabana Beach, and there are about one million people or more going there to watch the fireworks.

I need to say that Copacabana Beach is a massive beach, many kilometers long, so even though there are probably over 1 million people. It's not that you're going to have no space to move around. And basically, everyone wears white clothes on this night. So, it's just cool, like a great atmosphere with everyone wearing these white clothes.

And then you go there, you have the fireworks, which are just amazing. I mean, I think that these are some of the best fireworks that you can see anywhere in the world that they are firing off there. Then there's a big party in Copacabana. It's a lot of concerts and things happening there. There are many different stages.

It's just a really incredible, nice atmosphere. It's usually very warm on this day and something very unique to watch this. And then to be there with probably over 100 people that have been on the cruise already together and I wouldn't be too concerned about safety or anything there. I mean, so sometimes people think that Rio de Janeiro is quite a dangerous city.

So, if we are there in a big group, and even also for things like the New Year's party, just don't take your mobile phone. Maybe on you or have some other things and it will be absolutely fine.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I am going to be in Tenerife for the week before the Nomad Cruise. I'm going to be on the Nomad Cruise. I'm going to be giving one of the keynote speeches on the Nomad Cruise.

And it's a speech that I've never given before. I'm putting it together just for the Nomad Cruise because this year is my 10th anniversary of being a full-time world traveler with no base. And I have also just passed 250 episodes of The Maverick Show interviewing digital nomads every week for five years.

And so, I am putting together a talk on the seven biggest lessons that I have learned from my 10 years of world travel and interviewing digital 250 full-time world travelers. And so that's going to be my keynote on board the Nomad Cruise. And then I am going to stay for the week after in Brazil.

Once we get there, I am going to have to come back to do Christmas with my family. So, I'm not going to be able to be there for New Year's Eve in Rio, but anybody listening to this, I have heard incredible things about that experience. And I have seen pictures, and they are mind-blowing. So, if that is in anyway a possibility for you, definitely encourage folks to do that as well.

And I understand, Johannes, that you are able to offer this year a special \$100 discount to Maverick show listeners who would like to attend the cruise. And so, you've given me a link, which I will give out now, and we're also going to put it in the show notes. If folks go to [themaverickshow.com/cruise](https://themaverickshow.com/cruise), that link will take you to the page where you can buy your Nomad Cruise ticket. And at checkout, just type in the code, MATT100 that's M-A-T-T-1-0-0. And that code will get you \$100 off of your Nomad Cruise ticket. And then we can hang out on the boat, we can hang out before in the Canary Islands. We can hang out afterward in Brazil and it would be amazing to see you there.

So definitely if that works for your schedule, you can go to [themaverickshow.com/cruise](http://themaverickshow.com/cruise). That's going to take you to the Nomad Cruise page. It's going to show you more information about it and all that, so you get more details. And then when you buy your ticket, just type in MATT100 and that will get you your \$100 discount. And we're going to link everything up in the show notes as well.

**Johannes Voelkner:** Yes. We're giving these \$100 discounts. What I just want everyone to keep in mind as well is that as we get closer to departure, we are raising the prices of the cruise. It's simply a marketing strategy. I'll be 100% honest here with everyone, but for us, it is necessary actually to know from your side as soon as possible, if you're joining, if you can make it or you can't make it.

And that's why we are not lowering the prices, but just making it more expensive because it helps our planning. We always love to have full commitment from people who are joining. And the earlier you can let us know, the better the price will be that you get. And even better if you use Matt's discount code, that will give you an additional \$100 off.

Just don't wait too long. And the other thing I want to say is that one thing that I always hear from people like, yeah, it's cool. Like I want to do this. I want to do this one day or whatsoever. I really wouldn't recommend anyone to wait to do this because I've heard so many people who joined the cruise and they said like, ah, I know about this since 2015 when you organized it the first time, and only now, I'm joining.

And I just think that it's really not about the cruise. It's really about this experience and this, these people that you meet, and the cruise is just the perfect place where you can make those connections that can impact your life in so many ways. And that is the real value of the cruise. And the earlier you go out there, the earlier you go and meet those people, the earlier you will be in this type of circle.

So even if it's a bit beyond your comfort zone, and if you're thinking, you know, maybe I want to do this one day or whatever, don't do it. Just go earlier than you want. I'm not saying this to push people, but I'm just saying this because I've also been waiting sometimes for many decisions in my life and like taking the next step.

And I think that taking the next step is always so much easier when you surround yourself with the people who are already there where you want to be. And on the cruise, you meet such an incredible number of people. So don't wait, go to the page, get on board, and write to Matt if you have any questions about the cruise or to us, and then we're happy to help you.

**Matt Bowles:** Yeah, absolutely. I agree with that entirely because the earlier that you make these connections and relationships with people, the more they're able to compound. Like I met a bunch of people on Nomad Cruise 6, which was my first Nomad Cruise back in 2018. I see many of those people all over the world.

I'm literally going to see two people that I met on Nomad Cruise 6 over the next three weeks in different cities that I'm traveling to, and I've had those relationships and I've deepened those relationships over the last five years, and I continue to see people. So, the earlier you're able to connect with people and build those relationships, the more it's just going to compound and deepen over the years.

So, I agree with that entirely. The other thing is, Johannes, let's just be honest. I think every single cruise that I've been on so far has sold out. The tickets just sold out entirely and then they're gone. And so that's the other thing is you need to get your ticket while they're still available.

You waited too long; it's going to go up in price and then it's just not going to be available at all for any price. And so, we are going to link that up in the the show notes along with the discount code. So, you can go there and learn more about it and then grab a ticket if it's right for you. And definitely message me if you buy a ticket to the Nomad Cruise so that I can know that you're coming.

And so that we can link up, you can send me a direct message on Instagram at Matt Bowles Maverick on Instagram. Just shoot me a DM. Let me know if you're coming on the Nomad Cruise, and we'll plan to link up in Tenerife and certainly on the boat. Johannes, I want to ask you a few more questions. Just reflecting on your 13 years now since 2010 of the nomadic lifestyles with regard to long-term travel, because it's one thing to do this life for a year or two or even three or four, but to do it as long as you have for over a decade, which is even longer than I've done it.

There are, I think, some really important sustainability pillars in order to live this life in a way that is joyful and fulfilling. Can you talk about, for you, what some of those keys have been over the years that have allowed you to do it this long and still be so passionate and enthusiastic about it?

**Johannes Voelkner:** I think one of the key things is to not rush, to take it slow, because every place where you go, you need to adjust to the place. You can't focus on your work if you are jumping from one place to another every week. That is one key thing, one key lesson, and also even though I've been around, and I've been doing this for 13 years, I have to say that I've spent most of the time in very similar places.

So, I have my few favorites around the world, which is Cape Town and then always the locations before and after the cruise. And I lived a little bit in Mallorca for two years, now I'm based in Cyprus. So. It is not that I'm constantly traveling. I'm also just going to different places where I have some kind of base and where I know people.

So going as a stranger every week to a different place, I don't find this sustainable. I know that it works, but it's. can be very exhausting. So having some kind of base, having some, even your home where you are right now, I wouldn't necessarily give this up. Having a home base is a beautiful thing to have and going there and spending some time in your place where you are from, for example, makes absolute sense.

And then you're there, you focus on family and friends and then you go travel over the winter and that is like an amazing combination for example, how you can do it and yeah, so I'm spending most of the time in very similar destinations, I take it very slow, and I spend a lot of time with people that I know.

Now, I'm actually, since the last few years, I'm also traveling most of the time with my life partner and that also makes things a bit easier. So, in the first years, I traveled solo quite a lot and I also really enjoyed doing this in a relationship. That's another thing that for me is also a way to do it.

**Matt Bowles:** What tips do you have for folks on maintaining relationships with family and friends back home while living this lifestyle?

**Johannes Voelkner:** As I was explaining now, basically, it is quite important to keep your relationships with your family and where you're from. What I see quite often is that people who are traveling around the world, they are like, ah, you know, this is all so exciting.

At home, it's boring. And then they try to educate their friends and family that they are living a boring life and that's not really helpful for the relationship and it's not true because everyone has got different ways.

How they want to live their life and different things travel is not the only thing that is important for other people. The family is much more important or the connections or their job or whatsoever.

So, we don't need to educate anyone from our home or live the best life that we can do. But basically, what is for me quite important is that when I come back home, I spend about like two or three months in this area per year. And I spent time with my parents and with my friends and it kind of keeps me grounded there.

And I really enjoy this. And then I also enjoy it when I'm traveling a little bit again, but it is important to keep those ties all the time and not forget about it.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to ask you about your observations, particularly over the last couple of years, since the pandemic with all of the new people that are now remote workers and getting into the digital nomad lifestyle and the development of all of these nomad hubs and cities around the world that are offering nomad visas and things like this.

I want to ask you about some of the consequences of that and some of the potentially negative impact of that on local places. So, concepts like over-touristification, right? You and I have spent time in Playa del Carmen together, for example, or even for longer- and medium-term travelers, not even necessarily just tourists, but as the nomad life takes off and people want to go and do these extended stays in places like Lisbon, Portugal, for example.

There are dynamics of nomad or expat gentrification that are starting to manifest in terms of the rents rising in those cities to levels where locals can no longer afford them, which is pushing local people out. And it's also impacting the local culture and things of this nature. And so, I'm curious, since you've been really at the forefront of this movement for so long, what are your observations in terms of what you're seeing right now with what's going on and particularly concerning any of the negative impacts that it's having?

What tips do you have for us as long-term travelers in terms of how we can make the most responsible travel decisions to try to minimize harm and maximize the benefits to the local people and destinations where we're traveling.

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, this is quite a complicated topic. We could talk about this for hours. I will just try to bring up some concepts and some thoughts that I have about this. But of course, everyone has got different opinions or different thoughts on this topic in general. So, I think the first of all, the very most important thing that we as travelers need to keep in mind all the time, wherever we go, is that we are guests in the countries that we visit, and that we should be very respectful to everyone who is there and not be demanding in any ways.

And I think that is the first thing because we want to make a good impression as tourists and not act like idiots. So, I think that this is the first and most important thing if everyone would try to do this and would try to act in a way that is respectful and that is friendly. And in that sense, then some areas would have way less problems with us being tourists there.

It is definitely a problem of over-tourism or digital nomads going to certain destinations around the world where the rents go up. What I need to say here as well is that this is a little bit hard for our side to control, right? Because I think that this is also part of the job of the government. It's part of those who are planning the flights to certain destinations.

It's part of the Airbnb policies in those areas. It's part of the policies to give locals better rides. I mean, like in Berlin, if you don't have such a high income, then you have like a slip that you can use. And that will give you a place where you can pay less rent. And this is subsidized in some way.

So basically, I think that We can act responsibly, we can act respectfully, and do that in many ways. But a lot of the job is also part of the government and how they deal with us coming there. And I mean, tourism is a concept that has been around for many years and there's a lot of over-tourism going on.

It will get bigger for sure. First, there was Cancun and then slowly Playa del Carmen started to develop over the next years. Well, not really slowly. It was quite fast that these places are coming up, but it's not just the digital nomads, it's everyone going there and spending more time there. But I do think that a lot of the responsibilities are on the government side.

What I need to add here as well is because I actually did study responsible tourism a little bit when I was studying in Cape Town, South Africa. And maybe one other way to think about it is that sometimes in a place like Playa del Carmen or like Mallorca, the good thing about this type of tourism is that by doing it like this, people are going all to one destination and like this, they don't have so much impact on all the other regions.

So, if millions of people would be traveling all over Spain and there would be like 300 tourists here and 300 there, it would be much harder to control. Where is everyone going to certain hubs? So, I don't necessarily think, even though it looks quite bad that Cancun or Playa del Carmen are getting so many tourists in a way, it's also good because this is more controlled versus everyone going to each small town or destination around the world.

But at the end of the day, this is a big job for the governments to control this. And I know there's a lot of corruption. There are many different ways because people don't do it. So that makes it tricky. And then I want to bring in one more thought on this because I'm here in Thailand right now. And I've been here 20 years ago.

And what I see now is that things have developed, and things are getting better here. There are more Thai tourists traveling as well to the islands. And that's what also my friends told me. It's not just the backpackers from Europe who are going to certain places. It's a lot more international and you can see that basically by us as digital nomads spending more time in certain places around the world, we actually make the world a little bit more equal in some ways because we are distributing the money that we have to other areas.

And over time people sell their land or they're doing certain things. They're working in tourism. This generates much more income for them than being a fisherman or something like that. So, in some ways, also the tourism helps to make the world more equal, but it's really the job of the governments to kind of control this and to use the ways of, yeah, they can limit the visas. They can say, well, guys, you can only stay here for maximum one month and then automatically someplace will not be a digital nomad hotspot. So that depends a lot on the regulations and that's not necessarily our job or it's very hard for us to do it.

**Matt Bowles:** Johannes, let me ask you one more question and then we'll wrap this up and move into the lightning round.

When you think back on your 13 years of world travel, what impact do you think all that travel has had on you as a person? And why do you continue to travel? What does travel mean to you today?

**Johannes Voelkner:** So, for me I think it opened up my mind in many ways to be exposed to so many different countries. It made me a much more understanding person.

All these impressions that I'm getting to open my mind, but also, I'm very grateful for all the amazing things that I could see and that I could experience. So, I don't want to miss this in any way. I appreciate this. I've learned so much more. I mean, by going to all these places, you're learning so many things. So, it's been incredible.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Johannes. At this point, are you ready to move in to the lightning round? Yes, let's do it.

All right. What is one travel hack? that you use that you can recommend to people.

**Johannes Voelkner:** My travel hack is to charge all your devices overnight. You will have a much easier day. Actually, a friend told me this like a while ago, and then I was like, ah, you know, I'm never like just charge everything every single night and you will have a much easier day.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Johannes, who is one person that's currently alive today? That you've never met, that you'd most love to have dinner with, just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation.

**Johannes Voelkner:** I think I would like to meet Barack Obama. Yeah, that's, you know, such a, the former president, not so interested in meeting Trump, but Barack Obama, I think that would be really cool just to hang out with him and just to ask him some questions. Yes, would love to do that.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Johannes, I know you are a big kite surfer. That is one of your top passions, and that has informed a lot of your travel decisions. You've been to many of the top kite surfing destinations in the world. Can you share a little bit about your love of kite surfing, just for people who aren't familiar with the sport, just what it is?

And then can you pick your top three favorite kite surfing destinations that you would put people on to?

**Johannes Voelkner:** The reason why I love the sport so much is because it's so perfect to combine this sport with being a nomad and with traveling the world because kite surfing takes you to some incredible destinations around the world.

And the nice thing is also it's not something that you do every day or that you can do the whole day, like in actually in many ways, the wind only picks up in the afternoon, like around four o'clock in some places that you go so you can get work done and you have a nice routine in the afternoon that keeps you healthy and fit.

And at the same time, you can experience amazing destinations around the world. For me, one place where I almost go every year is Cape Town, and that is also the best place for kite surfing in the world, in my opinion. It is not a place for beginners. There are some high waves and very strong winds, but it's incredible.

Another really cool region to go for kite surfing for those who are starting out is actually the northeastern coast of Brazil. So, everything above Natal, and all the way up to Jericoacoara and even further, that is an

incredible area that also will pick up a lot more tourists over the next years, and it's developing very well, and that is an incredible place to learn kitesurfing and go.

And then my other favorite destination where I haven't been for a while, but I hope I can go back sometime over the next years, is actually Venezuela. It's an archipelago called Los Roques. We went there in 2016 after the first Nomad Cruise, and it's been an incredible experience. We could go to different islands every day and we had these beautiful spots just for us living on this small island. That was really incredible.

And now finally, just one more destination I want to share. It's not my favorite spot, but it's for everyone who wants to learn kite surfing and get some work done. I would recommend going to Al Guna in Egypt. It's very flat water there. It's a very consistent wind. March and September could be some great months to go there. And there are some great coworking spaces. And there are also some great projects developing for nomads. In the future. So, check out Alguna, Egypt, if you want to learn and get into the sport.

**Matt Bowles:** Amazing. I love that recommendation. I've spent about a year in Egypt, but it has been a while since I've been there. So that is awesome. I appreciate you putting that on people's radars.

All right, Johannes, last question. What are your top three bucket list destinations? These are places you have not yet been highest on your list. You'd most love to visit.

**Johannes Voelkner:** It's Japan. That is my number one, and maybe Tahiti, this region as well. Let's stick to those two, then I'm happy.

**Matt Bowles:** Alright, Johannes, at this point, I want you to let folks know how they can find you, how they can follow you on social media, how they can learn more about the Nomad Cruise and any other way you want people to come into your universe.

**Johannes Voelkner:** The best way to get connected with us is to sign up to the newsletter of Nomad Cruise. Just go to [nomadcruise.com](https://nomadcruise.com) and there will be a pop-up with a newsletter. So that is really the best way to do it because I'm not so super active on social media, but we send out quite a few emails and we inform about new trips and everything. So, I would always recommend going there first. Or just follow Nomad Cruise on Instagram.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. We're going to link all of that up in the show notes. So, folks can just go to one place at [themaverickshow.com](https://themaverickshow.com). Go to the show notes for this episode. There, you're going to find all the ways to connect with Nomad Cruise.

We're also going to put the link in the show notes for your discount, if you want to come on Nomad Cruise 12 in December 2023. Again, that is going to be [themaverickshow.com/cruise](https://themaverickshow.com/cruise) is going to take you directly to that page. And then you just type in Matt100 as your discount code to get \$100 off.

As soon as you do that send me a DM on Instagram. Let me know that you're coming, and we will plan to link up in the Canary Islands before we embark. And then definitely on the boat as well. I'm at Matt Bowles Maverick on Instagram. Johannes, this was amazing, brother. So good to have you back on the show.

**Johannes Voelkner:** Thanks so much, Matt, for this interview, and looking forward to catching up very soon in the Canary Islands and then going across the Atlantic.

**Matt Bowles:** I will see you soon, my friend. Good night, everybody.