

Matt Bowles: My guest today is Sergio Sala. He is a professional [YouTube](#) video creator who films his experiences living and working remotely in cities around the world. Originally from Mexico, he has been a full-time digital nomad with no permanent base for eight years and has traveled to over 40 countries. He is a stylish minimalist who travels the world through multiple climates with carry-on luggage only. And he has been a keynote speaker on stages all over the world at events such as the Nomad Summit, the Nomad Cruise DNX and the Nomads BA Conference in Buenos Aires.

Sergio, welcome to the show.

Sergio Sala: Hey, Matt, thank you. I'm very grateful for your invite for the podcast and yeah, very grateful to meet you here in Buenos Aires.

Matt Bowles: Bro, it's been such an incredible time hanging out with you in Buenos Aires. I don't even know how many nights we've been out together at dinners and bars and rooftops and all kinds of stuff. It has been an incredible time here. Let's maybe just start with that though also and just set the scene. We are still in Buenos Aires. We have just opened a bottle of this is actually a red blend from Mendoza. It's about 90% Malbec, about 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. So, we will be drinking through this beautiful bottle throughout the episode. But yeah, man, let's just talk about what we're doing in BA and the conference that we were both keynote speakers at. Can you share a little bit about how you thought the conference went?

Sergio Sala: It's funny because we're drinking wine right now. We were hanging out every day and its wine every single day.

Matt Bowles: That Buenos Aires life, man. This is what you do in Argentina.

Sergio Sala: Yeah, the conference, it was great. So, Tato, one of the organizers, I met him like five years ago, he admired my work. He's like, I had to bring you here. So, he brought me like four years ago and he rolled me this year, say, hey, I need you again here. And I like that guy so much like, say, okay, whatever you say, I'll be there, you know. And yeah, it was really amazing to be back in the conference. Like the last one that I spoke was two years ago. And it was great to see the people, the vibe, you know, what we're missing after the pandemic.

Matt Bowles: So good to be surrounded by nomads again.

Sergio Sala: Exactly.

Matt Bowles: And tell me about the city of Buenos Aires. This is not your first time here. You've been multiple times. But what is Buenos Aires like for people that haven't been? What do you love about the city?

Sergio Sala: I think it's the European city of South America or maybe all America. The whole vibe I love, we're hanging out outside in the streets, drinking the wine, eating all these asados. Like the idea of the Argentinians of hanging out outside is not a common thing in Latin America. And you see that a lot in Argentina. And also, the architecture, it's all beautiful, big buildings. And the area that we are now Palermo, which is my favorite area, is just very walkable, very like. Oh man. Like the trees, the movement, the coffee shops, lots of coffee shops. And I'm a coffee lover. It's like heaven for me, you know, when I find places like that.

Matt Bowles: It's really a special city for me. It's actually the city where I started my nomad journey back in 2013. You and I have been nomading for the exact same amount of time, which is amazing.

Sergio Sala: Exactly. Like eight years.

Matt Bowles: We've been full time itinerant nomads with no base for eight years. And for me, that started in Buenos Aires in 2013. And then I was here for like three months back then also in Palermo. And then I came back from for about a month in 2017. I was actually in Cordoba for a month and then Buenos Aires for a month. And then now I'm back again for the third time, man. And this city is just incredible. It is also one of the latest night cultures I have seen anywhere in the world.

Sergio Sala: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: And I've been telling people about this ever since I came the first time. I mean, if you try to go out for dinner at like 7 o'clock or something like that, there's little restaurants that are open at 7 o'clock for dinner. Prime dinner hour is about 10pm, 10:30, that's when the restaurants are really packed, that dinner goes until after midnight. Then people go to the bars until about three, and then they go to the clubs from three till seven. And this is an everyday thing, man. This happens on the weekdays. This isn't just the weekend.

Sergio Sala: Exactly. Well, you went out last night. I couldn't join you. But you're telling me about this Speak Easy place. No, like, it was.

Matt Bowles: It was insane. We went to this speakeasy called Uptown, and they have recreated basically the New York City subway experience. So, you're walking down the steps and it looks like you're walking into a New York City subway. And they have the signs, straight up replicas of the New York City subway signs, right. Bronx, Uptown, a train, like this thing. So, it literally looks like you're walking into the New York City subway. Then you get down there and you're walking through the. And it looks exactly like a subway. They get the turnstiles, they got everything. And then they literally have a perfect replica of a New York City subway car. It's graffiti. You go inside it. I mean, it was like insane. And all of this is to get into the speakeasy. It was insane.

Sergio Sala: That is crazy. Well, I'm making a video about living in Buenos Aires as digital nomads. So, I need to go there and that's going to be in the video.

Matt Bowles: Definitely.

Sergio Sala: So, for the audience, they had to watch that part, you know.

Matt Bowles: And as soon as that video is ready, we'll link it up in [the show notes](#) for this podcast episode, for sure. Definitely. Got to check that out. That's amazing.

Well, I want to go all the way back with you, Sergio, and talk a little bit about where exactly you are from and where you grew up. And as you were growing up, when you think all the way back, how did your interest in world travel initially develop?

Sergio Sala: Well, when they asked me where I'm from, always say Tabasco. And it's a funny thing because in Mexico we tend to say the state instead of the city. So, I always say Tabasco. But very few people ask me more and I say, well, I'm from Villahermosa and that's a mouthful. So, I don't want to go into that when I meet new people.

Matt Bowles: Tabasco, though, is the Mexican state. It's in the southern part of Mexico, just above Chiapas, right?

Sergio Sala: Exactly.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Sergio Sala: I always say Chiapas when people don't know where. It's Tabasco. And I always say also, you know, like the sauce. And you all like the sauce. But yes, the sauce is not from Tabasco, it's from America. But there's a chili, small chili, that is called Tabasco. That's how it was based.

Matt Bowles: Okay.

Sergio Sala: But born and raised there until when I was 18 years old, like the whole live there and I don't know, all that time I never expect myself to be a traveler, just living a normal life as a Mexican with all these beautiful people. So, I wasn't expecting something like that. But when I was like around 13, I used to play a game, machine dancing game that is called Pump it Up. In America, they know it more as Dance Revolution. You play with your feet, there's arrows and there's a screen that you got to tap on it. Right. Anyway, I play so much that I wanted to show that to the world. So, when I was like 12 or 13, I just learned how to build websites and I did an AltaVista search for the people that don't know. That was before Google, so we're talking like way, way before anything that we have right now. And I just searched and I created a website about this game. And this is how I start all my conferences always say, this is why I'm here right now. And I would never expect that that brought me to where we are now because many other things happened.

I started building websites here and there and. And nothing that interesting. Also, it was before, before Facebook, we didn't know the power of the web. So, when I studied a career, I chose architecture. It's a little bit different. So, what, what people were thinking I was going to do because I always wanted to be creative and help people. So, the architecture was going to be that. And one thing that changed a lot, well, I moved from Villahermosa, Tabasco to Puebla. And I studied there at one of the best universities of Mexico. And one thing that completely changed my life is that I did study abroad in Italy. And I still remember very well when I said to my mom, like, are you sure? Can I go to Italy? She's like, yeah, because she was supporting me at that time. I didn't pay for that, but it was like, wow, I'm going to Italy. And man, it was a life change. Like I always say, there's a Sergio before and after that.

Matt Bowles: I feel the same way. I studied abroad in Europe as well. I lived in Dublin, Ireland for a year and I studied at Trinity College, which was totally game changing for me on like 10 levels. Right, but you're a college student, your first major trip outside the country, you're living on your own, you're in a foreign country. It's a whole different experience. And I would agree with you, I mean that fundamentally transformed my life as well. But I want to hear about this Italy experience. And first, let's maybe start off with what you did to prepare for that. Because growing up in Mexico, you were not speaking Italian before you went to Italy. So, what was the sort of the preparation for the Italy trip like? And then when you arrived, what was that like? The first day in Italy?

Sergio Sala: Yeah. Luckily, also in college. And before that I was learning English, because English is needed if you don't speak Italian. So, I got the English cover, but I needed to speak Italian. So, in the college they had the chance to study for six months. And I did that. I just go every day and I felt confident. But when

I arrived there, it was the chaos. It was my first long, long travel from Tabasco to Mexico City, Mexico City to Manchester, Manchester, Milan, Milan to Torino by a train. It was long. And also, I had two suitcases.

Matt Bowles: You were not a minimalist yet?

Sergio Sala: I was not a mini. I thought I needed so much for a year. I was so naïve.

Matt Bowles: I did the same thing. I look back at how much stuff I brought to Ireland. It was unbelievable.

Sergio Sala: I can imagine. And I arrived well, luckily there was two friends living there from Puebla. So, I had an address already, a place that I had to go for my first days. But I remember I arrived to Torino, got out the train station, and I had a paper that I went to just pick up a taxi. And I showed them the paper, but the taxi didn't understand what exactly what it was. I was like, *direcione*. And the taxi was like, what are you talking about? In Italian, of course. And I realized later on, so in Spanish we say *dirección*. So, I thought in Italian was going to be the same. So, I said *direcione*. And the guy didn't understand. At the end I realized that it was *indirizzo*. It was very different. And that was also the hard truth of men. Italian is not as easy as I thought. Because, you know, Spanish and Italian.

Matt Bowles: They're not all cognates.

Sergio Sala: Yeah, I thought so. But yeah, anyway, it was a chaos because we also arrived like around 8pm, something like that. And the taxi realized that it was an address. It brought me to the place. But there's something that I never knew about Europe, that when you go to an apartment, there's like numbers or for each apartment on a building. I didn't have that number. So, I arrived to this place with two suitcases, maybe around 10pm with no number, like 10 things to click. I was like, what the hell? What should I do? I'm going to sleep on the street. But I do remember very well. There was a lady in front that she saw that I was a little bit like scared, and I showed her the same paper. Luckily, they had a phone number, so she called them. And then they show up. My friends show up on their balcony and I was received with beers and the whole party. So that was great.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing, man. What a special region too. I was actually just there in the Piemonte region of Italy, right before I flew to Buenos Aires. So, like last month, I spent the whole month up there. I was actually in Alba, which is about an hour by train from Torino. But to get there, you have to take the train, the exact same journey you mentioned. You fly into Milan, you land there, then you take the train to Torino and then you got off there. I took it on to Alba. But what a spectacular and really special place because you ended up staying there for like a year and a half, right?

Sergio Sala: Yes. Well, the original plan was only six months, and I love it so much that I just tried to spend it as much as possible. It was a year of studying and then like something like five months of a break because there was a conflict with the schedule of Italy and Mexico. So, I had like free time. I did a small internship for a month in architect studio, but I was mostly traveling. Traveling because you know how cheap it is to travel in Europe.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing, man. What an experience. Because the also for people that have never been up to that region, that is really truly sort of the wine and culinary mecca of Italy. It's in the very northwestern part, right. Almost near the French border. And the food scene and the wine up there is just absolutely next level. So, you're based there. And then as you said, it's super cheap to travel all over Europe. So, what was that like? Because I can remember when my study abroad, you're doing the same thing, just getting

backpacking and going on the train all through Europe and seeing all this stuff. Where did you guys go and what was it like for you at that age?

Sergio Sala: So, yeah, I arrived that night, we got some beers, we had such a great party. And then I woke up and I remember that I just opened the window. It was mind blowing, like, damn, I'm in freaking Italy. And I always say there's a different surgery after that, because when I was there in my first days, I was like, oh man, I just want to go and travel. I was a shy person. And being in Italy, I was just like, I want to go everywhere. It became more proactive and I was like, let's do this, let's do that. Let's try everything. So, Torino in 2006, they had the Winter Olympics. So, it was one of the best places to ski. And I learned to ski there.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Sergio Sala: In a place called Bardonecchia. Such a beautiful place. And I fell in love of skiing.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing, man.

Sergio Sala: Wow. I saw how cheap it was to travel, so we move a lot. Luckily, I have also friends who were like in Spain, in France, in Germany. So, I got to meet them all. I traveled all around Spain and I went everywhere in Europe. It was. It was crazy.

Matt Bowles: That is amazing, man. So then after that you went back to Mexico and you eventually figured out how to start sort of freelancing and doing your web design stuff and getting location independent and becoming a nomad. I want to ask you. One of the things I want to ask you about in terms of travel is to start with talking about Mexico as a travel destination. Because one of the things that you've done, which I love because Mexico is one of my favorite countries and one of the things that you've done that I love with your videos in terms of talking about different places to live and work and travel is you've really centered Mexico and different places around Mexico where people can go and stay and work and travel and what the nomad scene is like there and what the local scene is like there and all of that kind of stuff, which I think has just been amazing. So, I would love to start off by giving a lot of love to your homeland and letting you talk a little bit about some of the different places in Mexico of which there are a lot of very different and diverse places that you have chosen to feature on your [YouTube](#) channel and travel to and live in and spend time in. Maybe let's just start with CDMX and start talking about Mexico City because I feel like it gets a. A little bit less of the international recognition compared with the beach locations.

Sergio Sala: Yes.

Matt Bowles: But what a spectacular city, man. I've been twice and I stayed there most recently in 2017 for about a month. And I will share this with you as well. I was on a 12-month trip with Remote Year, which is an international work travel company that puts communities of remote professionals together who don't know each other before the trip. And then they coordinate a 12-month itinerary and you travel the world with the same community of location independent professionals for the entire year and you live in a different city each month for 12 months on four continents. Our itinerary, and I will tell you that, I mean we did Asia, we did Europe, we did Mexico. We went all through South America. I mean, we lived on islands, on the beach. Like, we lived in unbelievably insane, extraordinary cities.

Some of the most incredible places in the world. If you were to poll our group at the end of that trip and say, what was your favorite month? What was your favorite city? If you had to pick one of the 12, what would

your number one destination be? I would bet that the plurality of responses you would get would say, Mexico City was our number one favorite in the entire world. And for people that haven't been, that answer might surprise them. But I want to open it up to you to talk a little bit about how special Mexico City is. And what it's like there.

Sergio Sala: I mean, I love my country. I really love it. I travel a lot, but I also. I'm happy when I come back. And now that I have this, let's say, power or influence, you know, with. With the content that I make, I feel proud when I make videos of Mexico. As a Mexican, I appreciate also bringing people to the country. But let's talk about Mexico City first. It is a beautiful place. It's massive. The area that I like a lot is the Roma Norte, Condesa area. So, of course, last time I was there, I stayed in the area. It's so walkable. It seems like very European. Some parts beautiful buildings in the Zocalo, like the downtown. Even in Roma Norte area, there's so many beautiful buildings. You can also eat because some are like restaurants. They were like old buildings. They became restaurants. Or they're also like amazing speakeas. It's a beautiful place. There are so many things to do, and I spent like a whole month and a half and I could have done so much more.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it is incredible. The food scene there is absolutely insane.

Sergio Sala: Yeah, I almost forgot to say that. Yes. Mexico and its food are. It's amazing. Maybe that's why I was happy to be raised in Mexico, because even in where I'm from, in Tabasco, there's so many things that are only from there that you don't see it. If you don't go to Tabasco, that's very interesting. But Mexico, not only the Mexican, but also the international cuisine, there's also like vegan and vegetarian things that are popping up too. So, I'm trying to look for those options too. Like, you have everything. You have luxury food; you have cheap ones. You can get a torta for 40 pesos, and they're fulfilling and tasty. And you can, yeah, you can survive with less income too. It's a. It's an amazing city.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, absolutely. I tell everybody about it and it's an incredible place to do an extended stay and just become a resident and live there like a local and just experience and immerse in the city. It's one of my favorite places. I also want to ask you about some of the other places you've highlighted because I've gone through a lot of your [YouTube](#) videos and you have just some spectacular videos about some of these other incredible places and a lot of the beach locations. You even did a workation where you organized a group of nomads to go out to Sayulita and stuff like that. So can you talk about some of the other places and maybe people want to go. I mean, I know people that just go and just stay in Mexico. They go to Mexico City for a bit, but then they go out to a beach location, then they go to another beach location. And you've sort of been, I think, showing people how to do that, where to do that in each location. Where are the co working spaces? Where are the best coffee shops? Where do you get good Wi-Fi?

Sergio Sala: Yes.

Matt Bowles: And you've sort of done a lot of that on your [YouTube](#) channel and we're going to of course link that up in [the show notes](#). But can you just share a little bit about what some of the maybe highlight locations are that you'd want to put on people's maps and. And what it's like in those places.

Sergio Sala: So, we start with Mexico City and then we have Playa del Carmen, Tulum, Oaxaca, Port Escondido, Sayulita, Guadalajara, Puerto Vallarta, Queretaro, Guanajuato, Puebla. Oh, sorry, almost forgot the islands. Isla Mujeres, Cozumel.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, because you've done videos on all of these. So, people can just go to your [YouTube](#) channel and if they want to see what these places look like, see what the beaches look like, see what the

coffee shops look like, see what the co working space looks like. You do a review of the Internet speed. I mean you really profile these places for medium- and long-term world travelers who are remote professionals to go and live there and stay there. But yeah, man, I want to hear a little bit about some of these though. The Sayulita experience, you organized a workation for folks to go out there and you went to like this hidden beach and like just did some insane things. Like I'm watching this video, I'm like, what can you share a little bit about that?

Sergio Sala: Sayulita, it's a small beach town in the Nayarit area, like 40 minutes away from Puerto Vallarta. And it has a very special place in my heart right now because that was the first place that I went after the whole quarantine. So, after staying six, seven months with my family and when I arrived there, like, yeah, I was so, I felt such a free person again. And there's so many great things to do there. The co-workation thing is a project that I'm working, but the idea is to bring no mask or more workers for a whole week, maybe longer, to explore together some of the parts right now of Mexico. Maybe we can do it somewhere else. But the Sayulita.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Sergio Sala: There's an area called the hidden beach. I don't know if it's true or not, but they were saying that it was created in a way that they were testing some bombs. So, one of these bombs fell in one of the Coast. It created this hidden beach that the only way to get there is to through a boat. And the boat gets you, like, very close to that beach. You just jump. Then you start swimming until this beautiful hole. That's why I call it the hidden beach, because the beach itself, you can only see it if you walk there.

Matt Bowles: That's incredible. Yeah. And you profiled this whole thing, this whole experience in your video, which was just amazing, man. So, I'm now super excited to go back to Mexico. I'm definitely going to go to CDMX again in Mexico City and stay there because I love it so much. But I now know exactly which beach locations to go to and then what neighborhood to stay in, what co working space to use, what coffee shops are the best and all that kind of stuff because of your videos. So, we're going to link that up in [the show notes](#) so other folks can check it out.

Sergio Sala: I will say the two main cities you got to check at least is Mexico City because it's all central. You can go around. And then Playa del Carmen in the other areas that you can go, like Cancun to bloom and the whole Yucatan area. And, well, maybe a third one in Puerto Vallarta. So, you can get the vibe of the three main areas of Mexico. But there's so many. And I had so many friends that go to Mexico City. They love it. They go around. They go to this place called Guanajuato and they just love it. They want to stay for long. It's like Mexico is such a hidden gem.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it's a really, really Special place. And the other place I want to ask you about now is your experience in Ireland, which is my homeland. I'm about four generations in the US But Irish heritage. And as I mentioned, that's where I went and studied abroad and really reconnected a lot with that culture. I've been back many times and there's such a strong bond I feel between Ireland and Mexico. You and I were just talking today about the history of the San Patricios. We're talking about back in the mid-1800s when the United States government was annexing Mexico and the Irish immigrants were coming into the United States in droves because they were being pushed out of Ireland and the great famine and all that kind of stuff. And the immigrants, you know, here's your military uniform and go into the military and all of that and sending them down to conquer Mexico.

And this battalion, which was mostly Irish, there were some other Europeans in there as well, led by Captain John Riley from Clifton in County Connemara is where he came from decided, what are we doing? Like, we're not, we're not going to be any part of this. And they deserted the U.S. Military. And they didn't just leave, though. They didn't just refuse to serve in the military. They formed the San Patricios, the St Patrick's Battalion, and then they switched sides and they fought on the Mexican side of the war against the United States. And they fought them in five battles. And they are to this day commemorated in both Mexico City and in Ireland. So, I have actually been to the memorial in Connemara in Clifton, where John Riley is from, and I have seen that. And then I have also been to the San Patricio's memorial in Mexico City, and I have seen that.

And I feel like there is this really strong bond which kind of skips the United States because it was a piece of Irish American history, but it's pretty much like wiped out of our textbooks. Like, people rarely learn about that. You have to read a historian like Howard Zinn or somebody that talks about the non-mainstream history of the United States to learn about these things. But between Ireland and Mexico, there is a really strong connection and bond, I feel. And so, I would love to hear how your experience was in Ireland, what you thought of Ireland and how that whole thing was for you.

Sergio Sala: It's nice to know that that's why maybe we have this connection, because we come from that past. So, I got to thank you and all the Irish people for that. Maybe also that's why I felt kind of connected to Ireland. I always wanted to go, I wanted to experience that area. But had this friend that I met also like four or five years ago in the small city of Fargo. That's another long story. But we became very good friends. He was insisting that I will visit him. And so how the plans worked that I got the chance to meet him in Cork and oh man, like I was so happy to be in Ireland. When I arrived to the airport, there were lots of pictures of all these red-haired people and I was so shocked. You know, why do you have all these pictures of all these people? And they were all beautiful. That was my first introduction and then he went to pick me up. And my friend is a fan of the Wim Hof method.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. Can you share just for people that have never heard of the Wim Hof method, just basically what that means.

Sergio Sala: Yeah, it's a guy called Wim Hof that he thinks that our bodies can endure cold water, what they call like submersions. You stay longer to see that your body can resist any kind of.

Matt Bowles: Right. The positive impacts of doing things like an ice bath or exposure to extreme cold and then the positive impact that that has on your body. There's a whole sort of Wim Hof has been one of the main people that has really been promoting a lot of that stuff.

Sergio Sala: I'd done some cold-water showers, but I never done this. As my friend said, there's this lake, basically it was cold and he just went straight, hey, let's do it. So yeah, we took all of our clothes out and jumped into the water. The first jump, I remember I just went in and the whole body, I don't know how to explain. Feel the pain maybe in 1, 2 seconds I left the water like, I can't do this, can't do this. And my friend like, no, let's do it. I was also grateful that I was recording the whole time because I put the whole experience in the video but also had a good friend that I trust. So, I said, let's try to do it a second time. Started doing some of the techniques that the Wim Hof saying about breathing and exercise selling. So, I can like get ready. So, I jump again and this time my friend grabbed me with the shoulders. He's like, stay there. We can do this. And I stay maybe like, yeah, five minutes. It was great. I will do it again. But the anticipation is hard. Have you done that?

Matt Bowles: So, I have done an ice bath once. A very good friend of mine who's actually been interviewed on The Maverick Show Brooke Seamless. She is an XPT trainer, Extreme performance training. And one of the things that they do as part of their training experience is this fire and ice experience that they call it. And it's basically after you do sort of the fitness part of the training, it concludes with this fire and ice experience, which is you sit in an ice bath for three minutes, totally submerged, except for your head, of course, and then you go into the sauna for 12 minutes and then you go back into the ice for three minutes and then back into the sauna for 12 minutes.

So, she was doing this and she was traveling around doing this in different places and she was doing one of them in New York City. And I was going to be in New York at the time she was doing it. And she's a very good friend of mine. She went on that remote year trip with me for 12 months around the world. She's an extremely close friend of mine. And so, I of course wanted to support her because she had just been certified as an XPT trainer and this was her thing and she was running this training. So, I was like, of course I'm going to go and support her and participate in her training. So, I'm like, oh man, this is going to push some comfort levels for me. So that you liked it or it was very powerful. Yes. I mean, once you do it and you feel the impact of that, I mean, it's a very powerful thing. Like for the rest of the day you're just like, wow, this is a real remarkable thing. But yeah, I have done it that one time.

Sergio Sala: Well, that's the interesting thing. I never done an ice bath. I only don't like cold showers and I tried to do that more. I actually don't hot showers anymore. Try to do template to cold water now, but straight to the lake that was something else.

Matt Bowles: Well, I also want to ask you about your trip to New York City, which was the first time that you visited the United States. And I would love to hear about that experience for you. What you had sort of maybe anticipated before you ever went there and then what your experience in New York was actually like.

Sergio Sala: I'm from the south of Mexico. We don't think as much of the States. You know, we live in our own life over there. But I always wanted to see New York. There was something about New York that I always wanted to check. And when I arrived there, it was also like a whole different change of mindset of the Americans of the life because I realized, you know, that lots of Americans are welcoming. And I saw the whole story of from Europe to the States and how this New York became like a place for everyone. And that's like, wow.

Matt Bowles: I mean, being in Mexico, I can only imagine what it must feel like to hear all of this rhetoric from American media and American politicians and how fundamentally anti Mexican it is in all of these different ways. Whether it's the bombast of the Trump era, with just like the virulent sort of white supremacist, anti-Mexican narratives, or even during the times when there's democratic regimes or whatever, there's still this emphasis on the Narco trafficking and how dangerous it is and how awesome. I mean, there's a really powerful anti-Mexican drumbeat. And I'm wondering how was your perception of that when you were living in Mexico before coming to the United States?

Sergio Sala: Yeah, it was kind of like that. Like there's all these things that you hear from our side, you know, like as the same as Americans. They hear about Mexican. We all kind of hear the same over there. Especially as a said, from the south, from central to south, like, we hear very different things than the people from the north, like Monterrey, Sonora, all those places. Or San Diego, because they're so connected to the States.

Matt Bowles: What kind of stuff?

Sergio Sala: A lot of, like the white supremacist things that they don't welcome the Mexicans too much that, like, why do you go there? What's the reason? Let's go to a lot of the people from our area would prefer to go to Europe than the States. You know, we find them more fascinated usually. Maybe things are changing, but that was what I heard. That's why I was not like that interested to visit America. But that was also eight years ago or something like that.

Matt Bowles: Right, but that makes sense. I mean, based on the news media coming out of the States and a lot of the statements from these politicians, it would certainly appear from the outside as a Mexican that it wouldn't be a particularly welcoming place to go. I mean, that totally makes sense. But then when you went anyways and you landed in New York, right? I mean, what was it like?

Sergio Sala: Yeah, it was such a change. As I said, like realizing that they were bringing people in and there's like this area for Mexicans or Latin. It also was very interesting because I was trying to speak more in English and people were speaking back to me in Spanish like, no, I want to learn English.

Matt Bowles: Like, I was so shocked.

Sergio Sala: I was expecting no one to speak Spanish, but I realized how many people speak Spanish in the whole States. It's crazy. Like that's, like, being there made me realize that, yeah, in the United States of America is actually a great place. And funny enough, like, after so some while, my mom moved there to Toledo, Ohio. So now I have family in the States, and now I'm kind of, like, happy to be in both worlds and just know we're neighbors. And I think I'm very fortunate to be Mexican and have family connections in the States. Being in both places is great.

Matt Bowles: That's awesome, man. Well, I also want to ask about your travel experiences in Asia, and I want to ask you particularly about your 30th birthday trip, because you have been to some incredible places that I have not been, and I would love to hear how your experience was and where you chose to go and maybe just start back with why you chose that as your special trip.

Sergio Sala: When I was younger, I was doing more like travel just for the travel's sake. Now I'm more intelligent with the places that I choose, and then I'm staying longer in each place. And then as a nomad, I stay. They do coffee shops, things like that. But here and there, I like to do crazy adventures. And three years ago, I was going to turn 30th, you know, it's a big mark for a lot of people, the victory O. So, I was like, what can I do? And it was a whole amazing experience. I was also very grateful that I did everything. It's actually started with the World Cup, because in 2018, it was the Russian World Cup. And I always wanted to experience a World Cup, like, in this, in the country itself.

And as Mexicans, my passport is actually gray one because I'm Mexican. It's very flexible. I can be mostly everywhere. But to go to Russia, we always need a visa. And it's, like, lots of paperwork and the hassle to do it. But if you were going to go to the World cup, there was no visa, there was no paper. Just show that you have a ticket to the game, and boom, you're in. So, like, of course I got to do that. I got to take that in advantage. So, it started with that. It was just, like, a month before my birthday. So, I bought my tickets, bought two games, and I was so lucky because I got one of the best games. That was Spain versus Portugal. Like, you know, Cristiano Ronaldo, all the people from Spain, and I have a video of Conan Cristiano Ronaldo make this core. When they tied three to three, it was amazing.

And then I saw one from Mexico, and I told you the whole story about the South Korea that they won against Germany and therefore Mexico got to their quarters and celebrating in the street. Every South Korean that we saw, all the Mexicans was just bringing them beer. I would recommend anyone who's listening to this that you had to go to World Cup. It's such a born of humans.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, absolutely, man. I have not yet been to a World Cup game, but based on some of the stories that you and others have told me, definitely is going on the bucket list for sure.

Sergio Sala: We had to go to Qatar, then I'll see you there.

Matt Bowles: 2022 in Qatar.

Sergio Sala: We're going to have an interview over there.

Matt Bowles: That would be amazing, bro. So, you went to Russia was your first stop and you were able to go to these World cup games, including to see Mexico play in the World cup in Russia. After that, what was your next stop?

Sergio Sala: It started with the World cup and then I just took a flight from Russia way to Kunming. It's a province in China because there's this small town that's called Dali that has this small temple that is called Wu Wei. And I went to stay in a temple to live for a whole month with the Chinese monks, to learn kung fu meditation and to like really experience the proper Buddhist monk life. And it was something that I always wanted to do. And I saw a blog of a random American guys say, hey, I spent a whole month in this temple. Here's how you can do it. Follow the whole steps. Ended up in China. My first time in China, it was like a whole different world.

Also, man, we're talking about one of the hardest ways to communicate because they barely speak English. It was talking about small town. And I do remember trying to eat something when I was in Dali before getting to the temple because I could only say hello and goodbye. That's the only things that I could say in Chinese. So, I had to go to the restaurant and literally put my hand on the food that I wanted it so that people can serve me. It was like the hardest way to communicate with anyone in my already in that time was like six years maybe of traveling, it was the hardest. But the temple itself, it was an amazing experience. I did four things that I planned to do. First, I removed all social media for 30 days. Second, the whole world cup because the world was still going on and I didn't want to know who was going to win the World Cup.

Matt Bowles: Wow.

Sergio Sala: That was really hard. But I wanted just to be immersed on my own thing, you know. The third one was, well, to celebrate my birthday because it was going to be Thursday. And the other one, if you ever see my picture of people that are just listening, I have a very long, like, curly hair. That's been something that has been identified to me a lot. Like when I was younger, some of my friends, my nickname was Sheep. They called me Sheep, like in English, we're speaking in Spanish, and they call me, hey, sheep. Sheep. So, my hair has always been this identified thing of me. So, I decided to shave it. And you don't have to do that to be in the temple. But I just wanted to do it because I wanted to make the change. And I didn't tell anyone until I came back to social media.

Matt Bowles: So, what would you say? I mean, reflecting back on your 30 days there and your immersive experience, as well as all of the things that you learned there and you studied there, what would you say came out of that? What was the impact of that experience?

Sergio Sala: We are always connected, you know, we're always like, updating news, talking to friends. We're always trying to, like when we woke up, the first thing, you know, checking the phone and trying to be on the web and things like that. When I was there, I was like, really living each day and I was feeling that I was in another world, that we are into this Internet world. And I like that, but I don't want to do that my whole life. But I really like the whole way of living. Got to appreciate the simple things and also appreciate the things that we have in our Western world, both sides. One of the greatest things about eating, for example, the idea is not to talk to people. It was just to enjoy your food. Like, no talk, just feel the food. There's something that we don't do in our Western world. You know, it's interesting because we usually go and eat together, but just to talk, but not to appreciate sometimes, you know, the food that we're eating. So, I appreciate that so much. And then the whole meditation and getting to know yourself better.

Matt Bowles: And how was the Kung Fu part of it?

Sergio Sala: That was also amazing. And it was complicated because it was waking up at 5:30 every day. We did three exercises each day. We were opening our legs as much as we can, became a little bit more flexible. It was a lot of like, routine body strength. I loved it. It's a very slow type of technique, Shaolin. If you're in a fight, you're not going to use Shaolin, you know. So, I think it was just something that I really wanted to experience, but it's not really that useful. I think the best part was the whole experience of staying in the temple. And I was also sad not to learn the language. And also made me realize, you know, when you can't communicate with people, our Shifu, which is the main guy in temple, like the master, he was also having every single day, like a lecture to other Chinese people who went to the temple. And it was all in Chinese. So, it was so sad not to hear what are they talking about. So that also remind me of the importance of the communication. And that's also. I think that helped me too, because I was doing my content in Spanish for a while, and I just eventually changed to English. So that also kind of helped me to finally push through and put all my content in English, because I don't like that as a border, you know, between people.

Matt Bowles: I also want to ask you about the next thing that you did after the temple. You went to Tibet for two weeks, which is a place that I would love to visit. I have not been there yet. What was your experience in Tibet like?

Sergio Sala: It was such a dream come true. It was such a beautiful place. I was watching the movie *Seven Years in Tibet* in the plane getting to Lhasa, which is the. The main city there. And there's one scene that I will never forget in this movie that the Dalai Lama was building, like, a new part on the Potala Palace. And the Tibetan people were like, no, we don't build here because they're worms. And that is seen alone and not lying. Maybe the first second there was just walking and I saw a guy, a Tibetan guy there in Lhasa, picking up a worm from the street and putting it back to the green area. What I saw in the movie was real. I saw that in person. Like, oh, wow, these people really care about everything. That was mind blown. But, yeah, I got to see more of the monk. How do they live the whole experience?

I saw so many monks there, and they're all reading again with their language. I didn't understand anything. But they were so immersed on their present and what they do and the way that they use their clothes. But the tour guide that I met was such a nice guy. They're also suffering because it's so hard to get to the Tibet.

The only way is through China. So, I was kind of lucky or also, like, planning at the same time, my Hmong temple being very close to Lhasa. So, I only had, like, one flight from there. I spent two weeks. We went around, like, to small, remote places, also eating all these interesting food things that I never tried before. Man, it's an amazing experience.

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to also talk to you a little bit about the way that you structure your nomad lifestyle. You have been a full-time itinerant traveler with no base for eight years, as have I. And I'm sure super curious, maybe just to start with, how do you select your travel destinations, decide where to go, decide how long to stay and let's just say pandemic notwithstanding, in non-Covid times, what is your process for choosing your travel destinations and how do you structure your lifestyle?

Sergio Sala: It's been changing a lot, you know, for the last eight years. Every year it's been different. The first places that I chose it was like close to where I was. It's also they were not that expensive because when you start you don't have enough income to do all these crazy things that you want. And one of the first places it was Playa del Carmen in Mexico and that was like 2014. And there was a guy who I met in a co-working spot. He's asking me, so are you a digital nomad? What is that? And after that all my car content started shifting just to talk about digital nomadism and then to choose places. It's always been, I think from what I hear from other people. But I also had ideas of goals like I want to go to this place because it attracts me for something, whether food, the people, things to do.

Before going to the Tibet in the Chinese Hmong temple, the first is experience with the monk was Thailand. And I chose Thailand, many reasons. One of them because it was the hub for digital, like the Meccas as we call it. So okay, everybody's talking about Thailand. This is a place that I want to go. It's the Mecca for digital nomads. There's a lot of monks, so let's try to go there. But when I arrived to Thailand, oh man, I felt so lost. It was Asia, especially Thailand, when I had like this strong cultural shock. The first two days I was even thinking like the hell I'm doing here, I should go back to my area, you know. But luckily had some friends that I met like two days later and they helped me to acclimate here and understand the place. And I arrived to Chiang Mai and I saw lots of digital nomads and I fell at home. And I liked it so much. That was another place, kind of like the Torino that instead of six months spent a year and a half there.

And there were many reasons like also, you know, the price is a cheap place, food was amazing, cost of living, lots of nomads. Like, everybody was going there. Instead of me trying to search for nomads, everybody was coming to me, so I was going to stay there. There was a time in my life that was, maybe I'll try to be citizen. But going back to the Buenos Aires thing, Tato, it wrote me in the perfect timing, because I was thinking, maybe I'll just stay here, like, forever. Because also dating someone. And we were kind of settled there until he told me, hey, come to Buenos Aires and say, okay, this was meant to be. So, I say, yes. He helped me get the ticket from Thailand to Buenos Aires, which I'm always grateful to Tato, if he's listening. And when I went there, like, okay, that's great. I left Thailand. Let's go back to travel. I don't know if that happened to you, like, finding a place that you want to stay as much as you will be able to.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. And it's interesting because as location independent people, we actually do have that choice. We can be an expat and stay somewhere for quite a while, and then when we're ready to travel again, we can start traveling again, right. And we can be as itinerant as we want and move around as frequently as we want, or stay somewhere for really extended time, right. And there can be advantages and exciting things and incentives and motives and reasons to travel in different ways and at different speeds at different times in our life.

Sergio Sala: But is there a place that you feel like, oh, maybe I'll stay here,

Matt Bowles: Man, I don't know. You know, the thing for me, I mean, one of the reasons I'm a nomad is because it's like, I love so many different places in the world. You know, it's like, I could go to Mexico and I could. And I would get to Mexico and I'd be like, oh, my gosh, this is amazing. I have missed this, right? I'm eating spicy tacos on the street every night. Like, oh, my gosh, I just want to be here in Mexico, right? And then I'll stay there for maybe a few months or something like that. And then I'll be like, oh, man, this is great. But I miss Europe. And now I go to, like, Italy or something, right? Ooh, I missed this, you know, with the wine and this. And I was going, and then I'll be in Italy for, like, a few months, and I'll be like, I miss Asia.

Sergio Sala: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: And then I'll go to somewhere like Thailand or something like that right? And then I'll be like, oh man, I missed this, right? Then I'll hang out in Thailand and then I'll be like, I miss Africa. And then I'll just go to somewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, man. I'll be like, oh my gosh, this is amazing. So, like, for me, I think I appreciate so many different cultures for the amazing things that they have and they offer that I love to use my location independence to experience and immerse in them almost on like a rotating basis.

Sergio Sala: I think it's great that we have these visa things so they kind of push us to travel, you know, because some they like it so much that they stay, but no visa will. Okay, it's like a wakeup call. Okay, maybe I'll go somewhere else, right?

Matt Bowles: You got 90 days or you got 30 days, you got whatever.

Sergio Sala: So, but, but yeah, like my normal lifestyle has been changing so much because I have been also doing different kind of works in my whole eight years of travel, first as a web designer. So, it was more like I couldn't travel that much because I need to find a place with good Wi-Fi, you know. Then I started writing a blog in Spanish that gave me some audience. I was invited speaking conferences. So that was help me travel more. And then like the last thing that I'm doing right now is like YouTube. So, if you ask me right now, the places that I choose is now because my work is like literally to travel. And that's amazing. And it's different than a typical remote worker slash digital nomad. They can choose to stay three, four months or however they want me.

And right now, moving on because I need to be in a specific place to record and maybe only one month because I need to go somewhere else. And that's also very interesting. Being a nomad, it just makes you like understand more time. So, one month, it means that I only have 12 videos to make in one year. And one year can go so fast. And also, I'm getting older, so it's a complicated thing. It just made me realize that life is short too. And I'm working a lot with time. Time is like a part of my work right now. You know what I'm trying to say?

Matt Bowles: Yeah, 100% man, for sure. And I think oftentimes it's important to have that perspective. In many ways that's an advantage. Yes, because it makes you appreciate every day and your time in that location. And you know that it's limited by being conscious of time instead of just having it be this fleeting thing. You sort of are pushed to appreciate each day more. Would you agree?

Sergio Sala: Yeah. There's something that I've been talking about a lot when I had this newsletter, that time itself, when you're in one place, you kind of forget about that, you know. But time is always running out. We're here only for 100 years, let's say hopefully, but it's still short, you know. And then being a nomad

makes you appreciate that, like, oh, I only have one month here, so let's try to enjoy it as much as I can, you know.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, 100%. You know, I agree. Let me also ask you this. You've been doing this for over eight years now and I want to ask you about some of the sustainability pillars for this lifestyle. Because there's plenty of people that get into the nomad life and then within a year or two or three, they're out of the nomad life, right. And I love talking to long term nomads about how you sustain this lifestyle and you continue to make it healthy and fulfilling and exciting for yourself, right. Instead of burning out and having certain things be depleted. So, can you talk a little bit about that? How you balance your work and your social life and your health and your fitness to make this a sustainable and fulfilling life over the long term for us.

Sergio Sala: We do a lot of like the slow travel and that gives us enough time to enjoy a place and do other routines. And that's what I try to do in every place that I go. And as of now, with the [YouTube](#) channel, with my equipment, with my camera tripod and all those things, it's heavy stuff. So, it's like basically my work out of the day and the life that I had, which I'm very grateful right now. But it's also not that common for the digital nomads because a lot of remote workers, they find a co-working space, they work the whole day, they try to do something at the end. For me it's like mostly going out every day, you know, like every day is an adventure. A lot of them, they're days that I basically just stay editing. Editing takes hours. People don't think that [YouTube](#) really, it takes a lot of time to make videos. But the life that I have right now as a YouTuber, it's really amazing because it's one that lets me move around a lot, moving all the time, going to places, going to coffee shop, going to the activities around active. And I love that, you know.

Matt Bowles: So, let me ask you, I guess the countervailing side of that which is if you are constantly documenting your life and you're constantly filming your experiences, including your social interactions and all of this kind of stuff. Because of course you want to document that for your videos, right? What's the social scene like? What's the coffee shop scene here like? What's the. All this kind of stuff? If you're constantly documenting things, how are you also able to, going back to your monk retreat experience, be present and live in the moment and immerse and experience the place that you're in? How do you balance those two things?

Sergio Sala: That is also a very good question. And that's also a thing that you ask to any random people that, you know, we go to a concert and everybody's on their phone recording the experience. Experience. You see that a lot, right? So, what I try to do is balance that out. I do record, but I try to enjoy it too. I got to go 50-50. I got to go 50% of my own mind recording these experiences. And the other part, my other mind, which is my camera recording the other part.

Matt Bowles: Because I feel like even if people are not professional video makers, they have the same thing. Like when we are in an extraordinarily beautiful place, for example, right, we've just done a hike, we've seen the thing, we're watching a sunset, we're doing this. The impetus is to pull out the camera and take the picture, right? And like document your thing. You don't have to be professional anything. You're just the person. And the reflex is, oh, there's a beautiful sunset. I'm going to take a picture. There's a beautiful. This, I'm going to take a picture. And then when we're constantly taking pictures and documenting the experience, how are we actually living the experience and being present to appreciate the experience, right. I mean, I think it's a balance for everybody.

Sergio Sala: It has to be a violence.

Matt Bowles: So, what does your work day look like? I mean, part of your day, obviously is documenting the stuff that you're doing. So, you bring the camera along and you go and do cool stuff and like film it. But then obviously there's the massive other side, which is the editing and the production and then the business networking and then the, you know, all of the monetization and all of the other work and business side of what you do, other than the. Just the creative filming of it, right. So, can you talk a little bit about how you structure your work day? I mean, is there a routine that you follow when you're traveling? I mean, I'm also curious in terms of the health and fitness and like the whole sort of lifestyle structure for you. Do you have morning routines? Do you have a day structure? What is your nomad life look like?

Sergio Sala: Yeah, so right now as a YouTuber, and I keep saying as of now because I just began like full time five months ago, before I was between web design and making videos. So now that I do this full time, it's been like a whole different new journey for me. What I do plan a lot and people get surprised when I show them. There's this productivity app called Notion was my favorite app and I plan every single thing. And when I go to a city, let's say when a city, let's say Buenos Aires, before coming here, I already mapped out all the places that I want to see. I divided in sections. I go through co working, coffee shop areas, the life bar, like transportation activities, like all the things that I feel like they're needed to show in the video.

So, when I have that information, I start making a storyline of, of what I want to show since the beginning. Getting to the taxi to get to the place, to Selena, to Airbnb and I start making a storyline and then that's how I go and put my calendar. Okay, today I'm going to record all those things and the next day maybe I'll spend the whole-time editing. My life is 50-50 right now. One day I record, one day I edit. This is like how I do. I don't have a structure of week, weekend. It's like every day it's very different, which that's what I love. And it's also a little bit stressful sometimes because I plan, but things don't happen the way that I want.

And like maybe I'll just erase this day of my life and the next day I will try to do it again. I lost one day. But that's how you do filmmaking in real life. Because I mean, maybe it rained that day, maybe the coffee show wasn't open that day, maybe my friends didn't show up that day, or maybe I show up late, Maybe I was tired that day. So, every day I had to adjust. But according to the plans, I always make plans. And that's when people say, oh, you're a real YouTuber like, or filmmaker because you're actually having a plan. A lot of people, they don't do that. Like you just go with the flow, which sometimes work, but most of the times they don't and you waste your trip, you know.

Matt Bowles: Can you share some tactics for becoming a successful full time video maker on YouTube for people that are listening to this and they say, wow, I'd like to aspire to be able to do that, to be able to produce videos and monetize those videos in such a way that it fully finances my entire lifestyle to get to that point. What are some success tactics, looking back on your journey that you can share with folks in terms of what it takes and how to get to that level?

Sergio Sala: So, if you really want to do that, then it comes the hard truth that is not easy. It takes years to actually notice the ball. And because that's the problem, like a lot of people think that just because you make a video, you're going to get paid. I tell a lot of people; nobody cares that you travel. Just because right now, here in Buenos Aires, going around, if I didn't have an audience before and I just post this video today, nobody will care. You have to go slowly and showing the benefit to your audience. Like, why do they have to listen to me? And it takes, I always say there's consistency. At least two years of making videos being bad at the beginning. It's slowly getting into something and showing the world, like, I have something to tell. And it took me around three years. First studying Spanish, but slowly changing and putting my content in English because I already had experience. And then slowly showing to the world, hey, I am a nomad for

eight years and I want to tell you to do the same, because I already had this period. A lot of people go and start today, instead of like becoming a remote worker, webinar, designer, writer, copywriter, whatever, they want to go straight to make videos. And that's what I said. Nobody will pay you for that.

So, it takes a lot of time to start building the audience. And once you have it, when you have people, you have heads looking at your content, that's when you can start slowly. Also reaching to sponsors, to companies that are connected to your same audience. And that's what I did. I already had this audience. They were listening to me. And I started reaching to some people. There's this guy called Peter Levels, the owner of Nomad List, one of the most famous websites for digital nomads. I released one video from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. And I remember that he said, you just made a comment. I love it. And that comment itself was like, oh, I got you. When I saw that he was interested on the videos that I make, I just went straight to call him, hey, well, I know that you like my videos. I'm looking for sponsors to make this full time because I have this audience, I have this content, this quality. I know I can be better.

And it's something that I want to talk about too because I don't have like a million followers. I'm getting close to 10,000 right now, which sounds great, but it's not the common typical number to have sponsors. Well, how did that work? Because I knew the value that I had. It was a small audience, which now is growing more. But talking about digital nomads in YouTube is not that common as of now. So, I took that in advantage plus the quality that stands out for a lot of the YouTubers that I see. So, it was easier to pitch that to a company. The audience mattered, but doesn't matter how much if the audience is really connected to you.

Matt Bowles: I think that's a really important lesson and distinction and nuance to make that if you only have 10,000 subscribers on your [YouTube](#) channel, you can still, as long as you are focused on a very specific niche and those 10,000 people are all in that niche, you can approach companies, get sponsorships and monetize your channel to the extent that it is a full-time income for you. I think it's really powerful in terms of what you've done with only 10,000 subscribers to your channel because you've created multiple streams of income. So, YouTube is going to pay you and run ads on your channel. So, you're making money from that. You have affiliate offers that you are making money from on your channel as well because you can review travel gear and things that you actually use and believe in. And then of course you have your sponsors from nomad related companies are trying to market to nomads that will pay you to sponsor your channel.

And so, you've created multiple streams of income such that was only 10,000 subscribers. You can have a full-time income, finance your entire lifestyle and not need to do any other work. So, I think that is amazing and inspiring. The other thing though about you that has really impressed me just having gone through your content is to see the extent to which you have worked on your craft. And when I look at your videos from two years ago until now, the most recent ones, and you just show me and me some, some cuts from some ones that are about to come out. The journey that you've had, I think as a creative, both in terms of, you know, your presence in front of the camera, your video shots, your technical editing quality, all of this kind of stuff has just evolved in a way that just shows how passionate and committed you are to working on the craft.

Sergio Sala: Well, thank you for those words. When I was starting, I was debating, maybe I'm not that good looking, maybe I shouldn't be in the camera. And a lot of people go through that process, but for me, it was first pushing through that. And also, I just realized I'm a creative, you know, I always come from that. I love photography, I love architecture, love design. And filmmaking is like a combination of everything. I used to

write, I used to have my newsletter, so I do a lot of scripts for my videos. I do visuals as an architect. So, I'm documenting cities right now. So, learning everything that I learned from architecture, it really helped making these videos. So, I connected all of my dots of my past to become a YouTuber or a filmmaker. I just love it because I can express the way that I want. The filmmaker is powerful.

Matt Bowles: That's amazing, man. I feel like also this is a good sort of parallel to our travel experiences, because over eight years of traveling as travelers, we learn so much and we develop and evolve and refine so many things about the way that we travel. One of the things that you and I have in common is that we are both stylish minimalists. We travel the world with carry-on luggage only. And for us, that does not mean we have one bathing suit, one tank top, and one pair of flip flops that we walk around. I mean, you can see right over here next to us is my sport coat hanging up there. I travel with a three-piece suit as part of my carry on. And I got ties and cufflinks and Ferragamo shoes. And I can go out in the top cities in the world in terms of going out to elegant night spots and stuff like that. And I can also go to ski resorts and go skiing, or I can go to beaches or I can go to wherever.

And the ability to do that with carry-on luggage only is a technique that came from years and years and years of traveling with an inordinate and obscene amount of luggage and dragging it all over cities and downstairs and over cobblestone streets and just sweating profusely by the time I lugged it up four flights of stairs to my Airbnb or whatever it was. And eventually I said, you know what, I am going to really study this and to become a minimalist. And I'm curious for you a little bit about your philosophy of minimalism and why that is important for you. And also, if you can share some tactics and some specific things about how you do that and what you pack.

Sergio Sala: Man, minimalism is also a huge part of my life. And there's so many reasons why. We were saying about when I went to Italy, two big suitcases, such a hassle to travel with them. I was like, why? And I went from two suitcases to the typical hippie backpack, the ones that you hike with. The problem about those first, it looks horrible. You do look like a hippie. Yeah, we don't want that. Like, at least after 30, we don't want to look like hippies anymore. And yeah, the other one, because, yeah, I wanted to be more stylish. And those hippie backpacks, they're so big that you cannot take it as a carry on. And that's when I also said, no, I need to have a carry on because I hate waiting for the luggage. And I see all the stores of people that they get. They lost their luggage.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, it gets lost. It gets damaged. Or best-case scenario, it doesn't get lost or damaged. But you're waiting 60 minutes after you get off the plane. The people that are waiting 60 minutes after they get off the plane are still at the carousel with the luggage when you and I are already checked into our place, drinking a glass of wine.

Sergio Sala: Exactly. That's what I love.

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Sergio Sala: That's when I realized I cannot go with higher than a small carry-on. And I read this book from the guys, the minimalists, which I met in the States too. The name of the book is called [Everything that Remains](#). It's like their memoir of how they become minimalists. It just changed a lot of the thoughts that I had and just realized in a short story that we don't need as much as stuff as we think we need. And that helped me also, like, minimalism is not only physical things. It can be life. It can be the way of religion, relationships, but all are connected. And yes, when I think about having less things as a traveler, it goes to

all other aspects of my life. So, I tried to apply that on my travels. And then I got into it's a whole world, like materials and. Yeah, like more stylish. Not the hippie one. I tried to get, like, the things that look cool but doesn't look that like I'm a traveler. I also support small brands.

Matt Bowles: So, I'm curious. I mean, since you are a serious stylish minimalist, I mean, I want to use this opportunity to draw out some specifics because I agree. I mean, philosophically and conceptually, for me, 100% becoming a minimalist and downsizing all of my material possessions into what I can carry on a plane with me has been an incredibly psychologically liberating process because it also prevents me from engaging in materialist consumption in the places that I go. I can't "go shopping" in this place because I can't fit anything that I buy into my luggage. So, I have created a physical constriction which intentionally limits my ability to participate in materialist consumption. Right?

Sergio Sala: Yes.

Matt Bowles: So, by doing that, it forces me and encourages me and facilitates me to focus on experiences and relationships with human beings, not on materialist consumption. Right. So, for me, that has been extraordinary and I've been very intentional about that and very appreciative of the benefits of that. And it's very characteristic of my lifestyle. So philosophically, a 100% I agree with you. I want to talk a little bit about tactically with you. Right. Because you and I have both studied this and worked on it and refined it and sampled all of these different brands and refined which clothes we buy and from which brands we buy it and all that kind of stuff. So, I want to actually give you an opportunity to share a little bit about right now. What are the types of things that you are packing in your carry on for your stylish minimalism? What are your favorite brands? Give us some specifics.

Sergio Sala: I'm trying to show people that you can have nice things, but less of them. You know, quality instead of quantity. I've been going through a whole journey about minimalism and I stopped using merino. The only reason is because I'm more into veganism stuff right now and I'm trying not to use any animal-based products. So, we have the normal clothes, then we have the merino clothes, then we have the clothes that I'm wearing right now, which is from Western Rise.

Matt Bowles: Okay.

Sergio Sala: And it's the alternative non animal based products.

Matt Bowles: Interesting. Okay, so [Western Rise](#), which I'm familiar with that brand. So, they have merino wool products at [Western Rise](#), but they also have clothes that are made from non-animal products entirely. Which are the ones that you're trying to.

Sergio Sala: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Accumulate and design your wardrobe with currently.

Sergio Sala: Yeah. And everything that I wear right now, my pants, my shirt and the one over, they're all [Western Rise](#).

Matt Bowles: Yeah.

Sergio Sala: This is the Air light button-down shirt. This is the Session T. Everything that I wear, it's [Western Rise](#) right now. And this is from [Wildling](#). The shoes that I'm wearing. You heard about the barefoot shoes. Barefoot shoes are a thing that it's been going maybe already 10 years or more. It's about realizing that us

as humans, we don't need the padding that we include on the typical shoes. And this one that I have right now, as you can see, there's like barely small sole there because you feel the gray ground.

Matt Bowles: All right, so we're going to link up in [the show notes](#) for folks that are curious about where you get your gear. We're going to link up the shoe company and we're also going to link up [Western Rise](#).

Sergio Sala: One of the things that I love about [Western Rise](#) is they last long. They're like odor resistant. They're beautiful. This one is so comfortable. The pants that I have, I got a lot of compliments, like everything looks nice and they last long. So [Western Rise](#), they need to be my next sponsor. If you're listening to this.

Matt Bowles: We're going to link them up in [the show notes](#) so that folks can check them out. Sergio, I want to ask you one more question before we wrap up and move into *The Lightning Round*. When you think back now about all of your travel, going back to your study abroad in Italy and all of your nomading to 40 countries, and you think about the impact that that travel has had on you and how you've grown from it and all that. Why do you continue to travel? What does travel mean to you?

Sergio Sala: I just turned 33 years ago. I'm 33 right now, and I've been questioning myself all this time. Should I keep traveling? Should I get a place to stay? I also kind of aspire by you on that sense. I realized when I traveled to Italy and as you said at the beginning of the interview, like, this is Sergio of before and after. I think travel helps everyone realize that we are the same. You know, I don't know if you've seen the typical meme of showing skulls of humans. This is the skull of Italian, of German, whatever. We're all the same. It's just the news, the spread information that we heard. And then once we get to Buenos Aires, we see Tommy, the guy that took you yesterday to the club. He's just a normal human guy who wants to connect. Everybody wants to do the same. We just have different experiences. We were born in different places. We have different kind of way of eating, but we all want the same connection, family, friendship, experience. And traveling makes you realize that, yeah, like the world is all the same. I still remember one of my first travels when I went to Peru as a nomad. There was this guy from Chile who was her first time in Peru. And there was always a fight between Peruvians and Chileans. He just said, coming here, realize that Peruvians, they are nice people. It's not what they hear. I want to hear what the news tells me that as a Chilean. Oh, you don't have to connect with Peruvians because they hate you. It's not like that. We're all the same.

Matt Bowles: Yeah. They still have a conflict between Chile and Peru in terms of who makes the best Pisco Sour, man. That's an ongoing debate. We'll leave that one to another day. All right, Sergio, at this point, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Sergio Sala: I am because I just finished my wine.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. All right. What is one book that has significantly impacted you over the years you'd most recommend people check out?

Sergio Sala: [The Art of Non-Conformity from Chris Guillebeau](#)

Matt Bowles: Awesome. What is one travel hack that you use that you would recommend to people?

Sergio Sala: Travel with carry-ons.

Matt Bowles: Love that. Who is one person currently alive today that you've never met, you'd most love to have dinner with?

Sergio Sala: So, I will say Casey Neistat is one of the main YouTubers on the field. He was like the godfather of filmmaking in [YouTube](#). So, I haven't met him. I was trying kind of find one day a way to meet him. But that will be nice.

Matt Bowles: That would be an amazing dinner. All right, knowing everything that you know now, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Sergio?

Sergio Sala: Just, yeah, follow your dreams. And if you think you're not that good enough on the camera, just push through and follow all the things that you always wanted to do.

Matt Bowles: Awesome. All right, Sergio, I know that you are a coffee aficionado. That's a very significant and central part to your travels to experience different coffee shops. Of all the coffee shops you've been to now in the world, what are your top three, three favorite coffee shops you'd most recommend people check out?

Sergio Sala: Yes, I love coffee and I can't live without it. Love traveling also because of the coffee and the places I will say [Nine One](#) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, [Almanegra](#) in Mexico City. They give you a taste of tons of coffees. It's amazing place and of course we got to talk about Colombia. One of the best places for coffee and the last one is it's [Velvet Coffee](#) in El Poblado area of Medellin.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. We're going to link all those coffee shops up in [the show notes](#) so that folks can put them on Their bucket list to go try when they get to those cities. All right, Sergio, of all the places you've been in the world, what are your top three favorite travel destinations you'd most recommend people check out.

Sergio Sala: I got to say, Mexico represents everywhere in Mexico. You got to go there. And I will say back again in Thailand, I just love, like, Chiang Mai and even the. The beaches areas are just so beautiful. We didn't talk about diving, but this year started to dive more, so I didn't do that in Thailand, so I'm going back next year, going to dive more. So, it's such a beautiful place to do that. It's very cheap. And the other place? Yeah, Portugal. Lisbon. Portugal there is beautiful.

Matt Bowles: Amazing, man. Yeah. Those are three fantastic recommendations. Actually, did my PADI advanced scuba certification in Thailand on the island of Ko Pha Ngan, and when we were going out to do the dives for the certification, we got unbelievably lucky because a whale shark.

Sergio Sala: Nahh

Matt Bowles: Just kidding. Rolls up and just in the wild and just hangs out with us for, like, 10 minutes.

Sergio Sala: That's awesome.

Matt Bowles: It was unbelievable, man. So, yeah, it's an amazing place to get certified because you get the international PADI certification, but you can do a lot less expensively in Thailand.

Sergio Sala: So, Thailand is cheap for diving, but diving itself, it's a whole different topic that if we want to see a lot of places in the world to travel with. When you start diving, it's a whole new, different world that you have for experience.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, totally amazing, man. Totally agree with that. All right, last question. Sergio, what are your top three books bucket list destinations? These are places you've never been highest on your list, you'd most love to see.

Sergio Sala: Yes. There's so many, but I have Japan on those because I bought the tickets for the Olympics. We know what happened. There was no Olympics for foreigners. So, I want to go one day. Also want to go to Cape Town in South Africa. For Africa, I'm living to Morocco when I did my Torino travel, so I don't know much about Africa, so I want to go there. And I want to go to Brazil. Never been to Brazil, and we're in Argentina so close to it. So, this is my time to start checking some things off my bucket list.

Matt Bowles: Those are amazing picks, man. Those are three of my favorite countries in the world. I have spent at least three months in each of those places. So, when you are ready to plan your trip, my friend hit me up and I will give you some tips.

Sergio Sala: I'll ask you all the questions.

Matt Bowles: I love that. All right, Sergio, I want you to let folks know how they can find you, follow you on social media. Definitely subscribe to your [YouTube](#) channel and come into your world, man. How do you want people to come into your ecosystem?

Sergio Sala: Yes, just got to search for *Sergio Sala*. You find that on [YouTube](#), on [Instagram](#). Those are the two places that I'm mostly in. And well, of course YouTube, that's where I post most of my things. And yeah, just reach out to me DM or give me some comments on the next videos. Once we have the one in Buenos Aires, we're going to post a little bit of what we had on the podcast. I have my camera here too, so that's going to be on the one aside this video. So yeah, definitely, if anybody wants to hit me up, I'll be there.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. And the easiest thing to do is to go to [the show notes](#) for this episode because we're going to link up everything directly there so you can just click on it. Just go to [themaverickshow.com](#) and go to [the show notes](#) for this episode. There you will find all of Sergio's social media, especially his [YouTube](#) channel, as well as everything else we have discussed on this podcast today, Sergio. This was amazing, brother. Thank you for coming on the show.

Sergio Sala: I appreciate like the time that we have here. I'm also very curious for the audience listening nurse, if they realize when did the wine kick in?

Matt Bowles: The wine bottle is gone. Yeah, it is completely started full and now it's empty.

Sergio Sala: So, I want to know if you guys realize if our voice changed, if our mood change, maybe I at the middle of it.

Matt Bowles: So, send Sergio a message, follow him on social media or [YouTube](#) and then send him a message and let him know if you could tell at what point the wine kicked in during this interview.

Sergio Sala: Exactly. But very grateful to be in your show and hopefully we're going to see each other somewhere else like we're nomads.

Matt Bowles: So that's how we do, brother. Absolutely, man. All right, thank you for coming on the show, brother, and good night, everybody.