

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: Hello, ladies. Welcome to the podcast from *On She Goes*, a travel site for all women of color. You might know me from another small podcast, *Call Your Girlfriend*. I'm so excited to be hosting *On She Goes*. It combines some of my very favorite things, namely talking to ladies and going places. I grew up on three continents so you better believe I have a ton of experience under my belt. Today's episode is called "We Belong Here" because we women of color belong everywhere. The episode will feature travel trips, travel stories, and conversations with some of my very favorite writers. You'll hear from Jenna Wortham, Virgie Tovar, and Melissa Valle. On top of all that, every guest from this upcoming season is sharing their very own travel tips, like this one from *Huffington Post* rock star Lydia Polgreen.

Lydia: Always keep a spare, clean T-shirt that you can put over a stinky pillow, if it smells bad, in a cheap, crappy hotel room.

[PLANE SOUNDS]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: Let's get into it. First up, let's hear from Virgie Tovar.

Virgie: My name is Virgie Tovar, and I am a fat activist and an author. I also lecture all over the world now around my campaign, which is called Lose Hate Not Weight.

Aminatou: Virgie started traveling by herself in her 20s and discovered that it wasn't as

romantic as it was cracked up to be. But she learned a lot from her solo travels and is here with some advice if you're embarking on a trip alone. She also gives us deets about her Babecamp in Jamaica retreat.

Virgie: The very first piece of advice I would give is do not jump into the deep end on solo travel on the first go. Like, do not book a three-month, you know, travel experience by yourself if you've never done it before.

Aminatou: Is three months traveling, or are you legitimately an expat at that point?

[Laughter] I feel like if you buy a three-month plane ticket—

Virgie: [Laughter] That's the, like, duration of most visas.

Aminatou: If you're there 90 days, you should pay taxes. [Laughter] Like this is crazy.

You're a resident now.

Virgie: Yes. Okay, so do not book two months and 29 days' worth of travel on the first go. I would recommend if it's like the first time you're traveling, book something reasonable. Like I wouldn't even book two weeks. I would book a week, maybe up to 10 days, and see how you fare. If it's something that's really working for you, then you can extend it, maybe double it or something like that if you feel you can do a month. That's the first thing that I would suggest. I think the other thing that's really interesting about solo travel, is that you are not at all distracted by another person. When you're with friends, it's distraction in a good way. Like you're sort of engaging with them; you're looking at certain things, but you're

talking a lot. Like, in general when you're with a friend, you're talking constantly throughout, you know, an experience. And when you're on a trip in a new place, that means you're missing a lot of things. It means you're missing, like, these little details, and you're sort of distracted by this other person. And it might be really pleasurable, but it really affects your ability to take things in. So, I've noticed when I solo travel, I often am able to kind of go on these, like, deep, long meandering walks and then I can sit down, like, wherever I want. You know, if I'm like, okay I want to sit at this weird little cafe where there's, you know, like outdoor seating and I want to spend like three hours writing in my little journal while sipping tea or something, I can totally do that without having to worry about negotiating. That experience might be different, sort of like mitigated, when you're alone versus when you're with another person. The final thing that I'm gonna say is I don't think you age out of hostels, especially if you're doing this alone.

Aminatou: Wow, okay.

Virgie: Yeah, I don't think so. Like, I mean, I think there's a lot of like really intense American expectation around, like, hostels and at around 22. And I feel like most Europeans don't agree with this; don't agree with this standard; don't agree with this boundary, because I mean, Americans, especially in like metropolitan cities like San Francisco and New York, like, we're really intense

about markers of adulthood, quote unquote, that are really like stringent and I think, like, sometimes create prohibitive budgets and sometimes end up, you know, leading to loneliness. Like, I've had experiences where I'm like, "I'm gonna treat myself and stay in a hotel," and it's fantastic, 'cause there's pool and privacy and all those things, but then I find that I'm like, but wait, I miss that kind of communal—like I miss, you know, being around people. And like a couple of years ago I went to Bangkok, because I love Bangkok, for like a month. And I was like, "Well geez," like, "a) I really can't afford to stay in a hotel for an entire month and b) that would kind of drive me nuts." So, I decided to stay in this really nice, like really well-rated hostel. And it was fantastic. And I met people to travel with and it was just kind of like this experience that you're like engaging with people. Even if you're not, you know, getting down and having a deep conversation with them, you're still sort of consistently interacting with other humans, which is really important to me.

Aminatou: And you're creating community as you go, which is really great.

Virgie: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Aminatou: I want to switch gears a little bit and talk about your Babecamp Jamaica retreat.

Virgie: Yes.

Aminatou: That's such a treat to say.

Virgie: [Laughs]

Aminatou: Can you tell us really quickly what Babecamp is?

Virgie: I started Babecamp—it was designed to be a four-week, online-exclusively course that was designed to help people who were ready to break up with diet culture, but didn't know how to do it. So I wanted to offer that hand-holding experience because I've done it. After doing it for about a year, I got an e-mail from sort of a retreat center in Jamaica and it was the property manager and she was like, "I heard about Babecamp. I'd really love to make it an in-real-life thing." And like, "Go fat girls." Right? Like she's totally all about fat-positive lady times. And so, after kind of reluctantly falling in love with this retreat center, I decided, I'm gonna do this. I mean hopefully it'll work out. And I just was like, okay, we're doing Jamaica in real life.

Aminatou: Can you tell me like one—I don't know. I feel like the pictures from this will be so incredible.

Virgie: [Laughter] Yes.

Aminatou: But, maybe like picture it. Like what's one of the like most luxurious or, like I don't know, like envious aspects of, like, the retreat? Like, what's that going to be?

Virgie: Okay, whoa. So there's a couple. One is that the grill master, named Jube, lives onsite at the retreat place and he makes, like, lobster and he makes jerk chicken right there in real life. You can kind of go watch him and talk with him

and drink some Red Stripe. Like, if you can imagine Jube, who's like so cute and chill and is like constantly high and he's just the best, right. And he's like making grilled lobster while the sun is setting like over the Caribbean and then—you're about 10 feet away—there's an ocean-fed pool that you're sitting in and we're decompressing about feminist feelings. So that's kind of like what's gonna be happening at this retreat. [Laughter]

Aminatou: Ah. That sounds like a dream.

Virgie: Yes.

Aminatou: Virgie, where can our listeners find your work?

Virgie: Yeah, you can find me at [www.virgietovar.com](http://www.virgietovar.com). V-i-r-g-i-e-t as in Tom, o-v as in Victor, a-r.com.

Aminatou: This is awesome. Thanks, Virgie.

Virgie: Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: To read more from Virgie, head to [onshegoes.com](http://onshegoes.com).

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Michelle: My name is Michelle Zonner and my travel tip is to bring deli cups. It's good for food storage. You can stack them and you can also poach an egg in them.

Natasha: My name is Natasha Nyanin and my travel tip is call your cell phone carrier before you leave the country and tell them that you're leaving and you would like

your phone to be unlocked. Get a local SIM card and avoid the roaming fees associated with traveling with your US SIM card.

Myiesha: My name is Myiesha Gordon and my travel tip is to get an account with Charles Schwab. The reason is they do not charge ATM fees and they reimburse any ATM fee that you will incur anywhere in the world. It has been a lifesaver.

Ash: My name's Ash Wong and these are my tips for traveling with your very own fur child. Something that came in handy was a backseat cover for my car. There was a lot of hair, a lot of barf, a lot of dog treat crumbs, and whenever I had a human guest in the car I could just fold it down and be civilized again. Frontline was definitely a necessity. Nury picked up three ticks, I think, in Connecticut. I don't use Frontline a lot in the city, but it was necessary in the country. I brought along a collapsible water bowl. So we would drink from the same water bottle but we didn't want to get that intimate. So, he had his own bowl.

Aminatou: I'd like to introduce everybody to my dear friends Ashley Mosley and Rosie Dickens. [MUSIC PLAYING] Everyone thinks that they're the MVP of the dinner party, but I will say this: nobody beats Ashley and Rosie when it comes to fun stories. They're a power couple and tech moguls who are just a fabulous, fabulous travel duo. So I brought them on the podcast where they'll be sharing some of their crazy, fun adventures with us. Okay, first off, I want to discuss your pre-engagement trip to Paris that Ashley planned because I sense that there are

disagreements about how that went.

Rosie: There are very distinct disagreements between the two of us on that. But it was super fun.

Aminatou: Well, you know what? Tell me more about it.

Rosie: It was super fun. You know, we smiled on the other side of it. So, Ash hasn't planned a ton of our vacations. But in the beginning, you know, it was very much so, "Oh, you know Ash wants to take me to Paris." And this was super exciting because we have a five-year difference between us and so I was in law school, she was an undergrad, and so there's this undergrad kid who, you know, I'm dating; kind of like, basically robbing the cradle.

Ashley: I had braces.

Rosie: She had braces. And then on top of that I'm having her take me to Paris, which was, you know, thinking back on it, is probably not the best idea. But it was super cool because she was really, really cute and really excited about planning this entire trip to Paris. She had met some travel person who I never met in person. They only spoke on the phone. I never knew this person's name, but she had met some travel person and so they basically booked the entire thing, independent of me. I just basically showed up with my passport and we took it from there. So, it was around the Christmas holiday, and you know, we're super excited, super stoked; you know, flying over to Paris. We land [laughter] and like



most airports, Charles de Gaulle is out basically in the middle of nowhere.

Right? You don't really see Paris when you land. Like it's out in the middle of nowhere and so, I'm like, "Oh, okay. So, you know, this is the airport. So, let's figure out how to get to Paris." And so, we get in this shuttle bus, and it takes us maybe three minutes outside of the airport. Like turns to the right, goes around about, and then stops in front of the Hyatt right next to the airport.

Aminatou: No!

Rosie: So, I'm like, "Okay, well where is Paris first of all?" 'cause there's no lights. It's out in the middle of nowhere. And that's where we stayed for a full week. So, basically all of Paris was us trying to deal with jet lag. So, we didn't wake up until about, you know, noon. By the time we woke up a) we had to get on this train, think DC Metro but worse, and this train took us straight down the highway, all the way to the city of Paris. But then, it was 45 minutes, maybe an hour, each way—

Ashley: It was not an hour. It was like 30 minutes.

Aminatou: It must have been so expensive.

Rosie: —every single day. Anytime we wanted to see Paris [laughter], we had a two-hour round trip to get there. I mean we might as well had, you know—

Ashley: It was not two hours round trip. It was one.

Rosie: It was two hours round trip. And let me tell you what the most embarrassing

thing was. Okay, so she had this planned as part of the whole package. And she was like, “Oh, we get to decide.” This was one thing we weighed in on. “Do you want a dinner down the river?” What’s the river that goes through Paris?

Aminatou: The Seine.

Rosie: The Seine River, yes. “Do you want a dinner down the Seine River?” or I can’t remember what the other option was, but this dinner on this boat seemed amazing. It was not. And on top of that there was a bus that said, “Okay, after your dinner we’re going to take everybody back to their hotels in the city.” And he was going through and asking everybody, “Okay, what hotel do you stay at in the city?” And he kept asking us, “Hey, what hotel?” And we were like, “No, no, no, you can just drop us at, you know, the metro station” [laughter]—

Aminatou: Because you’re not staying in the city. [Laughter]

Rosie: —“because we’re not staying in the city.” Like this guy was, like, adamant. At that moment, getting on that metro to get back up to the airport, basically, you know, I was like, “Wow, the next time I come to Paris, we’re gonna do it right.”

Ashley: Well, you know what. I just wanna add that Rosie’s bougie, okay? [Laughter]  
And Paris during Christmas is probably one of the most popular, like, cities to visit. It’s absolutely beautiful.

Rosie: It was absolutely amazing, but honestly, I don’t remember much about it except for that dinner because the majority of it was spent commuting back and forth to

Paris. I don't remember what we actually—oh, we did go to the Eiffel Tower. I do remember the Eiffel Tower.

Ashley: That's so dramatic. A week in Paris and all you remember is the commute?  
Right. All right.

Rosie: So we were on the plane riding back home and I was like, "You have lost travel duties."

Ashley: And I did.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: You can also find their exclusive travel recommendations at [onshegoes.com](http://onshegoes.com).

Heben: My name is Heben Nigatu. My travel tip is secure your things, meaning: pockets and whatnot. Try it. Small purses, etc.

Brittany: I'm Brittany Lewis, and I have two travel tips. Number one, find a grocery store wherever you are. Find a place that sells produce. Find a place that sells some type of vegetable or some type of fruit and make sure that you have some, every damn day. The second tip is don't try to overpack. Don't try to complicate things. Just pick a few bottoms, a few tops, a jacket, a couple pairs of shoes, and just keep it moving.

Aminatou: And here are some travel tips from Candy Feit, Saada Ahmed, and Thao Nguyen.

Saada: My name is Saada and my travel tip is to bring the correct converters for

whatever country that you're traveling. I've accidentally melted my flatiron. Just go Team Natural. Get your hair braided. Wear an afro. It's easier.

Candy: My name is Candy and my travel tip is always travel with a tiny, one-cup Melitta and coffee.

Thao: This is Thao and this is my travel tip: if you need a yoga mat on the road, in the hotel room, you can just wet a bath towel.

[MUSIC]

Melissa: My name is Melissa Valle. I am a Jersey girl who just finished her PhD in sociology at Columbia University, and through that work, I think in the last few years, I've been doing a lot of traveling related to that.

Aminatou: I'm really curious how is traveling for research different than traveling for pleasure, for you?

Melissa: Mhm.

Aminatou: Is there an academic part of your brain that you have to turn off when you travel for pleasure, or are you just always, you know, like thinking in that anthropological, like sociological way when you're meeting people?

Melissa: Yeah, you know, it is actually quite difficult to turn off to the point where I don't know what's what. I mean, it goes both ways. You know, I kick it. I go hard. People are looking at Instagram. They're like, "Seriously? This is your research?" I'm like, "What? Can I not be on the beach?" Like, "I'm sorry that you

decided to do your research somewhere where it was a little bit, you know, rougher and I'm every Sunday in Cartagena at the beach." You know, so we make these choices. And yeah, so I think there is a major blurring. But I don't think that—it becomes very difficult sometimes to sort of be engaged and a lot of fun when in a space where there is a lot of poverty, there is a lot of oppression. You're trying to have a good time, but it's like I can't avoid the fact that, you know, there's a particular level of poverty that exists right outside the walls. And that's come up. I remember being on the rooftop of a party and looking down and seeing people and getting like—I'm a very sensitive person. So like, you know, I started to get like weepy while I'm there. Like, "Ah, this feels wrong." And I think these are some of the constant, I think, tensions when traveling abroad: how to be a good traveler and be responsible but also sort of suspend certain sort of ideas just so you can kind of just get through and have a good time too.

Aminatou: How do you reconcile that?

Melissa: I think now, honestly, I think my blog has been helpful for that. And I think having an outlet has sort of—because I came up with my blog, Machetes y Miel, which is Machetes and Honey, when I was living in Colombia the third time. The longest stint for my research was nine months. And I think having that source of being able to say this is what's happening in the world and I want you all to be aware of it, and trying to be a source of information and, you know, putting those

things out into the world has been helpful in terms of reconciling. Like, all right, I'm still gonna be responsible and tell people about what's going on, but I'm gonna really also have a really good time. And I think that's been a way to manage.

Aminatou: You know it's really interesting that you mention Brazil from the bat because when I think about the places that I've been that kind of have the most inequity or the places where I've felt—where I've just been like very aware of my blackness but in a global context, Brazil is the first place that comes to mind. Being a darker colored person, like skin person, in Brazil, like for me that was a completely different experience and being like perceived as West African. But that was the first time I was really aware of those kinds of patterns, you know, and the perception that people could have of you.

Melissa: You know, it's funny now as well. Like when I was in Brazil I was 21. I was riled up. I'm always like, "Yeah rawr rawr rawr," always, like you know. And so I remember, for example, being in a McDonald's and an older woman—I was with a friend—and an older white woman she, like, put out her burger and, like, sort of put it under the ketchup expecting my friend to hit the pump. [Laughter] And it was like, here you are, "Um."

Aminatou: Like, "We don't work here."

Melissa: Like is this because you're an older woman? And you sort of like—and you

never know. And this is I find the struggle with sometimes traveling, is you don't know what's operative right now. It's like, are you racist, or are you just having like a shitty day? And I think that's a struggle often. I think that like, when I was in Chile, I was quite taken aback by the staring. The sort of just always constant—and you just don't know is that, you know, because of a lack of exposure? You know, you just feel like you look—like, you know, am I running around with my hands waving in the air and, like, screaming? Like, that's what it feels like. Everyone's staring at you. And it's like, no, I'm just really walking down the street, or I'm just on the subway.

Aminatou: When you experience that kind of staring or, you know, in some cases it actually is harassment, is what's happening to you, how do you respond? Do you respond differently than you respond here?

Melissa: I was talking with someone about—we were talking about different spaces and how like, okay, you have to have an awareness of the ways that, you know—do people touch, particularly with you know, men abroad. Is this a touching thing? Is this, you know—is it just verbal? And the staring is one of them and, like, how you can respond is a little bit difficult, right, because I'm not going to go off on someone in a foreign country in the same way that I would comfortably here. And so that means that you really do have to protect yourself because, you know, you can't sort of—I mean, I'm not saying you can't. You can, but you have

to be very conscious about the choices you make when you start to sort of like, you know, “Well,” and just wild out and, you know, punch somebody dead in the eye. And I had a really terrible incident when I was on a subway in Chile. I was all excited, I was gonna go buy my yoga mat and had to go very far out to get this yoga mat, but I was excited. I was gonna start taking classes. And now mind you, I live in New York City. I have never, you know, knock on wood; you know, I’ve never been touched on the subway in New York City, you know, 8.2 million people, all these years. And you know I’m in Chile within maybe two months of being there and a guy was like grazing my crotch like while I was on the subway.

Aminatou: Oh my God.

Melissa: And I thought like this was an accident because he was in front of me. And I’m like starting to move around and, you know, you have that realization, like, “Oh my God. What’s happening?” Like, “What is this?” Like his hand is moving with me. And it was just like your heart just starts like—you know, like, I get like shaky now even thinking about it. It was just like so awful. And this fear of—I was gonna say something and I wrote about this in the blog—that it was gonna end up being like, you know, like, Miss Sophia in *The Color Purple* where everyone just starts, like, I hit him and everyone starts like coming after me, screaming at me. And it would have been in terms of language and they would



have been like speaking, and I would have just been, just really disoriented. So I just—in that moment, I chose to be silent and just sort of devastated. And you know, these are these kinds of things. Like how do you respond when something like this happens and you don't know whether people are going to step in? You have to just say, "It doesn't matter, I'm going to stand up for myself and then deal with whatever consequences come." And so these are the kinds of things, you know, can happen. Again not to put the fear of God in people when it comes to travel. But, you know, there are things that can happen.

Aminatou: And there are just not a lot of resources for dealing with that just because of that. I know that that's an experience that I've had and a lot of other people I know. It's that quiet devastation, right? And then you hate yourself for it and you don't talk about it and there's not really a space or a resource guide that tells you, like, "Here's how to respond when somebody touches you in the New York City subway, or in the Paris subway, or in the . . ." And then I assume that like with you, because you're such an esteemed researcher, you're probably reading up on norms, right, about like touching strangers and police interactions and you think about that before you leave. But for somebody who is less seasoned than you, what are things that you would really—I don't want to say "caution" because again, it's like I don't want to scare people from going—but really, like, what are things that they should have on their radar?

Melissa: Well, I was saying I was thinking about things in terms of wellness and like bodily wellness overall, right? So I think harassment is a big one. And again, that ties into sort of our mental wellness and feeling good, but also our physical safety. And I know that dress is a big deal. We like to say that, you know, we can sort of, you know, wear whatever we want to wear, but the reality is it does affect how we are perceived and the kinds of things that happen. So for example, like if a friend of mine went to India and she said that like the little boys kept touching her. Like, you know, touching her hips and touching her thighs. And someone said, "Hey, it's because you're not covering essentially like where your legs meet. Like your crotch area." You know, and I never thought about that. I was like, "Oh." You know, that's not the thing that you sort of automatically know. You know, things like that. Like, okay, well cover that area here. Well, wear this a little bit looser, or wear this a little longer. And actually it was interesting; when I was in Colombia, in Cartagena, I experienced some of the worst, like, sort of verbal harassment I've ever experienced in my life. Like, it's just—it was nonstop. And I had to sort of come to the realization like, "Oh, at some point"—because you don't know where the threat, like where the line is. So, are people gonna grab me? And then I realized, oh, it's just a very verbal kind of thing. At some point I got comfortable wearing headphones, which I—you know, ladies like rock those. And at first I didn't because I don't usually like to wear like, you

know, headphones in my ear when I'm abroad initially because I want to first of all just take in all the sounds and what's going on, but also, for safety. Like I want to be aware. But after a while, living in Cartagena, I was like, oh, no, I can safely wear these headphones and not have to deal with the, you know, sort of yapping on the street. And then, you know, you have things like women-only subway cars that I had both in Egypt and Japan, and then all of a sudden I'm like, "Yeah, I like this." And you know before I'd be like, "I don't want"—now I'm like, "Yeah, no, where are the women-only cars?" Let me just ride with the ladies and like, you know, be in that space and you're just suddenly very appreciative of it when you just sort of didn't necessarily think about that before. And it was like, no, now I get it, you know, and being in these other contexts and learning about how people navigate what the expectations are. And so, you know, I think we need to share our stories. And, you know, again, not as sort of fear tactics, but so that people are aware of that.

Aminatou: For more from Melissa Valle on her trip to Cartagena, check out [onshegoes.com](http://onshegoes.com). [PLANE SOUNDS] Next up, we have Nneya Richards.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Nneya: Hey there, *She Goes* listeners, I'm Nneya Richards of 'N A Perfect World, where I talk fashion, travel, food, and geopolitics. Each week I'll be highlighting a different city and three things to check out while there. This is "Around the World

with Nneya.” This week, put Lisbon, Portugal, on your wish list. There are definitely trends in the travel industry, and Portugal seems to be the place to venture for 2016. With new inexpensive routes from the country’s airline TAP to major cities in the US and throughout Europe, great values for accommodations, varied terrain, I’m talking seaside and mountains, and similar wine and food culture of neighboring countries like France and Spain, without the crowds—trust me, you should book a flight to Portugal ASAP. Here are some things you should check out while there. *Fado* is a Portuguese music genre with soulful, sometimes gut-wrenchingly emotional music; you know, great music to listen to out on a Saturday night. But really, guys, walk in the romantic Alfama District and you’ll hear it spilling out of bars, halls, and restaurants. I’m not 100% sure how I found this next place. This restaurant is definitely off a side street, down a road, and around the corner. This is where the locals go for hearty, home-style Portuguese food. Taberna Anti-Dantas on Rua São José. Definitely try the fish soup baked in bread. It is out of this world. Watch the sunset from the walls of the Old City. The old castle walls are still standing and the most beautiful place to take in the sunset over the River Tagus. Afterwards, walk over to Palácio Belmonte for dinner and fantasize that you and your sweet love are old Portuguese aristocracy.

Aminatou: Thanks, Nneya. To read more from Nneya on Lisbon, go to [onshegoes.com](http://onshegoes.com).

Nneya will be back every episode with more insider info on cities around the world. Now, let's hear some wisdom from Nadia Aboulhosn.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Nadia: I always get sick when I travel a lot. Planes are disgusting. So, before I even sit down I like take my wipes, I probably look like I'm crazy. These people probably think I'm crazy. But I take my, you know, my alcohol wipes and I wipe down the seat belt and I wipe down the tray in front of me. I wipe down the TV, and ever since I've been doing that for the past year, I haven't been getting sick.

Aminatou: And now for some biz travel advice, Roxane Gay.

Roxane: My travel tip is to have a permanent toiletry bag for travel that you always keep stocked. And also, some essentials like antibacterial hand wash, antacids and aspirin and cortisone cream, because you never know what's gonna happen where you end up.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: Up next, I sit down with Still Processing co-host and *New York Times* writer Jenna Wortham.

Jenna: Thank you for having me.

Aminatou: You're on the road a lot.

Jenna: Mm-hmm.

Aminatou: Like probably more than me, which is shocking.

Jenna: I travel constantly. I love it. I always want to be on the road. I have a trip coming up where I'm going to San Francisco to visit our friend Dwayne. And then I'm coming back and going to Maine. And I was looking at my travel calendar and I was like, "Oh no, I have one day in between trips," with like the biggest grin on my face. I'm like so happy. It's like I love being on the road. It's so fun.

Aminatou: No, it is fun. I think it's a great way to live life. Okay, walk me through your travel routine.

Jenna: So I have several, but I will say, just like you do, I mean I travel for work, for pleasure, for weddings, whatever. When I was younger, I definitely would—I was a crazy person when I had a trip. Like I would stay out partying. I was definitely someone who would take a cab from the club to the airport, to go home. Like, and that does not work for me anymore. So, I used to think the point of traveling was so you would tire yourself out so the only thing you could do on a plane is sleep. And now, I'm like, okay, I don't want to be hung over. I don't want to be tired. I don't want to have stomach problems. I want to like arrive looking like as dewy as a newly opened flower, you know.

Aminatou: Wow.

Jenna: So, that is my travel goal. So, everything I do is sort of with that in mind. Like I want to be able like to land and like walk to lunch and like look amazing, you know? So, usually what I'll do is—I have like a go bag also that's like always

packed. You probably have one too, right?

Aminatou: I mean, I have a go bag.

Jenna: Yeah, you're always packed to like be able to go whenever you need to.

Aminatou: Always. I have two of all of my toiletries.

Jenna: Right. Like two hairbrushes. Two toothbrush—like everything.

Aminatou: Everything. Just like two moisturizer situations. You just pick up and go.

Jenna: You just pick up and go, so. So in addition to all that stuff, I also always have like a pack of face masks.

Aminatou: Do you do face masks on the plane? I've started doing them and people look at you weird, but I love it.

Jenna: Yeah. I'm not there yet. I'll let you know.

Aminatou: Like a sheet mask on a plane, I'm telling you. People look at you legit like you're wild.

Jenna: Well, they're not wrong, but you should also do whatever you want.

Aminatou: Yeah.

Jenna: Because you paid business class. That's the whole point.

Aminatou: I'm like, I paid a lot of money to be here and I'm trying to look cute when I land.

Jenna: Trying to multitask.

Aminatou: Exactly.

Jenna: The secret to life is multitasking. I like to pack probiotics. I also like to pack

ginger chews, which are delicious but also just like—I just eat them nonstop on a plane because actually traveling does make you gassier. Like there's something about the altitude changes and the pressure; it makes you really gassy.

Aminatou: I believe it.

Jenna: So, you know, you gotta be on top of that. I have this thing too where now like I'll work out really hard the day before a trip. So I'll go to like hot yoga. I'll do like a spin class or I'll do like kickboxing because I feel like I'm like so tired I'm relaxed on the plane, kind of. But also like I land and I feel really good, you know? Like I just have those endorphins carrying me through the trip.

Aminatou: No, I hear that. But I'm just like that's like a 48-hour commitment to like packing and being on a plane.

Jenna: It is. It is, but I think that's the difference. I guess that's like the shift that I made where I was like, "Traveling is part of my lifestyle now."

Aminatou: Yeah.

Jenna: It's the same thing as like eating healthy-ish, or whatever. It's like getting a good night's sleep. I'm approaching it with the same rigor as like anything else.

Aminatou: That's fair.

Jenna: Oh, one other thing I like to do—

Aminatou: Tell me.



Jenna: —that you should have done, or you wouldn't be sipping this tea, is you have to—before you travel, you have to take like an oil of oregano shot like at least two days—you have to boost up your immunity.

Aminatou: You've told me this before.

Jenna: Yeah.

Aminatou: And you're right. I don't take the oregano oil shot.

Jenna: Yeah. You can just do oregano and I'm not like a green—I'm not like a juice person. I don't believe in juices, okay?

Aminatou: I take every vitamin.

Jenna: Okay. But the vitamins—I don't know about the bio uptake of these vitamins. I don't know what you take. But I'm telling you, you need to go into—

Aminatou: Sold.

Jenna: —Juice Press or whatever and get oil of oregano or like oil of oregano and cayenne, like whatever it is, ginger; just take a ginger shot. Ginger is so strong, it's crazy.

Aminatou: I like—I trust you with my life.

Jenna: You have to do it.

Aminatou: Okay, fine. I will do that.

Jenna: I don't really exercise when I travel. I have a jump rope that I pack, but I'm not someone who like lands and tries to find a gym. I don't do that.

Aminatou: You don't have running shoes?

Jenna: I don't pack running shoes, no, because I'm all about the carry-on and I cannot like—

Aminatou: What's your packing strategy like? Do you have a bag that's like your go-to bag, or how do you do that?

Jenna: Yeah. I actually need to get a new duffel, but I was using a, like a small leather duffel for a long time. And I do have like a very Joan Didion-like—here's what I pack when I travel. And it's like: pair of high-waisted culottes and like a button-down silk shirt and like—you know what I mean? It's like very basic. Like, a slouchy shirt that can also be a sleep shirt. Like always have a caftan, always have a bikini, and it's like very, very, very basic. And like one pair of boots and like one pair of flip-flops or sandals, you know? But it's like always set. So, it's like I'm not fold—like I would never pack this outfit when I travel because it's not versatile enough.

Aminatou: Jenna is wearing the most beautiful floral-print dress right now.

Jenna: It's a romper, it's like a—or a pantsuit. It's like a full-length pantsuit.

Aminatou: Oh my God, it's a romper.

Jenna: But I would never pack this because I could only wear it once, you know?

Aminatou: Yeah, that's fair. How do you book your travel? Do you just do online stuff? Do you have some sort of weird travel agent? Like what's the deal?

Jenna: Right now, I'm obsessed with Secret Flying and I get their tweets delivered to my phone as text messages. Let me read to you the last couple of ones I got 'cause it's like, I always want to think about where I want to be going or like where I should be thinking about getting assignments to, or where should I take bae? And also, it's like, this is my weird travel fantasy, which is like I always want to think about where I could be going instead of sitting at my desk. But like right now—okay, so this morning I got the alert, "Many U.S. cities to Cuba for \$200 round trip. Luxembourg to Tokyo for \$362 round trip."

Aminatou: What?

Jenna: That is so good. Then I got Milan to Kathmandu for \$350 round trip.

Aminatou: This is literally free travel.

Jenna: Miami to Norway, 98 bucks, one way.

Aminatou: What?

Jenna: Like, so this is what I do, and I copy and paste the links to people because I'm always like, "We should just be on the road all the time." And I have a lot of friends who do remote workplace. Like they do the remote working thing.

Aminatou: Yeah.

Jenna: So they're always like, "I'm working for the month from, you know, like Seattle, where to next?"

Aminatou: What's one thing that you can't travel without?

Jenna: I feel like a fully loaded Kindle because I, like—I should say Kindle app on my iPhone, 'cause I don't carry Kindle anymore, 'cause I'm just like all about efficiency now. But, if I have hours with nothing to do on a flight, I lose my mind. Like my worst nightmare is showing up and the in-flight entertainment system is nonexistent and I'm like, "What? [Laughter] How am I gonna catch up on all the shows that I don't watch in my regular life?" Like what am I gonna do?

Aminatou: Right. Let me tell you about the Austin to London flight with the entertainment system is down.

Jenna: No.

Aminatou: You become very intimate with your own thoughts.

Jenna: Exactly.

Aminatou: Terrifying.

Jenna: That's hell.

Aminatou: Okay, Jenna, so we're collecting travel tips from everyone on the show, everyone who comes on. So, think about what your travel tip is.

Jenna: Invest in a bunch of mesh cubes because you can pack your undies. You can pack all your toiletries. You can separate beauty toiletries versus like, whatever, sleep toiletries. It's so easy. You just throw them all in your bag and they're basically see-through, like, compartments that zip, that are mesh. I have one for like, all of my energy bars. Like it's perfect and you can just grab it. It's the best

thing ever.

Aminatou: Can we go on a trip together soon?

Jenna: Where would we go?

Aminatou: I think we should go upstate.

Jenna: Oh, we're gonna go upstate. That's right.

Aminatou: For the fall. I think fall, upstate.

Jenna: Okay, let's do it. Hot tub.

Aminatou: Hot tub and doing nothing for like four days.

Jenna: Like sold.

Aminatou: Okay. Sold. [MUSIC PLAYING] That was *New York Times* writer Jenna Wortham. You can listen to her podcast, *Still Processing*, on iTunes or wherever else you get your podcast. Now here's a very important message from Crissle West.

Crissle: Okay, so if you're traveling and you need to get high, but you don't know how to do it in a hotel room, all you have to do is go to the bathroom and turn the shower on to its hottest temperature and let the steam build up. You don't have to worry about wasting water or heat or whatever because that's what hotels are meant for. Like that's the whole point of spending all that money. And so once the bathroom's all steamy, you take out the big towels and roll them down in front of the doors so nothing gets out. And then you roll up and blaze up. And

you can smoke as long as you want to as long as the bathroom is like super steamy and everything because once you're done and you turn it off, the smell will like be almost all but gone. And so then you just need a couple of sprays of Febreze or something, and you are good money. Try to get a room that's not too close to the elevators because people coming off the elevators might be able to smell a little bit, but for the most part you are straight just like that.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: Thank you to all of our present and future *She Goes* guests for sharing your knowledge with us. I would be remiss if I didn't impart some of my own travel hacks to you lovely listeners. [PLANE SOUND] So my first one is to always make photocopies of all of your important documents. Don't be without copies of your passport and the pages that contain your visas and any other relevant materials that you have. My other piece of advice would be to buy the travel insurance. It costs very little. It's as low as 10, 12, 14 dollars, and it has come in handy for me many, many, many times and has paid for itself like time and time over. My other piece of advice would be to pack a lot of underwear. You're going to need a lot of it and in some places you might not have access to a washing machine or even access to clean water. So pack as much underwear as you can.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Aminatou: Okay. That's our show for today. Thanks so much for listening to the first episode of *On She Goes*, the podcast. Don't forget to check [onshegoes.com](http://onshegoes.com) for more travel stories, tips, and inspiration. I'm your host, Aminatou Sow. *On She Goes* is produced by me and Bari Finkel for Pineapple Street Media in partnership with Serita Wesley, Lizzy Harris, and Natalie Huizenga for Wieden+Kennedy Publishing. Special thanks to Jenna Weiss-Berman, Max Linsky, Emily Becker, Lindsey Mavis, Sarah Fink, Marmoset, and APM. Bye.

[END FILE]