

Dance Travel: Megan Taylor Morrison Talks Dance Adventure

We travel to see new places, new cultures, and to meet new people. But another great reason to travel is to broaden our knowledge and experience with the interests and experiences we have at home. Megan Taylor Morrison brings us a brilliant new book that focuses on her and other dancer's interest in dance travel. In [*Dance Adventures: True Stories About Dancing Abroad*](#), Morrison shares 19 true stories written by professional dance performers, dance teachers, dance scholars, and others with an interest in and experience with dance travel.

The book is a fascinating read, with lovely photography that brings you closer to each story writer. The lush hardcover or paperback edition makes the perfect gift for yourself and anyone in your life interested in dance. The stories are relatable and inspiring to anyone with a passion for any interest. As you read these stories, you'll relate to the possibilities of how travel can lead to a better knowledge of your own profession, hobby, or interest and give you rich travel experiences and the ability to get to know people who share those interests.

I had the chance to chat with Megan. Enjoy.

Interview with Megan Taylor Morrison

Nancy Zaffaro (NZ): What prompted you to write your book, *Dance Adventures: True Stories About Dancing Abroad*?

Megan Taylor Morrison (MTM): The idea for this anthology came to me while I was living abroad in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. While I'd gone there to dive into bachata and merengue; dances that originated in the country. My experiences further confirmed my long-held belief: Dance is a powerful access point to community and meaningful cross-cultural experiences that teach us more about ourselves.

NZ: Can you give us an example of this from your time in the Dominican Republic?

MTM: Absolutely! Dance is how I made almost all of my friends after moving to Santo Domingo. Because I hadn't learned to speak Spanish yet, dance made sure I had a way to bond with people I met. On the dance floor, my dance partners and I would laugh, play, and enjoy the music together. This forged a connection despite the initial language barrier.

As I spent more and more time with my Dominican friends, I was inspired by their capacity for artistic self-expression -- no matter their level of skill. Even if someone wasn't a "good" singer or dancer, they still had a great time singing and dancing! Watching them, it dawned on me how inhibited I had felt in many artistic situations. At some point during my training as an opera singer

and professional dancer, I'd developed a belief that you need to be good at something to enjoy it. The idea that you could relax and express yourself for the sheer joy of it was a new (and liberating) paradigm for me.

NZ: Your book offers 19 true stories written by a diverse group of performers, dance teachers, dance scholars, and avid dance travelers. How did you find these authors?

MTM: Initially, I put a post up on my Facebook wall. It said "Who has had an epic experience dancing abroad?" I then reached out to everyone who responded and asked them to tell me their story. If I liked it, I invited that person to be a contributor. In addition, I invited several people to participate who I had met through my own dance travels.

While this gave me a good initial cohort, I wanted this project to include authors outside my network, too. In having a wide range of voices represented in the anthology, I knew we could better demonstrate the far-reaching power of dance travel. This book shows that it ultimately doesn't matter what country you're from, your gender, or the color of your skin. Together, the other authors and I celebrate dance as a unifying force.

NZ: Tell us about the process of working with these dancers to write their stories.

MTM: While a couple of the stories needed just a few rewrites, the vast majority required many conversations and hours of coaching. In fact, several required more than 100 hours of editing.

During this time, I worked with each writer to help them identify the moral of their story, craft a story arch, and include as many details as possible.

At the author-only launch party we had recently, a few people laughed as they shared some of my now-signature quotes:

"I need to know what you saw, smelled, tasted and heard!"

"Tell me more! Bring me into this moment with you!"

Each story in the anthology thus represents a close collaboration I had with each contributor. I feel lucky to have learned so much about all the authors and their stories this way, and I hope to work with many more authors in the future!

NZ: Were some of the dances new to you? What are some of the dances your writers talk about that perhaps most of us don't know about?

MTM: Many of the dances were new to me! That's one reason I love this anthology. Even if you're

a dance aficionado, you will learn something from these stories. You will read about Karagattam (a folk dance from southern India that involves balancing a heavy pot on your head and other often-dramatic feats), Korcos (a men's dance in Hungary and Romania that is improvised to live music), and pangalay (a dance from the Philippines in which performers often wear long, metal fingernails.)

NZ: What advice would you give and what resources can you share for how non-professional dance aficionados can combine their love of travel and dance?

MTM: If you love dance and travel, make this combination non-negotiable in your life. Even if you have a day job, use some vacation days each year to go explore the world through movement.

You can find resources about dance travel and artistic traditions abroad at the end of each chapter in *Dance Adventures*. Our authors generously shared additional readings and videos that can help you learn more about the places and dances they describe.

You can also get ideas of where to go from the dance maps I sell on my website, travel shows like Mickela Mallozzi's Bare Feet on PBS, or in general travel publications. I recently read a great piece about traditional dance in Mexico in *Travel + Leisure*. Now I want to go dance there, too!

If you are interested in a trip organized specifically for dance, there many great companies to check out. I recently worked with [Caledonia Worldwide](#) to plan a dance trip to Cuba for the Maryland Dance Education Association, and I know Mickela Mallozzi is running cool trips through her company [Travel Bare Feet](#). If you want a more tailored experience, reach out to me! I ran a dance travel company for several years, and I now consult on how to create fun and educational dance trips.

If you're not interested in an organized experience, you can create your own dance adventure by enrolling in classes at a local studio. In January, for instance, I took part in a wonderful, three-day flamenco intensive hosted by the Taller de Flamenco in Seville, Spain.

NZ: Do you think an interest in dance travel is growing?

MTM: Dance tourism is a growing field, as evidenced by the growing number of dance studios and organizations I've worked with to plan trips in recent years. Of course, everything is on hold now due to the pandemic, but I anticipate we will see a resurgence in travel when it is safe to adventure once again.

NZ: Where can people buy your book?

MTM: The book is currently available for pre-order and will be released December 1, 2020. You

can purchase an [e-copy on Amazon](#) or the softcover and hardcover versions [on Barnes and Noble](#).

You can also buy the book [on my personal website](#).

NZ: Thanks for connecting with me, Megan. Best of luck with this wonderful book!

MTM: Thank so much.

About Megan Taylor Morrison

Megan Taylor Morrison is a business coach, former professional swing dancer, and avid dance adventurer. Her new book *Dance Adventures: True Stories About Dancing Abroad* is now available on Amazon and through Barnes and Noble. You can read more about Meg [on her website](#).

Megan Taylor Morrison is an avid dance adventurer and certified life and business coach. She has studied local dance forms in 16 countries on six continents, as well as designed and co-led retreats to Argentina, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and India. In partnership with Melaina Spitzer, Meg debuted the talk "Dance Travel: The Next Era of Dance Education," at the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) Conference in 2018.

Through lectures, roundtables, and articles, Meg continues to share best practices for cultural immersion through the arts. She holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and a bachelor's in international affairs and French from the University of Puget Sound.

For More:

- Megan Taylor Morrison's [website](#)
- [National Dance Education Organization](#)
- On our site: [A Flamenco Experience in Granada, Spain](#)

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