

## SAMANTHA BROWN

*The television host talks about the value of travel, owning her own show and visits to Asia*

JACLYN BRANDT

Samantha Brown has been in the travel industry for decades. She worked for the Travel Channel with shows like *Passport to Europe*, *Passport to Latin America*, *Green Getaways*, *Passport to China* and *Samantha Brown's Asia*. In January 2018, she began her own show on PBS: *Samantha Brown's Places to Love*. Brown is coming to Boise on Thursday, Oct. 10, to speak at Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce's 136th-annual Gala. We chatted with her about her career, her travel passions, and what she is looking forward to in the future.

**BW: What would you say to someone who has not yet traveled? How does it change a person?**

**Brown:** That that was my upbringing too. I grew up in New Hampshire. We went to Canada. That was our big travel, and then we visited relatives in Pennsylvania and that was it. It was always out of a car and it was always a long drive, and so I had I would say a pretty typical upbringing. I didn't have the upbringing of going to foreign countries. So I would say that travel is everywhere, and this idea that we have to travel far distances and go to different countries to have real travel experiences is just a false one. To make it more attainable, you can do day trips and you still have the same travel

experiences that are really everywhere. It's just your approach to it. Are you meeting new people? Are you meeting people that are not like you? Are you going to museums that tell you a story that you didn't know? [It's] your curiosity that makes you a traveler, and not necessarily with destinations that you may or may not have gotten to go to.

**BW: What is your favorite place that you've ever been to?**

**Brown:** I love all of Asia, I really do. I love China and Beijing. Most of my professional travel career was Western, the Western world. Even if you go to Europe, we see our lifestyle. Boise, is it Basque country? I mean, it's phenomenal. I think it's fascinating... that idea that so many of us are of Europe. And so we still kind of get that, but when you go to Asia, there's just nothing like it. When you really get outside your comfort zone, it's phenomenal because you just approach it as like a six year old all over again, like where you're just taking it in and there's no way you can understand it, you just have to go with the flow.

China is really where I just saw the world in a very different way after that.

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COURTESY SAMANTHA BROWN'S PLACES TO LOVE

**BW: So you now have a show on PBS. Tell me a little bit about that show and how it's different from working for the Travel Channel.**

**Brown:** Oh, it's so different. I was let go of the Travel Channel a good, I don't know, 10 years ago. Just fired. But I still love what I do and I feel like I'm really good at what I do, and now after 10 years and working hard and having kids, I finally own my own series. I have my own production company and I own that show and I raise all my own money to fund that show because you give back shows to PBS for free, you don't get any funding at all. So I own the show, I own every inch of footage. I direct, I edit. I'm a part of that process. It is an unbelievable feeling to see this is me and there's nothing in here that isn't how I feel and doesn't represent who I am as a person and my approach to travel, and that alone is 100% different than any of my shows at the network. My prior shows with [the] Travel Channel were all about what I was experiencing, and now my shows are about the effort that it takes to create the experiences that we as travelers just get to show up and have,

whether it's an amazing meal or a work of art or a piece of music. And it's all about meeting the people behind those experiences who created them. Another huge change in my travel shows from the Travel Channel to now is that everything I do in my show now is accessible to the traveler and oftentimes free. I don't have VIP experiences. We don't make up experiences for TV that look really good on camera, but no one will ever have access to. I don't talk to people that you will never have access to. That's really, really important to me that my show was more of a call to action for everyone how they can travel, not just the chosen few who have the privilege of time and money.

**BW: So those were all my questions unless you had anything you wanted to add?**

**Brown:** I'm really excited to come to Boise. It's the 136th gala, which is phenomenal. So obviously, you have a community that is incredibly strong. You have strength with each other and so I'm really excited to just be a part of it. I'm bringing my kids, so I'm really excited. **BW**