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After Hours: Mila Bridger

BY JUSTIN PAPROCKI APRIL 4, 2019



WHEN FORT MYERS PHOTOGRAPHER Mila Bridger answers a phone call from her father, she knows it's probably time to start packing. "He'll say, 'it's a good time to go,'" she says.

Bridger and "Tata" (Polish for dad) Metelsky are travel buddies who take any opportunity they have to hop on a plane and see the world. South America and Europe are favorite destinations, and recently they flew to Taiwan. "It's very spontaneous," she says. Bridger traces her wanderlust to childhood in her native Poland, where at age six she joined an international club that provided addresses of other youngsters from around the world, allowing her to write letters to them and make friends.

In 2000, she arrived in Orlando to take part in a Disney pro-gram arranged through her college back in Poland. The next year, she moved to Canada and in the mid 2000s, she relocated to Fort Myers, where she began her photography business, which has allowed her flexibility to travel. Bridger estimates that she and her father, a retired airline employee who lives in Houston, have taken more than 30 trips together. "We don't want to be like real tourists," she says, explaining that they find their own points of interest or lodging without relying on guides. "He does not like to stay in fancy hotels."

They meet at a predetermined airport, and their visits abroad typically last three days—and then it's home.

She'd like her next trip to be to the Yap Main Islands in Micronesia in the western Pacific Ocean.

"[Traveling is] the best form of education. It's the best way to spend your money," she says. "I love experiencing the new air wherever I go, experiencing new cultures."

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