

Machu Picchu on bucket list for Metz

By Jae-Ha Kim
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Actor Alexandra Metz said she loved her vacation in Japan and that her soul felt at home there. **SMUGMUG**

Alexandra Metz isn't a doctor, but "The Pitt" star and Los Angeles resident contemplated becoming one when she studied at Brown University. After graduating with a degree in human biology, she deferred med school for two years while she gave acting a shot.

"On the surface, it felt like a perfect backup plan, making my (acting) choice seem less risky," said Metz, who plays Dr. Yolanda Garcia on the hit series. "At my core, though, I always knew I wouldn't follow through with medicine, because I wasn't excited by the journey. Acting moved me in an undeniable way. While I found medicine incredibly inspiring, I knew it wasn't for me."

This interview with Metz has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Where do you film most of "The Pitt"?

A: The majority of the show is filmed in Los Angeles at Warner Brothers Studios in Burbank. We also spend about a week each season in Pittsburgh capturing exterior shots.

Q: Where did you shoot your first professional role?

A: In my hometown of New York City, on "Law & Order: Criminal Intent." It was a major milestone as an actor, especially since I had the opportunity to work with Jeff Goldblum.

Q: Do you think your character, Dr. Yolanda Garcia, would make a good travel partner?

A: Absolutely. Studies show that surgeons are generally more stress-tolerant, confident and decisive — phenomenal qualities in a travel partner. I also think Garcia is very organized while still being open to new, exciting experiences. That balance of organization and spontaneity is the ideal way to travel. I also love her sense of humor. Her job has given her a great deal of perspective. Having seen life-and-death situations on such a constant basis, vacation-mode Garcia is probably exactly who I'd want to travel with.

Q: What childhood trip stands out?

A: When I was a kid, my mom and two sisters (and I) drove from New York City to Orlando to visit Disney World. What stands out most is the road trip. We passed through towns where we were sometimes treated with disdain, which was a difficult and formative experience. I also remember feeling uneasy at night when we had to choose motels. It didn't always feel safe. It was eye-opening in many ways, and I was relieved when we got home. Still, it also made me realize how much I love road trips like the simplicity of travel and seeing new places along the way.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

A: I truly loved Japan. My soul felt at home, almost as if I had lived there in a past life. There's so much to appreciate about Nippon. Their respect for nature

immediately made me feel comfortable in a new place. In terms of navigating a new country, I loved how easy it was to travel between cities by train or public transportation. There's a different pace, a level of conscientiousness that feels peaceful, harmonious. I also admire the dedication to craftsmanship. As a part-time ceramicist, I can't wait to return.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?

A: Peru. I can't wait to hike to Machu Picchu, immerse myself in Peruvian culture and experience Lima's incredible food scene.

Q: What is your best or worst vacation memory?

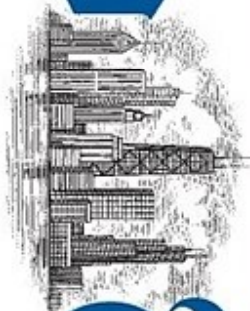
A: It's hard to choose the best, but if I had to, our trip through Oaxaca was incredibly special. I had been to Oaxaca City before and loved showing my husband around. We also traveled to the mountains in San José del Pacífico for a few nights, experienced a beautiful temazcal ceremony, then ended the trip along the coast exploring Playa Escondida and nearby beaches. It all felt magical. Even as nonbeach lovers, we were completely enchanted. As for the worst, on that same trip, my husband, who rarely gets sick, came down with a severe stomach virus that wiped him out for 30 hours. Even so, it didn't take away from how incredible the trip was.

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