

American Middle School Math Teacher in Abu Dhabi | Lan Ly

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

living, abu dhabi, home, people, uae, teachers, friends, dubai, dating, move, job, years, school, amazing, teach, pay, place, texas, money, taxes

SPEAKERS

Lan Ly, Michelle Ibarra

Welcome to pop abroad. Welcome to the show Lan Ly from from Texas. You're an American living in Abu Dhabi, you've been here for years, and you work as a middle school math teacher. So tell us a little bit about how you popped abroad. What's your story?

Lan Ly 00:14

So I was working at a middle school back home in Texas. And one of my colleagues just said that she had a daughter working in Dubai, and Dubai or UAE was totally off my radar again and think about it. Wanted to always live abroad, always love traveling. I think when I was in college, I was saving every penny I had, right. And then you're just going off to different states. And so then I took a trip to Vietnam and Thailand, loved being abroad and was like one day I'm going to actually make the move and do it. And so she was talking to me and I was like, that sounds great. But I was like where is like where's the UAE?

michelle ibarra 00:51

Nobody knows, where is this place?

Lan Ly 00:54

And so I just ended up going to teach away. So I think there were recruiting compare recruiting website kind of like two Es and search associates apply to a few jobs here and there didn't really think anything about it honestly, and and heard a call back from a couple schools flew out to Atlanta for one of the interviews. got the job. And here I am.

michelle ibarra 01:14

Oh, so it was like a recruitment fair in Atlanta.

Lan Ly 01:18

Yeah. Recruitment fair in Atlanta. And they asked me to fly out. So then I flew out with the company did just, I think two interviews there. And now I'm at the school, one of the schools I interviewed at and so I've been here for four years with the same school.

michelle ibarra 01:30

Okay. And so at the recruitment fair, there were like a lots of different schools. There was a

Lan Ly 01:35

lot of different schools, but the school had to have wanted you to interview with them for them for teachers to like, want you to fly out.

michelle ibarra 01:41

Let me teach you ways the recruitment company. Okay. And they were the ones organizing the fair.

Lan Ly 01:47

Yeah, they were doing organizing fair. There might have been other recruitment agencies there. I'm not really sure. But that was just one I was with.

michelle ibarra 01:53

Okay. And so what is the name of the schools that you work for here? It's a company where it's a big chain of schools.

Lan Ly 02:01

Yeah, it's a big chain of schools, and Emirates National School, and so they're I think they're five campuses in the UAE. I want to say Abu Dhabi. There's two in Abu Dhabi, one in LA, one in rasa Kima. And the open one in Dubai. Okay.

michelle ibarra 02:17

And what were the requirements like to even apply for the job? What did you did you have to have a credential? Did you have to have a master's or how to work?

Lan Ly 02:25

So you have to have at least four secondary majoring in the grade, or sorry, the subject that you want to teach. So if you were teaching mathematics, so I majored in education, mathematics and science, if you want to teach secondary, I believe you do have to like, major in the sciences.

michelle ibarra 02:42

So bachelor's degrees and national degree, no need for a credential?

Lan Ly 02:47

No need for a Master's, or anything above that. Okay.

michelle ibarra 02:49

Well, that's interesting, because I've heard so many MCs, things I've heard like, you do need a master's or you need a QTs, or Yeah. Qualified teaching status, if you're, like, depends on the school. Yeah,

Lan Ly 03:00

it depends on the school and what they're looking for. So I mean, hit or miss, right? Like, you can end up in a place that to me, people relax, or you can hit like, go to a place that is a lot more strict about what they want. It all depends.

Michelle Ibarra 03:13

But so your degree is in your Bachelor's degrees in math,

Lan Ly 03:17

education in math and science, specifically. Yeah. So it's very, very niche. Like I think my graduating class was because no one wants to teach middle school.

Michelle Ibarra 03:27

No, they're cute. I like them. They're hitting puberty. They're like, they're like, coming into their own who they are.

Lan Ly 03:35

school, they're getting the attitude, but they haven't quite high school yet. So they're not like too cool for school. So they still want to please you, which is really, really good. But like, I can say that my graduating class and the middle school education program was only 20. And the elementary school was like 200. Now Wow. Yeah. So it's very big difference on how many people actually want to teach the middle school, they are a bit. It's a wild age,

Michelle Ibarra 03:58

you are managing their emotions. You're the psychologist, you're their mother, and a lot of the sense you're their father, or you're doing so you're the therapist and the nurse and like you're doing so much for them. And you're they are honestly like going through a rollercoaster of emotions and hormones and emotion and so and so are we as adults, it doesn't make a difference. It doesn't know. And so sometimes even like, I've taught middle school, too, and I think it's a great age, but it's also like if I'm having a bad day, and they're going through their whatever they're going through whatever it may be, you know, there's stress. You must be the adult.

Lan Ly 04:35

Yeah, you do. And I think that's the thing sometimes adults forget is that like, when we have bad days, we sometimes like put it on other people, right? But when a child or a kid has a bad day, we expect them to have it together still. Yeah. And I think a lot of adults forget that that like kids have bad days too.

Michelle Ibarra 04:50

And they don't know how to manage their emotions any better than no better. That's okay. So you worked for you got the job at Emirates National School. At the fair, or did they like follow up after? So

Lan Ly 05:03

I got it at the fair, but it was actually for a school in Al Ain. And I ended up looking up la because I was obviously don't know what

Michelle Ibarra 05:11

it's like an hour west or an hour east of Abu Dhabi. Yeah, so still Abu Dhabi emirate, but it's inland.

Lan Ly 05:19

it's, and I looked at pictures and stuff. And I was just like, you know, I don't I come from Fort Worth, and Texas. And it's a city. You know, I don't live in the city. I live in the suburbs, but I come from the city. And I was looking at the photos of this place, and I was just like, Oh, my God, so a little bit small. It's like, it's like, it's proper desert. You know, I mean, so I was like, oh, no, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna move there. And so I told him, and I was like, Go, if you do have an opening in Abu Dhabi, I'm happy to go there. But like, I'm not gonna go to Al Ain. So it was like, Oh, if we do then I'll contact you. That was back in November. And then I got an email, I want to say in April. And he was like, Hey, we do have a position open in Abu Dhabi. Are you interested? Would you come? And I was like, 100%. So I'm moving. And I think it was then I told my parents, and I come from a very strict, not crazy, strict, strict enough, you know, Asian household where they want you at home, and you should be living next to Mom and Dad. 30 minutes away is too far. And so I told them, and they were freaking out. But I ended up going through the process anyways, doing all of it. And then I want to say if we're going to talk about the processes in August, I'm thinking I'm good to go. This is happening. Attic rejects all my paperwork. And it was like, oh, no, you can't come like okay,

Michelle Ibarra 06:31

yeah. And ADEK is the Abu Dhabi Education Department. So they're the ones who were they're the ones who are approving your paperwork, or degrees or diplomas, or anything like that.

Lan Ly 06:40

Yeah. And so then I was like, Well, I guess I'm not moving. But as HR here goes, like, you never know what's going on, really ever I find ever. So I remember it was Labor Day weekend, I was down in Austin, trying to reorganize my life because I've already quit my job. Yeah, because I thought it was gonna go on. I was like, What am I supposed to do now? Like I school back at home, the school year starts, the school year starts be so hard to find a job again. I was like, oh, maybe take a semester off. Maybe go get a master's? I don't know. So I'm out in Austin, Labor Day weekend, just going out with friends. And it's like 10pm. And I'm like sitting and I get a message from HR. It was like, and I hadn't found in a month. And they go, Hey, we pushed your paperwork through attic again, and I got approved. Are you ready to fly out tomorrow?

Michelle Ibarra 07:26

Whoa, whoa, whoa. You know, yeah. Okay. So like, so like, basically, the steps are you get the offer. And then your HR department handles that you have to get your degree it tested like step one, like you get a job offer, you get your degree it tests everything tested a testing means like you send it to the State Department, your diplomas, right? Like you send through a company though. So So did I. Because at the time I was in Shanghai, so like, I paid a third party to send my a copy of my bachelor's degree and my master's degree to the US State Department. And they stamp it and like, this is a real degree. It's not fixed. Yeah. And then they send it to the UAE consulate or embassy in Washington, DC. And then they stamp it like, Okay, we approve it. And then that attested degree gets posted to a deck or gets you upload it to you add EQ, which is the Department of Education here to prove that like you're a

teacher and the occasions so that initially your first step got denied, then you did it again and got approved. Which is I mean, normal here, why did it get denied the first time? What was their reasoning? Do they did they explain No, no reason. I think that's the thing too, like, I've always liked the quality photo. But that's the thing that

Lan Ly 08:41

like here, I've noticed that like, anytime you send something in and they don't approve it, there's actually no real explanation. And I found like, during that time, I was actually on a lot of like teacher forums, you can find them everywhere. Like on Facebook, especially everyone is so helpful. I'm on empowering expert teachers, everyone is so helpful. So kind, you ask a question everyone's more than willing to answer and help you out because everyone's been in a position where

michelle ibarra 09:06

especially empower and so is that just for UAE? Or is that global everywhere, and empowering,

Lan Ly 09:10

empowering expert teachers, and it's run by I want to say she's Irish. She's a teacher as well. But I think she's transitioning out of teaching and she runs it. And it's just you ask any question, if you think the most me just ask about any random school, someone in that group has went to that school, and I'll ask that question for you. So it really helped out a lot considering like, you've lived abroad for a while now, but this was this is my first living abroad experience. So I had no idea how to do anything. They were like, what you're talking about, like like a testing papers, like what's that mean?

michelle ibarra 09:43

Yeah, yeah. It's different. And for every country you move to it's different. So expect someone wants you to do your FBI fingerprints. When I lived in South Korea, I had to do my fingerprints. And they had to check that and my fingerprints like never worked. And they always I always got rejected, so I didn't do it again and again and again. Again, because and then here you have to do like police like, like an employment record. And yet, you also have to do in the UAE, like employment record and a police like police, criminal, China, which it wasn't FBI, you'd have to go to the FBI to do it. But you had to be like your local police. So I

Lan Ly 10:19

went to the local courthouse. Yeah. And they print out everything and you send it in. But it's like, you know nothing about this when you're when you're

michelle ibarra 10:27

down. Every country is so different. I think that's the complicated part is that you don't know like the UAE they're strict on the diplomas, at least for teachers, they want to know that your degree is legitimate. Yeah. Because they want teachers if you're a math teacher, they want to make sure that you know, math, you know, which I think is fair, like you don't want a math teacher that doesn't know anything about math. And they're, you know, they studied history or English. So fair to them on Bing. And they do have a process. They have the website, they have a deck. I'm surprised that it got rejected, though. But at least it went through the second time in the so did you come the next day? Or what was I

Lan Ly 11:02

had also, I honestly went out and party with my friends. And everyone's like, yeah, you're leaving, because they actually threw me a surprise going away party than once before. Oh, and it was like four weeks later, I still have like, and they're like, so did you really get the job? Are you really leaving? And I'm like, Yeah, I think so. I hope so. And so I texted you like screenshots on email, texted my parents, and whatnot in text, text my brother because my parents technology literally like I don't know, got four boxes from Home Depot, like the cardboard boxes. And I just started throwing things in there and packed all my stuff. And then so it was that was a Saturday, came home on the Sunday. So Austin Fort Worth about three hours away from each other, drove home, and my dad's just obviously in tears, because for a while he's thinking like his little girls not leaving. And then I left. So I left the next day. And then I got here and I had no idea what to expect, because I honestly didn't look too much into it. Like, in terms of knowing where I was going, no idea, no idea,

michelle ibarra 12:06

but hadn't done your research. You hadn't done it.

Lan Ly 12:09

I hadn't done it. Like, you know, which is not the best advice in the world. going in blind do your research, when you are moving to a country going in blind and but I think that's for me, works. Obviously, it worked. I'm still here worked out, worked out in the end. I knew it was a safe place like 100% at least knew that like, yeah, and stuff like that. So in that, in that sense, I had nothing to really worry about. But coming here wasn't like the biggest culture shock. I was very surprised at how many like expats and stuff through here. Were like, that was surprising to me, because I don't think Americans like we don't have any leave. Yeah, okay. Leave.

michelle ibarra 12:49

Yeah, exactly. The UAE is like 85%. Or spots. Yeah. Foreigners like non local Emiratis people from the UAE that the Emirates the Emirati people. It's a huge population of foreigners.

Lan Ly 13:04

Yeah. And honestly, that was surprised me but yeah, getting here was, it was a it was a long process.

michelle ibarra 13:11

Did they pick you up at the airport,

Lan Ly 13:13

at the airport? School, like provided the transfer and stuff like that? It took me to my accommodation. And then yeah,

michelle ibarra 13:21

and so you're living in your school accommodation, they provided accommodation.

Lan Ly 13:25

And they told me this upfront, so like, they provide housing allowance if you want it, but the housing allowance at my school provided was so low that you wouldn't want to take it because it just then makes more sense. And it was city center. Like you know, I don't live too far away from the main island above Dhabi. So it wasn't, you know, too bad. You know what I mean? Yeah.

Michelle Ibarra 13:42

Better to live in this cool accommodation. And you've been there for the entire four years? Yeah, entire four years. Okay. And so how was it like in terms of did you have to negotiate a contract? Were there even was it kind of like sentences, how it's always been, how was how was the contractual

Lan Ly 13:58

sort of hindsight is 2020. Right. Now moving forward, when I go to a new school, I'm going to notion negotiate. I didn't know that was the thing when I first was looking for jobs, because I'm the only teacher friend and I'm the only person out of my friend group that moved abroad. So I didn't know that was a thing, but you can negotiate contracts and stuff like that. It's a different

Michelle Ibarra 14:19

form of negotiation. It's like, do I get how money to live? Yeah. Which in the States, it's like, you're asking for money for like, can I work from home for a day? Or do I get health insurance? Or like those are kind of normal things here like everybody gets health insurance or if you have even worked for a company you're gonna get health insurance here. It's that's a part of it. But do I get like, how do I get money relocation allowance? Yeah. Do I get housing?

Lan Ly 14:44

Oh, that was so foreign to do I get a flight. Yeah. Do I get a flight home? And these are the things I would ask now like moving forward and on my next job, 100% I want to negotiate this, I'm losing this. So you need to, you know, alleviate that whatever. I'm losing, you know, cover the cost of this. Versus like when I first was moving over Here, I don't bet any of that. Yeah, like I was just happy to be moving abroad, I have a job abroad. And of course, luckily Texas does pay quite well for their teachers compared to other states. And so I was over here making the same amount of money than obviously my paying rent. So you do have to consider the costs of like you're not paying rent, which in Fort Worth might be \$800 to \$1,500. Depending if you're living alone in

Michelle Ibarra 15:23

what area so here they provided accommodation. Yeah. So on your flight, yep. My

Lan Ly 15:27

flight. And so you're kind of getting that money in terms of the salary. And then the medical care. Amazing, right. And healthcare, healthcare. Yeah, amazing.

Michelle Ibarra 15:38

And what was the like, turnaround? Like you arrived the next day? When did you start working?

Lan Ly 15:43

I think maybe two days later. My school was very good, though. They were kind of like, whenever you're comfortable to come in, but I just I was really so late to the school year, I want to say was really three weeks in the school year, because I arrived in September. Oh, wow. So then I was like, oh, no, I'm happy to come in and do to get started. Yeah, like, I just want to see what this is about. But also with the whole contract thing. I'd say that like, I wish I negotiated more now, in hindsight now that we're even talking about Yeah,

michelle ibarra 16:07

because we like we've talked about salary ranges before for teachers here. And I mean, you could go anywhere from like, a basic salary of like, you know, 7000, Durham, yeah. 8000, Durham, to, you know, 15 or 16,000. Durham. Depends on experience depends on your credentials, if you have a master's degree if you have leadership experience, so, like, there's such a range. Also, if you negotiate like, that's another thing, like,

Lan Ly 16:34

yeah, and that's, I think, doing your research for you come out here and again, like that page, and you you can go in, they'll let teachers are very upfront about how much money they're making, because no one wants to be put in a position where they're being undervalued, like, knowing that someone else is getting paid more than them. And I find that here. Some people get very secretive about how much they make, and it's not beneficial to anyone else, because you kind of want to know, because you kind of want to know what to ask for. Exactly. And, and that's so important, like,

michelle ibarra 17:00

especially if you have like 10 or 1520 years of experience, you know, you don't want to be making something that a teacher who just came out of University College, you know, it's it's unfair, because they've been working for 20 years, they have a lot of experience. They have leadership experience, they should be starting on a higher echelon or level of a teacher who just graduated.

Lan Ly 17:21

Yeah, but even with contracts, like gratuity, like we don't have that back home, like what is gratuity?

michelle ibarra 17:25

Yeah. And like when I lived in China, it wasn't it wasn't called or two, it was called, like, pension or separate, or it's called separate. Right? Like, it's completely has different there's different terms for everywhere. So grunts portunity. So it's basically can you explain gratuity a little bit. So gratuity,

Lan Ly 17:41

at least in the UAE is when, folks so for the most part in every job, you get your for every year you work there, you get your month's pay. Now, your month's pay can range right, an extra month, yeah, an extra month on top of that, so you get 13 months instead of 12 months. Yeah. And then depends on your school though. So like what Michelle was saying you have a base, some schools do base pay, and so your base pay might be 6000. So that's actually all you're getting, because they don't count your different allowances as part of your gratuity, it's just your base pay, versus some school don't have a base pay. So whatever your salary is for the month, is what you're going to get extra, quote unquote,

extra when you leave, so you only get the gratuity when you leave. So if I'm working at my school now for four years, and if I were to leave next year, I'd get four months, you know, extra extra additional pay on top on top. And so where I'm working, now, we don't have a base pay, it's just your salary for the month. So that again, that could range from whatever your salary is 12,000 to 16,000, and you'll get four times four times that, versus my partner, he's working at school where his base salary I want to say is like five 6000. So that's all he's gonna get first gratuity five, 6000 times, however many years he works there. But that's pretty, pretty basic for every job across here in the UAE.

Michelle Ibarra 18:54

Like, I think the basic salary for most teachers is between like, five to 10,000, the basic salary, that's not including living allowance or housing costs, or you know, the extra money you get if you're a leader in leadership or coordination or something like the basic salary, so you'll get an extra month. Yeah, after, which is it's kind of like your retirement money. Yeah, it's

Lan Ly 19:16

real retirement,

Michelle Ibarra 19:17

but you don't get the money until you leave the school. Yeah, until you if you stay at the school for 10 years. When you leave that school after 10 years, you're gonna have a huge gratuity and you're gonna get tax on that, which is the problem. Do you really well, yeah. Because as like, as an American, we have to do our taxes. Right. So that let's say like, we leave in 10 years, and our opportunity is whatever so we're gonna make let's say that year we'll make 100,000 US dollars. We're gonna have to pay tax on that money even though

Lan Ly 19:44

and I think that's something crazy like I've actually I don't know if your taxes here. Have you been doing your job? I've been doing my taxes because I want to go home and get a mortgage. So I'm gonna do my best to get a mortgage and I think Americans would know this, right? Like, we have to have tax returns and stuff so that we're able to get a mortgage. I would

Michelle Ibarra 19:59

say most Americans don't always do their taxes when they're abroad. Like it took me years to do my taxes because I didn't know I wasn't aware like that. See, like, you're lucky like the EU or wherever, like I would say most Americans are like, Well, I'm abroad, I don't need to, but you actually do need to.

Lan Ly 20:14

Yeah, and I luckily enough, if you lived abroad for that year, for a year, I can't remember Is it physical presence test, and then the bona fide residence test, I can't tell you what the difference is, I can't remember. But if you can prove that you've been out of the country for X amount of days, you don't have to pay your taxes up to 120 or 30,000, don't they? It's one of save. As teachers, I'm definitely not making that much at least. I just have to file the taxes and claim my money. And you'd have to claim your salary on top of your housing allowance or whatever you would be getting, even if you're living in

accommodation. But I do that I knew I had to do that. Because I want to get a mortgage versus like if you meet other expats. They don't have to do anything.

Michelle Ibarra 20:55

Yeah, they live abroad. Yeah, Americans we have to do our taxes regardless, and our abroad are

Lan Ly 21:00

shocking. Yeah, I tell them Europeans arrived.

Michelle Ibarra 21:02

Nobody has to do that. No, only Americans they want, they want to know how much money we're making. And if we're making too much money, they want some of that money. They're like, You need to pay us some of that money to you. Because we still hold us passport

Lan Ly 21:15

and get the benefits of pose. And so we need to pay up, but which is okay. Okay, which is okay,

Michelle Ibarra 21:21

I'll take it. But I mean, it's not. I don't know, who are you? Who are you having do your taxes while you're here,

Lan Ly 21:26

I do my own taxes. So I like I just go on to what is that? Everyone does it TurboTax TurboTax TurboTax. Through

Michelle Ibarra 21:33

mint. I use, I use mint. Like the app to like manage all my like us credit cards and all that. So like,

Lan Ly 21:40

I just go on and you just it's very quick. 10 minutes, and you're done with your tax and then you file but

Michelle Ibarra 21:45

because it's a special form. It's like form II ease, ease, easy form.

Lan Ly 21:51

I know what to expect for the easy, but it's something else

Michelle Ibarra 21:54

now temporary easy is like if you're but it's like if I need to look that up.

Lan Ly 21:59

But yeah, they did do it for you, which is great. Like they asked you if you live abroad, you say yes. And then they'll walk you through the steps of having to do your taxes. And so it's easy like I'm never probably you can teach her abroad gonna be making about 105,000 US dollars. So unfortunately, not

we should be getting paid that though. Now, one day, maybe one day, but definitely not now. So just have to file that and, you know,

Michelle Ibarra 22:22

easy. Yeah. It's I mean, it's like two or three forms. It's it's fine. Yeah. But you have to make sure that you're not in the US for more than 30 days a year to clean residence abroad.

Lan Ly 22:32

Yeah, and you'll have to type in all the dates and when you've left and when you've come back and it's you cannot just start like tracking your days of like, we need to be organized

Michelle Ibarra 22:41

like you really do have to keep track of like your payslips of how much you're making here. And everything. Like you can't, can't lie about stuff because they can audit they can still audit us even though we're abroad.

Lan Ly 22:51

I would say we're we're was it small fish in the sea or something? Yeah, that freezes. Yeah.

Michelle Ibarra 22:56

They're not going to come up here. We're not on their radar. Mondrian any money. I get I like if you like to hear like laundry and release. I think that's why they want us to file because if like, people are laundering money or something like that, they like what they want to know what you're doing. Yes, of course, like you're living abroad for 20 years. What are you doing? Why are you working? Like I get the fact that they want to know what we're doing? Yeah.

Lan Ly 23:17

So no other country has to do it. No other country?

Michelle Ibarra 23:21

No, no, we're the only ones which is, yeah, it's an interesting situation for us. So make sure you're doing, make sure you're doing if you're an American abroad, and you want to move back home. Like if you want to get a mortgage, and you can't you have to be able to prove that you've had a salary. Yeah. And this is a way to prove it. You can't go back and get a mortgage. And then they're like, Well, did you bake nothing for 10 years? Exactly. Like I've made \$80,000 a year for 10 years,

Lan Ly 23:45

we look back at least like three to four years or something like that of your taxes and stuff. So he does need to be especially if you plan on living abroad in the short term like he might be, you know, we all think we live in short term and here we are.

Michelle Ibarra 23:57

Okay, so you're here for four years. And how's it been? So you got here? You got the job? You've been working at this same job, same school as an educator. Yeah. What's the plan? What's

Lan Ly 24:07

your it's been good. How's it gone to the fifth year? Yeah. Can I complain? If I'm here that long here for the

michelle ibarra 24:14

what are the benefits of living here?

Lan Ly 24:17

Tax Free, obviously, amazing. Health care. Coming from America. Amazing. The weather, eight months out of the years really good. Yeah, eight months out of the year. It's very good. Then summers off as a teacher and results. So you do get to like leave when the weather gets too hot here. And that's what most teachers do. Like, I don't have any teachers that stay here for the summer. And why would you when you have six weeks off, you know,

michelle ibarra 24:42

we get about four months off a year, like two or three and a half to four months off per year. If you hate hate, hate,

Lan Ly 24:49

hate. Amazing. And if for me like moving here, another big decision moving here was I looked on the map and I was like, oh, it's kind of in the middle. You're in between Europe, you're in between Asia and then you do You experience a lot of Middle Eastern countries that you would have never wanted to go to like my first trip here was Jordan at least a trip to the Middle East and it was never going to be on anything on my radar in America and so that's another thing it's far yeah it's far and it's no one talks about it's not like getting back home in Texas go let's go to Jordan go see Petra.

michelle ibarra 25:20

But yeah, it's not it's exotic but on like the beach like they want to go to to Louvre and Mexico or Cancun or something. They say that's quite a Petras. It's it's it's a trip even getting friends for me from California to come visit me in Dubai. It's that's a long trip,

Lan Ly 25:37

such a long trip. And we don't get to like not leave, but my friends back home. All work and kind of normal business jobs or medical or whatever, and they don't get time off. Yeah, no one can get time off like, a week or two. You'd be lucky if you got a week, you know, a month off would be just insane. That's like unheard of in America, man. And so, but living here, the pros definitely outweigh the cons. I miss nature. We have beaches here,

michelle ibarra 26:04

but I do miss we have desert and beaches. Yeah, we

Lan Ly 26:06

have deserted beaches. I miss like, you know, when for my first trip out here, I'm looking out the window of the plane. I'm like, Oh, my God, a tree. Lots of trees, like real trees, and real grass, you know. And so you do miss that. But the pros definitely outweigh the cons. They do take care of their people here. Like you don't really have to worry too much about your safety,

Michelle Ibarra 26:23
safety, health care.

Lan Ly 26:25
Everything's kind of

Michelle Ibarra 26:27
efficient. Yeah. Fishery efficient,

Lan Ly 26:29
very efficient.

Michelle Ibarra 26:30
I'm very surprised. Because it's such a young country, how efficient it is. And it's all like tech. They're very into tech. Yeah. All the apps and

Lan Ly 26:39
all the chats, you can go on. How are we doing today? Happiness meter. Like everything, every app has some sort of like being how can you

Michelle Ibarra 26:46
improve banking is quite good, too. And all the convenience

Lan Ly 26:49
of this place? Like waking up after a night out and being able to call the call? Can I get an orange juice, please? And it's just delivered to your door? And like, yeah, 10 minutes. Yeah. You know, when you when I opened up a bank account here, it was like the banker, I don't know if you can call it a bank teller or anything. But they come to your apartment, and they deliver your cards to you. Yeah. And they deliver your paperwork that needs sign like everything is at your doorstep. And that's what's also really good, like,

Michelle Ibarra 27:20
efficiency. I'm surprised I'm honestly I was thrilled. I was like wild like everything apps, apps, apps, like, download all the apps and like, everything's so easy. Like, I got my like car service, they picked up my car with a tow truck, you can give it a car wash. The car washes are everywhere. Like everything is just you want, like you said, Orange is delivered in 10 minutes. 10 minutes. Like it's just,

Lan Ly 27:43

it's too easy. Yeah, that's the problem. Right, like, and I think that's the issue too, that it's too easy that like you do get comfortable living here because of how convenient everything is. I

Michelle Ibarra 27:52

don't know anybody who like has moved here. And I've had I have a lot of co workers that are like, we're gonna leave, we're gonna leave them and they don't leave and they'd been for 10 years or 15 years or because it's so good. It's such a great place for families. I

Lan Ly 28:05

would say we haven't I mean, don't really have an even went to the grocery store. Now in a year. We just get you do like, yeah, we're shorts to paint. I know, it's such a thing, but it's a pain going to store here. The malls here are crowded, like it's hectic, you know. And now it's like you go and Kip sends you one car for you get your groceries delivered, you know, I mean, and it's it's nice. I don't have to walk down the aisles. I just have to type in the search bar orange, or like, you know, chicken and everything pops up. It's too convenient, too convenient. Yeah.

Michelle Ibarra 28:34

Oh my goodness. That's also why like,

Lan Ly 28:36

eventually do want to leave because you are in like bubble here. Like it's such a but Okay,

Michelle Ibarra 28:41

so like, we were discussing this but like starting a family here, this is an amazing place to start a family. Because it's so safe. Healthcare so great. You can have a great kind of colleges, you could have a great experience. And you know, like the schooling there's amazing international schools here private schools, for the children to grow up in.

Lan Ly 29:02

And if you do end up working like in outside of teaching because normally when teachers you can get your kids tuition with your school that you're working in, right normally that's kind of a normal thing in a package where like to have your kids can go to our school and you know, tuition is paid for. But if you're in business, like a lot of my friends in their packages and contracts, they actually have a tuition lots, you know, for their, for kids for any kids that they might have. So your company might give you up to whatever 6070 80,000 A year of germs, germs, germs, yeah,

Michelle Ibarra 29:31

we're talking about

Lan Ly 29:33

so then you can use that money and it pays for your students tuition and you can put them in a good school and it's international, your kids to experience different cultures versus something they might not have done back at home and if that's something

Michelle Ibarra 29:43

important to their internationals, yes, I mean, like the kids like at my school, it's like French kids, Lebanese, Egyptian Tunisia and German, Polish Turkish like everything in one classroom. Yeah. And it's amazing because like, your class ain't never gonna get that if you live in England or California or Texas, not definitely in Texas, but like not, you're getting it here and then they're also they're learning Arabic and they're learning English and they're learning maybe third or fourth language which it's amazing like that's, that's cool. Like how what kind of like environment

Lan Ly 30:20

the experience in itself would be like definitely you know, for a family it's it is like very family oriented. There's things going on every week for you to take out your family and you don't have to worry about your kids. You know what I mean? Like back home in the states it's like Amber Alert. I remember back at home on your phone it just starts ringing you know, I don't think we hear about anything like that here ever. Like that just wouldn't happen

Michelle Ibarra 30:42

there's not even petty theft here Yeah, which I'm like you could leave your car

Lan Ly 30:45

on unlocked laptop in the car go into a shop real quick five minutes come out and you don't have to worry you know

Michelle Ibarra 30:53

No, it's that's the beauty of here I don't think gets talked about enough how safe it is like it's a we're very lucky to be here like it's a great place especially for families. Yes, Waterworld Warner Brothers record all these places that kids are like for kids. Dubai is a different story like I do think Dubai is more like your professional more party more glamour you know restaurants and all that stuff but when it comes to Abu Dhabi it's very

Lan Ly 31:19

family very chill. Yeah. Which makes me you're telling me the dating thing very difficult here like

Michelle Ibarra 31:25

I would say if you're single definitely go to Dubai. Dubai.

Lan Ly 31:29

Dubai is the way to go if you have a family already or a partner. I think Abu Dhabi is the way to go Yeah, that's that's what your options are.

Michelle Ibarra 31:36

What you want to where you're at in your life, where you're at in your life for sure. There's definitely places to party if you want to party and if you want to, like you know, have some fun here in Abu Dhabi, but I think choices are limited. more limited than Dubai is like endless. Yeah, like there's a deplorable and

Lan Ly 31:52

Vegas of the Middle East, Middle East, and it's insane. But definitely not my cup of tea. Like I tried living there for a bit. No dumbbells from Dubai. Tried living there because your

michelle ibarra 32:04

partner is Irish, Irish, but you met him in Abu Dhabi.

Lan Ly 32:08

I met on Tinder.

michelle ibarra 32:10

Tinder, but he was in Dubai. He was living in Dubai.

Lan Ly 32:13

Yeah. And so I was up there quite often. And I would think I want to live there and it was just mayhem. Like, yeah, I didn't want you so anyways, he ended up moving Abu Dhabi and he loves it way more than Oh, really by Yeah. Because but he's also not a big party person. So that plays into it, you know, like whatever you're looking for. It's fine to hear whether it be

michelle ibarra 32:32

he has a lot like people think UAE or Dubai is like we're saying a country but it's the United United Arab Emirates. That's the country Dubai is one emirate, Abu Dhabi capital, then you have Fujairah and Rasul clima, a couple others. And most of the foreigners of course have a Dubai and Abu Dhabi, but like, every kind of lifestyle you want, you can find it

Lan Ly 32:53

here. Yeah. 100% Like if you want the kind of sports and stuff like that kite surfing is pretty good half the time of the year. There's a place in Dubai note do almost akin to surfing, there's a place in Dubai that you can actually go surfing, they've it's privatized, but you can do it. If you want to put the money into it. You can do it. Like it is it's also affordable. I like water

michelle ibarra 33:14

oriented place for me. I'm like, Ah, okay, water. Cool. Little like like scuba diving and snorkeling. Yeah. Jeff jetskiing really loves jet ski inherits like a big, big thing big.

Lan Ly 33:25

Does hiking, teach camping. I don't know beach camping was a thing. Apparently people do it, go out to the beach and go camping for desert stuff. But it is a place where like, if you want it, it's there. Yeah. And I've grown to really appreciate living here. Because when I first moved here, I think I was crying every single day. I hated living here. I wanted to move home. I was so sure I was gonna move home. But it does take a while to get used to. And then once you're used to it, you don't want to leave. Yeah. So what

michelle ibarra 33:54

was the step for you that helped you feel comfortable here.

Lan Ly 33:58

And friends? Definitely having a good group of friends. Having a group of colleagues, like a lot of my colleagues, we've been together now for four years and the support system anywhere, like anywhere.

michelle ibarra 34:10

How did you make friends outside of your immediate colleagues?

Lan Ly 34:14

So I wouldn't, if you told my past me growing up, that you could go on Facebook and meet someone to meet someone online. You think that'd be so strange, right? Like, I used to think that like, Why would you meet someone online? But I didn't realize expat communities like thrive on these like Facebook groups. Yeah. And yeah, you know. And so I think I was on the Abu Dhabi q&a. And the other female one I can't remember right now, but there's a female network as well. And I had bleached blonde hair before I moved here, like just bleached blonde, and I was going to dye it back to black because I was like, Oh, I can't find a hairdresser. I'm not gonna bother having my hair blonde like that lawns anymore. So I went on this female Network page, and I was like, Hey, does anyone know any hair stylist It started with hair. Yeah. And this was before we even moved over here. I was just like, Alright, let me see this scene of this hair and, and I'm Asian course black hair, like it's very hard to manage. And so then there was one of my best friends now she at the time, she messaged me, and she was like, Oh, hey, I'm, I'm Chinese, and I know what he feels this way. This is how I this is the girl that I go do my hair with, blah, blah, blah. And so then she was like, Are you moving over here? I think you're, I think in a few months. And so then I landed, and I was we still kept in touch. And so she was like, I'm going out with my girlfriends tonight. And we're gonna have some sushi if you want to join. And so I joined. And then that was it. I met friends through her and then that's how it goes, it was at that like, and that's the hardest part too, is that you need to make sure you move anywhere that you bring yourself to go do things with strangers, complete strangers, people you've never met before, you have no idea if you're gonna get along. And that's what happened to you have to or else you're gonna be in your apartment all day long sulking, and no one wants to live like that.

michelle ibarra 36:04

But if you made it this far, if you've made it out of your home country out of your home, city, and you've moved to a new place, but you stop there. You're that's what's gonna happen. You need to keep pushing, you need to make friends because having a community having friends, that's going to help you feel comfortable in your new place. Yeah, and

Lan Ly 36:23

I loved I think one of the biggest things I always say about moving abroad is that my friends back at home, we all have been friends since we were 16. Right? So everyone still remembers you as a person? 21 Yeah, doing all the stupid crazy stuff. Yeah, right. Everyone kind of likes to remind you of the person you were versus

Michelle Ibarra 36:42

every time I go home, they're like, you're not the same person, or you are the same person. I'm like, okay,

Lan Ly 36:48

but you move abroad, and it is like starting over and starting fresh. And that's what's so amazing about moving abroad is that you do get to not reinvent yourself, you probably get to become more of the person you always were, it's just kind of being stuck in your town or city, whatever, people don't see that. And you do meet like minded people, people who have the same views on life and travel and culture as you. And so it does really you kind of meet your people. And I would say like some of my friends now. For years I've known them, or I've told them things, I wouldn't tell people back home, you know, because you do end up being friends and closer with these people, I suppose. I don't know, what's the like mine of it. And you don't really get it until you move. Like it's hard to

Michelle Ibarra 37:30

explain. Yeah, right? No, it makes perfect sense. That sometimes you have to be somewhere new in a new environment with people you've never met, to feel to come to understand who you are. Because if you don't understand yourself, and you haven't accepted yourself, it's hard to give yourself to a new person. It's like you meet a new person that you realize, well, I have so much in common with you like us. We're like brown woman. Today's parents are immigrants. Unless we met other people like that. In our situation. It's hard to open up to them, because they haven't experienced that. You know, where maybe my friends at home? Yeah, maybe they have immigrant parents. Yeah, maybe we have similar backgrounds in California. But they didn't move abroad. They don't know the struggles that they don't know what it's like to move abroad. Everyone

Lan Ly 38:15

thinks for living a life and you live abroad. Everyone is like, everybody thinks it's

Michelle Ibarra 38:19

temporary. Yeah. thinks it's, it's fleeting. And that it's, you know, we're just here for fun. No, we're working. We're living day to day or we're banking. We're healthcare. Like it's not just jobs

Lan Ly 38:30

like yeah, everyone else back home. We still are doing. We're doing the same thing you were doing except just in a different place. Yeah. That's different

Michelle Ibarra 38:37

struggles. Yes, different struggles. And I think it's people don't realize how hard it is. And like, and like you said, like you you develop as a person you grow so much faster. I find like, I feel like I've grown so much faster because I had to grow. Yeah, because if I didn't, I wouldn't have I wouldn't be here still living abroad, I would have gone back home and been like, I can't do this. I can't I would have I would have succumb to the struggle because it's it's hard to live abroad. You don't you're alone,

Lan Ly 39:05

you don't grow from being comfortable is what I'd like to say no one grows from being comfortable doing exactly what you grow when you step out, and you're uncomfortable and you don't know what to do. And you've never experienced that before. And I think that's what moving abroad like does like so if anyone's ever even second guessed, it's like, Oh, should I do it? You should do it. 100% Oh

michelle ibarra 39:21

my gosh, you know, I don't know why, like more people don't do it. But a lot of it is like family pressure, familial pressure they don't like you said like from coming from a Vietnamese family. Your parents don't want you to live far away. Like for me coming from like a Mexican or Latin family. Like I'm lucky my mom was so supportive, but like so many are like you have to be near your family like it's a part of your culture. It's part of you were a part of

Lan Ly 39:47

you. You can't just leave Yeah,

michelle ibarra 39:48

that's so they make they come into the decision making process. You can't make the decision for yourself. So like, I understand culturally, it's it is difficult, but it's people need to grow individually. They can't do be pushed to grow. They have to do it on their own in their own time. So no cheers to us. Yeah.

Lan Ly 40:07

moving abroad and living abroad and still here.

michelle ibarra 40:12

You're You're half everything. Everything is good here. Everything's great here. Oh, it's

Lan Ly 40:16

amazing. Yeah, it's amazing. I like I think the thought of having to leave puts a lot of pressure on me. Like, it's weird, because coming here four years ago, and hating it and crying to like, being away on summer, which is amazing. But then I've created a home here. So like, I always look forward to coming back. Yeah. And that's the weird part for me is that I didn't never think I'd get to this point. You know, when I first moved, and I think most people don't ever think they're going to get to a point where like, Oh, this is home, but it is like, four years now. It's, it's home. And it's weird one day that this isn't going to be home, you know that I'm gonna have to leave my bubble of like happiness in this place that protects me and I live in I do think I live in la la land here. I think a lot of us do.

michelle ibarra 41:01

No, no, I don't think so. I think like, yes, like we are in this shelter of like, safety. So that's really nice. But like, I think most times, you're in a country that like when you have a job and you're fortunate enough to live like you're like, This is great. Like, we're lucky to have this. But if you move to, you know, Korea or Argentina, you're gonna have that, but it takes time. Yeah, that's the that's the it takes time. It takes patience. It takes effort. Like we're saying, like, you have to make friends. And you've done that you've made your friends you have your colleague, it's

Lan Ly 41:34

like college all over again. Moving it's like college all over again.

michelle ibarra 41:39

Yeah, it's but you're always growing like like college you're growing. And your friends see you grow and you're abroad and your friends you grow. Because right now like you're planning to have children abroad as well. Yeah. So that's another growth and growth phase of your life. Right? Yeah, that

Lan Ly 41:55

was something that was decided maybe like three months ago that we were gonna have kids abroad. I was just like, oh my gosh, my brother was like, I was telling him about it. And he was like, Are your kids gonna be citizens? I was like, Yeah, I don't see why

michelle ibarra 42:06

they wouldn't be do still get us.

Lan Ly 42:10

I think it like you had to have to live in the US up to like 16 or something like that. And then once you move abroad, then your kids obviously can can be

michelle ibarra 42:17

so your partner's Irish. Yeah. So and you guys, so you're planning but you're both planning to stay here. Yeah, and have children here. And everything

Lan Ly 42:27

that two years, if we're lucky, after two years, we'll search for and have kids, if we're lucky,

michelle ibarra 42:31

because it is a great place to have kids here. It's honestly, like, I've been a few places. And this is a really great place to have children in terms of like the health care and the safety and the schooling and everything like that. Yeah,

Lan Ly 42:43

it's nice. I don't know how long we'll be here after the kids are born, but definitely during and just knowing that you like for us in the states, like I was saying earlier, like back home, I wouldn't go to the hospital or the doctor until I felt like I was dying because everything was so expensive. But here, it's like, at least I don't have to worry about that, like this amazing healthcare is going to take care of me anytime I need something if something were to go wrong, and I know that I will be taken care of. And that sense of security itself is is enough for me to want to stay. Yeah, like,

michelle ibarra 43:14

I think every employer has to give health insurance. So yeah, it's a requirement.

Lan Ly 43:20

It's a requirement. And so and it's doctors from around the world, too. And so you know, they hold a lot of experience, and you get to pick and choose you go to and it's nice, you know, versus like back home, you're kind of stuck in your network and all that sort of stuff. And it's a lot of like, a lot of rope back at home community here,

Michelle Ibarra 43:39

which is just expensive. So all expensive. Here we were, we're lucky. Like it's a it's a great place to live. It's a great place to have children from I mean, I have like colleagues that just they don't want to leave, and I don't know when they're gonna leave.

Lan Ly 43:57

I don't know when I think everyone I think it's funny enough when you're here. When you you when you see someone and it's at least for teachers, and it's getting towards the end of the year, every teacher is asking each other. So what are you going to do next year? So what's the plan? It's not like a it's a question that's constantly brought up, because everyone stays. And so it's like, you want to know who's leaving because then maybe it'll help you make the decision to leave or not, you know?

Michelle Ibarra 44:20

Yeah. So you're staying for sure. What has been a driving force like what like you said, you have some friends that like your colleagues and your friend that you went out with the first night? Is there any people that you want to like shout out to that have just really helped you like whether Instagram or Facebook groups that are really like solidified your, your comfort here? For sure.

Lan Ly 44:44

Number one would be Ashley. She is my colleague and one of my best friends here and someone hopefully when we don't get married, she be one of the birds mates. She's amazing, like, solid just whenever you need her. It's like she doesn't have it. tape to be there for you which is just even back home sometimes like your if you're lucky enough to even get dot.so dot and John and they're the Chinese came couple Amen.

Michelle Ibarra 45:12

So and she has she's an Instagram she's

Lan Ly 45:15

she's a food blogger here as well so she has the site what's her food blog.on

Michelle Ibarra 45:18

her way down on her way

Lan Ly 45:20

yeah and so follow her if you're listening in Abu Dhabi and she does food blogs and but she's a new mom now so her Instagram is slowly transitioning pivoting here. Yeah, she's pivoting to the mom, Mama world kind of things on her page. Now, Manju. Let's see who else I can think of. So when I first came here, my closest group of friends, a lot of them have left now. That is the unfortunate part about living

the expat life is, no matter how long you want to stay, people do end up leaving. So I'm in our group, we also had Ingrid and she's actually Mexican as well. So she moved back to Mexico and she's pursuing her pilot license now. So she comes from a family of pilots all her brothers flew for Etihad. Yeah, so she went back home recently, last year to do her pilot, so she left and Oscar he's Swedish. He also recently left as well. And so then that's the sad part.

Michelle Ibarra 46:15

That's the worst part about Lyon abroad is that the people that you become close to tend to like move like they move they're gonna move Yeah, eventually

Lan Ly 46:22

eventually move and so that's that's always very tough. But yeah, not like I think there's people I can think of a top of my head that have been here since day one, but lots of other amazing people since then. But I mean, obviously Donal obviously. Yeah, obviously the Irish partner is also very high on the high on the list,

Michelle Ibarra 46:40

which is also one of the best parts of London pride aside you're gonna meet people from so many different countries and you might fall in love with them whether it's Irish or English or whatever, Australian wildlife

Lan Ly 46:51

I actually smile so much thinking about him. He's amazing, amazing, amazing person and

Michelle Ibarra 46:56

you might probably want to meet him in Texas so

Lan Ly 47:00

Texas, he's a he's close, loving surfing man. There's no reason

Michelle Ibarra 47:04

Exactly. The point. Exactly. It's like the one of the best parts about living abroad is that you're gonna meet men, people from all over the world and love is inevitable. It's gonna happen.

Lan Ly 47:14

Yeah, and it's you know, it's one thing I think in America when you date outside of like, just your raised rates, like back home, I would have normally only ever really dated Asians. And then now it's like, not only am I dating and dating someone from a culture and even that is in itself beautiful. I think just the meshing of two completely understanding

Michelle Ibarra 47:33

the patient's Yeah, it is it to understand,

Lan Ly 47:38

because I also for him would be the first Asian person He's even been friends with, let alone like, be partners with David. And it was like, when we were dating, there'd be things that I'm explaining to him that I've never had to explain back home because all my friends are Vietnamese American Chinese American, and so I never had to explain too much. But you know, hit him dating It was first time you've had bubble tea like Boba never had it didn't know what it was, you know? And I'm just like, why any like, you just think it's like kimchi. Like back at home mom would make gallons of kimchi, whatever. And he's like, let's not honey make that and it's an lucky guy.

Michelle Ibarra 48:15

What a lucky guy.

Lan Ly 48:17

I tell you, I've cultured him. And interesting to all hell I introduced

Michelle Ibarra 48:22

canta kimchi to or to Korean barbecue. Yeah. It's an experience changes to Korean barbecue. There are rules to the drinking culture. There's, you need to know what you're doing. And

Lan Ly 48:36

yeah, like, like, even though now he'd be like, it's so weird. The things he asked sometimes. I asked him that. Like he just said what he does with chopsticks. And I'm like, What do you frickin want to? Isn't what toss sticks, I guess so. But it's yeah, it's dating someone from a culture to like, that's also been really good thing about living abroad is that you do get to meet and fall in love with people you never would have never met back home. And so that's been amazing itself. One of the many

Michelle Ibarra 48:58

perks Yeah. wanted to live in a brass. Yeah. There's no way would have happened in Texas. So absolutely not. Yeah. And you you're growing too as a woman as a person. Yeah. As a as a girlfriend, because you're with someone

Lan Ly 49:13

from a different culture. Yeah. And it's

Michelle Ibarra 49:15

pushing you out of your comfort zone to Yeah, in a lot of ways. Because if you had dated another Vietnamese American or another Vietnamese guy, it wouldn't be you feel comfortable in the situation where now you're like, pushed out of your comfort zone.

Lan Ly 49:27

Yeah. And it is like him dating someone from America. That in itself is different than dating someone that's Vietnamese American, which is even like a smaller market in American and so you do end up sometimes getting into heated discussions about certain things because you weren't raised the same way at all whatsoever. You won't see the things the same way now, but then it makes you it makes you

grow. Because you're seeing things from a different perspective that you never would have gotten itself. It's just worth it. Yeah.

michelle ibarra 50:00

It's what like, that's another reason to live abroad just for love, like well love word travel. There's so many reasons but like love is such a good one. Yeah, because you grow tenfold when you're dating someone for a different culture. Yeah, one because but you don't have a language. Like there's a little bit of a language barrier because he's Irish and like, yeah, okay, the job. The job is sense of humor. Yeah, yes, I agree. But like imagine dating someone who was like, like, Chinese and you're, you only speak English and they only speak Chinese. Like there it gets, it gets really complicated. Yeah. And it takes a lot of patience and a lot of effort to like understand the person so that is one of the great things about living abroad. Like I when I lived in Korea, I did I had a Korean boyfriend. And that was a whole there it was seriously it was. It was it was it was great. Like that's the nice thing like you get to experience these different cultures and these like beautiful people and try to understand them I wouldn't have got I wouldn't go out of my way to understand someone if I were living in California group California, and met a Korean guy on the street I would not go out of my way to date him. I would Yeah, but in Korea, there's so many beautiful Korean men that you're like okay, and you date them and you're like, wow, like like I learned so much. Yeah, not just about myself but about the culture. Let's

Lan Ly 51:14

just say she is with an Irish man right now. You're talking to two Americans who have now ended up with Irish

michelle ibarra 51:21

Irish are great so like they're Irish or they go to the Ireland

Lan Ly 51:26

and there's a lot of them here in the UAE

michelle ibarra 51:28

lot of Irish a lot of English for sure. So if that's what you want to come here for

Lan Ly 51:33

love that's what your cup of tea is your

michelle ibarra 51:36

there's plenty if you don't want to date Americans anymore, and you're American. Yeah, this is good place to be. If you want to date a Chinese go to China if you wanted to Korean go to Korea, for sure. Yeah, cuz Korean dramas and everything like everybody. It's true. I agree. Like Korean men were wonderful. They lived up to the expectation. But like you need to know some Korean. Yeah, to understand like, there's the language barriers, and it takes time you do you want to shout out anybody. Anybody else any Instagram or Facebook. Anyone who like help, think of the people who helped you feel comfortable here. Like I know it's your colleagues and everybody like but is there like any magazine

or Instagram? Anybody like who just kind of helped you on the day to day just Facebook groups? Get on

Lan Ly 52:24

Facebook groups? Yeah, Facebook groups here is poppin. Like Abu Dhabi q&a. Oh, my goodness. I think there's like 40,000 people there. Maybe I have not done a q&a is great. Abu Dhabi q&a, empowering expert teachers. Oh my gosh, GGI, obviously. GGIs very good teacher and is very girl international girl gone International. Trying to think of anything else if I was anything. I think that's it.

michelle ibarra 52:50

There are so like, basically Facebook groups, like get on Facebook. Like, this is your reason. If you want to live abroad, get on Facebook.

Lan Ly 52:56

Yeah, get on Facebook. I'm telling you I was but whenever I moved here Facebook was like dying. Yeah, I was hardly ever on it. It wasn't like in 2000 Whatever, that everyone was uploading 10,000 pictures onto albums. It was dying out but the time moves I agree. And then once I became an expert, it was like it's the place to be

michelle ibarra 53:12

like yeah, it for

Lan Ly 53:14

groups for for groups and to meet and so

michelle ibarra 53:17

because I started like an American girls in Abu Dhabi group, which I need to get going with that because like, I completely like like, there's not many of us over here. There are I just think it's like you we need to just reach out like it takes time takes effort, just like anything, like building any community. Yeah, but no, there are not.

Lan Ly 53:34

Not as many as everyone else.

michelle ibarra 53:36

I think there's there's also American Women's Network, like in Abu Dhabi when I was

Lan Ly 53:41

telling about you like she's American.

michelle ibarra 53:49

Or here there are there are some, but not as I would they say they're more British and they're more Irish. Yeah. We're closer to Ireland and we're closer to England. So it makes sense. Yeah, it makes sense. So thank you for joining me. Thank you so much.