



NEWS

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In Transit

Q. AND A.

VENUS WILLIAMS loves Hong Kong and vegan cuisine.

Venus Williams, 37, who has won seven major singles tennis titles and reached the finals this year at the Australian Open and Wimbledon, will tell you that one of the best parts of her career is the chance it has given her to see the world. "I travel so much for tennis that I don't count how often I'm on the road, but the sport has definitely taken me to some interesting places," she said.

Ms. Williams recently came to New York, a destination she has visited multiple times and where she won the United States Open twice. She was in the city to compete in the tournament and participate in Citi Taste of Tennis, a food tasting event at the W New York hotel in late August. She spoke to The New York Times before the tournament and culinary event from Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., where she lives. Following are edited excerpts.

SHIVANI VORA

What are some of your favorite destinations that you've traveled to for tennis?

I am a huge fan of Hong Kong because I am a night person, and it is a night city. I love to walk around at 11 or 12 in the evening because there are restaurants and other spots still open, and the streets are full of people. Also, although it is a big city with tall buildings, there's a nature feel because you're surrounded by mountains, water and greenery.

When you are traveling to compete in tournaments, how much free time do you typically have in a destination, and



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Venus Williams says she doesn't want much free time in each city she plays in. That means she is winning and must focus on tennis.

what do you enjoy doing with that time?

Seeing small museums always interests me whenever I have downtime because they feel manageable. In Paris, I enjoyed the Musée de Cluny. It takes an hour to get through the whole museum, and it has cool Roman baths and medieval art. In London, I like the Museum of London, where you can learn about the city's history, but as a tennis player, I never want to be seeing too much of any place where I am for a tournament; that means I've lost.

You've spoken previously about your love of good food, and you are also in New York to participate in a culinary event. What kind of food do you seek out when you're traveling?

I do enjoy good meals and like to call myself a cheating vegan, which means that I'll normally try to seek out some-

thing vegan, but may cheat depending on what I'm craving. In trips to Paris and Las Vegas, I really wanted a chili dog and found great vegan chili dogs in both cities.

How do you stay in top physical form to compete when you have to combat jet lag and the other challenges that come with travel?

It takes some discipline, but wherever I am in the world, whether it's China or Australia, I hit the gym the day I land and then practice for the match. I also don't sleep during the day and push myself to stay up until 10. Between the travel and my training that day, I'm usually pretty tired by the evening and don't have a hard time falling sleep.

What, for you, makes for a great hotel?
In the past, I've liked staying at bou-

tique hotels with a design element, and I'm still into properties with a focus on design like the New York Edition, where I stayed when I was in the city last time, or the 21c Museum Hotel, where I stayed when I was in Cincinnati.

But lately, I've come to appreciate hotels with great service and comfort, and I think that the Four Seasons is a winner for both. I also love the Lotte New York Palace, which has such a classic New York atmosphere.

When you're not working, where do you like traveling to for vacation?

My favorite vacation destination is Palm Beach Gardens, where I live. People actually come to vacation here, and why wouldn't they? The beaches are fantastic, and I can get in a great beach run or workout. The atmosphere is all vacation.