

PEOPLE

Meet Emilia Taneva

This beauty with brains is
taking over Instagram

WORDS BY ALLISON KUGEL



Emilia Taneva, a beautiful Bulgarian import, has managed to organically amass a whopping 655K+ Instagram followers at her handle @bubbly.moments in just a year and a half! Her luxury lifestyle blog by the same name is also exploding —resulting in major corporate sponsors from Clinique and Olay to Pantene, Macy's, and FabFitFun to line up to work with her. Turning her passion for travel into her own cottage industry, Emilia has circled the globe in rarefied luxury, chronicling her adventures draped in the latest fashion and accessories. What's more impressive, is that she has managed to accomplish this in parallel to a thriving career as an orthodontist and expert on dental genetics.

Originally a successful dentist in her native, Bulgaria, Emilia came to the United States on a student visa to get her orthodontics degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Along the way, she fell deeply in love with her now husband, and her brand, Bubbly Moments, was born out of the pair's penchant for romantic globetrotting.

In this interview, Emilia Taneva shares her story and her well-honed tips for achieving superstar blogger and social media status.

When you got your student visa to come to the states to study dentistry, had you also set your sights on being an entrepreneur and social media influencer, or did that come after?

Emilia Taneva: That came later on. I came here to study orthodontics. I was already a dentist in my native, Bulgaria. About three years ago, my husband and I were traveling a lot and I had a lot of content that I realized I could use. Traveling was always one of my passions. I saw other people doing their blogs and realized that I could turn this into a brand and make it a source of income. At the time, I was following a few bloggers, namely, @nomadicmatt and @theblondeabroad. I was focused on the website first and then came Instagram.

How did you put your team together to build and optimize your blog, BubblyMoments.com?

ET: I have website design experience going back many years, so I was able to do everything myself. I've built other websites in the past, and I love the technical part of working on my website. I studied, I Googled, and I read a lot of manuals about SEO. It's a field that is changing constantly, so I am always brushing up on the latest trends and methods.

People want to know how you managed to grow your Instagram following to over 650K followers in such a short period of time. What's your secret?

ET: It's important to have a niche when you are first building your following. Figure out what you are passionate about. Is it beauty, fashion, food, travel? Invest a great deal of time. I spend 4 or 5 hours per day just reviewing photos that are going to be published on Instagram, and I invested my own finances to build this brand. Just like with any other brand or business, if you want it to be successful, you have to treat it like a business and put in the time. After your following grows you can expand and start posting images that reflect other parts of your life and other interests.





Instagram seems to be your main stage. Is that true?

ET: It's never a good idea to put all your eggs in one basket. Focus on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and your own website; not just Instagram. Try to publish similar content on all of your platforms. Pinterest is its own animal and I spend a lot of time on it as well. The content that is being published on Pinterest requires different image sizing and lots of overlaid text. I use Pinterest quite a bit to drive traffic to my website.

How do you keep your engagement so high? Do you have any trade secrets you'd like to share?

ET: Well, different images get different engagement: whether it is travel, fashion or food. Different times of the day when people are more or less active makes a difference as well. You have to experiment with this formula. I try to engage back with my followers as much as possible. I go to their profiles, look at their pictures and reply to their comments. Engaging back is important.



You have some impressive sponsors, including Clinique, Olay, Macy's, Jared Jewelry and others. How did you land your first corporate sponsor, and what do you think it was about your brand that attracted them to you?

ET: My very first sponsorship was just a gifted product that came from a clothing line in the UK. There are so many platforms for social media influencers and bloggers that connect influencers with compatible brands. The brand wants to make sure you will be a good representative for their product. I have gotten my sponsorships either directly or through one of these influencer platforms. What brands tell me they like about my images are my use of bright colors and the places I've traveled. They like the idea of their brand being associated with these beautiful and exotic locations. They will ask me where I am going next and choose for me to promote their product or service against the backdrop of that specific locale.

In addition to your strong social media presence, you are a successful orthodontist, which you also incorporate into your blog and your social media posts. How do you see the two working together?

ET: Different days of the week are being dedicated to one or the other. At one point, the dental or orthodontic part of the blog might become bigger. People go through different life stages, so when you are thinking of expanding your family and having kids, the orthodontics part might take over a bit more as my traveling slows down for some periods of time.

You have traveled to so many places around the globe. What destination has been your favorite, and why?

ET: I really love Hawaii. It's one of my favorite destinations, and it is so easy to get from one island to the other. Each island has a different vibe, and the nature is so beautiful and unbelievable. Maui is more calming and relaxing. Oahu is more populated. If you are looking for more buzz and excitement, you can always jump over to Honolulu and Oahu. The best part is you're not leaving the states, so it's the same currency, same phone network. It's exotic and convenient at the same time.

People can now shop your lifestyle at your blog, Bubbly Moments. How do you choose what kinds of products to promote to your readers and followers?

ET: I need to believe in the product. I will usually use something for at least a few weeks before giving any recommendation. Now that summer is coming, I am focused on summer content: outfits, accessories, floaties. I love a good pool floaty! I am always looking for fun things to promote. And I do promote things that I personally love and use myself. For example, right now I am obsessed with my Amazon firestick, so I was just sharing that in my IG story. So much of it is completely organic and me sharing what I am loving at that moment. **ML**

Follow Emilia's "Bubbly" adventures at her blog BubblyMoments.com, and follow her on Instagram: [@BubblyMoments](https://www.instagram.com/BubblyMoments).