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## ARYN BAKER

JOURNALIST



Photo by YURI KOZYREV - NOOR, for TIME

As *Time* magazine's Africa bureau chief, Aryn Baker finds herself living in and reporting on interesting times. Before her start in journalism, with a bachelor's in anthropology from Sarah Lawrence, she worked as a Parisian pastry chef. After earning her master's in journalism from UC Berkeley, she moved to Hong Kong and then was hired at *Time* in 2001, covering everything from the first Tibetan beauty pageant to the Arab Spring. She became bureau chief for Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2006, then moved to the Middle East in 2010, where she covered the Syrian uprising, Iran's nuclear program and the rise of ISIS. Now she is covering the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. Baker was born in Los Angeles, attended Viewpoint School in Calabasas and spent her teenage summers attempting to surf in Malibu. She hopes to go back to the beach if and when Africa and the Middle East ever settle down.

**WHAT CHARITY DO YOU MOST IDENTIFY WITH?** Doctors Without Borders goes where few are willing to venture to deliver medical care. What I identify with most is that their volunteers are willing to sacrifice physical comfort to deliver essential aid where it's needed most.

**WHICH CHARACTER FROM FICTION DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?** Atticus Finch, from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It's not easy or comfortable to do the right thing, to tell the truth and to side with justice, but it's the only way to live well.

**WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT?** Despite the lamenting about how a woman still has to choose between a fulfilling career and family, I managed to have both, through a combination of hard work, luck and an extremely supportive partner.

**IF YOU COULD BE THE CEO OF ANY COMPANY, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?** Time, Inc. of course!

**IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE LAW, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE?** I would make it possible to override a veto in the United Nations Security Council, so individual nations cannot hold civilian rights hostage to international politicking.

**HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE LOVE?** Love is not fixed, so I couldn't even begin to define it. How can you fit all the involved emotions in one definition?

**WHAT IS THE GREATEST THREAT CURRENTLY FACING SOCIETY?** Willful ignorance and the segregation of society into self-affirming circles of belief.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR CLOSEST BRUSH WITH DEATH?** The only time I really thought I was going to die was when I was hiking in Tibet and found myself on the top of a mountain with no food and no water, through my own stupidity. I was rescued by two Tibetan men. I think of them every time I set out to do something dangerous.

**WHAT, IN YOUR OPINION, HAS BEEN THE GREATEST INNOVATION IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?** Video communication through Skype or similar services. The fact that poor people in remote villages can now communicate with others across the globe will go a long way toward improving lives everywhere.

**DESCRIBE YOUR PERFECT DAY.** It starts the morning after I have finished a big assignment: a hike or a day at the beach with friends and family, followed by cooking dinner together and sharing a good bottle of wine. Ideally the dishes would clean themselves.