

How Travel Broadens Your Mind

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There are so many benefits to traveling. From meeting new people, trying new foods, experiencing new cultures, seeing new sights — travelling gives you experience and perspective. Perhaps the biggest impact travel has is that it can broaden your mind.

Have you ever watched a little kid and thought, “Wow, I can’t even imagine what it would be like anymore to have my life be that simple?” The older we get, the more experiences we go through, the more complicated our lives becomes, the more perspective we gain. Through good experiences and bad experience, our minds are growing and expanding. That’s what travel is like on hyperdrive. The perspective you might gain in five years of life can be gained in a two week trip to a foreign country. Leaving your bubble and seeing a different way of life, a different set of rules, a different definition of happiness — these are all hugely enriching experiences travel brings to us.

Culture is one of the most beautiful things we have on this planet. People are vibrant, loyal, playful, helpful, rhythmic, and communal. Seeing and experiencing these cultures allows us to take a step back and think about our own culture. Our lives aren’t set in stone; we are transient beings who can change and adapt. There is beauty all around us and sometimes all it takes is seeing one person smile to realize your definition of happiness has been seriously misconstrued.

The flip side can also be true. You may have many beliefs and traditions that you value and those might become strengthened even more by learning about other people’s beliefs. Travel helps us to not judge others, keep an open mind, and let whatever may be, be. Travel allows us to see the world in ways we would never be able to understand in our home countries.

Learning new languages is not only a great skill, but there are nuances to languages that really make you realize what a culture values. For example, I had a Thai man say to me once that there are 15 different words for smiling in Thai. Smiling when you’re happy, smiling when you’re shy, even smiling when you’re upset, etc. To Thais, staying positive and smiling is a more effective way to deal with emotions than getting caught up in anger.

Travel can also give you a greater appreciation for home. I was lucky enough to grow up in Hawaii and even though I always knew it was a beautiful place and I never took it for granted, it wasn’t until my early twenties when I started traveling to other countries that I truly understood *how* beautiful my home was. To this day, after traveling throughout Europe and Asia, I’ve never seen a place more beautiful than Hawaii. And while I still have a thirst to see more of the world, I feel so appreciative of the home I have.

So get out there! Do as the great Mark Twain once said, “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”