



## Member Article - June 2015



### 8 Simple Ways to Be More in the Moment When You Travel

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#### **1. Don't make comparisons.**

Whether you travel often or only occasionally, it's far too easy to compare your current situation to one from the past. The pebbly shore off the Promenade des Anglais in Nice instantly makes you long for the black sand beaches you frolicked on in Santorini. The Pad Thai dish you order in Camden Market makes you realize how much better the noodles were in Phuket. You can't help but notice that the cab driver who picks you up at six in the morning after a night of drinking in Berlin wasn't nearly as friendly as the one who took you to the airport in Lisbon.

While reminiscing about fond memories is fun, the line between warm nostalgia and sudden, sharp dissatisfaction is blurry and easy to cross. Making comparisons yanks you out of the present moment and causes you to be instantly dissatisfied with what is right in front of you.

Don't dwell on what once was -- accept each situation exactly as it is presented to you.

#### **2. Put down your technology.**

Peel your gaze away from whatever device you're connected to and look around. Take note of what you see: the subtle flecks of yellow in the floral tablecloth your mug of cider rests on, a teenage couple locked in a long, slow kiss against the bus stop, the nearby birds pecking at crumbs of bread in the cracks of pavement. It's impossible to absorb the details around you if you're engrossed in the content on a screen.

Stow your technology and observe the movement and stillness in your surroundings.

#### **3. Indulge your curiosity.**

You walk past some graffiti on the wall stenciled with puffy pink paint and you want a closer look. Stop and examine it. Your server recommends the ginger-rum cocktail and despite your penchant for vodka, you're intrigued. Order it. You cruise to the end of the beach bike path and you wonder what's beyond the rocky point. Find out.

Part of being present is giving yourself the freedom to do what feels most right in the moment. If curiosity compels you to try something new, go for it.

#### **4. Be open-minded.**

Maintaining an open mind toward whatever you encounter while traveling is key to staying in the moment. When you say yes to a 40-minute walk to the restaurant because you missed the bus, to trying a bowl of locusts in Laos, or to waking up at four in the morning for a sunrise hike, you allow yourself to partake in new experiences.

If you continually shut down opportunities or ideas because of the rigid expectations, fear, or unfounded judgments you have, you will close yourself off to the potential for thrill and enlightenment that is always right in front of you.

#### **5. Listen to the sounds around you.**

Take the headphones out of your ears, pause your conversation, and listen. Listen to the broken plastic metro seat slapping itself against the metal wall with every lurch and acceleration of the car. Listen to the echoing strums of the acoustic guitar player on the corner. Listen to the persistent jangle of the street vendors' Eiffel Tower key chains; listen to the crunching collision of gravel and running shoes in the park. Listen to the ocean as it crumbles against the shore; listen to the drone of the jackhammer at the construction site across the street; listen to the snippets of foreign dialogue that float over the grocery store aisle.

Creating a habit of tuning in to the sounds around you makes you hyper-aware of your environment so that you never miss a thing.

#### **6. View everything around you as a learning opportunity.**

When your legs cramp because your train seat on the way to Zurich was the two feet of floor space in front of the sliding toilet door; when your shark-diving excursion off the coast of Cape Town morphs into a vicious battle

against sea-sickness; when your charming walk along the city walls in Dubrovnik becomes a frantic sprint to locate your stolen wallet -- you will wish you were somewhere else. But instead of mentally whisking yourself away, surrender to the moment. Figure out how to remedy your current situation and take the necessary steps. Embrace the reality you're faced with so you can learn and grow from your experiences -- or at least so you can remember the details for a great story later on.

#### **7. Forget your to-do list.**

So you still have to make those last-minute train reservations, respond to a weeks-old email from your best friend, find a place to wash your underwear, mail postcards to your entire extended family, and buy a box of local organic tea for your mom. Forget about it. Acknowledge the things you have to accomplish, spend a minute organizing your thoughts, and then let go. Don't be so preoccupied with your list of tasks that you miss the final song of the concert or the question the cute Australian guy asks you.

#### **8. Be spontaneous.**

Be fully present by creating space for spontaneity in your travels. You can't remain in the moment if you always adhere to a strict schedule or plan. Say yes to the voice within you that urges you to step off a marked trail, even if just for a brief minute.

Strike up a conversation with the woman beside you on the park bench,

offer a compliment to your tour guide, walk the side streets back to your hostel instead of the main avenue, dance when you hear music playing, swim in the ocean at night.

Some of the best travel experiences are the unexpected ones, the products of your wild present-moment whims. Call Marcy at Travel by Marcy@Travel 100 Group 847-897-7011 to plan your next exciting experience

*This article was originally published at [Matador Network](#).*

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