

ARTS CORNER

Traveling Is More Than Just Getting From A to B

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Traveling is not just a means for moving about; traveling is a pleasure. There are few people who do not like to travel. Traveling can mean visiting your family just a few miles away, and traveling can mean going around the world. But deep down, it is all the same: traveling.

One of the oldest known examples is that of Herodotus, who traveled around the known world of the time, observing and reporting everything he saw. This provided the travelers and readers at the time with a treasury of geographical and etymological information. Another of the attractions of antiquity lay in the 7 wonders; most of which have since been destroyed but many people came from all over the world to see them. And later came the Romans, the Middle Ages with the Crusades, and the discovery of America.

But it is Thomas Cook who is seen as the father of organized tourism after he chartered a train at reduced rates from Leicester to Loughborough, England for 540 people to attend a temperance meeting. And that is because we have always wanted to travel...

But a journey does not only imply getting from one place to another. It is much more than that! For many of us there is nothing more gratifying than planning a journey, thinking about it all the time, dedicating ourselves heart and soul to all the preparation it needs. And finally, traveling! Because we all know too well that satisfaction lies in achieving your expectations as far as possible. And one easy way to achieve personal satisfaction is to travel, as your expectations will be readily achieved: enjoying the journey.

By traveling you get to know the world, traveling, you discover monuments, squares, museums, theaters, parks, gardens; traveling opens your mind, it opens many doors to you, and forces you to be critical. In fact, through travel you get to know yourself and what you would really like to be, where we would like to live, where you would like to dream, where you would like to make your dreams come true. And it is that merely by traveling, you are already making one of your dreams come true: you are traveling.



Figure 1. Thomas Cook, the inventor of modern tourism.



Figure 2. River Walk, San Antonio, Texas (USA).



Figure 3. Just another day in Puerto Rico.

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But it is not only the days spent traveling that are important. You very often enjoy the memories of the journey much more than the time you spent doing it. Who hasn't, at some time, invited a friend home to see photos or videos of their trip? You enjoy it so much, you are so content that you don't even notice the deep snores of your (now former) friends. And your friends are right, traveling is not the same thing as listening to someone tell you about their travels.

And talking of traveling, there is no specialty like dermatology for allowing you to dream so much. Because few specialties allow you to travel so much. With dermatology, both you and I, have been able discover places we never would have thought of visiting. And that brings back memories of the most recent American Academy of Dermatology meeting in San Antonio, a city that ranked about 300th on my list of cities to visit, but that dermatology brought up to first place at the time. I never thought skin could take me so far...

It is very probable you will forget the bad time you had giving a presentation at a congress in Salamanca, but it's even more likely that you will remember the good times you spent in the aviation Museum in Washington. And that's because when you travel, you remember the good times and forget the bad ones.

And I remember the words of José Antonio, an old roommate of mine: "When I travel, I feel that I am me." It's true! We must not let ourselves be caught up by monotony, by the boredom of always doing the same things. Even if you travel a hundred times to the same place, you will never be bored. Because traveling gets the best out of yourself and you can get the best out of others. When I travel I'm always happy and I'm sure you would be too. I recognize that I like traveling (in case that wasn't clear before), and I remember the words of my good friend Luis Ríos: "Hey my friend, sometimes I don't know if you are a dermatologist or a travel agent."

Traveling is an art and the traveler is an artist. There is nothing that can bring out your deepest emotions and stand your hair on end in quite the same way. Because not everyone in the world travels the same way; some go out alone (and come back with company), some travel accompanied (and come back alone), some travel with friends, with their partner, or with a new friend they just met in the station. Some have one sort of experience, others have others. Some visit one sort of places, others visit others. Some have one sort of memories, others will have others. All this makes traveling an art: the art of traveling. Because traveling is a pleasure.

Life is amazing

Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience.

FRANCIS BACON

I have a very special friend. And this is not precisely because of her beauty, pleasant personality, or intelligence, all of which she has. It is above all, for her undying passion for life. She finds reason to be joyful, thankful, and fully committed in every instant. Her singular and distinct outlook on existence transforms her into a vital and emotionally moving woman, who is always finding new places to discover, impossible challenges to overcome, new loves to seduce, constant happiness to share. And she manages it all.

"Life is amazing," she tells me. And I think she is right. Probably dermatologist Javier Pedraz could share with my exciting friend one of the most daring pleasures of existence: the passion of conquest. Isn't it perhaps this that you seek and find when you travel? The desire to discover hidden landscapes, sleepy sunsets, surprising faces, incomprehensible customs, unknown foods, dangers overcome and battles won... For the traveler abroad, each journey becomes a great metaphor for life, a great spectacle, where it plays the leading role for a time, like a theatrical production for one night only. Traveling is a way of living many lives, of accumulating memories, of creating stories.

I also think that traveling is a sign of intelligence. In the play *Pamela*, one of Goldoni's characters stated "he who never leaves his country is full of prejudices." And that's how it is. Open-mindedness, adaptation to the environment, definite enrichment of the soul, is what the traveler achieves. But it is not only what you see that is important, but the kind of eyes you are looking through.

I encourage Dr Pedraz to keep on traveling. I appreciate his hobby, his special way of cultivating his mind, of filling his predisposed pupils with art and mystery. Life is amazing, and we must know how to live it... by traveling, for example. But if you, dear reader, do not like to travel, do not feel misunderstood. You already know what Hazlitt said: "I would like to spend the whole of my life traveling, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend at home."

It's all a question of making a wise choice. Don't you think?

A. GUERRA