

# Transcript

## INTRODUCTION

00:00 Welcome to the English with Rhys podcast. My name is Rhys. I'm a professional, master's-level English teacher from the UK, and I'm here to help you level up your English.

So, in today's episode, you'll learn advanced vocabulary related to travel, you'll improve your listening comprehension skills, of course, and you'll discover rhetorical questions.

On the English with Rhys podcast, you'll always learn through an interesting context, and today's episode is all about making a travel plan.

Now, here's a very cool thing. I have adapted this episode from a blog that I used to keep about travel. The blog is not available anymore, but I kept the blog posts. Now, this means everything I'm about to say was written by a native for a native, and that's so important when you're learning a language. A lot of what you read for learners is made for learners. These conversations you read never happened which means, sometimes, they'll use vocabulary that is great English but not really said by a native speaker.

01:00

When you listen to authentic texts, that's what that's called, 'authentic texts', you're getting something made for natives. This is really what people say.

So, today's episode, like every episode is authentic in that way.

So, I'm going to talk about how long you should travel for, what you should and shouldn't plan, and something that I like to call 'Goldilocks travel'.

Now, if you'd like to get more out of this podcast, there are three ways you can do that.

02:00 Number one is to download the transcript for free. Studies have shown that you acquire vocabulary more quickly and more fully if you read along while you listen. So, you don't want to miss out on this one. If you're watching this episode as a video, you can also just turn on the subtitles.

The second way you can get more out of this podcast is by downloading the worksheet. Now, this week's worksheet has additional pre- and post- listening activities such as vocabulary practice, comprehension checks, and practice on talking about imaginary situations and using rhetorical questions.

03:00 But if you're really, really, really serious about levelling up your English as fast possible. Well, there's no better way than by following me on Patreon. Okay, if you do that, you'll be able to download the transcript and worksheet, but you'll also get to listen to the podcast ad-free, you'll get additional behind-the-scenes content and activities, and you'll join a monthly live chat with me. But most of all, you'll get a nice little feeling for supporting my work.

So, links to everything I just mentioned are in the description.

## MAIN PART

When we think about a rich person, we often think about somebody with a lot of money, someone who can afford to buy and do whatever they want. But we tend to overlook the other things that can enrich our lives. Close relationships, great health, personal achievements, and the one I'll be focussing on today, freedom.

A career. A mortgage. A nice car. A flagship phone. Children. For many of us, these are our goals. They spell out 'comfort', 'security', and 'happiness'.

04:00 But, for a traveller, they spell out 'obligation', 'restriction', and maybe even 'unhappiness'. For the traveller, each of these things reduces the amount of opportunities that you have.

Now, one thing I would like to mention before I say anything else is that I don't think either person is happier, the traveller or the non-traveller. I don't think anyone better in any way. But I do think that people are different and like to do different things.

All humans are different. We have our own individual wants and our own individual needs, and they can change over time. Personally, I've been slowly moving between the two. I used to want to travel as much as possible, but now all I can think about is how much I want to own my own home.

05:00 And we all have different circumstances. It's just not possible for everyone to travel in the way that we think about travel. Perhaps you only have one week or maybe even just a weekend that you can take off work. Does that mean you can't travel? I wouldn't say so.

For me, travel is more about style than time.

Let's say you're sitting by the pool at an all-inclusive hotel drinking piña coladas all day. I would call that a holiday. But, if you're out in the community, exploring new things, eating new food, speaking to the locals, and trying to understand the culture, well, then I would say you are travelling. 'Travelling' has this idea of exploring that a holiday doesn't usually.

Maybe you're planning to travel right now, or perhaps you like to fantasise about it. If that's the case, then I need to tell you about the biggest mistake that most first-time travellers make. They plan everything!

06:00 Going to an unknown place makes us plan. We're worried that we'll overspend, that we won't make the most of our time, that prices will change, or that attractions will be fully booked.

We all want that sense of security, so these people pay for day trips and their flights back home even before they've even left their house.

It's natural but, by doing this, these people often miss out on going on some incredible adventures and meeting interesting people with fresh ways of seeing things.

Imagine this. You're planning a four-week trip to Australia. You've booked your flight to Sydney, you've booked a hostel for your first two weeks, and you've booked a bus ticket for your onward journey to Melbourne.

Now, let's fast forward a week into your trip.

07:00 You're sitting in your hostel, having a great chat with your new group of friends. They start talking about their upcoming trip to Brisbane and they invite you along for the journey.

So, now you've got a dilemma. You've already paid for your bus to Melbourne. So, do you turn down their offer, or do you say goodbye to the money that you've spent and join your new friends in Brisbane?

The reason I'm telling you about this is that it actually happened to me. I used to be an over-planner, and, in the summer of 2017, I got a job as an English teacher at a few summer camps around Italy. Before I'd arrived in Italy, I had already booked my flight back home. I thought about how it would probably be cheaper to do it earlier.

But, at my final summer camp, I became close with my fellow teachers, and we discussed taking a week-long trip to Sardinia, an island off the mainland of Italy.

08:00 I was faced with the same dilemma from our Australia example. Do I go back home? I've already bought a ticket. Or do I say goodbye to the money that I'd spent and go with them to Sardinia?

This decision wasn't easy, and I took a few days to think about it. Thankfully, though, I finally decided to take them up on their invite. And it ended up being the

right choice.

I made some of my favourite travel memories in Sardinia. Memories that I continue to think about to this day. We ate 27 pizzas in one week, we created ridiculous music on my friend's ukulele, we took an overnight ferry and slept on the ballroom stage, we got lost, we got lost again, and we even discovered a tourist-free flamingo sanctuary. I will never forget that.

09:00 A couple of years later, one of these friends was living in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and he invited me to stay with him for a week. Later, he also visited me in Bangkok, Thailand, where I was living.

So, the decision not to stick to my plans back in Italy led to further experiences later on, and surely there will be even more to come in the future.

That week in Sardinia was worth a lot more than the money I had spent on a plane ticket. Although, granted, plane tickets back then were far more affordable than they are now. Especially if you were going from Europe to Europe. If it was an expensive international flight, there's no way I would have said goodbye to that money.

I guess what I'm suggesting to you is to not worry *too* much about making a strict plan. Allow yourself some breathing room. You'll want the opportunity to make  
10:00 new plans while you're there. If things don't turn out the way they did for me, well, at least you had an adventure.

## AD BREAK

11:08 There's an idea that you may have heard of. It's called 'the butterfly effect'. The idea is that even a small action or decision can lead to something much larger later on. It's named after the idea of a small butterfly flapping their wings which could, possibly, cause a typhoon on the other side of the world.

I think that planning less can have a similar effect. Allow some chaos in your life and that can lead to adventure.

Of course, there is a balance, though. You shouldn't just go to a new country with no idea about the local customs, what to do or see, or where certain things  
12:00 are. If you do that, you could end up seeing even less. I'd recommend just going with ideas, not plans. I often make a list of things that I might like to do while I'm there. Usually, I'll keep that in my maps app. I've pinned the different locations. But once I'm there in the new country or in the new place, I'm way more open to suggestion.

So far, my advice has been mostly useful for long-term travellers, for people interested in making new friends, or for people without commitments back home that they need to return to.

But this doesn't describe all travellers. Some travellers only do it short-term, so let's talk about that.

A short-term traveller might only have a few days or a week, and they're probably just going to stay in one place so that they can make the most of their time. But here's the thing. They will actually end up seeing even more than the long-term

13:00 traveller.

Think about it like this. How many attractions do you know of within ten kilometres of your hometown? And how many of those have you visited? For me, it's not many.

But, when you're in one location for such a short amount of time, there is a pressure or a kind of stress that forces you to want to do more. The clock is counting down and you will have to leave soon. You must see and do everything while you still can!

And here's the best part about being a short-term traveller with this kind of pressure. Itineraries have already been written and are available for free online. Tokyo in six days, Paris in two, London in 24 hours. There is something for every short-term traveller.

14:00 I first discovered these kinds of itineraries when I worked in Shijiazhuang in China. I didn't have much time off, but I wanted to visit Shanghai while I was in China. So, I planned to go for one weekend. Since it was just a weekend, I had that pressure I just talked about. It made me want to see and do as much as possible. And, because of these itineraries, it was easy!

Someone had already taken the time to plan how to get between each location. They mentioned which attractions could be skipped if you didn't have much time, and they talked about things like opening hours and how to beat the crowd.



I followed mine as a guideline. I ignored a few things that didn't interest me, and I added in a few things that did.

If I hadn't used an itinerary, I would have probably only gone to the main tourist  
15:00 spots: the view of the bund, the tallest building in China, and maybe Yu Garden.

But, since I *did* have an itinerary, I also went to Shanghai Museum, I visited the People's Square, I saw a scale model of Shanghai, I took a tram through the Pedestrian Mall, I saw the Old Town, I took a boat along the river, I walked through the French Concession, and I experienced the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel. You get the point. That's a long list of things. I had only spent 48 hours in this city, but I took in so much!

In comparison, my hometown is just two hours away from Stratford-upon-Avon, which is Shakespeare's hometown. I'm an hour from Stonehenge, I'm an hour from the annual Cheese Chase, I'm an hour from the Roman Baths, and I'm only four hours from Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch; somewhere with one of the largest place names in the world.

16:00 However, I haven't been to any of them. Why? Because I can do it any time, therefore I probably never will. And if you stay in one place long-term, you might have that same problem. So, let's talk about that.

So, when I talk about long-term travel, I'm talking about staying in one place for more than three months. This is typically how I've travelled because I've always gone from job to job. That's how I afford it. I work in the countries I go to.

The advantage of travelling in this way is that you get to know the community. If you're working or volunteering, you can make friends quickly who can show you the things you would miss on your own. Eventually you may also get to know locals, become familiar with some of the language, try more local food, and generally get a better sense of the local culture.

17:00 One of the greatest things that I get from living or travelling abroad is that it tells me more about my own country. The things we do that are different or maybe kind of strange, for better or worse.

Now, think about working abroad. You might think you get the best of both worlds. You could work through the week and see something new on the weekend. But let's be honest. That never really happens.

After a 40-hour workweek, you just don't really have that energy. Add household chores on top of that, and you'll see that most people don't really do anything new. So how do you win? Goldilocks travel.

'Goldilocks travel' is a phrase that I made up, to be honest. But it means to stay in one place for one to three months. It's long enough that you have a chance to explore the culture get to know people, but it's also short enough that there is still  
18:00 some pressure to go and do new things.

For me, the novelty of being in a new place wears off after about two to three months. At that point, you don't feel like you're travelling, you don't feel like you're in a new place, you're just living.

Overall, I think the best thing you can do is book your flight there, as well as accommodation for the first little bit of time. Make sure you have enough money in the bank for emergency flights back home, and just go and have an adventure.

## IN CONCLUSION

Sitting here and recording the podcast, telling you about my experiences living and travelling abroad, makes me think about how not everybody can do it.

Yes, on the one hand, I've never been rich enough to just go and travel and not work. I've always had to get a job in these countries. But, on the other hand, I only get these jobs because these countries are looking for native English

19:00 teachers and I happen to be one.

I was born and raised in a native English-speaking country. That wasn't something that I planned. It's something I was born into. And I know plenty of fantastic non-native English teachers, but a lot of countries don't want them. And I think that's kind of unfair.

I'm also lucky that I enjoy teaching English because a lot of people don't enjoy their jobs.

So, while I do work hard and I try improve my knowledge and teaching skills, there is no way that I could have travelled if I wasn't an native English speaker

and enjoyed teaching.

So, let's move on a little bit. I want to tell you about some of the key phrases I used in today's episode.

I talked about how you might worry that attractions will be fully booked. And that's our phrase, 'fully booked'.

20:00 To book something means to reserve something or buy a ticket in advance. So, something that's fully booked, has no more room, or no more tickets left to sell.

Sorry sir, all our rooms are fully booked.

Sorry ma'am, the restaurant is fully booked this evening.

I also talked about saying goodbye to the money. You could also say 'waving goodbye to (something)'. This means that you are accepting that you will no longer have something that you value, or something that you had hoped to receive.

You've taken six days off this week! Say goodbye to that promotion!

At one point, I also said that the clock is counting down. This simply means that time is running out. There is not much time left to do or complete something.

Get 50% off this electric kettle! But act fast, the clock is counting down!

21:00 Lastly, I said that I took in so much in Shanghai. And that's a phrasal verb, 'take in' or 'take (something) in'. When you take something in, it means you're noticing something, usually with your eyes.

I just sat there and took in all the beauty that the countryside had to offer.

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Finally, I would love to thank my dedicated learners over on Patreon. Their names are Anzu Takakura and Jean Nxumalo. Thank you so much for your support.

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