

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION

NARRATOR AND EDITOR RICHARD GAY: Welcome to 30 Brave Minutes, a podcast of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In 30 Brave minutes we'll give you something interesting to think about. The topic for today is travel. In this episode the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Jeff Frederick, is joined by world travelers Kevin Freeman from the department of Political Science and Public administration, Cecelia Lara from English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages, Joanna Hersey from Music, and Jack Spillan from the School of Business. Now get ready for 30 Brave Minutes.

FREDERICK: 80 million Americans did something in 2017 that cost them some money but made them happier, healthier, and created a lifetime of memories. 66.9 million did the same thing in 2016 and the year before 61 million did it. What is this growing activity that Americans are doing? Its international travel. 76% of us want to travel more but lack the finances or have concerns about being prepared to go abroad. That prevents even more folks from getting on a plane or a passenger ship. Only 11% of Americans based on one poll have never been outside of their home state and that's a major change from a half century earlier. 64% of us have never been outside of the country; sadly, 68% of us still check in with the office while away, negating at least part of the ability to mentally and physically immerse yourself into the trip you spent weeks planning. Need some practical reasons to help you plan that next trip?

Researchers have concluded that traveling makes you a better problem-solver. It promotes heart and brain health, stimulates your creativity, imagination and thinking and likely makes you happier. Particularly if your sojourn through the TSA lines ends well and you don't get that dreaded dirty look like your carry-on is a centimeter bigger than allowed. Adam Galinsky, a professor at Columbia business school has published several studies documenting the link between creativity and international travel. Foreign experiences, he writes, increased both cognitive flexibility and depth and integrativeness of thought, the ability to make deep connections between disparate forms. A series of recent studies cited by The Guardian indicates that travel provides clarity and insight, and helps your mind to see details from a broader and more holistic perspective. Earlier this year researchers at INSET, a business school in France and at the Kellogg School of Management in Chicago, reported that students who had lived abroad were 20% more likely to solve a computer simulation of a classic psychological task known as 'Duncker's candle problem' than students who had never lived outside their birth country. We need to travel. It's science. Planning a health kick? In addition to some regular exercise and saying no to carbs better get some travel planned. According to a joint study from the Global Commission on Aging and Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies, traveling actually keeps you healthier. The study found that women who vacation at least twice a year show a significantly lower risk of suffering a heart attack than those who only travel every six years or so, this is equally true for men. Men who do not take an annual vacation show a 20% higher risk of death and a 30% greater risk of heart disease. So if nothing else use this podcast as your

rationalization for planning your next trip. I've got to go to France over the holidays; my health depends on it. Add this to your argument as well: a Cornell University study found that just planning a trip leads to demonstrable increase in happiness. For those of us in North Carolina with so many flights connecting through Atlanta, we often travel through the world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson. And of course, we all have some stories about missing connections and flight cancellations, being marooned in an airport or some other tragedy. Even so, travel is surprisingly possible from a financial perspective and it's safer than ever. Three times as many passenger miles will be flown this year as compared to 30 years ago. But only about half the number of fatalities on average. One in three Americans have some reluctance to fly, but air travel is far and away the safest form of transportation. On balance Americans receive about two weeks of vacation per year. Here to talk about the value of traveling with them and to encourage you to use some of those days to go visit another country are Kevin Freeman, Cecilia Lara, Joanna Hersey, and Jack Spillan.

Kevin why should people travel? Why do you love it? How many countries have you visited?

FREEMAN: Oh, wow. I think I've been to 14 or 15 countries. Most of them in either Europe or in Asia. But what I tell my students, and I do a study abroad trip just about every year, is that, of course you're going to learn a lot about a different culture, a different lifestyle, a different language, a different history than your own, which is great. But something that is arguably even more important and more useful than that is when you travel you learn more about yourself because it gives you the ability to compare yourself and your culture and your lifestyle and your habits with people who live in a different country than you do. So it allows you to create some perspective for yourself. The more information that you have related to that, the more you are culturally enriched, the more you become a global Citizen, and the better off you are for all the reasons that you mentioned earlier.

FREDERICK: That's great. What about the rest of y'all? Why do you guys travel?

SPILLAN: I travel out of curiosity. I'm just curious about what other cultures are doing, why they're doing it, who they are, and why are they different than me? And I have lived in Latin America; I'm married to a Latin and I married a Latin because I was interested in Latin America.

FREDERICK: ... and because she took pity on you.

SPILLAN: Absolutely. But travel has always been something that I had curiosity about and answering those questions. Why are people different and I don't think I have the answer yet. I've been to six continents and I've been to Africa. I've been to South America and traveled all over South America. I've traveled in China and in Morocco and Ghana and I still haven't understood why people are different. They are and that's the way we were created and I think we all should have an understanding of the differences that people have. Not because they want to be that way.

That's because they are that way. I think sometimes in our modern culture some people think people are that way because they want to be that way and you know, I can say they're not. They were created that way because of the way they are. Okay, if that makes any sense.

LARA: I travel because I really love culture and I really like to be involved in the culture of other countries and to get that contact with the people and to find the places and the artifacts that I really want to see. Like, when I went to Italy I needed to go to the Sistine Chapel, I needed to go to see the David or if I go to Cracovia. Okay, that is Krakow in English. It was wonderful to see everything that they have around. So basically, I travel because of the culture. To be immersed in that culture and to be related to that. Yeah.

HERSEY: I travel as a musician to connect with people who do what I do across the world. I live in Laurinburg, North Carolina and I come in to UNC Pembroke every day and it's a beautiful place to live. It's quiet and I play the tuba and so one of the things that I can do is I can get on a plane and I can get off again in Norway and have dinner with another tuba player, who does what I do but at a university in Norway, or I can get off the plane in Mexico and I can meet with a youth orchestra of students all studying the string instruments who've never met a woman that plays the tuba or maybe anyone that plays the tuba. And then I can come back to Laurinburg and Pembroke after it's all over and show all of that to my students.

FREDERICK: That's awesome. So you're all intellectually and culturally curious not only about the rest of the world but about yourselves as well. Pick out a place that you've been to that turned out to be something different than what you expected. And why was it so?

LARA: Well, I've already mentioned Cracovia, or Krakow. To me it really was a revelation. I didn't think that I would like it the way that I did. It was amazing not just because of the culture, not just because of the people but to realize how connected the language is with the culture, you know. The fact that there were so many Hispanics over there. So I went because it was a conference of Hispanics. A Spanish International Conference and then I find out all these people, these professionals, that are teaching Spanish, that they are interested in the Spanish language. That they are, you know, doing research in Spanish. Then why, why Spanish is so important over there? And I found out that's the number one language that they want to learn. You know, the English sometimes is force on them, but they have to choose two languages because everybody speak more than one language - not like here - and the number one language that they speak is Spanish because they don't want to take Russian as a second language. Okay, because of the history that they have with Russia in Poland. They don't want to take German, because of the history with Germany. Both of them were, you know...

FREDERICK: ...sandwiched on both sides...by less than friendly folks.

LARA: Exactly. So now the language that they really want to learn is the Spanish. You see how culture is related to the story, the history that they have, and why now the Spanish is important there. It is amazing to me.

FREEMAN: I'll stay in the same part of world if that's all right. Probably one of my most eye-opening experiences was when I took a trip to Slovenia in Ljubljana, which is the capital there for an academic conference. I just happened to be in there of all places. I'd never been there before and so I think some of us have a lot of expectations about what Eastern Europe is like but I was shocked with how Western Slovenia actually is. It shares a border with Austria, of course. It shares a border with Italy and so it's much more Germanic, I suppose, for lack of a better term than it is, say Bulgarian, or Romanian, or these other countries that we associate with Eastern Europe. They have the cafe culture that's very common in most European countries, beautiful castles and lakes and there's actually the Slovenian Alps. Slovenia is a part of the Alps just like Italy and Switzerland and Austria and Germany are. The people were very friendly. Not a lot of English there so it can be a little challenging at times. But that's part of the charm sometimes is trying to get around and find your way around while having a little bit of a language barrier and then there are universal languages that all of us speak, which is certainly helpful.

SPILLAN: I'll go to a different continent. Two different continents. I went to Ghana for six weeks to teach a data link in the university and I guess I had a real different experience there because here I am in this particular town Tema and I'm the only white person that's in the town for hundreds and hundreds of miles and I would walk down the street and the little boys would look at me and they looked at their mommy, and say "Mommy, look it, look it." Now Ghana speaks English and that's their official language. They do have several tribal languages, but it was kind of weird for me to have somebody say, "Look at that white guy there," you know, and now I can say what, you know, African Americans say about they being in the minority. You know, that perspective is really telling in terms of how I have seen the world. The second experience (was when) I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru back in the late 70s and my first assignment was in Lima Peru, where I had to study the language. I never got too good at it to say to you, but I got enough.

(everyone laughs)

LARA: He's been in my class.

SPILLAN: Yes, I've been in her class. She knows my capabilities, but I was assigned to Cusco Peru. I don't know if anybody's ever been to Cusco Peru but its way up 4,000 meters above sea level and I was put in a little Pueblo called Tio outside of Cusco. So I'd have to go into Cusco to do business transactions. But think about it, I have a bedroll; I have my mochila, my knapsack and I'd have a little light in the room that I'm living in, in the mountains of Cusco and it's a large indigenous population who speaks quechua, basically, not even Spanish, and here I'm struggling

with Spanish and they're speaking quechua. So how do I communicate with these people because I had a job to do. It was a required job that I had to go out and teach these people how to do Economic Development, but I'm struggling with Spanish. But they speak quechua and I have no idea what quechua is and, you know, here I am this Gringo from the United States and during that particular time, it was somewhat chaotic in terms of the political relationship. So, those are two experiences that really changed my point of view and perspective on a lot of things,

FREDERICK: Joanna?

HERSEY: One of the things that I think is great about seeing the other cultures, as we've all said, is that it resets you and resets your view. We tend to have all kinds of assumptions as Americans and when you go to a place, it's all normalized in your mind that they would be how they are. And so when you're in Mexico and you're sitting at breakfast and you're looking at your brass quintet music over your cup of coffee in the morning, you're staring out the window and you can see some of the poverty in the city that you're staying in. And you can see that your airplane was full of executives from other places who are coming in for the leather industry and that interesting mix of poverty that might be in a place. It reminds and resets you to come home and look at your life differently and we all know things like, well, we should stop buying as much, and we should recycle, and we should declutter and take care of our parks and we know that but when you see it and you're faced with it, it's really important.

FREDERICK: Well, let's talk practical for a minute. Each of you guys have been to places that maybe were a little different than what you thought. What are some tips? How do you find that universal language that Kevin talked about earlier? How do you figure out how to get done what you'd like to get done when you're somewhere where you're maybe not like everybody?

FREEMAN: Ah, two words of advice that I would give. The main one is be flexible. You have to be flexible when you travel. You cannot have a rigid structure. Invariably, a timetable that you spent weeks creating is going to be broken because of missing a train, or a language barrier, or something else that's very similar to that. So you have to approach traveling abroad with an open mind because invariably something is going to happen that you did not expect, and chalk it up to part of the learning experience with studying abroad because it's part of the fun, as far as I'm concerned. So, you're on the train and you don't pay attention, and the announcer on the subway is in a foreign language and you miss your stop, and you suddenly realize it four stops down the way. Finding your way home, assuming it's safe, of course, is an adventure.

FREDERICK: ...and you're carrying a tuba...(everyone laughs)

FREEMAN: Or a ukelele, or something similar. So all of it is... you just have to have an open mind and just have fun with it. Don't take it too seriously, I suppose.

LARA: The something that is universal is your smile, you know. Yeah, be friendly with the people even if you feel like you are nervous, but don't expect other people is going to speak English.

FREEMAN: So be careful, okay. Sometimes I say we smile too much.

SPILLAN: I got over this issue and being able to speak another language never bothered me because somewhere I can find somebody who is going to be able to communicate with me. Going to Europe is... I talk to students in the hall..."we go to Europe and we won't be able to speak their language, and I don't know what they eat. You know they don't have macaroni and cheese there, they don't have hot dogs. You know, that food is going to be awful and that these..." I don't know where they get these notions but they just are unrealistic. Going to Europe is like going to New York City for me. You know, it's very easy. I've never found - and I've been all over Europe - I've never found a place I couldn't find somebody to speak English, ever. And only when I go to Asia, it's much different. I go to the mountains of Peru and stuff, that's different. But I think this fear of "oh my gosh, I'm gonna have to eat the food that they eat" that that's a kind of a baseless fear.

HERSEY: That is the best part.

LARA: Yeah, the best part.

SPILLAN: Or, this issue that "I'll never be able to speak," that's just totally unfounded.

FREDERICK: So be flexible. Don't be overwhelmed. Don't be fearful. Any other practical tips?

SPILLAN: Be curious about it. Be curious. Why are they different? You know, this is the issue. I talk in my class all the time about intellectual curiosity. This is you know, something you should be excited about.

LARA: Now we always need to be careful about our surroundings.

FREEMAN: But get out of your comfort zone. Don't eat at McDonald's and Pizza Hut and don't drink coffee at Starbucks every day because you're not expanding your horizons. And in that regard try the little mom-and-pop pizzeria in Italy. Go to that that Slovenian sidewalk cafe where you can have bierock. If you've never had it before, it's fantastic. I mean, yeah, immerse yourself in the culture.

SPILLAN: I think Cecilia's point is well-taken. You don't go to places that are dangerous either, and you should know that before you get there. You know, you don't go to this place. You don't go to that place. I remember I was in China a couple years ago and I was going from Guangzhou to Hong Kong and this guy said he would give me a ride. I got on his van and I said, well, I don't

know this guy from Adam. I can't talk and ...I don't know what he was doing. But I got off that van quickly, you know, I said this is not a good situation. Now, I may have been over generalizing and, you know, but it was night time. It was about ten o'clock at night and I want to go back to the hotel, and I registered my mind, you know, this may not be the best place for me to be. So I got off. But some people don't react that way, you know, and they get into real problems.

FREDERICK: So you guys are all very experienced travelers who have been to lots of different places and you've overcome lots of challenges that may not have been as bad as you thought they might be. So do you plan to get on the organized tours? Do you get on a bus? Are you comfortable enough to sort of figure out where you want to go? What should new travelers do to make sure their first experience really works well for them?

FREEMAN: That's a tricky question because it just depends on what you feel comfortable with. Some people need that extra assistance. They need feet on the ground that are familiar with the territory and the language so that they can get their feet wet for the first time. I don't want to speak for everybody here, but I suspect experienced veterans like us are more than happy just renting a car and getting behind the wheel or hopping on the train and just going wherever it is that we that we need to go.

LARA, HERSEY, SPILLAN: Yeah. Right.

FREEMAN: Maybe not at the beginning though. So yeah, whatever you feel comfortable with and the language barrier and currency and there's a lot of things that can that can serve as a variable to how much you want to do on your own, but if you are able and you're willing and you want to try new things out, I think roughing it on your own is probably the best way to do it in the long run.

LARA: Basically, I will suggest everybody to do a research before they go to the place that they are going and after that: plan. You know, have a planning. What is it that you want to see and then if you think that you need extra help for somebody to direct you, go ahead and do it. If you want to take the car, go ahead and do it. But also there are so many free tours in the city - walking tours, you know, so you can take advantage of those ones. Okay, you feel like you need somebody to tell you what to do.

FREDERICK: So, how are Americans sidestepped and treated abroad? What are the questions that people ask you? Even if you're asking them questions about how to get to here, or where that is. What are they thinking about you as you're learning about them?

HERSEY: I think one of the things that I've noticed recently is that the first thing most people want to address is politics. So as I travel they will ask, "Oh, who did you vote for with our recent

elections? And so I think that we are seen as our political shape. And so that's one thing that I noticed traveling. Also people will say that they didn't expect an American to be so nice. Because I think we do sometimes come across as brusque or maybe because we're anxious we can come across as a little rude. We tend to be in a rush always and when we're on vacation, we don't have a way to slow that down, and I think we come across as disrespectful unintentionally often. And so one of the things we can all work on is really trying to check those cultural rules and norms, and trying to slow down, be respectful and be aware and read our social cues so that we can try to fit in a little better.

LARA: If I'm talking about Central America, Salvador, Guatemala Americans can be easy target, okay, because they are going with the camera. They are, you know, they're speaking English.

FREDERICK: They wear the white socks pulled up to their knees... (everyone laughs).

LARA: Exactly. So they need to be careful of the way that they are going to dress and the way that they are going to behave themselves or, you know, there is different than you going to Europe. Okay, in Europe you can blend a little bit but not that much in Central America.

SPILLAN: Cecilia could blend in a lot easier because she's native of El Salvador. Here I am a gringo, married to a Guatemalan. I've been going to Guatemala for over 35 years. When I first went there I used to go to my in-laws house and they'd give me the keys and I'd go down to the the open market and walk around, you know. I'd come back four or five hours later. I don't do that anymore. Ever. I stay right where my family is, because historically there's been some bad blood. And there's also been these ransom situations where they take people that look like me, kidnap them, and want ransom. So I'm very careful what I do now and where I go, how I act and so I stay more at home. I didn't used to do that. I used to be all over the place. And when I do go to places, I'm very careful of what happens. There is a tendency to not like some of the people that look like me.

LARA: Also sometimes Americans can be very loud. Yeah and exactly. So we need to be careful about that when we're going to Europe. Those are the advice that I give to my students, you know, the way that you talk to each other, whether you fill up the space (everyone agrees.)

LARA: Exactly.

FREEMAN: Act like you belong there too, that helps. I mean the people who were the ones who end up being targets, and these sorts of things, are ones who clearly look like they are lost. They look like they do not belong and are clearly acting like a tourist. You can be a tourist and still be relatively comfortable in your surroundings, and not appear to be one, so yeah, act like you belong there.

NARRATOR AND EDITOR RICHARD GAY: We'll return to Dean Frederick and his guests in just a moment. UNCP and the College of Arts and Sciences are changing lives through education. To learn more about our 14 departments, college highlights and news please explore our website. Additional news and events may be found by following us on Facebook at UNCP College of Arts and Sciences. Remember, you can now subscribe to 30 Brave Minutes on Podbean and iTunes. And now back to Dean Frederick and his panel of world travelers.

FREDERICK: So everybody's had these great experiences, gone to all of these different places, six continents, and all kinds of cool stuff. I'd be remiss if I didn't ask you each for a horrific incident at the airport, missed my connection story. What are some of the things that didn't go so well on a trip?

FREEMAN: I've got a great one, although it happened in the United States. We were on our way to Germany doing my study abroad trip and, historically, I do it with another colleague, Dr. Kirill Bumin, in this case, and we weren't able to book a flight where all of us are on the same plane. So what we had to do was book two flights with one of the faculty members with half of the students. Dr. Bumin, Kirill, with his students managed to get on the plane in Charlotte. No, this isn't Chicago, and made the trip to Berlin right on time. But in the meantime, there was a fire in the air traffic controllers tower between the time his flight left and the time my flight left. So as a result, my flight ended up getting cancelled. We had to stay the night in Charlotte with half the students and meet up with Kirill and the rest of the students the day later. So we got one less day on our trip than the other half of the group.

SPILLAN: I'll give you one that was really kind of, from a legal point of view, traumatic. My wife and I were traveling in 2004 in Peru. We had come from Ecuador down to Peru and we were staying at this hostel in Lima and we went out to dinner and we went to this internet cafe to do some communicating with our family at home and I had put my bag on the floor here and got up to walk away from it and the bag was gone. It had \$800 in it and both our passports. We had just arranged for all these trips to Cusco and a variety of other places. We couldn't go any place. Ronald Reagan has just died, I guess, and all the embassies were closed so we couldn't get out of Peru because once you get in, they lock all the borders. We had a real problem with the police and it was good that my wife was so good in Spanish because she was really great with those police officers, when they were really difficult with us. And then I called the embassy. They weren't very helpful at all. They said that it was my fault and, you know, I should be less careless and etcetera. It was really interesting and the next day somebody came to our hostel and had our passports and wanted \$500. You know, I said to my wife, you go deal with it because you know... She went out there and she got the guy talking about it, then she grabbed the things out of his hands and she says "We're not giving you any money! Get out of here! I'm calling the cops right now." But what we had to do is go back to the police and tell them that we found the passports. That was an unbelievable situation and he began to interrogate us, you know, "Why

are you, two a huge problem?” But we got the passports right back. That's all we cared about. We didn't care about anything else and then we could move on and do what we planned.

FREDERICK: I'll go to that movie! (everyone laughs)

LARA: Well, what happened to me was that we were in Guatemala with my husband and we were in Antigua Guatemala. We were trying to plan travel to Panajachel. So we rent a car and we were going over there and everybody was telling us not to take the old road. Take the new one. Okay, don't take the old one. But we didn't have the cell phones with the map. This was back in the 19s, okay, so we were over there, and there were so many cars all around and they was very dangerous. There was a river crossing the road and I say okay, I think we are in the old road where we ended up going on the place and then we rent a boat. We ended up in the water in the middle of the Lake of the Empanada. Chilled, okay? And damp. So basically, we almost died in that trip, but we ended up, you know, learning many lessons about things that we do, okay, and how we should improve it or how we should work it out to not that to happen, you know, so avoid that. But it was a... it was a very disaster.

FREDERICK: You've got to have a tuba story.

HERSEY: I do and it's not nearly so dramatic as all of this, but I think I could incorporate floods and lost passports in my tuba story for the next one. But in February, I do, each year, a residency in Germany; a week-long recital tour. I get on the plane in Raleigh and I get off in Germany and my tuba was lost for six days. I checked it on Saturday in Raleigh with the nice people and they delivered it the following Saturday afternoon, after an entire week. I had six concerts, including a world premiere. So the cool thing, and like we began this podcast talking about ways to make it easier, and one of those ways is to find your connections, find people you know, and connect with the people there, the locals. So there I am. I'm waiting at the airport; the tuba is not there; they can't tell me where it was and we had to go because there was a performance; I was delayed. And within 30 minutes I had found another tuba to use because I knew enough people. I started Facebook messaging from the rental car on the way. Now, it's the day of the concert because I was delayed and they found me a tuba. It was in the key of B flat. Not the key of C, which is the kind that I had been preparing the solo World premiere, for six weeks. And that meant that all my fingerings were different for each note.

EVERYONE: Oh my.

HERSEY: So I played. It was fine and they loved it. It was a little medieval German church. It was great. So my tuba never did make it in. It was exciting to play the other one until they started telling me it sounded better than I was.

SPILLAN: What happened to the tuba?

HERSEY: I don't know. They never said. So now I use one of those tile tracking apps. So after that trip because many people do do that. Then you can at least know where it is and feel comforted that it's still in Atlanta or whatever. So it was on a truck for a couple days and I had German conversations with the truck driver. It was quite dramatic.

FREDERICK: Last question. Okay, your bucket list destination, the one place you haven't been that you can't wait to go and, why there?

FREEMAN: I want to go to Iceland. This just looks exotic. I want to try all the food there even the strange stuff, the fermented shark. I want to see glaciers, I want to see semi-arctic mountains and Raekyovic is supposed to be a beautiful city. There's only 300,000 people there, so the culture's got to be a lot different. So Iceland is very high on my bucket list.

SPILLAN: In 2019 I'm going to Austria and South Africa, but the only place that I have to go before I kick the bucket is Ireland because my heritage is from there. My father's family, all of them, are from there and there's names on stores. My last name is on several stores in County Cork, so I have to go there. I have to go there.

LARA: Well, my place is Machu Picchu? Okay. I never been in Peru. I really, really, can't wait for our study abroad that is going to go to Machu Picchu this spring 2019. So it's a propaganda at the same time, but that's my bucket list. Is one of the places actually touch my heart, you know. Just to see this civilization. You know, what they did. Okay. Yes.

SPILLAN: I've been there so many times. It's kind of boring. (everyone laughs)

LARA: I hope I can say that one day.

SPILLAN: I used to live in Cuzco and on weekends I would get on the peasant train and go down.

LARA: That is another city that I want to know. Cuzco.

SPILLAN: It's very cold there during the night.

HERSEY: I'm along the same lines as Jack. I'd like to go to Scotland because that's where all of my ancestry is and look up all of the history and walk the walk.

FREDERICK: Well, this has been great fun. Thanks to our esteemed colleagues: Cecilia, Kevin, Joanna, and Jack, world travelers all of them, with great tips. Thanks for listening. Tune in next time for another edition of 30 Brave Minutes. Great job, y'all.

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