

Transcript Interview: Travel and Transport

(Apologies for any typos!)

Hi there, welcome back to Espanglisher. And today I am with my lovely niece again, making a repeat appearance. Thanks so much for doing this, Nat. How are you doing?

I'm good. I'm doing well. How are you? Thank you for having me.

Oh, my pleasure. You're doing me a favour, so that's great. So yeah, I thought we'd talk today a little bit in general about travel and transport.

Okay? Now you've recently moved from, where were you living? Auckland? Wellington?

Tauranga, the east coast of the North Island.

That's right. And you also spent some time in Wellington, but now you've moved to the big Australia. You're in Melbourne? So how's life there? Is it very different to the experience you had in New Zealand?

You know, we tend to kind of put Australia and New Zealand together, everybody from the rest of the world, where actually they're different countries, obviously, and really quite far apart.

Yes, yes. I think we culturally share a lot in terms of coffee culture, sport culture, drinking culture, better or for worse. Very laid back energy. But there are some surprises that I had when I moved over here, namely the work culture. There is far bigger importance put on your **nine to five**, progressing your career, working overtime, working on public holidays, which is something that I wouldn't have experienced in New Zealand. I think New Zealanders have a better work-life balance. So that's been a little bit of a shock to me.

I mean, you're living in a in a city. I imagine that Melbourne is bigger than than other cities that you've lived in.

Absolutely. I mean, the population of Melbourne is 5 million, and that is the entire population of New Zealand.

So... scale increased significantly and with that comes you know comes more opportunity more adventures to be had, more exploring, more to learn because of the population density but surprisingly similar characters that you come across. The very laid-back sportsman or the very keen finance yo pro, the shopaholic woman, not to be stereotyping, but you do see little similar stereotypes in both countries. So it does still feel like a **slice of home** while also being a whole new adventure.

Oh, wow. Cool. And do people know that you're from New Zealand? I'm thinking about your accent or is this because, you know, again, people from not from the area that you're from, we may not be able to distinguish very well between a New Zealand accent, a Kiwi accent and I imagine in Australia there are many different accents as well.

Yeah, I find there are sections where their accent is very, very strong and sections where it's a little bit more **mellowed out**, but I wouldn't say there's dialects.

So yeah, people generally can pick my Kiwi accent and that's only with the E's and the I's. That's a **kicker**. That's when you can tell, okay, you're either from Australia or New Zealand.

It's not always obvious, but I do tend to be called out. Oh, you're a Kiwi. A few sentences in. Yeah, I'm a Kiwi. One of the many who've moved over. But no, I can definitely tell how someone from and another country wouldn't distinguish the two of us.

And seeing as we're going to be talking a little bit about travel and transport, how do people get around? I mean, you know, like it's known, I think people believe that, for example, in the United States, you know, everybody uses the car. Very few people use trains.

Whereas here, the train is really, I mean, the car is popular, obviously, as well. But, you know, the train is well used. I mean, how do people get around and in Melbourne, for example?

In Melbourne, the public transport system is very, very good. So the main sources of public transport are tram and train, lots of cars as well, buses, people cycle as well, Ubers, you know, rideshare.

But the majority of people who commute into the city will do so using public transport, which is actually really **handy** because it takes cars off the road, sardined in together.

And do they have like a metro system, an underground system, or is it just trams?

I don't think so. Not that I've seen. Maybe it's all happening without me knowing, but no, don't know.

It's underground.

Yeah. No, it's all above ground. And it is a very good system. There are trams that will come every five minutes.

You can go to any part of the city. It's not claustrophobic, but it is reliable. So. Yeah, no, in New Zealand, we're very car-reliant. The same as in the US.

I think that's because our buses and trains, because we don't have trams, are just not as well developed. The infrastructure isn't there for it, probably because the population isn't there for it, so the economy isn't strong enough to support it.

But yeah, that I guess that was a bit of a shock to me. I'm used to driving around in my car in New Zealand, and then I come here have to look at a timetable in the morning and if I catch, if I miss one, then have to catch the next one. And so yeah, that was a culture shock for sure.

And is Melbourne, like you mentioned cycling, is Melbourne a bike-friendly city? Is it pedestrian-friendly as well? I mean...

Definitely pedestrian friendly. There are cycle lanes as well. I wouldn't say it reaches the standards of Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

But yeah, there's definitely... I can walk around the city quite comfortably. I don't have to worry about getting bowled over anything, well, apart from the trams, but you know when they're coming so you step aside

Look both ways before you cross the road... Moving on a little bit, so what would you say is your favourite method of transport? I mean you can go anywhere with this.

I said walking.

Okay, your legs.

Because it's eco-friendly. I can measure what time I want to be there and I can go faster or slower. I don't have to depend, I don't have to worry about traffic.

It doubles as exercise, doubles as sightseeing, doubles as getting fresh air. So yeah. Walking.

Perfect. In a kind of a romantic way, kind of love the train. I would love to do like one of those like cross Europe train journeys. You know, you've got your sleeper carriages, kind of like the Orient Express, but without the murder.

Let's hope without the murders.

You know, that kind of thing. just follow the hills.

Yeah, just looking out of the window.

And I mean, you'd have to be kind of rich to be able to allow, I mean, I don't mean kind of doing interrail. I'm past that, backpacking around but you know, like a luxury, a luxury train crossing over the whole of Europe. That would be, yeah, I think I would like that. And I do, I do enjoy travelling by train in general because it's just so easy and it's not like a plane because you can walk around.

You know, generally, if you do a long distance train, it's more or less comfortable. haven't got any responsibility, like you do when you're driving, obviously. and so yeah, of the of the kind of normal forms of transport, I would probably say that would be my...

Yeah, if I wasn't being cheeky, then train would be mine as well. No, you you're not being cheeky. I think you're absolutely right with, your legs are your favorite form of transport. Sometimes you don't appreciate it. Well, you recently they had an operation, so he must really appreciate it.

I really do. Maybe that's why I put it as my top one.

Do you have a least favorite?

The tram, which is what I have to use every day to get into work, namely because I don't like being sardined.

There are lots of stops, which is good if you want to get on and off, but if you're sitting there and I wait 20 stops, it can be quite annoying. Yeah. It's just busy and small.

The cabin is small. There are lots of people. The school kids never stand up for anybody else to sit down. So yeah, absolutely hate the tram and it's what I have to use every day to get to work.

Maybe there's a subconscious association with the fact that you're getting it to go to work. And is there is there like a method of transport that you would like to try that you haven't?

So I've been a bit cheeky with this one as well, just for fun. I think hot air balloon is my honest answer, is my normal answer, just because...

That would be incredible. Imagine seeing the sights from up above and it would be so calm and tranquil and maybe even a bit romantic. And it's quite popular. Well, it's a thing that you can do here in Melbourne. You can see the sunrise or sunset by hot air balloon. And sometimes you see a **bunch of** them in the sky and it's stunning. So that would be cool.

I was speaking to my cousin about the second one. He suggested dolphin. I don't know if you can consider it a mode of transport.

It moves you from one place to another. fits the definition. Yeah, absolutely. I like it. Have you ever done any kind of swimming type activities with creatures?

No, I would love to. I've done like snorkeling in the Pacific Islands and seen tiny little fishes of all colors and coral and but no, never the big fish.

That would be very cool. I did one once which was with sea lions. It was just in a swimming pool. It wasn't, you know, out in the wild. But that was that was amazing. Yeah. Being splashed by the creatures. and that was fun.

Yeah, I think mine would be, well, it always was when I was growing up. Again, this kind of like romantic association would be a like a tall ship. Do you know what I mean? Like the tall ships are like the old fashioned, like three masters, beautiful sails, like a pirate ship kind of thing.

Okay. And when I was growing up, there were, and I'm sure there still are, you know, you can go and do a month learning, you know, learning literally **learning the ropes**, you know, how to to navigate across the waters with these beautiful sails of feeling like you're a pirate.

I'd like to, I'd like to do that. Yeah. I could see that for you.

Not very good swimmer though.

No, you could be writing, but you know, like in the sun, maybe a glass of wine.

Yeah. I'd probably have to work hard though. I'd probably have to be part of the crew.

Yeah. That might be harder.

Okay, and just to finish off with that little section specifically on transport, have you ever had, are there any experiences you could share with us that you've had on a method of transport?

There is one that came to mind. We did a family trip in Australia before I actually moved here, and it was a boat cruise in Noosa kind of way, so east coast of Australia and there are these gorgeous canals that kind of wind through they almost are like highways like suburbs kind of streets in that way because there are houses that are on the sand dunes almost so it's like in The Netherlands. We have those floating towns, essentially.

So we kind of, yeah, we had a boat cruise around there and the guy who was on the microphone was telling us about the history of it and how they had to rebuild sand dunes by hand because they had started to erode and people were going to lose their houses so they had to do something to intervene and the houses are huge they are millionaires beach houses I think potentially and very elaborate and they have all have little jetties, little private jetties so that you can get around on your jet ski, so yeah it was insane and they pointed out a few native birds as well because there was a lot of native trees around. It's just quite a unique place and yeah, I got some great photos and made some great memories

Oh wow that sounds amazing. It kind of puts me in mind of, not that I've ever been there but puts me in mind of like the fjords, is it in Norway the fjords... Have you ever been up that far? I know you've done south and central Europe haven't you?

Yeah, I've done the Netherlands, but I've not gone into Scandinavia. I would love to.

Yeah, that's something I would like to do. The Fjords. Well, that beats the little story that I was going to tell you, which is not specifically about transport, but it was the time when I was stuck with an eight-hour delay at the airport in Madrid.

And that's, again, not specifically the method of transport, but just this whole thing of traveling and when you get, you know, herded like cattle from one place to the other. But the thing is, is in an airport, you've been in many, many airports, I don't know if you have the same sensation, is you kind of lose touch with reality. Time, time kind of, it doesn't feel real and you kind of go, okay, I got here two hours ago, but it feels like yesterday or I've been here for eight hours and what's actually

happened during this time, you know? It's a really weird sensation. Obviously, when you've got a huge delay like that, you just end up walking up and down the duty-free.

Like for chocolates and Toblerones, things you don't need.

But you do have one fun thing at the airport.

What's that?

The travelator.

Now that is fun, especially as a kid if you haven't seen it before. Going as fast as you can.

So yeah, so the Travelator is that kind of long, moving kind of conveyor belt, isn't it? When you've got long ways, distances to walk at an airport.

And it's kind of bouncy. So if you get on it and you don't just stand and wait for it to take you and you actually walk along it, it's kind of bouncy.

I've never experienced it bouncy, but... Maybe I've just been too conservative with it.

Or, maybe it's just I've been on ones that have been shoddily made.

You're on a different planet because you've got jet lag.

It's the one fun thing about being in an airport.

Okay, great. Let's move on. So what about pros and cons of kind of different types of holiday destinations or types of holiday?

So, okay, let's go. I want you to give me like a pro and a con, you know, kind of quick fire. City break.

Unlimited activities, but bustling.

Oh, too many people.

Yes. Which is the positive thing about it, but at the same time, you know, it's a **double-edged sword**.

Yeah. No, you're absolutely right. If I could just do a city break and it was just me, you know.

Yes. It wouldn't quite be the same. but you wouldn't have the atmosphere, would you?

Okay. The beach.

Relaxing, but bugs.

Aah, bugs. I was going to say sand.

And sand. And the salt and the sun.

Oh, it's awful. Why on earth would anybody go to the beach?

Okay, going out into the countryside.

Calm, but isolated.

Why would isolated be a bad thing?

Well, I don't know... if you don't have servers on your phone. If you're too far from a petrol station, you might feel isolated.

Yeah, but the first thing that obviously comes to mind is phone coverage.

Yeah, sorry.

No, no, I think you're absolutely right. We're all dependent, aren't we, nowadays? Even though the countryside is probably where you don't need it at all.

Well, the whole choice of going there is to kind of disconnect, isn't it? To switch off. And I'm like, no, I need to text my friends.

Get on Instagram.

Show everybody the pretty views.

Other social media platforms do exist, by the way, I should say that.

Okay. Sporty holiday, activity holiday.

I would say exhilarating, but planning and equipment heavy.

Oh I would say effort. Have you done any kind of like, not necessarily risky sports, but kind of like, apart from I know you go hiking and stuff like that? Have you done any? I think you did climbing as well for a while, didn't you?

Yeah, rock climbing and hiking would probably be the most extreme. Or like kneeboarding, I'm not sure kneeboarding is considered.

What's kneeboarding? Like skiing, but on a board and you're sitting on your knees.

It's in the name. You never heard of leg boarding before? No. Biscuiting or donuting? Okay. It's an inflatable, like an inflatable bed, but it's in a donut shape and you get pulled behind the boat and you just sit in **the wake** and you kind of like bounce back and forth.

I have no words.

Maybe it's a Kiwi thing. I don't think it is.

But I mean, I very rarely get to the coast, so I may not have seen it.

So maybe you'd consider it an extreme sport. I'll claim that.

I did once see, which was quite fun, paddleboarding.

That's not extreme.

No, but the guy was there with his paddle and his board, obviously. And there was a dog on the front in a life jacket.

Bless. Having a great time. I like that.

Camping.

Off-grid is technically and is my positive, but not very glamorous. And by not glamorous, I mean depending on the type of camping you're doing, you may not have... running water or electricity or, you know, a flushing toilet. Fine when you're five, six, seven years old. As a 20-something year old, no thank you. No.

Bad night's sleep.

Yeah. Tent, weird animals calling in the night. You always feel like there's something trying to come and get you in your tent. If you hear any rustling... It's probably just a hedgehog, but it feels a lot bigger when it's dark and you can't see it.

Oh, Lord above. Okay. Self-catering, like going, you know, hiring a an apartment or something like that.

I would say freedom, but not always safe from **scams**. It is technically safe, but I think I've heard of people being scammed by it. Like the photos aren't exactly what it looks like or it wasn't actually available that day and they haven't got their money back. So freedom in terms of you can choose from lots of different places around the city, if you're in a city, where you want to be, you can choose the dates, you can choose how much money you want to pay, but you might get scammed if they haven't been, haven't had good reviews or...

Okay, hotel.

Fancy but expensive.

And you have to leave early in the morning.

Oh yeah, yeah. Why on earth would I want to wake up before 11?

I mean, you can put your do not disturb sign out, I guess, but then your room doesn't get cleaned.

I guess when you go to a hotel, it's because you're using that as a base to go off and and see like a city or, you know. Oh, you know about this one, because you've had a lot of experience with this. Doing like a long tour abroad, period of weeks or months travelling around.

I would say **eye-opening**, but you get a little bit **homesick** if you don't have routine or if you're not in contact with your family too much. So it can be absolutely life changing, but without having that familial connection, sometimes you feel a little bit lost.

Yeah, understandable. And **living out of a suitcase** or out of a backpack.

Oh yeah, repacking it every morning because as you packed something that you needed right down the bottom. It's so frustrating.

Finding somewhere to wash your clothes.

Yeah, some dodgy basin in a hostel.

It teaches you about life.

It does. I feel like you develop your personality as well. You learn a lot about yourself. What you're willing to put up with and what you're not.

Absolutely. And finally, a staycation. So a staycation is like a holiday, but in your own country or near where you live.

I would say it's an escape, but incredibly boring.

Really?

Yeah, like you're in your own city.

Well, you don't necessarily have to be in your own city, I don't think, with a staycation. So, for example, if you did a staycation in the UK, maybe you live in the south and you do it, you kind of go to an area not too far away, but that you don't really know very well. You don't have to stay like in your city, as I understand it. So it's like you're like getting to know your own country because, you know, we talk about, oh, traveling and seeing other places, which is wonderful and marvellous, but sometimes we end up going, well, we don't even know our own.

I don't know if we really have that in New Zealand.

Well, you're always going somewhere else, aren't you?

Yeah, exactly. I don't really visit anywhere else in New Zealand unless I've got a specific reason to. I don't know. That's boring. It's your own country. Go see what else there is.

Fair enough.

Okay, so, thinking about travel, continuing with that kind of theme, if you had a time machine, Nathalie, where or when would you travel to and why?

I would love to travel back to 50s and 60s and poke my nose into Jersey and Birmingham and see what life was like for my grandparents and my great-grandparents. I think that would be... so eye-opening to kind of see what the norms were and what the family traditions were and the activities that they liked their routine. All of that would be so cool to feel closer to my family, some people who I've only heard anecdotes about rather than you know like I've met as a child or as a baby but don't remember, that would be incredible

Do you think they would be, I mean, what would you do? Would you just be an observer?

Yeah, I think I'd just like to be a **fly on the wall**.

Like seeing a family Christmas would be cool. You know, all these people who I've heard of and I've seen photos of, but never had the chance to meet them because they died before I was born or because, you know, they live in a completely different country. I think specifically like for my grandpa, I would love to have seen him **in his heyday** when he was in the cross country team at uni and they were, you know, doing competitions in France and England and seeing him in his element would be like incredible.

And then for Gran, I would love to have seen her ballet performances, all the costumes and the type of ballet that she did and all of that would just make me feel a lot closer to them and understand also, you know, the political landscape and the social landscape and how did that shape them? And if you were to go even deeper, I could say, by looking at a society that was 60 years ago, I can see what my privileges are living in 2025. How is that different from my life? The other thing I thought about was, I assume you have the same experience where someone might say to you, oh, that part of your personality is so much like your third cousin twice removed. Or you've got the exact same eyes as this person. I would love to meet them to see if it's accurate, to see if it's a compliment.

Yeah, I don't know if I would want to meet that person. It may not be a compliment.

No, maybe not.

Right. Well, that's really interesting, Nat. I wasn't expecting an answer like that. I was thinking, oh, you're going to go for a particular era or something like, historically speaking, but you've gone really personal, which is really interesting. I don't know. don't know if I would go personal.

I mean, the Victorian age is an age that has always fascinated me, but you know the clothes would be very uncomfortable. You'd have to wear a bonnet everywhere you went.

And layers and layers and layers.

Getting to the bathroom must have been a nightmare. Although, you know, what we understand as how we celebrate Christmas, for example, you know, the Christmas tree and all of those traditions became what we know today from that period, from Queen Victoria's husband, who was German. And he brought over the tradition of the Christmas tree. And so, kind of when you watch these... when you see a film like Harry Potter and they go down Diagon Alley and it's all it all seems very Victorian, kind of the way that people dressed and those types of things. I think think seeing that would be quite magical. And If I did go back Victorian times, I would have to be somebody rich and not a grubby urchin living on the street.

No, that would not have been a good life.

No, and women's women's rights were probably not that great, you know? So yeah, that might not be a nice place to actually live. To see, yes, but yeah, not to live it.

But there are so many very famous writers from that era that hey it would be cool to interact with them and understand their brain more and the struggles that they went through as well to be published.

Yeah, absolutely. **I can't help it**, for example, Charles Dickens. Yeah. I had to mention it. Had to mention it.

The Dorian Gray author.

Oscar Wilde. Wow, yes, he had a very interesting life. Okay, brilliant. So thinking we've gone on kind of cultural references, could you recommend a book or a film or a series or anything that kind of has a main theme or a general theme relating to travel or transport? It can be fiction or nonfiction.

You already mentioned it earlier in the podcast.

Did I? Sorry.

Murder on the Orient Express. Which I think everybody has read or seen, but that was the first thing that came to mind. Go back to the 1930s. Poirot's wonderful, wondrous ways of...

Deduction. It's something everybody must see at least once or or read.

Yeah, I agree. There's the Kenneth Branagh adaptation that came out few years ago, which I thought was quite good.

Yeah, I wasn't a huge fan of that one. But because I think because I know so well and I've seen many times the one they did in the, it's probably the 70s, I guess, you know, with these **star-studded** ensemble casts. But it's still really fun, fun to watch.

I was thinking about this as well. And although I admit to never having read it, I think probably a book or a piece of literature, which is the epitome of travel, transport, is the Odyssey.

Wow. You go way back.

Well, yeah. Ten years trying to travel home after the Trojan War and all of the adventures that they have along the way. I don't think you can beat that. And they're actually thinking of films, there is a film coming out next year of the Odyssey with Matt Damon. Coming out, I don't know when, sometime next year.

Oh, that's a great one for transport.

And travel. Well, that's been wonderful, Nathalie. Thank you so much.

Thank you for having me.

You're more than welcome. It's a pleasure for me. It's a privilege.