

The Art of Slow Travel

The World of Fast Travel

Do you travel? Surprised to see how much other people cram into their travel schedule? How people can see a capital city in two days. With a “must see” list longer than the Lord of the Rings Trilogy – you can’t help but wonder how they get it all done.

You may spot these fast travellers, they will be sleeping on the boat tour, or on the bus. On route to their next destination.

They will be in the queue for hours to see the Mona Lisa. You’ll see them quickly snap a photo before moving on to the next painting. They’ve not even glanced up, savouring all the magic within the art itself. The magic that can’t be captured in a photo.

You can’t help but wonder, will they ever look at these photos? Bore others with the photos they took? Will, they remember the waiting, the painting or the trip at all? Any which way, they can tick it off their check list, and move on to whatever is next.

At some point, we’ve all been there. I recall racing through Europe with a Eurorail pass in one hand a cheap glass of wine in the other. Cities blurred into one another – I saw enough churches to last me a lifetime.

Yet now, years on, this is no longer how I view of want to travel. The destinations in my life are not a checkbox, waiting to be ticked off and seen in a hurry.

No, now I am a slow traveller. I enjoy the endless meandering through strange suburbs. Blending in with the locals and

relishing each divine moment that I spend somewhere, be it home or abroad.



The World of Slow Travel

Slow travel is the opposite of trying to cram a city into two days or an entire country into a week. It is the state of being for which they special words, like 'meandering'. It's savouring the moment, meeting locals, and even stopping to smell the flowers.

Time is a commodity if you only have so much time off a year, and you go away for a weekend. You want that time to last, and to enjoy every precious moment of it.

Which means that you may not want to waste it in a queue to a museum. Preferring instead to find a spot to have a coffee and do some people watching on a terrace. All while, tasting the local cuisine, studying the locals they go about their day.



How to Travel Slowly

There are many ways to travel slowly. It is often a good idea to either scrape your ever extensive 'checklist', or exchange it for a few top priority items.

Through being spontaneous and open to what comes up, time also slows down.

When the old gentleman in a carpet shop offers you a cup of tea, why not take it rather than rush out to the next shop.

Sitting down and having a chat with a local gives you new perspectives into someone else's life. It is an opportunity, that you would otherwise never get the chance to experience – and can't be bought.

A simple cup of tea can end up being worth its weight in gold. When you look back on your trip years down the road, it will be this simple cup of tea, rather than a church that you remember.

Do carry a map if you feel you need to, or if you worry about getting lost. Ask your local hotel or hosts, if there are any

dodgy areas to stay clear of. Depending on the country it's always good to know where they are and to be sure to avoid them.

Then, head off into the wild blue yonder. Leave your watch and phone behind, and see the world unravel before your eyes. With the wind in your hair rather than a checklist of expectations in your pocket.

The best thing about slow travel is that you don't even need to go abroad. How often do you meet locals who have never been to a nearby landmark or tourist haunts nearby? Perhaps, in one form or another, we are all one of them?

Wouldn't it be fun to cultivate some curiosity and uncover stories and history in our local area?



Exploring the world outside your door

In this era of conscious travel, we are all concerned about our ecological footprint. The resources spent in getting from A to B, and at times suffering the masses of tourists doing the same. So why not practice slow travel by exploring the world outside our door.

It's not that hard, to find things to do. Perhaps visit a local museum, or tourist office to see what's on.

Right now, I am travelling and living back in the UK. My ultimate form of slow travel, by spending months in one place. At this point, I am in the Cotswolds and have uncovered an extensive group of Long Barrows, (megalithic burial sites).

Only a few locals know about them, and fewer go to visit them. If you are living or plan on visiting the UK, these sites are pretty easy to find. There are a few websites where you can see what are near you or a short to long drive away.

Here are two I've been using:

<http://www.megalithic.co.uk>

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Of course, if you are not in the UK, there is always the internet. So much and the world at the tip of our fingers, a wee bit of sleuthing will give you a small taste into the life of a local Indiana Jones.



Be sure to pack a sense of Adventure

What treasures lay waiting around each corner. Treasures being new stories, lives, and images waiting to be discovered and shared.

The best news ever, is a sense of Adventure is free, and portable, you can take it with you anywhere.

Use it as a tool, to travel through the world and life nice and slowly. Savour, experience and cherish each and every moment life offers to you. You'll see life and the world through fresh eyes and who knows what you will find!

Big thanks to [Simon Matzinger](#) on [Unsplash](#) for featured image.