

Tips for Thoughtful Travel: At the Start of Your Trip

1. **Heed your longings.** Some things will appeal to you or touch you deeply that make no sense to anyone else. That's OK. Pay attention when you're stirred. Often, moments on trips speak to us in ways different from what our day-to-day routines allow.
2. **Find what matters to you.** Look for personal discoveries and record them, either in photos or in a journal. It doesn't matter if something is meaningless to others. Take pictures of things you may never show anyone else, just because you like them.
3. **Maintain your creative routines.** You may not write, draw or practice at the same time or in the same way as you do at home, but you can often find creative ways to incorporate these into your trip making your routines and your trip richer.
4. **Pay attention to details.** Look closely at the myriad micro scenes within the larger vistas. Photos of the architectural details often make better images than the more traditional overview shots. Look closely at everyday items – door knobs, light switches, street signs, hubcaps, or shoes, items in a grocery store or kids' expressions or games. Magnificent vignettes abound if you look.
5. **Look for commonalities.** The differences in a new place or people will stand out on their own. Instead, look for the similarities, especially below the surface at the soul level. You will find that no matter where you go, we're more alike than we are different. This sounds like a small issue, but it's easy to forget and if you're struggling with culture shock, homing in on the familiar will help.
6. **Laugh and be childlike.** Take joy in the simple things that delight children. Risk looking silly. Laugh, dance, run, skip and play in ways you never do at home. Rekindle the enthusiasm of a child. And be prepared to experience a new sense of wonder.
7. **Step outside yourself.** Many of us find it's easier to have meaningful conversations with strangers on a trip than with neighbors at home. Take a risk. Strike up conversations with people you'd never talk to at home. You will likely never see them again, so you don't have a lot to lose, but much to gain.