

When you're stuck in the office, rounding up still another stressful day at your workplace, you've probably dreamt about being at any other place – maybe in a hammock, drinking a margarita and listening to the calm smash of turquoise waves against fine, white sandy beaches.

Dreaming about tropical islands is really popular– virtually as popular as the feeling of disappointment that those kinds of islands frequently inspire in actual life. Rather than pristine beaches and relaxation, a trip to the tropics usually entails a lot of people, mosquitoes, and sunburn. Certainly, the concept of travel is commonly a great deal more enjoyable than the reality of it.

However, as explained by this book, it doesn't need to be like that.

By taking more pleasure in small things, maybe the miracle of air travel or the beauty of nature, we can get more enjoyment in our trips. From clues on how to appreciate the specifics of the things surrounding you to reassuring stories about the adventures (and misadventures) of former travelers, this book will provide you a philosophical viewpoint on an activity, the enjoyability of which is regularly overlooked.

Chapter 1 - Dreams of travel are usually pretty different from real trips, partly due to the fact that you can't travel away from yourself.

The life of a human is frequently one long search for happiness, and the ways to this usually elusive end are numerous. Some turn to money; some, to love. Yet, others find happiness and significance in travel.

However, the reality of travel usually has a bit in common with the vague fantasies that first motivate one to hit the road, a difference that's properly talked about in *A Rebours*, which is a French novel written by Joris-Karl Huysmans in the year 1884.

Duke of Esseintes who is the book protagonist, is a hermit and a misanthrope; he hates the society of his local village and uses his days staying in his room, reading classic literature.

However, his reading motivates him to go back into the world. The duke reads Charles Dickens, whose clear explanations of foggy London fill him with a desire to visit the popular city. Immediately, he arranges his bags and sets forth.

While he was still in Paris, to while away time before his train departs for the first phase of the journey to London, the protagonist goes to an English bookstore and buys a London guidebook. Still full of his London interest, he then enters an English tavern, packed with tanned British maids, and smelling of beer and meat.

However, this whole untimely Britishness made Duke feel less confident. When it was time to get on the train to London, he is completely exhausted. Therefore, rather than experiencing the problems of train travel –going to the station, looking for a porter, sleeping in a compartment, standing in lines– he goes back home, never to go on another journey again for the remaining of his life.

The disappointments of travel definitely aren't restricted to fiction alone, and they affect people in the twenty-first century just like they did to those in the nineteenth century.

For beginners, travel isn't the best method to avoid your issues, because anywhere you go – well, your problem will be there you'll be.

The author visited Barbados one time. He'd been anticipating an avoidance from his daily habit, some time to relax and release. However, when he got to Barbados, he couldn't basically relax and enjoy the stunning view or the delicious fresh fruit; instead, he felt sad and nervous, just as he felt when he was back home in London.

Real travel is frequently far less splendid than the ideas one has of it. However, traveling still has a world of phenomena to show– it's only about amending our modern tactic to it.

Chapter 2 - Air travel can startle us, change our viewpoint and teach us to appreciate clouds.

The nineteenth-century French poet called Charles Baudelaire really loved big ships. He considers it fantastic and pleasant that such a huge craft could breeze, with quickness and efficiency, from one continent to another continent.

The frigates and steamships of former centuries may be really extraordinary; however, contemporary means of transportation are even more extraordinary.

Air travel isn't just wonderful; it also provides a chance to – literally –change your viewpoint.

If Baudelaire considered the elegant floating of a large boat was extraordinary, think of what he would have thought had he experienced the takeoff of a Boeing 747. Or, better still, if he'd witnessed the haste and delight of being inside the plane as it leaves the ground.

This instant is sufficient to break through the indifference of even the most experienced traveler. While taking off, as we basically leave the earth, we're reminded of our ability to witness similar instants of change in our own personal lives.

As we fly higher, we see as factories, houses, and cars turn smaller and smaller. This alone is a psychologically healing experience, revealing to us what all our human illnesses and drives really are: tiny. From that point (up in the air), even your nation may start to look quite unimportant.

However, as the plane goes higher until we're flying in a weird landscape of cotton mountains and snowy fields. We're among the clouds.

Clouds have a negative reputation down on Earth; they impose shade and release rain. However, when you're next to them in the air, their beauty turns out to be indisputable, as well as their three-dimensionality.

Factually speaking, we've got an unusual view, one that would have captivated former painters like Leonardo da Vinci and Nicolas Poussin.

Baudelaire would have certainly been jealous. Although his view of the clouds was earthbound, he still wrote profusely about the clouds. The narrator of one of his poems states that "I love the clouds / the clouds that pass by / there/ there/ those lovely clouds!"

Chapter 3 - Exoticism, which assures an escape from the toil of home, attracts to travel.

One time, the author visited Amsterdam. Although not precisely a far-flung travel journey, the city was, according to the author, unquestionably foreign. He saw himself enjoying in apparently ordinary things, like the signs at the airport. The Dutch language's double vowels and the unknown fonts offered confirmation of a thrilling fact: the author was in a foreign land – a place that, according to, was exotic.

The desire to find out unaccustomed cultures has long enticed travelers abroad. And one of the assurances held out by these cultures – that is, an escape from the accustomed drudgery of the daily– inheres in the umbrella term exoticism.

Exoticism has been in existence for some time. Back then during the nineteenth century, the word "exotic" was comely used to mean nations in and around the Middle East – or, as this region was named then, the Orient. And, back then, the Orient was mentioned a lot.

Lord Byron wrote a very famous poem in 1813 called "The Giaour," which was set in Turkey, narrates the story of a Muslim woman, Leila, who belongs to the harem of a man called Hassan. After she fell in love with a man that is not a Muslim (a giaour), Leila is sunk in the sea by Hassan.

During the year 1829, a French author named Victor Hugo wrote a set of famous poems known as "Les Orientales," set in the eastern Mediterranean. Also, a few years after, French painter Eugène Delacroix went to Morocco and took to naming himself an African.

This European interest for all things “oriental” even formed Continental spaces. Certainly, in 1833, the huge Luxor Obelisk was captured from the Luxor Temple in Egypt and carried on the suitably named barge Louqsor all the way to Cherbourg, France. From that point, it was taken to Paris, and, presently, it marks the towering center of the city’s Place de la Concorde.

Exoticism assures an escape from toil and boredom. And of the whole malcontented authors of the nineteenth century, just a few of them were as disaffected and tired of bourgeois pieties as Gustave Flaubert, who stayed in Rouen, France.

His diaries are filled with complaints about the dullness of his neighbors and their minor cares. Flaubert believed the Orient to be an escape from this boredom, a fantasy imitated in his 1839 novel *Les Mémoires d'un Fou*, whose protagonist wastes his youth daydreaming about Egypt.

Flaubert even had the chance to live out his fantasies. When he turned 24, he inherited and took over the family fortune, which enabled him to escape Rouen and travel to Egypt, where he fulfilled his urge for exotic cultures and exotic women.

Chapter 4 - Travel was formerly about exploration; however, modern travelers need to learn to ask questions.

One time, while the author was visiting Madrid, he was unexpectedly overwhelmed by a feeling of weariness. He stayed on his bed, where he would have stayed had the hotel’s cleaning lady not continuously disturbed his sleep. Eventually, he thought that he might as well go and take a look at the city.

The wandering exhaustion that drove the author to find refuge in his bed is a somewhat usual symptom of travel; but, it’s also a pretty new one.

Travelers of former times didn’t possess the time for torpidness since travel was formerly about exploration.

For instance, let's look at Alexander von Humboldt, a German explorer who visited South America in the year 1799.

His journey had a definite aim: to write down facts. And if he wasn't recording fact, he was creating experiments that would help his future recording of facts.

During the journey, he barely had spare time. He thoroughly recorded differences in sea temperature; he learned how to guess the ship's position with the assistance of his sextant and the stars, and he retrieved unclassified species of sea life from a net hanging overboard.

As soon as the ship was anchored off the coast of New Andalusia, Humboldt's passionate fact recording raged on. He wrote down the temperature and atmospheric pressure; he measured and sketched plant life; he spoke with the local people and recorded facts about the way they live.

In a nutshell, Humboldt was a busy man— something that contemporary travelers commonly aren't.

Presently, it's not compulsory to explore since, thanks to people such as Humboldt, the world has been explored already. And it's this fact, maybe, that caused the author's period of lassitude; he had nothing to be thrilled about.

When the author went to Madrid, he visited the Royal Basilica of San Francisco el Grande. However, the uninteresting facts provided by the guidebook made him bored. What did he mind that the paintings were painted in the nineteenth century? Therefore, he attempted viewing things from a new viewpoint by asking his own questions.

What initially made people create churches? Why don't every church use the same pattern? Why did the architects who built this church become really successful?

Those kinds of questions can rekindle the curiosity that guidebooks usually quench.

Chapter 5 - Vacations usually entail nature, useful outcomes of which we can learn to extend.

The British Romantic poet called William Wordsworth was a fervent critic of city life. The pollution, the traffic, the unattractive buildings –all these, he assumed, could have nothing except a harmful consequence on one's inner well-being.

Presently, a lot of people would concur with Wordsworth. Therefore, no wonder that people usually decide to go on vacation to the natural world, where they can heal and relax.

According to Wordsworth's perspective, nature is useful to both body and mind, enhancing the hardiness of the body and the purity of the mind.

While the author traveled to England's Lake District, he couldn't help but agree with him. Although it was raining, the author still felt relaxed as he hiked through a dense oak forest, with the raindrops chattering on the canopy overhead.

The oaks appeared eternally patient, gently taking in nutrients and water with their roots, season after season. Wordsworth stated that humans have much to learn from nature, which provides us a lot of such illustrations of patience and endurance. The author felt calmer among the oaks, as he set free his life's regular problems.

However, what about when you leave the forest and go back to the city? Won't this calm be blown off?

Wordsworth extended the usefulness of nature by storing up "spots in time."

He clarified this term to his sister in a letter from 1790. During that year, while he hiked through the Swiss Alps, and the outstanding views – of the gorge of Gondo, of Lake Maggiore – they made a deep impression on him. He wrote to his sister that these views would ease him for the remaining of his days.

They certainly did. Decades after, Wordsworth kept writing of the Alps in his poems. These dear moments, suspended in the amber of memory, were “spots in time” which are the happy memories of old-time that could dismiss current sadness.

Present-day travelers can gain from this same method. Watch a beautiful view and truly take it in. Then, any time the stresses of city life become a lot, you can remember this moment of peace and, hopefully, relax as you relaxed when you looked at that view.

Chapter 6 - Nature's beauty can stimulate spiritual feelings, and the Bible supports the contemplation of nature

Stunning natural landscapes usually look as if it has been made by some great and incomprehensible force; hence, it's probably not surprising that the natural world regularly stimulates deep spiritual feelings.

The author definitely felt feelings of a divine presence while he traveled to Egypt and was exploring the mountains of southern Sinai. The deep canyons and valleys and the towering granite mountains, everything over 400 million years old, were definitely awe-inspiring.

It's nearly definite that the men who wrote the Bible experienced something similar because this landscape is the backdrop of a lot of episodes in the holy book. For example, in the Book of Exodus, God looks out for a group of discontented Israelites, who, frustrated by a lack of food in Sinai, struggle with the temptation to worship foreign gods.

Certainly, natural beauty has frequently been referred to as a testament to a holy presence. For example, the nineteenth-century scholar and critic named Ralph Waldo Emerson, once wrote that nature's aim was “to stand as the apparition of God.”

Due to that, maybe, a lot of biblical stories encourage the contemplation of nature.

For instance, the Book of Job talks about the story of a rich, happy and devout man – Job. But, in a short time, his flocks of sheep are stolen or killed and a raging storm kills his firstborn son.

Job's friends claim that some sin might have caused this series of disasters. However, Job knows he's innocent.

Grief-stricken, Job questions God what he had done to deserve such kind of suffering. God replies by telling Job to contemplate the natural world. Nature, God gives the impression to be saying, is greater than the individual; it has it's own laws, laws which might look strange and strict to people; however, which, just like the unfathomable edicts of God, have a deep logic.

Chapter 7 - Art can increase our gratitude for landscapes, both foreign and local.

If Vincent van Gogh had never taken a paintbrush and palette and dedicated to painting scenes from Provence, France, the author most likely wouldn't have traveled there.

A lot of people have experienced something similar– only wishing to visit Spain after seeing the movies of Pedro Almodóvar or just having an interest in highway overpasses after seeing the photography of Andreas Gursky.

Certainly, art is a great means to get an appreciation of foreign landscapes.

It's quite easy to overlook the world's beauty. Usually, the desire to travel fades immediately it happens; what, could a different country have to give? We've been around the block a lot of times to reason that we might witness something new.

Well, if you feel like this, it might signify that you have to look closer, which is exactly what the lens of an artist's canvas can assist you to do.

Great art provides a new viewpoint, a means of viewing a place that unexpectedly fills it with life and interest.

For instance, during the pre-eighteenth-century Britain, the English countryside was seen as tedium incarnate – a barren, flat expanse of nothing much. If told to pick between Britain and the Mediterranean, travelers selected the Mediterranean all the time.

This choice was stimulated by the time-honored ritual of art. In the primeval Roman poems of Virgil and Horace and in the paintings of seventeenth-century painters like Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, Italy – and the Italian cities of Rome and Naples specifically– were celebrated.

However, then, during the eighteenth century, British artists started portraying their homeland.

James Thomson wrote a poem known as “The Seasons,” which praised English scenery. It motivated other poets, like Stephen Duck and John Clare, to follow his path. Meanwhile, the British painters Thomas Gainsborough and Richard Wilson also started portraying the English countryside.

These new viewpoints had a profound result. Immediately, tourists were flooding to the Lake District and the Scottish Highlands.

Chapter 8- While traveling, drawing and writing can make us concentrate.

Have you ever noticed how tourists behave? They have a tendency to use small time really watching historic monuments or breathtaking landscapes; instead, with a camera or phone, they take a few photos and move fastly on to the next compulsory view.

However, if one doesn't take the time to really notice things, what is the significance of traveling?

If you'd like to improve your concentration and extend your appreciation of what you notice while you travel, attempt drawing the things you see.

John Ruskin the nineteenth-century art critic had great trust in the power of drawing to improve aesthetic appreciation. He assumed that drawing is a means for people to capture external beauty and internalize it.

When he was still a child, Ruskin was really overwhelmed by the beauty of grass that he wanted to consume it – an unreasonable fantasy that he was able to understand later on in life by more

artistic means. Rather than actually eating the grass, he “ingested” it by using hours drawing blade after minute blade.

Different from capturing a picture, which doesn’t take any time at all, the time-consuming process of drawing calls us to ask questions. How, for example, does that tree’s trunk connect to its roots, and why do some leaves have a different shade of green from others?

Drawing inspires us to notice our surroundings with a deeper eye, and appreciate them more.

Writing – which John Ruskin at times called “word painting” – has a similar consequence; it can assist us to engage and appreciate our surroundings.

Ruskin didn’t support the lazy routine of sending home quickly written letters. Commonly, those kinds of letters say little, proving cursory portrayals of the pretty landscapes or the chilly weather. It’s better to ask more difficult questions and find finer information. Why, for example, is one lake prettier than another? What another object might it look like? Does it stand out for reasons other than its plain size?

Writing pushes us into really focusing on every information, and it’s this state of concentration that will assist us to appreciate where we are.

The Art of Travel by Alain de Botton Book Review

Traveling, although having its share of difficulties, can cause great pleasure. Flights can assist us to change our viewpoints and can remind us of the uplifting moments life has to give. Seeing art is a great means to learn how to appreciate landscapes, and traveling in nature can offer peace of mind, particularly if we draw and write about what we notice. Anywhere you are, it’s significant to take note of the details – that’s the definite means to derive enjoyment in your surroundings.

Take a tour around your bedroom.

If traveling to foreign lands seems a little daunting, you can take a clue from Xavier de Maistre the eighteenth-century French author, who traveled one time through his sleeping chamber and

wrote about the experience. If you really focus, you're certain to find out parts of your room that you either never saw, forgot about or failed to completely appreciate. For instance, even people whose rooms give an outstanding view hardly take the time to correctly enjoy it. Receptivity and curiosity aren't just useful abroad; they'll function equally well at home.

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