

Chatterbox #199 – A day in Beijing

Episode description

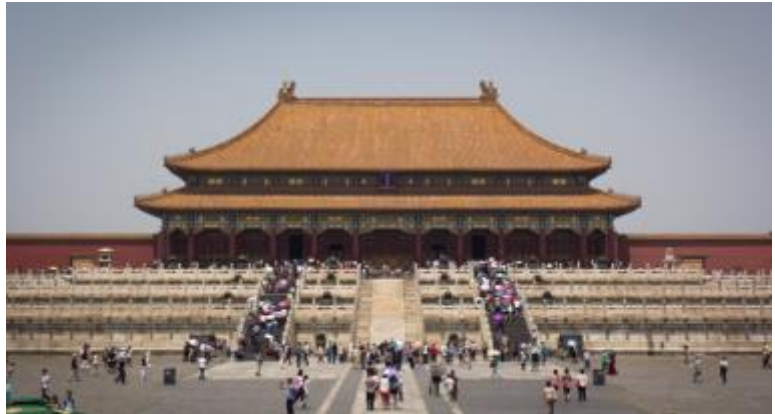
In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew talks to Suzanne about his whirlwind day in Beijing, China! Join them and learn all about Andrew's crazy adventure!

Fun fact

Beijing is the capital city of China and is populated by over 21 million people!

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To get a taste of [something]
- To pull out of [something]
- The tarmac
- To show up
- To have a cloud over you
- Ups and downs





Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode.

Hi, Suzanne.

Suzanne: Hey, Andrew! How are you?

Andrew: I'm doing really well. How about you?

Suzanne: I'm good, but you've been travelling, right?

Andrew: Oh man, I have been on the road for the last 6 weeks, Suzanne.

Suzanne: Wow!

Andrew: And I'm finally back "home." Quote, unquote, home. You know, as I'm sure a lot of our listeners are aware of, I live in Korea, but I'm Canadian. So it's weird to say I'm home because I'm not technically home. But Korea kind of feels like home, so I don't know. I don't know where I am, but I'm back to my home base. Let's say that.

Suzanne: Yes, that's good.

Andrew: Yeah, and today, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about my trip. Now, I had a lot of great experiences. I visited China. I visited Canada. I visited Japan. And I also travelled around Korea for a bit. And I won't have time to talk to you about everything today, but I did want to talk to you a little bit about my time in Beijing, China.

Suzanne: Wow, so what was the inspiration for the beginning of this journey?

Andrew: Actually, one of the most popular Culips episodes, or one that I get a lot of emails from listeners about, is my trip to Taipei, Taiwan, when I kind of had a travel nightmare experience.

Suzanne: Oh.



- Andrew: And so this is almost part two. I really wanted to have a good time in China because my last time in China was a little strange. But you know, I had another weird time in China.
- Suzanne: Oh no! So tell us about it.
- Andrew: All right, so actually, I wasn't planning ... You asked me what was the impetus for this trip.
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: I wasn't really planning to go spend a lot of time in China. Actually, as a Canadian, if I want to spend more than 72 hours in China, I need to buy a visa that costs around 200 dollars.
- Suzanne: Wow!
- Andrew: And I wasn't super into doing that, so what happened was I found a very cheap flight from Seoul to Vancouver, Canada. I was going back to Canada to see my family, and it was cheap because there was a 27-hour layover in Beijing.
- Suzanne: That's quite a long layover.
- Andrew: Yeah, most people would just ignore that flight, but I thought it was a perfect excuse to kind of stay the night in Beijing, and I could leave the airport and explore the city for the day, you know? So I got really stoked when I was thinking about it, actually. Like, "Oh my God! I can go see the Forbidden City and the Great Wall, and wander around Beijing." Like, it sounded like a really great opportunity **to get a little taste of China** just for a day.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: So yeah, I was ready for my trip, you know. It was a beautiful sunny day in Seoul. Got on my plane no problems. Everything's cool. And we're about to land in Beijing ... It's not a long flight, like, maybe an hour and a half or so. And we're going down. Like, you can feel the airplane going down, and then all of a sudden, we're going up again.
- Suzanne: No way!
- Andrew: And you can feel the engines revving, you know? And I'm like, "Hmm, what's going on here? And then maybe another 15 minutes later, we're going down. And then the pilot **pulls out of the landing** again and starts going up again. I was like, "Uh oh, something is fishy here." I could tell.
- Suzanne: Oh my gosh, I would be freaking out. I would be.



- Andrew: Yeah.
- Suzanne: Definitely freaking out because no one's telling you what's going on, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, exactly. And I'm not the greatest flyer. Like, I've travelled a lot. I've been in airplanes a lot, but I'm never comfortable. I'm always sort of like, "Ugh, when are we gonna crash? When are we gonna crash?"
- Suzanne: Argh!
- Andrew: So I was thinking bad things. And the captain came on, and he made an announcement, saying that there was a major thunderstorm in Beijing and that we can't land there. That the airport is closed.
- There's no planes leaving. There's no planes coming in.
- Suzanne: Wow!
- Andrew: So we were rerouted to ... I can't remember the name of the airport to be honest with you, but it was in Northern China, right near the North Korean border, really close to North Korea, so we landed there. Because it was an international flight, we just had to wait on **the tarmac**. They wouldn't let us exit the plane, so nobody knew how long we had to wait there. This was the thing that really was a bummer is that they were just like, "When the storm clears, we're gonna take off again. But that might be 20 minutes, could be 20 hours. We're just gonna wait."
- Suzanne: Oh man, that's already, like, a nightmare, just the **up and down, up and down**, and then waiting.
- Andrew: Yeah, waiting on **the tarmac**, I mean, to be honest with you, it sucked because you don't know what to do. I was trying to sleep, but I couldn't sleep very well.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: I met some really cool people on the airplane, some Koreans that were actually headed to Everest to go climb Mount Everest.
- Suzanne: Oh wow, wow!
- Andrew: I was talking to them for a bit, but you can only talk to strangers for so long.
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: And we ended up waiting on **the tarmac** for about 5 hours, and finally, we were able to return to Beijing. So ...



Suzanne: Finally.

Andrew: So we finally, finally get to the airport and land, but when we get off the plane and, you know, enter the airport, it is just jam-packed. There's so many people in the airport because there's a huge rush. Like, all of these planes are landing at the same time. It was just plane after plane after plane coming in, and it took me almost 2 hours to get through immigration, just to get out of the airport.

Suzanne: Oh my gosh.

Andrew: So I was supposed to arrive in Beijing at around 2:00 in the afternoon, but by this time, it's already 11:00 p.m.

Suzanne: That's crazy!

Andrew: I'm like, "Oh man, come on." Like my afternoon of sightseeing, my day of sightseeing, is gone. It is totally gone.

Suzanne: Oh man.

Andrew: Yeah, so I had booked a hotel in ... I don't know if I can say downtown Beijing, but it was in kind of a touristy area near the Imperial Palace and the Forbidden City in some of the major touristy zones, right?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: So I hopped on the train. I took the airport train to the subway, took the subway to my area. And I know, in China, that all of the apps that I really love, like Google Maps and Gmail, are blocked, unfortunately.

Suzanne: Oh, right.

Andrew: But I had prepared for this. I had downloaded a map application that would work in China.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: So it was no problem, loaded up the address of my hotel into the map and just followed the GPS to where I was supposed to go, right?

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: So I get there, and it was about, I don't know, a 20-minute walk or so, and there's no hotel there.

Suzanne: What? What?



Andrew: There's no hotel.

Suzanne: Wait, they lied?

Andrew: I don't know if they lied or if this map was crappy or what, but by now, it's around midnight. It's ...

Suzanne: Oh my God.

Andrew: It's pouring rain, still really rainy, and I am literally in like a very, very residential area with tiny little alleyways and just little houses. It was actually really cool because it was so hot that everybody had their doors and windows open. So here I am pulling my suitcase through the puddles, this foreign, white guy kind of peering in at people's, you know, houses. It was cool. I got a very inside view of China, I thought.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: But I was completely lost, and I was like, "You know what? I think I'm just going to have to retrace my steps and go back to the metro station and just hang out there until the train starts running again and just go back to the airport."

Suzanne: So you didn't even go to your hotel at all? You never made it?

Andrew: I made it. I'll tell you how I made it, so ...

Suzanne: OK, sorry, the story gets even better.

Andrew: Well, I don't know if it gets too much better, but I was successful in the end. So I'm walking around, and like I said, it's a very residential area, but finally, I did see a restaurant. And thankfully, the restaurant was open, so I went inside and I know ... You know, this is my fault. I know zero Chinese. I know ni-hao. That's about it. So I went in and I said, "Ni-hao," and then I just pointed to my map. And I pointed to the address in Chinese, and I said, "Where? Where is it?"

And they couldn't speak English, but one of the staff members had a translation app on his phone, so he typed something in and pressed play. And the phone spoke to me and said, "We will take you there." And so they said, "Wait," and I waited for about 10 minutes, and then a dishwasher came out. A very nice guy, he was about 17 years old, and first thing he did was give me a cigarette, which I thought was very kind of him.

Suzanne: Nice, nice.



Andrew: A very, extremely strong Chinese cigarette, so we had a strong Chinese cigarette, and then he guided me to my hotel. And all of the people at the restaurant were very kind, and I was extremely grateful that they showed me how to get to the hotel.

So when I got there, to the hotel, I checked in and dropped my bags off, and then I didn't want to give up, you know? Even though by now, it was past 1:00 in the morning, so there was really nothing to see. But I went out. I walked around for about an hour and saw Beijing at night. And I was really disappointed that I didn't get to spend my afternoon there because I loved what I saw, and everything looked so cool and interesting.

Then, essentially, I went back to the hotel. I set my alarm early because I knew that the airport was going to be also super busy the next day.

Suzanne: Everything that was cancelled before, they're gonna try to get those flights out.

Andrew: Exactly, so they told me **to show up** 4 hours early. I **showed up** 4 hours early. My flight was delayed by 2 hours, and I still almost missed the place. It was that insane trying to get through security and everything. Like, the lines were just crazy. So I'm glad that I **showed up** 4 hours early.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Still almost missed it. But yeah, guys, that's my trip to China, just a real quick one. And I've had bad luck in China. If you haven't heard about my trip to Taiwan, where I ended up in China during that trip too, I recommend listening to that one. I think the title of that episode is Andrew's Travel Nightmare.

Suzanne: Oh my God! That's a great title. You know, it's funny Andrew, just to jump in there, I also have had weird experiences when travelling to China. And I don't know. I don't think it's China. It's not China's fault in any way. It's just ... I don't know what it is. Like, my luck, you know, once we flew out of China and into Bali, everything was fantastic and fine.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: It was just, like, we had to fly through China both times in order to go to and from Bali. And I lost my coat, and then they closed the airplane, and then we had to flag people down. And it was ... I don't know, a series of unfortunate events. Like, there was no food. The food I ate—I got sick. It was just a funny experience where you're like, "What's happening? I **have a cloud over me**," you know?

And I hope someday to return to and erase that bad luck, you know?



- Andrew: Well, me as well. I mean this is two times now where I've had not bad experiences, but you know, I've always dreamed about exploring China and travelling to China. And it's just never quite worked out the way that I've wanted it to. But I will say that every time I've been in China, people have been so nice to me.
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: So I know that when I do actually get to spend more time there, it's gonna be awesome. Because yeah, the Chinese people have been very, very kind, so I'm looking forward to spending some serious time there sometime soon I hope.
- Suzanne: Yeah, it will happen. You will go back and erase the bad luck and have some good times there. I can see it for you.
- Andrew: Hey, guys, well, this was day 1 of my 6-week trip.
- Suzanne: Stay tuned for 32 more podcasts of ... I'm just kidding.
- Andrew: No, we won't do a day-by-day log. That would be much too boring. But we do plan to record a couple more episodes talking about some of the highlights, some of the major **ups** of the trips. This one is kind of the negative, but I think all of the other stories that I'm going to tell are super.
- Suzanne: They're funny also.
- Andrew: Yeah, it was kinda funny.
- Suzanne: It's funny now to look back at it. Maybe not when you were going through it exactly.
- Andrew: Yeah, well, I think I'm a pretty good traveller. Because even when all this crazy stuff is happening, and I'm totally lost in the middle of a Beijing midnight rainstorm, I'm just like, "Meh, it's all right. This is what's happening. If this is the way it's gonna be, this is the way it's gonna be."
- Suzanne: Yes.
- Andrew: So that I guess is it for today, guys. To get the most out of studying with Culips, you should sign up to become a Culips member. And Culips members get access to our learning materials, and these are super helpful for studying with while you listen to Culips. So you'll get a transcript. You'll get detailed explanations and examples of all the interesting or slang or idiomatic vocabulary that you hear us use. And you'll also get a comprehension quiz. You'll get this not just for this episode, but for all of our episodes.



- Andrew: So if you are interested in becoming a Culips member, just visit our website, Culips.com, for all the information you need to sign up. And if you're on social media, like Twitter and Facebook, hit us up.
- Suzanne: And you can always message us on Facebook or also email us directly at contact@culips.com.
- Andrew: Stay tuned for a new episode that will be out shortly, and we will talk to you then!
- Suzanne: Yeah, bye!
- Andrew: Bye.
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Detailed Explanations

To get a taste of [something]

Imagine that you are at a restaurant and your friend orders a meal that looks delicious. Now, pretend that your friend offers you a bite of his meal, so you can experience the flavour and the taste of the dish. Although you don't get to eat the whole meal, you get to taste it and partially understand what the full experience of eating the meal would be like. This is called tasting, and the expression **to get a taste of [something]** is based upon this idea of having a small taste, or rather a quick, temporary experience.

So **to get a taste of [something]** means to experience something for a short time. In this episode, Andrew mentions that he booked a flight to Canada that included a 27-hour layover in Beijing, China. He did this, so he could **get a taste of China**. When Andrew says that he wanted to **get a taste of China**, he means that he wanted to visit China and experience all that the country has to offer, even if it's just for a day.

So if you have a brief, short, or temporary experience of something, you can say that you **got a taste of that thing**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get a taste of [something]**:

Adam:	My friends and I are going camping this weekend. Wanna come?
Josh:	Sorry, but no. I got a taste of camping last year, and I never wanna do it again. There are way too many bugs in the woods for me!
Adam:	All right, no problem.

Colleen:	My boss is looking for a new assistant. I think you'd be perfect for the job! What do you think?
Sam:	I don't know. I've never worked in an office before.
Colleen:	Why don't you come in for a few hours on Friday. You'll get a taste of office work , and then you can decide if you'd like the job or not.
Sam:	That sounds great!



To pull out of [something]

To pull out of [something] means to stop doing something or to withdraw from a commitment. In this episode, Andrew says that the pilot of his plane **pulled out of the landing** because of stormy weather. Even though the pilot had started the landing process, and was committed to landing the plane, he aborted the landing because the weather was extremely bad.

The phrasal verb **to pull out of [something]** is used frequently when talking about business, government, and sports. Here are some common examples of how **to pull out of [something]** can be used:

- to pull out of an agreement
- to pull out of a business deal
- to pull out of a contract
- to pull out of an investment
- to pull out of negotiations
- to pull out of talks
- to pull out of a treaty
- to pull out of a competition
- to pull out of a tournament

So when you **pull out of [something]**, you end a commitment or break a promise by stopping your participation in something.

Here's one more example with **to pull out of [something]**:

Travis:	I'm really sorry, but I've got some bad news.
Jill:	Oh no! What is it?
Travis:	I sprained my ankle last night. I'm gonna have to pull out of the 10-kilometre charity run .
Jill:	That sucks! I hope you feel better soon and can participate next year.



The tarmac

The tarmac is the area of an airport where planes go before taking off and after landing. That is, **the tarmac** is the airport runway or parking area.

In this episode, Andrew says he was stuck on **the tarmac** for hours. This means that Andrew's plane stayed on the airport runway for hours, and Andrew was stuck on the plane for hours.

It is common to use the expression to be stuck on **the tarmac** to talk about delays at the airport or when you have to wait inside the plane.

Here are a couple more examples with **the tarmac**:

Satoko: How was your flight?

Richard: Terrible! There were major delays at the airport because of a snowstorm. We were stuck on **the tarmac** for over 2 hours before we could finally take off.

Satoko: That's the worst!

Jordan: This has to be the worst vacation ever!

Lacy: I hear you! First, the airline loses our luggage, then we get the stomach flu, and now, we've been stuck on **the tarmac** for over 6 hours!

Jordan: We have the worst luck!



To show up

To show up is a phrasal verb that means to arrive at a place where you are expected to be. In this episode, Andrew mentions that he **showed up** at the airport 4 hours before his flight was scheduled to take off. In other words, he arrived at the airport 4 hours early.

So if someone arranges to be somewhere, like at a restaurant or friend's house, and then they arrive, they've **shown up**. For example, if you are waiting for your friend at the movie theatre and they get there, you could say, "My friend **showed up**."

To show up is a casual expression and is frequently used in conversation, but it's best to avoid using this expression in formal writing.

Here are a couple more examples with **to show up**:

Helen:	I can't believe Ryan didn't go to the party last night.
Carrie:	I know! He said he was going to show up , but then he never did.
Helen:	I wonder if he's OK. Usually, if Ryan promises to be somewhere, he keeps his promise. I better give him a call this afternoon.

Steve:	Matt! How nice of you to show up .
Matt:	Sorry I'm late, I got stuck in traffic.
Steve:	I've been waiting for you for almost 45 minutes!
Matt:	Let me make it up to you. I'll buy lunch, OK?
Steve:	OK!



To have a cloud over you

To have a cloud over you means to experience bad luck or to have a bad feeling about something. In other words, if you **have a cloud over you**, you have bad luck or have a bad feeling about the future. You can also say **you have a cloud over you** if you feel depressed or unhappy.

In this episode, Suzanne talks about the bad luck she had while travelling through China on her way to Bali, Indonesia. She lost her coat, almost missed her flight, and got food poisoning. Because of this bad luck, Suzanne says that she **had a cloud over her**. When something negative happens in your life (eg, depression, bad luck, or anxiety about the future), you can say that you **have a cloud over you**.

There are some alternative versions of the expression **to have a cloud over you**. They are:

- to have a cloud hanging over you
- to have a black cloud hanging over you

All of the above expressions mean the same thing as **to have a cloud over you**, and can be used interchangeably.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have a cloud over you**:

Valerie:	I just got off the phone with my boss. She said I'll have to work overtime this weekend.
Carl:	Really? But we're supposed to go to the music festival together.
Valerie:	I know. I'm sorry. I must have a cloud over me. I'm having nothing but bad luck these days.

Brenda:	Have you seen my keys?
Ed:	Did you check the kitchen table?
Brenda:	Yeah, they're not there.
Ed:	Don't tell me you've lost them. Last month you lost your wallet, now your keys. You really have a cloud over you!
Brenda:	You're telling me!



Ups and downs

In this episode, Andrew promises to record a couple more Culips episodes about his summer vacation. Specifically, the major **ups** of the trip. The **ups** are the highlights of the trip, the best parts.

When Andrew talks about the **ups** of his vacation, he uses a shortened version of the expression **ups and downs**. The **ups and downs** of something are the positive and negative aspects of that thing, or the highlights and lowlights of that thing.

You can use this expression to talk about situations that unfold over time, such as:

- a relationship
- a marriage
- an investment
- a career
- attending university
- raising children
- following a sports team over many years

Additionally, if someone's emotions change frequently, you can say that person experiences many **ups and downs**.

So when something has high points and low points, it has **ups and downs**. The **ups** are the positive aspects, and the **downs** are the negative aspects.

Here's one more example with **ups and downs**:

Liz:	I just got a new puppy!
Donovan:	That's so great! Have you ever raised a puppy before?
Liz:	No, this is my first time.
Donovan:	Well, there are a lot of ups and downs that come with raising puppies, but I think you'll do a great job.



Quiz

1. Fill in the blank.

Mary: Where's Jim? He's late.

Clint: He texted me and said he's running behind schedule. Don't worry, though, he'll _____.

- a) show on
- b) show here
- c) show in
- d) show up

2. What do you experience when you have a cloud over you?

- a) delight
- b) bad luck
- c) criticism
- d) peace

3. The area of an airport where planes wait before taking off is called the _____.

- a) tarmac
- b) runway
- c) platform
- d) road

4. Which of the following can you NOT pull out of?

- a) taxes
- b) a tournament
- c) a negotiation
- d) a business deal

5. If an experience has many positive and negative aspects to it, then it has _____.

- a) lefts and rights
- b) ins and outs
- c) overs and unders
- d) ups and downs



Quiz Answers

1.d 2.b 3.a 4.a 5.d

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Suzanne Cerreta

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Learning materials writer: Andrew Bates

English editor: Stephanie Minelga

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: [Tony Bertolino](#) on [Unsplash](#)