

## Chatterbox #127 – Travel stories

### Informal Contractions in this Episode

Informal contractions are unofficial short forms of other words, and they're usually only used in casual conversation. For example, when a native English speaker talks casually, they might say *gonna* instead of *going to*, or *whaddya* instead of *what do you*. Even though informal contractions are usually only used in spoken English, we include them in the Culips written transcripts to help you get used to how they're used and what they sound like.

These are the informal contractions used in today's episode, along with their meanings:

- **'cause**: because
- **gonna**: going to
- **kinda**: kind of
- **wanna**: want to

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone. It's Maura.

Andrew: And I'm Andrew.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: That's right. Harp's here too.

Andrew: Yeah. We have a special Chatterbox episode for you today.

Maura: That's right. But before we get into that we'll also tell you to go to our website Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Andrew: And when you visit the website, make sure to sign up and become a member because when you become a member, you get access to a lot of special bonus materials.

Maura: That's right. You get transcripts for all of our episodes, you get more detailed explanations of the expressions that we use in our episodes, and you also have quizzes to help test yourself.

- Andrew: That's right. And while you're on the Internet make sure to check out our Facebook page and our Twitter page. And **while you're at it** why not go over to iTunes and rate us highly as well?
- Maura: Good idea. Now today we are doing a special kind of Chatterbox episode. If you're a regular Culips listener you'll know that in our Chatterbox episodes we chat about all different kinds of topics and we interview people. We do a lot of different things. Today we're going to try something a little bit different.
- Andrew: Yeah. We are going to talk about our travel experiences and share our interesting travel stories with you.
- Maura: That's right. So instead of just two hosts, you're going to hear from all three of us, and we've chosen a special or memorable travel story to share with you.
- Andrew: And how it's going to work is that we'll interview each other.
- Maura: Yeah. That's right. So, first, I am going to listen to Andrew's story and I'm going to interview him about his **little travel story** that he'd like to share with you.
- Andrew: Mhmm. It's a good one. And then I will interview Harp, and she will tell us about her experiences travelling abroad.
- Maura: And last, but not least, Harp is going to ask me about my travel story. So, shall we get started?
- Andrew: Yeah. Let's do this thing.
- Maura: So tell us where your story takes place.
- Andrew: Sure. Well, this story begins in Germany when I was travelling through Europe in, I think it was 2010, a couple years ago.
- Maura: OK. Cool. And where were you in Germany?
- Andrew: I was in Berlin. I had the chance to be in Berlin for a week. I was travelling with my girlfriend, and we were actually visiting our friend, who's a Canadian, but was studying in Berlin at the time going to art college.
- Maura: OK. Cool. So what did you **get up to** when you were there? What makes this memorable?

- Andrew: Well, I did a lot of really cool things in Germany and had a great time, but the thing that I remember the most was a biking trip that I took. And we actually, we rented bikes. And you Culips listeners know that I love biking and so this was a really great thing for me to do. And we went and visited this mountain called **Teufelsberg**. And I'm probably saying this wrong, but that's what I remember it being called: **Teufelsberg**.
- Maura: OK. I have never heard of this place. Can you tell us a little bit about what it is?
- Andrew: Sure. And when I say it's a mountain, it's more like a hill. But Berlin is very flat, so it does stick out a little bit. But it's an interesting place because it's actually a **man-made** mountain. It's not natural. And I guess after World War II, there was a lot of debris all over the place in Berlin. And so these little **man-made** mountains started appearing just as people were piling up the debris. Underneath this particular hill, **Teufelsberg**, is actually an old Nazi college that after the war they tried to blow up but were unable to. So buried underneath this hill is a really old college, which is kind of weird.
- Maura: Pretty crazy. I've never, ever heard of this place.
- Andrew: Right. So what makes this hill unique is during the Cold War, Americans built a communication's station on top of this hill, so they could look down into East Berlin and check out what was going on down there. They could **listen in**. And after the Cold War was finished, this spy station was abandoned, and now there's this old American spy station that's left standing on this hill. So we biked out there on a very beautiful day and climbed up the hill and checked out this old abandoned American base, and it was really cool.
- Maura: So, were you able to go inside?
- Andrew: Yeah. It's actually, I don't think you're allowed to go inside, so I apologize to the German government if you're listening, but I went inside, and it was really neat. We'll have to put a picture up for the listeners, so they can check it out. But there are these big domes that are part of the building and when you get inside, the acoustics are very different. And you can hear a lot of the sounds echoing around. And there were actually some people in there playing guitar, which sounded really, really cool. And I'm also a **music guy**, so I was really into the sound that was present in these domes.
- Maura: Cool. I imagine that there was no electricity, so was it really dark inside? Were you underground?

- Andrew: No, it's up on the hill so it's outside, and actually there's amazing graffiti inside there too. I guess it's a popular hang out spot for a lot of teenagers. The view is great as well 'cause you can see the whole city. 'Cause, like I said, Berlin's flat, so if you get a little bit elevated you can see the whole city out there. It's really great.
- Maura: And do you remember how you heard about this place?
- Andrew: It was just my friend that was living there. She recommended that we go, and it took us maybe an hour and a half to bike it there. It was a really beautiful day and we biked through the German forest, and it was nice.
- Maura: Ah nice. You know by the end of this episode, I'm sure I'm going to feel like booking a ticket and travelling somewhere again.
- Andrew: Yeah. Definitely. You'll get **the travel bug**.
- Maura: That's right. All right. Good story.
- Andrew: Yeah. Thank you.
- Maura: So, Harp, are you ready?
- Harp: I am.
- Andrew: All right. So, now I will interview Harp about her travel experience. So, my first question is where did you go?
- Harp: Well, I was **backpacking** through Asia, so the story takes place in Bangladesh.
- Andrew: Bangladesh. That's a really cool place to visit I'm sure.
- Harp: Yup. It is. And their tourist slogan is actually "come before the tourists come."
- Andrew: So you got in there before the rest of the tourists?
- Harp: Exactly. It was a really cool experience because there weren't a lot of tourists and people were really curious and really friendly.
- Andrew: That's awesome. So what did you do while you were there?
- Harp: Well, actually the reason we picked to go to Bangladesh was 'cause we wanted to go see a Bengali tiger in the **Sundaraban Forest**.
- Andrew: Wow. Yeah, that would be amazing.

- Harp: Yup. I've been obsessed with tigers since I was a kid, and I thought this is the perfect opportunity.
- Andrew: OK. So you went to go see the tiger. How were you going to see the tiger? You weren't just going to walk into the forest by yourself.
- Harp: That's the funny story because we arrived, and we were four. But two of us weren't feeling well. I was just sick, and I didn't wanna go look for a tour guide. So I stayed in the hotel lobby all day with my friend, and our other two friends went looking for a tour guide. They went to all these different tourist offices and other hotels to try to find a guide. But what we didn't plan for was first it was Friday, so most of the offices were closed.
- Andrew: Really? On a Friday?
- Harp: Yup. Bangladesh is a Muslim country and so they take Friday as their day of rest.
- Andrew: OK. I see.
- Harp: And also it was some sort of national holiday for the next couple of days, so we couldn't find any tour guides.
- Andrew: Oh yeah. That would be really hard to book a trip during that time.
- Harp: Yes. But the lucky thing was that because we were feeling sick and we were hanging out in the hotel lobby all day, we kinda became friends with the staff there. And they found out what we were doing and what we were trying to find, and they **hooked us up** with a tour guide.
- Andrew: Wow. That's great.
- Harp: Yeah. It was really cool. It was actually the owner of the hotel who has a tour agency on the side, and he took us to his private villa where had a boat that took us to the **Sundaraban Forest**.
- Andrew: Wow. It's crazy that that **hook up** happened. That's very convenient.
- Harp: Yeah. It was completely by chance, but it was such an amazing experience because we went to this beautiful home in a small village, and we actually got to go meet a lot of the villagers. And then we took this small boat, and we went deep into the forest. And I have to be honest though, once we got into the **Sundaraban Forest**, it's got the mangrove trees, which have their roots in the water, so you're -
- Andrew: Yeah. I was just going to ask. I was a little bit confused. You were taking a boat into the forest. How does that work?

- Harp: It's beautiful. I'll try to post a picture with this episode. But basically it's the mangrove trees that their roots go into the water. So you're going in this boat through these small passageways with big trees, and you're really close and it's small passages, and I started singing because I didn't want to see a tiger.
- Andrew: You didn't want to see a tiger?
- Harp: I got scared. I didn't realize how close you were to the trees and how close a tiger really could be to you.
- Andrew: Yeah. And do these tigers swim? Could it come up to the boat? I guess tigers do swim, don't they?
- Harp: They do. And they could have come, so we got a bit scared by talking to some of the villagers, so we sang a bit during the boat ride.
- Andrew: I'm curious, what song did you sing? Do you remember?
- Harp: We actually sang "Oh Canada" over and over again because we couldn't think of the words to any other song.
- Andrew: That's hilarious. OK. Good. So in the end, did you see a tiger?
- Harp: No. But it was still an amazing experience, and the **Sundaraban Forest** is absolutely amazing. So beautiful.
- Andrew: Did you see any other animals?
- Harp: We saw a couple of different birds, but I don't remember the names of any of them.
- Andrew: OK. Cool. That's a great story. That's sounds like a really interesting experience.
- Harp: It was amazing and one of my favourite travel stories.
- Andrew: Cool. All right. Good, well thanks for sharing with us.
- Harp: Thanks Andrew. Now it's Maura's turn
- Maura: All right. So I'm here, and I'm ready to tell my story too.
- Harp: Very exciting. So where does your story take place?
- Maura: My story takes place in Thailand, and I guess it was probably about 8 or 9 years ago that I was there.
- Harp: OK. And were you travelling there alone?

- Maura: For a little bit I had a friend, but at this point where my story takes place, I was alone.
- Harp: OK. Tell me all about it.
- Maura: Well, I was all alone, like I said, on a bus. And I was going to do some volunteer work. I volunteered with an organization called **WWOOF**, which stands for Willing Workers on Organic Farms. And what you do is you arrange to go work on a farm, and you don't get paid, but you get to stay on the farm and you get eat on the farm for free. So it's a work exchange really.
- Harp: Wow. It's very cool.
- Maura: So I was going out to one of these locations to volunteer. And the information that I had was to take a certain bus and to wait until they passed a school and then to get off at the school.
- Harp: That sounds very adventurous because it's not very clear.
- Maura: You know? I think that I knew that it wasn't clear, but sometimes when you're travelling you just have to have faith that things are going to work out. So I **crossed my fingers**, and I got on the bus. And I remember I was quite nervous and I was looking around a lot hoping to see an obvious school, but you know I never did.
- Harp: Oh no. What happened?
- Maura: Well, I rode the bus until it was pretty much empty. And I tried to communicate with the person that was on the bus. And I did know the Thai word for school. But I still wasn't sure if I was at the school. There was a building that looked like it could have been a school, but again everything was written in Thai, so I don't know if it was a school. Anyway, I got off.
- Harp: OK. So what happened then? You're **in the middle of nowhere** in rural Thailand trying to find a school.
- Maura: That's exactly what happened. I got off the bus and it was really **in the middle of nowhere**. When I think back to what it looked like, it was maybe a school and a dirt road and there was also a kind of gas station across the street. So since I had nowhere to go, I went to the gas station. And luckily there was such a nice man who was there. He didn't speak any English, and I only had a Thai phrase book, so it was really, really, really hard to communicate, but we were both up for trying and he wanted to help me out, so he tried.
- Harp: Then what happened? Where was the school? Where was the farm?

- Maura: Well, I tried to contact them by using this man's phone, but I couldn't get through. There was no answer. Like I said, we couldn't really communicate, so he gave me a Pepsi I remember, and I think he tried to contact some people or maybe get some information about where I was supposed to go. So I was kind of hanging out, drinking my Pepsi, trying to stay calm.
- Harp: OK.
- Maura: And then he came up with the idea to try to drive me around the neighbourhood, or around the area I guess I should say, because I was supposed to be at least close to the farm I was going to.
- Harp: OK. So now you're driving around. Do you find the farm yet?
- Maura: Well, we're driving around and I remember that there were a lot of mountains. And I looked up the Thai word for *beautiful*, so I would at least tell him, "Oh wow, it's beautiful." That was one of the few communications that we had. Anyway, we're driving around, and then I realize that because I had drunk this Pepsi I really, really had to go pee. I really had to go to the bathroom.
- Harp: Oh no.
- Maura: I was trying to convince myself that I could hold it, but I really couldn't. It was almost funny because I was already in a stressful situation and now I had to go to the bathroom.
- Harp: So what happened?
- Maura: So in some tiny small village, we stopped the car. And I used someone's washroom that I never knew before, and we kept looking. So somewhere this Thai person has a funny story of this Canadian girl who used her bathroom one day.
- Harp: Oh, I love it. OK. So we're still looking for the farm. What happens?
- Maura: That's right. There was a lot of driving around, and the man who was driving me was asking people and trying to get information. And then, yes, finally we found the place that I was going to. So I did eventually get there.
- Harp: Phew. I was worried that you were just gonna be stuck somewhere in rural Thailand.
- Maura: The funny thing is after all of this trouble - coming from Bangkok on the bus and arriving there - a couple days later the man who owned the farm had to go to Bangkok anyways. So if I had waited, I could have just got picked up by him, but instead I had this crazy adventure trying to get there.



- Harp: But you would have missed out on this fun story.
- Maura: Yeah. I love the story now. As I said, at the time it was quite stressful because I was by myself, I couldn't communicate. But one thing I think is true when travelling, most people are good people. Of course you run into situations that could be dangerous or just where you don't feel comfortable, but most people are good people, and if you need help often there will be someone there who's going to help you. And that's what happened.
- Harp: That's totally true. And what a wonderful man for just helping you so much.
- Maura: Yeah. I wish I could thank him, but I don't even know where I was, so I can't contact him.
- Harp: Well, that's a great story.
- Maura: OK. So that about sums up our special Chatterbox episode.
- Harp: Yeah. We hope you enjoyed listening to all three of us tell our favourite travel stories.
- Maura: Yeah. And since it's a little bit of a different format, let us know if you like it, and maybe we can do more Chatterbox episodes like this in the future.
- Harp: Well, we had fun talking about our stories.
- Maura: Yeah. I'm sure we're all reminiscing in our mind of great times we had travelling and, like I said at the beginning, it makes you just want to go book a ticket.
- Harp: Yeah. I definitely feel like going on a trip somewhere now.
- Maura: And hopefully listening to our stories, you start to think about your own stories too.
- Harp: Exactly. All right, well that's it for us today. Remember to check out the website Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com 'cause that's where you can sign up and become a member.
- Maura: That's right. And if you're on Facebook or Twitter, you can send us a word that way and if you're on the go you can download our episodes and listen with iTunes or the Stitcher app.
- Harp: Yup. And you can always still rate us there. So that's it for us today. Talk to you next time.
- Maura: Happy travels

## Detailed Explanation

### While you're at it...

We use the expression **while you're at it...** to suggest that someone could do something while they are also doing another thing. For example, in this episode Andrew suggests that Culips listeners go on the Internet to check out the Culips Facebook page. He also suggests that Culips listeners should give Culips a high rating on iTunes while they are on the Internet. He uses the expression **while you're at it** to suggest that Culips listeners do these two things at the same time while on the Internet: check out the Culips Facebook page and rate Culips on iTunes.

So, whenever you want someone to do two things at the same time, you can use the suggestion **while you're at it**. Here are some examples that demonstrate how this expression can be used:

Arsha: I'm going to run down to the supermarket to pick up some milk.

Hg: Oh could you grab me some ice cream **while you're at it**? I've been craving ice cream all week.

Arsha: Sure, no problem.

Rachel: You really need to clean the garage today. It's a mess! And **while you're at it**, do you mind taking the garbage out?

Gerry: Yeah. I'll make sure to get it all taken care of today.

### Little travel story

In the phrase **little travel story**, *little* is used to mean sweet or nice. When Maura uses *little* in this context, she communicates that the travel story is something that Andrew values. *Little*, when used in this way then, is an adjective that expresses an endearing feeling.

Here are some example sentences that use *little* the same way it is used in **little travel story**:

Chizu: What should we do for dinner?

Kafe: Let's go to that cute **little** restaurant on 5<sup>th</sup> street.

Chizu: Sure, that sounds great.

Paul: Where did you get that lamp? It's beautiful.

Sara: My neighbour, Mr. Peters gave it to me. Have you met him?

Paul: No, not yet.

Sara: Oh, he is such a sweet **little** man. You'll love him.

Paul: Awesome, I look forward to meeting him sometime.

### Teufelsberg

In this episode, Andrew talks about visiting **Teufelsberg**, a man-made hill located in Berlin, Germany. After the Second World War, the hill was built as a way to cover up the remains of a Nazi era military college. During the Cold War, the USA constructed a listening station on the top of the hill that they used to spy on the East Germans and Soviets. Today, the listening station is abandoned but is still visited by many people.

As Andrew mentions in this episode, **Teufelsberg** is home to a lot of really cool and interesting graffiti and offers great views of Berlin. Here is a photo of what the old listening station on **Teufelsberg** looks like:



### To get up to

**To get up to** simply means *to do*. So, in this episode when Maura asks Andrew, *what did you **get up to** in Berlin?* She means, *what did you do in Berlin?* So, whenever someone **gets up to** something, it means that they are doing something.

Sometimes this expression carries a negative meaning. This is because it can be used as a shortened version of the expression **to get up to no good**. We frequently use **to get up to** when we talk about a bad thing someone has done or something that other people would disapprove of.

Here are some example sentences that use this expression. The first one uses the expression in the neutral sense meaning *to do*. This is how Maura uses the expression in this episode. The second example uses **to get up to** in the mischievous sense that means to do something bad.

Yuna: So what did you **get up to** last night?

Frank: No much. I watched the hockey game on TV and that's about it.

Roozbeh: I'm so excited my friend Bill is coming to town next week for a visit.

Mel: Oh no, that spells trouble. Remember what you guys **got up to** last time Bill was here? You lost all your money playing poker together.

Roozbeh: Yeah, I'd rather not remember that actually. Anyway, we're older and wiser now. We'll stay out of trouble this time.

### Man-made

Anything that is synthetic, artificial, or constructed by people can be called **man-made**. In this episode, Andrew talks about a **man-made** hill in Berlin called Teufelsberg. It is a **man-made** hill because it was constructed by people. The hill is in the middle of a flat forest, and is not natural.

So, whenever anything is not natural but is instead made by humans, we can call it **man-made**. This expression is often used when we talk about geographic features like lakes, ponds, hills, etc. Here are some examples that use this expression:

Betsy: We're having fish for dinner tonight. Would you like to come over? My husband caught the fish himself.

Russ: Oh cool. Where did he go fishing?

Betsy: Adam's Lake, I think.

Russ: You realize that's a **man-made** lake, right? I don't want to sound rude but I don't think I would eat anything that came out of that lake.

Betsy: Oh hmm. I didn't know that. Thanks for the tip! Maybe we'll have to have you over for dinner some other time.

Kenta: That's a cool t-shirt. What type of fabric is it made of? It doesn't look like cotton.

Peiman: Yeah, it's definitely not cotton. I'm not sure what it is made of. Some sort of **man-made** fibre or something. It's supposed to be good for the summer. It's very breathable.

Kenta: Very cool. Looks great!

### To listen in

When you **listen in** to something, you listen to something that you are not supposed to hear. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **to listen in** when he talks about the American spy station in Berlin. The Americans used the base **to listen in** on radio broadcasts in Eastern Europe. In other words, when the Americans **listened in**, they spied because they were listening to conversations that they were not intended to hear. Occasionally, **to listen in** is used to mean *to listen to the radio*. In this situation, you

usually hear a radio announcer say something like, *make sure to listen in to our next show*. In this context, the radio announcer wants you to hear his show. So in these circumstances, **to listen in** just means to listen to the radio.

However, the majority of the time this expression is used, it means to spy or to pry into someone's personal life by overhearing something you are not supposed to. So, when someone **listens in** to something, they are listening to something that they are not supposed to hear. Check out the following examples to see how to use the expression **to listen in**:

Aphinya: I remember when I was dating my first boyfriend, my dad always used **to listen in** on our telephone conversations and it would drive me crazy!

Marcel: Oh yeah my Mom used to do the same thing!

Aphinya: I guess they were just looking out for us and trying to make sure we stayed out of trouble.

Marcel: Yup, I suppose so.

Jamie: I heard that that police busted a drug smuggling operations. They arrested 20 people.

Tim: Wow! How'd they get caught?

Jamie: I guess all of the criminals were talking about their plans on their phones and they didn't know that the police were **listening in** at the same time.

Tim: That's just like in the movies! Very cool.

### A music guy

When someone refers to themselves as a **music guy** it means they like music. If a woman calls herself a **movie girl**, that means she enjoys watching movies. We can place the word guy or girl after any noun to show that we enjoy that thing or that we do it as a hobby.

This expression is very similar to the one we encountered in Chatterbox episode number 123. That episode featured an interview with Roberto and during that interview he referred to himself as a *vegan yoga dude*. That just means that he is a person that enjoys both being a vegan and doing yoga. If he called himself a *vegan yoga guy* it would mean the same thing.

So, whenever someone calls themselves a **something guy/girl** it means that they like that thing and enjoy participating in it as a hobby. Here is an example that shows you how this works:

Jackson: So, what are you going to spend your bonus on this year?

Brenda: Well you know I'm a **film girl**, so I was thinking about a new and bigger television to watch all my films on.

Jackson: That's awesome! I'm actually a **music guy** myself, so I think I'll spend mine on a new stereo system.

Brenda: That's so exciting!

### The travel bug

In this episode, we hear Andrew tell Maura that she'll get **the travel bug**. She tells him that everyone's travel stories are going to make her travel again. **The travel bug**, or any *bug*, implies that you are going to get the urge to do something. The reason it's called a *bug* is because viruses that are contagious and spread from person to person easily, like the cold or stomach illnesses, are called *bugs*. So, if you get **the travel bug**, you are catching or picking up the urge to travel from another person as if it were contagious. Maura is catching **the travel bug** from Andrew and Harp because their travel stories are very exciting and it's as if the excitement is contagious. Maura is getting the urge to travel, or **the travel bug**, because of them.

You can have all sorts of *bugs*. For example, hearing stories about someone's pool can make you get *the swimming bug*. Or maybe someone is telling you about his or her camping trip and it makes you get *the camping bug*. Most often though, we hear the expression used for travelling.

Here is an example of how to use the expression **the travel bug**:

Hamdullah: What classes are taking this semester?

Owen: You know, I may take the semester off.

Hamdullah: Oh really? What for?

Owen: Well, I've been watching the National Geographic channel a lot, and now I have the **travel bug**!

Hamdullah: Oh yeah, that channel is so dangerous for that! So many beautiful and cool places are featured.

### To backpack

Harp's story talks of her **backpacking** through Asia. **Backpacking** is a way to travel that entails travelling through a place or places by carrying a backpack around and staying at different hostels or hotels, as opposed to making reservations at one hotel and leaving your things there. Most often, **backpacking** means you stay at a different place every day and visit lots of places within one or more countries. Backpacking is a much more nomadic way to travel. *Nomadic* means roaming from place to place without a fixed plan.

Here are a couple examples showing how to use the term **backpacking** in conversations:

Sonia: How was your trip to France? Did you stay at that hotel in Paris I suggested?

Taro: Well, we were **backpacking**, so we mostly stayed in hostels or in friend's houses and then walked around and explored different cities during the day. We never stayed in one city for more than one night.

Sonia: Oh, I didn't know you were planning on travelling all over France! That's awesome that you go to **backpack** through it!



Conor: Hey I was thinking of going somewhere for the summer break. Maybe even Munich, Germany. Dave's there right now and I would like to meet up with him. Do you have enough saved up to join me? We could stay at hostels to save some money if you want.

Tamara: Hostels are full of **backpackers** though. I'd rather stay at a nice hotel where we could leave our stuff while we explore the city.

Conor: Hmm. Let me see if Dave has suggestions. Maybe he'll even let us stay at his place.

Tamara: That would be amazing! I like **to backpack**, but I've done so much of it that I'd be nice to stay in one place for a change.

### Sundaraban Forest

The **Sundaraban Forest** is a forest in Bangladesh famous for its Bengal Tigers and Mangrove trees. Mangrove trees are very interesting and unique because they grow in water instead of soil. Because of the way Mangrove trees grow, and because they are so plentiful in the **Sundaraban Forest**, the forest is actually mostly a body of water with giant tree roots everywhere providing the only footing or land to walk on. Actually, the only way to travel through the forest comfortably and safely is by boat!

In this episode, Harp talks about her experience in the **Sundabaran Forest**. She went there because she loves tigers and wanted to see a Bengal Tiger there, but once in the forest she realized how scary it would be to see a Bengal Tiger up close, so she started singing to keep them away! Here is a picture of the **Sundabaran Forest**. You can see the Mangrove tree roots surrounded by water. Imagine being on a tiny boat and seeing a Bengal Tiger up in that tree looking down at you!



### To hook up

In this episode, Andrew tells Harp that it was crazy how Harp was able **to hook up** with her tour guide randomly. **To hook up** is a casual way to talking about making some sort of connection, establishing a relationship, or meeting up with someone. If you think about **hooking up** a stereo system, or **hooking up** a new refrigerator, it means that you are connecting plugs and wires to something. In the same way, **hooking up** with someone means you are connecting with him or her, whether you are on a date or whether you are just meeting up with a friend.

Here are a couple examples showing how to use the expression **to hook up**:

Javier: Wanna go see a movie tonight?

Henrique: I'd love to, but I have to **hook up** with my chemistry partner tonight.

Javier: Oh, you haven't finished that lab assignment yet?

Henrique: Not yet! We're planning on finishing it tonight.

Patsy: Have you talked to the new guy yet? He seems really nice.

Angela: Actually, he asked me out the other day.

Patsy: Seriously? Are you going to go?

Angela: I said I'd **hook up** with his sometime this weekend.

Patsy: Oh that's so exciting. You'll have to let me know how it goes?

### WWOOF

**WWOOF** is an acronym that used to stand for Willing Workers on Organic Farms, but was recently changed to Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms. **WWOOF** is a diverse network of organizations that place volunteers on organic farms all over the world. Its purpose is to introduce people to environmental and ecologically responsible methods of farming, so that the organic food movement can better catch on. When **WWOOF** was first established in 1971, it stood for Working Weekends on Organic Farms. At that time, organic food wasn't as popular of an idea as it is now.

**WWOOF** volunteers generally do not get paid, unless the farmer or business owner chooses to give them something extra. Most often, **WWOOF** workers get free accommodation and food, and a chance to see a new part of the world, in exchange for their work on the farm.

Here's a picture of a couple **WWOOF** volunteers harvesting olives in Italy. Doesn't it look beautiful? Even though it looks pretty, trust Maura when she says it's hard work!!





### To cross your fingers

In this episode, we hear Maura say that she crossed her fingers when she got on the bus to go to her WWOOF location because it wasn't clear where she should go. **To cross your fingers** means to hope or wish. The origin of this expression is an old one, and goes back to the days when superstition was very popular, mostly during the 1800s.

Superstition is the belief that doing certain things or having certain things happen to you can directly affect your luck. There are a lot of superstitious beliefs that can seem very bizarre, but people who believe in them are often very convinced of their power. For example, breaking a mirror is believed to result in 7 years of bad luck! People believed that doing certain things, crossing your fingers being one of them, could prevent bad luck from happening.

Now, the expression **to cross your fingers** simple means to wish for good luck. **Crossing your fingers** doesn't necessarily mean you are literally **crossing your fingers**, or that you believe in superstition anymore. It just became a popular way to say that you hope for good luck instead of bad luck. **Crossing your fingers** was also believed to protect you from the consequences of a lie, and still today, it is something children often do behind their back when telling a lie. Here is a picture of what **crossing your fingers** looks like. It is supposed to resemble a Christian crucifix, something people believed would drive bad or evil luck:



Here are some more superstitious beliefs. Have you heard of any of them?

Walking under a ladder is bad luck.

A black cat crossing your path is bad luck.

Spilling salt is bad luck.

Walking on a crack on the sidewalk is bad luck.

### In the middle of nowhere

Maura talks about getting off the bus **in the middle of nowhere** when she missed her stop. What Maura means by **in the middle of nowhere** is that it was a place she wasn't familiar with. Usually **the middle of nowhere** is a place or area with very few or no buildings or people. It is a remote area that you probably haven't been before, and it may be a bit scary or lonely to be there. Sometimes, people call places that they can't find on a map **the middle of nowhere**. The expression can also be used as an exaggeration, to talk about a place people think is very remote. City people may talk about people living in the country as living **in the middle of nowhere**.

Here is an example of the expression **in the middle of nowhere**:

Nassar: Want to hang out this weekend?

Dema: I can't. I'm helping my parents pack up.

Nassar: Oh, are they moving? Where to?

Dema: Basically **the middle of nowhere**. They're moving to a small cabin on the lake. The nearest house is 2 kilometres away!

Nassar: Oh, I think that sounds kind of nice. Very peaceful.

Dema: Well, we'll see how peaceful they find it when they have to drive for 30 minutes just to buy a carton of milk!

## **Quiz**

### **1. What does while you're at it mean?**

- a) to interrupt something to do something else
- b) you have to do something as soon as you wake up
- c) at the same time you're doing something else
- d) you've forgotten to do something

### **2. Little usually means small, but can also be used to mean which of the following?**

- a) mean or insulting
- b) boring
- c) cute or sweet
- d) confusing or frustrating

### **3. What does get up to mean?**

- a) to question something
- b) to insult someone
- c) to not do
- d) to do

### **4. If something was made by humans instead of being natural, it's said to be \_\_\_\_\_-made.**

**(Fill in the blank, please)**

- a) incorrectly
- b) man
- c) created
- d) falsely

### **5. What does listen in mean?**

- a) that you weren't invited to the conversation, or that the speakers don't know you are listening
- b) to use headphones to listen to something
- c) to use the speaker to listen to a phone call as oppose to using the headset
- d) to use audio books to 'read' a book

- 6. If someone calls himself or herself a movie guy or a photography girl, what are they saying about movies or photography?**
  - a) that they hate those things
  - b) that their parents like those things.
  - c) that they like those things or are good at them
  - d) that their friends like those things but they don't
  
- 7. If someone has the travel bug, what do they have?**
  - a) a bad experience from travelling
  - b) an illness from travelling
  - c) that they travelled to somewhere that had a lot of insects
  - d) the urge to travel
  
- 8. If you travel by carrying a pack instead of staying at one hotel where you leave your things, what type of travel are you doing?**
  - a) backpacking
  - b) knapsacking
  - c) brown-bagging
  - d) hosteling
  
- 9. Meeting or beginning a relationship is sometimes called:**
  - a) dipping up
  - b) hooking up
  - c) hooking down
  - d) seeing up

**Answers:**

1.c    2.c    3.d    4.b    5.a    6.c    7.d    8.a    9.b