

Chatterbox #76 – Maura's road trip**Transcript**

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And I'm Maura.

Harp: And we're here bringing you another Culips English Learning Podcast.

Maura: Don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com. And in case you don't know how to spell it, it's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And when you're there, become a member, because when you become a member, you support us. And by supporting us, it encourages us to make more episodes for you. When you're a member, you also have access to our transcripts, more detailed explanations, and quizzes!

Harp: Exactly. And we're also on Facebook. So if you're on Facebook, come on over, say hello, ask us a question.

Maura: We'll see ya there!

Harp: All right. So today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode, and that's where we chat.

Maura: Right. We chat about cultural things, we talk about things that might be in the news, and sometimes we interview people.

Harp: And today, I'm going to interview someone.

Maura: Who are you going to interview, Harp?

Harp: I'm going to interview you! Yes, I'm going to interview you, Maura, because you're about to start a big road trip.

Maura: Yes, and I'm so excited. This summer, I've planned to go on a really big road trip, about 3 or 4 weeks, across the United States and then back to Montreal through Canada.

Harp: Wow! So you're driving across the country, basically?

- Maura: Pretty much, right. Our trip is starting in Montreal, of course, where Culips broadcasts from, and that is located kind of in the centre, but more Eastern side of Canada. And then visit my family. And I'm from Kitchener, Ontario, which is not very far from Toronto. After that we're going to drive down into the United States, west. And then we're going to come back up into Canada, into Alberta and the Rocky Mountains, which is really our destination. Spend some time there, and then drive back to Montreal, though Canada.
- Harp: That sounds like a really long trip and a lot of driving.
- Maura: Yeah, it is going to be a very long trip. We're going to be spending a lot of time in our car. It's about six or seven thousand kilometres.
- Harp: Six or seven thousand kilometres?
- Maura: It'll be six or seven thousand kilometres by the time we drive all the way out to the Rocky Mountains in Alberta and then all the way back to Montreal from there. So, round trip.
- Harp: Wow! A six- or seven-thousand kilometre round trip. That is a lot of driving.
- Maura: Yeah. It will definitely be a few days of driving all day long. We plan to take our time, because it's not about the destination; it's about the journey as well. So, we're going to take our time and stop off at different places along the way.
- Harp: OK. Very exciting. Have you ever driven across the country before?
- Maura: About 10 years ago, the last time I was out there actually, I took a bus from Toronto to Calgary, which is pretty much what we're going to do this time, too. It's very long by bus, because when I took the bus, I was lucky enough that I was with a friend and we could stop in any big city that we came to. We had this special deal, so we were able to stop three times on our way out. We visited people or visited the city on our way out. But even with those stops, it's so painful taking the bus, especially when you take it at night and it's so uncomfortable and you can't sleep. So I'm really excited this time to drive and take our time and stop wherever and whenever we like.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. Driving in a car versus in a bus, I'd take the car any day.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure.
- Harp: It's really exciting. Why did you decide to take this trip?

- Maura: Well, as I just said, it's been 10 years since I was out in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. And that's the reason for the trip, because we're celebrating the anniversary of being out in the Rocky Mountains. Now, 10 years ago, I lived out in the Rocky Mountains, when I was in my early 20s, and I worked at a restaurant. It's something that's really popular to do for younger people in their 20s. A lot of Canadians do it from all across the country and there's also people who come from other countries. I remember I worked with someone from Japan and I also had a good friend from Australia. So, some people hear about this area in the Rocky Mountains and come out to work, too.
- Harp: All right, very exciting. So, talk to me about the trip. You're starting in Montreal. Where are you planning on stopping? Do you have some idea of some places where you're going to go?
- Maura: Well, first we're going to go visit my family. Because it's on the way, so why not? And after I spend a couple days visiting my family, we're going to go down into the United States. The reason we decided to do this is because it's actually faster to go out to the western side of Canada in the United States because of the Great Lakes. Right beside Ontario, in Canada, we have five Great Lakes and it's important to realize that these lakes are huge. So, if we wanted to stay in Canada, we would have to drive up north a lot to go around these lakes. We're going to go down to the United States because it's like a kind of short-cut. We don't have to drive all the way around the Great Lakes because it's not as far of a distance to get past them.
- Harp: OK, that's cool. I've had friends who have done that before. Have you been to some of the American states that you're going to go through?
- Maura: I actually don't think I've been to most of them. We're going to go into New York, and I have been to the state of New York before. But after that, when we drive west, I haven't been to any of those states. I'm especially excited because we're going to go to Chicago. Probably just for a day or two, but I've never been to the Windy City before.
- Harp: That's exciting. I really want to see Chicago.
- Maura: Yeah. I've heard a lot of really great things about it, especially that it's known for architecture.
- Harp: Really? That's cool. I've hear it has a lot of amazing restaurants.
- Maura: Another good reason to visit.
- Harp: Definitely.

- Maura: So, we'll only get to spend a day or two there before we'll have to move on. And we drive through Wisconsin and North Dakota. And then we'll be pretty close, at some point, to Yellowstone National Park, which is a really huge, and I've heard amazing, national park in the United States.
- Harp: That's cool. Are you planning on camping there for a day or two?
- Maura: Yeah. We're going to spend a little bit of time there. And it's funny, because whenever I think of Yellowstone National Park, I think of a cartoon that I watched as a kid. Do you know what I'm talking about, Harp?
- Harp: Yogi Bear?
- Maura: Yeah! There was a cartoon, and the main character was a bear, Yogi Bear, and he lived in Yellowstone National Park, so for that reason I'm kind of excited to go there, because I think it'll be fun.
- Harp: I love it! I hope there's a picture of Yogi Bear somewhere. You have to take a picture with Yogi Bear.
- Maura: OK, I will. I bet there will be a picture, you're right. I hope so.
- Harp: I think so.
- Maura: So, after that, then we will continue on and head up into the Canadian Rockies. And hopefully by then, we will be in Banff National Park, which is a very famous park. Banff, the city itself, is one of the biggest tourist destinations in Canada and Banff National Park is amazing! The mountains are beautiful! I just... I can't even explain how great it is. And it's been 10 years since I've been there, so I'm really excited to see it again.
- Harp: It is so beautiful there. I wonder how much it's going to have changed from when you were there 10 years ago.
- Maura: I don't know, but I'm sure it will have changed. Now, in Banff National Park, there's also another town called Lake Louise, and I worked for one summer in this town. That's another place we're going to go. What's really special about Lake Louise is it's at a very high elevation. So Lake Louise, the city, or village, as it's called, is about 5030 feet, or 1500 metres above sea level. So, sometimes if people arrive there by airplane and they don't leave enough time to adjust, they might actually be affected by the elevation.
- Harp: Yeah, it's really high up.

- Maura: Yeah. After you spend some time there you get used to it. Yes, I'm so excited to go back. It's always interesting to visit a place that you knew a long time ago when you were younger or when you were a kid, because you see how things have changed and you have all of these feelings attached to the place because you had all of these experience there.
- Harp: Yeah. And you said in the beginning that Banff and Lake Louise, that's your destination. So are you going to spend more time there?
- Maura: We'll probably spend some time there for sure because there's so much to do in terms of camping and hiking.
- Harp: OK. Are you going to be camping the whole time or are you going to stay in some hotels or bed and breakfasts?
- Maura: Yup. We'll probably camp as much as we can and, yeah, hotels, bed and breakfasts. To be honest, we're kind of flying by the seat of our pants. We don't have that much planned, so we'll have to find accommodations wherever we end up.
- Harp: Aw, that'll be good. At least you don't have to be somewhere at a set date. You get more freedom.
- Maura: Yup. We'll be very free to end up wherever we do. We'll probably also go to Calgary, because I also spent some time there when I lived in the Rockies because it's one of Canada's biggest cities and it's just about 1 hour from Banff, so we'll spend sometime in the city too.
- Harp: Very exciting. So this is the trip on the way there and your destination. What about the way back? You're driving through Canada this time.
- Maura: Yes, which is also really exciting because Canada is such a diverse place. Depending on where you are in our country, it can look so different. One of the places that I'm really interested in visiting is also in Alberta. It's called Drumheller, and what's really interesting about this place is that there were a lot of dinosaur remains found there. And, actually, the world's largest dinosaur was found in Drumheller.
- Harp: Yes, I know that. I've been to Drumheller before. It's really exciting and super cool.
- Maura: Ooh, I'm even more excited now. The other thing I'm interested in seeing in Drumheller is the badlands.
- Harp: The badlands.

- Maura: Yeah. I just love the name. It sounds so bad and rough. But the badlands are actually just a place where the earth and the soil has been eroded, which means changed, by the water and wind. And so the landscape looks really, really interesting. There are badlands, actually, all over the world in different places. So Drumheller is a place I'm really interested in seeing.
- Harp: Yeah, I hope you get to go there. It's super cool. Where else are you planning on stopping on your way back?
- Maura: Well, a friend of mine, who is from Saskatchewan, recommended that we go to the tunnels in Moose Jaw. Now, to be clear, Moose Jaw is the name of a city in Saskatchewan. It's a pretty crazy sounding name. I like it.
- Harp: It's pretty much one of the coolest town names I've ever heard. Moose Jaw.
- Maura: So, in Moose Jaw, they have tunnels that run under the city and these tunnels were used for two different things. They were used during the time of prohibition, when alcohol was illegal, for bootlegging, so, moving this alcohol that was illegal around. And these tunnels were also used by Chinese immigrants who were new to Canada and who were helping build the railway in Canada. So when you go to these tunnels, there are actors in the tunnels and you pretend like you are some of the bootleggers or you pretend like you're an immigrant to Canada and you have experiences that are re-enacted. And you have to move through the tunnels quickly and sometimes you go through a secret door. So it sounds really fun.
- Harp: Sounds super interesting.
- Maura: So I also hope I get to go there. I'm really looking forward to seeing the Prairies. Because, even though I was on the bus, I remember that it was just amazing. The Prairies are known for being very flat and so sometimes people say very boring. But for me, it's so flat that it's incredible, so I'm looking forward to seeing that again.
- Harp: Yeah. Personally, I think driving through the Prairies is amazing because the sunsets are just beautiful.
- Maura: Right. Because the land is so flat, the skies seem so huge. So, hopefully I'll see some of those amazing sunsets.
- Harp: Very cool. Now, I don't have a very good sense of direction, Maura. Are you planning on taking a lot of maps with you? How are you going to know where you're going?

- Maura: Well, luckily, we live in the year 2012, where a lot of people have a GPS. So GPS stands for *global positioning system*. And you can use this device to help navigate. So you can put in the destination where you would like to go and the GPS knows your location at that moment, so it can tell you where to go, which roads to take and which streets to go down. It even has information about accommodations and rest stops, and pretty much everything you would need to know in travelling.
- Harp: It's fantastic that you have a GPS. I don't think I would ever take a road trip without one now.
- Maura: Yeah. We do have some maps, but I think that's just our back-up plan.
- Harp: Yeah. Count on the GPS. Make sure it has batteries all the time.
- Maura: Yeah. So, that should help us out a lot because we definitely don't know the route.
- Harp: Are you planning on stopping anywhere else on your way home?
- Maura: Who knows! We'll stop if we see something interesting or hear something interesting. Oh, I almost forgot. We are going to stop in Winnipeg, because, by chance, one of our friends is going to be in Winnipeg at the same time. So we'll stop and visit a little bit there. But, other than that we'll be on the Trans-Canada Highway for all the way back to Montreal.
- Harp: Yeah, that's cool. The Trans-Canadian Highway basically is a highway that goes across the whole country, so that's cool you're going to be taking it.
- Maura: Yeah. It's really amazing to think that the highway goes across the whole country. It doesn't stop anywhere, and so on our way back, we might not be using our GPS as much because we know you just have to stay on the Trans-Canada.
- Harp: Yeah. It's less difficult to get lost on the Trans-Canadian.
- Maura: And one more thing I want to mention is during my trip, I'm going to share some of my adventure with you, because of course, we're going to be taking pictures along the way as we stop. So, I'm gonna have my computer with me and we're gonna get connected at internet cafés, so there I'll be able to post some of my photos. So, over the next few weeks I'll be posting these photos and you can see some of my trip.
- Harp: That's going to be very exciting. I really look forward to seeing all your pictures. Now, are you all prepared? Have you found a cat sitter yet?

- Maura: We are pretty much all ready to go. We have all the supplies we need for camping. We have a cooler and we'll buy some food along the way. And, yes, we did find someone to take care of our kitty cats. So, they're well taken care of and we don't need to worry about that.
- Harp: Perfect, so you're ready to go. This is super exciting.
- Maura: The closer it gets to the day that we're leaving, the more excited I get.
- Harp: I am sure. OK, well thanks so much for telling us all about your upcoming road trip. Again, I can't wait to see the pictures.
- Maura: Yeah, no problem I can't wait to post them. So, while I'm gone, we'll still be uploading our podcast. But don't forget to go to Facebook, where you can see my pictures. Hopefully I'll be able to upload a few pictures every week.
- Harp: Hopefully. And at the end you have to post even more pictures.
- Maura: OK!
- Harp: All right, well that's it for us. Make sure you check out the website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and becomes a member, because then you get the learning materials.
- Maura: Right. And that's it. I'll see you when I get back.
- Harp: Drive safely! Bon voyage!
- Maura: Thanks Harp.
- Harp: Bye everyone.
- Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

A road trip

Maura's going on a road trip. This means that she is going to travel a far distance by car. If a person is travelling by bus or not going very far by car then it is not a road trip. There is no exact distance to determine whether something is a road trip. It depends on how far people drive normally.

Road trips are popular in Canada and the United States. This is partly due to relatively cheap gas prices compared to other countries and the size of our countries. In Canada, it takes days to drive across the country. People will often drive for a couple hours to visit a place for the day.

A round trip

Maura says that her trip will be about a 6000 or 7000 kilometres round trip. The expression *round trip* means the trip to the destination and the trip back home. This can be used when talking about any trip. It is especially used when booking tickets for trains, buses, or airplanes. We say *one way* to talk about just one part of the trip.

It's not about the destination

This is a common expression with many variations. *It's about the journey, not the destination* is the basic form. This saying means that the destination or goal is not the most important and it is not good to focus all our attention and energy only on the destination. It is also important to enjoy and learn during the journey or trip. This expression is often used to offer someone advice.

This expression refers to a destination and a journey, but it's not only used for travel. It can also be used to talk about many other aspects of life. For example, a person who is focused on a career goal should not just focus on the position they want to obtain. This person should also learn from the experiences they have as they work towards that career goal.

This expression is also used to talk about life in general, with the wording *life's a journey, not a destination*. This means that we should not just focus on our goals in life, but enjoy the process too.

Maura uses this expression in this episode to talk about her travel plans. She says, "It's not about the destination; it's about the journey as well." She says this because on a long road trip, it is important to enjoy the ride and the places you drive through.

Any day

If a person says they would do something any day, this means that they would take this option at any time they had the choice. Harp says, "Driving in a car versus in a bus, I'd take the car any day," which means that if she were given an option, between bus and car, of how to travel from Montreal to the west of Canada, she would always choose the car. Harp would never take the bus out west.

It is important to note that when we use *any day*, we also use *would*. This is because it is a hypothetical situation. We say what someone would do at any time in a given situation.

Here are a couple of examples with *any day*:

Kenneth: Shelly's so beautiful. I would love to go on a date with her.

Pete: Yeah, I'd go on a date with her any day.

Amy: I have to go to Toronto for business next week, but I hate travelling.

Ryan: You're lucky. I'd go to Toronto any day.

The Rocky Mountains

The Rocky Mountains are a chain of mountains stretching more than 4000 kilometres. They include states all the way down to New Mexico and up into the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. It's an excellent place to participate in outdoor activities and to see a variety of wildlife that lives in the area, including elk, moose, and bear.

This mountain chain is also often referred to just as The Rockies.

A short cut

The fastest way to get to a destination is called a short cut. You can have a short cut with any way you travel, even by walking. Children may have a short cut when they walk home from school, for example, by walking through someone's yard instead of staying on the street. In this episode, Maura says that they are going to take a short cut out to the Rockies by driving through the United States.

Here's another example with *short cut*:

Germain: We take the 401 highway after the bridge, right? That's the way I've always gotten to the beach.

Ben: I know a short cut, and you don't have to take the highway. I'll show you. We turn off onto a little side road before the bridge and it'll get us there much faster.

The opposite of a short cut is the long way or the scenic route. People take the scenic route because it is entertaining and there are interesting things to see along the way. This may or may not be longer.

The Windy City

Chicago is sometimes called the Windy City. There are a few possible explanations for this name. One simple possibility is that the city is windy. It's on the shore of Lake Michigan and wind comes off the lake year round. Other possible origins are Chicago's rivalry with other cities. Cincinnati had previously referred to itself as the Windy City, and Chicago may have stolen the name from them. Also, Chicago won the right to hold the World's Fair when other cities had also wanted to. They were proud of this accomplishment, speaking about it a lot, making them windbags. Windbags are people who talk a lot or brag about nothing. Maybe this then earned Chicago the name of the Windy City.

Yogi Bear

Yogi Bear is a cartoon character, who was featured in *The Yogi Bear Show*. This television show was popular for many years. Yogi Bear was first created in 1958 and continued to be popular into the 2000s. Harp and Maura joke about Yogi Bear living in Yellowstone National Park. According to the show, Yogi Bear lived in Jellystone Park, which is a kind of word play with *Yellowstone*. They sound very similar, but there is actually no Jellystone Park.

A bed and breakfast

A bed and breakfast is a type of accommodation where a room can be rented just like at a hotel. Traditionally a bed and breakfast is a house in rural areas or small towns and the owners also live there. They provide rooms that can be rented, and they also cook a breakfast for you in the morning. Because it is a home, there are usually a very small number of rooms available for rent. At a bed and breakfast, you may also be able to chat with the owners and learn about the place you are visiting.

Bed and breakfasts, also called B&Bs, were originally cheaper than hotels, since people just simply rented out rooms in their houses. But now B&Bs have become so popular that the price to stay there is often the same as staying at a hotel. B&Bs can now also be found in larger cities. There are lots of B&Bs in Montreal!

To fly by the seat of your pants

To fly by the seat of your pants means to decide what to do in the moment and not make plans ahead of time. When a person flies by the seat of their pants, it might be because they don't have experience or skill in this particular area to know what to do or to even make a plan, or it might be because they want to be spontaneous and not plan everything out.

This expression is related to flying. In the past, pilots had to feel the movements in the plane to get information about how they should fly. There was a particular case in the early 1900s when a pilot did not have the proper instruments and had to fly the plane using the feeling through the seat of his pants. At this time he did not have a plan and decided what to do in the moment.

Maura says that she has not made many plans for her road trip. They will decide how long to drive and where to stay in the moment, so she will fly by the seat of her pants.

Here are a couple more examples with *to fly by the seat of your pants*:

Jenn: Do you know what you're going to say at Paul's wedding?

Rich: No. I haven't planned anything. I'll just fly by the seat of my pants.

Cheryl: When's your friend arriving from out of town?

Emily: I have no idea. She always flies by the seat of her pants, so it's hard to predict when she'll actually be here.

Bootlegging

Bootlegging refers to the making and selling of illegal goods. In the United States, during the time of the prohibition of alcohol (simply called prohibition) alcohol was still legal in Canada. At this time, there was an illegal supply of alcohol moving from Canada to the US. This was known as the bootlegging of alcohol.

Today, *bootlegging* is also associated with music. Music can be illegally recorded at concerts and then be sold with no money being given to the musician. This term can also refer to any illegal distribution of a musician's music. This was popularized at the time of the audio cassette. Today, with the Internet and file sharing, music continues to be shared illegally, but this is not commonly called bootlegging.

The Prairies

The Prairies are a part of Canada that you may have heard us talk about on previous Culips episodes. We have interviewed friends from the Prairies. The Prairies are generally in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, continuing down into the United States. This area is very flat with lots of prairie land.

A back-up plan

We all make plans in life, but sometimes, these plans do not work! This is the reason why we have a backup. A *back-up plan* is the plan you have in case your first plan does not work. This can also be called a *backup*.

In this episode, Maura says that on her road trip she will use a GPS (global positioning system) for directions on where to drive. Her back-up plan is to use maps. This means that if the GPS doesn't work, then she will use a map.

Here's another example with *back-up plan*:

Sal: What's your back-up plan if your mom won't lend you the money for rent?

Chelsea: I'll have to take money from my credit card. I don't have any other choice.

The pronunciation of *route*

There are two ways that the word *route* can be pronounced. There is also generally a difference between how Americans and Canadians pronounce this word. This is a general difference because some Americans say *route* like Canadians and vice versa. This word can be pronounced like *root* (rhymes with suit and boot) or *rowt* (rhymes with out and shout). Canadians are more likely to pronounce it like *root* and Americans are more likely to say *rowt*.

In this episode, Maura says *root*, just like most Canadians. Even though there is a difference between how this word can be pronounced, it does not prevent Americans and Canadians from understanding each other.

A cat sitter

A babysitter is a person who takes care of a baby or child while the baby's parents are out. Similarly, we can also say *cat sitter* or *dog sitter* to talk about a person who takes care of a cat or dog while the owner is away. Someone is going to take care of Maura's cats while she is on her trip and Maura calls this person the cat sitter.

Bon voyage

This is a French expression that we use sometimes in English. *Bon voyage* translates to *Have a good trip*. Harp says *bon voyage* to Maura because she is wishing Maura a good trip. Of course, we can also just say *have a good trip* in English.

Similarly, we can also say *bon appetit* in English, which is also really a French expression. This expression wishes everyone a good meal and is said just before people begin to eat a meal together. There is no English equivalent in this case. *Enjoy the meal* might be the closest expression.

Quiz

1. What is necessary for a trip to be called a road trip?

- a) It must be a trip taken by a singer or a band.
- b) It must be a car trip of a considerable distance.
- c) It must be a bus trip.
- d) It must be a trip of a considerable distance, taken by airplane.

2. Josh says that he'd eat shark meat any day.

What does the above statement mean?

- a) Josh hasn't eaten shark meat, but some day he will.
- b) At any time, Josh would eat shark meat if given the option.
- c) Josh has eaten shark meat.
- d) Josh would never eat shark meat.

3. What is another name for the famous Rocky Mountains?

- a) The Mounties
- b) The Rockers
- c) The Rockies
- d) The Rocks

4. Which is one of the possible explanations for Chicago being called the Windy City?

- a) It's windy.
- b) It isn't windy.
- c) It had a rivalry with Cleveland.
- d) It smells in the city.

5. What expression means not to plan in advance?

- a) to fly away
- b) to take flight
- c) to fly off the handle
- d) to fly by the seat of your pants

6. What is bootlegging?

- a) cutting off your jeans at your boot
- b) making and selling illegal goods
- c) selling alcohol
- d) dancing

7. What is the back-up plan in Maura's trip?

- a) to use maps
- b) to use a GPS
- c) to ask for directions
- d) to fly by the seat of her pants

8. Which French expression do people say before a person goes on a trip?

- a) Bon voyage
- b) Bon appetit
- c) Déjà vu
- d) Rendez-vous

Answers:

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