

## Chatterbox #13 – Harp's Trip to India

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone, this is Maura and ...

Harp: Harp ...

Maura: And we're here with the **Chatterbox** podcast at Culips, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. So you can go to our website to see the transcript and more explanations in our Lipservice. This episode, Harp and I are going to chat, we're going to chat about Harp's recent trip to India.

Harp: Exciting!

Maura: It is very exciting! I've never been there, but I imagine it's a pretty amazing place to visit.

Harp: Yeah, it was fantastic.

Maura: Yeah, for sure! So, was it your first time there, Harp?

Harp: It was actually my second time to India.

Maura: OK, great. Sounds like a good trip. So we're going to talk about the weather in India because it's very different from the weather in Canada. And we're also going to talk about food because Indian food is so delicious. And then we're going to talk about shopping because Harp did a lot of shopping when she was in India.

Harp: I did a lot of shopping.

Maura: OK, so first tell us about the weather. **What was the weather like** when you were there?

Harp: OK, well, the first time that I went to India I went in early February. So my family is from Punjab, which is the northern part of India, and it was colder. You had to wear jeans and a sweatshirt, but this time I went in the end of March, so spring is there and it's beautiful. It was the perfect time to visit, I think, for anyone from North America because it's not too hot and it's not cold.

Maura: OK, so it's just hot, like, is there rain or does it get cloudy?

- Harp: OK, so, I was there for two and a half weeks and for two weeks and four days it was perfect. But one day, **out of nowhere**, this crazy rainstorm came and it was horrible. But other than the one day it was beautiful.
- Maura: OK, so now let's talk about the food because Indian food is pretty delicious. I love Indian food and I'm sure when you were there you had a lot of excellent food.
- Harp: It was delicious! It's my favourite type of cuisine **by far** because I grew up with it, but in India it's even better than the Indian food in Canada because it's so fresh! My family lives really close to farmland—if not on farmland—so any vegetables you eat—anything—it's so fresh. For me the surprising thing was that they don't use any sort of pesticides or herbicides on any of the food that they bring into the house because they don't grow vegetables for sale, it's only the wheat, and they don't use pesticides. And so even things like **turmeric**, which is the essential spice of Indian cooking, I saw it in its natural, like, root form. While in Canada, I've only seen a powder, which is orange. You know, I never thought of what it looked like, but I saw what it came from. And the fruit—oh, the pomegranates, the oranges, the apples—everything was fresh and delicious.
- Maura: So did you eat in restaurants or did you eat at your family's home mostly?
- Harp: We liked to eat at home because that's the freshest and it's so delicious, but we ate in restaurants quite often. And the funniest thing is that the smallest restaurant is usually the best in India. It's just like a small family who is just trying to make a living and they just cook the same as they would for their families. It's so fresh and delicious. Lots of different curries and just delicious food.
- Maura: Yeah, I already feel hungry.
- Harp: Me too!
- Maura: Were there a lot of meat dishes?
- Harp: I tried to avoid meat just because not everyone has a refrigerator so I don't know how they keep the meat. But in the village where I was staying—where my family is from—they would kill the chicken that day and then cook it, so it's very fresh and it's delicious. I'm a big meat eater and I loved it. But I ate meat I think three times only, the whole time. The thing is Indian food is essentially **vegetarian** so you don't really even miss it because there's so much variety.

Maura: So good, so delicious.

Harp: So delicious!

Maura: OK, cool. Let's talk about the other very important activity in your trip which was shopping. Tell us about really why you went to India.

Harp: Basically, I went to India for shopping. I have two sisters and my older sister is getting married this summer. So my mom, my older sister, my younger sister and myself, we went to India to buy clothes. And you can do Indian clothes shopping in Canada, for sure, there's lot of stores, but the selection and the price in India is unmatched. So we went to get her wedding outfits to wear in the wedding, so for example, her wedding **lenga**, which is like a wedding dress. But an Indian wedding is five or six days long, and you need to wear a different outfit for each event. So that's four girls in my family, or four women in my family, times six events, you have a lot of clothes you need to buy and to wear. Yeah, we did shopping every day.

Maura: And what is shopping like in India?

Harp: Oh, it's fantastic. It's completely different from North America.

Maura: Oh really?

Harp: Yeah. So, I guess if you go to a shopping mall in India or in Delhi or in one of the big cities it's the same, but we were looking for Indian clothes so we were trying to buy the **saris**, the **lenga**, the suits, and I'll put pictures on the website so you can understand what those mean. So you go into a store and first thing you sit down, right away. There's no walking around this store. You sit down.

Maura: Sounds good.

Harp: Yeah, it's very relaxing. And first they ask you if you want something cold to drink, do you want some **chai**, which is tea, or do you want some snacks. And you really can't say no, like you have to accept one thing, so even if you say just a glass of water, they will bring you that. Then they will ask you what type of clothes you're looking for, so you can say, I don't know, like a party outfit or something to wear at the house. Because for the wedding ceremony and the wedding events, three or four of the festivities happen at home and those are more relaxed and then there's the couple of big events that happen in a hall or in a restaurant that you need more fancy clothes. So they would start with saying what kind of clothes and what colours and how much embroidery you want and then they would pull everything off the shelves. If

we would like something we would pull it to the side and at the very end they would show us the pieces we had thought were nice. And it was very exciting because you just sat there and saw the most beautiful colours, and textures and fabrics, and designs, and, for example, with the **sari**, so it's about I think nine feet of fabric and you wrap it around yourself. So if you see something that you think is pretty, you stand up there and they wrap it around you to see **what the colours look on you** or to see how it falls, so it's such an interactive experience even though you're sitting there. So it's just **out of this world**.

Maura: So how long do you spend in one store?

Harp: Three hours, probably.

Maura: Wow, so you don't just casually go into a store. You plan, OK this is a store that looks good, we're going to go in here.

Harp: Yeah. No, definitely. Even, for example, a shoe store, if you go into a shoe store, you're not **going to** go look at one thing that's on the wall, they're **going to** pull out pretty much every pair of shoes in your size in the store. You're **going** try on everything that they have, you're **going** to see everything because they just have such amazing selection and they don't display everything and they want to show you personally so you can see it, feel it, touch it, everything. It's just ...

Maura: Oh wow! And so when you go into a store and you stay for a few hours and you eat and you drink, you usually have to buy something at the end, I guess?

Harp: If you didn't like everything within maybe the first 20 minutes you would leave. But we would go to stores with people who are from India and they would only take us to the best stores or to the stores that had the best quality or to the stores that had the best selection. So we didn't have that much time that we could go to every single store in the city because there's a lot of selection.

Maura: But it wouldn't be OK to go and stay for a few hours and then say actually I didn't like anything, see you later.

Harp: Yeah, that would be very bad **manners** because they're putting all their energy and it's not just one salesperson it's usually a team of at least five to six, seven, eight people. Because then they're unwrapping all the clothes, they have to fold it all again, they have to put it all away. So it's a lot of time and energy **on their part**.

- Maura: Right, it makes sense, I think.
- Harp: If you don't like it in the beginning you say it right away and you leave. But we didn't really go to a lot of stores we didn't like.
- Maura: Wow. Well, thank you very much for talking to us about it.
- Harp: No problem.
- Maura: I'm really interested. Maybe one day I'll get a chance to go to India, too.
- Harp: It's quite fantastic, I think it's an experience for everyone.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure. OK, thanks a lot, Harp. And, yeah, like we said, if you want more information about this conversation you can simply go to our website. Thanks a lot. This has been Maura and ...
- Harp: Harp ...
- Maura: Bye!
- Harp: Bye everyone!

## Detailed Explanation

What was the weather **like** when you were there?

When we want a description of something, native speakers often use the question “**What was it like?**”

Instead of saying “How was the weather?” Maura asked what it was **like**. We often use the word “**like**” when we want a description of something.

Here are some other examples:

Holly:            So, what is he **like**?  
Yasmina:        He is super funny and smart.

Gavin:           We bought our new house today.  
Brad:            That is so great! What is it **like**?

### Out of nowhere

The expression “**out of nowhere**” is usually used when someone is telling a story. “**Out of nowhere**” describes an action that happened very suddenly and without any warning. The action happens so suddenly that it seems like it “came from nowhere,” like it appeared in front of you and you never saw it coming.

When something comes “**out of nowhere**” it is unexpected and it is a surprise.

Here are some examples of short stories using the expression “**out of nowhere**”:

Catherine:      I was biking along yesterday afternoon and there was no traffic and it was all quiet. And then **out of nowhere** this bird comes flying by my head.

Boris:            So, my boss and I were having a regular conversation the other day. It was just a regular conversation, and then **out of nowhere** he suddenly tells me that he doesn't think I've been doing a good job.

In Harp's story, while she was in India a rainstorm started **out of nowhere**.

The word “suddenly” and the expression “all of a sudden” are synonyms of “**out of nowhere**.” Here is the same example as above with the new expression:

Boris:            So, my boss and I were having a regular conversation the other day. It was just a regular conversation, and then **all of a sudden** he suddenly tells me that he doesn't think I've been doing a good job.

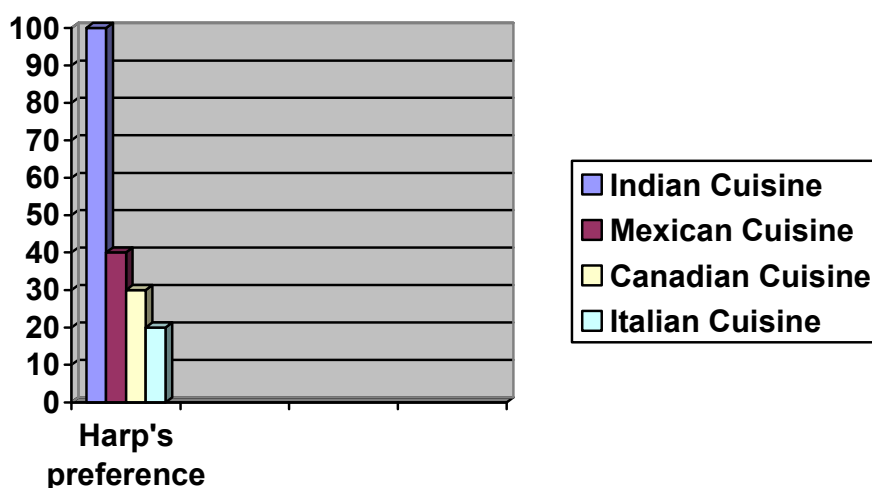
By far

In this episode, Harp says that Indian cooking is her favourite type of cuisine **by far**. “**By far**” in this case is an intensifier like “really” or “very.” It makes the sentence stronger.

It is often used when saying something is the best or worst, or any other kind of superlative (the funniest, the most interesting, etc.). When we say “**by far**” it means that the next best thing is not even close to the first.

Harp is basically saying, “It is my favourite type of cuisine.” But she puts emphasis on this when she adds “**by far**.” This means that Indian cuisine is her favourite, and she doesn’t like any other cuisine nearly as much. No other cuisine comes close to Indian cuisine for Harp. Indian cuisine is a lot better than all the rest.

Here is a little visual example:



And here are a couple examples using the expression:

Jared: I think this book is the best one in the course **by far**.

Fiona: She is **by far** the most stylish person I know.

Carla: Was it your favourite city?

Evan: **By far**.



### Turmeric

Do you know this spice? This is one of the most common kinds of Indian spices, but is used and can be found in many different countries, too. **Turmeric** is a deep orange colour and it has an earthy and bitter flavour.

**Turmeric** is used in cooking, of course, and has been used to dye fabric. It also has medicinal properties. It needs to grow in temperature between 20 - 30 degrees Celsius with a lot of rain, which explains why this is not a Canadian spice!

### Vegetarian

A **vegetarian** is a person who does not eat meat. A **vegetarian** does not eat chicken, beef or pork, or any type of animal.

A **vegetarian** meal is a meal that has no meat in it.

In many countries where meat is an essential part of the local cuisine, **vegetarians** are rare. In other countries, such as India, many people do not eat meat.

In Canada, vegetarianism is becoming more and more popular. Big cities, like Montreal, now have a variety of **vegetarian** restaurants to choose from.

### Lenga, sari

A **sari** (also spelled saree) is about nine metres of unstitched fabric that is wrapped around the body. Underneath, a woman wears a blouse and a petticoat, but usually only the top fabric is seen. It is a traditional outfit that is worn by women in India. The **sari** can be simple or very fancy and comes in every colour of the rainbow.

A **lenga** is comparable to a long skirt with a shirt, but is usually very fancy. It is typically worn by women at fancy events such as weddings, engagements, or other parties.



### Chai

“**Chai**” is the word for tea in India and other parts of Eastern Asia. So when Harp says she was offered **chai**, this means she was offered tea.

“**Chai**,” in most of the Western World, means a special kind of tea, the masala **chai** tea. We actually say “**chai** tea.” But we are actually repeating the same word twice!



“**Chai**” in North America is a spicy kind of tea, with spices like cinnamon and cloves. There are tons of kinds of **chai**, every recipe is different.

### It's out of this world

Harp says that the interactive shopping experience in India is **out of this world**. This is a good thing! To say something is **out of this world** is like saying that something is incredible, amazing, or unbelievable, and also different from anything else you have experienced before.

A more literal definition is to say that “**out of this world**” means that something is so interesting and different that it seems like it comes from another world.

Here are some examples with “**out of this world**”:

Roger: Have you been to that new restaurant downtown?

Shana: No, but I heard the food is **out of this world**.

Diane: How was the concert last night?

Mike: Great! The lighting show was really **out of this world**.

A note about slang: Harp pronounces “**out of**” like “**outta**.” This is a really popular way for native speakers to say this.

### Gonna (slang)

As Harp explains Indian shopping, she often uses “**gonna**” instead of “going” or “going to.” “**Gonna**” is not a real word, it is slang and means exactly the same as “going to.” This is very common slang.

Here is a portion of Harp’s transcript below where she uses the slang “**gonna**.” It is a good idea to listen to this episode again to hear this slang.

Harp: Even, for example, a shoe store, if you go into a shoe store, you’re not **going to** go look at one thing that’s on the wall, they’re **going to** pull out pretty much every pair of shoes in your size in the store. You’re **going** try on everything that they have, you are **going** to see everything because they just have such amazing selection and they don’t display everything and they want to show you personally so you can see it, feel it, touch it, everything. It’s just ...

Manners

“**Manners**” are standards of politeness. **Manners** are the cultural traditions that we use to show respect. For example, eating with your mouth closed and using a knife and fork properly are good table **manners**.

Harp says that it would be bad **manners** to go into a store in India, be served for hours, and then not buy anything. So, in India, good **manners** would be buying something from a store in which you have spent a long time. It is a sign of respect and the social norm there.

What are some **manners** in your country?

Grammar mistakes

Native English speakers make mistakes too. Here is one that we made this episode.

Harp says, “...to see what the colours look on you...”

Harp should have said, “...to see how the colours look on you...”

**Quiz** (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)**1. What does Maura ask Harp at the beginning of this episode?**

**Maura:**        **What was the weather \_\_\_\_\_ when you were there?**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) look
- b) like
- c) in
- d) out

**2. “All of a sudden” and “suddenly” are synonyms for which expression from this episode?**

- a) out of this world
- b) out of nowhere
- c) nowhere
- d) in this world

**3. Harp really loves Indian cuisine. She says that it is her favourite type of cuisine \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) by far
- b) by long
- c) by short
- d) by close

**4. What is a person who does not eat meat called?**

- a) a veggie
- b) a carnivore
- c) a vegan
- d) a vegetarian

5. Which is slang for “going to”?

- a) googoo
- b) gone
- c) wanna
- d) gonna

6. Saying *please* and *thank you* is polite. This is one of the basic rules of \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) manners
- b) mannerisms
- c) man
- d) mannequins

**Answers:** 1.b 2.b 3.a 4.d 5.d 6.a