

Simplified Speech #048 – Vietnam travel nightmare

Episode description

In this exciting Simplified Speech episode, Andrew recounts a crazy experience he had during his trip to Vietnam. Vacation is supposed to be a time to kick back, relax, and let loose, but sometimes things don't go the way we plan. Tune in to find out about Andrew's travel nightmare!

Fun fact

In this episode, Andrew talks about his trip to Da Nang, Vietnam. Did you know that Da Nang is the fourth largest city in Vietnam? It is situated halfway between the capital, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. The city is famous for its abundance of white-sand beaches and crystal-clear water that is perfect for enjoying water sports, fishing, or just relaxing in the sun!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To kick back
- All-inclusive
- To stash
- To catch a flight
- Safe and sound
- In one piece





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: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hey, Suzanne.

Suzanne: Hey, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: Suzanne, I'm doing not so bad, but I kind of had, well, a bad experience when I was travelling in Vietnam recently.

Suzanne: Oh no.

Andrew: Yeah, I mean, overall the trip was awesome. Vietnam is an awesome country. Anyway, so I was in Vietnam just for a short trip, for 3 or 4 days, had a great time. It was fabulous. The food is amazing, the people are kind and welcoming. It's a beautiful country, I love it. But right at the end of my stay, I had a bad experience. We actually recorded a Culips episode a couple years back about a travel nightmare that happened when I was visiting China. And it was really well received, people loved this episode. So I thought, let's do part 2 and I will share my bad luck with everybody about what happened in Vietnam.

Suzanne: Well, I can't wait to hear all the details.

Andrew: But, before I share all the details, I would like to remind all of our listeners that there is a study guide for this Simplified Speech episode. So if you want to study along with the study guide, which includes a lot of awesome things, like a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world usage examples, a quiz, and even discussion questions, then just visit our website, Culips.com.



- Andrew: Like I mentioned, I visited Vietnam for 4 days, 4 days it was, not 3. Four days, and I spent all of my time in the lovely coastal city of Da Nang, Vietnam.
- Suzanne: Nice.
- Andrew: Yeah, and I went there with my girlfriend. We had a lovely time together. We had a nice hotel that was right on the beach and there was a cool swimming pool. It was near a lot of great restaurants and, to be perfectly honest with you, we didn't spend that much time doing sightseeing because it was such a short trip. It was more one of those vacations where we just wanted **to kick back** and relax, so ... Although we did do some touristy things like visiting the market, and we went to a couple of tourist attractions.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: But most of the time we were just **kicking back**, taking it easy.
- Suzanne: That's nice when you can just really take a vacation and rest.
- Andrew: Yeah. Man, I gotta say this is maybe my preferred travel style these days, as I get older, is just taking it easy and relaxing.
- Suzanne: I totally relate, Andrew. I've only done it one time. I'm not gonna hijack your story, but I've only done it one time, and it was last year around this time, Olivier and I went to Mexico just to rest for 1 week. We stayed at a weird **all-inclusive**. We never do that kind of thing. We are more grassroots people, little villa, Airbnb, you know? And we just rested. I've never come back from a vacation so rested, so I highly recommend it.
- Andrew: I agree. It's an awesome way to travel. But, anyway, OK, so.
- Suzanne: Yes, back to Vietnam.
- Andrew: We had a great time in Vietnam, and it was our last day there and our flight wasn't leaving until 11 pm at night. So this caused a little bit of an issue because we had to check out of our hotel, I think it was 11 in the morning. So, you know, you check out of our hotel at 11, all right we don't fly out till 11 pm, so that gave us 12 hours with no place to stay and nowhere **to stash** our bags.
- Suzanne: Oh no, they wouldn't let you **stash** the bags?

Andrew: Well, this is the thing, we asked them could we store our bags there? And the hotel people said no problem, no problem at all. This is very common for people to do. So that's what we did, we filled out a little form that said these are our bags and don't give them to anybody else, this type of thing, and the hotel said just come back whenever you want, give us this form and we'll give you your bags. We left our bags at the hotel and went out and we had a really fabulous day, actually.

Suzanne: That's great. What did you do that day?

Andrew: We actually met a Vietnamese guy who was one of our drivers on a previous day. There's an app that many people in Vietnam use that's kind of like Uber, you know? It's like a ride-sharing app. He was one of our drivers, and he was very kind and a very safe driver. And he mentioned if we wanted to go anywhere, just to give him a call and he would be happy to drive us around. And there is a really amazing, historical site near Da Nang that is essentially the ruins of an ancient temple structure. This temple complex is very similar to Angkor Wat, which some people might be familiar with. And so we drove out there, that took about an hour and a half. We spent all day there and came back, and we arrived back in Da Nang, had some dinner, and then it was time to go fetch our bags and go to the airport. So our flight was at 11, I think this was around 8:30ish at night.

Suzanne: OK, so you plan to, like, get your bags and be at the airport in about 30, 40 minutes?

Andrew: Something like that. It's a very small airport, we weren't worried too much about being late or getting stuck in security, just because we had seen the airport already. It's not like a massive, massive airport. We weren't too worried about that. But, anyways, by the time we got back to the hotel to get our bags, it was maybe around 9:30. To be honest with you, maybe we left things a little too late. But we weren't anticipating any problems.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: However, once we got to the hotel, there was a big, big problem.

Suzanne: Oh god.

Andrew: And that's because our bags were missing.

Suzanne: No?

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: No, oh my gosh.



- Andrew: So, I only had one small suitcase. I tend to pack fairly light. My girlfriend packs a little heavier than I do. She had two bags.
- Suzanne: OK.
- Andrew: We had all of our important travel documents on us.
- Suzanne: That's good.
- Andrew: But, you know, all of our clothes, all of the souvenirs that we bought, our cameras and stuff were in our bags. Lots of important stuff.
- Suzanne: When you went up to them and asked, you gave them the paper, they were like, OK, be right back, and then what did they say to you?
- Andrew: Yeah, exactly. I gave them the paper and they said, oh, go have a seat over on the sofa in the lounge area and we will bring your bags right out. So we did that, we're sitting down, 5 minutes go by, 10 minutes go by. I'm pretty patient.
- Suzanne: Yeah, you are.
- Andrew: So I'm not, didn't even cross my mind that there might be a problem. But after about 10 minutes, my girlfriend was like, what's going on, why is this taking so long, go check this out. So I went back up and I said, hey, are our bags coming out? Like, we have **a flight to catch**, so if you could bring them out really quickly that would be great. And so they said, oh yeah, no problem, just sit down and we'll bring them right out. So we sat down again, but this time I was actually looking at the front desk and I noticed that there was now, five or six employees, staff that had gathered and, of course, they're talking in Vietnamese so I couldn't understand what they were saying. But I got the vibe that they were kind of panicked, looking for our bags.
- Suzanne: Oh gosh, that's not good. That's not a good sign.
- Andrew: And then a lady from the bar came and brought us out a drink, and I was, like, oh no. So I got back up there and talked to them again.
- Suzanne: Wait, you refused the drink? Or you were like, thanks, and give me my bag also?
- Andrew: Yeah, of course I was, like, thanks, they were, like, sorry to keep you waiting, there is just an issue, don't worry about it. They're very kind and civil about things.
- Suzanne: Doing their best.



- Andrew: Yeah, they were doing their best, but my girlfriend and I both had the feeling that something terribly wrong had happened. So I went back up to talk to them again and that is when they admitted, we lost your bags. We don't know where they are.
- Suzanne: Oh man.
- Andrew: And I said, oh, this is terrible because we have **a flight to catch** in like an hour and a half. So we're freaking out and I was also a little bit miffed about how they lost the bags because they're both very distinctive bags.
- Suzanne: OK, they're not like the bag that look like everyone else's bags.
- Andrew: Yeah, I have some stickers from Canadian music stores on my suitcase. Like, if you buy some guitar strings or something from a music store, they'll give you a sticker to promote their store. I got those stuck on my bag.
- Suzanne: Yeah, that's really specific.
- Andrew: And my girlfriend's bag is covered in stickers. It's, like, plastered in stickers, so it's not like somebody could just mistakenly take that bag. You'd have to be blind to make that mistake. You can easily tell if this is your bag or not. But, anyways, after waiting for a little while, one of the bell boys said that he thinks he made the mistake of putting our bags in the wrong taxi.
- Suzanne: No.
- Andrew: Just when we arrived. So we arrived, gave them the paper, and instead of bringing out bags to us when we were sitting in the lounge, he thought we were a different couple and put the bags directly into the trunk of a taxi carrying the couple that he thought was us.
- Suzanne: I'm literally doing a face palm. Was this just, like, a young kid? A young guy?
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Suzanne: Like, it's his summer job?
- Andrew: My girlfriend at this point was agitated, to say the least. I've actually worked in hotels before and I know that mistakes happen and I was happy that at least we knew what had happened. It was like, oh great, they weren't stolen.
- Suzanne: Right.



- Andrew: Like, worse-case scenario, we can probably get these bags shipped back to us in Korea and it would be all right.
- Suzanne: Right. They're out there somewhere, able to be tracked, yeah.
- Andrew: Exactly. So, I was trying to weigh the pros and cons of what to do in that situation because I didn't wanna miss the plane. I actually had to work the next day. So I couldn't really afford to miss the plane.
- Suzanne: Right.
- Andrew: And on the other hand, I didn't wanna leave my bags behind. So I was talking to the hotel staff some more, and they said, oh, we've managed to get the taxi driver on the phone and he's gonna turn around with your bags and bring them back to you.
- Suzanne: Great.
- Andrew: Great, but the problem was we really didn't have enough time. Like, at this point, we had to be on the plane in 50 minutes or so.
- Suzanne: Oh no, and you know the old rule, well, I'm not sure it's the same in Vietnam, but don't you need to check in at least 30 minutes before the flight?
- Andrew: Exactly.
- Suzanne: I mean, I think it's a universal rule, but I don't know if every country does it.
- Andrew: Well, I checked the ticket and it said 15 to 20 minutes the gate will close before boarding. So I knew we had a little bit of room there, and I also knew that the airport was really close to our hotel. The airport wasn't on the outskirts of the city, it was only a 10-minute, a 15-minute drive away. So I knew if this taxi came back ASAP, then it would probably be okay.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: So we spent, you know, about 15 or 20 minutes in suspense, really stressed out. Not knowing what to do, and I kept asking the staff, do you have an update? What's going on, come on, can you help us? We got this flight. And they're, like, yeah, we know, we know, just 2 more minutes. Just wait 2 more minutes. They kept saying just wait 2 minutes.



- Andrew: But finally the bags did come. We were happy, we checked very quickly to make sure nobody stole anything from our bags. And then we took the same taxi to the airport and, as soon as we got to the airport, I had to run like crazy to the check-in desk and check us in. This is a little bit of an aside and maybe I'll save this story for different day cause it's long and complicated, but the previous day my girlfriend actually broke her toe. So she couldn't walk very well.
- Suzanne: Oh no. Oh, that's awful. That is a long, complicated story. 'Cause that's the worst, you have to run to the gate, right? You have to run to your flight, that's what I was thinking, well, at least you guys can just get there and run. But now you can't run.
- Andrew: It was so funny because we didn't even talk about it, it was just assumed that's what would happen. So as soon as the taxi pulled out, I just bolted and made sure that we could check in to the flight.
- Suzanne: Wait, did you make the flight?
- Andrew: Oh, yeah, we made the flight. Everything was fine.
- Suzanne: Oh, good.
- Andrew: Yeah. In the end, everything was fine.
- Suzanne: That's great, Andrew.
- Andrew: We breathed a sigh of relief but, yeah, for a couple of hours there we were really stressed and angry.
- Suzanne: That's a really stressful travel situation. Especially when you depend on the services of a hotel.
- Andrew: Well, it sucked, too, because it was right at the end of the trip, you know? It's, like, of course having a stressful time when travelling is never good, doesn't matter if it's at the start or the end. But, you know, we had a great day that day and then just to be totally stressed and forget all about those good memories where gone.
- Suzanne: Yes, oh, yeah, for sure.
- Andrew: And you have that feeling, ah, man, I just wanna get home, come on, you know? You're frustrated and stressed.
- Suzanne: Oh, yeah, and you have a broken toe. That's also adding to it. Well, I'm glad you got on the plane OK and you got your bags and your cameras and you made it back **safe and sound**.



- Andrew: Made it back **in one piece**. And all's well that ends well, right?
- Suzanne: Yes, phew!
- Andrew: Well, Suzanne, thank you for listening to me rant about my stressful travel nightmare.
- Suzanne: Anytime.
- Andrew: Thanks to all the listeners for tuning in, as well. Again, if you wanna download the study guide for this episode, just visit Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And if you wanna check us out on social media, we're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, all of the big ones. Just search for Culips English podcast and you'll be sure to find us. Suzanne, if our listeners wanna send us an email, how could they do that?
- Suzanne: You can send an email to contact@Culips.com, and we would love to hear from you. So please do, send us an email.
- Andrew: That is right. OK, guys, that's it for us today. But we will be back soon with another episode and we'll talk to you then. Bye.
- Suzanne: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To kick back

Phrasal verb

To kick back is to simply relax and do nothing. Often, after a long day of work, a favourite pastime is **to kick back**, relax, and watch some TV. When you hear the words **kicking back**, you should imagine someone taking off their shoes and laying back on a couch or in a chair with their legs up—totally relaxed. A similar phrase that Andrew said in this episode is to take it easy. To take it easy also means to relax and take a break from everything.

Here are a couple of examples with **to kick back**:

Jeff:	Hey, Dave, should I start painting the kitchen after we finish painting the upstairs bedroom?
Dave:	No, man, we worked really hard today. Let's just kick back and relax for a bit. We've earned it.
Jeff:	Sounds like a plan! I'll order a pizza.

Michelle:	What are you gonna do tonight? Anything exciting?
Denise:	No, I've been on my feet all day at the restaurant. I'm just gonna kick back with a glass of wine and watch a movie. Wanna join me?
Michelle:	I wish I could, but I have a school event I'm going to. You'll call me tomorrow, though, right?
Denise:	For sure!

All-inclusive Adjective

All-inclusive is a term usually used in advertisements for vacations and travel. A hotel that offers an **all-inclusive** vacation usually provides food, beverages, and entertainment along with the price of the hotel room. People who stress about planning their own trips may wish to buy an **all-inclusive** package so that they don't have to worry about what to do, where to go, and how to get there.

Here are a couple more examples with **all-inclusive**:

Radio host:	Wow! Congratulations, Angela! You've just won a two-person, 10-day, all-inclusive trip to the Bahamas! You are a lucky lady.
Angela:	Oh my gosh! I can't believe I won! This is amazing, thank you so much!
Radio host:	No need to thank me, you've earned it! Have a great time and make sure to pack your sunscreen.
Angela:	Of course! Thanks again!
Radio host:	All right, listeners, that about wraps it up. Tune in next week for your chance to win like Angela. Talk to you then.

Tina:	Honey, I'm so happy for you and your fiancé, Sebastian. As a present to you both, your father and I are paying for your honeymoon. It's an all-inclusive trip to Hawaii. I know you've always wanted to go there.
Gillian:	Mom! That's amazing! Thank you so much. You really shouldn't have.
Sebastian:	Wow, Tina. This really is amazing. How can we thank you for this?
Tina:	Oh, don't be silly. Your happiness is all I could ever ask for ... And maybe a few grandbabies in the near future!
Gillian:	Haha, Mom!

To stash

Verb

To stash something is to store it safely in a specific place. In this episode, Andrew and his girlfriend **stashed** their luggage in the hotel for a day. Unfortunately, their luggage was not as safely managed as they had hoped it would be!

To stash can also be used to describe something you need to hide for safekeeping.

Here are a couple more examples with **to stash**:

Victor:	What's that?
Tony:	It's a cigarette—you know, for smoking.
Victor:	No, I know what it is. I mean, why is it here?
Tony:	I wanna smoke it, duh.
Victor:	No way. Mom will kill me if she catches you with that in the house. Stash it somewhere until you leave.
Tony:	Ugh, fine.

Kelly:	Do you mind if I stash some clothes at your house?
Ila:	Not at all. Why?
Kelly:	My little sister keeps getting into my closet and stealing my clothes. It's driving me crazy!
Ila:	How do you know I won't do that if you leave them here?
Kelly:	I don't mind if you do. You aren't a 4-year-old with dirty fingers and you don't have a habit of destroying everything you touch.
Ila:	Hmm, I get your point.



To catch a flight

Phrasal verb

To catch a flight means to board and travel in an airplane. This phrase can also be reworded, as in **a flight to catch**, such as, "I must leave now. I have **a flight to catch**." Airplane tickets are expensive, so it is imperative that people make it to their flights on time; however, many things can go wrong, from traffic, to long airport security lines, to broken toes! Therefore, it is not uncommon to see people running through the airport trying to catch the airplane before it flies away without them on board.

Here are a couple more examples with **to catch a flight**:

Monica:	Yuji, hello? Did you make it in time? I can't believe how much traffic there was. We should have left earlier. I'm sorry!
Yuji:	No, don't worry! I managed catch my flight just as they were calling my name for final boarding call.
Monica:	What a relief. I would have felt terrible if you missed it.
Yuji:	Don't worry about it. It sure got my adrenaline pumping! I gotta go, the pilot just told us to turn off all electronic devices for takeoff. Talk to you soon!

José:	Honey, have you seen my wallet? I've got a flight to catch in 2 hours and I still haven't left the house.
Melany:	I always tell you not to leave things until the last minute. Did you check the pockets of the jeans you wore yesterday?
José:	I found it! Thanks. I love you. I know I shouldn't rush like this, but now I really gotta go! I'll call you when I land.
Melany:	OK, be careful!



Safe and sound

Phrase

To be **safe and sound** is to be unhurt or unharmed after having been missing, lost, or in danger. In this episode, Andrew lost his bags but, luckily, they were returned to him **safe and sound**, undamaged, just in time for him to make his flight home.

Here are a couple more examples with **safe and sound**:

Justin:	Dad! Dad! I can't find Buddy anywhere. I think he ran away!
Dad:	What do you mean? Did you let him outside when the gate was open?
Justin:	Yes, but I didn't mean to. I thought it was closed, but I guess it wasn't. What should we do?
Dad:	Don't worry. I'm sure Buddy is just chasing squirrels somewhere down the street safe and sound . How about we hop in the car and go look for him?
Justin:	OK, I'll go grab my coat!

Mom:	Oh, Michael! You're back! I'm so glad you're home safe and sound !
Michael:	Mom, I was only gone for 2 days. Why are you acting so funny?
Mom:	I'm your mother. I worry! Now, how was your trip?



In one piece

Idiom

In one piece also means to be unharmed or undamaged, especially after a difficult or dangerous experience. In this episode, Andrew says he was happy they could make it home **in one piece**; in other words, he was happy they made it back home without getting hurt or in serious trouble.

Here are a couple more examples with **in one piece**:

Jun-Hwa: Hey, Tenji, can I borrow your car today?

Tenji: Well ... I don't know. The last time you borrowed my car, you broke one of the side mirrors and spilled soda on the front seat.

Jun-Hwa: I know, and I apologized for that constantly for a month! That squirrel came out of nowhere. I couldn't just hit it! I had to swerve.

Tenji: Yeah, you're right. OK, you can borrow it, but bring it back **in one piece** this time. Got it?

Jun-Hwa: Yes, ma'am. You've got nothing to worry about.

Nina: Hey, Jamal, how was the flight?

Jamal: Well, I arrived **in one piece**. That was about the only good thing about the flight.

Nina: I know you hate flying, but at least there weren't any problems. Have a safe trip and come back soon, OK?

Jamal: Yup, I will. See you in a couple of days!

Quiz

1. Which phrase has a similar meaning to the phrase to get back in one piece?

- a) to return a piece of something to someone
- b) to get back to the drawing board
- c) to get back safe and sound
- d) to get back a swimsuit

2. What does it mean to stash something?

- a) to erase something
- b) to store something
- c) to steal something
- d) to throw something away

3. Which is an example of an all-inclusive vacation?

- a) a cruise that includes food, beverages, and entertainment in the price
- b) a trip to Europe that includes the whole family
- c) a weekend trip that employees go on together for company bonding
- d) a trip that has a spa

4. What do people say when they are in a hurry to get to their flight on time?

- a) they have to grab a flight
- b) they have stop a flight
- c) they have catch a flight
- d) they have run a flight

5. What does it mean to kick back?

- a) to hurt someone with your foot
- b) to relax and do nothing
- c) to start something again
- d) to turn your back on someone

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a travel nightmare? What happened? What did you do?
2. Have you ever run to catch a flight before it took off? Did you make it or miss it?
3. Have you ever gone on an all-inclusive vacation? If so, how was it? If not, where would you go if you could go on one?
4. Is there anything you like to stash away so that others can't find it? What is it?
5. What would you have done if you were in Andrew's situation? How would you have reacted?

Quiz Answers

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

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