

Simplified Speech #206 – Impulse trip to Norway (ad free)

Episode description

In this episode of Simplified Speech, Andrew talks to Alina about her recent trip to Norway. Alina explains how she decided at the last minute to visit because she loves Scandinavian coffee and wanted to try a Norwegian sauna. She also shares her first thoughts about Norway, the challenges of making quick travel plans, and some surprising things she learned about the culture.

Fun fact

Norwegians are some of the world's biggest coffee drinkers. On average, Norwegians consume about 9-10 kilograms of coffee per person per year. That's roughly 4-5 cups per person per day, making it one of the highest coffee consumption rates in the world.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To sleep on it
- A far cry
- Deer in the headlights
- To follow suit
- Sticker shock
- To come to fruition



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Simplified Speech episode 206, "Impulse trip to Norway." Featuring Andrew and Alina. Hey everyone, this is Andrew and you're listening to Simplified Speech. So, I've got a question for you to kick this one off. The question is, have you ever booked a trip on impulse just because you felt like it? Well today, I'll be joined by my co-host Alina. You guys know her, right? She's one of our amazing study guide writers and is the moderator in our Discord community. Actually, Alina is based out of Ireland and just like you, she learned English as her second language. Recently, she decided to take a spontaneous trip to Norway and she's here to tell us all about it in this episode. So why don't we welcome Alina and get this conversation started. Hope you enjoy this one. Here we go. Joining me now to talk about her spontaneous travel and trip to Norway is my co-host, special guest co-host for today, Alina. Hello, Alina. Welcome back to Simplified Speech. How are you doing?

Alina: Hello, Andrew. I'm doing well. Thank you. Thank you for having me again.

Andrew: Yeah, it's great to have you back. And I really am excited to hear your recent travel story here, Alina. In fact, this was a surprise to me. I didn't even know that you went on this trip. But I messaged you, I guess earlier this week, and I said, "Hey, could you come on to Simplified Speech and co-host with me?" And do you have any topics or anything that you want to talk about? And you said, "Yeah, why don't we talk about my recent trip to Norway?" And I went, "What? You went to Norway?" I didn't even know. So, this is great. This is like news to me and probably news to many of our listeners as well. So, I think you just got back from this trip, Alina. Right? When did you return back to your home base in Ireland?

Alina: Yeah, just like last Sunday, basically a couple of days ago. It was only just like a couple of days trip, really, you know, short, but sweet. And yes, I like surprising people with this stuff, so I did not tell anybody. I just like shared photos, you know, I was like, "Hey, greetings from Oslo!"

Andrew: Do you have any friends who are Norwegian? Because maybe they'd be angry if you went there and didn't tell them.

Alina: That is actually a very good question, because I, in fact, do have a couple of friends and they didn't seem that angry. It was actually quite happy, you know, they were like, "Oh, cool!" And I do have a pen pal living in Norway who I've actually never met in person. But we've been in touch for so many years, like over six years. But he unfortunately lives quite far away from Oslo. So, we never got to meet, like hopefully now in the future. But I did get to ask him a couple of tips and like things to try while in there.

Andrew: OK, interesting. Well, why don't we rewind and go back to the start? And as you said, this was a spontaneous trip. Didn't really tell anybody. You just packed your bags and went. So why? Why did you decide suddenly and randomly to go to Norway?

Alina: So, yeah, I got to say, this is not the first time something like this happened to me. And most people I know are kind of used to it. But, you know, so why this particular trip happened was basically I just have to start with a mentioning that I'm a huge coffee fan. Completely obsessed with coffee, aficionado. It's not just like a caffeine fix, you know, I would go to like particular places to get a particular coffee. What happened was I once many years ago tried this coffee in Sweden and it was basically the best thing I've tried. Even like to this day, I consider that coffee the best. Whatever you do with that Scandinavian roast, just out of this world, basically. So, what happened was I was just kind of thinking about that coffee on a Sunday morning as I was, you know, preparing my morning coffee. And I was like, damn, would be so nice to have that coffee. And it's not really something you can get delivered easily to Ireland. I tried. I looked. So, in the back of

my mind, I always thought it would be nice to go back there. And like, it doesn't even have to be Sweden, because I know for a fact that in Norway and Finland, you could still get your hands on that coffee. So that morning, I just kind of thought, maybe I should just take a look at the tickets, just see if anything is there. And I did come across some pretty affordable tickets and the flights were direct as well, which is always nice. And it's like a couple of hours flight. Then, you know, I was like, OK, well, I got the tickets. Maybe there is something good in terms of accommodation as well. Let's just take a look, you know, just out of curiosity. So, yeah, I also found a pretty good accommodation, not like cheap, but wouldn't break the bank, basically. Something I could afford, I felt. And yeah, all I had to do basically was just to talk my husband into joining me because I felt like that's something I would like to share with him as well. And it's just like the weekend, you know, so he could do that, too. And I mean, unlike me, my husband doesn't really get the travel bug that easily, you know. And when it comes to me, it's like travel fever, really. I can't really shake it off that easily. I just have to go scratch that itch, you know. I managed to persuade him and, yeah, we just bought the tickets like next day. I did, you know, **sleep on it** just in case.

Andrew: OK, that's a good thing to do. Don't just act on your impulse right away. Take at least a night to think it over. Sure. Alina, I want to circle back to this coffee because I'm a huge coffee fan as well. And I've been to Finland before. I guess that's the closest I've ever been to Sweden or Norway. And I drank coffee in Finland, and I don't remember it being bad, but I also don't remember it being exceptionally good. So maybe I was just in the wrong place, or I tried the wrong blend. But how are you drinking this Scandinavian coffee? Is it like an espresso? Is it a latte? Could you tell us, and especially tell me, I'm very interested, a little bit more detail about the kind of coffee that is so delicious.

Alina: Right. So, I believe that the best way to drink the coffee, you know, I'm talking about this whole time. This special Scandinavian roast is in the form of filter coffee. So, no milk, sugar, anything. Absolutely. Just like pure filter coffee. And I don't really know exactly why, because I have tried, you know, espresso and other things. And it's just it doesn't

really feel the same. But whatever way they make this filter coffee, it just provides like all the flavors. And because the roast is light. Also, you can like taste all these flavors. Very, very strong. If it's like fruity, you can actually taste the fruit. That's not just like coffee. And what you said about Finland. I got to say, to be honest with you, I'm not sure Finland, like they do also have a strong coffee game. But I'm not sure it's as strong as Sweden and especially Norway. And you do need to know, like when I went to Finland, for example, I already knew, having gone to Sweden beforehand, which brand and coffee I should buy to get the right stuff.

Andrew: Well, I know what you mean. I visited Japan in the summer, and I had just an amazing cup of coffee in Japan. And I still think about it. So, I know what that is like when you have an unforgettable coffee experience. Yeah, sometimes we say chase the dragon, right? You chase the dragon trying to repeat that amazing cup of coffee. So, yeah, I'm right there with you. So, I totally think you're justified in going on a trip to a different country spontaneously just for a cup of coffee. I think maybe I'll go back to Japan someday to try and find that delicious coffee again. So, you booked your flights. You booked your accommodation. You twisted your husband's arm into joining you on the trip and then direct flight. It's only how long? Two, three hours to Oslo?

Alina: Just like two hours, 20 minutes, something like that. You know, you barely notice.

Andrew: Yeah, that's amazing. And so, what was your first impression of Norway like? By the way, I don't think I know this, but is this your first-time visiting Norway?

Alina: So, yes, it was actually my first time. I've been previously to Sweden, Denmark, Finland, not to Iceland quite yet. And that was the last Scandinavian country I hadn't been to. So that was my first time. And I was very excited. I'll be honest. I checked the weather forecast. You know, I wanted to be prepared. And I saw that like the temperature is around zero degrees. And I was like, OK, it's freezing there. Because, you know, when it gets to zero degrees here in Ireland, it's like you have to wear all the layers you can get. So even

though we were traveling with just backpacks, it was like the light kind of trip. I managed to pack all the essentials, all the layers. And I was shocked, it wasn't actually as cold as I anticipated. Like it was actually much milder and softer. I don't really know how to explain, maybe because of the humidity or whatever. It's different, basically. It felt differently from what it would feel like in Ireland with the same kind of temperature. So, first impression, yes, warmer than I expected. Unfortunately, I hate overpacking, especially if you only have a backpack. But like, how could I have known? I came prepared, overly prepared.

Andrew: Right. Well, better safe than sorry. And I think probably most people would rather overpack a little bit than be freezing cold. So, I think, yeah, you made the right choice there. I've never been to Ireland, but I have the feeling, I can just imagine. Because growing up on the west coast of Canada, our winters get like this as well. They're very, very wet, and cold. And even if it's not freezing, it feels super cold. It's like this bone chilling, damp cold. And maybe the temperature will be 0, 1, 2 degrees Celsius. But honestly, it feels colder than when I lived in like Montreal. And it would be minus 20 Celsius because it's like a dry cold versus this damp, wet cold. And so, if that's what Ireland's like, then that's a nasty winter. OK, so first impression, positive. It's warmer than you were expecting. And then, yeah, what did you get up to? What are some of the activities that you did?

Alina: So yeah, I should probably mention as well that besides coffee, there was something else I was really looking forward to doing there. And so was my husband. And it's the sauna. I know you've been to Finland, right? So, you kind of know what I'm talking about. Finnish sauna, Norwegian sauna, you know, it's kind of the same in all these countries. And why we particularly wanted to go and experience this kind of like proper sauna was that not so long ago, we had a very disappointing experience in Ireland. We went to this like wellness retreat, and they promised sauna. And we were like, OK, great, you know, picturing this like wooden, hot kind of sauna. And it turned out to be this like tiny box. Like infrared sauna, barely fitting two people, you know, lukewarm at best. Like so disappointing. We were like actually so bummed out about that. So, yeah, we had this like

craving for proper sauna as well. And that was actually like something we did first thing in the morning after breakfast, of course. We went to check out the sauna in Oslo. And it's interesting that they have like loads of these saunas. If you, for example, open Google Maps and just like type in "Sauna," you would see a lot of these saunas all kind of set along the waterfront. So, the views, of course, are just amazing. You see the fjords and sea. And it was not easy to pick one, but we did eventually. And so, yeah, that was the first thing we did in Norway.

Andrew: Nice. Sounds amazing. When I was in Finland, going to the sauna was one of the highlights of that short but sweet trip. I also had a short but sweet trip when I was in Finland, but it was dead in the middle of winter. And I remember going outside, like you'd be in the sauna, then you'd run outside and jump into the frozen ocean and then go back in the sauna and repeat until pretty much you couldn't do it anymore. You were just, I don't want to say you're too exhausted because you're not exhausted, but you're just like in such a state of relaxation that you can't really move anymore. Right? Was that something that you did as well? Were you able to jump into the water and then go back into the sauna?

Alina: Yeah. So, because the sauna was like a floating sauna, it was basically on the sea. So yes, we had the access to the sea. It wasn't frozen, though. Luckily. I don't think I would have been able to do the frozen. Though, I actually, I did it once in Finland as well, many years ago, but I got sick immediately afterwards. So, I don't think I would ever do that again. But, If I remember correctly, the temperature was plus four on that morning as we went to the sauna and the water was a bit warmer. It was plus nine degrees Celsius. So, it might sound like warm enough, but of course it was freezing. It was very cold. But, you know, as you get warmed up in the sauna, it actually feels kind of nice, even though it's a shock to your system. Of course, you kind of don't really feel your toes at some point. You just really have to get out of there, back into the heat of the sauna. But it's definitely like a super experience. I mean, like it's just something you have to experience to really get it. It's hard to describe. It's just, yeah, out of this world kind of experience.

Andrew: So, it made up for the disappointing wellness retreat back home in Ireland.

Alina: Oh, yeah, it was definitely **a far cry**. And actually, one funny moment I really have to share because I'm so curious to hear from the listeners. When we just arrived at the sauna location and we like obviously found some staff member and he was like, "OK, you know, here are the changing rooms." You can go like either into like the one on the left or the one on the right. And that was a little bit kind of confusing already. We were like, "OK." And then we go to these doors and both doors have these like signs, unisex changing rooms on them, basically mixed changing rooms. And my husband and I weren't exactly expecting that. So, it took us a second. We were just like standing there, you know, looking at each other like two **deer in the headlights**. Like, what do we do? And eventually we were like, "OK, let's just, you know, follow these guys." Some guys were just going into one of these doors. We just like **followed suit**. So, yes, they had those mixed changing rooms there. And like it wasn't too bad. I mean, it wasn't too awkward. Kind of were able to, you know, just like be cool about it.

Andrew: Are they very open or are there like some little areas where you could find some privacy if you wanted?

Alina: Not really. You see, that's what I thought. I thought maybe they have like cubicles, but it's just like a container kind of like space where everybody was just changing, like all in the same room. So I am, you know, like it's not like the super shocking for me. I feel like I was fine with that. But, you know, my husband, who is Irish, the Irish people are usually very awkward around this kind of stuff. You know, they go to like single-sex schools. He went to all boys school. So, I was so proud of him. He was like, "OK, that was kind of a cool part."

Andrew: I mean, I love that in a way about Europe, how it's more relaxed in that way. I think Canada maybe is more like the Irish, like we're a little bit prude when it comes to that

as well. And so, I'm probably similar to your husband where that would make me feel uncomfortable. Probably a culture shock for sure. And were there any other culture shocks that you came across during your trip?

Alina: To be honest, that's probably the main one now that I think of it. Not a lot of things. I mean, apart from maybe like a bit of like **sticker shock** in terms of prices.

Andrew: Right. That's what I've heard about Norway is that it's an expensive place. Is that what you found as well? Things were really expensive.

Alina: You know, if you compare it to Ireland, because that's what I was doing, basically. The groceries would be more or less the same like as in Ireland. But if you want to eat out, for example, if you go to restaurants, it's definitely more expensive. And the drinks in particular, like alcohol there. As far as I know, they've been trying to put people off drinking. So, they've been increasing their alcohol prices, especially, you know, pubs and bars. It doesn't really seem to be working, though, because they were packed. I'll be honest. But just for reference, I had a half pint of Kronenberg, which is very tiny glass. And that cost 10.60 euro, which would have been twice as much, perhaps, what you would pay here in Ireland. So, yeah, I definitely was shocked. And, you know, the funny part was that I picked that pub because somebody left a review saying that the prices are reasonable. So, I was like, OK, well, if somebody says they're reasonable. So, I can't even imagine whatever else they saw there if that was reasonable.

Andrew: Wow, that is quite expensive. And correct me if I'm wrong, but I think both Ireland and Norway use the euro. Is that true?

Alina: That's actually not true, because in Norway they use kroner. I'm not sure if it's the correct pronunciation in English, actually, because I've only heard the Norwegian. So, yes, we also had to do a bit of work, you know, math in our heads every time.

Andrew: OK, so it's a different currency. So, you do have to do a currency conversion.

Alina: It was different, yeah. It's not too difficult. Like, you kind of get used to it quickly, you know.

Andrew: To compare, my wife and I went to a little neighborhood pub on our way home last night. We stopped in. We also had about a half pint, 300 milliliter draft beer. And I think it was 1,900 won, which is probably just over an American dollar. So, it's probably like one and a half euro.

Alina: What? No way.

Andrew: Yeah, so much, much cheaper.

Alina: We traveled to the wrong place, OK?

Andrew: Yeah, yeah. If you're a beer lover, then maybe Korea is the place for you and not Norway. But, yeah, that is quite expensive. What about the coffee when you searched and found that coffee that you wanted? How much was a cup of coffee there?

Alina: That's actually a very good point. I was going to also mention that coffee was cheaper than in Ireland, even though it was so much better. Like, you couldn't even compare. But I feel like we paid like six euro for two cups of, you know, filter coffee, which is, I wouldn't say like cheap, you know, extremely cheap, but it's cheaper than would be here. And like, for what we, you know, got, it was just affordable. I guess they're trying to kind of maybe get people to drink more coffee and less alcohol, perhaps. That's the reason behind it.

Andrew: It's probably a healthy thing for society. Smart move, Norway. I'm behind it. Alina, I'm trying to think. Recently, when I've talked about these kind of travel stories with Indiana or with you, I feel a little bit ignorant because I don't know too much about these countries, but I'm trying to think about Norway. I know Magnus Carlsen, the world

champion chess player, is from Norway. And I think maybe that's all. I know we don't have too many listeners from Norway, because I think one of the reasons for that is that Norwegians speak really good English. That's another thing I know about that. Can you confirm or deny? Is this true? Do Norwegians speak really good English?

Alina: Absolutely. It's like second nature to them. It's kind of amazing because, you know, like, say, for example, if you go even to Germany, I think Indiana talked about going to Germany recently. You do get this kind of feeling like slightly like of guilt that like, sorry, I don't know your language. Could you please speak English to me? But in Norway, we would actually overhear people jumping, you know, from Norwegian to English very fluidly and naturally. And that was actually very impressive. I sort of wish that, you know, more countries were like that, because, like, imagine they grew up listening to both English and Norwegian, maybe more or less equally. So, yeah, that was definitely not a problem at all. It was definitely one of the easy parts. We didn't have to learn any Norwegian at all.

Andrew: I've also heard about Norwegians. Maybe this is a stereotype. I don't know if this is true or not. I have to go and find out for myself. But I've heard from people who try to learn Norwegian that it's difficult to learn because, A, people speak English so well that when you try with your baby Norwegian, it's just like too painful. They just switch to English right away, which I get. That makes sense. But I guess if you are really passionate about Norwegian culture and you want to learn the language, that could be frustrating. I've also heard that Norwegians are not very social with strangers and that there's not a lot of small talk that happens. And these kind of daily interactions that maybe we're used to in an English-speaking country where you're really friendly with people on the street or smile and say hello or good morning to people as you pass by them. Maybe in Norway, that's not as much a part of the culture as it is in English-speaking countries. Did you pick up on any of that at all? Or maybe I'm wrong with this assumption, but that's what I've read about before.

Alina: I mean, I've heard about that a lot as well. Two days perhaps is not enough to really be able to judge. But I do have a bit of history actually learning Swedish years ago.

So, I was actually able to understand because they would normally speak Norwegian amongst themselves. So, I was able to even remember some things, dust off a bit of my old knowledge because it's been years. And when I was learning Swedish, I did have a couple of language exchange partners and they were absolutely happy to just switch to Swedish for me. But perhaps you're right here. If you go there and they do see that you're really struggling, they would probably be switching to English. In terms of them being kind of cold, I mean, I would say that there isn't that much smiling in the street maybe as I get here in Ireland. Or just like, you know, saying hello to strangers. The problem is, you know, when you're a tourist in a country like that, you normally interact with like people from, you know, like staff and cafes or any other places. Of course, they would be more friendly than like an average Norwegian maybe. So, I don't feel like that would be, yeah, accurate, the judgment I could make in a couple of days there.

Andrew: Yeah, fair enough. Customer service people have to be friendly for their job, right? I always read about that, and I thought for an introverted person like me, Norway sounds like heaven. Like just everybody leaves you alone. Nobody's randomly talking to you or bothering you on the street. And you don't have to do any awkward small talk. Like I always thought, man, that sounds like the place for me. Maybe I have to move to Norway.

Alina: Do they do small talk in Korea?

Andrew: No, to be honest. I mean, that's one of the things that I love about Korea as well. I wouldn't say that they're like a cold or not friendly people, anything like that. They are very friendly and very warm, just in a different way. And small talk isn't really a part of the culture. But also, on top of that, being a visible foreigner and being someone who they just assume can't speak any Korean, then people just totally leave me alone. And like, even the other day I was coming out of the subway station and as I was exiting, there was a woman who was passing out some flyers. Like, she was advertising a new gym in the area or something. And so, she was passing out some flyers for the gym. And she was giving them to everybody. And then she saw me and just didn't pass me the flyer. Because I'm a foreigner, right? She's probably like, I can't read the flyer or I'm a tourist. I don't live here or

something. Of course, actually in my head I was like, I was thinking about signing up for a gym membership. I should probably go up and get one of those flyers. But at the same time, I would rather people just leave me alone, like, while I'm on the street. So, it's a nice place for me to live in that regard.

Alina: That's amazing. You don't have to deal with any of this flyers and stuff.

Andrew: Yeah. I mean, there are good things and bad things about being a visible minority, but that is one of the perks for sure. Alina, were there any other things that you wanted to highlight about your time? Any other little funny stories or memorable moments that you would like to share?

Alina: Yeah, I feel like we absolutely have to talk about food a little bit. And I wouldn't say that there is such thing as like Norwegian cuisine, to be honest. Probably the first thing you think of, you know, it's like fish, seafood, salmon. And we knew we would have to try salmon there since, you know, it's so famous. Everybody hears about Norwegian salmon. So, we did go, and we take these things seriously. You know, we go onto Google Maps, and we read all the reviews and we check the ratings. And I actually also leave reviews all the time. I kind of got into it a year ago, maybe. So, yeah, we found this place where my husband tried this like soup, salmon soup. And it was actually amazing. And it was so good that I think I probably ate like more of it than he got to. Because I ordered smoked salmon. And like smoked salmon was not that much different from what you'd get here. Which I feel like Ireland probably just gets, you know, their salmon from Norway anyway. So, I kind of didn't really feel impressed. But that soup was just, I don't know, it was just amazing. It was, you know, like it was kind of cold. We had it maybe around like three. It started to get a little bit dark. It was just the perfect thing to have. Like just, you know, hits the spot.

Andrew: I know it's hard to describe food. But could you give us a little insight into what it tasted like? Is it like a cold soup? Is it creamy? Is it spicy? I don't know. What would it taste like? I'm having a hard time imagining a salmon soup.

Alina: Sure, I could try. It's kind of funny, right? Because for me it would be totally normal. Like I've had that in Finland as well. They have this like creamy. Yes, it's creamy. It's warm. There were actually other kind of like bits. I don't know, like tiny little shrimp there. Something else. I'm not sure exactly. But like the actual broth. I don't even know like what they did. How they made it taste so good. But like so rich. I don't know, like so kind of. There was some weird green kind of like oil in it. Again, no idea what kind of oil is that. Why is it green? Maybe like super quality olive oil or something. But you know what? It's really hard to describe. But it's just like a hug. It's so good. It's definitely something I would recommend trying there. For sure.

Andrew: OK. The Norwegian salmon soup. Well, I would definitely be down to try it. And I would definitely love to visit Norway one day. I mean, I say this about every country I hear about here on Culips. It's on my bucket list. But it really is. I would love to visit one day. I think there's just something special about those Nordic countries. They have a really interesting culture. And I love how they're so small and really accessible to us as English speakers. But also, really mysterious at the same time. Something really cool about those countries. Really attractive for some reason. Just like you trying to describe the salmon soup. I have a difficult time putting my finger on exactly what it is that makes them so cool to me. Well, Alina, thank you so much for talking about your trip. Do you have any other trips planned in the near future? Anything else on the horizon?

Alina: I want to say, you know, I don't have anything planned. But the funny part of all this is that you have this pressure of, because I think I mentioned before that I have to get a visa to be able to travel. So, I only get this like six months. And I always feel like I'm, you know, wasting my time. I have this visa. It's about to expire. I have to go somewhere. I have to use this. Make the most of it. So maybe that's how, you know, these things happen when I just end up going somewhere like that. But not really. Not that I have something planned. Perhaps maybe for the next year. Actually, it's kind of interesting that you should ask. Because we've been talking on our server with a couple of people. Planning to meet perhaps next year somewhere in Europe. So hopefully all of this will **come to fruition**. Fingers crossed.

Andrew: You'll host the Culips meetup Europe edition.

Alina: It would be so nice. No, I mean, I don't know. I love the idea. Can't imagine how to organize that. I'll be honest. Because, you know, you have to bring everybody together. Like pick the country.

Andrew: Yeah. Pick the country. Pick the place. Pick the time. But yeah, it'd be awesome if you were able to meet up with some of the European members of our Discord server. That'd be really cool. And of course, we have to get you out to Korea sometime too. If you're a big coffee fan like that, I think you would like Korean coffee. The coffee game here is really, really good. Yeah.

Alina: That's definitely on my bucket list.

Andrew: But so far for you to go. You know, it's like how I was talking about just popping over to Japan. You can just pop over to Norway and it's easy to do. But for us to go across the continent, that's a big step. And many hours on the airplane. Anyways, Alina, thank you for coming on to Culips today and sharing your story with us. And we'll get you back on here sometime soon to share another one of your adventures with us in the near future. That brings us to the end of this conversation for today. I hope that the next time I talk about Norway on Culips is because I'm talking about one of my travel stories. I can dream at least. And I hope that is the case. Anyways, thank you to Alina for the great conversation. And thanks to you all for listening and completing an English study session with us today. Great job. So, guys, that's it for this one. Until next time, please take care. Happy English learning as always. And we'll speak to you soon. Goodbye. That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To sleep on it Idiom

The idiomatic expression "**to sleep on it**" means to take some time to think about a decision before making a final choice, often overnight. In this episode, Alina mentions that she "**slept on it**" before making her final decision to book her spontaneous trip to Norway.

The phrase "**to sleep on it**" means to wait before making an important decision, usually overnight, to think about it clearly. It suggests taking time to reflect rather than rushing into a choice. It's commonly used when a decision feels important or when you're unsure about your choice. For example, if you're deciding whether to accept a job offer, you might say, "I need to **sleep on it** and get back to you tomorrow." This means you want time to think carefully before committing to your decision.

You can also use this expression when you want to gently suggest that someone should not act on an impulse. For instance, if a friend is thinking about buying an expensive car right away, you might say, "Maybe you should **sleep on it** and decide tomorrow. You don't want to make an impulsive purchase you'll regret."

The origin of this phrase likely comes from the idea that after sleeping, you often feel refreshed and can think more clearly about problems or choices. The "it" in the expression refers to the decision or problem that you're thinking about.

Similar expressions include "take some time to think" or "think it over." For example, "I'm not sure about buying that phone yet. I need to think it over."

Here are a couple more examples with **to sleep on it**:

Julie: I got a great job offer, but the salary isn't exactly what I was expecting.

Tim: Maybe you should **sleep on it**. It's a big decision, and sometimes taking some time really helps.

Julie: That's a good point. I'll **sleep on it** and decide tomorrow.

Dan: This car looks perfect! Are you going to buy it?

Tessa: I'm not sure, it's a bit more expensive than I planned. I think I'm going to **sleep on it**. I need to think about whether it's really worth the extra cost.

A far cry Idiom

A far cry means something is completely different from something else, either in a negative or positive way. In the episode, Alina uses this expression to describe her experience with a disappointing sauna in Ireland compared to the much better sauna in Norway. She says, "It was definitely **a far cry**," meaning the Irish sauna was very different and much worse than the Norwegian one.

This expression is used when comparing two things and showing that they are extremely different, often in quality or experience. It can be used to show disappointment or surprise at how different the two things are.

For example, you might say, "The second movie was **a far cry** from the first one — it was much worse." This shows that the two movies were very different, and the second one was disappointing compared to the first. Another way to use this phrase is in situations where something didn't meet your expectations, like: "The concert was **a far cry** from the last one I went to — the music was terrible."

You can also use this expression to emphasize how much better something is. For example, "Her new job is **a far cry** from her last one, which was very stressful."

The origin of this phrase comes from the idea of a cry or sound being heard from a great distance. If something is "**a far cry**" from another thing, it means the two are far apart, either physically or in terms of quality.

Similar phrases include "a world apart" or "night and day."

Here are a couple more examples with **a far cry**:

Nora: I thought the beach resort was going to be amazing, but it's **a far cry** from the pictures online.

Lucas: I know, right? The place is much smaller than I expected, and the beach isn't nearly as beautiful. What a disappointment!

Nate: So, this is my old apartment. I forgot how small and cramped it is!

Hailey: It's **a far cry** from your new place, huh? Your new apartment is huge!

Nate: Yeah, it's a big upgrade.

Deer in the headlights

Idiom

In this episode, Alina talks about how she and her husband were surprised by mixed gender changing rooms in the sauna. She says they were "like two **deer in the headlights**" and didn't know what to do. This means they were shocked and didn't know how to react.

The phrase "**deer in the headlights**" refers to someone who is surprised or confused and freezes up, not knowing what to do. The origin of this expression comes from the idea of a deer being caught by the bright lights of an oncoming car. The deer freezes, unable to move or act.

This expression is often used to describe someone who is surprised or overwhelmed in an unexpected situation. For example, if someone asks you an unexpected question and you don't know how to answer, you might look like a "**deer in the headlights**."

It's also used in situations where someone is frightened by something, so they can't move or think. For example, "When the unexpected fire alarm went off in the middle of the exam, John sat there like a **deer in the headlights**, unsure of what to do."

Sometimes, the "the" is dropped from this expression, as in: "I felt like a **deer in headlights** when I opened my front door and saw two policemen standing there."

Similar expressions include "caught off guard" or "stunned." For example, "I was caught off guard when they asked me to present in front of the class."

Here are a couple more examples with **deer in the headlights**:

Lucy: Can you believe it? I saw John at the party last night.

Alex: No way!

Lucy: Yeah. When he walked in, I was like a **deer in the headlights**. I wasn't expecting him to be there, and I had no idea what to say!

Becky: So weird. You see that man over there? I asked him for directions, and he looked at me like a **deer in headlights**, and then just walked away!

Matt: Maybe he didn't know how to help, or didn't speak English. People can get nervous when put on the spot like that.

To follow suit Phrase

In the episode, Alina talks about how she and her husband decided to go into a changing room at the sauna after seeing others do the same. She says, "We just **followed suit**," meaning they did what someone else was doing without hesitation. This is a great example of how the expression is used to describe someone copying or doing the same thing that others are doing in a situation.

The phrase "**to follow suit**" means to do the same thing as someone else, especially after observing their actions. It is used when one person or group takes an action, and others decide to do the same thing, often because they see it as the right thing to do. For example, if one person at a meeting starts taking notes, others might **follow suit** and also start taking notes.

You can use "**to follow suit**" when describing situations where people are imitating others, usually after seeing them take a particular action. For example, "When she ordered a cheeseburger, everyone else **followed suit** and ordered one too." It's used in everyday situations, from casual gatherings to business meetings, whenever there's a clear action that others decide to copy.

The phrase comes from card games, where players are expected to play a card in the same suit as the one played before. If someone "**follows suit**," it means they are continuing the same pattern or action, just like in a card game. To help you remember it, think of following the same "suit" in a game. If one person does something, you follow them by doing the same thing.

A similar expression is "to follow someone's lead", which means to do what someone else is doing because they set an example or showed the way.

Here are a couple more examples with **to follow suit**:

Will: Everyone at the gym is doing yoga now. Maybe I'll **follow suit** and join a class, too.

Lisa: I love yoga! It's great for flexibility. I think you'd like it!

Kaya: After seeing how well the new flexible working hours worked for other companies, we decided to **follow suit** and implement the same policy here.

James: I think it's a great move. Many employees will appreciate the extra flexibility.

Sticker shock

Noun

In the episode, Alina talks about experiencing "**sticker shock**" when she was in Norway and saw how expensive things were. She was surprised by the high prices, especially for things like drinks at the pub. This is a perfect example of using the term "**sticker shock**" to describe the feeling of being shocked by unexpectedly high prices. For instance, when she ordered a small drink and saw it cost much more than expected, she felt a strong reaction of surprise and disbelief.

"**Sticker shock**" is an expression used when someone sees a price that is much higher than they expected, and it causes them to feel surprised or even uncomfortable. The phrase comes from the price tags (often attached as stickers) on products. When someone sees a price that is much higher than they imagined, it can be a shock, just like being surprised by something unexpected. For example, you might experience **sticker shock** when bringing a tube of hand lotion to the cash register and suddenly realize it's much more expensive than you anticipated.

You can use the expression "**sticker shock**" when talking about any situation where you're surprised by the price of something. It is often used when the price is unexpectedly high for something that normally wouldn't be that expensive. For example, you could say, "I went to buy a new laptop, but the prices gave me **sticker shock**." Another example could be, "We went out for dinner and had **sticker shock** when we saw how much the bill was."

Some similar expressions include "price shock" or "cost shock," which also describe a surprise caused by unexpectedly high prices.

Here are a couple more examples with **sticker shock**:

Ben: I just ordered a coffee, and it was \$10!

Maya: **Sticker shock!** For coffee? That's way too much.

Ben: I know, but I really wanted a coffee, and didn't realize until I saw the bill.

Ryan: Wow, this hotel is gorgeous, but did you see the price per night?

Anna: Yeah, it's a bit of **sticker shock**. I didn't expect it to be so expensive!

Ryan: We might need to reconsider our budget or look for something a little cheaper.

To come to fruition

Expression, formal

In the episode, Alina talks about plans for a possible Culips meetup in Europe. She says, “Hopefully all of this will **come to fruition**,” meaning she hopes their plans will actually happen and be successful.

"To come to fruition" means that a plan, idea, or hope has been fully realized or completed successfully. It is used when something that was once just a thought or plan finally becomes a reality. For example, if you plan to start a business and it opens successfully, you could say, "My dream of opening a store finally **came to fruition**." This phrase is typically used in situations where something has reached its successful stage after a period of effort or waiting.

You can use **"to come to fruition"** when talking about any project, dream, or idea that you've been working on, especially if it takes time to achieve. For example: "I've been working on this project for months, and it looks like it's finally **coming to fruition**," means that the hard work is paying off and the project is becoming a success. Another example is: "The event we planned for months is now **coming to fruition**," meaning the event is finally happening after all the preparation.

The origin of this phrase comes from farming, where fruits grow on plants or trees. If the plant **"comes to fruition"**, it means it has matured and is ready for harvest. To help remember the phrase, you can think of a tree bearing fruit. Just like you wait for a tree to grow fruit, you wait for your plans or hard work to **"come to fruition"**, or to be completed and successful.

A common synonym for “come to fruition” is “come to life.” For example, “After weeks of research, his school project **came to life** when he presented his final designs to the class.”

Here are a couple more examples with **to come to fruition**:

Willow: The idea we had for the new app never really **came to fruition**. We just couldn't get the funding.

Aaron: That's tough. But don't give up—maybe it will happen in the future.

Josh: Congratulations! Your performance was incredible! You did great!

Olivia: Thank you. I'm so happy! After all these years, my dream of singing on stage has finally **come to fruition**.

Expressions Quiz

1. What does the phrase "to sleep on it" mean?

- a) To take a nap during the day.
- b) To wait until the morning to make a decision.
- c) To sleep through an entire night without waking up.
- d) To sleep during a meeting.

2. Which of the following would be an example of something "a far cry" from what you expected?

- a) A new clothes shop that you really like.
- b) A presentation that started on time.
- c) A restaurant where everything is as described in the reviews.
- d) A vacation destination that is much worse than you thought.

3. If someone is like "a deer in the headlights," how do they feel?

- a) Calm and confident.
- b) Happy and excited.
- c) Overwhelmed and unsure how to react.
- d) In control and prepared.

4. After seeing everyone else in the office wear casual clothes, you decide to wear casual clothes too. What did you do?

- a) Experienced sticker shock.
- b) Came to fruition.
- c) Slept on it.
- d) Followed suit.

5. After months of planning, your team finally finishes the big project. What might you say?

- a) "It came to fruition!"
- b) "This is a far cry from our original plan!"
- c) "I'm like a deer in the headlights!"
- d) "I need to follow suit!"

Listening Comprehension Quiz

6. How long was Alina's trip to Norway?
7. Why did Alina decide to visit Norway?
8. How did Alina feel about the weather in Norway?
9. What expression does Andrew use to describe the feeling of trying to repeat a great experience?
10. What is the reason Alina didn't visit her pen pal in Norway?

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever made a spontaneous decision to travel somewhere? If so, where did you go and what was the experience like? If not, do you think you would ever do something like that?
2. Alina mentioned how a specific coffee from Sweden made her want to visit Norway. Have you ever had a food or drink experience that made you want to travel to a particular place? Was it as good as you expected or **a far cry** from it?
3. Have you ever experienced "**sticker shock**" while traveling? Where was it, and how did you handle it?
4. How do you usually make important decisions? Do you prefer to **sleep on it** or make quick decisions?
5. In group settings, do you usually **follow suit** with what others are doing, or do you like to make your own decisions? Can you share an example where you followed suit, even if it was outside your comfort zone?

Quiz Answers

- 1.b 2.d 3.c 4.d 5.a
6. A couple of days.
7. To try Scandinavian coffee and Norwegian sauna.
8. It was warmer than expected.
9. "Chase the dragon."
10. The pen pal lives too far from Oslo.

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