

Bonus episode #111 - Things I'm looking forward to

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew shares his excitement about an upcoming trip to his home country, Canada. He discusses three main things he's looking forward to: reuniting with old friends in Victoria, enjoying lake swimming in his hometown of Kelowna, and visiting Banff in the Rocky Mountains. He also shares personal stories about Canadian summer activities and the beauty of the country.



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello, everybody. Welcome back to the Culips English Podcast. My name's Andrew. How's it going? This is bonus episode 111. One, one, one. A very fun number to say. So, in today's episode, what I'm going to do is tell you about three things that I'm looking forward to in the near future when I visit my home country of Canada.

But before we get to that story, I have a few announcements. The first announcement is about our Osaka meetup. This is going to be the very first Culips meetup ever in the history of the podcast. So, I am very excited about it, as you might imagine. And we have a few spaces available still for people who would like to join us for the meetup. Of course, it's 100% free. All you need to do is bring yourself and it will be great to meet you and to hang out with you and other Culips members. So, if you live in the Osaka, Japan area, then we'd love to have you join us. The date for the meetup will be on July the 30th. That's a Tuesday and it's going to be happening at 7 p.m. I'll put all of the details and the link to sign up for the meetup in the description for this episode. So, if you're interested, please check that out.

Also, I want to let you know that there's a free interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary that will explain some of the difficult vocabulary that you'll hear me use in this episode. And it's free for everybody. So, we'll put that link in the description for this episode as well. Just follow the link and you can get those amazing study tools. Now, if you're a Culips member, we'll also include a comprehension quiz so you can test your understanding after you finish listening to this episode. If you'd like to become a Culips member, it's very easy to sign up and you can do so at an affordable price. When you're a member, you'll get tons of bonuses and extras like interactive transcripts and helpful study guides for all of our episodes plus exclusive bonus content. You'll get to go to our weekly speaking classes that we host several times each week and much, much more. The list is long. So, if you'd like to see all of the details and sign up and become a member, just visit our website, Culips.com, or check the link that we'll put in the description for this episode.

If you're new to the bonus episode series, what I do here is I just tell you some stories from my everyday life. I'm a Canadian guy, but I live abroad in Seoul, South Korea. And the goal for our bonus episode series is to B.I.G.B. That is our motto. And it stands for build your fluency, increase your cultural knowledge, grow your vocabulary, and become a clearer and better communicator. So, if those are some of your goals, then you're in the right place. And I hope you will enjoy this episode.

So, as I said, I'm going to be telling you three things that I'm looking forward to about my upcoming trip to Canada in this episode. And without any further ado, why don't we get started?

So here we go with number one. So as someone who lives in a different country and who doesn't get to go back home very often, obviously when I do get the opportunity and the chance to go back home, I am very excited. And I'll be visiting my hometown in the western part of Canada, a little city called Kelowna here, in a couple of weeks. And also, my wife will be joining me. Not for the whole time, but at least for a little part of the trip. About half of the time that I'm there, she will be joining me as well.

So, I'm really excited. This will be the first time that I get to show my wife what Canada is like in the summer. Probably, if you've never been to Canada, probably you have this kind of stereotypical image of what Canada is like. Maybe you think of it as like a cold northern wasteland. And I think for some parts of the year, you wouldn't be too wrong about that. A lot of Canada is very cold in the winter and snowy. Thankfully, my hometown in the western part of the country isn't so bad. But in many parts of the country, the winter is pretty nasty, pretty cold, pretty snowy, pretty icy. All of those things that you would associate with the winter. However, like I said, we're going this year in the summer. And this will be my first time to show my wife what Canada is like here in the summer. So, I'm really excited about that. But that didn't actually **crack my top three list**. It's one of the things I'm looking forward to, **don't get me wrong**, but I'm also looking forward to some

other things. And so, I'm going to check out my list here and I'll introduce the first one to you.

Number one is reuniting with old friends. Reuniting with old friends. So, I have some plans to meet up with some of my friends who I don't get to see very often. And the reason I don't get to see them very often is because of geography. Of course, obviously, I live in Korea and my good friends from Canada still mostly live in Canada. And so that's one geographical barrier, one thing that keeps us apart. But also, Canada is a huge, massive country. And when I get to go back home, I usually visit my hometown. And I see my parents and I see my brother and my sister and my immediate family. That is usually my priority when I go back home. However, a lot of my friends don't live in my hometown. In fact, not very many do. So, when I do go back home, if my family are busy, you know, if they have plans for the day and my brother and sister are working or something like that, and sometimes it can be a little bit lonely because I don't actually know too many people there.

Most of my friends, and this is probably true for many people who grew up in a small town, and my hometown, Kelowna, it's not really a small, small town by Canadian standards, at least. The population is probably hovering around 150,000 people. So, it's not like some super small town, but it's not big **by any stretch of the imagination**. And when I do go back and my family, my brother and sister are busy, then sometimes I'm like a little bit bored. I don't know what to do. So yeah, I don't have too many friends still left in my hometown. And if you're a longtime Culips listener, you'll know this information about me, but I graduated with my bachelor's degree from the University of Victoria. That is on Vancouver Island in the extreme westernmost part of Canada. And then when I did my master's degree, I did that in Montreal, which is much more toward the eastern part of the country. I guess technically it's kind of like the center eastern part of the country. It's not like on the east coast or anything, but it's in the province of Quebec. And both of those places are a pretty big distance away from my hometown.

To go from Kelowna to Victoria is a full day trip by car. You have to drive for around six hours to get to the coastline. And then from the coast, you have to take a ferry to Vancouver Island. And then from the ferry terminal on Vancouver Island, you have to drive for around another hour to get to Victoria. So that's like a whole day of traveling by car. And if you tried to drive by car from Kelowna to Montreal, it would probably take you about six days. Maybe if you drove all through the night, you could get there faster. But if you take an airplane, it takes five or six hours. So, it's also a long way away.

And so, because I have not too many friends left in my hometown, and most of my university friends are either in Victoria or Montreal, or other places throughout the country, right? When you grow up in a small town, usually you want to leave when you get a little bit older. And so that's what many of my friends did. And now they're scattered throughout the country. And so, it's really difficult to see people when I go home, because it's not like I can just go to Kelowna and then head to Vancouver, and then Toronto and Montreal and see everybody, right? Like it's almost impossible. So that's a little bit unfortunate. But one thing that is fortunate is that this year, some of my good friends from Montreal will also be visiting Victoria on Vancouver Island at the same time that I'll be in Canada.

And actually, I thought, hey, this could be a great opportunity for me to also show my wife Victoria, because as I mentioned, I went to university there. It's one of my favorite places in the whole country, in all of Canada. I love Victoria. And in the back of my mind, you know, I don't think we're going to do this anytime soon. But sometimes I think about if we were to move back to Canada, where would we settle? Where would we live? And Victoria, I mean, it's a very expensive city. So, it wouldn't be too easy to do this. But Victoria would top that list. It would be one of the top three destinations, top three places I would want to live in Canada. So, I think it will be great to introduce that place to my wife. And at the same time, some of my very good friends from Montreal will also be in Victoria on their summer vacations. So, we have plans to meet up and to spend some time together. And I haven't seen these friends since 2016 was the last time that we were able to hang out **in person**. So that's what, eight years or so? Time flies. It's crazy.

But yeah, I'm really excited to see my old friends. And that's going to be just a special moment and something that doesn't happen every day, obviously, and is very difficult to organize and to logistically make happen. So that's one of the things that I'm really looking forward to is A, showing my wife, Victoria, introducing that fantastic city on Vancouver Island to her, and then B, also seeing my friends at the same time. And this will be the first time that those really close friends get to meet my wife as well. So that will be special. And that's something I'm really looking forward to.

Item number two on my list. Item number two is lake swimming. Lake swimming. I love it. It is an essential part of a Canadian summer. For many Canadians, and definitely an essential part of a Canadian summer for me, without a doubt, is lake swimming. Now, here in Korea, where I live, it's something that you can't really do. A, there are not too many lakes. There are some lakes in Korea, but none that are really close to where I live. And B, there are no good swimmable lakes that I know about. If you're out there and you're a Korean person and you know about a good swimmable lake in the country, feel free to let me know. But as far as I know, lake swimming isn't really a thing here in South Korea. However, it is definitely a thing in Canada, probably in North America and many other places around the world, definitely in the States and in Canada, lake swimming is a thing.

So, in my hometown, we have this huge lake. It's called Okanagan Lake. The water is clean. The water is not too cold in the summer. It's just refreshing. I mean, it will be kind of cold, but not too cold. And the lake is, I think, over 100 kilometers long. It's not very wide. It's only maybe around a kilometer wide at its widest point. But it is long, it is deep, and it is amazing for summer water activities. And the easiest water activity to do is swimming. You don't really need too much equipment. It's not like you need a boat or anything. You can just hop right in. And luckily, my parents live, and actually my brother lives too, very close to the lake. So, within walking distance, you could walk there in 10, 15 minutes and be at a beach. And then you can just hop in and swim in the lake. And it's great for cooling down. It's very refreshing. And it's just, yeah, one of the essential parts of a Canadian summer for me.

So, I'm super, super, super looking forward to just, I think, probably two times a day, maybe, in the morning, waking up, walking down to the beach. Or you know me, I like to run. So, I'll probably run down to the beach, jog down to the beach, and then hop in the water for a little swim, and then probably do the same thing either in the afternoon or the evening. And I've been talking a lot about my wife in this episode. And I'm really excited to introduce her to the lake lifestyle as well, because she's been learning swimming for the last probably eight months or so now, for the last while. And she's taking swimming lessons and practicing regularly. And she told me that she's become quite a good swimmer. And I believe her. She's very interested in swimming these days and doing it passionately. So yeah, it'll be fun to swim with her. And I'm sure she'll actually be able to **swim circles around me** because I'm not that strong of a swimmer. I just do it for fun. But yeah, I don't think I could win a swimming race or anything like that.

Actually, close to where my parents live, there is a **high dive**. High dive. I'm not really sure what the official definition of an Olympic high dive is. It's nothing like that. But it's like this platform that you can swim out to. It's in the lake. It's probably about like 30 or 40 meters away from the beach. There's actually a dock that you can walk all the way down to. And then you can hop in the water, and you have to swim out a little bit to this platform in the lake. And then you can jump off the platform. And if I recall correctly, there's a diving board there as well. And the platform is probably three or four meters in the air. So, when you're out on the platform and you're looking down into the lake, it's a little bit scary. It seems pretty high. But if you just **let loose** and run and jump in, actually, it's really fun.

So, I'm looking forward to that. I'm not going to be doing any diving. It's a little bit too high for me to dive headfirst into the water. But yeah, **cannonballs**, **pencil dive**. Do you know what a pencil dive is? A pencil dive is just when you jump into the water, but you make your body upright and narrow and thin, just like a pencil and you point your toes so that you can go into the water without hurting your feet. So yeah, pencil diving and cannonballs. I'll definitely be doing, but no **belly flops**. A belly flop, as you may imagine, is when you jump into the water belly first and you flop your belly on the water. That is very

painful. So definitely no belly flops and no headfirst diving. I don't have enough confidence to do that. But yeah, cannonballs, pencil dives. **I'm all over that.** And it's something that I'm looking forward to doing when I visit my hometown in a couple of weeks.

And the third thing that I'm looking forward to when I visit Canada is going to Banff and visiting the Rocky Mountains. The very final part of our trip, my wife and I are going to spend a couple of days in Banff, which is a small little city that is located in the Rocky Mountains near a national park in Canada. And it is beautiful. I've been there quite a few times in the past, but it's been a long time. Probably the last time I was there is over 10 years ago. So, it's been quite a while, but the scenery is just beautiful. This classic, like Rocky Mountain scenery with huge mountains and beautiful forests and very emerald-blue colored lakes. There's a famous lake called Lake Louise that's also close by, and I'll try and put a picture of it in the YouTube version and on our Instagram page for those of you who are listening to the audio version of this as well, just so you can see this lake because it's a beautiful lake. A lot of Canadian people think that this lake is one of the most scenic spots in the whole country. And I could say that I'm one of those people. It's a very beautiful scenic spot.

So, it'll be great to enjoy visiting Banff. There's also lots of wildlife around. Sometimes you can see bears. If you are driving, and we're going to rent a car so we can drive around, then seeing a bear is kind of exciting. Like if you see one on the side of the highway or something, it's cool to see bears that way. If you're out for a hike, you definitely don't want to see a bear. That would be a disaster because they are quite dangerous and scary animals. So hopefully we don't run into any bear like that. But there's also elk that you can see and deer and rabbits and like tons of other wildlife. So, I'm really looking forward to spending a couple of days in Banff.

Interestingly enough, and I'm so sad that this is not actually going to be able to work out in reality, but just a couple of days before I'm scheduled to arrive in Banff, Suzanne, my Culips co-host, she's also going to be visiting Banff, but she leaves like one day or two

days before I'm set to arrive. So, we were really excited there for a moment. We thought we could have a mini Culips reunion in person in Banff and that would be so fun. But yeah, unfortunately, she's going to be leaving just as I arrive. So, I don't think we're going to be able to connect this time, but who knows? You never know. In the future, it might happen.

And last time I was talking with Suzanne, she actually told me that in Banff in the summer, there's an amazing arts festival. And so, she told me that she was going to check the festival out and she recommended that I check it out as well. And so, I checked it out and I was so surprised because the festival lineup is really fantastic. It blew my mind. And there's going to be a really, really interesting jazz concert with a musician who I followed for a little while now, actually from the UK. He's a saxophone player, a flute player, a wonderful musician overall. His name is Shabaka Hutchings and he'll be performing while I'm there. So, I was really stoked when I saw that his concert will be happening when I'm visiting Banff. Seems **meant to be**. And I thought, oh, I better **snap up some tickets** before they all are sold out. And so, I went and looked and there were just a few tickets available. Thankfully, I was able to find two tickets very close to the front, almost in the center. And the best thing was the tickets were only \$20. Like they're very affordable.

So, this is, I guess, the third thing that I'm really looking forward to is experiencing some culture and a wonderful jazz concert and jazz performance in the Rocky Mountains here when I visit Banff, along with all the other things. Hopefully I'll be able to do maybe some mountain biking while I'm there or some hiking while I'm there. I'm only there for a couple of days, so there won't be too much time, but I hope to **make the most of it**. And yeah, I'm really looking forward to visiting the Rocky Mountains, Lake Louise, and Banff when I'm back in Canada in a couple of weeks.

OK, everyone, that brings us to the end of this week's episode. As always, I want to share a completion code with you by sharing the completion code in the comments for this episode on our Instagram or our YouTube or our Discord community. You can show me, and you can show the rest of our amazing Culips community that you listened all the way

to the end and that you finished studying with this episode today. So, let's make the completion code for this week: "Sunshine." Sunshine. And the reason why the completion code will be "Sunshine" is because it is the summer right now and I'm going to be visiting Canada in the summer and I'm hoping that I get some good weather and I get to experience a lot of sunshine. I get to enjoy the sunshine while I'm back home. So, the completion code for this week is: "Sunshine."

Now you know what your homework is, so go, go, go and do it and I look forward to your comments. Speaking of our Discord server, if you would like to join our Discord server for free, we would love to have you join us. It is the place where our Culips community meets and we practice our English together, we hang out, we talk about episodes, we talk about all things under the sun, tons of different topics. There's a lot of good chatter going on there each and every day and we'll put the link to our Discord community in the description for this episode. So come on, don't be shy, come on and join us. I'm there every day and so are so many other people and we would love to have you practice English with us. So come on.

All right, everyone. Well, I got to go because I'm actually scheduled to record some brand-new Culips episodes with Anna here in just a few moments. But until next week, please take care. As always, happy English studies, and I'll catch you in the next Culips episode. Bye-bye.

Glossary

1. **Crack my list** means to be included in a top selection. Andrew uses this expression to explain that something didn't make it into his top three things he's looking forward to. *Example: The new restaurant didn't crack my list of favorite places to eat.*
2. **Don't get me wrong** is an expression used to prevent misunderstanding. Andrew uses this to clarify that he's excited about something, even though he's focusing on other things. *Example: Don't get me wrong, I love pizza, but I'm trying to eat healthier these days.*
3. **By any stretch of the imagination** means in any way or by any interpretation. Andrew uses this to emphasize that his hometown is not a big city. *Example: The movie wasn't good by any stretch of the imagination, but we still had fun watching it.*
4. **In person** means physically present, not through a screen or phone. Andrew talks about meeting his friends in person after a long time. *Example: After years of online friendship, we finally met in person at the coffee shop.*
5. **To ___ circles around someone** means to be much better at something than another person. Andrew suggests his wife might swim circles around him, meaning she's a much better swimmer. *Example: The new employee is so efficient, she works circles around everyone else in the office.*
6. **High dive** is a tall platform for diving into water. Andrew describes a high dive platform in the lake near his parents' house. *Example: I was nervous but excited to try the high dive at the new swimming pool.*
7. **Let loose** means to relax and act freely without restraint. Andrew uses this phrase when talking about jumping from the high dive. *Example: At the party, everyone let loose and danced like nobody was watching.*
8. **Pencil dive** is a way of jumping into water with your body straight like a pencil. Andrew explains this diving technique as one he plans to do at the lake. *Example: For beginners, a pencil dive is often safer than trying more complex diving techniques.*
9. **Cannonball** is a jump into water with your body curled into a ball shape. Andrew mentions this as another way he'll jump into the lake. *Example: The kids had a contest to see who could make the biggest splash with their cannonball jumps.*
10. **Belly flop** is a painful way of landing flat on your stomach when jumping into water. Andrew says he won't be doing any belly flops because they hurt. *Example: I accidentally did a belly flop and my stomach was red for hours afterward.*

11. **I'm all over that** means to be very enthusiastic about something. Andrew uses this phrase to express his excitement about doing cannonballs and pencil dives.
Example: When I heard about the free concert in the park, I was all over that idea.
12. **Meant to be** refers to something that seems destined or fated to happen. Andrew uses this phrase when talking about a concert coinciding with his visit to Banff.
Example: We bumped into each other at the grocery store - it must have been meant to be!
13. **Snap up [something]** means to buy or acquire something quickly before it's gone. Andrew talks about snapping up concert tickets before they sell out. *Example: The limited edition shoes were so popular, fans snapped them up within minutes of the release.*
14. **Make the most of something** means to use or enjoy something as much as possible. Andrew hopes to make the most of his short time in Banff by doing various activities. *Example: We only had one day in Paris, so we tried to make the most of it by visiting all the major landmarks.*

Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

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