

Bonus episode #071 - Train to Busan

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew talks about a trip he took over the weekend with his wife to Busan. Plus in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you about the expression “**I’m on dinner duty.**”

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: It's great to be here with you for another English lesson. I'm Andrew, I'm your host, and your study buddy, and this is bonus episode number 71 of the Culips English Podcast. In our bonus episode series, I just tell you some stories about what's going on in my life as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And I hope that by listening to these stories, you'll be able to improve your English fluency, grow your English vocabulary, and build your knowledge of the culture of English-speaking people. So, if your goal is to do one of those things, then you've come to the right place.

So, I'm going to keep this episode short, everyone. And I know that I say that often. But I really mean it this week, I'm going to try and keep things short, and that is for two reasons. The first reason is my throat's a little bit tendy right now, it's a little bit tender, and I don't want to have a full-blown sore throat tomorrow by talking too much today. So, I'm going to try and keep things short and sweet because my voice is actually very important to me. I realized this recently that if I lose my voice, I'm in trouble. I need my voice, obviously, for teaching in the classroom, and I need my voice for the podcast. So being a podcaster without a voice or being a teacher without a voice, it's not a very good thing. So, the health of my voice is very important to me. I think maybe I caught a bug that's going around. It seems like these days here in Seoul, there are a lot of people coughing and hacking away, and I'm sure there are lots of germs flying around. It's the time of the year when the seasons are changing, and actually, just last week, it was really quite warm, and I was still walking around in shorts and a T-shirt, and it felt like summer weather. But now, within the span of only a week, it's cooled down dramatically. And I was outside today for a walk, and it felt pretty chilly. And I was even wearing a hoodie. So yeah, when the seasons change, people tend to get the sniffles. They tend to catch colds. And there seems to be a bug going around these days as well. So, I'm going to try and save my voice here by not talking too much.

And the second reason, I said there were two reasons, the second reason is that I'm on dinner duty tonight. So, it's my job to prepare dinner for my wife and for me, and I'll be cooking up a storm here pretty soon. My wife is out exercising right now. But as soon as she sends me a text message and says that she's on her way home, then I've got to stop recording. I gotta put down the microphone and put on the apron, pick up the spatula, and get busy in the kitchen cooking up dinner. And actually, preparing dinner tonight will be quite easy because my mother-in-law brought over so much food when she came over to our house last week for Chuseok, the Korean Thanksgiving holiday. And I think there is some bulgogi or maybe it's galbi, I'm not really sure, some kind of Korean-style meat, either pork or beef, I'm not sure. But anyways, I just need to take it out of the fridge, cook it up, I've already put some rice in the rice cooker. So, making dinner will be a breeze. And I'll try to record this episode before I have to go to the kitchen and start cooking dinner. So, for those two reasons, I'm going to be a little bit shorter today than I usually am.

Before we get into this week's story, I want to let you know that there's an interactive transcript for this episode. It's completely free for everyone. It's a great study resource. I recommend following along with the transcript, either while you listen to this episode or after you listen to this episode to double-check your understanding. And you can find the transcript just by following the link that's in the description for this episode.

And of course, if you're looking for even more study materials and even better ways to improve your English with Culips, then definitely sign up and become a Culips member. There are so many great bonuses and benefits you get when you are a Culips member because you'll get access to our entire library of study materials that are designed by our expert English teachers to help you reach your English goals. And hey, at the same time, you'll be supporting the work that we do here at Culips and allow us to keep making brand-new English lessons each and every week. So, for all of the details and to sign up, just follow the link that's in the description for this episode or visit our website [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com).

And now, let's get started with this week's episode in earnest. I'm going to tell you a story about a trip that I took with my wife to the city of Busan. Busan is Korea's second-largest city, and it's located at the very south of the peninsula. It's on the ocean. It's a beautiful, big, bustling place. But I hadn't visited it for years. Well, that was until a couple of weeks ago when my wife and I visited over the weekend. So that's what I'll talk about in this episode. And let's begin with the story right now.

When I first moved to Korea, I spent a lot of time traveling. Nearly every weekend, I would travel to different cities throughout the country and just explore. I'd often go with my friends, we'd ride the bus or ride the train. And we'd choose a different random location almost every weekend and go and check out the country. You know, Korea's a small place, so it's easy to get from city to city to city. And there are so many things to explore. A lot of cities and regions have their own local cuisine, so you can try different foods, see different things. And of course, I love hiking, so I spent a lot of time hiking different mountains in different areas throughout the country for the first, well, several years that I lived here.

However, these days, my priorities in life have changed a little bit. A lot of the English-speaking friends that I used to travel with when I first moved to Korea have all left the country, and they've gone back home. And now that I'm married, I don't have the flexibility and the freedom that I once had when I was single. And on top of that, now I've explored so many different areas of the country that it's just not as thrilling and exciting as it used to be when I was younger and a fob.

Have you heard that expression before? "Fob." Actually, in the wrong kind of context, it could be considered quite rude, so please be careful when you're using this expression. But "fob" stands for "Fresh Off the Boat," and it's a word that we use in English to describe new immigrants. So, when I was a fob here in Korea, when I was brand new, when I was a rookie in this country, of course, exploring everywhere was really exciting because I didn't know anything. I was fresh. I was brand new, and I was still learning all about the country.

But now that I've been here for a decade, well, that sense of newness has kind of vanished, and traveling doesn't hold the thrill that it once did.

But despite that fact, I still do travel from time to time. But usually, these days, I travel by myself, to be honest. If you're a regular listener of the bonus episode series, you'll know that this year, I went to Jeju Island, but I went there by myself. I also went to Gwangju, another city in the southern part of Korea not too long ago. But I went there by myself as well. For the last few years, actually, whenever I traveled, I usually traveled by myself. Unless I went on a big overseas trip, like my wife and I went to Canada. But any kind of little trips in Korea, I'd always go alone. And the reason for that was our dog Pinky couldn't be left alone. And also, he wasn't a very good traveler. So, because of that, it was really difficult for my wife and me to travel anywhere in Korea just for, you know, a weekend getaway or something like that. And unfortunately, as you guys know, recently, our dog Pinky crossed the Rainbow Bridge, he passed over to the other side. And of course, that really broke our hearts. But there is one kind of little good thing about that, and that is now we're free to travel if we want to. So, we decided to take advantage of this new freedom that we have, get out of Seoul for a little bit, and take a quick trip down to Busan.

Now when I said a quick trip, I really mean it. We left on Friday afternoon, and we returned on Saturday afternoon. So, I think the total time that we spent in Busan was just a little bit over 24 hours. It was a short but sweet trip, and we really had a great time. We left Seoul on Friday afternoon. We took the bullet train down, and the train ride is only around two and a half hours. So, it's a pretty quick trip. Just like I mentioned a few weeks ago when I visited Gwangju, I just slept and listened to podcasts on the trip down. But before you knew it, we had arrived in Busan.

Now the reason that we went to Busan was actually to visit my wife's friend. So, she has a good friend that she met several years ago when they were coworkers together at the same company. But that friend and her husband moved down to Busan. I guess it was maybe a year or a year and a half ago. They originally lived in Seoul, but my wife's friend's

husband—it's a little bit confusing to talk about—but my wife's friend's husband is originally from Busan.

So, they had lived together in Seoul for I think over a decade. But they decided to start a new chapter in their life in Busan. So, they moved down there, and they built a house in Busan. And it was really kind of fun talking with them because we went through a lot of the same experiences at the same time. They were building their house in Busan while we were remodeling our old house in Seoul. So, when we met up down there in Busan, we had a lot of things to talk about and a lot of shared experiences. Although I have to say the scale of their house was quite a bit different than our little house. So, I can only imagine that the stress that my wife and I went through with our remodeling project was much, much bigger on their end of things.

But anyways, the house that they built is really cool because it is several stories high, and they live on the upper floors. But the ground floor is a commercial space, and they opened their own brunch cafe on the ground floor of their house. And now they work together operating this cafe on the ground floor of their home. So, the cafe opened a little while ago, I'm not sure exactly when, several months ago, and my wife's been meaning to go down and check it out. Of course, you know, if your friend does something amazing like this, you want to go and support them and check out the menu and see the space with your own eyes. And so, my wife was actually planning to go alone, but due to the change in our life circumstance, I was able to join her, and so we went down there together.

So, let's see, on Friday afternoon, we arrived in Busan, and Busan is a big city, and it's a beachside city, so it's on the coast, and it's got some really amazing beaches. And listeners, if you ever visit South Korea, I recommend going to Busan. It's got a cool vibe. There are two really famous beaches there. One is called Haeundae, which is probably the most famous beach, and another one's called Gwangalli, and they are both amazing, beautiful beaches. And we actually stayed very close to the Haeundae Beach. We didn't have time to check out the beach on Friday. But on Saturday morning, after we woke up,

my wife and I went for a nice walk along the seaside, and it was just a beautiful way to spend a morning, taking a stroll along the sea.

When we did arrive on Friday, we went to this really cool area of the city that I had never visited before, right in between the Jeonpo and Seomyeon subway stations. So maybe Busan people will know the area that I'm talking about. And if you're a listener from another country, and you ever do have an opportunity to visit Busan, then you could check out that area. I'm not sure if it has a specific name, but in between those Jeonpo and Seomyeon subway stations, it was really cool. It was like this old industrial area that is kind of being gentrified or reclaimed by younger people. So, you have a lot of warehouses and factories that have been turned into cafes and stores and restaurants. And it just had a really cool vibe. And there were way too many cafes there for us to check out all of them. Like literally in one city block, you would find five or six different cafes. And it's like that on every block. And this neighborhood is several blocks big. So, lots of cafes, lots of just cool stores, and neat things to check out. So, we really enjoyed walking around that area.

But before we knew it, it was time to head on over to another area of the city called Suyeong. And that's where we met up with my wife's friend and her husband to have dinner. And so, we met up with them. And I had met my wife's friend before, but I had never met her husband before. And I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. But to my pleasant surprise, he's actually a really good English speaker. So that made things really comfortable and fun for me. Of course, in these situations, I always love practicing my Korean speaking as well. And I was able to do that also. But it's always nice to have an English speaker there. And it's fun when you can kind of code-switch between the two languages as well. So, we met up with my wife's friend and her husband, and we had a great dinner, and we went out for some drinks afterwards. And we just spent a really nice time hanging out. And it was funny because my wife and I said, "Oh, this is the first time in a long time that we've been out at night like this with another couple." And my wife's friend and her husband said the same thing. They hadn't been out on a double date night like this for a long time either. So, it was just a really nice time to socialize, to chat, to have a

good laugh, to get to know my wife's friend and her husband, and just enjoy ourselves. Anyways, eventually it was time for us to part ways. So, we grabbed a taxi. We were actually out past the subway stop time. So, we missed the last subway. I think we ended up going home almost around 1 a.m., which is pretty wild and pretty late at night for me, but it was a special occasion. So, it was OK. We grabbed a taxi, and we went towards the Haeundae area, that famous beach area where our hotel was. And pretty much we just went to the hotel and passed out.

Like I said, the next day when we woke up, we went for a wonderful walk along the beach, and I took some pictures. I know I'm really bad at taking pictures and posting them on the Culips Instagram, but I will post some of the Busan pictures from our trip onto the Instagram so you can see just how beautiful the coastline of Busan is. And then around lunchtime, it was finally time for us to accomplish the goal of why we went to Busan in the first place. And that was to go visit my wife's friend's cafe, and to try the food and to check out the area and just do all of those things.

So, we got on the subway again, and then we arrived at the cafe. And it was really wonderful. They had done a great job at decorating the cafe. It's got this kind of antique vintage European vibe to it, and it doesn't really feel like you're in Korea anymore once you step into the cafe. And we ordered a lot of food off the menu, we wanted to try a little bit of everything. And I gotta say, they're doing a great job. It was really cool to see how my wife's friend and her husband were able to start this whole new endeavor, really. They had never owned or operated a brunch cafe before, but they dove in headfirst, and really you can see that their passion and their love for this kind of work comes through with the food.

Now usually, I'm not the kind of person that will give specific shout-outs or recommendations on the podcast, but I do want to shout them out and support them. So, if you are ever in Busan and you're looking for a nice place to maybe have brunch with a friend or a good date spot, something like that, then I recommend their cafe, which is

called "Le meets" and I'll put a link to their Instagram in the description for this episode so you can check out the cafe if you live in Busan or if you're ever in the neighborhood.

We ordered, like I said, a little bit of everything, and the specialization at that cafe is pasta. We had a triple cheese pasta, and we had a ragu pasta, and they were both very delicious. And after our brunch, then we had coffee as well. And I'm a little bit of a coffee snob, but the coffee was amazing. The brunch was amazing. And when it was time to head back to Seoul, we left with full bellies. So in a nutshell, that was our short but sweet trip to Busan. To be honest with you, it felt a little bit too short. So, I really hope that we can go and visit again sometime in the near future.

Actually, this weekend, right now when I'm recording this, there's a huge international film festival in Busan called BIFF, I think that's what Korean people call it or an English speaker would call it BIFF, Busan International Film Festival. And it's been on my bucket list to visit for so, so long. And actually, I tried to make things work so that we could combine checking out my wife's friend's cafe and our trip to Busan at the same time as the BIFF was happening. But I waited too late, and hotels were very expensive, it was hard to find accommodation, and we couldn't really make things work. So, I'll have to save BIFF for another day. But hopefully, maybe next year, I would love to go down and check out the city during the time when that famous festival is happening, or really any time of the year because it's just a nice place to spend some time in.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson.

A little bit earlier in this episode, I told you that I was going to try and keep this episode short because I'm on dinner duty tonight. And that is actually the key expression that I want to focus on and teach you about in this vocabulary lesson. And this is one of those expressions that I think many of you will be able to understand once you hear it, but maybe you didn't know that you could express yourself this way in English. So maybe instead, you would have defaulted to saying something like, "I have to cook dinner

tonight." But that's not what I said, right? I said, "I'm on dinner duty tonight." So, it's just a different alternative way to express ourselves.

And now that you know that this expression exists in English, I hope that you can use it in your future English speaking as well. Because when we can express ourselves in different ways, using a variety of different expressions, well then the end result is that our English sounds more fluent and more natural. So, I want to rewind and go back to the part of the episode where I used this expression, just so you can hear once again how I used it in a natural context. So, let's go back and listen a couple more times right now. Here we go.

The second reason is that I'm on dinner duty tonight.

So, as you can probably guess, by what I just said, to say "I am on dinner duty tonight" means that I am cooking dinner tonight. It's my responsibility. I'm the one in charge. It's my duty. And actually, we can use this expression in a variety of different situations when we have to talk about being in charge and being responsible for cooking or preparing food. But it's not limited to only talking about food. You can also use it to talk about doing other chores or tasks around the house. For example, if it's your turn to do the dishes, what could you say? What could you say? Yeah, that's right, you could say, "I'm on dish duty." Or if it's your turn to clean the bathroom, then you could say, "Hey, I'm on bathroom duty."

So now that we know what this expression means, let's take a listen to some example sentences. As always, I've got three prepared for you, and we'll take a listen to the first one right now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

I'm on breakfast duty tomorrow, which means I need to get up early and start making the coffee.

Let's break this example sentence down. In this example sentence, the speaker said that he's on breakfast duty tomorrow. So, that means he is the one who is responsible for cooking breakfast tomorrow. He's the breakfast cook. And so he said because of that, because that's his task to do tomorrow, he's going to wake up early so he can get the cooking started and get the coffee started. And all of those things that you need to do when you prepare breakfast.

Example sentence number two.

I'm on snack duty for the party. So, I'll bring chips and dip.

Let's break the second example sentence down. So, in that sentence, we hear the speaker say that he's on snack duty. So, if you're on snack duty, what does it mean? Yeah, you guessed it, it means that you are the one who's responsible for preparing the snacks. "I'm on snack duty," I am the one who needs to buy and prepare the snacks."

Example sentence number three.

You're on dinner duty tonight, right? Could you get started? I'm pretty hungry.

Alright let's break this final example sentence down. In this example sentence, we heard the speaker ask, maybe his brother or sister or roommate, a question. And the question was, "You're on dinner duty tonight, right?" which means that he was asking whoever if they were cooking tonight. Like he wanted to confirm that information. And he said also said that he's pretty hungry, so he wants the cook to start cooking soon because he's really hungry.

Alright, guys, we did it. We made it to the end of another bonus episode. Thank you for listening along with me here today. And I'm going to cut things short now because, like I said, my voice is barely hanging on by a thread here. Also, I'm on dinner duty tonight, and

my wife just texted me and said that she's on her way home. So that means I need to put the mic down and get started cooking in the kitchen.

So, until next time, take care. Happy English studies, as always. Let's talk about this episode further on our Discord server. The link to the Discord server is in the episode description, so you can easily find and follow our Discord server by just clicking on that link. Take care, bye.

Episode credits

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