

Bonus episode #089 - Sunshine and Swims in Sydney

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew shares stories from his trip to Sydney, Australia. He talks about his first impressions of the city and how he fell in love with it. Andrew also discusses his swimming adventures, including his wife's swimming lessons and their visits to the hotel pool and various beaches. He highlights their experience at the Bondi Icebergs Pool and the Bondi to Coogee coastal walk.

By listening to his stories, you can improve your English communication skills, learn idiomatic expressions and vocabulary, and immerse in English-speaking culture, all while exploring one of Australia's most iconic cities.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello, everybody, and welcome back to another bonus episode of the Culips English Podcast. This is bonus episode 89, and I am your host and your study buddy for today, Andrew. I hope you're feeling fine because this is episode 89, so I can't miss the opportunity to make a rhyme there. I'm feeling fine. I hope you are as well, and I want to welcome you back to the bonus episode series.

And what we do here, let me just quickly explain for our new listeners, is I tell you some stories from my everyday life as a Canadian person who lives abroad in South Korea. And actually, now I am not in Canada, and I'm not in South Korea. I am on the road. I am traveling, and I am in Australia. So, for today, I'm going to share with you some stories from my trip here in Australia, and specifically about the time that I've been spending in Sydney. And I hope that by listening to these stories, you'll be able to build your English fluency and grow your vocabulary, increase your knowledge about the culture of English-speaking people, and ultimately, to become a clearer and more confident communicator in English.

And to accompany this episode, there is a 100% free transcript and a vocabulary glossary. You can get it just by following the link in the description for this episode. And if you are a Culips member, then there's also a comprehension quiz that you can get. And I share the link with all of our members in the member-only area of our Discord server.

And speaking of our Discord server, it is a wonderful place where all of our community gathers to hang out, spend time together, and practice our English together. So, if you haven't joined us on Discord yet, what are you waiting for? Come on over and **see what all the fuss is about**. And you can do that, you guessed it, just by following the link, that's in the description for this episode.

OK, and with that said, let's jump in and get started. So, guys, I'm going to talk to you about the time that I've been spending here in Sydney. My wife and I came here just last week, and we've been here just for, I guess, about a week now. So, we're heading on to Melbourne very soon. We only have a couple more days here left in Sydney, and then it's on to Melbourne for the second phase of our trip.

But we've been busy this last week exploring the city and experiencing as much as we can. And I got to say, I really, really like this place. At first, you know, I don't know if you guys have had this experience, but it's happened to me before. Whenever you visit a new place or a new city, right away, you fall in love with it. Just because it's really maybe different from where you're from and when things are different, they're more exciting and more interesting. And so yeah, you visit a new place and right away, you kind of start imagining what life would be like if you lived there or what life would be like if you moved there. I know this has happened to me so many times when I travel. And also, I think like when you travel to a new place, usually you see the best parts of the city, right? Maybe you're staying in a touristy area of the city where things are really clean and really nice. And yeah, the city has built that tourist area to show you the best parts, right? So, it's easy to fall in love with the city. And yeah, I know that's happened to me almost every place that I've visited. I always, within the first few days, think about, "Hmm, could I move here? Could I live here? What would life be like here?"

And of course, that's happened to me in Sydney too. Only spending a week here doesn't really give me enough time and enough data to accurately know what life would be like living in this city. But even after a week, I'm still really in love with Sydney and I think it's a really cool and fascinating place and just seems like it would be an amazing place to live if you were lucky enough to live here. And maybe a little bit later after my trip is finished and I'm back in Korea, then I'll record an episode and I'll talk about the things that I really liked about Australia and Sydney in particular and why I think it would be a fantastic place to live. And maybe after my trip is finished, that will have given me enough time for the **infatuation** to wear off.

Infatuation. Do you know that word? I would say it's not a super common everyday word, but it's a perfect word to use in this situation. And it's also a perfect word to use when you're talking about romance as well. Maybe some of you have had this experience where you meet somebody new and you date somebody new and at the start of the relationship, everything is amazing. You can't see any flaws or faults with the romantic partner that you have. They just seem totally perfect, totally amazing, totally beautiful. And that kind of feeling is called infatuation. It's like you're obsessed and you're in love and everything is perfect. But with a lot of relationships, that infatuation period usually wears off after a few weeks or a few months. So, I think maybe I'm in that infatuation stage with Australia right now. And then after a few weeks of being here, then maybe I'll get to look at it a little bit more honestly. So that's why I'm going to save my ultimate review of the country for a little later on.

But anyways, so far so good. And as I mentioned, my wife and I have been really busy exploring the city and trying to experience as much as we can. Of course, it's summer here, even though it's February, which seems really weird for me coming from the Northern Hemisphere. This is usually the worst part of winter when you've been going through winter for several months already and spring still seems far away on the horizon. You're like, come on, winter, when will you finish? When will spring finally come? That's what February usually feels like for me. But not here in Australia, not here in the Southern Hemisphere. It's summer. So yeah, we've been getting outside and exploring and enjoying the lovely sunny weather as much as we can. And the first thing that I'll talk to you about is something that my wife and I have been doing almost daily here. And that is swimming. Swimming, yeah!

So, if you recall, last week, I told you that my wife has been taking swimming lessons for the last several months. I don't know, probably around four to six months, somewhere in that range. Now, it's not like she totally didn't know how to swim before. She wasn't like a complete, complete beginner. But she told me that she didn't feel confident as a swimmer. And we've gone swimming sometimes in the past together. And I noticed also that she

wasn't really a confident swimmer. So, when she approached me with the idea of her signing up and taking some swimming lessons, I was all for it. I really encouraged her to do that because it's a great, just life skill to have, right? If you ever had the misfortune of finding yourself in a dangerous situation in the water, it's good to know how to swim. And also, it's good exercise. And it means that you can go to the beach or go to the lake or go to a swimming pool without having to feel stressed out around the water.

So, yeah, she signed up for the lessons and she's been practicing swimming really diligently, maybe three or four times a week. And so, when we came to Australia, she was really stoked and pumped to show me what she's learned before and to swim as much as she can.

As for me, I feel confident in the water. I took swimming lessons when I was a young kid, and I grew up swimming every summer in my friends' swimming pools. I was lucky enough to grow up in an area of Canada where many, many people had backyard swimming pools. My family, unfortunately, didn't have a backyard swimming pool, but several of my neighborhood friends did. So, I spent lots and lots of summers swimming in my friends' pools. And also, I have a huge lake in my hometown, so I would spend lots of time in the summer swimming in the lake. So, I've got a lot of experience as a swimmer, but at the same time, my technique is not really good. Although I took lessons when I was really young, as soon as I got the hang of things, I stopped taking lessons and I sort of developed my own style, I could say.

So anyways, here in Sydney, we're staying in a hotel that has a swimming pool on the roof. It's really cool. You can go up to the roof and you can go to this swimming pool. And we've been going up there every morning to swim. And sometimes we get lucky and there's nobody there at the swimming pool and we can have it all to ourselves. And then other times we're not so lucky and there are many other guests there. And it's hard to get a good swim in. It's more like just hang out in the water and kind of bob around. "To bob in the water" means to just sort of float up and down. So, we kind of bob around if the pool is

busy. But most mornings, actually, we've been very lucky and there's been nobody in the swimming pool. So, it's been great. We can get in there and we can practice.

And it's kind of funny because when my wife mentioned that she wanted to do a lot of swimming in Australia, I thought she just meant like kind of going to the pool and hanging out and having fun and swimming around together, you know, just playing in the water, that kind of thing. But she's much more serious than that. Now that she's been diligently taking these lessons, it's more like let's go to the swimming pool and really swim like freestyle swimming, doing laps, that kind of thing. And that's the kind of swimming that I'm not so good at. I'm better at doing the first kind that I mentioned, going to the pool, hanging out, playing, having fun, playing games, you know, that kind of thing. But she's more like let's freestyle, let's do laps. So, it's been really cool because she has turned into a really confident good swimmer. It's been fantastic to see how much she's learned and how good of a swimmer she is now. And also, she's able to give me some tips. So, I've been practicing my swimming strokes as well. And so, we've been helping each other. There's some things that she doesn't know how to do that I know how to do, such as swimming on my back. She's still not so good at that. So, I've been trying to help her with that, and she's been trying to help me with my freestyle stroke because that's one that I'm not so good at.

And to be honest, a plan that I've had in the back of my mind for a few years now is to properly learn how to swim so that I could try and do a triathlon. I love running. It's one of my hobbies. You guys know I **blab** about it all the time. But I also love cycling as well. And I feel like, you know, I'm decent at both of those things. But to do a triathlon, you need to add a third sport because "tri" means three, right? T-R-I, tri. So, you have swimming and then biking and then running. And really, if I were to do a triathlon, I think the race would be over for me as soon as it started because I would just get **blown out of the water** by the other competitors. So yeah, it's in the back of my mind that one day that would be a cool experience to have is to finish a triathlon. So, I've been listening to the advice that my wife has been giving me and trying my best to improve my freestyle swimming stroke.

In addition to going to our hotel pool almost every morning, we've also been **hitting up** some of the beaches here in Sydney. We went to this really, really beautiful beach. It's around three kilometers long, this really nice white-sand beach called Manly Beach. And to get there, you have to take a ferry. So, we walked down to the inner harbor of Sydney. There are many passenger ferries there and you can just **swipe in** with your transit card and you have to take a boat ride for around 20, 25 minutes or so. And, I mean, it's an amazing trip just taking one of the ferries. The scenery is absolutely beautiful of the ocean, and the scenery, and Sydney in the distance. So just the ferry ride alone is amazing. But once you arrive at your destination and it's just a short walk from the ferry terminal and you get to Manly Beach. It's got this little cool beach village with some restaurants. We actually stopped and had fish and chips there before we went to the beach. And then we walked down to Manly Beach and like I said, this huge, beautiful beach with surfers and swimmers and tons of sunbathers just hanging out on that white sand. But, Manly Beach seemed a little bit too crowded for us. We went on a weekend, which is, you know, time for everybody to go to the beach.

So instead of going to Manly Beach, we just walked along the coast a little bit. And there's this other beach called Shelly Beach. And my wife was most interested in going to Shelly Beach because it's more secluded, it's smaller, and it's more in like **a cove**. So, the ocean is a little bit calmer there. And honestly, it was a little bit intimidating at Manly Beach because the waves were quite big. There were people surfing and there's this specific area that the lifeguards have set up that you need to stay in between if you do go swimming so that you can stay safe because Australia is famous for very powerful waves. And we did see some extremely powerful waves and also for ocean currents that if you're not careful can actually pull you out to sea. So, you have to swim in these specific zones and the lifeguards are constantly yelling out over this announcement system, instructions to the swimmers. So, you'll hear things like, "Hey, lady in the red swimming suit, come back towards the shore!" Constantly yelling at the people that are swimming out there.

And so that's a little bit stressful for me. So, I was also like, "Yeah, let's go to this other beach that's more secluded and the waves weren't quite as strong." It was more protected by some rocks so that the ocean wasn't as strong there at Shelly Beach. And the other thing that's cool about Shelly Beach is you can go snorkeling there. And my wife brought her snorkel and her goggles and not her flippers. Didn't bring any flippers. And flippers are the things that you wear on your feet to help you kick in the water. But she did bring a snorkel and a mask, I guess. Goggles are like the things that you wear when you're trying to swim quickly. And a mask is like the big thing that you put over your eyes when you want to do some sightseeing underwater, like snorkeling or diving. So, I misspoke there. She didn't bring her goggles. She brought her mask and her snorkel. So, we went snorkeling in the ocean there. Unfortunately, we didn't have two sets. We only had one set, so we had to take turns. But if you go under the water, you can see some fish, some rather large fish too, surprisingly. So that was really fun to do. And my wife was rather obsessed with that. So, she spent most of the time snorkeling and I spent more time hanging out on the shore.

Now, Shelly Beach has this really nice white-sand area. But it was in full view of the sun at the time of the day that we were there in the later afternoon. So, the sun was just **beating down**. And as I told you last week, everyone, I am a burner, not a tanner. And because my skin is so weak and pale, if I'm not careful, I can get a really, really painful and nasty sunburn. So unfortunately, as much as I want to just lay out in the sun and get an amazing tan, it's impossible for me. So, I have to stay in the shade. So, I wasn't out on the sandy part of the beach. There was a lawn, a grassy area to the side with some trees and some shade and some cover. So, I spent some time just chilling there. And it was wonderful. You could sightsee and look out at the ocean. I brought a book with me. So, I was reading my book. That was awesome.

And I also did one of my favorite things to do when I visit a park or visit a beach, and that is, take a little nap. I love that. I don't know, like after you go swimming and you're in the sun a little bit, you get sleepy. And so, I just closed my eyes for a little bit and took a little

nap there on Shelly Beach. But I had a rather surprising awakening when... when I was napping because I was in that state where you're kind of half awake, half asleep. Not really sleeping very deeply, but just, I don't know, semi-unconscious. I don't know even what we can call that condition, but I'm sure you guys know what I'm talking about. So, I was in that half-awake, half-asleep condition. And suddenly I heard some people, and they were like, "Oh my gosh, look at that! Wow, incredible!" So, I kind of jolted awake and regained my consciousness. And right beside me was this big turkey. In fact, I don't know if it's called a turkey here in Australia. It wasn't the same kind of turkey that we have in North America. It looked rather different and more colorful and more tropical. But it was about the same size as a turkey, and it was just **pecking around** where I was sleeping there. So, it was a very alarming, shocking way to wake up. But he wasn't like coming to attack me or anything. He was just pecking around in the grass. And "To peck" is a word that maybe you're not familiar with. It's the action that birds do when they move their head toward the ground or towards the trunk of a tree to look for food. So, think of a chicken. We all know what a chicken looks like, and we all know how they move through the world. And they're almost constantly pecking at the ground trying to find things to eat, right?` So that turkey was just pecking around looking for food. And he wasn't really interested in me at all and didn't really seem afraid of me. But I was a little apprehensive and nervous of him. I was like, "Oh, turkey, go the other way."

And more incredible than that, at the same time when I turned my back a little bit away from the turkey, then crawling across the grass behind me was this huge lizard. Like a really big lizard. I don't know exactly how long, but maybe like 50, 60 centimeters. I'm not sure. I didn't have my measuring tape with me, but much, much bigger than I've ever seen in the wild before. And that was cool. He also didn't seem like he was coming to attack me or anything. And he also got the attention of the other people around where I was. Once people noticed the lizard, then we started talking about him. And one of the ladies who was an Australian who was around me, I asked her about the lizard, and she said, "They're safe. Don't worry. Just don't attack it and it will leave you alone." So, I just let him do his thing and he kind of walked behind me and walked away. But I did manage to get a

couple of not great, not super high-quality pictures of the lizard. So, if you want to see it, I'll upload the picture to our Instagram account, and you can see that picture there. And if you happen to know about what kind of lizard that was, then you could let me know. It would be cool to know the name of the animal so I could put a name to the face, so to speak.

Now to wrap things up here, I'll tell you about one more swimming adventure that we had. And that was going to the Bondi Icebergs Pool at the famous Bondi Beach. And this was one of my wife's bucket-list destinations, was going to this swimming pool. So, here's a little excerpt that I found on the internet about the pool, and I'd like to read it to you. So, it says, "This massive saltwater pool is made even more iconic by the splashing of the waves from the nearby ocean. In fact, this is how the pool is filled with seawater. As you swim, you might even feel the wave hit you as you come up for air. This is part of the appeal of the iconic pool and is also responsible for its gorgeous blue-green **hue**." And "hue" means color. So yeah, a really, really cool swimming pool that's right beside the beach on the famous Bondi Beach. You have to pay an entrance fee to get inside, but once you're in, then you can swim in this pool.

And I was a little bit apprehensive about going in the water to swim because it looked like there were a lot of serious swimmers doing laps in the pool. And as I said earlier, I'm not a super strong technical swimmer. So, I was like, can I do laps in here? But there was a slow lane. The very first lane of the pool was the slow lane for the people who are not super, super strong swimmers like myself. So, I was fine, and I did quite a few laps. I like **wore myself out** swimming in the pool. But just as that description goes that I just read you, the color of the water was really, really gorgeous because it's filled with seawater, right? The ocean is just behind the pool and the waves are crashing against some rocks and then coming in and filling the pool. So, the water was a little bit cold because it is ocean water and it's not chlorinated or anything. It's just natural seawater so you don't have that gross feeling on your skin after swimming in a chlorinated pool, which I've never really liked. So, it was nice to swim in that seawater. And yeah, my wife and I did as many laps as we could and then we just hung out beside the pool for a little bit. It was kind of **a vibe** in

there. Just a lot of people hanging out beside the pool and there was a little restaurant and cafe there as well, which we didn't check out, but after we finished swimming, we did something that was on my bucket list for Sydney. And that was to go on this coastal walk called the Bondi-Coogee Coastal Walk.

And here's a description of that walk that I also found online. I'll just read it to you here. It says, "The Bondi to Coogee Coastal Walk is a cliff-top coastal walk that extends for six kilometers in Sydney's eastern suburbs. The walk features stunning views, beaches, parks, cliffs, bays, and rock pools." And it was a fabulous walk. There's a nice path and on one side is the ocean and cliffs. And then on the other side is just where lots of really rich people live, I think, with these beautiful stunning homes that are facing the ocean. And it's very, very easy, guys, when you're walking along this walk to go, "Oh yeah, this is a place I'd like to live. If I could live in one of these mansions overlooking the ocean, life would be good." But yeah, there's a lot of people enjoying that walk and we snapped lots of photos. And I'll try and put some pictures on our Instagram of me and my wife on that coastal walk so you can get a visual of what I'm talking about as well.

But after walking for a little bit, we stopped to take a break. And we were sitting up on the cliffs and we could look down at the ocean and another beach. And it was really quite cute because this beach was a dog beach. And so, it was an off-leash dog beach, and the owners could just take their dogs there and take them off their leash. And the dogs were having fun, running around and playing with each other and swimming and playing in the water. And there must have been, I don't know, 20, 30 dogs there. Like there were a ton of dogs just running around playing. And so, my wife and I really, really enjoyed that looking down at the dogs playing and talking about all the different dogs that we saw. So, for me, that was one of the highlights of that walk was just dog watching. It was really cute and really fun. And yeah, after dog watching for 20 or 30 minutes or so, we continued our walk until we were just exhausted of walking and exhausted from swimming. We stopped at a cafe to have a little snack, have a coffee, recharge our batteries. And then we took the bus back to our hotel and **we called it a night.**

So, everyone, that is a little bit of what I've been up to during my time here in Sydney, swimming, doing lots of swimming. But to be honest with you, that's just **a little tiny slice** of the activities. We've been getting up to much, much more than that. But as you guys know, sometimes my storytelling is a little bit slow, and I don't have enough time here today to tell you about everything. I'll have to tell you some more stories next time.

But for now, I think I'm going to wrap things up here. So, thank you so much for listening and making it all the way to the end of this episode. That is amazing. And I want you to pat yourself on the back because you're doing exactly what you need to do to improve your English fluency. You're putting in the time, you're putting in the effort and you're putting in the work, you're spending time with English, and this will help you improve.

Another thing that will help you improve is by using your English productively, by speaking and by writing. And a great place where you can do that is on our Discord server. We have thousands of members from our Culips community there who are practicing their English writing and speaking every day on the Discord. So, hop on over, just follow the link that's in the description and you can join our community and let's keep practicing our English over there. I look forward to reading what you guys have to say over on the Discord this week. But for now, I'm going to sign off. We'll be back soon in a few days with another brand-new Culips episode. So, until then, take care, everybody, and I'll talk to you soon, bye bye.

Glossary

1. **See what all the fuss is about:** To find out why something is very popular or why many people like it. Andrew invites listeners to discover why the Culips Discord server is popular.
2. **Infatuation:** Feeling very strong, but usually short-lived, love or admiration for someone or something. Andrew talks about quickly falling in love with Sydney, similar to how people can quickly fall in love with a person.
3. **I blab about it all the time:** To talk about something a lot, especially something you like or are interested in. Andrew admits he often talks about his love for running.
4. **Blown out of the water:** To be completely defeated or to fail in comparison to others. Andrew uses this to say he would not do well in a triathlon because of his swimming skills.
5. **Hitting up some beaches:** Going to visit several beaches, usually for fun or relaxation. Andrew and his wife visited different beaches in Sydney to swim and enjoy the sun.
6. **Swipe in with your transit card:** Using a special card to pay for public transportation by moving the card near a scanner. Andrew mentions using a transit card to take a ferry to a beach.
7. **A cove:** A small, sheltered part of the coast; a tiny bay. Andrew describes Shelly Beach as being in a cove, which made it more protected and calm than other beaches.
8. **The sun was just beating down:** When the sun is very hot and shining very strongly. Andrew talks about how hot the sun felt while he was at the beach.
9. **Pecking around in the grass:** When birds use their beaks to pick at the ground looking for food. Andrew describes waking up from a nap to find a bird doing this near him.
10. **Hue:** A specific color or shade. Andrew mentions the beautiful color of the water in the Bondi Icebergs Pool.
11. **Wore myself out:** To become very tired from doing an activity. Andrew talks about swimming until he was very tired.

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12. **It was kinda a vibe in there:** The place had a special feeling or atmosphere that made it enjoyable. Andrew describes the atmosphere at the Bondi Icebergs Pool as being really nice.
13. **We called it a night:** Deciding to end the day's activities, usually by going home or going to sleep. After a day full of activities, Andrew and his wife decided to rest.
14. **A little tiny slice:** A small part or amount of something. Andrew says that the stories he shared are just a small part of his entire experience in Sydney.

Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

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