

How Can International Travel Impact Your Life?

By: Cassidy Robinett

There's no place like home...there's no place like home! While Dorothy might be right that there is no place like home, there are however places greater than home. Places that are different, challenging, and a true cultural shock and experience.

Growing up in a small Kansas town with a grand total of 2,899 people and an incredibly non-diverse population, I've always yearned to see the world in its entirety. Traveling internationally does more than that, however. International travel broadens ones perspective. There is more to life than the small bar and grill in my local town. There are people out there who are truly struggling to get by. Struggling to decide to eat that day or buy medicine for their children instead of which brand of chips to buy at the grocery store. It can humble a person to their core and make them open their eyes and value what is most important in our lives.

Everyone is different and can choose to spend their life how they want but I want to spend my time and money experiencing *it*. Once you begin traveling that fancy watch or brand new car seem less valuable. Instead of buying *things* I want to save and spend my money on experiences. We are all on the "pursuit of happiness" and experiencing and living life to the fullest is the best way to be happy! Even scientists and psychologists across the globe agree. The science behind that says that while buying "things" might make us happy for a short amount of time, we come to succeed those things. While we might feel connected to our "things" they are still separate entities. In contrast, our experiences truly are connected to us. Each individual and their personality is just a total of the experiences that have and will take place in one's life.

Traveling internationally impacts one's life in more ways than they can imagine. You see things you've never imagined, learned about your own culture from another culture's perspective, you lose your sense of materialism and are free, vulnerable, and independent in ways that you've never experienced. You meet new people and make friendships and connections that last a lifetime. You create a network of people and friends from different areas of the world who, in most cases, would give you the shirt off of their back if you were ever in need. Nothing in life is more important than loving one another and sharing a good laugh.

Oz might not have been the place for Dorothy and Toto and they're right, there is no place like our Kansas homes. However, I am sure that Dorothy and I can both agree that going outside of our comfort zones, making new friends along the way, and helping those around us have made us feel better than home ever could.

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

– Oliver Wendell Holmes