

## Tips for Thoughtful Travel: After Your Trip

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**Live with incompleteness.** You'll experience many things during your trip that you won't understand or you'll have to move on before you feel you achieved any closure with a person or place. That's the norm. Trust that time will reveal what you need to know. Many of the most confusing aspects of your trip will only make sense days, weeks and even years after you return.

**See home anew.** You may find yourself in awe over an ice cube or water you can drink from the tap. You'll likely see the familiar sights of home in a new way and appreciate them better.

**Prepare for reverse culture shock.** Conversely, a trip to the grocery store may leave you stunned at the incredible abundance we have here. It's normal after a trip to a developing country to react negatively to all we have here. Leverage these emotions to look for new ways of involvement locally. Take what you learned abroad and make a difference in the lives of others here through volunteering and caring for people different than you.

**Create.** Your trip was a time of gathering the raw materials of creative work. Make a scrapbook, write a blog, share stories with friends or just take on some creative endeavor you've always wanted to do and let what you learned about the freedom to live in joy and passion on your trip inspire you to do more here.

**Share carefully.** You may want to let everyone know about your trip. But because they lack your context and experience, even your best friends and family members won't appreciate it the way you do. Don't expect them to. Instead, share your feelings selectively or with those with whom you traveled.

**Reflect on multiple levels.** Both during and after your trip, spend time reflecting both alone and with others who have been to the same places. Avoid the tendency to immediately apply what you've experienced and think of it as learning. You can't fully understand what you've gained abroad until you return to your own context. Reflect alone and with others trusting that in time it will make sense and relate to your daily life more clearly.

**Extend yourself grace.** You will have changed in light of your trip. But you likely won't know how, at least not fully. You're not the same person who left and it may take a long time to realize that. You've got the rest of your life to figure it out, so remember: Your return may actually be just the beginning...