**The surprising purpose of travel**

**令人惊奇的旅行目的**

**1 It's 4:15 in the morning, and my alarm clock has just stolen away a lovely dream. I almost return back to sleep before my eye catches my packed suitcase and I groan, remembering that I'm going to the airport. The taxi is late and then lost, and I'm getting increasingly nervous that I'll miss my flight. I run in when we arrive, stagger through security and finally get to my gate. After all the trouble of this morning, my flight is canceled and I'm stuck in this terminal for the next 218 minutes, and my only consolation is a cup of complimentary airport coffee. This is traveling, a burdensome series of running and waiting, and after countless hours, finally getting there.**

**早晨四点一刻，闹钟把我从美梦中惊醒，要不是突然看见早已收拾好的行李箱，我几乎又要睡着。想起来还要去机场，我叹了口气。出租车来晚了，并且在途中迷了路，我越来越担心会赶不上飞机。出租车一到机场我就冲进去，跌跌撞撞通过安检处，终于，我来到了登机口。经历这一早所有的麻烦事，我乘坐的航班却被取消了。在接下来的218分钟里，我被困在了机场，唯一觉得安慰的是机场提供的一杯免费咖啡。这就是旅行，让人心烦的跑跑停停。最终，在不知经过多少小时之后，终于到达要去的地方。**

**2 Why do we travel? I don't mind the actual flying, the wonder of being airborne in a dense metal bird. The rest of the journey, however, can feel like a tedious lesson in the ills of modernity, from the predawn x-ray screening to the sad airport malls selling clusters of keepsakes. It's the result of a globalized world, and it sucks.**

**我们为什么要旅行？其实，我并不介意飞行本身，在这样一个密实的金属大鸟中飞行，让我感到很奇妙。然而，旅程其余的部分，从一大早X光检查到出售大堆纪念品的糟糕的机场商场，感觉就像是关于现代社会弊病的乏味课程。这是全球化的结果，它糟糕透了。**

**3 Sometimes, of course, we travel because we need to. Because in this digital age, there is still something important about the handshake at a business luncheon. Or eating mom's special food on Thanksgiving. Or seeing your girlfriend on your 2-year anniversary.**

**当然，有时候我们旅行是因为我们需要去旅行。因为即使在这个数字化时代，我们仍然有一些很重要的事情要去做，比如在商务午餐中与生意伙伴握手，或是在感恩节这天吃上妈妈特别准备的食物，或是在你和你女朋友的两周年纪念日这天去看她。**

**4 But most travel is decidedly optional. Only corporate travel, about 30% of trips over 50 miles, is truly compulsory. Instead, we travel because we want to, because the annoyances of the airport are offset by the thrill of being someplace new. Because work is stressful and our blood pressure is too high and we need a vacation somewhere tropical. Because home is boring. Because the flights are on sale. Because Paris is Paris.**

**但是大多数旅行是可去可不去的，在超过50英里的旅行中，只有30%属于真正必需的商务旅行。我们旅行是因为我们想要去旅行，因为到一个新地方的兴奋和激动可以抵消在机场的各种烦心事；因为工作压力太大，我们的血压太高，我们要去热带地区度假；因为在家实在太无聊；因为航班都在打折；因为巴黎毕竟是巴黎。**

**5 Thanks to modern aviation, we can now move through space at an inhuman speed. For the first time in human history, we can outrun the sun and move from one hemisphere to another in a single day. Of course, it's not enough to simply get on a plane. If we want to realize the creative benefits of travel, then we have to re-think its overall purpose. Most people, after all, escape to Paris so they don't have to think about those troubles they left behind. But here's the irony: Our mind is most likely to solve our most stubborn problems while we are sitting in luxury in a Left Bank café. So, instead of contemplating that buttery dessert, we should be conscious of those domestic issues we just can't solve.**

**多亏了现代航空技术，我们现在可以以非凡的速度在空中穿梭。在人类历史中，这是我们第一次超过太阳——在短短一天中从一个半球到达另一个半球。当然，仅仅往飞机上一坐是不够的。我们要想认识到旅行在提高创新力方面的价值，还得再全面考虑其目的。毕竟，大多数人逃到巴黎，是因为这样他们就可以不必考虑家里的那些烦心事。但是，具有讽刺意味的是，当我们坐在豪华的左岸咖啡馆时，我们的脑子极有可能能解决那些最棘手的问题。因此,我们应该考虑那些在家里解决不了的问题，而不是琢磨那些奶油甜点。**

**6 The larger lesson, though, is that our thoughts are saturated with the familiar. The brain is a space of near infinite possibility, which means that it spends a lot of time and energy choosing what not to notice. As a result, creativity is traded away for efficiency; we think in finite, literal prose, not symbolic verse. A bit of distance, however, helps loosen the cognitive chains that imprison us, making it easier to mingle the new with the old; the mundane is grasped from a slightly more abstract perspective. According to research, the experience of an exotic culture endows us with a valuable open-mindedness, making it easier to realize that even a trivial thing can have multiple meanings. Consider the act of leaving food on the plate: In China, this is often seen as a compliment, a signal that the host has provided enough to eat. But in America the same act is a subtle insult, an indication that the food wasn't good enough to finish.**

**但更应该知道的是我们的思想被熟悉的东西所充满。大脑是一个几乎具有无限可能性的空间，这就意味着它花了大量的时间和精力选择不去注意什么。因此,我们牺牲创造力来换取效率。我们以字义明确的散文方式思考，而非以具有象征意义的诗歌方式思考。然而，一点的距离就可以帮助我们放松禁锢我们认知的链条，使新旧思想的结合更容易，对平淡无奇的事情可从更抽象的角度加以认知。有研究指出，体验异国文化可以赋予我们宝贵的开放性思维，使我们更容易明白即使是微不足道的事物也可以有多种意义。想一想把食物剩在盘子里这个行为:在中国，这通常被看成是一种赞美，说明主人提供了足够的食物。但是在美国，同样的行为却暗含侮辱，表明食物不够好，人们不愿意吃完。**

**7 Such multicultural contrasts mean that seasoned travelers are open to ambiguity, willing to realize that there are decidedly different (and equally valid) ways of interpreting the world. This, in turn, allows them to expand the circumference of their "cognitive inputs" as they refuse to settle for their first answers and initial guesses.**

**这种多元文化对比说明，经验丰富的旅行者会接受对事物的多样性解读，他们欣然认识到对这个世界可以有截然不同（但却同样有效）的方式进行解释。这也从而让他们扩大了“认知输入”的范围，因为他们拒绝仅仅满足于他们的最初答案和先前的猜测。**

**8 Of course, this mental flexibility doesn't come from mere distance, a simple change in latitude and longitude. Instead, this renaissance of creativity appears to be a side effect of difference: We need to change cultures, to experience the disorienting diversity of human traditions. The same facets of foreign travel that are so confusing (Do I tip the waiter? Where is this train taking me?) turn out to have a lasting impact, making us more creative because we're less insular. We're reminded of all that we don't know, which is nearly everything; we're surprised by the constant stream of surprises. Even in this globalized age, we can still be amazed at all the earthly things that weren't included in the Let's Go guidebook and that certainly don't exist back home.**

**当然，这种思维的灵活性不仅仅来自纯粹的距离变化，即简单的经纬度的变化。相反，这种创造力的复兴似乎是差异所带来的副产品: 我们需要处于不同的文化中，体验人类传统中纷繁复杂的多样性。在国外旅行中让人迷惑的同一个方面的问题（如我该给服务生小费吗？火车要把我带到哪里？)，产生了一种持久的影响,使我们更加具有创造性,因为我们不再那么视野狭隘了。我们了解了我们不知道的东西，而这些东西几乎涵盖了一切；我们对接连不断的惊喜感到惊奇。即使在这个全球化的时代，我们仍然会对所有未包括在《旅行指南》中的、平常的东西感到惊奇，而这些东西在自己家中也不存在。**

**9 So, let's not pretend that travel doesn't have its drawbacks, or that we endure jet lag for pleasure. We don't spend 10 hours lost in the Louvre because we like it, and the view from the top of Machu Picchu probably doesn't make up for the trouble of lost luggage. (More often than not, I need a vacation after my vacation.) We travel because we need to, because distance and difference are the secret cornerstones of creativity. When we get home, home is still the same. But something in our mind has been changed, and that changes everything.**

**当然，我们也并不是假装旅行没有缺点，或是说我们忍受飞行时差综合反应只是为了消遣。在卢浮宫我们迷路十个小时，那不是因为我们喜欢迷路。我们站在马丘比丘古城遗址顶端俯瞰的风景可能也并不能弥补我们丢失行李的麻烦。（通常，我在假期结束后还需要一个休假。）我们旅行是因为我们需要旅行，因为距离与差异是创造力的秘密基石。我们回家后，家还是那个家，但是我们的思维已经有所改变，而这就可以改变一切。﻿**

**Traveling solo — A blessing overall!**

**独自旅行——总体来说是好事**

**1 So you're ready to travel. Pick a place, any place. Let's say you've always wanted to go to China. You've seen pictures of the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Tian'anmen Square. You've always been fascinated with Chinese aesthetics and culture, with red, fragrant temples and venerable statues. You have a chunk of money saved and extra vacation time earned. Now is the time to go!**

**现在你准备去旅行，挑一个地方，任何地方都可以。比如你一直想去中国，你已经看过了长城、紫禁城、天安门广场的照片。你一直被中国的美学艺术和文化所深深吸引，那里有香烟缭绕的红色寺庙，有庄严的塑像。你早就省下了一笔钱，挤出了点时间，现在，该出发了！**

**2 But maybe you haven't traveled much. You've never been to an exotic place where you can't speak the language or read the signs. A place where you'll have to do all the research for yourself, find hotels, get yourself around, buy locomotive or bus tickets, order your own food. You must figure all of this out while looking at the unfamiliar notation which you see wherever you look or go.**

**但也许你以前旅行不多。你从来没去过异国他乡，你不会讲当地语言，也看不懂任何标志。在这里，你得亲自研究所有的事情，自己找旅店，自己到处逛，自己买火车票或汽车票，自己点餐。所有这一切，无论你身处何处，你都得盯着那些不熟悉的符号自己搞定。**

**3 So now you're ready to realize your dream to explore China, and find, for yourself, the soul of the country. Unfortunately, right from the onset, none of your friends share that dream. Your sister is pregnant and can't travel. Your best friend just got a new job and can't take time off. So what do you do? You could ask everyone you know — friends, acquaintances, co-workers. You could join a tour. Or, you could go alone.**

**所以，现在你整装待发，去实现探索中国的梦想，亲自去发现这个国家的灵魂所在。但是不幸的是，刚一开始就没有朋友分享你的梦想。你姐姐怀孕了，不能去旅行；你最好的朋友刚刚找到新工作，没办法休假。你该怎么办呢？你可能会询问认识的每一个人——朋友，熟人，同事。你可以参团旅游。或者，你也可以自己一个人去。**

**4 To travel alone is a difficult decision for anyone, though especially for women. For me, it came naturally. I made that trip to China, and then zigzagged on a multinational excursion through Indonesia, Thailand, England and France.**

**对于任何人来说，独自旅行都是一个艰难的决定。对女性来说尤其如此。而对我而言，这个决定却再自然不过。我先去了中国，然后再辗转到了印度尼西亚、泰国、英国和法国，经历了一次多国之旅。**

**5 But the reactions I've gotten, from people I know, fellow travelers, and especially, from the natives of the countries I've visited, showed me that solo traveling is strange, and even considered inconceivable or reckless by many people. People ask me if the isolation makes me sad or even if I'm more susceptible to violent or dangerous situations.**

**但是，我从认识的人、旅友，尤其是所到国家的居民的反应中得知，很多人觉得独自旅行很怪异，甚至会觉得不可思议和欠考虑。人们问我单独一人会不会觉得难过，甚至问我是不是更容易遭遇暴力或者危险情况。**

**6 This has been sometimes a blessing, sometimes a curse. I remember searching desperately for accommodations in Taiwan. The university listed in my booklet no longer had dormitories for travelers, and I was lucky when the desk clerk called a young woman out of a nearby office. As it turned out, she was offering to let me stay at her flat and even had a friend come show me around the city the next day.**

**单独旅行有时是件好事，有时则不然。我想起曾经有一次在台湾绝望地寻找住处的经历。我的手册上列出的大学已经没有宿舍提供给旅游者了。幸运的是，接待人员从旁边办公室叫出一个年轻女孩儿。结果，这个女孩儿让我在她的公寓住了一晚，甚至第二天还让她的一个朋友带我在这座城市转了转。**

**7 Also in Taiwan, I met two girls who smuggled me into their hotel room, gave me one of the beds (they shared the other), and took me to a feast with their tour group. When they heard my next stop was their hometown, they arranged for a bilingual friend to pick me up at the train station.**

**还是在台湾，我遇见两个女孩儿。她们偷偷地把我带进旅店的房间，让我睡其中的一张床（她们俩挤另一张床），还带我和她们的旅行团一起吃了顿丰盛的饭。当她们听说我下一站要去她们的家乡时，又安排了一个会说两种语言的朋友到火车站接我。**

**8 But there has also been the downside of those not-so-pleasant experiences. In Indonesia, a cute boy gave me a ride on his motorbike, and thought that gave him license to grope me illicitly. Many times in Indonesia, boys menaced me, assuming I was willing to pay for their company. In Japan, I was picked up by a young man who refused to drop me at my Youth Hostel; he insisted I stay with his friends. The friends turned out to be four girls; I was safe, but one snored like a lawnmower, and it took me two days to escape.**

**当然也有一些不太愉快的负面经历。在印度尼西亚，一个长相可爱的男孩儿让我搭乘了他的摩托车，认为这样他就可以非礼我。在那里，常常有一些男孩儿威胁我，认为我同意付钱让他们陪游。在日本，一个年轻男人让我搭车，却拒绝让我在青年旅馆下车，他坚持让我和他的朋友们呆在一起。结果我发现，他的朋友是四个女孩儿。我很安全，但是其中一个人打呼噜就像割草机一样。我花了两天时间才逃走。**

**9 I've been irritated and perplexed many times — not speaking a language, not understanding or being understood. Once, in Italy, a hotel clerk tried to overcharge me and only gave up after 10 minutes of arguing. Another time in China, a taxi driver insisted I pay more, and I was rescued by the doorman of a fancy hotel.**

**很多时候，我很苦恼，感觉不知所措，因为不懂当地的语言，不能理解别人的意思，别人也听不懂我说的话。有一次在意大利，一个旅店接待员试图问我多要钱，争论了十分钟他才放弃。还有一次在中国，一个出租车司机坚持问我多要钱，最后还是一个豪华宾馆的门卫帮我解了围。**

**10 Having a companion might have helped safeguard me from some of those problems. But it would have suppressed other opportunities — a long afternoon in Thailand all alone in the back of a hay wagon and then seven days in the back of a truck with a Brit, two Aussies and two Norwegians! Eating ethnic food on my way through eastern Korea with four youthful Japanese salarymen. Getting sick in China, and being nursed with chocolate bars and tissues by a couple from Texas.**

**如果身边有一个同伴陪着我，也许就能使我避免刚刚讲的那些问题。但是这也会使我错失其他的机会，比如我在泰国装干草的马车后面独自坐了整个下午，然后和一个英国人、两个澳大利亚人、两个挪威人在一辆卡车的后车厢里呆了七天；我在去韩国东部的路上和四个年轻的日本上班族品尝了民族风味的食物；在中国生病了，有一对来自得克萨斯州的夫妻照顾我，给我吃巧克力棒，递纸巾。**

**11 The few times I have traveled with a companion, I haven't had the same ample opportunities to meet people. Other travelers can swap stories with you about the local folklore of the places they've been to and often have credible insights into the place you're visiting. Locals are also more likely to see you as approachable and be upfront with you when you're on your own.**

**在我为数不多的几次结伴旅行中，我就没有那么多的机会结识那么多的人。其他旅游者会给你讲他们到过的地方的民间风情，对于你正在旅行的地方，他们也有令人信服的见解。当你独自一人旅行时，当地人也会觉得你更容易接近，从而愿意和你坦诚相对。**

**12 Of course you have to be careful not to endanger yourself by throwing caution to the wind. Watch your back, but don't presume the worst and be overly fearful. Be friendly with people, but watch out for those who are too friendly with you. Don't disregard your instincts. If you hear stories about criminals on a road, take the road – just don't take much cash, and don't accept Coca Cola from strangers.**

**当然，你必须当心，不要因为大意而使自己处于危险的境地。要处处提防，但是也不要把什么事都想成最坏的，过于担惊受怕。要对人友善，但需防备那些对你过于友好的人。别忽视你的直觉。如果你听说某条公路上曾经有坏人出现，你可以走这条路——只是不要带太多的现金，不要喝陌生人给你的可乐。**

**13 The key to solo travel is to open your mind, close your eyes and leap in! Everything that happens to you is an experience, and good, bad or neutral, they will all benefit you in some way. Take those little annoyances, those inefficiencies, and those boring bureaucrats with a laugh. If you despise something, just remember: You don't live there, you can leave anytime, and you'll never have to deal with this again!**

**单独旅行的关键是敞开心扉，闭上眼睛，投入其中!所有发生在你身上的事情都是一种经历，无论是好的、坏的，或是不好不坏的，将来总会对你有益。把那些小烦恼、那些拖拉低效的作风、那些令人厌恶的官僚主义都抛在脑后，一笑置之。如果反感某些东西，请记住:你不是住在那里，你随时可以离开，你以后再也不用管它了!**

**14 Don't ever let a lack of companionship constrain you from doing what you really want to do. Once you go solo, you'll be amazed at how sensational your travel experiences will be.**

**永远不要因为缺少同伴而不去做你真正想做的事情。一旦你独自一人去旅行，你会惊奇地发现你的旅行经历将会是多么美好。**