**Participant Profile**

Name: Emily (fictitious)

Age: 21

Profile: Emily is a 2nd year university student majoring in Communications, working part-time at a café. The biggest part of her discretionary budget goes to food, music festivals and short getaways with friends. She typically travels with a core group of four to six close friends from university, sometimes with the addition of her cousin. She characterizes their group as enjoying very impulsive weekend breaks, but making the planning process difficult with different schedules, budgets, and indecision.

**1. Travel Background and Habits**

Interviewer: So, when you and your friends do end up traveling, how does the idea of a trip come about?

Emily: Usually it’s very impulsive. Someone will just say in the group chat after a week of lectures “man this town is boring, let’s get out of here this weekend” and then everyone’s throwing in wild suggestions. At first, it’s all jokes but then someone checks bus tickets or flight prices and all of a sudden we’re talking about actually making it happen.

Interviewer: Who’s typically involved in your travel group?

Emily: A core group of four or five of my close uni friends. Sometimes my cousin or someone’s boyfriend or girlfriend might come along, but we usually try not to go too big on the groups. If it’s more than six or seven people it becomes a real headache.

Interviewer: And in terms of selecting destinations or activities, how do you typically go about that?

Emily: Honestly very vaguely. I guess it’s more to do with the vibes everyone’s in the mood for. We’ll search “cheap getaways near Melbourne” or “TikTok’s top spots for spring” to get ideas. As for activities, we very rarely plan, we just Google “things to do” when we land. So that’s very very spontaneous, but also very chaotic.

**2. Coordination and Challenges**

Interviewer: So group trips sound like a lot of fun but in your experience, what’s the most difficult aspect of making them happen?

Emily: Oh, definitely scheduling. We all have different classes, part-time jobs, family commitments or friends to meet. Syncing three free days in everyone’s calendar is near impossible. By the time everyone agrees on a date, all of the cheap tickets are gone.

Interviewer: Can you describe a time when the planning process fell through or was a disaster?

Emily: Haha, yes. Last semester break, we had one friend who was obsessed with the idea of going camping and four people who didn’t want to rough it at all. We spent ages on the group chat arguing about booking the right site with proper facilities and activities to do. Half of the group wanted glamping with cute tents and hot showers and the other half were very committed to no Wi-Fi and actual hiking. It was kind of funny at first with all the memes we sent but after a few days it got pretty heated. In the end, we just compromised but we all knew it made the mood before the trip tense.

Interviewer: And how do you handle the budget and expenses typically?

Emily: Ugh, it’s always a bit of a nightmare. We’ll make some shared Google Sheet but nobody really updates it. Also, some of us are starving uni students and others have more disposable income and can go for a more luxurious Airbnb, so we usually end up compromising and being annoyed that someone had more or less say in where we went.

**3. Needs and Priorities**

Interviewer: When you think about a group trip, what is the most important thing to you?

Emily: Honestly, the memories. I mean I don’t care if it’s five-star or all sleeping bags on the floor. The funniest and best parts of group travel for me are the ridiculous in-between moments. Playing cards in a cramped hostel room, getting lost together and finding the best ramen place in the back streets. The stories that we laugh about for months.

Interviewer: When it comes to your own wishes and the group’s, how do you reconcile them?

Emily: To be honest, I usually just go with the flow. If I have a strong interest in doing or seeing something, I’ll make a case for it, but if no one’s really feeling it, I don’t push. I sometimes try to hype things up to get people to agree—like “Guys, guys this night market looks phenomenal”—but yeah, I don’t push too hard.

Interviewer: If you could solve one thing about traveling in a group with the app, what would that be?

Emily: Decision making, 100%. There are too many polls, too many “I don’t mind, you decide” messages. I wish there was one app that aggregated everyone’s preferences and just told us what to do. It would save us hours of arguing.

**4. Usage Scenarios and Contexts**

Interviewer: What kinds of trips does your group tend to end up taking?

Emily: Weekend road trips or low-cost flights are the most common, for two to four days at the most. That’s about our budget. We’ve done the beach, the mountains, and once a city trip in Sydney. Overseas? That’s more of a post-university pipe dream when we’ve got more money.

Interviewer: When during a trip is group travel the most enjoyable for you?

Emily: Honestly, the simplest moments. Singing along to the same two songs in the car over and over, staying up too late in a hostel and just aimlessly exploring a place. Sometimes even if the activities aren’t “wow” the overall vibe makes it amazing.

Interviewer: And when is it the least enjoyable?

Emily: Definitely when people cancel last minute. All of a sudden, our Airbnb costs twice as much per person or we have to cancel activities. It’s a huge hassle and a bit of a downer. Also when one or two people end up doing all of the planning and a couple of people are just along for the ride. That’s a little unfair.

**5. Perceptions and Values**

Interviewer: What’s the best part, in your opinion, about traveling with friends?

Emily: Definitely the bonding. You see sides of people you’ve never seen before. Who’s the morning person, who has a meltdown when we get lost, who for some reason has this amazing way of making breakfast over a campfire. I think those are the moments that make friendships stronger.

Interviewer: And how do you think group trips like this change your friendships in the long-term?

Emily: For the better, I think, most of the time. At least we come home with jokes that last years. But sometimes the fights over money or planning leave some bad vibes and then it can be a bit of a sour note at the end of the trip.

Interviewer: If you were to describe your ideal group trip, how would that go?

Emily: Somewhere cool but cheap—Japan or New Zealand would be a dream. I’d want the best of both worlds: enough planning so we don’t fight but enough open time to be spontaneous and try random stuff. Everyone chips in evenly, nobody stresses and all of us come back with completely ridiculous stories. That would be ideal.