



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

GLOSSARY

singles cruise – a vacation of several days on a very large boat, designed only for people who are not in a romantic relationship and are looking for a partner

* We enjoyed dances every night on the singles cruise. They were a great opportunity to meet people.

on the make – looking for a sexual relationship, perhaps with many different people in a short period of time

* Stay away from Blake. He says he's looking for a serious girlfriend, but really he's just on the make.

to take (one's) pick – to have many choices; to be able to decide what one wants from a group of things

* Our store has more than 100 flavors of ice cream. Which one would you like? Take your pick!

fling – a romantic relationship that is not serious and lasts for a only a short period of time

* Many college students go to Florida for spring break, hoping to enjoy a one-week fling.

to mingle – to interact with other people socially whom one does not know well, especially at a party

* They spent the evening drinking champagne and mingling with other people at the party.

tour – an organized trip to see many different things in an area, usually with a guide

* Would you like to see pictures from our tour of Alaska?

to match – to put two or more things together as a group because they have similar or complementary characteristics; to recommend that two people begin a romantic relationship with each other

* The computer matched us because we both enjoy going to folk concerts and eating Greek food, but other than that we really have nothing in common.

to get better acquainted – to become more familiar with another person; to learn more about another person

* Are you sure you want to get married so soon? Why don't you two wait a few months and use that time to get better acquainted?



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

stuck with – forced to have or be with someone or something

* Our Ferrari needs a new transmission, so we're stuck with this horrible old car until the mechanic can fix it.

adventure – an exciting experience in which one tries many new things that one has never had or done before, especially exploring an unknown area

* Traveling alone through Europe for a year after high school was an unforgettable adventure.

the great outdoors – nature; natural, undeveloped areas that are far from cities and towns

* On the weekends, they like to go hiking and boating in the great outdoors.

worse case scenario – the worst thing that one can imagine happening

* I know you're nervous about moving to another country, but worse case scenario, you can always move back home if you hate it there.

what do you have to lose – a phrase used to mean that one should do something because there are no negative consequences (results) and there may be some positive consequences

* What do you have to lose? Just go ahead and call her!

peace of mind – tranquility; calmness; a feeling of relaxation, satisfaction, and comfort, without any stress

* Every evening after a stressful day at work, Ross tries to regain his peace of mind by drinking a cup of herbal tea and listening to classical music in front of the fireplace.

to look out for (someone) – to try to make sure that another person is okay, warning him or her of any dangers or problems

* Please look out for your little brother at school.

to marry (someone) off – to find a husband or wife for someone; to arrange a marriage for someone

* Would you rather marry your daughter off to a millionaire, or hope that she finds true love?



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

to get (something) through your thick skull – an informal, rude phrase used when one is frustrated that another person does not understand something because he or she is too stupid or slow

* Why can't you get it through your thick skull that I don't want to buy your company's products? Please stop coming to my apartment!

ray of sunshine – sunlight; a person who is very happy; most often used sarcastically to describe someone who is not very cheerful or upbeat

* In the movie Pollyanna, the main character is a little ray of sunshine who makes everyone in the town feel happier and more cheerful

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Samantha mean when she says, "I'm not interested in having a fling"?
 - a) She doesn't want to be in a non-serious relationship.
 - b) She doesn't want to go on a cruise.
 - c) She doesn't want a boyfriend.
2. How is Ray trying to look out for Samantha?
 - a) He's trying to help her fall in love.
 - b) He wants her to relax on vacation.
 - c) He's interested in her physical appearance.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

fling

The word "fling," in this podcast, means a romantic relationship that is not serious and lasts for a only a short period of time: "He was hoping for a one-weekend fling, but he was surprised when he found himself falling in love with the woman."

A "fling" can also be a fun period of time when one has no worries and just enjoys oneself: "She decided to make her last month in New York a fun fling, without working or worrying about money." As a verb, "to fling" means to throw something strongly, but not necessarily very far: "When the students got home, they flung their books onto the table and turned on the TV." Finally, the verb "to fling (words)" can be used to describe saying something angrily, without thinking



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

about the consequences: “Louise flung horrible words at her husband and felt bad about it afterward.”

match

In this podcast, the verb “to match” means to recommend that two people begin a romantic relationship with each other: “This website claims to match people who will fall in love with each other.” The verb “to match” also means to put two or more things together as a group because they have similar or complementary characteristics: “Please match each word in the list with its definition.” This use of the verb most often relates to the color of something: “Does this skirt match this blouse, or is it a different shade of green?” When talking about money, “to match” means to contribute the same amount of money as someone else: “The business will match all private donations made to the foundation by February 15, up to \$5,000.”

CULTURE NOTE

Single people can choose among many different types of travel experiences that are “targeted at” (aimed at; intended for) people who are looking for a romantic relationship and want to have a good time while they do it. A singles cruise can be a good “starting point” (something to begin with), but those cruises “attract” (generate interest from) singles with many different interests and experiences. Other travel experiences are designed to help singles meet other singles who are more similar to themselves.

Some singles tours focus on a specific sport or hobby. For example, a singles trip could focus on skiing or “kayaking” (paddling a small, one-person boat) in a particular area. A single person who “signs up” (registers for) for one of those trips knows that the other singles on that trip will share his or her interest in skiing or kayaking. Other singles tours might focus on a particular culture or language, or maybe even the food of a different country.

Still other travel experiences target singles by “restricting” (putting limitations on) who can participate. For example, the trips might be only for singles of a certain age or of a certain religion. Other singles travel experiences are designed only for singles who make a certain amount of money or have a certain amount of “wealth” (money; financial value).



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

The tours often arrange special events to help the singles “get to know each other” (become more familiar) more quickly. For example, a tour might include several dinners and dances or “receptions” (quiet parties for people to meet each other) where singles are “encouraged” (told it would be a good idea to do something) to introduce themselves to each other and begin looking for “potential” (possible) romantic partners.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 569: Traveling for Singles.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 569. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at www.eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode, it will help you improve your English even faster. You'll be glad you did!

This episode is called "Traveling for Singles." It's dialogue between Ray and Samantha talking about someone who is going on a vacation by themselves. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Ray: I have a great idea for your next vacation. You should go on a singles cruise.

Samantha: I'm not going on a singles cruise. Everybody will be on the make.

Ray: That's the point, isn't it? You can take your pick of single guys. What could be better?

Samantha: I'm not interested in having a fling!

Ray: You'll never meet anybody if you don't get out there and mingle. Look, here's a 10-day tour through Asia and the tour company will even match you with someone before the trip. You can use the time on the tour to get better acquainted.

Samantha: That sounds awful. What if I don't like the person I'm matched with? I'm stuck with him for 10 days, and we'll both be miserable.

Ray: Okay, here's something you'll like – a single's adventure vacation. You can enjoy the great outdoors, while you get to know the single guys on the tour. The worst case scenario is that you don't meet a guy you like. You'll still have a great vacation. What do you have to lose?



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

Samantha: My peace of mind! Okay, you're my brother, and you're trying to look out for me, but leave me alone and stop trying to marry me off. I'm happy being single. Can't you get that through your thick skull?

Ray: Sure, you're happy. That's why you're always such a ray of sunshine!

[end of dialogue]

Ray says to Samantha, "I have a great idea for your next vacation. You should go on a singles cruise." Someone who is "single" is someone who is not married, typically. A "cruise" is when you go on a very large boat, and usually it travels for three days or seven days. For example, here in Los Angeles you can go on a cruise from here down to Mexico and back in three or four days. Cruises are popular ways that some people like to take their vacation – not me, but some people. "Singles cruises" are cruises where everyone is single, or most of the people are single, and the idea is that it will help you find a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

Samantha says, "I'm not going on a singles cruise. Everybody will be on the make." The expression "to be on the make" (make) means that you are looking not just for a relationship but specifically for a sexual relationship, not necessarily a permanent one. Ray has a different opinion of life; he says, "That's the point, isn't it?" meaning that's the purpose of the single cruise. "You can take your pick of single guys (meaning men)." "To take your pick" means that you have many choices. You can decide what you want, and choose from many different things; in this case, from many different men. Ray says, "What could be better?" meaning there is no better situation for you than to have the choice of all of these single guys.

Samantha says, "I'm not interested in a fling (fling)!" A "fling," as a noun, is a romantic relationship but not a serious one, one that you do not think will last very long. "Fling" actually has several different meanings in English; you know where to find those, in the Learning Guide.

Ray says, "You'll never meet anybody if you don't get out there and mingle." "To get out there" means to go out where other people are; in this case, to go out and try to meet men. "To mingle" (mingle) means to interact socially with other people, even if you don't know them very well, usually at a party. Someone invites you to a birthday party and you don't know most of the people there, you can go and talk to them. You would mingle, go from one person to the next, very informally, and have conversations. Ray says, "Look, here's a 10-day tour



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

through Asia and the tour company will even match you with someone before the trip.” A “tour” is an organized trip to see different places, usually with what we would call a “guide,” a leader that explains everything to you. This is a 10-day tour through Asia, and the tour company matches you with someone. “To match” (match) two people or two things means to put them together. There are companies on the Internet, for example, where you can try to meet someone else, and you can describe the person you want to meet. The company then tries to match you, to find someone who fits or who matches that description. “Match” has other meanings as well in English. Guess where you can find those? That’s right, in the Learning Guide. I knew you knew the answer!

This tour is going to match Samantha with someone before the trip. So they’re going to say you should talk to this man. Ray says, “You can use the time on the tour to get better acquainted.” The expression “to get better acquainted” means to become more familiar with another person, to learn more about someone else. Samantha, however, is not interested; she says, “That sounds awful (terrible). What if I don’t like the person I’m matched with?” What if she is matched with someone she doesn’t like? Then, she says, “I’m stuck with him for 10 days, and we’ll both be miserable.” “To be stuck with (someone or something)” is a phrasal verb meaning to be forced to have to be with someone, or to be forced to have to have this situation. “To be stuck with (someone)” means here that she would have to be with this person even if she doesn’t want to be. Usually it’s a negative thing when someone says “I’m stuck with this,” or “I’m stuck with her.” It means you’re not very happy. Samantha says, “then we’ll both be miserable,” we’ll be terrible, we’ll feel bad.

Ray says, “Okay, here’s something you’ll like,” he’s going to give her another idea for her vacation. It’s a single’s adventure vacation. “Adventure,” in general, means an exciting experience where you do many new things. Maybe you will climb a mountain or you will hike – that is, walk – a long distance through the forest. I’m not sure; I have never been on an adventure vacation. Ray says, “You can enjoy the great outdoors.” “The great outdoors” is a term that means nature, the world outside of the cities and the towns. He says, “You can enjoy the great outdoors while you get to know the single guys on the tour.” So you can meet single men on this tour. He says, “The worst case scenario is that you don’t meet a guy you like.” “The worst case scenario” is the worst thing that can happen, the thing that would be more terrible than anything else. So Ray is saying that it can’t be that bad, because the worst thing that could happen is that she doesn’t meet a man. Ray says, “You’ll still have a great vacation. What do you have to lose?” The expression “What do have to lose?” means that you should do something because there are no negative consequences or results,



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

and there might be something good: “Call the girl you met today at the party and ask her out on a date. Ask her to go to coffee with you. You have nothing to lose.” If she says no, well, then, you’ll probably never see her again – unless the party was at your office, in which case – hmm – maybe that’s not a good idea!

Samantha answers the question “What do you have to lose?” by saying “My peace of mind!” “Peace (peace) of mind” means tranquility, calmness, the feeling of relaxation, of satisfaction. Samantha says she wouldn’t be very relaxed on a singles adventure vacation. She says to Ray, “Okay, you’re my brother, and you’re trying to look out for me.” “To look out for (someone)” is a phrasal verb meaning to make sure the other person is okay. If you have a young brother or sister you want to protect them; you want to look out for them. Samantha says, however, “leave me alone (stop bothering me) and stop trying to marry me off.” “To marry (someone) off” is another phrasal verb meaning to try to find a husband or wife for someone, to arrange a marriage for someone. A father may try to marry off his daughter, who is still living at home and doesn’t have a job. Probably won’t be very successful, however! Or, you may try to marry off your older brother, who doesn’t do very well with women.

Samantha says, “I’m happy being single. Can’t you get that through your thick skull (skull)?” When you say to someone “to get something through their thick skull,” you’re saying that you are frustrated with the other person who doesn’t understand something because they’re too stupid or too slow. The “skull” is the large bones in your head that keep your brain in. When we say someone has a “thick skull,” we mean they’re not very smart. So this is an informal, very rude thing, not a nice thing to say to someone. “Why can’t you get that through your thick skull” means that you are stupid and you don’t understand what I am saying to you.

Ray says, “Sure, you’re happy (you’re happy being single Samantha). That’s why you’re always such a ray of sunshine!” “To be a ray (ray) of sunshine” means to be a very happy person. But usually we use this expression sarcastically, trying to make a joke, and that’s what Ray is doing here. Samantha is not a very happy person, she just insulted him, so Ray is making a joke, saying “you’re such a ray of sunshine.” It really means you are not very happy; you’re not very cheerful.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]



ESL Podcast 569 – Traveling for Singles

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[end of dialogue]

You can take your pick of great scripts here at ESL Podcast. That's because they're all written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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