



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

GLOSSARY

vacation package – an arrangement that includes airfare, lodging, transportation, admission fees, and possibly food and drink so that one can enjoy a vacation without worrying about the details, usually for one price

* This five-day vacation package includes everything except alcohol.

to double-check – to make sure something is a certain way, often by asking more than once

* I know I just asked this question a few moments ago, but I want to double-check: Are you sure there won't be any hidden fees on our bill?

airport transfer – transportation from the airport to one's hotel or other destination

* They've arranged our airport transfer – we just need to look for a man holding up a sign with our name once we get off the plane.

hindsight is 20/20 – a phrase used to express the idea that one cannot understand something fully until after it has happened, and it is impossible to have that information before it happens

* If we'd known that everyone here would be wearing tuxedos and formal dresses, we would have dressed better, but hindsight is 20/20.

taxi – a car with a driver who is paid to take different people to different locations

* Let's take a taxi to the next meeting because it will be hard to find parking if we drive there.

to nix – to not let something happen; to say no; to deny or refuse something

* They were planning an outdoor wedding, but they had to nix that idea when it began to rain heavily.

to cost an arm and a leg – to be very expensive; to be very costly

* Adding another bedroom to your home is going to cost an arm and a leg. Are you sure you don't just want to move to a bigger house?

option – one of many choices; one of many things that one can have or do

* The cable company offers three payment options: cash, credit card, or check.

limo service – a company that arranges to drive people from one place to another in a limousine (a very fancy, expensive, and long black car)

* If you really want to impress your date, pick her up using a limo service.



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

to be out – to not be an option; to be impossible; to be eliminated as a choice

* Peter is afraid of heights so flying across the country is out. We have to drive or take a bus.

shuttle service – a company that arranges to drive groups of people from one place to another, usually in a large van, normally going to and from the same places every day

* This airport shuttle service will pick you up from your home and take you to the airport, but it takes a while because you'll have to wait while the driver picks up other people, too.

stop – one of many places where a vehicle pauses for a short period of time to let people on or off

* Do you live near a bus stop?

public transportation – types of vehicles that are provided by a city for everyone to use, usually after paying a small fee, such as buses, subways, or trams

* If everyone used public transportation, there would be less traffic in this city.

bus – a large vehicle that has many seats and follows the same route each day, or many times in a day, taking people to and from different places

* Taking the bus to work is kind of slow, but I enjoy being able to read the newspaper instead of driving.

subway – a type of train that moves underground, taking people from one place to another quickly in large cities

* Max rides the subway to work each morning, transferring from the yellow line to the red line.

courtesy shuttle – a large van operated by a hotel that moves people between the airport and the hotel whenever they need it, for free

* I've reserved one room with a queen-sized bed for two nights, and the hotel is going to send its courtesy shuttle to meet us at the airport.

on its way – coming toward oneself; in movement, but not yet at the destination

* Your package was mailed last Thursday, so it is on its way and should arrive within the next day or two.

to relish – to enjoy; to look forward to

* I don't relish the thought of our daughter moving so far away, but I know it's a good career opportunity for her.



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

red-eye – an airplane flight that travels during the night-time hours

* Sandra could have saved money by taking the red-eye flight, but she decided she didn't want to be so tired when she arrives.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these transportation options would be most expensive?
 - a) A limo service.
 - b) A shuttle service.
 - c) A bus.
2. What does the phrase "a long red-eye" mean?
 - a) A tearful goodbye.
 - b) A strong allergic reaction.
 - c) A flight that lasts all night.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to be out

The phrase "to be out," in this podcast, means to not be an option, or to be eliminated as a choice: "Now that Horatio is unemployed, eating at restaurants is out. We have to save money by cooking at home." The phrase "to be out of it" means to be unaware of what is happening around oneself, often because one is daydreaming, tired, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs: "Sheila has been out of it all day. I wonder what she's thinking about." The phrase "to be out of the loop" means not to have all the information that other people have: "After two weeks on vacation, I'm out of loop on the Omega project." Finally, the phrase "to be out of (something)" means to use all of something so that nothing is left: "We're out of eggs. Could you please buy some on your way home from work?"

shuttle

In this podcast, the phrase "shuttle service" means a company that arranges to drive groups of people from one place to another, usually in a large van, normally going to and from the same places every day: "Our hotel has a shuttle service that can take you to any of the popular beaches." A "space shuttle" is a type of rocket that is made to take astronauts into outer space and back to Earth several times: "How many space shuttles have flown to the moon?" Finally, as a verb, "to shuttle" means to move between two places many times: "After the divorce, their kids were shuttled between their mom and dad's home every week." Or,



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

“How many times did you shuttle between Miami and Rio de Janeiro to close the deal?”

CULTURE NOTE

A “standard” (regular; normal) vacation package usually includes just “the basics” (the most common, necessary things), such as “airfare” (the cost of airplane tickets) and “lodging” (the cost of staying in a hotel). Most tours, “admission fees” (the price paid to enter an area), and meals are “extra” (additional) and must be paid for separately.

A luxury vacation package includes everything in a standard vacation package, plus much more. For example, it might include airport transfers, local transportation, and “tour guides” (people who lead a small group to different places, sharing information about those places). A luxury vacation package might also include admission fees to various sites. A luxury vacation package could include some or all meals and even alcoholic beverages. Some luxury vacation packages might include “spa treatments” (beauty routines like a massage, manicure, or pedicure) or special arrangements to meet a local “celebrity” (famous person) or “chef” (professional cook).

Another difference between standard and luxury vacation packages is the quality of the items included. For example, a standard vacation package usually includes “coach” (the least expensive airfare in the most uncomfortable seats) airfare, “whereas” (while) a luxury vacation package includes “first-class” (the most expensive airfare in the most comfortable seats) airfare. “Likewise” (similarly; in the same way), a standard vacation package includes lodging at a basic hotel while a luxury vacation package includes lodging at a “five-star hotel” (very nice and expensive hotel, with many features).

The items included in standard and luxury vacation packages can “vary” (be different) a lot, so it is important to ask for a full list of all inclusions and “exclusions” (things that are not included) before paying for any vacation package.

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



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 635: Arranging Airport Transfer.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 635. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Download a Learning Guide for this episode from our website that will help you improve your English even faster – faster than the speed of light! That's pretty fast!

This episode is called "Arranging Airport Transfer." Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

My wife and I bought a vacation package and we thought that it included everything. We should have double-checked that it included airport transfer to our hotel as well. Hindsight is 20/20, they say.

My wife wanted to take a taxi, but I nixed that idea. It would cost an arm and a leg. I wanted a cheaper option so we went to ask about it at the airport information desk.

...

Don: Hello, my wife and I need to get to our hotel downtown. What are our options?

Clerk: Well, you could take a taxi.

Don: We're hoping to find a cheaper option.

Clerk: Okay, in that case, a limo service would be out, too. There are private shuttle services, but since you're so far from downtown, you'll be making a lot of stops and it will take a long time to get there. You could also take public transportation – the bus or the subway – but that'll take even longer. Doesn't your hotel have a courtesy shuttle?

Don: I never thought of that.



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

Clerk: Many downtown hotels do. Call your hotel and they'll be able to tell you. They'll probably have the best suggestion on how to get there, too, if they don't have their own shuttle. If you decide on a private shuttle service or to take public transportation, come back and I'll give you more information.

Don: Thanks a lot. I'll give the hotel a call right now.

...

Lucky for us, the hotel had a courtesy shuttle and it was on its way. Good thing, too, since I didn't relish spending any more time at the airport after a long red-eye!

[end of dialogue]

Our story begins: My wife and I bought a vacation package and we thought that it included everything. A "vacation package" is when a company sells you airplane tickets, your hotel, transportation, often your meals; all of this is part of one price. He says, "We should have double-checked that it included airport transfer to our hotel as well." "To double-check" means to make sure that something is correct. To go back again to check something is to make sure it's correct, or to inspect – to look at something.

They should have double-checked that their vacation package included airport transfer. The "airport" is where the planes fly in and out of. "Transfer" is taking someone from one place to another. So, "airport transfer" is transporting, or taking you in a car or a bus from your airport to the hotel. Many hotels that are near the airport have free what are called "shuttles," which are small buses or vans that pick you up from the airport and take you back to the hotel so you don't have to pay for a taxi. That's true in a lot of big cities in the U.S.

"Hindsight is 20/20," he says. This is an old expression. "Hindsight" means looking back at what has happened in the past, considering what has already taken place. "20/20" refers to the system that we use to determine how good your eyesight or your seeing ability is. 20/20 is what we call perfect vision; you can see perfectly, you don't need glasses. I am definitely not 20/20, but hindsight is always 20/20, meaning it's always easy to understand something that has already happened. The difficult part is seeing what is going to happen in the future!

The story continues: My wife wanted to take a taxi (a taxicab), but I nixed the idea. A "taxi," or a "cab," or a "taxicab" – they're all the same – is when you have a driver that you pay, usually based on how long you are in the car or how far the



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

car travels, or both. The taxi idea, however, was nixed by this man, Don we later learn his name is. “To nix (nix) (something)” means to say no to it, to refuse to do it, to make sure it does not happen. He says, “It would cost an arm and a leg.” Taking a taxi, that is, would cost an arm and a leg. This expression means very expensive, something that costs a lot of money, too much money. He says, “I wanted a cheaper option (a cheaper choice) so I went to ask about it at the airport information desk.” Many airports have information desks. I’m not sure if they would give you information about this, but maybe.

Don says, “Hello, my wife and I need to get to our hotel downtown.” He’s talking to the woman who works at the information desk in the airport. “What are our options?” The clerk says, “Well, you could take a taxi.” Don says, “We’re hoping to find a cheaper (less expensive) option.” The clerk says, “Okay, in that case (meaning if that’s what you are looking for), a limo service would be out, too.” “Limo” is short for “limousine.” It’s a very large, usually black car that is very long. You often see limousines at expensive parties. When there are award shows here Los Angeles – and there are lots of them – there are always limousines that take the stars – the celebrities – to the event. There are also limos or limousines that are not long, that are more like a regular car, but very nice and comfortable. A “limo service” is a company that will send a car to you – a nice car, not a taxi – and you pay typically one price; they charge you a certain amount and you know what that is in advance. With a taxi you may not know, because it depends on how long or how far it is that you ride in the taxicab.

Anyway the clerks says, “a limo service would be out.” “To be out” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning not to be a possibility, to be impossible, to be eliminated as a choice. She says, “There are private shuttle services, but since you’re so far from downtown, you’ll be making a lot of stops and it will take a long time to get there.” A “shuttle service” is a company that arranges to drive groups of people from one place to another, normally in a large car – a large van. What happens here in Los Angeles, and in some other cities, is you can call up one of the shuttle services and they will come by and pick you up at your house just like a taxicab would. But they’ll also, on their way to the airport, stop and pick up other people, and so there, all of you go together. It takes a longer time, then, to go from your house or your hotel to the airport because the shuttle may be stopping at three or four more places to pick up more people. However, a shuttle is cheaper than a taxi, for sure, but you’ll be making a lot of stops if you take it. A “stop” is one of the places where the vehicle – the van stops to pick up someone or to leave someone at their hotel or house.



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

I should mention also that the word “shuttle” and the expression “be out” have additional meanings, which can be found only in our Learning Guide. Well, you can find them other places, too, but most especially in our Learning Guide!

The clerk says, “You could also take public transportation.” “Public transportation” is something that the government provides. Usually buses, subways, some trains are part of what we call public transportation. She mentions two of these: the bus and the subway. The “subway,” of course, is a type of train that goes typically underground, although sometimes it may be an elevated train, what is called in cities that have elevated trains an “el,” short for elevated, meaning up above the ground. Subways, however, such as the one in New York, at least in the main part – the downtown Manhattan – are underground. Even Los Angeles now has a subway. Unfortunately, it doesn’t go very far from downtown and isn’t really very useful to you – but we have one! The clerk says, “Doesn’t your hotel have a courtesy shuttle?” We talked earlier about how the hotels have their own shuttles – their own cars or vans that go and pick people up from the airport and bring them back to the hotel. That’s called a courtesy shuttle. “Courtesy” means, in this case, free; it doesn’t cost you any money.

Don, who’s not exactly an intelligent man, says, “I never thought of that.” Hmm, Don, wake up! The clerk says, “Many downtown hotels do (meaning many of them do have courtesy shuttles). Call your hotel and they’ll be able to tell you. They’ll probably have the best suggestion on how to get there, too, if they don’t have their own shuttle. If you decide on a private shuttle service or to take public transportation, come back and I’ll give you more information.” So the clerk is telling Don, the idiot, to call his hotel, see if they have a free shuttle, if they don’t ask them what’s the best way to get from the airport to downtown where the hotel is located. In Los Angeles, the downtown and the airport – the main airport are several miles apart. Driving it takes, with no other cars on the road, probably about 25 to 30 minutes to get downtown. So, this is a big problem if you don’t have cheap transportation.

Don says, “Thanks a lot. I’ll give the hotel a call right now.” “To give (someone) a call” means to call them on the telephone. Don says, “Lucky for us, the hotel had a courtesy shuttle and it was on its way.” Something that is “on its way” is something that is moving toward you, something that is coming to you but is not yet there – not yet arrived. He says, “Good thing, too (which means it was a good thing, it was a lucky or fortunate thing), since I didn’t relish spending any more time at the airport after a long red-eye!” “To relish” (relish) means to enjoy, to look forward to. Don says he did not relish – he did not look forward to spending more time at the airport after a long red-eye. A “red-eye” (eye), like the



ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

eye you use to see, is an airplane flight that travels during the night. So for example, there's a plane that leaves Los Angeles at midnight that flies to New York City. It takes six hours to get there roughly, and because New York is three hours ahead of Los Angeles – the time difference is three hours – if you leave at midnight from Los Angeles you'll arrive in New York City at nine o'clock in the morning. The plane flies all night, normally when you would be sleeping. What happens if you don't get enough sleep? Sometimes you will wake up and your eyes will be red, that's why we call that kind of plane a red-eye. Strange but true!

Now let's listen to the story and dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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ESL Podcast 635 – Arranging Airport Transfer

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[end of dialogue]

If you relish listening to these scripts as much as I do, you can thank our scriptwriter Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.

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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