

Timeless Travel

As our world is being reshaped by the impact of Covid-19, so is travel. Many of us have had to change plans to visit family and friends to escape the cold of winter or celebrate an upcoming wedding or graduation. For others, that dream trip has been put on hold and there is uncertainty when restrictions will be lifted, and will we celebrate again – travel again?

However, when travel does cease, I am reminded there are still endless opportunities for us to travel. While our travels are now in a different way, it doesn't mean that they can't still be fully enjoyed or even recreated.

Enjoy these 10 Tips to Timeless Travel:

1. Invite "travel" into your home. There are a number of travel shows available for free or purchase through Amazon or Netflix. If Europe is a place of interest, I invite you to watch [Rick Steves' Europe](#) where you can livestream 100 free 30-minute episodes from across Europe.

[National Geographic](#) also provides a variety of travel shows from around the world that you can watch for free from the comfort of your home.

If you love nature, check out [You Tube Nature Videos](#) where you can enjoy hours of relaxing and breathtaking scenery from across the world. Likewise, [the National Park Service](#) provides webcams to watch bears, eagles and more! Love the Zoo? If so, enjoy watching a variety of animals at the [San Diego Zoo](#) or take a look at the beauty and bounty provided by the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) webcams.

For those who love museums, [2500 museums](#) have given us access to virtual visits to countless exhibits (minus the crowds!).

2. Revisit a past trip or family gathering by getting out a photobook or album. Sit down with your loved one and look at the pictures. Rather than asking a lot of specific questions (for which your person may not remember), tell a story or make an observation about the picture(s). Most of us like to revisit memorable experiences. Photos provide the "prop" to bring that trip or gathering to life. And, research studies suggest that reminiscing can improve our mental health and decrease our stress – something we all need these days!
3. I am a big fan of picture books; after all, we say "a picture is worth a thousand words." These books can be of people, places and things. However, most of us relate to pictures that represent our interests. Look for books (often on sale) that may include favorite places/landscapes, art, food, animals, children, or work-related photos. Books that contain less text are best so the focus can stay on the pictures we are "visiting." While looking at these pictures, strike up a conversation about a story being told through the picture. The great thing is that there is no right or wrong as each of us can see a picture through a very different lens!
4. Food is an important part of travel and/or visits with family and friends. Why not plan a "visit" to a favorite place by enjoying a food or meal from the region. If Italy was a favorite trip, why not

enjoy a bowl of spaghetti and top it off with a bowl of gelato?! Want to re-visit a region in the US, then think about a regional food you might enjoy. Take advantage of local places where you can order out and enjoy the meal from the comfort and quiet of home while remembering the good food from a good trip.

5. Bring out the mementos and souvenirs from past travels as there is a story behind each one. If your loved one doesn't remember the story or the trip, you do. Go ahead and tell the story that encouraged you to buy or bring home this special object. Just the act of looking at the object, holding it and retelling the story feels good.
6. Begin to think about and/or plan your next trip with or without your loved one. Looking forward to future positive experiences (travel and visits) is important for emotional well-being. If your person is living with early stages of Alzheimer's disease/dementia and enjoys planning, by all means, begin to talk about and research your options. Contact a travel agent for brochures, purchase a travel magazine or go online to learn more.

If your loved one can no longer travel, it is okay for you to imagine a day when you can once again do so. Allow yourself permission to plan for that day and don't feel guilty. I encourage you to read, [Travel Well with Dementia: Essential Tips to Enjoy the Journey](#) for more specific planning ideas and tools.

7. The libraries offer an option for other forms of exploration. A wonderful program called, [Tales and Travels](#) provides guidance for caregivers to work with a local librarian to choose books and activities in order to visit a new or favorite location.
8. Keeping your loved one connected to familiar family and friends is important, but many of them struggle to know what to say or how to carry a phone conversation or in-person visit. Help these important people to connect with your loved one through favorite stories of travel or visits. Family and friends need your help with how to make a conversation happen. You can help them script a story (or more) that they can use during every visit. Provide feedback to callers/visitors letting them know how much your loved one enjoyed the visit down memory lane. They need this feedback to know their visit matters.
9. Don't forget the music that you enjoyed during your travels. I still have vivid memories of driving across country singing along to "Grease" my 8-track player. I can visualize the long and scenic routes we took. But also think about the music that is enjoyed during celebrations. A high school reunion might allow you to play music from your high school days or a wedding can invite you to listen to music often played during a wedding reception. Use your imagination, as for most of us, music helps us travel back in time to very memorable places.
10. Put these tips all together and create a sensory filled visit. In my [book](#), I love the story of a family who recreated "An evening in Paris," for their mom who lived with dementia and had long dreamed of visiting. The family brought Paris to her as they created the ambiance in their

backyard, coupled with French food, wine and music. The family traveled together and created a wonderful memory they all hold precious.

Travel really is timeless if we allow ourselves to embrace it!