

Travelling Post-Pandemic: Reflections

As a geography teacher, I'm always telling my students how important it is to travel and experience new cultures. Personally, I have been to Europe three times, as well as the Caribbean. I've travelled to different parts of the United States. I love to travel. Maybe that's why every personality quiz I took in school told me my perfect career would be a flight attendant. When the pandemic hit, my entire life changed. I became closed off from the world in many ways. I went from being someone who didn't think twice about jumping on a plane to go overseas to somebody terrified of going to the supermarket. During the pandemic—perhaps partly because I worked in healthcare at the time—I lost my way, and it took me a good two years to recover parts of myself and gain the courage to venture into the world again. My fear of getting sick was especially debilitating in 2020-2021. It cost me countless opportunities, and most significantly, it cost me my relationship of seven years and the love of my life; we couldn't agree on how to handle the pandemic, and it ultimately destroyed us. I regret this every single day.

I have not travelled since all of this. I know people who have, and it does seem that despite some COVID-19 protocols in place people are able to experience travel as before. A good friend of mine who was and remains very nervous of contracting COVID-19 went to the Amazon Rainforest this summer. If he could do that, there is no reason I shouldn't resume travelling. However, half of me feels unworthy, seeing as I lost so much personally by succumbing to fear for so long. The other half of me feels now is the time to take new risks and try new things. Maybe now is the time to go to a trip that is once in a lifetime. I have always wanted to go to the Falkland Islands. I'm drawn their ruggedness, wildlife, history, and culture. I am interested in uniqueness and experiencing the reality of a destination, not just what travel websites advertise. Then again, maybe now is the time to simply sit on a tropical island, cool beverage in hand, and relax for the first time in three years. Wherever I ultimately decide to go, my first trip post-pandemic will be one that is liberating, both physically and emotionally. I will take photos, videos, and keep a journal to record my experiences. This way, I can look back later and remember exactly what it felt like, from sights and sounds to tastes and smells.