



Simple, with Tsh Oxenreider

Episode 201

thesimpleshow.com

Segment One

Tsh: [00:03](#) This is Simple; I'm Tsh Oxenreider. To acknowledge the fact that summer usually equals travel for many of us, we're doing something a little different in this episode. We've got for you a best of Q and A with my friend Stephanie Langford and myself, both of us rather seasoned travelers. You usually hear us in these short segments at the tail end of episodes after a fuller length conversation where you ask us your burning questions and we do our best to answer them about everything from longterm planning travel to good ideas for nearby weekend getaways. So whether you've got some traveling on the horizon or just want to be an armchair traveler from home right now, we've got you covered. You might remember some of these from previous episodes or they might be brand new to you, so whatever the case is for you, let's get right into it. Here's Steph and me answering some of your travel questions.

[01:03](#) Stephanie, you are lucky to be Canadian for quite a few reasons. You've got good healthcare, you're all super nice. It's really pretty and you get to go to Cuba, unlike, well I mean, we can go as Americans, it's just a little trickier, but you're going to Cuba in just a few days and I'm so excited for you and can't wait to live vicariously through you because that is high on my list of places I've always wanted to go. Tell us a little bit about what you plan to do there and what you're looking forward to.

Stepahnie: Yeah. I'm sorry, I wish I could just like pass you over my Canadian passport.

Tsh: You're what? You're "saw-ry"? Is that what you said?

Stephanie: Yes, you can hear my Canadian accent?

Tsh: You are so saw-ry, It's okay.

Stephanie: [01:49](#) I totally heard it actually when I said it I was like, oh, that sounded really Canadian.

Tsh: I love it.

Stephanie: We are excited about Cuba. We're only going for seven days and I wish we had more time, but the things we most want to see, I mean we've heard that it's a different world there because it's almost like it got stuck in a time warp and it's like back in the fifties or something. We're just really intrigued. What does that look like? Are we going to feel like we've gone back in time or is it going to feel like some weird mixture of old but also modern. Cuban music is amazing and so that is up at the top of our list so going to see live music as much as possible. Other than that we just really want to explore. We've heard that there's some very cool architecture, so we're going to spend some time in Havana. We're also going to go to another city that seems really cool called Cienfuegos. We are going to spend a bit of time in the countryside as well in this area called Vinales that is supposed to have just beautiful, beautiful landscapes and lots of opportunities to do and hiking and biking and horseback riding or things like that. We hope we get a nice little bit of variety, a good overall taste of Cuba.

Tsh: [03:07](#) Plus the food is supposed to be amazing. You're going to have to try out some good stuff. I'm going to put a link in the show notes my favorite deep dive on Cuba is Anthony Bourdain's episode. I think it's his show Parts Unknown. You know, he's got a couple of shows. I'm going to put the link of the Netflix because it's on there right now of the Cuba episode. We covered that for my patrons in the world at home episode of the other show I do. It was really good. I'm gonna link to that so you guys can see what she means because it really does look like it's in a time warp with all their cars straight out of the 50s. It's wild.

We are here to answer or travel questions and we've got a grouping of some that are similar.

Do you keep a routine while traveling with young kids, naps, bedtimes, etc.? Any tips for traveling with zero to two year olds, nap times? Do you bring a pack and play? Tips that you wish you'd known before setting off on adventures with littles. Then finally this last one, I believe she's planning, no, she is traveling there in Lisbon and Paris with the 13 and 11 year old fighting a lot right now. Advice on discipline while traveling. We have never been there. Our kids are perfect angels while they're traveling. Good luck to her. Steph, you are literally there with your five kids. Tell us a little bit about your experience of handling kids while on the road. Handling is the wrong word. You know what I mean? Parenting while on the road.

Stephanie: [04:42](#) Parenting on the road. Absolutely. I think that's actually a really good place to start because we try to just see it as like an extension of our regular parenting and maybe that's even more applicable for us because we travel in very long stretches at a time. If we didn't try to just bring in some of the same routines and the methods of discipline and different things that we did back

home, it wouldn't work for us because this is our lives half of the time. We do definitely try to keep up routines. Actually I should comment that right now our youngest, we have kids between 14 all the way down to three and a half. He's almost four. But we have also done traveling with babies as little as six months to a year. We've done a lot of traveling when they were in the one or two year old stage. Maybe we should start with that because I know that traveling with babies and toddlers is one of those things that just makes people feel really apprehensive. How is it going to go? Are they going to be totally exhausted? Are they going to throw temper tantrums? All that. I know that part's hard.

Tsh: [05:46](#) Yeah. And I will say from my experience that I honestly think the hardest time period or stage of traveling is when their age about one to two because they are still babies. They're bigger babies so they're harder to carry and they are into everything, but they have absolutely no filter. It can just be a lot of physical work, for the parents, a lot of just heavy lifting literally and figuratively. Grace and peace in advance for those traveling with little kids. But that doesn't mean it can't be done. It totally absolutely can. And you Steph are testimony to that because I haven't seen you travel with all sorts of ages of kids including in utero. It is totally possible.

Stephanie: [06:25](#) It is. I 100% agree with you about that one to two years season. I think that that really is the hardest part. We have still had amazing travels during that time. Some tips for traveling with these little ones. Let's start off with the whole pack in play, baby bed idea. It depends I think on maybe where you're going, the types of places you can be staying and how mobile, how light do you want to travel because it depends on what you're going to be doing. So for example, if I was going to Europe and I was expecting to be on and off of a lot of trains and on cobblestone and things like that, I would want to keep what I was carrying a lot lighter and more simple because I mean sure, some train stations have an escalator and elevator but often they don't, they just have stairs. What ends up happening, you've already got this little kid or a baby and maybe you're wearing them or you're schlepping them up and down the stairs in the stroller. I have so many memories of Ryan and I, one of us taking the back of the stroller when I was taking the front of it and going up and down stairs that way. You can do that if you're wearing back packs or if you travel pretty lightly. But then if you add like a baby bed on top of that, it's just one more thing. But if you're going to be somewhere where you're not expecting to do a lot of fast travel, where you're mostly going to be in a hotel or just in one airbnb rental and you'll primarily just be taking the plane and then maybe a taxi to and from your place where you'll be staying, then I think it would be reasonable to bring a baby bed and you might be really glad that you have it.

That's the first thing I would say. We did travel with a baby from 11 months until his second birthday. We traveled for a full year. We did not travel with a baby bed. What would happen is we would request pack in plays or cribs when they were available. In hotels or in Airbnbs, we would always ask and see if we could get one. And when we couldn't, we would just do make shift beds or pull him into bed with us. It's not super fun. Now most of you aren't planning to go do it for a year like I did. It's at least a shorter time of discomfort. Then we did also travel for a three month period with a small travel bed for a baby who was one year old. The travel bed, it was a pain, to be honest. And yet there were situations when I was really grateful for it where it kept him contained. There's totally pros and cons to having one or not having one.

Tsh: [09:01](#) I like that you brought up that you can always ask because you'll be surprised how many places will provide them if offered, Airbnbs or hotels and so often you really don't need them. In fact, when I think back to traveling, we started traveling when Tate, my oldest was five months old I think is when we started traveling. I can hardly remember ever actually taking our pack and play. In fact, we might not have, I don't even remember. But to me by and large I would default on not bringing one over bringing one. I mean our kids tend to be pretty resilient. I know there's personalities and exceptions to that rule. But if a kid needs to sleep in your bed for a week or heck, you create some kind of cordoned off area depending on their age, ff course, kids are pretty okay with whatever at certain ages.

Stephanie: [09:48](#) I agree. Our kids have gotten to be very flexible sleepers because of our travels because they have to sleep in a lot of different scenarios. And the sooner you start doing that with your kids, the better. I think it helped that even when we're at home in Canada, that's just our lifestyle. Even when we had babies, we'd go up to people's houses, we'd put them down for a nap there, we hang out late into the night and put the babies down in a bedroom that was unfamiliar to them. Doing those things at home or going camping with them or going on road trips, it just gets them used to the travel experience and helps them develop that flexibility and the ability to sleep and function when it's not exactly like home.

Tsh: [10:30](#) Yeah. Longterm listeners and readers of mine will know that I have said this many times, the more you travel with them, the better travelers they become. And so sometimes when you're thinking about the idea of travel and you're looking over at your two year old who just was going nuts at Costco or whatever, and you're imagining like, oh my gosh, how on earth am I going to like travel to Italy with them? That sounds just ridiculous. You have to keep in mind the more they do it, they actually do get better. To not necessarily assume that's just the way it's always going to be. Like I've said before, starting off small,

exactly what Stephanie just said, before you go somewhere majorly cross cultural or go on a really long flight, consider a couple hour road trip or going camping for the weekend or even in your same city, but overnighing it downtown and learning the public transportation of your city, trying out these smaller ways of traveling with your kids will both build your confidence as a parent but also get them used to this art of travel and what all it entails.

Stephanie: [11:33](#) The other thing with littles is that I think you need, we have personally always traveled with both a stroller and a baby carrier when they're little because that allows us to help keep the assemblance of a normal routine. Even if we're out sightseeing if we have the stroller or the baby carrier, we can put them in something at the time when they would typically take their nap. Yes, it's not perfect. Sometimes they might have a harder time getting to sleep depending on where you are and the noise or whatever's going on around you. But usually if they're tired they will go to sleep. And then we also tried to keep bed times as similar as possible. We are pretty minimal packers when it comes to traveling with a baby. But there are a few things that I do like to bring. One is if your baby's used to going down with the bottle or your toddler with a sippy cup then bring the one that they're used to, it's a really nice thing to have with you. Don't bring a whole bunch of stuff from home but maybe bring a special blankie or one special stuffed animal from home because then it smells like home. It feels like home. It's just that little bit of comfort that they might need. We always sing the same song when we put them down and we try to keep bedtime's as similar as possible and those little things go such a long ways in helping your babies and your little ones to just stay on track and get the naps and the rest that they need.

Tsh: [12:58](#) It reminds me of this little blip of a nightmare, not a nightmare, but a mild emergency we had in Africa one time when Reed accidentally left his blankie on the plane in Uganda and so we were going to turn around and run back into the airport to get it and the plane had already taken off. So his blank basically took a little side trip to Rwanda. This airport being a little more chill than where we used to. They just basically called. They ended up talking to the flight attendants on that plane. They found it under his seat, set it aside, and then the next day we just went back to the Ugandan airport and got his blanket back that it turned out it took a little side trip and we were a bit nervous at the time. Oh my gosh, he's going to spend the night without his blankie. How are we going to get through this night? It turned out to be totally fine. He was cool with it and now we have this fun little story, his blankie went to Rwanda without him.

Stephanie: [13:50](#) I love that, but he survived. It was okay.

Tsh: [13:53](#) Yup. He was just fine. And you know what? Actually side bonus to strollers. Kyle and I were both laughing. We had to mourn the loss of being out of the stroller stage because they're really handy in airports for carrying so much stuff. The first time we went on a trip no longer with a stroller, we were like, oh, you don't have a place to just toss all our stuff anymore. It's sad.

Stephine: [14:14](#) I completely agree. We just got all the out of the stroller phase this past year. Our stroller broke in Europe last summer when Oliver had just turned three. And normally we will keep a stroller up until about three and a half or maybe four depending on the kid, but it broke. And so we were like, well, you're three. I guess that's fine. I do really miss having the strollers. There's no handy.

Tsh: [14:36](#) Yeah, there's bonuses. In general, we're the same way having rhythms, routines that are similar at the same time, especially if you're going to be traveling, I would say for like a month or less, to also be somewhat okay with loosening up on the routine and the rhythms that you're used to somewhat in the name of experience. Just enjoy your experience more than being rigid about a nap time. I still remember back on a camping trip a few years ago when a couple, we were on a group camping trip with, they were very hard nosed about nap time and ended up not doing half the stuff we all went out and did because they really wanted their toddler to stick to his nap time, which of course he didn't really sleep well anyway because it's in a tent and it's bright out and all that stuff. They ended up missing out on some of our outings because they were, I don't want to say rigid, but it was a high priority of them to stick to their routine. I completely understand that every family and every kid is different, but there are also times when it's okay to loosen up on that. An example for us as a family is whenever we go on long haul flights, we go ahead and let them watch the kid channels on the screens in front of them, even though it's way more screen time than they would normally get if we were home. Because this is kind of a special occasion. We were not always on a long haul flight. It's not the end of the world if they get a bit more screen time than they usually do. That kind of stuff is what I mean.

Stephanie: [16:00](#) Yeah. We're the same way. We feel like there are certain experiences while you're traveling that you should just be flexible about. One example was we were in Argentina and some friends invited us to go attend Carnivale, which is, a huge deal in South America and we were like, oh, it's going to be really late at night. This is going to throw everybody off and literally we were there I think until 2:00 AM, but you know what, if kids start to get tired, they will often just fall asleep where you are. A couple of the kids did get tired and they did start falling asleep and just sleeping on our laps and yes, the next day we were tired but we just let them sleep in and then we got back on to our routine the next day. That's also part of the beauty of when you stay somewhere a little bit longer or

when you're in an Airbnb home instead of a hotel, there's something that makes it a little easier to feel like you get back into the groove of like a normal family routine. It's worth it to be able to have those really one time experiences, I think.

Tsh: [17:02](#) Yeah, we would joke that we had this collection of photos of Finn sleeping around the world because our youngest when he was four and we were traveling around the world, he would fall asleep in the funniest places. We would be eating out in some crazy loud restaurant in China and he would just decide I'm going to bed now and he would just curl up on his chair and just fall asleep with no problem at all. Now not all my kids could do that, but he could. And it just got to be so funny that we started just taking this collection of photos of Finn falling asleep because he would fall asleep anywhere when he was done. And for me it was a good reminder of this is really okay with him. He wasn't complaining one bit, he just decided he's done and it was fine.

Stephanie: [17:43](#) We totally have kids who have done the same thing and I think it's great. In fact, they almost start to learn a bit more body awareness. It's not just I need to go to sleep because I had been told it's time to go to sleep now, but I'm out somewhere and I'm really tired, so hey mom, can I take a nap on this bench? I think that's a great thing for them to learn to listen to their body cues and be like, oh hey, I'm really tired right now.

Tsh: That's right. Let's get into the last question about traveling with slightly older kids. This listener's kids are 13 and 11. She says they're fighting a lot right now. Any advice on discipline while traveling? What are your thoughts there, Steph?

Stephanie: Wow. I mean I giggle a little bit because it's so normal and we have a few bigger kids. We've got a nine and a half and almost 12 year old and a 14 year old in addition to our little kids. They absolutely fight when we're on the road. And part of it is that like adults, they experience some level of culture shock or of exhaustion or maybe of overwhelm with new and different surroundings. I think that one important thing is to just be aware of and maybe learn to ask good questions about how are you feeling right now? What's going on for you? For example, our almost 12 year old son, I'm guessing that as he becomes an adult, we will realize that he is definitely a highly sensitive person. Some people are familiar with that term and he can sometimes struggle with a lot of loud noises, too much stimulation. Sensory input is hard for him. Sometimes he will get grumpy or I'll see him withdrawing into himself and it's because he's getting really worn out with what's going on. Now, my daughter's on the other hand, they don't respond like he does by doing that sort of inward pull. Instead they tend to just get aggravated when things are feeling overwhelming or when they're tired. That's when they'll start to bicker with each other because really they just don't know what to do with themselves so they just get grumpy. I can relate to because isn't that the same thing that happens to us? I know it does for

me anyways. One thing that we have learned is that we just need to respect that each of our kids is going to deal with their new environment or the things that they're experiencing differently. We need to treat them like we would any other person and be like, what's going on for you right now? Are you feeling tired? Are you feeling overwhelmed? Is there something about today that it is hard for you? Can you share with me how you're doing and how you're feeling? It's easy to just be, oh, stop arguing with each other. We totally have times where that's just our reaction but the times when we actually feel like we solved the problem better is when we stop and have these really good conversations and find out what's going on with them and it takes more time. Maybe sometimes it feels frustrating when you're like, we're here on vacation or we're traveling in this really cool place. I don't want to stop and have a tearful 40 minute conversation with my kid to try to figure out what's going on and why they're bugging their brothers so much. That is parenting on the road, the demands and the responsibilities of parenting don't really change. You still have to do the hard work of that even when it feels frustrating or disappointing because you're trying to do something that's really exciting. Does that feel like a big bummer of an answer?

Tsh: [21:19](#) It's the right answer and I think it's a good zoomed out reminder that when you travel, it's not like it's that much different than real life. The way you "handle" maybe older kids as the same way you would interact with them at home really. To treat it as that different might be part of, I don't want to say the issue, but perhaps they are wanting a little bit more of what they experience at home, whether that's a more predictable bedtime or whether that's a little bit of alone time because they have their own room or whether they need some outdoor time if you've been inside a lot or just some form of whatever is similar in their own home environment because yeah, it's not that different. A couple of weekends ago, our family just decided to hightail it to the coast for the weekend. We were just itching to get out of dodge and just have a weekend. I was really just impressed with how well our kids got along. I think it's simply because we didn't necessarily ask more of them than we would ask at home. And yet we did ask kind of similar things in terms of help set the table, help load the dishwasher. If somebody wants to go over here and swim and someone else wants to read a book, it's totally fine. We're not gonna try and overly plan or be cruise directors in a way of our travels. We're gonna let them have some autonomy and some say with how they spend their time. I'm not saying we are perfect at this at all, not in the slightest, but it was a reminder to me that the reason I think they were so capable of just naming what they needed, identifying it and seeking it out is just because we've done this so many times.

Stephanie: [23:07](#) Yeah, for sure. You do get more used to that. One thing we've gotten used to is just being able to find places to pull aside and have those

conversations with our kids. Or for our kids to be able to learn how to articulate their needs or even to say to us things like, I'm feeling really lonely right now, or I'm feeling really overwhelmed by hearing another language all day long and not being able to communicate, but whatever the situation is or maybe being together more with their siblings than they're used to. If they all go to school or they don't bedrooms and now they're like together all day long, whatever it is. But I do feel like just the more you do it, the more you practice it the easier it becomes for them to tell you what they need and for you to be able to discern how to handle the different situation.

Tsh: [24:04](#) Just to wrap up this whole conversation of traveling with kids is a thing I've said here before on the pod, and I'll say again, is whenever you travel as an adult with kids and you expect it to be, or you hope even, it will be just like traveling without kids, you will be disappointed. It doesn't make it better or worse. Honestly, there are so many valuable things that you gain by traveling with kids that you wouldn't get with kids. But if you go in assuming, okay, if I just try hard enough, my kids are going to be just like they would if they were a little adults or it would be just the same as if it were me and my spouse traveling. You're going to be disappointed, but if you think about it as a form of travel, traveling with kids as its own style of travel and embrace that in all its stages, whether it's with a baby or a teenager, then you really can have so much more fun and a whole new experience that you wouldn't have had otherwise if you had stayed home.

Stephanie: [25:02](#) Completely agree. It's the expectations that you go into the travel with and I think that's a great place to end it.

Segment Two

Tsh: [27:47](#) Steph, as I mentioned on the pod a few weeks ago, you and I are going to have a third segment here every couple of weeks on this show where we are going to answer a listener travel question and I'm so excited about this because it means we get to keep our toe in the water talking about travel without bombarding you guys with all the information all the time. At the end of this I will share how you can submit your own question. We've got tons to go through and I'm excited to hear what you are curious about. Let's dive right in and I'm gonna start off by butchering a name. Caitlyn, you have asked what is the first thing you plan when traveling, lodging, food tickets, et cetera? She is curious, what is it we do first whenever we are preparing to travel. I know you and I could talk about this all day, but let's just dive in and say what we tend to do first. What do you do first, Stephanie?

Stephanie: [28:47](#) Yeah, I pretty much have got a system down. It's not really a system, it's just the order that I always do it in. I always start out by just reading and

researching and soaking up information about the place that I think we want to go to. I start reading blog posts. I might read a book that takes place in a certain country or part of the world or I will begin by buying guidebooks maybe about that country or maybe if it's a regional buy a book for like the broader region, like Central America rather than just buying like a Guatemala book for example. That's where I begin. I just want to know all the things and I want to get a lay of the land, not at exactly literal lay of the land, but I want to understand what are the different places that people go to, where are they located in the country or in the region and what are the things that I need to be aware of? What are the possibilities of what we could do in this place. So how do you begin Tsh?

Tsh: [29:46](#) Well, you know, I really like what you have to say because now I'm like, oh, do I do that first? Because my first thought was 100% the first thing I do is make sure that there's a place I want to stay at. For me it's lodging and then I maybe look into things. I guess I'm a little bit more of, I don't feel this need to do all the things in all the places. If I know we want to stay in a particular place, let's say the French countryside along the Riviera or the south of France in general, I'm going to just start looking for a place, I'm going to go onto Airbnb and see what's available and then let that be my guide of maybe what we do because it's not so much that I care so much about the lodging being exactly what I want. I just want to make sure that there is the possibility of even being there before I start making plans and dreaming and scheming. In that case we ended up, it's funny I'm even brought that up as an example because I ended up staying there with you, where we found this little village that I would've never in a million years heard of because it's so tiny. We found this really great place online to stay and then use that as a springboard for what we did next just because I feel like I want to have a good home base even if it's not fancy. It works for us and then I use that as a way to then to dream and scheme and do what you say. Steph, you're actually better than I am at reading up on places before you go, like what you said, the guidebooks. I bought guidebooks for London this past year, but only because I was leading the trip and I felt like I needed to do that. Otherwise I haven't bought a legit guidebook in a long time. I think it's cool you do that.

Stephanie: [31:19](#) Do you want to know what a geek I am? I read them at bedtime. They're on my kindle as I am going to sleep every night. If I don't have a different book that I'm super into at the time or if I just feel like I need to use this time as research because I don't have a lot of extra time in my day, then I will lay in bed at night and I will read through guidebooks in different regions of the country and do my research that way. I've also been really happy to discover that lately, with your kindle and your prime account on Amazon, you can borrow books sometimes for free. Not every book is available, but some books are more and

more guidebooks are being available lately. And I'm so happy I just got to Peru one the other day and a Columbia one, I think. Yes, this is really good.

Tsh: [32:07](#) That's fun. I had no idea. I'm gonna have to look into that. Now I'm curious, Steph. For you, the stage of dreaming and reading guide books to the next practical, now we're going to go there. How long are we talking? Are you doing this like a year in advance or just a few months?

Stephanie: [32:22](#) Usually just a few months. I don't plan that far in advance. I mean I might start learning casually, but I'm not going to start reading the guidebooks a year in advance. I start by reading my books and my posts and whatever I'm reading, I start gathering my info and at the same time I'm doing a lot of thinking about our itinerary. The itinerary really, when I say itinerary, I don't mean the day by day, this is what we're going to do when we get there. I mean because we travel long term. When we go we have to work dates around what's happening in our own lives and at our home base and when we think we want to come back and are we planning to meet up with anybody on our travels and when does that come to take place? For me it's figuring out those dates. That's really important to me as my second step. I'm sort of always keeping notes on that while I'm gathering info so that I can play around with different possible itineraries and just big picture like on this date we're gonna fly here or somewhere between these two or three days, might be when we would leave and head to this next country. That's what I do.

Tsh: [33:26](#) Okay. That's interesting. That's good to know. I think for the listeners who maybe are thinking a bit more of the typical two week vacation type of travel where you're going somewhere and maybe are staying in the same general location, if you're curious, if I know for example, we are going to go to Portland, Oregon because of a particular event or something and so we're going to stay there. The first thing I do is look at lodging. I think for me it just feels grounding to know I'm going to have a home there followed by right away flights because I want to make sure that we find a good deal at the right time. That's my answer, is housing. Yeah, there you go.

Stephanie: [34:10](#) I think that makes sense. Like for example right now, sometimes we go places for a shorter period of time and it's a very defined place that we're going. We're going home to Vancouver for Christmas. It's going to already have been passed. We were going to Vancouver for Christmas and when I started planning that out actually the first thing I looked at was flights because once I settled on our dates, I looked at flights because I knew that I wanted to get the best price possible because with seven of us flying, that is the number one expense in our budget for travel. First I did that and then I went to lodgings and I did actually, well it's a little unique because we used to live there. For me it wasn't really at all

about the itinerary or there was no research being done. It was purely how are we going to get there, where are we going to stay? It depends on the trip.

Tsh: [35:00](#) Okay, well there you go. Hopefully Katelyn, that answers your question about what we do first and if you have a travel question for me or stuff, I would love to hear it. I have put info in the show notes of this episode, how you can ask us a question. We would love to hear it big or small and whether it's something practical or a little more just your curiosity is killing you and you just are wanting to know what we think from past stories of travel. We want to hear it. Check the show notes to find out how you can ask your question.

Segment Three

[35:46](#) I am here chatting once again with Stephanie Langford who is currently in Guatemala with her family. Her sound is a little bit different than usual, but we can still completely hear her. Steph, let's talk about some of these questions that listeners have asked related to weekend trips. In fact, it's really great that we're doing this because this particular episode, Christine and I are talking about what it means to be at home playing tourists, like staying a little local but yet having a traveler's mindset. I think it's a great adjacent topic to just springboard a little bit on US locations because you and I so often talk about international travel. Let's stick to more North American. @theedonati, I don't know if I'm saying that right. This is via Instagram. She asks, "Great US cities for weekend trips". Margaret Howard asks, "Where are some hidden gems to travel to in the US?" and then @erchla asks, "Favorite off the beaten path to visit in the US with kid?" Basically you guys are wanting to know where can you go domestically if you're American or just in the US. Steph, I know you're Canadian but you have traveled extensively in the US so I'd love to hear your thoughts first on where you think people should go.

Speaker 4: [36:55](#) Okay, I have a few suggestions here. We have traveled quite a bit in the US and one city that we ended up loving that I did not think that we would love. I've mentioned it before on the podcast is Nashville. It is really, really one of my favorite cities to go back to and not even necessarily for the music scene, although that's cool. We've gone to the country music museum, I don't even know what it's called, but we've done a little bit of the music stuff and we've been to the Grand Ole Opry, but actually I just like Nashville for its foodie scene. Mostly it's markets, it's restaurants, it's cafes, the ice cream. There's so much good stuff to do in Nashville. It's got some really, really great parks. It's got a good family vibe. Also we love Franklin, which is a smaller city, just a little bit below Nashville. We go there all the time when we go to visit. We don't do all the typical tourist stuff when we go to Nashville, but we just feel like it's a great city to just enjoy if you want to go for walks and bike ride around, use the rental

bikes in the city and go to the parks and eat good food all day long. Nashville's a great place to do it.

Tsh: [38:03](#) I know that you like Nashville, for sure. Nashville reminds me a little bit of Austin. I say a little bit, a lot of Austin. Anytime I fly into Nashville and I'm talking with my Uber driver or Lyft driver from the airport and they ask where you from? I say Austin, they always say that's a lot like Nashville, I hear and I have to say yes because of the both the food scene and the music scene. It's slightly different though. It's just enough of a different food scene and just enough of a different music scene to where they compliment each other well. That is my suggestion is, is what I'm leading up to, is my own hometown is Austin and I think it's actually a great place to visit for a long weekend. It depends on what time of year you go, which I think is the same for Nashville. You really are asking for it, especially if you're not a hot weather person, asking for a death wish if you come in the summer. I would advise spring in Austin or just central Texas in general is where it's at. It is phenomenally beautiful here in terms of weather, low humidity for us, the highs are usually are in the mid seventies, which is delightful, especially if you're up north and you are sick of the snow, which I remember from living in Oregon. It can still snow well into spring. You can come down here and enjoy shorts and sandals and get your wildflower fix. It sounds silly but there stunning drives around here full of wild flowers just as far as the eye can see where you can both take great photos but also just wander around and them. A lot of times with my kids we bring sketchbooks and watercolors and we paint and it sounds really hippy dippy, but it's really fun and plus you will be blown away by the food here in terms of breakfast tacos, barbecue, Tex-mex, taco trucks, every where great drinks, great fusion food. I mean it really boggles my mind having been born and raised in Austin, what the food scene is like now, it's just phenomenal. You can spend your entire time just going from place to place eating and never see it all. In fact, when we lived in Oregon, we used to joke or I used to joke that I get back on the plane from Austin feeling gross, but I'm still so happy because I just ate an amazing, incredible amount of food. That is my big suggestion but I've got a few other suggestions I can just go through quickly, Steph. I would love to hear though if you have any other suggestions.

Stephanie: One other suggestion that it's a place that we've just learned to love over the last couple of years because we have a bunch of friends who all move there, three families we know moved to this area. People go to a lot of different places in Florida. But a place I'd never really heard anybody talk about was in the panhandle. It's between Destin and Panama City, but we've never really spent any amount of time in either of those cities and those are popular destinations. But in between the cities, there's a little strip, it's called 30-A. 30-A is the name of the highway that runs right along the beach. This is beautiful beach. There's a lot of protected dunes because of the sea life. I'm not even sure but I think

there's maybe turtles and I don't know what else, but I know that they're really trying to protect the area, the dunes in that region and the water is warm. It's clear. It's gorgeous. It's like going to Mexico, it's beautiful, but what we love are all the little towns in the area. Santa Rosa Beach, Grayton, Seaside, Rosemary Beach, these are lovely little towns that people are so proud to live there. They really love where they are. They're really proud of 30-A. There's a really great community vibe there. The last time we were there for Thanksgiving, we participated in a local 1K or a one mile fun run and some half marathons. It was really neat to see how the community all comes out. It's very health conscious area. You'll find really good restaurants, cafes, and health food stores and there's just so many outdoor activities you can do and it's just a really lovely area to visit. We've gone back again now I think three times. and we can't wait to go back again.

Tsh: That is a great suggestion, I have never heard of it, so you taught me something new, so I'm thrilled to look into that. Thanks, Steph. I've got a long, I mean I say a long list, it's pretty detailed list of places that I think are great to spend the weekend and because we've done it as a family, but I'm not going to park on most of these because you've heard of them. Portland is a great city for a long weekend with kids. New York City is fantastic for a weekend. I mean, of course you have to approach it like we're hardly going to do anything in terms of scratching off the bucket list. But if you even spend time in one borough, just go to Brooklyn and enjoy Brooklyn, then you can spend a delightful weekend in New York City. San Diego is a great city for a weekend because of the beach scene there, but it's also very laid back. Great weather, lots of great food and it's just a very chill town. Seattle's a great place to go for a long weekend. New Orleans is another great place for a long weekend. Two especially I want to unpack a little. One is Charleston, South Carolina. That one is really fun because of the history. I will say that I've actually never been with my kids, but I can see how it could potentially be fun, but it's especially good if you're a history buff and you love the food. I think it's a great place for girlfriends weekend. It's really fun because you can stay in a pretty house right downtown with their porches and you could spend the time just walking around, taking in all the architecture, all the markets and sample some really great food. And then another great we can town is Washington DC. It's surprising but there is so much to see there. You're not going to see it all. There are a ton of free museums, all the Smithsonian museums are free or I think they're all free. I don't remember. And I think there's like 19 of them. I was blown away the last time we were there, I had no idea. If you just even decide we're going to go see four or five and then pepper that in with a lot of international foods because there's so much great international food there. That could be a weekend in itself. Those are my main, more busy, not busy but bigger city suggestions that you've heard of but you might not maybe consider for a long weekend and we can put links in the show

notes some details if you want to look into it more. Steph, do you have other ones to share or other tips in how to decide?

Stephanie: I do have a couple of other places and I also wanted to know if I could tack on a couple of Canadian places. Can I do that?

Tsh: Sure. We're talking North America. They've asked North America, so, yeah.

Stephanie: Okay. Well, I will share one more place in the US that we really enjoyed. If you're into national parks, we have loved going to Moab, Utah and going to the Arches National Park. There's actually two parks that are, I think they're about maybe a half an hour drive between them and Moab itself, it's touristy, but it's a really fun little city to spend a few nights. I mean, you can do so much in the parks. They're gorgeous. The hiking is amazing, the scenery is fantastic. Utah is just a really cool place to explore if you love the outdoors in general. That is a recommendation in the US and then if we want to get into Canada, we're from the Vancouver area. That's not where we live right now. But if you want to cross over the border or you're a Canadian, Vancouver City in itself is amazing, but there's also a lot of really cool things around Vancouver or within about three to four hours that people might not know about. One is to take the ferry over to Vancouver Island, you can go to Victoria or there's a lot of communities. It's quite a big island, but there's also all these small little coastal islands. Those are gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous. You have to take a ferry to get to all of them, but they're actually really easy to connect. They're very small communities, but they are the perfect place to spend a long weekend. We have friends who have a house on Main Island and we just love going there. Then you can also drive up from Vancouver, if you don't want to take a ferry, you could drive up the Sunshine Coast. It is probably one of the most beautiful drives you'll ever do in your life. You could visit Squamish or you could go up to Whistler or you could go the other direction and you could go to and the Okanogen and it's a bit of a deserty, a bit of an arid region in Canada and it has incredible fruit in the summer and vineyards, it is famous for its vineyards. You want to go to Kelowna and Penticton and they're on either sides of a huge lake that is just beautiful in the summer and it also has skiing in the winter. Those are a couple of places on the west coast of Canada that I would highly recommend.

Tsh: I love that. I don't know if you know, I'm taking notes because this is where we are going this summer as a family and we are going to drive up into the Vancouver Victoria area. I'm curious when you say ferries, are these ferries you can take your car on?

Stephanie: Yes, they are big ferries that you take your car on. But you can also walk across too.

Tsh: Very cool. I love that suggestion. One thing I did want to just tack on as a more of a thought exercise that might be fun, is to consider, if you go to Google flights, or Kayak and you want to look at flights, you always see a some pretty good deals based on your home city. For me here in Austin, I can find some good flights to New Orleans or Orlando or Atlanta or Dallas. I look at those and I just think, well, sure, okay, thanks. But those aren't exactly the places I want to stay at to consider what is a good flight deal for where you are and then look what's right around there that you can perhaps rent a car and drive to you. For example, if you do fly into Orlando, you can maybe take up Steph's advice, and drive, I don't know what the long drive is or maybe some other town in Florida, but I know in Orlando you can drive to Seaside, which is a great little small town. If you fly to Houston, you could then drive to Galveston. That's a really fun Gulf of Mexico town. If you fly into Atlanta, it's a little bit of a drive, but you can go to Hilton Head. It's a beautiful island in South Carolina. If you fly, if you find a good deal to LA, you could go to Catalina Island and that's a great place for a weekend. If you find a good deal to either Boston or Providence, you could take the ferry to Martha's Vineyard, which we are big fans of. This is where we spent our honeymoon and then our 10 year anniversary. That would be a fantastic place for a long weekend. Or if you find a good deal to Denver, there are a lot of great smaller mountain towns just a quick drive around like Breckenridge or Winter Park, there's tons of them and they're great anytime of year, not just for skiing. They're fun in the summer as well. Just to put that mental cap on whenever you're looking at the flight deals and think, okay, where else can I go that's near there that maybe isn't exactly there.

Stephanie: I think that's a great suggestion. There's always such good areas when you get just a little bit outside of the city. If you start researching or you look on a map and you see there's maybe national parks or there's a lake just outside of a major metropolitan area or there's always something really good that you can get to within a couple of hours if you do just a little research or at ask around. I like to ask on Facebook and Instagram, people always have suggestions.

Tsh: That's a great way, especially if you can't go far, forget flights. You just want to go on a small weekend trip nearby, ask around and your friends will tell you about all sorts of, oh we just rented a cabin in this one little town that you know you probably would have driven by and not thought anything of, but it turns out it's like a lot of fun, especially if you embrace a small town or off the beaten path perspective instead of we're going to see this huge epic thing I've always wanted to see. Just go with the more of adventurous spirit just to check out something off the beaten path.

You can find Stephanie at WonderlingFamily.com or on Instagram @WonderlingFamily and to keep up with me, I'm on Twitter @Tsh and Instagram

@TshOxenreider and of course at theartistsimple.net. Head to the show notes of this episode number 201 at thesimpleshow.com where you can find all sorts of things, links to things we talked about, where you can sign up for my weekly email called Five Quick Things and how you can join the community that supports this work to make it happen. It's just a few dollars per month as well as how to connect with my guests.

Also, a quick note. Starting in the next episode, we're kicking off a short summer series as I go on sabbatical. You'll hear a collection of conversations I've had over the past few months with different interesting women about their Good Lists, which is a thing we feature around here from time to time. I know you're going to love it. I'll be enjoying the Pacific Northwest with my family but I'll be back on here soon enough, you're barely know I was gone.

This show was produced by Chad Michael Snavely and Jesse Montonya, and thanks also to Caroline TeSelle, Andrea Debbink, and my furry intern Ginny. Thanks so much for listening. I'm Tsh Oxenreider and I'll catch you back here soon.