



Why Travel?



By Eleanor Rodgers, MD

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NEARLY EVERY DAY the postman drops a beautifully illustrated brochure at the door, an invitation to a destination far from home. Winter and spring are past, and summer is upon us. Time to put aside the habits of winter and its worries. Travel is worth considering.

First, is it safe? Is it comfortable? Will you be left behind? What will happen to whatever you leave? Who will take care of the children, the dog, the practice?

Before that first trip to a surgical meeting in Hawaii you dreamed of the flight that would be like in the big Pan Am propeller plane you once saw landing at Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. Your husband would sit beside you, comfort and keep you safe. But, when the tickets came, they were on TWO jets! "Of course," your husband said. "We have to think of the welfare of the children. Both planes won't flounder." He would fly Pan Am and you would fly United. You didn't back out, but you lost your enthusiasm.

Instead of your husband, a urologist sat there, readying a speech for one of the seminars. He was recovering from a heart attack. He proceeded to entertain with the off-color stories some urologists prefer. You hardly listened. You worried about his blue lips. Was he about to have another heart attack? And what would you do?

Nevertheless, you arrived uneventfully in Honolulu and met your husband in the breezy airport where you were welcomed with pretty flower leis and kisses from happy young women.

With the passage of years and more trips, comparisons are made. Today you face room charges with only a flicker of amazement or annoyance. Once, in Zurich, you left a beautiful French provincial room with elaborate bath, at a cost of \$16, to find another, with breakfast, for \$6.

You not only compare room charges but people, types of humanity. Some are so similar you often wonder where you met them before. There are the solitary ones and those who talk constantly. On tours, teachers always find each other to compare situations.

You compare breakfast rolls - the medium-hard in Munich, the hard in Vienna (Raymond Chandler, of Phillip Marlowe fame, claimed he was so tough he could break a Vienna roll with his bare hands) and the flaky croissants in France.

Like many before you, a desire to get away from it all is to experience the new, even to imagine you are the first. Curiosity encouraged the early travelers. Then they added trade and enlarged the world.

You review what you have seen and are startled at how often countries are upset and altered. You wonder what might happen here and now. You once saw Chairman Mao's little red books everywhere in China and suddenly they disappeared. You chugged up the Blue Nile in Uganda, awestruck over the peaceful existence of the hippos and the crocodiles and a year later there was war in the area. You admired ancient Dubrovnik and lakeside resorts, then bombs and shells destroyed it all. Haiti was a worrisome place, ready to explode - and it did.

Travel makes news and maps understandable, and it is an opportunity for personal observation and revitalization. The earth and its population are not stationary.

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