



Conversation topics to avoid on family trips

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The goal is to avoid these talking points at all costs and thus, save the little-so-dignity you might have among your family members and relatives.

STUDIES (THE PRE-UNIVERSITY VERSION)

As a school or college student, when the topic of studies is raised by your family members or relatives, they will surely find a way to make you feel uncomfortable about it. If your studies are going well, they will point out how they have "really high expectations" from you in the future as if you becoming successful will somehow ensure a happily ever after for them as well. On the other hand, if your results aren't as lit as your memes (which by the way, is completely fine), they will go on to lecture you about the harsh reality of life and how they never expected such results from you. Cue "tumi kintu arektu cheshta korlei parta" here.

STUDIES (THE UNIVERSITY VERSION)

Private university students will get a bigger share of the spotlight in this case. No matter what year you're in or what your major is, in your relatives' eyes, it's just useless. If this conversation does take place, be prepared to tell them that your plans are focused on the public service examinations. Spoiler alert: they DO NOT want to hear you say "I am not interested in a government job."

YOUR SUCCESSFUL COUSINS

Making comparisons between people is what family members do best. Especially when it comes to situations where your achievements are overshadowed by those of your siblings or cousins. If the topic of successful apu-bhaiya is brought up anytime during the trip, they will end up talking about that one cousin whom you've never met and never will and then they will go on to tell you tales of their successful conquests. There is no easy way to divert the attention to a less successful cousin or to a topic that will save you from the embarrassment. So if you can't avoid it, just tolerate it or try to fall asleep.

MARRIAGE

By the time you have reached the legal age for marriage, your family members will have already decided on your future in-laws. In fact, they might even have planned out your wedding to your cousin or to some other "bideshi public" in their heads just to see how it works out (for their interest that is). Either way, avoid triggering them if they bring up this topic. Trigger phrases include but are not limited to "I don't want to get married", "I have someone in mind" and "Arre Abbu, YOLO".

HEALTH

They will tell you that you've gained a bit of weight, right after you've downed a kilogram of polao. In such cases, take your plate elsewhere.

Why second visits are better

RABITA SALEH

First visits to any holiday destination can be great. However, quite often on the first visit, people run into unanticipated hurdles. There might be too many people crowding your experience at the perfect spots; maybe the transport or hotel costs or even just the taxes seem too hefty; perhaps you didn't pack the right clothes. All in all, there can be several hiccups that put a damper on your first visit somewhere. And that is where the second visit comes in, giving you a chance to experience the destination right.

YOU KNOW YOUR WAY AROUND

You're no longer getting lost on subways or bus stations. Taxis or buses can't overcharge you. You know where the locals shop and have a better understanding of how much stuff should cost, so you can avoid the "tourist prices" for your shopping.

Knowing what to expect, you've packed right. You're not freezing to death. You didn't forget sunscreen. You brought your hiking shoes and your swimming trunks. Only clear skies and smooth sailing ahead.

YOU KNOW WHICH TOURIST TRAPS TO AVOID

The biggest issue people face when travelling somewhere new is stumbling towards honeypot sites. This is usually what happens when you skim tourism sites online, and don't really dig deep into the authentic attractions of a location. The bustling crowds, littering children and annoyed overworked service people are bound to get on your nerves when all you're trying to do is have a break from your stressful daily life.

On your second visit however, you've learnt from your experience. You're now older and wiser. You know

which sites are worth the hassle and which should be avoided with a ten-foot pole.

Since coming back from your first visit people have been telling you about all the amazing "hidden" areas that transformed their trips. Cursing them in your head, you make it a point to visit as many of these newly discovered sites as you can. With all the popular tourist locations out of the way, you can now visit these hidden gems.

YOU TAILOR YOUR EXPERIENCE TO YOURSELF

The second time around, you disregard what the internet says your vacation should be. You know that the best way to make your trip worth it is to cater to your likes and find experiences that are just right for you. You now find yourself at quaint little restaurants with amazing food, or at old bookshops with a certain mystique about them. You make your way to the best spot to experience the sunrise or sunset, and go on hiking trails with amazing views. You experience carnivals or festivals that you hadn't known to look up before. You might even find theatres, comedy bars, or pop-up dance clubs that you would never have thought of going to the first time.

The recommended things to do on a vacation aren't necessarily the best for you. A second trip to a location just allows you the freedom to decide what you want to do, without the pressure of missing out on the top five things on all the lists. So if you enjoy heckling over a pair of sunglasses with an old shopkeeper in Chinatown, you go do that with confidence!

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