



# Greenheart Travel Atlas

An Interactive Guide to Your Cultural Experience



## Build Empathy

After going through this exercise yourself, can you start to imagine how having stereotypes about people can cause unwanted or unintended consequences and miscommunication?

People come from different backgrounds, and it is important for us to develop a good sense of empathy to help us approach a situation with an open mind. To practice broadening our cultural perspective, we're going to borrow directly from Dr. Roman Krznaric's "6 Habits of Highly Empathetic People:"

### *Habit 1: Cultivate curiosity about strangers*

We're taught as children "stranger means danger," but throw that notion out of the window. When you're sitting next to someone at a cafe, strike up a conversation. Expressing curiosity and being genuine in our inquiries exposes us to new and interesting worldviews.

### *Habit 2: Challenge prejudices and discover commonalities*

It's likely you've read stereotypes about the culture of the country you'll be visiting. The danger of sweeping generalizations is we often use these assumptions to avoid learning more about a culture or connecting with the local community. By challenging these prejudices you will find commonalities and integrate into the culture at a deeper level.

### *Habit 3: Try another person's life*

"All genuine education comes through experience." If you're curious about a culture, live as the locals do as often as possible and push yourself out of your comfort zone to gain new perspectives.

### *Habit 4: Listen hard—and open up*

Have you ever had a conversation where it felt like your partner wasn't listening but instead just waiting for a moment where they could interject something about themselves? To learn about a person and a culture requires attention and deep listening. Don't just hear their words, actively listen and process the context of their perspective. At the same time, don't be afraid to be vulnerable and share a bit about yourself as well.

### *Habit 5: Inspire mass action and social change*

Individual gestures of empathy and compassion can often inspire a ripple effect of positive action. Obviously, no one is expecting you to incite social change while traveling abroad, but recognize that just as individuals can be empathetic, so too can groups of people.

### *Habit 6: Develop an ambitious imagination*

Don't restrict your sense of empathy to only select individuals or communities. Imagine if the environmental activist reflected on the perspective of a fossil fuel executive, or a driver found empathy with a commuting cyclist. These exercises shift our perspective and use empathy to build cooperation by searching for commonalities.

## Embracing Your Multicultural Self and Empathizing With Others

As a global traveler, you are not only representing yourself, but also your country and culture. This is an opportunity to make a positive impact through personal interactions and bridge cultures and countries through meaningful travel experiences.





## I. The “Honeymoon” Stage

- Experience enthusiasm for your new country, cuisine and culture
- Everything feels new and exciting
- Confidence is high



## 2. The “Shock” Stage

- Transition from the “honeymoon” stage to this stage is usually the most extreme
- Initial sense of “adventure” begins to wear off within the first few days or weeks
- Differences between your home and host community culture become apparent
- You may feel like an outsider
- Communicating in a foreign language becomes frustrating and exhausting
- Minor problems can quickly escalate to what feels like a major crisis
- Feelings of depression might develop
- Homesickness is most prominent at this stage



## 3. The “Adjustment” Stage

- Anxieties begin to subside as you gain a better understanding of your host country and culture
- You start to reach beyond your comfort zone to cope with your new surroundings
- A curiosity and new appreciation for the local cuisine, culture and customs occurs
- Increase desire to learn about the country and culture develops as you feel more comfortable



## 4. The “Isolation” Stage

- You’ve become acclimated to your new surroundings, but continue to feel like an outsider
- You realize that although you’ve done a good job adjusting, it is still difficult to get to know individuals
- Your core values are challenged as you begin to understand reasoning from other perspectives
- You’ve got a good grasp of the basics of the language, but realize there’s a long way to go toward having meaningful conversations



## 5. The “Integration” Stage

- Usually develops as you are nearing your departure
- You now “feel at home” in your host culture
- Adjusting to the norms and standards proves a success• You might become confused and lonely when your new cultural experiences conflict with your old
- Your language abilities have vastly improved and communicating is no longer frustrating
- New cultural customs may take preference over your old cultural habits
- At this stage you feel a satisfaction and love for your host country

Learning about the symptoms of culture shock is by no means meant to dampen your excitement for your upcoming travel adventure! Our goal is to help you be prepared for these emotional challenges and help lessen the “shock” while traveling abroad for a positive cultural exchange experience.



We encourage our travelers to volunteer while they are abroad and after they return home. Many other countries do not have the same level of support for community volunteerism or it is not a societal norm to participate in service learning. No matter the culture's experience with volunteerism, it is important to remember that at the heart of volunteering is connecting with people and place.

## Traveling for a Change

When you travel on a Greenheart Travel program, you are automatically eligible to be a member of the Greenheart Club. This unique community equips you to make deeper connections through volunteer service and gives you a chance to connect with Greenheart alumni from all over the world.

The Greenheart Club also gives you unique access to Greenheart's Service Grants. These grants are awarded to Greenheart International travelers to use for community development projects in their host or home country.

A Greenheart Grant is the opportunity to create, improve, or maintain an impactful, community-focused project abroad or at home. Grant funds could be applied to supporting women's cooperatives, schools, community centers, or health clinics, for example.

### Testimonial:



“As I write this, I can't help but be thankful for all the help we had in putting together this event from our Greenheart Grant. It's really magical how a small idea can turn into something unforgettable with a little bit of hard work.

— Renee Ormond, Greenheart Travel English Teacher in Colombia and Greenheart Grant Winner



## Write It Down!

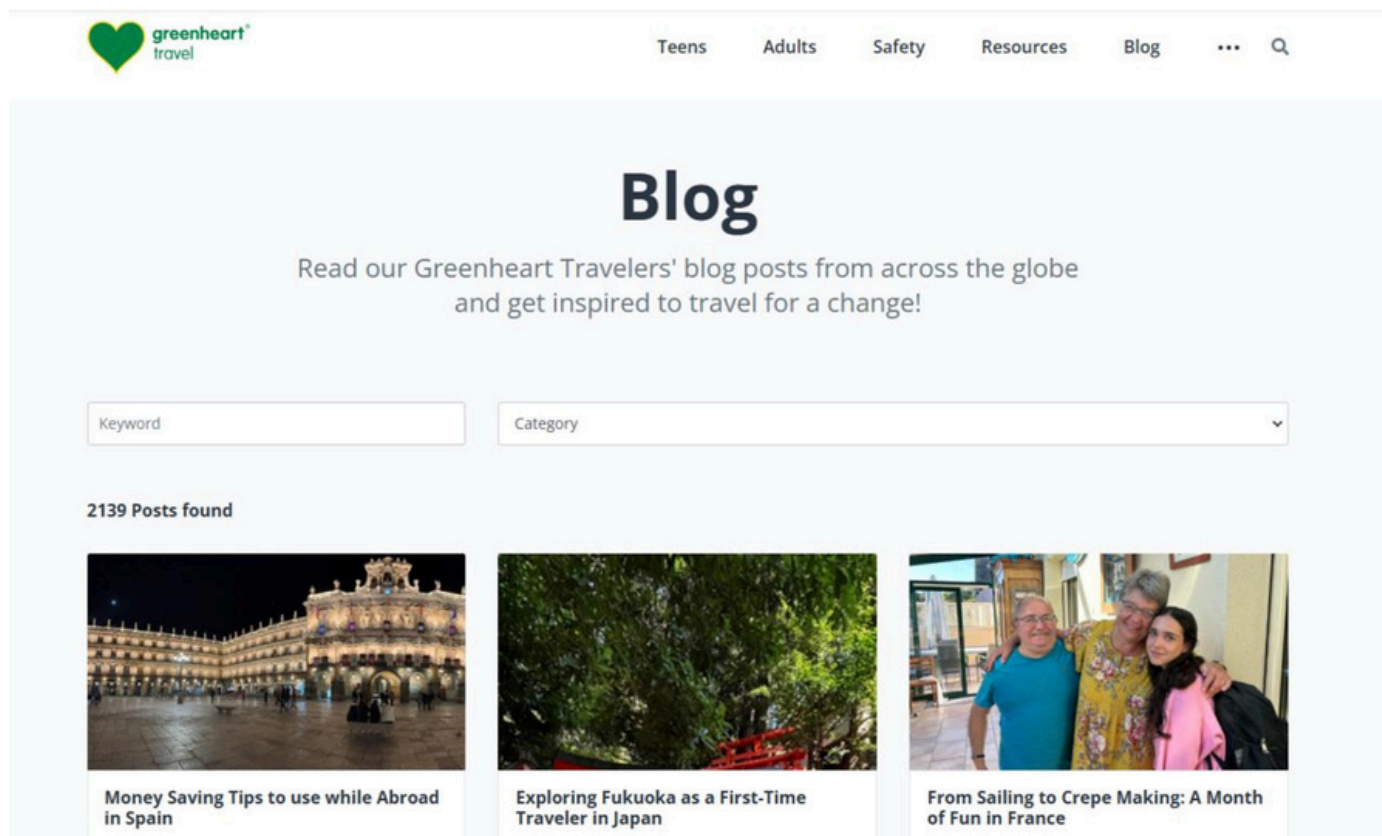
Now that your cultural exchange has ended and you're back home, everyone wants to hear all about it and so do we! Greenheart Travel wants to hear about your time on the program. What was your daily life like? What were your favorite foods? How did this experience change you?

Tell us about your experience in a blog and get it posted on the Greenheart Travel Website! Send that along with some photos to show us your time abroad.

Need some inspiration for writing? Use our list of blog questions to get started!

- What advice would you give someone before they start their program?
- What did you learn about yourself, and your own culture, from your exchange experience?
- Did you experience any culture shock?
- What was something that surprised you on your program? i.e. was there something that happened you did not expect?
- What stories will you bring back to share with your family and friends?
- What part of the program stood out the most to you?
- Tell us about your day-to-day life while on the program.
- Was there an activity you wish you did or wish you did more of while on program?
- Why did you pick this program?
- Do you have a favorite memory?
- Why do you think cultural exchange programs like this are important?

Send in your Blog and Photos or Videos [HERE](#)



The screenshot shows the Greenheart Travel website's blog page. At the top left is the Greenheart Travel logo. To the right are navigation links: Teens, Adults, Safety, Resources, Blog, and a search icon. The main heading is "Blog" in a large, bold font. Below it is a sub-heading: "Read our Greenheart Travelers' blog posts from across the globe and get inspired to travel for a change!". There are two search filters: a text box for "Keyword" and a dropdown menu for "Category". Below the filters, it says "2139 Posts found". Three blog post thumbnails are displayed in a row:

- Money Saving Tips to use while Abroad in Spain**: A photo of a large, ornate building at night, likely a plaza in Spain.
- Exploring Fukuoka as a First-Time Traveler in Japan**: A photo of a lush green forest with a red torii gate in the foreground.
- From Sailing to Crepe Making: A Month of Fun in France**: A photo of three people (two men and one woman) smiling together indoors.

