



ESL Podcast 281 – All-Inclusive Vacations

GLOSSARY

all-inclusive – including everything; with nothing omitted or left out; complete

* The cable company has an all-inclusive offer that includes cable TV and internet service for one monthly cost.

resort – a nice place to go on vacation; a vacation destination; a large hotel with many luxurious or upscale services

* This beach resort has nice rooms, a beautiful view of the ocean, a full restaurant, and a swimming pool.

vacation package – a combination of transportation, hotel rooms, meals, and admission fees that are sold together for a vacation

* Monica paid \$2,000 for a 6-day vacation package in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains.

to pay extra – to pay an additional amount; to pay money in addition to what one has already paid

* If you want Adriana to finish building the website in less than 72 hours, you’ll have to pay extra.

fixed price – a price that does not change, regardless of how much of something one uses; a price that does not change with usage

* We pay a fixed price of \$29 per month for Internet access whether we’re online for two hours or 200 hours during that month.

unlimited – without limits; without a maximum or minimum; as much as one wants

* When you buy a monthly ticket, you get unlimited travel on the city’s busses.

predictable – knowing what will happen; knowing what something will be like; without surprises

* In Washington, the weather in February is very predictable because it is cold and rainy every day.

off the beaten track – unusual; not done by many other people; not common

* Instead of going to the Statue of Liberty, let’s go off the beaten track and visit some neighborhoods that the tourists don’t usually go to in New York City.

character – the qualities and characteristics that make a person or place special, unique, and different from other people and places

* This hotel used to be a railroad station, so it has a lot of 19th-century character.



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plus – advantage; good thing; a thing that makes something better

* One of the pluses of studying at a small university is that you get to know the professors and the other students better.

first rate – very high quality; excellent; high class

* The food at this café is first-rate, but there are so many people eating there that it is hard to find a table.

substandard – not as good as what one wanted or expected; below an acceptable level

* This store sells substandard electronics that break down easily.

amenity – something that makes a place good and comfortable to stay at

* This hotel's amenities include a gym, swimming pool, restaurant, salon, and conference rooms.

convinced – certain about something; sure that something is correct; believing that something is right

* Why are you convinced that Nicholas was the thief?

compromise – an agreement between two people who want different things, so that each person gives up a little bit of what he or she wants, but both are happy with the final agreement

* Everyone says that if you want to have a happy marriage, you need to learn how to make compromises.

spontaneity – doing things that were not planned; doing things without thinking about them very much, simply because one wants to do them

* Gerry is known for his spontaneity. Yesterday, for example, he bought a ticket and flew to Miami for the day because he thought it would be fun.

...or bust – a phrase meaning that one plans to do something, or that one will work very hard to be able to do something

* After almost four years of studying at the university, it's graduation or bust!



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Mei want an all-inclusive vacation package?
 - a) Because she wants to pay extra.
 - b) Because she wants to do the planning.
 - c) Because everything's included in one price.

2. Why does Guy say, "I'm still not convinced"?
 - a) Because he thinks Jamaica will be a bust.
 - b) Because he thinks a vacation package is too predictable.
 - c) Because he thinks there will be too much character.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

resort

The word "resort," in this podcast, means a nice place to go on vacation: "This ski resort has lots of snow, beautiful views, private rooms with fireplaces, and a very good restaurant." A "last resort" is the last thing that one can do in a situation if nothing else works: "If we need more money at the end of the month, we can sell the car as a last resort." The phrase "to resort to (something)" means to do something that one doesn't want to do because there aren't any other options: "If we can't get this project done ourselves, we'll resort to hiring outside consultants to finish the job." Or, "The robber resorted to violence when his victims refused to give him their money."

character

In this podcast, the word "character" means the qualities and characteristics that make a person or place special, unique, and different from other people and places: "The town lost much of its character when the old buildings were torn down." A "character" can also be an interesting or unusual person: "Cheyenne is such an interesting character! She has fascinating stories to tell about her life working in the circus." Depending on the context, a "character" can also be a strange or unpleasant person: "Who were those characters you were talking with at the bar?" Sometimes a "character" is a person in a book, movie, or television show: "Bill Cosby is the main character in The Cosby Show." In writing, a "character" is one letter or symbol: "This Learning Guide has about 6,000 characters."



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CULTURE NOTE

Buying an all-inclusive vacation package can make your vacation more enjoyable. You won't need to worry about making plans and "reservations," which are arrangements to do something at a certain time in the future. The "travel agency" or the company that creates the vacation package, does that work for you.

Before you buy an all-inclusive vacation package, be sure to find out exactly what is included. Some companies might say that their vacation package is all-inclusive, but it might not include the things you were hoping for.

Most all-inclusive vacation packages include the cost of transportation to the vacation destination from a major airport. If you live far away, you will probably have to pay extra to cover the costs of transportation from your home to the major airport. Vacation packages usually include all of the costs of local transportation for going to museums or other places that are nearby.

Vacation packages typically also include the cost of the hotel rooms where you'll be staying, but they may or may not include "room service," which is food being brought to your room. Be sure to ask whether the package includes the use of hotel amenities, such as the gym or swimming pool.

Ask what meals and "beverages" (drinks) are included in the price of the vacation package. Some vacation packages include the cost of only non-alcoholic beverages, such as soda, but not alcoholic drinks, such as beer and wine. Also ask whether "tips," the money that is paid for good service, are included in the package. Learn what kind of entertainment and activities are included in the price. If the vacation package includes outdoor activities, ask whether you'll have to pay extra to "rent" (pay to temporarily use something) the equipment.

With all this information, there won't have any unpleasant surprises on your vacation.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 281: All-Inclusive Vacations.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 281. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com and take a look at the ESL Podcast Store, where you will find some additional premium courses that you may be interested in.

In this episode, we're going to talk about a special kind of vacation called an "all-inclusive vacation." Let's get started.

[start of story]

Mei: Let's go on an all-inclusive vacation to a resort in Jamaica!

Guy: I'd like to go to Jamaica, but I don't know about going to an all-inclusive resort.

Mei: It saves so much time in planning. With these vacation packages, all of our lodging is included and we don't have to pay extra for anything. For one fixed price, we get unlimited food and drinks, and all of the activities and entertainment we want.

Guy: It sounds a little too predictable to me. You know that when I travel, I like to go off the beaten track. The fun is in going out of the tourist areas to find the real character of a place.

Mei: I know, but a resort has its pluses. If we pick a good resort, we'll know that everything will be first rate. There won't be any problems with substandard amenities or service.

Guy: That may all be true, but I'm still not convinced. I'd rather keep looking until we find a good compromise that will have the predictability you want and the spontaneity that I want.

Mei: Okay, but we agree on Jamaica, right?

Guy: Yeah, that's right. It's Jamaica or bust!



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[end of story]

This dialogue between Mei and Guy – Guy, here, is a man's name – is about all-inclusive vacations. The expression “all-inclusive” means that the vacation includes everything. The word “inclusive” comes from the verb “to include,” and it refers to a, in this case, vacation where you pay one amount that covers all of your food, hotel, and transportation usually.

All-inclusive vacations are popular, especially at resorts. A “resort” (resort), as a noun, is a large hotel, usually a little more expensive, that has many things for you to do. It has many nice services available. That would be a “resort,” a big hotel. An all-inclusive vacation at a resort means you would pay one price, and then you get all of your food, all of your hotel costs, and so forth included.

Mei, in the dialogue, says, “Let’s go on an all-inclusive vacation to a resort in Jamaica!” Jamaica is an island in the Caribbean, south of the United States.

Guy says, “I’d like to go to Jamaica, but I don’t know about going to an all-inclusive resort.” When Guy says “I don’t know about,” what he means is “I’m not sure. I have my doubts about this.”

Mei then tries to convince him that it is a good idea to go on an all-inclusive vacation. She says, “It saves so much time in planning. With these vacation packages, all of our lodging is included.” A “vacation package” is a combination of transportation, hotel rooms, meals, and sometimes other fees and expenses that are included and sold together, usually by travel agencies, as one package for one price.

The vacation package that Mei is talking about includes lodging. “Lodging” is another word for where you are going to sleep. A “lodge” is another name for a hotel. So, “lodging” is your room – where you are sleeping in the hotel.

Mei says, “we don’t have to pay extra for anything.” “To pay extra” means to pay more money – an additional amount. Mei says that “For one fixed price, we get unlimited food and drinks.” A “fixed (fixed) price” is a price that does not change, no matter how much you use it or don't use it. So, a fixed price for your meals may mean that you can eat as much as you want. Mei says that you “get unlimited food and drinks.” Unlimited: without limits – without a maximum – as much as you want.

Guy says that “It sounds a little too predictable to me.” “Predictable” means you know will happen; there are no surprises. Guy uses this word because he thinks



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it may be, perhaps, a little boring. He says, “You know that when I travel, I like to go off the beaten track.” “To go off the beaten (beaten) track (track)” means to do something unusual or uncommon, to go somewhere where most people don't go. A “track” is like a path or a road.

When we say the “beaten path,” we're referring to, for example, when you are walking out in a field, out where there are no concrete roads. The place where most people walk will usually not have any grass. It will be obvious; you can see where most other people have walked. That's the “beaten path,” or the “beaten track.” “To go off the beaten track,” or “off the beaten path,” means to go where other people haven't gone before.

Guy says, “The fun,” or what is fun about a vacation, “is going out of the tourist areas to find the real character of a place.” The “character of a place” refers to the qualities or characteristics that make someplace special or unique. That word, “character,” has a couple different meanings in English. Take a look at the Learning Guide for this episode for some additional explanations.

Mei says, “I know” – I understand what you are saying Guy – “but a resort has its pluses.” “Pluses” are positive things; the opposite of a “plus” would be a “minus,” which would be a negative thing. People may talk about “the pluses and the minuses” – the good and the bad – the advantages and the disadvantages of something.

Mei says, “If we pick a good resort, we know that everything will be first rate.” The expression “first rate” (rate) means very high quality – excellent – very, very good. “There won't be any problems with substandard amenities or service.” The word “substandard” means below what you would expect – not as good as it should be – below an acceptable level. “Amenities” are things that make a place comfortable – the nice things about a place. A hotel could have a gym and a swimming pool and a restaurant; these are all extra things that make it nice to stay there. Those would be the “amenities,” the singular is “amenity” (amenity).

Guy says that “That may all be true” – it may be true what you say – “but I'm still not convinced” – I'm still uncertain about it – “I'd rather keep looking until we find a good compromise that will have the predictability you want and the spontaneity that I want.” Guy is looking for a “compromise,” an agreement on something that both people can say “yes” to. Usually, both people have to give up something they want. So, a compromise is when two people agree to something. It's not exactly what either person wants, but it's good enough.



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A compromise here would mean finding a place that has predictability for Mei, she wants to know what she's going to get, it has to be predictable, and spontaneity for Guy. "Spontaneity" (spontaneity) it is the opposite of "predictability." It's when you do things that aren't planned – you don't know what's going to happen. That would be "spontaneity."

Mei says, "Okay, but we agree on Jamaica, right," meaning we both want to go to the island of Jamaica. Guy says, "Yeah, that's right. It's Jamaica or bust" (bust). We use that expression, "something or bust," to mean that you have plans to do something and you're going to work very hard to do it. "To go bust" means to lose – to fail to do something. Often, it can mean to lose all your money. We sometimes use the expression when we talk about traveling to a place. "It's New York City or bust," meaning we're going to go to New York, we're going to do everything possible to get there.

Now let's listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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Guy: Yeah, that's right. It's Jamaica or bust!

[end of story]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

If you have a question or comment, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Please join us again next time, here at ESL Podcast.

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