



Coffee and Conversation for ESL Listening

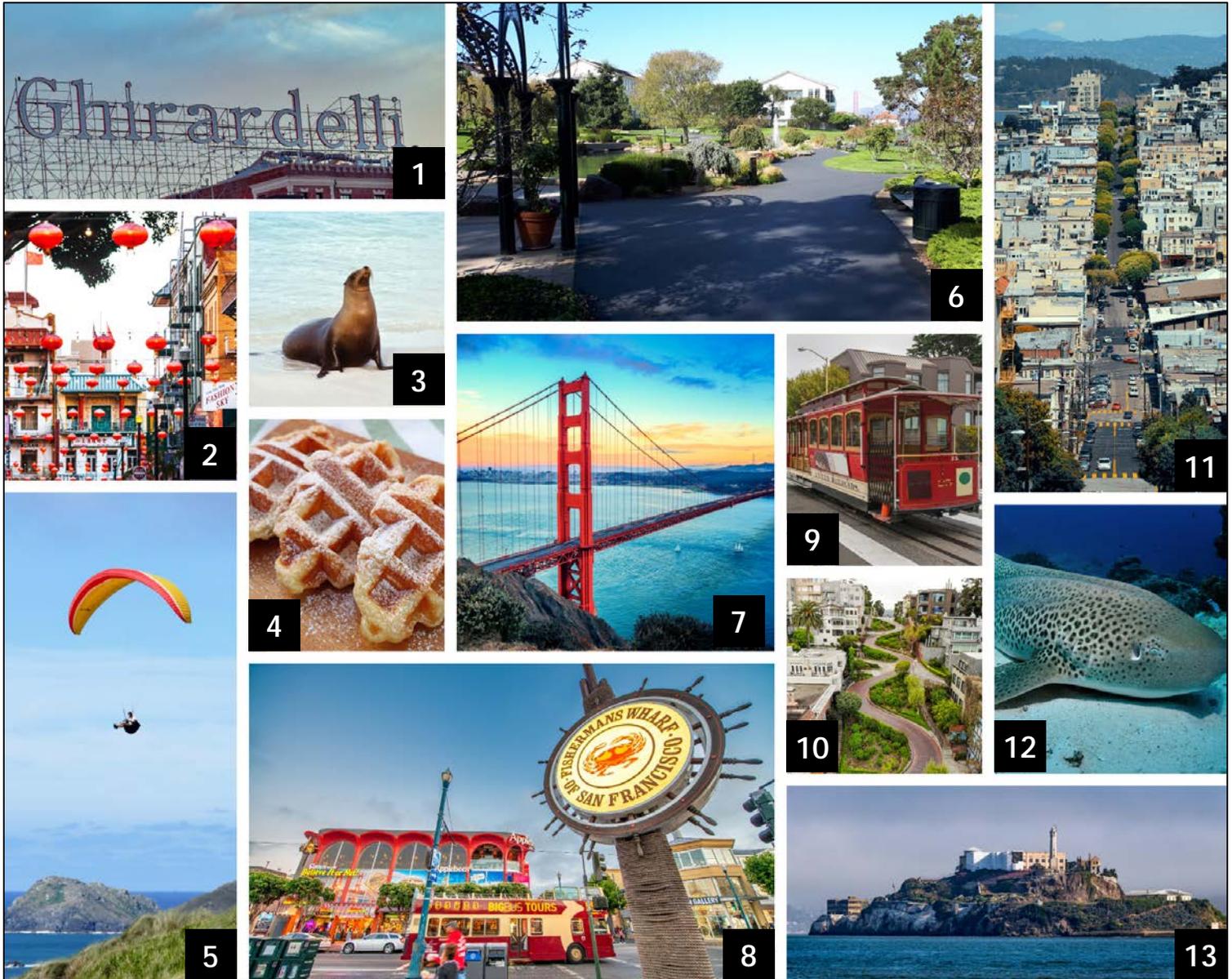


with Donielle and Khrystyna

Episode 39: Summer Travels Part 1: San Francisco

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper-level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations.

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss a summer trip to San Francisco. **Here are a few images of things and places mentioned in the conversation:**



1. Ghirardelli Square

4. croffle

7. Golden Gate Bridge

10. Lombard Street

2. Chinatown

5. paragliding

8. Fisherman's Wharf

11. hilly streets

3. sea lion

6. Presidio Park

9. trolley (streetcar)

12. leopard shark

13. Alcatraz

You can also read the [transcript](#) for this episode.*

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| stand out | Phrasal Verb: be easily noticed or remembered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What <u>stands out</u> most to me about that trip was the food. |
| look into [something] | Phrasal Verb: research or investigate something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm going to <u>look into</u> flights before deciding on a destination. |
| predominantly | mainly; for the most part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area was <u>predominantly</u> residential, with just a few shops. |
| trolley | A small streetcar/cable car used for public transport, often found in tourist areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We rode the <u>trolley</u> through the historic part of town. |
| Wall Street | A street in New York that represents the U.S. financial industry; often used to refer to banks and investment firms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She got a prestigious job at a <u>Wall Street</u> bank. |
| crooked | (1) not straight; bent or twisted (2) dishonest or corrupt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1) a <u>crooked</u> road (2) a <u>crooked</u> politician |
| shady | suspicious or possibly dishonest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That deal seemed a little <u>shady</u>, so I didn't sign anything. |
| ferris wheel | large vertical rotating wheel with passenger seats, usually found at amusement parks or tourist spots |
| humongous | extremely large |
| play it by ear | Idiom: make decisions as you go, without planning ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We didn't book any tours—we just decided to <u>play it by ear</u>. |
| preload | put money/info into something in advance (like a card or app). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can <u>preload</u> your transit card online before your trip. |
| swipe | move a card or finger across a machine or screen to activate it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just <u>swipe</u> your card when you get on the bus. |
| waffle | a breakfast food made from batter cooked in a grid pattern |
| comes down to | be the main reason or point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the end, it all <u>comes down to</u> how much time you have. |
| the grounds | The land around a building or property. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The museum wasn't open, but we were able to walk around <u>the grounds</u>. |
| the crème de la crème | the very best of something (French for "cream of the cream") <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That restaurant is <u>the crème de la crème</u> of Italian cuisine. |
| beat up [someone] | Phrasal Verb: attack someone physically, usually by hitting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He wore the rival team's jersey and the fans almost <u>beat him up</u> at the game. |
| I can take it or leave it. | be indifferent or not have strong feelings about something. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for baseball, <u>I can take it or leave it</u>, but my husband wanted to go, so we did. |
| run away from [something] | Phrasal Verb: escape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We were determined to <u>run away from</u> the summer heat. |

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation - Cont'd

| | |
|--|---|
| how I would do | <p>how I might react, perform, or manage in a situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have trouble with seasickness, so I wasn't sure <u>how I would do</u> on the boat.</i> <p>Note: this structure is commonly used in many situations. Other examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>How did you do</u> on the test? I <u>don't do well</u> with confrontation.</i> |
| choppy | <p>Rough or uneven, often when describing water.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The boat ride was bumpy because the water was <u>choppy</u>.</i> |
| skeptical | <p>doubtful or unsure about something</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was <u>skeptical</u> about using a driverless car, but it worked great.</i> |
| cut in | <p>Phrasal Verb: move in front of someone suddenly or out of turn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other cars <u>cut in</u> because they know the driverless cars will not challenge them</i> |
| apprehensive | <p>nervous or unsure about something</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was a little <u>apprehensive</u> before trying it, but I ended up loving it.</i> |
| nibble | <p>a small bite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the kitten gave my finger a gentle <u>nibble</u>.</i> |
| a haul | <p>informal: a long or difficult trip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It was a bit of a <u>haul</u> to get there, but once we arrived, we enjoyed our stay.</i> |
| be mistaken for [someone or something] | <p>be wrongly identified as something or someone else</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He <u>was mistaken for</u> a celebrity at the airport.</i> |
| Who are we [am I] kidding? | <p>something you can say when you realize that what you are talking about is not true or is not going to work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I said I would get up early and clean. <u>Who was I kidding?</u></i> |
| learning curve | <p>The time and effort needed to learn something new.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This software has a steep <u>learning curve</u>.</i> |
| crease | <p>the line or fold created in clothing or other material. In this case, it refers to the intentional crease created in pants by an iron to give them a neat, polished look.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He didn't like the way his pants were <u>creased</u>, so he decided to iron them again.</i> |

Vocabulary from Pop Culture

During the discussion about how the new recording equipment and editing software had such a steep learning curve, you heard how solving one problem led to another problem—and fixing that one caused yet another. We often refer to this phenomenon as “playing Whack-a-Mole.”

This expression comes from a classic arcade game called Whac-A-Mole, where players use a mallet (hammer-like tool) to “whack” (hit) plastic moles that pop up randomly from holes. As soon as one is hit, another quickly appears somewhere else. In everyday language, “playing Whack-a-Mole” is used to describe a frustrating situation where new problems keep appearing just as you fix the old ones, thereby making it feel like an endless cycle.

Join the Conversation

- Have you ever visited San Francisco, or is it somewhere you'd like to go? Why or why not?
- What's the most memorable food you've ever tried while traveling?
- What's your opinion on doing “touristy” activities when visiting a new place?
- Would you prefer to stay in a hotel or a local neighborhood Airbnb-style rental when traveling? What are the pros and cons of each?
- Have you ever taken public transit in another city or country? How did the experience compare to where you live?
- What are the top three things you like to do when visiting a new city?
- What's your opinion on driverless cars? Have you ever tried one, or would you like to?
- Do you have a place in your country or region that you think everyone should visit?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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