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**The Importance of Travel for A Writer**

**By Maxine Thompson**

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"Don't go into the city alone," the blonde tourist warned me at the port of Belize. "They will cut off your arm for your jewelry."

This was in October 2004, when I went on a Caribbean cruise which, among other islands, stopped in the country of Belize. As I have a friend (whom I'll call Natalia) who grew up in Belize, this made me curious as to how the people actually lived.

Instead of jumping on a tour bus, I decided to get out of my comfort zone and go off the beaten path. I found a group of men standing outside the gates of the port, clamoring for customers to get into their cabs. Finally I chose the most friendly-looking man and climbed into a taxi, which was actually a jitney. On this hour-long ride around the island, I, not only felt deliciously alive, I saw Belize through Natalia's eyes.

My driver, Raoul as I'll call him, assured me that the people would treat me kindly because the island is largely supported by tourism. First, he took me to the richer side of the island. This side of town was comprised of small mansion-like homes, wrapped around by lush palms, which belonged to the prime ministers and the dignitaries. The neighborhood was sedate and quiet as all the inhabitants were at work.

Afterwards, we blundered through the back streets and alleys of Belize, and I met the everyday denizens, including the derelicts.

Looking back, in what Raoul described as the "hood" side of the island, I noticed that the largest house belonged to that of the Obeah woman. This house was chalky white and resembled a mausoleum. It

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stood out like the Taj Mahal in a trailer camp as it was surrounded by what can only be described as windowless hovels and wooden shacks. Suddenly I realized and appreciated how much Natalia had accomplished by coming to America from this third-world country. (Truly, Natalia had given me an accurate picture as to how underdeveloped the country was.)

But this trip also made me think. How can a writer improve his writing through traveling?

These are just some of the benefits I gained.

- 1.. Travel gives you a broader frame of reference from which to write.
- 2.. You get to see how people in other parts of the world live.
- 3.. Travel helps you learn how it feels to walk in another man's shoes.
- 4.. Travel satisfies a writer's curiosity and can give you life-changing information.
- 5.. Travel gives you a fresh perspective on life and expands your horizons before you close your eyes in death.

Travel helps you fill out the small details of your writing projects. These were some of the ideas that I gathered while traveling. Some will be used in future projects.

1. From my trip, I absorbed many small details, which eased their way into my novella, *Second Chances*, a story about renewal and resurrection in life.
2. People are basically generous. As people opened up to me, I found everyone has a story.
3. I learned about the haunted hotels in Galveston, Texas, which is an area of research I'd like to look into.
4. I learned about the flood in Galveston, Texas, which killed over 8,000 people in 1908. I'd like to research this story more.
5. On the cruise, I took classes in traveling around the world safely, which cultivated my desire to travel around the world.
6. I also took a class on feng shui, which I found to be useful as a fictional plotting tool. (Pronounced fung-schway, this is the ancient Chinese art of manipulating and arranging your surroundings to attract positive life energy, or chi, so it can flow smoothly, unblocking any obstructions in your body and environment. Feng Shui evolved from the theory that people are affected for better or worse by their surroundings.)

Most of all, since this trip, I discovered that travel not only broadens a writer's horizons, it is a lucrative way to make money as a travel writer.

As a writer, how would you like to travel the globe and find out how different cultures live? What if you could do this, stay in five-star hotels, and have an all-expense paid for trip? Moreover, what if you

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could get paid for writing articles about your travels? Wouldn't it be nice to supplement your income as a novelist?

Bottom line. The largest journey is the internal journey that you go on when you travel. I believe the best writing should "Tell me something I don't know." Therefore, when you travel, you will encounter the unknown. Some resources to help you sell articles, including travel articles are the following:

1. Writer's Market — this annual publication lists 8,000 or more (mostly North American) publications that buy articles — travel and others.
2. Writers & Artists Yearbook — A directory for writers, artists, playwrights, writers for film, radio, and television, designers, illustrators, and photographers. This is a good resource for British and European markets.
3. The Guardian Media Directory — Also focuses on the British and European markets, this listing contains over 10,000 contacts, from regional newspapers to publishing houses.

Maxine Thompson does 3 Internet radio shows to help authors promote their books and products. They are at

[www.maxineshow.com](http://www.maxineshow.com)

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[www.voiceamerica.com](http://www.voiceamerica.com)

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[www.artistfirst.com](http://www.artistfirst.com)

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in being a guest, or for help with your writing needs, please contact me at

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## Travel Insurance UK

By Judith

While we choose to travel, very few of us realise the importance of travel insurance even though our travel agents tell us a whole saga about its importance. It's only when we encounter emergency situations like theft, flight cancellation, medical emergencies et al that we realize the importance of it.

Travel insurance is defined as the promise of reimbursement in the case of loss of your health and belongings when you are on a trip.

When we are on for a trip, we open ourselves to many risks and emergency situation which may cause tension and thus make our trip a stressful one.

Let's find out what all situations you might confront during your travel:

- Cancellation or Delays: If for some unexpected or unknown reason your flight gets delayed or cancelled, your travel insurance will cover you. The cover even includes bankruptcy of the airline.
- Medical Emergencies: If you fall sick or are injured during your travel, your travel insurance will give you financial coverage.
- Loss or Stolen: If your luggage gets lost or stolen during your trip then your travel insurance will cover you as per the plan policy.

While taking up travel insurance cover most of us think about small things like luggage, cancellation and delays. It tends to skip our mind that travel insurance also takes care of major issues like our illness and accidents which we might encounter during our trip. It takes care of hospital and medical treatment while you are abroad.

Travel..... whether for business or pleasure should be accompanied by travel insurance. Travel insurance is specifically designed to cover you against the possible risks you may experience while travelling abroad. Travel insurance makes you prepared to tackle any unexpected situation that may arise while you are on move and gives you peace of mind.

So, next time when you will be on for a trip abroad, make sure to cover up yourself with travel insurance. There are wide number of providers who can offer you travel insurance. The cover and the options will vary according to the company policy.

So, before applying for travel insurance make sure to shop around and find out the right cover which beseems your circumstances and requirements perfectly. Don't opt for the first insurance cover that comes your way. Explore the market; educate yourself with all the terms and terminologies of the travel insurance cover that will help you to avail the best travel insurance.

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Judith Earl, Profesor finance deptt. MUN,



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