#269 - How to be a Tourist in Your Hometown

Hi there! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast! I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't! Today is episode 269 - how to be a tourist in your hometown. It's summer, we're traveling, and faraway places seem lovely. But so can home! Today, let's Lazy Genius how to visit where you live like you've never been there before.

I'll mention this at the end as well, but I want to make sure you know about my favorite Lazy Genius travel guru - Courtney Cleveland from All the Best Days. I've had Courtney on the show before where we actually talk about staycations, so we'll put that link in the show notes so you can hear Courtney actually say words and be fabulous. But if you are interested in travel, Courtney has some fantastic resources for packing and other universal travel things, but she specifically has travel guides for a handful of cities, and they are fantastic. So rich. So detailed. Full of so much permission. She has city guides on New York City, Colorado Springs, Maui, The Great Smoky Mountains, and the one that I'll be using next week - Washington DC. She covers touristy things, food, drink, ways to get moving, places to get inspired, and she holds hands of scaredy cats like me with information on public transportation and those little details you're afraid you'll miss. These guides are an absolute winner, so if you're thinking about taking a trip soon and are looking for a location, you could be inspired by the travel guide you most want to get. She adds new cities all the time, so I bet we'll have some new ones soon. Plus, you can follow her on Instagram @bestdaycourt. The best day is because she wants to help you find your best day in every city. It would simply not be a complete travel episode without mentioning Courtney.

Okay, so let's Lazy Genius being a tourist in your hometown!

I'm going to take you down a path to help you figure out your own day or weekend in your hometown.

Our first stop on this Hometown Tourist path (and frankly any trip) is what matters? Of course. What matters most to you about this day in your hometown? Is it a feeling? Are you wanting to feel something specific, no matter what you're doing? Is it a location? Is there a place in your town that you've always wanted to go to but haven't? When I was in New York a couple of months ago, I was on a food tour and met a couple of women who grew up on Long Island and had never been to a ton of the touristy places. The Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center. It was just where they lived, and they didn't see any of those places with the same freshness as tourists do. So is there a place in your city that everyone visits but you've never gone to?

What else could matter? Maybe it's a specific experience! Maybe you want to spend a day in your town on foot. Maybe you want to visit every park or every bakery or every pizza place. Maybe you grew up where you currently live and want to take your family or friends to all your favorite places from when you were young. Maybe an experience matters.

And remember that if you're doing this hometown tourist thing with other people, what matters to them also matters. It's not just you. So ask them!

Our next stop is asking "what's keeping you from that thing?" What's keeping you from having that feeling, going to that place, experiencing that kind of day. What's in the way? It could be an expectation that things have to be a certain way to count. It could be an assumption that your city just doesn't have enough fun things to do. It could be that you don't have enough time to spend in your city the way you'd like because of jobs or commitments or health restrictions. It could be the thing that's keeping you from doing this is the interest or buy-in from your family. No one thinks this is a good idea but you. Name what's in the way so you can either remove it or address it.

For example, if your kids or partner or anyone involved in this idea is like "This sounds boring we'll just come back home it won't really be a vacation," you could stay in a hotel in your city. Or get an Airbnb downtown. You could remove the barrier of "it's all the same" by making it not all the same. Obviously that all depends on what matters to you and what your barriers are, but consider that anything counts if it supports what matters.

After you name what matters and name what might be in the way of that, what are you missing? Is there anything you need that you don't have to be a tourist in your hometown? Maybe it's expertise. Maybe you've only been in your city for a short time, a lot of that being during the pandemic, so you don't actually have any idea what the city holds because you're new here but it's also been home for awhile but you haven't made a lot of friends to show you around… it's complicated! So maybe what you're missing is someone else's expertise. Or it could be a plan. You're missing a plan. You have all of these ideas floating around, but they're not part of one cohesive plan. We'll get to that, but it could be as simple as that. It's only overwhelming or even underwhelming because you haven't yet made a plan and put things in their place. Or maybe you're missing time. I mentioned this before that a lack of time could be in the way, so maybe you need to create space for more time like take off a day or two of work or not plan anything for three days straight like you would if you were actually taking a vacation. Make sure you have what you need based on what matters to you.

We'll be right back…

Next up, let's start to get some stuff on paper here. Your next step is to lock something. Lock anything into place. Remember the episode about how you can plan your day with flags, chairs, and bunting? We'll put that episode in the show notes, but flags are things that don't move. In a regular day, it could be a doctor's appointment or a meeting at work. On vacation, the flag is more fun. What is something you want to lock? It could be a certain place you will absolutely visit. Everything revolves around eating breakfast at that restaurant or visiting that museum or riding through that park on a bike. It could be a day of the year or time you're doing this trip. Maybe you have a long weekend coming up off of work or family is coming into visit and you want to take them exploring. Whatever the reason, the thing that's locked could be a date. Lock

it in. Or maybe it's a budget. You got a cash gift from a family member or you get a refund check from something or you came in under budget for something and want to spend the rest on exploring your city. The thing that's locked could be your budget.

No matter what's locked, having something fixed and ready to go will automatically impact your next few decisions. If your budget is locked, you can eliminate super expensive things. If your date is locked, that can eliminate things that could be outdoors or related to whatever season you're in. If the experience is locked, you put that thing in the best part of the day, and then work around it based on how much time you want to spend at the one locked place. Does that make sense? Just lock something in, and it will help you continue to make decisions as you plan.

So you've named what matters about your "vacation," you've named what might keep you from it, you've named what you're missing to make it happen, and you've locked something in. Next, I want you to borrow Courtney Cleveland's phrase and ask yourself what would make the day the best day for you and your people? What happens on your best day? It doesn't have to be all of the same kinds of things, but most of us have certain things that make our best day.

Courtney's categories are Get Coffee, Get Moving (so usually something active or outdoors), Get Inspired (so a museum or something that makes you think or feel good creative vibes), Get Touristy (where you do the touristy thing), Get Food (because obviously), and Get Shopping (because also obviously). Those are categories that probably hit a lot of people's boxes.

For me, I know that my best day will always include something book related, so visiting a bookstore or amazing library, going to a museum for a favorite author, something like that. I've also found, depending on the city of course, that I love visiting old churches. Three of my favorite vacation moments were all at church: Westminster Abbey in London, St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, and Jane Austen's little country church in England. It's probably not likely during most of my vacations to find an old church, but if I can, I'm going. I also love to get coffee and great food which are kind of no-brainers, but my other favorite thing that makes a day a best day is taking a long walk through a city listening to music. It's one of my favorite things on the planet. So if I'm taking a trip, those things will happen.

Have I ever walked through my city with headphones on? Nope. I've gone on walks in parks and around my neighborhood and stuff but never through the city like I do on trips. And now I kind of want to!

The point here is what elements do you and your people need to have a great day? To have your personal best day? Because everybody's versions of this are different, and that's why I love the question and particularly love Courtney because no singular trip is for everyone. What do you need on yours?

Now your final step is to plan. Gather up your ideas and start to orient them around whatever your flags are. Based on what matters and whatever your best day is, make a list of the things you could do. Think outside the box. It might be a day, a whole weekend, or it might be a

summer or seasonal project to explore new parts of your city on purpose over a certain period of time. You can mix familiar things and new experiences. You can think now about the on and offramps to this trip and what you might need to prepare and to rest from afterward. Just brain dump all your things, and then you can put the most important things in the right order and the right place depending on what matters most about your trip and on the flag or flags that you've already locked in.

I think the most important thing to keep in mind when being a tourist in your hometown is to keep an open mind. Don't make assumptions about your city. Try not to gloss over certain things because they've just become the pile of stuff on your desk that you just don't notice anymore because it's always been there. Fresh eyes. Pretend you don't live there. If you were exploring your own city for the first time, what would you be drawn to? Just find one thing, and you can build around it.

You can also utilize your local friends and family to share their favorite place to go or eat or thing to do in the city. Maybe something that's beloved by them could be new to you! They're your secret travel agents.

I live in Greensboro, NC, and I do have a Greensboro guide on the website that we'll link to in the show notes, but those are all things I've done and already love. I'd like to look at my city the way I would if we were visiting it for the first time. Our family might stay in a downtown hotel for a night and spend the day downtown walking to the children's museum and the downtown parks, to the civil rights museum and to the pizza place we've never gone to because downtown parking isn't as easy as Papa John's delivery. It's a different experience and still fun because you're looking at it through a different lens.

I will also make this commitment to you that when it is no longer hot and summer, I am going to put in my ear buds and take a multi-hour walk through my city, and I'm super pumped about it.

So to recap, if you'd like to take a trip this year but can't travel and will do the hometown tourist thing, here's a path to walk to plan that day:

Name what matters about the day or weekend, name what's keeping you from that, name whatever it is you might be missing and need to make this happen, lock something in so that you have a flag to plan around, name whatever makes your best day, and then begin to brainstorm things that fit this structure you've built. Keep your eyes open, ask friends for their favorite things, and watch those assumptions. There's a lot of fun to be had wherever you might live! And if you're like "Kendra, you're wrong I live in a tiny town with nothing," do this for the closest biggest town to you. Proximity is good, too.

Okay, that's how to be a tourist in your hometown!

Before we go, let's celebrate the Lazy Genius of the Week! This week, it's Nicole Vega who shared this great tip: "Summer is full of birthday parties, showers, and bridal events. I'm a busy

mom so most of the time, I get a gift at the last minute aka on the way to the event. I started keeping a few different sized neutral gift bags from the dollar store as well as white tissue paper in a collapsible crate in the back of our car. It's saved me some money not having to buy the expensive bags wherever I get the gift. I used to keep bags and tissue at home, but I never used them. Having them in the car has helped me so much!" Nicole, this is such a great idea! It's another example of putting something in its place - a Lazy Genius principle - but in a place that makes sense based on what matters to you. If you're not wrapping gifts at home, you don't need to store the wrapping stuff at home. It just sits there! But it in the car? So good. This doesn't mean that everyone needs to do this or even that everyone can. Some of you live in big cities or use public transportation and don't have a car to store gift bags in. But I hope this example shows you how you can put anything anywhere that matters to you. It's like the other week where the mom stored her daughter's hairbows by the back door because that's where they always needed them. You put things where you need to put things! Love this, Nicole, and congratulations for being the Lazy Genius of the week!

That's it for today! Thank you so much for listening, everyone. Remember to check out the links in the show notes to all the travel things, particularly to Courtney's travel guides! They are robust, thoughtful, so beautifully designed, and they're making me want to go to the cities she's offering rather than wait for her to come out with a guide to wherever I'm going. They're seriously so good. She's a Lazy Genius through and through. Also I'll put a link to my favorite spots in Greensboro if you're ever around! Not robust but still helpful. And I'm so grateful to all of you for listening. Until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!