

Road trips

1 Work with a partner. Look at the information about the different countries and answer the questions.

- Which country has the most world heritage sites?
- Do you find any of these statistics surprising? Why/Why not?
- Do you know the answers for your country?

2a Read about the trips in different countries. Did all of the writers enjoy their experience? Which of these countries would you like to visit? Why?

Mexico

Population: 128+ million

Main language: Spanish

Other languages: Nahuatl, Yucatec Maya and Mixtec

World heritage sites: 27

Popular transport: bus

**France**

Population: 64+ million

Main language: French

Other languages: German, Flemish, Italian, Basque, Catalan

World heritage sites: 34

Popular transport: train

**Vietnam**

Population: 94+ million

Main language: Vietnamese

Other languages: French, Tày, Mường, Cham, Khmer, Nùng, H'Mông, Chinese

World heritage sites: 5

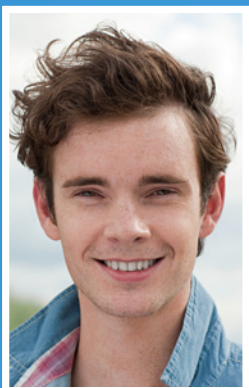
Popular transport: motorbike



Have you ever been on a road trip through your own or another country? What did you learn about the country? Tell us your experiences.

**Gabriela, 19, United States**

I live in the US, but my mother is Mexican and I have always wanted to travel in Mexico. Last summer I toured the country by bus. I set out from Cancun to explore the land of the Mayas, visiting pyramids and cenotes. From there I went to Oaxaca where the people are very proud of their cooking. Mole, I discovered, means 'sauce', and they can contain numerous ingredients: different types of chilli, nuts, raisins, herbs and spices. I tried several and all were delicious! I then visited Puebla, a large city with Spanish colonial buildings in the centre; pyramids like Cacaxtla, with wonderful murals dating back to 900AD, on the outskirts; and the volcano Popocatepetl looming over both. Moving north, I fell in love with Zacatecas which has a wonderful museum with over 3,000 masks from around the country. I found this place fascinating as it showed how many tribes there used to be, and how each Mexican state is unique with its own customs.

**Tom, 18, UK**

I live in the UK but until I was 17 I'd never been to France! Last year a friend and I took a road trip through the country. We took the ferry to Calais and then drove to Paris to explore the capital. From there we passed through Normandy where we enjoyed real camembert cheese at its best. We then headed south crossing the Millau Viaduct, which is the highest bridge in Europe and has amazing views of the valley. We spent some time in Carcassonne as my favourite author Kate Mosse has written various books set there. There are lots of small villages and medieval castles and you almost feel as though you're stepping back in time. We then travelled east along the coast with a detour to see the Verdon Gorge, the deepest gorge in Europe. We did hiking and rafting there which was awesome. We finished our journey in Nice and exchanged our car for bike rides and the beach. This trip really surprised me as I had no idea the French countryside was so beautiful; I used to think of France and associate it with Paris and city life. I also learnt an important lesson: when the waiter offers to refill your glass, don't say 'Merci'. You need to say 'Oui, s'il vous plaît' – quite the opposite to English!

**Kim, 19, Vietnam**

I live in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Last year I visited my brother in Saigon. I flew there and he showed me around on his motorbike. At first I felt as if I was in another country. The city is full of skyscrapers and American-style shopping malls are everywhere. I felt comforted by the number of motorbikes and trikes though, still the main form of transport. We visited the Mekong Delta which was amazing. I've never seen such lush, green countryside and so many fruit and vegetables growing. People always say that Halong Bay near Hanoi is perhaps the most beautiful place in Vietnam but now I'm not so sure! The difference in food caught me by surprise, too. I ordered my favourite, Pho soup, which is noodle soup with meat. However, it tasted completely different because they add fresh herbs, limes and chilli, which we don't do in Hanoi. All the food was delicious and there was so much variety with French bakeries, international restaurants and local food. I was so inspired that I've been experimenting with cooking ever since I got home.

2b Read the texts again and decide if the statements are True (T) or False (F). Correct the false sentences.

- 1 Gabriela travelled around Mexico by train. T / F
- 2 In Puebla you can see skyscrapers and pyramids. T / F
- 3 Tom and his friend went on a car journey through France. T / F
- 4 The Verdon Gorge is the deepest gorge in France, but not Europe. T / F
- 5 Kim's brother showed her around Saigon on his motorbike. T / F
- 6 Kim thinks that Halong Bay is much more beautiful than the Mekong Delta. T / F

2c Read the statements. Which of the travellers said these things? Write *Gabriela, Tom or Kim*. Sometimes there may be more than one answer.

- 1 I improved my understanding of the language.
- 2 There was quite a strong American influence in the city buildings.
- 3 I didn't know there were so many ingredients in one dish.
- 4 I was surprised to find so many differences between the states.
- 5 I hadn't thought the scenery would be so breathtaking.
- 6 I didn't know the same dish could have such a different flavour.
- 7 I learned a lot about the country on this trip.
- 8 The trip has encouraged me to be more adventurous in my own cooking.

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner or in a small group. Read the quotes, discuss their meaning and decide if you agree or disagree with them.

- 1 "You can't understand a city without using its public transportation system."
- 2 "A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles."
- 3 "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page."
- 4 "When overseas you learn more about your own country than you do the place you're visiting."

PROJECT

3b You are going to plan a road trip in your country and write a travel blog entry. Read the questions and prepare your research.

- 1 Work in groups. Brainstorm places that you all want to visit.
- 2 Choose three or four places and plan a trip that covers these locations. Make notes on the following points:
 - how you will travel
 - locations you will visit
 - sights you will see
 - activities you can do that are unique to that place
 - local food you will eat
 - reasons for visiting these places.

3c When you have done your research, write a travel blog entry describing the points above and giving a comparison between the places you chose and your own country. Use your notes to help you. Try to include some ideas about what you learned on your travels.