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# 10 Reasons Every First Date Should Involve International Travel

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BRAND NEW IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES  
Couple kissing on private jet

One random Friday morning the crickets chirping in my Facebook inbox were interrupted by a message inviting me to skip town -- and country -- for a weekend in Japan. It was a genuine invite from a man I'd met on a total of three occasions in very social settings.

Forget going home to have a bath and watch a movie. This weekend I was playing Richard Branson's mistress. I was beaming with my own marvellousness until the realisation that it wasn't *just* an invite to Japan, it was a potential first date. And if there's anything more terrifying than a first date, it's one that you're trapped on for an entire weekend, with not even the fictitious death of a great aunt lined up to save you.

In spite of rationality begging otherwise, by 11 pm I was clearing customs and babbling about Tokyo's weather with my international man of mystery. I felt like I

was boarding the plane with plans to hurl myself out the door at 10,000 feet -- sans parachute, if need be.

So, what ensued from my spontaneous weekender? A wardrobe of brightly coloured kimonos, an appreciation for the art of cutting fish, and a compelling list of reasons why every first date should involve international travel.

### **1. You'll see them interact with service staff, many times**

If handing your date the Myers & Briggs personality test feels a little stage-five psychopath, then utilise the next best indicator of identity and watch their interactions with service staff. Dealings with the duty manager or employee of the month won't suffice; it's the jittery trainees, the arrogant baristas, and the underpaid taxi drivers that let true colours shine through. Factor in customs officials, public transport officers, hotel staff... and a three-day international travel date is the equivalent of encountering more service staff than about 85 dinner dates. A year's worth of normal dating, done and dusted in 72 hours.

### **2. You will bypass the awkwardness of deciding when to part ways**

It's always optimal to be the one declaring the closure of a date. Even more optimal for it to be playfully rebutted with the lure of gelato and a gentle stroll home. At no point in the optimal dating scenario do you find yourself waking up to the words "I'd take you to breakfast but I've got this thing ... with my Mum ... we're doing pottery, I mean pot plant shopping. All day. Maybe even all week if we can't find Californian Hibiscus Trees." No, that's not optimal. Best stick to international travel dates managed by a very tidy schedule of flights.

### **3. They will see you at your worst**

If you've ever walked off an international flight feeling more attractive than a week-old carcass of chicken, the rest of us salute you (and can only assume you're a relation of Miranda Kerr). Meanwhile -- despite dousing our face in oxygen spritzer, consuming Evian like we're hiking Machu Picchu, and eating only pre-prepared carrot sticks -- we non-models cannot disguise the disheveled mess of crossing many time zones. It's the look you hope a potential husband doesn't see until he's six-months deep, but hey, why avoid the unavoidable?



*The dim romantic lighting of the traditional bonbori paper lantern - highly desirable for shielding face post international flight. Image by Samantha Chalker.*

#### **4. And vice versa**

This is also your chance to see them at their worst. If you find yourself appreciating how cute they are in opened-mouth sleep pose, you may start picking rings. If you're anywhere in the vicinity of repulsion, this is not the time to go deleting your Tinder account.

#### **5. Every scrap of small talk will be over**

It's remarkable how many dates small talk can stretch across when real life interludes them. With an international travel date, there is no interlude. Even the initial plane ride, that will see you trapped beside each other with stale scenery and an unavoidably definite number of hours ahead of you, has the potential to move you into deep waters. Unless you plan on falling into a faux sleep or trapping yourself in the bathroom, in which case it will be saved for the calendar of meals you're about to share together. Somewhere during the trip, moving past the small talk is frightfully inevitable.



*Tokyo locals enjoying ice cream and small talk. Image by Samantha Chalker.*

#### **6. There will be an incubation stage free from friends and family**

In the nest of foreign lands your entire circle simply drifts away, and you will be free to formulate your own opinions. His tactless jokes your Mum will hate and the dress sense your friends will despise may not even occur to you. What bliss!

#### **7. There will be drama**

Misplacing your passport. Getting lost with nothing more than a torn map. Running embarrassingly late for a flight. Giving away \$100 US dollars for a packet of gum because you can't convert currency to save yourself. There's nothing particularly easy about international travel, and you'll quickly find out if he's a man that stops moving trains to search for your lost possessions or folds his arms and rattles off his grand methodology for "never losing anything".

#### **8. You'll tackle money matters**

In a world where fairy-floss grows on trees and rivers run with Moët & Chandon, money doesn't matter. In a world of chivalry and feminism and the Personal Financial Crisis, money matters are a painstaking reality of the dating game.

Managing the bill of a dinner date or a trip to the cinema is one thing, a room service bill at the Hilton is quite another.

### **9. There will be free time to fill**

He might declare himself "pretty outdoorsy" whilst swirling a whisky on the rocks in the comfort of a lounge bar. But would he really choose to roam the gardens of an ancient shrine when a screening of *The Godfather* trilogy is taking place in your hotel room? Only the international travel date will tell.



*The Kuil Meiji Shrine in Shibuya, Tokyo, which some may enjoy more than The Godfather trilogy. Image by Samantha Chalker.*

### **10. It's a trial of living together**

Is there any greater relationship challenge than living together? For fans of speed dating, the international travel date is speed relationship-ing. The painstakingly intimate act of sharing a bathroom will quickly reveal just how comfortable you feel in the presence of this particular human being. By the time you're boarding the flight home you will know exactly where your future stands with Mr. Spontaneity.