I was talking with a friend at work yesterday about vacations. She told me about her upcoming trip to Hawaii and how much she was looking forward to the “travel part” of traveling. Awe, yes, the airports, waiting in line for security, layovers, not to mention the time in the air tripping over your neighbor to go for a pee. Then, there’s the airplane food, the ear phones that only work when you hold your head slightly to the left, and the ever present turbulence. By the time you arrive at your destination, you’re completely knackered. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I actually do enjoy all of these things in a quirky kind of way. It’s the anticipation that mounts while you’re doing all these “travel bits” that lead to a successful and memorable holiday.

I met a person on my last flight to London that I have kept in contact with for almost a year. I thought she was going to be rather obnoxious, complaining rather loudly about her choice of seats. But, wouldn’t you know it, she was to be my travel companion for the next 7 hours. We had a lovely time talking and the hours whittled away.

I’m sorry to say, I haven’t had a lot of pleasant close encounters in an airport waiting on flights. But I do enjoy people watching. Depending on what airport you are “stuck” in, you can literally see every nationality and
culture coming and going. It’s interesting to see how they occupy their time waiting, the food they eat, and the way they interact with one another.

Then there are the taxi drivers. When I was in England, I looked forward to my daily taxi outing. I had all the usual questions of “where I was from”, “what was I doing in this part of England” etc. One particular day I remember well. The driver was retired from a blue collar job and took to driving a cab as a means to supplement his pension. From the 25 minute or so trip we took together, I found out that he had lived in northeast England all of his life, was a widower, had a little dog named Charlie, suffered from bouts of rheumatoid arthritis, and had recently developed irritable bowel syndrome. Ok, I got a little nervous about that one, thinking too much information. But as he dropped me off at my destination, I realized that I had enjoyed getting to know this aging middle class Englishman and how kind he was to offer conversation to me.

So, next time, don’t be in such a hurry to get where you’re going. Take the time to enjoy the “travel part” of traveling. You’ll be surprised that they will become a memory you won’t want to forget.