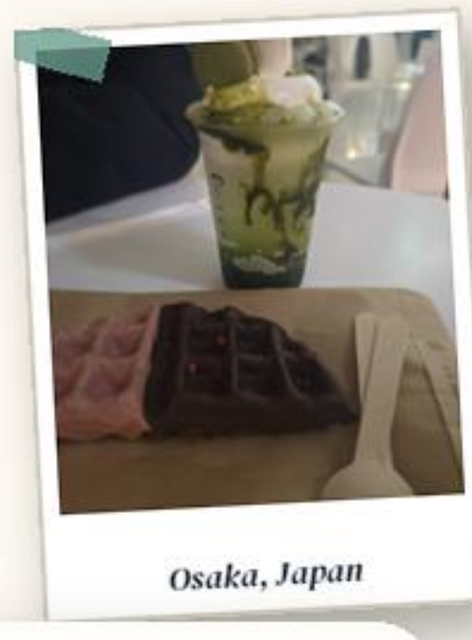
The

Language Barrier Cheat Sheet

WHAT I ACTUALLY DO WHEN I DON'T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE



Baguio, Philippines



Osaka, Japan

1 GOOGLE TRANSLATE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE

Numero uno, every single trip. Type it, say it, or snap a photo of it, the app handles all three.

2 BASIC PHRASES ARE OPTIONAL, NOT REQUIRED

If learning a few local sayings calls to you, do it. If not, you do not need to be a language expert to travel well.

3 HAND MOVEMENT IS A LIFESAVER

Point at what you want, mirror the gesture back, smile bigger. People understand tone and body language faster than words.

4 EXPECT KINDNESS, NOT COLDNESS

Locals go out of their way for you almost every time, especially once they can tell you are a foreigner giving it your best shot.

THE TRAIN STORY

PROOF: my friend's train ticket reservation to Belgium kept failing and the train was filling up. Neither the station worker nor the conductor spoke English. We explained it in broken English and Google Translate, and the worker came back to translate the rest into French. The conductor let her ride for free and pointed out exactly where to get off.

French people get a reputation for disliking Americans, or getting short with you if you do not speak French. That is not what we got. At the end of the day we are all human, and they knew exactly how it feels to be stuck.

"Never let a country not speaking English be the reason why you don't go."

Deja | Mame Dee Travel World
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My firsthand experience, not a guarantee for every trip. Kindness and safety vary, use your own judgment too.