

INTERVIEW ABOUT PUBLIC TRANSPORT

1. Where did you previously live? What was the city like?

Before moving here I lived in Orange County in California. The city I lived in was also a city where I grew up and it is pretty small city, I would say in comparisons to other US cities. There is a lot of nature around, hiking, biking and these things. But in general, that is all there is.

2. Was the city similar to Prague (was it smaller or larger)?

Not at all. It is very suburban city and very much for families, but it is home.

3. Were you a student? What did you study?

What we talked about was actually before my studies. Before living there I was living in city in the North of San Diego, which is again very small city but it was more connected as far I was able to walk and ride bikes. And then I was working (in California) and saving money for coming to Prague. (laugh)

4. Did you use the school bus (for example when you were at high school)?

Actually I never used a school bus. When I was a child up maybe thirteen or twelve when I was in primary school and the school was close enough to ride a bike there – so it was nice. And when I was about fifteen or sixteen my sister was older so she drove a car. At sixteen I got my licence and I could drive as well.

5. Do you like driving a car?

I like driving. And sometimes I have to say that I do miss it but I think in general I am so used to that in home (US) are the distances very long and the gas is very expensive. You kinda have to be cautious about where you will park your car or how much you have to pay. Also when you go with some friends in the pub – you have to keep that in mind. It is not so easy as going out your door and going for a tram.

6. What type of public transport you used in the USA and what type you use nowadays (in Prague)?

I honestly have to say that as far as my use of PT back home is minimal to almost like nothing. I could ride bike around. Lot of people take taxi and you can call it PT, but that is not PT. But the other thing that comes to mind is take a train down to city (like San Diego), because it is really expensive to park there. But I don't think about it as a PT, because you still have to drive to train station. For me it used to be very exciting like „Weeee! I am on the train!“ But now in Prague I use everything I need to use. I stay on tram and I like to avoid going underground, because it is dark there. I like the underground – it is faster and more effective but if I can avoid going down where it is cold and dark I would rather be on a tram even when it is couple of minutes longer. I like looking at things.

7. What was the most comfortable way for you? (bus, subway...) And what you liked there (for example in the subway)?

It depends on where I am traveling. In the city it is probably a tram and when I have to go somewhere little bit further or quicker then I would say that I prefer train. For example to Pilsen I would prefer a train. They are really comfortable here and you can walk around – that is very nice.

8. And are trains in US the same or not?

I think lot of US trains are privatized, so they are very expensive and not very effortable. You can take 45 minutes train ride down to city-centre and it cost you about 20 \$ and that is about 500 crowns, maybe more.

9. Is Prague public transport diferent between USA public transport?

I would say just the acesebility. Prague is much made for public transport. San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco they have public transport but not as many people take it and they are much more iregular and I think that the general mentality about PT is not the same. People take Uber or taxi or somathing more often then go try PT, which is really shame.

10. Do you think public transport in Prague is less/more eco-friendly than in your country?

I do think that Prague has much more eco-friendly because people do take those and there is not the stigma towards those who taking it. I know some czech people, some students who say: „Oh no! Public transport is gross! People are weird there.“ And I am like – sure there are weird people but you may see weird people everywere. It is not thing that only strange people are taking public transport. It is very exesible. Those people should realy try public transport in US.

11. Do you miss something about the PT in your country that is not here in Prague?

I can't really say that I do because I was not really used to taking it. As far as I really miss riding bike. I don't have a bike here, if I have one. My expirience about public transport is almost minimal. If it were better (in US) I probably would take it more. Imagine that I live in bigger city, that I can figure out public transport better. But I just wish it were better. If it were more people will probably use it. But I can't really miss something if I never really used it.

12. But you said that you miss riding bike. Do you use for example bikesharing or something like that?

I don't but I have two bikes and I really need to fix them. In winter when the weather is not so nice, you are not so motivated to do it. And I need to find the time.

13. Was there anything that surprised you about the PT here? For example, those young people give up their seats for older people or pregnant women?

I think that now because I have been here for little while it is not so suprising as it used to be. But first surprise when I came here was that public transport does run all night! That is something really amazing. At home many of the bus lines eighter stop or they become extremly iregular. That is making things extremly difficult. If you don't have a driving licence or a car, this can really effect your lifelyhood – if you live in a big city most of a time you have to drive. For example I worked in a restaurant as a bartender and server and I would drive 20 – 30 minutes to the restaurant every time I have to work. If I had not a driving licence it would be really difficult for me to get there – I would have to look for a job closer to the house. It does effect everything.

And the checking of tickets. When I first came I was like: „Where are these people? (who checking tickets)“ I was suprised that they are hidden and they are going around and inspecting randomly but other places for example London – they have someone phisicly in the tram and he is checking and looking if you are validating and checking when you go in and out. In US we have somebody on the tram, much like you have here, but in US they check everyone and there is no way to get away with it. I know people who did not buy ticket and hope that nobody would chcheck them. They did get caught often. I do not do that. Who wants to traveling around with that nervous feeling: „Oh maybe that guy would check me...“ That was something that suprised me.

And people give up their seats for older people. That is something really admirable and nice to see. People are usually more than willing to give up their seats and actually they are almost shamed when they do not. I am not sure if that is eticet or something and I also see signs on tram like: „Get up for elderly or handicap people, do not play your music loud...“

And there is something which still suprise me – the level of volume in public transport. It is so low to almost nothing. People do not talk and it is not very loud. I was talking to my friend and I felt strange that we are the only people talking. And kids are not very loud as well and if they are perents would pretty quickly shash them. And that was really impressive to me.