

EPISODE 2: GETTING USED TO IT

C: When did you first come here, to Barcelona?

A: First first I studied abroad like the...which, you know, in the US we would say study abroad, in Europe you say Erasmus

C: Of course. Best years of your life.

A: But Erasmus, that's too classy. So, I studied abroad in Granada, in the South, first semester in fall of...Jesus...fall of 98.

C: **Fall** you mean **autumn**, yes?

A: Autumn, yes, I'm sorry.

C: Ok, thank you

A: Fall, you know, when the leaves fall off the trees. Cause leaves don't autumn, they fall. But yes, sorry.

C: If you google this, fall is actually a British word.

A: I'm sure it is.

C: Yes, it kinda shocked me but fall and autumn, I think both have British origins.

A: But not to get too linguistic on us, but since I'm at heart a linguist and by studies and trade as well, that's very similar to many words in Latin-American Spanish that are still being used, because these are words that went over with the colonizers. When the white Europeans went and killed all the brown people and most of the brown people in the Americas, they brought the language with them. And as we know, geographic isolation forces languages to develop in unpredictable yet explainable ways and in different paths. So, Spain Spanish has developed different than American Spanish, even though four hundred years ago they had similar words. Some things happen like that with English and British and American. For example, "reckon". The word **reckon** for us, like "I reckon", has to be said in a southern accent and in some horribly stereotypical way of a **hillbilly**.

C: Right!



un pòdcast de:



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



UB talkin' to me?

#PodcastUB

A: Because in the US the only people who use a southern dialect, that does not mean that all southerners are hillbillies by any means, but there's that traditional stereotype of the "yokel" the slack-jawed yokel from the Simpsons: "I reckon we should "bla"", very southern expression. But also British. In Chicago nobody says I reckon. Sorry, so yes, fall, ok, used to be British.

C: Ok.

A: so, in the third season of the year, the one when the leaves scatter...

C: Between summer and winter.

A: Exactly. I studied abroad in Granada, in the South and then realised I only had one semester left to go to finish my undergraduate degree at the university of Illinois and I'm like "I'm not going back to central Illinois for three months to finish my degree so I came and studied abroad in Barcelona in spring, well, winter-spring of 99. Then I was back here 2001-2002 as an English professor, English philology at the UB. "Go.." they don't have a nickname. Go UB! And then I finally moved back for good in 2005? 2006, sorry. I've been here for around 16 years. Consecutively. Yourself?

C: I arrived here August 2001.

A: August that is...fall?

C: That is between July and September.

A: Excellent. Commonly known as summer.

C: Well, actually, if you come from Ireland, August is more like autumn, to be honest.

A: Ok, Ireland is *always* autumn.

C: it's never summer, that's for sure.

A: Well, in Chicago they say there's like two seasons: there's winter and construction. And that's it.

C: In Ireland it's sunny every day. Might only be a minute but it's sunny every day.

A: Perfect! So you came in August.



un pòdcast de:



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



UB talkin' to me?

#PodcastUB

C: I actually came to live in August 2001 and I'd been visiting here since about October 2000. Funny story, first time I ever came to Barcelona was a Saturday night. It was October 2000, and got to the airport arrived in the airport at about 10 pm with absolutely no security control, no passport control. Nobody seemed to be working in the airport. I thought, "ok, this is a bit strange, Saturday night there's a lot of people around and absolutely nobody working". And then I saw everybody huddled around a TV set. I think they had little Estrella beers, smoking, as people still smoked in public places. And they were watching a Barça-Madrid. And it was the Barça-Madrid that Figo came back for the first time, having signed for Madrid and having been labelled a "traitor" and what not.

A: Yeah, for those of you listening, as an American, I'm shaking my head now cause I don't know what a Figo is. I don't know...but ok.

C: I think Figo was a bit of a traitor to the Barça team. So, it was a huge moment in Barcelona.

A: So he was a LeBron James when he switched from the Cleveland Cavaliers to the Miami Heats. That's a basketball reference for all American listeners.

C: I'm **nodding** and I have no idea what you're talking about, but something similar. So that was the first time I came in and I was like "oh, I like this city".

A: So, not to get on too much of a tangent, but as an English teacher, how many times have students asked you to cancel, move, postpone a class or an exam because of a Barça match?

C: I recall that on several occasions, during the famous Guardiola era it wasn't even a request, it was simply a "we're not coming because there's, Barça are playing". And I also recall having one class where it was Wednesday evening, it was Champion's League night, it was Barça-Madrid, I think a semi-final or something and it was Saint Jordi. I mean, I did not cancel the class I just thought, "nobody is going to show up to this class", and one person I think from South America, a Colombian student who just wasn't aware of football whatsoever, he was a bit lost. So we had a one-on-one class that night.

A: Ok, good. So yeah, I think every teacher at least during those years, not so in its true since the golden age it has had, but there was a while where...man!

C: Well, that was also because Champion's League mid-week that was...

A: That's something that's changed?



un pòdcast de:



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA



C: Yes.

A: I would just like to say, as a musician, there is a never-ending source of frustration, not so much now, again, but during the golden years if you had a gig the night of a Barça match...no. And the worst part was that the way, if I remember correctly, the way that they announced the schedules was, they would say what weekend there was a match but you wouldn't know if it was a Friday, Saturday, Sunday until...and like gigs, by the way, "gig" a "bolo" is a concert from the musician's point of view, right? The fans or audience members go to a concert, musicians play gigs. Like "gig economy", which of course is an irrelevant phrase that everybody is familiar with now. But as a musician you have to book a gig three months ahead of time. And you don't know, sometimes you would play in the cards, you would say there's a Barça match and they would later tell you if it was Saturday or Sunday. Am I wrong about that or no?

C: There was one famous Primavera Sound as well where there was a Champion's League final, and they basically had to say "look, we'll show the game".

A: Really?

C: On the screens, and then when the game was over the bands can come back on and play.

A: We'll talk about Primavera Sound in another episode.

C: So you came here...

A: It's been sixteen years.

C: About sixteen years, I'm something similar. When you first came here was anything you found difficult to get used to? The lifestyle here, the...

A: I mean, if we go back to when I first first first first came here, when I studied abroad in Granada, we flew into Madrid and we had to take a bus down from Madrid to Granada. And that's not only when people could still smoke, as earlier you mentioned people smoking, you could smoke in buses, and old toothless men used to really like those Ducados, black tobacco cigarettes. And like, one could argue that sometimes tobacco has a slightly appealing aroma, not for me, but perhaps you could argue that. Black tobacco smells like tar. It smells one hundred percent like the stuff that they used to pave roadways, and you would, I don't know it was four, five, six-hour bus ride stuck with just...So, that took me a while, actually, I never got used to that, I think. But that was just horrible. So, indoor smoking: bad.



UB talkin' to me?

#PodcastUB

C: Yeah, I remember trying to, well, going to open a bank account and in the queue...

A: And you had the bars of gold with you and they wouldn't accept the gold, right?

C: They would not take my money because I did not have the right piece of paper to prove that...well, that's another story.

A: Because you got it from the end of the rainbow because you're Irish.

C: Of course. But being in the queue and people smoking, people in front of you actually smoking. That really shocked me.

A: In Ireland, was it not common at the time?

C: No. I do remember in the 80's in the cinema people smoking. But by the 90's, early 90's, I think nobody smoked.

A: I don't know if I can remember people smoking in the movie theatre. For sure, as you said earlier, when my parents took me to see Star Wars in 1977, for sure, people were smoking, and probably more than cigarettes, in the movie theatre back then. Ok, so smoking is something definitely difficult to get used to.

C: But also I think when the smoking ban came in, people thought nobody is gonna get used to this. You know, people will just keep smoking in bars and restaurants. So quickly we got used to it, so, so quickly.

A: Spain has kind of...Catalunya, but more in Spain in general a lot, has really surprised me in some cases like this. Because I think Spain in general is quite a "fuck you" country, pardon my expression. Which I love. The irreverence, the, you know, the disdain for certain social constructions, in a positive way. I mean, the history of anarchism in Barcelona, geez, that's part of the socio-cultural fabric. And then like, for example, during COVID, you know, positively enough, I think, everybody here really respected the rules of mask wearing but more so than other European counties and more so than the US, we're not even talking about the US. And it's been, I think it has made me feel happy, level one emotional word, satisfied, content, proud, to a certain degree to live in a place where they know when to say "fuck you" and when to say "ok, maybe you got something there, we'll wear our masks and maybe we will stop smoking so the people next to us don't have to go home and take a shower after being in this restaurant or bar for ten minutes". So...



Vocabulary bank

Autumn = season of the year between summer and winter

Fall = autumn in American dialect

Nodding = lower and raise one's head slightly and briefly, especially in greeting, assent, or understanding, or to give someone a signal.

Reckon = to think or believe

Hillbilly = As a demonym, hillbilly is a pejorative term used in the United States to define the inhabitants of certain remote, rural or mountainous areas.

gig



un pòdcast de:



UNIVERSITAT DE
BARCELONA

