

## Episode 10 - Transcription

[Music] Welcome back fellow travelers. This is Trouble with Me, your in... accessible travel experience podcast.

If you enjoy the show and would like to be a part of it, by sharing about your cities or telling us your accessibility horror stories, you can visit us at:

[troublewithme.com](http://troublewithme.com) or at [TabiFolk](http://TabiFolk), your accessible travel community. And now, without further ado, welcome aboard and get ready to take off.

This is episode 10: Trouble in Tokyo, and, as our season finale, it will be packing a punch. First of all, we'll have an accessibility review of Tokyo. This time sent to us by Josh from Accessible Japan, so thanks a lot Josh. Then, we'll visit Montmartre in Paris, one of its most bohemian quarters, and, finally, as always we'll have an accessibility horror story, although with a bit more horror than usual, so get ready for it. And we'll finish it up, as always, with some accessibility tips and our sounds of the world. Let's begin.

Welcome to Tokyo.

[Music]

Tokyo, the capital of Japan, busy and tidy alike, it is home to neon light streets, eclectic districts and to the Shibuya scramble, the busiest zebra crossing in the world. Originally a fishing village named Edo, it has hosted the Paralympics twice and has grown into one of the largest metropolis in the planet.

[Subway music]

We're on board of Tokyo's subway to give our score on Transportation accessibility. We are giving it 4 out of 5 stars.

Once you get used to the winding subway lines and to the fact that many times elevators are located in nearby buildings, Tokyo is one of the easiest cities to get around using public transportation, even for wheelchair users. Just prepare to avoid commuting times, if you don't want to get squished.

Next, Streets accessibility. We are giving it 4.5 stars. Streets are generally narrower than in many other cities in Japan and are often very busy, but they are usually smooth and safe for travelers of all needs. Tactile pavement, as well as curb cuts, are widespread. Accessible toilets are also easy to find at department stores, parks or stations.

[Music]

We are hearing the unmistakable sounds of a game parlor in Tokyo to give our score on Restaurants and Shops.

We are giving it 3 out of 5 stars. There are so many places to choose from, but way too many are inaccessible due to lack of space or steps. If you fancy a specific place, it is best to research in advance using tools like Google Street View. Otherwise, shopping malls or department stores near stations are a safe bet.

Now, Hotels and Accommodations. We are giving it just 2 out of 5 stars. If you need an accessible room, be sure to start looking far in advance and don't hesitate to ask for pictures, as hotel accessibility has no clear standards in Japan. The Toyoko Inn or larger western hotel chains are usually good options.

We are at the Senso-ji's temple to give our score on tourist attraction accessibility. 4 stars. Tokyo has many sights and sounds to enjoy, such as skyscrapers, vibrant neighborhoods and temples. Most of them are wheelchair accessible, even the traditional ones like Asakusa and Meiji Jingu. Some inaccessible areas in smaller temples and the issues with shop entrances in areas like Shinjuku or Akihabara are the only downside.

[Train speakers in Japanese]

Finally, we are in one of Tokyo's platforms to give our score on Getting there. It is 4.5 out of 5 stars. Getting in and out of Tokyo is fairly smooth and both its airports have accessible transportation to get to the city center. Haneda is the closer option. Besides, the Shinkansen, Japan's famous bullet train, conveniently connects the city center to the rest of the country.

With this we have reached the end of the review and our overall accessibility score for Tokyo is 3.7 out of 5 stars. Tokyo's score takes a dip due to poor accessibility on restaurants, shops and, specially, accommodation. On the other hand, transportation and streets should not be a problem and tourist attractions can be mostly enjoyed too, so, if you plan your stay in advance, you'll be good to go.

Remember that this was just a summary. If you want to download the full report with lots of extra information on the city, you can go to [troublewithme.com](http://troublewithme.com) or find it at TabiFolk community. Okay, now let's move on to our tourist attraction review and let's visit Montmartre in Paris.

[Music]

Located at a hill in the north, Montmartre is the historic quarter of artists in Paris. The unmistakable Place du Tertre, a picturesque square brim with painters, is the heart of the area. The Sacré Coeur basilica overlooks the city from its top and offers great views to the hordes of tourists that visit it. As a bonus, if you've got a keen eye, from nearby the front stairs of the church, you may also spot its elusive sinking house.

This is Montmartre's funicular and, despite having said wheelchair accessible funicular to overcome the 222 steps that lead to the top of the hill, Montmartre is not friendly for those with mobility impairments.

[Speakers] "Beware of pickpockets."

Well, as you've just heard it's also a bit dangerous for tourists in general. Anyway, let's continue. So, the area is mostly paved with uneven cobblestone, sidewalks are extremely narrow, some curb cuts and tactile pavement is also missing and there are many unavoidable steep streets, if you want to get to the best sightseeing spots. Furthermore, the accessible entrance to the basilica is a bit tricky to find and is not open throughout the whole day, so planning in advance is necessary.

But, what is it that we are hearing in the background? It is actually Montmartre's real atmosphere. It's what makes the city unique. We are hearing the performance of a couple of songs, "Champs Elysées" and "La vie en rose", by a street artist.

So, despite what we've said before, if you have an electric mobility device, someone to push, strong arms and/or loads of patience, its views of the city and bohemian atmosphere may be worth a try. Getting there earlier in the morning is recommended to avoid the crowds.

So, this is the end of the report and our overall accessibility score for Montmartre is 1.5 out of 5 stars.

Again, this was just a summary. You've got the full report on our website and on our podcast notes at [troublewithme.com](http://troublewithme.com). And that gets us to our accessibility Horror Story. It is one of the first that I experienced, many many years ago in the middle of a haunted mountain.

[Music]

More than 15 years ago, when I still regularly walked, I had a summer job in a haunted house at an amusement park on top of a mountain. I knew that it was not my cup of tea, but I wanted to know as a little person what it felt to work in a disability cliché. Can't talk about something if you don't know anything about it.

Anyway, one day, a rumour started spreading that there had been some assaults in the mountain. That night, at 10pm, I exited the park and made for the parking lot, more than 500 meters away downhill. At my pace, when I got to it, mine was the only one left. I got on, turned the keys and nothing. Turned the keys again. Silence. I checked around and saw that I had left the hand break on, which had most probably drained the battery. As I'm one meter tall, I use hand controls and, to shift gears when parking, I have to lock the break lever. As usually noone can leave the break pedal pushed, the lights-on alarm doesn't set off if you leave the break on. Thus, as I had forgotten to release it, no alarm, break on, the car's battery had died after so many hours. I cursed a bit, but I kept my cool. I'd have to call for assistance.

I took my phone out from my bum bag, I pressed the button to light the screen... but it didn't turn on. I pressed again. Nothing. I held the "on" button for a while and the dreaded no battery sign appeared. It was not the first time that my phone had nearly run out of battery while working at the park. As signal was poor in the mountain, the phone kept searching for signal the whole day, so it used more power than usual. Today, when I most needed it, it had completely run out. Hail to the power outage day.

It was time for difficult decisions. Should I spend the night at the car at an empty parking lot in the middle of the mountain or should I try to go back to the park and find some help? Most probably a night guard would be there and I might be able to borrow their phone. On the other hand, it was completely dark outside, the way back would take more than 20 minutes and that day's rumours were definitely unsettling. However, if I stayed the night, safety concerns were quite similar and my family would for sure worry without news.

I decided to make the trek back up. I left the car, locked it with the key and started walking. As I left the parking, I did not use the narrow sidewalks, but the middle of the road. The surroundings were pitch black and my mind kept going to the rumours. I tried to pick up the pace, but after a long day's work, I couldn't muster any speed. I kept on, wanting to distract myself to make time go faster, but the stillness of the night made it impossible to focus on anything else. There was no wind, no moon, no stars. You could not hear a single soul, not even summer crickets. My crutch and footsteps were the only sounds piercing the night.

At long last, I reached the square in front of the park. Dim street lights gave it a bleek atmosphere. I got near the fence and saw a guard seated at his post. I waved at him. He approached. His face was obscured by the shadows. When he was about 5 meters from me, I spoke. "Excuse me, could you help me. My phone is out of battery, could I make a...". I couldn't even finish that he turned around, but just before that, I saw a glimpse of his eyes, wide with surprise. He left and never looked back.

I was left there standing. Alone, but not beffudled, as I had already had my share of hiccups and one more only added a bit to it. Did he think I was a ghost? Did I have some make up left from the haunted house? No, I always removed it before going. Was he spooked by a one meter tall person that talked like an adult? That sometimes happened, plus the eerie setting might have helped it. Either way, my position was the same. Left with a return ticket to spend the night in my car.

I took a deep breath and looked around one last time hoping for a potential way out. On a far corner of the square, I saw a telephone box. I looked at it with longing and bitterness, as I knew that I wouldn't be able to reach it. However, instead of starting on my way back, I approached it anyway, wondering if I'd be able to operate it with my crutch. As I got closer, I was blessed by the gods of accessibility. It was a lower telephone box designed so that anyone could use it. With relief, the only thing left was for me to have a coin, as most probably the kind guard wouldn't lend me one. I fished in my purse and there it was, a 2€ dime. The most expensive and relieving short call of my life. I dialed my parents house.

After a 30 minute wait, they picked me up and we were able to restart the car by charging it with connecting battery cables. This wouldn't be the last time for it to run out of battery, but that's another story...

[Music]

Well, we've reached the end of the story and, with that, we've gotten to our tip of the day.

First of all, we've seen the importance of accessibility. In this case, I was actually saved by it. Accessibility is not only a thing that can save you from a pinch, but it's something that's

necessary every day. Design for all. Imagine living in a world where you cannot use any machine, any device. That's not fair, right? So everyone's got the right to be in charge of their lives and, for that, access to the surroundings, access to everything is necessary.

Well, so having said that, our tips for today are the following. Always carry a power bank with you. So, in case you run out of battery in your cell phone or any of your devices, you can charge them again. Power banks nowadays are very very small, so you can carry them in your purse, in your bum bag or in your mobility device. For a second tip, also, always carry your mobility device's battery charger with you. Battery is what makes us keep moving forward, makes us keep rolling.

So, thanks a lot for having rolled with us during this first season of Trouble with Me podcast. Now, we are taking a long break. We don't know if we are going to come back or not. It will depend on many things, it will depend on our troubles, it will depend on our travels... I said trouble... I meant travel, as in trips, okay. And it will also, well, depend on the support, on our time... only time will tell. So, we've gotten to the end of the episode and, as always, we'll wrap it up with a very special edition of our sounds of the world.

[Train tracks]

Today's sounds will all have summer vibes.

These are some cicadas and the sea. It was sent by Roser from Barcelona.

And now, we are going to the final party of the World Dwarf Games, an Olympic style competition held every 4 years.

Listen how everyone is singing their hearts out.

This time it was in Köln or Cologne in English.

We are hearing songs from Backstreet Boys, "Everybody". And then, "Breaking Free" from High School Musical.

Again, another summer nature sound. This is some heavy rain.

Storm and thunder.

Yeah, and to close it up, another concert.

The first concert in Barcelona from Coldplay, The Music of the Spheres World Tour.

[Music]

Again, lots of people singing their hearts out with this rendition of "Paradise".

[Music] "In the night, the stormy night, away she'd fly".

[Music]

**Trouble with Me**  
Your (In)Accessible Travel Experiences' Podcast

With this optimistic sound, we're going to say goodbye, have a nice day and see you around, fellow travelers.