

## Episode 80: Chocolate Festival

### Summary

Nick and Wendy talk about visiting the chocolate festival held in the beautiful medieval town of Óbidos in Portugal.

### Transcript

Nick: Today Wendy and I are talking about the chocolate festival that we went to last week in a town called Óbidos, which is about an hour of Lisbon, here in Portugal. But before we get to the chocolate festival, it's worth talking a little bit about Óbidos itself, because it's a beautiful little town, right?

Wendy: It is. It's gorgeous. It's a small medieval town, where all of the buildings are whitewashed<sup>1</sup>. But then they also have kind of yellow and blue stripes on the corners of some of them. So it's really beautiful and then everything is surrounded by a stone wall.

Nick: Yeah, so the stone wall is a complete wall that goes all the way around. And more or less all of the buildings inside are very uniform and so, yeah, it's a beautiful place to go. You can walk along the entire stretch<sup>2</sup> of the walls, and so we did that. And actually we've been to Óbidos before, as well, so it's worth going to even if there's no chocolate festival going on at that time. So you can walk along the walls which is great. Uhh, there are some towers that you can get up as well, umm, and then you get a great view of the surrounding area, so, it's, yeah, it's really lovely.

Wendy: Yeah, and we were lucky with the weather this time. I had been once before, I think you had been twice before. Uhh, but we had never had really great weather on the other trips and this time it was a really bright, sunny day with a beautiful blue sky. It was still quite windy, which I think is normal for that area, because I saw lots of windmills, both on the bus as we were heading there and then also from Óbidos itself when you're up on the walls and looking out over the countryside, you can see quite a few modern windmills, you know, the ones that generate, umm, electricity from the wind. And you can also see others that are centuries old that are falling apart and are no longer in operation, but you can tell that it was always a windy place.

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<sup>1</sup> whitewashed: painted white (referring to the outside of a building)

<sup>2</sup> stretch: continuous length

Nick: Yeah and actually on the high point of the walls that you can get to, kind of up one of the towers, yeah, it's quite windy up there too and there aren't really any barriers that could stop you from falling down, uhh, the walls. Except now they've put one up, uhh, to stop you from going to a certain part. I noticed that this time. That wasn't there last time. Because I remember the previous time when I'd gone with some other friends, we'd taken some pictures from this other section, but now that's blocked off. And so I hope it wasn't because somebody was blown off the walls!

Wendy: Well, hopefully it was a preventive measure<sup>3</sup> that they decided to take before anyone got blown off of the walls.

Nick: Actually another really interesting thing that we got told this, uhh, past time when we were there last week was that a local<sup>4</sup> told us that Óbidos used to be on an island in a lake, and that the only way you could get to it was by boat. And the entire little town was on this hill surrounded by water. And then after the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755, the topography of the area changed. I don't know what happened exactly but the lake disappeared and now it's no longer a lake. But that probably contributed, umm, to the size of the town and things like that. It was probably quite restricted because of the land that was available with the lake all around it. And so that's helped create these great medieval walls and the uniformity in the architecture, perhaps, as well.

So it's a quite a touristy town. I don't think we can pretend it's an undiscovered site. It's close enough to Lisbon that it's a day trip from Lisbon, uhh, and so a lot of people do go there. Uhh, what we did this time was we went a little bit earlier than we needed to go, because the chocolate festival started at 11am, and we decided to go and get there at about 10am and that was great because there was really nobody there at that time, and so we went along the walls and we had everything to ourselves and we could take some pictures without there being lots of people. Uhh, but then, yeah, by about eleven o'clock, some busloads of people started to arrive. It was also, like you said, a beautiful day, and ever since then, the last ten days or so have been kind of awful.

Wendy: Yeah, it's been raining an awful lot<sup>5</sup> in Lisbon and snowing in other parts of Europe. It hasn't been cold enough, not nearly cold enough, to snow here. But it has been snowing in Spain, for example, in Madrid, where they normally don't get very much snow. So, yeah, there's a big, uhh, kind of storm of bad weather that's come in, that came in just the day after we were there at the chocolate festival, so we made the right decision to go then.

Nick: Definitely. So in Óbidos itself, there's probably, I guess, two main streets, uhh, in the town. It's quite a small place. And one of them has quite a lot of shops,

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<sup>3</sup> preventive measure: that which stops something bad from happening

<sup>4</sup> local: person from the area

<sup>5</sup> an awful lot: a great amount

souvenir shops, things like that. And the other one has ... is more where the restaurants are. Umm, and there's a couple of bars as well. And so, you know, it doesn't take long to walk around it, but it's very pleasant. Umm, I think, you know, like I said, there are a lot of tourists but it's still just such a nice place, it's so nice to look up at the walls and to climb on the walls and everything, that, you know, I think everybody who goes there really enjoys it even though there are, you know, quite a lot of people for the small town that it is. So as we said, we went for the chocolate festival, and they have this every year, and it goes on weekends for quite some time, for, like, a month, right?

Wendy: Yeah, I think it's at least a month, but, yeah, it's not every day of the week. I think it's just Friday, Saturday and Sunday for, say, four weeks in a row.

Nick: And one of the good things about it is that the chocolate festival is held inside the castle, and we hadn't been inside before. Uhh, I'm not sure if it's usually open, I guess you have to pay to get in, but I'm not sure if it's always open or not. Umm, but so we went to a different area of Óbidos that we'd never seen before, and so that was a little bonus as well.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: And so what's the chocolate festival all about?

Wendy: It's all about chocolate! So there are lots of stalls that are set up by, uhh, different little companies that sell chocolate, or sometimes they just sell, you know, bars of chocolate, sometimes they'll sell more inventive things. I think I saw something there that they called a choco-burger, so it was in the shape of a hamburger but the ... what would have been the patty<sup>6</sup> was made of chocolate, and then they put whipped cream on top of that and then put it between two pieces of bread like a hamburger bun. So, yeah, there were lots of, kind of, innovative ways of using chocolate. We got some chocolate-covered strawberries which were really delicious and a chocolate bar as well that was like chocolate and peanut butter mixed together. Umm, yeah, that's pretty much it. And then there are also some workshops, there are some activities for kids where you could make your own chocolate pizza, for example. So you could create a dessert pizza and put sprinkles and M&Ms and all different kinds of toppings that you would like on your pizza. And then they have, like, cooking demonstrations as well, where chefs will come and show an audience how to make these different dishes, and they're all using chocolate.

Nick: Yeah, it's quite a local affair in terms of these small stalls where, you know, there's a lot of handmade stuff or artisan chocolate and things like that. Although there was a huge Nestle sign, uhh, as well, that was where people went to get their selfies because it was right at the base of the city walls and so it was a kind of a nice picture. But, umm, yeah, the commercial companies get into it as well.

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<sup>6</sup> patty: the meat in a hamburger, or the main part of a veggie burger

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: Umm, so, yeah, we tried to be a bit restrained<sup>7</sup>. Like you said, the chocolate-covered strawberries, the chocolate bar. The other thing we had which you can get year-round in Óbidos is a, uhh, liqueur which is called *ginjinha*, and they can serve it, they serve it sometimes in a little glass that's made of chocolate.

Wendy: Right, a little tiny cup, like the size of a shot glass, uhh, that is made out of chocolate. So you can drink your *ginjinha*, and then when it's finished, you can actually eat the cup 'cause the cup is made of chocolate. So that's a lot of fun, and, yeah, that's something that is not only at the chocolate festival, you can have that any day of the year that you go to Óbidos.

Nick: Yeah, I think that's more or less something you have to do when you go.

Wendy: Yeah.

Nick: It's a rite of passage<sup>8</sup> for Óbidos. And so we walked around the chocolate festival for a bit. Uhh, there were also, umm, people doing entertainment kind of things related to chocolate. There was a chocolate, umm, covered person.

Wendy: Right, so, yeah, there was a man on stilts<sup>9</sup>, kind of like a clown, and then he was pretending that he had a marionette, you know, a puppet, that is ... where you use strings to manipulate the puppet's hands. But that puppet was actually a real person. So there was this big person who was up on stilts and then there was this smaller person who looked like she was all covered in chocolate and her arms and legs were attached to these strings, and this clown was moving her around. It was all very strange but everyone seemed to enjoy it.

Nick: Yeah, no, it's a great place to go for families, for anybody - there were locals there, there were tourists there. And people were just walking around, enjoying the sun, taking their pictures, eating their chocolate.

Wendy: Mmm-hmm.

Nick: Yeah, I don't know about the chocolate burger though. I don't really think with real bread, I don't think that would taste too good, so I think we did well to skip that one.

Wendy: Yeah, maybe the bread is sweet, maybe it's like a *brioche*. I'm not sure, we didn't try it. Umm, but, yeah, there are lots of different things, so if the choco-

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<sup>7</sup> restrained: under control (in this case, by not eating too much chocolate)

<sup>8</sup> rite of passage: a ritual marking an important stage in life (Nick used this expression in a bit of a sarcastic way in this example)

<sup>9</sup> stilts: large wooden leg extenders used by performers in the circus, etc

burger doesn't strike your fancy<sup>10</sup>, then I'm sure that you can find - as long as you like chocolate - I'm sure that you can find something there that you will like.

Nick: And if you're not into chocolate, well you can go to Óbidos any other time of year and it's a great little town to spend a half a day in, taking in all the little sights.

Wendy: Yeah, I definitely recommend it.

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<sup>10</sup> strike your fancy: appeal to you

## Comprehension Questions

1. What was the weather like when Nick and Wendy went to Óbidos for the chocolate festival?
2. How long does the chocolate festival last for?
3. Where in Óbidos is the chocolate festival held?

## Exercises

*Use the words and expressions in the footnotes of the transcript to fill in the gaps.*

1. If you're going to ask someone for directions, make sure you ask a \_\_\_\_\_ and not a tourist.
2. The holiday was great but there were \_\_\_\_\_ of mosquitos there. I have loads of bites!
3. This road is in really bad condition. There's a long \_\_\_\_\_ that's full of potholes.
4. I think the movie looks like it will be really fun. I don't know why it doesn't \_\_\_\_\_. Is it because you don't like romantic comedies?
5. The hamburger was OK but I think the \_\_\_\_\_ was a bit overcooked. The fries were good though.
6. In Goa in India there are a lot of beautiful old \_\_\_\_\_ churches dating from the Portuguese colonial era. They look stunning against a deep blue sky.
7. Usually when they go shopping, they buy way too much stuff. This time they were actually quite \_\_\_\_\_ and only bought one or two things.
8. We decided to hold the party indoors as a \_\_\_\_\_ in case it rains. We don't want to set everything up outside and then have to move it all in later.
9. The kids loved the circus. Their favourite part was watching the performers do tricks while on \_\_\_\_\_. It's impressive that they can keep their balance while they're so high off the ground!
10. Buying his first car was a \_\_\_\_\_ for him as he finally feels like an adult now.

## Discussion Questions

Discuss these questions with a partner or in the [English in 10 Minutes Listeners group on Facebook](#):

1. Do you like chocolate? What is your favourite type of chocolate?
2. Have you ever been to a chocolate festival? If so, what was it like? If not, what other food festivals have you been to?
3. Do you think you would like eating the choco-burger? Why or why not?

## Answers

### Comprehension Questions

1. It was sunny and there were blue skies, but it was a bit windy.
2. It lasts for four weeks, but only on the weekends.
3. It's held inside the castle.

### Exercises

1. local
2. awful lot of
3. stretch
4. strike your fancy
5. patty
6. whitewashed
7. restrained
8. preventive measure
9. stilts
10. rite of passage