Armchair Travel: A Sensory Experience for Seniors

Armchair Travel takes people to faraway places without leaving home.

It provides a sensory experience and the opportunity to learn about exotic lands and important past events in a meaningful manner.

Related: 30+ Sensory Activities for People Living with Dementia

Start an Armchair Travel tradition at your facility! Make it a monthly event and build up expectations to this most interesting and engaging activity.

How to Plan an Armchair Travel Activity

- Use the scheduled ‘Residents meeting’ to reveal the proposal to residents.
- Have residents choose a country or event/documentary they would like to see.
- Make decorations according to the country chosen.
- Serve some food or snacks from the chosen country.
- Get hold of some relevant music or trivia to enhance the activity.
- Send personal invitations, especially to more introverted residents.
- If showing YouTube videos, make sure that you can hook them up to a large TV screen.
- Alternatively borrow videos from your local library.

Related: Armchair Travel with Google Maps

How to Conduct an Armchair Travel Activity
Choose your theme by asking your clients for topics of interest or choose from generic themes such as: national parks, islands, rain-forests and even biographies of famous actors or singers.

Choose a short DVD or play YouTube videos for a maximum of one hour; preferably less if your clients have attention deficit. There are excellent short videos to be found on YouTube that are less than 20 minutes long, you may show two short videos if the response is positive.

Here are a few ideas:

- The Taj Mahal and its history
- The Champs Élysées
- Castles and Palaces
- The Royal Wedding of Danish Prince Frederic and Princess Mary from Tasmania, Australia

**Where to Find Suitable Films and Videos**

- Look for videos freely available online. YouTube is a great resource! If you know someone who is computer-savvy, they may also be able to download suitable videos for you.
- Purchase online (Amazon, E-Bay).
• Borrow from Library.
• Borrow from friends or residents’ relatives.
• If you know someone going overseas ask them to take a 10 minute video of the place visited.

Samples of Themes & Videos to get started with:
Here are a few videos I deemed suitable, found online. Show the videos in full screen mode hooked up to a large TV for an enjoyable morning or evening.

1. Visit the beautiful Iberian Peninsula, then Morocco!

A narrated video by Raymond Kresha, featuring a group of people visiting historic sites of Portugal, Spain and then Morocco. The video runs for roughly 30 minutes. There are some pictures of the tour participants but mostly it shows stunning landscapes from the Iberian Peninsula and Morocco.

Watch: Portugal, Spain & Morocco (YouTube)

Craft: Color-in the Flags of Portugal & Spain (download below)

Serve: Look online for recipes of Pasteis de nata (Portuguese tarts) or Tapas (Spanish entrees such as small meat balls or Spanish omelet cut into bite sized pieces) or Moroccan bread cut into chunks and served with Hummus.
2. The Queen’s Palaces Documentary

The Queen of England, Elizabeth II has three residences: Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. This is a 30 minute video on the history of the most romantic of the three, Holyroodhouse. Besides romance, there is also deceit, betrayal, and murder.

Watch: