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[Blue Planet: An Alien's Guide to Living on Earth](#) - By Glenn Campbell

Chapter 1 Welcome

Welcome to the Blue Planet, gem of the Solar System, home of a diverse ecosystem, interesting culture and many unique entertainment opportunities. Whatever your desires may be, you will find a way to express them here. Opportunities for wealth, love, fame, challenge and accomplishment are found here in abundance, but you have to know what you want and how to get it. If you like games, this planet presents a sophisticated one: On your visit, you will live among the natives, experiencing the world as they do. You will immerse yourself in their culture, biology and peculiar way of thinking. By trial and error, you will learn the rules of the game and how to apply them. You will make decisions and directly experience their consequences. On this planet, there are few safeguards and no guarantees. The experience is raw and untamed, and if undiluted reality is what you really want, Earth is the place to be.

Whether you were born on this planet or come from somewhere else, you might not have been fully briefed on local conditions. Earth is both a minefield of threats and a garden of unrealized opportunities, and knowledge is your key to their proper avoidance or use. If there is anything lacking on Earth, it is reliable information about the things that are most important. Until now, no one has published a comprehensive guide, not just on the planet's biology and scenic features but on how to get along here. If you have ever wished for a simple, no-nonsense instruction book, now you have it. While many competing documents claim to offer the truth, their advice is usually colored by religious ideology or the self-serving goals of the author. Ours is different. We accept no advertising and claim no connection with God.

Although we currently live on Earth and have made our own local investments, we have also retained our alien perspective. We'll give you the straight scoop on where to go, what to do and how best to prosper here, even when that information is uncomfortable.

A lot of what you find on Earth will be uncomfortable. This is a primitive planet with far more pain and senseless waste per capita than would be anticipated by any theoretical model. Many of the rules that you think of as logical simply do not apply here. Justice is rare, and the often bizarre behavior of the inhabitants can be explained neither by ethics nor simple self-interest. There is an emotional logic behind even the strangest human activity, but it is usually hidden behind a complex system of delusions and rationalizations. Only experience can tell you how this society works, and we hope that some of ours can benefit you during your visit. During our own tour, we have made mistakes and learned some lessons. We have eaten at the bad restaurants so that you don't have to.

This guide will touch on the flora, fauna and physical environment of the planet, but since all of these are amply described in the existing literature, we will not dwell on them. We will focus instead on how best to adapt to this planet should you choose to stay here for an extended period. While Earth possesses a rich variety of life forms, we shall focus on the dominant organism -- man -- and the culture he has created on the planet's surface. Whatever your purpose may be in visiting, even a discreet botanical study, you will probably have to deal with humans in some capacity. Mankind's influence is so widespread in every surface environment that you must thoroughly understand his ways even if you wish to avoid him.

If you intend to mingle with man, then you must not only understand him but learn how to interact with him to get what you want. Ideally, you should come to Earth in human form, as opposed to some kind of alien creature, as this is more likely to put your subjects at ease. To communicate with humans, you must learn to think like a human, act like a human and thoroughly inhabit a terrestrial role. You must accept the flaws of your surroundings, the weaknesses of your body and the limitations of your perception. You did not come to Earth to seek perfection or omniscience; you probably came here -- and continue to stay here -- as a test of your abilities. Your challenge is to make the most of the circumstances presented to you within the rules of the local environment. You want to prove that you can overcome the obstacles and thrive on this planet in spite of the primitive conditions. Full involvement in the Earth experience may require you to sever all connections with whatever other planet or astral plane you came from. To understand the earthlings, you must be an earthling and play their game to the fullest of your ability.

====> Throughout this manual, we assume that you will be occupying a human body, as this is the most convenient vehicle for local travel and exploration.

Fuel and service for a human body can be found in almost any populated place. If you choose to come to Earth in some other form, be prepared to provide your own fuel, bodily protection and air supply.

A tour of Earth, if properly conducted, is like being shipwrecked on a desert island. How you arrived here and when you will be rescued are not important now. At present you face certain threats, like hunger and thirst, and have limited resources to work with. It doesn't do any good to grieve for your misfortune or rejoice at surviving the wreck; you've got to do something. As soon as possible, you need to survey your island and find out what you are dealing with. You have to start developing a plan, even a tentative one, and then go about implementing it. Once your survival is assured, you can turn your attention to more interesting goals, liking deciding what to accomplish here as you wait for your return.

This document will try to describe the risks and underlying mechanisms of this place. It is intended to make your stay here as comfortable and productive as possible. We will not try to impose our own system of values upon the visitor, but certain conclusions are obvious:

1. Time should not be wasted.
2. Unproductive pain should be avoided where possible.
3. Other entities should be treated with respect.
4. Superficial symbols should not be substituted for real accomplishment.

Working from these assumptions, we can start to develop a rational approach to this irrational place. We don't need to know everything about this planet, only enough to make decisions. Should we spend our time in Newfoundland, Peoria

or Peru? A careful analysis of potential costs and benefits, taking into account to our own unique circumstances, should provide a solution. Just because you are still exploring does not mean you should abandon yourself to the winds. You must choose your winds and steer a course.

Earth is not a homogeneous place. There are islands of grace and opportunity surrounded by oceans of evil and hopeless waste. Your role as a tourist is to seek out the gems, finding the places and circumstances that will enhance your own personal development. Sometimes you will venture into the darker jungles of humanity, if only to see what they are like, but you must also have a base camp to return to, at least to shower and freshen up. If you choose to live on Earth, then you must learn to understand and modify your surroundings to better serve your needs. Don't gripe about the circumstances of your landing, because they cannot be changed. Instead, you should learn everything you can about your environment, your body and the creatures that share your domain. This knowledge will help you anticipate threats before they come and exploit opportunities when they happen to befall you. On Earth you are playing a game of chance where you cannot anticipate every roll of the dice. You can, however, influence the odds.

The Physical Environment

Earth possesses a relatively benign climate, with a stable, oxygenated atmosphere and surface temperatures supporting liquid water. The planet enjoys a nearly circular orbit around its sun, whose rays provide most of the energy driving Earth's ecosystem. Although the total input of solar energy is stable throughout the year, various parts of the planet receive more or less of it depending on a variety of factors. For example, the planet's rotation on its axis results in a local daily condition known as "night" in which no solar energy is received and very little work is accomplished. Plants don't grow, and humans, if that happen to be awake, are probably watching TV.

Local Temperatures. On Earth, sunlight falls most directly on the equator, so the dominant factor in determining the temperature of a place is its distance north or south. In the equatorial regions, shorts, sandals and a loose-fitting shirt are appropriate attire, although total nudity is discouraged for social reasons we shall later discuss. At the poles, nudity could be fatal within a matter of seconds, and not just death by embarrassment. ("Don't go nude," is a good rule of thumb wherever on Earth you are travelling.)

Due to the distribution of solar energy, equatorial regions tend to be very warm and support the majority of the Earth's land-based biomass, while the poles tend to be permanently icy and support very little life. Between the equator and the poles are more temperate regions supporting a moderate diversity of organisms and experiencing some temporary cold periods. In addition to latitude, temperatures and precipitation are moderated by global wind patterns interacting with land masses and bodies of water. The daily weather of the region you are visiting may be difficult to predict, but if you want to know what is right now, step go outside.

Seasons. The axis of the Earth is slightly tilted, resulting in yearly seasonal climatic changes. When the northern or southern hemisphere is tilted away from the sun (on one side of Earth's orbit), solar energy is reduced and local temperatures fall -- a dark condition known as "winter." Winter has little temperature effect at the equator but is increasingly harsh the further you travel north or south. In winter, large parts of the temperate zones come to resemble the poles, with most non-human life being killed off or forced into hibernation. Even humans have their conflicts with winter. Apart from the inconvenience of the cold itself, aqueous precipitation tends to fall in solid form, which clogs transportation routes and inhibits outdoor activity.

==> If you can choose your place of residence on Earth, we recommend the warmer part of the temperate zones, just outside the area in which water solidifies in winter.

We have nothing against water, per se, or its falling from the sky in moderation, but water and cold are an unpleasant combination. In the lands where ice occurs, winter weather is a significant burden to daily life and a hinderance to tourism. Just outside the frost line, winter is no more than an inconvenience while summers are not as harsh as the year-round extremes of the equatorial regions. We recommend that visitors sample a variety of climatic regions on short-term outings, but the lower temperate zones make the best base camp.

Surface Appearance. Three-fourths of Earth's surface is water or sea ice and is inhabited by humans only during

temporary transit. There is nothing to see or do here apart from the packaged entertainment of cruise ships (which we consider a waste of resources). The remaining surface is stable land with only a few isolated areas of volcanic or tectonic activity. Even in seismically active areas, earthquakes are relatively rare and the visitor need be concerned about them only when purchasing real estate. While tourists do occasionally get swallowed up by the Earth, it is usually the result of deliberately walking too close to some fissure or caldera. When travelling in geologically active areas, be sure to avoid molten lava and obey all local warnings.

On land, long-term tectonic action and surface erosion have created a variety of landforms, from plains to canyons to high mountains. The highest peaks rise to almost 9 kilometers above sea level and are as cold and inhospitable as the poles. Humans tend to live where the land is relatively flat, but often make annual migrations to mountains or the sea. The land is green where there is vegetation, brown or red in the deserts, white near the poles and highest mountains, and invisible entirely in the densest areas of human habitation.

Native Life

Life on Earth ranges from simple organic slime to complex multicellular organisms (some of whom are no better than slime). Depending on which human you talk to, the many variations of terrestrial life were created (A) in a single instant by the hand of God, or (B) through a long process of random mutation and natural selection. The most graceful compromise is that God created plants, animals and man to appear as though they evolved through natural selection when in fact they were part of His plan all along. This deceit may have been part of a holy conspiracy to keep the humans quarrelling amongst themselves and not seriously challenging His authority.

In any case, it can be confirmed that life exists on Earth in great diversity. There are mosses and trees and slugs and elephants, each of which is highly adapted to its environment. All plants and animals reproduce, some simply by dividing and others by torrid romances involving the ruffling of feathers, the beating of breasts, the flashing of flesh, the revving of engines and many other useless displays of flirtation or machismo. The final result, in any case, is a smaller version of the parent, who either fends for himself immediately after hatching or goes through some rudimentary educational process before being kicked out of the nest.

The creatures who invest the most in their offspring are the mammals, who suckle their young, teach them hunting skills and give them a snarl or swat on the butt when necessary. Mammals are highly mobile, possessing either two legs or four, and they can maintain a stable internal body temperature regardless of the weather. Mammals are the most adaptable of the larger organisms, in part because of their investment in child rearing. A protected childhood allows recently learned knowledge to be passed from one generation to the next without waiting for genes to mutate or God to rewrite the script. Among the mammals, humans are the most highly developed, having mastered the use of tools and symbolic communication and passing these skills to their children. For adaptability and geographic diversity, humans are matched only by certain varieties of rat and cockroach.

The Dominant Species

There is only a single species of human still extant: homo sapiens. (Neanderthals are now extinct, while reports of a Bigfoot or Yeti-type humanoid remain unconfirmed.) There are several major races of homo sapiens and hundreds of ethnic sub-types varying in size, facial proportions and coloration but not in basic form or function. Although ethnic differences are often a matter of violent conflict on Earth, any statistical variations in temperament or ability appear to be minor and are masked by much greater cultural and individual variations. All races are capable of interbreeding and show identical organ layout when autopsied.

The maximum human lifespan, without artificial assistance, is about 120 years, with most individuals currently living less than a century. Humans reach physical maturity by around the age of 16, but don't achieve mental maturity until -- well, most of them don't.

The means of reproduction is sexual, and considerable effort and cultural bandwidth is devoted to the mating process. Every human is assigned by genetic mechanisms to either the male or female somatoform. Males and females differ in

overall size, genitalia, fat distribution, hair distribution, musculature, voice pitch and external adornment. Only the female is capable of bearing children, but she requires a genetic component from the male to initiate procreation. What might seem a simple act of conception is overlain in human culture with a complex system of mores, taboos, sick humor, hidden deviance, emotional trauma, and product marketing. (Lots of product marketing.) Human children are usually born in litters of one, with litters of two being less common and three or more being rare. The gestation period of the human child is the longest and most resource-intensive of any animal on Earth, consisting of nine months of slow growth inside the mother's body followed by 16 to 25 years of resource consumption within the parents' home.

====> Visitors who come to Earth in human form must always be aware of their gender, as this is the key to choosing the correct restroom.

Apart from differences in style of urination, males and females display different personality traits, with males generally being more aggressive and goal-oriented and females displaying more subtle social skills. While these differences are real and significant on a statistical basis, it is now considered inappropriate to pre-judge an individual based on their gender. Because males tend to occupy the majority of leadership positions and the more aggressive role in mating procedures, females often see themselves as victimized, while males often feel victimized by female claims of victimization. Although gender is a significant factor in almost every social interaction, political tensions remain high, and the visitor is advised not to openly acknowledge any of the obvious differences.

Social Organization. Humans are social creatures who instinctively organize themselves into hunting parties, hierarchies, unions, and lynch mobs. The smallest unit of social organization is the pair-bonded couple: usually one male and one female who in spite of their differences choose to live together, share resources, engage in sexual intercourse and possibly procreate. If they do procreate, their unit becomes a family, which is the most significant formative environment for young homo sapiens. In the family, the child establishes his fundamental relationship with the world, a pattern that is rarely broken later in life.

As the child matures, he joins larger social structures outside the home. These are both formal organizations -- schools, work places, churches, governments, etc. -- and informal communities which share the child's interests or background. One common community is the child's neighborhood: the local homes and streets where he grows up. Here he forms his first voluntary relationships with others and exchanges information with these contacts which cannot be discussed in the home. (For example, the details of mating procedures are often first conveyed through these informal alliances.) A community is a channel for the exchange for information, and with modern telecommunications, some of communities can include individuals separated by thousands of kilometers.

Humans are also influenced by "pseudo-communities." While a community is a two-way information channel in which all members can participate, a pseudo-community is a one-way broadcasting of information that members can only receive or turn off entirely. Television is one popular kind of pseudo-community. It conveys information (or pseudo-information) and gives the viewer the illusion that he is participating in a mutual exchange.

Some of the information conveyed by pseudo-communities is useful, but the absence of active feedback can result in significant quality control problems. The channel itself is motivated only to maintain maximum market share and is not otherwise concerned with the accuracy or social consequences of its broadcasts. Although the quality of advice is often poor, pseudo-communities are highly influential in determining the behavior of the human masses, who look to these channels for guidance on how to live and what to regard as important.

====> When landing upon Earth in a spaceship, it is important to consider how the event will be perceived by the human media channels and their respective pseudo-communities.

Where possible, arrange soft lighting, gentle sounds and a pleasant visual environment in which to land. Stage the event in Hawaii rather than Washington, and choose your ambassadors to project a balanced mixture of human warmth and strength. Avoid imperative or monolithic statements like, "Resistance is futile," or "Surrender your weapons or die." Make the humans think they have a choice. For guidance on how to present oneself for maximum pseudo-community status, one should review the films and political speeches of former United States President Ronald Reagan.

Political Divisions. At the highest level, humans organize themselves into countries, religions and cultures. These

divisions have been responsible for the majority of large scale conflicts on Earth. A country is a political division based on geographical territory. Each country has an established border and usually its own language or distinctive dialect. Wars are typically fought over the gain or loss of territory, the autonomy of a particular region or political control of an entire country.

Religions can span multiple countries. A religion is a shared belief system concerning the existence of a supreme being or spiritual force and man's relationship with it. All religions promulgate a set of moral rules supposedly given by God. These are enforced by elders of the church and family, and transgressions result in real or theoretical punishment (damnation to Hell, etc.). Religious rules govern personal behavior (do not kill, do not lie, do not have sex with your sister, etc.) and reinforce a firm distinction between "us," the pious believers in the faith, and "them," the infidels who do not believe. Each religion believes that it alone has the most privileged relationship with God and that God implicitly disapproves of all other religions. Many wars and much brutality have visited on mankind in the service of God and His love.

Cultures do not have such well-defined borders. A culture is a set of customs that have evolved to meet local environmental demands and to convey survival skills from one generation to the next. The skills and social structure needed by Eskimos are different than those required by Polynesians or Italians. Groups living in potentially deadly environments have a vital interest in the weather, food storage, safe travel and keeping warm. Cultures in milder climates may be more concerned with maintaining agriculture or protecting territory. These interests are reflected in the mythology each group creates for itself and in the learned behavior they hand down to their children. Survival concerns, as well as the availability of materials, affect each culture's artistic style, so that Scandinavian art and music is significantly different from Inca or Chinese. With succeeding generations, cultures evolve into a rich tapestry of practices and styles in food, clothing, speech, entertainment, religion, mating behavior, and nearly every other activity of everyday life.

Until the Twentieth Century, that is. Technology has recently erased most of the traditional survival concerns of individual cultures and replaced them with global economic demands. An Eskimo loses his concern for hunting and food storage when he can get in his car and drive to the supermarket. Cut off from their original purpose, most local cultures are being reduced to a few ethnic restaurants, local holidays and symbols preserved for tourists. In practical terms, there is only one successful culture remaining on Earth -- American culture -- which is based on the efficient marketing of goods and services.

America has invaded the planet not through battles or bloodshed but by "giving the people what they want." Through its overwhelming domination of the entertainment industry, America also tells the people what they want. Via television, movies and advertising, America transmits subliminal messages throughout the world which have become emplanted in the brains of every homo sapiens with access to those media. Everyone wants to be part of a stylish pseudo-community, and American business exploits this impulse to sell physical and informational products as well as vast quantities of sweetened carbonated water.

Even countries which are openly hostile to American culture, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and France, cannot escape the influence of American-inspired technology and the values that come with it. No one can turn down the efficiency and convenience of computers and televisions, and once these devices are installed, America has the user under its control. American programming feeds the viewer a series of idealized images until he forgets where he came from. Wherever you land upon this planet, you will find local cultures quietly being assimilated into the American model, with young people overlooking the wisdom of their forefathers for the cultural and consumer ideals conveyed by Baywatch and Melrose Place.

==> When first arriving on this planet, it is futile to demand, "Take me to your leader," because on Earth there isn't any.

If Earth has a capital, it is the county of Los Angeles in Southern California, where most worldwide entertainment decisions are made. If you go there, however, you will find only urban sprawl and no "center." There are many figurehead celebrities but no leaders. In Los Angeles, there is no parliament or secret cabal of producers deciding what will be seen. Instead, entertainment decisions are made by thousands of viciously competing individuals, each of whom

is driven by the circumstances of his childhood to seek unlimited power or perfect love.

The Earth is lead not by dictators, presidents or legislators but by technology, naked egos and blind economic interests. Institutions and belief systems rise and fall depending upon their ability to generate profit for the few people who are aggressively seeking it. Philosophical ideas, biological impulses and old cultural customs are preserved and amplified if they can be used to sell products; otherwise they tend to vanish from public consciousness. Technology did not invent sex or Christmas or the need for food, but it did invent new ways to exploit these things for profit. Governments do not control technology; they only respond to it after it changes. If something is profitable -- be it computers or illicit drugs -- it will be sold, regardless of what governments do, and world society will be molded in such a way as to maximize that profit.

Preparation for Landing

If there is one word to describe the overall condition of the planet, it is misery. While life is relatively good in the prosperous parts of the developed countries, it is desperate elsewhere. Overpopulated, robbed of their culture and unable to compete in an image-based economy, most of Earth's people live in poverty and fear, concerned mainly with keeping alive from day to day. They have little time to educate themselves, explore their world or experiment with new ideas. Even in the developed world where resources are plentiful, most humans don't come close to achieving their full potential. They make poor lifetime decisions, overextend themselves with credit and sedate themselves with mindless entertainment. As one travels around the planet and scratches below the surface of daily affairs, one is appalled at the massive waste of human resources nearly everywhere. This doesn't mean that you can't have a good time here, at least in achieving your own potential, but you must never forget how bad things can get.

In this document, we will try to prepare you for the worst, as well as help you recognize the best when you find it. To get the most from this planet, you must understand the psychology, biology and politics of the dominant species, because, like it or not, you are going to be caught up in them. As the occupant of a human body, you are going to have to struggle with the same kind of impulses and delusions as the rest of humanity. It will be a challenge to keep your sanity amidst the imprecise firing of neurons and chaotic swirling of hormones, not to mention the irrational demands of the humans around you. We cannot be there to instruct you at every step, but we will try to give you the tools you need to solve problems yourself.

We have a lot of ground to cover, but first we must deal with the basics. If you are like the rest of us, you arrived on this planet naked. You must find ways to provide food, shelter and clothing for yourself as well as to assemble the equipment you need for exploration. To do this, you must negotiate with other humans and somehow convince them to provide these services to you. Although you may be disoriented and unprepared, you are going to have to enter the marketplace and haggle with the savages. Other guidebooks may skip over this unpleasantness, pretending you have already worked things out, but we are your honest advisor, so we'll give it to you straight....

Sooner or later, you are going to have to get a job.

Next Chapter [Getting There](#)

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