

All about authenticity - 3 major trends influencing the travel industry

 By [Jared Ruttenberg](#)

8 Jan 2020

As tourism continues to rise (2018 saw a global increase of 6% in 2017) consumers are not shy to make their preferences known on how they want to travel and, afterwards, what they thought of the experience.

While there'll always be culturally- or regionally-specific microtrends, some larger trends are quite easily noticeable.



Jared Ruttenberg

Self-directed and self-researched vacations

Conversations I've had with several accommodations and tour operators have confirmed that more travellers are opting to take self-drive holidays rather than group packages or arranged tours.

It seems that the desire to handpick their itinerary and a plethora of material available online is resulting in more self-curated holidays.

Certainly, gone are the days when the local travel agent was the trusted fount of knowledge concerning all things travel. TripAdvisor and the host of accompanying social media platforms have become the experts.

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Back from the enchanted islands! ✨💎.....

We just wrapped my @tbaescapes luxury yacht excursion through the Galápagos Islands! 20 Galápa-gals spent 8 incredible days exploring pristine islands with unparalleled wildlife encounters and it was truly unforgettable ✨💎💎💎!!! We swam with penguins, met giant tortoises and sunned our buns on powdery white sand beaches. Lots more photos and videos to come but peep my stories over the next few days for all the Galápa-goodies!

..... #tbaescapes @ecoventura_galapagos
@ralaischateaux #ecoventura #galapagos #cerrobrujo

A post shared by Kiki | The Blonde Abroad (@theblondeabroad) on Nov 21, 2019 at 5:14pm PST



With a growth in travel blogger/influencers, holiday-goers also now increasingly basing their travel plans based on places recommended by the social media personalities that they follow and trust.

As a travel writer operating in the social media context, I'm inundated with requests from people asking for my various travel recommendations, and it's always a pleasure to direct them to the lists that I've curated.

Experience-driven

Another very visible trend is that holidays are no longer for just kicking back. Yes, we all love to wind down on a beach for a day or two with a good novel, but recent trends such as volunteer-tourism and educational-tourism have grown in popularity, showing that hands-on experiences are now a vacation must.





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From Cambodia to Malawai, today we are spotlighting a handful of volunteer tourism opportunities with @shefaritravel @caringforcambodia @discovery.corps @handsupholidays and Global Vision International that offer programs to help advance women's rights and education in developing countries. Learn more at uneearthwomen.com

A post shared by [Unearth Women](#) (@uneearthwomen) on Jun 12, 2019 at 9:25am PDT

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And it's not only millennials who are wanting to get their hands and mind busy learning new skills. All ages are keen to get in on the action and learn something new while on holiday.

Whether it is a bucket-list adventure activity or gourmet food lessons, travellers are looking for intimate and hands-on curated experiences.

We're seeing larger hotels partnering more with tour companies and service providers, whereas smaller boutique accommodation offerings are able to more easily tailor-make experiences themselves. Experiential travellers are willing to pay more for these curated travel experiences, providing of course that they are authentic and personal.

Local-inspired

There's definitely seeing a rise in travellers wanting to spend time with locals. Part of feeling at home in another country is experiencing it through the lens and footprints of a local.

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Lisbon, Craft Workshop, 2 Hours — Susana, host of “Sewing with Grannies,” and her friend Ângelo, founded a creative hub for seniors called A Avó Veio Trabalhar (Grandma Goes to Work). According to her, “age is a super power, nothing to fear or be ashamed of. It’s a time to create the life you wish for. It can be a time of falling in love with yourself all over again.” That’s what Susana hopes for in her embroidery workshops where ladies blend modern designs and old-school techniques. The commercial goods they create are so cool, they’ve won two international design awards. And it’s not just for seniors. You can drop in, learn crafts, and meet some badass women too. All proceeds fund @aavoveiotrabalhar. Link in bio. 💎💎: @olgadelaiglesia

A post shared by [Airbnb Experiences](#) (@airbnbexperiences) on Nov 19, 2019 at 6:16pm PST

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It hardly gets more personal or local with these types of immersive experiences. Taking guests on my private tours, I see first-hand how much they appreciate the chance to direct their questions to someone who is at home in the context they’re exploring.

Several online services – for example, Airbnb Experiences, Like A Local, Withlocals, etc. – help facilitate these experiences and connect travellers with locals.

ABOUT JARED RUTTENBERG

Jared Ruttenberg is an independent travel journalist, regularly contributing to some of South Africa's most respected publications. His social media engagement leads him to partner with various clients highlighting Cape Town, South Africa and abroad. As a qualified tour guide he also offers bespoke private tours and experiences in and around the Mother City. Find him online at www.jaredincpt.com or www.instagram.com/jaredincpt.

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