

Tourism: Destinations...It's all about the experience!

Have you ever wondered why some destinations that you never heard before become so popular all of a sudden? What is it that makes them so attractive? Destinations are many and each one is unique, different, and has its own beauty. The collective experiences that you encounter at those destinations are what build your memories and the desire to share those experiences with others, good or bad, are the essence that make or break a destination.

Each traveler comes to a destination with hopes and dreams to fulfill and each one has unique expectations of what they want to experience during their visit. That is the reason that so many niches and specialties have developed in our industry today, for example, let's look at France. The country of France can be experienced in many ways through the eyes of an art lover, through a gourmet enthusiast, through a wine lover, or a cycling fan. Each one experiences the same country but through a unique point of view.

Travel professionals need to listen carefully and pay attention to what the customer tells them and translate those needs into magical experiences that last for a lifetime. Today, information is being exchanged at lightning speed. Customers are more savvy and educated. Travel Professionals need to be informed and up to date about what unique opportunities abound for their customers and offer them for their consideration. You never know what may appeal to them! Your clients may want something unique and different or they may want something more traditional but keep in mind, it is their experience.

Our senses are vital for those experiences; the sounds, the tastes, the smells, the views.... Two of the most vivid encounter I ever experienced occurred in Greece. Greece was a dream destination for me since I was in sixth grade. I clearly remember how overcome with emotion I was when I took the last steps to the Parthenon. Tears came down my face when in front of me was that magnificent temple that I had seen in books and pictures for years. It was like the pages of my Ancient Civilizations' book had magically transformed before my eyes and in my imagination I was transported to the glorious days of Athens!

My other experience happened at a Greek bakery at one of the islands. It was evening and the baker had just put out a fresh tray of baklava. I remember the sweet smell of the nuts, the warmth of the pastry oozing with clear, orange blossom honey. It was like no other baklava I ever had. That taste still lingers in my mind. Experiences are many but in the end is what you take and learn from those encounters with other people, with other food, with other customs that stay with you for a lifetime. They are priceless.

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