

STJ

TRAVEL & CREATE

VOL. 2 | APRIL 2026

PROFESSIONAL
ETHICS

TRAVEL JOURNALISM

Practical applications.

CREATING IN
THE AGE OF
ALGORITHMS

HUMAN CREATIVITY AND
ALGORITHMS?

REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS

ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE IN
TRAVEL JOURNALISM?

CREATIVE DEBATE

Cork

BEYOND THE POSTCARD

A travel chronicle about hospitality, memory and the small gestures that turn a destination into something far deeper.



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STJ | School of Travel Journalism

Travel & Create

A magazine designed for aspiring and professional Communication and Tourism workers.

Reinvent the way
you communicate!

- Rethinking communication.
- Learning from experts.
- Destinations and tourism.
- News, events and tools.

STJ Director: Daniel Murillo Mir
Editorial direction, graphic design and layout: Maria Julia Giana

Teachers who participate in this magazine:
Jordi Canal Soler

Students who participate in this magazine:
Federica Acclavio
BinduSree Gondipalli
Katrijn Geerts
Chloe Nguyen

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Contact:

Email: hola@schooloftraveljournalism.com Phone: +34 623 98 10 11
For inquiries, collaborations, or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to have you participate and hear your feedback.
In tapa cloth: Sophie Dover of Getty Images





ISABEL POULIN

The spirit that guides this magazine and **School Travel Journalism** is based on two simple but profoundly meaningful words: **Travel and Create.**

Travel is much more than simply moving from one place to another. It's an experience that transforms us, opening our eyes to new cultures, landscapes, and ways of life. Every trip is an opportunity to learn, grow, and connect with the world around us, and to capture the living stories we encounter along the way.

Create is then the consequence, the essence. It is the art of turning those experiences and discoveries into stories, photographs, videos, documentaries, podcasts, interviews, or any other format that allows us to share what we have lived.

Creating is the spark that ignites our creativity and drives us to innovate, to find new ways of telling stories and to capture the true essence of the places we visit.

At **STJ**, we want to awaken that creativity, encourage you to innovate and reflect on current communication.

Each page of this magazine is an open door to new experiences, stories, and landscapes. We invite you to travel with us, to let yourself be carried away by the inspiration you'll find in these stories, and to create your own path in the vast and fascinating world of tourism communication and travel journalism.



M. Julia Giana
Publisher

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PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN THE CREATION OF TOURISM CONTENT

01 Practical Applications

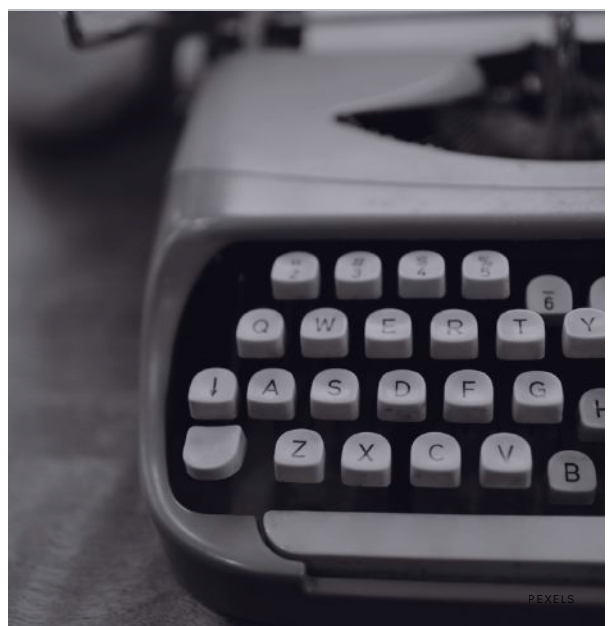


ETHICS IN TRAVEL JOURNALISM AND TOURISM COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL TO MAINTAINING CREDIBILITY AND PUBLIC TRUST AND TO ENSURING THAT THE IMPACT OF JOURNALISM IS POSITIVE FOR COMMUNITIES AND DESTINATIONS.

"THE EVOLUTION OF TOURISM CONTENT HAS BROADENED ACCESS TO CREATION, BUT IT HAS ALSO INTENSIFIED THE NEED FOR TRAVEL JOURNALISM THAT IS ETHICAL, RESPECTFUL, AND SUSTAINABLE."

The creation of tourism content has undergone a radical transformation in recent decades, evolving from a field dominated by journalists to one where independent content creators also play a crucial role. This shift has brought new opportunities, but it has also raised significant ethical questions.

Travel journalism, like any other branch of journalism, has a fundamental ethical responsibility to its readers, the communities it covers, and the industry as a whole. Ethics in travel journalism center on truthfulness and accuracy, respect for cultures, sustainability, and transparency.



What is ethics in travel journalism?



Ethics in travel journalism refers to a set of principles and standards that guide the conduct of journalists and content creators who write about tourism and travel. These principles ensure that the content is accurate, honest, respectful, and responsible.

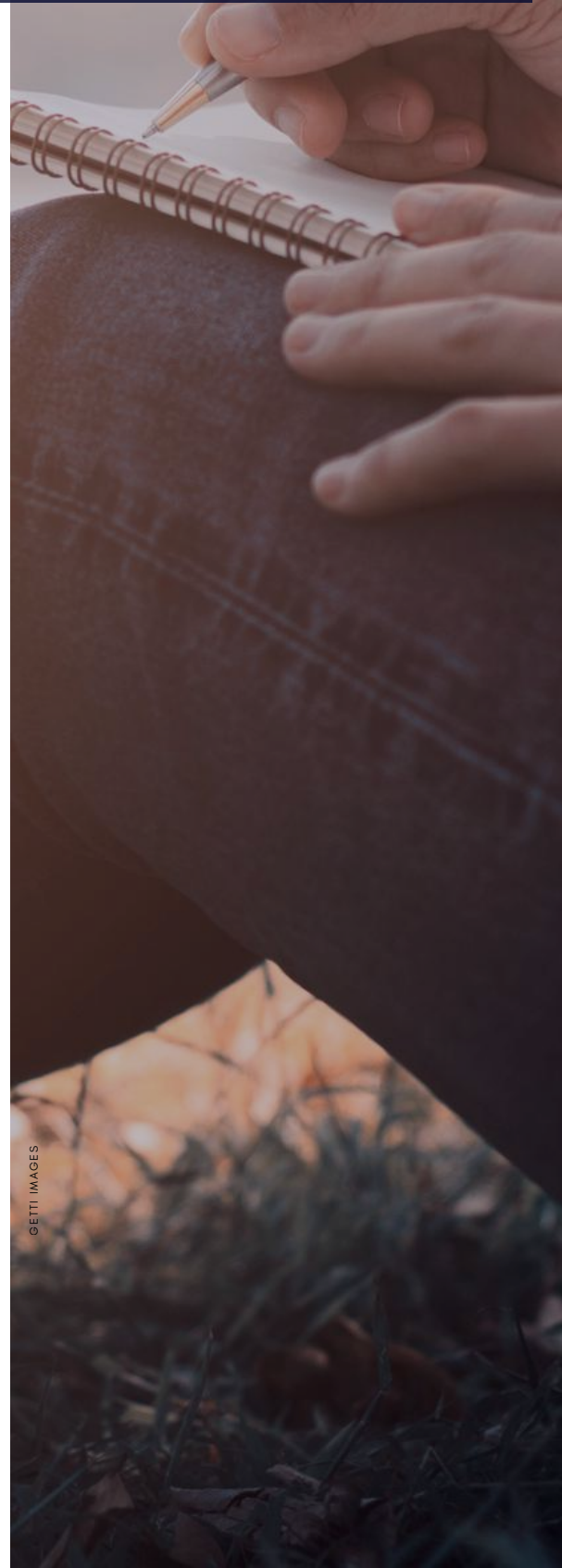
The fundamental pillar: Transparency.

Transparency is one of the most crucial ethical principles in creating tourism content. Readers and followers trust the honesty of the creator or journalist. A lack of transparency can erode this trust and damage long-term credibility.

The fight against disinformation: truthfulness and accuracy.

In an information-saturated environment where fake news and rumors spread rapidly, it is essential that journalists and content creators carefully verify all facts before publishing them. Accuracy not only ensures that the public receives correct and useful information, but also protects the credibility of the media and fosters reader trust. Truthfulness implies an ongoing commitment to transparency and honesty, ensuring that the information presented is not distorted or influenced by external interests.

In today's digital age, where the speed of publication can outpace the rigor of research, reinforcing these principles is crucial to combating misinformation and promoting a flow of information that is reliable and ethically sound.



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Beyond the superficial: Respect for local cultures and communities.

Responsibility goes beyond simply highlighting the positive aspects of a destination; it also involves educating audiences on how to be responsible and respectful travelers. Presenting a destination solely from an idealized perspective can lead to a superficial appreciation that ignores the complexities and challenges associated with tourism. Therefore, it is crucial that content creators not only celebrate the attractions and benefits but also address issues such as environmental impact, local customs, and sustainable tourism practices. Informing travelers about how to minimize their ecological footprint, respect local cultures, and contribute positively to local economies helps foster more conscious and responsible tourism.

Copyright and intellectual property rights: Ethical use of third-party materials

The ethical use of third-party materials not only avoids legal problems, but also honors the work and creativity of other authors, fostering an environment of respect and collaboration in the field of communication and tourism.

HOW WOULD YOU APPROACH A PAID CRUISE ITEM?

THE BALANCE BETWEEN PROMOTING A PRODUCT AND JOURNALISTIC ETHICS CAN BE DELICATE.

OPEN DEBATE

When promoting a luxury cruise, we face the challenge of balancing the need to highlight the voyage's attractions with the responsibility to address environmental concerns. Cruises, in general, have a reputation for their negative impacts, such as significant emissions of pollutants, the generation of large amounts of waste, and damage to marine ecosystems.

Is it difficult?

The balance between product promotion and journalistic ethics can be delicate. By focusing on the positive experiences offered by the cruise while simultaneously fostering greater awareness of sustainability in tourism, is it possible to meet commercial expectations while remaining true to ethical principles?

What decision do you have in mind?

- 1) I do not accept the article.
- 2) If the cruise ship in question has any positive initiatives, such as onboard recycling programs or efforts to reduce environmental impact, these aspects can be highlighted in the article.
- 3) Cruises exist, I will investigate to give a constructive approach.

Promoting products and services is part of modern journalism, especially in travel journalism and sponsored content. However, **even in promotion, maintaining integrity and adhering to ethical principles is crucial.** Maintaining journalistic integrity means providing a balanced perspective, even in sponsored content. Nobody said it would be easy.



Practical applications

Truthfulness and Accuracy	Ensure that all information provided is correct, verifiable, and fact-based.	Verify data before publishing and correct errors quickly when they are detected.
Transparency	Be clear and honest about any form of sponsorship, compensation, or collaboration.	Disclose whether a trip was funded by a company or if any incentive was received.
Respect for Local Cultures and Communities	Treat local cultures and communities with respect and avoid stereotypes.	Research and understand local customs before writing about them.
Integrity	Maintain high ethical standards even in the face of lucrative offers that could compromise objectivity.	Avoid accepting gifts that could compromise the objectivity of the report.
Accessibility and Diversity	Ensure that the content is accessible and represents a diversity of voices and experiences.	Include a variety of perspectives in the stories.

2 BOOKS

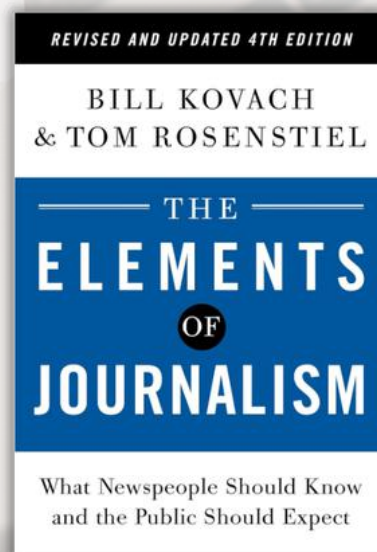
Journalistic Ethics

Recommendations that will help you develop your own professional ethics process.

THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM

Authors: de Bill Kovach , Tom Rosenstiel

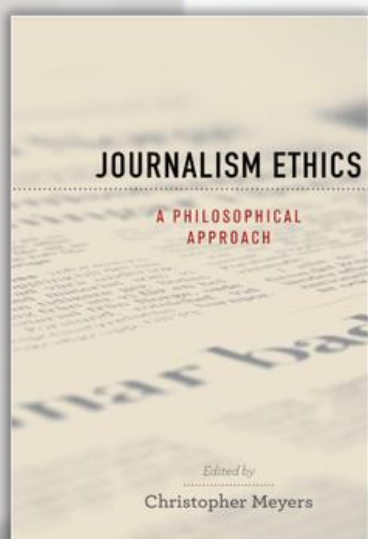
Tirant the White “What is journalism for?” Through exhaustive research, surveys, interviews, and public forums, the committee identified the essential elements that define journalism and its role in our society. The result is one of the most important books on media ever written—winner of the Goldsmith Book Prize from Harvard, a Society of Professional Journalists Award, and the Bart Richards Award for Media Criticism from Penn State University.



JOURNALISM ETHICS: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Author: Christopher Meyers

Journalism Ethics is a reminder, a defense and an elucidation of core journalistic values, with particular emphasis on the interplay of theory, conceptual analysis and practice. The book begins with a sophisticated model for ethical decision-making, one that connects classical theories with the central purposes of journalism. Top scholars from philosophy, journalism and communications offer essays on such topics as objectivity, privacy, confidentiality, conflict of interest, the history of journalism, online journalism, and the definition of a journalist. The result is a guide to ethically sound and socially justified journalism-in whatever form that practice emerges.





” TOURISM

should not be only about visiting places, but about learning to see the world with greater **respect, curiosity, and awareness**

LEARN FROM EXPERTS | BECOME ONE OF THEM
JOIN THE COMMUNITY

YOUR NEXT
destination **COULD**
BE THE START
of your **CAREER IN**
TRAVEL JOURNALISM

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CREATING IN THE AGE OF ALGORITHMS

Julia Giana



HUMAN CREATIVITY AND ALGORITHMS?

Karen X. Cheng reveals how algorithms are redefining artistic creation and authenticity in a digital world. Cheng explores the influence of algorithms on the aesthetics and distribution of art, showing how the pursuit of digital validation can transform creativity.

I had to watch Cheng's presentation at least five times to be able to reflect on every detail of his presentation.

In a world where technology and algorithms play an increasing role in the production and distribution of content, it is essential that communication and tourism professionals pause to reflect on how these forces are transforming our work.

Karen X. Cheng's *The Artist VS The Algorithm* offers an insightful perspective on the interaction between **human creativity and artificial intelligence**, and provides **valuable lessons** for those seeking to tell **authentic and captivating stories** in the digital age.



WHO IS KAREN X. CHENG?

Karen is a renowned content creator, entrepreneur, and technology expert, known for her ability to merge art and technology in innovative and creative ways. Her work is distinguished by its focus on using digital tools to create unique visual and narrative experiences.

His work continues to **inspire other creators and communication and marketing professionals to think outside the box and to use technology to drive creativity and innovation.**

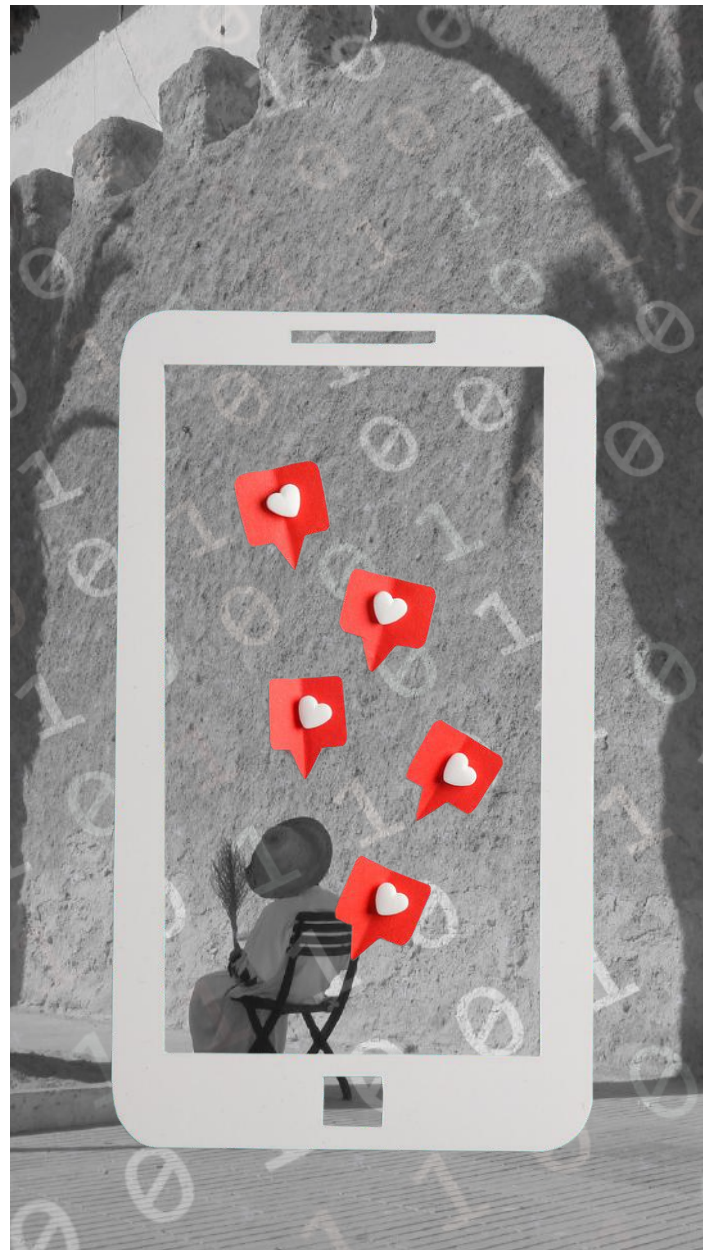
HUMAN CREATIVITY AND ALGORITHMS?

Content creation in tourism is an art that involves **capturing and conveying the essence of unique destinations, cultures, and experiences.** However, the **digital landscape** is increasingly dominated by algorithms that influence how content is **produced, distributed, and consumed.** In *The Artist VS The Algorithm*, Karen x. Cheng examines how these algorithms are **shaping art and storytelling, offering key insights for content creators.**

Cheng uses **visual examples and case studies** to illustrate how algorithms can generate **art, music, and other creative content,** often with **surprising results.** However, he also raises questions about originality, intention, and the essence of creativity when AI is involved.

For **content creators in the tourism sector,** it raises the need to **think and reflect** on the importance of **authenticity and personal perspective in narratives,** something that **algorithms cannot yet fully replicate.**

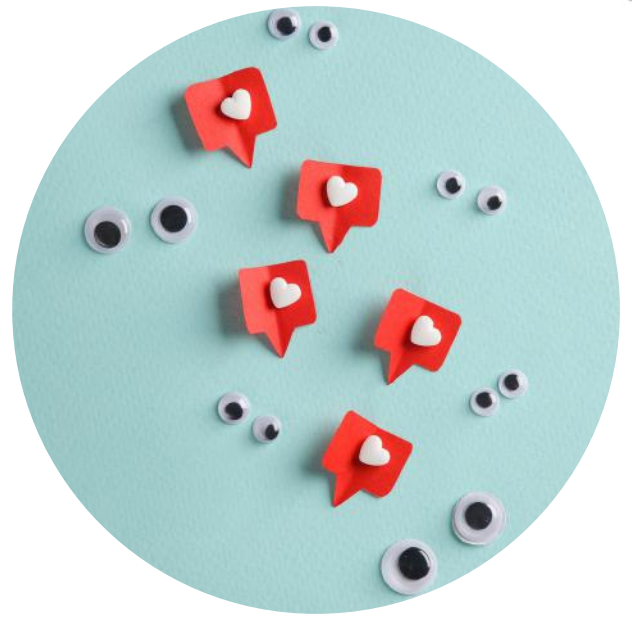
**TECHNOLOGY CAN
EXPAND THE
BOUNDARIES OF
ARTISTIC
EXPRESSION
WITHOUT
SACRIFICING
AUTHENTICITY.**



THE STRESS OF CREATING AND THE SEARCH FOR VALIDATION

The constant pressure for digital validation. The pursuit of "likes" and metrics can distract creators from their authentic vision and lead them to produce content that merely seeks to comply with algorithms, rather than telling genuine and meaningful stories.

Cheng highlights how human storytelling reflects a personal and unique experience, while algorithmic content, although efficient in terms of presentation, lacks the depth and emotional connection that a creator can provide. This comparison underscores the importance of maintaining authenticity, even when faced with the pressure of digital metrics.



THE PURSUIT OF "LIKES" AND METRICS CAN DISTRACT CREATORS FROM THEIR AUTHENTIC VISION AND LEAD THEM TO PRODUCE CONTENT THAT SIMPLY SEEKS TO COMPLY WITH ALGORITHMS, INSTEAD OF TELLING GENUINE AND MEANINGFUL STORIES.

THE PRESSURE TO CREATE VIRAL CONTENT CAN LEAD TO A SUPERFICIAL OR STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYAL OF DESTINATIONS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE IN HOW YOU PRESENT THE PLACES YOU SHARE.

THE ARTIST VS THE ALGORITHM

CHENG, KAREN X. THE ARTIST VS THE ALGORITHM. [VIDEO PRESENTATION]. AVAILABLE AT: KAREN X. CHENG - YOUTUBE (ACCESSED JULY 29, 2024).



TALK BY @KARENXCHENG FOR @ADOBE MAX
**IN A WORLD WHERE
ALGORITHMS AND DIGITAL
VALIDATION ARE UBIQUITOUS, IT
IS VITAL TO FIND A BALANCE
THAT VALUES BOTH
AUTHENTICITY AND
INNOVATION.**

LESSONS AND REFLECTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION AND TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

1 **BALANCE BETWEEN POPULARITY AND AUTHENTICITY:**

It's crucial to strike a balance between creating popular content and maintaining an authentic voice. The pressure to get "likes" can lead to producing content that follows trends instead of reflecting genuine values and perspectives.

2 **UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF ALGORITHMS:**

Social media algorithms influence what content becomes visible and how it is distributed. This can affect public perception and engagement with the content.

3 **VALUING CREATIVE DIVERSITY:**

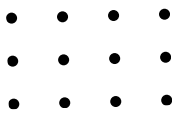
Pressure to follow proven formulas can limit creativity and innovation. It is important to encourage and value diversity in content.

4 **MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS:**

The pressure to get "likes" and the search for approval can negatively impact the mental health of creators and communicators. It's essential to have a clear path to reducing this stress.

5 **USE TECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL, NOT AS A LIMIT**

Artificial intelligence and other technological tools should be seen as resources that can enhance creativity and communication, not as limitations.



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Travel Journalism



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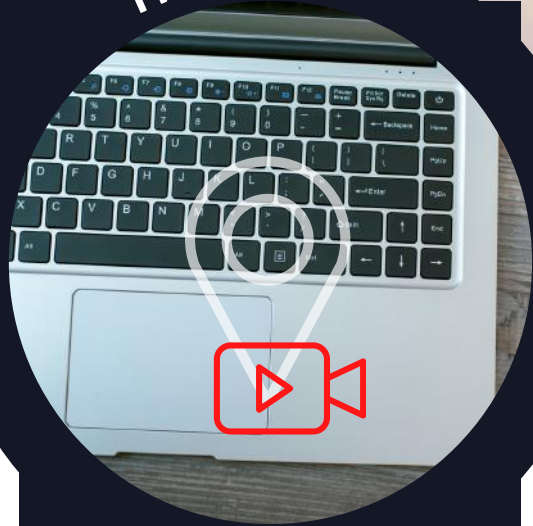
LIVE



LIVE CLASSES

- From anywhere in the world.
- Live & recorded classes.
- Live Creative Debates.
- Access to the job board.
- 100% practical approach.
- International students.

HYBRID



AT YOUR OWN PACE

- From anywhere in the world.
- Recorded classes.
- Begin anytime.
- Access to the job board.
- International students.

STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD CONNECT IN ONE SCHOOL

THIS IS HOW WE LIVED THE GLOBAL STJ EXPERIENCE



STJ | School of Travel Journalism

Every year, students from different countries, cultures, and languages come together in one place: the *School of Travel Journalism (STJ)*. A space that transcends borders to train the new generation of travel and food journalists, connecting talent, passion, and a global vision.

At STJ, we teach storytelling. We create an international community where each student is the protagonist of their own journey. *Our students learn, collaborate, and build their professional future in a 100% online environment, with live classes and constant access to content.*

We teach about the world, and at the same time the whole world is an active part of our classrooms.

BEHIND EVERY
MEAL THERE
IS A STORY
TO TELL...

Food & Travel

GASTRONOMIC *Journalism*

Condiments

Experienced teachers &
students eager for
knowledge.

MASTER IN MASTER IN GASTRONOMIC JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

*What story
do you want
to tell?*

Each dish has a cultural,
historical, and emotional
background.



MASTER

Gastronomic Journalism and Communication

**Where
gastronomy
becomes
storytelling.**



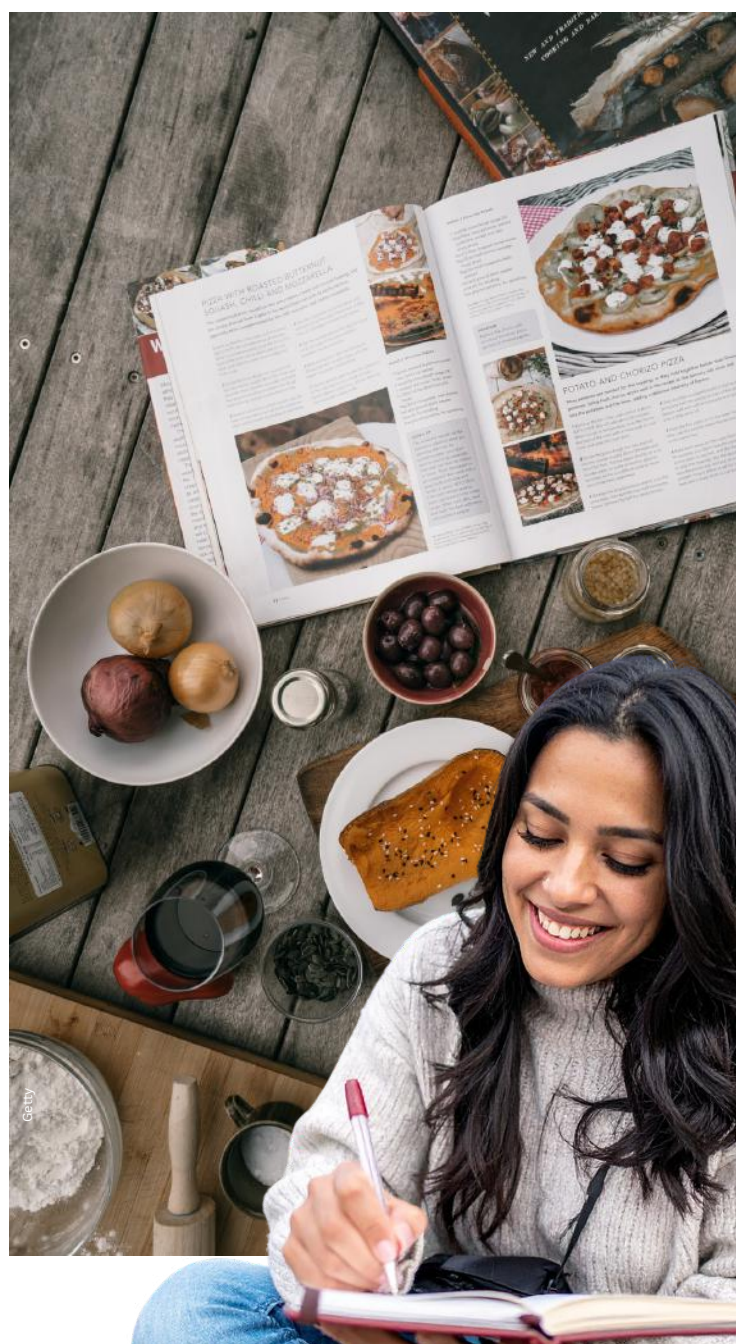
NEW MASTER'S DEGREE IN GASTRONOMIC JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

Stories on demand

In a media landscape that increasingly demands specialization, the Master's in Gastronomic Journalism emerges as a distinctive opportunity for those who want to explore the intersection of **food, culture, and storytelling**.

Designed for aspiring journalists, communicators, and content creators, the program offers a **rigorous and creative approach** to understanding gastronomy not only as a subject of consumption, but as a **cultural, social, and economic phenomenon**.

This Master's program is created to train professionals capable of **researching, interpreting, and communicating culinary realities** with depth, accuracy, and narrative strength. From **food writing and reporting to destination storytelling and multimedia content creation**, students will develop the tools needed to produce meaningful journalistic work in one of the most dynamic fields of contemporary communication.

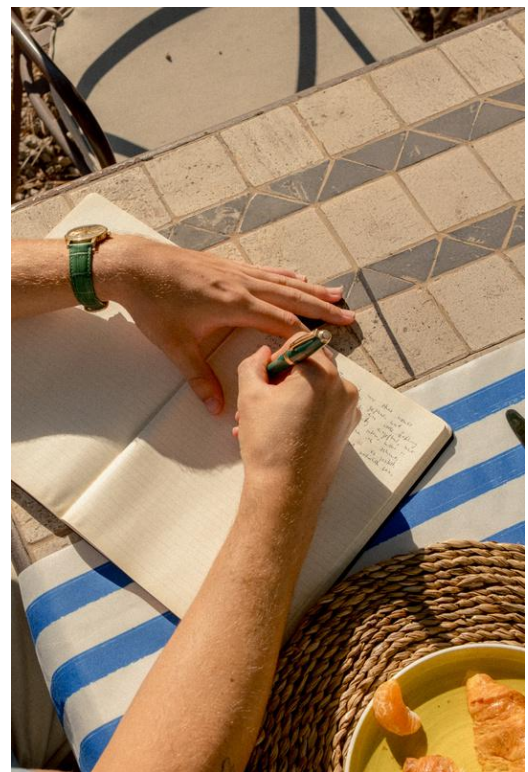


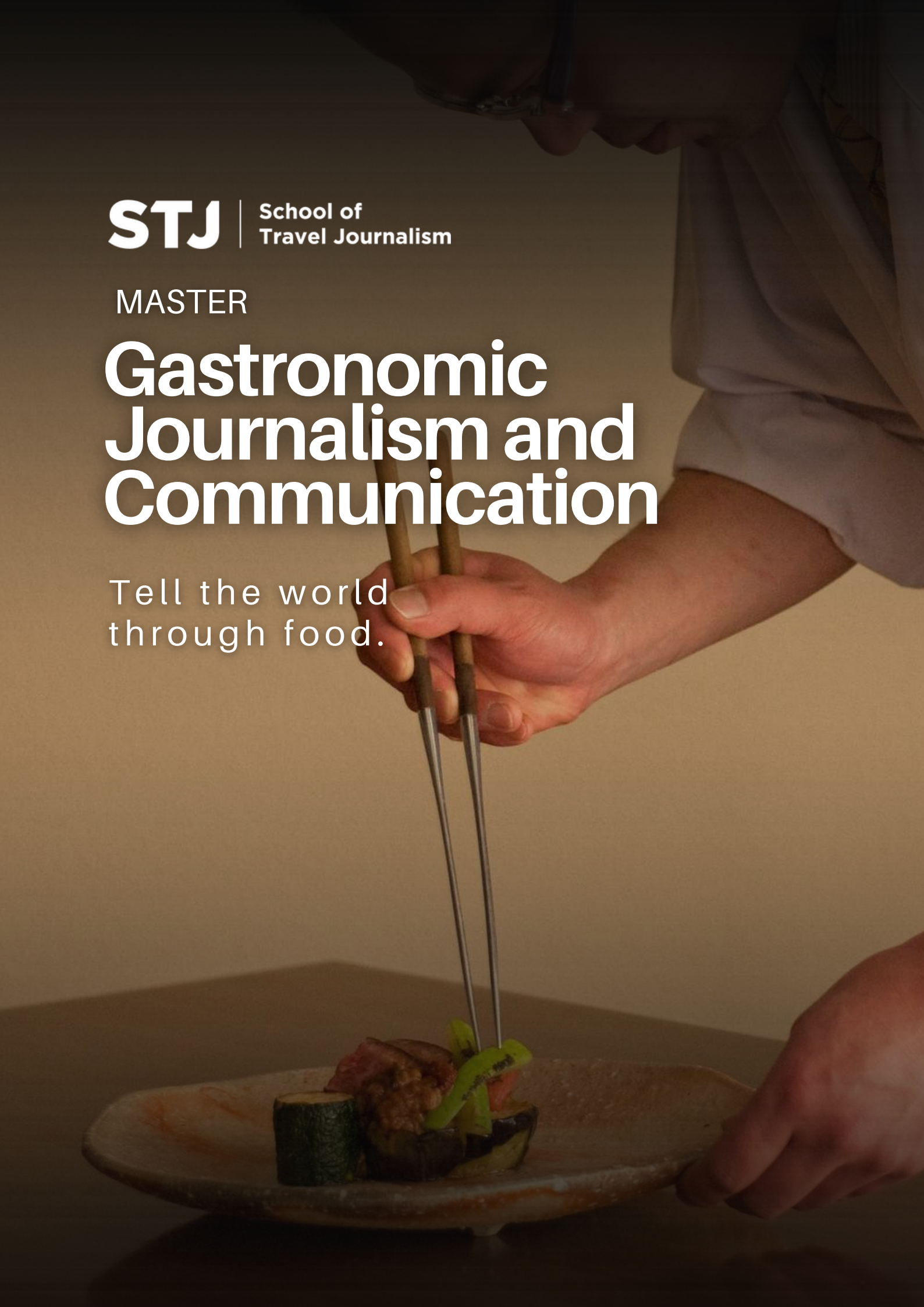
Training voices to tell the world through food.

Graduates will be prepared to lead **food journalism projects**, contribute to the promotion of **culinary destinations with critical insight**, and create content that adds value to both readers and the tourism sector. The program also encourages a broader understanding of gastronomy as a gateway to issues such as **identity, sustainability, heritage, and local development**.

The school brings together an **outstanding faculty** made up of renowned food journalists, photographers, editors, and industry professionals, who will share their expertise with the next generation of storytellers. Through this program, students will not only gain **practical skills**, but also refine **their voice and perspective in order to tell the world through its food**.

Applications are now open for those ready to take the next step and specialize in one of the most exciting areas of contemporary journalism.





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Travel Journalism

MASTER

Gastronomic Journalism and Communication

Tell the world
through food.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TRAVEL JOURNALISM

CREATIVE DEBATE

BERTA CARRERAS

The **School of Travel Journalism** organized the debate featuring students from the Master's in Travel Journalism program, on the **impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on travel journalism**. The guest speaker was Basque freelance journalist *Iñaki Makazaga*, host of the travel podcast *Piedra de Toque*. He regularly contributes to various media outlets, including *El País* and *ElDiario.es*, and runs his own content production company, *IMK Comunicación*, which focuses on travel content related to mountaineering and human rights.



Makazaga presented his arguments regarding the emergence of Artificial Intelligence and how it affects, complements, and evolves the profession toward a slower, more focused journalism, one that is rooted in culture and human interest. Meanwhile, *Daniel Murillo*, director of the School of Travel Journalism, shared his views as a staunch advocate of AI as a tool that enhances professional productivity in the field of journalism.

Main topics addressed by the two speakers during the debate

Throughout the debate, the two participants presented their ideas and opinions regarding how Artificial Intelligence affects the daily life of a travel journalist.

Is it a tool or a risk to the profession? Is it a market opportunity that benefits independent journalism or is it the end of this profession?

Adapting the profession as a travel journalist:

Makazaga argued that more technology leads to more journalism with a personal touch. More AI leads to more complex, authorial journalism that offers added value. “Technology works in favor of journalists, as it facilitates the task in terms of speed and quantity. Therefore, more than ever, we need literary rigor and slow journalism that offers a perspective through culture and human interest,” the freelance journalist explained.

For his part, *Daniel Murillo* introduced the shift in journalistic content distribution, focusing on how to tell a story and reach a wider audience, while also providing more data on trends to further personalize the content we want to deliver. *“The efficiency of automatically generated content and the acceleration of content creation represent an opportunity in the travel journalism market. AI-powered content is easy to create, which increases the value of original content and our personal brand,”* explained the director of the School of Travel Journalism.



Artificial
intelligence won't
replace travel
journalism, it will
force it to be
better.

It helps with professional productivity as a travel journalist:

AI increases the quantity and ease of content creation, which means it requires **greater ambition to produce long-form journalism**. But at the same time, it requires **staying up-to-date with technologies** to know how to apply them and make our work easier at certain times. “These tools and technologies are welcome so we can work even better. So we can reaffirm our ambition and work on travel journalism that is truly worthwhile,” Makazaga stated.

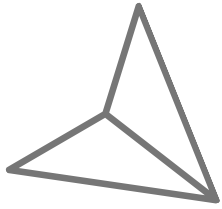
Automatic generation has accelerated content creation and, consequently, improved the algorithm. It has also **enhanced content personalization** because your work can be compared with thousands of others, providing much more information to improve your own work. “It’s important to keep in mind that you can make money with AI-generated content. *It might work in the short term, but it’s impossible in the long run,*” said Murillo.

Dependence, ethics and transparency of Artificial Intelligence:

The reliance on AI can flourish because it **eliminates our fear of the blank page**. It gives us ideas we hadn't previously considered, helps us structure text, and improves its SEO. It's a tool **we must know when to use, and we must be transparent and ethical with its results**. We must understand that **achieving balance requires personal journalism**, with a deep, empathetic, and creative perspective.

In conclusion, both speakers agreed that **the profession of journalism is not going to disappear; it will be complemented**. We are in the process of adapting these new technologies to journalistic work, just as happened with the arrival of the internet and television in their time. **We must overcome our fears** to understand and adapt technologies as work tools. We must take advantage of their weaknesses to create journalism with an empathetic and creative approach. As Makazaga said, *"We have to send automated emails, but we also have to respond to them,"* and for that, we need **human understanding**.





TRAVELIG

Discover two inspiring accounts.




IG @TASTEATLAS

@inspiredbyiceland focuses on promoting Iceland by sharing visually striking photos and videos of its landscapes, such as waterfalls, volcanoes, and the Northern Lights, along with elements of local culture and everyday life. **Its goal is to inspire people around the world to visit the country, explore its unique nature, and experience what makes Iceland special.**

IG @INSPIREDBYICELAND

Taste atlas focuses on **traditional food from around the world**. It is the account of TasteAtlas, a project that **presents itself as an “encyclopedia of flavors”** and a global atlas of traditional dishes, local ingredients, and authentic restaurants. On Instagram, its current slogan is **“Eat local around the world.”**

Its content usually focuses on **typical dishes, food maps, rankings, lists of “best dishes/cuisines/regions”** and recommendations for traditional restaurants, rather than on personal travel or lifestyle content.



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Dual Master

Travel & Gastronomic Journalism

Travel. Taste.
Report. Create

A program for those who want to go beyond writing and learn how **to produce multimedia stories about destinations, cultures, gastronomy, and experiences.** Develop your voice and create content across **journalism, photography, video, audio, and digital storytelling.**



Start: May, 2026 - APPLICATIONS OPEN

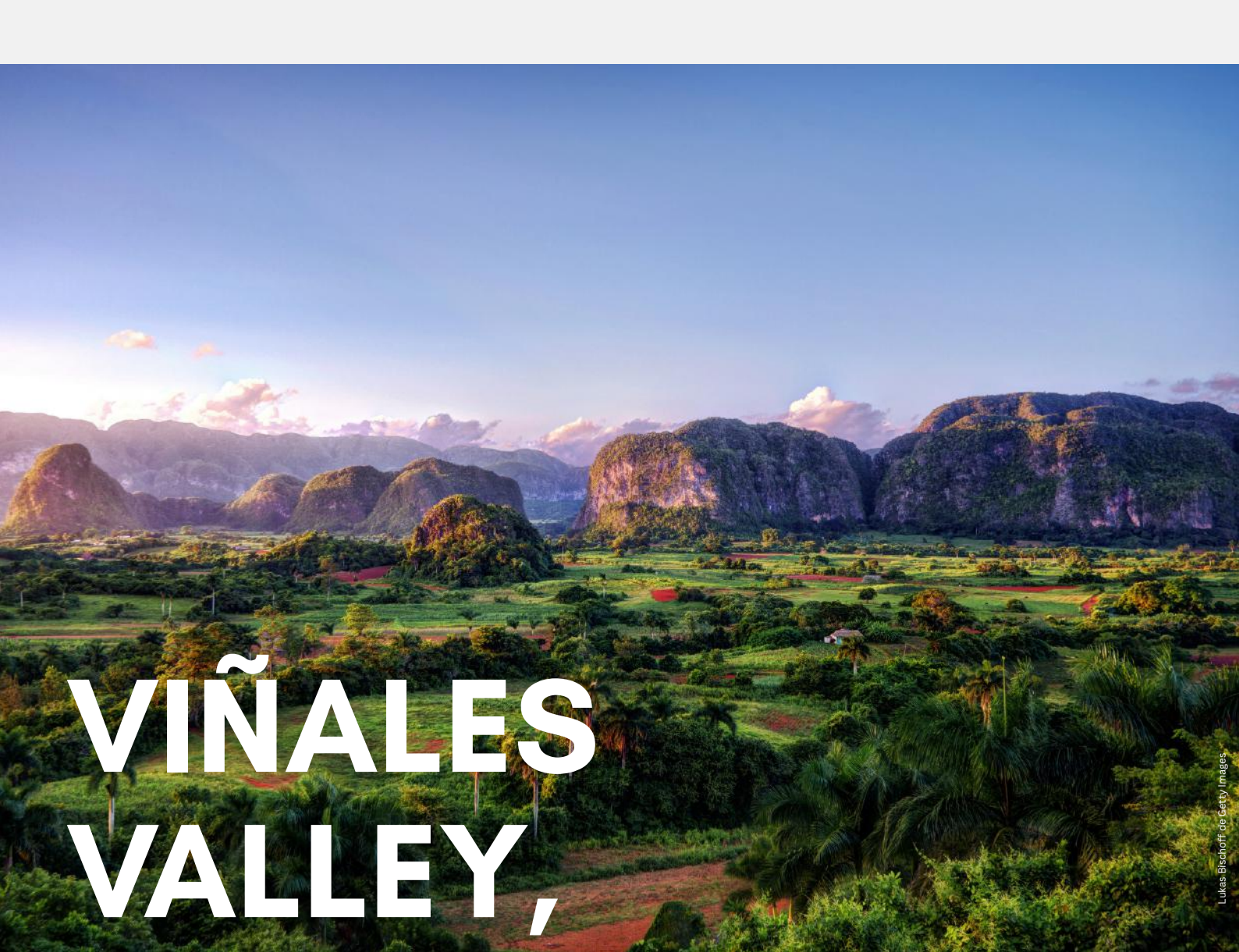
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THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

Travel stories by students, graduates, and faculty members, offering personal and inspiring perspectives on unique destinations.





Lukas Bischoff de Getty Images

VIÑALES VALLEY,

THE SMOKE OF CUBA

JORDI CANAL-SOLER

UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Writer | Journalist and Photographer specializing in Travel.

Lecturer in charge of the Travel Narrative Module at School of Travel Journalism.

Coordinates 22°37'00"N 83°43'00"W

From the top of the **Mirador de los Jazmines viewpoint**, a landscape of **extraordinary beauty** unfolds: in the foreground, the **lushness of palm trees** and the **canopies of dense forests** shimmer under the **tropical sun**; on the horizon, rising like giants covered in vegetation, the **mountainous towers of the mogotes** stand out like **green islands in an emerald sea**; and in the center, the **great valley**, dotted here and there with the **cultivated fields of the small plains...**

The **Viñales Valley**, in the province of **Pinar del Río in Cuba**, is not only **beautiful**, but also **rich in fauna, flora, and history**. This is why the area became a **National Park** and, since **1999**, has enjoyed the status of a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Here you can admire the **Sierra de los Órganos**, where the **karst limestone hills**, sculpted by water, date back **more than one hundred million years**. It took the artist **Leovigildo González Morillo** a little less time (*only five years*) to paint the great **Mural of Prehistory** on one of the **rocky walls** of a large hill: here **mollusks and dinosaurs, reptiles and human beings coexist, representing, with vivid and striking colors, the origin and evolution of life**.

But if **Viñales** is known for anything, it's for its **extensive production** of a specific plant: here in the valley, the best conditions exist for cultivating **Nicotiana tabacum**, that is, the **tobacco plant**, and it's said that this is where the leaves come from to prepare some of the **best Cuban cigars in the world**. Factories like **Cohiba, Montecristo, Partagás, and Romeo y Julieta** are supplied from here, and it's said that when one of these cigars is lit, the **bluish smoke** that escapes in the first puffs is reminiscent of the morning mist that often drifts through the **traditional fertile plains of Viñales**.

THE VIÑALES VALLEY, IN THE PROVINCE OF PINAR DEL RÍO IN CUBA



Jordi Canal Soler



Jordi Canal Soler

It's easy to spot **farmers with their tools**, working from **sunrise to sunset** with the **same equipment used centuries ago**. Tobacco was already being cultivated in Cuba before the arrival of the Spanish, but it was after their export to Europe that tobacco began its love-hate relationship with Viñales. Here in the valley, it's rare to hear about anything other than tobacco, and it's almost impossible to find someone whose life isn't directly or indirectly connected to its cultivation. But tobacco also has a tragic side: in the past, slaves were used to work the fields and cure the leaves, and the work was so arduous that many tried to escape. Those who succeeded hid in the many caves that abound in the valley, such as **San Miguel Cave**, near the **Sierra de la Guasasa** mountain range. Here, the **runaway slaves** tried to survive however they could, regaining their strength to **escape their masters**, who often pursued them on horseback with dogs. Slavery ended years ago, but the life of a **tobacco farmer in Cuba remains hard**.

In a country **ravaged by politics and poverty**, there are **no tractors or machines** to make the task easier. **Tobacco farmers**, like **Gerardo González**, have to do **all the work by hand**. The farmer **welcomed me to his farm** early one morning, **invited me for coffee**, and told me **his troubles while rolling a cigar over his thighs**. He belonged to the **fourth generation** of a family dedicated to **tobacco cultivation** since the **19th century**. His field yielded about a thousand drying racks a year, each of which held the leaves of **up to twenty tobacco plants**. The **curing and drying process** took place in tobacco barns, wooden structures with palm-leaf roofs that dot the Viñales landscape. After about forty days of drying, the tobacco leaves are ready to be processed in the factories and sold to the only customer the farmers can have: the **government buys ninety percent of the harvest**.

established (only seven hundred pesos per quintal). The remaining ten percent can be kept by the farmers to do whatever they want with it.

“We mostly smoke it” Gerardo told me, almost finishing rolling the cigarette. *“It’s our life. And also our death. But we don’t know how to do anything else...”*

Gerardo told me that they sold unfermented tobacco to the government, which then decided the final fermentation time depending on the required quality of the leaf. With their portion of leaves, the González family carried out a homemade fermentation using their own recipe, which included water, rum, and a guava leaf.

The farmer finished rolling the cigar and gave it to me. Rudimentary in appearance but handcrafted, it seemed far more authentic than any of the boxed cigars.



Samotrebizian



Getty

that they sold in Havana. Gerardo took one just like it from his shirt pocket and lit it. And the room seemed to fill with the same morning mist that had just faded away in the valley outside...



VIÑALES

Jordi Canal Soler

THE IRISH PATH

FEDERICA ACCLAVIO



DIARY OF A TRAVELLER IN COUNTY CORK





A personal journey through County Cork, where Irish hospitality, local encounters, and a slower way of travelling reveal the true soul of the destination.

Federica Acclavio


Wait. Until it happens. You wait hours, days, months, years. A lifetime because you feel that moment will come. **And for me, that moment came on a rainy late February morning eight years later.**

It was a Friday at the beginning of the day; on the motorway, the cars were flowing fast without hindrance, and we reached Bologna airport by the scheduled time. **The rain was falling hard, and the wind was lashing it against our faces, but we were so determined that nothing and no one could stop us; there was a magnificent light inside every storm.**

We boarded the plane almost on time - a rather unusual standard for the 'budget'

airline Ryanair - ready to take off for the Emerald Isle. This is an account of a past trip before I began my master's degree in travel journalism and before I realised that **every single place one visits deserves to be experienced slowly** to capture those details that would otherwise remain unnoticed. **A little over a year has passed since I departed for Ireland**, and in these months, many aspects have changed without my realising that the first approach to this deep land, **founded on Celtic legends**, would then shape the rest of my days.

Therefore, I will not write about my fourteen-day travel itinerary, as I will



base it on my personal experience with the locals I had the great pleasure of meeting during the days I spent in County Cork, in the south of Ireland. Fortuitous and fortunate encounters occurred through a mutual acquaintance, which allowed me to immerse myself in the true meaning of Irish hospitality, kindness and generosity.

Tommaso loaded the suitcases into our compact little Kia, ready for us to hit the road again, when we heard John's message with directions to Cork, instructing us to turn off the M8 - in Ireland, motorways are identified by the letter M followed by a number. And so we did; along the way, glimpses of the rural landscape, thatched cottages scattered along the road, and signs for small towns - the little villages that still bear the Gaelic name - were poetry to the eyes. Every ten kilometres travelled by car, the weather changed quickly: from shy sunshine to downpours of rain, to flurries of snow, only to return as clear as it had started. This is Ireland.

A growing sensation of hunger was beginning to surge within us, and on the way, we stopped for a quick break at a traditional Irish pub in the suburbs;

inevitably, as we approached the entrance, curious glances turned towards us. Discomfort and indecision hovering, we entered cautiously, exchanging greetings and smiles that aimed to inspire confidence. Each of them returned to look at their pints and the waitress to serve the dishes.

The Irish are known for their friendliness - I do not deny that this is a constant feature found in Ireland - however, in more remote and country places where locals are more likely to be seen, a wary gaze can penetrate you, especially in social situations of aggregation and new contexts where they may show a particular caution towards strangers; an attitude influenced by the historical and cultural framework experienced.

The fact remains that having finished the first few seconds as foreigners we were, the introspective atmosphere, the brown and earthy colours of the rustic décor, the distinct accent of the mother tongue, and the intense perfume of the generous dishes and the chunks of butter in the middle of the table spread on Soda Bread, is an indelible memory.





We resumed our journey with Tommaso still at the wheel, and by mid-afternoon, as we queued along the Port of Cork, we arrived in the city where our friends were waiting for us for the days to come. The Port of Cork 'Connecting Cork to the World' is the second largest natural harbour in the world - of which Corkonians or Leesiders are very proud and speak of with some pride - and represents a vital international gateway for trade with over two hundred years of history. Cork's historical past is long and marked by tragic events, inextricably linked to the Irish struggle for independence.

<<Hit hard by the economic recession, thanks to its liberal, young and cosmopolitan spirit, Cork has been able to reinvent itself and today boasts elegant streets, redeveloped stretches of waterfront and artisan cafes on every corner.>> Guide to Ireland, Lonely Planet.

The main attraction of Cork is the city itself; it is worth getting lost and wandering aimlessly along its streets, savouring its atmosphere, as we did during our encounter with the tea house to the right of our hotel. My attention was caught by the cosy, old-fashioned style of décor with a rectangular palette of bleached wood on which the cafe's name is written above the door and collections of china on the sideboards; welcome to the home of an old Irish aunt.

Tara's Tea Room is a small, cosy place, so warm and full of trinkets in every corner that when you open the front door, the smell of cake and loose-leaf tea pervades you, and as you take your first steps towards the cabinet of sideboard cakes you are as enchanted as a child, undecided which one to choose.



Editor's note:
Tara's Tea Room,
mentioned in this
article, has since
closed its doors.
Even so, it remains
part of the
emotional
landscape of this
journey.





I would have tasted them all. In the end, after minutes of indecision, I opted for the blueberry cake accompanied by breakfast tea without any regrets. **Our first day in the thriving metropolis came to an end; the next day, awaiting us were Sam and Eoghan, two Irish natives from County Cork who would be our guides.**

By trade, the two characters I am about to tell you about are not tour guides but people who have offered to do so to give us a truly unique experience; Sam is a client of my boyfriend's hotel, while Eoghan is a friend of Sam's whom both of us (*my boyfriend and I*) met during our short stay in the city. **They embody the classic Irish stereotype in appearance: a pale complexion with rosy tones, deep, dark green eyes, a broad smile, the *Gavroche* hat (an Irish hat) for Eoghan, and the warm Aran Islands jumper (Aran Knitwear) also for Eoghan. They are also skilled conversationalists, with Sam, in particular, being a notable example.**



What distinguishes the two, apart from their physical form, is their character. When I saw them arrive that Wednesday morning, I expected them to be younger in appearance, but I soon had to change my mind, crumbling all my prejudices. They were not two retirees as I had imagined them to be... Their attitude was distinguished, lively, alert, and typical of those who still have drive and a desire to do many new things. Sam is a former bank manager with more commitments than he had before. At the same time, Eoghan has worked all his youth at the Port of Cork and now enjoys the streets of Ireland riding his bike with his friend Sam and the *Fort 2 Fort cycling group*, who organise international bike rides to raise money for

'*The Mercy Hospital Foundation*' in support of cancer patients.

As the city woke up, we returned from our first walk, and sitting on the soft couch in the Hall, we waited with excitement and anxiety (at least for me) for our friends who showed up with **extreme punctuality**, also excited to show us **places unknown to us**.

The first stop left me positively surprised; I certainly did not expect to enter the **local tourist office**. Sam told us seriously, <<*Here you can find all the information you need, clarify your doubts, and collect a lot of paper material divided by itinerary.*>> When you visit a new town, go to the local tourist information offices. And dropped several catalogues into my arms.

A year later, that material sits in the **travel section of my personal library** at home, not knowing that some of it would serve me for the **final project of the master's course** I am attending. **Life surprises you.**

County Cork is a place where **traditions are still alive** and where tales are passed down from generation to generation, summing up the best that Ireland has to offer its visitors. Between the pages of *Fairy Legends, Tales of Irish Fairies and Traditions*, the first organic collection of legends from the Irish oral tradition, handed down only by the storytellers of the noble Celtic tradition of the *seanchaí*, the author *Thomas Crofton Croker*, a brilliant pioneer in inventing a proper method to systematise these stories, made me reflect on the places I explored, beauties unveiled and amplified by the technology of the modern world now before everyone's eyes but which **very few know how to see**.

At a good pace, I set off towards the centre with my companions, with the enthusiasm of a child, my heart beating, my eyes full of curiosity. My ears strained to translate Sam's descriptions as he tirelessly and without catching his breath told us about every corner of his town, with a distinct county accent that was difficult to understand.

We stopped in front of a black cast-iron gate. <<*Come here, you're in front of the English Market. I'll take your picture,*>> said Sam. With its elaborate vaulted ceiling and Victorian-style columns, the English Market, which owes its name to the fact that it was opened in 1788 by the Protestant, or 'English', guild that controlled the city at the time (there used to be an Irish Market nearby), is a real find. <<*This is where Queen Elizabeth II passed through on her visit to Ireland; let's go inside to warm up with a cup of tea*>> Sam urged us.

We passed through **colourful stalls** featuring regional products, ranging from meat and fish to fruit, cheese, and ready-to-eat dishes. As a natural glutton, I was enchanted by the array of Scones with and without raisin, with chocolate chips, stuffed or empty, and the fragrant Croissants whose perfume wafted through the air, intoxicating me without having had a Guinness yet.

A small note on Scones... they are those little sandwiches that are eaten with tea across the Channel, accompanied by clotted cream and strawberry jam. Neutral in flavour, except for those with raisin, which give them a natural, sugary aftertaste, neither sweet nor savoury, they belong to the family of quick breads that use bicarbonate of soda as a leavening



County Cork is a place where traditions are still alive and where tales are passed down from generation to generation.



agent: let's say a relative of Soda Bread.

We sat in the corner of a cafe and ordered two teapots amidst small talk conversations to socialise and establish the weather that day -in the end, a burst of splendid sunshine accompanied us all the way through the day- Eoghan, of a shy and more reserved personality than Sam, bit into the thunderous croissant, asking me several times if I wanted a piece.

This attention, and many other gestures that took place that day and the following day, were an actual demonstration of the **generosity of these people**; they made us feel welcome, introduced us to other friends eager to get to know us, **embraced us as family**, offered us everything within their reach, without asking for anything in return. Actions that show the reflection of the **soul of a people**.

<<Now let's head for the garage to get the car and get out of Cork to another destination>> Sam said as he stood up. *<<We will drive along back roads along the coast, an ideal area to drive around in no hurry>>* added Eoghan.

And so it was. With our eyes glued to the window, **expanses of grass, sheer cliffs, endless horizons, rocky headlands and sandy beaches** darted along the route towards Charles Fort, one of the best-preserved star-shaped fortresses in Europe, dating back to the 17th century. Believe me when I say that it deserves a visit if only to admire the **spectacular view** that surrounds it. We were 3 km south-east of Kinsale - the third stop on our trip.

Built in the 1770s to defend **Kinsale harbour**, this fort was used until **1921**, when it was largely destroyed by retreating British troops.

After an hour or so of sightseeing, we drove up towards the **picturesque marina of Kinsale (Cionn tSáile)**, where the **famous Wild Atlantic Way begins**.

Suddenly, the car stopped <<*get out and walk down the Scilly Walk with Eoghan, I'll wait for you down at the harbour*>> so we said goodbye to Sam and took the mysterious coastal path, not knowing where it would take us. You can't tell you've visited **Kinsale** before you've walked the **Scilly Walk**, an **enchanted coastal path** that takes you both towards **Charles Fort** and towards the harbour along the waterfront.

Kinsale is a **small fishing village** with **brightly painted houses** that brighten up the many long, gloomy autumn and winter days - an alternative way to combat depression. The town features a series of **narrow, winding streets** lined with **art galleries, souvenir shops, lively bars, and excellent restaurants** that serve **freshly caught fish**. Surrounding it is its **beautiful natural harbour** full of pleasure boats. A **pretty little town** where we spent a few hours in complete tranquillity.

We stopped to eat at a small seafood restaurant; the pictures hanging on the walls depicted photos of Kinsale from years past, faces of fishermen, and a fledgling town based on its **primary source: fishing**. The ambience was intimate, with **long wooden tables** and benches synonymous with gathering and togetherness.

The menu primarily featured **fish dishes**, but there was no shortage of meat dishes - one more inviting than the other, all made with **regional ingredients**. I opted for the catch of the day, always accompanied by a generous portion of potatoes and a side dish of vegetables, while Tommaso chose a succulent duck breast. Between good food, beer and company, that was among the most enjoyable lunches of my life. For dessert? **There was no room!**

Our afternoon was coming to an end; physically tired but not yet excited, we took the road back to Cork as the **sunset peeped over the ocean**. To our left, a flat green **Spike Island** lay exhausted in **Cork Harbour**. **Spike Island** played an important defensive role for the harbour in the second half of the 19th century, during the Irish War of Independence, and from 1984 to 2004, it became a place of detention, earning the nickname *'Ireland's Alcatraz'*. Source *Lonely Planet, Guide to Ireland*.

That day was full of **amazement** - at least for us - probably our guides thought they hadn't given us enough time or perhaps they were dissatisfied with the itinerary shown to us: it was almost 6pm, and we still had to get back to the hotel, feeling the strain of the early wake-up call as they suggested we go to dinner at the steak house with the best meat in the county.

With **extreme gratitude**, we declined; we felt we had taken enough advantage of their willingness. As a final tribute, on the way home, the **sky was ablaze**, filling us with feelings of **hope and wonder**. We said goodbye in front of the Isaac Hotel, and we would see each other again the next day.



Writing this story has been like walking backwards – a bit like when you rewind a tape or send back the recording of a video – a journey into **my memories**, of how I remember it, what it was like, what I thought it was like under the eyes of a tourist, and how I appreciate beauty after experiencing it. A year later, with a **different perspective**, I would have liked to savour more of those weeks, to face them calmly, without the rush of following the **list of places to visit**, returning home even more tired than when I had left. To write notes of **volatile sensations**, to appreciate even better – *not more than I already do*, and I am immensely grateful for that – the company of **my Irish friends**.

The aforementioned book on page 3, which I am currently reading, gave me the input to write this story, my '**hero's journey**'; *T. Crofton Croker* – translated by *Francesca Diano*, art historian, writer, essayist and translator, an expert on **Irish folklore and oral tradition**, who has always edited and disseminated Croker's work – made me reflect on the term folklore and its meaning.

The term was initially coined by the English archaeologist *William John Thoms* in 1846 in a letter sent to the journal *Athenaeum*. He invented this compound name, which literally means '**popular traditions**', to replace the various other terms in use at the time, such as popular antiquities or popular literature. Antiquaries were defined as scholars, such as Croker, who dealt with this material. **Fairy Legends is a hymn to Ireland**, a

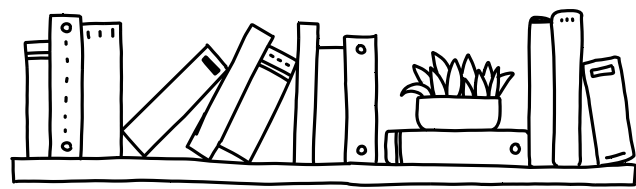
search for common roots in the themes of fairy tales and legends, and a comprehensive anthology that has given accomplished form and longevity to the **voices of Ireland**.

In his tales, I still find the **generosity of these people** who, despite having nothing, living from hardship and misery, were **magnanimous with the pilgrims**, opening the door of their homes to them and offering what they had, even if it was just a **measly potato**. Let's not take it for granted; not all of us are capable of doing this, of **opening our hearts to a stranger**, of letting him get in touch with us. Who would do that nowadays without expecting anything in return? I am the first to expect a return from others.

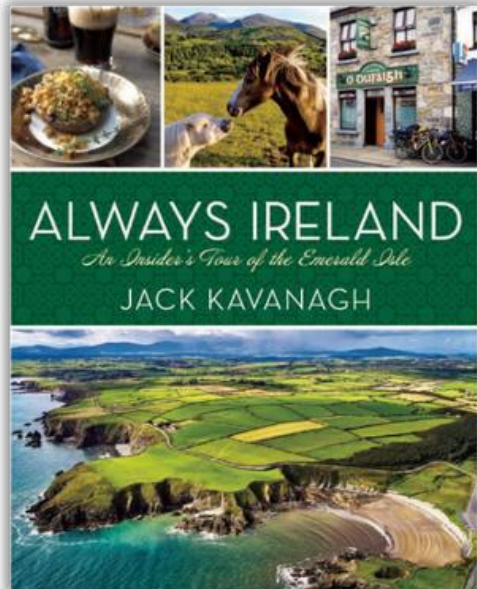
I hope that this story has taken you on a journey with me, that it has drawn you into the silhouette of **noble-minded locals**, that it has conveyed the same emotion I felt during those days, that it has given you a clear picture of the places I visited, and how **good and varied the Irish cuisine is**.

Ireland is a state of mind, a succession of **connections, vibrations, the perception of ancient souls, legends and stories** that add a touch of mystery and fascination.

On Monday morning, when I entered the office a fortnight later, **I was no longer the same**; I was determined to continue what I had started on the **Emerald Isle**. But that's another story.



Recommended books

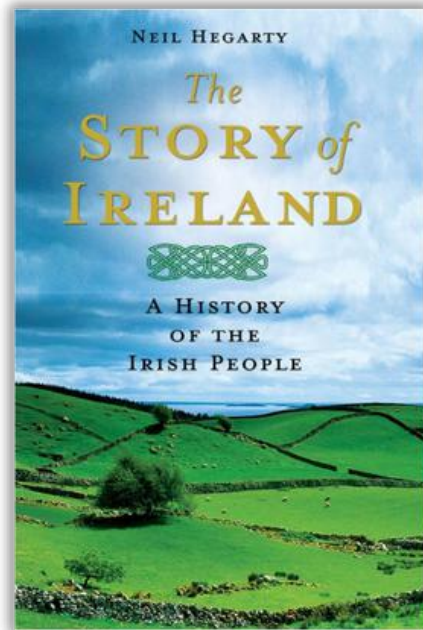


Always Ireland

Author: Jack Kavanagh

This alluring travel guide from National Geographic, covering every county of the Emerald Isle, offers the ultimate insider's tour of Ireland's most iconic places, from the literary pubs of Dublin to the Cliffs of Moher.

From the emerald green coastal cliffs to centuries-old castles, hole-in-the-wall pubs to world-renowned distilleries, this richly illustrated narrative showcases Ireland's best sights, bites, and experiences.



The Story of Ireland: A History of the Irish People

Author: Neil Hegarty

The Story of Ireland re-examines Irish history, challenging the accepted stories and long-held myths associated with Ireland. Transporting readers to the Ireland of the past, beginning with the first settlement in A.D. 433, this is a sweeping and compelling history of one of the world's most dynamic nations.

Hegarty examines how world events, including Europe's 16th century religious wars, the French and American revolutions, and Ireland's policy of neutrality during World War II, have shaped the country over the course of its long and fascinating history.





BULGARIA

Bulgaria Beyond the Postcard

A conversation on destination branding, slow travel, and the stories used to present Bulgaria to the world.

STJ student **BinduSree Gondipalli** speaks with the **Bulgaria National Tourism Board** to examine how Bulgaria is presented internationally through narratives of **heritage, gastronomy, wellness, and slow travel.**

Bulgaria, according to Ms. *Elena Dimitrova*, is positioned as a country of **authentic experiences, rich heritage, and natural beauty.** “We want travelers to feel Bulgaria before they see it - to taste, hear, and walk through our history” she explained. This philosophy translates into campaigns emphasizing slow travel, wellness tourism, and cultural immersion, rather than a checklist of sites.

When asked about the key narratives used, *Dimitrova* highlighted several recurring themes:

- **Heritage and Continuity:** From Roman amphitheaters in Plovdiv to ancient monasteries in the Rhodope mountains, historical continuity is a cornerstone. Campaigns often juxtapose centuries-old architecture with contemporary cultural events to demonstrate that Bulgaria’s story is alive.
- **Culinary Culture:** Traditional dishes, markets, and local gastronomy are leveraged to attract visitors seeking authentic taste experiences. Ms. *Dimitrova* described initiatives showcasing banitsa breakfasts in Sofia, shopska salad in Bansko, and artisanal wine tours in Plovdiv. “Food tells our story in a way words sometimes cannot” she said.
- **Nature and Wellness:** Bulgaria’s mountains, mineral springs, and coastal regions are central to health and wellness promotion. Spa tourism, full-body massages, and mineral bath experiences are positioned as avenues to slow down and reconnect with nature.



The Board faces challenges as well. One persistent issue is fragmented perception abroad. **Many international travelers associate Bulgaria with winter skiing or budget travel, overlooking its cultural depth.** *Dimitrova* emphasized that a cohesive digital presence and storytelling that highlights contemporary culture alongside tradition are crucial to shifting this perception.

Ms. Dimitrova also discussed digital strategy: a mix of social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, and storytelling through blogs and videos. She stressed that authenticity matters. **“We encourage influencers to immerse themselves rather than merely capture images”** she said. This ensures that promotional content is rooted in lived experiences, not staged tourist snapshots.





Rila



Another interesting insight was the Board's ethical approach. **Sustainability is embedded in campaigns**, emphasizing small businesses, heritage preservation, and slow tourism. Programs feature local guides, artisans, and traditional workshops, inviting visitors to engage responsibly.

The interview revealed that the work of a **tourism institution** is both **strategic and narrative-driven**. It requires balancing **economic goals with ethical promotion**, **tradition with modernity**, and **digital efficiency with genuine storytelling**. For a travel journalist, understanding these dynamics is invaluable: it frames how destinations are curated and guides how stories can amplify or critique those narratives.

In conclusion, my conversation with the BNTB highlighted that Bulgaria's appeal is more than its landscapes or historic monuments. **It is a country that invites presence over pace, tasting over ticking boxes, and connection over consumption**. Through institutional storytelling, the country presents a layered, **sensory-rich experience that aligns closely with the ethos of slow, immersive travel**.





Traditional Bulgarian Shopska Salad

The Ivan Vazov National Theatre, or Bulgaria's National Theatre, is the oldest and most important theatre in the country, and one of Sofia's leading institutions.



Koprivshitsa town.



Plovdiv.



Dormition Cathedral in Varna, Bulgaria, is the main Orthodox church in this coastal city on the Black Sea.

Behind the Interview

Reflections on Travel Journalism Practice



Conducting this interview was both exciting and challenging. The first step - identifying and contacting the institution—required research and careful wording. Introducing myself as a student and requesting a short interview felt nerve-racking at first, but framing it as a learning opportunity helped me gain confidence.

Preparing the questions was another exercise in precision. I wanted open-ended questions that would uncover strategy, narrative, and ethical considerations, without sounding like a checklist. Questions such as “How do you balance heritage and contemporary culture in promotions?” or “Which visitor experiences reflect Bulgaria’s values?” helped guide the conversation while allowing room for storytelling.

During the interview, I felt a mix of nervousness and curiosity. Listening actively while taking notes required focus, and asking follow-up questions demanded flexibility. Recording permission was requested politely and professionally, which gave me a sense of responsibility as a budding journalist.

The biggest learning was understanding how institutions craft destination narratives. I realized that tourism promotion is not only about showcasing attractions, but also about framing culture, values, and ethics in ways that resonate internationally. It also reinforced the journalist’s role as an intermediary - translating institutional objectives into stories that are engaging, responsible, and truthful.

Finally, I reflected on the importance of ethical engagement: respecting sources, avoiding oversimplification, and presenting tourism narratives with awareness of their social and environmental impact. This interview has strengthened my confidence in approaching professional sources and sharpened my sense of responsibility as a travel storyteller in training.

BinduSree Gondipalli



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→ Bruges at a Turning Point

THE MEDIEVAL CITY REDISCOVERING ITS FUTURE

By Katrijn Geerts



A sustainable Bruges,
the thinking goes, must
first be a liveable
Bruges.

On a quiet winter morning in Bruges, when the swans glide across the canals and the belfry bells roll softly through the narrow streets, the city feels like a secret. This is the Bruges locals love: contemplative, lived-in, textured. But by midday in high season, the atmosphere changes. Tour groups mushroom in the Markt, chocolate shops buzz, and camera shutters ricochet against the medieval facades.

Bruges, one of Europe's most photogenic cities, is wrestling with the paradox of its own success.



Bruges is wrestling with the paradox of its own success.

A Brand Built on Timeless Beauty

The city's global identity was crafted long before modern marketing existed. Bruges is its brand: gabled houses, cobblestones, quiet canals and Flemish Primitives — an aesthetic so complete it borders on cinematic. For years, this visual shorthand made promotion easy. A single image could do the work of an entire campaign.

But travel tastes have evolved, and so has Bruges' strategy. Visit Bruges, the city's tourism board, now positions the

destination as a place for “quality cultural travel” — where art, gastronomy, craftsmanship and heritage intersect. That shift from volume to value is deliberate.

“We wholeheartedly choose not for ‘more’ but for ‘better,’” the organisation says — a line that could double as the city's new mission statement.

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made promotion easy. **A single image could do the work of an entire campaign.**

Instead of casting a **wide marketing net**, Bruges now targets **discerning travellers**: those who **stay longer, engage deeper and wander beyond the postcard**. Digital campaigns highlight **ateliers, neighbourhood cafés, hidden courtyards and seasonal events** curated with care. Even the tone has changed: less *“bucket list”* more *“slow discovery.”*

The Weight of Popularity

Still, the numbers tell a **different story**. Around **eight million visitors** pass through the city each year — an extraordinary figure for a place with only about **120,000 residents**. At peak times, Bruges feels like it is **operating at capacity**, and locals notice.

The term *“overtourism”* has moved from academic journals into **daily conversation**. Residents complain about **congested footpaths, homogenised shops** and the creeping feeling that they are becoming **minor characters in their own city**. An international paper summarised the tension bluntly: *“There are just too many visitors.”*

Unlike some destinations that bristle at such criticism, **Bruges confronts it head-on**. Policy changes have been swift: **tighter controls on short-term rentals, limits on cruise ship arrivals and smarter visitor-flow management**. The aim is to guard the **fragile equilibrium between economic benefit and everyday liveability**.

Sustainability, Reimagined

Sustainability here is about more than **low-impact travel**. For Bruges, it includes the **safeguarding of heritage, community well-being and cultural continuity**.



The city's tourism strategy is explicitly tied to several UN Sustainable Development Goals, which might sound bureaucratic — until you wander into a quieter neighbourhood and see what is at stake.

There's a growing fear that high tourism pressure could erode Bruges' authenticity. Some long-time residents report feeling “detopographised” as though the city they know is gradually being replaced by an idealised façade for visitors. Local identity — *the subtle rhythms of daily life, from market routines to the dialect heard in bakeries* — is part of the heritage Bruges is trying to save.

To counter that erosion, the city has ramped up community participation. Residents now have a louder voice in tourism planning, from event approvals to neighbourhood impact assessments. This approach is not just democratic — it's strategic. A sustainable Bruges, the thinking goes, must first be a liveable Bruges.

Rewriting the Story

Modern destination marketing is no longer just about enticing tourists; it's about shaping expectations. And Bruges' evolving narrative is clear: the city invites visitors to experience it with intention. Campaigns encourage travellers to explore lesser-known quarters, choose walking or cycling, and support local artisans.



This new messaging communicates values — *authenticity, respect, craftsmanship, and stewardship* — that stretch far beyond simple sightseeing. It's not scolding, but gently guiding. **Think of it as a cultural code of conduct wrapped in beautiful imagery.**

The Road Ahead

Cities like Bruges exist in a **delicate balance**: too few visitors, and the cultural ecosystem suffers; too many, and it **begins to crack**. The long-term health of Bruges hinges on how well it can **manage that tension**.

The current approach — *emphasising longer stays, better distribution, and less dependence on day tourism* — gives Bruges **room to breathe**. Whether these measures will **preserve the city's soul** remains to be seen, but early signs suggest a **newfound clarity of purpose**.

Despite the challenges, Bruges still offers **moments of magic**, especially when the crowds thin and the **muffled sound of footsteps echoes against centuries-old walls**. **That fleeting quiet may be the greatest luxury of all**, and perhaps the most compelling reason for the city's shift toward **quality over quantity**.

Bruges is not merely trying to protect its past. It is cautiously, but confidently, shaping its future. And in doing so, it invites travellers to rediscover what makes the city extraordinary: not just its **medieval splendour**, but its capacity to feel **profoundly, intimately human**.

A sustainable Bruges must first be a liveable Bruges.

Bruges is not merely trying to protect its past. It is cautiously, but confidently, shaping its future.



THE AIM IS TO
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EVERYDAY
LIVEABILITY.





BY CHLOE NGUYEN

THE “HABIBI” CODE TO FIND MOROCCO’S SOUL

Leaving for Morocco, I expected **the history, the “medina”, the desert and the Atlas Mountains.** Yet, I returned with something far more meaningful: **a collection of human stories.** It was **unexpected hospitality and the random encounters** which I would never be able to find anywhere else. Those are things bringing more charm to Morocco and make it an **unforgettable destination.**

This piece is simply an **archive of those moments,** the spontaneous stories collected, proving that **the greatest adventure isn't about where you go, but who you meet.**

The Shared Sunrise and Breakfast

I kicked off my Moroccan adventure with a **hot air balloon ride over Marrakech** – a bucket list moment of everyone. But the experience gave me more than just **stunning views from the air.** In the basket, I met a **group of strangers,** mostly older individuals, who were initially just asking for help with photos.

Yet, moments later, we were **found sitting together for breakfast.** We savored **authentic Moroccan bread** and sipped **warm mint tea** around a small table. Five people from different corners of the world, united by a shared magical moment, we traded silly stories. I was so into their stories that I completely forgot to ask for contact. We parted ways with goodbyes, each heading off to continue our own separate journeys, but carrying a shared memory.



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Off The Road: Fellow Travelers

The next day, I joined another group for a three-day desert excursion to Merzouga. Our bus was a mix of ages and nationalities. The nine-hour drive flew by, filled with laughter and spontaneous stories. This, I realized, is the joy of solo travel: no one knows who you are, what you did, or what you will do. The only thing that matters is who you are in that moment and the experience you are sharing.

That brief encounter soon blossomed into a shared WhatsApp group. A few weeks later, I woke up to a message from one of the men in the group, sharing photos from his trip across South America. It was a small gesture, but it reignited my own wanderlust. These temporary travel bonds can, surprisingly, leave a permanent mark.

TEMPORARY TRAVEL BONDS CAN LEAVE A PERMANENT MARK.

The Magic of Local Storytellers

My most cherished encounters, however, were with the locals, those truly showed me their home and culture.

Mohammed, the Chef of Dades Valley

Before reaching the beauty of the Merzouga desert, we spent a night in the Dades Valley. There, I met Mohammed, an Amazigh (Berber) chef at the hotel.

It all began with a simple, silly question about the song playing in the background. The next thing I knew, we were on the hotel rooftop, stargazing beside the Atlas Mountains, sipping mint tea and exchanging stories.

Mohammed immersed me in the rich history and traditions of Amazigh culture. I learned firsthand that Moroccans are true masters of folklore and storytelling. Mohammed's personal story about growing up in that remote village was just as compelling, offering a powerful counterpoint to the historical tales. Nowadays, people turn to the internet for answers, yet I found that the most valuable and memorable details came directly from the people.



A Moment Logging Out of Earth

The desert experience would not have felt complete without **the locals guiding the way**. The spirit of Moroccan hospitality is truly remarkable.

When I felt unsure about how to capture the **Milky Way**, a member of the camp staff immediately offered to help and guided me to the **deepest dune in the desert**. That night felt unreal. We lay on the cold sand, wrapped in the heavy desert wind, our eyes fixed on a sky overflowing with stars. As we waited for the moon to set, I felt a deep sense of **serenity**. For a brief moment, it was as if I had **logged out of Earth**.

It was a reminder that some of the best travel moments happen when a local opens the door to an experience beyond the expected route.





An Old Man of Chefchaouen

My last meaningful encounter took place in the **blue city of Chefchaouen**. I spent half an hour sitting with an **elderly man selling souvenirs on a blue staircase**. I simply stopped to listen to his folktales about the city and the origins of its famous colour. He shared stories, details, and old photographs of Chefchaouen — things far harder to find online than I had expected. For a **brief moment, he became a bridge to the city's memory**, showing me that its charm extended far beyond its **blue walls**.

Even knowing there was a good chance I would never cross paths with these people again, their stories stayed with me. They shaped my perspective and, in many ways, defined the journey itself.

It is not the destination or the landmarks that help us understand who we are, but those **unexpected encounters** — someone sitting next to us on a train, or a stranger we meet in a park. Sometimes, a **few minutes of shared conversation** are enough to shift the way we see the world. That, I believe, is one of the quietest and most beautiful ways life moves. In the end, this country — and its many “**habibis**” — became less about the map and more about **the memories it left behind**.

Download



WOMEN 15 TRAVELERS

WHO OPENED THE WORLD FOR US.



SCHOOL OF TRAVEL
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Flavors of the world

In two dishes



Poutine (Canada)

Poutine is a typical dish from the Quebec region of Canada, consisting of French fries topped with cheese curds and gravy. It is a symbol of Canadian comfort food.

Although its exact origin is debated, it is believed to have been invented in the 1950s in Quebec.

Kimchi (South Korea)

Kimchi is a traditional Korean dish made from fermented vegetables, primarily napa cabbage and radishes, seasoned with chili, garlic, ginger, and other spices. It is an essential side dish on the Korean table.

It is so important in Korean culture that many households have special refrigerators just for storing kimchi.



STUDENT WORK SHOWCASE HUB

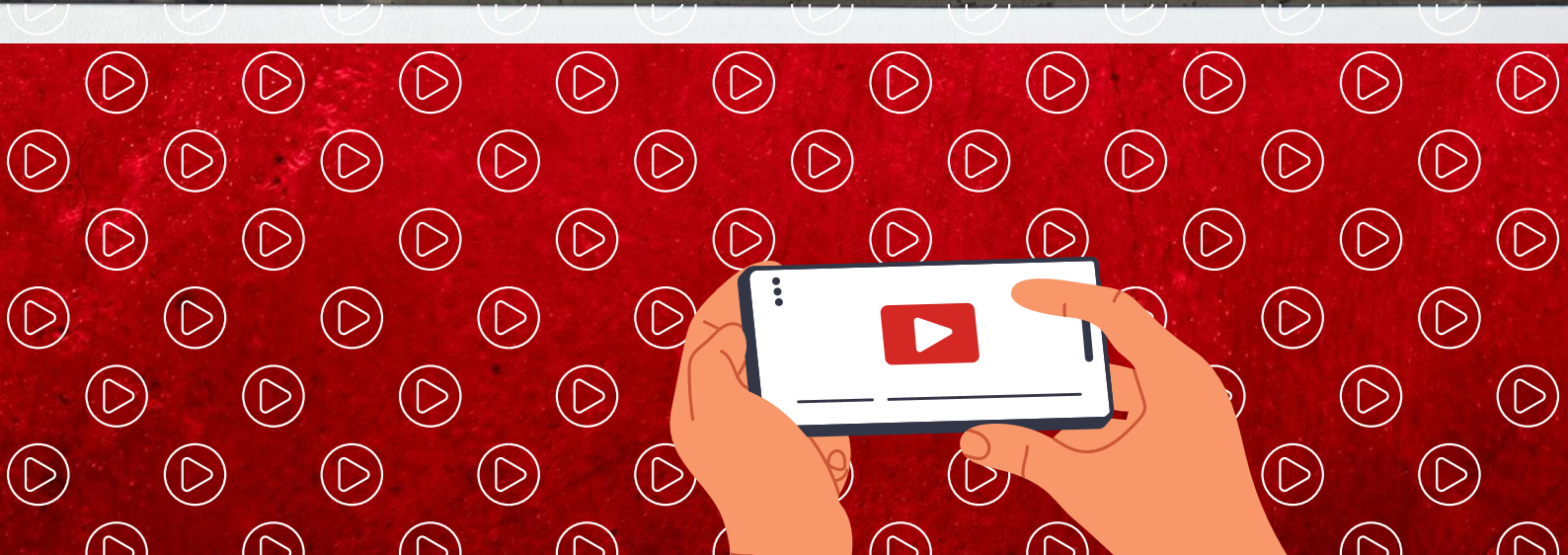
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YOUTUBE NEWS

Your next great travel story starts here!



Life of a Travel Journalist | Masterclass | Igor Kondrat

What does the **“life of a travel journalist”** actually look like—beyond the highlight reel? In this Masterclass for the Master in Travel Journalism, travel journalist Igor Kondrat breaks down the real day-to-day of the job: the freedom and the publications, but also the long hours behind the screen, the logistics, the health curveballs, the culture shocks, and

the pressure to deliver stories that are accurate, fair, and useful. You’ll also hear a practical conversation about one of the biggest gray zones today: where travel journalism ends and travel content creation/influencing begins—and what ethical responsibility means when your work can shape decisions, safety, and reputations.

YOUTUBE NEWS



AI-GENERATED TRAVEL: INNOVATION OR THREAT TO TRAVEL JOURNALISM?

Is AI-generated travel content a creative breakthrough... or a direct threat to the credibility of travel journalism?

In this Open Days debate by the School of Travel Journalism (STJ), Joe Amditis and Laura G. de Rivera tackle the tension

between speed and verification: AI that can produce travel guides, articles, and images in seconds—versus journalism that requires sources, field reporting, editorial accountability, and a clear ethical compass.



TRAVEL NARRATIVE – FROM EXPERIENCE TO STORY: THE TRAVELERS CHALLENGE

What makes a travel story worth telling? In this open class from the School of Travel Journalism, award-winning journalist and author David Farley shares practical tools and [#storytelling](#) insights to help transform ordinary [#travel](#) experiences into publishable narratives.

Farley—a contributor to [@nytimes](#), [@BBCTravelShow](#), [@guardiannews](#), [@wsj](#) and more—guides us through the structure, ethics, and creative process of narrative travel writing.

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DEFINITIONS



Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is an approach to tourism that seeks to minimize negative impacts on the environment, culture, and local communities, while maximizing benefits for residents and preserving natural and cultural resources for future generations. It is essential to promote tourism practices that respect and preserve destinations, fostering responsible tourism.



Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage includes monuments, historical sites, and living traditions such as music, dance, gastronomy, and art that are passed down from generation to generation within a community.



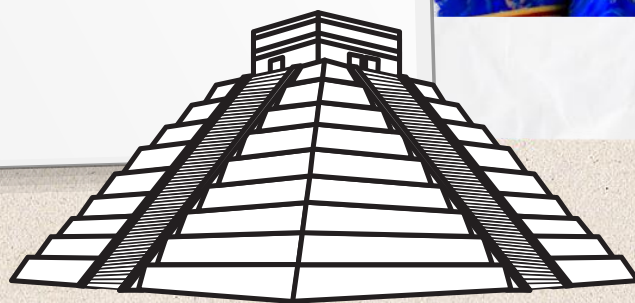
Ethnography

Ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures, where the researcher observes and describes the customs, behaviors, and ways of life of a community from their perspective.

In travel journalism, applying ethnographic techniques helps to understand and narrate in a deep and respectful way the cultures being explored.



Cotton Bro Pixels

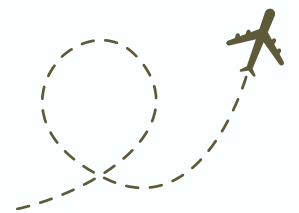


Geopolitics


Geopolitics is the study of the effects of geography (human and physical) on international politics and relations between countries. Understanding the geopolitical context of a destination is key, especially when reporting stories in regions with political tensions or conflicts.



JOURNALISM TRAVEL



Studying for a Master's in Travel Journalism, Marketing, and Tourism is a decision that offers you the opportunity to acquire specialized knowledge and essential skills to excel in the tourism and communications industry. This program empowers you to tell stories effectively, promote destinations and experiences in a compelling way, understand the complexities of global tourism, and access an exciting and constantly growing career.



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