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TRAVEL TALES: THE CHANGING FACE OF TOURISM

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Destination unknown ...

Tourism is one of the fastest growing and diversified industries. From wellness weekends, to de-luxe-breaks to couch-surfing: For each travel desire there's a made-to-measure solution. But the booming business also has its dark side, from drinking sprees at the infamous Bal-lermann beach of Majorca to sex tourism. On the positive side: green adventures such as farm holidays or garbage-free nature trekking. But who profits from all that travelmania, and what does it do to the locals who live where others go on vacation? This IMS-publication presents travel tales from different perspectives



Which kind of traveller are you?

“The world belongs to
those who enjoy it”

Giacomo Leopardi

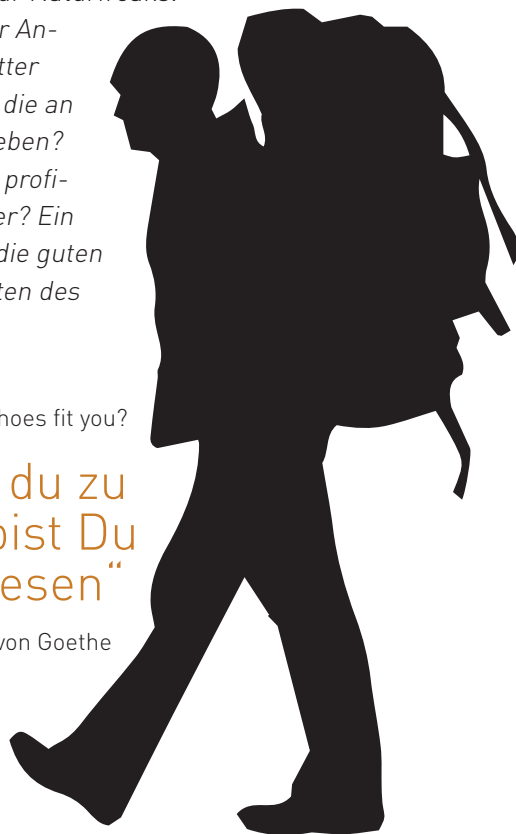
Kaum eine Branche ist so wachstumsstark und abwechslungsreich wie der Tourismus. Vom Wellness-Wochenende, über Luxus-Trips bis zum Couchsurfing: Für jede Nische gibt's ein maßgeschneidertes Angebot. Der Boom hat seine Schattenseiten von Ballermann bis Sex-Tourismus, aber auch alternative Reisen hervor gebracht, wie Ferien auf der Farm und Öko-Trekking für Naturfreaks.

Was aber macht der Ansturm der Globetrotter mit den Menschen, die an den Urlaubsorten leben? Und vor allem: Wer profitiert vom Reisefieber? Ein IMS-Magazin über die guten und schlechten Seiten des Reisens

... or do these shoes fit you?

„Nur wo du zu Fuß warst, bist Du wirklich gewesen“

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

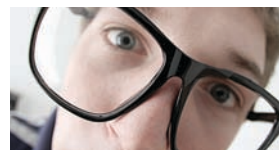


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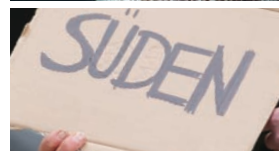
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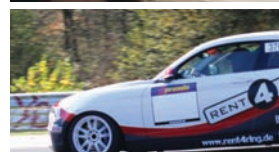
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New shades of green tourism

Happy farming days

Photo: Rene Passetti, Flickr

Worldwide the interest for eco tourism is on the rise, along with organic food consumption and environment protection. A tendency that is re-shaping the traditional farm holidays

By Joana Cidade and Mira Knauf

It is early in the morning. Instead of using an alarm, you wake up with a rooster crowing. You get dressed and you go out to milk the cows and work on the land. The air is clear, although it is still a bit dark. You breathe deeply. It is hard work, but you feel happy. You are enjoying your vacations

at the Breuerhof, a family farm. This lodge is located in the Eifel, a region in western Germany, close to the Belgium border. Such a holiday - without Internet and television - may sound as the ultimate nightmare of the all-times connected youth, but it is one aspect of a growing movement of "green vacations". Accord-

ing to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), eco tourism is a fast growing niche, increasing at a pace of 20 percent annually. Following the trend, traditional farm holidays are re-shaped, attracting not only kids and parents, but also urban people in need of some rest from stressful everyday life. But the modern visitors have higher expectations: besides enjoying, they also want to be actively in contact with the nature, protect the environment and eat healthy. "Many of our guests say that our milk tastes very different, much better," says Reiner Breuer, owner of the Breuerhof. Since 1998, he and his wife Monika have hosted tourists from all over the world. "Our guests are mainly from Germany, but we have also guests from the Netherlands and France, countries that are just a few hours drive away," says Breuer.

When the visitors step outside the main house of the farm, their eyes encounter endless green and a nice garden, where children run around and play with bunnies. At the same time a young couple rests laying down on the grass. Different styles, age and tastes co-exist in the daily farm routine.

"Most of the time the children actually decide where the family spends their holidays, so they are still very relevant for us here. But we also have many childless couples that like, for example, to go hiking and enjoy nature," says Breuer.

Cows against stress



Photo: Public energy, Flickr

"Mooo! I only eat organic"

Hot spots for eco-trips and a green lifestyle

The farm hotel portrayed in our reportage, fun for kids and adults
www.breuer-hof.de

Independent listing of bio-nature vacations in Germany, Italy, Austria and Switzerland
www.bio-natur-urlaub.de

Since 15 years: information on farm house holidays all over Germany
www.bauernhofurlaub.de

Useful news about green journeys
www.greentravelerguides.com

Information about bio markets, fairs and vacations in Germany
www.bio.de

The Brauerhof is one of hundreds of similar farm hotels in Germany. The rising interest in this kind of holiday may be partially explained by this country being the biggest market for organic products in Europe. But more than a local phenomenon, this is also a worldwide tendency. According to the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, bio markets tripled in size in the last ten years, having reached revenues of 44,5 billion euros in 2010.

At the farms, organic food is then an important attraction. Children collect fresh eggs, adults eat healthy. "Although I don't hold any official bio label, all I produce is free of chemicals," affirms Breuer.

Furthermore, he also supports local and regional economy by buying from neighbour suppliers products like meat and sausages.

The increasing awareness towards climate

change, air pollution and nature protection are the key elements responsible for this gradual re-shaping of the tourism sector. Environment-friendly, local and small-scale holidays emerge as an alternative to mass tourism. Farmer Breuer can surely expect a growing number of visitors every year.

Odeon, 100% bio

Alternative restaurant for healthy foodies in Bonn attracts an eclectic crowd

By Jaime Campoamor

The increase of bio stores and organic food restaurants in cities worldwide has become a trendy phenomenon in the last few years.

As a multicultural, modern and developed city, Bonn is no exception. In one of the youngest neighborhoods of the former capital, Beuel, there is a good example of the possibilities of this kind of business. Four years ago started the adventure of Michael Zerfin (53), a German who has always lived with the motto of being consequent with nature in his daily life. After coming from Portugal, where he lived for four years, Zerfin decided to use his previous experience running a health-food shop to start his own restaurant. Intending to use a hundred percent biological products coming from a neighbour green-supermarket, he has developed an interesting concept in a friendly atmosphere. Open everyday, the Odeon MOMOs Bio-Bistro combines a standard menu with a weekly one, always based on season products.

Got a hankering for a healthy continental breakfast, a german dish or a fresh juice? In Odeon costumers can taste different veggie dishes as the Fetaschnitzel with Potato Sal-

Photo: J. Campoamor



Relaxing the green way: costumers in a bio restaurant

ad (9,80€) or the Taboulé with Mint Joghurt (7,20€), and accompany them with different sorts of lemonades, teas or bio-beers (Hellers Kölsch, 2,40€; Pinkus Honigmaltzbier, 2,40€). One of the waitresses of the local, Kathy Schaefer-Matijevic (32), says that it is hard to define the costumer's profile. The reason is the variety of the guests: students, business people, neighbours and also tourists are guided by the advice of veggie-websites like *Happy Cow*. They all can be seen tasting the proposals offered in the bistro's menu.

For more information, check out the website:
www.biobistro-bonn.de

MOMOs Bio-Bistro ODEON, Hans-Böckler-Straße 1 (Bonn)



Photo: Thijs Woslyn

Green tourism for dummies

Our special selection of dos and don'ts that will make you stand out of the sandals-and-socks tourist crowd and transform you into a cool green expert *By Joana Cidade*

+ Dos

Go longer and go fewer times

Don't be a city-hopper! Go to fewer places, but get to know them better. Every trip represents a high environment cost. So, does it make sense to use tons of fuel and resources for a weekend abroad?

Go direct

Whenever possible, book direct flights. Ecologists may have better sleeping nights if you avoid several takeoffs, the pick point of fuel usage in any air travel. If possible, chose rather the train.

Book green lodges

Be curious, not shy! Ask about the environmental policies of the hotel you intend to stay. You don't want to find your own sanitary disposals in the ocean you plan to swim, do you?

Use local public transportation

This is the greenest option to go from A to B. If not at all possible, then rent a hybrid or biofuel car.

- Don'ts

Green holidays, grey home

Think about household arrangements before you leave. Does it make sense to plan a green holiday and let your thermostat at full power back at your empty home?

Wild in the wild

It is time to show the best of your civilized manners! Don't bring plants, seeds or any other alive souvenir from forest areas. Don't let anything behind beside your footprints. Future generations may thank you!

Fast food, no good

Don't run at the first chance to the nearest fast food. Try local produced aliments, choose organic. This attitude contributes not only to your health, but generates revenues to local communities and helps maintaining a green environment.

Spoiled guest

Back at home you do not change towels and bed linens everyday. So, why to do that in a hotel? This rule may send you a bit away from a nomination as king of hypochondriac cleanness, but you will save water and keep great hygienic habits.





Photo: Roger Jones, Flickr

Eins mit der Natur - aber auch Bäume leiden
wenn wir mit dem Flieger in den Urlaub starten

„Fünf Tage Mallorca sind unnötig“

Interview: Mira Knauf



Photo:   T.E

Bernd R  th:
„Fliegen ist das Letzte“

Nachhaltigkeit ist ein Modewort. Auch die Tourismusbranche lockt damit Verbraucher. Aber was muss man sich als Reisender unter nachhaltigem Urlaub vorstellen? Bernd R  th vom Verband   kologischer Tourismus in Europa (  T.E) hat Antworten

Was genau ist eigentlich nachhaltiger Tourismus?

Beim nachhaltigen Tourismus geht es um eine Kombination aus Naturschutz, Umweltschutz und sozialer Gerechtigkeit, also z.B. faire Arbeitsbedingungen f  r die Menschen am Urlaubsort. In der Realit  t lassen sich leider nicht immer alle drei Aspekte in Einklang bringen. Uns geht es darum dem Ideal so nah wie m  glich zu kommen.

Was zeichnet den idealen   ko-Touristen aus?

Eigentlich sollte sich gar nicht so sehr der Tourist um diese Dinge k  mmern, viel mehr sollte die Region f  r, der Tourismus unter nachhaltigen Bedingungen stattfindet, sorgen. Der Tourist selbst ist h  ufig   berfordert, wenn er   berall auf Nachhaltigkeit achten muss. Denn wenn wir ganz ehrlich sind, dann f  hrt niemand in den Urlaub um aktiv Umweltschutz zu betreiben.

Also braucht ein Tourist kein gr  nes Gewissen?

Nein, es ist trotzdem wichtig ein Bewusstsein f  r Umweltschutz und soziale Gerechtigkeit beim Verbraucher zu schaffen. Unternehmen geraten nur durch   ffentlichen Druck in Erkl  rungsnot.   hnlich wie in der Textilindustrie, wo viele

Verbraucher die schlechten Produktionsbedingungen nicht l  nger akzeptieren, werden auch Urlauber langsam kritischer.

Was sollte ich bei der Reiseplanung besonders beachten?

Wichtig ist es vor allem bei der An- und Abreise zu   berlegen, ob man mit dem Bus oder der Bahn fahren kann. Denn um es mal ganz deutlich zu sagen: F  r nur f  nf Tage nach Mallorca zu reisen ist unn  tig. Wenn man fliegt, dann sollte man auch l  nger vor Ort bleiben. Um ein Beispiel zu nennen: Wenn ich einmal nach New York und zur  ck fliege, dann m  sste ich mein Auto ein ganzes Jahr lang stehen lassen um den CO2-Aussto   auszugleichen.

Werden wir in Zukunft alle bewusster reisen?

Die gro  en Unternehmen ver  ndern sich leider sehr langsam, aber immerhin tut sich   berhaupt etwas. Je kritischer ein Verbraucher, desto besser. Ein gro  es Problem ist aber auch die Politik, die h  lt zu sehr still. So muss zum Beispiel auch der Druck auf Billigairlines wachsen, denn die Discount-Preise stehen in keinem Verh  ltnis zur Umweltbelastung.

The tourism activists

Ecological Tourism in Europe (  . T. E. or E.T.E.) is a NGO that promotes sustainable tourism since 1991. Its headquarters are in Bonn, Germany. (www.oete.de)

Sight-seeing without seeing

Tourism in the dark: exploring the other senses



Photo: Blindwalk archive

Smelling, touching, tasting and hearing cities. In Germany, a tour offers tourists and locals the possibility to explore beyond what their eyes can see

By Joana Cidade

Imagine travelling to a new city and, once there, deciding not to see it. Although it may sound unrealistic, this is the choice of those that join the Blindwalk in Cologne, Germany. The tour, created in 2011, weekly guides outsiders both into the local attractions and the secrets of walking in the dark. As your eyes get folded, your nose and ears awake from a long sleep. By smelling and hearing, you can tell someone just passed holding a hotdog or wearing high heels. And all that even before you move from where you are.

The rediscovery of the four remaining senses is the highlight of this experience. Behind the idea is Dr. Axel Rudolph, an economist and psychologist long working in projects involving visually impaired people. Besides the Blindwalk, a pioneer concept in Germany, he is also responsible for the first local dark restaurant, among other activities. "If you look to the world with other eyes and use your senses differently, you can experience the very same world in a totally different way", he tells.

Photo: Blindwalk archive



Smell: important role in detecting flavours

Easy to say, challenging to do. Before the tour starts you have to overcome some barriers. On the very beginning, all participants receive a blindfold to block their sight and a backpack with a grip to hold and follow the guide. So imagine now not seeing anything ahead and being conducted by a

stranger. Yes, it has everything to do with trust. Nevertheless, although it may take a few minutes, you learn to have some faith and stop taking long and high steps as if you were walking on the moon.

The third accessory the group receives is a headphone in one ear. Along the way the guide uses it to give instructions such as 'we will turn right', besides describing the landscape

and enriching the experience. "You can concentrate on this voice and you feel like you are never alone. I find it good", says Philipp Knoche, 29, one of the participants. The tour moves further, and the guide asks if anyone knows where they are. Some guess it right: it is the interior of the Dom, the Cologne cathedral and one of the most visited spots in Germany. The clues in this case were the smell of burning candles and the amplitude of the voices inside.

"Are they really blind?"

From time to time, it is possible to hear curious people laughing or commenting about this exotic troop. The most frequent question is 'are they really blind?' Although this is usually not the case, sometimes visually impaired visitors join the tour. "For the blind it is a relaxing experience. They like the fact they don't have to worry about the way, only follow and enjoy", says Dr. Rudolph. He also explains that his wish was to create a real life experience in the dark, not limited to four walls as in museums. "It is not about teaching people how is to be blind because you cannot totally simulate that. But people get to understand something about how blind people deal with the world", he tells.

Back to the tour, after some more breakthrough experiences it is time to explore tastes. All participants are arranged in a bench for a picnic. Unexpectedly, that little ball you were sure it was a grape, happened to be a cherry tomato once you tried it! Yes, eventually some of your senses may trick you. Not much later, it is time for the promenade to end. You hear the noise of water and, once your eyes are allowed to see again, you realized you are just beside the Rhine river. You did not notice, but it got darker, that sun that was shining two hours ago is now gone. Time to go home. But as you cannot find it in other German cities, this is a good reason to come back and once again not see Cologne.

A globetrotter of a different kind



Tony Giles during a trip to Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

Photo: Tony Giles / Ilaria

Being blind and partially deaf did not prevent Tony Giles from dreaming about visiting every single country in the world. Indeed, he is getting there fast

During a semester break Tony Giles faced a common student dilemma: where to go? His friends had plans to visit Florida, but Mickey Mouse was far from his priority list. Giles then decided to take a solo trip to New Orleans. This would be rather an ordinary story, if not for the fact that the portrayed traveller is blind and that this choice changed his life.

Tony, 35, is a British national and a veteran globetrotter. After this breaking through experience during an exchange period in an American university, he has so far visited over 80 countries and stepped in every continent. "In New Orleans, I walked out of the hostel, and just froze. But I said to myself, 'this is what you wanted. If you don't want it, go home.' I took a deep breath, turned left, walked down the street and never looked back", he tells.

Diagnosed with Cone Dystrophy at the age of nine months, his vision gradually degraded until he became totally blind in his teenager years. Besides the visual impairment, Tony is also around 80% deaf when not using hearing aids. Nonetheless, he never considered this as a barrier. "When I was growing up I went to boarding schools with lots of disabled children who had far more debilitating conditions than me. This gave me a sense that mine were not the worst disabilities in life", says Giles.

Low budget, big travels

In his world trips, Tony is a truly budget backpacker. Most of the time he is either hosteling or camping and his only companion is the guiding cane. Every year, Giles spends several months on the road. In order to finance his adventures, he counts with the pension left by his father and the revenues from the book he published about his journeys, entitled "Seeing the world my way".

Currently visiting East Africa, Giles is racing against the clock. He wishes to cover the entire continent before his yellow fever protection runs out by the end of 2013. Due to a recent kidney transplantation he cannot receive live vaccines anymore. This is one of the many challenges he faces on a regular basis. As a blind man, Tony says a major problem during this travels is to deal with money. Some countries, like the United States, have banknotes all the same size. "It means asking and trusting people the entire time", he affirms. Moreover, Tony also has to trust people to find his way

in a new town or to get to know where and what to eat. Without seeing, pointing a food in a menu is not an option.

Thus, the lack of vision does not hinder him from enjoying new places. Giles claims he can experience the world by hearing, tasting, touching and smelling things.

He appreciates the sounds of nature and he senses the environment around him. As snapshots of those moments, he also likes to take pictures. For those who may ask why a visual impaired man uses a camera, he has a good-humoured answer: "It is fun. Plus I find it funny for sighted people to see a blind guy taking photos!"

Special travels

Traveleyes: agency specialized in holidays for the blind and people with special needs
www.traveleyes-international.com

The Blindwalk takes place every weekend during spring, summer and autumn
www.blindwalk.de

Follow the adventures of Tony Giles at his blog
www.tonythetraveler.com

Venice of the north or drug paradise?

The controversial appeal of Amsterdam to attract tourists from all over the world

By Mariana Santos

Photos: Mariana Santos

“Sometimes I spend up to 50 Euros per day in a coffee shop”, affirms Jess, trying to figure out the total amount he spends in a month on “joints”, cigarettes rolled with cannabis, while he drags the wietje once more. “Considering I go to coffee shops almost every day, yes, it is a lot of money”, continues the 23 year-old salesman, who has lived in Amsterdam since he was born.

Clients such as Jess account for 70% of the clientele at Feels Good, a coffee shop in the Red Light district. The business is as old as its most frequent customer. The manager, who prefers not to be identified by name, says that while tourists spend little money buying soft drugs (hash and weed), Dutch customers who consume them regularly are the main source of the coffee shop’s income. “Groups of tourists do not necessarily consume a lot. It is not rare for 20 tourists to spend less than 50 Euros”, explains the manager. From behind a glass window, in a cabin-like enclosure, he sells Jess a tiny plastic bag with a small portion of marijuana for 10 Euros.

One million drug tourists per year

Unlike Feels Good, however, in most establishments visitors from abroad can account for more than 80% of the clientele. Besides the beautiful cruises along the canals and interesting museums, drug consumption is among Amsterdam’s biggest attrac-



Dutch government launched a huge debate in the country two years ago after proposing restrictions against tourist drug consumption in coffee shops



tions. According to the Amsterdam Tourism Board, out of 6 million visitors each year, approximately 1 million declare drugs as one of their main reasons for choosing the Dutch capital as a holiday destination. Approximately 35% of all visitors end up going to one of the city’s 220 coffee shops.

This all adds up to serious business: levies on cannabis sales alone contribute almost 400 million Euros to the government in tax revenues annually.

This explains why inflamed debates erupted two years ago, when the new conservative government proposed changes to the regulations concerning the trade of soft drugs in the country. The aim of the proposals was to restrict access to coffee shops to only Dutch residents with a membership card, a weed pass. Since then the controversial idea of “putting an end to the ‘open door policy’” is still on the agenda.

While the specific method is still up for debate, it is clear that many in the Dutch government want coffee shops to become smaller and easier to control, in order to combat public nuisance and crimes associated with the drug trade. “Dutch drug policy must be made less appealing to users from abroad”, stressed the Minister of Security and Justice Ivo Opstelten November of last year.

Far of street trafficking

French student Pierre Michel, 19, swears that the chance of smoking cannabis without the



risk of being busted does not play a decisive role in his decision to travel, for the third time in 3 years, from Paris to Amsterdam: "I like the architecture, the atmosphere here. It is a very beautiful city". He admits, however, that the liberal drug policy makes the Dutch capital even more appealing.

Amid the dense smoke emitting from joints, Michel hangs out with friends at the Green House, one of the fanciest coffee shops of Amsterdam. On the wall, photos of celebrities who have stopped in, such as Mike Tyson and Jason Mraz. "The quality of weed is much better here than in France. We have no fear of getting a product with bad quality", says Pierre.

"Restrictions against foreigners would never work in Amsterdam", bets one of the waiters. "If they adopt it here, people will buy cannabis on the streets. You see, cocaine is forbidden, but you can find it everywhere outside", he points out.

The mayor of Amsterdam, Eberhard van der Laan, shares this opinion. According to his cabinet, there is a "fear" that denying tourists access to coffee shops "would result in an increase in street trade, enormous pressure on the remaining coffee shops and greater health risks in general". This means that, at least for now, the proposal to restrict consumption by foreigners is off the table in the city.

Doors closed in Maastricht

Since the late 1970's, when the drug trade was first permitted in the Netherlands, restrictions have been a hotly debated issue, comprised of both internal and external pressures. Many residents worry about the implications for society beyond the effect of drug laws on tourism. The sociologist Philippus Johannes Heijblom, 51, sees a paradox: while consumption has been legalized, production remains illegal in the Netherlands; this can attract criminal supply the booming industry.

Nevertheless he thinks foreigners should continue being allowed in coffee shops. "People should have the choice to do what they want", believes Heijblom, who lives in a small town, 20 km from Amsterdam, with his family. It is easier to have control over a situation without prohibitions, he stresses.

The restrictions are, however, already in place in three municipalities in the south of the country. The ban was introduced in May of last year, but not without a struggle. In Maastricht, only 7 of the city's 14 coffee shops remained opened; the others sold to foreigners and are waiting for a judicial decision to overturn the ban and reopen their doors. The number of drug tourists has been four times lower in the city. The Association of Coffee Shops of Maastricht calculates that 420 jobs have been cut as a result.



One million tourists visit Amsterdam every year to consume cannabis

Reisejournalismus – das Tor zur Welt?

Der moderne Mensch hat in seinem von Terminen und Fristen beherrschten Leben nicht oft die Möglichkeit auszubrechen, zu reisen und andere Kulturen kennen zu lernen. Doch reisen kann man auch, ohne das eigene Zuhause zu verlassen. Meike Nordmeyer, Journalistin und Reisebloggerin, bringt den Lesern Urlaubsträume nahe – in ihrem Blog [meikemeilen.de](http://www.meikemeilen.de)

Interview: Mohammad Mansoor



Meike Nordmeyer hat Philosophie und Germanistik studiert. Seit mehr als sechs Jahren arbeitet sie als freiberufliche Journalistin und Texterin und hat eine Vorliebe für Reisen. Im Sommer 2012 startete sie ihren Blog www.meikemeilen.de

Reisebloggerin – ist das ein Beruf?

Ich bin schon lange sehr aktiv in den Social Media. So bin ich auch neugierig auf die Bloggerszene geworden. Da eines meiner Schwerpunktthemen im Journalismus der Reisejournalismus ist, hat es sich angeboten, einen Reiseblog zu gründen. Ich wollte das einfach ausprobieren, was da möglich ist, und als Textprofi aktiv mitmachen. Von meinen vielen Reisen habe ich ja immer so viel zu erzählen. Über meine Aktivitäten in den Social Media, vor allem bei Twitter, bin ich schnell in die sehr lebendige und offene Blogger-Community hineingekommen. Das ist eine spannende und bereichernde Sache für mich, die ich nicht mehr missen möchte.

Machen die meisten Reiseblogger das als Hobby, oder ist es eine neue Form von Journalismus?

Die Reiseblogger-Szene bietet ein breites Spektrum. Es gibt natürlich Reiseblogger, die privat für ihre Familie und Freunde von ihren Reisen berichten und das nur als Hobby sehen. Aber es gibt auch sehr viele Reiseblogger, die das sehr ernsthaft mit professionellem Anspruch betreiben. Sie liefern spannende Reiseberichte angereichert mit tollen Fotos und bieten damit viel Inhalt und Qualität in ihren Blogs. Außerdem sind unter den Bloggern inzwischen auch immer mehr Journalisten, die in ihren Blogs dementsprechend journalistische Texte bringen und das keinesfalls als Hobby ansehen. In den Reiseblogs schreibt man anders, vor allem viel persönlicher als im Print, und so bildet sich tatsächlich eine eigene journalistische Form heraus. Ich würde jedoch nicht von einem anderen Typ von Journalismus sprechen. Denn für gute und glaubwürdige Artikel gelten auch dort die journalistischen Standards.

„Ohne Einladungen wäre Reisejournalismus heute nicht mehr möglich. Der Verdienst eines Reisejournalisten deckt niemals die Reisekosten. Trotzdem kann man unabhängig berichten.“
Meike Nordmeyer

Wie berichten Sie oder was für Informationen liefern Sie Ihren Lesern und wie nützlich sind Reiseberichte für Leser?

Mit meinen Geschichten von den Reisen, von den Eindrücken und Erlebnissen möchte ich vor allem interessanten Lese- stoff bieten, der dazu einlädt, in Gedanken für einen Moment mitzureisen. Natürlich bieten die Texte damit den Lesern auch konkrete Anregungen für eigene Reisen und im besten Fall Hinweise auf Touren und Unternehmungen, auf die sie selbst noch nicht gekommen sind. In meinen Texten bringe ich immer auch eine Portion Hintergrundinformationen über den Ort, zum Beispiel über seine Geschichte, über Dichter, Maler oder Komponisten, die dort lebten oder auch über typische kulinarische Themen der Region. Sodass man immer noch etwas lernen kann. Das mache ich einfach gerne. Denn ich freue mich ja auch immer, wenn ich wieder etwas auf meinen Reisen gelernt habe.

Wenn Sie auf Reisen sind, um Informationen für Ihre Berichte zu sammeln, womit finanzieren Sie sich? Woher erhalten Reiseblogger das Geld für ihre Reisen und gibt es Korruption im Bereich Reisejournalismus?

Ohne Einladungen zu Recherchereisen wäre Reisejournalismus heute gar nicht mehr möglich. Vor allem deshalb, weil mit den Honoraren für die Artikel die Reisekosten niemals zu decken wären, und kaum noch Verlage die Reisekosten ihrer Journalisten übernehmen. Um genügend interessanten Inhalt zu bieten, sind die Recherchereisen und Einladungen auch für Reiseblogger sehr wichtig. Dabei ist es aber natürlich absolut geboten, dass jeder Reisejournalist und Reiseblogger darauf achtet, dass er sich nicht abhängig macht und sich nicht korrumpieren lässt. Schon bei der Vorauswahl der Einladungen muss man genau prüfen, dass es wirklich um interessante und lohnende Themen geht, über die man auch gut schreiben kann und möchte. Andernfalls muss man die Reise konsequent absagen. Und wenn die einladenden Destinationen und Hotels dann nicht das Angekündigte und Erwartete bieten und nicht überzeugen können, dann muss man darauf entsprechend reagieren. Also entweder nicht darüber berichten, weil man es auch nicht empfehlen kann, oder die

Schwachpunkte benennen. Das kommt auf die Situation an. Es bleibt immer eine Gratwanderung. Wichtig ist das Verantwortungsgefühl des Schreibers gegenüber seinen Lesern. Wenn das Bewusstsein dafür ausgeprägt ist, dann lässt sich auch ein guter Umgang mit den Einladungen finden.

Heutzutage ist der Blogger-Markt sehr wettbewerbsreich und da spielt der eigene Ruf eine ganz wichtige Rolle. Wie kann man in diesem Kontext die journalistische Freiheit bewahren?

Gerade bei der Vielzahl der Reisejournalisten und vor allem der noch größeren Menge an Reisebloggern ist es wichtig, sich einen Namen zu machen und seinen Ruf zu pflegen. Daher setze ich in meinem Blog konsequent auf journalistische Qualität. Deswegen veröffentliche ich dort beispielsweise keine Sponsored Posts, also bezahlte Fremdartikel, die einem häufig angeboten werden. So etwas möchte ich auf meikemeilen nicht. Ich baue meinen Namen und den meines Reiseblogs als Marke aus, und da weiß der Leser, dass er Qualität und journalistische Textarbeit bekommt. Dementsprechend zeige ich auf meinem Blog auch, dass ich als Print-Journalistin tätig bin und habe dort einige der gedruckten Artikel als PDF hinterlegt. Die bilden für mich eine zusätzliche Visitenkarte. Als Bloggerin gelten für mich die gleichen ethischen Grundsätze wie als Print-Journalistin: korrekte, unabhängige Berichterstattung.

Wie sehen Sie Ihre Arbeit, Einkommen und Reise-Blogger-Markt in den nächsten zwei bis fünf Jahren?

Ich werde auch in den kommenden zwei Jahren als Print-Journalistin und als Reisebloggerin tätig sein. Das beides ergänzt sich sehr gut. Bisher verdiene ich noch kein Geld mit meinem Blog. Aber in diesem Bereich entwickelt sich gerade viel. Es werden sich sicherlich in den kommenden Jahren neue Möglichkeiten ergeben, mit dem Bloggen auch Geld zu verdienen. So habe ich beispielsweise schon Aufträge bekommen, gegen Honorar auf anderen Blogs zu schreiben. Das finde ich auch eine interessante Aufgabe. Es ist eine spannende Umbruchszeit. Wir werden sehen, wohin die Reise führt.

Madagascar

The Maki Catta is one of the lemur species that accompany tourists in Malagasy forests

Photo: Nicolas C.

Forgotten paradise

Almost five years of political crisis led to the decline of the “Grande Île” as a tourist destination

by Onja Rasamimanana

Madagascar is an island between the Indian Ocean and the Mozambique Channel where exotic plants, endemic animals and endless beautiful beaches work together to create an amazing touristic attraction. But: The tourists have stayed away of late. Time to explore: What does political turmoil do to tourism in any given country?

Known for being one of the world's biodiversity hotspot, Madagascar does not fall short of the neighbouring tourist destination, the island of Mauritius. However, the much bigger Madagascar, by landscape and biodiversity a continent in itself, has proven to me much more volatile.

I am student of Madagascar myself. The first image that comes to my mind of my home is lots of tourists rooming around town, sunbathing on the beach, playing with lemurs while wandering in the rainforest and breathing the captivating scent of exotic vanilla plants. But reality is totally different in the Grande Île today.

Indeed, since the beginning of the political crisis in Madagascar in 2009, the number of tourists has drastically decreased from almost 375 000 in 2008 to less than 163 000 in

2009. Tourism has shrunk by half - although it was supposed to grow around 11 per cent per year by optimistic estimates. There has been a slow increase since then, but in 2012 the number of tourist was still below the tourists' arrivals before the crisis. And I could certainly feel the difference during my several trips around our island.

Half deserted areas

When travelling through different parts of Madagascar before 2009, I used to meet a lot of “vazaha” - as we call foreigners - on the beaches, just relaxing under the sun and the calming view of the blue ocean. I also used to meet plenty of them late in the evening, walking in the noisy and animated streets of popular quarters where tourists usually go out for a drink and relax in the evening. But the more the crisis lasted, the more crime rates and insecurity rate grew, leading sometimes to robberies against tourists as well as locals.

Thus, during my latest tours in 2012 and even this year, I saw the noisy and animated areas still apparently animated because of loud music but the streets were almost deserted.

Also in August, during my last tour in Ramena in the north part of the Grande Île, a must see before cruising to the "Mer d'Émeraude", I noticed that despite the mild climate, the call of the blue ocean and the attraction of seafood, many hotels were half empty though it was supposed to be the peak of tourism season. Like Ramena, most of the touristic places had to bear the consequences of the political crisis. The only exception might still be Nosy Be, a small island in the north coast which has kept some tourists somehow.

Political unrest erupted in Madagascar in 2009. The president resigned and opposition leader Andry Rajoelina assumed power with military backing. Since then country has not found peace nor back to constitutional rule and has been isolated by the international community. The World Bank estimates that 92% of Malagasy live on less than \$2 per day.

Rooms without guests

What nevertheless surprised me is the contradiction between the decreasing number of tourists and the increasing amount of provided rooms. During almost five years of political crisis some hotels became bigger, others were built totally new.

Rakotoseheno Marcel, General Director of Tourism Development at the Ministry of Tourism explains: "Because of the cyclic crisis in Madagascar, people still prefer to invest in something supposedly secure like hotel construction to ensure their future. But the newly built hotels do not always fulfill the expectation of the international clients". Ramonjavelo Patrick, technical advisor at the Ministry of Tourism in Madagascar confirms: "People who have big houses and villas decided to rent their properties, mainly to local tourists." Currently, hotels up to three stars have only around 15 to 30 per cent occupation rate compared to better times.

Another reason for the increase of room numbers is that hotels' owners decided to extend their hotels due to the growth in the number of tourists from 2007 to 2008. But decisions were met before the crisis suddenly upset plans.

Timid initiatives

To encourage more tourists to come to Madagascar, tourists from Europe, United States or Japan are provided free of charge visas for a stay of less than 30 days. Besides, the national tourism board as well as regional tourism boards take part in international tourism events to promote the destination Madagascar.

But experts say, that such measures are not sufficient to incite tourists to come in droves to breathe the captivating scent of tropical plants and bring its reputation back to Madagascar. It needs security to make a tourist happy.



Photo: O. Rasamimanana

Side effects of a political crisis: empty beaches at the Mer d'Émeraude in Madagascar in peak tourism season

What the tourists miss out on:

- Whale watching off the shores of Nosy be, Toliary, Taolag-naro or Morondava. The best period is from July 1st to September 30th as it is a specific migration period for whales, which come into the channel of Sainte Marie to mate and give birth
- Kite and windsurfing in Tuléar with magnificent landscapes, and waves generated by the southern hemisphere swell, in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. In the Baie des Sakalava, near Antsiranana, windsurfing is a hit: trade winds blow more than six months a year. The best surfing season: from April to late August
- Diving: Malagasy waters are among the finest diving spots on the planet. On coasts or at sea, the spots are located in three main areas: Toliary with the world's third largest coral reef, Nosy Be and Sainte Marie. Best period : April to mid-January

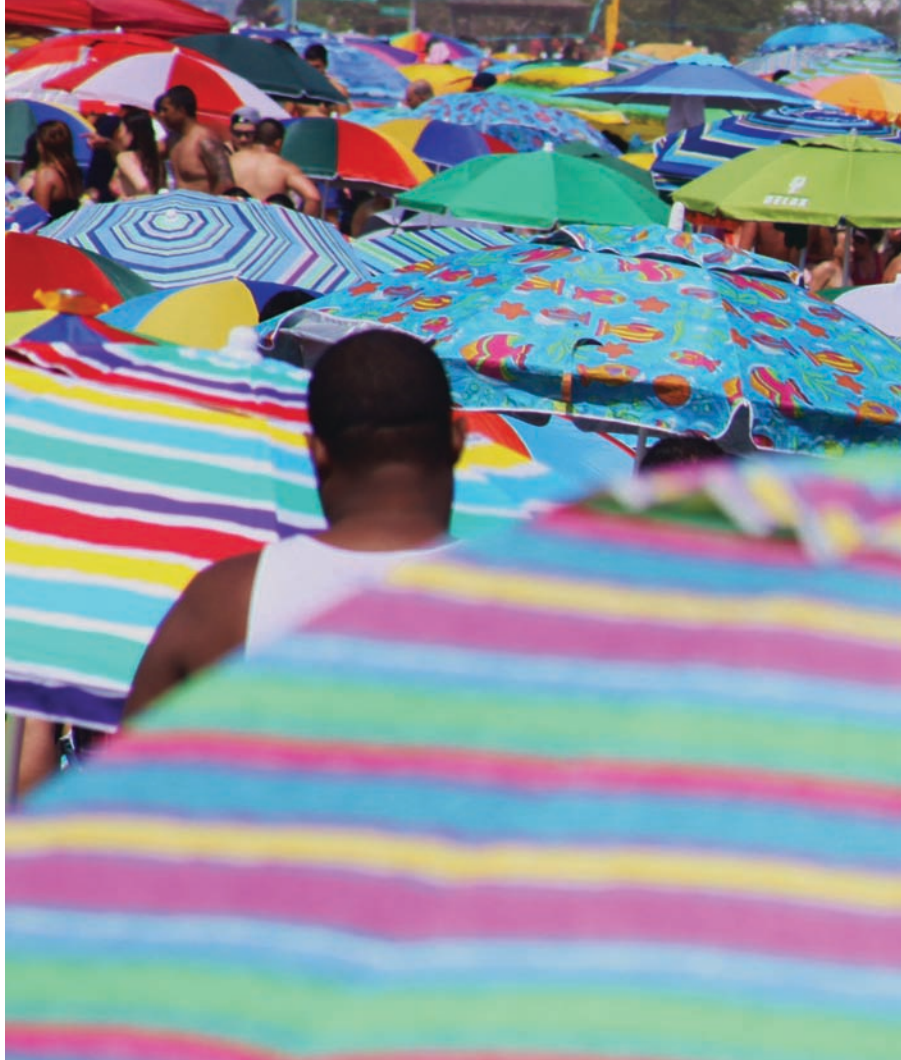
Unparalleled rich nature:

- 80% of endemic plants, among which the ravinala, emblem of the national airline and more than 1000 endemic species of orchids
- 85% of endemic animals among which 105 different species of endemic lemurs
- 6 rainforests in the East : Marojejy, Masoala, Zahamena, Ranomafana, Andringitra and Andohahela. These very old forests contribute to the ecological process, which is vital for the survival of the unique Malagasy biodiversity
- 6 strict nature reserves: Tsingy de Bemaraha, Betampona, Lokobe, Tsaratanana, Zahamena, Tsingy de Namoroka

For more information:
www.madagascar-tourisme.com

Europe in 3 days for under 100 €

Clever ways to travel cheaply - a student's story



The bad side of budget tourism: overcrowded beaches in many countries

By Sara Motalebi

On September 28th, 2013 Onja while on a trip to Strasbourg and visiting the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Strasbourg, was reunited with a childhood friend after 15 years. "My cousin Hasina called a friend of hers to meet us at the cathedral, this acquaintance turned out to be my old school friend Tiana; it was a big surprise. It definitely was a highlight of all my trips in the last year." At this point in the trip media student Onja from Bonn had spent only around 15 Euro. Since Onja was a little child, she dreamt of travelling to faraway lands and visiting famous historical metropolises. She longed to visit Paris, Strasbourg, and Brussels. She is now a student in the master's programme in Deutsche Welle Akademie, in the heart of central Europe; she says "the fantasy lands are now within reach and I am determined to make the most of everything."

The lowest bidder

She has already visited Paris, wandered along Champs-Élysées, towards the Arc de Triomphe; has set foot on the cobblestones of La Grand Place and l'Allee des Bouchers in Brussels. Her latest trip was to Strasbourg which she considers as the highlight of her recent journeys. "The co-existence of modern and antique architecture was pure delight and the food was absolutely amazing. *Sauerkraut and*

"I had to become a creative traveller"

Pfannkuchen for fee." She is an admirer of European Architecture, culture and travelling has given her a chance to experience them first hand. But as a student she is on a limited budget and can naturally not afford to stay in Hilton Hotels or fly business class! Instead she is always on the lookout for creative ways to travel to her favorite cities and opts for less conventional stays, which allow her to travel without breaking the bank.

On one occasion in order to reach Brussels she rode the train to Aachen with her student ticket and then took another regional train from Aachen to Brussels which cost only 10 Euros. Mitfahrzentralen (literally translated travel-with communities) are another alternative available in Germany with Europe-wide reach that provide low-cost means for transportation by connecting drivers and travelers bound to the same destination on online portals. Onja also says that a ticket from Cologne to Paris through a *Mitfahr*-community network would cost about 35 Euros. Similar distance travelled by train would cost between 150 to 200 Euros. One more possibility which Onja takes advantage of is a website for long-distance bus trips offering a budget friendly alternative to trains. She has already booked a trip through this website and explains that the buses are comfortable, equipped with clean toilettes and provide wifi connection during the drive. A one way ticket



Photo: Jmazzolaa



Photo: O. Rasamimanana

A student on her budget trip through Europe: Onja Rasamimanana from Madagascar, holidaying in Strasbourg. "The weather was often cloudy and chilly but on this particular Sunday we could enjoy a clear sky."

from Cologne to Strasbourg cost her 20 Euros.

As a rule Onja plans her trips at least two weeks in advance. Early bookings allow her to thoroughly search available offers and choose the ones with the lowest price.

Hitting two birds with a stone

But where does Onja stay and how does she get around once she is in the city? "I travel mostly to cities where I have friends or acquaintances; usually they allow me to stay with them, show me around and take me sightseeing. This way I don't have to pay for sightseeing tours". She gives the host family a hand in household chores and shares the cost of food with them. Through facebook connections and networking with friends of friends or relatives staying abroad she has created a wide network of friends in many cities around the world. These networks make her travels the more enriching; she has company during the stay and gets support and important tips on where to visit and what to do and last but not least ensure that she gets around safely. >>

» The total bill

A three day trip to nearby Brussels was a major cost buster. Train 20 Euros, Food 10 Euros a day and the rest was taken care of by favours of relatives and friends who drove her around the city. "For a farther trip, like to Paris it would of course cost a bit more, as the distance is longer, Paris is a very expensive destination. Travelling cheap is more of a challenge there." Onja says.

Her only regret: culinary adventures usually remain out of her reach (or more precisely her stomach!) as she cannot afford to eat at restaurants to taste the local food when travelling. And she can't take advantage of paid tourist attractions. She has also had to give up her favourite pastime: shopping. "I have limited myself to buying what I really need only; this allows me to save for my next trip."

A traveller for all seasons

Onja travels in all seasons. Heat or cold can't stop her adventurous spirit. "Mitfahr-Community offers and friends to provide you with a place to stay always exist, regardless of the time of the year." But warning: avoid visiting your long-distant family and friends during Christmas. You will end up having to buy gifts for everyone. Toys can be expensive; especially around the festive season!"

For more information:

www.fernbus.de: a website offering buses for long-distance trips

www.mitfahrzentrale.de: online community for connecting drivers and passenger bound to the same destination

www.couchsurfing.org Online platform for private accomodation

Mittellos unterwegs

Kann man auch fast ohne Kohle reisen? Aber ja!

• Die fliegende Couch

Couchsurfing ist ein globales Netzwerk für Reisende, die nicht nur ein billiges Bett zum schlafen suchen, sondern neue Freundschaften entwickeln möchten. „Aus Fremden werden Freunde,“ diese Philosophie steckt hinter der virtuellen Gesellschaft. Das Durchschnittsalter von Couchsurfern ist 28. 19.1 Millionen posteten bisher Freundschaftslinks auf der Seite, in den 10 Jahren seit Bestehen der Schlaf-Börse gab's 5.6 Millionen Übernachtungen weltweit.

• Knappes Reisebudget, lange Strecken

Mitfahrzentralen: Die Idee ist einfach. Fahrer werden mit Reisenden verbunden. Der Abfahrtsort und Zeit wird vereinbart und los! Den Preis für die Fahrt bestimmt der Fahrer. Eine Reise vom Köln bis Berlin kostet zum Beispiel zwischen 25 bis 30 Euro. Diese Art von Fortbewegung braucht jedoch Vorplanung; kann sein dass für eine bestimmte Strecke in einem bestimmten Zeitraum keine Angebote zur Verfügung stehen.

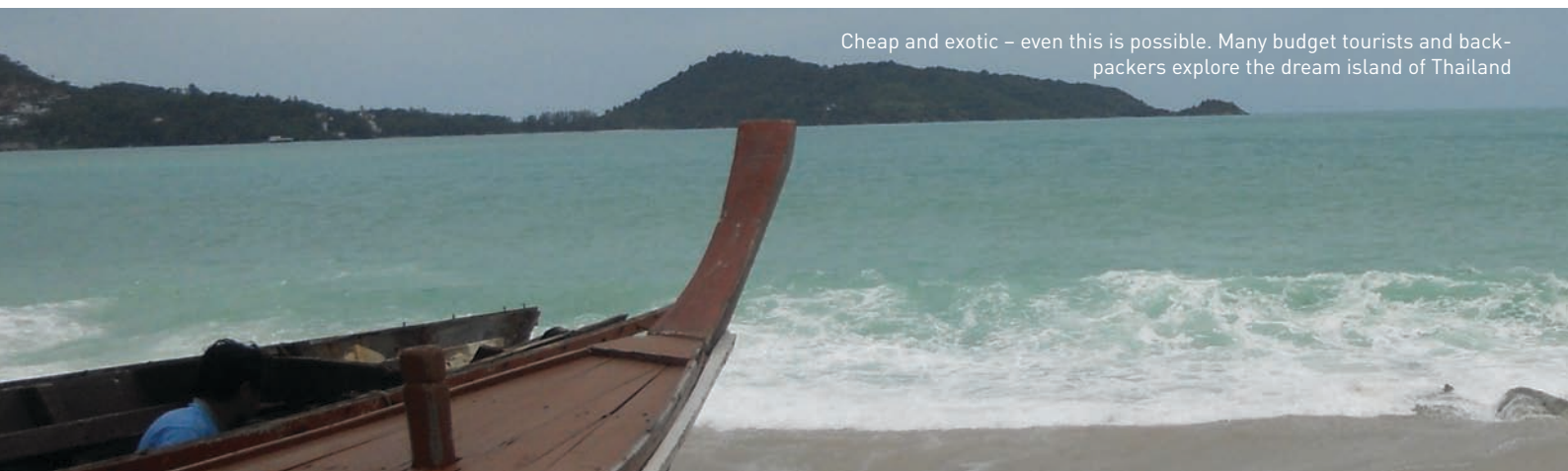
• Autostopp und Daumen raus!

Lange Tradition, kostet keinen Pfennig. Geht auch ohne Internet und Vorplanung. Zu empfehlen für Mutige und Spontanreisende. Abenteuer Pur. Irv Thomas ist der König der Amerikanischen Hitch-hiking Tradition: 66 Jahre Erfahrung. Letzte Reise mit 82. Das Buch Who's who in America enthält sogar eine Kurzbiografie von Irv.

• Housesitter wanted

Wer sich für einen längeren Auslandsaufenthalt interessiert kann sich seinen Wunsch mietfrei erfüllen. Zu den Aufgaben gehören Betreuung von Haustieren und Weiterleiten von Post. Und ein Tipp: Besser eine Wohnung als ein Haus. In einem Haus wird man gebeten den Rasen zu mähen; Also Vorsicht!

Tatiana Smorodina und Sara Motalebi



Cheap and exotic – even this is possible. Many budget tourists and backpackers explore the dream island of Thailand

CHEAP vs. LUXURY

How German tourists travel



Photo: Malediven Baro Foto Tui

Pure luxury: Chic holiday resorts like this, in Maldives, are jewels in a travel agents' portfolio

by *Tatiana Smorodina*

From a 500€ trip to Spain to a 1800€ trip to Africa – various touristic agencies offer a great amount of destinations with a wide spectrum of service. But how do they deal with the customers?

I put myself “in the customer’s shoes”, and decided to make my own research. I visited the main Bonn branch of a tour operator. DER Touristik belongs to REWE group, and is the second largest travel company in Germany. It is currently the market leader in Germany and Austria for many far away destinations, particularly North America. The DER Touristik product portfolio includes tours to long-haul and European destinations, city tours events.

They have in menu a range of holiday hotels, flights, plus numerous country programmes. Everything depends on wallet. They arrange river and ocean cruises, sailing boat cruises and boat trips for water holiday fans. Golfing, motor sport, mountain biking, wellness holidays and other activities can be found in their catalogues or on the homepage.

In Mallorca “everyone speaks German”

When I came into the office, the amount of light-red flyers and magazines of different sizes and forms everywhere, created a feeling, that it was a St. Valentine’s Day. Most ladies in the office were blondes. The light furniture created a cozy atmosphere. The whole picture raised a feeling of relaxation and a holiday.

According to the statistic of the agency, the most favourite destinations among the German customers are Turkey and Spain, especially Mallorca because as I was told, “everybody speaks German there.” The tour operator Tanja Weinreis prefers tours to Spain and Italy and advises the customers

in accordance with her own experience.

“The best advice is based on a personal experience,” said Tanja.

Statistically, only 10 percent of the customers prefer to enjoy their vacation in a luxury way, 70 percent of the clients give the preference to the budget tours. They come to the agency, being “informed in advance.” They make their choice to book tickets in that touristic agency, after searching in internet beforehand.

Those, who make a high - cost order, receive a bottle of champagne to gain the feeling of a luxury style before going abroad. All others are rewarded with a bar of chocolate to flavour the feeling of a jolly holiday expectation. Even the bar of a chocolate is red, besides the expensive leather luggage hanger and pens.

“A personal approach is very important for us,” said Tanja. “The main difference from other tour operates is the focus on an every desire satisfaction.”

The cheapest tour by DER Touristik costs approximately 500€ per person. Mallorca is the leader among the cheapest tours. The most expensive destinations are USA, Canada and Africa. The cost for the tour to Africa is around 1800€ per person.

Another focus is on a customer-feedback. After every tour, the tour operators try to gain an opinion of a customer about the trip and improve their gaps. Many of the customers leave their feedback, coming to the office. Some of them include also complains. Other customers are being polled by telephone to receive an opinion after the vacation.



**“Best advice is personal,”
travel expert
Tanja Weinreis**



Photo: courtesy of Osho Times blog

Osho meditation resort is located in Poona in India, attracting thousands of visitors every year; the resort offers meditation classes, seminars and other relaxation programs all year round

Holiday, holy style

Once a cult, the Osho meditation centre in Poona has become a popular destination for spiritual travellers. Here's one visitor's story

By Sara Motalebi

About three years ago Sima, a 55 year old single working woman and mother of two, took a trip to India to stay in a meditation resort in Poona. "The idea came as a coincidence. My neighbor was having a garage sale, while browsing through her stuff some Osho magazines caught my attention. When I asked her about the magazines, my neighbor then explained that she had stayed in this particular resort and recommended me to also go there. A few months later I took the courage to book a flight to Mumbai and to the Osho resort."

From Mumbai a taxi brought Sima and her daughter to Poona. They stayed a week in the Ashram.

"At the beginning it was weird. I didn't know what was going on or what I was supposed to do there." But after looking around the place a little, Sima started feeling at home. There was an introduction session and after going around the place she didn't want to leave anymore. "It was like a paradise on earth. Many visitors were on their second, third or even tenth visit!"

Located in Poona, India, the Osho Ashram is basically a meditation resort founded by the controversial 20th century mystic known as Osho. Currently

there are three hundred Osho Meditation Centers in forty-five countries around the world; among others in USA, Germany Denmark and even in Greece and Turkey. The program offers 130 different types of meditation and each individual is free to find one or more style of meditation suitable to their individual need or preference.



Sima loves staying at Osho resorts

"Deep down I always knew I was not exactly on the right track. I was always looking for something to explain my inner feeling of discomfort. I just couldn't define it."

Some meditation techniques created by Osho himself are practiced in Osho centers all across the world. Normally they involve music, dancing and silent sitting. the Kundalini meditation for example consists of four phases: shaking the leggs, dancing to the music, sitting and lying down. Each phase takes 15 minutes and the whole session one whole hour. Even if a person is not interested in meditating they are free to do nothing and enjoy their time there. There

are also seminars on different spiritual topics. The length of seminars can vary between 2 to 21 days.

During her stay Sima opted for a course on relationships which lasted two days with total of six participants. "I will never forget the people I met in that group and I will always have feelings of great affection towards them; the mentor was a great man and his assistance really enlightened me". Sima further explained that the course was quite therapeutic and focused on re-enacting unconscious behaviors and attitudes which persons secretly hold towards their partner. Furthermore Sima says – now in the jargon of the cult –, that she learned during the seminar "to become closer to herself and to become aware of unconscious traumas" that she was supposedly carrying around in herself and the resulting consequences of those traumas in her external life. "It was a painful and a joyful experience at the same time. Painful because one becomes conscious of ones inner traumas and joyful because of finally becoming free."

Every year thousands of people visit this bohemian resort in India. It is comfortably equipped with amenities such as a guest house, a swimming pool, a tennis court and an exquisite garden. Quality vegetarian food is also served within the commune. "The philosophy is to nourish the body, the emotion and the spirit all at the same time." Sima explained further.

When I asked her how much the trip cost in total, Sima explained that all in all, the trip had cost her 1000 Euros. This includes the air ticket, the hotel and food; including 300 Euros for the seminar on relationship (the meditation courses were free, but for participating in seminars an extra fee was to be paid).

"The experience was something that I can not express in a few sentences. All in all I felt great afterwards. I experienced love, joy, happiness, freedom and a bigger heart towards life, the world and people. It's like you find your body and your spirit in great harmony, you are fulfilled and enjoy more inner unity."

According to Sima the journey was a return to ones true nature, an effort to dig inside and to witness the many layers of oneself which one has never been in touch with before or was escaping from. "deep down I always knew I was not exactly on the right track. I was always looking for something to explain my inner feeling of discomfort. I just couldn't define it."

After returning from the trip Sima felt also physically more fit. She is convinced that the practice of meditation can guarantee a happier, healthier and a more joyful life.

"As a consequence of better health you think better and the result of better thinking is that you will be more happy and content in life. But it is a long way and you have to grow and growing never ends."

When I asked if Sima would repeat her experience, she told me that she had already visited Osho resorts in Denmark and in Istanbul Turkey. Laughingly she added: "Ideally I wish I could go there and stay there for the rest of my life. If I could settle life matters, work and everything."



Chandra Mohan Jain, also known as Osho

*"Happiness happens
when you fit with your life,
when you fit so harmoniously
that whatsoever you are doing
is your joy. Then suddenly
you will come to know:
meditation follows you.
If you love the work that
you are doing, if you love the
way you are living,
then you are meditative."*

*Osho, A Sudden
clash of Thunder,
Chapter 7*

For more information about the Osho resort in India you may visit the below website:
<http://osho.com/>

Trampen und Trauer

Nach Süden – gegen den Schmerz

Michael hat nur das Nötigste im Gepäck. Sein Ziel ist unbestimmt, nur vergessen will er – um jeden Preis. Seine Reise führt ihn durch ganz Europa. Er erlebt Abenteuer, Krisen, Frust, Freude und Schmerz

Von Mira Knauf

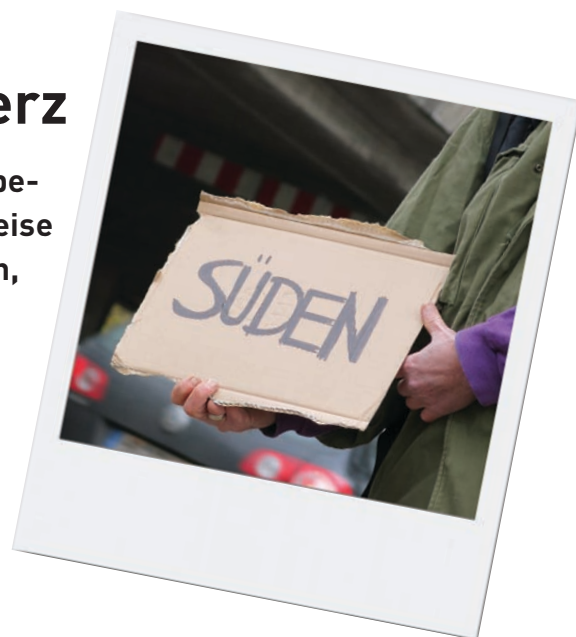
Fotos: Mira Knauf

Scherben. Überall Glassplitter. Seine Hand blutet. Dann wird alles schwarz. Als Michael am nächsten Tag im Krankenhaus erwacht, weiß er nicht, was passiert ist. Er hat Fußball gespielt, drei Tore geschossen, sein bestes Spiel überhaupt. Als er aus dem Auto aussteigt, fängt seine Schwester ihn vor der Haustür ab. Sie weint. „Papa ist tot“, hört er sie sagen. Verstehen kann er ihre Worte nicht. Plötzlich holt er aus, seine Faust zertrümmert das Autofenster. Dann bricht er zusammen. „Ich konnte das nicht begreifen“, erinnert sich Michael, „er war einfach nicht mehr da.“

Die folgenden Wochen ziehen wie in Trance an ihm vorbei. Er fliegt zu Hause raus und zieht zu seinem besten Freund Jonathan. Michael ist nicht mehr im Stande, seinen Alltag zu gestalten. Seine Ärztin schreibt ihn für Monate krank. „Ich war überhaupt nicht mehr gesellschaftsfähig“, erzählt er. Wie sollte es nur weitergehen?

Da kommt Michael eine Idee. Warum nicht ein paar Wochen durch Europa trampen? So wie es sein Vater früher gemacht hatte. „Ich musste raus hier, wollte nur weg“, sagt Michael. „Alle meine Freunde haben mich plötzlich anders angeguckt. Ich habe das nicht ertragen.“

Also packen die beiden ihre Sachen und machen sich mit ein paar Klamotten, einem Zelt und einem Gaskocher auf den Weg. Am Bonner Verteiler warten sie mit ihrem Pappschild, „Süden“ steht darauf. „Ich hatte 80 Euro dabei, Jonathan um die 100 und damit sind wir los“, sagt Michael.



„Mein Selbstbewusstsein war total zerstört“

Jonathan organisiert zu Anfang alles. Er kümmert sich um Mitfahrgelegenheiten. Michael kann und will mit niemandem reden. Mit dem Verlust des Vaters waren ihm Halt und Sicherheit weggebrochen. „Mein Selbstbewusstsein war total zerstört und ich habe mich schlecht gefühlt, weil wir im Streit auseinander gegangen waren“, erzählt er.

Nicht dazu stehen, wer man ist; so tun, als wäre das alles nicht passiert – die Straße hilft dabei, möchte er glauben: „Es kennt einen ja niemand.“

Das Schöne sind die Momente, in denen er lernt wieder zu lachen. So wie in Saintes-Maries de la Mer, einem kleinen französischen Dorf an der Küste. Für Jonathan ist alles neu, er hatte noch nie das Meer gesehen. Jonathan rennt los. Lläuft und läuft, stürzt sich ins Wasser und freut sich wie ein kleines Kind. Wenig später tritt er zu seinem Handtuch zurück und zieht erstaunt sein mit Wasser durchtränktes Handy aus der Hose. „Ich musste so sehr lachen und das hat unglaublich gut getan“, erinnert sich Michael.

Schon als kleines Kind hatten die Geschichten über das Trampelerleben Michael fasziniert. Heute, Jahre nach der Reise, sagt Michael, dass er sich damals vielleicht auf den Weg gemacht habe, um wieder zu sich selbst zu finden. unterwegs wird ihm immer wieder schmerzlich bewusst, dass sein Vater nicht mehr da ist. „Es gab so viele Momente, in denen ich ihn gerne um Rat gefragt hätte.“ Er wählt seine Nummer, spricht ihm auf die Mailbox, erzählt, wo er gerade ist.

Auf ihrer Reise begegnen sie vielen Menschen, manche sind unfreundlich, manche rühren sie mit ihrer Fürsorge. „Da gab es zum Beispiel einen LKW-Fahrer, der uns ganz viele wichtige Tipps für Italien gegeben hat und für uns so etwas wie ein weiser Opa war.“

Das Geld ist immer knapp, ab und zu können sie bei einem Bauern ein paar Euro verdienen. Manchmal gibt es aber auch gar kein Geld: gestrandet in Nizza erzählen sie der Po-



lizei, sie seien ausgeraubt worden und diese bezahlt ihnen tatsächlich ein Zugticket nach Marseille. Dort lebt Michaels Tante.

Irgendwann kommt der Tag, da kann Michael wieder auf Menschen zugehen. „Plötzlich heißt man wieder Michael und kann dazu stehen, wer man ist und was einem passiert ist.“

Nach zwei Monaten kehren Jonathan und Michael nach Deutschland zurück. Mit gemischten Gefühlen. „Ich bin auf jeden Fall gestärkt nach Hause gekommen“, erzählt Michael. Sein Leben hat er danach entschlossener in die Hand genommen, den Tod seines Vaters aber immer noch nicht verarbeitet. „Begriffen habe ich auf der Reise, dass er nicht mehr da ist, akzeptieren kann ich das bis heute nicht.“



„Trauer kann man nicht erzwingen“

Wie trauern Kinder um ihre Eltern? Der Verlust ist grausam – kann man damit fertig werden? Kirsten Fay und Nicole Nolden von der Trauerbegleitung Köln berichten über ihre Erfahrungen

Interview: Mira Knauf

Was bedeutet es für einen jungen Menschen, einen Elternteil zu verlieren?

Nolden: Unsere Eltern sind das Fundament unseres Lebens. Es sind die Menschen, die uns bedingungslos lieben und bedingungslos für uns da sind. Zu unseren Eltern können wir immer gehen und um Rat fragen. Und wenn ein Elternteil stirbt, dann bricht ein ganz wichtiger Teil unseres Lebens weg und das erschüttert das Selbstbewusstsein im Kern.

Menschen, die nicht weinen, trauern nicht – stimmt das?

Fay: Nein, Tränen sind kein Muss für Trauer. Genauso wenig kann man sagen, wer nicht weint, der trauert nicht.

Nolden: Auf keinen Fall, es wird aber früher oder später aus einem herausbrechen. Stirbt jemand sehr plötzlich und geht man womöglich auch noch im Streit auseinander, dann bleiben ganz viele ungeklärte Dinge zurück, häufig auch starke Schuldgefühle. Da ist es wichtig, dass man sich einen Weg sucht, trotzdem mit dem Verstorbenen zu kommunizieren. Das kann auf dem Friedhof sein oder man schreibt einen Brief und gestaltet so das Abschiednehmen.

Ist Trauer ein Muss?

Fay: Das kann man so nicht sagen. Man kann Trauer nicht erzwingen und es ist ganz normal, dass es Jahre dauern kann, bis man sich mit der Trauer auseinandersetzt. Es kommen Leute zu uns, die haben vor zwanzig Jahren einen Elternteil verloren und sind erst jetzt bereit zu trauern. Verdrängung ist zunächst ein ganz normaler Schutzmechanismus, aber



Fotos: TrauBe Köln e.V.



Kirsten Fay und Nicole Nolden:
„Jeder Mensch trauert anders“

einen schmerzhaften Verlust wird man nicht sein ganzes Leben beiseite schieben können. Wenn man seine Trauer nicht bearbeitet, dann wird sie einen irgendwann einholen.

Kann man der Trauer davonreisen?

Fay: Trauer ist kein linearer Prozess, der irgendwann beendet ist. Trauer verläuft in wellenartigen Schüben, kann explosionsartig ausbrechen oder einen in tiefe Depressionen stürzen. Man kann Trauer bearbeiten, so dass man lernt, mit dem Verlust und dem Tod umzugehen, und eine Reise kann dabei durchaus helfen.

Nolden: Stellen Sie sich vor, jemand schneidet Ihnen mit einem Messer tief in den Oberschenkel. Erstmal spüren sie gar nichts, stehen unter Schock. Langsam kommt der Schmerz im Gehirn an und wird unerträglich. Irgendwann fängt die Wunde an zu heilen, auch das tut weh. Und bei einer falschen Bewegung reißt sie wieder auf. Wenn sich dann eine Narbe gebildet hat, schmerzt die trotzdem, wenn's einen Wetterumschwung gibt. Und selbst wenn Sie die Narbe mal vergessen, dann werden Sie im Spiegel daran erinnert, was passiert ist. So in etwa kann man sich das auch mit der Trauer vorstellen.

A band on the road: drummer Mario Brüninghaus, 46



Photo: M. Brüninghaus

“Life on the road is no luxury travel”

German musician Mario does not enjoy travelling but his profession is tightly bound to it

Music penetrated Mario's life since he was born in the family of an opera singer. He grew up with Puccini for breakfast, Verdi for lunch and Tschajkovsky for dinner. As a child, he always travelled with his dad. Mario got used to sleeping between the sounds of instruments and the loud snore of the musicians in the bus. Lots of concerts and lack of money became an essential part of life not only for his dad, but also for Mario himself.

Never been a tourist

“The impulse to become a professional musician I received in 1985 by listening to Joan Jett & the Blackhearts on ZDF Rock-Pop concert,” -said Mario. That concert defined the future. Mario applied to the Music Hochschule in Cologne on the Jazz department. “I have never been focused on money”, - underlined he. Mario has never longed to spend vacations on luxury resorts, to drive Bentley or to be wearing Valentino. From the South America through the Atlantic Ocean till Europe spread the sounds of his drums. Chile, Portugal, France, Italy, Holland - became his resorts and employers. But as Mario pointed out himself: “I have never been a tourist.”

The main disadvantage of a “travelling job” for Mario is: when the priority is given to job, you can't relax as a tourist, melting under the scorching sun on the beach with a mint Mojito in a hand. Even having concerts in America and Europe, saving money on everything, it was not enough for living. “Not long time ago I started with Gala concerts”, says Mario. Not creative. But the arrangement of 6-7 events for the company pro month brings more money, than 3-4 concerts monthly, travelling along Europe and living “the life on the road.”

Travel and work: Yes, you can!

Pro and contra of working by travelling and travel by working

By Tatiana Smorodina

Au-pair Maja from Georgia had never been abroad before she found a job which gave her the chance to see the world

There are only two possibilities to go abroad from Georgia: studying or working. Maja has never been abroad before she came to Germany. “I always dreamed to see the world, but never had enough money for this”, -said Maja. Meanwhile, to gain a well-paid job in Georgia, you need to have a job experience in Europe. To continue with studying abroad is almost impossible, because the offers from scholarships like DAAD are much less than the students' demand in them. “The income of an average family in Georgia is so poor, that” only 10% of families in Georgia can afford sending a child abroad to study”, - underlined Maja.

“It made me happy to leave home”

To receive a visa for a year, you need to have 8.040 euro on your account. For those, who are not from rich families, the only one opportunity to go abroad is to get a job as an Au Pair. In this case, you don't need to have money on your account to receive a visa. You just

need to pay a program fee- 350 euro. As soon as Maja gained information about the program, she informed her parents, that her plans for future were changed. She “steered the course” to Europe. “To abandon with the motherland made me happy”, - said Maja.

The guest -family paid 40 euro for insurance, Maja received a separate room with a bathroom. The family even paid for her language course and her monthly salary was 460 euro. “Yes, they used me as a housekeeper, and I washed, cleaned and cooked for the family, but I didn't have an alternative.”, - pointed out she. For Maja it was the opportunity to collect money for studying and peep into another life. That sum of money, which Maja received from her guest -family was much more, than usually girls expect to have. The common monthly salary is around 260 euro.

“None of my family has ever been abroad”

“During my stay in Germany I had the opportunity not just to collect money for studying at the university, but also to travel. I was in France, Greece, Spain, Swiss, Hungary, Slovenia, Portugal”, -shared Maja. Her brother earns 500 lari monthly, working as a journalist in a newspaper, and he has never been in Europe. This money is not enough even to cover basic costs for living. “I try to buy small souvenirs for my relatives, being abroad” - emphasized Maja.

Among her Georgian friends there are many, who passed the same way and now, even become a student of the university, they don't give up working. Most of guys are “formally” written at the universities, but do not attend lectures. They earn money at the factories, like Hugo Benzin GmbH, where they are well-paid, but their morning starts not with a fresh newspaper, crispy croissant and a cup of coffee, but in rush to pick up the first train from Stuttgart to Zuffenhausen and be in time to work, before

the alarm roars at 6:00 am as an awoken bear. The oily penetrated smell through skin and clothes gives them the opportunity to support financially their families in Georgia and travel in Europe. As students, they realize that they can be kicked out from the university, when they do not pass the exams. But as foreigners, they know, that according to German Law, they have 3 attempts to apply at different universities and start the studying program from the beginning. And till they have these attempts and possibilities to stay in Germany, to support their families and travel, they will use these chances.

Photo: M. Margishvili



**Travelled all over Europe as an Au-pair girl with a German family:
Maja Margishvili, 27, from Georgia**

Georgia & Germany in figures

Baby-sitter/ nurse in Georgia
45 hours per week = 300-400 Lari;
1 GEL= 0,44 euro
"Au-Pair" from Germany (STEPIn)
In USA 30 hours per week = 146, 81 USD;
1 USD= 0,7 euro
In Australia 25-35 hours per week = 150-180 AUD; 1 AUD= 0,69 euro



Photo: T. Smorodina

"German youth enjoys leaving home and going abroad for a while", says Au-pair specialist Sophie Schweder, 29

Au Pair Program by STEP

In German young people are curious about other cultures and travel with pleasure.

The favourite aims among German youths, who decide to take part in Au pair program are English speaking countries. Their goal is to improve their language skills. "Germans want to live separately from the family", - says Sophie. It's the first gulp of independence.

Among the favourite destinations are: USA, New Zealand, Canada, Australia. To get the visa, you have to have 3000-4000 euro on your account.

Program price

Canada= 675 euro
New Zealand= 675 euro
Australia= 795 euro

Work and Travel programs

German favourites: Australia and Canada

Australia - 26 000 Germans

Canada - 24 00 Germans

Kevin took part in this program in 2009-2010. He chose the destination to Australia. It became somehow a "Jakobschweg" for him, to define the future goals. After his arrival, he decided to work in STEPIn and share his experience with others. Kevin considers the participation in this program as the best experience and decision in his life.

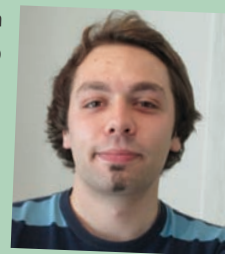


Photo: T. Smorodina

"The best decision and experience of my life": work-and-travel student Kevin Fleckenstein, 23

To compare with New Zealand and Australia, where the participants can't be older than 30 years old, another English-speaking country as Canada, can be visited till 35 years old. And Kevin definitely advises to 90% of youths to participate there. For those, who is interested in money earning, he finds the best opportunity to experience the life on the farm. "And the amount of money, which can be earned there, can be used in other traveling directions", - confirmed Kevin.

To receive a visa, for the security reasons, the Germans have to show the confirmation of the amount of money on their personal current account, which shouldn't be older than one week.

The visa fees

Canada= 2500 CAD; 1 CAD= 0,7 euro
New Zealand= 4200 NZD; 1 NZD= 0,6 euro
Australia= 5000 AUD; 1 AUD= 0,69 euro



The silhouette of the track is recognizable worldwide

Photo: Carlota de Andrés

Pilot for a day

The circuit of Nürburgring offers tourists experiences impossible to live elsewhere

By Jaime Campoamor

The dream of every motorsport fan has a name and a last name, Nürburgring Nordschleife. The 174 curves of this 20,8 km German racetrack have become an obsession for cars enthusiasts since its opening in 1927, being nowadays one of the best well-known racing icons worldwide. For Ruperto Sánchez and Emilio Ruiz the Ring had turned into an obsession since they had obtained their driving licenses. These two Spanish friends knew the attraction offered by the circuit since a while, and after spending hours and hours watching videos in YouTube, they decided that it was time to live that experience for themselves. Having saved a little, and taking advantage of having a good friend living in Bonn, they both pack their luggage and fly to the nearest airport.

Located in the Eifel Region, in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the track is not far away -just 58 kilometres by car- from the former capital city of the old West-Germany. One-hour drive through winding roads surrounded by forests is enough to reach the destination. The morning fog and a light drizzle enhance the mysterious appearance of the racetrack, nestled in the middle of a forest. The weatherman has predicted that the sun would rise from midday, so the two friends remain hopeful. 'Welcome to the Green Hell', warns upon arrival a huge sign. The culprit of the nickname by which the Nordschleife is also known is the three times F1 world champion Sir Jackie Stewart. Rupert and Emilio would discover the reasons for the nickname few min-

One of the most important events of the year, the 24h of Nürburgring, takes place on June



Rent4Ring offers a great variety of cars, like this BMW 125i

utes later. The access road to the village of Nürburg runs parallel to the long finish-line, which gives drivers the first sight and sounds of the track.

Today is one of those known as Touristen-Fahrt Tagen, the most exciting dates for people interested on driving in the Nordschleife. In these special days, when the circuit is free of motorsport events and becomes a conventional road, driving lovers can enjoy an exclusive experience impossible to find anywhere else. Since 50% of the visitors come from all over the world, mostly Japan and North America, there are two ways to do it. In one hand, using their private cars, drivers have the possibility of completing a lap for a reasonable prize, paying -27€/lap- at the ticket booth and working the way around. In the other hand, it is also possible to rent cars in the various businesses located in Nürburg and neighbouring villages. Companies with cars adapted to race, available for all types of drivers, whether amateur or experienced. One of those companies, Rent4Ring, is the one Rupert and Emilio decided to choose to enjoy their much-desired experience. After a brief speech warning them of the possible situations that one encounters when driving on the circuit, where they are reminded that they will circulate in a "conventional" road, with traditional circulation standards such as the obligation to pass cars by the left side of the road, the two Spaniards drive their Suzuki Swift to the entrance of the track. Everything is in their hands, nervous



Photo: Carlota de Andrés

smiles and sweaty hands announce that the time has come. Hoping to be able to use the experience gained after hours of YouTube videos and driving laps in the game Gran Turismo for PlayStation, Rupert sits behind the wheel and faces the first of the three laps that correspond to each. Two hours later, they return smiling and with the car intact. Before anyone was able to ask them a question, they both said at once: "It was awesome!" The nervousness has disappeared from their faces and has been replaced by a look of satisfaction. The Nordschleife has fulfilled its role. Long live the Ring!

Much more than a racetrack

The Nürburgring is composed of two circuits: the Nordschleife -20,8 km-, which was built between 1925 and 1927 and the Grand Prix Strecke -4,542 km-, inaugurated in 1984, eight years after Niki Lauda's accident during the F1 GP of Germany in 1976. Because of its 300 m height difference with extreme gradients and the difficulty of its 40 left-hand bends and 50 right-hand bends, the circuit has been used along the years as a perfect test track for car manufacturers. Different high-performance models are promoted here with videotaped laps competing to achieve the fastest lap. Germany's most popular open-air festival, Rock am Ring also takes place annually at the Nürburgring racetrack.

Rent4Ring, cars for all budgets

"There is nothing like Nürburgring. It is a lifestyle", says Fredy Lienhard, CEO of Rent4Ring when he is asked about his job. In 2009, he and his cousin Ralph changed Switzerland for Nürburg. After more than 1.200 laps driven in the Nürburgring during the first year with their own Suzuki Swifts, they built a non-professional website, printed some flyers and started to rent the cars to the tourists for a reasonable price. At the end of the first year they had already five cars. "We found a market niche, with costumers who didn't want to spend thousands of Euros driving Porsches or BMWs", ensures Fredy satisfied. Today, with more than 30 cars and an average between 6.000-7.000 costumers per year, coming from more than 100 different countries, the company is still like a family. Apart from Fredy and Ralph, seven other people formed the crew of Rent4Ring. The key of their business is the mouth-to-mouth advertising. Returning costumers bring new ones. Sure that it is enough.

Rent4Ring
Burgstraße 1
53520 Nürburg



Lost or found?

Surprising: Ex-German capital attracts more visitors than ever - now with art instead of politics

by Onja Rasamimanana

Bonn, a city where calm and noise form together an interesting interaction, where modernity and medieval history co-exist. When I first arrived in Germany, one year ago, I was just amazed by the calm of the city where Beethoven was born, especially in some fringe of the "Alt-stadt", the old quarter of Bonn. There, the blossoming oriental cherries with their rose flowers call to a tour around the very quiet neighborhood, where almost nobody is to be seen on the streets. Walking five minutes far from there,

I discovered another face of the former capital of Germany: a center where shopping centers stand close to each other and which is full of people from Bonn but tourists as well. The city is so small that I can find everything in easy reach. In the center, modern shopping centers mix with old

buildings and a part of the ancient city wall built in the 13th century, vestige of the past.

Is Bonn really losing its celebrity?

While seeing such a contrast, I first assumed that the atmosphere in some parts of Bonn has changed because it is not the capital anymore since 1990. Observers, including myself, actually thought that Bonn would lose its celebrity since the reunification and the capital moved to Berlin.

But Jochen van Üüm, a nightguarding guide affirms: "Tourism in Bonn has developed even though it is not the capital anymore." Dressed in costumes inspired by the 16th century, his bamboo torch in hand, he has been guiding tourists and interested Bonn inhabitants for a night tour through

Now and then: Blue pillars on the green roof of the new museum “Bundeskunsthalle”, and a historic moment at the old Rathaus when John F. Kennedy visited Bonn in 1963



Photo: J. Campoamor



Photo: M. Soudemann, Stadt Bonn

the history of Bonn for two years now. The number of tourists who book the tour is increasing and he can have up to three to four tours a month.

Another proof of the increasing interest in Bonn, according to the economic report released by Bonn tourist information, overnight stays in the former capital reached in 2012 more than 1.3 million. That is 30 percent more than when it was the capital city, where the average overnight stays were around 1 million.

Still cosmopolitan

One common fact about the former capital and the current city of Bonn that attracts tourists remains the political side. When Bonn was the capital city of Germany, lots of people came here for political invitations. And it is still the case as six ministries still have their seat here. In addition to that, people who have friends and >>

New fame for Bonn

Bonn was thought to lose its fame after the move of the capital to Berlin. The facts below show that Bonn has even found a way to promote itself.

- Art lovers: Bonn now boasts of 30 museums
- Average overnight stays until 1990 was 1million, and has increased since then to 1.3 million (2012)
- Beethovenfest is one of the main annual cultural events and attracts 75.000 visitors
- Even the chancellor bungalow, the former home of power with Helmut Kohl as the last inhabitant (until 1998) is now a museum and gets 22 000 visitors yearly

The river Rhine: romantic boat rides are popular with tourists



Photo: J. Campoamor

» relatives working for the United Nations Organization and those who attend conferences at the International Conference Center - former seat of parliament - come for day trips, weekend breaks, as well as business and cultural trips.

A town of 30 museums

As far as I could see during my tours and confirmed by Mrs. Faust from Tourism and Congress GmbH, a special organization devoted to promote Bonn, it has become a city of culture and art. The 30 museums – twice than when it was the capital city – stand as proof. If the “Stadtmuseum” and “Akademisches Kunstmuseum”, which still exist, made Bonn already popular at that time, new museums like “Arithmeum”, a mathematics museum and the “Kunst und Ausstellungshalle”, that has exhibitions of art treasures and important cultural objects from around the world also contribute to a big part of tourism in Bonn. The new contemporary “Haus der Geschichte”, which gathers alone 750.000 visitors per year, is another main museum that attracts tourists, foreigners as well as Germans. I sometimes meet groups of around 60 years old Asian tourists, walking slowly toward the entrance of the museum with their camera or waiting to rush inside to learn more about the history of Germany since 1945. But younger people from United States and European countries are also interested in visiting the chancellor bungalow, former second residence of the chancellor and now turned into museum.

The “Kanzlerbungalow” is a hit among tourists

Romance on the Rhine

Other cultural events like Beethoven Festival gather also each September huge number of tourists and fans of the famous composer, whose works are played by high talented orchestra and soloists. Of course, the house where he was born, in Bonngasse, in the center of Bonn, is also a must to visit.

Besides, the very colorful “Rhein in Flammen” remains the main touristic event for the beginning of open-air season in early summer in Bonn and its surroundings. The one I attended on 3. May was just magnificent. As background music, they played music by the classical composer Richard Wagner to celebrate his 200th birthday. Here again, the

mix of the noise fireworks’s noise and the calm of Wagner’s music resulted in an unique feeling that young and less young Bonn inhabitants and tourists enjoyed quietly, without saying a word,

laying or sitting on a plaid or even on the wet ground. No wonder that the Rhine serves as way of transporting goods but also and above all as a romantic attraction for tourist in honeymoon or even for tourists who would just like to enjoy the green banks of the river. I had the chance to experience once a boat tour on the Rhine, breathing fresh air and enjoying the wind touch on my hair. I had the feeling that I was communing with the nature. Only the sound of the boat, drifting on the Rhine, came to my ears. I was alone at that time. But around me, I saw some couples, just enjoying the sightseeing as I did.

“Ideal city for tourists”

There are few cities in the world that live with the title of ex-capital city, such as Calcutta in India and Istanbul in Turkey, Bonn is another one. When I walked around the German city of 320 000 inhabitants to interview tourists I found its reputation is as cosmopolitan as ever

By Mohammad Mansoor



Veggies till late

“Bonn is culturally rich. Everything Germany has to offer, to you can find in Bonn, because it’s a mixture of the past and the modern. Since I’m in Bonn, I found the city hall (Altes Rathaus) and its market the most favorite place to visit, where people can find fresh fruits and meat. In UK you don’t get these kinds of things until 6 pm evening, even in other cities like Jakarta, they close market earlier and don’t continue till the evening. I really love it!”

Vasslli, 30, Malaysian student in UK, in Bonn for two days

I love Beethoven

“Bonn for me is Beethoven city, the city of the greatest and most influential composers of all time; I really think music is a talent that some people are born with, so Beethoven was one of the pioneers, though he was deaf. I have been five times in different cities of Germany but I found Bonn the most fabulous city for Beethoven’s history. So it’s really a great city for great people.”

Reeman, 47, Malaysian business man, came to Bonn for an exhibition



An ideal city with an ideal size

“I like Bonn because it’s a beautiful city and well equipped as a modern capital city in Europe.

Although it’s a relatively small city by population, it is ideal for tourists. In fact, the smallness of Bonn adds to the attraction because as a tourist you do not have to walk for a long time to visit the high-lights. This makes Bonn unique.”

Steven Olls, 63, Danish engineer, visiting his daughter

Every time when you get lost, there is somebody to help you

“Bonn is the most international city, you can find people from all over the world here. The Germans’ are very nice too and very friendly and helpful, I just feel at home because it’s safe. The only problem is that I cannot speak German, so sometimes I found it difficult to go to some places, but every time somebody was there to help me. I feel it’s a place, where I would like to spend my entire life.”

Beenish Jawed, 30, Pakistani journalist, in Bonn since 2 months



Photos: M. Mansoor

Travel and tourism industry worldwide

... but who benefits?

Number of tourists worldwide: 1.03 billion (in 2012)

In 1950 the number of international tourist was 25 million.

Tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) worldwide exceeded 1 billion for the first time in 2012.

Forecast for 2030: 1.8 billion. Tourism growth: 4% in 2013

Most expensive hotel worldwide: President Wilson Hotel, Royal Penthouse suite, Geneva: US\$ 53.000/night

Most visited region: Europe

European market leader in the travel industry: TUI with 30 million clients per year and 500.000 tourists per/ month using charter airline TUIfly to go on vacation

World's top spender in international tourism: China jumps in the first place with 102 billion dollars

Strongest growing sectors:

- Long distance travels with 20% growth-rate
- Sustainable and green holidays, also 20% growth
- Fastest growing region: Asia and Pacific with Thailand as mega climber (16%)

Top 10

of worldwide tourism destinations
(tourist arrivals per year...)

France, 83 mio

US, 67 mio

China, 58 mio

Spain, 58 mio

Italy, 46 mio

Turkey, 35 mio

Germany, 30 mio

UK, 29 mio

Russia, 25 mio

Malaysia, 25 mio