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GUIDE TO SCREEN TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

Screen tourism, sometimes referred to as film tourism, has emerged as a significant economic and cultural force, attracting travelers to locations featured across various forms of media, including films, television shows, music videos, video games, commercials, and online content.

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive understanding of screen tourism and a recommended strategic framework for developing and sustaining successful screen tourism initiatives. While the overarching goal is to serve as a guide and strategic framework for implementing effective screen tourism strategies, the recommendations may not be adapted into every region's current structures. It is important to note that these guidelines may be adapted by different stakeholders to align with regional oversight methods, budget limitations and specific responsibilities.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- Define screen tourism and its impact.
- Identify key stakeholders and their roles.
- Provide a recommended structured approach to developing screen tourism destinations.
- Address future-proofing and long-term planning.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is structured to help stakeholders understand screen tourism, implement best practices, and leverage media-influenced travel experiences. Each section provides insights, real-world examples, and actionable strategies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS SCREEN TOURISM?

Screen tourism, once called film-induced tourism, is one of the fastest-growing travel sectors, capitalizing on a form of tourism first recognized in the 1990s. The growth and awareness of screen tourism is expanding what was once a niche tourism sector into a thriving travel sector, allowing and encouraging visitors to discover and travel to the destinations made famous in all forms of produced content. Produced content includes; films, television, video games, music videos, online and social content, commercials, and new media platforms.

Examples of the benefits of screen tourism may be discovered through a series of case studies provided at the end of this document.

IMPORTANCE OF SCREEN TOURISM

Screen tourism contributes significantly to local economies, promotes cultural heritage, and enhances the global visibility of filming locations. Countries and regions that actively promote screen tourism experience increased visitor numbers, greater economic activity, and stronger community engagement.

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS

This document is designed to support key stakeholders who have involvement in, and benefits that arise from, that arise from implementing sound screen tourism practices.

- **Film Commissions** are looking to bring productions to the region and utilize screen tourism analytics to support and defend further production incentives.
- **Government / Tourism Agencies** looking to leverage screen-induced tourism to attract a new tourism segment and expand economic development.
- **Studios and Production Companies** wanting to understand the economic ripple effect of their projects and enable a greater production opportunities.
- **Local Governments and Businesses** interested in attracting screen tourists (i.e., those inspired by films, TV shows, video games, etc.).
- **Journalists/Media and Researchers/Scholars** who report on screen tourism trends and success stories.

TYPES OF SCREEN TOURISTS

- **Casual Fans:** Visitors who happen upon film/TV/game and other content forms visit locations as part of their broader travel plans.
- **Dedicated Media Pilgrims:** Tourists who specifically travel to experience filming locations.
- **Movie-Themed Experience Seekers:** Fans looking for immersive experiences such as themed attractions or guided tours.
- **Social Media Influencers:** Travelers who document their film/screen tourism experiences online, influencing others to visit locations.

WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN EXPECT FROM THIS DOCUMENT

Defined Roles

It categorizes key players in screen tourism, such as studios, film offices, tourism offices, local communities, film tourists (fans), and journalists/media and scholars..

Value to Organizations

It explains how each entity benefits from screen tourism, such as economic impact, brand awareness, and community engagement.

Guidance

Suggested action points each stakeholder may optimize and adopt in their role to foster enduring screen tourism plans, including collaboration strategies and marketing approaches.

Action Plans Throughout the Production

This document will provide an illustration of action points each stakeholder may take during all phases of production, from pre-production to the release date and beyond.and marketing approaches.

EACH STAKEHOLDER'S ROLE IN SCREEN TOURISM

Screen tourism takes dedicated actions and effort from stakeholders. Below are several suggested roles and points of involvement that are recommended to enhance the process.

STUDIOS AND PRODUCTION COMPANIES

Their role in shaping tourism opportunities

- Studios influence tourism potential by selecting filming locations that later become popular destinations. With the advent of screen tourism, studios should be looking for opportunities to collaborate with film commissions and other location stakeholders to deliver negotiated assets to help with economic and cultural benefits post-production through screen tourism.

How they can collaborate with tourism offices and local businesses

- Studios can partner with local governments and businesses to create official tourism campaigns, ensuring sustained engagement with media fans.

FILM OFFICES AND COMMISSIONS

Promoting filming locations

- These entities market regions to filmmakers by highlighting unique landscapes and urban backdrops.

Building infrastructure to support screen tourism

- Investing in industry support, permitting processes, incentivizing a production's marketing deliverables, and screen tourism responsiveness (i.e, developing production incentives, cataloging scene locations, and visitor experiences enhances the region's long-term tourism potential).

TOURISM OFFICES AND DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

Developing campaigns around filming locations

- These organizations create marketing initiatives tied to filming locations to attract visitors.

Support the creation of immersive experiences for visitors

- Interactive tours, exhibits, and events enhance the screen tourism experience.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES

Economic Benefits and Challenges

- Screen tourism provides local businesses with revenue but may also bring issues such as overcrowding and environmental impacts.
- Recognize areas of challenge: (i.e., limited parking, fragile environments, etc) and work to strategize solutions in advance.

Strategies for Community Involvement

- Encouraging partnerships between businesses and tourism officials ensures locals benefit from screen tourism.

PHASES OF SCREEN TOURISM AND STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Screen tourism unfolds in several key phases, each requiring collaboration between stakeholders such as film commissions, tourism boards, studios, local businesses, and communities. The success of screen tourism depends on careful planning, strategic partnerships, and long-term investment in destination branding.

1. PRE-PRODUCTION:

Setting the Foundation

- This phase involves preparing policies, infrastructure, and partnerships to ensure a destination can maximize the benefits of screen tourism once production begins. Tourism offices and film commissions work to create an environment that attracts productions while planning how to convert filming locations into tourist destinations.
- Recognize and define the cultural heritage and unique elements of regional IP, ensuring they are available for future planning and integration.

2. PRODUCTION:

Maximizing the Moment

- During filming, local businesses and tourism boards can capitalize on media attention and industry presence. This is the time to build relationships with production teams, promote local businesses, and create early marketing initiatives around the project's setting.
- As locations are identified, recognize those areas that may become popular, and prepare for handling logistics such as noise/crowd control, traffic/congestion, environmental concerns, and other logistical pain-points and develop alternatives and solutions.

PHASES OF SCREEN TOURISM AND STAKEHOLDER ROLES, *continued*

3. POST-PRODUCTION AND RELEASE:
Building Anticipation

- As a project nears release, screen tourism marketing campaigns ramp up. Cities and tourism organizations can organize premieres, interactive experiences, and themed events to connect fans to real-world locations featured in the project.

4. ONGOING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
Sustaining Engagement

- After a project's initial success, destinations must create long-term tourism strategies. This can include dedicated screen tours, branded experiences, and collaborations with travel agencies to maintain visitor interest and economic impact.

5. LONGEVITY AND EVOLUTION:
Future-Proofing Screen Tourism

- The most successful screen tourism destinations evolve over time, ensuring that interest in a film, TV show, or game remains relevant across generations. This can involve commemorative events, themed accommodations, or integrating screen tourism into broader cultural and historical tourism strategies.

UNDERSTANDING SCREEN TOURISM

THE LIFECYCLE OF A SCREEN TOURISM DESTINATION

A screen tourism destination does not emerge overnight; it follows a structured lifecycle that is most effective when there is collaboration, strategic planning, and long-term investment. Each phase presents opportunities for stakeholders to maximize the cultural and economic benefits of screen tourism.

PRE-PRODUCTION: Awareness and Groundwork for Screen-Friendly Tourism

Before a project begins production, film commissions, tourism boards, and local governments lay the groundwork for future tourism benefits. This stage involves building awareness of the destination's potential for screen tourism and establishing policies that make it attractive to filmmakers.

Key actions in this phase:

- **Film-Friendly Policies:** Governments and film commissions create tax incentives, streamline permits, and establish infrastructure to attract productions.
- **Tourism Readiness:** Tourism offices identify locations with cinematic appeal and plan how to market them post-release.
- **Local Business Engagement:** Hotels, restaurants, and tour operators prepare to accommodate film crews and, later, tourists inspired by the film.
- **Industry Partnerships:** Film and tourism sectors collaborate early to ensure that filming locations can be leveraged for future tourism.

Example:

New Zealand developed policies before *The Lord of the Rings* to support future screen tourism, including infrastructure investments and promotional partnerships. (Source)

UNDERSTANDING SCREEN TOURISM, *continued*

PRODUCTION: Collaboration Between Production Teams and Tourism Stakeholders

During filming, local tourism authorities and businesses have a unique opportunity to engage with production teams and establish partnerships that will benefit the region long after the cameras stop rolling.

Key actions in this phase:

- **On-Set Collaboration:** Film commissions/tourism boards work with production teams to facilitate filming and ensure the destination is positively represented post-release and within screen tourism.
- **Community Involvement**: Local businesses and residents can support production by providing locations, accommodations, and services.
- **Media and Publicity**: Behind-the-scenes content, press coverage, and social media buzz can begin driving interest in the location before the film's release.
- **Early Branding Efforts**: Tourism boards can start developing campaigns, sneak peeks, and partnerships to position the location as a must-visit destination.

POST-PRODUCTION AND RELEASE: Marketing Campaigns Linked to the Film's Setting

Once a film is released, tourism organizations must act quickly to harness audience enthusiasm and turn interest into visits. This is the moment to launch screen tourism campaigns, themed events, and official destination branding efforts.

Key actions in this phase:

- **Tourism Marketing Integration**: Provide production-approved promotional materials, advertisements, and travel packages highlighting the film's locations.
- **Social Media and Fan Engagement:** Platforms showcase real-world filming locations and encourage travelers to visit.
- **Exclusive Events and Premieres:** Cities can host movie premieres, red-carpet events, and themed fan experiences.
- **Local Business Tie-Ins**: Hotels, restaurants, and retailers may collaborate with studios to offer film-inspired merchandise, as well as explore travel packages and discounts

Example:

Warner Bros. capitalized on *Harry Potter* by opening the Warner Bros. Studio Tour in the UK, allowing fans to step into the world of the films. (Source)

UNDERSTANDING SCREEN TOURISM, *continued*

ONGOING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: Maintaining Engagement Through Tours, Merchandise, and Events

After the initial buzz, successful screen tourism destinations shift their focus to long-term economic sustainability. This phase ensures the continued economic benefits of screen tourism through specialized experiences, partnerships, and strategic branding.

Key actions in this phase:

- **Guided and Self-Guided Tours:** Locations offer structured experiences for visitors to immerse themselves in select locations used in filming.
- **Themed Accommodations and Dining**: Hotels and restaurants incorporate film-inspired decor, menus, and activities.
- **Official Merchandise and Licensing:** Working with the studio and approved distributors, local businesses sell exclusive souvenirs, apparel, and memorabilia related to the film, *but NOT infringing on the studio/production IP.*
- **Annual Events and Festivals:** Cities host themed festivals, screenings, and fan conventions to maintain engagement.

Example:

Hobbiton – A recreation of the Hobbit village featured in *The Lord of the Rings* – became a permanent attraction with expanded visitor experiences, including guided tours, themed dining, and immersive activities in New Zealand. (Source)

LONGEVITY AND EVOLUTION: Preserving the Film's Legacy Through Anniversary Celebrations and Continued Marketing Efforts

To remain relevant, screen tourism destinations must evolve beyond their initial appeal. This phase involves keeping a film's legacy alive through new experiences, expanded offerings, and ongoing marketing efforts that attract new generations of fans.

Key actions in this phase:

- **Anniversary Celebrations:** Special events, re-releases, and exclusive experiences mark key milestones for the film.
- **Cultural Integration**: Destinations weave screen tourism into broader historical and cultural narratives to sustain interest.
- **Expanded Attractions:** Locations evolve to offer new interactive experiences, VR/AR enhancements, and modernized exhibits.
- **Ongoing Partnerships**: Tourism boards continue collaborations with studios, influencers, and travel brands.

Example:

Salzburg, Vienna continues to celebrate *The Sound of Music* with annual events, guided tours, and new experiences that keep the film relevant across generations. (Source)

ECONOMIC IMPACT AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY IN SCREEN TOURISM

Screen tourism has the potential to significantly boost local economies, creating new job opportunities, increasing revenue across multiple sectors, and elevating a destination's global profile. However, with rapid tourism growth comes the responsibility of ensuring long-term economic sustainability. Destinations must balance economic benefits with environmental and cultural preservation to avoid over-tourism and maintain their appeal for years to come.

REVENUE GENERATION AND JOB CREATION

When a destination becomes a screen tourism hotspot, it experiences an influx of visitors eager to explore the locations featured in their favorite content. This increase in tourism drives revenue across multiple industries, including hospitality, retail, transportation, and entertainment.

Key economic benefits:

- **Increased Hotel Bookings and Accommodations:** Hotels, B&Bs, and vacation rentals experience higher occupancy rates, especially if they offer film-themed packages.
- **Boost in Local Business Sales:** Restaurants, shops, and tour operators benefit from higher foot traffic and increased spending.
- **Growth in Tour Operations**: Themed walking tours, bus tours, and guided experiences create employment opportunities.
- **Job Creation Across Industries:** Local workers are employed in tourism-related roles, such as hospitality, retail, and event management.

Example:

Game of Thrones tourism increased hospitality sector jobs by 12%, creating over 6,000 new jobs in Northern Ireland as fans flocked to filming locations. (Source)

ECONOMIC IMPACT AND ITS SUSTAINABILITY IN SCREEN TOURISM, *continued*

RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT OF FUTURE GROWTH AND AVOIDING OVER-TOURISM

While screen tourism can bring economic prosperity, it also poses challenges such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, and the displacement of local communities. Sustainable tourism practices ensure that destinations can manage visitor numbers while protecting natural and cultural heritage.

Key sustainable footprint strategies:

- **Visitor Caps and Regulations:** Setting daily visitor limits at fragile locations prevents environmental damage.
- **Off-Peak Promotion:** Encouraging film tourists to visit during the off-season reduces overcrowding.
- **Local Community Integration:** Ensuring local businesses and residents benefit from tourism revenue fosters positive engagement.
- **Responsible Tourism Initiatives:** Implementing sustainable or "green" tourism programs (i.e., promoting public transport, reducing waste at tourist hotspots, etc.).
- **Historical and Cultural Education:** Integrating information that illustrates the history and heritage of the community, indigenous populations, and points of cultural relevancy; information that is important to the region that may not be present in the screen content itself.

Example:

Skellig Michael, Ireland, where scenes from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* were filmed, implemented strict visitor limits to protect the fragile ecosystem and historical structures, ensuring long-term preservation. (Source)

CASE STUDIES ON POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND CULTURAL IMPACT

- **New Zealand – *The Lord of the Rings:*** A 20 year retrospective explored economic and cultural impacts of LOTR and the Hobbit Trilogy. (Source)
- **Dubrovnik – *Game of Thrones:*** Over-Tourism led to strictly enforced regulations to reduce overcrowding. (Source)

Screen tourism can be a powerful economic driver when managed responsibly. By balancing economic sustainability, destinations can enjoy long-term benefits without compromising their cultural and environmental integrity. The most successful screen tourism strategies focus not just on short-term gains but on creating a lasting, positive impact for both visitors and the local community.

SCREEN TOURISM BEST PRACTICES MATRIX

This Screen Tourism Best Practices Matrix is a structured guide designed for stakeholders involved in screen tourism. It outlines the roles, responsibilities, and key benefits for various entities that contribute to the success of screen tourism. Overall, this matrix serves as a practical roadmap for aligning efforts between the film industry and tourism sectors to create sustainable and profitable film/screen tourism initiatives.

DOWNLOAD FILM TOURISM BEST PRACTICES MATRIX FOR STAKEHOLDERS

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

HOW SCREEN TOURISM CAN BE FUTURE-PROOFED

To ensure the long-term success of screen tourism, stakeholders must adopt sustainable models, foster community involvement, and continuously evolve visitor experiences.

- **Sustainable Tourism Models:** Implementing eco-friendly policies, regulating visitor numbers, and developing infrastructure that supports responsible tourism are critical steps to avoid over-tourism and environmental degradation. For example, Skellig Michael in Ireland implemented strict visitor limits after *Star Wars* filming to protect its delicate ecosystem.
- **Community Involvement:** Successful screen tourism strategies prioritize local engagement, ensuring that communities benefit economically and culturally from increased visitor traffic. Initiatives such as hiring local guides, promoting locally-owned businesses, and involving residents in themed events help sustain positive relationships between tourists and host communities.

Evolving Visitor Experiences: Screen tourism should continuously innovate by leveraging digital engagement, immersive storytelling, and emerging technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). Many film commission offices have built, or are building, screen tourism resources into their websites, providing online search results for fans. Other offices work with local business chambers to create destination maps for filming location discoverability. Dedicated mobile apps like SetJetters enhance visitor experiences by allowing users to locate and interact with film locations, expanding the emotional connection of the fan experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Each stakeholder in screen tourism has a role to play in ensuring its economic, environmental, and cultural sustainability to coincide with long-term growth:

Studios and Production Companies

- Identify partnership opportunities with tourism boards early in the production process to create long-term tourism opportunities.
- Support conservation efforts to protect filming locations from over-tourism.
- Provide official merchandise and licensing agreements for screen tourism operators to create authentic experiences.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS, *continued*

Tourism Boards and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

- Develop integrated marketing campaigns around films and television series.
- Establish interactive visitor centers and themed experiences based on popular film locations.
- Monitor and manage visitor impact to prevent environmental and social strain on local communities.

Local Governments and Communities

- Implement policies that regulate visitor flow while promoting sustainable tourism practices.
- Ensure local businesses and residents benefit from increased tourism through fair revenue-sharing models.
- Encourage local storytelling and heritage preservation as part of the screen tourism experience.

Tour Operators and Hospitality Industry

- Design themed travel packages that provide immersive and responsible screen tourism experiences.
- Train guides to provide in-depth, engaging narratives about film locations and their cultural significance.
- Support sustainable tourism initiatives, such as encouraging FIT (free independent tourists) to reduce one-stop tours, develop local walking tours, and encourage longer stays to open opportunities for better distribution of tourism dollars.

By following these best practices and strategic recommendations, screen tourism can continue to grow while benefiting local economies, cultural heritage, and the environment.

This guide provides a comprehensive roadmap for developing, sustaining, and benefiting from screen tourism while ensuring a positive impact on destinations and communities.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

This glossary provides definitions for key terms related to film/screen tourism, helping stakeholders understand industry terminology.

Film Tourism: Travel inspired by films and TV shows, where visitors seek out filming locations and experiences tied to their favorite productions.

Screen Tourism: Travel inspired by not only films and TV shows, but also video games, music videos, online and social content, commercials, and new media.

Set-Jetting: A term for travelers who visit destinations specifically because they were featured in a film, television show, video game, etc..

Filming Location: A real-world site used as a backdrop for scenes in a variety of media productions.

Movie Pilgrimage: A journey taken by dedicated fans to visit a site that holds significance in a film or television series.

Cinematic Branding: The use of productions to market a destination and attract tourists.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO): An entity responsible for promoting a location as a travel destination, often leveraging its connection to film and media.

Over-Tourism: When a filming location experiences an overwhelming number of visitors, potentially leading to environmental and social issues.

Film Commission: A government or private organization that facilitates film production in a region and promotes locations for tourism and industry development.

Legacy Tourism: Tourism that continues long after a project's release due to its lasting cultural significance.

Screen Tourism Package: A curated travel experience that includes visits to multiple filming locations, often combined with guided tours and themed activities.

Themed Experience: Attractions, accommodations, or events designed to immerse visitors in the world of a particular production.

Interactive Tourism: The use of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), games, or mobile applications to enhance the visitor experience at filming locations.

Studio Tour: A guided visit to a working film studio or a set-turned-attraction where fans can see behind-the-scenes elements of production.

Film Trail: A mapped route, physical or digital, that connects multiple filming locations within a region, allowing tourists to follow in the footsteps of iconic scenes.

Economic Spillover Effect: The additional revenue generated by screen tourism in local economies, including hospitality, retail, and tour services.

Cultural Heritage Tourism: Tourism focused on exploring cultural and historical aspects of a destination, often tied to films that highlight local traditions and landmarks.

Filming Permit: A legal authorization required to shoot a production at a specific location.

Influencer Tourism: The promotion of film-related travel experiences by social media influencers who showcase destinations to their followers.

Movie Memorabilia Tourism: Travel driven by the desire to see or collect items associated with a film, such as props, costumes, or signed merchandise.

This section serves as a foundational reference for those engaged in screen tourism development, marketing, and policy planning.

CASE STUDIES AND ARTICLE SUMMARIES

CASE STUDY 1

"ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE *YELLOWSTONE* TV SERIES ON MONTANA'S TOURISM ECONOMY (2023)"

Overview

This study, conducted by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) and the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana, evaluates the economic impact of the *Yellowstone* television series on Montana's tourism industry. The study quantifies both direct production spending and visitor spending influenced by the show.

Key Findings

Tourism Growth Due to *Yellowstone*

- An estimated 2.1 million visitors in 2021 cited *Yellowstone* as a factor in their decision to visit Montana.
- These visitors spent $730.1 million in Montana that year.

Economic Impact

- The combined effect of visitor spending and film production increased Montana's economy by $1.1 billion.
- The state gained 10,240 jobs across various industries.
- The series contributed $376 million in personal income for Montana households.
- The additional state tax revenue was $44.5 million.
- The *Yellowstone* effect led to a population increase of 3,305 people, attracted by economic opportunities.

Film Production Contributions

- The *Yellowstone* production spent $72 million in Montana.
- Season 4 filming directly supported 527 jobs in industries like motion pictures, construction, accommodations, food services, and retail.
- It generated $25.3 million in annual income for Montana households.

Tax Incentives and Returns

- The production received $16.5 million in tax credits through Montana's MEDIA Act over two fiscal years.
- The economic return on these incentives was significantly higher than the cost.

Conclusions

The *Yellowstone* series significantly boosted Montana's tourism economy, attracting visitors and generating substantial revenue. The combined impact of film production and tourism led to sustained job growth and economic expansion, benefiting multiple industries across the state. Additionally, the economic benefits derived from film tourism far exceeded the tax incentives provided to productions, demonstrating the strong return on investment for Montana's film industry.

Read the full case study here

CASE STUDY 2

"FILM TOURISM AND DESTINATION MARKETING: CASE STUDIES OF IN-BOUND AND OUT-BOUND IN THAILAND"

Overview

This study, conducted by Smateera Phomsiri from the College of Innovation Management at Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin, explores the role of film tourism in Thailand and its impact on destination marketing. It examines how films and television shows influence travel behavior and create economic benefits while also considering potential negative effects on local communities and the environment.

Key Findings

Impact of Film Tourism on Thailand:

- Films like *Go LALA Go!* and *Lost in Thailand* have significantly increased Chinese tourism to Thailand, particularly to cities like Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Bangkok, and Phuket.
- The influx of tourists has led to economic benefits, including increased revenue for hotels, local businesses, and attractions.
- Chiang Mai University adapted its facilities to accommodate tourists inspired by the movie.

Marketing and Film-Induced Tourism:

- The Thai government actively promotes film tourism as part of its economic development strategy.
- Media content serves as a strong marketing tool, influencing audience perceptions and encouraging visits.
- Destination marketing activities before, during, and after a film's release can attract tourists.

Tourist Motivation:

- The study applies push-and-pull motivation theory, where tourists are either driven by internal factors (e.g., nostalgia, adventure, socialization) or external attractions (e.g., film locations, landscapes).
- Successful film tourism campaigns integrate storytelling with authentic destination experiences.

Challenges and Negative Impacts:

- Over-tourism can lead to environmental damage and disrupt local communities.
- Rapidly increasing tourism may require infrastructure and policy adjustments to manage visitor flow and environmental sustainability.

Conclusions

Film tourism is a powerful tool for destination marketing, offering economic advantages and cultural exchange opportunities. However, careful planning is required to mitigate negative consequences and ensure sustainable growth.

Read the full case study here

CASE STUDY 3

"HALO EFFECTS OF A COUNTRY IN FILM-INDUCED TOURISM: A CASE STUDY OF HA LONG BAY, VIETNAM IN *KONG: SKULL ISLAND*"

Authors: Dai Duong Pham & Yeong-Hyeon Hwang
Published in: Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, Volume 25, September 2022

Overview

This study explores the halo effect of a country in film-induced tourism, focusing on *Kong: Skull Island* (2017) and its impact on Ha Long Bay, Vietnam as a tourist destination. The research examines how viewers' perceptions of the filmed location change when they learn about the country where it was filmed and how this influences their intention to visit.

Key Findings

Film Imagery and Initial Travel Intentions:

- Viewers develop an initial intention to visit a filmed location based on the aesthetic appeal of the scenery shown in a movie, even without knowing its real-world location.
- *Kong: Skull Island* generated strong interest in Ha Long Bay due to its cinematic landscapes and dramatic natural scenery.

The 'Halo Effect' of Country Perception:

- When participants were informed that Ha Long Bay is in Vietnam, their willingness to visit the location either strengthened or weakened, depending on their pre-existing perception of Vietnam.
- Positive country images (e.g., Vietnam's natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure tourism appeal) enhanced travel intentions.
- Negative country perceptions (e.g., political instability, lack of infrastructure, or safety concerns) decreased the likelihood of visiting.

Peer Influence and Tourism Decisions:

- A significant factor in changing visitor intention was peer influence – the more acquaintances a person had who had visited Vietnam, the more likely they were to visit.
- Social proof (e.g., knowing people who visited and enjoyed the destination) contributed to making film tourists more comfortable with the idea of visiting.

Impact of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs):

- Destination marketing plays a crucial role in maximizing the halo effect – strategies that emphasize positive aspects of the country can enhance film tourism impact.
- The study recommends that countries featured in international films should actively promote themselves alongside film locations to reinforce positive tourist perceptions.

Conclusions

The study confirms that the image of a country significantly affects the impact of film-induced tourism. Even if a movie generates interest in a location, a country's reputation can either enhance or deter potential visitors. For destination marketers, leveraging the halo effect through strategic branding can maximize the tourism benefits of film exposure.

Full case study Journal of Destination Marketing & Management (Subscription or institutional access required).

CASE STUDY 4

"FILM-INDUCED TOURISM AS A KEY FACTOR FOR PROMOTING TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE: THE *JAMES BOND SAGA* CASE"

Authors: Not specified in the visible text
Published in: Administrative Sciences (MDPI), 2024

Overview

This study examines the impact of film-induced tourism by analyzing how the *James Bond* franchise has influenced tourism trends and shaped the destination image of various filming locations. The research focuses on how movies contribute to place branding and affect tourists' perceptions of destinations featured in high-profile films.

Key Findings

The Power of James Bond in Film Tourism

- Locations featured in *James Bond* films, such as *Skyfall*'s Scotland, *Spectre*'s Mexico City, and *The Man with the Golden Gun*'s Thailand, have experienced an increase in visitor numbers following the movie releases.
- These films contribute to long-term place identity and destination branding, making locations recognizable worldwide.

Impact on Destination Marketing and Tourist Behavior:

- Spectacular scenery in Bond movies enhances the desirability of destinations.
- The glamorous and adventurous image associated with James Bond influences tourist expectations and motivates travel decisions.

Economic and Cultural Benefits of Film Tourism:

- Film-induced tourism generates economic benefits for local businesses, hospitality industries, and tour operators offering James Bond-themed experiences.
- The locations gain cultural prestige, reinforcing their identity as luxury or adventure destinations.

Challenges and Environmental Sustainability Considerations:

- While film tourism boosts local economies, it can also lead to over-tourism, requiring careful destination management.
- Sustainable tourism strategies should be integrated to preserve the authenticity of film locations.

Conclusions

The *James Bond* franchise plays a significant role in shaping global tourism trends, demonstrating how film narratives can transform ordinary places into iconic travel destinations. The study suggests that destination marketers should strategically collaborate with film productions to maximize tourism benefits while ensuring environmental sustainability.

Read the full case study here

CASE STUDY 5

"ON LOCATION: THE COLOMBIAN TOWNS, ARCHITECTURE, AND MUSIC THAT INSPIRED DISNEY'S *ENCANTO*"

Published by: Condé Nast Traveler
Author: Meredith Carey
Date: November 24, 2021

Overview

This article explores the real-life Colombian locations, architecture, music, and culture that inspired Disney's animated film *Encanto*. The film's creative team, including directors Byron Howard and Jared Bush, took a two-week research trip across Colombia to ensure an authentic representation of the country's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

Key Findings

Filming Location Inspirations:

- The Cocora Valley inspired the film's magical setting with its towering wax palm trees, found only in this region.
- The town of Barichara, known for its well-preserved colonial architecture, influenced the design of *Encanto*'s timeless village.
- San Basilio de Palenque, the first free African town in the Americas, influenced the portrayal of Afro-Colombian characters and cultural elements in the film.

Architectural and Design Elements:

- The Madrigal family's home was inspired by traditional Colombian hacienda-style houses with courtyards designed to bring families together.
- Colombian architect Simón Vélez, known for his innovative use of bamboo, influenced the film's architectural styles.

Music and Cultural Influences:

- *Encanto*'s soundtrack, composed by Lin-Manuel Miranda, integrates Colombian musical traditions.
- The tiple, a traditional Colombian string instrument, was featured in the film after the directors encountered it in Barichara.

Food and Local Traditions:

- The film highlights traditional Colombian dishes such as arepas, a staple of the country's cuisine.

Conclusions

Disney's *Encanto* is deeply rooted in Colombian culture, landscapes, and traditions, with locations like Salento, Barichara, and Palenque playing a central role in shaping the film's vibrant setting. The film's attention to cultural authenticity has helped spark international interest in Colombia as a travel destination, reinforcing the power of film tourism in promoting lesser-known yet stunning locations.

Read the full case study here

ARTICLE SUMMARIES

The White Lotus Season 3 and Tourism in Koh Samui, Thailand (2025)

The third season of HBO's *The White Lotus,* filmed at the Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui, has led to a significant increase in interest and bookings for the island. According to the Tourism Council of Thailand (TCT), there has been an 88% surge in internet searches for Koh Samui and a 44% rise in hotel reservations since the promotion of the season began. These statistics were reported by the *Bangkok Post* on February 21, 2025. Bangok Post

Encanto and Increased Tourism Interest in Colombia (2022)

Disney's animated film *Encanto*, released in November 2021, has sparked a notable rise in interest in Colombian tourism. Travel platform Skyscanner reported a 69% increase in bookings to Colombia in 2022 compared to 2019. This data was highlighted in an article by The Times.

Emily in Paris and Tourism Surge in Paris, France (2024)

The Netflix series *Emily in Paris* has contributed to a notable increase in tourism to Paris. Following the show's latest season, Expedia reported a 155% year-on-year increase in flight bookings and a 55% increase in accommodation bookings from January to June 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Fans are particularly interested in visiting filming locations featured in the series. News.com.au

Irish Wish and Tourism in Ireland (2024)

The Netflix film *Irish Wish*, released in March 2024 and starring Lindsay Lohan, showcased various Irish locations, including Lough Tay and the Cliffs of Moher. The film's popularity led to a significant increase in online searches for these destinations, with Tourism Ireland noting the positive impact on the country's tourism industry. Wikipedia

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly and Tourism in Santo Domingo de Silos, Spain (2024)

The restoration of the Sad Hill cemetery, the set of the final scene in the 1966 film *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,* has revitalized tourism in Santo Domingo de Silos, Spain. Completed in 2015 by local enthusiasts, the site has become a popular destination for Spaghetti Western fans, contributing to the local economy and addressing issues like depopulation. The Guardian

ARTICLE SUMMARIES *continued*

Set-jetting has significantly influenced Thailand's tourism and economy, while requiring conservation and over-tourism strategies (2025)

- **Tourism Surge:** Iconic locations like Maya Bay, popularized by *The Beach*, and Koh Samui, featured in *The White Lotus* Season 3, have experienced increased visitor numbers due to their on-screen exposure. In 2023, Bangkok hosted 466 foreign film projects, generating 6.6 billion baht in revenue. Nation Thailand
- **Economic Benefits:** The influx of tourists boosts local economies through spending on accommodations, food, transportation, and tours, contributing to Thailand's GDP. In 2019, tourism revenue reached $62 billion, accounting for approximately 20% of the country's GDP. CEIC Data
- **Environmental Concerns:** Overtourism has led to environmental degradation in some areas, prompting measures like temporary closures and stricter regulations to preserve natural sites. For instance, Maya Bay was closed in 2018 to allow for ecological recovery and reopened in 2022 with visitor limitations. Thailand Business News
- **Sustainable Tourism Initiatives:** Thailand is focusing on sustainable tourism to balance economic gains with environmental preservation, aiming to attract conscious travelers and ensure long-term viability. Efforts include promoting lesser-known destinations and implementing eco-friendly practices to distribute tourist traffic more evenly and reduce environmental impact. Thailand Business News

While set-jetting enhances Thailand's global appeal and economic growth, it necessitates careful management to protect cultural and natural assets.

The 1987 film *Dirty Dancing* significantly transformed Mountain Lake Lodge in Virginia into a thriving tourist destination (2024)

- **Tourism Surge:** Following the film's release, fans flocked to Mountain Lake Lodge to experience the iconic filming locations. The lodge embraced this interest by hosting themed weekends, guided tours, and special events, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the movie's atmosphere. southsidedaily.com
- **Economic Impact:** The influx of visitors revitalized the lodge's business, leading to extensive renovations in the early 2010s. These updates modernized facilities while preserving the site's historic charm, enhancing its appeal as both a nostalgic and contemporary retreat. southsidedaily.com
- **Environmental Challenges:** Mountain Lake, a natural feature showcased in the film, experienced significant water level fluctuations, notably drying up completely by 2008. This posed challenges for tourism, as the lake was a central attraction. HowStuffWorks Science
- **Resilience and Adaptation:** Despite environmental hurdles, the lodge diversified its offerings to include land-based activities such as hiking, archery, and ropes courses. The mysterious refilling of the lake around 2020 reignited interest, drawing both new visitors and returning fans eager to witness the lake's resurgence. southsidedaily.com

Mountain Lake Lodge's ability to capitalize on its cinematic legacy, adapt to environmental changes, and invest in sustainable practices has solidified its status as a premier destination in Virginia.

Indiana Jones movie site on Colorado's Most Endangered Places

Film tourism has played a crucial role in drawing attention to historical sites, with many locations gaining recognition through iconic films. Colorado, home to several cinematic landmarks, has recently seen preservation efforts for sites featured in Hollywood productions:

- **Rollins Pass:** This historic rail route, which crosses the Continental Divide near Boulder, was featured in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). Its rugged terrain and scenic views made it a fitting backdrop for the adventurous spirit of the film. However, the site now faces threats from environmental changes and increasing development pressures. en.wikipedia.org
- **Antonito, Colorado:** The recognition of a rare Adobe-styled house as Indiania Jone's boyhood home enabled this 136-year-old structure to be added to a most endangered places list. CPR News

These locations serve as key examples of how film tourism can drive preservation efforts by raising awareness and mobilizing resources to protect Colorado's cultural and cinematic heritage. Read Here

Sony is making a location-based experience based on *The Last of Us*

Sony is developing a location-based physical entertainment experience inspired by *The Last of Us*, as announced by Neil Druckmann, co-creator of the franchise, at CES 2025.

- **Immersive Environment:** The experience will recreate the infected undergrounds of Seattle, a prominent setting in *The Last of Us Part II*. VentureBeat
- **Multisensory Engagement:** Designed to engage all senses, the project is currently in the proof-of-concept phase, aiming to provide a deeply immersive encounter. VentureBeat
- **Expanded Franchise:** Druckmann also revealed that Season 2 of The Last of Us television series will premiere in April on HBO and be available for streaming on Max, reflecting the franchise's growing multimedia presence. VentureBeat

This initiative underscores Sony's commitment to expanding its intellectual properties into diverse entertainment formats. Read Here

Tourism and Travel in 2025: Set-Jetting, Secluded Stays and Sustainability

The travel industry in 2025 is experiencing a resurgence, with emerging trends shaping traveler preferences:

- **Set-Jetting:** Travelers are increasingly visiting locations featured in popular films and TV shows, a phenomenon known as set-jetting. For instance, the first season of *The White Lotus,* filmed at the Four Seasons in Maui, led to a 386% surge in availability checks at the property. LBB Online
- **Secluded Stays:** There's a growing demand for off-grid, luxury accommodations as travelers seek to disconnect from the online world. Upscale retreats equipped with modern amenities, yet offering seclusion, have seen a significant increase in bookings. The Times
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Eco-conscious travel is on the rise, with tourists prioritizing destinations and accommodations that emphasize environmental responsibility. This includes stays at eco-lodges and participation in activities that support local communities and conservation efforts. The Times

These trends reflect a shift towards more personalized, responsible, and experience-driven travel choices in the current landscape. Read Here

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