



TIPS ON TRIPS



Off-The-Beaten-Path Travel: How To Feel Like A Local While Far From Home

(NAPSA)—When you're abroad, it's generally easier to take the road that everyone else has traveled. Destinations are set up for the influx of tourists, directing them to the "must see" sites in the area and providing them with lists of things to do that "everyone else" does when they go there. If you only stay on the path that every other tourist in the vicinity is on, however, you may miss some surprising discoveries.

For travelers who really want to experience their destination, the most insightful learning of the culture and people can occur when they venture off-the-beaten-path. While it requires a little more planning, the road less traveled is usually less expensive and more rewarding than simply following the herd to the same popular destinations. Most of all, it lets travelers create an entirely different experience that is reflective of their own personal tastes and interests.

"The most unforgettable moments on a vacation are the ones that you happen upon through individual exploration," said Scott Nisbet of Monograms, a member of the Globus family of brands and a provider of worldwide independent vacations that offers travelers flexible itineraries. "Travelers who choose to experience their destinations like the locals do will find hidden jewels that others don't, getting an insider's perspective while creating memories and stories to share."

To help "detourists," or those who want to journey on the path less traveled, Monograms offers the following tips:

Go off-season. While you probably know that traveling off-



season makes for cheaper airfare and accommodations, it can also help enhance your travel experience once you've arrived at your destination. When you leave the crowds behind, the local atmosphere is much more relaxed. In addition, hotels, restaurants, transportation and events are more readily available, making reservations and advance planning less necessary.

Meet the locals. Striking up a conversation with someone indigenous to your destination will provide you with insider knowledge about where to go and what to do—information you won't necessarily find in a guidebook. If you don't speak the local language, learn the basic introduction phrases, write them down and carry them with you. The local people will appreciate your interest in their language and respond better if you try to communicate with them on their own terms.

Use a local guide. A local guide can provide you with helpful tips on everything from sites to check out and where to buy gifts to the best transportation. Monograms provides travelers with a Local Host to help point them in

the right direction. These hosts not only offer insider tips for exploring the destination but can provide behind-the-scenes support in coordinating excursions to nearby attractions or even making dinner or theater reservations.

Dine where the locals dine. Instead of going to the places all visitors go, ask the locals where they like to eat. Most likely, when in their suggested restaurants, you'll find authentic cuisine and more local "flavor." While you're there, chat with the service people, as they are often a good resource for finding more off-the-beaten-path activities.

Shop where the locals shop. The term "tourist trap" was coined for a reason. Shops that cater to tourists can come with high price tags and usually carry similar merchandise. If you're looking to bring home an authentic souvenir and are interested in saving money, browse markets and boutiques in less "touristy" areas. Your purchase can serve as a distinct reminder of your trip.

Use public transportation. As long as the destination you're going to provides public transportation options that are safe, consider traveling the way the locals do. You'll not only save money getting around, but will gain valuable insight that most other tourists will not. Before taking on this venture, make sure you know where you're going, have a map and are well versed in transportation costs.

For more information on off-the-beaten-path travel at destinations worldwide, call toll free 800.250.7614 or visit www.monogramstravel.com.