

Tourist Experience

Contemporary perspectives

Edited by
**Richard Sharpley and
Philip R. Stone**



Routledge Advances in Tourism

Tourist Experience

To consume tourism is to consume experiences. An understanding of the ways in which tourists experience the places and people they visit is, therefore, fundamental to the study of the consumption of tourism. Consequently, it is not surprising that attention has long been paid in the tourism literature to particular perspectives on the tourist experience, including demand factors, tourist motivation, typologies of tourists and issues related to authenticity, commodification, image and perception. However, as tourism has continued to expand in both scale and scope, and as tourists' needs and expectations have become more diverse and complex in response to transformations in the dynamic socio-cultural world of tourism, so too have tourist experiences.

Tourist Experience provides a focused analysis into tourist experiences that reflect their ever-increasing diversity and complexity, and their significance and meaning to tourists themselves. Written by leading international scholars, it offers new insights into emergent behaviours, motivations and sought meanings on the part of tourists based on five contemporary themes determined by current research activity in tourism experience: dark tourism experiences, experiencing poor places, sport tourism experiences, writing the tourist experience and researching tourist experiences: methodological approaches.

The book critically explores these experiences from multidisciplinary perspectives and includes case studies from a wide range of geographical regions. By analysing these contemporary tourist experiences, the book will provide further understanding of the consumption of tourism.

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Introduction: thinking about the tourist experience

*Richard Sharpley and
Philip R. Stone*

In his now classic *Jupiter's Travels*, Ted Simon reflects upon

the fascination with which I watch myself come closer and closer to merge with the world around me, dipping first a toe, then a foot, then a limb. Although I am made of the same stuff as the world, it used to seem that I might as well have been born on an asteroid, so awkward and unnatural was my place in the scheme of things... Then began a long apprenticeship, to become something certain in my own right, from which to see and be seen... to confirm that the world and I were, after all, made for each other.

(Simon 1979: 176)

Like innumerable others before him and since, Simon is writing about a journey. More specifically, he is writing about a four-year trip around the world on a motorbike (named 'Jupiter'), vividly describing the places he visits and passes through, the people he meets, and his adventures (and disasters) related to his mode of transport. Significantly, he also reflects at length on his personal experiences: his relationships with the people, places and cultures he encounters, the purpose of his journey and, in particular, his own life and how it has been transformed by his travels. Thus, his book is, in a sense, a story of two journeys: the physical trip through time and space, with an identifiable beginning and end; and a personal, spiritual journey of discovery and transformation extending beyond the temporal boundaries of the actual trip.

Interestingly, over 25 years later and at the age of 69, Ted Simon recreated or, maybe, attempted to relive the original journey by embarking on another global motorbike ride that was to last two years. Implicit in his subsequent account (Simon 2007) is his disappointment that not only had many of the places he originally travelled through changed dramatically, challenging his remembered experiences of them, but also that he too had changed, that perhaps the world and he were, in fact, no longer 'made for each other'. Ironically, the meaning of his travels had in some way been transformed, from a voyage of discovery into a nostalgic journey into the past, something that he accepts in the title of that account: *Dreaming of Jupiter*.