

# TRAVEL INFLUENCERS - A NEW PHENOMENON IN THE WORLD OF TOURISM



The world is changing in a very dynamic manner, and this is also reflected in the tourism industry. A phenomenon that has been growing in popularity in the last couple of years is that of travel influencers, who are reshaping the sector as we speak.

These influencers have a massive impact on the current society. They show their followers on social media, who are future tourists, which places to visit and where to take photos. **And they provide instructions on how to present yourself as a tourist in very particular destinations.**

## How Do Travel Influencers 'Influence'?

All major tourism influencers use personalized filters that make everything work in a certain aesthetic. This way it makes no difference whether you are in Dubai or in Bali.

On the other hand, we can observe the effect of imitation among influencers and their followers. People don't want to travel differently, but to come close to this ideal that the influencers professionally create of themselves and the places.

What can be observed is a return of package tourism, but in the guise of individuality. This is because every influencer pretends to express himself/herself personally in one place and discover particularly enchanted corners of a destination. Often this is much further from reality than we could imagine.

People don't just want to get close to the influencers, they want to become like them. This can be achieved by physically conforming to them and using the same products. Influencer marketing is based on this - that you imitate something and buy it again.

This also applies to travel. People want to be like their idols. And the influencers seduce their followers permanently. They say: 'Travel like us, maybe we can even meet at a certain place!'. This is exactly what the advertising partners (such as hotels or airlines) want.

## What Are 'Instagrammable' Places?

Instagram is the most powerful social media tool of a travel influencer. And in this context, the adjective 'instagrammable' has risen in popularity in the last couple of years. But what does this word mean exactly?

Essentially, a photo is instagrammable when it works well on Instagram. With such a photo one can receive a lot of likes and comments as well as a lot of new followers. Some hotels have special areas for such photos. Or the influencers discover these places themselves.

The problem is, it's often not about tracking down the most interesting places. The point is that the photo must have the potential to be 'successful' on Instagram'. It is rarely about encountering

something new and experiencing something really special and unique.

### **Destinations Popular among Influencers**

As a rule, destinations with enormous luxury are popular among travel influencers. It is no longer so much about cultural heritage and a sense of history, but more about destinations where you can consume well and present yourself well, for example, Dubai and Singapore.

Influencers are hardly ever critical about a hotel or a travel destination. They do not ask questions about human rights violations or other issues.

Therefore, they are particularly popular in undemocratic states that advertise themselves with western influencer faces.

### **The Problem of Modern-day Influencing**

It is true that travel influencers are definitely addressing feelings that each of us has: to escape certain constraints, experience something new etc. That is absolutely fine, but there is a serious problem with this.

The problem is that travel influencers don't make it clear that most of them can't ever achieve their luxury life. They stay in hotels where a night often costs more than 1000 euros. It feels almost cynical when you convey followers who are still in training or studying.

**The irony is that studies show that spending a long time on social media makes many people unhappy.** They are constantly being presented with something that does not correspond to their own reality, which they cannot achieve.

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