

Why I Write

Everyone thinks that I am always flying somewhere, enjoying yet another complimentary cocktail and getting free dinners with representatives of tourism boards from all around the world - the 'lady of leisure', they called me - and that I am holidaying all the time.

I suppose the mistake was mine; when I told them that I am a travel and lifestyle writer, about to embark on a press trip to Wellington, my peers old and new stared at me with faces as green as the new sprouts of leaves in spring.

I'd like to think what I do is glamorous, but in reality I spend most of my time in my hotel room trying to meet deadlines, and not all my trips come free.

I started writing out of laziness while studying abroad in Germany for a year in 2003. I had the desire to share my experiences abroad and to tell everyone about my travel experiences around Europe; however it was difficult to manage the relationship of who wants to read about what when I write home and I found myself repeating the same stories to different people over and over again. I got tired, and thought wouldn't it be nice to just write it once for everybody?

So I started blogging and, without realising it, it was the beginning of a really slow progression and learning curve into a career that I used to call hobby.

I am a staff writer and columnist for Worldette.com, a women's travel, lifestyle and news website, as well as InTheKnowTraveler.com, a travel website dedicated to promoting cultural exchange. My editors have been my mentors throughout the years and the skills I have learned from both styles of websites led me to launch my own travel website called Footprints and Memories.

Here's the ugly truth: not too many writers earn a lot. Aside from my travel writing, I also do corporate blogging to help pay the bills.

Not that I am really struggling. With an IT career in tow, I am financially stable enough not to worry about the months when I am not commissioned for work; however juggling between the two careers can get a little difficult, especially when writing deadlines and day job deadlines collide.

Not to mention I am forever in two minds about which career to concentrate on.

Another downside to being a travel writer is that I never really get a 'holiday'. When my husband and I were in Bali for our first year wedding anniversary, I immediately turned to investigation mode. I collected every brochure I could get my hands on, interviewed as many hotel/tour staff I could speak to and wrote every night, even when I wasn't on assignment. I just can't help it.

So why then, do I do it?

For me, writing is my way of keeping myself sane from everyday life. It's about exerting my frustration and desires when I am not travelling. It is also a way for me to live up to my own motto, that travel is the best education of all, by sharing my stories, experiences in other cultures in the hopes that the world will be inspired to do the same, to try to understand each other and get along.

I write to inspire and educate those who may not have had the opportunity to find out more about this interesting world of ours. I attempt to influence my readers to travel more and learn more about other people, religions and cultures.

My husband, who is in international politics, thinks I am a bit of a dreamer, but in my mind, world peace is just a few more culturally conscience travellers away.



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