



Script

"Heritage Travel" —Travel Agent Script

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Aim

The aim of the project is to create an education-based narration that a high-level travel professional within the company can use to create a web-based seminar for Europe Express' premier travel associates. This series of scripts is used to promote new destinations, introduce upcoming products and identify emerging trends in the industry.

As a provider of upscale and luxury European land tours, Europe Express uses these informational scripts to up-sell additional destinations, to help agents craft sample tour routes throughout the continent and to offer options for interest-based travel such as this itinerary crafted especially for genealogy enthusiasts.

Introducing Your Clients To Heritage Travel

As Americans we live in the world's great melting pot. With such diverse backgrounds, we often about our pasts: where did we come from and where did our story begin?

Maybe you can identify with being Italian because of the meatballs your Nonna used to make for Sunday supper or you think of yourself as German because of the lullabies your Oma used to sing when you were little. But how much do we really know about the places our ancestors once called home?

Fueled by television shows like "Who Do You Think You Are?" -- where celebrities trace their family trees -- curiosity in genealogy has exploded. In a recent Ancestry.com

poll four out of five Americans reported a strong desire to understand their heritage. People are finding out it's important to know where they're from in order to know where they are going. What may have begun with a simple TV show is quickly turning into boots on the ground and mere curiosity can soon become an entire family driving through villages half a world away. That's where you come in!

So who are these heritage travelers?

It's fair to say the most common roots travelers are in their 50s and older. Many are empty-nesters or parents who want to show their adult children and grandchildren where they come from. In fact, it's not uncommon to see several generations on a single trip. It's a way for grandparents to help connect the younger generation to the past -- introducing them to the food, music, language and religious traditions of their own childhood. But that doesn't mean older Americans are the only ones booking roots trips. We've seen younger couples, singles and even those looking to learn more about their adopted culture on heritage journeys. In fact, the digital component of genealogy searches have made these journeys popular bucket list trips for millennials as well. It's the type of thematic travel that can appeal to almost anyone.

Where do they want to go?

If you're wondering where in the world people are going for heritage travel just think of all the places travelers come from. However, there are some places that are more common to North Americans than others...Ireland, England, Italy, Scotland, Germany, Poland, Hungary and China just to name a few.



What does Heritage Travel involve?

Ancestry travel can run the gamut depending on how deep travelers want to dive. While some clients may need the services of ancestry agencies and want to spend all their time knee-deep in the archives, most people are satisfied with FIT tours that mix traditional sightseeing with glimpses into life in the "old country." This type of heritage travel is ideal for first timers.

Heritage travelers are often content just to walk the streets where a great-grandfather once lived or visit the church where their grandparents were married. Often times people want to taste the local cuisine, visit monuments they've heard about or connect with distant relatives.

The truth is, often times travelers may not even know to ask about a heritage trip. However, when you hear a client mention an upcoming trip to the country where their family came from, you have a chance to plant a seed. Encourage them to spend a day exploring some family history or traveling to the town their ancestors came from, it doesn't have to be the main focus of the journey. Sometimes that simple suggestion is all it takes to pique their interest. If you plan it right, you might make a client for life!

Getting Started

So where do you begin? Let me put it this way, the more your clients can do prior to their trip, the more productive it will be when they finally arrive. Here are some ways you can educate them and get the ball rolling.

First, you want your clients to begin building their family tree. Now there are several ways they can do this: DNA kits, family research and online genealogy. Once again, this all depends on how deep they want to go and how much information they're looking for.

Let's start with a home DNA kit since these genetic testing kits are driving heritage research and they could be one of the most useful tools you have in creating interest in this new theme of travel. Essentially what a DNA kit does is take a sample of saliva to help people discover what part of the world they come from and their ethnic make up.

With that information, your clients can begin talking with relatives to discover more specific information: maiden names, birthdates, deaths and villages where common ancestors may have lived. Older family members are a

great source of forgotten knowledge. You'll want to be sure genealogy-seekers inquire about religion since in countries like Ireland, different denominations maintained totally separate records. Plus, they should ask about the original spellings of names since many immigrants underwent a name change when they arrived in North America.

The final task is to hit the internet to fill in the gaps with census records, military enlistments, marriage certificates, obituaries and even naturalization papers. Last, but not least, travelers can turn to online genealogy websites for a small fee. This may seem like a lot of homework but remember -- the more they know in advance, the more meaningful the trip is likely to be!

Hit the Road!

The first thing travelers will need is a rental car which offers the flexibility to make itineraries, take detours and spend as much time as they need in any given spot.

Once you've reserved the car, the biggest piece of advice I can offer is to make sure to plan ahead! You can help by researching the addresses of local historical societies, museums, archive buildings and public libraries. Your clients can track down the locations of living relatives or sites that are important to their family history to ensure they are ready to go as soon as the plane touches down.

Then, the more serious heritage-seekers can break down their travels into a schedule of places to visit each day. We suggest dividing the trip into morning and afternoon sessions, where travelers do one thing a session. This prevents burnout and allows time for unexpected discoveries. By having a schedule your clients can best plan their overnights and make accommodation choices in advance.

Finally, your clients will need a few additional items for their packing list:

- A laptop computer to upload new information to family tree software in real time
- A digital camera or smartphone for taking pictures
- Change for copies of records, documents or newspaper articles
- Local currency for admission to smaller museums or historical societies

Tips for a Multi-Gen. Heritage Trip

Since many heritage journeys are also family vacations, they should maximize the time people spend together. That means while discovering history is important, it should never be at the expense of the present. Here are a few tips to consider:

- We suggest travelers spend the morning on genealogy and keep the afternoons open for activities like cooking classes, enjoying an outdoor adventure or visiting a local festival.
- Another option is to work heritage travel into a larger trip. For example, if your clients are on a cruise that stops at

port where their relatives come from, they can spend time exploring the town they trace their roots back to.

- Consider the audience. If you have several younger family members you probably won't want to spend a lot of time in historical societies, archives or cemeteries. Focus on the broader meaning of heritage. Say things like, "This is the kind of food our relatives ate" or "This is the village our people once lived in." Paint with broad strokes.
- Spend time with locals. Locals offer deeper insights into your homeland. Strike up conversations, make personal connections and ask questions. Who knows, when they hear your last name or that your grandfather used to be a doctor in the village, they just may be able to offer you additional information you didn't know.

Two Sample Trips

So, what might a heritage journey look like? Here are two sample trips to help your clients build a bridge to the past:

IRELAND -- Did you know one in every nine Americans has an Irish heritage? It seems the Irish story has become the American story. Here's what their journey might look like...

After a pint at the pub and a walk through the cobblestone streets of James Joyce's Dublin it'll be time to head further afield. The Irish journey takes your clients to County Donegal where lost roads wind past rugged coastline in a place National Geographic named to 2017's cool list. Then it's onto Westport, where hiking, climbing and water-sports entertain thrill seekers and families occupy the kids with looped walking trails. The highlight of the adventure comes next with the iconic sights every Irishman holds dear: the Cliffs of Moher, Bunratty Castle and the Ring of Kerry.

In between sightseeing there will be plenty of time for genealogy research. With the use of a rental car your clients can explore the hamlets where they come from, places like Adare and Shannon where they can visit Catholic Parishes and county records. Then it's onto the cemeteries of local churches to search for the names of relatives or town halls to look up marriage certificates. Before they leave, make sure they pull up the family crest to print and frame so they'll always remember their time here in Ireland.

POLAND'S HOLOCAUST STORIES -- The stories people are often trying to connect with in Poland are deeply personal ones that revolve around war, the Holocaust and memories most families would rather forget.

The journey begins in Warsaw where a rebuilt Old Town only hints at the brutality of World War II. Travelers will relive the siege of Warsaw and its uprising before heading to the crumbling fragments of the Ghetto Wall. Next, it's onto Krakow to Oskar Schindler's factory where a 1,000 people were saved from deportation to concentration camps.

A little more than an hour away is perhaps the hardest leg of the journey, the Auschwitz concentration camp. The largest of the Nazi death camps is where Jewish people and

perceived enemies of the Reich were exterminated, used as slave labor and where more than 1 million people lost their lives.

The sad reality is that most Jewish genealogy-seekers will eventually discover relatives who were victims of the Holocaust. To learn more, travelers can visit places central to their family's story, speak with living family members or work with the archive center, Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem. This center maintains an extensive database of names and attempts to document each of the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

These are just two types of heritage journeys. Hopefully, we've shown you that with a bit of planning and imagination you can create a trip that unlocks the unique history of the past for your individual clients.

One Final Thought...

It's easy to get your hopes up about finding that long-lost relative or discovering the beginnings of your adoption story but it's not always the fairy tale. Sometimes it happens just the way we see it on television and other times...it doesn't. It's important to help your clients understand that even if they don't meet a living relative or discover the document that unlocks all the mysteries, sometimes the little things are all the answers they'll ever need.

Maybe hearing the language their grandparents spoke or tasting the food of their childhood is enough. Perhaps this trip won't be the end but a stepping stone to discoveries yet to come. And in the end, if they leave having traced the paths of their ancestors surrounded by people they care about, maybe that's the greatest lesson of all.

