

How to plan a movie-themed vacation

TRAVEL

By Shivani Vora - The New York Times



LARS LEETARU/NYT

ILLUSTRATION MOVED IN ADVANCE AND NOT FOR USE - ONLINE OR IN PRINT - BEFORE MARCH 11, 2018. -- Many noteworthy movies are filmed in appealing locales that travelers may want to visit and enjoy, and some travel companies sell set itineraries focused on popular movies. Luxury tour operator Zicasso, for example, has an eight-day trip to Ireland inspired by "Star Wars: The Last Jedi." (Lars Leetaru/The New York Times) -- NO SALES; FOR EDITORIAL USE ONLY WITH NYT STORY SLUGGED MOVIE THEMED VACATIONS BY VORA FOR MARCH 11, 2018. ALL OTHER USE PROHIBITED.

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Whether it's the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy in New Zealand or "Roman Holiday" in Rome, many noteworthy movies are filmed in appealing locales that travelers may want to enjoy.

According to Angela Tillson, a film location manager in Hawaii who has worked on the set of films including "Jurassic Park: The Lost World" and "The Descendants," exploring a beloved movie set destination through the eyes of the film makes for an enjoyable vacation.

Here are her tips to get started:

Choose Your Destination

Pick a spot you're interested in visiting, and find out what movies have been filmed there. Then, plan an itinerary based around a film that you've seen and liked. "It's fun to sometimes let a destination determine the movie you're going to live rather than the other way around," Tillson said.

Get in the Mood

Before you head to your destination, be sure to watch the movie again. This reminds you of identifiable spots to look for during your trip.

If the movie is based on a book, consider reading the book as well. It may have details about the locale that the movie doesn't touch on.

Also, books often have scenes that don't make it into the movie adaptations, which gives you a deeper view of the destination. Tillson also recommended downloading the movie's soundtrack or score, and listening to it throughout your trip.

Book a Themed Trip

Some travel companies sell set itineraries focused on popular movies. The luxury tour operator Zicasso, for example, has an eight-day trip to Ireland inspired by "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" and Wild Frontiers has an 11-day trip to India inspired by "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel."

Tillson suggested doing a web search or checking with a travel agent to find out about such trips.

Also, in some destinations, local tour operators and hotels sell movie-themed tours. For instance, the St. Regis Princeville Resort in Hawaii offers a tour that includes a private helicopter ride to Manawaiopuna Falls, made famous in "Jurassic Park," and a tour of filming locations of movies such as "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Pirates of the Caribbean." Lunch is even included.

The cost is \$5,674 for two adults.

A more affordable option, in Rome, is the four-hour Roman Holiday themed excursion from HR Tours, where travelers ride a Vespa with a driver and see all the sites from the movie; the cost is 170 euros (\$207) per person.

Hang Where the Movie Crew Did

When they're not working, movie crews enjoy hitting local bars and casual restaurants, Tillson said.

Find out where the behind-the-scenes staff of your film spent their time by asking your destination's tourist board or your hotel's concierge, and check out a few of the spots.

"It's another way to get entrenched in the film and spend time in bars and restaurants that you wouldn't normally think to hit," she said.