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# 8

# The Future of Film Tourism

## Introduction

Film tourism refers to a post-modern experience at an attraction or destination which has been portrayed in 'some form of media representation, such as the cinema screen, television or video' (Kork, 2018: 5). Film-induced tourism occurs when a tourist visits 'a destination or attraction as a result of the destination being featured on television, video, DVD or the cinema screen' (Hudson and Ritchie, 2006: 256). Screen tourism, movie induced tourism and TV induced tourism are other terms commonly used in association with this type of special interest tourism (Riley *et al.*, 1998; Connell, 2005; Connell and Meyer, 2009). Beeton (2005), categorises film-induced tourism based on where the tourism activities occur, namely 'on-film' and 'off-film' induced tourism. 'On-film' induced tourism refers to tourism resulting from where a part of a film is shot and shown on the screen, while 'off-film' induced tourism refers to events or artificial destinations actualised through the involvement in films (Beeton, 2005). Film-induced tourism falls under the umbrella of cultural tourism as it represents the cultural heritage of a destination and may be considered an expression of visual arts and local traditions (Gjorgievski and Trpkova, 2012), with Kim *et al.* (2007: 1351) suggesting it has 'great potential to advance cultural exchange and understanding'.

As an illustration of the size and extent of movies which are filmed away from traditional studios, the 11 *Star War* movies filmed between 1977 and 2019 utilised a number of location sites throughout the world, in addition to sound film studios in the United Kingdom (Elstree and Pinewood Studios) and Australia (Fox Studio). Locations included the countries of Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Norway, England, Guatemala, Switzerland, Australia, Italy,

Thailand, Spain, Ireland, Bolivia and the Maldives (Obias, 2018a). Only two USA locations were used for filming, both in California, however outside of the traditional Los Angeles and Hollywood sites. Similarly, many scenes in the six *Mission Impossible* movies spanning from 1996 to 2018 were filmed on location in various parts of the world, including Prague, Norway, Paris, London, Washington, Virginia, Sydney, Utah, Berlin, China, Vatican City, Morocco, Vienna, Kuala Lumpur, Budapest, Moscow Mumbai, Canada and Dubai (Looch, 2018; Obias 2018b). Table 8.1 shows a variety of on-film and off-film induced tourism.

**Table 8.1:** Examples of on and off-film induced tourism and runaway productions

Name of Movie or TV Series	Impacted Locations
Harry Potter	Kings Cross Station, London; Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland; Glenfinnan Viaduct, Scotland; and, various locations in Oxford including Christ Church College, Bodleian Library and New College: United Kingdom
Lord of the Rings	Matamata, Waikato: New Zealand
Downton Abbey	Highclere Castle, Newbury, Hampshire: United Kingdom
Notting Hill	Notting Hill, London: United Kingdom
Braveheart	Stirling (despite being filmed in Ireland): Scotland
Four weddings and a Funeral	The Crown Hotel, Amersham, Buckinghamshire: United Kingdom (booked for four years following the movie release)
Field of Dreams	Baseball field, Dyersville, Dubuque County, Iowa: USA
Pretty Woman	Four Seasons Hotel, Beverly Hills Wilshire, California: USA

Source: Riley *et al.*, 1998; Goldstein, 2019.

## Film tourism and destinations

Traditionally, Hollywood is the home of television and film making. However, in recent years there has been an increase in *runaway* films and television series, where filming occurs on location, usually at lesser known destinations (Johnson-Yale, 2008). Runaway productions are films and television series which are filmed in one country but initially released in another country. The interest among the public about the film helps to raise awareness of the site where it was filmed, which leads to the site becoming a potential attraction for domestic and international tourists. Franchise movies and television series, such as *Star Wars*, *Marvel*, *Game of Thrones* and *Mission Impossible* to name a few, have well planned filming and release date schedules which may enable destination locations to be scouted well in advance and subsequent tourism related opportunities be realised.

From a destination image and marketing perspective, a discrepancy may exist between the film-induced images and the images desired by the destination. For example, the way in which a destination is portrayed in a film may not be aligned with that of the destination management organisation (DMO). For example, the 1978 film *Midnight Express* (set in Turkey but filmed in Malta) and the 1982 television series *Bangkok Hilton* (set in Bangkok, Thailand) both portrayed their respective locations in a negative light. In addition, issues of inauthenticity and displacement within this context may arise when a movie is filmed in one place but is actually representing somewhere else entirely. Bolan *et al.* (2011: 106) considered a range of examples of displacement film tourism (or runaway production) including *Braveheart* (set in Scotland but filmed in Ireland), *The Last Samurai* (set in Japan but filmed in New Zealand), *Gangs of New York* (set in the USA but filmed in Italy), *Saving Private Ryan* (set in France but filmed in Ireland) and *Batman Begins* (set in the USA but filmed in England) just to mention a few. Although not all tourists expect a completely authentic destination experience, some do and may be disappointed when the reality does not match their expectations (Yeoman, 2008; Bolan *et al.*, 2011; Rickley and Vidon, 2018); White (2017) suggests that there are many film fans who would happily pay large amounts of money to visit an authentic location. Teng and Chen (2020: 7) suggest DMOs could consider strategies for increasing emotional attachment to the movie and the associated site. This could include activities such as providing exclusive fan clubs and celebrity activities as a method of ‘reinforcing the fans’ sense of belonging toward film celebrities’. White (2017) noted that it is really powerful if a destination highlights the ‘emotional hook of the film’s story’ and connects that emotion to the location where their favourite movie was filmed.

## Benefits of film tourism

The existence of film tourism suggests that by exposing the individual to the destination via the screen, they will be enticed to visit as a tourist (Saltik *et al.*, 2010). For example, one tourist from the USA was interviewed by Iannucci (2017) and said that she had a ‘trip of a lifetime’ when she visited Highclere Castle, West Berkshire where the television series *Downton Abbey* was filmed. She said ‘I couldn’t believe I was standing where the show was filmed.’ Similarly, a couple from the USA were hooked on *Downton Abbey* as well as *Poldark*, and ‘practically every British drama picked up by PBS’. The woman said, ‘the pull of the gorgeously shot vistas (both internal and external) in these TV series was inescapable’ (Iannucci, 2017).

Featuring a destination in a film or television series has the potential to increase visitation, generate visitor spending and increase the direct economic