

Keeping Tourism Websites Relevant in 2019

Dos, Don'ts, and Creative Inspiration

First, meet CrowdRiff

CrowdRiff is a visual content marketing platform trusted by over **500+** travel and tourism brands worldwide.



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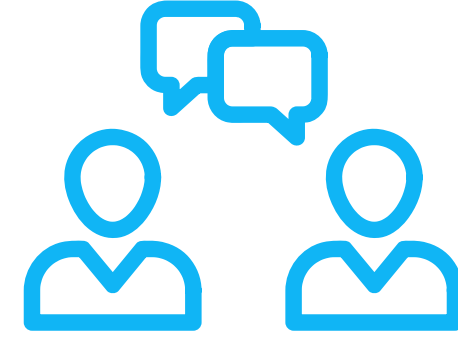
Trends in traveler behavior

To make your website appealing to a modern traveler, first you have to understand what makes them tick. These are 4 trends in consumer behaviors and buying preferences that travel marketers should pay attention to:



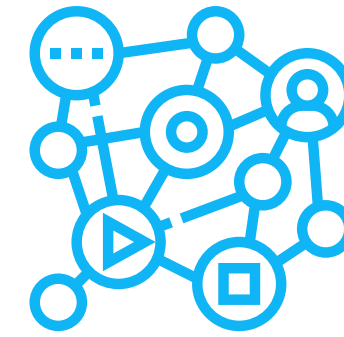
Expecting personalization

74% of consumers are frustrated that web content doesn't map to their interests.



Trusting peers over advertising

Word of mouth is still the most trusted source of information, with 92% of consumers trusting friends and family over advertising².



Sharing experiences through social media

76% of travelers post vacation photos to social networks³.



Visual decision making

People are increasingly turning to photos and videos to decide what to do, where to go, what to buy.

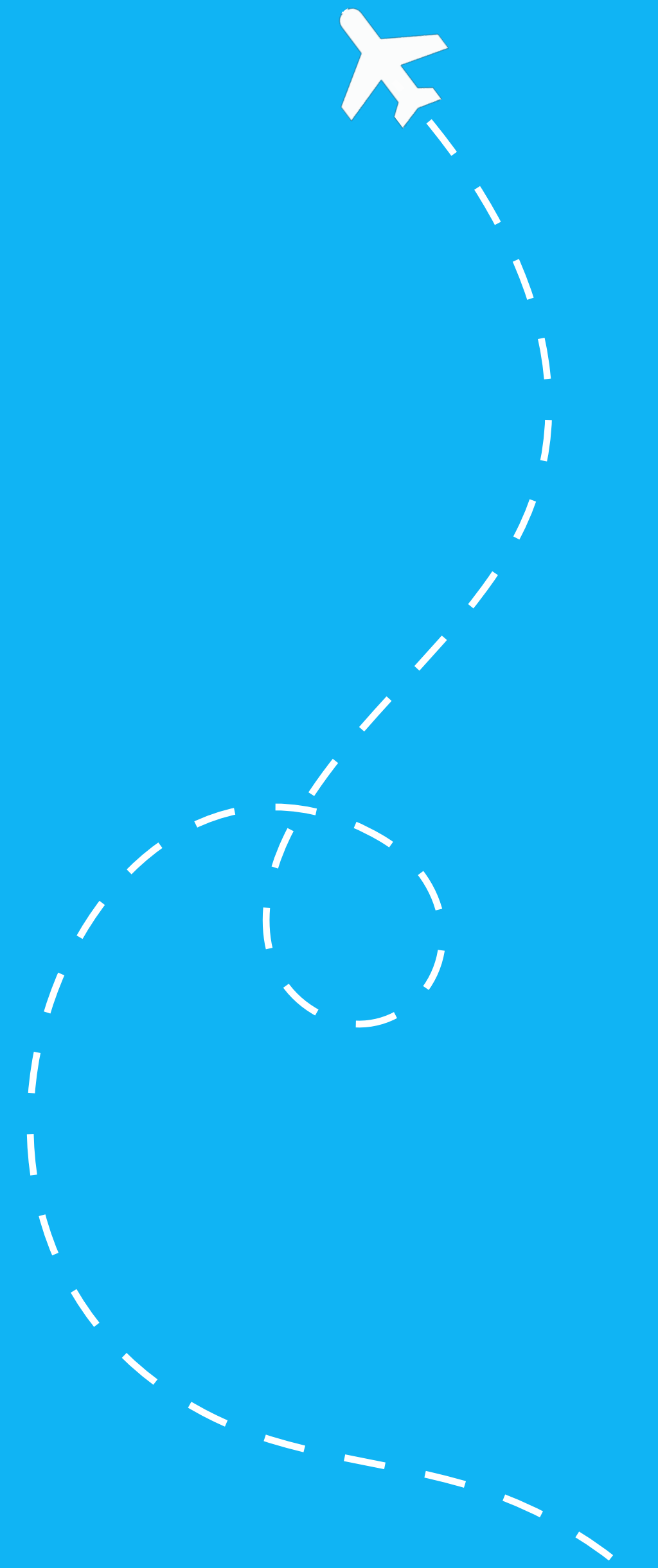
¹ <http://www.marketingmag.ca/consumer/millennials-want-experiences-not-stuff-column-164421>

² <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports-downloads/2012/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages.html>

³ <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/social-media-and-travel-go-hand-in-hand-infographic/625230>

7 reasons travelers overlook tourism websites

Having worked with over 500 tourism brands, we've gathered insights that few other organizations have access to. From these insights we've curated the top 7 reasons people may be ignoring your site.



1 Your site only shares well-known tourist spots

Imagine a New York travel site that only gave recommendations like Times Square or the Statue of Liberty.

While it's important to talk about your most popular tourist attractions, if you're not promoting local gems and lesser known attractions, your website has become redundant.

Today, Google and Facebook are offering travelers easy-to-access information on well-known tourist spots. Your website needs to offer something unique, otherwise people will skip your website in favor of travel content on social media or a “best kept secrets” blog about your destination.



2 Your website makes a poor first impression

Marketers behind the most innovative tourism sites know that from the moment a web visitor lands on their destination site, they have 8 seconds to grab their interest.

People today are visual decision makers. Visuals make an impression even before they've had a chance to read what's on a web page.

So if your website doesn't wow with visuals, visitors are more likely to click away and never come back.



3 Your website visuals are stale

It's easy to leave your website photos up for a little too long — just because sometimes it's too much of a hassle to change them up. Days turn to weeks, which turn to months, and your photos are still the same.

But a lack of up-to-date images can make site visitors feel like no one's home. It makes it seem like either nothing new is happening, or you're not updating your website content regularly.

When your visuals don't look current, your web visitors will be compelled to look elsewhere for more relevant information.



4 Your site feels more like a directory

On many tourism websites, clicking into the “Restaurants” page leads to a list of all partner restaurants, which then link out to their individual listings pages.

The problem with this approach is that most of the time, travelers are looking for *recommendations*, and alone, this directory style approach just doesn’t give travelers the answers they’re looking for.

It’s not enough for your website to list out the best restaurants, local attractions, and landmarks. You don’t want to just be a directory — you want to tell a story, to capture people’s imaginations and inspire them to visit.



5 Your images look too corporate

If your website features a photo of a pristine beach, it will get people's attention, yes — but they might be skeptical that the beach looks like that during peak season.

The reason platforms like Instagram have become popular with travelers is because they show an authentic, unfiltered view of the sights, sounds, and activities of a destination.

If your website can't show travelers that “authentic” lens, they'll go elsewhere to find it.



6 Your site doesn't direct users to relevant information

Imagine you're on a website that raves about a local restaurant. It's got fantastic pictures and glowing descriptions... but no link to the restaurant's website, or any information about how you can make a reservation.

Chances are you're not going to jump through hoops tracking down the official restaurant website, right?

The same goes for your website. You've wowed your visitors with all that your destination or attraction has to offer – but can they click through to those attractions or book their adventure?



7 People simply don't know about your website

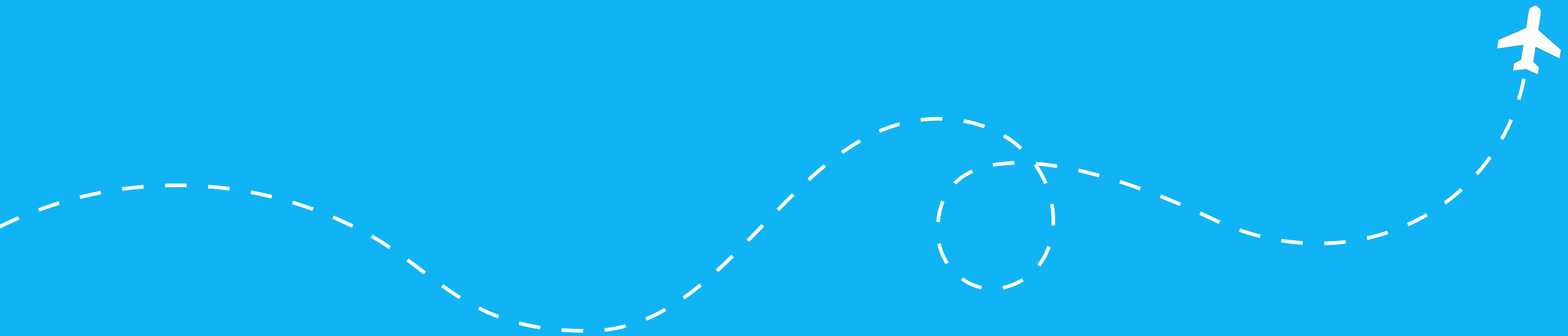
Perhaps this sounds obvious, but it's one of the most common reasons travelers overlook DMO websites.

With so many other places to start trip planning, like [social media](#) or well-known travel sites like [TripAdvisor](#), sometimes travelers just don't think to look for your website.

This is especially true if your website doesn't rank well in search, or if you are quiet or absent on social networks where travelers are most active.



10 tips to make your website more appealing

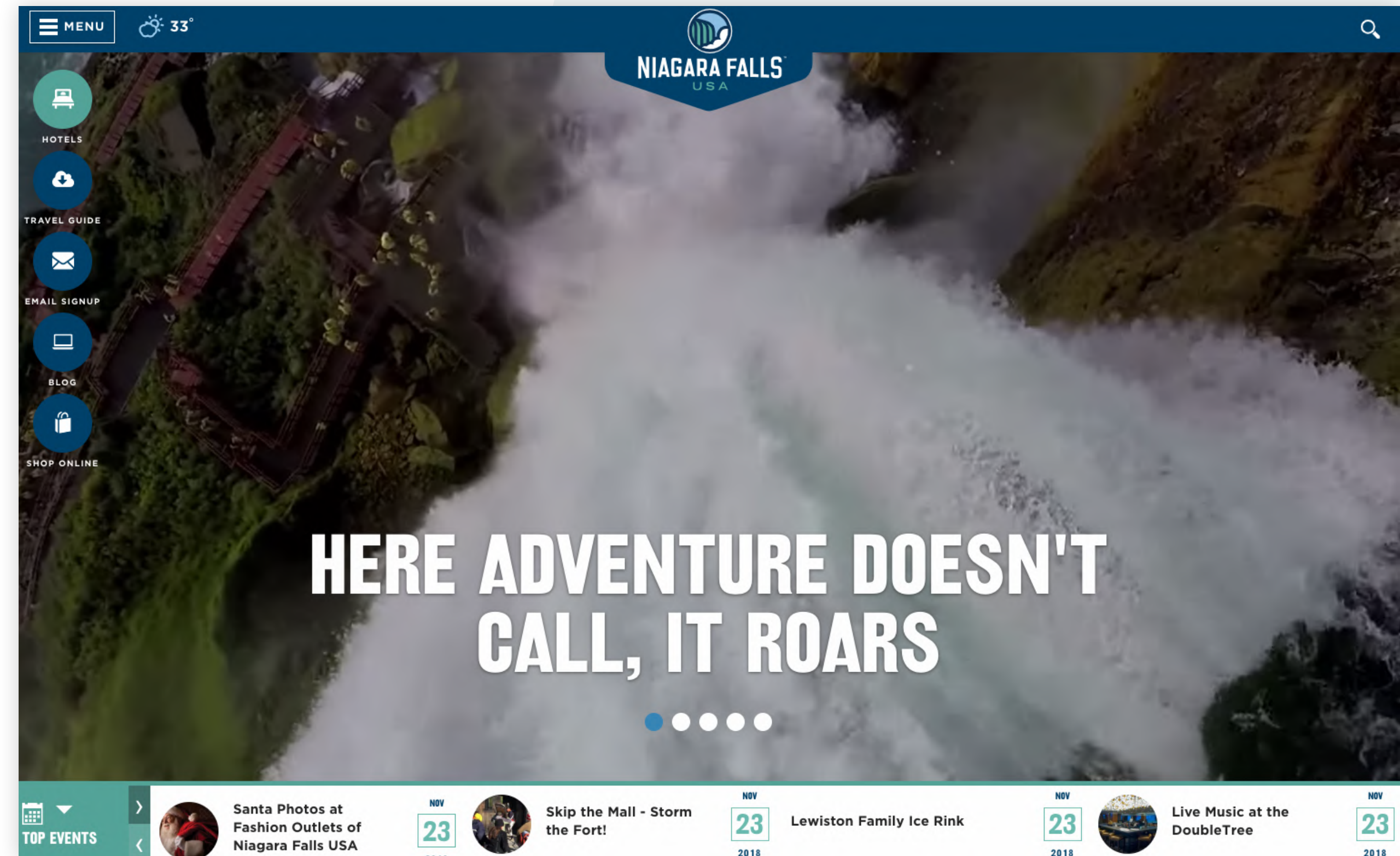


1 Present a visually immersive experience

Make sure all your landing pages — from your homepage to your blog posts — wow your visitors with stunning visuals they can't forget.

For example, Niagara Falls USA's homepage features a fast-paced auto-playing video above the fold that takes you over the edge of the falls. So within 5 seconds of landing on their site, you're already on your toes and entranced by the views.

Take a leaf out of Niagara Falls USA's book: captivate your web visitors with visuals right from the get go, to give them a website experience they can't resist diving further into.

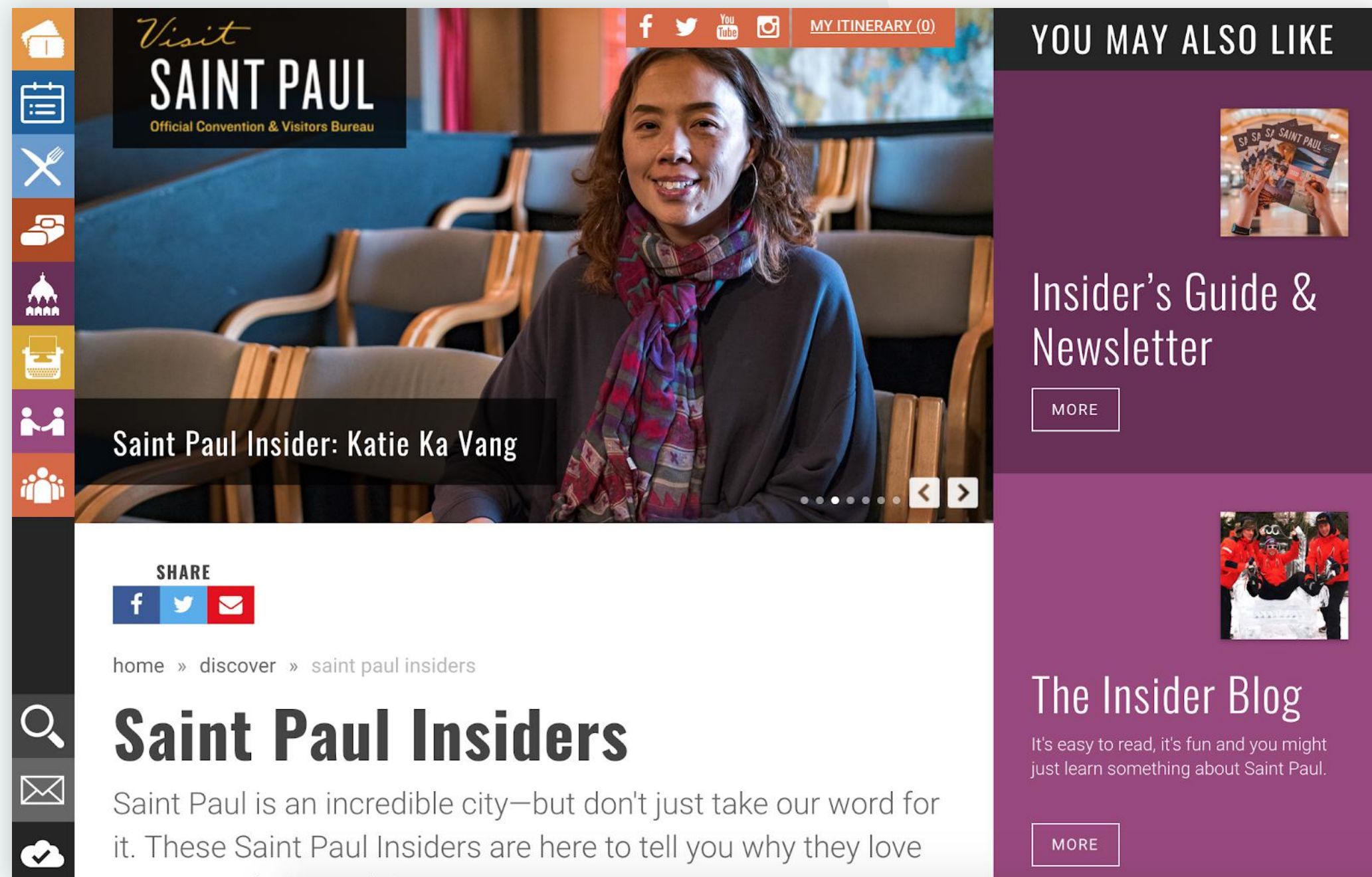


2 Position your website as an insider's guide

You know your destination best — so prove it to your audience by telling them about the coolest places they *don't* know about.

For example, Visit Saint Paul makes a big push to show more than just the average tourist attractions. They have an “insiders” series on their website, which features profiles of locals and their favorite places to frequent. Throughout their website, you’ll also find galleries of user-generated content, displaying various local experiences from people on the ground.

Position yourself as *the* insider's guide, and you won't be sidestepped for social media or other “best kept secret” blogs.



3 Make keeping your website's visuals fresh a priority

When it's not top of mind, it's easy to forget — so be intentional about keeping your photos current.

People don't want to know what your destination or attraction was like a year ago — they want to know what the experience is like today. Having up to date visuals tells your visitors that your information is current, giving you credibility as a trusted source around your brand.

Tourism Regina keeps their website visuals current with CrowdRiff galleries on their website, shown on the right. Updating their visuals is as easy as clicking on the images they love and pressing a button. As a result, the photos featured on their homepage are never more than a week old.



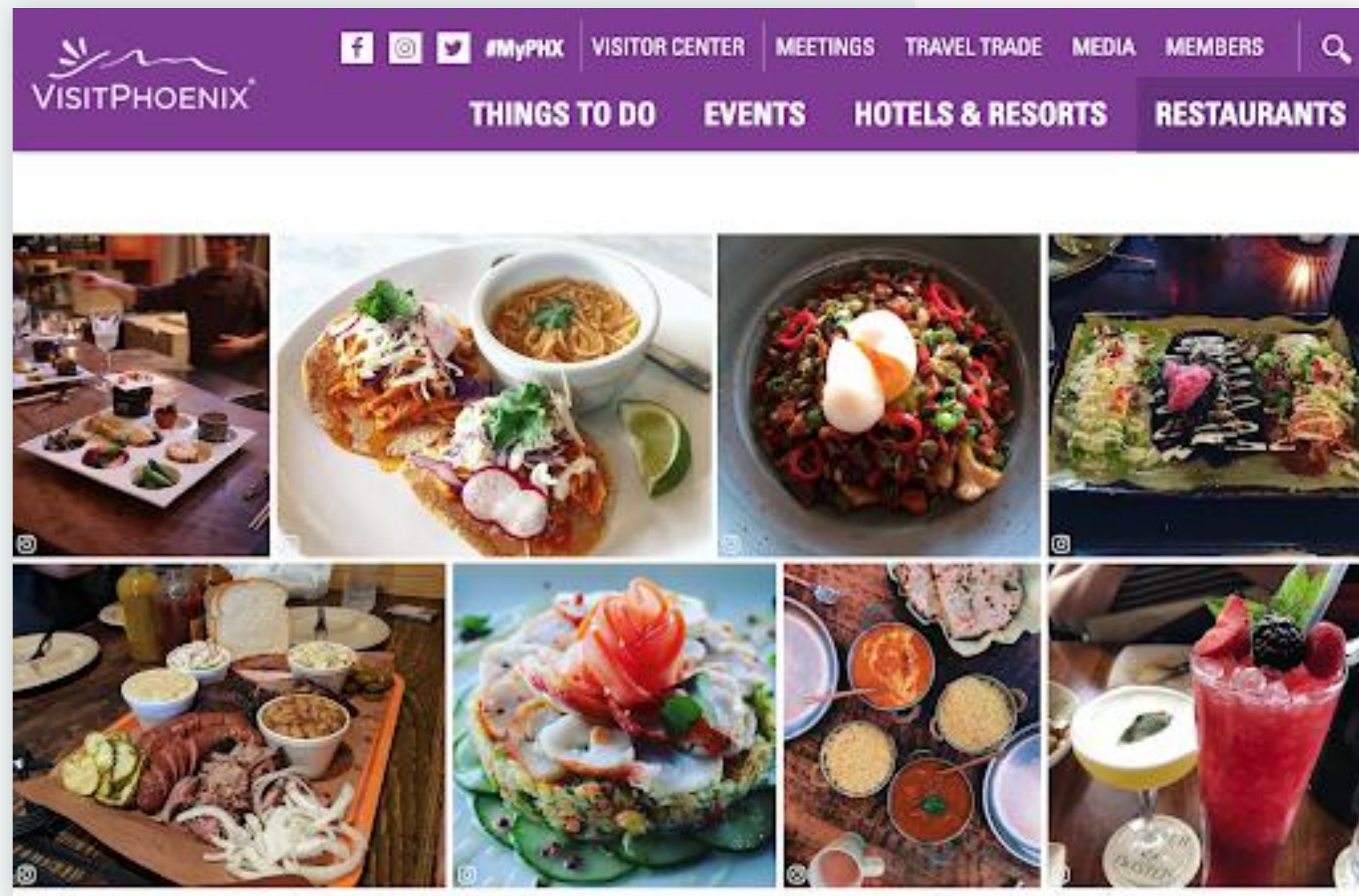
4 Spruce up listings pages with visuals

It's important to frame your content as recommendations, so that interested travelers can find the content they're looking for.

On Visit Phoenix's website, the top of their Restaurants page is a header gallery featuring mouth-watering pictures of local Phoenix cuisine, taken from social media. Each of these photos also have links to the restaurants where they were taken. Then comes a section called "Restaurant Roundups" which feature blog posts that are curated roundups of local joints, such as "8 Favorite Phoenix BBQ Joints" and "Mexico-City-Inspired Cuisine".

Below that is the master list of Phoenix's restaurants, which travelers can choose to browse.

By curating your pages this way, and incorporating beautiful imagery, it makes it easy for a visitor to explore content catered to their interests.



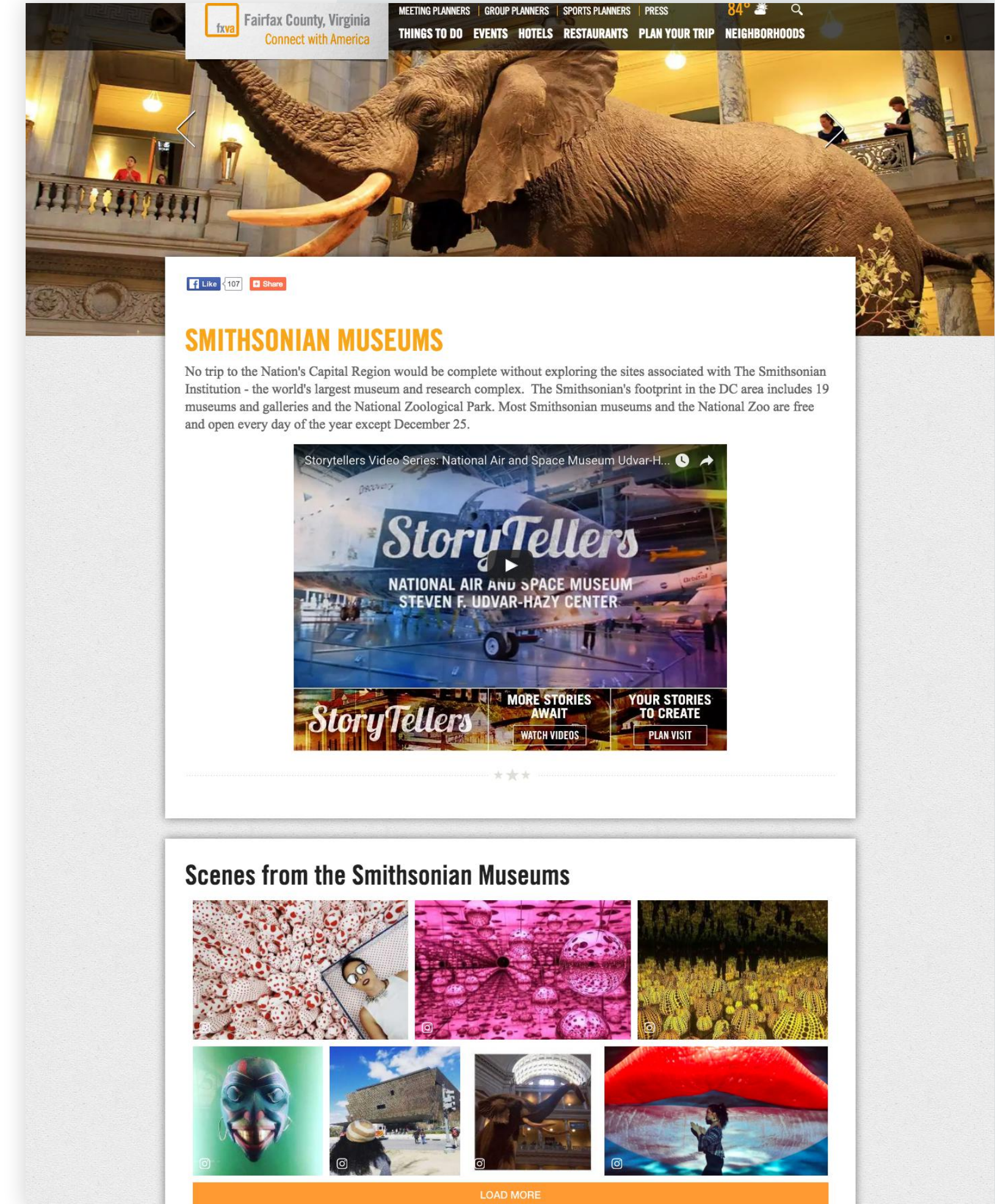
5 Replace stock imagery with shots from visitors & locals

People are showcasing amazing visuals and raving about your destination on social media every day. And travelers want to see this authentic imagery from social. So by curating the best social imagery and showcasing it on your site, you're both amplifying the voices of your brand ambassadors *and* showing travelers the content they want to see.

And don't be afraid to put this content front and center!

Visit Fairfax ran an A/B test - putting CrowdRiff's UGC galleries above the fold and below — the version of the web page with the galleries above the fold had an **85% higher time on site**.

Case in point: authentic visual content keeps travelers on your site.



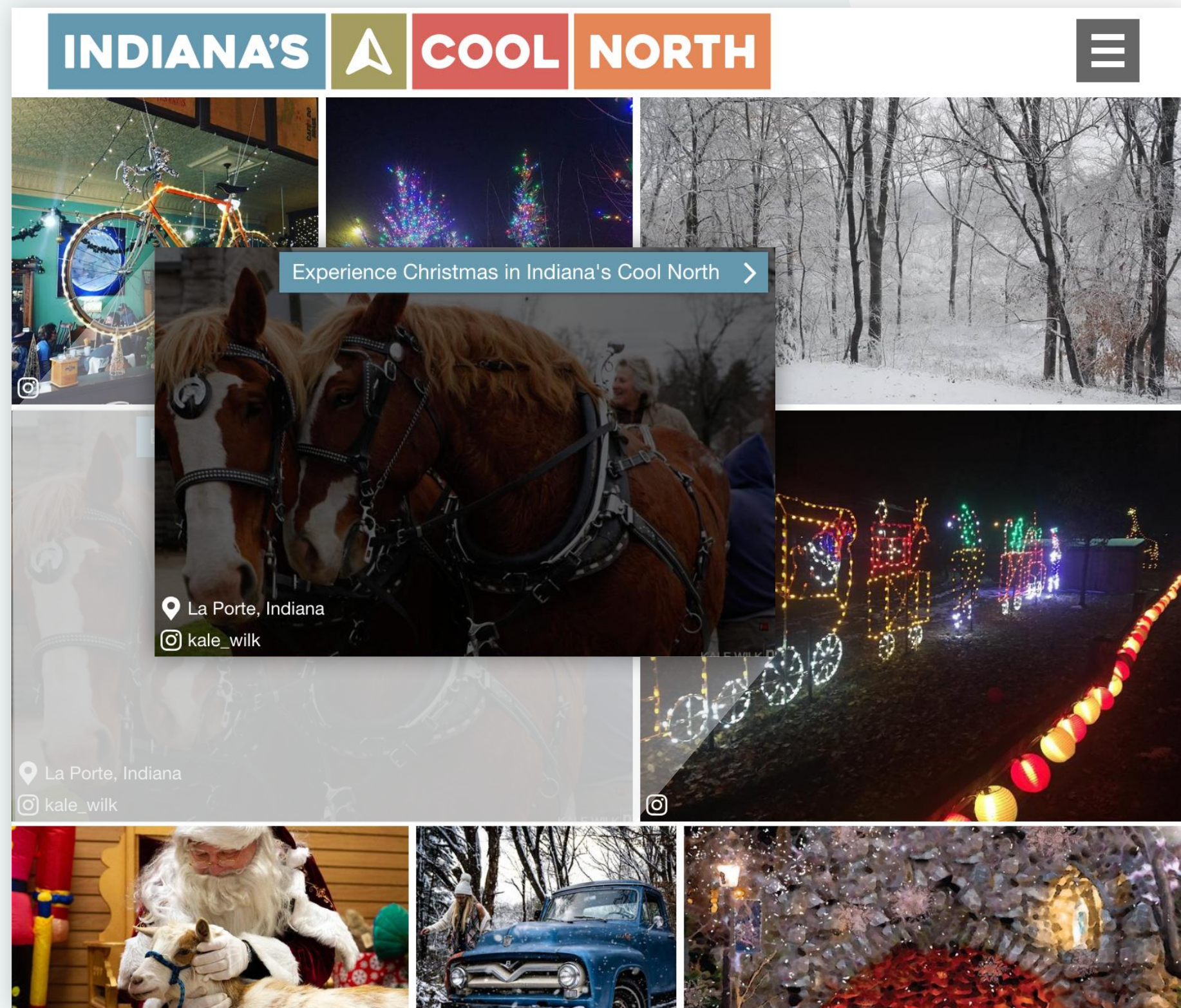
6 Use visuals as a navigation element to drive action

Providing truly useful information means that after inspiring people through visuals, you provide an actionable next step.

Not only should you showcase your best sights, food, and attractions, but also provide links to direct interested people somewhere they can find more information (or book their tickets!).

Northern Indiana overlays the images in their galleries with a clickable caption. These link out to other relevant web pages on their site (or on a partner's site) to give inspired visitors a way to learn more, or even start booking.

Offering this seamless online experience makes your local businesses happy and gives your website visitors a reason to return.

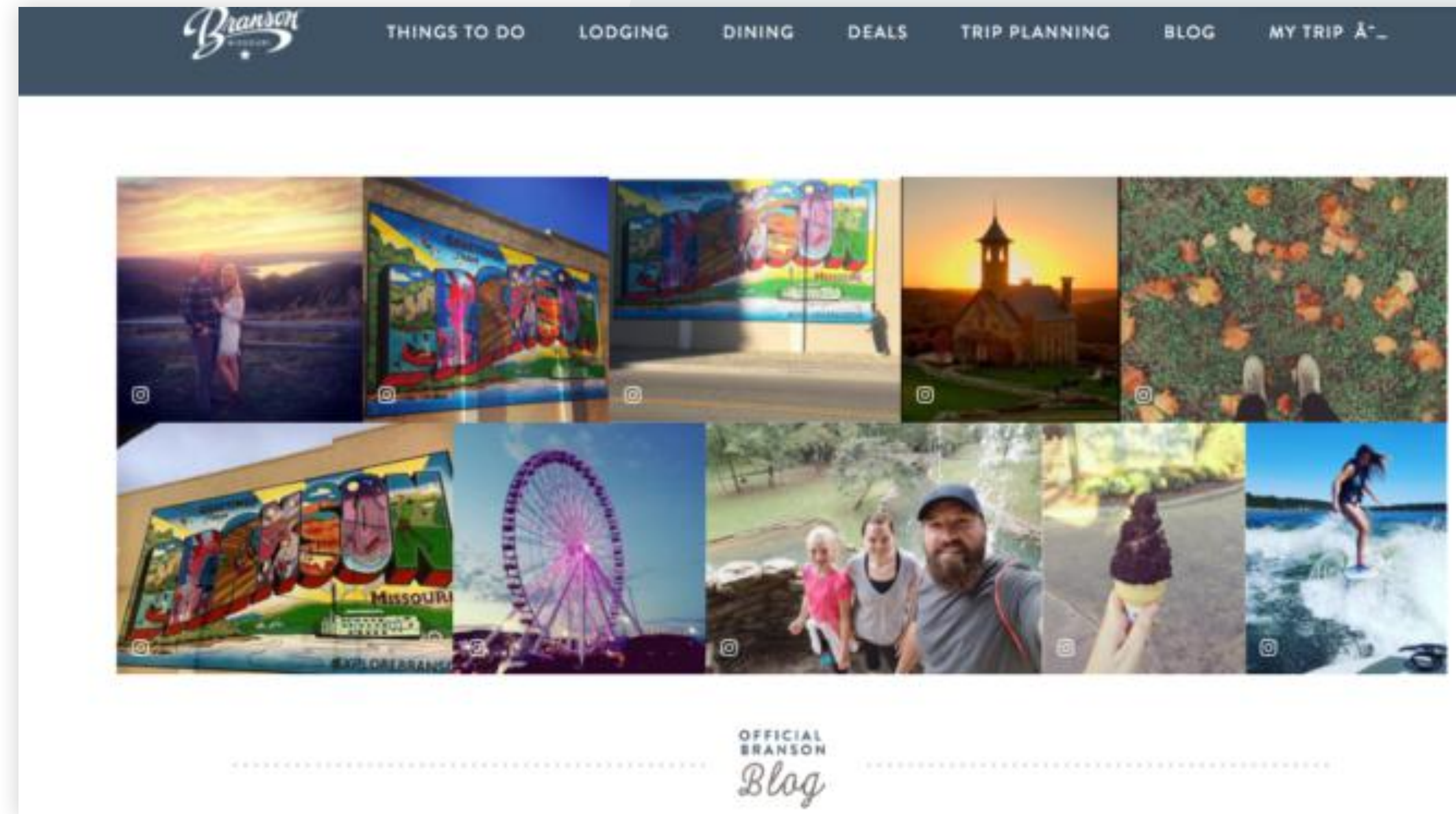


7 Personalize your visual content

Consumers today are accustomed to personalization, from Netflix recommendations to email marketing.

Most tourism websites offer the same content to every visitor, so a millennial family interested in theme parks sees the same content and images as music enthusiasts looking for a city's best live music venues.

Instead, consider using a personalization platform like Bound360, to serve up tailored content and visuals to your key audience segments. Go the added mile and tie this in with your ad campaigns, so people clicking on Facebook ads for music see a landing page of music-themed copy and visuals while people clicking on food themed ads see images of your upcoming Restaurant Week.



8 Show real-time information

Embed live webcams or Instagram photos (both yours and those taken by visitors and locals) so that people can see photos of your destination in real time as they're being shared.

Visit Telluride's website has multiple live feeds for visitors to get an unfiltered view of their destination.

So while you can say that your destination has temperatures in the 60's in November, website visitors will appreciate a firsthand view into what people are actually wearing.

This "behind-the-scenes" look at your destination is valuable information that will keep an interested traveler coming back to your site regularly.



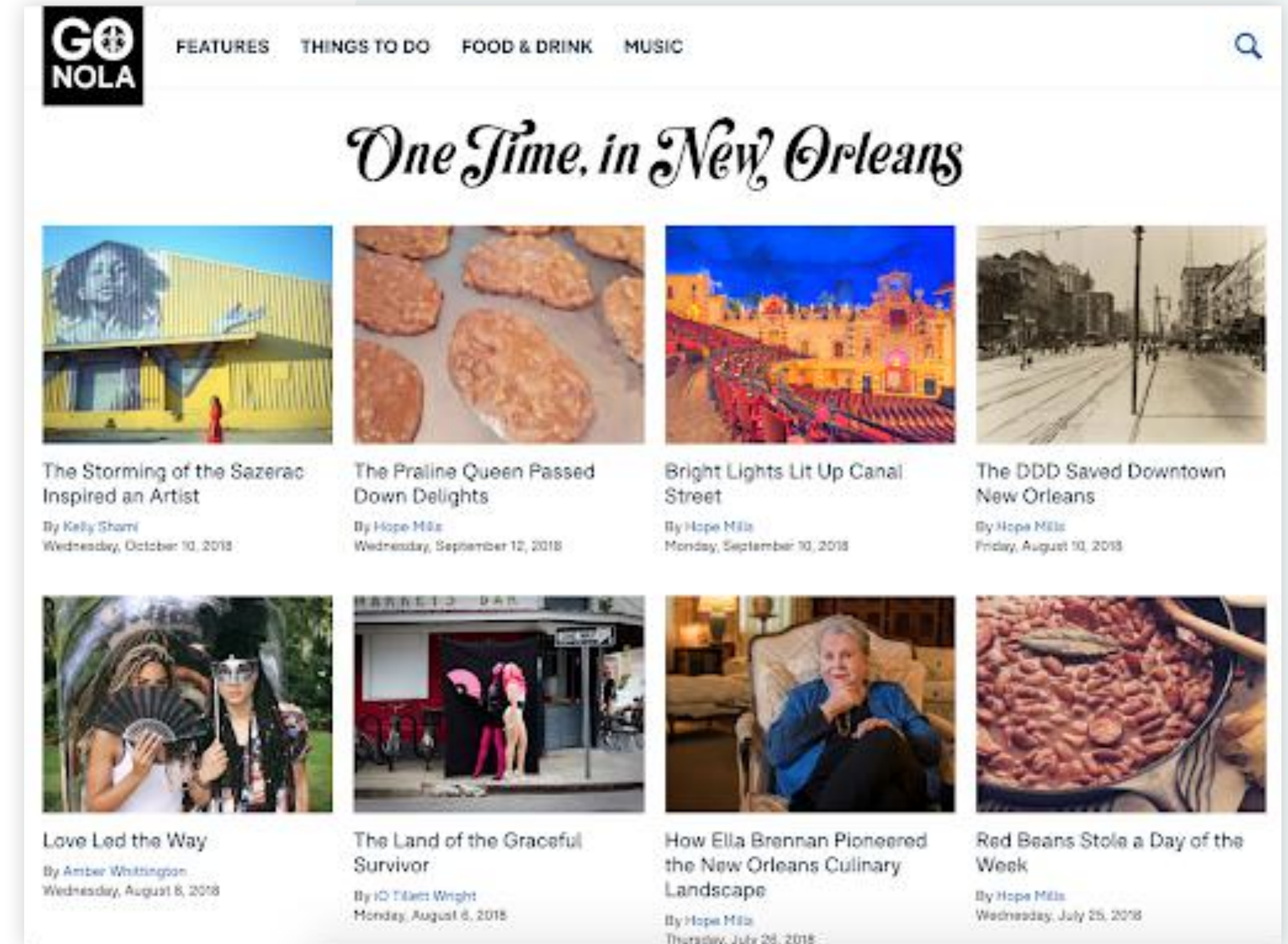
9 Serve niche interests

Give people a reason to use your site by creating pages and blog posts around niche travel interests.

Invite local influencers with particular specialties (like cocktails, artisan burgers, music, etc.) to do guest posts.

GoNOLA (a blog from the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation) publishes plenty of content that appeals to a range of specific and niche interests, from food, history, music, and even stories from locals.

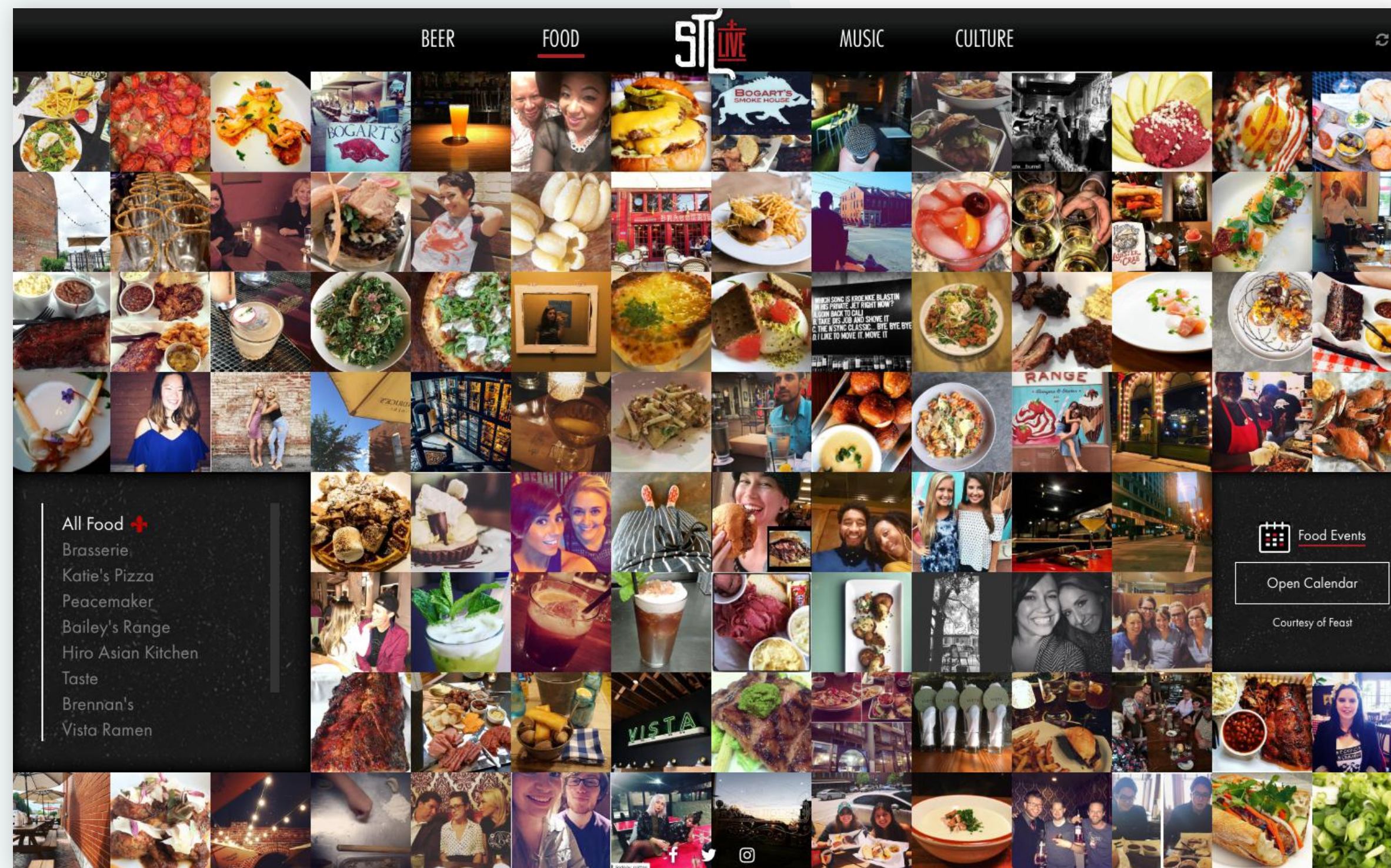
The more relevant and targeted your content is, the better value a traveler is going to get, and the more they'll appreciate using your website!



10 Give tips through storytelling

Explore St. Louis has created an ingenious way to reveal their attractions and points of interest to travelers. Through STL.Live, a microsite using both UGC and owned imagery, Explore St. Louis curates content designed to appeal to millennial travelers.

As you see on the left, the microsite is a collage of authentic images from social media that come together to paint a bigger picture of the St. Louis experience.



3 unique digital experiences

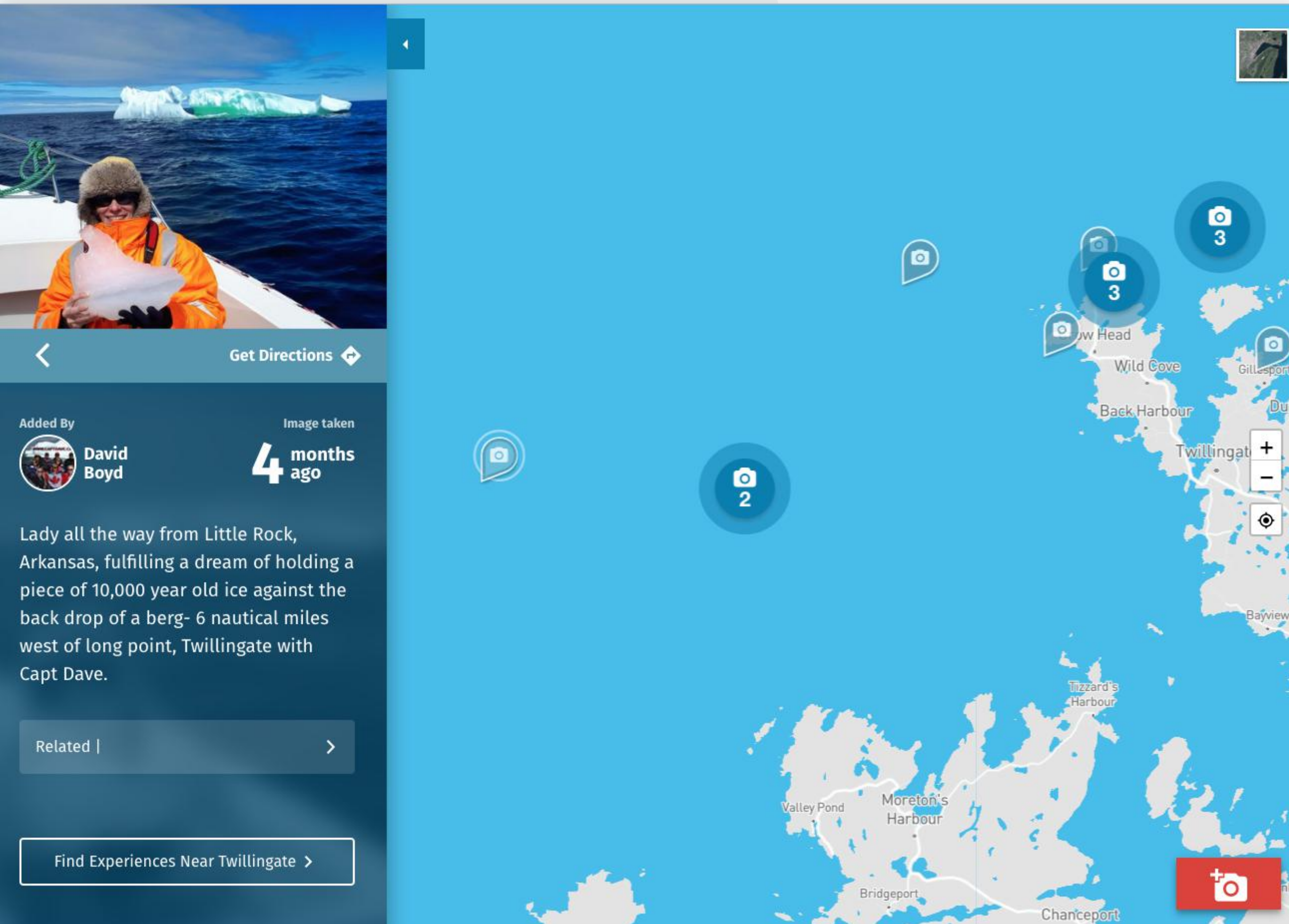


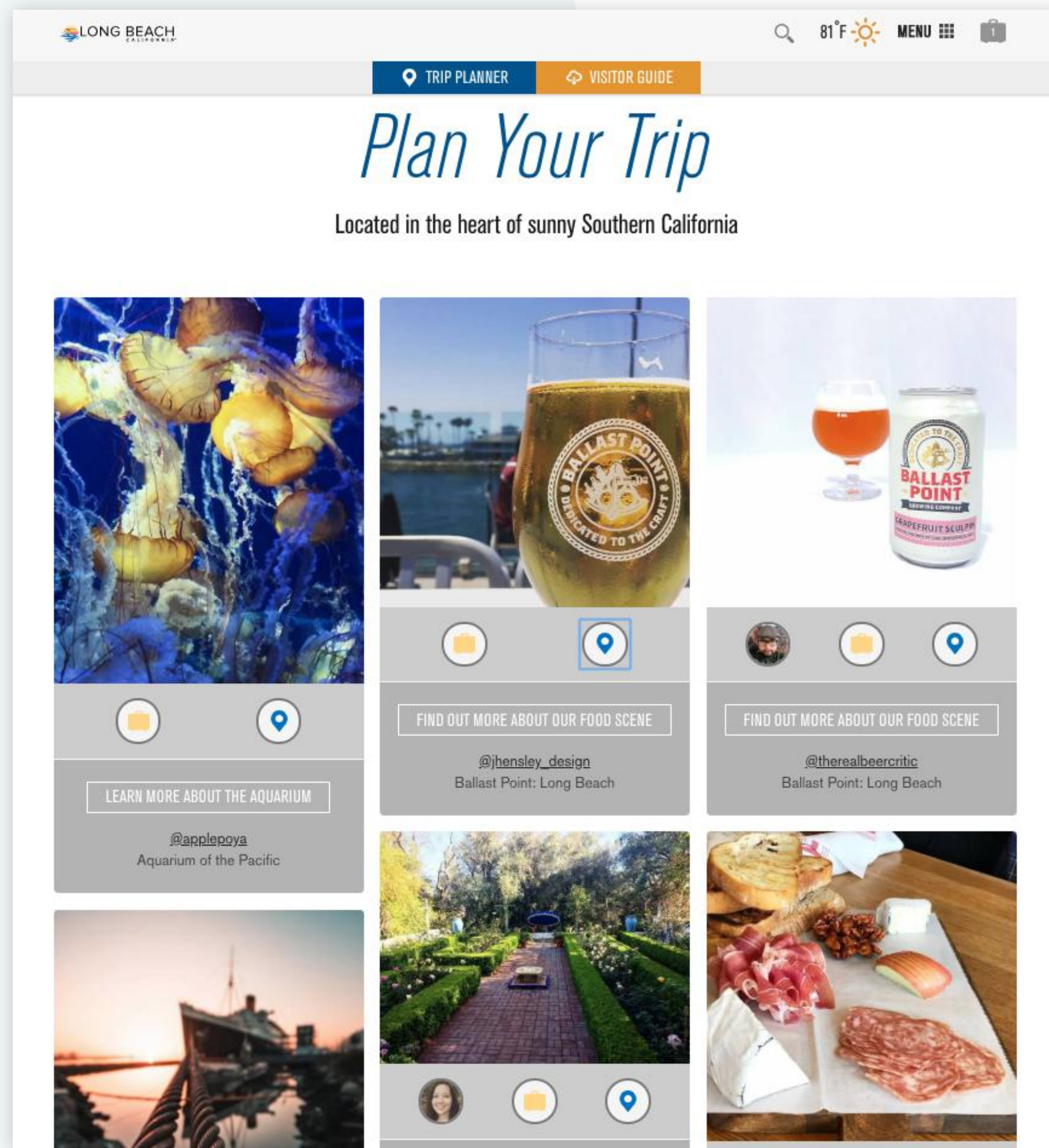
How Newfoundland and Labrador help travelers find icebergs

Newfoundland and Labrador, a province in eastern Canada, promises spectacular glimpses of icebergs.

So, to help travelers actually find them, they used CrowdRiff’s API to power a photo map of all their iceberg sightings, using user-generated content. The Iceberg Finder is designed as a visual map, with pins where locals and travelers have spotted icebergs. It allows people to add their own photos too.

By incorporating user-generated content onto their map Newfoundland and Labrador don’t just claim to have tons of icebergs – they provide social proof as well.





How Visit Long Beach uses visuals to help people plan their trips

This trip planner, shown on the left, allows travelers to explore social media photos (which Visit Long Beach acquired rights to), get inspired by those photos, and then easily take the next step to act.

When something catches a visitor's eye, they can do the following:

- See the location the photo was taken, visualized on a map
- Click a link that leads to a web page to get more information
- Add the activity to their trip plan

This trip planner was custom-built using the CrowdRiff API.



 **beth_whoover**
Canal Walk - Indy Par... [Follow](#)

#nascarweekend #ajallmendinger #47 #37
#buescher #oregontoindiana #nascarfans
#weekend#nascar #indy #hotpass
#indianapolis *Yes, I'm wearing heart ❤️
sunglasses--did I say I loved Indianapolis?
😄 #visitindy #weloveindy #whyweloveindy
#jtgdaughertyracing

lettersandpaiges I've taken a pic with that sign! :)

cindrasmith I agree with your comments about Indy! I'm sorry I missed getting to meet up with you. We left on Saturday. And yes it was HOT! ☀️

visitindy Awesome photo! Check out your snap in our #LoveIndy gallery - link in profile 📸

beth_whoover @visitindy Thank you so much! We love your city and its citizens! ☀️

126 likes

JULY 24

Add a comment... 

How Visit Indy uses UGC to drive social traffic to their website

Visit Indy regularly curates photos taken with their hashtag #loveINDY to user-generated content galleries on their website.

After they curate an image, they also let the original user know they've featured their image on the Visit Indy website! People are always interested to see their own photos in the spotlight and share the news with their friends – and many people are introduced to the website through this social outreach.

“CrowdRiff has become integral in our marketing efforts. 90% of our creative with photos/videos is sourced from CrowdRiff. It has helped to drive traffic to our website from social and has helped increase time on site since implemented. Overall, we couldn’t be happier!”

Taylor Cummings,
Director of Marketing
Travel Dubuque



How leading tourism brands integrate CrowdRiff into their websites



Turn your website into an irreplaceable travel resource

We hope these tips have helped shed some light on opportunities to improve your tourism website.

There might be multiple areas of your website you can start to think about modernizing — but don't be overwhelmed! Start with one or two changes that make the most sense for you, and steadily work your way through a larger website refresh. Implementing these solutions will deliver measurable results.



A modern UGC + DAM platform, powered by AI

Centralize all of your marketing visuals into one platform, including user-generated content and professional photography and video.



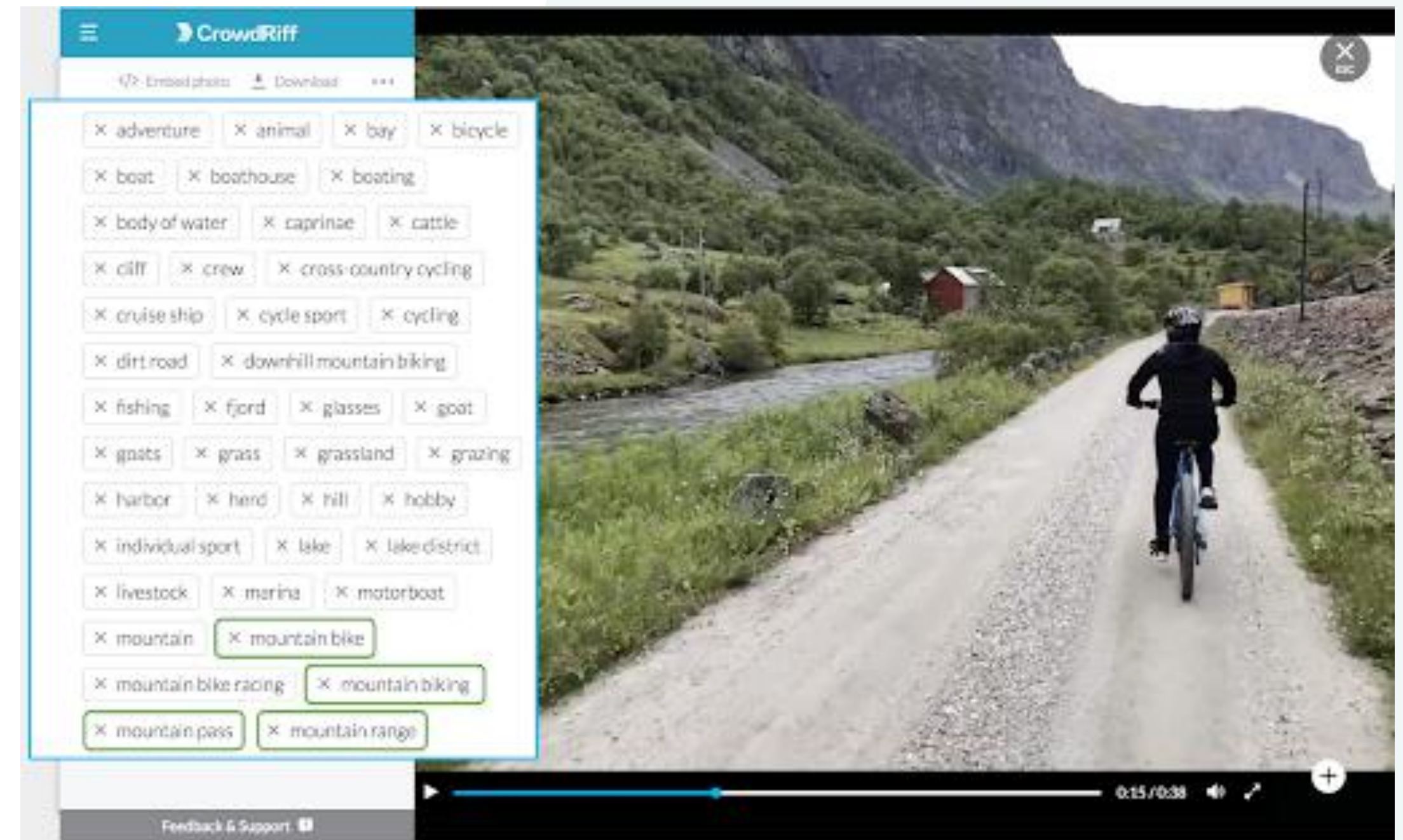
Have all your images organized in seconds

Google Vision's artificial intelligence automatically tags all your photos and videos with relevant keywords, for easy categorization and discoverability.



Add any complementary keywords

You also have the option to further add any keywords to organize your assets; for example, the name of the photographer.



Smart curation

Say goodbye to blurry photos, gym selfies, text-laden posts and memes — CrowdRiff eliminates it all from your library.



Scroll through less clutter

CrowdRiff's smart curation functionality automatically filters out poor quality or irrelevant visuals, so you scroll through less clutter and find the perfect visual faster.



Maintain total control over your content

You can turn filters on and off, so at the end of the day, you have control over what's included in your library and what's not.



Lightning-fast image search

No more wasted time manually scrolling through hashtags — CrowdRiff finds what you need with a fast and powerful search function.



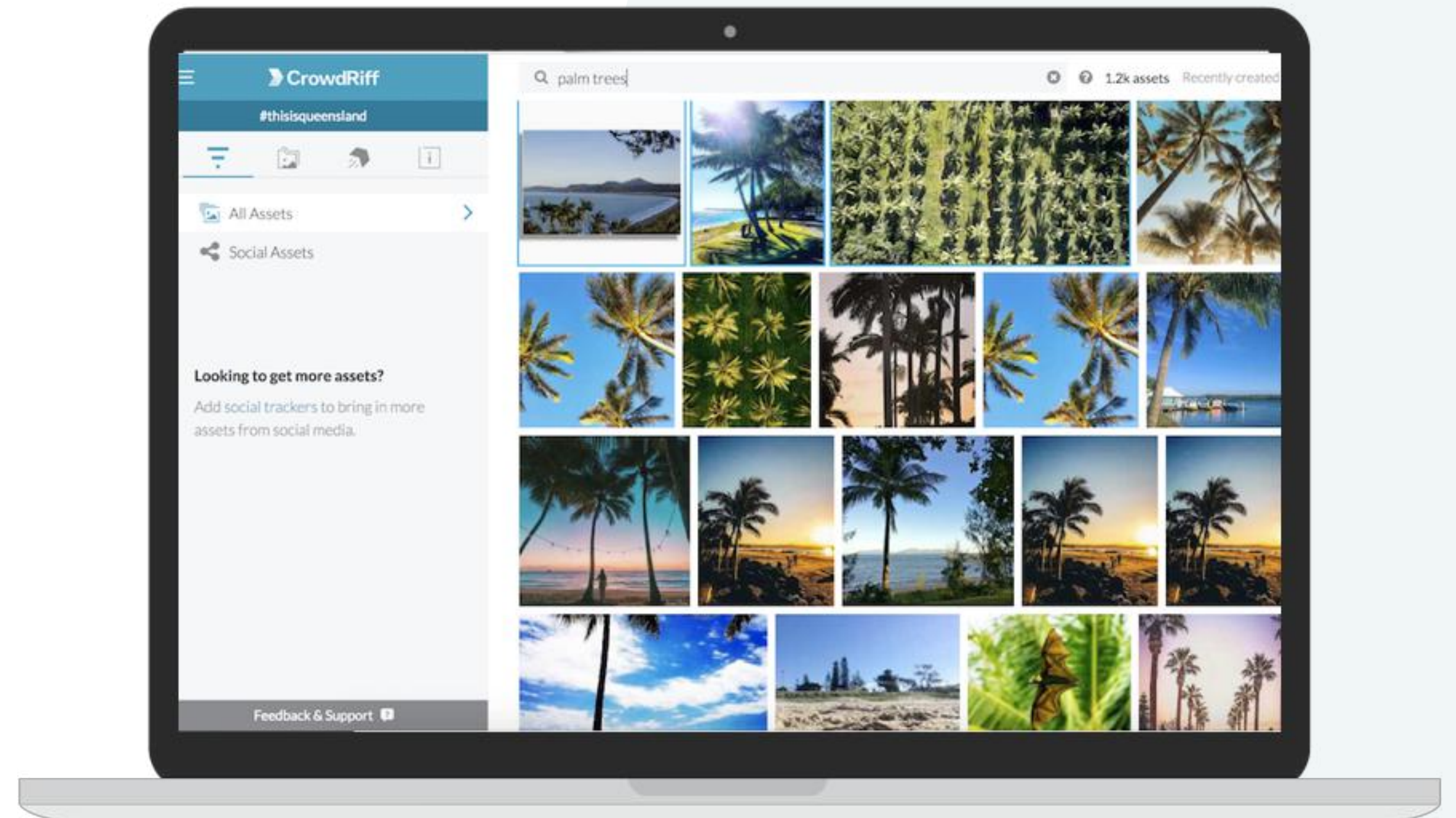
Find the right visual in seconds

CrowdRiff's search recognizes word stems (hike = hiking, hiked, hikes) and multiple languages, so you always find the content you're looking for, even if it's not exactly what you typed.



Get as specific as you need with flexible search parameters

Get granular with your searches by specifying format, types, and even dates created to find the exact image you need for any use case.



Self-optimizing website galleries

Responsive and interactive galleries make it easy to captivate and excite travelers with fresh website imagery.



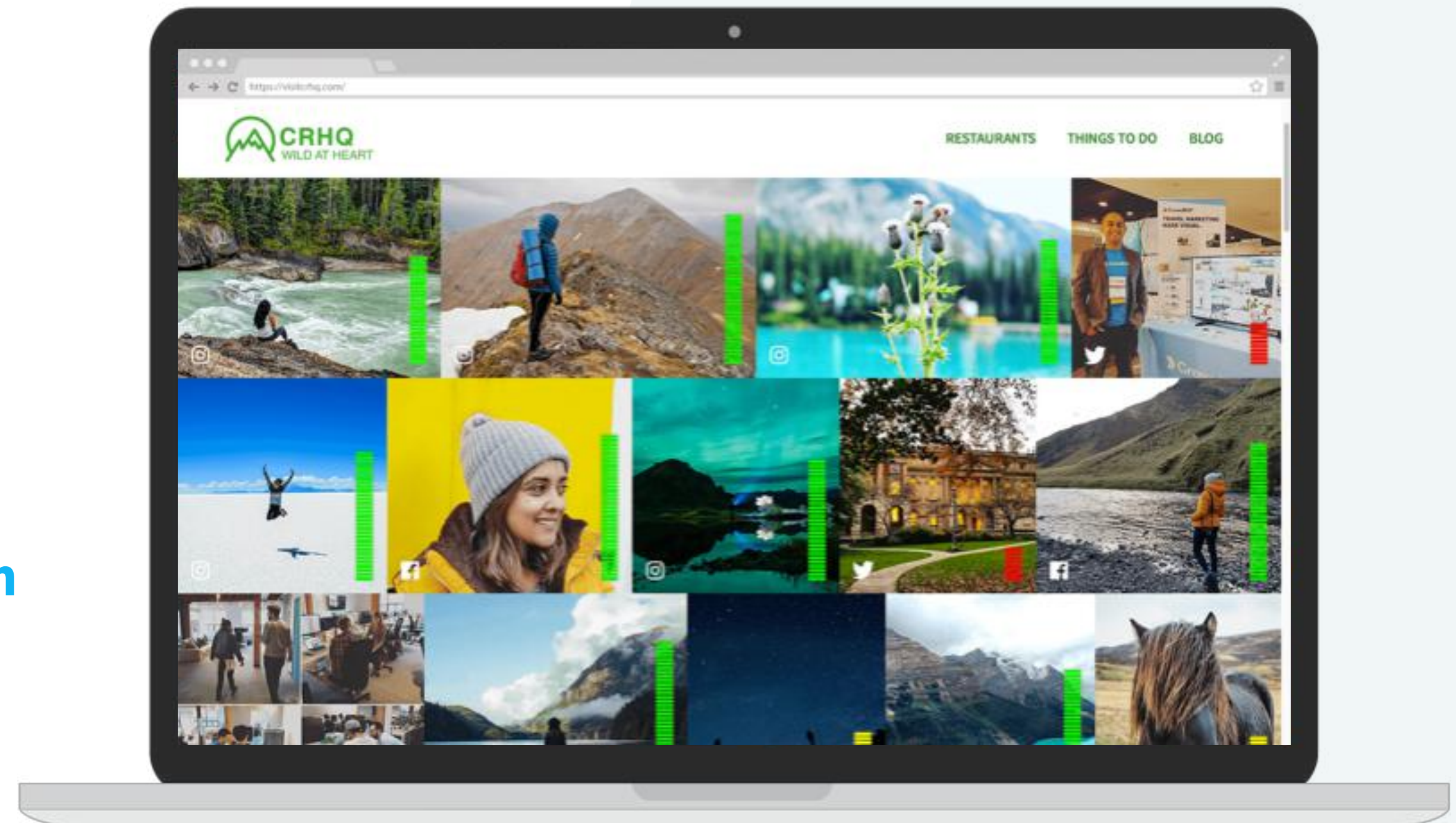
Display your most engaging visuals

CrowdRiff's self-optimizing galleries use machine learning to track which visuals visitors engage with, swapping out your lower performing images with higher performers.



Access insights from our experience in tourism

CrowdRiff has processed over 500 million travel and tourism visuals, learning which images resonate with website visitors. We use these insights to recommend visuals that are likely to resonate with your audience and align with your brand.





“Giving these real images of people having fun, I mean the numbers speak for themselves. In both [tests] we saw nothing but positive results from the CrowdRiff content on the page.”

Patrick Lennon,
Director of Marketing
Visit Fairfax



Over 500 tourism & travel brands use CrowdRiff to incorporate beautiful imagery on their website, and see results like:

 **20%**

Click-through to
tourism partners

 **30%**

Reduction in
bounce rate

 **4x**

Increase
time on site

Discover and deliver the visuals that influence today's travelers

Over 500 organizations use CrowdRiff's visual content marketing platform to keep their websites engaging, useful, and relevant to the modern traveler.

CrowdRiff enables travel brands to discover and deliver top-performing visuals to any marketing channel — from websites to ads, social media and beyond.

We'd love to help bring your website to life. Get a personalized walkthrough today, and see why CrowdRiff is a must-have tool for tourism brands of all sizes.

[Get a product tour](#)

