



**California Outdoor**  
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

**Cultural Tourism,  
A part of the Experience  
Based Economy**

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# Cultural Tourism, A part of the Experience Based Economy

By Debbie Sipe



## Your Customers Want to Bring Home Memories

Wikipedia's definition: "Cultural tourism (or culture tourism) is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do.



Golden Gate Japanese Tea Garden

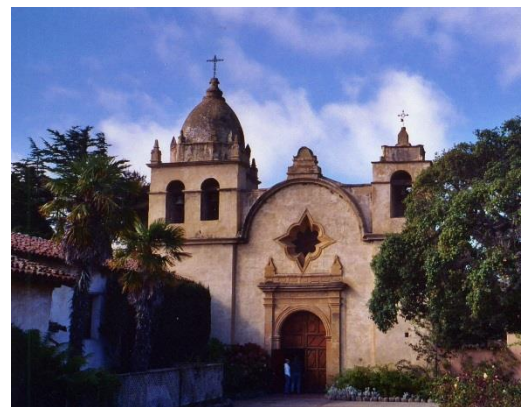
Cultural tourism has been defined as the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs."

An obvious example of cultural tourism can be found in Washington DC. It would focus around the making and history of the United States and include such attractions as the Washington Memorial, the Capitol Building, the

Lincoln Memorial, the Smithsonian museums, the National Archives, etc. etc.

Other examples closer to home can be found in Coloma, California, the where gold was discovered in 1848 or in Hollywood/Burbank where the birth of the film industry is a featured treasure of the area. No matter where you live in California you can market to the segment of RV travelers looking for cultural experiences:

- San Francisco with its maritime heritage
- California Missions
- Discovery of gold
- Monterey with Cannery Row and Fisherman's wharf
- Route 66
- Arts focus (museums, theater, music)
- "Rat Pack" influence on California's Desert Resorts
- Wine Industry growth & development
- Native American cultures throughout California
- History & Growth of the Logging Industry



Carmel Mission

This is just the short list. Here are some guidelines to review and evaluate which local attractions you want to incorporate into your marketing or packaging. Remember back to the article on Experienced Based Economy, today's customers are looking for memories and unique experiences.

What is unique and authentic to your town and region? Look for links between themes, historical periods and resources to find the more interesting stories to share and attractions to visit. You may even want to think outside your region a bit – connect attractions and destinations into scenic byways or music or literary trails.

Consider the following when reviewing your options:

- level of authenticity
- uniqueness
- level of quality
- unusual/intriguing
- educational
- entertaining
- fun/adventuresome and exciting
- thematic ties (by subject or timeframe)
- logistical ties (attractions that are physically close together)
- name recognition (famous individual, place, structure, etc.)
- ties to an annual event (festival, crop, migration, seasonal attraction, etc.)



California Surf Museum



Fort Ross

Creating unique experiences and packaging them into “easy to choose from” options will attract the cultural tourism customer. Don't miss the opportunity to cater to this niche market with larger budgets that are willing to pay for these experiences!

### California Culture and Heritage Resources:

California Travel & Tourism Commission (CTTC): [www.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.visitcalifornia.com) and [www.industry.visitcalifornia.com](http://www.industry.visitcalifornia.com)

Central Coast Tourism Association: [www.centralcoast-tourism.com](http://www.centralcoast-tourism.com)

Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association: [www.shastacascade.com](http://www.shastacascade.com)

Gold Country Association: [www.calgold.org](http://www.calgold.org)

High Sierra Visitor Council: <https://californiahighsierra.com>

Central Valley Tourism Association: [www.visitcentralvalley.com](http://www.visitcentralvalley.com)

Inland Empire Tourism Council: <http://www.ieshineon.com/>

North Coast Tourism Council: <https://northcoastca.com/>

Desert Region Visitors Association: [www.californiadeserts.org](http://www.californiadeserts.org)

## **What is the Experience Based Economy?**

James Gilmore and Joseph Pine II explain the science of the Experience Based Economy. They argue that businesses must orchestrate memorable events for their customers, and that memory itself becomes the product - the "experience". More advanced experience businesses can begin charging for the value of the "transformation" that an experience offers. As goods and services become commoditized, the customer experiences that companies create will matter most.

The basics of The Experience Economy can be found on [Wikipedia](#). A summary of Gilmore & Pine's concept was published in the Harvard Business Review. [Click here to read](#). Additionally, videos are available on [YouTube](#). Want even more detail? You can purchase their book [online](#) or at your local book store.



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