EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

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GETTING STARTED

At ArrivalGuides, we firmly believe in the power of content. To help create excellent, high-value content, we have put together a set of guidelines and useful tips to help get you started on the journey to creating the perfect destination guide.

You will become familiar with ways of appealing to the largest possible number of potential travelers by selecting the right information, POIs (Points of Interest) and images to be featured on your guide.

We will go over some of the common questions and obstacles new editors face, and lead you by example. This handbook contains advice on writing style, tone of voice, the dos and don'ts of grammar and punctuation, effective SEO recommendations, and more.

Welcome on board, and let's get started!

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OUR GOAL

The purpose of each one of our 630+ ArrivalGuides is to **motivate** and **inform** visitors in a concise yet comprehensive manner, providing a balanced mix of inspiration and practical tips to help make our readers' travels smooth, fun, and memorable.

We treat each destination with care and attention, and set out to showcase the world's cities, islands, regions and countries at their finest, selecting the best attractions (both well-established and lesser known), eateries, and entertainment hot spots.

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OUR VOICE

- **Knowledgeable and non-patronizing**. We treat readers with respect and trust their judgement. Our goal is to inform about existing options rather than convince of one's superiority over another.

- **Friendly and approachable**. We speak to travelers in a warm, open-minded way. We make them feel comfortable with the information we select.

- **Concise**. We focus on what is most important, trimming texts to contain only the essentials, leaving room for further in-depth research and directing readers to where they can do so (e.g. the official website of an establishment).

- **Inclusive.** We are aware of our volume limitations, but aim to represent points of interest and establishments appealing to a diverse audience of different walks of life, ages, social status and cultural background.

- **Respectful.** We do not over explain, repeat ourselves, or demand that readers take our word as gospel. We let readers know if something stood out to or especially impressed us, but don't expect that to define their choices.

- **Modern.** We stay up-to-date with current trends and expand our scope to include information that interests world travelers of today.

- **Clear.** We avoid heavy-handed, overly formal structures, and aren't afraid of contractions or giving up flowery language in favor of clarity.

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WHAT WE DO

✓

- Talk specifics
- Focus on positives
- Highlight facts
- Supply information
- Write concisely
- Use inspiring visuals
- Educate and motivate

WHAT WE AVOID

✗

- Filler content & placeholders
- Painting places in poor light
- Unverifiable information
- Subjective opinion
- Dull, heavily edited, or black and white images
- Inconsistency

USER PRESONA

Our audience spans all age groups (from under 18 to 65+) and multiple world countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, Australia & Oceania. Although our scope is broad, the primary consumer persona ArrivalGuides has identified is a traveler:

- ❑ Aged **late twenties to early thirties**
- ❑ Often in the **planning and anticipation stages** of a trip
- ❑ Based in **Europe** (primarily Sweden, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Denmark and Belgium), the **United States**, or **Australia**
- ❑ With a particular interest in a destination's **nightlife** scene and **practical travel advice**
- ❑ Linked to Air Travel and Hotel & Accommodation market segments

This <u>does not</u> mean that all content we produce is directed exclusively at the persona above, although we certainly write and make editorial decisions with them in mind.

Our goal is to foster our relationship and communicate better with our primary audience, while also having something to offer all of our readers, from solo travelers to groups of friends, families, and couples of all ages and various backgrounds.

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IMAGERY GUIDELINES

Imagery often has the decisive power to sway readers. This is precisely what makes image selection so critical when creating or updating an ArrivalGuide, so we put a lot of thought into which images we pick to represent a destination.

As with all forms of content, our goal with images is to **inform** & **inspire**.

IMPORTANT: When using images, it is of essence to have the right to do so. This means either having written permission of the author to use the image, owning it oneself, or having procured it from a source that has released it under the an appropriate license (free for commercial use: CC, Public Domain, and similar license types).

However, **just because an image itself has been cleared for commercial use, doesn't mean its subject matter has been** as well. We are extremely mindful of the types of images we use and sources we work with, and train all new editors into carefully following copyright guidelines before starting to furnish any ArrivalGuide with images.

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We **avoid** images of:

- ❑ Brand names & logos (Disney, McDonald's signs in the background of street shots, Starbucks cups, names of specific boutique in a shopping center, and similar)
- ❑ Close-up shots of people (unless they are hired models, or you possess the depicted individuals' written consent)
- ❑ Images of historic figures and celebrities (Albert Einstein, Elvis Presley, and many others)
- ❑ Flags & currencies
- ❑ Indoor areas of museums, galleries, restaurants, or any private businesses, especially artwork and exhibits
- ❑ Statues (may require copyright release by owner)
- ❑ Some major events & sporting team branding (the Olympic Games logo or any related imagery)
- ❑ Football (soccer), rugby, and volley balls
- ❑ Trophies & awards
- ❑ Theme parks & Amusement parks (unless permission to use such images is obtained)
- ❑ Vehicles (cars, planes, etc. – if they are the main focus of the image)
- ❑ Some major landmarks (Images of the Eiffel Tower *at night* aren't cleared for commercial use, for example. Neither are photos of the Las Vegas Strip and casino grounds, including world-famous attractions located on these grounds.)

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POI & IMAGERY EXAMPLES

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TocaMadera

If TocaMadera's menu can't excite you, few things can: from tantalizing pequeños of tamales, empanadas and taquitos, to the raw bar featuring several exciting varieties of ceviche and appetizing mains (try the hot stone with a choice of tofu, chicken, grass-fed beef or Japanese wagyu, plus scrumptious sides). The cuisine is curated by chef Suárez, a pioneer of the Cuban New Food scene that aims to incorporate local tradition into cutting-edge culinary endeavor.

Useful Information

Address: Calle 38 e/1ra y 3ra, Miramar, Playa, La Habana

Phone: +53 5 2812144

Website: www.tocamadera.com

Gendesign/Shutterstock.com

Gastrobar

Gastrobar is all the rage in savvy circles, an establishment both upscale in quality and casual in demeanour, with an extensive menu of international specialities and an inviting atmosphere with no pretence. Thursdays and Fridays see deliveries of fresh oysters.

Useful Information

Address: Alexandru Bernardazzi 66, Chisinau

Phone: +373 689 06 545

rocharibeiro/Shutterstock.com

Gok-Oguz

The charming, highly stylised Gok-Oguz specialises in Gagauzian cuisine, a unique blend of Russian, Romanian and Turkic flavours customary in Moldova's south. Lamb is the speciality that comes in many forms, but the menu extends to include an abundance of further options.

Useful Information

Address: Calea Orheiului 19/A, Chisinau

Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm

Phone: +373 22 468 852

Website: www.gok-oguz.md

bbernard/Shutterstock.com

Sky Bar

This flashy, upscale bar and club is unique for its rooftop setting that affords panoramic views of Chisinau. Come here if you have cash to spare, and if a quintessentially Eastern European clubbing experience complete with go go dancers and flashing neon lights is your idea of fun.

Useful Information

Address: Albisoara 4, Chisinau

Email: chisinau.skybar@gmail.com

Phone: +373 767 39 739

Facebook: Visit profile »

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IMAGE BOARD

STYLE GUIDELINES

One will often find conflicting guidelines when it comes to language style, including rules for punctuation, capitalization, etc. **Consistency is key**: whichever way of, say, listing opening hours makes most sense, it has to be adhered to throughout the whole guide. In addition, below are a few of our best practices:

PUNCTUATION

- ❑ In American English, periods and **commas** go inside quotation marks. In British English and other Englishes, regional variation is possible.
- ❑ Commas aren't used before a conjunction in a simple sentence ("The Farmers' Markets in Spain offer fruit, vegetables and handicrafts.")
- ❑ Commas aren't used for any series that includes elements containing the conjunctions "and" or "or" ("A trip to the local Farmers' Market includes shopping for groceries, socializing with locals, and having an overall good time.")
- ❑ For **numbers**, thousands are separated with commas (80,000 or 1,000,000)

ABBREVIATION

- ❑ **Acronyms** are pluralized like regular nouns (for example, one DJ – multiple DJs), unless there are periods between the letters of the acronym (one M.R.I. – multiple M.R.I.'s) OR if the acronym only contains 1 letter ("The student only received A's and B's.").
- ❑ "Saint" is abbreviated before a city or street name (St. Petersburg, St. John Street, etc.)

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- ❑ **Quotation marks** are used with titles of books, poems, plays, films, speeches, songs, works of art, subjects of lectures and magazine articles ("A First-Timer's Guide to Slovenia: Ljubljana, Bled and Beyond", "The Great Gatsby")

- ❑ When writing about **decades**, we use the following format: the 50s, 60s, 70s, etc. (NOT 70's or '70s)

- ❑ Mind the **dash**! There is a difference between the en dash (–), em dash (—) and a regular hyphen (-). Hyphens are used for word compounds ("eye-opener," "check-in"); medium-length en dashes (–) are used to denote lengths of time, scores (0–4, as in sporting games) and to denote conflict ("years 2010–2018," "opening hours 8am–9pm," "East–West debate,"); the longest of the three, em dashes (—) are used in virtually all other cases in place of commas, parentheses or colons. The en dash with spaces on either side is equivalent to the em dash.

CAPITALIZATION

We DO capitalize:

- **Specific regions** (for example, Western District, Southern Corsica, etc.) but leave points of the compass lower-case (northern, southern, east, west – unless it refers to the broad reference of the East vs the West)
- **Holidays and historic events** (Thanksgiving Day Parade, the Super Bowl, Prohibition era, etc.)
- **Acronyms** (FYI, ASAP, etc.)

We DO NOT capitalize:

- General names of foods, dishes, cocktails, and other edibles, unless they have a trademarked name. For example, some restaurants may have dishes unique to only them ("Big Mac" vs "hamburger"), or specialties with a specific, unique name ("Suzy's Cream Cheese Tart" vs "strawberry cheesecake").
- Music genres (pop, rock, rock & roll/rock 'n' roll), unless they contain a reference to a geographic region or age ("Latin music," "Renaissance music," etc.)
- Names of seasons, unless they are used in a proper name (Summer Olympics)
- For emphasis (for example, "it was an AMAZING restaurant" is a no-go)
- In cases like "Swiss cheese," "French fries," "Irish coffee," "Brussels sprouts," "Manhattan," we capitalize the word referring to the country or city, and leave the generic word in lower case.

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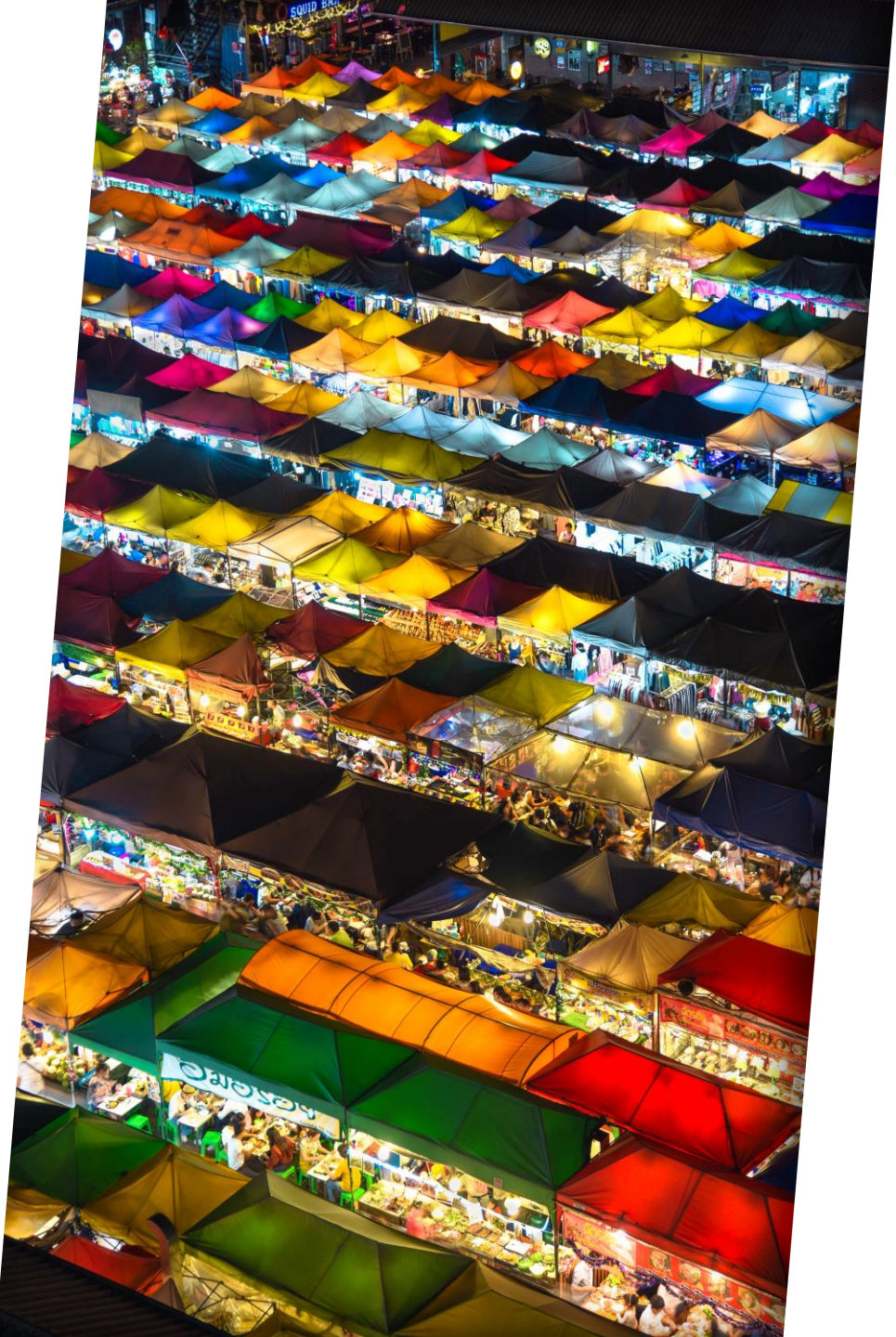
POI SELECTION

❏ We analyze several reputable sources and carefully consider our options before beginning to add POIs and create sections. If the destination is a seaside or resort city, we might add a separate section for "Beaches"; if there is only 1 public beach, it might fit better in "Do & See." Large cities may warrant adding dedicated POIs for specific neighborhoods or essential day trips.

❏ POIs in each section are selected to appeal to a very broad audience, of varying ages and interests. The reader might be an older man travelling with family, a business woman on a short trip, or a couple on a getaway vacation. While our main demographic lies between the ages of 25 and 34, users of different tastes read our guides and should be able to find them suited to some of their interests.

❏ We avoid omnipresent international chains. We want to give our readers insight into what makes this particular destination stand out, rather than direct them to the same places they can find in their hometown.

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❑ When selecting POIs, we make sure to have a good balance. For example, a good "Dining" section would contain:

▪ exceptional restaurants recommended by reputable dining guides
▪ restaurants that serve local specialties
▪ establishments that specialize in world cuisines (such as Indian, Mexican, Japanese, etc.) or restaurants with a unique thematic focus

❑ We make sure to include options appealing to different traveler categories across all sections, from "Do & See" (museums, amusement parks, natural attractions, etc.) to "Bars & Nightlife" (wine bars, nightclubs, hip new openings, performance venues, etc.).

❑ We focus on **affordable**, **quality** places. We try and avoid adding more than 1 or max. 2 exclusive fine dining establishments or very expensive restaurants, and only add them if we feel it is essential for the destination and is an attraction in itself (ground-breaking cooks, Michelin-star awardees, etc.). We avoid restaurants that require booking many days or months in advance.

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WRITING & TONE

Years of experience have taught us what works and what doesn't when it comes to creating an appealing, informative ArrivalGuide. We are happy to share the things we learned along the way to becoming the world's leading provider of destination content.

❑ We are **matter of fact** and **informative**. We avoid describing the "friendly service" or "extensive menu", focusing rather on which dishes exactly are on offer, what time is the happy hour, what looks to us like a "selling point" for the establishment. We mention if the place has especially good breakfast or lunch offers, or set dinner menus worth having. Fewer adjectives, more nouns.

❑ The texts we write are not purely promotional content. We **focus on the positives**, but aim to be as objective and matter-of-fact as possible.

❑ We avoid exclamation marks or rhetorical questions and use a **calm tone** in our writing.

❑ For section introductions, we **avoid generic text** applicable to any given destination.

❑ We **avoid ellipses** and pace the text in such a way that they are not needed.

❑ In commercial writing, transitional words and phrases (however, moreover, in addition, etc.) are best kept to a minimum. While they work great for a vast scope of texts, they tend to serve as fillers and empty placeholders in commercial content.

- ❑ We are **concise**. It is better to have a one-sentence paragraph that contains everything we want to say than to spread it out over three sentences unnecessarily.
- ❑ We scrutinize each sentence. Should it be there? Is it conveying any information? Elaborating on a previous idea? Or is it just filler?
- ❑ We are **consistent** with British vs. American English. We use British English for most guides, except for North and South American destinations. We use the British or American spellchecking tool while working with a guide, to help keep spelling consistent.
- ❑ Refrain from using subjective superlatives that cannot be proven ("the best place in town," etc.).
- ❑ We enter the name of the POI + name of destination in the Geolocation search field, and click on the correct suggestion. We double-check that the address written under "Address" and the location of the POI on the map are the same (especially if the place has several branches across the city). We add information on further branches in the "More Information" field whenever necessary.
- ❑ We always finish with **Batch Editing** – a tool in AGDA that helps optimize the editing process for addresses, working hours, etc. We make sure all contact details are indicated consistently across the entire guide.
- ❑ For working hours, we either use a 24 – hour system (8.00 – 17.00) or am/pm (8am-5pm, which is most common in America), but stick to a single one throughout the whole guide.

SEO GUIDELINES

Although our content reaches travelers in many ways, from downloadable PDF guides to mobile apps and web widgets, a significant chunk of traffic still comes from **organic search**. To strengthen our organic traffic even further and help our guides reach the largest possible number of travelers, we like to stay up-to-date with the latest SEO trends for Google and other search engines.

Here are a few best on-page SEO practices for boosting ArrivalGuides' visibility:

❑ We are informative and descriptive. We focus on specifics whenever possible (e.g. particular dishes or drinks served at the restaurant, bands that have played at this annual event in the past, types of art showcased at this gallery, etc.).

❑ Keywords matter. For a travel guide, the primary target keyword will most likely be the name of the particular destination, but using related words and word combinations throughout can help boost visibility even further. In many cases, this will happen automatically, but it's a good idea to use the target keyword in the first sentence of the page, somewhere in the last two, and roughly every 200th word.

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❑ In order for search engine crawlers to pick up our guide pages more effectively, they will need as much information as possible. To help them pick our page as the one that best matches search queries, **we name each image file with 4-6 descriptive words**, including the destination name wherever appropriate. We focus on nouns over verbs or adjectives:

Girl smiling by Eiffel Tower, Paris, France

❑ With practices above in mind, we hold up the current consensus among SEO experts: what matters most is **quality, in-depth content** that keeps readers on our page for the longest period (dwell time) possible. Artificial spamming with keywords can potentially do more harm than good, and have zero tolerance for "black hat" SEO techniques.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

We follow a **multi-step process** in order to make sure all content published on our website complies with editorial guidelines and quality standards.

1. Introduction to ArrivalGuides & AGDA training

All editors working in our proprietary CMS (AGDA) receive a comprehensive introduction and usage training, with time put aside for Q&A. During the training, editors are instructed on best practices, and given tips and insights to help them make better decisions with regard to selecting content and visuals. All editors also receive personal log in information, so all actions taken in the CMS can be traced back to each editor if needed.

2. Structure

During this stage, a guide's selection of sections comes under scrutiny. If there are too many sections or POIs, this may impede comprehension, and turn away potential readers. Suggestions are made pre- and post-production if necessary.

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3. Proofreading

All texts produced in-house are proof-read and brought up-to-standard by a supervising editor prior to publication. The service is also available to destination partners going live with their ArrivalGuide for the first time, as well as those looking to boost quality if their content.

4. Visuals: inspiration, localization, copyright

We take copyright regulations very seriously. All images uploaded to our platform are required to have corresponding copyright information, and will fail to upload if the relevant field is left blank. Our teams and official destination partners obtain written permission from the image owner and ensure that no off-limits objects or subjects feature on any photo (these are detailed under "Images" section of this editorial guide).

Images are scrutinized on subject matter and value prior to publication. The image should inspire & inform, and never mislead. Images are to be selected with sensitivity to cultural context (e.g. oriental bazaars in the Middle East as opposed to European farmers' markets, diverse ethnicities with consideration to geographic/cultural context, etc.).

All relevant fields must be filled out in order for an ArrivalGuide to be cleared for QA stages to follow.

5. Final review

There are certain elements that go into the creation of each guide, such as adding essential keywords, selecting relevant themes/categories ("Lazy beach days", "Be active", "With your kids," etc.), and linking all airports closest to the destination to the guide via internationally recognized IATA codes. All these are put in place prior to publication.

6. Post-publication

Once the destination guide is live, we go through it one final time. If the final product diverges from the original idea, some alterations can be made at this stage as needed.

7. Regular updates

We value fresh, up-to-date content as much as our readers, and aim to update each destination guide once a year. In some cases, we prioritize certain guides for extra updates in-between. DMOs in charge of the ArrivalGuide for their destination keep in close contact with our Customer Success team, and are encouraged to update and refresh their guides as frequently as possible.

CASE STUDY №1 – Los Indios Bravos

Boracay, The Philippines

BEFORE

Los Indios Bravos Boracay

At Los Indios Bravos you will find a special atmosphere. You can eat a meal or just have a beer with your friends. You will find here handcrafted beers on tap paired with classic pub food from all over the world.

Address: Road 1-A, Malay, Aklan

Opening hours: 10am-12am

Phone: +63 36 288 2803

Internet: www.indiosbravosboracay.com

Email: indiosbravosboracay@gmail.com

AFTER

Remove abstract clichés and trim filler content

Avoid vague word combinations like "special atmosphere," and disposable sentences like "You can eat a meal or just have a beer with your friends."

Use eye-catching photos

A good photo is 80% of your success. Pick an image that represents the establishment (for example, a dish off the menu), is bright and appealing.

Be specific

Name cuisines served/dishes off the establishment's menu, include specifics like happy hour times, nights that feature live music, special offers, etc.

Foodio/Shutterstock.com

Los Indios Bravos Boracay

At Los Indios Bravos, craft beers on tap are paired with classic pub food from all over the world. The eclectic menu includes everything from oysters to steak to Indian dishes to traditional British pub pies. For dessert, try the deep-fried Mars bar or apple pie.

Useful Information

Address: Bulabog Beach, Boracay

Email: indiosbravosboracay@gmail.com

Opening hours: 10 am-12 am

Phone: +63 36 288 2803

Website: www.indiosbravosboracay.com

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CASE STUDY №2 – Kikar Kedumim

Tel Aviv, Israel

BEFORE

Kikar Kedumim

If you are up for buying some souvenirs or just going for a lovely romantic walk, Kikas Kedumim is the right area for you! Just swing by this area and take a stroll on it's enchanting streets and look at all the lovely historical churches.

Photo: Jorge Láscar (image cropped)

Address: Kikar Kedumim, Tel Aviv

AFTER

Identify what's important

What is it about the POI that you want to highlight most – its historic and urban significance, shopping options or romance factor? Feel free to mention all of those, but be mindful of the order.

Use inspiring imagery

A good photo is 80% of your success. Pick an image that is bright and appealing.

Avoid exclamations

Use a calm tone in your writing. The primary goal of a travel guide is to inform, not persuade. Give readers information they need and

volkova natalia/Shutterstock.com

Kikar Kedumim

The heart of Old Jaffa, Kikar Kedumim is an ancient central square and an essential stop for anyone touring the city. With the city port on one side and Old Jaffa streets on the other, Kikar Kedumim is the perfect picture point for a Tel Aviv city tour. Do not miss its centerpiece fountain, as well as souvenir shops and eateries in the area.

Useful Information

Address: Kikar Kedumim, Tel Aviv

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