NEWS LESSON

Is Instagram Choosing Our Holidays?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Where do your holiday ideas usually come from?
2. Can a photograph tell you whether you would enjoy a place?
3. Have you ever arrived somewhere that looked different from its pictures?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**desirable**	☐	A	choosing only some things and leaving others out
2	**genuinely**	☐	B	in a real way, not pretending
3	**commissioned**	☐	C	made up, not real
4	**respondents**	☐	D	something you want to have or visit
5	**selective**	☐	E	asked and paid someone to do a piece of work
6	**outrank**	☐	F	very unusual and impressive
7	**extraordinary**	☐	G	to be more important than something else
8	**invented**	☐	H	people who answer a set of questions

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A beautiful image can send you across the world. It can also send several thousand other people to the same railing.

1 The water is impossibly blue. A table for two sits on an empty terrace. Somebody turns towards the camera with a village and a mountain behind them. You save it. One day, you think.

2 When that imagined traveller finally arrives, the view is exactly as promised. So is the queue of thirty people waiting for their turn in front of it.

3 That scene is invented, but it describes something most travellers now recognise. Social media can make a place feel desirable long before we know anything about it. A few seconds of video can introduce a beach, a night train or a café on the other side of the world, and for someone at home on a grey Tuesday, the possibility of being somewhere else is genuinely powerful.

4 The influence does not stop once the flight is booked. In a survey commissioned by the travel company TUI Musement, 39% of respondents said they had visited a tourist site mainly to take a photo or record a video. That survey covered travellers in Spain, Italy and the UK, and it cannot explain why any individual travels, but the behaviour is familiar: at some point the picture became part of the plan.

5 The trouble is that photographs are selective by nature. A frame may leave out a car park, a crowd or the ninety minutes somebody spent waiting for the light. That is not dishonesty. Every photographer chooses what to include. It becomes a problem only when we see nothing but the best moments and then arrive expecting a private experience in a very public place.

6 For the people who live there, the attention cuts in several directions at once. A café that appears in a popular video may suddenly be serving visitors from countries its owner has never been to. The same week, a neighbour may spend twenty minutes getting down a street that used to take two. Residents are not one group with one opinion, and a busy summer is not the same problem for everybody in town.

7 Nor is photographing a holiday the opposite of enjoying it. Pictures hold on to things we would otherwise lose. The awkward moment arrives when getting the shot starts to outrank deciding what you actually want to do with the afternoon. Does everyone in the group want to wait for it? And the harder question underneath: would you still have come if there were nothing to post?

8 There is room for the famous view and the unplanned afternoon in the same week. A recommendation might take you somewhere extraordinary. So might a wrong turn. Perhaps the best thing to bring home is not evidence that you went to the right place, but an afternoon that belongs to you whether or not anyone else ever sees it.

Sources: ABTA, Holiday Habits 2026-27 report; TUI Musement, Travel in the age of scrolling. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Fewer than half of the travellers surveyed said they had visited a tourist site mainly to take a photo or video. T F NG
2. The writer says taking photographs of a holiday stops people enjoying it. T F NG
3. Most of the travellers in the survey were under thirty. T F NG
4. The text says a café can end up serving visitors from countries its owner has never been to. T F NG
5. The text says all residents agree that a busy summer is a problem. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

behaviour	capacity	dishonesty	evidence	influence	possibility	reputation	residents

1. Several _____ complained that the new viewpoint had made their quiet street impossible to walk along.
2. Cropping a photo to hide a crowd is not necessarily _____ ; most photographers simply choose the best part of the scene.
3. Photos are often shown to friends as _____ that a trip really happened.
4. The _____ of social media on where people choose to travel is hard to measure exactly.
5. Taking twenty photos of the same plate is quite normal _____ these days, and nobody finds it strange.
6. Booking the flight made the _____ of seeing the island feel real for the first time.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time we reached the viewpoint, the sun _____ already. (SET)
2. The street _____ so often that everyone recognises it. (PHOTOGRAPH)
3. If we _____ about the crowds, we would have chosen another beach. (KNOW)
4. You _____ to hurry; the viewpoint stays open until midnight. (NOT NEED)
5. If the crowds keep growing, the town _____ a limit on visitors. (INTRODUCE)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many verbs need a fixed preposition after them: object to, benefit from, rely on. Learn the verb and the preposition together.

against for from of on to with

1. Many locals object _____ crowds blocking their streets.
2. Small businesses often benefit _____ a sudden rise in visitors.
3. Residents protested _____ the closure of their local bakery to make room for a souvenir shop.
4. Travel writers are sometimes blamed _____ spoiling quiet villages.
5. Many visitors rely _____ their phones to find the way.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Would you still go somewhere if there were nothing to post about it?
2. How many photos is too many on a holiday, or is there no such number?
3. What do people who live in a popular place gain, and what do they lose?

9 Role-play: one famous beach or a quiet day

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the friend with the video

You saw a video of a beautiful beach and you saved it. You want to spend the whole day there and take photos. Explain why it matters to you, and listen to your friend's worries.

Student B · the friend who wants a quiet day

You've heard the beach will be packed. You'd prefer a slow lunch somewhere nobody told you about. Say what worries you, then suggest a plan you can both accept.

Useful phrases

I'd love to see that beach from the video.

It's going to be packed, though.

We don't have to take a hundred photos.

How about half a day there and half somewhere quiet?

That's fair, I'm happy to compromise.

What matters most to you on this trip?

Afterwards, tell the class: where did you decide to go, and how did you share the time?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 B · 3 E · 4 H · 5 A · 6 G · 7 F · 8 C

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 NG · 4 T · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 residents · 2 dishonesty · 3 evidence · 4 influence · 5 behaviour · 6 possibility

6 Verb forms

1 had set · 2 has been photographed · 3 had known · 4 don't need or do not need · 5 will introduce or is going to introduce

7 Language focus

1 to · 2 from · 3 against · 4 for · 5 on

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