

Quick Start Guide to
**TRAVEL
JOURNALING**
By Christine Elder

FABER-CASTELL
PITT artist pen



Welcome

Hi, I'm Christine. I love to travel and I bet you do too!

But you don't have to visit exotic lands to have a 'travel' journal. Anyplace you visit can qualify. You could even take a 'staycation,' visiting new sites in your own town and looking at them with fresh eyes. Visit a specialty tea house to sip chai and journal about your next adventure; take a hike along a favorite path to sketch wildflowers; tour a new exhibit at a museum and note your favorite items; or relax at a park's picnic table and write a poem inspired by your surroundings. All these are fodder for a travel journal. So let's dive in!



Why keep a journal?

There are many benefits to keeping a journal of your travels. Here are a few that I think are noteworthy:

- *Slowing down*—It's too easy to rush through a trip, feeling like you can never see or do enough.
- *Peaceful and meditative*— Since travel can be so hectic, it's a chance to 'be here now.'
- Gives you an activity to make *time pass more quickly*, as when stuck on a 10-hour flight or in a long line to enter a destination, or a never-ending wait for travel paperwork.
- Provides *better memories* than just a phone full of selfies, since the act of observing while you journal helps you remember a scene longer and more clearly. Even if your journal is lost, the scene you observed will burn brightly in your memory forever.
- Becomes a *personal souvenir*; a physical product you can hold and show to people, and even pass on to future generations. What a treat that would be, since so many of our family memories are stored on private or easily lost digital devices.
- It's a great way to *meet people*, and a fun, easy way for folks to strike up a conversation with you, which is especially welcome if you're traveling alone.
- If you are a travel blogger/writer, the daily practice of keeping a travel journal helps to *organize and collect* your impressions of a place and the things you wish to review—the destinations, hotels, restaurants, and such.

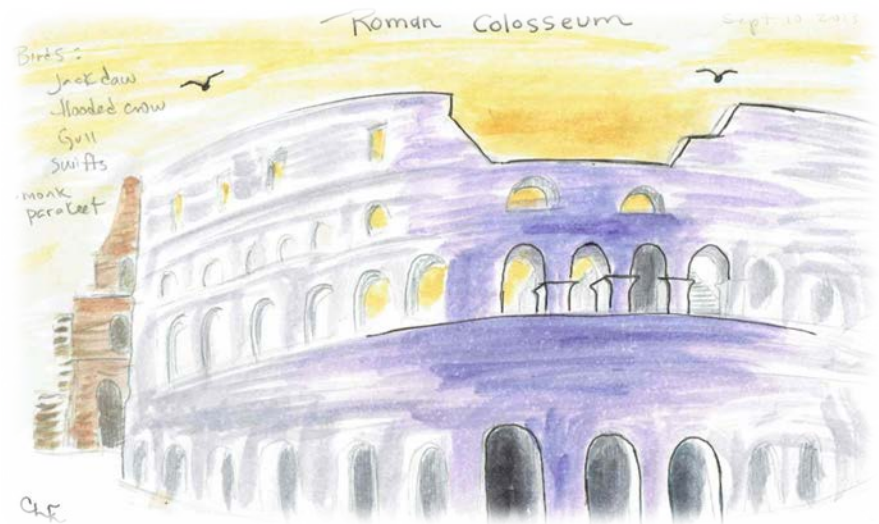


Ideas for what to include in your travel journal

Journals have three basic types of content; sketches, words and mementos.

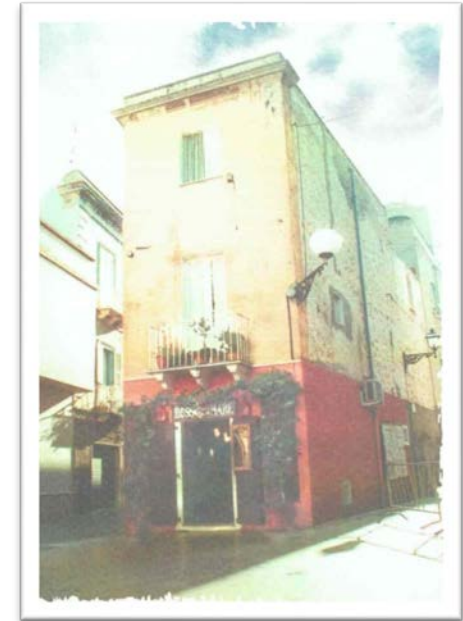
Sketches may include:

- People; like street performers, musicians in a subway, kids on a merry-go-round, old men gossiping on a bench, or couples flirting at a café.
- Buildings; like historic & prehistoric sites, interesting architectural features like doors, windows and facades.
- Still life; like a bouquet in your hotel, fruits in an open air market, or a beautiful dessert.
- Plants & animals; like a kitten curled up in a bookstore's window, a gecko on your room's wall, orchids on a tropical forest trail, or a parrot on a man's shoulder.
- Hand-drawn maps of where you've been in a city.
- Abstract zentangles, cartoons, patterns, symbols and random doodles to decorate your pages.



Words may include:

- Travel info—your itinerary, flight info and names of people you meet.
- Prose—creative writing about the sights, sounds, smells, and conversations you overhear. No detail is too small to include; all will help bring back more vivid memories of your trip.
- Poetry and inspiring quotes—yours or those of others you come across.
- Words and phrases you're learning in the language of the area, mai oui!
- Writing prompts you to get started.
- Notes scribbled from people you meet along the way (sort of like your high school yearbook!)
- Hint: you might want to have some examples of cool fonts you like that you could use as inspiration—perhaps a bold heading font, a decorative calligraphy font and a practical body font.



Mementos may include:

- Just about anything that can be flattened between the sheets of your journal!
- Ticket stubs for planes, trains, ferries, and the metro.
- Entrance tickets to museums, galleries, movies, and theatre productions.
- Stickers, postcards, business cards, decorative papers and fabrics.

- Brochures, photographs, magazine and newspaper clippings, posters and playbills.
- Foreign coins and paper bills (their variety and beauty are astounding).
- City and regional maps, with routes marked and notes on the sights you've seen.
- Rubbings of leaves, coins and architectural features and other interesting textures. You'll need a soft sketching pencil and thin paper in order to make the best rubbings.
- Postage stamps (visit the local post offices to pick up a few).
- Postcards (you could even send yourself one from each destination and write a note to yourself about your memories). Add them to your journal once you return home.
- Decorative food wrappers, such as those from candy, chips and chocolates.
- Pressed flowers and leaves. Hint: you might want to press them somewhere else first so their moisture doesn't wrinkle and discolor your journal pages. Bird feathers make lovely additions as well.
- Photographs you've taken (printed out once you're home, and you'll want to leave some room in your journal for these).
- Samples of colorful beach sand—like pink, white and black, kept in little envelopes or glued onto your pages.
- Menus, napkins, drink coasters, wine bottle labels, fortunes from fortune cookies, matchbooks and restaurant receipts, all to remember the local delicacies you tasted.



Inspiring places to journal while traveling

Just about anywhere can serve as an inspiring place to journal while you're on the road; just use your imagination!

Here are a few ideas to get you going:

- When you're traveling between destinations, like on a long flight or train ride or waiting in a long line.
- Public places:
 - A local farmer's market, an outdoor theatre performance, or a local bookstore.
 - Art museums —there's a long tradition of artists learning about techniques and composition by sketching the collections in a museum.
 - Cafés—for people watching or doing a still life of the delicious meal on your plate.
 - Historic and prehistoric ruins—castles, catacombs, amphitheaters, fortresses, and famous cemeteries.
- Nature: parks, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, arboretums, and beaches.
- Activities: journal about your tour of a winery, or an adventure while sailing, zip-lining, SCUBA diving, horseback riding, spelunking, skydiving....and the list goes on!



Suggestions for organizing your travel journal

There are as many ways to organize your journal as there are journals, but here are a few ideas that help me.

- Include your contact information (in case your journal gets misplaced) with your full name, phone, email and physical address (including country!)
- Include a copy of your travel documents for reference—passport numbers, flight times, your itinerary, contact info for your hotels and scheduled activities, as well as the numbers of friends in the cities you'll visit and the names and addresses of friends back home, so that you can send them a postcard (such a special treat nowadays!). You may think that having this info on your phone or tablet is enough, but it's always a good idea to have backups of this vital information. You'll be thankful in the event that your digital gear gets lost, stolen or damaged!
- Save room in the front of your travel journal for a table of contents, and number your pages for easy reference.
- I often leave the facing pages blank so that I can add photos and other memorabilia once I am home.
- Perhaps include some envelopes, paper bags or folders to keep small items organized.
- Lastly, embellish your cover—here's where you can get really creative, gluing on multiple layers of maps, fabric, or ribbon, as well as some of your favorite items that aren't flat enough to go inside the journal, like coins and buttons.



Recommended supplies for journaling

All you really need is something to write *with* and *in*!

At a minimum you'll want a pencil, pen and some sort of a booklet. I suggest a high-quality, hard-covered, spiral-bound notebook that will hold up to the rigors of travel. Visit my [website](#) to see my detailed post describing all my favorite art supplies for sketching in the field; it also includes two Periscope videos showing some basic techniques for using each tool.

You might also enjoy having: a glue stick, decorative tape (like washi tape), and a pair of small scissors. Craft stores provide endless inspiration for fancying up your journal with their wide array of colorful supplies.



Oh, the places you'll go!

Well, that's all I have for you now on the subject of travel journaling. I hope this guide has been helpful and will inspire you to journal on your next trip around your city or around the world! Ciao, adios, and au revoir!

About the Author



I feel so lucky to be able to combine my passions of art, travel and nature. I've traveled far and wide, from the tundra of Alaska to the tropical rainforests of Honduras. I've enjoyed many adventures, like riding my Harley on solo vision quests, scuba diving with sharks, watching 10 million bats emerge from a cave, seeing calving glaciers and breaching whales, and eating everything served to me, from grilled goat to suckling pig.

I've also experienced mishaps galore; like being electrocuted in a shower, missing flights and ferries, having flat tires and dead batteries, getting food poisoning and seasickness, being stung by jellyfish and chased by a moose, and making the mistake of visiting an Amsterdam 'coffee house.' But, if it weren't for mishaps like these, traveling wouldn't be half the fun!

When I'm not on the road, I make my home among the pine-clad foothills of the central Oregon Cascades. Keep in touch, and happy journaling!

Let's keep in touch

Here are a few ways you can keep in touch in order to learn more about what I'm creating, as well as keeping up-to-date with what I share from my travels and explorations of the natural world.

Join my newsletter list

If you'd like to receive my Nature Notes newsletter with travel tales & tips, wildlife spotlights, sketching tutorials, and behind the scenes access to my art studio, sign up at: <http://christineelder.com/join-nature-notes>.

Learn more about nature sketching

Get access to my fun videos and written sketching tutorials, and also download my "play" sheets on my Nature Sketching Tutorials page at: <http://christineelder.com/tutorials>. You may also be interested in learning about the nature sketching retreats I lead to such exotic locales as Mexico and Honduras!

Contact me

I'd love to hear from you with any comments or suggestions to improve this guide. I would especially love to see examples of the sketches you've produced as a result of working through this guidebook. Also, I'd love to know what you'd like to learn next.

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