



◆ Orient Museum

The idea came about **two years** ago when Alice was living in **London**

L

isbon, Porto, Barcelona, London, Paris, Rome, Milan, Shanghai, New Deli, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Miami, Hawaii, San Francisco and New York are some of cities where it's possible to "rent a local friend". The idea came about a year and a half ago when Alice was living in London.

By this time she had a blog called Local Life, where she would write about her little discoveries around town such as "the antique market, pubs with live jazz every Wednesdays, and stores with promotions such as free tickets to theatre plays. I wrote tips not only for those visiting London but also for people who already lived there", she explained. The blog had more and more visitors until one day Alice had a message from an Italian blogger saying that her brother had already visited London three times and was going back but didn't want to visit the same locations, so she asked Alice if she would be available to show him around. "I took it as a joke and replied 'rent me for a day', truth be told she accepted and loved the idea", Alice told us.

The experience was in the blog and people really adored it. Soon after, Alice left London headed to Portugal for a vacation just before returning to Brazil. During that time she "discovered Lisbon". She liked so much what she saw that decided to stay and create a website to sell this new travel concept, first as 'live local spirit' but then as www.rentallocalfriend.com.

Coincidentally a friend of hers that is a journalist was doing an article about Lisbon for the American magazine Budget Travel and hired her for a day for an alternative program. Soon after the article was published requests started pouring in. In the first few months I only had requests by American visitors. By the end of the year I went to Brazil



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and my friends thought the idea was very interesting and said that if someone would be interested in going to Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paulo they would be available.

Alice rapidly extended the concept to other cities through people she already knew and who live in those cities.

How does it work?

People interested can visit the website and they will find a short form, “only ten questions, because people don’t like to answer too many questions”, mentioned Alice. Age, profession, interests are some of the things visitors are asked about that help to design a tailored profile and understand what he or she wants.

Alice has been receiving about three requests a week on average for Lisbon city. The Portuguese capital is among those most solicited side by side with Barcelona, Paris and Rio de Janeiro.

Most customers are older people “who travel a lot, I prefer to call them travellers instead of tourists”, said Alice.

In Lisbon requests are grouped by vintage stores, tile stores and places to take pictures “since Lisbon is famous for its luminosity”. In the summer requests are mainly for the beach. Suggestions for nice restaurants and good wines are also very frequent. “Most people already come to us with clearly defined ideas of what they want to see in Lisbon”.

The price of the programs varies from city to city. In Lisbon for a group up to three people, the price is 55 Euros for a 4-hour tour, and an additionally 12 Euros per each extra person. For a whole day (between 6 to 7 hours), the value is 80 Euros for a group up to three people and 15 Euros for each extra person.

Tours are mainly on foot, however there’s flexibility to use other means of transportation if customers prefer, and also for the hours available. Alice has had requests for two hours or even a whole week.

Alice has associated with two agencies that have a similar profile to her product: “authentic and alternative tours, outside the traditional tourist scene”, the Italian meridiano361.com and the Spanish atrapalo.com. “We’re open to other partnerships with agencies that believe, that have similar concepts and want to sell our product”, she concluded. ■





One day with Alice in Lisbon

Breakfast

Cinnamon roll in Praça das Flores

Morning

Walk to S. Roque Church and its belvedere (the richest and most beautiful church in Lisbon); visit the store 'A Vida Portuguesa' in Chiado, a very authentic store selling only Portuguese retro products.

Lunch at Chapitô

Afternoon

Walk through Graça Belvedere and visit to some Fado Houses in Graça neighbourhood where "fadistas" sing in the afternoon.

Photos in Nossa Senhora do Monte

Evening

Dinner at the Journalists' Club (best price for value wine list in town)

Go to a temporary show at Marionette Museum, Orient Museum or Chiado Museum.

End the evening at Lollipop at LX Factory

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