

CRITICS' CHOICES

FAVORITE FILM SITES MAKE GREAT DESTINATIONS

BY KRISTY ALPERT

Sometimes you can lose yourself in a destination the same way you would get wrapped up in a good movie. Whether it's the allure of exploring a way of life foreign to your own, the joy of getting caught up in the storyline of the city or even just meeting interesting characters along the way, travel and film are becoming more interrelated for groups. Film-related tours display the directors' perspectives of numerous movie locations across the country.

Tour companies in cities from San Francisco to Boston are rolling out the red carpet for groups of tourists looking to go behind the scenes of their favorite cities on a film-freckled adventure. Here are a few of our favorite film-related tours for group travel.



— ON LOCATION TOURS — BOSTON

1 The historic yet modern city of Boston has played host to tons of box office hits — “Field of Dreams,” “Good Will Hunting,” “The Departed” and “Legally Blonde,” to name a few — and the guided bus or walking tours with On Location Tours offer the perfect blend of history and cinematic fun for anyone looking for a unique Boston experience. Groups can take advantage of customized packages with step-on guides, combination city-tour tickets, group rates, and other features before following in the footsteps of their favorite television and movie characters and seeing more than 40 filming locations, among them sites used in “Ted,” “Fever Pitch,” “21,” “Ally McBeal” and “Cheers.”

On Location Tours offers groups two touring options to go behind the scenes of this city. The Boston TV and Movie Sites bus tour runs year-round and lasts approximately two and a half hours, bringing guests to more than 40 locations. The Boston Movie Mile walking tour runs from April to October and lasts about an hour and a half, showcasing more than 25 locations.

“Our tour guides are all locally trained Boston actors who give guests insider secrets to filming movies,” said Jenny Gomeringer, Boston marketing manager with On Location Tours. “Having grown up in Boston, my favorite aspect of the tour is that it shows you a completely different way to view the city. The park bench you sit on all the time in the Public Garden? That’s actually where Matt Damon sat to deliver his famous monologue in ‘Good Will Hunting.’ It’s so fun to start to uncover facts about movie magic.”

WWW.ONLOCATIONTOURS.COM



THE FAMOUS SITE OF “CHEERS” IN BOSTON

Courtesy On Location Tours

— PHILADELPHIA MOVIE SITES TOUR —
PHILADELPHIA

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Philadelphia is heralded as the birthplace not only of America but also of some of the country's greatest films. More than 100 major motion pictures have been shot in and around Philadelphia, from "Rocky" and "Transformers" to "The Sixth Sense" and "Marley and Me."

The Philadelphia Movie Sites Tour is the official tour of the Greater Philadelphia Film Office and provides group tours in the company's vehicle or on the group's motorcoach. The company's tour covers 30 movies in two and a half hours, and guests onboard get to see clips from their favorite movies as they drive by each filming location.

"We bring Hollywood right up to your window as the sites, scenes and secrets of moviemaking in Philadelphia unfold in front of you," said Mark Beyerle, president for Specialty Tours Philadelphia, parent company for the Philadelphia Movie Sites Tour. "The tour will take you to the actual movie site and sprinkle in some great secrets and stories of the filming. It's great fun to hear about what the stars did while in town filming, where they stayed, where they ate, continuity errors. We even offer guests their very own Rocky Run at the 'Rocky' steps."

WWW.MOVIESITESTOUR.COM

— SAN FRANCISCO MOVIE TOURS —
SAN FRANCISCO

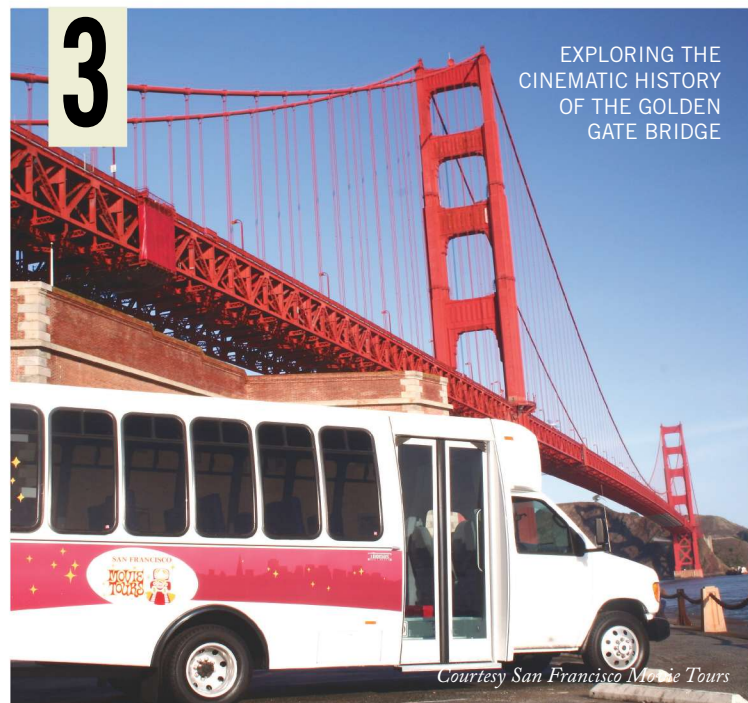
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With more than 600 major motion pictures portraying scenes from locations around the Golden City, San Francisco is easily one of the best spots to get caught up in the lights of cinematic sightseeing. For the past six years, San Francisco Movie Tours has specialized in group tours aboard the company's Theater on Wheels or as a hop-on service for the group's vehicle/bus. The company plans half- and full-day customizable tours to accommodate groups' schedules, special interests, content requests and budgets.

Each trip combines a comprehensive city tour of the major tourist sites of San Francisco with a look at San Francisco through the eyes of Hollywood. The experience includes more than 70 clips from 55 movies filmed all over the city from the 1920s to the 2010s, among them such films as "Vertigo," "Dirty Harry," "Mrs. Doubtfire," "Full House," "Princess Diaries" and "The Birds."

"Moviemaking and San Francisco are inseparable," said Bryan Rice, owner of San Francisco Movie Tours, who loves seeing his guests get that "Oh, wow" look on their face during each tour. "We offer a unique tour of San Francisco that goes beyond the mundane; all of our guides are actors and/or comedians, so they are very energetic and truly enjoy interacting with guests."

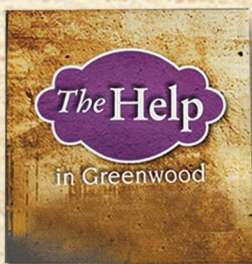
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— CHICAGO FILM TOUR —
CHICAGO

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Now in its fifth season, the Chicago Film Tour takes groups on a 30-mile ride through cinematic history along the streets of the Windy City where movies such as "The Blues Brothers," "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," "The Fugitive" and "The Untouchables" were filmed. The company can provide the group with a tour vehicle, or it can provide a step-on service for tour motorcoaches. The standard tour covers all of Chicago's film history in two hours; the Blues Brothers tour takes groups on a 90-minute ride through Jake and Elwood's Chicagoland haunts. The Blues Brothers tour also takes a look into the city's blues history, with stops including the recording studio where both Buddy Guy and Muddy Waters laid down their tracks.

"Chicago actually has a pretty big film history," said John Brinkman, owner of Chicago Film Tour, whose tours show groups film clips as they pass by filming sites for movies such as "The Dark Knight," "Road to Perdition," "The Fugitive" and "The Sting." "We show all those clips and tell interesting backstories about the films; but also for groups, we can do trivia or let them have lunch in between at a place like O'Brien's Restaurant, where 'The Color of Money' filmed a famous scene with Tom Cruise and Paul Newman."

WWW.CHICAGOFILMTOUR.COM

'THE HELP' DRIVING TOUR

On May 13, 2010, DreamWorks Studios formally announced that a major motion picture based on Mississippi native Kathryn Stockett's bestselling novel "The Help" would be filmed in Greenwood, Mississippi. The town was used to film more than 95 percent of the movie, and many of the cast members called Greenwood home for several months during the filming, renting out houses around town and extended-stay hotel rooms at the prestigious Alluvian Hotel.

The award-winning hotel was not only home to many of the actors during filming but today also plays a vital role in hosting "Help"-crazed tourists with tons of group-friendly options, such as its amazing group packages at the Alluvian Spa; its "Help"-themed classes at the Viking Cooking School, where groups can learn how to make Minny's chocolate pie — sans special ingredient, of course; and a fabulous complimentary Southern-style breakfast before groups depart for the guided "Help" driving tour of the town.

"For groups of 10 or more, we offer complimentary step-on-guide service for a driving tour to see the locations used in the film, where the stars stayed, as well as spots for cast and crew sightings," said Paige Hunt, executive director for the Greenwood Convention and Visitors Bureau. "I'm usually the step-on guide, and I was heavily involved with all aspects of the filming, from scouting locations to being an extra in the movie, so I can give some real behind-the-scenes' tidbits from the filming."

WWW.VISITGREENWOOD.COM



Courtesy Greenwood CVB

— **MOVIE TOURS AROUND WILMINGTON** —
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

5 Wilmington first stepped on the big screen in early 1983 when “Matlock” began filming in that port city. Since then, the city has accrued more than 400 film and television credits, including “Iron Man III,” “We’re the Millers,” “Dawson’s Creek,” “One Tree Hill,” “I Know What You Did Last Summer” and “The Secret Life of Bees.”

This area boasts a large historic district that comprises nearly 300 blocks, gorgeous island beaches, a mild year-round climate and a varied landscape of rivers and hills, making Wilmington an ideal shooting location for filmmakers and television crews. The town is home to three companies that specialize in film tours. Wilmington Walking Tours uses local actors as tour guides for its walking or step-on-guide Hollywood tours of the city. On Location Tours offers movie- and film-related step-on tours for groups. Cape Fear Segway Tours takes small groups of six or fewer on a Hollywood Glide Segway tour of the area.

“On any given day, there are film crews and star sightings from the river to the sea,” said Mikie Wall, vice president of sales and services for the Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau. “I love the behind-the-scenes scoop about the actors and actresses who come here to visit. Top spots for stargazing include coffee shops, trendy restaurants and nightspots in Wilmington’s historic river district.”

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