



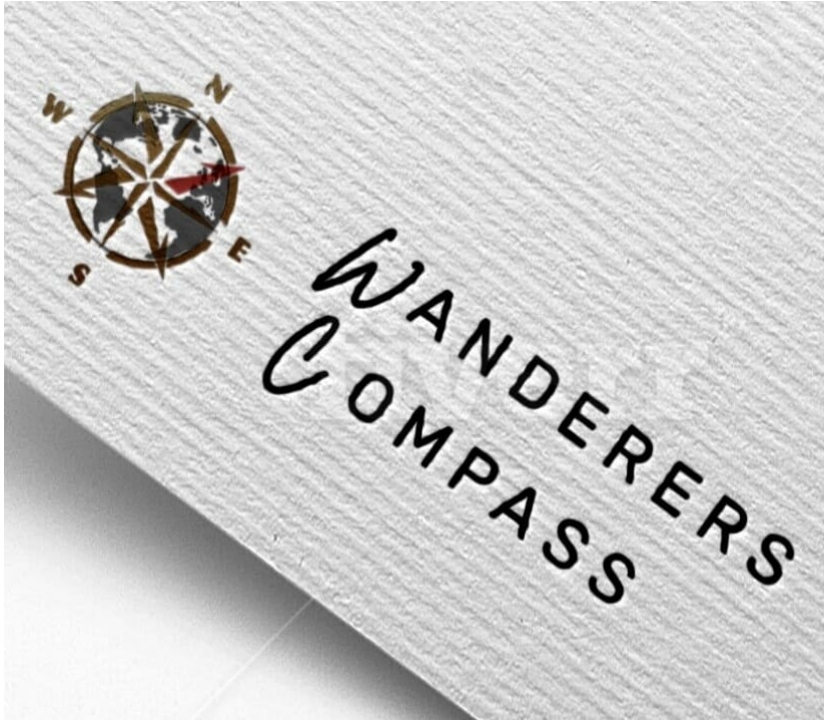
Starting a travel blog? It Takes a “Village” of the Right Resources

Description

Let us show you how to build yourself a powerhouse of a “village”

Remember this – the journey is part of the dream. Whatever it is you’re chasing, so long as you are actively moving in the right direction, the dream is coming true.

Richelle E. Goodrich



Starting a travel blog

Our journey to travel blogging is one of dreams. The story began many years ago when a young man aspired to see the world. Endless hours captivated him watching PBS, and Rick Steves had him craving to travel one day. Not for one second, though, did he believe it would ever happen.

Then, over a decade later, the opportunity arose where he could take a trip of a lifetime. Though nervous and apprehensive, he embraced the idea and dived right in. That incredible trip to several Western European countries was life-changing. He saw life through a different prism and started to believe dreams could come true. It would be the first of many trips to come.

Dreams to help other veterans

The realization of more travel led to other inspired ideas. Early on, Ryan spoke about how he wished more of his fellow soldiers, some so beaten down by their service, could experience what he had. He often mentioned that we should start a travel blog. Still, it seemed only a pipe dream. A soldier and a nurse with no clue where to begin, with no tech experience whatsoever, in entirely different stages of their life, and living on opposite sides of the country, were clearly out of our league.

For years, it was just that, an idea. During happy times, we briefly brought it up again, but the flame quickly extinguished. But it was one of those magical relighting birthday candles that wouldn't flame out. It was that dream of travel blogging that just would not die.

Maybe we could do this.

Possibly make a difference.

Maybe the story and inspiration that led us here meant something.

So it commenced.

The Research

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It was a 21-month journey from Let's Do It to going live, a roller coaster ride we weren't prepared for and more challenging work than we ever imagined. Throw in a pandemic, a world in chaos, and travel halted dead in its tracks. It was the perfect excuse to bail and say it was not meant to be.

Instead, we dug our heels deeper and took this opportunity to learn more about the technical side of starting a travel blog, get a deeper understanding of logistics, and focus on launching a stronger product from the get-go. Knowing we would make a million errors, maybe we could land up with a few less big ones. In hindsight, had we launched as planned, it would have been a weak and sloppy product. We embraced a lousy situation and worked harder than ever, making us more determined and

committed.

At the start, it was all about research, getting out there, and studying for what seemed like endless hours and hundreds of travel blogs. There are thousands out there; it is a very competitive market. That initial research took months, and we took copious notes of what we did and did not want our blog to look like. Then came finding a name we could use across all social networks, setting up a business, and setting up all these new accounts and the blog itself. It was an essential but small part of what was ahead of us.

Lessons Learned



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Our first and most important lesson when starting a travel blog is that you will need to lean on many people and services to make this happen. Unless you do this as a line of work, it is not intuitive and is

not easy. Without those people and services we tapped, we would not be here. They are lifesavers and just excellent at what they do!

One day, we will write more about our travel blogging journey, hopefully helping others avoid some of the pitfalls we experienced. Our goal now is to share what got us where we are. Along the way, we encountered many duds, and if not for determination, we would have been stopped in our tracks, dreams unrealized.

So, let's share with you the incredible resources that have been with us during this travel blogging journey and those we would not be here without. This is not meant to be a tutorial on how to start a blog; that is for another day. This is a guide to help those considering starting a blog find the best resources available to them.

The “Village“

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The old saying “It takes a village” beautifully applies to starting a travel blog on all levels. We would never have made it here if it weren’t for some fantastic people along the way, incredible resources, and a supportive network.

Up front, we want to state that having great resources does not reduce the work you will need. It should increase because when you learn from them, you need to apply those lessons. Here is our advice from our experiences to date. We appreciated being warned about what was ahead and what to best prepare for.

Tips to get a great start in travel blogging

1. Read and take copious notes. We can't emphasize how important it is to read absolutely everything you can get your hands on. That said, beware of bloggers who make vast amounts of money sucking you into their expensive courses. They offer "free courses" that are only the hard sell of their expensive course "worth over \$2000 for only \$500". If you find selling others "How to blog courses" becomes the priority over the content of the blog, then go elsewhere quickly.

There are wonderful supportive sites that provide more than you can ever imagine. They are honest upfront, don't say anyone can do it, and it costs next to nothing. Before you know it, you will be rich, and the blog will run itself. It is simply not true. It takes years to earn an income, money to build a blog, and, most importantly, a ton of hard work. Find a course that speaks to being your mentor and walking you through the entire blogging process.

Are costs keeping you from travel? Check out our blog post. [Do you want to travel for free? Let us show you how](#)

2. We have tested various programs, products, hosts, themes, etc. We learned many parts the hard way. It was wasted time that should have been avoided. If you find you made a wrong choice in a particular product, let it go. Move on. The first theme we picked was a poor choice; despite asking the right questions, it was not in any way a program to be used for people who are not tech-savvy. The support when asking questions was awful and very slow. It's funny how they answered quickly when selling it to you but took days to answer once you were on board.

Letting it go and moving on was the best decision we could have ever made. Learn more below.

3. We learned early on that it is ok to ask what seems stupid questions to save you ten hours of work that was never needed. The blogging community as a whole is a very connected and supportive one. They are an excellent resource. Reach out and ask questions.

4. Have patience. When you are ready to pull your hair out, take a break and get some space. This will take time, so give yourself that time to learn. Don't set unrealistic goals.

5. Take the time to pull together what you have found in your research. Gather information, but from that, you need a strategy.

Considering a trip to Europe? Check out our [Destinations page](#) to help plan your next adventure.

6. Have determination and a strong work ethic. A mental game is at play; you must overcome significant obstacles to win it.

7. Focus on quality, not how fast you can get out there or how quickly the money will come in. It won't

be for a long while. However, a well-put-together site with great content can grow if it is launched strong from the start. It needs to stand the test of time to survive.

8. Make this about serving others. It should not be a place to show off but a place where people will gain inspiration. If you make it about your audience, it will blossom over time.

9. Be ready for some failures, embarrassing moments, and some cruel people who take joy in belittling your efforts. There is a huge learning curve; forgive yourself for the errors that will inevitably happen, but most importantly, learn from them!!!

10. You don't have to travel full-time to have a blog that provides excellent content. It is more about life experiences you can share and the stories you tell.

Our Best Resources for Starting a Travel Blog

Below are the resources we trust and have used ourselves to this day. We will put them in order of how we used them. There are many other choices out there; do your research. Just because we chose these does not mean they will work for you by default.

Explore and Study Travel Blogs

The first step is to analyze the community you are about to join. Give yourself lots of time to do this, months even. Seek multiple search engines and lists of travel blogs. Look at big and tiny sites. Then, determine what you like and don't like and write it all down. Take screenshots and write down each site you visit.



Image from Adobe Photo Stock Starting a travel blog

We will list the sites that brought us the most inspiration and guidance. We won't list the sites we found

to be poorly done and sloppy. Some even were scam-like, trying to sell classes while putting little new content about travel. The bad sites were of great use to us, and we learned what we would never want to be like. They served an essential purpose, and as a result, they have our appreciation. That is why we will not list them, but you will find many along your research path.

The travel bloggers we most respect and are at the top of their game

The sites listed below are the ones we are most impressed with and have been using as role models. The two that, in our opinion, are the best are [Nomadic Matt](#) and [A Dangerous Business](#). Each is unique in its own right, and both have fantastic blogs. Both hold themselves to high standards, are excellent writers, and are passionate about travel. Their honesty about the path it took to get to where they are has earned our respect and admiration. It is not an easy road and involves lots of hard work and dedication, which we have learned in these first 18 months. Their examples influenced us. However, we aspire to find our unique style and voice while growing our travel blog.

[Nomadic Matt](#)

[A Dangerous Business](#)

[Goats on the Road](#)

[The Blonde Abroad](#)

[Chubby Diaries](#)

[Legal Nomads](#)

[Expert Vagabond](#)

[Never Ending Footsteps](#)

[Maptia Travel Blog](#)

[The Planet D](#)

Travel Blogging Education Resources

We secured our Domain and Host before signing up for a blogging course. This worked for us since, during our research, we were taking notes on how the whole process began. But it does make sense to take the classes first or at least examine what they say about launching the process. After looking at many courses and reviews, we chose what seemed most informative and grounded.



Starting a travel blog

[Nomadic Matt](#) is one of the most successful travel bloggers in the world and a New Times Best-Selling author. We feel his hands-on class is the best out there. He knows his stuff and is honest and straightforward about what it takes to launch a blog. Matt and his support staff at Superstar Blogging are great mentors. He and his team kept us inspired, helped us through challenging moments, and never made us feel stupid for asking questions. In hindsight, we recognize their patience. They provide Q&As, a community forum, webinars, and real-world assignments. The program is easy to follow and not overly cumbersome. The cost is only \$99 for his [Superstar Blogging Masterclass](#).

Securing your travel blog domain

[Hover.com](#)



You can't have an online blog without a domain. That is your URL, your connection to the World Wide Web. Ours is www.wandererscompass.com. Based on recommendations from the Nomadic Matt team to keep where you register your domain separate from your host, we chose [Hover](#). We picked a name for under \$15 when we registered Wanderers Compass. That was it. We renew annually at the same cost.



Web Hosting

A web host is one of the most critical pieces, and quality does matter. It is where your new blog first lives. It was a big decision, and the competition was strong. After much research, we signed up with Siteground. They are Europe-based and provide 24-hour support. It will work well for sites that don't anticipate becoming too big. In our case, it did not work. We don't recommend it as a result.

Siteground was fine at first, but we are a photo-heavy blog. The package we had signed up for only gave us 40 GIGS of space on their server, and we were quickly approaching the cap. As a result, we had issues with the site. The next level up at Siteground was astonishingly expensive. Then we also ran into some bad attitudes from their support staff. It was time to move on.

Our Fiverr IT and WordPress consultant, Miftah, suggested getting our own server with tons of space. He set up the server and migrated our site to [Hostinger](#). It was important to have our host be a solid and reputable company. On top of that, the cost was very reasonable. Our IT Guru provides us with support in case issues arise. This was the best decision ever!! Our site has never been stronger. We can't recommend them enough.

Best Blogging Platform

The platform you choose to build your website is important. The most significant determining factor is how much flexibility and customization you want. We chose [WordPress.com](#) because doing it right from the start was paramount. It is what 43% of the world uses for building their websites.

WordPress is an open-source **CMS (Content Management System)** for creating blogs and websites. It has made setting up a blog easy. The best thing about WordPress CMS is that it is free. You can download it from its official website, [WordPress.com](#), or on the web you choose. You must first have a web host and a domain name. We loaded out through Siteground, our host.

Another great thing about it is the plug-in support; countless free and paid plug-ins are available online that help you extend its functionality in many ways. If you have a good grip on HTML, CSS, and a bit of PHP, you can customize quite a bit. Or hire someone who can. We have never regretted choosing the most powerful platform with the greatest customization opportunity.

Travel Blog Theme

Picking a theme was a massive effort we weren't expecting. There is a lot out there, and many promise their theme is easy to use and offers support. You can find both free or premium themes that cost usually well under \$100. After doing lots of research, we decided to steer away from the free ones, but some good free WordPress ones might work for other types of blogs.

Upon studying reviews, we discovered that support was a huge issue for many developers. With each theme under consideration, we interviewed and asked many presale questions. Mainly to check how responsive and engaged they were. Our first choice failed us. We clearly said we are not tech-savvy and are newbies at all this. They assured us that support was great and we would have no issues.

It was awful, so complicated, and support was a hassle. Once registered, you join their community support group. Many of the people complaining were professional developers, those who make websites for a living. They could not figure out all the bugs they came across and were very frustrated with the product. The jargon they used was completely over our heads. After a ton of effort to figure it out, we gave up and moved on.

We didn't give up

DEOTHEMES

We found our nirvana in a theme called Solopine. The theme's ease of use and support provided was excellent. Our site used the Sitka theme for about 18 months when suddenly Solopine closed the shop one day with no warning or guidance whatsoever. We were shocked and dismayed that they would leave their clients in such a lurch. Thank goodness for our excellent IT consultant, Miftah from Fiveer, who handled it all until we found a new theme.

After much searching, we were able to find a theme that was almost identical to our previous theme (our guess is Solopine may have sold it to them) with a very responsive team. They have been around for a while and have great reviews. [Our new theme is Caeliora from Deothemes.](#) The transfer to their theme was very smooth, and they responded quickly to questions. We are thrilled to have found a new home theme for our website. All is working well.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) Plug-in

You will quickly learn what SEO is all about. It will be a word that is core to anything you publish. Google and other search engines are needed to bring traffic to your blog. Yoast SEO is the premier SEO plug-in for WordPress. This plug-in has over 5 million active installations and has been downloaded more than 350 million times, with over 25,000 five-star reviews on Wordpress.org. It is the #1 downloaded SEO plug-in on WordPress.

[Yoast's](#) goal is simple: to help website owners get more traffic from search engines. They help their customers keep their content neat and easy to read for their audience. But most importantly, they make sure search engines can find and understand their pages! Because that'll help with ranking high on Google! [Yoast](#) SEO also takes care of a lot of [technical SEO stuff](#) in the background. So, you don't have to write any code to use their software! Their mission: "At [Yoast](#), we believe that SEO should be for everyone. We believe in creating equal chances for everyone in the search results. We keep our mission in mind in everything that we do."

This is when a Premium subscription is a must when starting a travel blog!

In our case, we brought them on early and upgraded to **Yoast Premium** shortly after that. They have fantastic courses that have been invaluable and are free with Premium. They constantly educate and keep you informed as things rapidly change. It is a European-based company. The cost is very reasonable for all you get. Currently, the [annual Premium membership is \\$99](#). They do have a free option as well. We would be lost without them.

Google Analytics

[Google Analytics](#) is a crucial tool for anyone starting a travel blog that is looking to enhance their website's performance and engagement. It is something we access every day to review our stats. By providing detailed insights into user behavior, it allows bloggers to understand who their audience is, how they interact with the content, and which posts or pages are most popular. This data is invaluable for tailoring content to meet readers' preferences and interests, ensuring that the blog

remains relevant and appealing. Additionally, Google Analytics helps bloggers track key metrics such as page views, bounce rates, and average session duration, offering a clear picture of how well the website is performing and identifying areas for improvement.

How to sign up

Signing up for [Google Analytics](#) is a straightforward process that starts with creating a Google account if you don't already have one. Once you have a Google account, go to the Google Analytics website and sign in. From there, you'll need to set up a new property for your blog by entering your website's details and selecting your preferred data-sharing settings. After this, Google Analytics will provide you with a unique tracking code that you need to insert into the HTML of your blog's pages. Once the tracking code is in place, Google Analytics will begin collecting data on your website's performance.

In essence, Google Analytics is a free service that empowers bloggers with the knowledge needed to grow their audience, enhance their content, and achieve their blogging goals.

Keywordsearch

When starting a travel blog, you will quickly learn the importance of SEO, and finding a place that can assist you without breaking your budget can be challenging. Enter Keywordsearch, an affordable SEO suite that is easy to use.

We use [KeySearch](#) to enhance our content strategy and improve search engine visibility. KeySearch is a powerful keyword research tool that helps bloggers identify relevant and high-performing keywords for their niche. By using KeySearch, bloggers can uncover valuable keyword opportunities that drive targeted traffic to their site, optimize their content for SEO, and better understand their competition. This targeted approach not only helps in crafting content that resonates with their audience but also improves the chances of ranking higher in search engine results, leading to increased organic traffic and greater engagement with their blog. We have come to depend on Keywordsearch and are so glad we found this for our blog

Global Online Marketplace for Freelance Work

There are lots of elements you don't think of upfront. Such as designing a logo. It was how we found [Fiverr](#)

when looking for an artist to design multiple versions of a logo. Being a young blog and years from being profitable, we had to keep costs down. Fiverr is a global online marketplace for freelance services. Fiverr's platform connects freelancers (sellers) to people or businesses looking to hire (buyers). Listings on Fiverr are diverse and range from "get a well-designed business card" to "help with HTML, JavaScript, CSS, and jQuery. Prices vary a lot as many GIGs are from professionals from countries where the cost of living can be pretty low. They are paid a fair wage, and as a result, you can get a fantastic deal.

Our first service was logo design, and we found a gold mine in [Zunairaah](#). She worked hard and made our concept a reality beyond our expectations. **Zunairaah** is a very talented and consummate professional. She was not happy until we were, and her patience was exceptional. Most importantly, she has a great vision and offers terrific suggestions. You can look her up on [Fiverr](#) by putting [Zunairaah](#) into the search box.

After that, we used [Fiverr](#) for business card design, packing lists designed by Sammerayub, emergency travel cards by Mahmudulhasan, and design and artwork. Everyone was a pleasure to work with, and the costs were reasonable.

The right guy at the right moment

Our most recent contact with them was for Site Speed Optimization and Security. We found a gift from heaven on [Fiverr](#) in [Miftah](#). Site speeds are a huge factor in getting readers to use your site. If things don't load, they will be gone onto other sites in a heartbeat. In a competitive online world, that is essential. Though our site was doing OK with Page Speed, we still wanted better, especially on mobile, which was in the 60s. We were told not to expect high speeds on mobile. Our Fiverr GiG with Miftah proved otherwise, and we have had scores that are nearly perfect for months now. With mind-blowing results, we consistently achieve speeds in the upper 90s on both desktop and mobile.

We found ourselves a gem in [Miftah](#). He so impressed us with his speed optimization that we ordered a WordPress security GIG, and he again blew us away. We approached him about setting up AMP, as Google encourages us to do all the time. He thoroughly audited our site for free and recommended against setting up AMP. He said it could work wonders, but when it doesn't, it will hurt the site, which would be our case.

Handled a difficult move

Since our site was running out of space on the Siteground server, we had to move on. Miftah set us up on our server on [Hostinger](#) (something we never considered) and migrated our full site. Considering the size of our site, it was a huge effort. He stuck with it despite some significant photo issues. In the end, our site works better than it ever had before. Something that we could not have done on our own. He continues to provide support to us almost two years later, and we can't imagine what we would do without him. He is a Godsend. We have used him for technical SEO, plugin compatibility, security,

SSL, correcting AHREFS warnings, WordPress Sitehealth warnings, Google ranking optimization, and Google Index issues, to name a few.

Miftah has exceptional expertise and the utmost professionalism, and we have a great functioning site because of him. He also offers on Fiverr: Moving a Website, Setting up a Google webmaster, Setting up Google AMP, Setting up Google indexing API, Setting up Cloudflare CDN, Creating a WordPress blog website, plus much more. We trust him and find him an incredible pleasure to work with. He is GOLD!

Writing Software

If you recall, neither of us had careers that required excellent writing skills. For Joelle, English is her second language. While her classmates were learning grammar, she was still learning the language. When writing, mistakes were frequent and embarrassing. They often happened, as only two of us provided most of the content. We needed a program to help us.

Along came [Grammarly](#), and we have been sold from day one. It is an online grammar, spell-checking, and plagiarism detection platform. It is a robust writing editor designed to help you compose and edit clear, mistake-free documents. There is a free version, but we upgraded to the Premium subscription for \$139.95 a year. It is invaluable; we also use it for everything in our personal lives. Our emails now are much better worded, and they even proof your texts if you want. Grammarly is a brilliant program.

We have suggested it to friends who are in college, and Ryan is now using it for his college classes.

Photograph and Document Management

[Adobe](#)

We would be lost without our Adobe Creative Cloud Suite. This includes Adobe Photoshop with Lightroom Classic, Adobe Photo Stock, and Adobe Acrobat, among others. The suite is called Creative Cloud. Our site is photo-heavy, and we need efficient and proficient software to manage that. We are also a business, so we need documents signed, and Acrobat takes care of that.

Adobe has so many options that you can choose from, whether you are on an individual or within plans. For photographers, there is Lightroom, Photoshop, and Lightroom Classic. If you are a student or teacher, some plans save you over 60%. Individuals, there are over 20 creative apps, including Acrobat and more. They can customize plans as well; that is what we did. Click on the link above or the Adobe Logo, click the Creativity and Design tab, then click View Plans and Pricing to see all the options.

Final Thoughts



There you have it. The lists of resources for starting a travel blog are in our “Village.”

Without them, we would not be here. If you wish to succeed, then build yourself a solid “village” with a team that will provide the support you need to make your dream come true. They will make your work so much easier, and when you lose your mind, they will provide a much-needed dose of sanity. Remember, learning and hard work never end, which keeps you engaged and on top of your game.

Do you have any suggestions to share on starting a travel blog?

We welcome stories of resources that have worked for you. There are many talented people out there, and if we share what we have discovered, we all grow stronger in the process. Though we compete on some level, there is plenty of space for all of us. When we share and collaborate, we all contribute to the overall quality of the travel blog world and gain respect for our material.

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1. Travel blogging
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1. blogging
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