



Where the Music Takes You

So much energy and passion come out of listening to live music that it's hard to imagine how it could get any better than that. But add traveling to your favorite city or a city you've always wanted to visit, and you get a music vacation.

Ever wonder what it would be like to see your favorite artist in an iconic setting, like the Beacon Theatre in New York City? Or maybe listen to a show under a starlit night at the acoustically sublime Red Rocks Amphitheater? Or maybe travel to the birthplace of jazz to attend the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival for an authentic immersion of music and culture? This practice of music tourism is becoming a popular trend among baby boomers. More financially secure, they're now able to enjoy live music and travel as a whole new experience.

Marcela Curry heard rock and roll for the first time when she moved to the U.S. from Chile when she was 15 years old. She remembers thinking, "Wow, what's going on here?" and has been hooked on rock and roll ever since. Curry loves the history behind rock music—how it's derived from the blues and the way some lyrics can seem like the workingman's poetry.

Marcela and her husband, John, treat themselves to vacations around locales where the likes of U2, Bruce Springsteen, and the Foo Fighters have upcoming shows. They'll pick a city they want to visit and then see who's playing at the local venues.

Curry once went to multiple Tom Petty shows in one tour. Every show had the same set list and the same Tom Petty banter, but it was the last show in Boston that she felt was by far the best. According to Curry, this was due to the warmth and harmony of the crowd reacting to the music. Plus, there was the bonus of visiting Boston, one of her favorite cities.



Live music has a way of bringing people together and enhancing emotions. Hearing your favorite artist live can make you feel connected to the performer and the community around you.

A specific song can become significant to someone because they can relate to the meaning behind the lyrics.

A study conducted by digital communications company O2 and Patrick Fagan, an expert in behavioral science, revealed that experiencing just 20 minutes of live music resulted in an increase in feelings of well-being by 21 percent. Feelings of self-worth and closeness to others both went up 25 percent, and mental stimulation climbed up 75 percent.

The researchers claim that all these increases, experienced twice a month, could result in an additional nine years added to a person's lifespan.

Mike Gray, a financial advisor at CAPTRUST, has always enjoyed taking in a live show. He especially loves the thrill of the find when he discovers a new artist, seemingly obscure to the general public, to add to his playlist. Gray has transferred his love of music to his son, Roth, and daughter, Addison, both now in their 20s. He admits, "I've ruined the kids with classic rock." His daughter lamented to him once that the Talking Heads follow her everywhere she goes.

Gray often takes his grown children on trips to exciting cities. The next show on their itinerary is to see As the Crow Flies, a new incarnation of The Black Crowes, in Lexington, Kentucky. Taking music mini-vacations is a way for Gray to continue to bond with his kids and perhaps retain an element of cool in their eyes.

For some, gone are the days of pinching pennies for concert tickets, waiting in long entry lines, and getting an elbow to the face while dancing in the pit. Those who grew up with the Grateful Dead and the rise of music festivals, such as Woodstock, are now older and potentially more financially stable, so they can look for new ways of enjoying live music.

And there is a whole world of VIP and platinum packages to pick from. Companies such as CID Entertainment offer fans of live music an array of services, including hotel packages, luxury bus rentals to and from the event, artist meet and greets, VIP viewing access, pre-show gatherings, and cocktail parties. Anything you can think of to aid in a hassle-free and premium experience is now available.

Then there's the whole revamped festival experience. While there's still the option of general admission camping where you bring your own tent and brace yourself for a weekend of roughing it, organizers are now offering options to provide fans varying levels of accommodation, concert viewing, and hospitality services.

Those who have a passion for live music are happy to offer up their time and money to be part of its universe. John Martin, another financial advisor at CAPTRUST with this passion, said, "I don't like music, I love it, and I spend a fool's amount of money on it."



Martin often jumps on a plane to see a show in New York City or Nashville to feed his live music addiction. And a couple years ago, he took a trip to Arrington, Virginia to attend the Lockn' Festival. He and a couple friends decided to enhance their festival experience by renting an RV and purchasing VIP tickets. Their VIP package offered clean, air-conditioned bathrooms with showers and access to the VIP viewing area with complimentary food and non-alcoholic beverages.

For this year's Lockn' Festival, to be held in August, concertgoers can go even further by renting a "glamping" tent. This package includes a queen bed, complete with memory foam mattress—a far cry from a sleeping bag on the hard and unforgiving ground—table and chairs, mini-fridge, daily personal shopping service, bath products and towels, tent lighting, and a fan to keep cool. It sounds a lot like staying in a hotel, but having access to a VIP Glamping Lounge where there will be yard games, comfy furniture, snacks, coffee, and breakfast takes it to a new level.

Whether you're a diehard U2 fan ready to travel near and far, or you love visiting Nashville and wandering into smaller venues to hear local bands, music travel is a way for people to take in new sights, have an adventure, and feel part of the live music community.

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