

Introduction

You've traveled, and you enjoy telling others about your trips—when they let you. But we all know a little of that goes a long way.

Plus, you want more. You want a sharper memory of the trip; a deeper understanding of how it affected you; a more compelling telling that makes others want to know more, not hurry you to anecdoté's end. You want to write a travel memoir.

Writing a travel memoir is a spectacular opportunity to practice the craft of creative nonfiction writing, as well as to discover new perspectives on your life. When you have completed this five-lesson curriculum, you will have all the tools you need to write about your life as a traveler. And I hope you will have enjoyed the example memoir I've written about a trip to Italy's Cinque Terre in Spring 2008.

What you'll find here

This book begins with five chapters of writing instruction. I conclude each chapter with an assignment for your writing practice.

In Chapter 1, *The Outbound Journey*, I discuss why we write, whom we write for, and what we intend to write about.

With Chapter 2, *The Traveler and Companions*, we explore how to bring to life the people in the story, and delve into the issues involved in writing about living people.

Write Your Travel Memoirs

In Chapter 3, *Settings: Where the Stories Live*, we examine techniques for making places come alive like characters.

In Chapter 4, *Staging the Action in Your Anecdotes*, I offer you a simple structure of complications, developments, and resolutions to give focus to your story, and suggest techniques to increase the dramatic appeal of your story, if needed.

With Chapter 5, *Coming Home*, I coach you to find the meaning in your travel memories.

Following these chapters, you'll find six chapters comprising my Cinque Terre travel memoir.

At the conclusion of the book, you'll find several resources designed to help you continue your exploration of writing in the travel memoir genre.

I developed this curriculum for an online course I've offered through Story Circle Network, a resource for women with stories to tell. I have also taught it in local groups, an outgrowth of my memoir workshops (which are general in focus rather than travel-oriented).

In these workshops we explore different aspects of the writing craft. For each class meeting, students write a few pages on their life experiences. I suggest topics, but encourage participants to write on whatever motivates them. Each class meeting includes time to share what they've written in a supportive environment. To enhance small-group interaction, enrollment is limited. Anyone age 14 to 114 is welcome to participate, and the more diverse the student group, the more interesting for everyone.

I hope you enjoy reading what I've written, trying the exercises, and—best of all—living more fully with the memories of your travels preserved.

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