Why Museums Matter More Than Ever to Tourism

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Museums22
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Recently, a friend of mine went on her first ever solo trip. So, when she invited me and our circle of friends over last weekend, I couldn't wait to hear her stories.

Her trip turned out to be a full- blown adventure, and by the end of the evening, I was left feeling inspired to plan something myself this summer.

But what really stood out was a quiet pattern I hadn't expected: every new place she visited included a stop at the local museum.

The funny thing is, she's not the kind of person you'd expect to spend hours wandering museum halls. Yet there she was, immersed in art and history, losing track of time among artifacts and exhibitions.

That's when it clicked. Museums are as much a part of tourism as street food, water sports, or that unforgettable view from a mountain peak. In many ways, museums carry the spirit of a place—the culture, the memory, the meaning.

Curious, I started digging into how museums are embracing this wave of tourism. Everything I found is packed into this newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together!

Warm regards, Shalini Bansal

How Much Time Are Tourists Spending in Museums?

"*I once spent seven hours at the British Museum.*" This is how one Reddit user documented their favorite part of solo trips: museum visits.

If you scroll down the thread, you will notice how seven hours don't even faze most people, as many travelers are more than happy to spend entire days wandering through exhibits, coffee in hand.

Museums and travel are one unsuspecting duo that we rarely call out explicitly, yet no itinerary is truly complete without one.

These institutions give us a chance to understand the soul of the city through art. The thoughtful curations hold up a window in the past, present, and future of where you're visiting vis-à-vis what you can expect.

Take the Louvre Museum, for example. Around 50,000 people visit every day. It's said that to see the entire collection, you'd need a week or more.

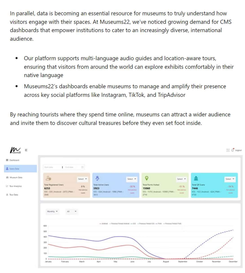
How many travelers do you think plan a trip to Paris solely to experience the legacy of this iconic institution? Museums like the Louvre pulse at the heart of France's cultural and economic life.

Museums Are Adopting New Tech For Immersion

Luckily, museums aren't indifferent to tourists, either.

The biggest example is the free after-hours programs that certain museums offer, which draw crowds of travelers looking for meaningful experiences without draining their wallets.

If you're in New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art showcases work from over 2,000 artists and offers free entry every Friday evening from 5–10 PM, as well as on the second Sunday of every month.



Enjoy free entry to the Whitney on Friday evenings and second Sundays

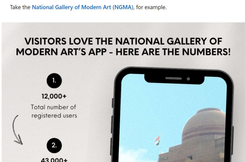
Touching down in Brazil? The São Paulo Art Museum (MASP), like many others in the region, opens its doors for free on Fridays from 6 PM to 9 PM.

And if you're visiting Spain, the iconic Prado Museum in Madrid welcomes visitors free of charge from Monday to Saturday between 6 PM and 8 PM.

While these after-hours programs are designed to engage local residents and foster a deeper appreciation of art, they also speak directly to curious travelers looking to explore more thoughtfully.

Some museums go even further to create memorable experiences for visitors by integrating immersive technology. For instance, VR installations allow visitors to interact directly with historical settings—seeing, touching, and virtually walking through the past.

In one of our recent blogs, we explored the trends shaping newly opened and restored museums across the U.S., U.K., and the Middle East. AI tools, mobile apps, and QR codes have emerged as key enablers of engagement.

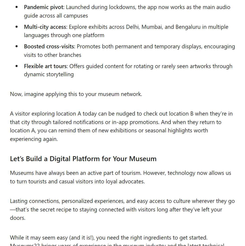


Book a demo!

In parallel, data is becoming an essential resource for museums to truly understand how visitors engage with their spaces. At Museums22, we've noticed growing demand for CMS dashboards that empower institutions to cater to an increasingly diverse, international audience.

- Our platform supports multi-language audio guides and location-aware tours, ensuring that visitors from around the world can explore exhibits comfortably in their native language
- Museums22's dashboards enable museums to manage and amplify their presence across key social platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and TripAdvisor

By reaching tourists where they spend time online, museums can attract a wider audience and invite them to discover cultural treasures before they even set foot inside.



Gain insights into visitor flow, preferences, and engagement through Museums22's smart dashboard

Museums Turn Solo Travel Into Shared Experience

Jack, a Spanish traveler exploring Delhi (India), after visiting all the heritage spots, wanted to connect with the local community. Then, he found himself drawn to a vibrant gathering at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA). Here, locals, artists, and visitors like Jack come together through workshops that spark creativity and connection.

KNMA offers a diverse lineup of workshops spanning various creative disciplines—from pigment-based art sessions and co-creation events to comic-making workshops and reflective panels tied to its exhibitions like *The Elements You* and *Purvaee*.

These sessions often feature local artists and invite public participation, fostering an open environment for dialogue and exploration.

Many museums globally adopt similar approaches, especially during weekends or special exhibitions. These gatherings help travelers connect with like-minded individuals, gain hands-on exposure to cultural practices, and experience the city from a more personal, collaborative lens.

For solo travelers, this kind of immersion not only makes a visit more memorable—it transforms it into something shared.

How Museums Let Visitors Take the Experience Home

Museum visits don't have to end when a visitor walks out the door or gets on that plane flying back home.

With apps, museums can maintain a lasting relationship with travelers, keeping them informed, engaged, and connected long after their trip ends.

Once a visitor signs up on a museum's app, they can stay in the loop with upcoming exhibitions, join virtual tours, or attend pop-up events in their own city when the museum expands its footprint. What begins as a physical visit can evolve into an ongoing connection—one that stretches across time zones and locations.

From the museum's perspective, such interaction is more than just digital outreach. It's a strategic opportunity to remain top-of-mind and invite repeat engagement.

Take the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), for example.

With branches in Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, NGMA used a Museums22-powered app to unify the experience across all campuses. Key features included:

- **Pandemic pivot:** Launched during lockdowns, the app now works as the main audio guide across all campuses
- **Multi-city access:** Explore exhibits across Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru in multiple languages through one platform
- **Boosted cross-visits:** Promotes both permanent and temporary displays, encouraging visits to other branches
- **Flexible art tours:** Offers guided content for rotating or rarely seen artworks through dynamic storytelling

Now, imagine applying this to your museum network.

A visitor exploring location A today can be nudged to check out location B when they're in that city through tailored notifications or in-app promotions. And when they return to location A, you can remind them of new exhibitions or seasonal highlights worth experiencing again.

Let's Build a Digital Platform for Your Museum

Museums have always been an active part of tourism. However, technology now allows us to turn tourists and casual visitors into loyal advocates.

Lasting connections, personalized experiences, and easy access to culture wherever they go—that's the secret recipe to staying connected with visitors long after they've left your doors.

While it may seem easy (and it is!), you need the right ingredients to get started. Museums22 brings years of experience in the museum industry and the latest technical expertise to help you create digital experiences that are unforgettable.

If you want your museum to be the talk of the town and have full hallways on the weekends, start by jumping on a quick call with the Museums22 team.

Book a demo!

The world is changing this year, and so are museums. To keep up with the changes in visitor preferences, socialization patterns, and ingenious technological developments across museums—follow our newsletter!