

2023

Smart Tourism in Rural & CBT



Practical guideline: how guest houses and rural touristic business should work online without much of extra cost or specific technical knowledge

Version 3.0

Center Smart Tourism

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Abstract

Nowadays, we observe wide development of rural tourism in the world. Such trend has clear reasons behind it. Mainly, development of rural tourism has positive impact on several important aspects, such as

1. Fighting poverty in villages.
2. Saving authentic lifestyle of variety of territories.
3. Improving cultural exchange.
4. Unique touristic experience.
5. Grows of the interest from the side of tourists.

On top of the reasons specified above, development of rural tourism contributes towards [2-nd aim of SDG](#), which is fighting hunger. Generally, SDG represents the list of tasks for humanity, aimed to solve main problems of the modern world. Due to this, area of rural tourism attracts a lot of interest and respect around the world. In particular, the importance of agricultural tourism, CBT (Community Based Tourism) and rural tourism is regularly discussed by a variety of international organizations, including [UNWTO](#). Unfortunately, majority of companies in the area of rural tourism does not have enough staff members with required qualification to work properly online and to promote their touristic businesses on the internet.

Naturally, organizations like *CBT*, in contrast to large touristic brands, cannot hire many specialists, such as online marketing managers or SMM. The reason for this is obvious: rural touristic business is small and cannot spend its resources on a variety of different marketing specialists. For this reason, **Center Smart Tourism** has created simplified internet strategy for rural touristic organization in the form of the check list, which will help to initialize proper work of CBT on the internet from scratch. This would not require any significant cost or specific technical knowledge from the business owners.

Book is available for everyone in open access and can be used at no cost. In case of posting this document, the link to the source <https://centersmarttourism.world/> is necessary!

1. Where to start?



The first step would be to find a person who has at least basic skills on using computer and smartphone. Look for such a person in your company or more broadly in your community/area. This person will take the role of being responsible for the work of your business on the internet. Possibly, you will find more than one candidate for this position. You would have to choose one with the best leadership and communicative skills. However, the rest of the candidates would also be able to apply their skills in the same context. There are many tasks for internet activity of your business – from digital photography to writing texts for online advertising. It is important that your online consists of creative people with the will to regularly learn something new. With time such people would be able to improve their qualification through self-learning. In addition, locals get engaged in presenting their society on the internet, which is also useful for marketing and technological development of your region. Digitalization is continuous spreading process. Everyone in the society will be able to experience positive effect of digitalization in their region. The earlier you start, the earlier you would feel all the benefits that digitalization brings to your business, region and personally to you.

For those who want to learn the Fundamentals of Digital Travel Marketing in more detail, we publish a tutorial here: <https://centersmarttourism.world/for-tourism-organisations/materials/digital-travel-marketing-fundamentals-book/>

2. Create your own website



Why is it necessary to create a website? For most of the organizations, website is the main source of communication with their customers/clients. This is the best way to present full information about your business. Moreover, own website is not affected by any kind of specific rules and is not in danger to be blocked, unlike a social network account. Creating your website is extremely important as this becomes the face of your business in the internet space. Creating your own website is much easier than most people think. We recommend using free platforms for creating websites. These typically do not require any specific background or advanced technical skills. Let us look at the most popular platforms for creating websites below. Once again, these can be used for free and are intuitively easy to use. We strongly recommend spending some time and creating a website using one of these platforms.

Welcome to the world's most popular website builder.

43% of the web is built on WordPress. More bloggers, small businesses, and Fortune 500 companies use WordPress than all other options combined. Join the millions of people that call WordPress.com home.

Start your website

Wordpress is one of the most popular platforms for creating websites in the world. Developers state that up to date more than 43% of all websites in the world are created on this platform. *Wordpress* has free and paid options and services. Creating a website and learning how to do it is completely free.

Below are some examples of the websites, created with the use of *Wordpress*.

<https://toomarahvae.wordpress.com/>

<https://agrikulturista.wordpress.com/>

<https://taiwan-scene.com/taipeis-organic-agriculture-mountain-tourist-farm-experience-in-the-baishihu-area/>

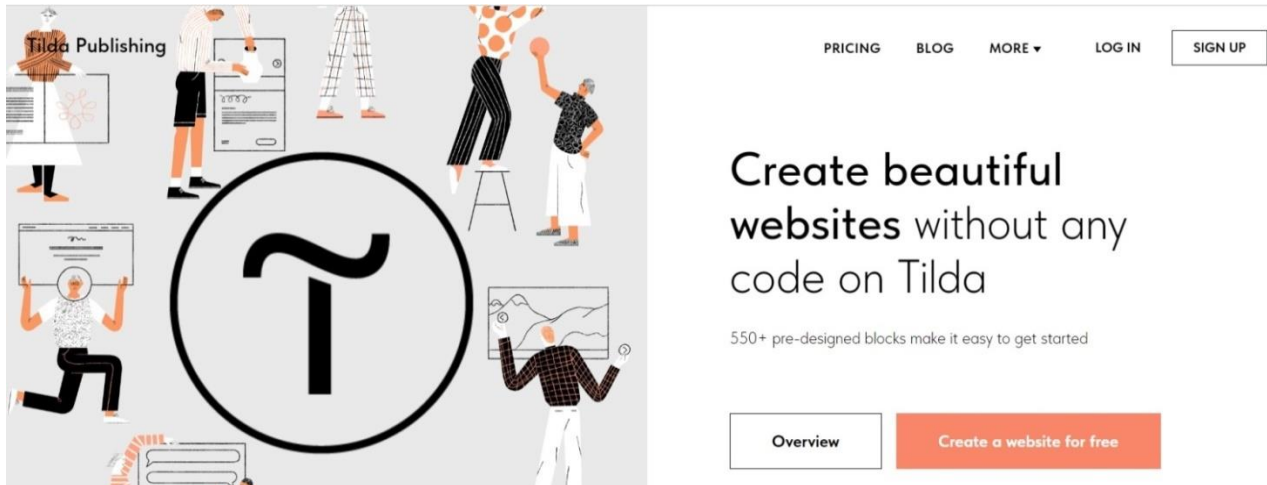
<https://fermaekzarho.ru/>

<http://www.pattayasheepfarm.com/?lang=en>

[Wordpress Help](#)

[Guide for a quick start for Wordpress](#)

[Tilda](#)



Tilda is another very popular platform for creating websites. Similar to *WordPress*, it is easy to learn and use. It also has free and paid services, but creating a simple website is free.

Below are some examples of websites, created with *Tilda*.

<http://ekokarpaty.tilda.ws/eng>

<https://gornayaroza.ru/>

<https://furst.kz/tourism>

<https://derevnnya.com>

<https://reanukeeves.surf>

[Tilda manual](#)

[Guide for a quick start for Tilda](#)

Create a website you're proud of

Discover the platform that gives you the freedom to create, design,
manage and develop your web presence exactly the way you want.

Get Started

Try Wix. No credit card required.

Wix is another platform with free and paid services for creating and operating websites.

Examples of websites created with Wix:

<https://www.kamishy.kz/>

<https://www.fincasermide.com/>

[Support](#)

[Guide for quick start for Wix](#)

Remark 1. All these platforms have a lot of learning materials online, including books and study videos. With the help of these materials, anyone with basic computer skills can easily learn how to create website on their own.

Remark 2. It is better to create multipage websites with sections of news, blogs, photo galleries and so on. Firstly, this will increase position of the website in the organic search. Secondly, this will allow publishing more various content on the website.

Remark 3. Provided examples of the websites, created on these platforms, are the websites of real organizations. Hence, they could be changed or deleted by their owners at any time.

3. Domain name and hosting

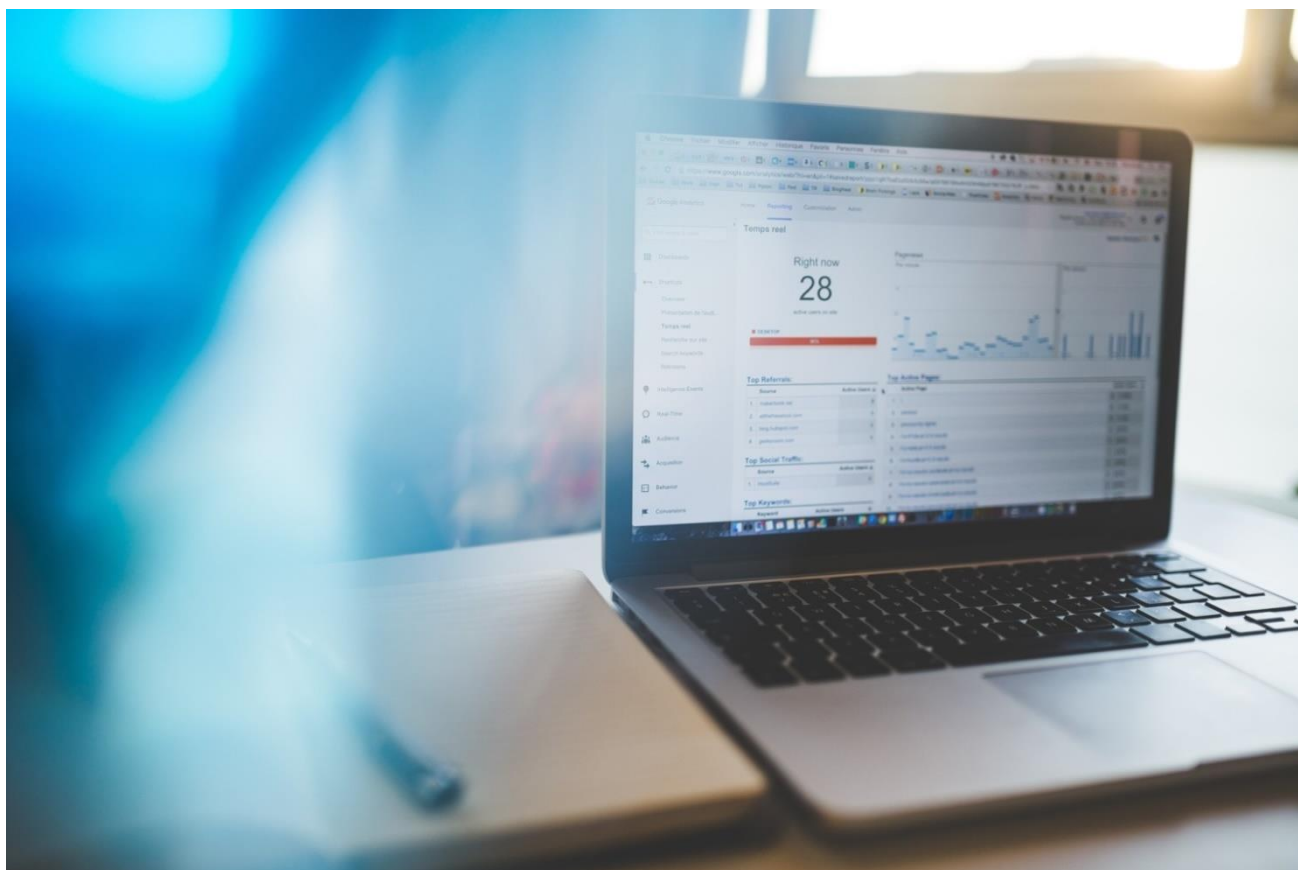


First of all, it is necessary to purchase domain name from the local registration in regional segment of the internet. You should think beforehand what kind of name you are going to buy. The name should reflect location, type of business or name of your organization. Domain could also be bought through the platforms for creating websites, which we discussed earlier. Typically, this does not have significantly big costs and more than affordable for any company.

Second thing to do is to buy a hosting service from local hosting provider. Technically, what this means is that hosting provider would have a powerful computer, named server. This will be located at the place of internet provider but this server will support existence and activity of your website. Usually, this does not require large costs, but enables your website to always operate well in the internet space.

Why is this important? If you have your own domain name and hosting service, no other person would be able to control your resource on the internet. In other words, website with its own name becomes a unique and individual internet resource of your business. You will be able to turn off or redirect traffic on the website, access statistics of the visits on the website, decide on the ways of advertising etc.

4. Web analytics



For proper work and development of your resource on the internet it is necessary to use web analytics. Web analytics is basically the service in the internet that collects full statistics of your website. It shows you where users come from, their social and demographic status, how long were they reading your website, which sections they visit the most and so on. Why is it important? Without analytics, you cannot realize how successful your website is, who visits it, when do they come to your website and where from. Moreover, at some point you will need to promote your website through different channels. For example, these could be done through social networks or partnered websites. Without analytics, it would be impossible to understand which channels bring visitors to your website, and which are not so effective.

Our center recommends to install counter from Google analytics 4 on your website. Currently this is the most modern and advanced system. Interested reader can find out more about Google analytics at <https://support.google.com/analytics/?hl=en> This is completely free.

The system has self-educational courses here: https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/student/catalog/list?category_ids=6431-google-analytics-4

You can get a certificate confirming your system skills here: <https://skillshop.exceedlms.com/student/path/508845-google-analytics-certification>

Google Analytics 4 Certificate Sample:



Before you start promoting your website on the internet, it is strongly advisable that you at least take basic level of certification and ask to do the same from your employer responsible for the work on the internet.

Remark: All considered platforms for creating websites have plugins or special functions for installation of counter for analytics on the website. This makes implementing analytics very fast and simple. In fact, this can be done in just 5 minutes!

5. Accumulate the content

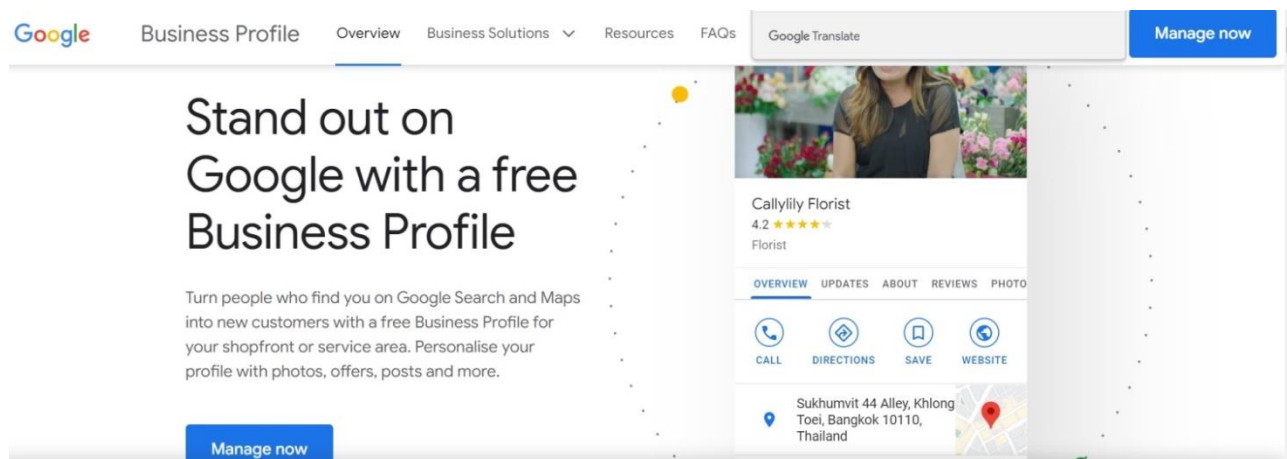


It is obvious that content consists of texts, photos, videos, etc. Content is basically everything what you post on the internet. Why is it important to work on the quality of the content? Before the trip, modern tourist would carefully study everything about the planned destination. This is why content needs to be useful, interesting and unique. Besides, good content has an impact on your reputation in the search engines. Search engines rate your content, and if the content is good it results in higher positions in the search results. Obviously, this increases the chance that clients find you and be interested by what you offer. In addition, if you have a lot of content you can decide what parts of the content to use for social networks and on other platforms. In conclusion, content should be thought of as the heart of your advertising on the internet.

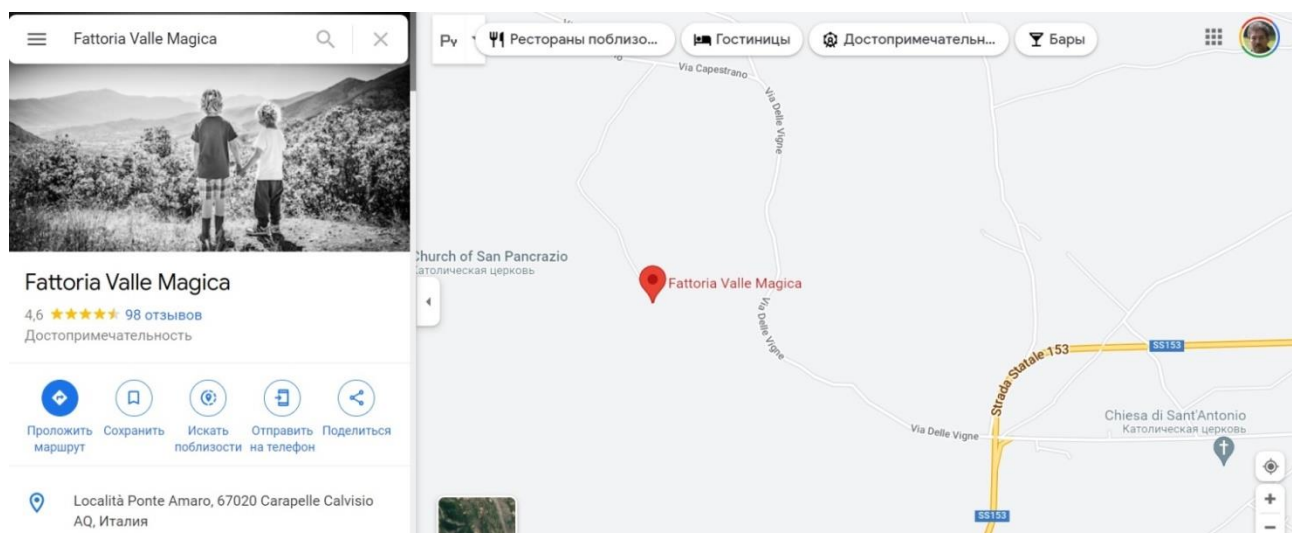
Nevertheless, quality of content is rather poor in the area of tourism. It suffers a lot from similarity of advertisings and posts on the internet. However, we believe that rural tourism has a great potential in creating unique content, due to variety of specifics and originality of different territories. It is a good idea to involve locals in creating the content. This would generate their interest and engagement in promoting your region and as a result to constantly renew the content on the internet.

Remark. Content on website and in social networks should not be something frozen. It is necessary to regularly add something new, tell about your services in different ways, post new photos and videos, and so on. This would show that your business lives full interesting life, and this is reflected in the internet space.

6. Google Business Profile



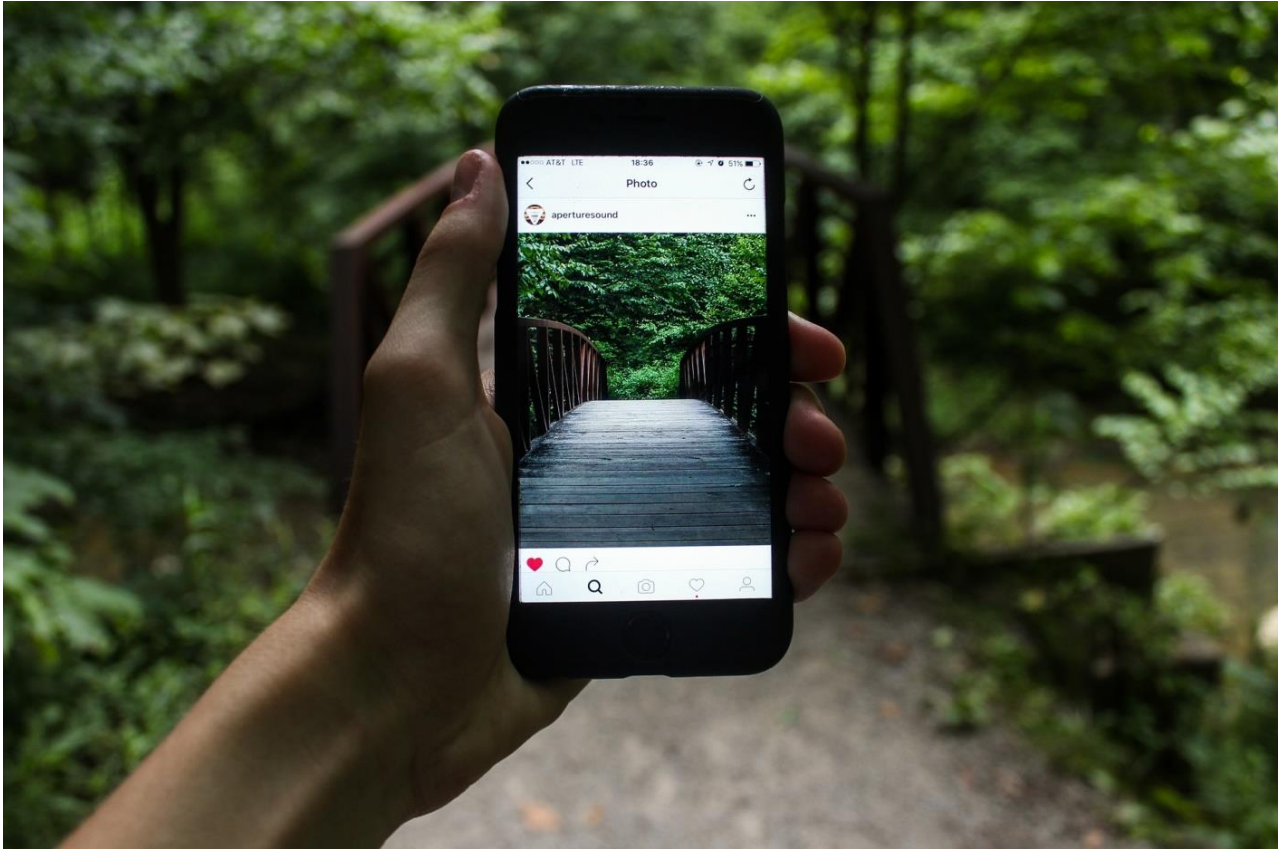
The next recommendation is fairly simple: register with service [Google Business Profile](#). This is totally free and will enable you to pass all the required information about you to the search engine. At no cost you will be able to publish photos, respond to reviews and even accept requests directly from the Google maps. Why is this important? In order for Google to provide users with information about your business you need to help it happen. Besides, Google is not just search window but also maps. This is why if someone is looking for your farm on the map, they will only find you if your profile is filled right. In this case users would see your business on the map, as shown below.



Apart from that, service also collects reviews from the visitors. It is important to carefully keep track of the reviews and respond as quickly as possible. This shows how careful and thoughtful you treat your clients.

It is required to fill in all required fields, get a confirmation of address by email and pay attention to all up to date information placed there. As said before, do not forget to also renew your content. This will be a big step towards success of your business.

7. Start working in social networks



Social networks are certainly one of the channels to promote rural tourism. However, there are many of them and choosing one of them as main channels could only be done after careful testing of different options and making decision based on the results. Before that we recommend to register business profiles in the most popular social networks and make a few posts there. Why is this important to do? Besides advertising in social networks, it is important to know that nowadays some people are looking for goods in services in social networks. Apart from that, a lot of tourists would prefer to check social networks to get more detailed information about a touristic organization, even after visiting its website. This is why it is good idea to place icons and links to your social networks on the website.

It is necessary to always write very detailed information in your social network accounts, such as website, address, phone numbers, emails, etc. Then make several posts, videos and photos, which would tell visitors about your business. This is required in order for anyone interested to be able to easily find you in these services and understand what you offer. There are many social networks in the world, and each of them has its specifics. Below are several examples of specifics of popular social networks and platforms.

Facebook



Up to date Facebook is the most popular social network in the world. This is why placement there is critical. At least this is needed so that tourists could find details of your business online. Additionally, this could further be used for placement and management of targeted advertising. However, there is one important nuance regarding registration on Facebook. For a personal page people register under their real name and this is very simple. For placement of a business on Facebook one needs to register personal profile as well as business page. Personal profiles or groups on their own do not allow placing paid advertising. Without this promoting your business on Facebook would face many difficulties, so we recommend to register business page from the start.

Paid advertising is not the only reason to register business page. By the rules of social network, only real persons are allowed to have personal profile. Organizations have to register business page. In the case of breaking rules of social network, accounts could be banned. You can find details [here](#).

- *How to create a page on Facebook please follow [here](#)*

Examples of pages of rural touristic businesses:

[RAMS Travel Agency](#)

[Parry Creek Farm Tourist Resort and Caravan Park](#)

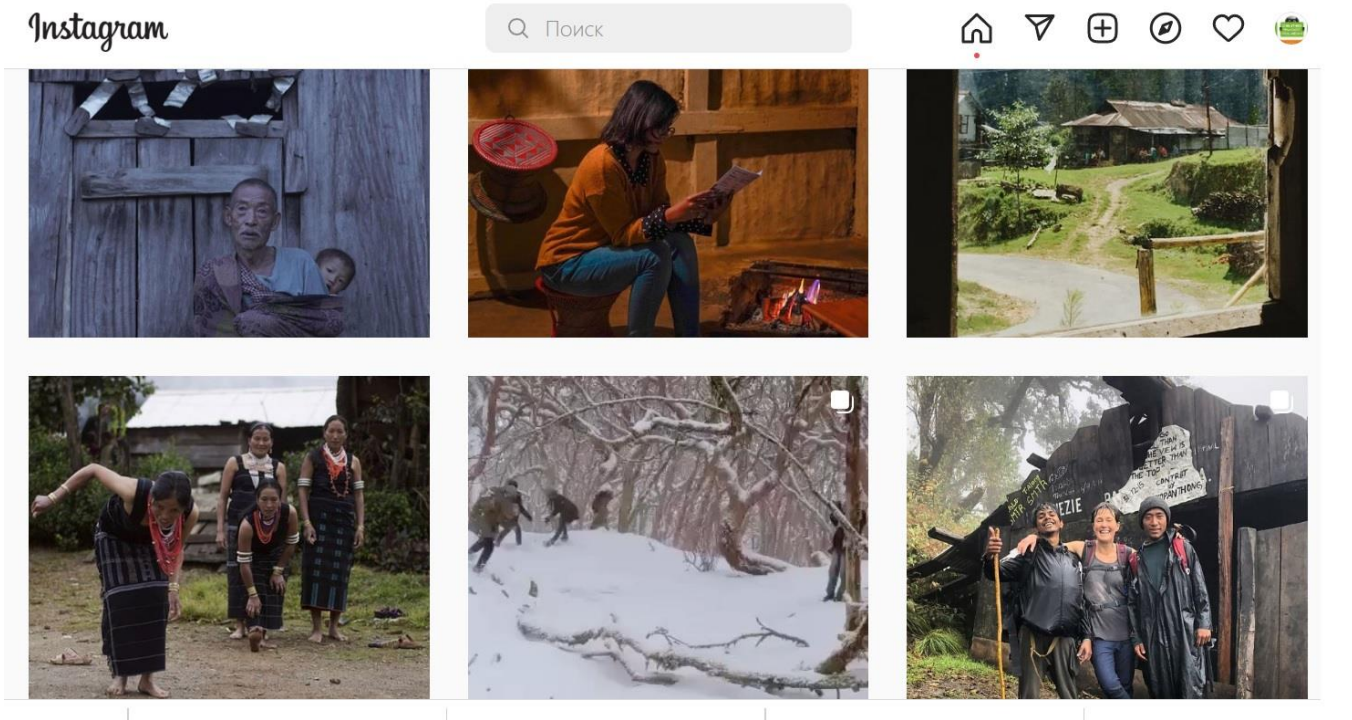
[Magalong Eco Farm Resort](#)

[Community Based Tourism](#)

[Talang & GIAN BI Community Based Tourism](#)

The examples above is just a small part of such pages. Learning on the experience of other businesses, any business can create their own page on Facebook. Doing this is very quick and does not require any cost or advanced technical skills.

[Instagram](#)



Instagram is one of the most popular social networks among tourists. The reason for this is simple: Instagram is oriented on visual content. In this network it is easy to share the atmosphere of your facility through photo and video content. In order to run a business page on Instagram it is advised to use business profile, which has minor differences from personal profile. This is described in more details [here](#)

Several examples of business accounts on Instagram:

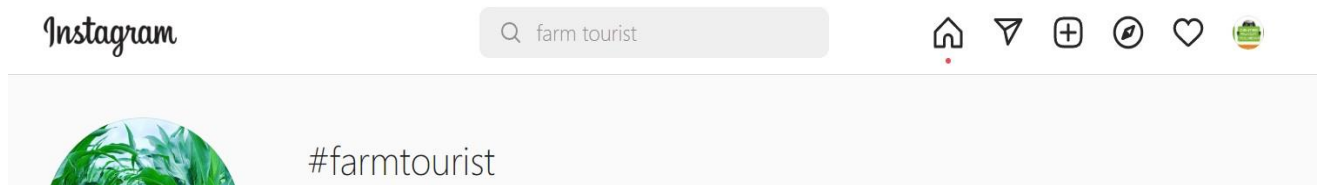
[Econagaland](#)

[Gornaya Roza](#)

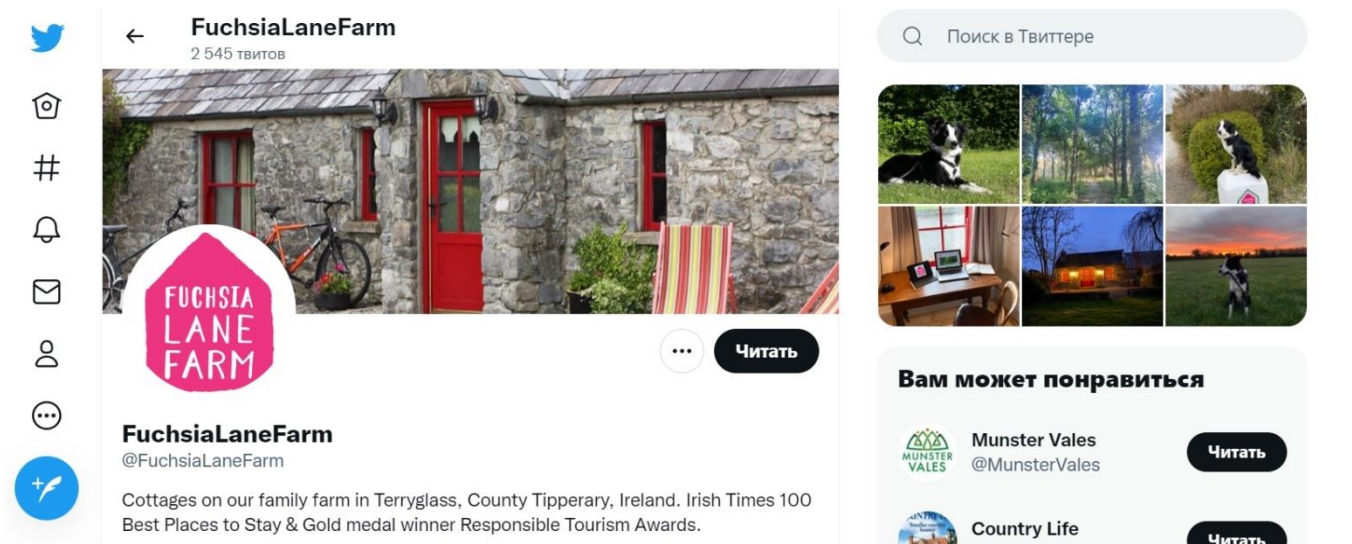
[Tourist farm Pri Andrejevih](#)

[Masnec tourist farm](#)

There are very many similar pages on Instagram. You can easily find them by searching on Instagram, using keywords such as «farm tourist» or hashtags like «#farmtourist».



[Twitter](#)



Twitter is another social network that has popularity among tourists. It is designed to post short messages with a photo or a video. This social network could be used to publish short news and updates about your object with the links to your website. As with other social networks, you could register business profile under the name of your business, brand or organization. Quite a lot of rural touristic businesses use this social network to connect and communicate with their existing or potential clients.

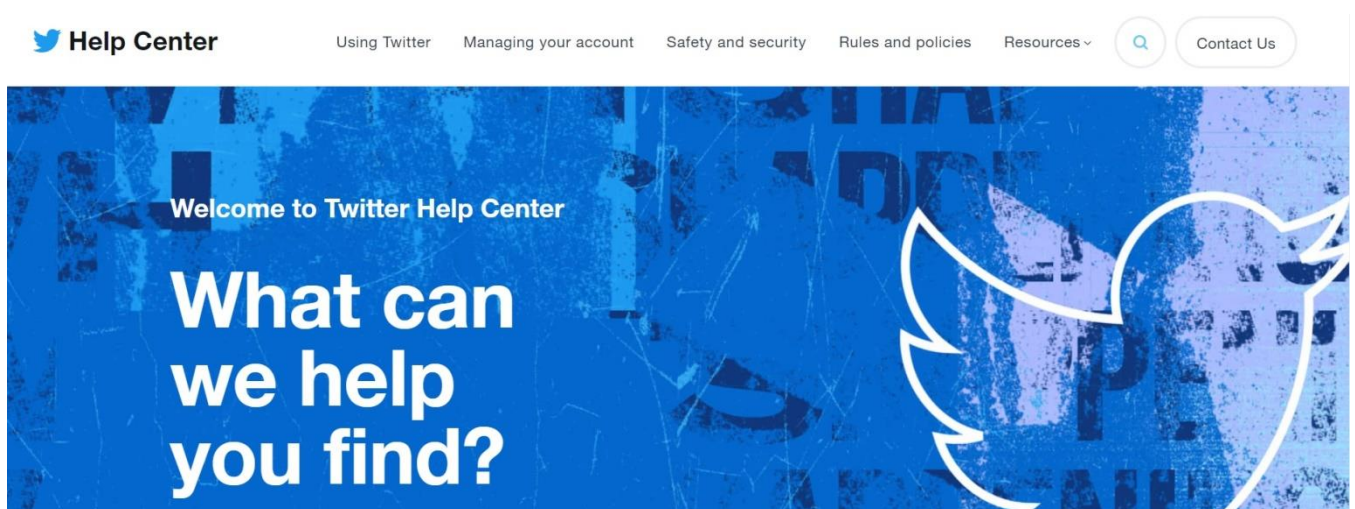
Examples of rural touristic business accounts on Twitter:

[Mt Briscoe Organic Farm](#)

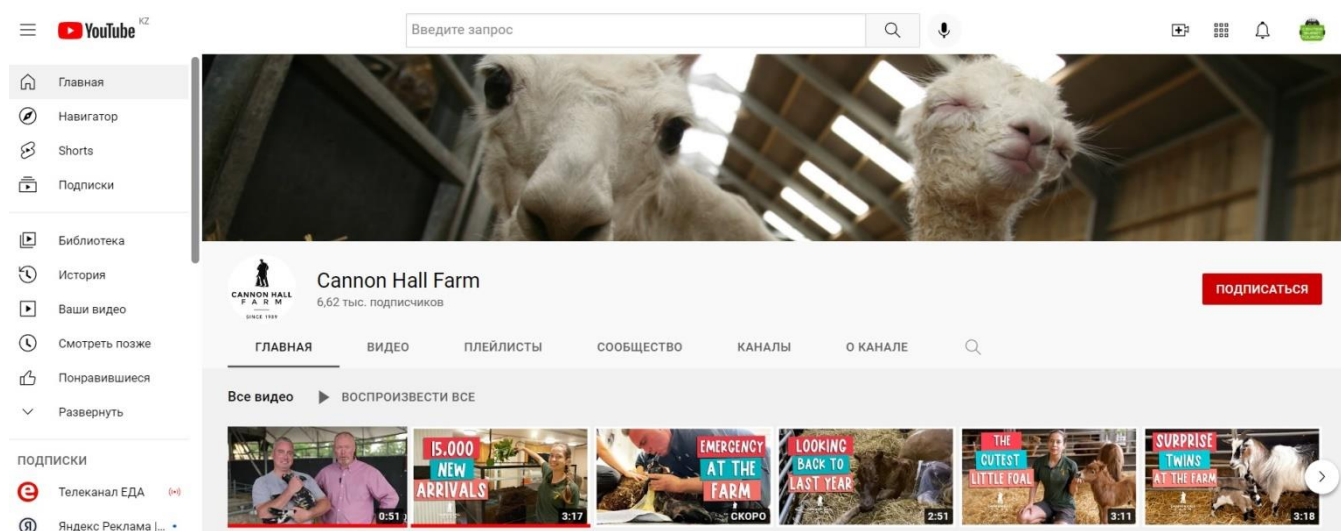
[Emburara Farm Lodge](#)

[Fuchsia Lane Farm](#)

In the case of any questions, Twitter has a big [help](#) section.



[Youtube](#)



Youtube service becomes more and more popular among tourists. Before a trip many of them are searching for videos about their planned destination. Moreover, after a trip some of them post their own videos about their experience there. For this reason, it is advisable to open your own Youtube channel and post a few videos there, where you could show your business from a good side.

➤ [How to create channel on Youtube](#)

Why did we decide to discuss Youtube in the section about social networks? The reason is that communication between users is possible under any video on Youtube. This includes likes and comments, which you could address as the channel owner. Moreover, the better reputation you get with the amount of likes and comments, the more likely it is that your channel will be shown as a recommendation for users that are not even subscribed to your channel. Such natural growth of reputation is called organic and will strongly depend on how interesting and engaging your content is. Once again, content is heart of your online activity.

Examples of Youtube channels:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Hmh0TXNGtWbz4wIQZaYIQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUXhwsCCMurz9RhjTYhBxSA>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjPpXUEDTqROQCKUfOyz_ZA/featured

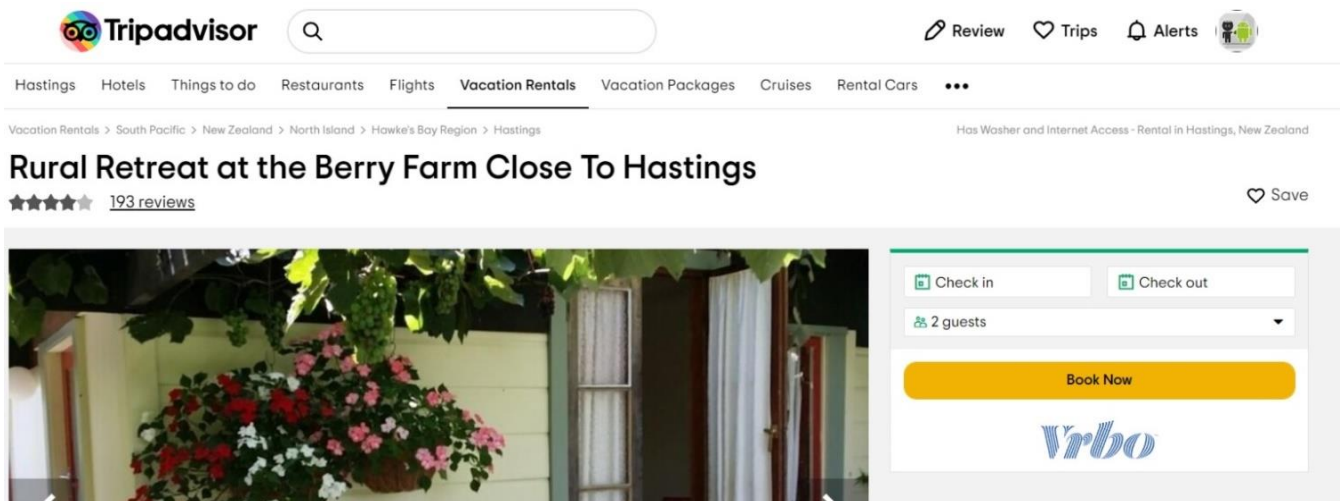
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0aFPwYOhQ2g4H0MR7sDwxA>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_VXgECQmCzLO2zz-In5CjA

Getting to know different channels you can draw conclusions of what in your opinion are the key attributes of a successful Youtube channel. Based on this you will be able to create your own channel and post any videos you want.

8. Get placement on touristic platforms

[Tripadvisor](#)



Register your business in [Tripadvisor by following this link](#). Make sure to provide all useful information, post some pictures, videos and don't forget to mention your contacts. Why is this important? Tripadvisor is one of the most visited touristic resources on the internet, so being there is simply mandatory. Tripadvisor popularity can be explained by the fact that this is top 1 website in the world, which collects and publishes reviews from real tourists, as well as any useful information about destinations, touristic organizations and different types of activities. Of course, just having account on Tripadvisor is not enough. You have to monitor reviews from the tourists and respond to all of them.

Examples of rural touristic organizations on Tripadvisor:

[Rural Retreat at the Berry Farm Close To Hastings](#)

[Vegetable Farm In The Heart Of Lancaster County](#)

[The Howling Dog Farm](#)

Remark. Despite the fact that registration on Tripadvisor is free, you could choose to activate availability of direct booking from their website. In this case you would pay a fee from every booking made there.

For more details on the opportunities with Tripadvisor there is a big [help section](#)

The screenshot shows the Booking.com interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Booking.com', 'KZT', a UK flag, a help icon, a notification bell with '1', and a 'List your property' button. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with icons for 'Stays', 'Flights', 'Car rentals', 'Attractions', and 'Airport taxis'. A 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support' banner is visible. The breadcrumb trail reads: Home > All apartments > Italy > Tuscany > Alberese > Agriturismo Podere Montenero (Apartment), Alberese (Italy) deals. The main content area features a search sidebar on the left with fields for destination (Alberese), check-in/out dates, and guest count (1 adult, 0 children, 1 room). The main listing is for 'Agriturismo Podere Montenero' in Alberese, Italy, with a 'Superb 9.4' rating from 24 reviews. A review snippet mentions 'Excellent hosts, helpful, friendly, they go the extra mile from providing free bikes to use, lending beach umbrellas & providing herbs for cooking! Amazing views from ...'. The listing includes a 'Reserve your apartment stay' button and a 'We Price Match' badge. Navigation tabs at the top of the listing include 'Apartment info & price', 'Facilities', 'House rules', and 'Guest reviews (24)'. There are also three photos of the property and its surroundings.

Booking is the most popular platform among accommodation renting facilities. This kind of platforms is called *OTA* (Online Travel Agency). Usually, placement on such platforms is free but the fee is taken from a booking made through a platform.

- For the placement on Booking you need to [register here](#)

Examples of rural guest houses and touristic farms placed on OTA:

[Winlu Vacation Farm](#)

[Agriturismo Alberese Sasso Rosso](#)

[Tourist Farm Firbas](#)

[Hallikivi Tourist Farm](#)

[Finca Hotel Rural Es Turó](#)

Remark. There is a lot of discuss around expensiveness of the fees taken by OTA. A big group of people in tourism think that these fees are overpriced. However, many forget that in exchange OTA typically takes the lead on solving all marketing and advertising tasks. Every business has the right to decide for themselves – whether to get a placement there or to run all the marketing work by themselves.

Indonesia > Bali > Things to do in Sidemen Village

DAY TRIP

Sidemen: Firewood Cooking Class & Organic Farm Tour

★★★★★ 4.8 / 5 8 reviews Activity provider: Green Kitchen



Getyourguide is one of the most popular internet platforms for booking different types of activities: tours, walks, presentations, master classes, etc. Placement on Getyourguide is free, but fee is charged for every booking made there.

Examples of placement on Getyourguide:

[Catharina Hoeve Cheese Farm](#)

[Sidemen Village, Indonesia](#)

[Things to do in Honolulu](#)

[Cozumel: Farm-to-Table Culinary Experience](#)

[Santiago de Querétaro, Mexico](#)

Important notice! All platforms allow your clients to communicate with your page. This includes making comments, writing reviews and asking questions. It is absolutely necessary to follow the rule of answering everything within 24 hours. The key to success with this is to always check all your placements: social networks, Tripadvisor, maps and others. This is important because reviews and responses to reviews are read by potential clients. Apart from that, how actively you communicate with users is rated by all online platforms and has a direct effect on your online reputation. This effect is further expanded to organic search indicators of your business. The quicker and nicer you respond to reviews – the higher your page will be in the search results.


9. Use local touristic resources


wonderful indonesia

What to See ▾ What to Do ▾ Plan Your Trip ▾ Go Explore Essentials ▾ GB-EN ▾

rural

4 Result Matching

 **4 Special Things to Experience on a Rural Getaway around Yogyakarta**
10 Nov 2021
The Jakarta Administration in collaboration with PT Summarecon Agung Tbk will be holding the 15th Jakarta Fashion and Food Festival (JFFF) this year, starting from April 5th to May 6th at Summarecon Kepala Gading, North Jakarta.

 **Experience Java's Rural Life in These 5 Villages and Get Closer to the People**
20 Aug 2021
Have you ever wished you could get closer and really get to know the people of...

Local touristic resources are quite specific for each business and region. The idea here is to try to make a deal with touristic management of your region about placement of your business with the link on website of **visit center** of your region, association of tourism and other local websites. This would not only increase probability of booking, but also add trust and credibility to your business. Of course, this also has an impact on rating of your website in search engines.

Examples of placements in different countries:

[Switzerland](#)

[Indonesia](#)

[Spain](#)

[Italy](#)

[Poland](#)

10. Conclusion

The first thing to remember is that non technologies would replace hospitality, so do not put them at the top of your touristic business. Technologies play supporting role in tourism, mainly to help tourists to find required touristic services. There is no need to rush for all new technologies just because these technologies appear. It is much more important to run your business with required tenderness, hospitality and care. Don't forget to show these qualities through your internet activity. If you do this right, this activity will bring you increased flow of clients and bookings.

Another thing not to forget about is that content is hear of everything you do on the internet. You need to always work on the content. Make it up to date, unique, interesting and useful for your potential clients. Discuss released and planned content with your team and try to rate yourself on quality of produced content. Don't be afraid to make new original and unique content on the internet. Create a wide, interesting and trusted reputation about your business on the internet. You potential customer would definitely appreciate this.

The methods described in this guideline are just the basics. However, these basics are extremely important and they will allow your community to take their respected place on the internet, and will help potential customers to easily find you! We hope that recommendations will be useful and easy to implement for the reader. Our center wishes you good luck in digitalization of your touristic business and to get pleasure from the process.

In addition to studying this manual, you can study our open lessons on the basics of Internet marketing [here](#).

This manual was published as part of a special initiative of the Smart Tourism Center, which is aimed at developing smart tourism in rural areas. Read more [here](#).

The authors would appreciate feedback and suggestions from readers about this guide and our initiative, which can be emailed to info@centersmarttourism.com

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