



Julie Diebolt-Price has wanted to launch into travel writing for years but fear and work demands always seemed to get in the way.

This year, however, she was determined to make that dream a reality. Julie shares her journey to her new-found life as a travel writer, below.

Best,

Noreen Kompanik
Travel Writer's Café Pioneer

My blast off into a full-time writing career

By Julie Diebolt Price in Tustin, California

Waiting for the perfect time, for the planets to align, for enough experience, for the right season, for enough money, for approval... that's been the picture of my life for the last 40 years related to travel writing. It seems I've always been preparing, getting ready, getting organized, learning, and gaining the experience to be a travel writer.



The past shapes our future

There always seemed to be an excuse not to write: too busy, family responsibilities, work demands. I'd been collecting stories and photographs for years. Languishing in my files, they have been bugging my subconscious and were finally demanding to be set free.

During the years I was working my way up through corporate America, then launching my photography business, I was also traveling. I photographed my travels, seldom taking notes but using the images to record my stories. Success with stock photography and selling some pictures to magazines kept

the dream alive of writing my own stories and producing completed articles with photos.

I took my first travel writing class in my early thirties but I still didn't write with any consistency. I became a certified tour guide and worked for a destination management company as a side gig – again, thinking it would launch my travel-writing career. Though it didn't, it provided me with new experiences. Today I'm still an experience host in my "hometown" with an emphasis on photography.

Milestone birthdays are essential landmark events in my life. I moved to New York City when I was 25. It was my dream to live in the Big City since I was 10 years old and I made it happen. Then I moved to the west coast and got married when I was 35.

When I turned 50, I created my own "Under the Tuscan Sun" trip to Italy. It was there, overlooking the Ligurian Sea, that I committed to continue my photography career rather than fall back into some other corporate job. Here's a link to my photography [website](#).

My love of planning travel and developing itineraries led to adventures for me, my relatives, friends, and clients. Several photographic journeys to Italy landed me an adopted family, close friends, and even clients in Umbria and the Amalfi Coast. In addition to consulting and arranging [trips](#), I connected my travelers to service providers in Italy.

What I learned along the way

Now I realize that it was fear that kept me from leaping into travel writing: Fear of criticism. Fear that I wouldn't succeed. And fear of not being able to come up with the words that editors and readers would find interesting.

To overcome those fears, I had to stop making excuses. I had to envision what success would look like for me as a travel writer. What it would feel like daily. And, what it would look like on my calendar.

Making progress

Over the last year, I've been taking baby steps and dipping my toes in the water. Being accepted as a regular contributor to a restaurant review blog was huge for me along with meeting the challenge of hard, fast deadlines and specific word count. Here's a link to my first published [review](#).

To be successful at travel writing, I knew I had to create daily writing habits. I'm seeing improvements and feeling more self-confident. I never knew I

had so much to say! The challenge now isn't coming up with the words, it's writing to meet the lower word count guidelines.

Blast-off time

This year on my 65th birthday, the planets finally aligned. Thankfully, 40 years of past work provided the financial security to meet family responsibilities and allow me to pursue my travel writing career full-time.

I jumped into the deep end of the pool with what I call my "Blast-off trip" through the Midwest, Southwest and Deep South of the U.S. Not only did I request (and receive) assistance from CVBs (Convention and Visitors Bureaus) along the route, I also produced a [story](#) from the trip in less than a week after my return. Soon after that, I created a pictorial article, which is pending publication.

Loving the perks of the job

The biggest attraction of travel writing is undoubtedly the perks that come with story assignments. On this trip alone, these are just some of the perks my husband and I enjoyed:

- Compliments of Memphis Tourism, we visited the world-famous Birthplace of Rock and Roll (Sun Studio). The careers of Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, BB King, Jerry Lee Lewis, and many others launched here. Other tours included the museum dedicated to the history of American Soul Music (Stax Museum); the historic National Civil Rights Museum and landmarks; a paddleboat ride on the Mighty Mississippi; and a private tour (yes, just me and my husband alone in the shuttle bus and a tour of the house and grounds) of Graceland.
- Visit Jefferson Parish arranged a banquet of specialty dishes at a popular restaurant and a swamp tour along with complimentary adult beverages in New Orleans.
- A director gave us a private tour of the plantation she stewards in a small town near New Orleans. She gave a detailed explanation of work currently being performed to preserve and document the history of the plantation. After the tour, she treated us to lunch at a local restaurant.
- On the homeward bound journey, Visit Las Cruces arranged a complimentary dinner as well as an exceptional experience at Spaceport America – the current location for commercial and tourist space travel testing and launches. Talk about zipping down the runway

and blasting off. The tour director revved up the vehicle engines and powered down the two-mile runway. I thought for sure we were going airborne!

Benefits of the Blast Off

My blast-off trip was such a fitting launch for my travel writing career and as a result I have so many experiences to write about. I feel energized like never before.

I'm excited about connecting with my hometown CVB resulting in a regular restaurant review gig. And how fun to hear that as a result of a restaurant I wrote about in Orvieto, Italy recently, 15 people dined there at one sitting. I guess that makes me an "influencer" now, right?

My husband proudly introduces as a travel writer these days. Undoubtedly, he's enjoyed sharing the benefits of travel with me this past year. And since he's become the final editor of my articles before publication, I can truly say we're in this business together!

I'm so happy that since last October I've managed to have 16 articles published with two additional pending.

I made my great escape into a travel writing career. And I know you can, too!