



Evita Robinson/Nomadness

THE INTEL

How Travelers Can Make This Moment of Reckoning Count

Evita Robinson has spent years calling for greater representation in travel. Now that companies seem to be listening, she asks: What are we going to do about it?

BY EVITA ROBINSON

August 4, 2020

We've been here before. Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd. We pause. We say their names. We protest another Black life lost at the hands of police brutality. We eventually move on.

But this time the pandemic has slowed the world down just enough for everyone—regardless of race, religion, or socioeconomic status—to take a long hard look at this country. Not only at police brutality, but at the **institutionalized racism** that exists here. And so this moment, while devastatingly late, has **the potential to be different**.





A traveler visiting Pura Penataran Agung Lempuyang in Bali, photographed by Clé Hunnigan, a recent panelist at Robinson's Audacity Fest [The Wind Collective](#)

Over the past few weeks, I've watched travel companies post solidarity memes on social media and [issue statements](#) promising more diversity, but it all feels too little, too late. I should know. I've been advocating for more [diversity in travel](#) for almost a decade. As a Black traveler I know how it feels to worry about how I'll be received abroad; to research how racist a country is before I buy a plane ticket (yes, we actually do this). Being a Black *American* traveler also means that you sometimes find yourself more comfortable in *other countries*, places where you don't have to worry about being shot by police for walking down the street.

There is a movement within the travel industry, but it's been happening for some time. Nine years ago I founded [Nomadness Travel Tribe](#), a community for Black and brown travelers to safely share stories and resources. Our international community has more than 25,000 members. Most look like me: a college-educated, Black, millennial, culturally inclined traveler, with the passport stamps and disposable income to prove it. Nomadness curates trips around the world, from Spain to Samoa, and puts on innovative events, like [Audacity Fest](#), the country's first festival for travelers of color and our allies. In May we brought travel experts of color from all over the world together for our first digital iteration, which had nearly 500 attendees from 24 countries.

In the early days of Nomadness, I was ignored. Phone calls and emails to travel companies, tourism boards, and hotels we wanted to partner with went unanswered. Was it that our community was too new? Or was it that we were too Black? But since George Floyd's murder, my Instagram follower count has skyrocketed and I've found myself having brutally honest conversations with travel brands that have spent years focusing on the white demographic and are only now allocating budget for consultations to foster real change. I have to wonder: Do we finally have your attention?

So as quarantine restrictions lift and borders reopen, I implore the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* to hold the travel industry—and this magazine—to a higher standard. Ask uncomfortable questions: Are hotels creating **marketing campaigns** that reflect the diversity of the world? Are travel media companies hiring Black, Asian, Indian, Hispanic, and Indigenous writers? Are there payment discrepancies between people of color and white employees?

We must make this moment, and this movement, count. The world is watching. The truth is, Black lives more than matter. *Matter* needs to be the baseline. *Matter* is the prerequisite. Black lives, across the globe, must be respected and protected.

*Robinson is the founder of the community Nomadness Travel Tribe and on the advisory board for Condé Nast Traveler's **Women Who Travel**, the leading travel authority for self-identifying women.*

*This article appeared in the August/September 2020 issue of Condé Nast Traveler. **Subscribe to the magazine here.***

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