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Black Women Making Waves in the Travel Industry

FEATURES & ADVICE | [MARIETTE WILLIAMS](#) | MARCH 04, 2022

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A Color Outside group hiking together (photo courtesy of Nailah Blades Wylie)

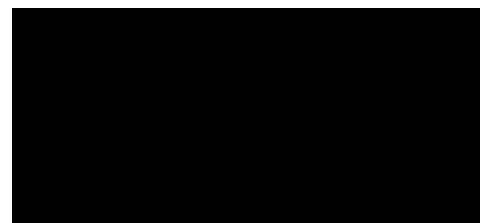
Nailah Blades Wylie wasn't necessarily an outdoorsy person growing up, but when she moved to Salt Lake City, Utah as an adult, she started immersing herself in outdoor activities. The profound mental, physical, and spiritual effects of connecting with nature led Wylie to establish [Color Outside](#), an organization aimed at helping women of color escape their routines and get outside.

The outdoor adventure coach hosts one on one workshops, weekend retreats, and coaching workshops for women who want to get away from the demands of everyday life and reconnect with nature through hiking, kayaking, and exploring Utah's wilderness.

Wylie says, "The biggest success from the retreats and events is witnessing women start to tap back into the things that bring them joy. I've really enjoyed watching women light up after trying something new or connecting with the other women in the group. Even just the simple act of them being able to take the time out to do something that is just for them is life-changing."

Wylie says that it's important for Black women to be more visible in the outdoor

FEATURED VIDEO





Nailah Blades Wylie

space because Black women are going on all types of adventures, but the mainstream image of an outdoor adventurer has remained the same.

"I think that the narrative of the outdoor industry is shifting but I still think there is a lot of work left to be done. The industry has been doing a lot of work on the diversity piece -- showing more representation in marketing, ads, etc. But the industry as a whole is still lacking in the inclusion and equity piece." Wylie adds, "There aren't many Black women in positions of leadership within the industry and Black women are still facing an uphill climb as we work to make changes to the industry."

Wylie isn't alone in her mission to see more Black leadership in the travel industry.

Kelly McCoy is the Tourism Development Coordinator of [Blacks in Tourism](#), an organization that works to promote Black people in travel and tourism leadership roles and to support Black-owned tour companies.



Kelly McCoy

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And for the industry to continue to grow in a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable manner; it's essential to have more Black and Brown tourism industry thought-leaders, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, executives, and managers," McCoy says.

McCoy grew up traveling with her family on road trips, which sparked her love for travel. Now, one of McCoy's roles is to promote tour companies owned by Black women like [Charlotte NC Tours](#) in North Carolina and [A Tour of Possibilities](#), in Memphis, Tennessee.

Black women are also leading international travel tours like Tinashe, the owner, [Tin Trips LTD](#), a travel company that hosts group trips and offers travel planning services. Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Tinashe had an upbringing that helped her appreciate travel and different cultures. Today, she leads tours for women that take her all over the world.

She says, "My company not only empowers black women through travel but also shows black women traveling with elegance and genuinely enjoying exposure to new environments. This also shows other black women in our communities that travel is achievable and that there are other black women out there to travel and network with."

Some of Tinashe's favorite travel destinations are Zanzibar, Tulum, Costa Rica, and Ghana, and she credits today's technology for opening doors for Black women.

"This technology-led world has given us the ability to explore more [travel] leadership by Black people, which I have seen to be vastly from Black women." Tinashe adds, "On each group trip, we always have a diversified level of travel

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the reality of living overseas. Ingram didn't leave the United States until she was 27, but since then, the lawyer and entrepreneur has traveled to 23 different countries. In 2109, she and her husband, with their two children, moved to London and then Singapore and Taiwan for her husband's career.

Ingram decided to share her experience with others in a series titled [The Expats International Ingrams](#) which shares the unique obstacles of being a Black family abroad.



The Expats International family (photo by Juanita Ingram)

Ingram says, "This series tackles tough and relatable issues in an educational yet entertaining way, all while breaking stereotypes and increasing representation of expats of color. The series challenges dangerous stereotypes by setting forth a positive, informative, and entertaining depiction of the Black family and will open up a world of opportunities for viewers seeking to explore options of living abroad."

Ingram's advice to other potential Black expats? Research what your social and personal life will look like, take safety into consideration, and lean into all of the opportunities that are presented with living in another country. Like other Black women leaders in the travel industry, Ingram wants other Black women to be inspired by her journey. When there is increased representation and leadership of women in the travel space, it creates a path for more Black women to follow.

Ingram says, "It's vital that Black women are more visible in the travel space and media because normalizing our existence impacts how we are handled in global or foreign spaces. When we see ourselves in travel media, these depictions can serve as a vehicle for challenging negative stereotypes and providing cross-



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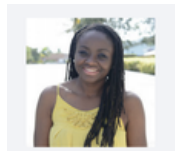
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