



We've done both, and as we get older and wiser we prefer independent travel. The annoying thing about guided tours, especially multi-day bus trips, is that it seems most of the daytime is taken up on the boring roads. Then, tired and sweaty, we arrive at the hotel in time to shower, eat dinner and go to sleep. Then, the next day, it is the same routine all over again.

Also, on guided group tours every meal is a line up and wait ordeal. Once, on a bus tour in Canada, when we dragged ourselves off the bus and were herded like a flock of sheep into the restaurant, the tables weren't quite ready for us.

A large group of foreign tourists were finishing dinner, and we were told they would soon leave. They didn't soon leave. They were determined to drink more cups of tea, extend conversations or whatever. We waited in our prisoner line for an hour, and the diners could clearly see us there. When the management asked them politely to leave, there was angry response. They stayed longer, maybe just for spite. Similar incidents happened whenever we traveled in lock step to wait at restaurants, museums, hotel check-ins and other group schedules.

Now, when we travel, we make our own decisions. If we find a restaurant crowded, we go somewhere else. If a menu doesn't appeal to us, we go somewhere else. If the motel or hotel is not to our liking, we find another one. If we decide to go to Venice instead of Pisa, we do it.

Guided tours are for people who prefer everything decided for them or are physically unable to travel independently. For us, while we're still able to make our own decisions, we take the road less traveled.