



“The road itself should be an experience!” A Conversation with Road.Travel

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According to [Airbnb's "From Isolation To Connection – Travel in 2021" study](#), 56% of Americans say that a domestic or local destination is preferred for upcoming travels, with one in five wanting their destination to be within driving distance of home. According to Airbnb, “travel by car is the only means of travel that draws majority interest, beating air travel by 17 points.”

That's why it's the perfect time for a solution like [Cerence Tour Guide](#), a new AI-powered application for automotive assistants that brings professional, guided tour content directly into the car, transforming road trips, short jaunts, and everything in between. To enrich Cerence Tour Guide with valuable, industry-leading travel content, we've created an ecosystem of content partners including [Road.Travel](#), an award-winning marketplace for self-guided, packaged road trips that offers expert, step-by-step guidance for more than 800 trip scenarios from 110 cities worldwide, from staycations and weekend getaways to multi-day experiences.

Given Road.Travel's extensive knowledge of all things road trips, we recently sat down with its Co-Founder & CPO, Kirill Khomko, to talk travel trends, how drivers can maximize their road trip experiences, and what makes a great road trip.

Thanks for joining us, Kirill! First thing's first – how do you see travel trends shaping and changing in the wake of Covid-19?

As soon as the Covid-19 pandemic began, we started to notice travelers' growing interest in local travel. Obvious, isn't it? But what was not obvious to travelers is that you don't really need to go far from home to find wonderful places to visit and have great experiences. You just need to get in your car and start driving .

The Road.Travel team is scattered all over the world, but we are all originally from Russia, and that's where we focused our work during the pandemic. Even I , who have been working in the travel industry for more than a decade, was amazed by how many places I haven't seen and didn't know about that were right in front of me – just a couple of hours from my home.

Staycations and weekend getaways are the trend of the modern travel world, transforming the idea of a road trip from a long pre-planned journey to a new lifestyle that can be enjoyed on a weekly basis.

That's great. In your view and with your experience, how do you see Cerence Tour Guide serving drivers as more of them take to their cars as their primary mode of destination travel?

The idea of a car being your personal travel guide has been in our minds at Road.Travel from the very beginning. We are very proud to be in partnership with Cerence to make this dream come true. Wherever you go, whatever you do, you can stay safe in your car that will be guiding you on your journey – isn't that amazing? Soon, self-driving cars will bring this experience to an even higher level.

Together with Cerence, we are bringing the expertise of travel professionals to the in-car experience - and it doesn't mean killing the industry as we know it. We are working on solutions to give travel experts the ways to connect with travelers worldwide and create and share new experiences in a new, modern and actionable format.

What should drivers look for when choosing a road trip destination? What makes for a great road trip?

Do not think of destinations; think of the experience you get between them. The most interesting places can be found outside touristic areas. Explore the map for something unusual on the way. Avoid boring highways – enjoy the scenic, curvy roads. The road itself should be an experience!

Ok, last question – favorite road trip snack and favorite road trip song?

Jamon and cheese during short getaways bring the best memories of road trips to me. As for the music, I won't be able to name just one song; in addition to my role at Road.Travel, I'm a DJ and a radio showrunner, so I'm more into long musical stories. What I like to listen to most on the road is some deep and minimal ambient music. There's nothing better than listening to a soulful drone-ambient hours-long story driving by vast green fields.

Many thanks to Kirill and the Road.Travel team for sharing with us. For more on Cerence Tour Guide, visit <https://www.cerence.com/cerence-products/cloud-services>.