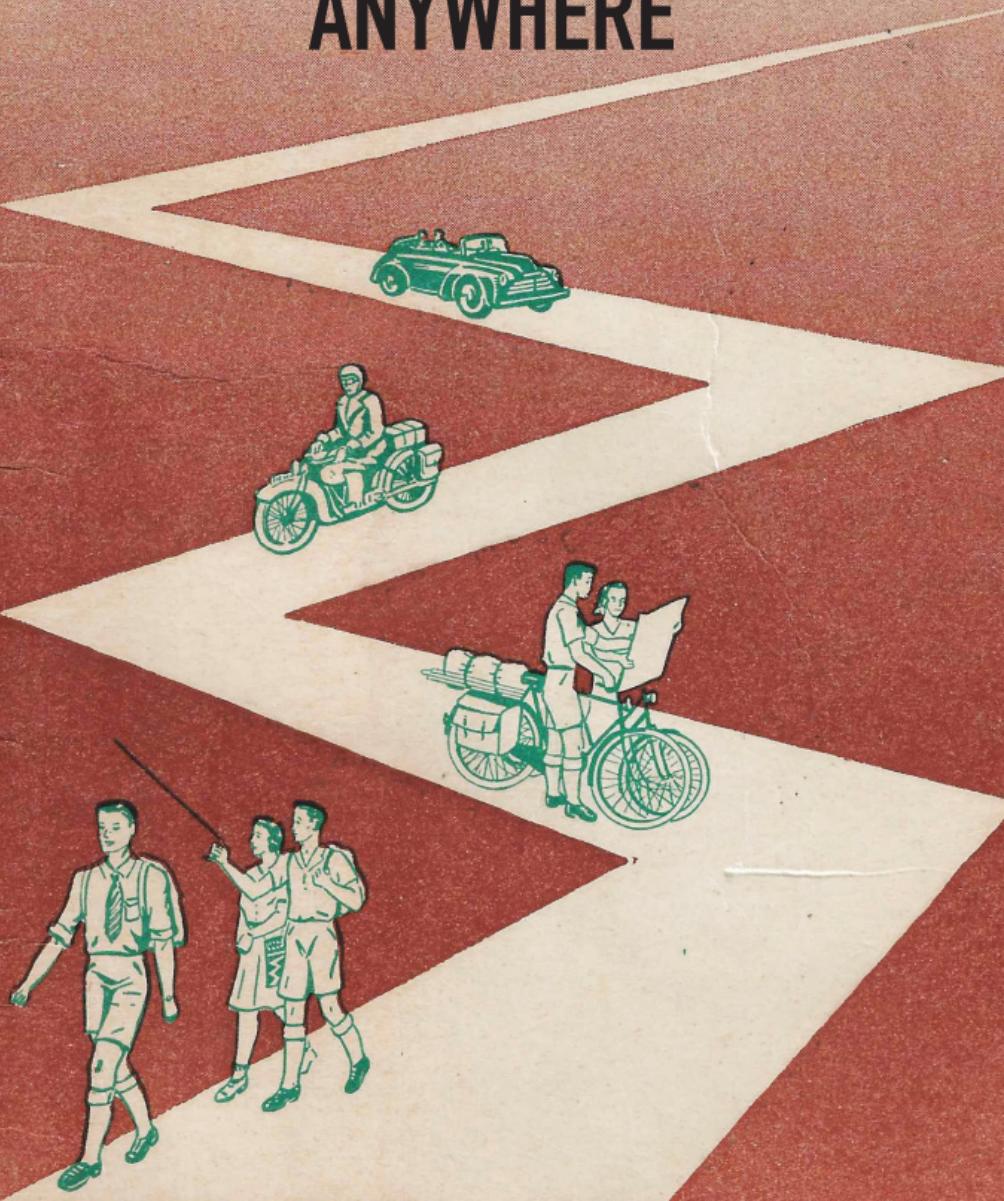


THE  
**VERY SPECIFIC GUIDE**  
TO  
**ANYWHERE**



## INTRODUCTION

How do you sensitise yourself to the places you enter?  
What role does your smartphone play?  
When have you last explored a place that you know through a new lens?

How exciting that you decided to travel with The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere. The guide you are holding is a surrealist travel guide. It is one size fits nowhere, and thus no longer requires travelling to a specific part of the world. We, the makers of The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere, think that travel guides are an interesting medium to consider as methodological tool, because they are “discursive constructions of culture”: they point out what is worth seeing or noticing (Czeitscher & Krautgartner, 2017). Historical travel guides have been used to study what cultural narratives were deemed important or generally thought of as valuable. Today, these narratives have extended into our online realities - they take the shape of selfies, hashtags, and Google reviews.

But how could travel guides also be a tool to enable reflection on what and how we notice as researchers doing fieldwork?

You are about to figure that out with your copy of The Very Specific Guide to Anywhere.  
It is time to embark on a walking tour in your surroundings, and to along the way engage in experimenting, documenting, and reflecting on how your smartphone use and local experience are interlinked - or not.

**Bon voyage!**

## GEAR LIST

- Hiking boots, or other proper boots
- Rainy weather? Bring a raincoat!
- Smartphone, with internet access, a working camera, and a charged battery
- Make sure the following apps are installed before you embark on the excursion: Google Maps, a compass, timer, and optionally: Instagram
- Pen or pencil
- Scissors and a stamp
- Some money - enough to buy a drink in your current surroundings
- Recommended speed: max. 5,25 km/h (regular walking pace)

### Colophon

A Very Specific Guide to Anywhere (38th edition)

Concept: Marlies Vermeulen & Veerle Spronck

Design: Marlies Vermeulen, Veerle Spronck,

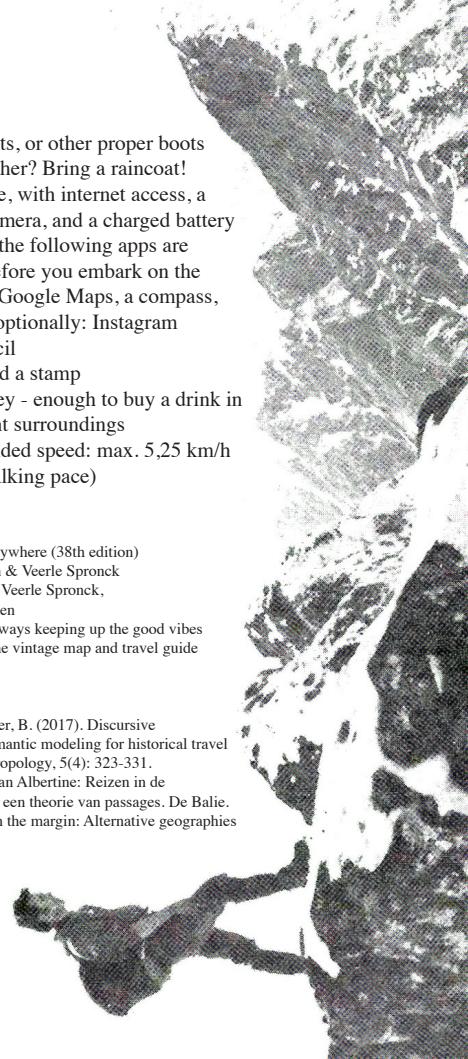
Remy Kroese & Pim Lucassen

Special thanks to Peer for always keeping up the good vibes

All images are taken from the vintage map and travel guide collection of Pim Lucassen

### References

- Czeitscher, U. & Krautgartner, B. (2017). Discursive constructions of culture: Semantic modeling for historical travel guides. *Sociology and Anthropology*, 5(4): 323-331.
- Peters, P. (2003). De haast van Albertine: Reizen in de technologische cultuur: naar een theorie van passages. De Balie.
- Shields, R. (1991). Places on the margin: Alternative geographies of modernity. Routledge.



1.

This tour starts by going over the threshold.

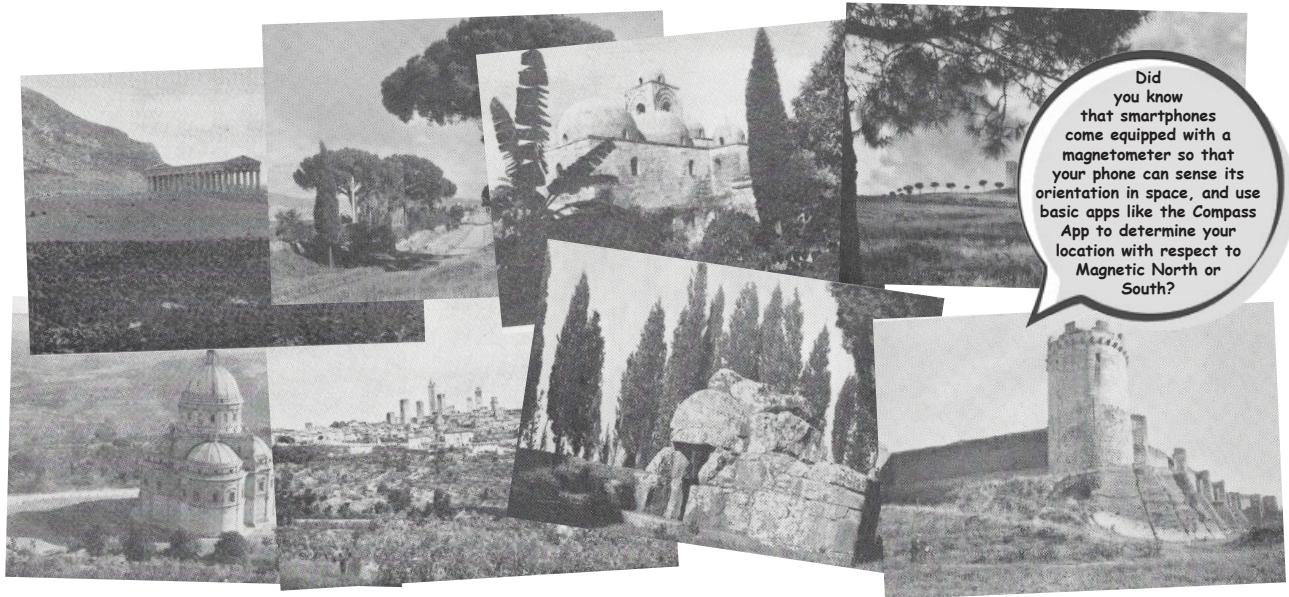
Walk out of the door and close it behind you.

2.

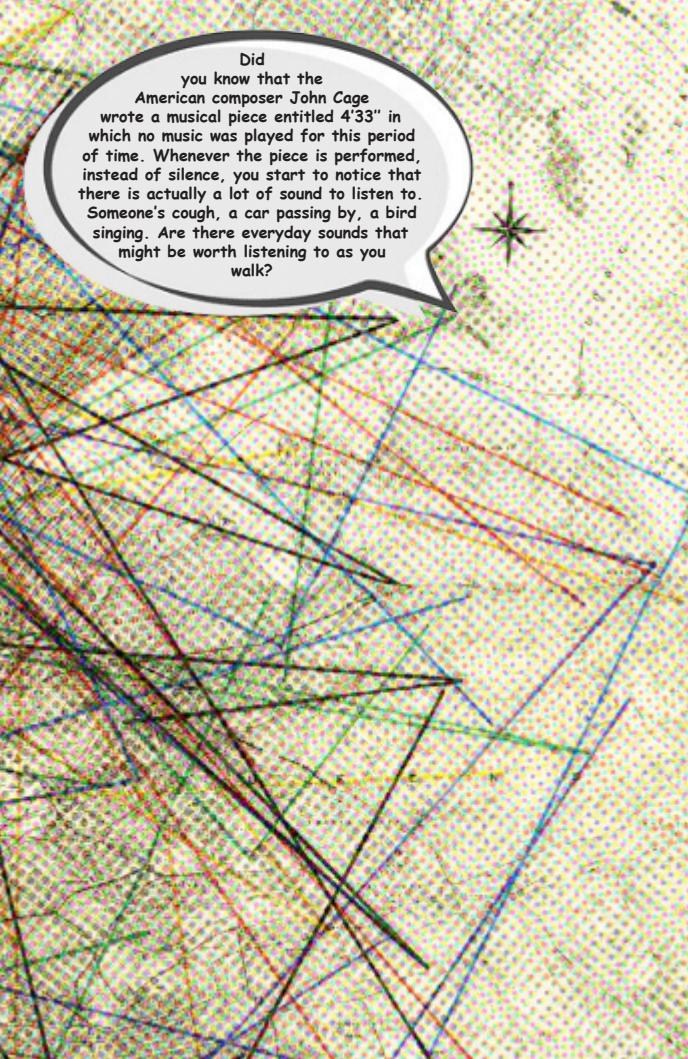
Try to orientate yourself first. Where is the highest point of orientation that you see?

Take your phone, open the compass app. In which direction does your orientation point lie?

You will start walking in that wind direction.



Did you know that smartphones come equipped with a magnetometer so that your phone can sense its orientation in space, and use basic apps like the Compass App to determine your location with respect to Magnetic North or South?



3.

Set a timer for 4 minutes and 33 seconds. Start walking, and while you walk pay attention to what you hear.



4.

What is now the highest point you see?  
Take your smartphone. Open Google Maps, choose the map view so not satellite or terrain, and find your chosen point.

Place a pin.

Let the app now make a route. It will most probably propose three options to you. Choose the most colourful one. Take a screenshot. Which colours are in the map? What do they stand for on the map?

Now continue to walk your route. Walk as far as you like. And take a picture each time you notice something on your way in the same colour as the ones defined on the map.

## 5.

You have now arrived at your ‘Place of interest’.

A ‘place of interest’ is a place famous for its scenery or being a historical site. They are popular places in cities or countries that are considered worthwhile to pay a visit. A place of interest can thus be anything from the Eiffel tower to a gas station.

Such places, however, do not simply attract interest out of nowhere; myths and stories are created around them. Travellers need to have a reason to go somewhere. ‘Sites are never simply locations. Rather, they are sites of someone and of something’ (Shields, 1991: 21). Already in the 19th century, adventurer and businessman Thomas Cook was aware that he needed to collect and share stories about and around places to generate interest for them - “place myths” were created (Peters, 2003: 91-92).

Take a picture of your place of interest, and, if you feel like it, a selfie with it too. Then fill out the required information:

At the beautiful ...

site, close to ...

you find a ...

that dates from ...

It is a great example of ...

At first sight you ...

, but if you look further you might notice ...

Three particulars of this place are:

1 ...

2 ...

3 ...



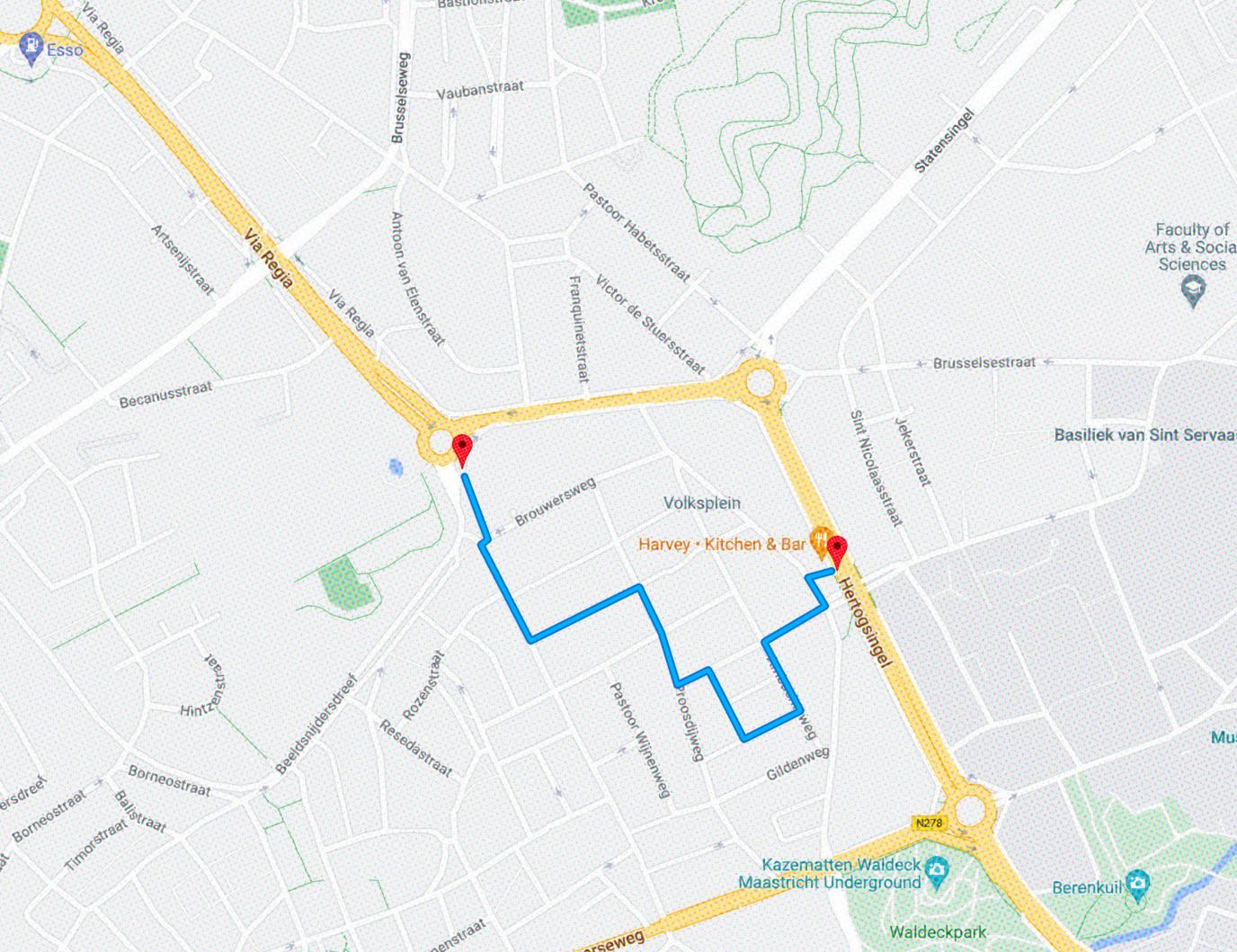
## 6.

At the next page of this travel guide, you can find a map. You will use it to reach your final destination.

As you will see, this map does (most probably) not represent your current location. It is a map of where this travel guide has been created. You will now use it to continue your excursion at your location.

Use the directions on the map at your current location.





7.

You have reached your final destination. Time for a drink! Find the closest establishment where you can sit and enjoy a well-deserved beverage.

Are you seated? Time to document.

Complete the map you have just used at step 6 by adding the route you walked to it, starting from the threshold.

- a. How did you make the map fit your location?
  - b. Look back at the pictures you took at step 4. Compare the pictures you took of the colours along the way and the colours in your screenshot of the map. How do they differ?
  - c. What knowledge did you build on when reading the map? And when you are now mapping your route?

Take a look at the picture you took of your place of interest. Draw it on the postcard. Then turn it around, write down your memories, cut it out, and send it to the person you want to share it with.

- a. What memories did you just write down? Why?
  - b. Places of interest are 'socially constructed'. By making your postcard, you have started to construct a new place of interest.

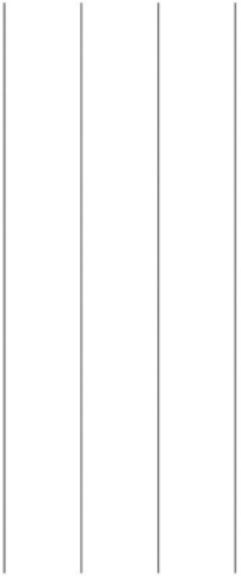
To further establish your place as a place of interest (1) upload the picture to the location on Google Maps and write a review, (2) share the picture and/or the drawing you just made on Instagram with the hashtag #guidetoanywhere and by adding the location.





Greetings from:

...



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**#guidetoanywhere**