secretcitytrails
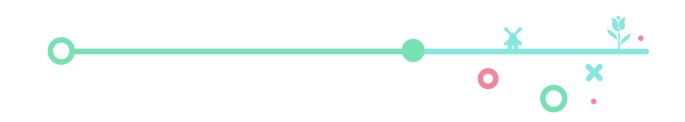
Join our community of Game-Builders

Secret City Trails – our story

We're so excited that you're interested in creating playful city discovery games with us! Before we get into the practicalities of game design, let us tell you a little bit about Secret City Trails and why it exits.

First, our mission is to inspire playful city discovery. We do this by offering cryptic games in cities all over Europe - and beyond! During our games you solve a trail of riddles and unlock forgotten stories as well as local recommendations.

We dare to say that each of our experiences will take you discovering places you didn't know existed. You'll notice details in the city that you would have otherwise easily missed.

Our games are played via a web app that works in any smartphone's browser. You don't have to download anything. All trails are text based only, so you'll be immersed in looking up and around, instead of down at your phone.

We believe our discovery games are a playful, independent, authentic and affordable alternative to regular city discovery activities (i.e. guided (walking) tours).

Secret City Trails was started by Kristina (Slovak) and Wendy (Dutch). We are passionate about travelling, exploring new places and creating unique experiences. On top of that, we care deeply about bringing more playfulness into our lives and that of all adults. Being playful has proven to be good for our health as it increases well-being – it also boosts our creativity and productivity.

One quote on playfulness has been particularly inspiring to us while building our venture, it's by the Greek philosopher Plato, "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play, than in a year of conversation."

We launched our first game in Amsterdam in 2016, via automated text messages (yes, that's a thing!). Today we have nearly 30 games in 11 cities across Europe. And we're looking forward to be working with you to create even more playful experiences all around the globe.

Secret City Trails – designed by you

As a game-builder you know the hidden gems of your city, you have a lively imagination and enjoy playing games yourself. You're curious, playful (naturally!), are intrigued by mystery and enjoy discovering new spots across a city.

With our discovery games, we want to show people (locals and visitors of a city) lesser-known spaces and places; anything from plaques or paintings on buildings and wicked statues to quirky shops and cafes.

What does it take to be a game builder?

Besides knowing your city/neighbourhood inside out, developing games requires a curious and creative mind. Of course, you'll also need time. Once we agree we work together we share our framework/playbook that will help you design immersive and engaging experiences. Below is a high-level overview of what's involved in building a city discovery game in your city.

1. We recommend starting with listing the hidden gems and cool spots you want to include & mapping out the route around the city. *This will mostly likely take 1-3 days.*
2. Once you have a route in mind, walk it yourself and start developing your cryptic clues/riddles connecting one hidden gem to the next, this will be an iterative process. *This can take up to a week.*
3. Next it's time to find **original** stories and recommendations that can be told along your route. *This can take another few days.*
4. Then it's time to input your clues, hints and stories onto our platform *(half a day)* and organise a minimum of 5 teams to test play your trail (for free in return for feedback on the clues, their hints, the stories and the overall route, as well as experience.)

5. Based on feedback from test players, clues and hints will be amended, maybe even part of the route. *This usually happens over 1-2 weeks, depending on tester's availability.*

6. *In the unlikely case of negative feedback from your testers, we may decide to redesign the game entirely to ensure a great experience.*

7. Next we will provide a framework for the experience description on our website and share examples of photos. You'll then put together the description and share the photos (taken with a camera, not a phone). We'll review and upload to our site.

8. As soon as the experience is live on our website we'll both promote it and you'll enjoy a 50/50 revenue share model, after VAT.

9. Of course, a game needs regular check-ups. You as a game-builder are responsible to make sure trail is in good condition - which means regularly check on clues in case of (re)construction or changes in the city.

10. You'll be paid monthly by Secret City Trails, receiving 50% of the price (after VAT). As an example, taking into account VAT, on a game of 20 euros, you'll receive approx 8 euros per sale.

Any questions, contact us at hello@secretcitytrails.com