



How to organize a toy photo safari in 10 minutes

by Julien Ballester (aka Ballou34)

After going to Sweden, Germany, or the UK we (see Stuck in Plastic [1], the international toy photographer collective) organized our annual toy photo safari in one of the most beautiful cities in the world: Paris. I know, I am a bit biased because it's my home city and I was the one organizing it.



The Fellowship of the Brick – by Shtacyp

But what is a “toy photo safari”?

To explain simply, it's a gathering of people trying to capture snapshots of toys coming to life in outdoor environments. Like if we were chasing animals in the savanna for pictures – we are doing the same with our LEGO® minifigures.

For this edition, which we have called 'SiP goes Paris 2018' [2], 20 people from seven countries (Czech Republic, England, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Turkey and France) came to Paris. We spent three full days and walked around 50 km, taking thousands of pictures with hundreds of LEGO® minifigures (and a few other toys).



Ready for a great toy photo safari - by Ballou34

If you want to learn more about what we did during those three days, I invite you to read our blog post on the subject (<https://www.stuckinplastic.com/2018/06/sip-went-paris-2018/>) as well as the nice comments people left on our digital guest book (<https://www.stuckinplastic.com/2018/07/sip-went-paris-2018-the-guest-book/>).

Toy photo safaris are a great opportunity to meet other people who share the same passion for toys and photography. We, at

Stuck In Plastic, organize international meets, but you can also organize a local meet-up in your area. So, let me share with you some tips I learned to make your own toy photo safari a great one.



The ghosts of the Louvre – by HerrSM

1) Social media

When you organise an event like this, talk about it online. Social media are a great way to invite people to come and participate. To help with your communication, have some kind of picture or poster that you can use to talk about it and a hashtag corresponding to your event so that people can use it when sharing pictures online.

In our case, I used a picture that I took on the heights of Paris and I even created a logo corresponding to the hashtag of our safari #SiPgoesParis2018.



Welcome to Paris - by Ballou34

2) Location

When you come to a toy photo safari, you will be discovering the city/place you're in so as to take pictures in cool locations. A minimum of scouting is necessary in advance to prepare for it. If you live in the area, you should know some nice places to bring people to. It's not always easy to know how long people will like to stay in one spot to take pictures so be flexible with the schedule. No need to rush.



Sacré Cœur – by Lolitabrick



Dashing in Paris – by Nutelasabe

For SiP goes Paris 2018, I had a tour of Paris prepared on paper. Everyday, we would go to different places in the city and reach them either by foot or public transportation. Except for the first location of each day (and the dinner, which I booked - see below), no specific time was planned. That way, if people liked one place in particular, we could spend hours there without feeling rushed for time.

3) Food

Food is important :)

Despite spending time together taking pictures, photography is a solitary pastime. Indeed, although it is great to collaborate with other toy photographers on pictures, most of the time you are in your own bubble, creating stories. So it is important to have some social time together when taking breaks. And lunch and dinner are the perfect moments.



Happy together – by Mickebg



French spiders – by Fubiken

I brought everyone to the famous landmarks in Paris (the Eiffel tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, The Louvre pyramid, the Sacré Coeur) but I also wanted to share some lesser known places where I like to take pictures (a cemetery in Montmartre, some abandoned train tracks, and several parks and gardens).

So if you are planning a meet-up on a day, organize lunch in a restaurant, and if you plan one taking place over several days, you can pick up sandwiches for midday and have dinner in restaurants. It will be a great time to chat and socialize with your fellow photographers. So pick a good restaurant and people will be happy.



T-Rapped in Paris – by Reiterlied

It's interesting because when you come back to these places with friends you discover them from another angle, another point of view. Even though we all spend time in the same location, we won't all use it the same way and that's very instructive.



Too much wind – by LEGO__fun

4) Activities

One thing we like to do during our toy safaris is the print exchange. The idea is simple. You bring prints to give to others and in exchange you will receive the gift of prints from everyone else. It's a great time. It does get a bit messy when the prints from everyone are moving around the table but you will leave with great souvenirs. I love it. Personally, after a toy safari I will bring these prints back to my office and hang them on the wall. It's a living wall growing like a disease at work. A lot of colleagues are coming to my office, just to check out the new additions.



Making friends – by Stepping_on_bricks

Another thing we did on a previous toy safari was the “One toy to share” (<https://www.stuckinplastic.com/2017/10/one-toy-to-share-in-scotland/>). For that, we brought one toy and everyone had to take a picture of it during the weekend. It's fun to see how we all used it in a different way with our own style. It's a good exercise that we need to try again next time.



Vroom vroom – by Pulup

For this toy photo safari, we improvised a big football match (that's 'soccer' for our friends on the other side of the pond). Everyone put some minifigs around in a sports event and we took pictures of them. It's funny to see how we all framed this match differently. It shows how collaboration is something really fun to explore during toy photo safaris.



The soccer match – Picture by @Reiterlied

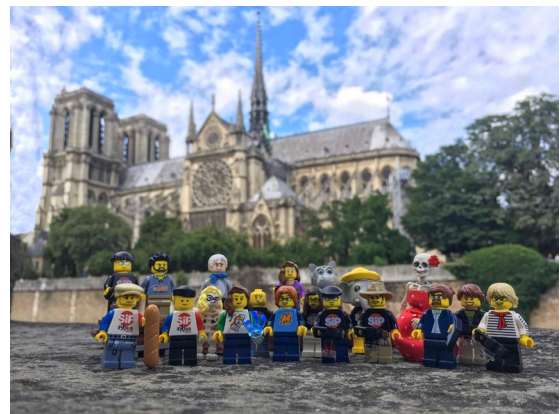
5) The people

In the end, with all the preparation you can put in, the best thing to do is to have fun. It's ok if you have to improvise. Some events that you did not plan will occur during the weekend, and you will just have to roll with it.



The little world of Paris – by Eatmybones

But the most important thing is that you are among friends. You will learn a lot from the people who will accompany you. Spending time with people is why we do those events. We are not just Instagram handles. We are people.



The traditional Sigfig groupie – Picture by @_Me2_

Last words

I hope this article will help you make a leap of faith. You can join us for our next toy photo safari that will take place in 2019. We don't know the location yet, but we are working on it. We hope to see you there.

Julien and the Stuck In Plastic crew

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[1] <http://www.stuckinplastic.com>

[2] You can find all the pictures of the event using the hashtag [#SiPgoesParis2018](#) on Instagram