

What is a Tour Ambassador?

Tour Ambassadors for Hop Head Tours are part adventure guide, part concierge, part historian, and part sommelier. You will be actively guiding our guests as they embark upon an educational adventure that typically visits 3-4 brewery, winery, and/or distillery locations over the course of 4-5 hours. Our Tour Ambassadors (TA's) lead from the front, either driving our shuttle bus or riding lead bike, as they provide local historical context, pertinent tour stop information, tasting and appreciation guidance, and giving recommendations based upon our guests' tastes. TA's are also responsible for maintaining the tour schedule and bus cleanliness, ensuring guest comfort, taking photos and gathering other marketing materials, as well as building and maintaining positive relationships with our business partners and potential guests/clients.

Is this a full-time job?

No. Tours typically take place Thursday through Sunday, last 4-5 hours, and Tour Ambassadors can expect to be scheduled for one tour a week, and at least 3 times per month. With time and experience, however, that number may increase for you. We cannot guarantee that a tour will run— sometimes we do not get enough reservations or inclement weather may cancel certain tours or events. We pride ourselves on our communication with our guests, partners and staff and you will always be kept up to date on the status of a scheduled tour.

What times do tours run?

On weekdays, tours typically run in the early evening (5pm-5:30pm) and end between 9- 10pm. On weekends, tour shifts can vary, but typically run late morning (10:30am-11:30am) until early evening (3:30pm-5:30pm), or evening (5pm-10pm). Tour scheduling is heavily dependent on the availability of our business partners and guest preference. Our tour schedule changes from season to season, but you are encouraged to look at the website (www.hopheadtours.com) to view our current tour lineup and gauge how that could fit into your schedule.

How are Tour Ambassadors scheduled?

Tour Ambassador schedules are typically set up one month in advance, though TA's are encouraged to let a Tour Manager know of any scheduling conflicts as early as possible- even if it is several months out. We utilize a tour scheduling software that also has an available smart-phone app that will allow you to see scheduled tours, times and dates, number of guests, and assigned staff members.

Keep in mind that being scheduled for a tour means you are considered "on call" until we confirm that the tour is running. There are situations in which scheduled tours may not run (inclement weather, not enough reservations, cancellations, etc) so we cannot guarantee that you will always be running a tour you are scheduled for. Cancellation of a tour is typically communicated to guests, staff, and business partners the day prior to the scheduled tour departure.

Why do I have to be 26+ years of age to work for Hop Head Tours?

Our insurance requires that our vehicle operators be at least 26 years of age, have a driver's license, clean driving record, and be accepted by our insurance provider. New Tour Ambassadors will need to provide proof of this before they will be allowed to run a bus tour and employment for running bus tours is contingent upon approval by our insuring agent.

Do I get to drink alcohol while working as a Tour Ambassador?

No, our Tour Ambassadors are not typically allowed to consume alcoholic beverages, particularly in cases where you will be driving a bus. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding the use or consumption of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs prior to or during a tour. Maintaining a safe environment for our guests is of paramount importance to us and Tour Ambassadors that violate that policy may be subject to immediate termination.

With that said, there are certain types of tours or events where you may be permitted to drink (e.g. bike tours, beer festivals, chartered tours). Under those circumstances, consumption of alcoholic beverages may be permitted in moderation. You will be representing Hop Head Tours at all times, interacting with our guests, business partners, and potential clients and we expect that you will be an exemplary representative at all times.

Will I be doing any public speaking?

Yes, it will be critical part of your role as a Tour Ambassador. Typical tours range from 3-14 guests. Public speaking is a skill that is learned with practice and time, and this can be a fantastic opportunity to grow in both skill and comfort speaking to groups. We expect that new Tour Ambassadors will have at least a modicum of skill or comfort in order to run a tour effectively.

Will I have a script to work from when giving a tour?

Yes, particularly when training. We have a reasonable amount of information and history to communicate to our guests and we expect that you will initially be studying and using the information provided for this purpose. As you grow in skill, knowledge and experience, we expect that you will put your own spin on a tour, inject your own personality, and tailor your tour to the guests you are guiding.

What job experience do you look for?

We prefer if candidates with experience in hospitality, tourism, food/bar service, or teaching fields. Your primary role as a Tour Ambassador is to act as a host taking care of our guests, helping to educate them about the beverages they will be sampling and the history surrounding those beverages. You will be answering questions, providing an engaging environment and ensuring their tour goes smoothly. We have found that candidates with these types of job experience do well as Tour Ambassadors.

Further, you will be spending much of your time in tap rooms, brew pubs, and production facilities. Knowing how these environments operate and how to make yourself useful to staff (and when to stay out of the way) improves our guest experience and builds relationships with our partners.

Will I be driving a “drunk bus?”

No. For both safety and insurance reasons, we limit our guest’s consumption while on the tour. Further, visually inebriated guests will not be allowed to board our bus prior to the start of the tour. While we have had almost no instances of such behavior, you will have the authority and full support of Hop Head Tours to remove guests that become over-intoxicated during a tour or show up drunk. Hop Head Tours prides itself on providing safe, fun, and engaging tours that focus on appreciation and education and we try to make that as clear as possible to our guests prior to them arriving for a tour.

Do you take people to bars?

No. Hop Head Tours works primarily with the creators of your favorite beverages (breweries, wineries, and distilleries) rather than the purveyors of those beverages (bars). Further, our TA’s do not lead “drunk bus,” “pub crawl,” or “pedal tavern” style tours. While we at Hop Head Tours think those types of tours can be fun and have their place in the alcohol tourism industry, it is not our business model, nor do we intend to implement tours such as those in the future. We are always happy to direct potential guests looking for that type of experience to one of the numerous companies that provide those styles of tours. Our goal is to provide a safe and educational environment that appeals to our guests and business partners alike.

Some privately chartered tours and special events may start, pick-up, end, or have tour stops at such locations, though it is extremely rare and is thoroughly communicated prior to the tour or event. Our rules regarding over-intoxication still apply under these circumstances (see “Will I be driving a “drunk bus” above).

Is it hard to drive the bus?

No. It can be intimidating at first if you have little or no experience with large vehicles, but like anything, you will get very comfortable with practice. Our busses are similar to hotel or airport shuttles and do not require a CDL or special licensure to drive. You will be trained extensively on driving the bus prior to your first tour including a safety certification and numerous practice driving sessions.

What other qualities should I have if I am considering applying for this position?

Reliable- As a very small company with few employees, we rely on our Tour Ambassadors to be available when scheduled, show up on time, and deliver consistently high quality tours. Our business and reputation rely heavily upon being reliable, and so we seek out this trait in our Tour Ambassadors.

Passionate- A genuine interest and passion in brewing, winemaking, and/or distilling always comes through when you are guiding a tour. Having Tour Ambassadors with this passion is what sets us apart from our competition and helps us provide unique value to our guests.

Multi Tasker- You will be juggling multiple tasks while on tours. For example: Keeping an eye on the tour schedule timing while taking photos for social media and giving beverage recommendations to a particularly hard to please guest- all at the same time. It can get hectic at times and seem overwhelming, but with practice, it becomes second nature.

Composure- While we do our best to eliminate the possibility of surprises for our staff and guests, things inevitably do go wrong from time to time, and unforeseen situations are to be expected. Maintaining your composure, minimizing these situations, and keeping a tour moving forward to the best of your ability, regardless of the circumstances, will provide value to our guests even in the worst situations.

Local Knowledge- Our guests frequently come from other cities or states and as such, you may find yourself acting as a local ambassador or expert. Whether it is dining, arts, nightlife, history, or some other area of interest, our guests will ask for your opinion or expertise. Knowing how to answer questions or help them find something of interest can help tremendously in adding value to their tour and their visit to the city. It certainly doesn't hurt to know your way around the city when traffic gets bad either.

Perceptive- Every tour group is different and they often contain sub-groups with different interests and expectations of the tour. The ability to identify and cater to those interests and expectations is another area where we can add value for our guests. This includes knowing when to engage our guests and when to let them build relationships amongst themselves, when to add pertinent information or context- and when not to, and ultimately, gauging a groups interest in the various topics we cover on a tour and tailoring your tour to meet those interests and/or expectations.

Personable- You will be interacting constantly with our guests and business partners during the course of a tour. Having an approachable, friendly, and engaging personality is an absolute must for our Tour Ambassadors. We expect that you will do your best to ensure that our guests and business partners alike feel welcome and valued at all times.

Non-judgmental- Guests, prospective clients, and our business partners all come from various walks of life and each person on your tour has their own unique likes or dislikes. Alcohol doesn't judge, and neither do we. The ability to provide non-judgmental advice or recommendations is very important for our Tour Ambassadors- even better if you can help our guests safely explore and understand their own tastes or expand their palate.

Knowledgeable- Whether it is the fermentation process, industry knowledge, or simply higher level appreciation, having some knowledge about alcohol will be important. We do extensive training with our staff, but having a decent knowledge base never hurts. Your guests may look to you as a subject matter expert, and being able to confidently answer questions can add tremendous value to a tour. We

expect that our TA's will communicate accurate information to our guests and be willing to build upon existing knowledge.

Do I have to be an expert?

No. While we prefer our candidates to have a reasonable knowledge base before starting, we do provide extensive training and even offer opportunities for Cicerone Beer Server Certification. We want to communicate to our guests a wide variety of information regarding the history, process, industry, market, and appreciation of alcoholic beverages. Candidates with strong desire to learn about these topics or build upon an existing knowledge base are encouraged to apply.

What are the benefits of working as a Tour Ambassador?

We pride ourselves on providing a living wage for our Tour Ambassadors- even as a part time position. Further, we provide opportunities to build your practical knowledge of the various fermentation sciences, learn from local experts, interact with leaders in the industry, gain useful certifications, and ultimately, get paid to talk about something you love and are passionate about to a captive audience.

You will have the opportunity to develop your public speaking and presentation skills, meet and interact with a diverse group of people, attend industry events, and finish your work day at reasonable time.

What if I have other skills that may be useful to Hop Head Tours?

We are a small company and everyone wears many hats. We always welcome folks that have other skills and professional experience they can share. Do let us know if you have any other skills that you think are pertinent when submitting your application. It never hurts.

For example: If you fluently speak another language or have some awesome skills or experience in a field that could be useful in a business or marketing environment.

What types of events and tours do you run?

Aside from our bus and bike tours, Hop Head Tours promotes at beer festivals, hosts beer paired dinners with local restaurants and breweries, charters regional beer tour vacations, delivers beer education events for local organizations, partners with Visitor & Convention Bureaus for events, and runs free shuttles during events like Craft Beer Week.

Why is the training process so rigorous?

We want to provide our guests with the highest quality experience that exceeds their value expectations and as such, we require our staff to undergo an extensive training program before they are allowed to take out a tour group unsupervised.

Becoming comfortable and confident with the material takes time and practice- and like anything that requires frequent repetition to get good. Your first six weeks of employment is designed to give you the repetition we feel is required to build your knowledge base and competency. We want you to be successful in this role and feel that a strong commitment at the start will help you tremendously once you are running tours on your own.

How will I be compensated?

Tour Ambassadors earn \$15/ hour (\$10/ hour when training) and are expected to track their hours worked. At the end of every month, Tour Ambassadors are expected to submit their work hours and will receive a check that corresponds with the number of hours submitted within one week of submission.

It is not uncommon for our guests to reward TA's who perform well on a tour with a tip at the end of the tour. This is not an expectation on the part of Hop Head Tours, nor do we track such tips. What you do with any tips is up to you.

What other organizations do you work with?

Hop Head Tours works with numerous organizations throughout Wisconsin and the Midwest including:

Wisconsin Department of Tourism (TravelWI)

Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau

Milwaukee Convention and Visitors Bureau

Circle Wisconsin

Do I have to give facility tours?

While it is uncommon, there are times that Tour Ambassadors may be required to give brief tours of production facilities. A vast majority of the time, we rely on our business partners to provide technical tours of their facilities, though certain tours (or odd circumstances) might dictate that our TA's give a facility tour. We only ever do so with the express consent of the brewery, winery or distillery. We train our TA's extensively on the production process, but understand that our TA's will not know everything there is to know about a specific production facility.

Will I be giving a guided beer tasting?

Yes. A fully trained Tour Ambassador will be expected to have the body of knowledge required to lead our guests on a guided tasting of 3-4 beer styles including proper tasting and appreciation process,

origins and history of iconic beer styles, discussion of key ingredients that define the sampled styles, and unique production aspects of any sampled styles.

Do I have to wear a uniform?

Our Tour Ambassadors are provided with seasonally appropriate Hop Head Tours branded attire (typically t-shirts, sweatshirts, or bike jerseys) and the rest is at the discretion of the Tour Ambassador. We do expect that other clothing choices made by our TA's will be inoffensive and work appropriate regarding both our guests and business partners. Otherwise, we encourage casual and comfortable work clothes for our Tour Ambassadors. TA's running bicycle tours will be expected to wear prescribed safety gear when appropriate throughout their tours for their own safety and as a model for our guests.