**COMPANY INFO + HISTORY**

[Traveling Spoon](http://www.travelingspoon.com/" \t "_blank) connects travelers with authentic food experiences, from market tours to homecooked meals to cooking classes, with locals around the world. The company’s mission is to make travel more meaningful. 100% of experiences are private, and 100% of hosts are vetted.

Learn how to make pasta from an Italian in her central Florence home, or grind curries from scratch on a family farm in Thailand.

The company was founded by Aashi Vel and Steph Lawrence in 2013. Lawrence and Vel met at the Haas School of Business and quickly realized their shared passion for food and travel, and for helping travelers to connect with meaningful travel experiences and preserving food traditions.

Traveling Spoon has been featured in New York Times, National Geographic, Travel+Leisure, Travel Channel, Forbes, the Chicago Tribune, AFAR and more. The company has won the Dartmouth Entrepreneurship Forum, Women 2.0 People's Choice Award and the Berkeley Venture Lab competition.

Traveling Spoon currently operates in 50 countries and 160+ cities across the globe, from Asia to Europe to Central and South America. Notable advisors and investors include Erik Blachford (former CEO Expedia), George Butterfield (founder of Butterfield & Robinson), Anjan and Emily Mitra (owners of DOSA SF) and Alice Waters (owner of Chez Panisse and founder Edible Schoolyard Project).

**FOUNDER BIOS**

**Aashi Vel** is a food and travel enthusiast with a deep passion for creative problem-solving and product innovation. Aashi has 11 years of experience as an industrial design professional managing teams of designers and engineers developing life-changing products. Her expertise in user-centered research, and experience in product development enables her to transform consumer insights into marketable products. A patent holder, Aashi has designed products that have received the IDEA, Good Buy, and Institute of Packaging Professionals awards. Aashi is a magna cum laude graduate of the Savannah College of Art & Design and received her MBA from Haas.

**Steph Lawrence** has a background in marketing and business strategy and a depth of experience in the social sector, where she spent five years as a non-profit consultant focusing on emerging markets. She has launched a number of successful websites and marketing campaigns, most recently working with Alice Waters and the Chez Panisse Foundation to develop their national rebranding campaign. She has a deep passion for food and travel and has strong industry ties. An award-winning food blogger and photographer, Steph graduated with honors from Dartmouth College and received her MBA with honors from Haas.