Mobile technology is playing an increasing role in the tourist experience and a growing body of tourism research focuses on this area. There is often an implicit assumption that tourists embrace mobile connectivity and much research analyses the opportunities this brings and the strategies to leverage benefits. Relatively little research has explored the tourist experience of disconnection. This can be purposeful or imposed by technological limitations. Research shows the tourist is not ‘always connected’ and there is ambiguity about some forms of digital connectivity. Drawing on empirical data from several studies and contemporary literature from the tourism, leisure and geography fields I raise questions about established tourism concepts such as ‘escape’. Mobile technology has led to new social practices which have to be carefully negotiated by users. New perspectives are emerging of the tourist experience, the connection to home and the friction encountered in corporeal and virtual travel. This will be discussed in the context of mobile technology solutions in tourism and leisure.

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