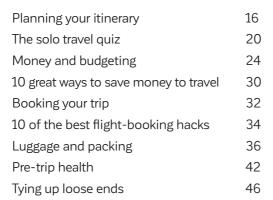


CONTENTS

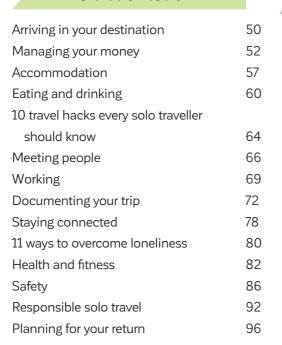
OECIOING TO GO

Why go solo? 6
What's stopping you? 8
10 lessons you learn
about yourself while
travelling solo 12

BEFORE YOU GO



ON THE ROAD



inspiration: 10 great trips for solo travellers



Singapore 120

Best for culture:

Rome 125

Best for a city break:

Portland, Oregon, USA 129

Best for a tropical island escape:

Caye Caulker, Belize 132

Best for road-tripping:

East Coast Australia 137

inspiration: SOLO TRAVEL TALES

Solo travel tales 140
Resources 154



Budget breakdown

\$ = BUOGET \$\$ = MIO-RANGE \$\$\$ = TOP-ENO

LGBT-friendliness indicator

LONELY PLANET WRITERS HAVE RATEO DESTINATIONS FROM 1 TO 5 BASEO ON THEIR FRIENOLINESS TOWARDS SAME—SEX COUPLES. 1 INDICATES THE LEAST LGBT—FRIENDLY PLACES, AND 5 REPRESENTS THE DESTINATIONS THAT ARE MOST WELCOMING.





Powder-white sand beaches. Lush, tropical rainforests. Vibrant, ancient cultures. Local markets that almost literally pop with colour. Not a day goes by where you don't secretly wish you were living your Instagram feed, but you can't convince anyone to take a trip with you. So, why don't you go by yourself?

Sure, the idea of travelling alone might sound daunting to a first-timer. Too much, even. But with a little bit of confidence and a generous dose of preparation, you'll find that travelling solo won't just be fun, but more rewarding than you ever imagined.

THE PRACTICAL PERKS

Solo travel is the ultimate indulgence, because it's all about you. When you're in charge of your own schedule, you can go where you want and do what you want, when you want and how you want. You're free to meet new people - which tends to be easier when you're travelling solo - and really soak up the destination without any distractions. You can travel as fast as you want, or take as much downtime as you like, without having to justify your choices to anyone but yourself. Enjoy it!

THE PERSONAL JOURNEY

Solo travel offers the ultimate opportunity for self-reflection and development. At home, our friends, families, employers and colleagues all play roles in influencing the way we live our lives. Travelling alone, you can escape these influences and make your own decisions. Without a travel partner to delegate some of those decisions to, your problem-solving ability increases, making you a more independent, more fearless solo traveller in the process. Expect to get to know yourself better, discovering strengths you didn't know you had, as well as wish to work on. Embrace it.

CHALLENGING THE SINGLE STIGMA

There must be something wrong with you if you travel alone, said no one ever. Yet, somehow, a stigma still persists. Fortunately, it's changing. A raft of recent studies have shown solo travel is on the increase and, as more people begin to embrace it, the image of solo travel is being redefined as a luxury rather than some sort of back-up plan. If you're living a fabulously independent life at home, there's no reason why you can't have a similarly fantastic experience on the road. Own it.





WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?

You can make a million excuses for not wanting to travel on your own, and you'll always find more - unless you make the conscious choice to confront your solo-travel fears. To give you a friendly push in the right direction, we've broken down some of the most common solo-travel fears, so they don't seem so scary at all.



'i DON'T THINK I'M BRAVE OR OUTGOING ENOUGH'

Travelling solo isn't necessarily synonymous with being an adrenalin junkie or even an extrovert. If you're the shy or timid type, ease into solo travel by taking a tour so you can get used to new destinations before breaking away to do your own thing, or choose an easy travel destination – perhaps in your home country – where you can work on building your confidence in more familiar surroundings. Being somewhat forced to talk to people while travelling alone, whether it's to ask for directions or order a meal, has a wonderful way of bringing people out of their shells.

MY WORRIED ABOUT THE (057)

There is no rule that says solo travel is more expensive than group travel. It can often be cheaper, as you don't have to compromise on where you stay, eat or play. Opt for tour companies that don't charge a single supplement and/or match you with a roommate (p27). Consider staying in a dorm to cut down on hotel-room costs, ask about discounts for single occupancy.

Ti 2i' EVEN SAFE? This is a perfectly legitimate concern for every traveller, and one that should be kept in mind with regard to all decisions you make on the road. While travelling alone is often seen as riskier than travelling in a group, this is not always the case. Travelling solo, you are forced to be aware of your personal safety, whereas in a group you may let your guard down and expose your vulnerability. Choosing a destination where you feel comfortable travelling is the first step to keeping this fear in check. See p86 for more tips on staying safe on the road as a solo traveller.

WHAT'S STOPPING YOU? THE SOLO TRAVEL HANDBOOK



The people who love you should not make you feel guilty for wanting to follow your travel dream. Just as they have a responsibility to support you, you also have a responsibility to support them by making an effort to stay in touch and keep them involved in your life while you're on the road. Fortunately, there are now more gadgets and apps than ever to help you stay connected; see p79 for the lowdown.



There are times while travelling alone that you will be forced to make do with your own company. Enjoy it. Take the opportunity to observe and savour the world around you, read a book or start a diary. Most solo travellers will find that it is actually easier to meet people when they are on their own, with locals, hotel staff and waiters often going out of their way to engage solo travellers in conversation. There are also plenty of great ways to meet people on the road, even in places you'd least expect; see p66 for Lonely Planet's top 10.



'TAKING MY FIRST SOLO TRIP WAS THE BEST THING I'VE EVER DONE FOR MY RELATIONSHIP'

'I was in a relationship when I took my first solo trip and I felt incredibly selfish about travelling at a time when my boyfriend couldn't. I booked my one-way flight on an impulse and, when I told him, he assured me it would be OK because he'd travelled solo himself and understood my need to have this experience. Prioritising my needs during the trip sparked my love for travel. Today, we're happily married and we run a travel blog together fulltime.' - Phoebe Lee, travel blogger, littlegreybox.net. Read about Phoebe's first solo trip on p144.



'QUITTING MY HIGH-POWERED JOB TO TRAVEL WAS EXACTLY WHAT MY (AREER NEEDED'

'After spending 15 years building a successful career in fashion, people thought I was crazy when I gave it all up to walk solo across Spain. But it was a case of now or never. I'd always wanted to start my own business but had never been brave enough to do it. I figured if I could make this walk by myself, I could do anything. And that's what happened. After walking 775km, I found the strength to believe in my idea and back myself, and I've never looked back.' – Kat Fahey, wedding planner. Read about Kat's life-changing solo trip on p152.



Whether you're quitting your job to travel, or taking a 10-day break that feels more like a year in your fast-paced life, focus on the positives. You may miss out on a company event or an opportunity for a promotion, but you'll gain skills on the road that may very well land you the role of your dreams down the track. At the very least, a bit of time out can help you to reassess what you really want out of your career, so you can return with guns blazing. For advice on working on the road, flick to p69.

'AM I TOO OLO TO TRAVEL SOLO?'

Just because you didn't take a gap year after school or university doesn't mean you have (literally) missed the boat. Whether you're 26 or 56, there are destinations, tour companies and travel communities that cater to solo travellers just like you; a little bit of research will help you find your tribe. Even if you do end up on a tour bus with people 20 years older or younger than you, use it as an opportunity to learn a bit more about a different generation.

SO, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? THERE'S A WHOLE WORLD OUT THERE.

PUSH YOUR FEARS ASIDE AND JUST GO!

10 THINGS YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF WHILE TRAVELLING SOLO

If you travel alone, you may learn just as much about yourself as the destinations you visit. These lessons can then be transferred to all areas of your life.

1 YOU LEARN

WHAT KIND

OF TRAVELLER

YOU ARE

When you don't have to fit in with anyone else's travel preferences, your personal travel style becomes clear. Perhaps you realise you prefer exploring at a fast pace, or otherwise enjoy having more time to smell the roses. Maybe you discover your inner party animal, or you find that you like getting up early to sightsee before the crowds arrive. This intel will help you better plan future solo trips.

2 YOU LEARN

TO BE MORE

OPEN-MINDED

When you travel alone, your assumptions and beliefs are tested more than ever. With no one by your side to back up your prejudices, you'll learn to open your mind to new ways of living, and re-evaluate any preconceived notions about these cultures or customs you may have been harbouring.

3 YOU LEARN

WHAT YOUR

LIMITS ARE

Thought you'd be comfortable enough sleeping in a 20-bed dorm? Figured you'd be tough enough to manage a multi-day wilderness hike without access to a shower? Travelling solo, you'll quickly find out what your limits are, and how comfortable you are pushing them.



4 YOU LEARN TO

BE COMFORTABLE

BEING ALONE

There might be times when you wish you had someone to share a meal with, but after travelling solo for a while, you learn to be at peace with your own company. After being in a group environment for a few days, you may even find yourself pining for a bit of solitude afterwards.

5 YOU LEARN TO

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

You'll lose bank cards, miss buses, underestimate the amount of time it takes to get to the airport, and forget to book a hostel during a festival period. When travelling solo, you have no one else to blame for your mistakes but yourself. You learn to take full responsibility for them, take the lessons on board, and move on.

6 YOU LEARN

TO TRUST YOUR

INTUITION

Without a trusted travel partner to help point you in the right (or wrong) direction on the road, you find the courage to trust your own instincts. You have no other choice, after all.

YOU LEARN

WHAT IS

IMPORTANT TO

YOU IN LIFE

people, sights, smells and sounds,

As you are introduced to new

you develop the ability to look

at your 'real' life at home more

the habits, goals and lifestyle

choices you once thought were

much as you thought they did.

important really matter to you as

objectively. You question whether



8 YOU LEARN TO

LIVE WITH LESS

After travelling for a while, you get used to living with just the essentials. Suddenly the idea of ordering next season's must-have jeans when you have a perfectly good pair at home, or spending an hour on your beauty regime each day that you could be spending at the beach, starts to seem a lot sillier than it once did.



9 YOU LEARN

WHO YOUR REAL

FRIENDS ARE

Your true friends and family love you for you, and understand (or at least learn to accept) your need to travel alone. When you return, you'll pick up exactly where you left off. Other people you may have thought you were close to, however, may not relate to the 'new you', and don't have time for the travel stories you've been dying to share with them. Likewise, you may realise that you don't have as much in common with these 'friends' as you thought, and start to re-evaluate the role they play in your life.

10 YOU LEARN

THERE IS ALWAYS

ROOM IN YOUR LIFE

FOR MORE FRIENDS

You'll soon learn that it's easy to make friends travelling solo, with many of the friends you meet on the road ending up being friends for life. Be receptive to other travellers who strike up conversation, taking the time to find out more about what brought them to the very same place you're visiting – you may very well have something in common.

10 THINGS YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF

13 THE SOLO TRAVEL HANDBOOK

