



Solo Travel



Hey, I'm Lexie,

I'm 21 years old and **I recently broke the Guinness World Record for the Youngest Person to Travel to Every Country.** To give this achievement some context, more people have been to outer space than have traveled to every country!

My goal has always been to challenge myself to get out of my comfort zone and discover how much of the world is accessible to a solo female traveler. Along the way, I've encountered kindness, generosity, and some difficult situations in some of the least visited countries in the world.

Over the years of traveling, I've learned a lot about solo travel. From difficulties and challenges to life-changing experiences, I've learned a lot and want to share that all with you!

Most of us are interested in solo travel for 2 main reasons:

1. The first being that there's somewhere you have always wanted to explore but you can't find anyone to go with you. Either they aren't willing to pay the money to join you or it's not the main place on their list. Whatever it might be! So you either never go or you go alone.
2. The second reason is that you want to travel alone because of the immense amount of growth and self-realization that comes from being independent in a foreign place. The number of people who are traveling alone by choice is increasing because of the many positive aspects of solo travel which we will talk about later.

In this course, I'll go over the benefits I've experienced from traveling alone for years. Then we'll dive into some useful knowledge that will help you plan your trip, stay safe, and get the most out of your adventure. By the end of the trip, you will have some solid perspective on where you might want to go and what considerations to keep in mind as you plan. You'll learn some of the main safety tips that I've learned over the years. I'll talk specifically about traveling alone as a woman which unfortunately needs to be talked about. But everything else in this course applied to everyone.

This PDF guide summarizes everything we talk about in this course. This will be a digital file you can download and print out or keep on your phone, tablet, or computer.

Chapter 1

Solo Travel Explained

The Benefits of Solo Travel



Confidence

Successfully navigating foreign countries and overcoming any obstacles you may face gives you an undeniable sense of self-confidence that you take home with you.



Stories to Tell

You will find yourself in so many unique, fun, and exciting situations many people don't experience when traveling in a group. These situations result in fascinating stories to tell.



New and Genuine Relationship

Solo travelers are much more approachable so chances are you will have more genuine interactions and even develop long-lasting relationships with locals and other travelers.



Gratitude

Having a sense of loneliness when traveling solo allows you to appreciate the time you spend with those you see every day.



Freedom

You are free to explore where you want when you want. You don't have to compromise your time for things you don't do, which makes traveling solo one of the greatest ways to experience a place the way YOU want it.

Embracing the Discomfort

Many of us try to go by our lives avoiding discomfort. The superpower you earn as a solo traveler is the ability to turn every obstacle you face into an unforgettable learning lesson.

Expect to feel:

- Awkward
- Lonely
- Overwhelmed

Lean into all of these!

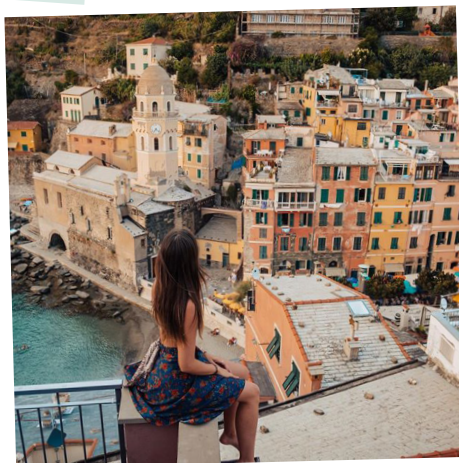
These things help you develop into a more experienced, better version of yourself.



My Favorite Places for Solo Travel

Western Europe

- ✈ A great region to navigate on your own, especially for your first solo travel trip.
- ✈ Countries like France, Italy, Germany, Greece and Switzerland are all fantastic places to travel solo.
- ✈ Easy to make friends.
- ✈ Most people speak English where you would need them to.



Cinque Terre, Italy



Waisai, Papua, Indonesia

South East Asia

- ✈ Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and most other countries in the region are wonderful places to experience alone.
- ✈ Many countries in this region have a strong reputation for solo travelers.
- ✈ Great for backpacking.
- ✈ Great region for female solo travelers.



Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Central America

- ✈ Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama, in particular, are all great solo travel.
- ✈ In the rural areas of these countries, there is a language barrier but you'll find people interested and eager to communicate with you despite the barrier.
- ✈ Central America also has some of the cheapest transportation in the world and there's plenty of other solo travelers to connect with.

Chapter 2

Preparation and Arriving

Planning Your Trip

The level of preparation depends on the varying countries that you intend on visiting because each will entail specific requirements unique to that nation, the time of the year, the political climate, etc.

Research and Planning

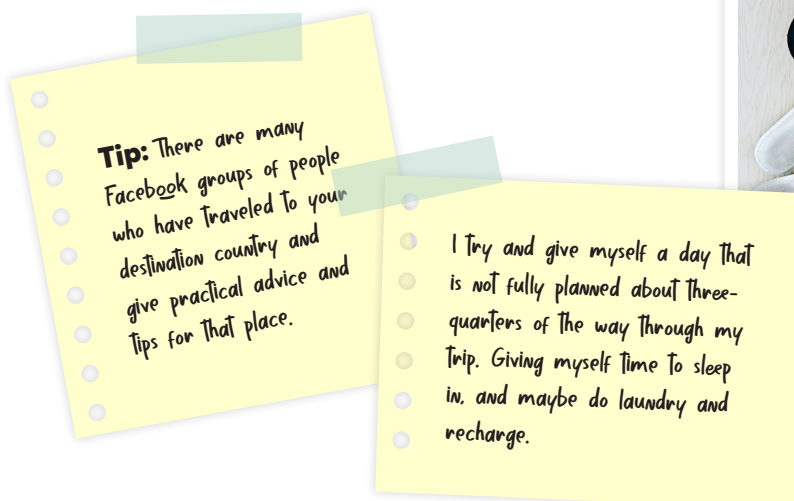
Flight and hotel bookings, transportation and tour reservations should be thoroughly researched before booking.

Step 1: Research General Safety of the country you're traveling to

- ✈ Networking on social media is a great way to research.
- ✈ Make a Game Plan.
 - Build a specific itinerary.
 - Factor in downtime for unexpected downtime and adventures.
 - Be realistic about the limitations of your body when traveling.
 - Take one of your first days on your trip to familiarize yourself with your location and adjust to the time zone.
 - Leaving days open to explore a city can also be beneficial, because you may find new places you want to explore.

Step 2: Packing

- ✈ Only pack what you can carry!
- ✈ When traveling alone, try not to check a bag.
- ✈ If you are traveling to urban areas, a rolling carryon will be suitable and save your back.
- ✈ If you are going to hostels that require a hike, a carryon backpack will be your best.



Remember:

Media outlets tend to report only unique horror stories and rare tragedies rather than day to day realities of tourists.

Tip: I keep my phone with me and my second device in a different bag when I am on the move.



Step 3: Communication

- ✈ Always have two forms of communication.
- ✈ Bring one device that allows you to communicate with people back home.
- ✈ Bring one device to connect to the internet so you can get information and book things.
- ✈ Example: A phone in addition to a tablet, smartwatch or laptop.

Step 4: Print Your Documents

Having a folder with printed documents outlining your trip, especially if traveling to less-visited countries, is a very good idea.

- ✈ Documents should include.
 - Flight itinerary, proof of flights and exit ticket.
 - Proof of at least one hotel reservation.
 - Copy of your passport.
 - Optional: Transportation tickets, tour reservations, or directions.

Step 5: Considerations as a Woman

- ✈ In many countries, how a woman chooses to dress is not an issue. However, there certainly are some countries where it is necessary to dress conservatively in order to avoid being made uncomfortable or considered disrespectful.
- ✈ Other than clothing, I have found that planning my trips as a solo female takes the same amount of research as it does for men. And generally, the same preparation applies.



Remember:

Keep in mind different historical sites and dress code for those places.

Arriving

- ✈ The first thing you should do when arriving is to pick up at least enough local currency to get you to your accommodation.
- ✈ I like to have one place where I keep more US dollars and the bulk of the local currency and then a smaller wallet I keep in a personal bag.
- ✈ If you are taking a taxi to your hotel, do a quick google search on how much you should expect to pay.



Tip: Having that small wallet with only the amount of money to get you to your accommodation is helpful if anyone does try to haggle you for money.

If you notice that the taxi driver is rigging their price meter or demanding an absurd amount of money for the trip, ask for a hotel receptionist who speaks the local language to help you. Always stand your ground in these situations.

Handy Apps

Your trip will be made a lot easier if you are able to use your cell phone through your cell-phone service or by using a local SIM card. If that isn't possible, these apps are available offline and can be downloaded before you leave for your trip!



Google Maps

Download offline google maps of the entire area of the country to which you are traveling.



Google Translate

Download the offline version of the local language. This technology has become so advanced that you can even just snap a photo of the foreign language on menus, signs etc. and it will translate it for you in the spot.



Whatsapp

Make sure to have Whatsapp installed on your phone because most countries only use this texting app to communicate.



Currency Exchange

This app shows you the real rate of exchange so that currency vendors can't take advantage of you when you go to exchange money.



Optional

Download offline Netflix shows or movies, some of your favorite podcasts and movies, to keep yourself entertained for long periods of time when you have no internet.

Chapter 3

Staying Safe on Your Solo Trip

The Do's and Don'ts of Solo Travel

Common Sense

For starters, I use the term “Common Sense” to include all of the safety measures and self-care that apply to your day to day life. Things like:

- ✈ If you are drinking, **DON'T** leave your cup unattended.
- ✈ **DON'T** walk around by yourself late at night.
- ✈ **DON'T** leave your belongings unattended in public places.

A good way to keep track of this is to constantly ask yourself, “Is this a good idea or a wise decision?”

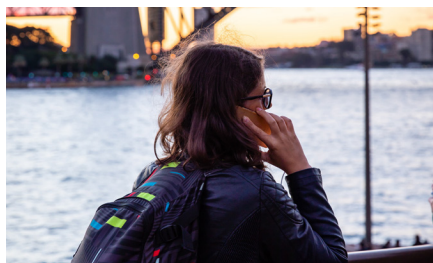
Show Self Confidence

- ✈ Body language becomes the most important form of communication when you don't speak the local language.
- ✈ Avoid slouching, pick your head up and keep your shoulders back. Smile. Look like you know what you're doing and that you belong there!
- ✈ Be awake and alert, be aware of your surroundings. Be strong and secure. If you begin to feel unsafe or insecure, act the opposite.
- ✈ **DON'T** appear lost, even if you are. There really is no more obvious target than a nervous-looking tourist holding a large map and looking around frantically in every direction.

Make Your Location Known



DO make sure that AT LEAST one person who isn't traveling with you is aware of your approximate location and the times that you are supposed to be there as well as when you are supposed to contact them again.



DO make a plan to check in again.

- ✈ Make sure you have a system in place that goes along the lines of: “If you don't hear from me in the next 3 days, try to check-in and if you can't get a hold of me to call X emergency number”
- ✈ This system should be flexible, adjust the timelines based on where you are traveling, and how good the service and wifi is.



DO take advantage of the day and avoid traveling at night.

- ✈ Spend the least amount of time as possible in your hotel room during daylight hours.
- ✈ Go to sleep early and wake up early to take full advantage of your time in a new place.
- ✈ Try to avoid taking late-night taxis, buses, etc. as well as walking around at night with all your belongings.



Traveling Solo as a Female

Golden Rules for Solo Female Travel:



1. Don't get intoxicated.
2. Don't explore at night by yourself.

- ✈ If you do decide to get drinks with people you met while traveling, just keep a close eye on your drink and keep a tally and timeframe of your drinks in mind.
- ✈ Expect to be stared at. People are usually just going to be curious about you, especially if traveling to a lesser-visited region.

Sexual Harassment

- ✈ One of the simplest ways to avoid being harassed is by dressing conservatively. I personally feel it's absurd to harass someone regardless of what they're wearing but I've found this to be the case.
- ✈ I tend to travel to most places in clothes that cover my shoulders and thighs and then assess the 'vibe' once I arrive.
- ✈ The most helpful piece of clothing I bring with me is a long sleeve, button-down shirt that is long enough to cover the whole back on my legs, almost knee-length.
- ✈ I've actually found this to be the most effective way to get rid of someone because yelling in a public place attracts way more attention to the harasser than they were prepared for.
- ✈ If you experience any higher degrees of sexual harassment while traveling, do not hesitate to contact the locals authorities. If you are not listened to, you can always contact your embassy.

Know the Culture

- ✈ **DO** know a few words and phrases in the local language just in case you need help with small things. Here are a few good terms to know how to say:

- Hello/Good Day
- Where is this
- Excuse me
- Toilet
- Water
- Hotel
- Thank you

- ✈ Write these down in your phone on your notebook so you don't forget them.
- ✈ **DO** know what is inappropriate to do in the specific culture that you are visiting and adhere to their preferences.

Disrupt Any Unwanted Attention

This “**DO**” relies heavily on your intuition and common sense. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, simply change your location. Usually, when you find yourself in a situation you don't want to be in, simply walk away and try to find a more public area.

Be Alert!

DON'T tune out your surroundings when walking alone or in the half-hour before your train/bus arrives at your location.



Remember:

Wherever you are going, people walk around by themselves all the time. Be smart, be alert, but relax.



Skardu, Pakistan

Traveling Alone

The Ups and Downs of Travel

The biggest obstacle I had to face while traveling solo has been overcoming loneliness and becoming comfortable enough with myself to enjoy solitude. Start off at casual restaurants or cafes and work your way into more formal dining settings if you are uncomfortable with the idea of eating alone.

Here are a few other habits I've developed to counter loneliness when it arises in the mind:

- ✈ Take an hour to yourself in the morning as often as you can.
- ✈ Try my best to meditate for 10-15 minutes.
- ✈ Writing in a journal mornings.
- ✈ Give yourself time to exercise.

Communicate

Tell a friend or family member back home that you're feeling lonely. I've found that whenever I'm struggling with loneliness, anxiety or other stressors when traveling it helps me so much to communicate my feelings with someone who really knows me.

Socialize with Strangers

It can feel intimidating to strike up a conversation with people you don't know but it's the only tangible way you are going to not physically be alone.

Tours and Meeting People

Tours

- ✈ Booking a day tour is a great way to get around without taking on the travel costs all by yourself.
- ✈ Do some research about specific locations you want to visit and find which group tour styles call out to you
- ✈ There are even tons of small group tours like the ones at [G Adventures](#) and [Contiki](#) that are geared specifically towards solo travelers!

Social Media

- ✈ My personal favorite way of meeting new people is to post on social media and reaching out to people ahead of time.
- ✈ Posting about your trip on your Instagram or Facebook and seeing if you have a friend of a friend in any of the destinations you're traveling to is always a great idea.



Speak to Locals

Hotel receptionists or guesthouse hosts, waiters or taxi drivers are great people to chat with because they know their city better than anyone else.

Meeting People in Transit

Have the social confidence to strike up a conversation with the people that happen to be around you!

Events

Keep an eye out for what is going on around town! Local activities, concerts, festivals, are a great way to seek out other people who are interested in being social.

Hostels

One of the absolute best ways to meet other travelers organically is by staying at hostels.

Where to Stay as a Solo Traveler

Hostels

The word "Hostel" is basically synonymous with solo travel. It's one of the cheapest forms of accommodation and is also the perfect place to meet other travelers.

Once you decide on your price range, you'll most likely have a lot of hostels to choose from.

- ✈ I usually read through reviews on hotel booking websites to see which ones rated the highest.
- ✈ Make sure you can lock up your valuables, that the place is clean, and see if there is a social common area where you can meet other travelers.

Dorm vs Private Room

- ✈ I have stayed in a lot of dorm rooms and I've never had anything stolen because I always make sure to lock up all my belongings in the locker.
- ✈ Since I travel with a lot of camera gear now, I play it safe and stay in private rooms.

Tip: I recommend staying in the dorms for a few days to get a feel for it but if you want a bit more personal space, private rooms are a good way to get that without losing the opportunity to meet new people.



Guest Houses & Airbnbs

- ✈ This is a more local, authentic feel and usually comes with a price between hostels and hotels.
- ✈ It basically comes with a local who knows everything about what travelers like to do!

Hotels

- ✈ Hotels aren't usually the best option for solo travelers because you tend to feel more isolated.
- ✈ Sometimes hotels can be the only option around though if you are staying in the less-visited parts of the world.
- ✈ Hotels are typically more luxurious and secluded than hostels and guesthouses so if you are an introvert like me, every once in a while it's nice to indulge in a few nights stay in a hotel.



Documenting and Sharing Your Trip

Choose between a phone or a camera

I use the camera on my iPhone every day while I'm traveling and it does a great job of capturing the moment. I highly recommend traveling with a GoPro!

Lightweight tripod

There's value in having a tripod so you can capture yourself in certain places.

Selfie stick

They are really useful for capturing photos and videos of yourself.

Camera remote control

If your phone or GoPro doesn't have the best self-timer or if you want to take awesome photos of yourself with your camera, it helps so much to have a remote control to snap photos!

