5 ways to embrace solo travelling later in life

With a rising number of people embracing solo travelling, it could well be something you're considering.

Even though it might seem like an experience for younger people, it's never too late to try exploring a new destination by yourself.

If it's on your agenda but you're a little nervous, read on to discover five ways to start planning and get the most from your travels.

Freedom, flexibility, and excitement are some of the benefits associated with travelling solo

Increasingly, people are seeing solo travel as an adventure, rather than a burden. Research from Atlys shows that solo travel searches have increased by 60% between 2022 and 2024. Around 70% of solo travellers are women, with freedom and self-growth cited as some of the reasons for this.

1. *Start small for your first trip*

Even if you ultimately have your sights set further afield, it can be a good idea to start with a destination within the UK, or another English-speaking country, to help build your confidence.

Staying close to home can be less of a culture shock, giving you fewer barriers to navigate than if you were in a less familiar setting.

You're also more likely to enjoy the experience and focus on your trip, rather than spending all your time trying to adapt. The familiarity of public transport, currency, and road signs can make your travels far less daunting and much easier to navigate, as you build up towards more challenging adventures.

2. *Choose a group tour*

Independent travel doesn't have to mean being alone. If you'd rather have some company, a group tour can be a good way to explore, with the added advantage of professionals taking care of the logistics.

This means that some of the more stressful elements are out of your hands, such as transport, accommodation, and your itinerary. You'll also have the support of the guide, which can be especially reassuring if you're abroad in unfamiliar territory.

Choosing a group tour can be a good way to meet new and like-minded people and remove some of the more intimidating aspects of solo travel, such as eating alone.

In some cases, tour operators will offer trips that are specifically for people travelling alone, so you won't need to worry about being the only one without a travelling companion.

3. *Plan ahead to choose your activities*

One of the big positives of travelling alone is that you can create your own agenda. Make a list of the things you know you enjoy doing, whether that's walking, browsing an art gallery, visiting a museum, or just relaxing on the beach.

You could also check out what's going on at your destination before you travel, such as festivals, local holidays, and exhibitions.

According to a 2024 National Geographic article, planning and researching a trip can boost your mental health, with research showing that the anticipation of a break can substantially lift your happiness levels.

4. *Allow room for flexibility*

While it's great to make plans, it can also feel liberating to leave some room for spontaneity. As you're not travelling with others, the agenda – or lack of agenda – is really up to you.

Plan some of the things you're excited about at your chosen destination. But leave a few gaps for wandering around, sitting and sipping a cup of coffee, or just resting and reading a book.

5. *Take some practical steps to stay safe*

Safety issues can be a worry if you're planning to travel alone. But there are some simple precautions you can put in place to keep your loved ones informed as to your whereabouts.

Sharing your live location is usually straightforward on your smartphone, allowing your nominated contacts to check in and see where you are. If you ever got stuck and needed help, this means they'd know where to send it.

Travel insurance is a must and can offer you an extra layer of protection if the unexpected happens. The events it covers includes:

- Medical emergencies
- Cancellations or delays
- Lost property
- Emergency assistance

Using travel apps and guides can enhance your sense of security, with navigation options helping you find your way around, translation functions making communication easier, and accommodation and transport recommendations and reviews from other users.