



Woman's World



pg 16-17 Find out if the dressing sense of Bollywood's singers is as good as their voices

ADC

pg 19 How to plan for leave and check out the new products for working women

Afternoon Despatch & Courier

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WORLDLY WOMEN



>> WOW travels to amazing destinations such as this trip to the Greek Isles



>> The WOW group travels to locations such as Kenya, where you can enjoy the view of the flamingoes



>> If you don't want to travel alone, you can sign up for one of the WOW trips for a girl's only, fun-filled travel experience



>> Away and Beyond organises tours across the world, such as this one in Tuscany, where you can meet new people and experience new cultures

Dreaming of packing your bags and jet setting all by yourself? Rhea Dhanbhoora talks to a few women and travel clubs to give you a one stop guide for all your solitary travel needs

The sun in the sky and the wind in their sails... to travel without a care in the world is a feeling like no other. For women who want to travel alone however, the world may not be their oyster, considering the number of places that just aren't safe for women to venture out into alone. But, there's no need to give up and go home yet. Several women travel alone and enjoy it too. As traveler Namrata Balwani tells us, "There's a



>> Trips Gone Crazy tells us that the Greek Isles is one of the best destinations for women traveling alone

joy to independent travel that, for me, is unmatched. It's all about discovery and through that, the experience. Solo travel lets you interact with local people and with other travelers in a much more open way, as otherwise you would be most likely to stay in the company of friends." We talk to a few women to find out how you can escape on that solitary vacation with minimum hassle...

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WOMEN WANDERERS

Discover yourself with every new destination
 "I traveled to England, Scotland, the Netherlands and Brussels alone. Discovering yourself as well as discovering a destination surprises you. Every new place can bring a new personality within yourself to life. I think women can travel safely to places such as Greece, Spain and Singapore if they are sensible. Finding accommodation close to public transport always helps stay safe, not wearing jewelry, keeping your passport and minimum money with you and making sure you have emergency numbers is advisable." — **Zelda Gomes, Senior sales consultant, Outbound Tours**

Travel is all about the experience

"I love travelling! I make it a point to visit at least one new place every year. I have met so many interesting people, some of whom I am still in touch with. I have also been to places that were not on my original itinerary! You also have the ease of planning as hectic or relaxed a schedule as you like and sometimes making impromptu plans with the new people that you meet. I've tried Couchsurfing (a traveler's website); it added a new dimension to solo travel because there are very warm, hospitable people who will host you and make you understand and appreciate their culture in a way that even guidebooks cannot do justice to. I've done a fair amount of solo travel over the years. My first trip abroad had a solo leg when I went to Scotland on my own. I have also traveled alone to Ladakh, to Spain and France, and most recently to Cambodia, a few months ago. Especially for a woman, it's important to read up beforehand about what each place is like. On your trip, be open to meeting new people but always be aware of your surroundings and ensure you don't ignore your inbuilt safety meter. Apart from that, just go out there and enjoy yourself without worrying constantly!"
 — **Namrata Balwani, COO, Media2win**

BOOK IT NOW

Here's a list of books to get you inspired for that solo journey...
 • **Go Your Own Way: Women Travel the World Solo** — Faith Conlon, Ingrid Emerick & Christina Henry de Tesson
 • **A Woman Alone: Travel Tales from Around the Globe** — Faith Conlon, Ingrid Emerick & Christina Henry de Tesson
 • **The Art of Solo Travel** — Stephanie Lee
 • **Wanderlust and Lipstick: The Essential Guide for Women Traveling Solo** — Beth Whitman

NETWORK THROUGH

Head over to these sites to weave yourself through to an easier trip:
www.couchsurfing.org
<http://solotravelerblog.com>
<http://www.journeywoman.com>

SAFE & SOUND

We spoke to a number of people and compiled a list of travel destinations that are safe and a number that should be avoided when you're thinking of jet setting alone:

VISIT: Greek Islands, Ibiza, Spain, Singapore, London, France, Austria, Ladakh, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa (except Johannesburg)
AVOID: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, China, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia

TRAVEL TIPS

All the women we spoke to felt there were a number of things women should keep in mind before venturing out in the big bad world alone. We compiled a list of their suggestions to give you a quick guide of things to remember:

- Know your destination before you start your journey. Note down information about the embassy and find out about the culture and appropriate dress code.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary back home.
- Never travel without documents and insurance and keep your passport close at hand.
- Avoid wearing anything flashy that may attract attention.
- Stay off the streets in remote areas too late at night. It's good to have company if you are outdoors. Even when you're in a "safe" place, don't let your guard down and use common sense when you are out to sightsee, shop or eat a meal.
- Never compromise on fun but try to not get drunk or mingle with people unless you've spoken to them for sometime to judge their intentions. Remember never to leave your drinks unattended.



Always look confident

I have cycled from Pune to Goa by myself and also traveled alone for a cycle tour in France. Planning your trip before is limited when you're talking about cycling and when I started 20 years ago, there was no Google Maps to help out and I had very unreliable maps! But, the experience is worth it. I always made sure I found a place to stay before lunchtime and never stayed out alone after it got too dark. If you're in a place off the chart it's tougher than tourist filled destinations, so it's a good idea to establish friendly contact with some of the locals. — **Divya Tate, Cyclist**



TRAVEL CLUBS AND MORE

You have to be careful even in a safe place

"Every party destination around the world has a dark side to it. Even in a safe place there are secluded lanes and train stations that women should avoid. For example, London has a great night scene and boasts of night club hubs. These places are usually crowded and there is good police vigilance through the night, but the city also has parts that you should not visit alone too late. For anyone, not just women, who party or travel alone, it's advisable to share their travel dates, flights and accommodation with someone. It's always good to carry a local SIM card and have emergency contact information. There are lots of self defense products available such as pepper spray, ultra sonic alarms, GPS trackers and more."

— **Chirag Khandelwal, Trips Gone Crazy**
Contact: For more information and to avail of upcoming customised tours call 9930879774 or log on to www.tripsgonecrazy.com

Find out everything before visiting a place

"As far as safety for women is concerned, I believe that at the end of the day it all comes down to how much time and effort you have put into research, plus some common sense. I have met a lot of single women travelers and most seem to know precisely what they are doing. When you think of 'party places,' it is best to be responsible for your own safety rather than depend on a book. Most people are always looking to help in their local cities but you have to develop a knack of sticking to certain rules. The key is you that you must know or find out about the places you are going to visit if you plan on having a good, hassle free time on your vacation."

— **Chirag Patel, Trip to Click**
Contact: Trip to Click is about combining travel experiences with photography. It is about having that travel experience which in turn reflects in your photography, making your trip all the more special as it touches you so much more visually. Get in touch on 9819587054 or log on to www.triptoclick.com

Most cities are as safe as you make them

"Traveling alone all depends on travel circumstances, where do you go and when? Your first trip alone doesn't have to be far away from home. Start slowly and before you know it, you'll be wandering around the world — solo and loving it! Most cities, though, are as safe as you make them. Remember that pickpockets live everywhere, as do affectionate men, so take precautions such as avoiding walking alone at night. Leh, Ladakh is the perfect place to start with because the beautifully bizarre land is woman friendly, and the locals tend to mind their own business — and so not yours. You'll love the way you can come and go as you please, the casual, warm atmosphere. Even the places to stay don't seem to be typical hotels, more like staying with family. While venturing overseas, zero in on a place where language is no barrier. When you're new at traveling solo, easy communication will make you more comfortable."

— **Sumitra Senanapaty, Founder, Women on Wanderlust (WOW)**
Contact: Women on Wanderlust, (WOW), a special travel club dedicated to women, is organising trips to Tibet in August, South Africa in September and Morocco in October. Get in touch with Sumitra on me@wowsunitra.com and visit their website www.wowsunitra.com

A simple air of confidence can really help

"It is not dangerous per say for women travelers in this day and age, but it is important to keep in mind certain parameters such as being aware of your surroundings and trusting your instinct for your personal safety. Read about the destination to have a better idea about the customs and try to dress appropriately. If you exude a simple air of confidence, it can help you as a solo woman traveler." — **Suchna Hegde Shah, Founder, Away and Beyond**
Contact: Away and Beyond will be organising girlfriend getaways to Tuscany, Provence and France. For more information, get in touch with Suchna at suchna@awayandbeyond.in

Photo Credit: WOW Club



>> There's no better feeling than traveling alone but if you aren't ready for it yet, take a girlfriend along or sign up for a fun-filled travel tour such as this one from WOW