



FLAVOURS

Guide to singles holidays

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Introduction

Many thanks for requesting a copy of our guide to singles holidays. With more and more people striking out on their own I wanted to put together this helpful booklet for those considering travelling solo.

Having been myself widowed, I know just how hard it can be to have the courage to go on holiday alone for the very first time. After reading this booklet you will be ready to take the plunge with any luck.

As many as 60% of Flavours bookings are from single travellers. As you read through this booklet, hopefully you will begin to understand just why people take the plunge, sometimes filled with trepidation, return home and book all over again as the solo travelling bug takes hold.

With any luck this little publication will empower you to explore the world regardless of whether you have a travelling companion or not.

If you have the tiniest interest in becoming a solo traveller then take a look at what is on offer these days. If you have any questions, need more information, or even reassurance there is always someone on hand who is happy to handle queries, so please do not hesitate to contact us about any aspect of travelling as a single person.

Buon Viaggio!



Lorne

“Having been myself widowed, I know how hard it can be to have the courage to go on holiday for the very first time.”



Rise of the single traveller - going it alone...

Going on holiday on your own: it used to sound, well, frankly a little sad. No friends? No partner? And then there was the dreaded single supplement – to add insult to injury you had to pay more for the privilege. However, perceptions have, thankfully, changed over the years.

They've had to. As there are more and more single travellers out there. Statistically it's a growing market. According to the Office of National Statistics around a third of households in Britain are now occupied by just one person. And in 2009 Lloyds TSB forecast that over the next decade the number of single-person households would increase by two million. Research by the Halifax, meanwhile, showed that the proportion of single women living alone jumped

from 9.8% in 1983 to 21.7% in 2002. Everyone was quick to start talking about the Bridget Jones' generation.

However, although Bridget did occasionally mope alone in her flat with a bottle of Chardonnay, she was generally looking for some fun. Travel companies have, of course, finally cottoned on. Many have started offering incentives, scrapping the single person supplement, while adventure companies usually offer the opportunity

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of sharing with someone of the same sex to avoid an extra charge. There are also many specialist singles holiday companies out there now. But for those who still feel a little apprehensive about broadcasting their single status to the world an activity holiday is the perfect foil.

Whatever, you fancy doing, there's probably a travel company that offers it, from tried and tested cookery holidays, to yoga, pilates and even belly-dancing. You can try something new, or spend a week doing something you love, with like-minded people. And make new friends along the way.

I've travelled extensively on my own because of my job. Sometimes, of course, I've had boyfriends or friends to go away with. But because I'm a travel writer there have been plenty of times when I've had to go alone. And it's those trips that have often proved the most memorable – for the adventures I've had and the people I've met along the way. When you're not in your comfort zone you're more open to new experiences.

Cookery holidays are some of the best ice-breakers. I've laughed more with strangers – who later became friends – around a stove than I would ever have thought possible.

And even grew to enjoy cooking! Especially learning to make pizza and fresh pasta in Italy. There's something warm and all encompassing about an Italian kitchen – like being wrapped in a big, welcoming hug. Add a communal meal under the shade of some olive trees, a few glasses of good Italian wine as you tuck into the dishes you've made with your new friends and it doesn't get much better.

Going away on your own can be liberating and a real adventure. And, ultimately, you're not on your own, of course, on a group holiday.

What type of people go on singles holidays?

In the past few years, singles holidays have become an increasingly popular way for solo-travellers to experience new places and meet new people, without the added pressure of having to continually make new acquaintances or schedule activities.

Today, specialist singles holidays are available across the globe, attracting a whole spectrum of different age ranges and personality types, from young people taking a career break, to older individuals enjoying their retirement.

The type of activity you choose can easily have a bearing on the types of people you'll meet. The best advice is to choose an activity-focused singles holiday, picking something that you have a genuine interest in, such as walking,

painting or cooking. Or you could make your holiday choice based on the location: if you have a fondness for Italian food or have always dreamed of visiting the Arctic, for example, you can guarantee that the people on your trip will also share your passion for the place.

Most singles holidays attract a variety of different ages. On Flavours Holidays, the bulk of our single guests tend to fall into the 35 - 60 age range, but over the years, we've welcome guests in their early twenties, as well as their

“Most singles holidays attract a variety of different ages.”



late 80s! And with cooking, painting and pilates holidays tending to attract like-minded guests who are open to meeting new people, having a diversity of ages can make for a really interesting and well-rounded experience. For some, gender might be a consideration. Pilates holidays, for example, are likely to attract fewer males, although not exclusively, whereas cooking and painting holidays tend to attract a more balanced group.

You don't have to be looking for love to enjoy a singles holiday. Flavours' singles holidays aren't about match-

making and speed-dating, they're about learning new skills, developing existing ones, meeting a variety of new people and appreciating the culture, food, landscapes and weather of Italy.

And it isn't necessary to be an expert painter or talented cook to enjoy a singles holiday. People join with a wide range of skill levels: some come as first-timers and are looking to gain basic skills, whereas others already have significant experience and are looking to fine-tune their talents. With our small group sizes and professional tutors on hand, everyone on

a singles holiday with Flavours has the opportunity to work at their own pace and gain the advice they need to progress. Even non-singles come on singles holidays!

For some, it may be that their partner doesn't share their passion for painting or fondness for food; or it might be that some just fancy a bit of time away from the family, or want to meet like-minded people. Whatever the reason, singles holidays also attract independent people that simply enjoy travelling alone and meeting other single travellers who share their interests.

Top 10 tips for single travellers

- 1** Forgo single supplements: Single hotel rooms, taxis for one and individual bookings on excursions often come with a nasty price tag. Avoid extra charges by travelling with a holiday company that caters specifically for single travellers.
- 2** Join a group trip: By far the best way to meet like-minded people, joining a group tour allows you to easily engage with new people. By booking onto a singles group holiday, everyone will be in the same boat, so you can get stuck in with getting to know the group, right from the start.
- 3** Go small: Big groups can offer plenty of choice in personalities but it's too easy to get lost in the crowd, or stick with the same two or three people you meet on the first day. Small scale tours, with group sizes of fewer than 15 guests, will give you the chance to really get to know everyone and allow you to mingle more freely within the group.
- 4** Choose an activity holiday: Rather than sit on a coach seeing the sites, choose a holiday that revolves around doing something creative, like cooking or painting. Sharing a passion with your fellow travellers creates an instant connection and, with mutual interests, you're bound to bond.
- 5** Take a game: A pack of cards can be an invaluable asset to any group trip, particularly on singles holiday when you'll be engaging new people for the first time. A card game offers a nice break from small talk in those first few evenings, when everyone's loosening up.



- 6** Make a holiday resolution: Socialising with a brand new set of people is the perfect time to change bad habits or tackle personality traits that hold you back. Establish yourself as a non-smoker, if you're trying to quit; make a resolution not to put yourself down; or make a conscious effort not to dwell on a failed relationship you can't let go of.
- 7** Use your holiday as a goal: If you've been trying to lose weight or get more exercise, use your holiday as a target. Plan to shed a few pounds, and reward yourself with a new holiday outfit.
- 8** Try something new: It's never too late to learn or try something new. If you haven't picked up a paintbrush since school, book yourself on a painting holiday; if you haven't got round to booking that beginner's Pilates class, kick start it with a week-long Pilates holiday.
- 9** Switch your phone off: The beauty of singles holidays are the opportunities they present for you to take a real break from home. Truly immerse yourself by minimising the amount of time you contact home to feel the full benefits of getting away from it all and meeting new people.
- 10** Choose the right company: Some holidays appeal particularly to older clientele, whilst others market themselves to a wider range of age groups, allowing you to meet a truly diverse set of people. And while some companies operate a tight schedule of sightseeing tours and activities, others will balance excursions, activities and free-time. Decide what sort of trip suits you best and look for companies that meet your ideal.

Happily ever after

If you are wondering whether a holiday alone would be the right thing for you it is always reassuring to read other experiences like this wonderful story written about one of our guests who went away on an activity holiday in 2010, returned later in the year and then again in 2012! Something truly magical occurred so read on and see how a holiday booked as a single traveller can totally transform a life.

"I lost my lovely husband of 24 years in May 2010.

During July and August of the same year, most of my friends were going off on holiday and I started to wonder if I would ever holiday again as most of my friends are happily attached – I didn't want to play gooseberry on a week away anywhere.

I started to Google solo holidays, albeit with some trepidation as I was expecting a lot of sites to come up specifically for people looking

for a relationship which I was not. I was pleased to see a few sites that offered activity type of holidays and Flavours took my eye as I loved cooking and had never been to Italy.

It took quite a few weeks of thinking about it as, apart from work, I had never spent any time abroad on my own. I chose Flavours because of the no single supplement policy, some testimonials on the website, the "all inclusive" arrangement and the trips included in the price. So with

'From the moment I arrived at the airport I felt I was amongst friends.'



a mixture of anticipation and dread(!) I set off for Sicily in October 2010.

The holiday was a mixed cooking and Pilates holiday and I had the opportunity to try Pilates. From the moment I arrived at the airport I felt I was amongst friends. Everyone was warm and friendly and the group gelled immediately.

Livia was fantastic and nothing was too much trouble. I enjoyed the cooking lessons (I ended up doing all the cooking as the others had cancelled at the last minute)

and I loved the interaction with the Sicilian chef. I loved the holiday so much I booked to go to Umbria the following May. Again the group was fantastic and we had a great week together.

At the end of 2011, I was faced with the tricky situation of how to spend New Year. My first New Year without my husband had been spent babysitting my grandson but I was going to spend New Year's Eve 2011 alone. As Livia was hosting Sicily for Flavours, I decided to book knowing that I would have good fun and meet interesting and

friendly people. Amongst them was Matt. There was a lot of great banter, not only with him but the rest of the group but there was no holiday romance.

Once we returned from holiday a few people in the group became Facebook friends and posted loads of pictures of our holiday. Matt and I started talking via the internet and he invited me down to be his guest at a dinner dance at the end of January. The rest, as they say, is history....."