

# Lifestyle

Advice | Carolyn Hax | Food | Home & Garden | Style | Travel | Weddings | Wellness | Magazine | KidsPost

ADVERTISEMENT

In the News | Carolyn Hax | John Edwards | Discovery | Correspondents' dinner



Search The Washington Post



'Photography and the Theater of the Street'



Newfangled nostalgia



Who's on the Correspondent's dinner A-list?



Recipients of the Helen Hayes Awards

## Don't stay home because you lack a companion: Tips for traveling solo



(Carrie Osgood/Associated Press) - In this Jan. 11, 2012 photo, a lone visitor sits on a pier with a book in Bocas del Toro, Panama. Traveling solo can involve big or small adventures, with all the decisions about itineraries and plans up left to the individual.

Text Size | Print | E-mail | Reprints

By Associated Press,

NEW YORK — Are you filled with wanderlust, but sticking close to home because you lack a like-minded companion? Solo travel is an extraordinary, accessible opportunity that can involve big or small adventures, easy or difficult as you choose.

You can do what you want, when you want, how you want, where you want. You pick your own pace, budget, itinerary and can always change your mind on a whim, never having to negotiate. The experience can be liberating and thrilling, igniting a rewarding sense of accomplishment, and the detachment from your "real" life is often therapeutic.

When entering a new place on your own, you may notice more than you do when you travel with others. I strike up conversations more easily when I'm solo,

### 0 Comments

Weigh In | Corrections?

More

ADVERTISEMENT



How to Exercise Your Brain to Make It Strong



The 5 Stupid Things People Do When They Have Too Much Debt



Why Penny Stocks are the Road to Riches for Many Small Investors

Advertorials by How life Works

Powered by TROVE

### The Post Most: Lifestyle

#### Most Popular

1. Carolyn Hax: When unmarried means uninvited
2. Miss Manners: Mother's utter lack of judgment leaves stepmom aghast
3. Ask Amy: Man feels he can't go home again
4. Pippa Middleton's 'gun situation': from royal in-law to outlaw?
5. #YOLO: The newest acronym you'll love to hate

#### Top Videos

#### Top Galleries

### Travel News from Lonely Planet

Editor's picks

- How to do the London Olympics
- Paris: Films to see before you go
- Exploring lower Manhattan: A local's guide



More from Lonely Planet

Lonely Planet picks

- What's the world's sexiest accent?
- The best secret islands
- How not to behave on an airplane

something I've done in dozens of countries across six continents. But not all destinations are right for solo travelers. Here are some tips.

—Visit walkable destinations connected by trains, buses, ferries and flights. Getting around this way will be straightforward, prices will be per person, and you increase your odds of meeting others, unlike destinations best seen or reached by car, where there may be fewer interactions. I've found places outside the U.S. and Caribbean are sometimes more friendly to individuals, with reduced-fare single-person rooms. Youth hostels are great for 20somethings and travelers of any age on tight budgets who crave conversation and don't need upscale accommodations.

—Traveling offseason can save a lot of money. One year in October, it was cheaper for me to spend a week in Costa Rica than to visit the Adirondacks in upstate New York. The off-peak flight, local transport and single accommodation in Costa Rica was less than the car rental and pricier double rooms during fall foliage season here.

—If you can't fly nonstop, turn your stopovers into perks. I've visited Fiji, Iceland, London, Paris and Rome, at no extra cost, all on extended layovers.

—Ask others about their vacations to get ideas for your own trips, and read up online and in guidebooks. Publishers can vary tremendously so look at a variety of brands in a bookstore or library, then travel with a guidebook that best suits your priorities.

—Keep expectations to a minimum so you're not disappointed. Instead, be flexible, go with the flow and treasure the unexpected. I've stumbled upon some amazing hidden gems. Bedouins invited me for tea in the caves of Petra, and a Portuguese model in Lisbon declared his affection for me by saying it was "love at first look."

—Be prepared for the occasional bad day. I've been tired, cranky, lonely and frustrated, suffering from food poisoning and stressed out by emergency landings, 14-hour flight delays, altercations with customs officials, bad weather and other complications. But temporary misery is part of travel, and can help you enjoy the magnificent moments that much more. And sometimes the worst experiences generate great stories later on.

—Write in a journal every night. It records your adventures while also giving you the conversational outlet to express and process the details of your action-packed day.

—When dining alone, bring a book or journal. Eating at the bar may feel more comfortable than a table for one.

—Be respectful, inconspicuous and dress to blend in. Local fashion norms vary, but I typically wear jeans with subdued colors, dark shoes and subtle accessories so as not to attract undue attention.

—English has become the world's second language, but learning to say hello and thank you in the local tongue goes a long way.

—Be cautious but not paranoid. If there's a site that piques your interest, but it's out of the way or you have concerns about personal safety, take a day tour or hire a guide. Independent female travelers may face harassment and other dangers, while men traveling alone may be targeted by scam artists and touts peddling illicit activities.

—Ignoring verbal aggressors — whether beggars, vendors or passers-by — is frequently the best defense, although in some cultures, like the markets in Istanbul, a simple "no, thank you" works better. Intimidation and harassment are never fun; feel empowered by your ability to say no.

[More travel tips](#)

Plan your trip



[Travel checklist](#)



[Visa help](#)



[Lonely Planet blog](#)



[Destination guides](#)

[Travel tools](#)

## Live Discussions



### Talk About Travel

Travel tales and advice  
The Flight Crew discusses your travel-related questions, comments, sad tales or happy endings.

[Chat](#)

11:00 AM [ComPost Live with Alexandra Petri](#)

12:00 PM [Chatological Humor: Monthly with Moron](#)

1:00 PM [Eugene Robinson Live](#)

[Weekly schedule, past shows](#)

## Post Newsletters & Alerts

Sign-up for e-mail newsletters and alerts and get the news you need delivered directly to your inbox.

- [Going Out Guide: Dinner & Drinks](#)
- [Lean & Fit](#)
- [Going Out Guide: With The Kids](#)
- [Movies](#)
- [At Home](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [DC Scout](#)
- [Going Out Guide](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[See all Washington Post Newsletters](#)

## Featured Advertiser Links

**\$30BILLION**

for **LUNG CANCER VICTIMS**

**WEITZLUX.COM**

**BIRTH DEFECT: was it ZOLOFT?**

Sign up for official email updates from Barack Obama's campaign.

Looking to buy a home? Visit TWP Real Estate section for the latest open houses.

Make Your Vanguard Investing More Profitable - Free Research Report Reveals Best & Worst Funds

—Check guidebooks and consult with local tourist offices and hotel staff for advice on what to watch out for. Take special care after dark, in dense crowds, and with likable strangers. The freedom of being far from home can release inhibitions in wonderful ways. In fact, I try to do something new every trip. But if you feel as though you're taking a risk, have an exit strategy, inform the hotel staff of your whereabouts, or make sure you're in a place where you can shout out to others.

Gratifying solo travel comes from following your bliss. Don't let societal pressures rattle you. Don't let loneliness paralyze you. Educate yourself so you know what you can, and cannot, do. Most of all, embrace the exciting possibilities before you.

Copyright 2012 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.



#### Sponsored Links

##### IPAD NEVER Needs Charging

OTCBB: DOMK launches amazing new solar charger sleeve for the iPad.  
www.SolarWerks.com

##### QUAN - Hot Stock Pick

New Investment Opportunity Could Explode, Buy Shares Now!  
www.QuantumInnovators.com

##### Map Your Flood Risk

Find Floodplan Maps, Facts, FAQs, Your Flood Risk Profile and More!  
www.floodsmart.gov

[Buy a link here](#)

## 0 Comments

[Discussion Policy](#) | [FAQ](#) | [About Discussions](#)

### Add your comment

Type your comment here

### Read what others are saying

[About Badges](#)

#### Top Comments (0)

#### All Comments (0)

Sort Comments: **Newest to Oldest**

**Pause loading new comments**

**No Top Comments** are available at the moment. [View all Comments.](#)

Comments our editors find particularly useful or relevant are displayed in **Top Comments**, as are comments by users with these badges: **Washingtologist**, **Culture Connoisseur**. Replies to those posts appear here, as well as posts by staff writers.

#### Top Lifestyle Stories

#### People Also Read

#### Most Popular Videos

#### Sponsored Links

##### IPAD NEVER Needs Charging

OTCBB: DOMK launches amazing new solar charger sleeve for the iPad.  
www.SolarWerks.com

##### QUAN - Hot Stock Pick

New Investment Opportunity Could Explode, Buy Shares Now!  
www.QuantumInnovators.com

##### Map Your Flood Risk

Find Floodplan Maps, Facts, FAQs, Your Flood Risk Profile and More!  
www.floodsmart.gov

[Buy a link here](#)

The Washington Post

[Politics](#) [Opinions](#) [Local](#) [Sports](#) [National](#) [World](#) [Business](#) [Tech](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Entertainment](#) [Photo](#) [Video](#) [Blogs](#) [Classifieds](#)

#### More ways to get us

Home delivery

Mobile & Apps

RSS

Facebook

Twitter

Social Reader

Newsletter & Alerts

Washington Post Live

Reprints & Permissions

Post Store

e-Replica

Archive

#### Contact Us

Help & Contact Info

Careers

Digital Advertising

Newspaper Advertising

#### About Us

The Washington Post Company

In the community

PostPoints

Newspaper in Education

#### Partners

CAPITAL BUSINESS

The Capitol Deal

El Tiempo Latino

express findsave

FP

Foreign Policy

MASTER CLASS PARADE POST TICKETS the ROOT

service alley

Slate

StudentAdvisor

TROVE

