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# Introduction

## Catch the Spirit Travel Solo

*People want to believe that somewhere,  
somehow it is still very dangerous, bizarre,  
anxiety-making and exotic to travel,  
that one can still make discoveries  
in a glorious solitary way.*

*Paul Theroux, Sunrise with Seamonsters  
(Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985)*

**A**re you contemplating a solo travel adventure? Possibly this is your first trip going by yourself and you need a little encouragement. Or possibly you go alone all the time and simply enjoy comparing notes. Either way these travel tales may strike a chord of empathy if you look to solo travel as the means of unleashing your spirit of adventure.

Some adventurers must do daring deeds to prove their mettle. You are less intrepid. So am I. Some would say that travel is only adventurous if it involves trekking remote mountain tops, or cycling far distant highways, or crossing deserts on camel-back, or circumnavigating the globe in a dinghy with only a cat for company. I would say, none of that for me.

Admittedly, I am far from fearless. Yet I do feel myself adventurous.

My travel stories start from the middle-class, middle-age, typical North American perspective. Which is to say, it is not only the possibility of a close encounter with rape, robbery or revolution that causes me concern. I have certain bathroom hangups, food fixations, bug phobias and other neuroses harbored deep within my female psyche. I like my comforts, my white wine



chilled, my bath long and lazy, and clean sheets on my bed. I don't like flies, mosquitoes, dirt or strange, unaccountable odors, feeling hot and sweaty, or food with weird ingredients. Bouncing along on dusty buses or playing catch-me-if-you-can with foreign cockroaches is no holiday, if you ask me.

Still, under all these ingrained insecurities I feel I possess a spirit of adventure. And that brings me to 1985. In 1985 I felt I was in a rut and must get out. My routine had become dull and plodding. As always I looked to travel to put the zing back in my step, only this time I wanted more than a quick getaway to some resort. I longed for a life changing experience. Foreign travel, independently and on a budget I believed would push me beyond mental security zones and in touch with my repressed spirit of adventure. I wanted to wander but not without purpose. I promised myself that this trip would be a new beginning to a new career.

Putting into practice the old axiom: write what you know, I decided to become an expert on solo travel and live happily ever after writing about my experiences. To launch my new career I had to sell my car, furniture and stocks, in fact all my meager belongings, to finance a year-long, around-the-world journey. I figured if nothing else came of my dream, at least I would have my life-changing experience because restricted finances would demand a thrifty lifestyle, and dispensing with feminine fears and inhibitions would surely test my limits and capabilities.

Thanks to friends who stored my letters from abroad until my return, I had an accumulated daily journal amounting to several hundred thousand words from which to compose my travel tales. If you haven't guessed already, these tales won't tell you where to stay or eat, or much about local attractions. They are mostly about sticky predicaments and minor misadventures I got myself into (and out of) from planning stage to journey's end. In common with many travel tales they include dusty buses and cockroaches, a little romance on the road, a little insight into the nature of things, and an assortment of odd characters who helped me rekindle my sense adventure. Any traveler may encounter similar experiences, but because our world contains enough variance for all its creatures, my travel tales are uniquely my own, as your tales will be uniquely yours. Guaranteed.

*Diane Redfern*

[See Going Solo Tips](#)

*Getting Started Independently*

*Budget, Deals, Health, Insurance, Money, Travel Agent*

*Tipping Around the World*