



**Go solo!** Nearly half of you have traveled by yourself (and loved it!), and another 44 percent might be interested in giving it a try, according to a joint survey by Self.com and Lonely Planet. Unsure where you want to make your first personal foray? Jumpstart your journey here! —Abigail Libers

IF YOU SEEK

THE SOLO ADVANTAGE

STILL WAFFLING?

BOOK IT



city life

“Being by yourself in a big city is like having a VIP pass,” says Teresa Rodriguez Williamson, author of *Fly Solo* (Penguin). “There is always room for one person, even at the city’s most popular spots. Oftentimes, you can sit in the front row at the theater because it’s much easier to get a single ticket than it is to get two or three.”

More than a third of you worry about dining alone when traveling solo, our survey reveals. To feel at ease, think location: “Look for sidewalk cafés where you can people-watch from behind a book, or snag a seat at a bar where you’re likely to meet other singles,” says Beth Whitman, author of three *Wanderlust and Lipstick* guides (Dispatch Travels).

“In addition to having a rich history, great food and beer gardens, **Berlin** has one of the world’s best transportation systems, making it easy and cheap to explore,” Rodriguez Williamson says. Check out NewBerlinTours.com. “Groups tend to be small and consist of young travelers hoping to spy unique places off the beaten path.”



the beach

Even on the remotest of islands, travel buddies can turn a lazy beach getaway into a hectic week packed with activities. “It’s liberating to be able to pick and choose the social engagements that matter to you personally without needing a consensus or feeling selfish,” notes Alison Bing, travel writer and author of 10 Lonely Planet books.

Too much of anything—even much-needed me-time—can get old, so, naturally, 85 percent of you said you’d like to meet people on your trip. “Select a hotel that offers group outings like nature hikes, and attend the cocktail hour,” Bing suggests. “While taking in the sunset, don’t be shy: Ask your neighbors how they’re enjoying the view.”

Called the Land of Smiles, **Thailand** is known for its peaceful culture—a plus for women. “Railay Beach is a beach lover’s dream; you can reach it only by boat,” Rodriguez Williamson says. Get a bungalow at Sand Sea Resort (starting at \$60 a night; KrabisAndSea.com) or Railway Bay Resort & Spa (starting at \$111 a night; RailwayBayResort.com).



adventure

“Trying new and challenging hobbies such as rock climbing, scuba diving or parasailing—without coaxing or help from your guy or BFF—pushes you outside your comfort zone and reminds you of how strong and capable you are,” Bing says. Travel with a less daring friend and you may miss out on a life-changing experience.

Sure, you’ll have an exciting time, but 63 percent of you are concerned about not having anyone to share it with. Rest assured: “Group activities that test your limits are great bonding experiences,” Bing says. “You’ll return with new friendships and amazing stories.” If you still want support from home, share updates on Twitter and Facebook.

“**Costa Rica** has endless options for adventure: You can surf, visit active volcanoes, hike to waterfalls—not to mention gaze at monkeys as you fly through the rain forest canopy on zip lines,” Bing says. Head to the Nicoya Peninsula on the Pacific Coast and hang ten alongside fellow female travelers with Surf Diva (SurfDivaCostaRica.com).



self-reflection

Soul-searching is easier when you don’t have familiar voices buzzing in your ear. “A trip that’s geared toward introspection, like a yoga retreat, gives you a chance to evaluate your life and make sure you’re on the right path for *you*—without the pressures of family, friends and work,” Bing says. Even a two-day jaunt can help you gain clarity.

Multiple days of meditation may be too intense—even to the nearly 20 percent of survey takers who said time to reflect would be the best reason to travel solo. Choose an area you feel connected to in other ways (say, the local cuisine or art). “It’s good to have another reason to be there, in case you need a break from the itinerary,” Bing advises.

The central coast of **California** offers the tranquility of the ocean and the majesty of the mountains. Our favorites: the White Lotus Foundation (WhiteLotus.org), whose weekend retreats (\$675) offer yoga twice daily; and Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, which features art classes, a massage and wine tours (starting at \$400 a night; OjaiResort.com).

THE TRIP THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

“I served in the peace corps in Bangladesh. Despite my initial culture shock, I quickly realized the most important things in life are universal: family and love. What’s more, I met my husband, John, while I was there. Travel brings people together in the best of ways!”

Erin O’Hara, 29, San Francisco

