

More Women are Flying Solo to See the World

Written by Ginny Grimsley
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5 Tips for Getting Off Your Settee & Joining Them

So you're a woman and you want to see the world – on your terms.

Join the crowd!

More and more women are traveling alone or with girlfriends; an estimated 32 million in the past year, according to the Travel Industry Association.

"It's the new trend in travel and, really, it's a no-brainer," says Ruth Yunker, an intrepid solo traveler and author of "Paris, I've Grown Accustomed to Your Ways," (www.ruthyunker.com), a humorous recounting of her extended stay in Paris as part-time resident, part-time tourist.

"Women hold the purse strings, so to speak, and we don't necessarily want to see and experience our travel destinations in the same ways men do."

The numbers tell the story:

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- 28 million single women ages 35 and older – a growing demographic, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Earnings for women with a college degree have increased 31 percent since 1979 while men's grew just 16 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- In 2011, 28 percent of married women made more than their husbands, up from 17.8 percent in 1987.

"We value our independence and we have the means to get up and go, so why not?" Yunker says.

If you're a woman who has dreamed of taking off on a safari, jaunting across Europe or sampling fried seahorses in Beijing, Yunker offers valuable advice:

1. So you want to travel. You are dying to travel. You have a list of 10 favorite places you're going to get to ... one day. Buy the airline ticket six months in advance. A non-refundable ticket. Don't fret. Don't get stopped by all the details. Just do it. There. You've taken the first step. You can, and will, worry about all the other details later. But baby, with this ticket, you are now on your way.
2. Bring a few creature comforts from home. I bring my own pillowcase for the airline pillows, my ragged at-home comfy wear instead of new nightgowns for the hotel or apartment, and the clipboard for working crossword puzzles.
3. Pack only clothes you currently actually wear. Do not buy a ton of new clothes for the trip. A suitcase packed with new clothes is a trip doomed to tears, trust me. The old clothes fit you now. You know without thinking how to look pulled together. The new clothes are uncomfortable. They don't go with anything yet. And they scream brand new traveler!
4. Bring some currency from your destination country with you. Do it. Everyone will tell you otherwise. They'll say it's so much cheaper to change your money once you get there. Maybe. But in the mayhem of the airport, suitcases going in every direction, do you really want to be finding the currency exchange? Just getting to the hotel/apartment will be job enough. So do arrive with Euros or whatever currency you need. It doesn't have to be a huge sum, just

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enough to ease your arrival.

5. Once at the hotel, unpack your toilet articles and arrange them in the bathroom in the same order you do at home. It makes things so much easier. It's so nice to be able to leave the hotel/apartment without having had a meltdown looking for misplaced mascara.

About Ruth Yunker

Ruth Yunker is an author, humorist, columnist, blogger and diehard world traveler. Her peripatetic childhood led to an adulthood always on the move; she has lived all over the United States, from Boston to Los Angeles, Brussels, Belgium and, for a short time, Paris. Her first book, "Me, Myself & Paris," recounts her first experiences as a single woman living alone in Paris for three six-week stints. Her newest book, "Paris, I've Grown Accustomed to Your Ways," continues the saga from a more City of Light-experienced perspective.