

# What's so good about travelling solo? TripAdvisor survey reveals why one in three women chose to go on holiday alone

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TRAVELLING solo gives you freedom to do what you want, when you want, says Linda Bentley.

The Sydney-based blogger, author of [thepackedbag.com](http://thepackedbag.com), admits it can be lonely at times but she finds travelling alone incredibly fulfilling.

Travelling solo is a popular option among Australian women.

Bentley represents the one in three Australian women who travel solo for leisure, according to new TripAdvisor findings.

TripAdvisor's inaugural Women and the World Travel Survey has found Aussie women are embracing independent travel.

The study of more than 3200 Australian women found that 33 per cent travel solo for leisure.

Of these women, 40 per cent are planning between two to four trips this year.

Eighty-two per cent of these solo travellers said their main reason for taking off by themselves was to "get away from it all".

Nearly half of the women (45 per cent) said a reason was being able to choose their own schedule without worrying about others - something Bentley, 39, relishes.

"If I feel like turning left and heading up that road I can," she says. "I can stop anywhere. It's just the incredible freedom of not having to consult anyone."

On average, Bentley spends between a third to half a year travelling abroad, every year. In her down time she's in Sydney working as a graphic designer to finance her trips.

She spent all of 2013 travelling by herself through 50 states in America over 50 weeks. She can do this as nothing ties her to one place - she's single and doesn't have children.

"I sacrifice a lot to be able to be footloose and fancy-free," she admits, "but honestly, I wouldn't change it for a thing."

Fellow Australian blogger Brooke Saward writes on her popular blog [worldofwanderlust.com](http://worldofwanderlust.com) that solo travel can be lonely.

But she says it has opened her eyes to a new way of seeing the world.

"There are highs, lows, lessons and battles, but all in all I can certainly conclude that I have done a lot of growing up by going out and seeing the world on my own," the blog reads.

Travelling solo, Saward writes, is one of the most rewarding experiences to embark upon.

"It's a little scary sometimes, a lot frustrating, but there is certainly never a dull moment."

But travel writer Chanel Parratt describes solo travel as "a wonderfully indulgent experience".

"Waking up in a city you've never been to before, asking yourself, 'What do I want to do today?' is something that everyone should try at least once," she says.

"Travelling alone takes courage and is a great way to learn about yourself - it pushes you out of your comfort zone and forces you to talk with strangers."

Of the 33 per cent of women who travel alone, as found in the TripAdvisor study, 63 per cent said the experience had changed them.

Thirty-one per cent said they had more confidence, while 15 per cent felt solo travel had altered the way they think about their lives.

Forty-six per cent felt more independent.

Travelling solo isn't just restricted to familiar ground either, with 60 per cent of female solo travellers planning to spread their wings both in Australia and overseas.

For long-haul trips, Europe (46 per cent) is the region of choice, followed by Asia (39 per cent) and North America (28 per cent).

Cindy Tan, TripAdvisor's Asia-Pacific vice president, says with Australian women leading busy lives, it's no surprise to hear that most are travelling simply to get away from everything.

"Travelling solo is a liberating and thrilling experience that enables women to make plans based on their own personal tastes and interests, so we're so excited to see that women are truly choosing to be masters of their own itineraries."

For women who are nervous about the idea of a solo trip, Bentley suggests starting small by going somewhere close to home.

She says tours are great because you can have time by yourself with the comfort of having a pre-organised itinerary.

She also advises doing research, and when you land, going to the local visitor centre to get ideas about sightseeing.

"Investigate the place and go 'is this a safe place for a woman to be travelling single', because a lot of places, honest to goodness, still in this day and age, are not," Bentley says.

"If you walk around terrified, the vibes are palpable. People can see that you are an easy target."

The trick: "Don't go beyond what you are comfortable with."

TripAdvisor's Women and the World Travel Survey included 3228 female travellers in Australia and was conducted between February 17-21, 2014.