

I'm not a bot



















## How to find friends while travelling

When traveling alone, it's essential to connect with others, and I've found that using the same methods every time I travel has helped me make new friends. In this post, I'll share simple ways to meet people while solo traveling, including networking at hostels, using apps, finding local activities, and more. Traveling alone can be amazing, but it also comes with challenges like planning, safety concerns, and meeting new people. However, with the right approach, you can easily put yourself in situations that make meeting new people less intimidating. To start, it's crucial to follow some basic rules, which I call the Don't Be CARD rules: don't be creepy, an ass hole, rude, or a douchebag. Being nice and respectful is key. Now, here are 20 ways to meet people while traveling solo. One of the best resources for meeting people is your existing network. When I book a trip, I reach out to my friends and family to see if they know anyone at my destination. For example, when I'm traveling to Portugal, I asked my friends and family for recommendations, and one friend even offered to introduce me to her Portuguese friend in Lisbon. This way, you can get valuable tips and advice from people who have visited the same places. By following these tips and being open to new experiences, you can easily meet new people and make friends while traveling alone. I never would have gotten this head start on my travels without reaching out to my network of family and friends. In fact, I highly recommend putting up a social media post to reach a wider group of people. Before each trip, I go through my Facebook friends to see if anyone lives in the destination and strike up a conversation with them. I also post on Facebook to gather recommendations or get connected with locals who can help me navigate the area. My friends and family groups have been invaluable resources for meeting fellow travelers when exploring solo destinations. Staying at hostels has been an incredible way to meet new people traveling solo, as they provide numerous opportunities for socializing and making connections. While some people may be hesitant about staying in a hostel due to concerns about sharing a room with strangers, this isn't always the case. Many hostels offer private rooms with multiple beds, which can be a great option for small groups looking to save on costs. Private rooms do come with a higher price tag, but they provide more privacy and comfort. Shared dorm rooms are another popular option, offering a range of capacities from 4 to 34 beds, sometimes with en-suite bathrooms. I've found that shared dorm rooms with 4-8 beds work best for me, as they allow for easy socialization with fellow travelers. One of the things I love about shared dorm rooms is the instant connections you make with new people. Just by introducing yourself and starting a conversation, you can find common interests to talk about and gather valuable tips on local sites and restaurants from your roommates. Whether it's asking them to join you exploring the city or inviting them to meet up for a meal, these relationships can be incredibly rewarding. For booking hostels, I always recommend using HostelWorld. I also make sure to exchange contact information with my roommates so we can stay in touch after leaving the hostel. In fact, I've met up with former hostel roommates in other cities and they've provided me with invaluable information about destinations or introduced me to friends living in areas I'm visiting in the future. Overall, staying at hostels has been an incredible way for me to connect with fellow travelers and make unforgettable memories on my adventures. I often hang out with my friends and acquaintances, facilitating connections for others as well. For instance, I introduced my friend's acquaintance to someone living in Melbourne, where they were headed. Interestingly, another person we met during a walking tour in Prague was also staying in Melbourne - without knowing about it! I put them in touch, too. As soon as she arrived, she had people to socialize with immediately. Hostels are great for meeting new folks; common areas like bars and game rooms attract people who enjoy drinking, playing, and chatting. Joining a game or asking to be part of the next one can help you connect with others. Just remember to respect people's boundaries if they don't seem interested in socializing. Another way to make friends is by asking someone to be your partner for a game - like beer pong! I was asked to join a game at one hostel, but didn't have a partner initially. I simply asked around the bar until someone agreed to play with me (it was the second person I approached). People love games and are usually willing to team up. Hostels also organize plenty of activities for their guests, which I highly recommend taking advantage of. These events are often free or relatively inexpensive. My favorite activities include joining walking tours or pub crawls. Hostels also host comedy nights, movie nights, game nights, karaoke nights, and more - all great opportunities to meet new people. As an added bonus, you'll likely have a blast and maybe even learn something! Hostels provide many easy ways to connect with others when traveling solo. People you can meet while traveling solo A good pub crawl is a perfect place to find new travel friends because everyone has an intention to have good time. In my experience, running a pub crawl in Santa Monica for almost seven years, many friendships were made through it. You don't need to drink excessively on the pub crawl. Many people who join them aren't drinking, so you can easily make connections even if you're not into alcohol. Just enjoy yourself with others and have fun. If someone wants a selfie taken, an easy way to meet fellow travelers is to offer taking their picture. Strike up conversation afterwards about where they are from and what brings them on this trip. Just be genuine and kind while approaching strangers, like offering help without expecting anything in return. My first solo international trip was in Denmark. I saw people struggling to take a selfie and offered to help them out by taking the picture for them. We started talking and later got invited for a drink after that. Bars are also a great place to meet new friends while traveling alone. When sitting at the bar, you'll have faster service and can easily talk with the other person seated next to you. Bartenders are great people to talk to as well, providing good local advice and information about places to visit. In Europe, things work differently than in the US. Many bars don't have seats for customers but rather small areas where everyone can stand together. To meet someone, just join a conversation with others or help out by alerting the bartender for them when they need drinks. It's generally okay to talk to strangers without being rude, so just be friendly and initiate conversation if you feel comfortable. Karaoke nights are also excellent opportunities to make friends while enjoying drinks and singing together with everyone else. You always drink responsibly and that's another great move to make when traveling solo. Another effective way to meet new people is to dine at a restaurant or café, especially if there's a long line. Try striking up a conversation with the people waiting and ask if you can share their table. I did this recently and ended up making two great friends. We were all packed in at the restaurant, but we made the best of it by sharing a big table. Some places even have communal tables where anyone can sit down. Just ask if seats are taken and join in if possible. These public areas and common spaces are perfect for meeting new people. Some restaurants also have great bar or counter seating areas near the kitchen. I love those spots! At a busy restaurant in Denmark, I found myself sitting at the bar because there were no tables available. Luckily, there was an empty stool, and I got to chat with two couples from Pittsburgh and Copenhagen. We had a fantastic dinner together, and they gave me great recommendations for other places to eat and see. Approaching strangers can be intimidating, but it doesn't have to be scary. One of my go-to ways to meet people while traveling is to talk to locals on the street or in stores. People are often very friendly and willing to help. They'll also appreciate your effort to communicate with them in their language, even if you're not perfect. In Copenhagen, I would ask store workers for restaurant recommendations, and they'd point me in the right direction. When I got lost trying to find a Mexican restaurant, a local walked up to me and took me on a wild goose chase - it turned out to be a fun experience! Locals are often incredibly nice, and traveling is an excellent way to meet new people. Join community forums like Couchsurfing, Facebook, or Meetup for events happening in your area. These platforms make it easy to connect with others when you're traveling alone. I met some great people through these groups, including a volleyball group that welcomed me as a player. We joined a group game at the location listed in an ad, which attracted over 15 people, including many non-locals seeking social interaction. After the game, everyone went out for food and drinks. This experience made me consider using Meetup, which offers various classes like painting, pottery, or dance, allowing you to interact with others. Many cities offer such classes, ranging from free to paid, with some even offering wine as a bonus. Taking a class can provide entertainment and keep you active while meeting new people. For solo travelers, learning the local language is also an option, although it won't be exhaustive. Festivals, concerts, and street markets are great places to meet like-minded individuals. I met people from different countries at Coachella, and they often initiated conversations with me. Approaching someone or a group can lead to new friendships. Similarly, helping others with their groceries, directions, or translations is a great way to meet people while traveling. Using dating apps like Tinder to find friends in your area can also be effective. Looking for travel companions or like-minded individuals to share experiences with, even potentially finding romance along the way. Volunteering is an excellent way to meet new people while making a positive impact. Options abound, from local shelters and stores to community-based initiatives. Utilize online resources such as Google or specialized platforms like Workaway, World Packers, and WWOOF to discover opportunities abroad. Not only will you form connections with fellow travelers, but your unique skills can also serve as a conversation starter, fostering meaningful interactions in social settings. For instance, musicians often draw crowds at hostels, sparking impromptu gatherings and friendships. Striking up conversations with fellow travelers in waiting areas is another effective way to meet new people, just be respectful of personal space. Many Airbnb rentals feature shared common rooms where guests can mingle, while Couchsurfing allows for direct interactions with hosts, who often become valuable sources of information and potential travel companions. Even if you don't smoke, having some cigarettes can be a good idea as they might interest someone who's looking for a pack. Cigarettes can also be used in exchange for other things, like money or services. If you stay in one place for a long time, getting a job is essential. There are many opportunities to work at hostels, restaurants, bars, on boats, farms, or giving tours and teaching English. Having a job means you'll have people to talk to, make friends with, and get paid. I've met several travelers who stayed in hostels for months working, which was a great way to meet new people. Giving genuine compliments can be very effective too, like noticing someone's scarf and telling them how nice it is. Just don't be creepy or condescending about it. A simple comment like "I love that Star Wars shirt" can lead to interesting conversations. People often talk enthusiastically about where they got their clothes when traveling. I print out group photos of new friends with my portable printer, which helps make connections even stronger. My friend brings stickers and buttons she designs herself, which are always a hit. Another essential item for me is my portable speaker - it's amazing at starting parties and bringing people together. When traveling solo, making new friends can be a challenge. I'd love to hear from you - do you have a favorite way of meeting fellow travelers? Perhaps there's something I've missed that you think is important to share? Feel free to leave a comment below! If hostels aren't your thing, don't worry; there are still plenty of ways to meet new people. Use Hostelworld to find accommodations and take advantage of the social areas, even if you opt for a private room. Joining a guided tour or participating in free walking tours can be a great way to break the ice with fellow travelers. For day tours and activities, check out GetYourGuide and Viator. When all else fails, utilize your online connections to connect with other travelers. I've found that joining online groups or posting on social media can lead to impromptu meetups with like-minded individuals. Of course, sometimes it's just a matter of being open to new experiences and striking up conversations. Whether you're sipping coffee at a trendy café or participating in group dinners or bar crawls, the possibilities are endless. Lastly, don't be afraid to try something new! I've even stumbled upon hostels that offer activities like musical instrument-making lessons - keep an eye out for these when booking your accommodations. And remember, sometimes the best way to make friends is by doing what you love and meeting others who share your passions. Looking for lasting friendships during solo travel? Try apps like Hey!Vina and Bumble BFF to meet fellow travellers and locals. Many travel bloggers host meetup events, and attending one is a great way to connect with like-minded people. Websites like Meetup unite people over shared activities and interests in specific locations, making it easy to find common ground. Join digital nomad or freelancer groups when arriving in a new city, and you'll likely meet fellow travellers at hostel social areas around 7 pm. Invite someone to dinner, and you might just form a lasting connection. Websites like EatWith host supper clubs in over 130 countries, offering a chance to meet locals and share food. Strike up conversations with people on buses, trains, and planes - they're likely headed to the same destination, making it an ideal time to start chatting. For backpackers, FlixBus is a great option for solo travel in Europe, while 12Go works well in Southeast Asia. If hostels aren't your thing, use Couchsurfing or Host A Sister to meet locals and get free accommodation. Some people prefer shared Airbnb rentals, which can provide a more local experience. During solo trips, staying with hosts who become like family members has been life-changing - my host dad in Bali took me to hidden gems I wouldn't have known about otherwise. Investing time in building connections will yield deeper friendships and create lasting memories. Meeting fellow travelers while on the road can be a great way to create lasting friendships. Just like participating in guided tours or joining group activities, it allows you to bond with others who share similar interests and passions. Consider exploring websites such as Workaway, which offers over 50,000 cultural exchange opportunities worldwide, often including free accommodation and meals in exchange for work commitments. Worldpackers is another popular platform, boasting more than 3.2 million users across 140 countries, providing volunteer opportunities and protection through 'experience insurance.' To initiate conversations with other travelers, ask about their travels or experiences, as people generally enjoy sharing stories of their adventures. This can be done in hostels, on public transportation, or even while waiting for a bus. You could also offer to help someone with their camera or propose taking a photo together - even if it doesn't lead to friendship, you'll have captured the moment. Most importantly, as a solo traveler, don't appear closed off to meeting others. Join group activities, attend social gatherings in hostels, and be open to new experiences. While it may feel daunting at first, putting yourself out there can significantly increase your chances of forming meaningful connections with fellow travelers. I prefer booking apartments through Booking.com, as it allows me to filter by review score and price to find affordable options. For hostels, I use Hostelworld.com. To save money on accommodation, I utilise Trusted Houseitters, a website that connects homeowners going away with travellers who can house sit their homes and pets. For travel tours and activities, I browse GetYourGuide. If needed, I consider True Traveller for UK & Europe residents, as it offers affordable insurance coverage for various activities, valuables, and pre-existing conditions. What's unique about True Traveller is that they insure you even if you're already travelling or haven't booked your flight yet. For travel insurance tailored to other nationalities, I recommend Hey Mundo. For long-term digital nomad travellers, Safety Wing is a great option. You can find more travel discounts and budget tips on my resources page, which I've accumulated over 10+ years of travel experience!