

Travelling is something that every person should be free to do. It expands the mind, refreshes the body (once the initial jet lag wears off) and opens you up to new people, new experiences and new foods. Travelling alone as a woman contains a unique set of advantages. When I set off to begin travelling independently two years ago, most people were supportive but there were warnings.

A chorus of “be careful” and “won’t you feel unsafe?” echoed behind me. Whilst it is true that depending on where you travel, specific pitfalls do present themselves to women and of course it is essential to be mindful of these, ultimately travelling alone as a woman is so enriching and fulfilling. It remains one of the most liberating and unforgettable experiences of my life and here’s why.

Independence is largely about prioritizing your own needs and wants. You know what you want and aren’t afraid to get it alone. Travelling alone means that you are responsible for directions, map reading, schedules and handling money. Many women turn over these necessities to men. When women become wives and mothers, many lose a large amount of their independence. This becomes necessary to a degree. Exploring alone is a great way to value being alone and helps you realize you really can do it all. Treasuring this sense of independence is vital.

I haven’t always had the highest self-esteem. It’s been a daily battle. Travel really plunged me out of my comfort zone. I had to contend with language barriers, bizarre new foods and unforeseen challenges. Nothing builds esteem and confidence quite like travel and this is a powerful lesson to take home that will stand you in good stead for life.

In life, problems will come your way. When you travel, you’ll be presented with very distinctive struggles. You’ll have to problem solve how to make that 21:05 flight to Hanoi when you only finish seeing Maya Bay at 18:00. You’ll have to budget, learn key words and phrases, and master asking for vegetarian food as well as studying how to [apply visa on arrival Vietnam](#) online.

You can do what you want. Most people think they want freedom. Yet, when they get it, they don’t know what to do with it. Landing in a strange place affords you such an odd form of emancipation; do you want to go swimming? Try a bowl of pho? Go on a safari? Sky dive?

You can see what you want to see. When you travel with others you have to compromise, which is a skill in itself. When you travel alone, it’s all about you.

You can avoid the tackier sides of tourism. I don’t want to tar all tourists with the same brush but there are certain types of tourism that don’t benefit local communities. Animal tourism encourages the abuse and exploitation of exotic animals. The sex tourism industry, which abounds throughout South East Asia, practically forces young children and teenagers into a life of prostitution to earn a semi-decent wage. Swathes of tourists travel without thinking of the repercussions of how they spend their money. Although women are by no means travelling saints, women tend to focus on volunteering or teaching projects when they travel. A female traveler’s money really does benefit the country’s economy and promotes proactive practices which in turn opens up opportunities for locals.

Travel broadens the mind so they say. You’ll find that everyone basically wants the same things; to be loved, a decent wage and a life of adventure. Travel demolishes boundaries; you

will feel close to people you barely understand, you will see people as they are, neither demonized nor idealized as they so often are by the media – just real people doing real things.

Your journey is unwritten. Travelling with companions lends you security but it also hems you in. Travelling alone carries limitless potential. There's no telling who you might meet or where you might go next. You're in control. Do your research on the area. The Middle East is far more dangerous and restrictive for female travelers than South East Asia for example.

Dress appropriately to the area. In conservative areas, dress modestly. Know the number and address of the local police station. Always have a phone with credit on hand. Always tell someone, such as the manager of your hostel or a roommate, where you are going. Be wary of strangers; don't accept drinks from those you don't know, don't go back with someone you don't know and guard your belongings.

Ultimately the risks to women abroad are similar to those at home so just be mindful of the intentions of others and be responsible. You'll find that many locals are warm and hospitable to foreign women travelling on their own but there are always exceptions.

Finally, go have the time of your life!

Source: [get vietnam visa](#)