

## AARP EMPLOYEE TRAVEL BLOG POSTS

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### ARTICLE 5: SOLO TRIPS

*Title suggestions:*

- Solo Trips and Tips For Going International
- **International Solo Trips: How to Do Them Right**
- Top Tips for Traveling Solo Internationally

*Body:*

[IMAGE: Danielle Alexander\_Stonehenge.jpg CAPTION TEXT: AARP employee Danielle Alexander poses playfully with Stonehenge on her solo European vacation.]

Planning a solo trip can be intimidating, and traveling internationally solo even more so. Can you make a great international travel work on your own? Of course! We surveyed experienced solo travelers in the AARP employee family, and they shared these words of encouragement for anyone who wants to travel alone. Share your tips in the comments below, or continue the conversation in the [AARP Online Community](#).

#### **Find Your Inspiration, Be Sure To Pack It**

AARP employee Danielle Alexander took herself on a European tour to London, Paris, and Rome. “For years, I have wanted to go to Europe, but never found friends that had the time or money,” she recalls. “One of my favorite books is *Eat, Pray, Love*. I started reading it for motivation to go alone. I joined a group travel company ... and was ready to go solo. Prior to the trip, I attended Oprah’s “The Life You Want” tour and ended up personally meeting Oprah, ... that encouraged my first solo travel tour to Europe – my own *Eat, Pray, Love* journey. These are [the] memories [of] a life-changing moment – the moment I found out I was brave. ... Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.”

#### **Find The Ultimate Escape**

Erica Dhar’s ultimate escape was to Scotland and Iceland. “I had not been able to take vacation ... [and] I needed to get away from NYC and needed to decompress,” she says. “Scotland and Iceland were just the zen vacation I needed. There was the Edinburgh Fringe Festival so I got to enjoy good food, music, comedy, nature travelling to the Scottish countryside, the south coast,

highlands, lowlands....Iceland was awesome, the volcanic terrain, and stupendous nature. I was so impressed with Reykjavik; I was there during their marathon and cultural festival ... I met fabulous people in both countries and felt refreshed. I totally didn't think about work and was so energized by fresh air and beautiful countryside."

[IMAGE: Joseph Broda\_GrandPalaceGuard.jpg CAPTION TEXT: AARP employee Joseph Broda poses with a Grand Palace guard on his solo vacation to Thailand.]

## **Do It All / Do It Up**

AARP employee Joseph Broda said yes to every adventure in Thailand. "I love to travel and I love good food, so I chose Thailand for my first solo trip to Asia," he writes. "I saved up frequent flyer points and booked a round-trip ticket to Bangkok. The long journey (23+ hours) was definitely worth it! Bangkok has a palpable energy and the Thai people are friendly and kind. ... The first morning, I visited the wet market in the Klong Toey slum and took a Thai cooking class. I ferried up the Chao Phraya River and explored the Grand Palace and the temples of Wat Phra Kaew. I mastered the Sky Train, took my first tuk-tuk ride, and had cocktails at the rooftop Sky Bar. I went to mass at a Catholic Church that looked like a Buddhist temple.

"After four days in Bangkok, I took a short plane ride to Ko Samui, Thailand's second-largest island. I treated myself to four days at a wellness sanctuary and holistic spa. I did yoga every morning, meditated and had a wonderful Ayurvedic massage. I ate healthy, tasty, fresh food. ... This trip left me feeling rejuvenated and gave me a newfound zest for life!"

## **Balance Your Alone Time**

Charlotte Spinner left for her trip alone, but returned from New Zealand's North Island with new friends. "This was the first significant solo vacation I ever took and it was quite an adventure: driving a manual transmission automobile on the left side of the road, encountering all sorts of exotic flora and fauna, and just being so very far from home," she remembers. "New Zealand had a very 'homey' feel ... with warm, friendly people (and signs in English!). The beauty and diversity were stunning: bubbling mud pools, forests of giant kauri trees, beaches of black sand, and rainbow-adorned waterfalls. Traveling solo was not a problem, as I mostly enjoyed my solitude, but found plenty of natives and fellow travelers alike with whom to share the fun. I would do it again in a heartbeat!"

Share tips for great solo travel in [AARP's Online Community](#).