



MEMBERS

Why It's Better to Travel with Friends

Not all who wander are brave

Written by: Dave Owen

We publish a lot of articles about why you should travel alone: how it empowers young people to see the world on their own terms, have experiences they might otherwise miss, and make new friends along the way. All of those things are absolutely true... but travelling solo simply isn't the right move for everybody. The risk is that the constant assertion that people should be brave enough to travel alone will make those who don't have the confidence to do so, who simply don't thrive and won't enjoy travelling alone, feel as if they are cowards. That they are somehow doing it wrong, when in fact there's nothing wrong with preferring to travel with friends and loved ones at your side.



First, let's consider the practical advantages of travelling with somebody you know. It means not having to sit next to a stranger on your long haul flight, being able to leave your bags with somebody you trust when you go to the loo, and getting as many photos of yourself looking pale and sweaty in exotic locations as you like without bothering the locals to take them.

To many, these reasons don't add up to enough to stay home if you can't [convince friends to travel with you](#). But for somebody with approximately no social skills and/or genuine social anxiety, having somebody else to ask for directions, book tickets, and take care of all those little tasks can make a trip significantly less stressful, and ensure that you're able to make the most of it.

For some people, [travelling solo](#) is a way to gain the self-confidence to overcome these issues. Others will not find that confidence and simply have a terrible time. It's okay to recognise and accept that.

The argument also goes that choosing to travel with friends you already have hinders your ability to [make new friends](#). Honestly, if that's the case you're probably content with your current companions and aren't really too bothered about meeting new ones. If you want to speak to new people on the road, having friends with you

should make it easier – there's less pressure on you individually to make an impression, so you're more likely to just be yourself.

My desire to travel with friends goes further than practical reasons. Having those shared memories helps to make a trip feel more *real*.



Stay with me here. Last year, I travelled alone to Australia's [Northern Territory](#) for ten days. It was undoubtedly one of the best experiences of my life – read my [rapturous impressions of Kakadu National Park](#) if you don't believe me. But now, just seven months later, it almost feels as if I was never there, because nobody close to me shares those memories.

Undoubtedly this sounds a little silly. I have plenty of photos and videos that prove I was there. I *did* go. But I didn't make any friends while I was there (no social skills, remember). I will never see any of my tour group again. This means I have nobody in my life with whom to recount the trip, either the big moments or the small. Sure, I can tell people about them but, like a tiresome aunt showing off her holiday snaps,

nobody else really cares or understands, because they weren't there with me.

Travelling together and sharing memories is an incredible way to feel closer to the people I already love. I spent much of the trip wishing [my girlfriend](#) was there, or my best friends.

My fear, I suppose, is that memories of adventures taken alone will fade more readily than those shared. Perhaps this is why solo travellers by necessity become adept at making new friends along the way – so they will always have the affirmation of somebody else who experienced what they did.

As somebody inept at making those connections, it simply makes sense to stick with the people I already know.

Find more articles like this

TRAVEL NEWS

STORIES & REPORTS

OPINION



One in every 50 travellers finds romance on a flight, survey finds

A Rainy Overlanding Accident in Uganda, Africa

9 Surveys About the Best