



WOMAN TO WOMEN

travel advice. woman to women.

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FOREWORD

to all the she-dreamers, the
one-day-ill-go-ers, and the pink
passport holders: lets. get. lost...



03

Hola. Ciao. Hello.

Hey girl. So I wanted to start by saying just how much I love traveling and just how unqualified I feel even beginning to write this book full of travel advice when it feels like I have not even put a dent in my global bucket list. But you know what? That is ok.

Travel isn't about checking off as many destinations on your list as you can. At least not to me, it isn't. In my opinion, travel is like scratching an itch, so to speak. It is to feel a familiar feeling in an unfamiliar place. It is to soak in moments, tidbits of life, that you otherwise wouldn't.

not to get lost, and how to even begin your traveling adventures.

And this book isn't just for solo female travelers either! I am talking to any and all women who want to and love to travel - alone, with their love, or with their girl friends! While solo travel is good for the soul, I would be totally lying if I said that some of my very favorite travel experiences had been ones where I was traveling alone.

While I feel like writing a book about travel in general is a daunting task, I

TO TRAVEL IS TO FALL IN LOVE OVER AND OVER AGAIN

The purpose of this book is not to tell you all the places you should visit because in all honesty, I feel that I haven't really been to enough places to actually tell someone where they should or shouldn't go. I want to go everywhere!

My goal in this book is to help fellow female travelers to know what my own personal favorite travel spots have been, what spots may be more worth it than others, and how to make the most of your time there, including tips for taking awesome photos (even if you're traveling solo!), how to and how

do feel like I've had some awesome global opportunities that somewhat qualify me for the job!

A little bit about me - I've had amazing trips throughout Eastern and Western Europe, Eurasia, Central America, and North America! I have even lived in London for a summer!

I truly hope that my experiences - both good and bad - can help female travelers like me to make their travel experience the best they possibly can! So, ready? Set? Lets go!



cinque terre, italy

SO YOU LIKE TO TRAVEL...

I love to travel. Great. Where do I sign up?

Whether you've never even posed for a passport picture, or whether you've been continent-hopping for years, no travel-bugged dreamer is immune from a fresh case of wanderlust from time to time. In my case, I feel the travel bug the strongest when I've recently returned from a trip. So unfair. So, how do you start traveling if the only places you've ever been are the Marrakesh and Munich boards on your Pinterest travel page?

Make a physical manifestation of your dream location!

Whether your form of a vision board is your travel fetish on Pinterest or some magazine photos of your dream destination tacked onto a bulletin board, I truly believe that seeing a physical representation of where you'd like to travel to is the first step to making it happen! I remember when I was about ten years old, I would pour over the Highlight Magazine Mysteries they would send me each month, and each was set in a different country. I would stash the books in an accumulating collection, and vow that I would go to these places one day! And that is what started it all.

So dust off some travel magazines and pull that bulletin board out from under your bed and get to planning!

Base a trip off of cheap flight tickets!

A couple of years ago, I had two friends who caught the travel bug and wanted to go to South Africa (who doesn't?!), but obviously flights were too expensive for a spur-of-the-moment trip. So, we began looking at flights to anywhere and everywhere, and we discovered amazing round trip flights to Iceland, and we committed! It ended up being the best road trip I had ever been on!

Sign up for a tour-based trip for your first travel experience!

I know that the word 'tour' can put off some negative connotations. I hate the idea of an overcrowded, overly-organized itinerary based travel schedule as much as the next female traveler, but there are some amazing tour-based trips that can really enhance your first travel experience! I highly suggest researching travel tour packages, as the right ones can really give you the best travel bang for your buck!



A FEW FAVORITES





For me, these next few places are the cream of the crop from my travel experiences. I feel like most of my favorite places are off the beaten path, but I think that is why I love them so much!

ISTANBUL, TURKEY



I have told people time and time again that Turkey is one of my favorite places I've ever been, if not my very favorite. The word that comes to mind when I think of Turkey is mystical. I love it when countries take me back in time, and to me, Istanbul still felt like a land of sultans and magic carpets as I strolled through the Grand Bazaar



and saw hanging lamps, patterned silk scarves, and open tubs of colorful spices. I think the best way to see most sea-side cities is by boat, so I suggest taking a ride on the Bosphorus Strait. Did you know that Istanbul sits on two continents? Most of the city sits within Europe, but the other part is considered Asia! But most of all, my favorite thing about Turkey is the people. My belief is that Turkish people are some of the warmest, kindest people in the world.

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC



Ah, this city. I love Eastern Europe, because when I pictured Europe, I pictured cobblestone streets, dated buildings, and street vendors selling local treats. Fast forward to my first time in Paris and...uh, that is not quite the case. Prague still has that old-timey feel

that Western Europe still feels like its lacking. While Prague still has plenty of tourists, theres lots of corners to explore in the old city that will make you feel like youre walking through the streets of what you always thought your European fantasy would look like. And for your taste buds, try a Trdelník from a street vendor! (insert drool face emoji)



charles bridge, prague

AKUREYRI,
ICELAND





Ok, ok, so all of Iceland is actually my favorite. But Akureyri is such a cute and quaint town nestled in the hills of Northern Iceland with so much natural beauty just a drive outside of the city. My friends and I stayed at a horse ranch Airbnb and the drive to our stay was so beautiful. Iceland is such a nice escape from the city scape too if youre looking for a more nature-inclined trip!



fjaðrárgljúfur canyon, iceland



TULUM, MEXICO



las ruinas de tulum, tulum

How could I not list a tropical paradise as one of my favorite locations? While I have not been to an impressive number of tropical locations, I have seen a lot of beautiful beaches! And Tulum trumps them all so far. Even the ancient ruins sit atop a view of the most beautiful view of white sands and palm trees. I think the Yucatec Indians knew exactly what they were doing when they settled here! Everyone knows Mexican food is the best (I am biased. No shame here), and Tulum has no shortage of amazing restaurants, both off and on

the beach! Tulum is also totally picturesque, and perhaps a little less tourist-abundant than its popular neighbor Cancun. My favorite thing to do in Tulum was rent a moped (for ridiculously cheap) and wheel around the cute beachfront hotels! I would not recommend doing a ton of shopping in Tulum-beware that everything here, or at least the typical knick-knack souvenirs are almost always likely to be double or even triple the price of the same items found outside of town.



PATMOS, GREECE



So, Greece has six-thousand islands!! While not all of them are inhabited, there are still a lot to choose from. Everyone knows the most famous ones, but Patmos is the epitome of slow, Greek island life. There were tentacled octopus legs hung out to dry after a recent catch, mopeds skirting slowly round corners, and views of the Aegean sea from every white-washed building and balcony. While I didn't find my Kostas (if you know, you know!) I did see a lot of sweet old Greek men perched atop their balconies.

I had never heard of the tiny island before I visited, but it's most famous for being the place where John the Revelator was exiled, and where he wrote the Book of Revelation. You can even visit the house where he lived while there! History is preserved well within the traditional white walls of this Greek Isle. There are plenty of cute cafes and quaint boutiques on the island as well! I recommend ordering the Moussaka from one of the seaside cafes!



TAKE THE ROAD



LESS TRAVELED

Hold the tourist please: Tiny towns where you get the better bang for your buck

If you want to avoid feeling hot and bothered by the amount of people at your destination, read on. Like I said in my introduction, I would never tell you not to go somewhere (unless it was dangerous or truly a horrible experience), because I think everyone has different experiences at different places. However, if you are wondering whether one place is worth it while another isn't, or you are worried about the amount of heavy tourism at a particular place or time of year, let me tell you: I'm your girl.

I wish I had known this when I went to Venice last summer on a solo trip. I had been to [Venice](#) once in October, and it was a lovely experience. Summer? That's an entirely different story. Little did I know that air-conditioning (air-con for my European friends) was actually laughably dismissed in the summer months for most of the European cities I visited mid-July, and that made all the difference. Not because I planned to stay inside my whole trip, but because when it is over one hundred degrees outside, air-conditioning makes ALL of the difference when you can step inside a cool building for a quick break. And when you can't do that, heat + one thousand meandering tourists makes for one unhappy traveler.

I had the choice to either stay in [Verona](#) for an extra day, or try to squeeze another day and a half in Venice via train. I chose to hit both cities, and boy did I regret it. I wished I had known how miserably busy and hot Venice would be in July. So my hope is that with this chapter, you'll gain some useful trips on which big cities you may want to avoid if you have the option of exploring some smaller, lesser known parts of the country instead!

INSTEAD OF
VENICE,
VISIT

VERONA

Yup. There it is. I said it.

I know. I know that Venice is a must. But take it from me, it is not a must in mid-July. Its busier, smellier, and much, much hotter than normal in July. I also went in October two years prior, and while I'm not sure you can ever catch Venice without somewhat of a mob of wanderlust-ful tourists trying to cross it off their bucket list, Autumn in Venice was much more magical in comparison.

Verona, oh Verona, wherefore art thou, Verona. The hometown of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet was still pretty poppin in July, but it was so, so dreamy. My advice: get up early in the morning, go see the Casa di Giulietta before all of the tourists arrive, then spend the rest of the day on a rental bike (you can get them for five dollars for the whole day), meandering through the veins of the city. If you steer clear of the main Piazza, some of the tiny cobblestone roads have not a soul in sight, and the city is all yours.

I will also say, that as a solo female traveler on both of these trips, I felt safe in both cities, but in Verona, I felt like the sleepy little city had the nicest people who loved giving advice on the best things to see, and who were always excited to practice their English with me!

My absolute favorite thing to do was to bike to the top of Castel San Pietro, where the most stunning view of all of Verona was waiting at the top. The best views from Verona are from across the river, and the bike ride there is so beautiful as well! As for food, you can bet I stuffed my face with carbs and...carbs. My favorite restaurant with the best ravioli was called Trattoria Reale, and it was tucked in an alleyway away from the touristy parts of the city. And insider tip? The food in Verona was a lot better than the food in Venice in my opinion. It tasted a little more authentic!

parked mopeds are in no short supply in verona







trattoria reale restaurant, verona

INSTEAD OF
ZURICH,
MARCH TO

MÜRREN

Dont get me wrong. Zurich is beautiful!

But, the views from Mürren, Switzerland have their place in my heart as one of the most awe-inspiring, jaw-dropping scenes from the heavens I have ever seen.

Mürren is situated in the Swiss Alps, and it is everything you think a tiny Swiss village would be. There are strings of Swiss flags waving in the breeze against a backdrop of unreal mountain views. You can catch a glimpse of paragliders as they float against the snow-capped mountains and greenery of the Alps. There are cows with traditional mountain bells tied around their necks grazing on the long grass on the hilltops, and the people are kind and accustomed to the slow season. I went in October, and it was beautiful weather, and not too cold at all.

If you want a slightly more thrilling experience of the Alps though, I totally suggest taking a gondola ride up to the top of Schilthorn and visit the rotating restaurant, Piz Gloria, the filming place for one of the James Bond movies. The restaurant has a James Bond theme, but even more impressive is the rotating panoramic view you enjoy while eating your food! High above the town of Mürren, you can literally eat in the clouds, face-to-face with the Alps and all of their breathtaking beauty.

Down below the restaurant, there is a thrill walk available to anyone, where you can walk across a rope high above the Alps (there is a net beneath you as well, dont worry, your girl is deathly afraid of heights!) where people like me can overcome their fears in the coolest place ever.

I think the Alps are the coolest place to experience Swiss beauty and culture.



INSTEAD OF
SAN PEDRO,
CAB TO

CAYE CAULKER

Belize is such an interesting country. It has probably some of the most diverse culture that I've seen in a Central American Country. Belize is settled between Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. The national language is English, but most everyone speaks Belize Kriol (picture English with a Caribbean accent so strong that it is no longer English!). There are lots of Guatemalans there, so there's plenty of Spanish spoken, but there are also a lot of Russian Mennonites who speak a German dialect, so the occasional Plautdietsch language can be heard throughout the country as well.

So let's cut to the chase. The beauty of Belize lies in its islands, or cayes, as they say (pronounced as key. Don't worry, I already made a fool of myself so you don't have to). The cities are somewhat grimy and full of cat-callers that would make any female traveler want to pick up a fast-walk pace in the opposite direction. Their islands, however, are white sandy pearls in the middle of Caribbean, turquoise waters.

There's a popular town on the Ambergris Caye called San Pedro that most tourists flock to because it has the most amenities. While it is beautiful, it does have a lot more people and busier beaches. Caye Caulker on the other hand, doesn't even have roads! The main way of transportation is by golf cart, and even without one you could walk the circumference of the island in about forty-five minutes!

The island totally embodies the idea of slow Caribbean living. In fact, the saying on the island is "Go Slow," which basically means take it easy. You can even go back and forth between San Pedro and Caye Caulker by water taxi because they're so close.

My favorite thing to do on the island was to snorkel with nurse sharks and sting rays at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve that's just a boat ride away, and enjoy some great barbecue chicken at Mama Liz's right on the beach!



FORTY-EIGHT HOUR CITIES



view from the arc de triomphe, paris





PARIS

While it may not seem possible to breeze through the city of love in forty-eight hours, there are a few must-sees that you can fit into your itinerary if that happens to be all the time you have...

LOANO
MILLESIMO
DEGO
MONDOVI
ROVEREDO
BASSANO
S' GEORGES
MANTOUE
TAGLIAMENTO
SEDIMAN
MONT THABOR
CHEBREISSE
BASSIGNANO
SAN GIULIANO
DIETIKON

ADIGE
CITTOENNE
POZZOLO
LA PIAVE

Take a boat ride on the Seine River

I've said it once, and I'll say it again - the best way to see all of a city in a short amount of time is by waterway, if possible. I only had two days to spend in Paris, and the most I saw of the city was on a cost-friendly boat tour of the Seine. I got the best photos that way too! The river boat passed the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, and all the pretty pastel buildings that I was surprised to find in the outskirts of Paris rather than the main streets of one of the world's most famous cities.

Visit the Gardens of Versailles

Even if you don't want to take a tour through the entire palace, the palace gardens are absolutely stunning. They are a great place for photos as well! Versailles is an hour drive from Paris, but if the palace is a must on your bucket list, you could still make it there and back to the city without spending an entire day there. Tip - get there as soon as they open to beat the scores of tour buses that come two-to-three hours after they open!

Take the metro to Saint-Germain-des-Prés

I was a bit underwhelmed with my overall first impression of Paris. I thought that I would fall in love with the city at first sight, but, as one of the top tourist destinations in the world, a lot of other first-timers probably thought that to...and I think they were all there at the same time as me!

It wasn't until I stepped out of the metro station at Saint Germain, a province of Paris, that I finally caught a glimpse of the Parisian flare that I'd been so looking forward to. There are awesome restaurants, pastel buildings, and little boutiques that I could have wanted to spend the entire day exploring.

See the Eiffel Tower from the Place du Trocadéro

This was my favorite view of the Eiffel Tower! It is located across the river from the Eiffel Tower, and you get a better view here than from trying to stand at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower where every other tourist is! Go at sunrise for the most amazing view!



Go to the top of the Arc de Triomphe

Ok. This is a must. If you do nothing else in Paris, I highly suggest going to the top of the Arc de Triomphe! The view from there is the very best (even better than the Eiffel Tower), because you can see all of Paris, including the Eiffel Tower! Its very affordable to do as well. When I went, it was only twelve Euros for an adult ticket and nine if you could prove you were a student. There are so many opportunities for amazing photo-ops too! Whether you go during the day and enjoy the pastel colors of Paris, or ooh and awe over a glittering Eiffel Tower at night, the view is so worth the stair climb up there!

Finish your trip off with a ride up to the Eiffel Tower

I know, so cliché! But how can you go to Paris and not climb to the top of the Eiffel Tower? I couldve spent hours looking at the views from all four sides of the country's most iconic monument. Also...the morning is really the best time to make the trip! I am not an early riser in the least, but if I can beat the hordes of tourists by a couple of hours, then I will consider my alarm set!



There are so many things to do in Paris, and these are just a few of the things I made time for in the forty-eight hours that I had there!



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LONDON

Stroll around covent garden

Covent Garden had some of my favorite vibes in London! It was always a fun, lively place to be with a huge abundance of shops around the area, and within the Covent Garden square, there were plenty of great restaurants too!

See a musical at West End

Compared to Broadway tickets in the U.S., theatre and musical tickets in London are quite affordable! I saw some musicals for as little as eighteen pounds! One of my favorite things to do on a weekend night was to eat dinner somewhere at Covent Garden and then go to a musical. My favorite musicals were Dream Girls (soo good!), Matilda, 42nd Street, Kinky Boots, and Wicked!

Take some photos at Notting Hill

The most picturesque part of London! South Kensington and Notting Hill are both my favorite place to stroll through and take the prettiest pictures!

Notting Hill is home to Portobello Road, where the neighborhoods are flocked with pastel pink, blue and purple houses! The worlds largest antique market is held there on Saturdays!

Scratch n Sniff at the Columbia Road Flower Market in Hackney

At nine thirty a.m. every Sunday during the warmer months, there is a glorious occurrence. Every flower you can imagine is put on display for a couple of hours with salesmen yelling bargains for a bouquet. Better yet - there are the cutest vintage shops right behind the flower market where you can buy antique teacups and teapots, a vase for your flowers, handcrafted bags, and loads of other items!

While exploring Hackney, grab some pho if you like Vietnamese food! I had some of the best pho I have ever tried, and there are tons of Vietnamese food restaurants in the area!

Take the Underground to Picadilly Circus

It wouldnt be a trip to London without a visit to Picadilly Circus! This is like the Times Square of London. While it is swarming with people, it has its redeeming qualities. If you arent into shopping main retail stores, there are lots of great restaurant options and pub food to try. My favorite that I went back to time and time again was the Queens Head at Picadilly Circus! The chips there are top notch!



belgravia, london

Treat yourself at Peggy Porschen Cakes

Maybe you've seen the famous pink pictures of London's Peggy Porschen Cakes and have dreamed of seeing if their cupcakes live up to the hype? Maybe not. Well either way, they are! The desserts here are as decadent as they are delicious. Belgravia, the area where the bakery is, is fun to walk around, too! The street is lined with insanely cute decorated shop windows lined with flowers and bikes and everything nice.

Cross Sketch off of your cool-girl bucket list with some afternoon tea

While you need a reservation to eat here, my first time in London, I only had forty eight hours to spend in the city, and I knew I wanted to eat here, so I made a reservation beforehand, and I'm so glad I did! The food is pricey if you're willing to splurge, but it is so worth it because their steak is amazing! You can either make a tea-time reservation or a meal-time reservation for lunch or dinner. Either are great! Their peppermint tea is so good that I asked to buy a box!

Learn something at a museum

South Kensington is a great place to visit the abundance of museums that London boasts. There is the famous Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, and the list goes on...

Take a bike ride through Hyde Park

My absolute favorite activity in London was to rent a bike for two pounds an hour and just ride it through Hyde Park! Did you know London is actually renowned for its abundance of parks? Hyde Park is a green, lush, mostly quiet bikers paradise, and you can bike to Kensington Palace, the museums at South Kensington, and even Buckingham Palace in no time.

Visit the palace at Kensington

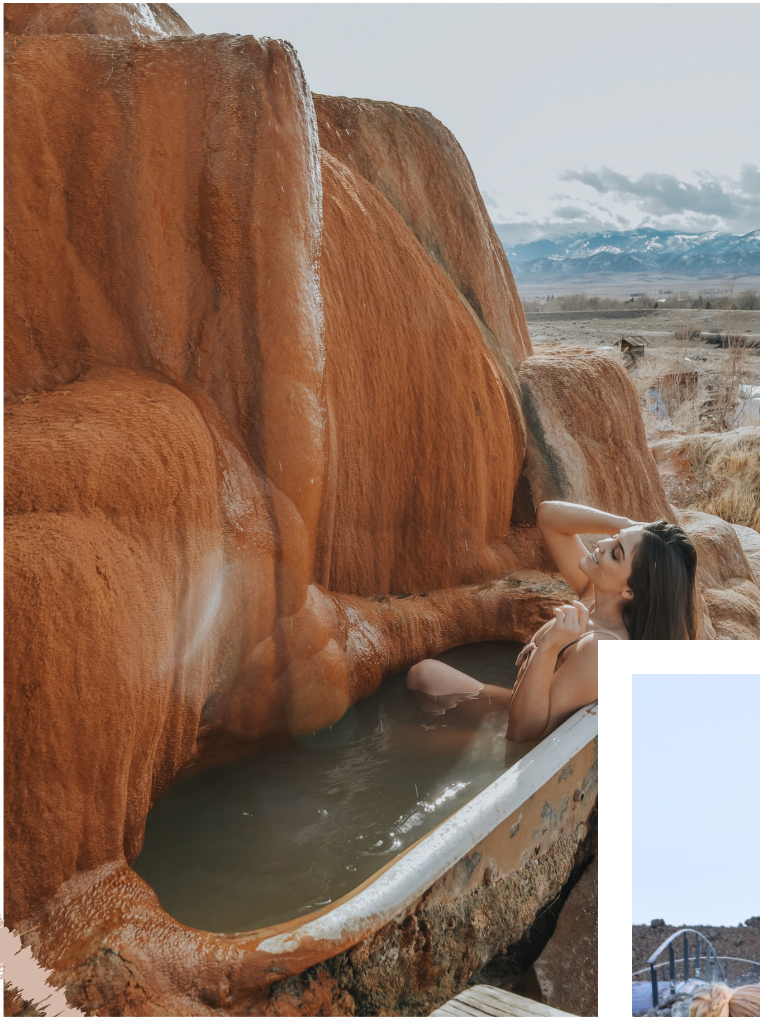
I am a sucker for pretty gardens, and the gardens at Kensington Palace are quite impressive. There are plenty of benches to sit and rest from a long day of exploring and it's surrounded by the perfect London park feel, with a pretty fountain and loads of greenery to look at.

While in Kensington, if Indian food is on your radar, Zaika has some of the best Indian cuisine with a cool restaurant feel inside a former bank.

Walk across Westminster Bridge

While the most iconic bridge in London is the Tower Bridge and worth a visit, Westminster Bridge is the bridge between the famous London Eye and Big Ben! Tower Bridge is just a ten-minute walk from the area, too!

SHUT UP AND DRIVE



THE ALL AMERICAN

A woman with long brown hair is relaxing in a white hot tub. She is holding a light blue camera up to her eye and smiling. The hot tub is built into a natural rock formation. The surrounding landscape is a desert with dry grass, shrubs, and a large wooden structure made of logs in the background. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Road trip: Idaho to California and Arizona

While going to school in Idaho, I've road-tripped down to California, where I'm from a dozen times by now. Here are some fun stops along the way!

Mystic Hot Springs

This is a fun little pit stop on the way to St. George, Utah that has the power to take you right back to the seventies! It's a natural hot springs that's been rigged up to some earthy hot tubs!

Seven Magic Mountains

This is an art installation that's right outside of Vegas! It's just seven stacks of colorful rocks you can stop and take photos!



bath, england

DAY TRIPS FROM LONDON

Bath, Somerset

Bath is probably my favorite place I've been to in England. I spent a day here once and decided to go back for an entire weekend because I loved it so much! It's home to the famous Roman bath houses, Jane Austen's residence, and some of the prettiest hilltop homes ever!

For the best city sights, I would suggest booking a cheap ticket atop Bath Abbey, or renting a bike (what's new??) and biking to the top of Alexandra Hill, which has a breathtaking panoramic view from the top. The town is beautiful in early morning light before the tourists arrive and the Abbey square is yellow with the first light of morning.

My favorite thing in Bath were the quaint bookshops and restaurants that lined the old streets of the city.

Woolacombe Beach, Devon

Woolacombe Beach can be compared to the California at the height of the Beach Boys era. Tiny surf shops and beachside restaurants with outdoor seating and a hamburger-hot dog only menu gives off a family-friendly, all-American vibe right in the South of England.

Clovelly, Devon

Clovelly is a little seaside fishing village near Devon. The buildings look as if they haven't been touched for centuries, and in the summer months, there are flowers hanging from every porch. While there isn't a huge variation of things to do there, there is a seaside pub that has good food and friendly faces.

Stratford Upon Avon, Warwickshire

It's hard to believe that a town as old as William Shakespeare is still alive and thriving, but this quaint Shakespearean village is the epitome of Old England. Shakespeare's old stomping grounds still retains all the sixteenth-century architecture, and is basically dedicated to Shakespeare himself, as his school desk, old home, and hangout spots are kept preserved and used as a museum.

Stonehenge

I don't know about you, but I never realized that this Wonder of the World was so close to London! It only takes about two hours to get to, and there are tours everyday that leave from London, where they give you ample free time at the site (not that you need it, you can only stare at giant stones for so long!) Stop along the way in quaint little Southampton to extend your day trip!

THE RING ROAD

The Ultimate Iceland Road Trip

Iceland is definitely the country to put some milage into with an epic road trip. While Reykjavik is awesome and totally worth a day or two to shop, eat and check out the culture, raw, uninhabited Iceland is where the real beauty of the country lies. So, why not take to the road to discover it? There are two main road trips that you can tackle while in Iceland, and one encompasses both. The Golden Circle is a route that sticks to a three-hour span in the Western region of the country, while the Ring road spans the circumfrence of the entire island. My friends and I stayed for ten days when we took our trip, so we opted for the Ring Road roadtrip, and here are some of my favorite pit stops we made time for!

Skógafoss Waterfall

Iceland is truly the land of waterfalls. Skógafoss is the most impressive in my opinion. You can walk right up to the base of the it, where there is a constant, giant rainbow and awesome photo opportunities. You can also hike up to the top of the waterfall (via endless steps) and get an amazing view of the rolling green hills of Icelands countryside. You can even sit on the edge of a rock at the top and dangle your feet over the roaring waters of Skógafoss!

Seljalandfoss Waterfall

Seljalandfoss is another waterfall thats in the Southwest part of the country, and its pretty big in size as well. You can venture underneath this waterfall, and click your heels together, just like Justin Bieber in his Ill Show You music video...

Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon

This (not so) little gem is another landmark made famous by Justin Bieibers music video, and for good reason. My jaw pretty much stayed on the floor the entire hike up the canyon and duration of my time looking at the deep drops into beautiful blue water. The jagged cliffs and mossy rocks make for my favorite, most spectacular view in all of Iceland. We even filled out water bottles with the crystal clear glacier water at the base of the canyon and it was so good!

Goðafoss Waterfall

Surprise, surprise. Another waterfall. Iceland truly is the adult playground for adventurers because waterfalls, hidden canyons and beautiful moody views are around every corner it seems. Goðafoss is really cool because it has such blue water that resembles tropical beach water in the midst of the green and the rock.



LET ME BE
YOUR GUIDE...

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I know how it feels to be lost in the best possible way in a new place. But I also know how it feels to be totally and utterly lost without a clue as to what to do or how to handle the situation. I know how it feels to travel with my favorite people and how it feels to travel all by myself. I even know how it feels to feel awkward setting up a tripod in an alleyway to get a cool picture! I just want you to know that I've been there. I am here to be your guide and help you wade through these same situations, because some can be so fun, but some can be so daunting! But don't worry girl, I've got you.





photo pit stop in verona on my way to
castel san Pietro from town

1. WHEN IN DOUBT, FRAME IT OUT

Since becoming interested in photography, something funny has happened. I have started to see my surroundings in frames. When I look at a specific area, I will actually see the frame I want in my mind, and that way I'm able to discern if I'll want to take a photo somewhere or not. If I can't see the photo in my mind beforehand, then I probably won't bother with a photo or the photo won't turn out as cute as I want it to.

Also, if I am traveling and I see a spot that I can already see will make a great picture and I have time to stop and set up a photo, I make sure to do it! Even if I'm nervous or embarrassed. There's nothing worse than a photo that could have been. If you see a spot that would make for a good photo, don't convince yourself that you'll find a cute spot later, or that it's not worth a quick second to snap a photo, even if it's just with your phone of something. Odds are, you won't ever regret stopping to capture a memory, and most likely you've got a great photo out of it!

2. POSING

A pose can really make a picture worth keeping or not! I always catch myself with bad posture and I know that I am so much more likely to toss a photo if I am hunched over versus when I am sitting tall but relaxed.

But on the reverse side, if I am too posed, I don't like the photo either. So how the heck do you find the balance between too candid and too posed? I've noticed the more relaxed and happy I am, the better my photos turn out. When I'm tense and let my feelings of awkwardness taking a photo get the better of me, it shows in photos!

3. BE DELIBERATE

I used to think that I would just maybe snap a shot here and there and if I was lucky, I'd get a good one. That's totally fine for casual trip photography, but if your focus is to capture beautiful images, you must be deliberate in everything - your camera settings, what you're wearing, the framing, etc. If I just snap a photo at random when I'm crunched on time, I usually don't end up liking my photos. It took me a while to realize that for the type of photo I was going for, that I would have to plan a small portion of my day to capture that photo, whether it's anywhere between five minutes or fifty-five minutes. I also realized that planning an outfit if I had a specific photo in mind can make all the difference when I am posing for photos. If I'm not confident in my outfit, any kind of pose I do feels awkward. So I always make sure to wear comfortable but cute clothing.

4. TOO MANY PEOPLE.

Too many tourists to get a great photo without a couple of wandering arms and legs? No problemo...

There are definitely angles you can work to where you can get a decent photo without all the other tourists in the background. Try having your camera angled up from the floor, or researching other angles to see the spot. I did not like any of my eiffel tower pictures until I went on the river cruise of the Siene, and we passed right in front of it!

Another trick is to go ahead and take the photo with people in the background, and use the lasso tool in photoshop to take them out. Simply press L, draw a close circle around who you want to take out, press Edit, then press fill, make sure Content Aware is selected, then voila! (This works best when the people are far away and smaller because it tries to fill in the background with similar surroundings and it looks wonky if you try to cut out a larger subject).

5. LIGHTING IS YOUR FRIEND

I think working with natural light has produced some of my favorite photos rather than trying to enhance it in Lightroom, because you can only do so much if the lighting isnt so great in the original photo. I find that the golden hour for shooting, at least for my style of edits, works about an hour and a half before sunset, because the sun was still out, but it wasnt too bright!

6. YOU CAN BE YOUR OWN PHOTOGRAPHER

If your focus is self-portrait photography for Instagram or any other reason, you dont need someone there to capture beautiful images for you!

One of my fears while living alone in London was that I wouldnt be able to document my trip with photos of me in them at all because I wasnt traveling with anybody. So, I bought a nice tripod (you can even order them off of Amazon for really cheap), and set off on my first saturday trip alone, camera and tripod in hand. I. Was. MINDBLOWN!

The photo you see in the previous page of me in Verona was actually taken with self timer! Yes, I had to keep climbing off and on the bridge, but the picture made it worth it. Just set your camera to self-timer mode (even your iphone has self-timer! Just find something to perch it on!), and I always set mine to sports mode so it takes multiple photos and I have options to choose from. Just make sure you focus on the spot you will be in before you pose, and there you have it! Youll be a master of advanced selfies in no time.



GUIDEBOOK: SOLO FEMALE TRAVEL



1. THINGS WILL GO WRONG: HOW TO PLAN

I think my biggest realization as a first-time solo traveler was how many things I never had to worry about when traveling with a group, my boyfriend, or with friends. Not that I never worried at all, but everyone kind of takes part in the planning, all the directions, and also the quick thinking when plans need to be rearranged. When you're a solo traveler, that all falls on you, and that can be a scary thought at times!

My advice would be to always have a plan B, because sometimes the planning of just one person can fall short. A lot of times I would have a half-hearted plan in mind with little prior research involved. This is totally fine for a leisurely Saturday, but for bigger trips it's necessary to have a plan mapped out, including prices for transportation (the biggest area where I fell short most times), a place to stay already planned out, and maybe a list of things you actually want to do in the city so that you're not just walking around for hours like I did in Venice.

3. HOW TO AVOID GETTING LOST

There were so many times that I would have gotten lost had it not been for my phone, and so many times that I DID get lost even with my phone!

The App CityMapper was also a lifesaver. It's available in a lot of cities, and it gives you walking directions, tells you what buses, train, line, etc. to get on if you're in a city with public transportation options! I relied on that app heavily for my underground routes during my time in London!

Don't underestimate the power of a helpful stranger (preferably ask directions in a public area). People are usually so willing to give help with directions, and that was my way of getting around if my phone died or if CityMapper wasn't available in the city I was in.

2. LEARN TO BE YOUR OWN FRIEND

This sounds so cheesy, I know. But I had the hardest time learning not to feel weird eating at restaurants, visiting tourist attractions and doing basically everything all alone! I really had to learn to be comfortable by myself. I actually learned to love it because the whole day was mine, and there was no back and forth on whose itinerary is better!

My favorite way to entertain myself at restaurants, on public transportation, or during down time was to read ebooks on my phone! It doesn't use up a lot of battery, and I read through five books during my trip! Just find something you enjoy, like taking photos, reading a book, journaling, etc. and allow yourself to do that because you can! It's a great way to get to know yourself better, which is the best part of solo travel!

4. GET LOST-IN A GOOD WAY

There's a difference between meandering through the city streets, and walking intentionally, enjoying every little moment. When I walked around because I felt like I had to be out and about, that wasn't very enjoyable. Don't forget to enjoy your time and get a little lost! Explore a new area, don't be afraid to deviate from your plans a little if you see something you'd enjoy!



clovelly, england

1. BRACE YOURSELF FOR CULTURE SHOCK

If I had to go back and move to London all over again for the very first time, I would allow myself a maximum of a couple of days to cope with the initial symptoms of culture shock. I think my biggest mistake was assuming that since I would be living in a country where English was still the primary language, that I wouldn't have to worry about culture shock. I couldn't have been more wrong!

While our friends across the pond do have a lot of cultural similarities to Americans, it is a different country with a different culture, and London is a huge city, which I wasn't used to. The symptoms of culture shock manifested kind of like homesickness and lethargy combined for me. I stayed at home after work every day for two weeks because I didn't let myself get accustomed to the different culture right away! So if you're moving abroad my best piece of advice is to allow yourself to embrace the culture shock by exposing yourself to that culture instead of hiding away at home for two weeks like I did! I would love to get those two weeks in London back!

3. BUDGET YOUR TRIPS

I booked three weekend trips when I was living in London, both inside and outside the U.K., and they added up fast. I wish I had been better at budgeting because it's easy to justify frivolous spending while abroad. I like to write down everything I plan to spend, and everything I am spending along the way!

2. BE OPEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF NEW FRIENDSHIPS

While still practicing caution towards complete strangers, one of the things that helped me enjoy my time the most living abroad was making great friends! We would go to plays, go dancing, explore, and try new restaurants together!

Plenty of people who live abroad are often in the same boat as you...the no friends boat! They want to go out and see/do things just like you do! I am an introverted person at times, so it's hard for me to develop new friendships from scratch. But, when I kept this in mind, it became easier and easier to be the first one to initiate a friendship, and I never regretted it!

4. BE A YES (WO)MAN

I think this helped me come out of my culture shock the most effectively! There were days after work ended at five p.m. that I just wanted to go home and throw on some Netflix until I went to bed. The thought of taking public transportation an extra thirty minutes out of the way to do something just didn't sound fun to me! But the days I said yes to people's invitations or yes to my own desire to go visit a certain park or museum or attraction, I never ever wished I would have gone home instead.

If you're only living abroad for a semester or summer, your time in the country will dwindle down so quickly! Live it up for a couple months so you can be sure to make the most of your experience living abroad, because that might not come again!



THANK YOU

Thank you so much for following along with me in my journey across three continents! I hope you enjoyed every minute of it and I hope I was able to share some useful tips and tricks on locations, travel advice, and how to enjoy your adventure!

I would love to get to know each and every one of you! Follow me on social media, @devenelise or email me at devenelise@gmail.com to chat about your travels, let me know if my advice worked for you, or if you need any help planning your next trip!

Here's a little something to help you get to know me - I just turned twenty-five and I am a recent graduate of Brigham Young University-Idaho. I also recently got engaged to the love of my life who I met traveling! I love to sing, cook and watch true crime and thriller movies with my man. I am originally from Southern California, but I've called Idaho home for the past six years. My favorite place in the whole world is Mission Beach, San Diego, where I spend a week every summer with all of my family.

I would like to dedicate this book to everyone I've met and made friends with while traveling, including my fiancé. I would like to dedicate it to my senior project and to all of the wonderful teachers and programs at BYU-Idaho who made my dream of travel a reality for the first time starting in Turkey. And I would like to dedicate this book to my family, because without their support I would not be as well-traveled and open-minded as I am today!

-Deven



Lucky enough to call London my home for a summer. Sitting at the doorstep of Notting Hill's famous pink house.

