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8 Hints on how to travel alone as a mature woman

NEW YORK, NY— Many people think about traveling alone but older women resist taking risks any more. Or maybe you've become a bore talking about what you used to do. Or maybe your rut is an unending family life, enough to yearn for *your* time. If yes, jolt that inner you and plan a trip alone. Terrified? Don't be. I guarantee you'll return as your own best friend. Your confidence level will soar. You'll learn resilience, self-love and the art of conversation. So much so, the next trip is planned before you arrive home.

- **Choose your level of comfort.** Start off with a few days away close to home if you're nervous about a radical change. Then rethink comfort levels and envision a longer trip. See yourself in a metropolis if the boonies are home. Exchange city concrete for small towns but don't isolate yourself. Avoid romantic places. If you're a foodie, book a culinary tour. Sign up for a home exchange. Remember, it's the journey that creates memories, not the destination. Yours should include unfamiliar terrain.
- **Plan before you land.** Acclimate your eyes before your feet arrive. Use Google Earth. Browse single-traveler websites such as journeywoman.com and Facebook's SoloTravelSociety. Research local customs, especially those affecting women. Be a minimalist packer. Check out travel insurance and cell phone charges. Or when you land, purchase an inexpensive cell phone loaded with free minutes. Copy your passport, license and credit cards email them to yourself. Sign up for free WhatApps and Skype accounts.
- **I'm here, not what.** Write a daily itinerary. Hit the ground walking, limit cabs to nighttime. Purchase a multi-pass for public transportation. Take a half-day city tour, noting spots to revisit. Talk to fellow travelers. Hire a personal guide for several hours or join a walking tour. Tourist bureaus list daily events, ticket discounts and so forth. Stroll through museums. Shop Mom and Pop stores, buying local take-out food. Vow not to return to your lonely room until exhausted.

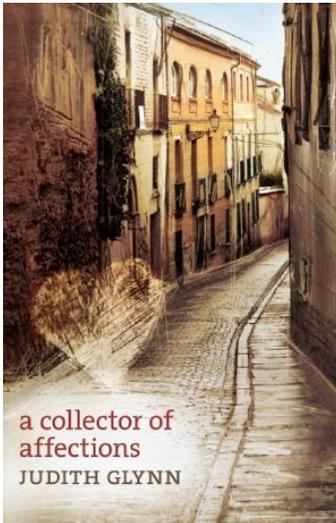
- **Master dining alone.** *A table for one* is challenging. Practice dining alone in your home town. At your destination, bring a book that first night. Then put it away and jot notes on a pad or photograph your food. Mysterious people can solicit questions from other diners. When talking to couples, resist only talking to one gender. Ask for traveler's advice. Last resort, stay in a Bed and Breakfast and eat with other guests.
- **Embrace meeting strangers.** Sign up for meetup.com and attend local meetings. Talk to seatmates—everywhere. If your stay is lengthy, open a museum membership and attend newcomers' night and lectures. Many city libraries have fantastic free events. Ask friends for friend referrals in your destination. Suffer through a foreign language class but participate in student outings. Take flamenco lessons in Madrid; whizz along rip lines in Cancun; drink in Irish pubs; ride a camel; snorkel in Hawaii — you get the message.
- **Risking romance.** A divine romantic encounter can happen on the road between mature adults. When dining alone once, I asked the waiter to give my business card and message to a dashing man at a nearby table. He joined me for dinner and we walked for hours afterwards. A man stood beside me as I checked into a Dublin hotel and heard my room number. He called and our dinner led to a seven-year, long-distance romance. I met a charming seatmate traveling to Madrid. That happenstance romance led to my novel. If you prefer friendship only, make that clear if he misinterprets your smile. Always pack condoms.
- **Follow Your Gut.** If you do travel with a stranger from the road, fine tune your intuition. Remember conversations, listening for lies and incomplete stories. Don't pay for everything. Don't appear lonely. Avoid getting drunk. Verify a luggage tag or a business card using the Internet when your companion isn't looking. Email a friend detailing who you're with and where you'll be on a daily basis. Reject paranoia, just be cautious.
- **Indulge Yourself.** Risk a haircut in a salon where no one speaks your language. Purchase original art for a wall back home. Pack a sharp outfit and wear perfume your last night alone with your new best friend — you. Sip wine at outdoor cafes and toast your independence. Take that last wad of leftover cash and blow it on something you'd never buy or do at home.

About the Author:



Judith Glynn has written countless freelance travel articles over a 30-year span that began with newspapers nationwide. Today, her articles appear on the Web. Her memoir, *The Street or Me: A New York Story* is a raw, riveting read. She is self-employed and adores being a mother and grandmother. She has homes in New York City and Rhode Island. www.judithglynn.com

About the book:



When Leah Lynch books a flight to Spain, she doesn't plan on meeting a charming seatmate that leads to a romance when they land. This sensual novel is a heartfelt travelogue that follows a two-year middle-age romance through Spain, Portugal, New York City and Rhode Island. *A Collector of Affections: Tales from a Woman's Heart* (Fox Point Press, 2011, ISBN 978-0-9834595-0-7, \$12.99 paperback and \$2.99 eBook, Available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, iTunes and Google Play.)