

# MySurvivalAlliance

## Tips and Information for Women Traveling Alone

By: Pamela Oglesby



More women of all ages are traveling alone now. Of course, some are widows or do not have anyone that can travel at a convenient time, but many women actually like to travel alone. Using commonsense and planning well ahead of time can give you a wonderful vacation.

There are many benefits for a woman who prefers to travel internationally alone. Of course, safety is always a primary consideration, but solo traveling is an opportunity to learn more about yourself and your capability to soldier on despite

any problems. The satisfaction of planning an international trip and completing the trip cannot be overstated.

- **Arrive Early** - It is much easier to maneuver in a strange city during the day, so make your plane reservation accordingly. This gives you a chance to arrive at your hotel earlier and settle in. If this is your first solo trip volunteering for some type of charity work is a great idea, as it places you with a group of like-minded people who are trustworthy and ones with whom you can share experiences. You can also stay in a hostel, which is cheaper, but you will have to share the bathroom.

Many seasoned travelers do not use a travel agent, as they have learned the best way to reserve the type of accommodations that suit their budget, the best ways to handle transportation, and they are not interested in taking a planned tour. If you have not done much traveling, then a travel agent can be a good idea, as they are very knowledgeable about foreign countries.

- **Plan Ahead** - Part of the enjoyment of traveling alone can be found in the planning stages. It is a good idea to know the laws of the country you are visiting. For instance, it is illegal to carry pepper spray in many countries. Obtain a belt that can be worn under clothing to keep a passport, traveler's checks, credit cards or cash. Leave most credit cards at home, along with any expensive jewelry. **Seek out information** of some of the sites you wish to visit, so you will know about transportation, cost and the hours of operation. If several sites are located close together, than choosing accommodations in that area might be wise. If you choose to rent a vehicle, remember traffic laws are different in different countries.
- **Safety First** - Solo travel requires a higher alertness to the surroundings. Carry a detailed map of the area and a phrase book. Book your plane so that you arrive in daylight, as it is much easier to maneuver in a strange city. It is important to allow time upon arrival to manage all the initial details as travel fatigue is common. Most hotels have a safe, so your passport can be locked up securely (travel.state.gov, 1995). Traveler's checks, cash, jewelry and even medications can also be kept safe.

Safety is the primary goal, and there are numerous ways to have a safe, yet thoroughly enjoyable trip.

## Helpful Safety Tips

### Some of the tips for handling your valuables include:

1. Do not become a target by wearing expensive or revealing clothing
2. Leave expensive jewelry at home.
3. Travel light, as it is easier to walk quickly, and baggage is less likely to be left unattended.
4. If you are carrying your passport, money or other valuables, purchase a belt worn under clothing designed for this purpose. Do not use your wallet or handbag for cash, as this is an easy target for thieves.
5. Be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes.
6. Bring an extra pair of glasses if you wear glasses or contacts. Bring sunglasses.
7. Sunscreen and bug spray are often helpful.
8. Include a few basic outfits, wearing layers, and bring some clothing that can be washed in a sink.
9. Take a small first aid kit with sample size shampoos and conditioners.
10. Some women get a haircut for easier styling while traveling.
11. Always be cautious with strangers, even other women. Listen to your “gut instinct.”
12. A purse that is worn across the shoulders is much more difficult for someone to steal.
13. Do not take an unlicensed cab.
14. Single women should wear a fake wedding band.

There are also some important things you should leave at home, such as your social security card, library card, voter registration card, any extra credit cards and any irreplaceable pieces of jewelry.

### Final Security Tips

-A family member should have a copy of your itinerary and other important papers. Make two copies of the serial numbers of the travelers' checks, your passport, driver's license, airline tickets and credit cards that will be taken on the trip. One copy can be packed in your suitcase or some other separate place, and the other copy is for the family member. Email or text some family member daily,

so they will know you are safe, and it is important to know someone would be concerned if you were missing. Quick getaways or longer vacations are therapeutic. Relax, pamper yourself, and enjoy your trip. I do not know about you, but I could be packed within the hour!



## **Tips on Travelling Light: Packing Tips**

By: Carmen Beth

For those of us who enjoy travelling, we are completely familiar with the "golden rule" when it comes to packing - "travel light", unless you have your own private jet. If you do really have your own private jet, then you probably might not even comprehend

the concept of travelling light and hopefully this article would furnish you with an idea of what it means, only, of course, if you even bother to read on.

**"Pack only what is necessary"** is the concept of travelling light easily understood. Unfortunately, this simple concept is arduous to achieve. Dilemmas are bound to surface and that is when the line between necessities and extras become increasingly blurred. The rudimentary items on the list somehow manage to burgeon into a family of their own as rapidly as the growth of fungi, fueled by "I cannot do without this" and "If I'm already taking this, I might as well take this" phrases. There're the hair curlers that are needed to get the bangs for that oh-so-pretty look and the extra skin-hydrating lotions and accessories that hopefully

would not contribute to the palpable bulkiness of the luggage. Perhaps the most challenging issue we all encounter is the "what-ifs." What if I were invited to a black-tie event that calls for an elegant evening gown/tuxedo? What if my only umbrella suddenly malfunctions in the middle of a heavy rainfall? What if the hotel room does not have enough hangers for my clothes? And the list goes on.

In all, the packing process is the most difficult part for many - torturing for the style-conscious, stressful for the ones who constantly doubt, daunting for the perfectionists, frustrating for the indecisive, and exasperating for the rest who do not fall into any of the above categories.

Below is a list of my guidelines to packing light, which I have built upon the advices of others and from my own personal experiences. Hopefully, it would help provide a practical objective to alleviate most packing woes, except for the part where self-control is concerned.

- ***Make a list.*** This is the first crucial step to take when it comes to packing because if you do not pack with a list, you are bound to either over-pack or under-pack. Besides, having a list makes it easier to review the items and any surplus material can then be effortlessly spotted and crossed out.
- ***"One-bag rule"*** Travelling light means having just one suitcase. So it is more practical to go with one large suitcase than with two small suitcases. If you are travelling by air, be sure to research the airline's luggage weight and size limits, especially if you are carrying a hand luggage. A bag with lots of organizer pouches would definitely come in handy too.
- ***Get/Plan an itinerary.*** Knowing the places you will be visiting helps you plan the number and types of outfits to suit the occasions. Such as if St. Peter's Basilica is on your itinerary, you'll then know that you cannot just be packing shorts and sleeveless tees even if it is summer during your visitation, or if you were to attend a religious event, a scarf would be needed to cover your head.
- ***Check the weather forecast.*** Be aware of the seasons and the highs and lows of the temperature of your destination. It may be winter in the north but summer in the south. If you are heading far into the northern hemisphere, bring a jacket or a coat even though it is summer as temperatures can drop tremendously during the nights. And if you are

packing for a summer getaway, don't even consider packing black garments.

- ***Go for double-duty items.*** Bring multi-functional wear and accessories, such as scarves, which can also serve as shawls to shield yourself from the chilly winds or scorching sun, or as headscarves when you travel in opened automobiles or attend religious events. But the best double-duty items are convertibles as they offer style, versatility, functionality, and lastly, practicality. Dresses that roll into skirts or blouses and handbags that transform into clutch purses or shoulder bags are some of the great must-haves.
- ***Big items first.*** Pack all your largest and bulkiest items first before filling and cramming the remaining small and flexible items among them. This method ensures maximum use of the amount of your suitcase's space.
- ***Don't roll all your clothes.*** Although many packing tips suggest you roll all your clothes to minimize space usage, I never find that practical. In fact, such technique uses up more room. My advice is to stack up your folded clothes into one corner of your suitcase till the top piece touches your suitcase's cover when closed, and then only start to roll all the remaining pieces to fill in the gaps and odd spaces. As for the rolled-clothes-don't-crease-as-much-as-folded-clothes theory, I don't see how that works as rolled up garments always end up more crinkled than folded garments neatly pressing on top on one another.



- ***Don't leave your boots and booties empty.*** You would be wasting a lot of valuable space if you do so. Stuff them with small objects that are in plastic bags so as not to transfer the shoes' odor to the things. Boots are especially useful as protectives for souvenirs and breakable items.
- ***E-book v. paperbacks*** Go for the e-book. This is one technological blessing for travelers. Most e-books can store up to hundreds or thousands of books, more than you can read during your entire vacation.
- ***Forget the shampoos, soaps, & towels.*** All hotels provide these. Unless you have to use a particular brand or product, these are NOT NECESSARY. Most shampoos supplied by hotels these days come with conditioner too. However, if you will be lodging in motels or hostels, it is better to check with the management before your trip whether or not they provide such utilities.
- ***Invest in travelling toiletries.*** The reason such petite toiletries came into existence was to cater for travelling light. I have come across many who pointed out that such toiletries are not worth their purchases as they are undeniably costlier and not so economical, but what is the point of lugging the excess weight and space of an average tube of toothpaste or a bigger bottle of lotion that will not be even be used. Anyway, airlines now have strict restrictions on packing liquids, so I guess to purchase or not to purchase travelling toiletries is no longer an option.
- ***Packing medication.*** Hand sanitizers and antibacterial wipes should be in



your handbag or backpack, not your luggage. But other spare flu, cough, and sore throat medication should be packed in small amounts as these are only to aid temporarily before getting a sufficient amount of medication at a local drugstore should the occasion deem them necessary.

- ***Flip-flops.*** If you are heading somewhere tropical that requires only flip-flops, wear a pair that is both comfortable and versatile to suit all of

your outfits such as a white or black colored pair, and bring another pair spare.

- *Pack an extra bag.* It may seem as if I am beginning to sound impractical here, but trust me, you will be thankful for sparing a place in your suitcase for this additional bag at the end of your trip when you have to transport all your shopping and souvenirs home considering that your primary luggage is already jam-packed from day one. My favorite type is the foldable duffel that can be fitted onto the base of my suitcase before all my other stuff are packed on top of it.

## *How to Keep Your Dog Safe When In The Car*

By: India Arnold

It is estimated that over 100,000 dogs die annually because they are not tied securely into the back of trucks. This number increases greatly if we add in the number of dogs that are killed when thrown hard inside the vehicle cab from where they sit during a vehicle collision because they are not harnessed safely in place. Humans strap themselves into seat belts, lock doors, and behind air bags to keep safe. But, more often than not, dogs end up tossed in the back of a truck or allowed to move freely about the passenger compartment of our vehicles. This is not a safe environment for you or your dogs. Tethering your dog in the back of your truck or backseat of your vehicle can help keep him safe just as your safety belt keeps you from being thrown forward and potentially out of the car. If we take it one step further, we rarely keep a leash on our K9's when in the car. On top of maintaining their safety with restraints, a leash can be very helpful should your dog get loose during any degree of collision. The leash can be used to keep the dog under control by onlookers preventing him from running frightened into traffic and being hit, or worse, causing another accident.

Be a good dog owner, safe driver and conscientious traveler by restraining your dog while you drive. Even when on a short trip to the local market and especially when you set out on a road trip, restrain your family pet. Preventing Fido from



moving around in the car can save your life, protect your dog's life and those who travel on the road around you.

### **DOG SAFETY TRUCK TETHER**



(The Dog Safety Tether for your truck has a durable clip that allows limited movement yet still keeps your dog in the safety zone of the truck bed.)

### **The Safe Zone for Your Dog (see diagram above)**

When driving with your dog in the back of your truck, (tethered safely) the area directly behind the cab (see above diagram) keeps your dog in the safest place. The half-moon shaped area prevents your dog from being struck by debris and bugs, as well as preventing him from being clipped by a close passing vehicle, branch or sign. The diagram above shows you the safest place to keep your dog secured in the back of your truck bed. Never travel anywhere without first securing or tethering your dogs in the safe-zone!



## *How to Cook Healthy Meals for Children*

By: Virginia Kearney

### *What is a Healthy Meal?*

The first step in cooking healthy for kids is setting your goals. There are lots of different ways to do healthy cooking. Some people want to cook with all organic produce, or avoid sugars altogether, or get their kids to eat vegetarian meals. As a practical, busy mom, my goal has been to make gradual changes to add:

- More whole grains.
- More vegetables and fruits.
- Less fat.
- Less sugar.
- Fewer processed foods.

However, I don't want a rebellion at home over food. So I also decided to:

- Try to alter familiar recipes my family likes to make them more healthy.
- Make healthy substitutions my family wouldn't notice.
- Involve my kids in making choices and cooking healthy foods.

## *Mom's Guide to Healthy Kids*

### *Tip #1: Healthy Meals Start at the Grocery Store*

What you buy is what you eat. So the first step in preparing more healthy meals for kids is to:

- Avoid eating out.
- Read nutrition labels.
- Know the brands with the lowest fats and sugars, and highest fiber and good nutrients.
- Change to the healthiest brand of food.
- Buy lots of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

#### *How can you avoid eating out?*

Have a lot of fast healthy meals ready ahead in your cupboard and refrigerator.

#### *How can you buy the best brands?*

Like me, you probably regularly buy either the cheapest brand, or your family's favorite. When I got serious about making healthy meals for my family, I made a plan for a grocery shopping detective trip. I spent about 2 hours in the grocery store just investigating the labels of the foods I buy most often. I was astounded to find that there were products that seemed identical to what I was already buying, but had significantly:

- less fat and/or sugar
- fewer calories
- more nutritional value
- more fiber

### *Tip #2: Add Healthy Recipes to Your Cooking*

Along with using better, healthier ingredients, you can revise your old recipes and add new healthier ones to make your cooking better for you and your kids. Here are some of my favorite tricks:

- Add pureed vegetables to recipes.
- Substitute applesauce for all or most of the oil in baking.
- Use sugar substitute for all or most of the sugar in recipes.

- Use fat-free cream cheese, fat-free sour cream and non-fat milk in creamy sauces or as toppings.
- Substitute all-fruit jam as a sweetener or topping.
- Use low-granola for crunch in sweet recipes.
- Substitute wheat flour, multi-grain flour or cereal or oatmeal for all-purpose flour.
- Try my Honey Chicken method of cornstarch and no-fat butter spray to pan fry meat as a substitute for deep fat frying.



***Tip #3: Involve Children in Healthy Cooking***

Along with changing what I bought, I decided to change what recipes I prepared.

What I especially wanted to do was to introduce my children to more vegetables and fruits. However, I knew that in order to get my kids to eat healthy food, I needed to be sure they had:

- Choices in foods.
- Involvement in preparing food.

Here is how I've done this:

***Take Your Kids Shopping.*** My first step was to take my kids with me after my stealth shopping trip. We focused on buying fruits and vegetables. Another friend of mine takes her daughter to our local Farmer's Market. I plan to do that soon. My kids loved making their own fruit and vegetable choices, and also loved weighing their choices and printing out labels. Let Kids Choose Their Own Healthy Foods. Actually, I was often surprised at their choices of things like winter squash, cucumbers and broccoli. They don't always like what they choose, but they will always try something they picked out themselves, which they won't always do if I

bring something new home. Best of all, they've each begun liking some new fruits and vegetables which I now buy for them on a regular basis. My youngest loves acorn squash, another daughter loves dried seaweed.

*Let Kids Cook Healthy Recipes.* Although it takes more time, it is worth it to allow your children to cook healthy meals with you. My daughter Sophie enjoys making her own sushi, cooking green beans for the family, and inventing her own healthy snacks to share with her siblings and friends. The more you involve your children in planning and cooking healthy recipes, the more likely they are to eat them.

Consider Growing Your Own Food: We don't have an extensive garden, but we do grow figs, blackberries, onions, potatoes, asparagus and many herbs. My kids enjoy everything we grow and like being able to go out and pick things themselves. You don't have to have a big garden to grow herbs, onions, carrots and tomatoes. In fact, many vegetables and herbs can be grown in pots. Or if you can't grow your own food, you might be able to take your children to a place where you can pick foods, or even a Farmer's Market.