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**Why I Travel Alone (Sometimes)**

**By Victor Pryles**

Some people shy away from traveling alone, a few embrace it. This article looks at the decided advantages of going it alone.

First, traveling solo is the ultimate freedom. The itinerary you set and all the decisions you make are your creations without concern or acquiescence to any other person or group. In other words, no compromises. No arguments, no second-guessing!

Traveling alone is a confidence builder as well. When I was young, at the tender age of 16 I traveled alone to work in Biddeford-Saco, Maine. I was over a hundred miles from home and family for the first time in my life. I was just a snipe of a boy and yet I was never terrified. Only a bit lonely. In retrospect, I realize the great value of that small journey (though a big one at the time) for a new found confidence was born in me. This always happens with travel by oneself. You learn you can solve problems, get over the blues, and find hidden treasures all by yourself.

Have you noticed that when you're on your own as a Traveling Pauper, people are more willing to start a conversation with you? You may feel like taking the initiative as well. Up pops an invitation for a meal, a side trip, a stay at someone's home. For some odd reason people keep a slight distance from couples and groups for they seem so self-contained in their association. Whereas the single Pauper looks ready about for a fellow human being that he might engage at any moment in pleasant conversation and simple exchanges about his travels.

Thomas Jefferson once said: "One travels more usefully when alone because he reflects more." It's true: you have abundant time for contemplating, even vegetating, or anything you want. A day long visit to one museum? No problem. A long hike on a trail fraught with danger? Not an issue. You don't have to deal with someone else's mood swings, ---nor they with yours.

Here are two more exciting reasons that solo travel appeals to me: I find you learn language faster when you don't have someone else talking to you in your own all the time. It's funny, but we interact, are FORCED to interact much more frequently when we travel alone in a country that doesn't speak our native tongue. And finally, romance. I won't get into specifics, (this is such a tender and private sort of

## Why I Travel Alone (Sometimes)

thing) but when you're on your own you're free to meet someone who might turn out to be very important in your life.

The most important factor to consider in your decision to make a trip alone is your own sense of independence. If you find that you have little tolerance for the idiosyncracies of others (and I confess this is my problem) you might be happier traveling alone.

But what if you have an eager spouse, relative, or friend that would feel somehow diminished by your decision to take off by yourself? Not to sound indelicate but, that my friend, is your problem. You'll simply have to open up these relationships in your life and solidly communicate the value of traveling alone. I pray your loved ones will be open and understanding enough to allow your wish to become reality.

I have a whole section in my book: "Travel Cheap Travel Well!"– Confessions Of A Traveling Pauper on

this issue of solo travel, as well as the many vagaries and benefits of traveling with a partner or a group.

But in this article, I hope I've at least opened the door, shown you the great benefits of leaving everyone behind as you discover the world INSIDE and outside of yourself.

Why not plan such a trip this year? Tell everyone of your decision or keep it to yourself and, with no explanation given, leave with great joy in your heart for the adventure to come. It's your choice!

As for this Pauper, I've done both and found each a liberating experience each time. In such action I've rediscovered that little boy that traipsed off to far away Maine on his own without permission asked or granted. I rebel still at conformity and the restriction of others upon me. I wasn't placed on this earth to always be known to anyone who wished to call.

So, I challenge you to answer your own inner traveling pauper, to pick up your courage and let your heart lead the way to a new adventure and landscape. Be it near or far—go it alone!

Victor K. Pryles is the author of: "Travel Cheap– Travel Well!– Confessions Of A Traveling Pauper at

<http://www.paupertravel.com>

You can join his book club for free by sending a blank e-mail to:

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**Travel Wallet Checklist**

**By William Manor**

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A travel wallet can be pretty handy when you're on the move, especially on international trips. It keeps all your travel documents and currency in one place for easy access. Following is a checklist of items you may want to keep in your travel wallet.

- Passport
- Photo ID
- Airline, Cruise and Train Tickets
- Boarding Pass
- Insurance Cards (medical and car)
- Itinerary with important telephone numbers and addresses (hotels, airlines, etc.)
- Travel Coupons or Certificates
- Some one-dollar bills for tipping
- Credit Cards
- Travelers Checks
- Foreign Currency
- Calling Card

William Manor is the owner of U.S. Passport Service Guide, a very useful and comprehensive resource for U.S. citizens who travel internationally.

<http://www.us-passport-service-guide.com>



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