



**FORWARD**  
TRAVEL®

*Travel Better. Travel Further. Travel Forward.*

## **THE FULL-STACK SOLO TRAVEL COMPANION: 170+ TIPS, SMART MOVES & SAFETY SECRETS FOR EVERY KIND OF TRAVELLER**

**From first-timers to seasoned wanderers, from introverts to extroverts, from neurodivergent travellers to those with four-legged companions, this is your solo travel checklist for a smarter, freer journey.**



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# Why This Guide Exists

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Compiled by **David Smyth** of [Forward Travel](#) with over a decade of experience designing tailor-made journeys for solo travellers of every background, this guide brings together everything he's learned: the prep, the hacks, the mindset shifts, and the safety habits that make solo travel not just possible, but empowering.

This is the real stuff: field-tested, Australian-approved, and built for anyone who wants to go further with confidence.

So print it, save it, scribble on it, dog-ear it.

Consider it your permission slip to go.





# SECTION 1: BEFORE YOU GO – PREPARATION & PLANNING

## Research

- Read at least 3 recent (last 12 months) trip reports or vlogs for your destination.
- Check official travel advisories (Smartraveller).
- Learn 10 local phrases (hello, thank you, sorry, help, how much, water, toilet, left, right, delicious).
- Research cultural dress norms and gestures to avoid.
- Check local tipping etiquette and table manners.
- Read about major public holidays or festivals that may affect travel.

## Documentation

- Passport valid for at least 6 months beyond return date.
- Visa requirements checked and applied for early.
- Digital and physical copies of passport, ID, insurance, itinerary stored separately.
- Emergency contact card printed and left with family/friend.
- Register with Smartraveller (AUS citizens).

## Money

- Notify your bank of international travel.
- Carry two debit cards and one credit card in separate locations.
- Download your bank's mobile app for lock/unlock functionality.
- Research local ATM and card fees.
- Keep \$150 AUD equivalent in local currency.
- Have at least one backup source of funds (e.g. Wise, Revolut, or cash reserve).



## Health

- Visit GP or travel clinic 6–8 weeks prior.
- Vaccinations up to date (region-dependent).
- Pack small medical kit: pain relief, antihistamines, antidiarrhoeals, plasters, rehydration salts, personal prescriptions.
- Arrange travel insurance with emergency evacuation.
- Download insurer app and know claim hotline numbers.

## Packing

- Choose lightweight, multipurpose clothing.
- Pack one “comfort outfit” for low-energy days.
- Roll, don’t fold; keep toiletries minimal.
- Reusable water bottle, compact towel, power bank, adaptor, pen, sleep mask.
- Doorstop wedge or travel lock for safety.
- Travel laundry soap, zip bags for wet items.
- Keep medications in original labelled containers.





## SECTION 2: COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE

### Before You Go

- Download offline translation packs (Google Translate or DeepL).
- Save common phrases in Notes app for quick reference.
- Learn polite refusals and gratitude expressions.
- Carry a mini phrasebook for low-signal areas.

### On the Road

- Use body language and smiles generously.
- Download visual translation (for menus, signs).
- When in doubt, write down addresses instead of pronouncing them.
- Keep printed copies of key phrases if hearing-impaired.

### Language Learning Tip

- Learn 5 phrases a day through repetition; locals respect the effort.







## SECTION 3: TECHNOLOGY & DIGITAL SETUP

### Pre-Departure Tech Setup

- Backup phone data to cloud.
- Enable phone tracking (Find My / Android Device Manager).
- Set up password manager (1Password, Bitwarden).
- Download offline Google Maps and pin accommodation.
- Install VPN for secure Wi-Fi.
- Bring universal adaptor, multi-port charger, power bank.
- Set up local eSIM or plan.

### Useful Apps

- Google Translate / DeepL
- Maps.me / Google Maps
- Splitwise (expenses)
- Wise / Revolut / XE Currency
- TripIt / Wanderlog (itinerary)
- Hostelworld / Booking / Agoda
- Calm / Insight Timer (sleep/relaxation)
- Sitata / Red Cross First Aid (safety)





## SECTION 4: SAFETY & SECURITY

### General Safety

- Trust your instincts; if it feels off, it is.
- Keep valuables in crossbody bag or money belt.
- Never put your bag behind your chair.
- Avoid isolated ATMs and always cover keypad.
- Walk confidently, phone down, keys ready.
- Don't overshare your plans in real time online.

### Accommodation Safety

- Book first night before arrival.
- Choose hostels/hotels with reviews mentioning "safe area" or "good lighting".
- Carry portable lock or doorstop.
- Check for smoke detector and double locks.

### Transport Safety

- Prebook airport transfer or use licensed taxis.
- Avoid night arrivals where possible.
- Sit near other women/families on buses/trains.
- Screenshot ride details before entering car.

### Solo Women Safety Extras

- Use "we" language in conversation ("my friend's meeting me soon").
- Avoid rooms on the ground floor.
- Fake wedding band if it helps deter attention.



## Solo Men Safety Reminders

- Avoid excessive alcohol in new company.
- Respect boundaries; reading social cues is part of cultural respect.

## LGBTQIA+ Safety

- Research local laws and attitudes before booking.
- Avoid PDA in conservative areas.
- Use queer travel forums for region insight.
- Choose LGBTQIA+-friendly accommodations via reviews or Spartacus app.

## Neurodivergent & Disabled Travellers

- Prebook accessible stays and transport.
- Carry medical documentation or sensory aids.
- Use maps and visuals for orientation.
- Build downtime into itinerary.
- Prepare sensory recovery kits (noise-cancelling headphones, sunglasses, stim items).

## Pet Travellers

- Check airline pet policy and vaccination requirements.
- Bring collapsible water bowl, waste bags, comfort item.
- Ensure pet microchip and ID tags are updated.
- Research pet-friendly hotels and parks.





## SECTION 5: MONEY & BUDGETING

### Before You Go

- Set trip budget and 15% buffer.
- Book accommodation with free cancellation.
- Track expenses with app or spreadsheet.
- Keep emergency fund separate.

### During Travel

- Split funds across locations (hotel safe, bag, wallet).
- Use credit card for large purchases, cash for small.
- Check daily balance for unauthorised charges.
- Never flash money in public.
- Keep \$20 “get-out-of-trouble” cash note hidden.







## SECTION 6: SOCIALISING & CONNECTION

### Breaking the Ice

- Join walking tours or cooking classes on Day 1.
- Sit at communal tables or bars.
- Compliment, ask curious questions (“What brought you here?”).
- Offer to take someone’s photo (great opener).

### Apps & Groups

- Meetup / Bumble BFF / Couchsurfing Events.
- Facebook travel groups (solo, women-only, queer-friendly).
- Volunteer programs or hostel activities.

### Boundaries & Etiquette

- Learn to exit politely (“I’ve got an early start tomorrow”).
- Avoid overdisclosure until trust is earned.
- Say no firmly but calmly.





## SECTION 7: PHOTOGRAPHY & DOCUMENTATION

### Self-Photography

- Carry compact tripod or Bluetooth remote.
- Use reflective surfaces creatively.
- Ask other travellers for help; offer to reciprocate.
- Avoid flashing valuables publicly.

### Data Safety

- Backup photos nightly to cloud or USB.
- Keep SD cards separate from camera bag.

### Social Media

- Post with time delay.
- Avoid geotagging small private spots.
- Keep personal details minimal.







## SECTION 8: ACCOMMODATION, TRANSPORT & DAILY LOGISTICS

### Accommodation Types

- Hostels – for social energy
- Hotels – for privacy
- Airbnbs – for “local living”
- Monastic or homestay – for cultural immersion
- Pet-friendly / accessible filters checked

### On Arrival

- Confirm booking before you leave the airport.
- Pin location on map.
- Lock door, check windows, locate exits.
- Note local emergency numbers.

### Daily Routine

- Morning: quick route check, cash/cards, water, sunscreen.
- Midday: hydrate, rest, quick budget check.
- Night: backup photos, check messages home.







## SECTION 9: SPECIAL TRAVELLER PROFILES

### Introverts

- Plan rest days between high-energy activities.
- Stay in private rooms within social hostels.
- Use solo hobbies (journalling, sketching, photography).

### Extroverts

- Choose group tours and active hostels.
- Book classes or events to channel energy.
- Schedule “quiet nights” to recharge.

### Seniors / Retirees

- Prebook transfers and first nights.
- Limit heavy luggage.
- Factor recovery days after long flights.
- Join small group tours for connection.

### Travellers with Disabilities

- Use Google Maps “wheelchair accessible” routes.
- Carry medical card translated to local language.
- Pre-confirm accessible rooms and tours.

### People with Allergies or Dietary Needs

- Translate allergy phrases and carry written cards.
- Research local cuisine and safe dishes.
- Bring backup snacks for travel days.





# SECTION 10: MENTAL HEALTH, LONELINESS & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

## Before Departure

- Identify coping strategies (music, journalling, mindfulness).
- Save helpline numbers (Beyond Blue, Lifeline, etc.).
- Plan rest, not just sightseeing.

## During Travel

- Acknowledge loneliness as natural.
- Keep daily micro-rituals (coffee spot, evening walk).
- Reach out to home base regularly.
- Move your body; endorphins are your best travel insurance.

## If Overwhelmed

- Find a quiet, safe space
- Take slow breaths, eat, hydrate
- Contact embassy or insurer if safety or mental health is at risk.







# SECTION 11: SUSTAINABILITY & CULTURAL RESPECT

## Planet-Friendly Habits

- Carry reusable bottle and tote.
- Say no to single-use plastics.
- Use public transport or walk when possible.

## Cultural Respect

- Dress appropriately in sacred or conservative spaces.
- Ask before photographing people.
- Learn local customs around shoes, gestures, tipping.
- Support small local businesses.

## Wildlife & Ethical Travel

- Avoid rides or interactions with captive wild animals.
- Choose verified ethical sanctuaries and tours.





## SECTION 12: WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

### Lost Items

- Report to police for insurance.
- Contact bank immediately to freeze cards.
- Keep digital copies ready.

### Illness or Injury

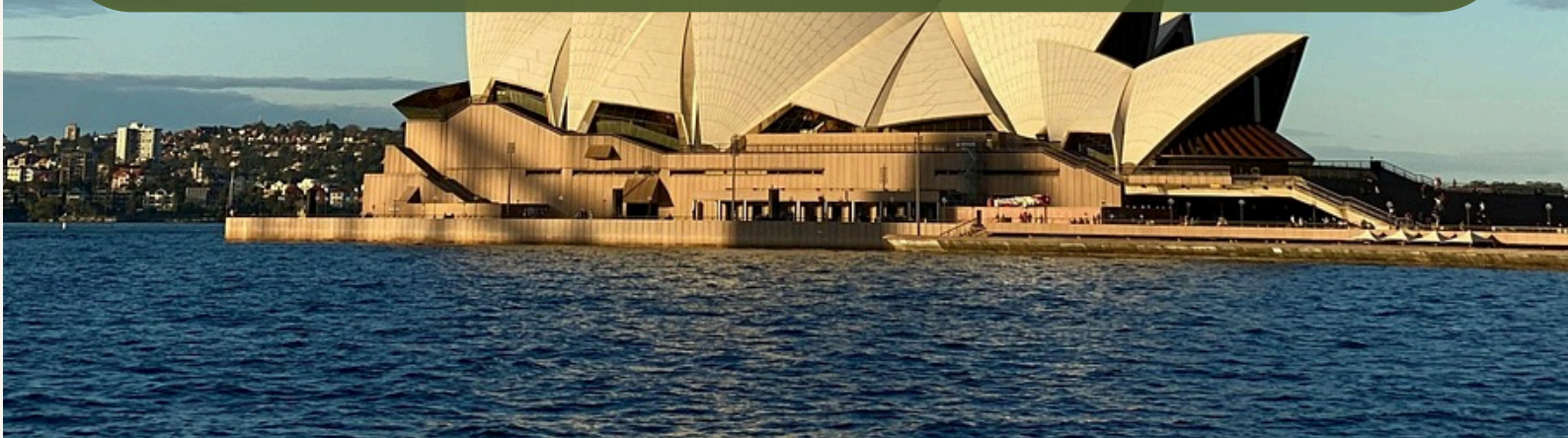
- Use travel insurance hotline.
- Carry basic medication in day bag.
- Ask accommodation for local English-speaking doctor.

### Missed Flights / Cancellations

- Contact airline via app first.
- Know your rights for compensation or rebooking.

### Natural Disasters / Civil Unrest

- Follow embassy social channels.
- Stay indoors, contact family, monitor news.







## SECTION 13: RETURN & REFLECTION

### After Travel

- Back up photos and receipts.
- Review budget – note learnings.
- Journal your highlights and surprises.
- Share verified reviews to help future travellers.
- Start planning the next trip (because you will want to).







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**This download is only the beginning.**

Forward Travel crafts solo-friendly itineraries and small-group adventures tailored to how you travel — your energy, comfort, and curiosity. Whether you're a first-timer, a digital nomad, or a lifelong explorer, our team helps you plan safely, confidently, and in style.

*Book your Solo Travel Consultation now at [www.forwardtravel.com.au](http://www.forwardtravel.com.au)*