

The Soft Landing

*A Slow Solo Travel Starter Guide
for the woman who's ready to stop rushing
and start actually arriving.*

*By
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A note before we begin



I want to be honest with you about something. This guide isn't for everyone.

It's not for the woman who wants to see twelve countries in three weeks. It's not for someone chasing Instagram moments or trying to prove something to anyone — including herself.

It's for the woman who has been quietly wondering whether travel could feel different.

Slower.

More hers.

Who am I?



I travel slowly and mostly solo, even though I'm married and have a full life at home. I travel alone because something happens when I do — something I can't quite manufacture any other way. A kind of stillness. A version of myself that only seems to show up when I give her the space and the silence to do so.

I didn't always travel this way. For years I did the same rushed, ticked-box version of travel most of us are taught — see everything, waste nothing, come home exhausted with a full camera roll and very little else. It took me a long time to realise the exhaustion wasn't the price of a good trip. It was a sign I was doing it wrong.

This guide is the starting point I wish I'd had. Not a list of destinations. Not a packing spreadsheet. Just an honest, grounded introduction to a way of travelling that might change not just how you see the world, but how you see yourself.

Wherever you're reading this from — a busy kitchen table, a lunch break, a bed you can't quite get out of yet — take a breath. This next part is just for you.

Let's begin.

CHAPTER ONE

What slow travel actually is

(and what it isn't)

Slow travel is one of those phrases that sounds self-explanatory until you try to define it.

It isn't about moving slowly for its own sake, or needing months of free time to justify it. And it definitely isn't about missing out.

Slow travel is a decision to go deeper rather than wider.



It means choosing fewer places and staying longer, letting days have a natural rhythm instead of a packed itinerary — a café you return to, a street you walk down each morning, a market you visit twice because the first time you were too busy being a tourist to actually be there.

When you travel slowly, something shifts. Places stop feeling like destinations you're ticking off and start feeling like somewhere you briefly belong. You stop being a visitor passing through and start being, even temporarily, a person who lives somewhere.

That's where the real experience lives. Not in the famous square at peak hour, but in the quiet version of it at 7am when it's just you and the pigeons and the light doing something extraordinary to the stonework.

Slow travel isn't a pace. It's a permission.

Is this style of travel for you?

There's no personality test for this. But in my experience, slow travel tends to appeal to a particular kind of woman.

She enjoys her own company — not because she's antisocial, but because solitude genuinely restores her. Everyday life holds more interest than landmarks, and one long conversation with a local beats ticking off four tourist attractions any day.

If any of that resonates, you're in the right place.

This might be you if you...

Genuinely enjoy your own company

Are curious about everyday life, not just landmarks

Would rather have one real conversation than tick off four attractions

Are figuring out what genuinely fills you up, not what's expected

The emotional truth of travelling alone

I want to be honest with you here because most travel content isn't.

Solo travel can be beautiful. Genuinely, unexpectedly, quietly beautiful in ways that are hard to articulate to people who haven't experienced it. And it can be lonely. Sometimes profoundly so. Sometimes both in the same afternoon.

There will be evenings where you'd give anything for familiar company. Days where you question what you're doing and whether it's worth it.

*There's a particular kind of quiet that only shows up when
you're truly alone in a place that's new to you.*

Slow solo travel isn't an escape from yourself. It's an unusually honest encounter with yourself.

That can be challenging. It can also be the most clarifying, grounding, quietly transformative experience available to a woman who's ready for it.

When loneliness visits

Loneliness tends to arrive at predictable moments, so you can meet it with a plan instead of a spiral.

01 The first evening

The streets, the sounds and the feel of the place are still unfamiliar. Head somewhere with people around: a busy café or a market.

02 The rainy afternoon

Plans collapse and the quiet gets loud. Keep your hands busy with a notebook, a sketch, or an unhurried walk. And it's okay to binge-watch TV too! It's your time to do what's right for you.

03 A table surrounded by couples

It can sting more than it should, but you chose this table, this meal, this pace. Put your phone or book down and observe the people around you. You may be surprised how many couples are open to a chat. I've made so many friends this way, often starting with a simple, "Ooh, that looks delicious, what did you order?"

*Solitude is spacious.
It's the thing that lets you hear yourself again.*

Staying in touch, without the pressure

Agree with your loved ones on a simple way to stay in touch, so they feel reassured about your safety and up to date on your travels, without you feeling the pressure to keep updating or pleasing anyone.

01 A short message each morning

Just enough for them to know you are well. No photos or updates required.

02 A longer call every few days

Save the proper catch-up for when you have the energy for it.

03 Tell them you may go quiet

That way a slow reply is just a slow reply, not a reason to worry.

One small ritual

Choose one thing each day that is only yours: a morning walk, a notebook, a regular café table. Solitude feels fuller when it has a shape.

Choosing where to go

A framework, not a list

I'm deliberately not going to give you a list of “best slow travel destinations.” The right destination for you depends entirely on you. What I'll give you instead is a framework — questions to hold up against any place you're considering.

Walkability

Can you get meaningfully around on foot? A walkable place is more alive at street level.

Safety for solo women

Somewhere the general environment feels manageable, where your instincts have room to operate.

Cost of living

Affordability that gives you freedom — to extend, to eat well, to rest without anxiety.

Cafés & public spaces

Somewhere to simply be, without spending money or needing a plan.

Transport ease

Clear, reliable transport removes a layer of daily stress that quietly exhausts you.

Language friendliness

Somewhere the barrier feels navigable rather than isolating.

How long is 'slow'?

There's no rule — but here's an honest guide based on my own experience.

One week

You'll get a taste. You'll start to settle just as it's time to leave — its own kind of lesson.

Two to three weeks

This is where it starts to feel real. Routines. Recognised faces. A café that feels like yours.

One month or more

Something deeper happens. Staying long enough to feel bored sometimes, and finding something anyway.

Start with whatever length feels possible. The goal isn't the longest trip. It's the most present one.

Your first 48 hours

The most important part nobody talks about

The first 48 hours in a new place, travelling alone, can feel uncomfortable. You might feel lonely, disoriented, or suddenly convinced you've made a terrible mistake.

Resist the urge to fill every moment.

The discomfort of the first two days is not a sign something is wrong. It's the feeling of arriving — really arriving. It's you, becoming present.



Three days in

01 Do almost nothing

Find somewhere to eat that doesn't require a decision. Walk without a destination. Sleep if you need to.

02 Find your café

Just one place you'll come back to. Order the same thing. That small repetition is the beginning of belonging.

03 Notice the shift

You'll find you're not checking your map as often. You'll recognise a street. You'll feel like you know where you are.

That feeling is the foundation everything else is built on.

A gentle nudge

If you notice yourself reaching for your phone to fill the quiet, that's normal. Just try putting it away for one hour longer than feels comfortable each day. That's usually where the shift starts — not in a grand gesture, but in the small, slightly uncomfortable choice to just be there.

Give it three days. See what shifts.

Your first evening

The first evening sets the tone for the whole trip, and it's the one most of us get wrong: we drop the bags, scroll reviews, then push through a big night because we feel we should. Here is the gentler ritual I come back to. Tick it off as you go.

☐ **Walk before you plan**

Spend your first hour on foot, before any itinerary.

☐ **Eat early, eat slowly**

A simple dinner close to where you're staying. Make the first meal a long one.

☐ **Find the way home in daylight**

Walk your street while it's still light, and notice the busy, well-lit routes.

☐ **Put the phone away**

Keep it in your bag through dinner. The first evening is for arriving, not documenting.

☐ **Notice three small details**

A smell, a sound, a doorway. Write them down before bed.

☐ **Leave tomorrow unplanned**

The second day doesn't need a plan yet. Let it unfold.

Three small things I noticed today

Table for one

Eating alone, and why lunch is the whole point

For a lot of women, the restaurant is the hardest part of travelling alone. The trick isn't confidence. It's deciding to actually be there: ordering what you want, and watching the room instead of your phone.

01 Go early

Restaurants are quieter and the staff have time for you.

02 Ask for the seat you want

The bar, a window, a corner table. Asking is allowed.

03 Order the way you would with company

Small plates, the local speciality, a glass of wine, dessert. Ask what the server recommends; it is often the best thing you'll eat.

Let the lunch become the afternoon.

Across southern Europe, lunch is the main meal of the day and often the best value. Look for a set midday menu (in Spain, the *menú del día*), choose a busy local spot over a photogenic one, and let the meal be the plan.

If you're nervous

Start with a quiet lunch or an early dinner. Keep your phone in your bag. A book or notebook is fine. The second time is usually easier than the first.

Feeling safe, not just being safe

A calmer way to think about safety when you travel alone

Most safety advice is about being safe: the locks, the apps, the checklists. All of it matters. But you can tick every box and still lie awake on your first night. Feeling safe is its own project, and it deserves its own attention.

You are allowed to be cautious and unafraid.

01 Get familiar, quickly

Look at your neighbourhood in daylight photos before you go. Once you arrive, walk your street before dark.

02 Trust the signal

If something feels off, you don't need a reason to act on it. Leave, change your plans, even change your accommodation.

A peace-of-mind checklist

- ☐ Share your itinerary with someone at home
- ☐ Save your accommodation address offline, in the local language
- ☐ Plan how you'll get from the airport
- ☐ Note the local emergency numbers
- ☐ Carry backup money, a spare card and travel insurance

What comes next

If you've read this far, something in here resonated with you.

Maybe it's given you language for something you've been feeling for a while. Maybe it's simply confirmed what you already knew — that you're ready to travel differently.

This guide is the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one. If you'd like to keep wandering with me, you'll find my slow travel videos on YouTube and new stories on the blog at wanderingrach.com.

No pressure, no rush. Come along whenever it suits you.

A question to sit with

If you could give yourself permission to travel exactly the way you wanted — no itinerary to justify, no one to impress — where would you go first, and what would you do with your first quiet morning there?



*“For now — welcome to a slower,
more intentional way of seeing the world.
I'm really glad you're here.”*

— Rach

*By
Wandering Rach*

Follow the journey on YouTube & at wanderingrach.com