

ASK THE experts

With more mature travellers going solo, **Isobel Turner** asks three specialists how best to tap into this market



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1 VALUE FOR MONEY IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION FOR MATURE TRAVELLERS

Before working in travel, Dyan was a teacher who liked to spend the school holidays exploring new destinations. Following a once-in-a-lifetime trip to India, she decided to take the plunge and quit teaching to apply for a job at Intrepid Travel. Now, 23 years later, she's still there and looking after the company's Premium range.



Dyan Mckie
senior product manager, Intrepid Travel

“While mature travellers tend to have higher disposable incomes, it's important to remember that value is still an important consideration to them. They want to make sure that they're getting good value for money when it comes to travelling – both in terms of comfort and experiences.

“We offer a Premium range that combines responsible travel with a higher level of comfort, and this has been really popular with mature travellers since it launched in 2021. It includes upgraded accommodation, a slower pace of travel and exclusive, authentic experiences that bring the group together with locals.

“To ensure that your clients get the most value from their solo trip, remember to ask questions about what kind of interests they have and what they'd like to get out of their holiday. With so many different tours out there, from cycling trips to foodie adventures, asking questions will help them select the right holiday and ensure they have the best experience.

“This vast range of tours is also a big selling point. We see mature travellers choosing to visit a huge range of countries, from Morocco and Egypt to Vietnam and Japan, and our repeat customers tend to choose different destinations each time they travel, so don't be afraid to encourage your clients to consider far-flung destinations.”

2 FIRST-PERSON TESTIMONIALS HELP TO INSTIL A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE

Polly has 20 years' experience in the travel industry and has spent the past nine years as part of the trade sales team at G Touring, which operates the escorted holiday brands Travelsphere and Just You. In her current role as national account manager for the south, she focuses on supporting the trade business.



Polly Poulton
national account manager, G Touring

“When selling to mature solo travellers, a key point to emphasise is how everything is taken care of for them. They don't need to worry about the itinerary or navigating new places, which is a big reassurance for solo travellers, especially those who are used to travelling with a partner or group of friends.

“All of Just You's escorted tours are run by experienced holiday directors, who are experts at making holidaymakers feel welcome and secure. This is particularly important for the women who join our tours. Around three-quarters of the people who book a Just You solo trip are women, who really value the feeling of safety that comes with travelling as part of an organised group.

“Although the itineraries are set, we make sure to build in plenty of free time for the group to explore at their own pace. During this time, travellers can stick with the holiday director or explore by themselves. If exploring is top of your client's agenda, an active trip like one of Just You's walking holidays is a great option.

“It's important to remember that mature solo travellers really value first-person testimonials. Hearing from other solo travellers who have had positive experiences helps to instil a sense of confidence.”

3 ORGANISED TOURS ARE ABOUT MORE THAN JUST THE DESTINATION

Over the past 33 years, Claire has worked in a variety of roles across the travel industry. She has specialised in the mature market since 2017, most recently at JG Travel Group, whose brands include Just Go Holidays and National Holidays, where she works with agents to help them gain a deeper understanding of mature travel.



Claire Dutton
trade sales manager, JG Travel Group

“A common misconception is that mature people only travel alone when they don't have a partner to go with, but this is certainly not the case.

“We're seeing more mature travellers embrace their independence and opting to join organised trips, as they're a great opportunity to meet new people with similar interests. On trips like this, everyone is very sociable and welcoming, which is the perfect environment for solo travellers, particularly those travelling alone for the first time.

“As specialists in UK and European coach travel, we find that a lot of people travelling solo opt for an event break, as these enable them to enjoy their chosen sporting event, theatre show or concert with a group of like-minded people.

“Also, with a greater choice of trip options than ever before, we cater for a diverse range of interests. This means that it's really important for agents to understand their clients' interests in order to recommend the best trip for them.

“My advice to agents would be to remember that organised tours are about more than just the destination. Joining this type of trip is about being able to relax and connect with new people.

“Booking an escorted tour also reduces the stress of organising a trip. When selling to mature solo travellers, remember to reassure them that every client is looked after by friendly guides and drivers throughout the whole experience.”