

# Go low for solos

For solo travellers concerned they'll pay more than their share, there are plenty of ways to sidestep single supplements, writes **Lina Molloholli**

**S**olo travel comes with a host of benefits – the freedom of being able to go wherever and whenever you want, being open to new experiences and never having to compromise with someone else's agenda. But it can also come with extra fees, with some single supplements doubling the cost of accommodation or experiences.

According to Mintel's UK Solo Holidays Market Report 2024, 16% of respondents say single supplements are a barrier to travelling alone, so to help you sell more to this growing market sector, we highlight a few easy ways to avoid unwanted extra costs.

## SOLO CRUISE CABINS

While most cruise fares are based on two sharing, many lines have introduced

cabins priced specifically as single-occupancy rooms. Fred Olsen was an early adopter of single cabins and offers solo passengers plenty of opportunities to socialise, including welcome drinks and mixed dining tables. Royal Caribbean International, Cunard and Marella Cruises also offer studio cabins on select ships, while Norwegian Cruise Line is doubling the number of solo cabins available on its fleet.

Phil Hullah, chief executive of Riviera Travel, notes that solo cruisers travel "not just to satisfy their wanderlust, but also because solo exploration can grow self-confidence – whatever stage a person is at in their life".

Riviera is running 39 solo-dedicated departures across 16 river and ocean cruise itineraries next year. ➤

### BOOK IT

**Mercury Holidays** offers a seven-night stay at VidaMar Resorts Algarve from £700, staying in a Single Prestige Resort View room on a half-board basis. The price includes flights from Gatwick on February 1, 2025, and transfers. [mercuryholidays.co.uk](http://mercuryholidays.co.uk)

**Riviera Travel** offers a six-day Danube's Imperial Cities and Yuletide Markets River Cruise for Solo Travellers from £2,149. The price includes full-board accommodation in a Standard Suite, flights from Stansted on December 18, luggage and transfers. [rivieratravel.co.uk](http://rivieratravel.co.uk)

**Exodus Adventure Travels** recently added a 13-day Annapurna to Chitwan: Walks & Wildlife trip from £3,799. Includes twin-share accommodation, transfers and return flights from Heathrow departing on February 23, 2025. [exodus.co.uk](http://exodus.co.uk)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Intrepid Travel clients in Morocco; Cunard's Single Oceanview Stateroom; Riviera Travel is offering 39 solo-dedicated cruise departures next year; Mistral Hotel in Crete PICTURES: Greywolf Studios; Mark Theisinger

### ACCOMMODATION OFFERS

Resorts with plenty of activities and public spaces in which to mix can be a sociable choice for solo travellers. Suggest hotels with lessons in beach volleyball, cooking or a local craft, which create a natural environment for meeting new people. Some resorts even have offers where single supplements are waived or significantly reduced, so urging clients to be flexible with dates can help you grab a great deal. For instance, BodyHoliday in Saint Lucia runs a September Solos offer, where the wellness-focused hotel reserves rooms for single occupancy and designs each of its guests a schedule of spa treatments, fitness classes and an array of land and watersports.

Portuguese brand VidaMar Resorts waives supplements for travellers staying in a twin room at its properties in Madeira and the Algarve between October and March, for bookings through operators such as Mercury Holidays.

For clients seeking a singles-only retreat in the Med, the 35-room

Mistral Hotel in Crete offers holidays exclusively for singles, who dine together daily on delicious Cretan cuisine at a communal table, with social events and tours of the local area also available.

### BUDDY UP

Small-group adventurers such as Intrepid Travel, G Adventures and Exodus Adventure Travels offer a same-gender roommate option to cut costs. Catering to 18-35s, 70% of Contiki's travellers join trips solo, with roomie options available on all tours including the new 11-day Lima to Machu Picchu Road Trip and five-day Hà Giang Loop in Northern Vietnam.

For female clients keen on tours with a local lens, Insight Vacations has added 11 women-only tours. New itineraries take in Morocco, Scandinavia and India, with room-sharing options available.

Active types might enjoy Wilderness Scotland's women-only walking and sea-kayaking trips, which waive the single

“At Newmarket Holidays, retired women are leading the charge for solo travel

supplement when customers share with another traveller, while offering a comfortable environment to try their hand at activities.

### SEARCH FOR A SPECIALIST

Many companies focus exclusively on the solo market or have solo-specific ranges, so steer clients to trips that will help them make connections and share their experiences with fellow travellers.

Newmarket Holidays launched a Solo Traveller collection last year, which ranges from island-hopping off Croatia's Dalmatian coast to exploring the Kenyan wilderness. According to the operator, retired women are leading the

charge for solo travel, with 81% of bookings for the operator's Exclusively Solo departures made by women – almost half of these clients are aged 65 to 74.

For millennial and Gen X travellers, try solo specialist Flash Pack, which caters specifically for people in their 30s and 40s. New itineraries include the Albanian Riviera, Georgia, Turkey, Puerto Rico and Mexico.

### NICHE APPEAL

Seeking out a hobby-based holiday is another way to meet travellers with similar interests, while swerving the supplement. Not In The Guidebooks offers activity holidays with no single supplement. Trips include cooking classes, wine tastings and visiting local markets across France, Spain and Italy. The operator's seven-night Jewellery Making Holiday in southwest France is perfect for clients keen on crafting, while sports lovers will find the French Tennis and Culinary Holiday to their taste. **TW**