

NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS



Solo travel is firmly on the up. Over the past year, more than one in six people chose to holiday alone, according to Abta research – up from one in nine in 2017, and only one in 16 in 2011.

Traditionally that meant paying a single supplement to cover the cost of a double or twin room for those wanting their own space – but no longer is this the case. More and more tour operators, cruise lines and hotels are scrapping single supplements or offering reduced rates to entice solo travellers wanting to meet like-minded travellers without having to slum it with a stranger. So who offers what, and how can you use it to sell to this burgeoning market?



Tours

Tours have long attracted solo travellers, but it's only over the past couple of years that the mainstream operators have really started to embrace the market.

Wendy Wu Tours brought out a Solo Tours collection, offering a guaranteed single room at no extra cost on six trips, which range from a 14-day Captivating China tour, priced from £3,590, to an 11-day Highlights of Japan trip, starting at £5,490.

Titan Travel has a similar deal with its Solo Travel tours and holidays, giving clients a room of their own without an additional fee in destinations ranging from Sri Lanka to Armenia and Ethiopia to Canada.

Riviera Travel's Solo Traveller collection has no single supplements on trips spanning the likes of New York, Costa Rica, Israel, New Zealand, Greece, Italy and beyond.

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Great Rail Journeys likewise offers no-single-supplement deals on a collection of its trips, including a 10-day Glacier Express & St Moritz itinerary through the Swiss Alps (from £2,695) and a Highlights of Tuscany tour complete with cooking and wine-tasting in Chianti (from £1,795 for 10 days).

Closer to home, walking specialist HF Holidays – which says solo travellers account for 50% of bookings –

offers single rooms for clients going it alone and double rooms for a small supplement on nearly all of its trips in the UK, while Grand UK Holidays' Just for Singles! coach trips give solo travellers their own twin room in the likes of Snowdonia, the Peak District, Eastbourne and beyond without charging extra.

It's the solo specialists that were the real forerunners of the trend, of course. Just You has offered no single supplements for twin or double rooms on all trips since its launch. The operator says its biggest growth areas are South America, India, Africa and the Far East.

Solos Holidays offers a similar deal across its tours, cruises and single-centre (Clubsolos) trips, giving single travellers the chance to explore everywhere from Albania to Panama and Saint Lucia to Cambodia without being penalised for having their own room. ➤



“We conducted a survey that found 65% of people believe they are financially penalised for travelling solo, which can be a huge disincentive to booking. In response, we created Solo September, working with partners to offer no single supplements and support single travellers. Reports from our website and our partners reveal a sharp increase in solo travel over the past few years. Booking trends from several of our solo partners show that solo travel is particularly popular with women travellers aged over 50. Many cruise partners have noted a particular rise in solo travel, as it's a safe and easy way to meet fellow passengers.”

James Clarke,
UK general manager,
Travelzoo



PICTURE: Wulfrich Didier

Cruises

BEST OF THE REST

☉ Fred Olsen has 190 solo cabins across its fleet, including 11 suites. No-single-supplement offers are available on twin cabins at certain times of the year – currently on 12 itineraries.

☉ AmaWaterways has dedicated single staterooms on four European ships, with itineraries on the Seine, Dordogne, Garonne, Rhone, Rhine and Moselle. It also offers occasional no-single-supplement deals on twin or double rooms.

☉ Saga Cruises has 109 single balcony cabins on *Spirit of Discovery* and *Spirit of Adventure*, and 44 single cabins on *Saga Sapphire*. It hosts drinks parties, lunches and meet-ups on port days to get solos mingling.

☉ Cruise & Maritime Voyages has single cabins across its fleet, as well as an onboard programme of events designed for solo passengers, including a welcome-cocktail party.

☉ Norwegian Cruise Line was the first to offer solo staterooms and hosts dedicated meet-ups and bar crawls.



Aurora Expeditions



Emerald Waterways



CroisiEurope

PICTURES: Maureen Gilbert; Herve Oudin; iStock

Tour operators aren't the only ones jumping on the solos trend, with cruise lines also spotting an opportunity to get in on the act.

Emerald Waterways is now offering no-single-supplement deals on 10 river itineraries (on five cabins per sailing). Options range from a nine-day Enchantment of Eastern Europe cruise along the Danube from Croatia to Serbia (from £2,895) to an eight-day Sensations of Lyon & Provence itinerary along the Rhône (from £3,095 per person).

Tauk waived the supplement on Category 1 riverboat cabins on all departures for this year – reducing supplements on other categories

on selected sailings – while European Waterways did likewise on 40 barge cruises in France, the Netherlands, Scotland and beyond.

CroisiEurope, meanwhile, offers no-single-supplement deals in double cabins at certain times of the year, with current options including a five-day Venice cruise departing October 29 and priced from £603 (down from £890), and a five-day wine-tasting itinerary in Burgundy, departing November 19 (reduced from £1,089 to £959).

Riviera Travel has dedicated Solo Traveller river cruises whose USP is no single supplements across the whole ship on selected dates and itineraries,

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with eight-day trips ranging from the Douro (from £1,799) to the Nile (from £2,139) via a yacht cruise in Croatia (from £2,499).

Beyond the rivers, there's plenty for those going it alone. Aurora Expeditions is targeting independent adventurers by scrapping single

supplements on several 2020 Arctic voyages in two cabin categories on new expedition ship *Greg Mortimer*. The line also offers a 'cabin mate finding' service, pairing up solo travellers on departures without the no-supplement offer, in destinations ranging from Patagonia to Greenland.

Hurtigruten has a limited-time deal offering solo travellers their own room at no extra cost on certain expedition itineraries, including a 17-day Christmas cruise round Antarctica (from £6,082) and a 23-day extravaganza combining the Falklands with South Georgia and Antarctica (from £10,064).

Hotels

Elephant Hills

Hotels are also starting to boost their solo offering. Inghams has an impressive range of no-single-supplement hotels, including the four-star Saaga Spa Hotel in Ylläs, Finnish Lapland, and the four-star Hotel Champs Fleuris in Morzine, France.

Mercury Holidays offers no-single-supplement twin and double rooms in several resorts, ranging from the Dolmen Hotel Malta – a luxury beachfront property in St Paul's Bay – to the Leonardo Plaza Cypria Maris, a four-star adult-only hotel overlooking Paphos harbour in Cyprus.

Those wanting to go more exotic should look to Kihaa Maldives; the resort offers a solo traveller package combining a seven-night stay in a Reserve Beach Villa with a snorkelling session, a 60-minute spa treatment

and return airport transfers, all for \$1,500, without charging extra for single occupancy.

In Thailand, Premier Holidays says jungle camp Elephant Hills likewise has no single supplements, offering guests a luxury tent to themselves and the chance to care for elephants in the lush wilds of Khao Sok National Park.

But queen of the solos offering has to be Saint Lucia's BodyHoliday, whose September Solos campaign targets independent travellers with a schedule of daily treatments, hosted solos dinners and dedicated fitness classes. Caribours offers a week in a Standard Garden View Room from £2,449 with no single supplement, including flights and transfers in September 2020, for clients after a dose of me-time on sparkling turquoise shores. **TW**

SOLO TRAVELLER HOLIDAYS THAT TICK ALL THE BOXES



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