

# Seeing Scotland solo soars in popularity

**Soaring numbers of people from across the world are exploring Scotland solo – including Edinburgh – new figures have revealed.**

Visitors say that Scotland's friendly people and inclusive culture make the country stand out from other destinations.

VisitScotland has identified a post-pandemic trend in solo travelling after a surge of interest over the last three years.

From 2021 to 2023, Google searches for solo trips to Scotland jumped by 33% with travellers citing several decisive factors.

VisitScotland, the national tourism organisation, said that after Covid stopped travel plans, many people are now less willing to wait for others to take their dream trip, combined with a "why not" mindset post-pandemic.

The majority of solo travellers are female and more than half recommend Europe as the best destination for a first solo trip.



Winter at Loch Morlich within the Cairngorms National Park  
Leanne Mallon, VisitScotland's Head of Performance Marketing, said: "Solo travel has grown more popular post-pandemic, and this may be down to people feeling the need to seize travel opportunities now as we don't know what might be round the corner.

"There has also been the rise of social media platforms like TikTok where solo travellers share their experiences and show how easy it can be to travel alone.

"Solo travel comes with many benefits for the visitor and the destination. It allows you to explore what works or doesn't work for you. You can encounter a wide range of people and be able to immerse yourself in Scottish culture in a way that suits you.

"It can be done on a budget, making it ideal for anyone wishing to watch their spending. And it can be easier to make more responsible choices such as staying longer in general or in a particular area or travelling around via more public

transport, which can lessen the impact on the environment.

“This trend is one that many Scottish tourism businesses can jump on. They can look at shaping their products and services to suit lone travellers and capitalise on this growing market.”

Hannah Rose, a solo travel influencer known as [@postcardsbyhannah](#), has visited Italy, the French Riviera and the Maldives, but claims Scotland is the ideal place to travel alone.

She said: “The first time I visited Scotland solo I went to Glasgow. I chatted with the owner of a coffee shop who was so pleased I had picked his home city to visit that he refused to let me pay my bill. He then called his partner and co-owner who invited me on a night out with her friends. She gave me her number and we still chat to this day.

“I don’t know any other place in the world where locals make me feel comfortable and want to chat to me when they realise I am travelling solo.

“Scotland isn’t just the perfect choice for solo women, but it is a very inclusive country that welcomes those from all walks of life. It is a safe country for the LGBTQ community whilst also being accessible to those less able.”

Hannah, 32, said solo travel can also mean “slow travel” – where visitors take their time in a location instead of checking off hotspots.

She added: “Scotland is the ideal place to enjoy ‘slow travel’. Whether you are visiting larger cities such as Edinburgh or exploring the wilderness of the Highlands, it shouldn’t be rushed.

“Travelling solo means I can set the pace. If I want to sit in a coffee shop and watch the world go by I can. If I want to



climb a hill and spend an hour sitting at the top admiring the view, then I absolutely will.”

Research has shown that 74% of solo travellers go alone because they want to experience the world without waiting for someone.



Elise Shapiro, an IT training specialist from Seattle, Washington, was drawn to Scotland as a fan of the TV series Outlander. She travelled alone as her husband was bound by work commitments and friends could not commit. After visiting some of the locations where Outlander has been filmed, she explored the country further. Elise, in her 50s, is an example of the soaring trend for solo travelling in Scotland.

Elise Shapiro, an IT training specialist from Seattle, Washington, told how her husband couldn't travel due to work and friends could not commit.

She said: “I have found that Scotland is a great country for solo travel. People are kind and friendly and public

transportation has been easy to figure out.

"I've scheduled time on group tours as well as alone, so I can meet people and make new friends, but I can also have downtime by myself."

Elise, 52, was drawn to Scotland as a fan of TV show Outlander but, after visiting some of the filming locations, has explored further.

She said: "I visited Iona, Mull, Skye, Orkney, the Highlands, and Edinburgh. Before I leave Europe, I will also go to Glasgow and then Edinburgh again, later in the winter.

"Scotland is an easy country for solo travellers. From the botanical gardens, castles and cathedrals to the museums and great restaurants, there's tons to do, no matter what you are interested in."

Tour company Mary's Meanders, which specialises in Outlander experiences, has also seen a rise in solo travellers.

Guide Emma Chalmers said: "Since we started offering Outlander Tours, we have frequently hosted solo travellers. They have increased slightly since the pandemic but what is interesting is that they now say things like 'I got tired of waiting for my friends/family members to commit and decided to just go for it', 'just because my husband doesn't want to travel doesn't mean I can't'.

Emma and her team have devised new ways of catering for solo travellers to ensure they feel safe holidaying in Scotland.

She said: "We have a hand holding approach, we offer zoom calls in advance of the guest booking, we are happy to answer any type of question about little things that might be worrying them. It is all about building their confidence if needed.

"We set up WhatsApp group chats so everyone can start to get



to know each other. This works really well. In fact, we have even had guests meet up in the airport and fly over together.”



Loch Affric viewpoint



A young woman wrapped up in warm clothing enjoying a hot drink as she enjoys the view at the Clachaig Inn, Glencoe, The Highlands.