



FINDING FRIENDS ON THE FLY

HITTING THE ROAD ALONE HAS NEVER BEEN LESS LONELY, THANKS TO A HOST OF TECHIE TOOLS THAT PUTS FELLOW TRAVELERS WITHIN EASY REACH. BY DIANA HUBBELL

AT HOME

— **Plan your trip together.** Let's say you're not much of a lone wolf, but that none of your friends feel like gallery-hopping in Hong Kong next weekend. With **Mingle Trips** (mingletrips.com) there's no need to compromise; just tell the site what you have in mind—anything from clubbing to culture is fair game—and see who signs up. **Wandermates** (wandermates.com) operates on a similar principle, allowing you to scour cities for existing adventure ideas.

— **Make a date.** Yes, travelers are indeed using the **Tinder Plus** (gotinder.com) "Passport" feature to meet up while seeing the world. The paid version of the app allows you to start swiping profiles anywhere in the world you want to go, meaning you can lay all the groundwork before your plane actually hits the ground. Less established in Asia is **Traveller Chic** (travellerchic.com), which allows users to search for other singles based on age, gender, orientation and intention. The basic site is free to use, but to send private messages, you'll have to shell out US\$25 a month or US\$120 a year.

— **Go mobile.** If Tindering carries a few too many amorous expectations, there are plenty of other ways to reach out. Both **Triprr** (triprapp.com), the leader of the bunch, and **Ventoura** (ventoura.com), launched earlier this year with US\$250,000 in seed funding, use the familiar left-right swiping interface to connect road warriors and locals, many of whom offer specialized tours of their home cities. **Backpackr** (backpackr.org) offers detailed profiles of users and allows you to propose trips with a tap.

ON THE WAY

— **Pick the right seat.** Do you find yourself crossing your fingers each flight hoping that this time you'll sidle up to someone who shares your interests (and hopefully the armrests)? **KLM** (klm.com) made headlines a few years ago when it launched **Seat & Meet**, which allows passengers to choose their seats based on public LinkedIn and Facebook profiles. While competitors such as Malaysia Airlines adopted and abandoned similar programs, a series of apps aims to help passengers accomplish the same thing.

With **Planely** (planely.com), you can connect with others on your flight before taking to the skies, giving you time to decide if this is someone you want to spend time with at your destination.

— **Road trip it.** The Lion City's public transportation may be squeaky clean, but where's the fun in that? Chat up a local and save a buck with **Ryde** (rydesharing.sg), a Singaporean startup that makes carpooling a cinch. To ensure safety, the site offers the country's first specialized ride-sharing insurance, provides a ladies-only option, verifies all user profiles and has a zero-tolerance policy for shenanigans.

ON THE GROUND

— **Hit the town.** Checking out that trendy craft beer bar just isn't the same without a buddy. Grab one fast with **Party with a Local** (partywithalocal.com), which uses your location to find insta-pals for a drink, chat or just a few nightlife tips. **Meetups** (solo-travel.meetup.com), in addition to providing networking opportunities for locals, has a section for solo travelers in any given city.