

Sex Swipe right - online dating for the real world

As a woman, is it safe for me to say that I'm seeking casual sex while traveling?

Swipe Right is our advice column that tackles the tricky world of online dating. This week: how to look for one-night stands overseas without attracting trouble

● Got your own online dating quandaries? Send 'em to Eva: askevaguardian@gmail.com



'What can I do to keep myself safe while still seeking out a bit of adventure and companionship while overseas?'
Illustration: Celine Loup

Eva
Thursday 14 January 2016 15.00 GMT



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Dear Eva,

I'm a single woman who travels overseas a lot, sometimes for work. While using dating sites, I often come across profiles from men who are in town for a week or so and are looking for dinner companions or casual sex, and occasionally I have met up with people in these circumstances.

I have considered posting a similar profile while on my travels, as I don't enjoy dining alone, and have been known to seek out one-night stands on occasion. However, I worry how safe it is to announce that I am a woman with no friends in town. Am I over-thinking it, or is it a genuine safety concern? If so, what can I do to keep myself safe while still seeking out a bit of adventure and companionship while overseas?

Hey, you.

In terms of stating that you're a woman in town on your own in your profile: I don't think this is inherently dangerous as long as you are careful not to include any identifying information or to identify where you are staying. If you do mention this, however, then I think it's fairly likely that you may get more aggressive messages than you would, say, if you posted a profile describing yourself as looking for immediate marriage. But, as ever, it's up to you to screen people out who you don't want to spend time with, even if you're not looking to spend a lot of time with them. Alternatively, to reduce the spam, you can always leave that information out and instead take the initiative to contact men who seem interested in what you're up for - it sounds like this is a scenario in which you won't feel the need to play it cool.

As for actually meeting people: I think the safety precautions that you need to take here are pretty much the same that you'd take when you're meeting men when you're not traveling. Don't invite strangers to your home, or your home-away-from-home: always meet them for the first time in a public place. A good public place is not the bar of the hotel where you're staying. Don't tell them where you're staying until you feel confident and safe with them; better to refer to the area of town instead of a specific location.

Some of my friends like to text me if they're having a one-night stand, not so much as to boast about it as to let me know where they are in case something goes wrong - I don't think this is a bad idea, either, even if you're a bit away from home. And finally always remember that you are always allowed to withdraw your consent: just because you meet someone with the understanding that you're interested in casual sex doesn't mean that you have to sleep with them, or that you can't change your mind if at some point in the evening they turn out to be less cool than they seemed onscreen.

Love,

Eva