

## Michigan Traveler: Tour planner caters to single travelers

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By [Ellen Creager](#)

### The Michigan Traveler

Eating alone.

Paying a single supplement to get a one-person room.

Being the only solo in a sea of couples.

If you are single, traveling can be awkward and costly.

“Every time I wanted to go on a trip, I’d call the company and say I didn’t have a roommate, they would charge me a single supplement,” says Janet Blair of Rochester Hills. “I’d say, ‘If you get a call for a single person, I’m available.’ But they don’t do it that way. If you don’t sign up with a roommate you pay the single supplement automatically.”

Blair didn’t just whine. She did something about it. The operator of the Successfully Single Social Club expanded into travel. In the last four years she has taken groups of singles on numerous cruises, to Yellowstone, Mt Rushmore and the National Parks, Costa Rica, Egypt, New Zealand, Thailand, Dominican Republic, Russia and now, Budapest, Vienna & Prague in November.

Next year? New Zealand, Turkey and an African Safari.

She’ll match up singles with a roommate to keep costs down. She sometimes cajoles nervous people to be brave enough to go. She encourages exhausted single parents to take a few days for themselves. She caters to people ages 45 and up.

And she is hoping for something even more — the transformative power of travel to relax you, so you can meet others as they really are — and just maybe find the next love of your life.

“If people go to a dance, they might chat for an hour or two, but that is very different from being with someone for at least a week, when you really get to know someone,” says Blair. “We have romances all the time. Still, I don’t encourage people to come with the expectation that they are going to meet somebody. It’s about a wonderful destination, having a great time, not going alone.”

Many of her travelers are experienced and want exotic destinations. Others are brand new, and travel for them is like jumping off a cliff.

“I just signed up a single guy for Budapest, Vienna & Prague and he has never left the country before,” Blair says, admiration in her voice.

One single mother of a 15-year-old recently came on a trip to Punta Cana — the first time she ever took a vacation without her child.

Blair's trips often use Gate 1 as the tour operator. For New Zealand, where she has been many times, she planned and will lead that trip herself Feb. 4-20 (\$1,899 plus airfare). Blair is a certified New Zealand travel specialist by the New Zealand tourism board.

You don't need to be a member of Successfully Single to sign up. But membership gives you access to dances and other social events. Also upcoming for 2014 are Turkey in June and Africa in September, with details still being arranged ([www.successfullysingle.org](http://www.successfullysingle.org), 248-289-6406).

If you don't want to pay the single supplement (usually a 50% to 100% higher rate), Blair will match you up with another person in your age range and gender to save money. Women, she says, tend to sign up for trips with their friends, but those who are solo may need the service. Men are more likely to sign up on their own and need a roommate.

Blair, who also does Web design and runs a business networking company, was married once. She has not yet found love on a trip. But that is OK.

"I have tried to make the most of my single life," she says. "A lot of people can't stand being single. And they are not very discriminating when it comes to selecting their next partner. They are afraid of being alone. I'd love to have somebody in my life, but in the meantime, I'm going to have a wonderful life for myself — and that includes travel."

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