

HOTEL INTEL

# TRAVEL SERVICES FOR WOMEN, BY WOMEN



ROCHELLE LASH

The concept of sisterhood in travel is growing fast and several companies organize tours and lodging exclusively for women. Here are three outstanding sources: Wanderful operates a home-sharing network, and Wild Terrains and Purposeful Nomad run tours built around local culture and women-operated enterprises.

**Home sharing:** If you're traveling thousands of kilometres and arrive in a place that is outside of your comfort zone, you might need a best friend, family togetherness or a home-cooked meal.

Wanderful's home-sharing network is similar to Airbnb, except all the hosts and guests are women and they all are identified through a video process. Many of the hosts are single mothers, empty nesters and young professionals.

"Our home-sharing network caters only to women and keeps in mind their safety concerns by using video verification," said CEO Beth Santos. "We offer women the chance to build relationships around the world."

With Wanderful, you can rent a room in Madrid, Medellin or Hong Kong, stay with a family in an ancient Indian city or rent a seaside apartment in Bahrain. A single traveller would pay about \$40 to \$50 for a room in Quebec City's historic but trendy Limoilou neighbourhood.

"We now have listings in 10 countries around the world, and we're expanding fast," said Santos.

Partnering with Purposeful Nomad, Wanderful also co-ordinates tours. See below.

**Sustainable and local:** Purposeful Nomad is a tour company for small groups of women that supports local businesses and provides authentic experiences.

Founder Caitlin Murray created Purposeful Nomad after she visited the Mashpi Artisanal Chocolate Farm, an award-winning conservation project in Ecuador.

"We want women to outdo themselves and go beyond a typical tour," said Murray. "And

IF YOU GO

**Wanderful:** sheswanderful.com. Prices for shared lodging vary widely.

**Purposeful Nomad:** purposefulnomad.com. Bali, June 20 to July 2, from US\$3,825 p.p., double occ. India: The Divine Female, March 1 to 11, starting at US\$3,450 p.p., double occ., with \$1,200 p.p. single supplement. Tour begins and ends in New Delhi.

**Wild Terrains:** wildterrains.com. Portugal: March 21-28, May 3-10, May 10-17, May 23-30, Oct. 3-10, Oct. 10-17; from US\$2,950 p.p., double occ., or from \$3,650 p.p., single. Leaves from Lisbon. Mexico City: March 6-10, May 6-10, May 10-14, May 22-26, Oct. 28-Nov. 1, Nov. 1-5; from US\$1,950 p.p., double occ., or \$2,650 p.p., single. Leaves from Mexico City.

we showcase incredible things women are doing around the world."

**India:** The Divine Female is an 11-day, 10-night journey through Rajasthan in March. One of the heritage hotels is the splendid Chunda Palace, and the trip's experiences include markets, local cuisine, camel treks and a home stay in the Thar Desert. This tour also includes the International Women's Day march in Jodhpur.

A trip in June will explore Bali, with highlights including a batik class, snorkelling, temple tours and cooking lessons.

**Culture vultures:** Wild Terrains is a boutique travel company specializing in women-only group trips to vibrant destinations, and supporting women-owned businesses. Based in Washington, D.C. and founded by Lauren Bates, Wild Terrains recently announced two of its 2020 destinations: Portugal and Mexico City.

An eight-day, seven-night Portugal tour focuses on fascinating history and spectacular landscapes, as well as creative pursuits such as an art and design tour and a cooking workshop. Other features include a stay at stylish, women-owned hotels like the Lisboans in Lisbon and Duas Portas Townhouse in Porto; a gourmet dinner at the top-rated Prado in Lisbon; and a visit to Douro Valley's female winemakers.



One of the women-only tours by Wild Terrains is at the Ignacia Guest House in Mexico City. JAIME NAVARRO

A five-day, four-night tour of Mexico City, Wild Terrains' flagship destination, alights at women-owned properties such as the Ignacia Guest House and Nima Local House, both in the intriguing Colonia Roma neighbourhood (featured in the Oscar-winning 2018 film Roma).

Always focusing on women-owned enterprises and women designers, activities include a jewelry-making workshop, a street food crawl, a Frida Kahlo art history exploration and a Mexican-cuisine cooking class. rochelle@rochellelash.com



A Purposeful Nomad tour called India: The Divine Female will stop at Chunda Palace in Rajasthan. PURPOSEFUL NOMAD

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