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ONE FOR THE ROAD

Travelling alone can be intimidating—there are too many questions and too many doubts. But India has many safe solo travel trails for women, says travel writer **Amrita**

SPITI, Himachal Pradesh

Set in the barely accessible highlands, Spiti valley is at an altitude of between 3,600 m and 5,000 m. The people of this Himalayan valley are very warm and have some of the happiest faces you will ever see. Even though there may be moments of absolute silence here, you're never lonely. The popular villages to visit are Kaza, Langza, Komic, Tabo, Dhankar and Pin valley. You can go on a snow leopard expedition or spend time farming in the fields. Or you can explore the monasteries and discover the local way of life.

Tip: Travel responsibly in this delicate valley. Allow Ecosphere, a social enterprise here, to plan your trip for you.

PUDUCHERRY, Tamil Nadu

The vibrant streets of the French Quarter are brimming with life. Here you can explore, shop, eat, surf, dive and cycle comfortably. Even after the sun sets, you can wander about the French Quarter's lanes quite safely till about 10 pm.

Tip: Stay in one of the heritage bungalows in the French Quarter's for a local experience. If you want to visit Auroville, book with your B&B. Local rickshaw drivers may fleece you.



PANAJI, Goa

The Goan capital has some of the best restaurants in the state.

While the beaches endorse a relaxed way of life, Panaji has many things for you to do. There's always someone at hand in this city, in case you need help.

I visited the Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, tried scuba diving with Dive Goa, ate at cafés around 18 June Road and Altinho and walked around the photogenic Fontainhas.

Tip: If you are comfortable riding a gearless scooter, hire one. Or bunk at Fontainhas, which is centrally located.

KODAGU, Karnataka

The forests of Kodagu—Coorg, as it is popularly known—are so enchanting that you will want to return soon.

Madikeri is the busy town in this district and most sightseeing spots are here. The locals may appear curt initially. But don't fret; they're very helpful and have a great sense of humour. Spend some time at the coffee plantations, hike up to Shola forests from Mojo Plantation or tuck into some of the best momos you'll ever have in Kushalanagar. You will never be bored here.

Tip: For local sightseeing, book a rickshaw from Madikeri's town centre and keep it for the day. Take the private buses to travel around Coorg (from Madikeri to Kushalnagar or Virajpet). Bus routes are well connected and you will get all the info you need to make plans at the private bus stand. KSRTC buses are excellent and recommended to travel to and from Coorg. 



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