

The Women Every Female Traveler Should Meet in the World



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As I rolled the little dough ball between my palms, a familiar feeling came rushing back: Suddenly, I was transported to my childhood kitchen table, where—joyfully covered in flour—I'd make dumplings with my Taiwanese-American family. My dad would knead the dough, my sister and I would roll the little balls and flatten them (clearly, the entry-level position), and my mom would perfectly pinch together the pretty-enough-for-a-restaurant dumplings.

But here at the [Sisterhood of Survivors'](#) kitchen table in Kathmandu, any nostalgic pleasure I took in rolling the dough was immediately tinged with guilt: My hosts were all survivors of human trafficking.

I was traveling through Nepal with [G Adventures](#), whose nonprofit [Planeterra Foundation](#) had partnered with the survivor-empowerment [SASANE](#) organization to create meaningful tourism employment for these women—in this case, the traditional [momo-making](#) lesson I was taking with 12 of my fellow travelers.

We'd started our visit by listening to the women tell their stories. And whenever I locked eyes with one of our hosts, I couldn't help but wonder at the strength she'd summoned to break out of her unthinkable situation—and to put a smile on her face so she could connect with strangers from around the globe.

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When the cooking portion began, one young woman folded and pinched the momo so quickly and effortlessly as she held court, I felt myself staring in awe. She'd been forced into situations—time and again—where she'd been voiceless. Now she had a group of Americans, Canadians and Europeans hanging on her every word, the power of her voice unmistakable.

I'm thinking of her today, on the UN's [International Women's Day](#), and of so many other women I've met in my travels—women whose extraordinary resilience and willingness to share a piece of themselves make our collective journeys so much richer.

To add a female-forward perspective to your own travels, check out these five offerings.

Take the wheel in Kenya





When travelers on the [Kenya: Women's Adventure](#) hop aboard Intrepid Travel's overland safari truck, they're laser-focused on driver Becky Kieha, whose every utterance could mean that a zebra, rhino or giraffe is nearby. But to locals, [she's](#) the real sight.

The Kenya native is East Africa's first female overland truck driver, a dream since this truck driver's daughter was a little girl—and no easy feat in a country where women still struggle to find meaningful employment ([estimates say](#) the gender pay gap won't close here for 135 years).

Inspired by the groundbreaking job she's held for six years, locals consider "Mama Overland" a celebrity, and young girls who aspire to be like her even refer to her as "Aunt Becky." The 9-night adventure she leads highlights the strides women have made in East Africa, from the women's only Umoja Village, a settlement for survivors of sexual assault, to a flower farm run by women who've had little access to formal education.

Weave through Peruvian barriers





In the rural communities of Peru's Andean regions, women struggle to find work that can help them support their families. One organization looking to change that: [Awamaki](#). In 2009, it connected the work of 10 female weavers to the global marketplace—and has since trained and partnered with eight additional artisan cooperatives to sell traditional textiles online. ([Look](#) how proud the women are of their work!)

The group now offers day tours and overnight experiences, too: The six-hour [Rural Tourism](#) visit takes a deep-dive into the process of making textiles, while the [Artisan Overnight](#) offers an immersive experience in a Quechua village to get a taste of how the artisans live.

Discover the secret formula to Morocco's beauty



Winding through the Atlas Mountains on G Adventures' [Kasbahs and Desert](#) trip, you'll pull over at a thoroughly nondescript building—but inside, women are breaking barriers. In a region where many women don't have the privilege of going to school, cooperatives are springing up and giving them a chance to provide for their families. The business at hand is argan oil—a nutrient-packed ingredient typically used in beauty products and Moroccan cuisine. And as a traveler, you can not only watch the painstaking process of extracting the oil from the seeds, but participate, too.

Bonus: The success of female-run Argan cooperatives in Morocco has helped save the nation's argan trees, which were [being lost](#) at an annual rate of 600 hectares until relatively recently. The trees' deep roots, in turn, have helped limit desertification exacerbated by climate change. And more argan groves = more [goat condos](#).

Stroll through Parisian her-story





Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette may be fixtures of French history, but there are so many more *femmes françaises* with stories waiting to be told. Now, the [Women of Paris](#) walking tours—led by women, of course—put female history in the spotlight.

If you were a fan of last year's [Colette](#), go for the Sugar & Spice literary tour of Saint Germain-des-Prés—a district also known for amazing chocolatiers, patisseries and confectioneries, several of which you'll visit between stops related to Colette, George Sand and other female literati. If you lean theatrical, try the Drama Queens tour, which puts stage sensations from Edith Piaf to Sarah Bernhard in the spotlight. But you can never go wrong with the [Essential Walk](#) through the lesser known (i.e., female) lore of the Left Bank, where there will be a patisserie stop for good measure.

Toast Upstate New York's Wine Trail



When Japan native Fumie Thorpe dreamt of becoming a meteorologist, women couldn't study the field there, so she moved to Oswego, New York, to pursue her passion. But her plans took a turn when her dad visited and decided to buy a vineyard. Thorpe started running the business while she was in college — and [Thorpe Vineyard](#) has just celebrated its 30th anniversary.

While the wines have won their share of awards, the business is equally famous for being 100 percent women-owned and -operated. Dubbed the Little Winery on the Big Lake, this Lake Ontario Wine Trail stop offers tastings, as well as stargazing and bird-watching events. And be sure to take a look at the watercolor paintings in the tasting room—they're all Fumie Thorpe originals.

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