



I'm a widow and just got a birthday present from my son. It's a round-trip flight to London and six nights in a city hotel. I couldn't get any friends to travel with me, so I'm considering going by myself. I want to be able meet and talk with Londoners while there. What do you suggest? *PTO'*
B, Boston MA

A: First, an example. A recent news story about a street protest in London emphasizes a unique way to meet new people. The reporter asked a sign-carrying senior why he joined the march. The American tourist shrugged his shoulders and said it was a great way to meet people.

Mingling isn't difficult if you can be outgoing, friendly and socially creative. When you're in busy, friendly London, you don't have to join a protest march. Just get out there, get talking and get noticed. As soon as you arrive, check online and in the daily newspapers about what's happening. If there are social events, celebrations, street fairs or other activities where people mix, go and join in with enthusiasm.

Take your smartphone to a coffee shop, pub, outdoor cafe or park. Strike up conversations, ask questions and compare your device with those of others there. When they find out you're an American tourist, you'll get all kinds of suggestions on what to do in Londontown, or just maybe an invitation to a British family dinner.

Check with the hotel front desk for museums and art galleries, especially those with new exhibits or other special happenings. You'll meet all kinds of people, especially the scholarly, creative and artistic.

The best places in London to meet new people when you're traveling alone are those where you find or create occasions to talk with them. Then, if you do it right, conversations can lead to new friendships to take back home with you.