

More Americans dining and traveling alone

By Bella DePaulo, Washington Post

When I taught a psychology course on singles in America at the University of Virginia in 1999, one of the assignments was: Go out to dinner alone. One of my students waited patiently as the hostess seated one party after another; the hostess thought my student was waiting for someone else, so she ignored her. Another student got dressed up and headed to an upscale restaurant with several dining rooms. She was ushered into a room with no other diners.

Today, things would be different. Recently, the online restaurant reservation service OpenTable reported that, over the past two years, the fastest-growing party size has been tables for one; one-person reservations have increased 62 percent. Diners are not going to restaurants alone just by chance – they are committing to it ahead of time.

Solo travel has also increased.

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