

THE 90-DAY PRE-MOVE COMMUNITY PLAN

How to Land Abroad Already Knowing People

A free guide by Kimberly Anne

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A note from me before you start

If you're reading this, you're probably thinking about leaving the US. And somewhere in the back of your mind — quieter than the visa questions and the money questions — there's another one: but will I have anyone there?

I want to tell you something I wish someone had told me before I left in 2022.

You don't have to land abroad and start from zero. Most people do — because nobody tells them they don't have to. But you don't.

This is a 90-day plan to help you walk off the plane in your new country already knowing names, already in group chats, already invited to things. It's three months of quiet, steady, low-effort work from your couch in the US that will save you the first six months of loneliness on the other side.

Everything in here is what I would do if I were starting over today.

The truth about making friends at 50+ (that nobody says)

Before the plan, one reframe.

Adult friendships don't form the way they did in college or in your thirties. They form through **repetition and shared activity**, not charisma or introductions. The person who shows up at the same yoga class every Tuesday for three months will make friends. The person who goes to a single expat mixer and hopes for magic will not.

Pre-move community building isn't about meeting people. It's about building **familiarity** — so that when you land, the first in-person meeting isn't meeting. It's *finally* meeting.

That's the whole trick. Here's how to do it.

Phase 1 — Days 90 to 60: Foundation

Your job this month: join 8–12 online groups tied to your destination city.

The first 30 days are research. You are not trying to make friends yet. You are finding the rooms.

Step 1 — Map your identity across three axes

Write down your answers to these three questions. You'll use them as search terms.

1. Interests — hobbies, activities, things you do for fun (hiking, ceramics, cooking, yoga, reading, cycling, photography, gardening, dance, martial arts).
2. Values — what matters most to you (environmentalism, LGBTQ+, veganism, spirituality, animal welfare, social justice, writing, creativity).
3. Life stage — what you are right now (solo woman over 50, retired, remote worker, divorced, widowed, parent of adult kids).

Aim for 2–3 items per axis. These are your search terms for everything that comes next.

Step 2 — Join Facebook groups in your destination city

Search combinations like:

- [City] + expats
- [City] + Americans
- [City] + women
- [City] + women over 50
- [City] + [your interest — e.g. hiking, vegan, LGBTQ+, ceramics]
- [City] + [your value]
- [City] + solo travelers
- [Country] + expats + women

Goal: 6–10 FB groups. Some will be noise. You're filtering.

Step 3 — Create accounts on these platforms

- Meetup.com — find groups in your destination city
- Internations.org — paid membership, but worth it for real events and real people
- Bumble BFF — yes, really. Friendship matching, works in major cities
- Eventbrite — search your city for events in your first-month date range

Step 4 — Lurk, don't post

For the first two weeks, just read. Figure out which groups are active and which are ghost towns. Which ones have your people. Which ones are full of people you'd never want to meet. Observation is a skill. Use it.

Phase 2 — Days 60 to 30: Engagement

Your job this month: become a recognizable face in 3–4 groups.

This is where the work starts. You're going to start being a person in these groups — not a ghost, not a lurker, not an American showing up to ask logistical questions.

Step 1 — Introduce yourself, once, well

Pick your 3–4 best groups from the research phase. Write an intro post for each. Keep it short, specific, and useful.

Bad intro:

“Hi everyone! I’m moving to Bangkok in June and I’d love to meet people! Any tips would be appreciated!”

Good intro:

“Hi — I’m Kimberly, moving to Kuala Lumpur in June. Solo woman in my 50s, vegan, big hiker, I work remotely. I’d love to connect with anyone who hikes on weekends or runs in the same circles — drop me a comment or a message if you do. Happy to return the favor by sharing anything I’ve learned from this side.”

The good one works because it:

- Names who you are specifically (age, status, interests)
- Asks for something specific (“weekend hikers”)
- Offers something back
- Invites DMs, not just public replies

Step 2 — Engage in other people’s posts

Don’t just post your own intro. Comment thoughtfully on 2–3 other people’s posts per week in each of your 3–4 groups. Answer questions you can answer. Ask good questions. Be useful.

This is how you become a name people recognize before you land.

Step 3 — Start one-to-one conversations

When someone's intro or comment resonates with you, send them a DM. Keep it warm and low-pressure:

“Hey — saw your intro in [group]. We overlap on [specific thing]. I'm moving to [city] in [month] and would love to grab a coffee once I'm settled if you're open to it. No pressure — just thought I'd say hi.”

Do this 5–10 times over the month. Not everyone will respond. That's fine. You're looking for the 2–3 people who do.

Step 4 — Keep a short list

Open a simple note: name, how you met them (which group), what you have in common, their response to your DM. By the time you land, you want to have had real conversations with 5–10 people.

Phase 3 — Days 30 to 0: Conversion

Your job this month: turn online connections into concrete plans for after you land.

The final month before you move. This is where online becomes real.

Step 1 — Turn “let's meet up” into a specific date

Go back to the people you've DM'd with. Say something like:

“I land on [specific date]. I'll need a couple of weeks to get my feet under me, but would you be free for a coffee the week of [specific date, 2–3 weeks after arrival]? If so, tell me your favorite café and I'll come to you.”

Specificity is the trick. “Let's get coffee someday” never happens. “Coffee at your favorite café the week of June 15” does.

Aim for 3–5 concrete plans on the calendar before you land.

Step 2 — Register for recurring activities that start within your first month

Pre-enroll in:

- A language class (the single highest-value social environment of your first six months)
- One hobby class — ceramics, cooking, yoga, photography, whatever
- One physical activity with a regular schedule — gym, running club, pickleball, dance

You want at least two things with **weekly standing times** that start within your first 30 days. Regularity beats novelty. You're building the scaffolding for the consistency-beats-charisma principle.

Step 3 — RSVP to 2–3 events in your first month

Look at event calendars for:

- Internations events in your city
- Your FB groups' meetups
- Eventbrite
- Festivals, markets, or neighborhood events in your first 30 days

RSVP to 2–3 specific ones. Put them on your calendar. Go even if you're tired.

Step 4 — Prepare your “landing week” script

Know what you're going to say when someone asks “*so what are you doing here?*” Keep it short. Long expat origin stories are boring. A good version:

“I'm from [state]. Moved here in [month] for a combination of the pace of life, the weather, and the fact that I could actually afford to live instead of just survive. Still figuring it all out. You?”

Ending with “*you?*” turns it back into a conversation. Practice saying it out loud. When you're tired and jet-lagged, you'll thank yourself.

The first 30 days after you land

The plan doesn't end when the plane lands. It shifts.

Week 1

Rest. Get oriented. Don't force social anything. You just did a huge thing.

Week 2

Start attending your pre-registered classes and activities. Go to the first meet-up you RSVP'd to. Don't try to make friends. Just show up.

Week 3

Have your first coffee meet-up with one of the people you DM'd. Attend your second recurring class. Say yes to one thing that scares you slightly.

Week 4

By now you've seen the same people at yoga four times. You've had a coffee. You've been to one event. You're not a stranger anymore.

The goal of the first 30 days is not friendship. It's **familiarity**. Friendship takes 6–12 months of consistent showing up. You're laying the foundation.

Common mistakes to avoid

1. Joining 30 groups instead of 3. Depth beats breadth. Pick a few and be a real presence.
 2. Only joining American expat groups. Your people may not be your countrymen. Mix values-groups in.
 3. Waiting until you land. The 90 days before you move are free. Use them.
 4. Treating coffee dates as friendship tests. They're not. They're introductions. Friendship comes from the fifth, tenth, fifteenth interaction — not the first.
 5. Performing “happy expat” online. Be a real person. Your honesty is what attracts the people you actually want.
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What comes next

This guide covers the first 90 days of the community-building piece. It doesn't cover the visa, the finances, the taxes, the housing, the healthcare, or the timeline for the rest of the move.

If you want the complete framework — everything I wish I'd known before I left — that's what my **Move Abroad Masterclass** covers. It's the full pre-move playbook, structured the same way this guide is. [Link below.](#)

If you want to keep hearing from me for free, my **Substack** goes out weekly. It covers the stuff that doesn't fit on YouTube — the messier, more honest version of what this life actually looks like.

And if you ever want to sit down together and map out your specific situation, I take on a small number of **1:1 consulting clients**. Also linked below.

Your next 3 steps

Today. Pick your destination city. If you haven't narrowed it down, pick your top two contenders and do the plan for both.

This week. Complete the Phase 1 foundation. Map your three axes. Join your 8–12 groups.

Next Sunday. Watch my video “Making Friends in a New Country at 55+” on YouTube. This guide is the behind-the-scenes companion — the video has stories and context this document doesn't.

Links

- [YouTube](#)
- [Substack](#) (free weekly newsletter)
- The [Over 50 Readiness Check](#) PDF
- The [Tuesday Test](#) PDF
- The 6-Question [Country Filter PDF](#) or [Fill-In Online Version](#)
- [Move Abroad Masterclass](#)
- [1:1 Consulting](#)

This guide is free to share with anyone who needs it. The best thing you can do for me in return is this: when you land, remember that someone else is 90 days behind you

right now, sitting on their couch in the US wondering if they're crazy for considering this. Tell them. That's how this works.

— Kimberly Anne

Porto, Portugal