

Start Making Friends Abroad — *One Small Moment at a Time*

Your 3-Step Connection Guide

Step 1 · BE

Step 2 · DO

Step 3 · HAVE

WELCOME

Hello, hello my lovely people, I'm *Susana*

If you've moved abroad and thought... "Why is making friends so hard?" — you're not alone.

And no, it doesn't mean you're awkward, boring, or "bad at socialising." It usually means you're trying to do it with too much pressure... and not enough structure.

"You don't need to become someone else. You just need a simple, repeatable way to show up as yourself — and let connection grow naturally."

This little guide will help you:

- ◆ Feel calmer about making friends abroad
- ◆ Know what to do — step by step
- ◆ Know what to say — without overthinking
- ◆ Start building your first real connections in a simple, low-pressure way

SELF ASSESSMENT

Before we start — answer these short questions so you are clear on your starting point.

WHAT DO I WANT MOST FROM THIS GUIDE?

Write freely...

Right now, making friends abroad feels mostly like:

- easy awkward heavy confusing lonely hopeful

What is stopping me the most right now?

- time language confidence fear of rejection not knowing what to say
 tired / overwhelmed

WHAT HAVE I ALREADY TRIED?

The *waiting mindset* — and why it keeps you stuck

Most expat women — especially expat mums and spouses — start from what I call the **waiting mindset**. It usually sounds like this:

"Once I have friends here, I'll finally have someone to grab a coffee with."

"When I have friends, I'll feel like myself again."

"I miss feeling normal. Like I belong somewhere."

Does this sound familiar? Yes A little Not really

Here's the core mindset shift — shown side by side so you can really see the difference:

✗ THE OLD WAY

HAVE → DO → BE

Wait until you *have* friends... then you'll *do* social things... then you'll finally *be* confident and connected.

This creates waiting, pressure and frustration — because you're putting the result first.

✓ THE NEW WAY

BE → DO → HAVE

First *be* the open, curious woman you're choosing to become... then *do* small actions from that place... then *have* real friendships grow.

This creates momentum, ease and real connection — starting today.

🌱 WHY MINDFULNESS MATTERS HERE

Knowing you *should* be open is easy. Actually *being* open in the moment — when your heart is beating fast and your mind goes blank — is where most of us struggle. Mindfulness is the bridge between knowing and being. It's what helps you choose your new identity in real time, rather than just in theory.

Who do you want to *BE* here?

Not what you want to do. Not what you want to have. Who you want to become.

You didn't just move countries. You arrived somewhere new with no one watching, no old role to step into, no history to fall back on. That can feel terrifying. But it's also a **rare and beautiful invitation** — to choose, on purpose, who you want to be here.

"The woman I am becoming doesn't have to be the same woman who got on that plane. She gets to be chosen."

Don't think too hard. Write what feels true — or what you *wish* felt true. That wish is already the beginning.

Quality 1

I AM CHOOSING TO BE...

One word or short phrase...

What does this quality feel like in your body? How does she walk into a room?

She feels... she walks in and...

open curious warm present brave grounded

Quality 2

I AM CHOOSING TO BE...

One word or short phrase...

Where do you already show a little of this? (Even a tiny moment counts.)

I already show this when I...

adaptable gentle with myself adventurous calm playful

Quality 3

I AM CHOOSING TO BE...

One word or short phrase...

If she were making friends this week, what's the first small thing she would do?

She would... and she wouldn't worry about...

connected enough resilient joyful free seen

What "BE open" looks like in real life

Choose to be open, curious & courageous — one tiny moment at a time

It's not about being louder, more interesting, or more outgoing. You don't need to become someone else. You just need a simple, repeatable way to show up as yourself — and let connection grow naturally.

SMALL THINGS THAT OPEN BIG DOORS

- Smiling first at another mum at pick-up time — it quietly opens the door to a conversation
- Saying "Hi" even if it feels awkward — yes, after the smile
- Staying 2 minutes longer — just to give yourself space to ask one question
- Going back to the *same* place again — pick-up, your morning café, a weekly class

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE — 60 SECONDS BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

- Take one slow breath in. Feel your feet on the ground.
- Picture the woman you described on the previous page — open, curious, warm.
- Step into her. Exhale slowly. Bring that feeling with you into the room.

You don't need to wait until you *have* friends to be her. You can be her right now.

Now it's your turn. Choose one little mindset shift for today:

Today, I choose to BE more:

open curious courageous calm gentle with myself present a good listener

OR WRITE YOUR OWN:

Today I choose to be...

Choose activities that feel *familiar* and comfortable

When you go somewhere that already fits you, connection can happen naturally

You don't need to choose the "perfect" activity. You just need something you can **repeat**. Because familiarity creates the environment where friendships grow.

MOVE & BODY

Walking · Yoga · Pilates · Running · Dance

FOOD & EVERYDAY LIFE

Coffee · Brunch · Cooking · Baking · Markets

LANGUAGE & LEARNING

Language exchange · Book club · Courses · Talks

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

School activities · Playdates · Volunteering

CREATIVE & CALM

Photography · Writing · Art · Journaling · Crafts

◆ THE RULE

Choose what feels *lightest* and most doable weekly — not what sounds impressive.

Circle 3 activities you enjoy or feel curious about. Then choose **one** you can repeat for the next 2 weeks.

MY ANCHOR ACTIVITY PLAN

MY 1 ANCHOR ACTIVITY FOR THE NEXT 2 WEEKS:

WHERE WILL I DO IT?

WHEN? (DAY / TIME)

Simple sentences you can *repeat*

You don't need perfect language. You just need a few real sentences that feel like you.

Many expat women don't struggle because they don't want friends — they struggle because in the moment, their mind goes blank. So let's remove the pressure. When you already know what to say, your body relaxes and connection becomes possible.

MINDFULNESS IN THE MOMENT

When you feel awkward, pause for 2 seconds. Feel your breath. Remember: you're not trying to impress anyone. You're just being open and curious. That's it. That's the whole job.

MOVE & BODY

"Okay... I'm just going to the class. That's it. I'll just smile at the person next to me."

→ "Have you been coming here long?" / "That was harder than I expected!" 😊

FOOD & EVERYDAY LIFE

"Same place. Familiar face. If I see that woman again, I can just say..."

→ "I think we keep coming here at the same time." / "Do you have a simple recipe for this?"

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

"We're all standing here anyway. I don't need to be interesting. I can just be kind."

→ "How's your child finding it?" / "Hi." (That's it. That's where it starts.)

UNIVERSAL THOUGHT (FOR ANY MOMENT)

"I don't need to find my best friend today. I just need one small moment of connection."

→ "Everyone else looks confident... but maybe they're hoping someone talks to them too."

REWRITE ONE OPENER IN YOUR OWN STYLE (WARMER / FUNNIER / CALMER — WHATEVER FEELS LIKE YOU):

My 'me-style' sentence starter...

Follow-up questions to *stay open* a little longer

These aren't about being impressive. They're gentle reminders to stay curious.

You've said the first sentence. You smiled. You asked the question. That already counts. Now comes the small pause — the moment where you decide whether to keep going or quietly retreat. These follow-up phrases are for that space.

MOVE & BODY

"Okay, she answered. Don't panic. I can just ask one more thing."

→ "Do you come every week?" / "Same time next week?" (*planting a seed — no pressure*)

FOOD & EVERYDAY LIFE

"She seems nice. I can keep this light."

→ "I'm still figuring out the area — have you lived here long?" / "I usually come on Tuesdays."

LANGUAGE & LEARNING

"She's talking about her move. I can relate. I don't have to pretend it's all amazing."

→ "I found the first few months harder than I expected." / "Are you coming next week?"

FAMILY & COMMUNITY

"Our kids are in the same class. That's already something."

→ "Maybe we could exchange numbers in case there's homework confusion." (*practical — no pressure*)

"I don't need to secure a friendship right now. I just need to leave this interaction feeling a tiny bit braver than before."

YOUR FOLLOW-UP LINE (REWRITE IN YOUR OWN STYLE):

If the conversation flows, I can say...

Simple, light, and *completely doable*

For the next 7 days, you're not trying to "make friends." You're practising tiny connection moments.

Think of it like this: you're building comfort and familiarity — becoming a familiar face. And that is how friendships start. Pick **1 small action each day**. You can repeat the same one — that counts!

- Smile + say "Hi" to one person

- Ask one simple question

- Stay 2 minutes longer after the class / event

- Go back to the same place again

- Send one tiny message: "Coffee sometime?"

MY PLAN FOR THE WEEK

MY 1 PLACE:

MY 1 MOMENT (WHEN I'LL DO IT):

MY 1 SENTENCE (WHAT I'LL SAY):

WHEN YOU FEEL NERVOUS — PAUSE FOR 30 SECONDS

- Take a deep breath in. Let your shoulders drop.
- Exhale slowly — yes, actually make the sound if it helps.
- Smile. One more breath. Soften your neck. You're ready.

You're not doing this to be perfect. You're doing this to feel more comfortable. One place. One person. One small moment at a time.

And now you have a process you can *repeat* — in any country, any city, any moment

1 BE

Choose how you want to show up — open, calm, curious, courageous. This is your new identity, chosen on purpose. Use your 60-second mindfulness pause before you walk in.

2 DO

Take one small action that feels simple and doable for you — a smile, a question, staying 2 extra minutes. Repeat it. Familiarity is the soil where friendship grows.

3 HAVE

Let familiar faces slowly become real connections. That's the magic: *slowly*. Friendship isn't something you rush. It's something you build — one person, one moment at a time.

"You can belong without performing. You can connect without forcing.

You can make friends by simply being you."

— A GENTLE REMINDER, ALWAYS

"You're not missing your chance. Your people will come — one connection at a time."

This guide gave you the first steps. But what if the steps *aren't the problem?*

If you've tried the tactics and still feel stuck — that's an *identity conversation*.

Sometimes the issue isn't knowing what to say. It's the quiet voice underneath that whispers: "*I don't fit here. I've lost myself. I'm not sure who I am in this country.*"

That's not a tactics problem. That's an identity and mindset conversation. And that's exactly where coaching starts.



You've tried the activities, the smiling, the small talk — and it still feels **forced or exhausting**



You feel like you left the real **you** behind at the airport — and you're not sure how to get her back



You want more than surface-level connections. You want someone who **really gets you**

✦ READY TO GO DEEPER?

If any of these feel true, I'd love to invite you to a free 30-minute **Visionary Call** with me. This isn't a sales call. It's a real conversation — just the two of us — where we look at where you are right now, identify what's truly holding you back, and I give you your first 3 personalised steps forward.

No pressure. No pitch. Just clarity — and a little warmth from someone who truly gets what you're going through.

Book a free 30-min Visionary Call

We'll look at where you are, identify your biggest gap, and I'll give you your first 3 personalised steps — no pressure, no pitch.

[BOOK HERE →](#)

You made it to the end ❤️

Let's stay connected

Thank you for taking the time to go through this guide. Keep practising every day with these simple steps — and your first real connections abroad will come.

Remember: you don't have to navigate expat life alone.



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With warmth from Yokohama,

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