

PACKING TIPS

- Above all else, **pack lightly**. You'll be lifting your bag out of the trunk of the car, through the airport, off the luggage carousel, to the train station, to the bus stop, onto the bus, off the bus, back a few kilometers because you missed your stop, up six flights of stairs, and onto the dresser. If you can't carry your luggage around the block three times, you're taking too much.
- Choose luggage that's sturdy, on wheels (2" diameter or larger to navigate curbs and cobblestones), and portable (even into a bathroom stall). If on the move, use a backpack instead, especially one with an internal frame, padded belt and shoulder straps, and side pockets.
- Find out your airline's luggage limits (dimensions and weight) and if there is a fee for oversized or overweight baggage. Baggage limits on the major carriers vary by destination, so check with your carrier(s) before finishing your packing.
- Check the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov just prior to departure to find out what items are allowed in your carry-on bags.

What do I pack? (See packing list on next page)

Don't forget

- A **day pack** to hold maps, phrase books, guidebooks, water bottles, sunglasses, etc.
- A **neck wallet or money belt** is recommended, regardless of where you're going or how you're getting there.

Clothing

- **Pack** enough underwear for 7-10 days.
- If it's an **extended trip**, pick one color scheme and stick with it. Black travels very well.
- Plan on **bad weather**; specifically, plan on colder and wetter weather than you'd expect, or, in the tropics, hotter than you'd expect. Ask yourself: what would I put over/under this outfit if it gets cold/starts to rain?

Luggage

- What you carry needn't be expensive, but ask yourself: Will I be carrying my luggage a lot (**big backpack**), or am I staying in one place for a long time (**suitcase**)?
- Could my luggage withstand a lot of **rough treatment**? Are the straps/handles strong enough? Will the zippers hold?
- Does all my luggage **lock** (to discourage theft)? If not, buy a lock or locking strap.
- Can TSA easily search and reclose my luggage?
- Does any of my luggage have **wheels**? Wheels smaller than 2" diameter are bound to snap off at the first cobblestone or curb. A suitcase with big wheels or a sturdy folding luggage cart with big wheels can really help the suitcase traveler.
- Label your luggage outside and inside with your name and address, in case the tag is torn off. Attach distinctive ribbons or yarn to luggage. Everyone has black!

Other packing tips

- Research **culturally appropriate clothing** (for religious sites, discos, conservative Muslim countries, etc.), as some places may not let you in with immodest dress. In some Asian countries, shoes are removed at the door and must be easy to slip on and off.
- Take **nothing you'd be sorry to lose** (except your camera), as it is easier to lose things while traveling than in everyday life.
- A **tiny flashlight** comes in handy.
- Put a copy of your itinerary in each bag.

Electricity and appliances

- Appliances such as hairdryers run on a certain voltage of electrical current. There are two standard voltages in the world: 110 (used in the U.S.) and 220. An appliance designed for 110 V (voltage) cannot run on 220 V without a **converter** (or may run for a while and then burn up). In addition, plug-in (outlet) types vary the world over and require an **adapter**. If you must take an appliance, be sure to take the proper converter and adapters. If you will be abroad for a while, consider buying the necessary appliances abroad. Better yet, consider living without your appliances altogether.

Packing valuables

- Do not bring valuables unless absolutely necessary.
- Carry passport, cash, credit cards, and other important documents on your body in a neck pouch or money belt. Pack photocopies of important documents in one place and never pack them in checked luggage.

- Photocopy valuable documents such as passport, visa, credit cards, prescriptions, driver's license, etc., and keep copies in your bags and separate from the originals. Leave a copy at home with your parents, too.
- Pack prescription medications in your carry-on, in case your checked luggage is lost (see "Health" section of this handbook).

How to pack

- Stuff socks and underwear in plastic bags and then stuff the bags in shoes.
- Roll your clothes to take up less space.
- Pack largest items first (clothes, shoes, toiletry bag), then tuck smaller items in between.
- Bring toiletries in plastic bottles, not glass (lighter and unbreakable).
- Carry toiletries in a plastic bag in case they leak.
- Consider buying toiletries abroad unless your trip is short or you need certain kinds (e.g., plastic applicator tampons, specific brand of contact lens solution).

For the traveler on the move (i.e., backpacking):

- Bring half of what you think you'll use. You only need three of anything (including underwear): "One to wash, one to wear, one to spare" —Clay Leitch.
- Prepare to wash clothes in the sink and hang dry (bring sink stopper, laundry soap, and clothesline with suction cups). Bring a thin towel (one that will dry quickly).
- Rethink grooming: get short haircut, grow out leg or facial hair, leave your nail polish at home.
- Choose a backpack carefully, as it will determine the number of miles you are willing to walk to find cheap or clean housing or to see the sights.
- Bring an old sheet for hostels in case required.
- Bring flip-flops or Crocs for nasty showers and cheap and easy beachwear.