

# PACKING TIPS



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## PACKING

The best packing tip I can give is to anticipate your needs and don't pack anything that you don't need. Most of us tend to overpack and still forget something that would have made life much easier. Here are few things that can come in handy on almost every trip that most people don't think of:

- Zip Lock bags - large and small - for muddy shoes, wet bathing suits, keeping things dry in your pocket or bag and for food.
- A taste of home. Bring something homecooked.
- Guidebooks, maps and/or phrase-book.
- Headphone or earbuds.
- Emails you have been putting off—for long plane rides.
- Charger for each piece of technology and/or extra batteries.
- Insurance policy or coverage page.

### Plan Your Packing

The first thing is checking the baggage allowance for your flights or cruise. With most airlines, you will be allowed one carry-on bag (sizes vary by carrier) and one personal item (purse, small backpack or laptop bag) without having to check any bags or pay any fees. This is not always the case with the budget airlines, so make sure you check. Cruise lines usually let you carry on whatever you can actually carry yourself. No matter how you are traveling, always check before you start packing. Checked bags often have a fee per bag and a limit of 50 pounds each (sometimes more weight is allowed for an additional fee).

**Carry On Bags:** For most carriers, there is no charge for carry on bags, and the size limits are usually 20-24-inches. You can fit a lot into a bag that size. Remember you can also carry a personal item. This has to be small enough to fit under the seat in front of you on the plane. This is the bag you will want to keep your items for the flights and anything that you couldn't cram into your carry on.

Whenever possible, try to fit everything you need into your carry-on luggage. This is usually manageable for short trips or trips to warm climates. Not only will you save money and time, but you don't risk lost, stolen or delayed baggage. There is also a much lower risk of damaged items.

**Travel Documents:** Print out all of your boarding passes, confirmations and vouchers ahead of time and check in online whenever possible. This saves time and helps get preferred seating or times. Before you leave your house, verify all flight times and expected weather along the path of your travel. Verify that you have any forms if ID required, passport, visas, etc. These should be in a secure compartment of your carry on with your boarding documents.

**For the Plane:** This is something many people forget to plan for. The longer your flights or layovers, the more important it is to have some comforts and things to entertain you. If traveling with children, it is also very important to plan ahead:

- Make sure all electronics are fully charged before leaving.
- Make sure you have chargers for each device in your carry-on in case you are delayed at the airport.
- Small (or inflatable) pillow and a small blanket.
- Handheld video game or media player.
- Even if every seat has a TV, you will need headphones or earbuds, and any game or media player should be used with headphones.
- Pen and hotel information to fill out immigration forms.
- Snacks. Not all flights offer snacks and it can get expensive if they do. Drinks are not allowed in your carry-on, but snacks are.

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- Prescription medication (in carry-on)
- A good quality camera with extra batteries, charger and memory card.
- Download movies, shows and music onto your laptop.
- My card or contact information.
- Lots of sunscreen - if flying, make sure you purchase 3.4 oz sizes or smaller and bring extra. It is a lot more expensive in the sunny vacation destinations and gift shops.
- Get a TSA-approved combination lock for your checked bags and any lock for carry-on bags in your room.
- Sunglasses—so often forgotten.
- Cruising with a lot of small items? Bring an over-the-door shoe bag to use for shoes, toiletries and other small items.
- Low-tech entertainment—books and magazines.
- Inflatable water toys or floats.
- White noise maker.
- Extension cord.

## Pack Like a Pro

**Minimize:** Don't pack anything you don't need and prepare to bring home more than you left with. It is usually a good idea to pack an empty backpack or foldable tote to carry back anything purchased on vacation in. A tote bag can also be useful for carrying items during your excursions or to the beach.

**Formal-Wear:** Limit formal-wear to what you need, because it is bulky and usually not required. Even formal restaurants on cruise ships or at resorts usually only require business casual or "resort casual" (verify requirements before packing).

**Don't Duplicate Amenities:** At a minimum, you will be provided soap, shampoo, conditioner (usually body lotion), towels (even for the pool, beach and excursions) and a hair dryer. Unless you have a skin condition, don't waste space packing things that will be provided for you.

**Tight-Roll Clothing:** Rolling your clothes will save space and usually cuts down on wrinkles. If you do not have an iron and ironing board in your room, ask for one if needed.

**Traveling with Children:** Consider bringing a thermometer and children's meds (Tylenol, Pedialyte, etc.) so you can handle minor colds and fevers on your own. Pack extra wipes to clean face and hands on the go and make sure you pack sunscreen for them. Also be sure to have signed consent forms if both parents are not traveling with a minor. Children's clothes take less space, so use the extra space in their carry-on for your items.

**Prescriptions:** Carry all necessary prescriptions in your carry on, in case your checked luggage is lost or delayed. All medicine must be in its original prescription bottles with the label on it (showing your name). Be sure to bring enough for a few extra days, just in case of a serious delay.

**Prepare for inclement weather:** Even in warm climates, you will want a sweater/sweatshirt for cool evenings or windy days. It is best to have options for layers, rather than bring anything bulky. A light raincoat or water-resistant breaker is a good idea as well. I don't pack an umbrella, but some people recommend it. I pack a light jacket with a hood. For cool climates or Alaska cruises, consider bringing hat and gloves along with layering options.

**Shoes:** Plan to wear the bulkiest of your footwear while traveling to and from your destination to save space in your bags. Try to coordinate outfits so you only need one pair of dress shoes (if any at all). For men and women, I suggest one pair of comfy sandals and one style of footwear that is multi-purpose (think boat shoes for men and a nice pair of flats for women).

**First-Timers?** If this is your first cruise or resort vacation and you aren't sure what to wear, let me know and I will give you more detail.