

# 14 Best Travel Packing Tips

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Going on vacation is *the best*. Not so fun? Trying to cram your cutest outfits into your suitcase. Indeed, the anxiety of figuring out what to pack (and how to make it all a fit) can put bit of a damper on your pre-getaway excitement.

To the rescue: These savvy packing tips from the Good Housekeeping Institute's travel experts. Whether you're someone who starts packing a week ahead of time or waits until the last minute, these hacks will ensure that your favorite travel dress doesn't get wrinkled and you have plenty of room for souvenirs.

Keep reading to learn how to pack faster and smarter — without the stress.

## 1. Roll clothes and pack them first.

The best way to prevent creases and make the most of your space is to use the roll method. Lay tops facedown, fold in the sleeves and roll from the bottom up. For pants, put the legs together and roll from the waist down. Once you've rolled everything, place pants and tops in your suitcase before walking shoes and accessories; then, fit in other oddly shaped items, like hair tools.

## 2. Choose travel-friendly fabrics.

We always recommend opting for knits and stretchy fabrics while traveling. Even when these fabrics wrinkle, the creases will fall out when you hang them up. Woven fabrics (like linen or cotton twill) are more prone to wrinkling.

## 3. Pack the first outfit you'll want to wear on top.

If you know you're getting off the plane and going straight to dinner or a meeting, plan your outfit and put it into your suitcase last. That way, when you arrive, you won't have to dig through everything else to find it (plus, it will be less likely to wrinkle). This strategy is a great excuse to think about what you'll wear in advance, so you don't make one of the biggest packing mistakes: waiting until the last minute to pack.

## 4. Place heavy items at the base.

Keep weightier things like shoes and books by the wheeled end of your suitcase. This placement helps your bag stay stable when upright and stops other items from getting smushed.

## 5. Layer plastic dry cleaning bags between clothes.

The next time you pick up your dry cleaning, save the plastic bags. You can use them to protect delicate items from accidental pulls by layering them between your clothes. They help your clothing slide (not snag) when your bag gets jostled (and they help reduce wrinkling!).

## 6. Use packing cubes.

These blocks keep your suitcase organized and stack together easily — no more trying to fit in oddly shaped items like a puzzle. Plus, the best packing cubes are lightweight and thin so you won't lose any precious suitcase space.

## 7. Avoid over- or under-packing.

While you might be tempted to leave space for souvenirs, extra room means items can shift and crumple or break. Fill empty spaces with dry cleaner bags (and fill them later with mementos from your trip). It's important not to over-pack either (especially if you're only bringing a carry-on), since that's a surefire way to create crease marks and can make it extra tricky to repack when you're going home — or heading off to another spot.

## 8. Get an extra tote for souvenirs.

You're going to want to shop so bring a foldable tote bag or travel backpack. It won't take up much space on the way to your destination (many fold into a small pouch!) and you can fill it with (almost) anything you buy on your travels.

## 9. Take a mini-iron.

Despite your best packing efforts, some wrinkles and creases are inevitable. That's where a pint-size steam iron or garment steamer comes in. Most are under two pounds, meaning they take up very little space and are perfect for quick touch-ups anywhere — just don't expect it to de-wrinkle a full garment in record time.

## 10. Bring two small laundry bags.

Use one for lights and one for darks. If you forget, grab plastic bags from your hotel room's closet. When you get home, throw the presorted loads in the wash. Other must-haves: two-gallon resealable bags for wet bathing suits and an instant stain remover like Shout Wipe & Go.

## 11. Organize your liquids bags.

You know the drill: Stash any liquids you want to keep in your carry-on bag in a separate, clear bag so you can easily pass through security. Our must-haves: a do-it-all hydrating balm, cleansing wipes for your face or hands (or the seat) and a lightly scented hand sanitizer. Not sure which liquids you can bring on the plane? Remember TSA's 3-1-1 liquids rule: Products must be 3.4 ounces or less and they all must fit in a one quart-size bag.

## 12. Keep important medications in your purse.

Even if you plan to carry on your bag, there's still a risk you could have to check it at the gate. If your meds are in your purse, you'll have what you need even if the overhead bin space fills up and you end up having to check your bag.

## 13. Bring a scarf for the plane in your carry-on.

No matter what season it is, planes are often on the chilly side. Bring a pretty, warm wrap that you can bundle up in if the temp doesn't feel comfortable. Bonus: You can also fold it and use it as a pillow.

#### 14. Carry a reusable water bottle.

As long as it's empty, it's okay to bring a water bottle through airport security. Once you're inside the terminal, fill it up at an airport cafe or water station. You'll stay hydrated, and it's greener than having to buy plastic water bottles while sightseeing.