

# PACKING LIGHT

*The Normal Person's Guide to  
Carry-On-Only Travel*

FRED PERROTTA

*Tortuga Backpacks LLC*

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## INTRODUCTION

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I started out traveling just like you probably did, weighed down by a comical amount of luggage. Maybe you're still there.

Don't worry, you're in the right place. We can help.

My first real backpacking trip (and first time outside of North America) was in 2009, with my childhood friend Jeremy Michael Cohen. Before then, I had never traveled farther outside of the US than Niagara Falls, half of which is in the US. Despite hours of pre-trip research, I had no idea what I was doing.

I bought the wrong bag, brought the wrong stuff, and made every possible rookie mistake. The beauty of travel is that my mistakes were vastly outweighed by all the good stuff about the trip. Those two weeks in Europe were phenomenal; they changed my life. My luggage was, literally, a drag. I was lugging far too much stuff around Europe. But I was lugging it to Prague, to Budapest, and to Hvar, a beautiful island off the Croatian coast.

Still, my luggage was a needless hassle throughout the trip, and I was at fault. Like many travelers, I set out

on my trip with everything that I might need. A quarter of the stuff in my pack went unused because I guessed wrong. Remember, this was my first international trip. My packing was mostly guessing. I carried enough essentials, like socks and underwear, to make it though the entire 14-day trip without doing laundry. I brought a thick-soled, heavy pair of men's dress shoes. In short, I did a terrible job of packing.

My huge backpack might have looked helpful in carrying all that stuff, but the bag was part of the problem. With 65 liters to fill, I started finding things that I could bring. "Well, there's room. Might as well throw it in!" Sounds almost smart, doesn't it? It's not. "Might as well bring it," really means, "Might as well carry this on my back for two weeks." Doesn't sound so smart now, does it?

The punishment for overpacking could have been worse. Since my bag was so big, I had to check it on my flights from San Francisco to Frankfurt and back with a layover each way. I got lucky. My bag didn't get lost. It even came out of the baggage carousel pretty quickly. Even better, this was 2009, before checked baggage fees were ubiquitous. I didn't have to pay for my bag. Now, the same bag would cost \$50 or more to check roundtrip.

I learned my lesson. I brought far too much for a two-week trip. Jeremy had it even worse. He carried a similar load by *one shoulder strap* because his other one broke the day we landed in Frankfurt.

Why do we pack too much stuff, even after we've learned how inconvenient, expensive, and wasteful it is?

Fear.

Traveling somewhere for the first time is new and exciting and intimidating and scary. We're afraid we won't be prepared. We're afraid we won't have everything we need. We're afraid something bad will happen. Here's the thing: you aren't fully prepared. You will forget something.

Does your imperfect preparation matter? No! You will be okay. You can get toothpaste in Italy. They have plenty. You can get whatever you need wherever you go. Accept that you are not prepared. Then you can begin to embrace the adventure ahead. The adventure of visiting a drugstore in a country where you don't speak the language. The adventure of clothes shopping where the sizes aren't what you expected. The adventure of buying food based on the picture with no idea what that food is.

Making that leap of faith is scary, especially the first time. But the benefits are huge. "Let go and jump," sounds easy enough, until you're hanging out the door of the plane with your hand on your parachute.

This book was written to help you bridge the gap from understanding the advantages of packing light (and the disadvantages of overpacking) to figuring out how to do it, regardless of who you are or where you're going.

After reading this book, you will know what to bring and how to pack it.

When Jeremy and I founded Tortuga Backpacks, we weren't any better at packing than anyone else. By starting a backpack company, we became the de-facto

experts for friends and family and (soon thereafter) total strangers. The longer we ran the company, the more we learned and the more questions we got. Rather than answering the same questions over and over face-to-face or by email, we started writing our answers publicly for everyone to see. Those answers evolved into our blog, Packsmith. Now Packsmith has evolved into this book. Blogs can be big, messy, and hard to navigate, especially when you discover a new one with hundreds of posts already published. We wrote this book in collaboration with the rest of the Packsmith team to organize the questions we've been asked and the answers that we've given.

We hope it can be your packing handbook, whether you're a newbie considering packing less, or an expert looking for a few new tricks to pare down your load. We'll walk you through the process, step-by-step.

You'll see that this book is arranged in an "escalating" order. First, in Chapter 1, Laura Lopuch will address the first and largest question: Why? If you don't believe that packing light has any benefits, the rest of the book is meaningless to you.

Later in Chapter 1, you'll learn the basics, beginning with choosing your bag, which is, perhaps, the most important step. Then we'll introduce you to some basic principles and the parameters, including the rules for carry on luggage and liquids, what to wear vs. what to pack, as well as why the colors and fabrics you choose matter.

Then, we'll move on to specific use cases. Choose and read the chapters that apply to you or your next trip.



Revisit the rest if, and when, they're applicable. You can use these chapters like a reference book. Skim what's interesting to you now then revisit the relevant chapters before your next trip. You don't need to read the book cover-to-cover. Think of it as a choose-your-own-adventure in packing.

We did our best to make this book as thorough as possible. If we missed anything, contact us through our website to let us know. We'll write a blog post to answer your question and maybe even add it to a future edition of this book. For your free carry on packing list and more packing tips, join our mailing list.

Happy travels,

Fred Perrotta  
Co-Founder, Tortuga Backpacks

## CHAPTER 1.

### CARRY ON BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

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Never buy a backpack/suitcase that is bigger than carry-on size. If your travel pack/suitcase is small, there is no possible way to overpack.

— Adam Seper, Editor, Boots-N-All

*This chapter contains contributions from Laura Lopuch.*

I threw open my closet and surveyed its contents. So many choices, so many options. The number of hangers blew my mind and I was shocked to recognize my excess. My backpack gaped on my bed, clothes hanging out of its open mouth.

In the last two weeks, I had been a *tortuga* — a tortoise carrying its home on its back, wandering through cobblestoned European streets. What I needed, I had. What I didn't have, I did without or figured out an alternative for. My home was limited to four flimsy fabric walls, a limited amount of space and whatever I could carry. Too big, heavy, or bulky? No thanks.

Never had I felt my own excess more keenly than in that moment, the first morning home, when I found

myself confronted by my closet and the vast number of choices it contained. Just one day before, my choices numbered four options: blue, black, striped grey, or purple shirt.

Before this trip, I'd considered myself frugal. I believed I leaned towards minimalism. After, standing in front of a closet that could supply four backpacks' wardrobes, it seemed my perspective was wrong.

### **Or, was it that my mindset had changed?**

Perhaps you've always packed light. Or, perhaps you're a newbie to this game of carry on style travel. Either way, you know a different mindset is required to accomplish minimalist packing. Striking the perfect balance between necessity and perceived necessity is an art form. Maybe, like me, you've gotten home after a long trip and seen your house with new eyes. Your bulging closet shelves stuffed with shoes you hardly wear surprises you. Perhaps you know this feeling of blinders flying off your eyes and seeing your life as it truly is? The feeling of struck-to-the-core truth slapping you?

You embark upon a journey, knapsack full of provisions, the horizon brimming with promised adventure. Somewhere along the way, your path twists in an unexpected direction. You find yourself on the road less taken and return home a new person, thinking new thoughts and seeing the world in fresh light. It is, sometimes, a side effect of packing light. When you live for days, weeks, or months, with a carefully curated collection of items — handpicked for their necessity — you realize how very little you need in life.

“Its all about perspective, that is how you look at things. Your own thoughts and outlook defines whether an experience, event, or situation is good or bad. And your definition determines your response.”

— Stella Payton

Sometimes we need to clear away the clutter and live out of a carry on for a few weeks to figure out what's important. Paring down your physical stuff helps you see what you need, versus what you believed you needed, whether it's a job you should've left long ago, a toxic friend, or simply clearing out old stuff.

### **PACKING LIGHT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

Clutter chains your mind to the past and to your fear. You worry you won't be prepared. You'll miss out by not reading that book. You'll forget where you come from. You won't have an awesome trip if you forget a black skirt. Not true.

Since I've unshackled myself from the fear of being underprepared and the tyranny of packing too much stuff, I feel more alive. I feel like I can go anywhere and even if my well-laid plans crumble to pieces; I can handle it. I feel like I can conquer anything because I lived out of a carry on for three weeks, darn it, and who cares if I forgot my toothbrush because I remembered my glasses and that's what's important.

“Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra colors. And the people there see you differently, too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving.”

— Terry Pratchett

I am confident because stuff doesn't make me. I make myself.

Let's be honest, isn't that what travel is about?

Travel plucks us out of the worn routines of our lives and plops us down into a new culture, language, or city, and lets us figure life out. It strips the excess away and melts us down to our core. It teaches us that stuff doesn't make us happy — only experiences and being present do that.

## **FIRST STEPS TO PACKING LIGHT**

The first step to mastering carry-on-only packing is to know the rules. There is nothing more frustrating than being forced to check what you thought was a carry-on-sized bag because you were unaware of the nuances of a particular airline's ever changing policies.

Carry on luggage allowances differ by airline. Assume nothing. Check your airline's rules before flying. Just Google "[airline] carry on luggage" or "[airline] hand luggage," and you'll be directed to your airline's particular restrictions. Always use the measurements from your airline's website. Those measurements will be the most accurate. Be wary of third-party sites that aggregate information for multiple airlines as their measurements may be inaccurate or outdated.

## **CHOOSING YOUR BAG**

### **SIZE MATTERS**

The size of your carry on luggage is non-negotiable. If your bag does not fit within the dimensions stated by the airline, you'll be forced to check it. The most commonly

allowed size for carry on luggage is 45 linear inches (length + width + height). Some airlines allow larger bags, but forty-five inches is a reliable baseline to use. Get out your tape measurer and check your bag.

Airlines that give measurements by dimension typically allow bags up to 22 x 14 x 9 inches. Some airlines allow bags that are larger in one or more dimensions, but this configuration will meet the guidelines for most major airlines. We used these measurements to maximize packing space in the Tortuga Travel Backpack while still keeping it carry-on-eligible on most airlines.

Budget airlines, like Ryanair, are the most common exceptions to these norms. Cheaper airlines are often more strict with luggage size rules.

**Check your favorite airline's rules before buying new luggage.**

In addition to your carry on luggage, most airlines also allow one personal item, like a purse or laptop bag. Your personal item must fit under the seat in front of you.

Very few airlines publish size rules for personal items. United's new baggage policy allows items up to 17 x 10 x 9 inches. If your airline doesn't have specific size limits, use United's rules as a guide to determine if your personal item will fit under the seat.

## CARRY LIGHTWEIGHT LUGGAGE

Don't forget your bag's weight. Before you pack anything, you're already carrying a few pounds.

Carry a bag that weighs 20% or less of your airline's weight limit. Look for backpacks that weigh 3.0-4.5 pounds (1.4-2.0 kgs) at the most. Lighter is better as long as you aren't sacrificing quality and durability. This rule will exclude most wheeled luggage. The plastic wheels and handles use up too much of your weight allowance. Wheeled, hybrid backpacks are lighter than suitcases but still weigh 4.5-8.5 lbs (2-4 kg).

You would be wasting up to 40% of your carry on weight allowance just on your bag. Good luck packing it for more than a day or two without tipping the scales.

## **WEIGHT MATTERS, TOO**

As long as everything fits in a carry on, you're good. Right? Not necessarily.

Everyone knows about carry on size limits. But airlines have carry on weight limits too. You can easily overstuff a carry-on-sized bag. The weight of a laptop, book, and an extra pair of shoes adds up quickly.

Airlines' carry on weight rules vary even more than their size rules do. Air China allows carry on bags up to 11 lbs, while Frontier Airlines allows bags up to 35 lbs. Some airlines allow carry on bags weighing up to fifty pounds. Even if you're allowed to carry 50 pounds, you probably shouldn't do it. Lugging that much weight around defeats the purpose of packing light. Instead, aim for the low-end of allowed weight: 18-25 pounds (8-11 kgs).

Some budget, European, and Asian airlines only allow carry on bags up to 15 pounds (7 kgs).

Make sure to check with your airline before flying. A \$20 electronic luggage scale will pay for itself by helping you avoid fees for overweight luggage.

If you can pack light, do it.

My best unorthodox advice for traveling light is to not take a bag.

— Rolf Potts, Author of *Vagabonding*

## DISTRIBUTE WEIGHT IN YOUR PERSONAL ITEM

Most airlines don't publish specific rules for your personal item, the extra bag that you're allowed to carry onto a plane. The most common guideline is that your personal item should fit under the seat in front of you. Your personal item should be a purse, messenger bag, laptop bag, or small daypack. Think "bag" or "pack," not "luggage."

Use your personal item to your advantage. Pack your heavy electronics or books there to keep the weight of your main pack down. Use your main bag for your comparatively light clothes and toiletries. The ticketing and gate agents probably won't weigh your personal item. Use it to do your heavy lifting.

## WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG

Packing is like grammar. You have to know the rules before you can break them. Learn to work within these constraints, then you can start to freestyle.

Packing light is hard. Let's discuss some of our favorite strategies for keeping the weight of your carry on within airline limits.



## INVEST IN A LUGGAGE SCALE

Buy a scale so that you aren't playing luggage roulette. Show up to the airport knowing exactly how much your luggage weighs. Don't wait for the ticketing agent to tell you it's overweight and must be checked.

With a luggage scale, you can weigh your bag as you're packing so you know if you need to make any changes.

I use a \$20 Balanza digital luggage scale. This scale is more expensive but also more accurate than the cheap, analog scales. Buying the scale is cheaper than checking a bag once. A luggage scale will more than pay for itself every time you fly, which makes it a great investment.

## PACK LAYERS, NOT BULK

When traveling in cold weather or across multiple climates, dress in layers. Packing multiple thin layers takes up less space and offers more flexibility than packing bulky items like sweaters and coats. One heavy sweater will eat up so much space in your bag that you'll never fit everything else you need. A merino wool base layer or thermal shirt will keep you warm and can easily be combined with other items or taken off as the weather changes.

Imagine a city with variable, spring, or fall weather. Cool mornings, warm afternoons, and cold nights. Pack for that day. I often wear a t-shirt, base layer, and light jacket when heading out in the morning. As the weather changes, I can remove one or both of the outer layers. When the sun sets, I can put them back on.

**Dressing in thin layers offers this flexibility and keeps your pack light.** Two t-shirts and two base layers can take up even less space than a single sweater.

If traveling in very cold, wintry weather, wear an ultralight down jacket and/or a fleece jacket. Most importantly, don't pack your jacket. Wear it if your whole trip will be cold. Otherwise, pick up a cheap jacket as the weather changes. Then, sell or donate it when you're done.

#### IF IT'S BULKY, WEAR IT

If it's heavy, wear it. Don't pack it. In discussing how women can pack carry-on-only, Brooke Schoenman of Her Packing List said, "*Wear it all at check in.*"

If you need something bulky, like boots or a winter-weight coat, wear them, don't pack them. Wear your heaviest clothes onto the plane, even if you aren't cold. Wear your coat then stash it in the overhead bin. If you pack your coat, it counts against your weight allowance. If you wear your coat, it doesn't.

When wearing the coat on the entire trip is impractical, for instance if the trip includes time in warmer climates, don't bring any coat at all. Pick up a cheap one at Goodwill when you land, then sell or donate it when you leave.

While living in Sydney, Australia, I visited Queenstown, New Zealand for a week at the beginning of ski season. I bought a cheap winter coat before I left for New Zealand, then sold it to a friend when I got back to Sydney. The "rental" was cheap and easy.

Losing a few dollars on the exchange was far preferable to dragging a winter coat from the US to Australia to New Zealand. Even budget travelers should be willing to spend a few dollars to make their lives easier.

Shoes are the most common reason that people don't pack light. Most trips require two pairs of shoes. This hurdle trips up lots of people, men included.

**Here are my simple, no-brainer rules to follow:**

1. Bring no more than two pairs of shoes, including the ones you're wearing.
2. Wear the bulkier pair, typically sneakers or boots.
3. Pack the smaller pair. They must be flat and light. Think sandals, flats, boat shoes, or espadrilles.

Done. You never have to think about how to pack shoes again.

In the next chapter we'll address how to cut weight by swapping out some items and finding multi-use replacements.

**PACK "MUST HAVE," NOT "JUST IN CASE"**

When preparing to travel, lay out all your clothes and all your money. Then take half the clothes and twice the money.

— Susan Heller

Packing light requires sacrifices. You can't bring clothes for every possible situation. You should only bring what you wear on the average day.

Pack with the Pareto Principle, aka the 80/20 Principle,

in mind. Applying the Pareto Principle to packing means that 20% of what you pack will account for 80% of what you wear. Bring your core wardrobe that you wear over-and-over at home. Those clothes will cover more than 80% of the situations you will encounter on the road. For the rest, buy or borrow what you need depending on local prices and your budget. Most of your “what if” scenarios will never happen. Don’t carry around extra physical and mental baggage “just in case.”

You’ll find that some absolute must haves are easier to buy when you land than to carry with you. Toiletries fall into this category. You can find all the basics that you need at your destination. On longer trips, you don’t need to pack extra socks and underwear. Just find a local laundromat or wash-and-fold. Washing clothes is cheaper than checking luggage.

I had a week’s worth of clothes laundered for me in notoriously expensive Hong Kong. The price: \$3.87. Or you could spend \$25 to check a bag and lug around more clothes. Your call.

## PACK FOR ONE WEEK

If you’re traveling for two weeks, or a month, or a year, or permanently, break your packing list down into a more manageable chunk: one week.

Packing for every possible contingency on a long trip is impossible. Instead, pack for one average week. A week is a manageable amount of time. You can easily visualize one week of clothes. A year of clothes would be your

entire closet. If you're traveling for longer than a week or two, you will need to do laundry. Pack accordingly.

On short trips, hand wash your basics like socks, t-shirts, and underwear in the sink between laundry cycles. For longer trips, use a cheap wash-and-fold service or local laundromat.

In many countries, you can save time and money by dropping off your dirty clothes at a cleaning service. Then just pick up a neatly bundled package of your clean clothes the next day. In San Francisco, wash-and-fold costs \$15 for a huge sack of clothes that lasts me two weeks. At that price, I could do laundry three times, which would yield six weeks of clean clothes, for \$45, less than the cost of checking a bag on a roundtrip flight. Most other cities will have cheaper services.

### **Do laundry. It's cheaper than checking a bag.**

Plus, you have all the other benefits of packing light: convenience, flexibility, and less mental and physical burden.

### **COST PER WEAR: THE RIGHT FABRICS**

To pack light for any weather, consider the fabrics that you're wearing. Cotton is a common but poor choice on the road. It's heavy, slow to dry, and doesn't breathe as well as wool.

Wool and synthetic performance fabrics are good investments that will pay for themselves by saving you on checked baggage fees. Wool is ideal because it keeps you warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The

downside is that high-quality wool clothing can be expensive. Merino wool t-shirts can cost \$40-80. Wool socks can cost \$10-15 per pair. Don't think about the total price. Think about the cost per wear.

Cost per wear is how I justify buying expensive jeans. A well-built pair of raw denim jeans are expensive. But I wear them every day, and they're tough as hell. If they rip, I just pay a few dollars to patch them up.

Treat wool clothes as an investment. Save up. Buy a small number of high-quality pieces. Take care of them. A wool t-shirt may be expensive, but you can wear it under anything and wash it as often as you need to on the road. Wool fights off odors much longer than sweat-wicking performance fabrics. Performance fabrics are cheaper than wool. They do a nice job of wicking away sweat but will smell bad if you don't wash them after wearing them. Either invest in wool or be willing to give your synthetic fabrics a quick wash at night if you've been sweating.

We recommend Smartwool, Wigwam, or Darn Tough wool socks. I know. They're just socks. What's the big deal? Why so expensive? Because they feel great, they let your feet breathe, they don't fall down, they fit snugly, they're durable, and they're easy to wash and dry.

We also like ExOfficio and Uniqlo Airism underwear for keeping you dry and eliminating odors. They're also very easy to wash and can dry overnight.

**Break the cycle of cheap, disposable junk. Buy good stuff so you can buy less stuff.**

## SIMPLIFY YOUR COLOR PALETTE

By sticking to a simple color palette, you can maximize the number of outfits for the clothes that you're bringing.

Everything should match. Anything can be worn with anything else. For example, four shirts and four pairs of pants should yield sixteen, not four, outfits. Four tops times four bottoms equals sixteen outfits ( $4 \times 4 = 16$ ).

- Pick a simple color palette and only pack clothes that fit that palette. I wear blues and grays.
- Bring pieces, not complete outfits, to maximize the number of looks that your travel wardrobe can yield.
- Limit hard-to-coordinate colors and patterns to accessories. Wear that printed scarf if it makes you happy.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

Packing light teaches you what truly matters in life by stripping away the excess.

- Check your favorite airline's rules for carry on luggage size and weight before buying new luggage.
- Wear, don't pack, your heaviest and bulkiest clothes.
- Layer your wardrobe.
- Doing laundry is cheaper than checking a bag.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/basics>.

## CHAPTER 2.

### THE DEFINITIVE CARRY ON PACKING LIST

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Choose a color combination for your attire and pack only pieces that match this so that you can mix, match, and layer to create different looks (instead of packing completely separate outfits).

— Jessica Festa, Travel Writer at Jessie on a Journey

As I stood next to the luggage carousel waiting for my bag, I realized the absurdity of the situation. I was in Frankfurt, the first stop of a two-week backpacking trip through Europe. Traveling light. Traveling fast. Staying flexible. We hadn't booked any train tickets or hostels past Germany's financial capital.

Why was I waiting (with fingers crossed) for my backpack? I shouldn't be at the mercy of the airline. I should control my own destiny.

This was my “see the light” moment.

Checking luggage made no sense. Now, years later, baggage fees have become common, and checking luggage makes even less sense. If you're reading this book then you've seen the light too. Whether you've always



packed light or are a recent convert to the carry on club, you're in the right place.

In the Basics chapter, we discussed the general size and weight rules for carry on luggage for the airlines and the general principles to help you make the most of the space you have. In this chapter, you will find a complete carry on packing list with recommendations for some of our favorite products to get you started.

The purpose of this list is to provide an all-purpose, carry-on packing list that anyone can use. By understanding the principles from the last chapter, you can customize the list to fit your needs. Add your own personal flair so that you feel comfortable and confident when you travel.

### **We've broken the list into categories:**

- Paperwork
- Electronics
- Toiletries
- Gear
- Clothes

### **PAPERWORK**

Paperwork is anything and everything that you will need to travel, or will need while on your trip, from your passport to insurance information and travel documents. Not all of these things will necessarily be on actual paper; ensure you'll have access to digital copies and be sure you've made a back up. Below is a basic list.

## PASSPORT

Don't leave home without it. Passport requirements vary by country. To be safe, make sure that your passport is valid for six months beyond the end of your trip.

In the US, the State Department recommends renewing your passport nine months before it expires. Apply for or renew your passport through the State Department's website.

I put my passport on top of my backpack so that I can't forget it. I've been halfway out the door more than once before remembering my passport.

## LOCAL ID

A form of identification from your home country, for example a driver's license, can serve as extra proof of your identity.

## BOARDING PASS

After your passport, your boarding pass is your most important document. Mobile boarding passes are convenient, but make sure that you'll have internet access via your phone if you plan to use one.

## COPY OF YOUR ITINERARY

Some countries won't let you in without a guarantee of when you'll leave. Pack a copy of your complete itinerary, including evidence of when you'll leave the country, to appease border security.

For your own convenience, print out the details of your transportation from the airport to your accommodations

(if you've booked anything), the address of where you're staying (for customs forms and taxi drivers), and confirmation of your visa on arrival (if applicable).

I like to save all of these details in the TripIt smartphone app for my own reference and convenience. Make sure to sync the app before you leave in case you need to reference it while offline.

## COPIES OF YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Make copies of your passport, ID, credit cards, and debit cards. If your passport is stolen, you'll have an easier time getting another one if you have a copy of the information page from your original. If your wallet is stolen, you can reference the copies of your cards to find the phone numbers to call to cancel your cards.

You can scan these items in, or take photos with your phone or tablet instead of, or in addition to, actual paper copies. You should also send a paper or virtual copy of these documents to a trusted friend or family member in case of emergency.

## EXTRA PASSPORT PICTURES

Pack a few extras as some countries, like Vietnam, require passport photos on entry. You can get extra photos taken at drug stores, photography studios, or consulate offices. You shouldn't have to pay more than \$1-2/photo.

## PETTY CASH

Having a few US dollars stashed can come in handy upon re-entry, or if you get into a jam.

## DEBIT CARD WITHOUT ATM FEES

Carry a debit card that won't charge you a fee every time you need cash abroad. Either use a bank in the Global ATM Alliance or get an account, like the Schwab Bank's High Yield Investor Checking Account, that will refund your ATM fees.

## CREDIT CARD WITHOUT FOREIGN TRANSACTION FEES

Make sure that your credit card isn't charging you an extra 3% "foreign transaction fee" and is earning you points or miles.

## ELECTRONICS

You can 'de-materialize' certain objects by replacing them with apps on your phone. The obvious example is the camera, but also think of the travel guide book, maps, the Moleskine, books, magazines, etc.

— Diego Saez-Gil, Co-Founder and CEO of Bluesmart

I've seen huge variance in the electronics that travelers carry. Here are the most common basics.

## UNLOCKED SMARTPHONE WITH LOCAL SIM

Carrying an unlocked smartphone will enable you to swap in cheap, local SIM cards in most countries. Buy the SIM card at your destination for low cost voice, SMS, and data plans. The local approach is simpler and cheaper than using US wireless carriers' roaming plans or relying on WiFi.

## SMARTPHONE CHARGER

My #1 most forgotten item. Even the pros make mistakes.

## EARBUDS

For listening to music or podcasts on long flights and for calling home. I use the Apple earbuds that came with my iPhone. If you don't already have a pair, the Wirecutter has a variety of earbud recommendations depending on your preferences and budget.

## TRAVEL ADAPTER

If you're on a RTW trip, pick one with dongles to fit plugs in any region of the world. You can also buy a set of individual adapters and just carry the one that you'll need in your destination region.

Really, that's all you *need*. Many travelers do with even less. If you're a digital nomad, or plan to work from the road, then you'll also need your computer setup.

## POWER STRIP

Pack a power strip so that you can charge all of your electronics through one outlet, instead of packing multiple adapters.

You could charge your electronics via your computer's USB ports, but this method is slow and limited by the number of ports on your computer.

The Belkin Mini Surge Protector and the Accel Travel Surge Protector are popular options.

## LAPTOP

Apple's Macbook Pro, Macbook Air, or Macbook are the obvious choices. The smaller and lighter, the better. I'm

still lugging around a nearly six-year-old 15" Macbook Pro but will switch to the Air for my next laptop.

Dave, at Too Many Adapters, wrote a helpful guide to choosing a laptop for work and travel, you'll find the link on the appendix page.

#### LAPTOP CHARGER

My least favorite item to pack because it's bulky and awkwardly shaped. My charger is yet another reason to get a new computer.

Here are a few more options depending on your tech needs and preferences:

#### TABLET

For reading or simpler tasks that don't require a laptop. If you're already carrying a phone and laptop, the tablet is a luxury.

#### TABLET CHARGER

More cords!

#### KINDLE

Ideal for readers who will have lots of dead time (flights, train rides, bus rides). I love to read but put off making the leap to Kindle for as long as I could. Then I got tired of lugging around multiple books and decided I would make a concession to using an e-reader but only when traveling.

## TOILETRIES

Unless you're traveling to a remote village with no electricity or running water, purchase all of your toiletries at your destination. Hit up the dollar/euro/pound store when you arrive for hair products, deodorant, toothpaste... everything.

— Jess Dante, Creator of The Abroad Guide

Pare your toiletries down to the essentials to fit everything in your one quart bag.

For carry ons, your liquids and gels must be in 3.4 ounce (or less) bottles. Those bottles must fit into a one quart plastic bag. Each passenger may only carry one such bag, according to TSA regulations.

If space is at a premium, don't pack toiletries. Basic toiletries can be bought at your destination, often for less than you would pay at home. If you buy your toiletries instead of packing them, you don't have to worry about the three ounce bottle rule. You can buy any size you want. Sample sizes of soap, shampoo, and face wash won't last through longer trips anyway. If you don't pack any liquids, you won't have to take your toiletry bag out at security either.

For a less extreme but still minimal approach, pack the bare necessities: a toothbrush, toothpaste, and face wash. These toiletries are just to help you feel human while flying. Buy the rest of your supplies when you land.

If you can't find your favorite brand, want to save money, or want to be more eco-friendly, buy normal-sized toiletries and pour what you need into GoToobs. I use a

three ounce GoToob when I need to pack body wash for short trips.

To save space, use Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap. The liquid version is concentrated and can replace your soap, shampoo, shaving cream, toothpaste, and detergent.

One liquid to rule them all.

## GEAR

Don't bring any books on your trip. This way you'll be forcing yourself to talk and meet new people. Don't worry about books, no need to carry them, you'll find plenty where ever you go.

— Tania Cruz, Co-Founder at The Poshpacker

This is the catchall portion of the list before the home stretch of clothes.

## CARRY ON LUGGAGE

You will need the right luggage to pack carry-on-only. Choose luggage that matches your travel style and fits within your airline's carry on luggage rules for your airline. We recommend our flagship product, the Tortuga Travel Backpack, or the smaller, lighter Tortuga Air.

For more options, see recommendations from Carryology or the Wirecutter.

## PERSONAL ITEM

Your personal item can be a messenger bag, duffel bag, purse, or small daypack.

Most airlines don't publish specific size rules for personal



items. Just make sure that you're carrying it (no wheeled bags) and that it fits under the seat in front of you.

Don't carry an extra bag just because you can. Make sure that your personal item makes your trip easier. I prefer daypacks that can be packed into my carry on when not in use. We designed the Tortuga Daypack to fit in your luggage when in transit. Snarky Nomad published a list of other packable options.

#### LUGGAGE LOCK

A small, TSA-approved padlock is a great theft-deterrent, especially if you will be traveling on trains or buses or staying in hostels. Make sure your suitcase, or backpack, has lockable zippers.

#### PACKING CUBES

If you need more organization than your luggage offers, use packing cubes. I previously used a two-sided packing cube to separate my dirty socks and underwear from my clean ones.

#### TRAVEL TOWEL

A lightweight, packable travel towel is handy even if your accommodations will provide towels. I use the REI Multitowel Lite, but any similar product, like PackTowl, will work fine.

#### WATER BOTTLE

Carrying your own water bottle can help you stay hydrated without going through too many disposable plastic bottles. I carry a Camelbak, and Jeremy loves his

Vapur Anti-Bottle. The Wirecutter recommends the Klean Kanteen.

#### EARPLUGS AND EYE MASK

If you'll be taking long flights or overnight trains or staying in hostels, earplugs and an eye mask make for all-natural, compact sleep aids.

#### PEN

For filling out customs forms.

#### NOTEBOOK/JOURNAL

For documenting your trip, taking notes, or getting addresses written in the local language.

Now, onto the big one: clothes. Take a deep breath. Are you ready? Okay, here we go.

#### CLOTHES

Doug Dymant is the author of *OneBag*, the bible of packing light. He eloquently stated the purpose of a packing list,

The primary purpose of the list is not to specify what you will take with you on any particular journey, but to serve as a model for your travels, a constraint on your packing exuberance, a personal blueprint that you can refine over time (not change every time).

With this purpose in mind, we present a rough outline of the clothing that we recommend. This list is a suggestion, a framework. Your wardrobe will vary by your style, trip length, and the weather at your destination.

**The packing list at the end of this chapter includes our suggestions but is adaptable to your style.** Are you a jeans and t-shirt guy? Skew your list toward those items and cut other stuff. Prefer dresses and tights to shirts and pants? Bend the list to match your preferences. This packing list is designed to give you a starting point and to show you just how much you can fit in a carry on bag.

- Rain jacket
- 4 t-shirts
- 2 long sleeve shirts
- 2 pairs of pants
- Gym shorts
- Swim suit
- Underwear and socks
- Shoes
- Toiletries
- Electronics
- Laptop



(1) Rain jacket, (2) 4 t-shirts, (3) 2 long sleeve shirts, (4) 2 pairs of pants, (5) Gym shorts, (6) Swim suit, (7) Underwear and socks, (8) Shoes, (9) Toiletries, (10) Electronics, (11) Laptop

Please substitute items to maximize your comfort and happiness. The goal is to make packing easier. Once you're packed, you shouldn't have to think about your clothes. Get out there and enjoy your trip.

## OUTERWEAR

Outerwear can be tricky. If you're on a winter trip, it's easy. Wear, don't pack, a warm coat. Fleece or down work well. I've worn a Patagonia R2 fleece as my winter coat for years.

Wool base layers, a down jacket, and a fleece jacket will provide enough warmth for almost any weather. For rainy weather, get a packable rain jacket. It will keep you dry when in use and pack away into your bag when the weather dries up. I use a Patagonia Torrentshell Jacket. Make sure that you can either wear your coat at all times (heavy winter coats) or pack it away. Even a lightweight hoodie can eat up space in your bag.

## TOPS

- 4 short-sleeved shirts
- 2 long-sleeved shirts

Feel free to shift these numbers around depending on the weather. Packing six shirts and wearing one will give you a week's worth of different shirts without repeating (or washing) any of them. Not that anyone would notice.

- American Apparel t-shirts are a good balance of price and quality. However, their shirts are mostly cotton or a cotton-polyester blend.
- Icebreaker wool t-shirts are more expensive but a worthwhile investment.
- Under Armour and Nike both make high-quality, moisture-wicking athletic shirts. Make sure to rinse them at night if you've been sweating. Synthetic fabrics can stink.

For long-sleeved shirts, pack one wool base layer shirt and one nicer shirt for going out. Some people like non-iron, stain resistant shirts, but I think the fabric feels too unnatural.

## BOTTOMS

- 2 pairs of pants/shorts or 2 skirts/leggings
- 1 pair of gym shorts
- 1 swimsuit

Substitute shorts or pants depending on the weather on your trip. Including the pants that you're wearing, you will have three pairs, total. Those will get you through the week without repeating any one pair too often. Pants can be bulky, so pack conservatively. I live in jeans and my Outlier Slim Dungarees. Either can work well for travel. Always wear your jeans when in transit because they will use up too much space in your bag.

A lightweight pair of gym shorts are good for lounging, sleeping, or swimming (for guys at least). Include a swimsuit if you plan to be in the water.

## UNDERWEAR

With the right fabrics, you can be as stingy as you want with underwear. We'll take a more practical approach.

- 6 pairs of underwear
- 6 pairs of socks

Combined with what you're wearing, this will get you through an entire week without doing laundry. If you're willing to hand wash your undergarments, you can pack as few pairs as you want. I recommend ExOfficio underwear for men and women because they eliminate sweat and odors and are quick-drying. Men can also consider Uniqlo's Airism line for a cheaper option.

For socks, we love Smartwool. They really are significantly better than other socks. They stay up, feel snug, and let your feet breathe. The latter is crucial when you're on your feet all day. Smartwool's hiking socks work with most shoes and boots. The PhD micro socks are cut lower for wearing with sneakers. I also like Wigwam and Darn Tough wool socks.

## SHOES

- 1 pair of lightweight, packable shoes

If you're bringing more than one pair of shoes, pack the lighter pair. Your boots or sneakers might not be as convenient for air travel, but they'll use up too much space in your bag. Wear them even if they don't make sense with your flight outfit or destination weather.

Sandals, flip flops, flats, boat shoes, or espadrilles all pack well. Think small, flat, and light. Avoid anything with thick soles or heavy padding.

## ACCESSORIES

- 1 scarf, sarong, or buff
- 1 pair of sunglasses
- Glasses or contacts, as needed

Pack the necessities you need and functional items, like scarves, that you can use in multiple ways.

For more organization, use packing cubes or packing folders. I used a two-sided packing cube to keep my clean and dirty socks and underwear separated.

Packing folders are great for condensing dress clothes if you have to attend meetings or a formal event like a wedding.

## PACK EFFICIENTLY TO MAXIMIZE SPACE

### **Roll Your Clothes, Don't Fold Them**

Now is the time to convert to the rolled packing method. Smooth out each item on a flat surface. Fold it like it was on display in a store. Then roll the folded clothing item into a tube. Rolled packing will minimize wrinkles and reduce the amount of space you need.

Having a suitcase or backpack full of rolled clothing will make finding a specific item much easier. You can see everything at once. If you fold and stack your clothes, you will have to flip through the stack to find what you need.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

If you've made it this far, give yourself a pat on the back. You are committed to the carry-on-only lifestyle, and we commend you.

Packing light is about more than just saving money. Packing light minimizes your physical and mental burden. Trade stuff for convenience, flexibility, and fun. Real travel is about your experiences, not your gear.

We spend inordinate amounts of time thinking about, discussing, and researching this stuff. We'll do the heavy lifting for you. To simplify your future travels, you can get a downloadable, printable version of this carry on packing list from our website.



Once you get in some “reps” of traveling carry-on-only, you won’t need the list anymore. You’ll figure out what you really wear and use on the road. Your travel kit will become as effortless as your every day carry.

## **HOW TO PACK YOUR BACKPACK**

Even a maximum-sized carry on backpack can feel light and comfortable on your back.

The secret to a comfortable carry is two-fold:

1. Buy the right pack
2. Pack it correctly

Yes, some of this is up to you. Don’t worry, we’re here to help.

When buying a bag, padding and comfortable straps are a must. Larger, maximum-sized carry on bags should also have a hip belt as most hiking packs do. A good hip belt will transfer most of your pack’s weight from your shoulders to your hips.

Buying a bag with the right padding and straps is the easy part. Most people struggle with packing it.

## **WHY PACKING MATTERS**

Packing the right items in the right spots in your bag will affect how heavy it feels. I was skeptical of this at first like you probably are. Then I tried it and saw how well it worked. Packing a backpack can be easy... if you have a plan.

The key to a comfortable backpack is a balanced load.

Your pack's weight should be centered and close to your body.

Keeping as much weight as possible close to your body will minimize the “pull” on your shoulders which can cause strain. This packing strategy will also give you more “pack awareness.”

The farther away your pack's center of gravity is from your body, the harder it will be to control its momentum.

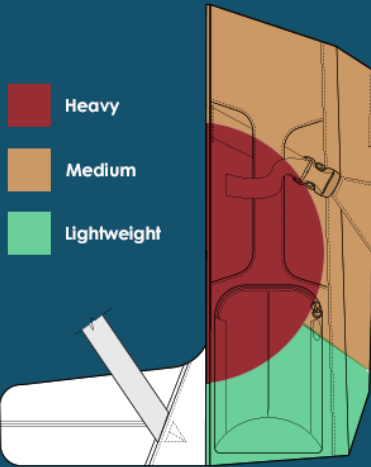
Pack awareness is especially important when navigating in crowded areas... Imagine weaving your way through a packed bus station during rush hour while wearing a pack that sticks out 15 inches off your back. It's more difficult to turn around, see who's around you, and you could even unexpectedly take somebody out with any sudden movements!

— Amanda Fenn, Outdoor Gear Lab

Your heaviest items should be at the vertical center of your pack and as close to your body as possible as in the graphic below. Keeping the weight near you will make your bag feel like an extension of your body.

## HOW TO PACK YOUR BACKPACK

The key to a comfortable backpack is a balanced load. The weight should be **centered** and **close to your body** so that your bag isn't pulling back on your shoulders.



Pack **medium-weight** items like pants and jackets around the heavy items in the top half of your pack. Use them to fill out your pack and give it structure.

Pack **heavy** items like shoes, a laptop, or a camera in the middle of your pack. Keep them as close to your body as possible.

Pack **lightweight** items like t-shirts and socks at the bottom of your pack. They should be packed densely enough that the heavy items don't compress them and sink down in your bag.

Don't pack your clothes in the order you pulled them out of your closet. Choose the clothes you'll bring, then make a plan.

Pack your backpack in "zones" based on **weight** as seen above.

Next, let's look at a more specific example.



## WHAT TO PACK WHERE

### Heavy Weight

Heavy items like shoes, a laptop, or a camera should be in the vertical middle of your pack and as close to your body as possible.

Your heaviest stuff will make or break the comfort of your pack. Start there.

### Medium Weight

Next, pack medium weight items like pants, jackets, and heavier tops in the top half of your pack. Pack them around and above the heavy items.

By above, I mean on top of them, vertically, when wearing your backpack, not depth-wise when packing it. Even though your bag is lying flat when you pack it, picture it

full and standing vertically on your back so that you can pack it correctly for real world use.

## **Lightweight**

Lightweight items like t-shirts, socks, or underwear, go at the bottom (vertically, not depth-wise) of your pack. Pack them densely enough that your heavy items don't compress them and sink down in your bag.

A packing cube, as seen in the graphic above, is a good lightweight item that can give the bottom of your pack structure.

A packing cube will support your shoes better than a pile of socks will.

Balled up socks can also go inside your shoes to save space. Socks and t-shirts can be used as “filler” between other items so that your stuff is padded and densely packed. A solidly packed load will stay in place. Use your bag's internal compression straps to hold everything down and in place.

## **The Exceptions**

The last items to pack are the ones you need at hand. Pack them in your bag's exterior pockets.

When packing your bag's exterior pockets, you can prioritize convenience over weight. Pack water bottles, umbrellas, guidebooks, and maps in exterior side pockets so that they are within reach. Money and tickets can go in your hip belt pockets so that you can grab them without taking off your backpack.

I pack my toiletries and a book in my Tortuga's front pocket. Both should be in secondary pockets so that I don't have to open my pack's main compartment in the airport security line or on the plane.

Don't be *that* guy or gal fumbling around at airport security. Make a packing plan and stick to it.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Carefully consider not only what you pack, but how you pack it. Within the five main categories of **paperwork, electronics, toiletries, gear, and clothing**, narrow down what you really need and make smart choices about how to minimize the weight you're carrying.

Pack your bag intentionally.

- Center heavy items in the middle of your pack (vertically).
- Consider packing cubes to keep things organized and “tight” in your bag.
- Keep the items you'll need during travel in the outside pockets or near the top of your bag.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/list>.

## CHAPTER 3.

### PACKING FOR EXTREME WEATHER

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Leave those bulky jackets and boots behind and head, instead, to a warmer climate. Bikinis and sandals don't take up much room... leaving your suitcase light with plenty of room for souvenirs!

— Christina Ricchiuti, National Geographic Channel Producer & Blogger

Often, the greatest variable affecting what you pack is the climate, or expected weather, at your destination. You would pack very differently for a trip to Hawaii versus a trip to Alaska. The time of year you're traveling, and the season of the year, will change how you pack as well. Toronto, Canada in the summer is a completely different experience than it is mid-winter.

While your basic packing list and strategies will remain the same, you can make small tweaks to optimize your wardrobe for any weather conditions while still traveling carry-on-only.

#### WARM WEATHER

Despite growing up in western Pennsylvania, I never

acclimated to freezing winters or humid summers. I prefer the temperate climate of Northern California.

Not wanting to miss out on warm weather vacations, I've adapted my packing list to make the hot weather bearable. Below is what I pack to stave off the heat.

## THE RIGHT FABRICS

Merino. Clothing made from merino wool is super-lightweight, keeps you warm in cold weather and cool in hot weather and you can wear it for days on end and it still won't smell.

— Dave Dean, Editor & Founder of Too Many Adapters

Thankfully, performance fabrics and high-quality wools are now readily available and often stylish. Specialized clothes aren't cheap but at least they don't make you look like a middle-aged man on safari anymore.

To keep cool, look for lightweight wools, moisture-wicking performance blends, or more traditional fabrics like linen.

Icebreaker's Featherweight or Ultralight lines are 90-100% wool but extremely lightweight. Both are expensive but will keep you cool in the heat and can be worn as base layers in warmer temperatures. Best of all, they can be worn for a few days without smelling like it.

Moisture-wicking performance fabrics are a cheaper alternative. Nike Dri-Fit and Under Armour HeatGear are both good options that I often wear to the gym. The usual caveat with performance fabrics applies doubly when you're sweating: *they stink*. These fabrics will wick the sweat away from your body but will quickly



start to smell. Just make sure to give them a quick wash at the end of the day if you were sweating.

If you need something more stylish, consider linen, seersucker, or a lightweight chambray. Every mainstream clothing brand sells shirts and shorts in these fabrics at summertime.

#### BANDANA OR BUFF

When the sun is beating down, you may need more protection than sunscreen can offer.

Keep the sun off your skin with a bandana or a buff. Either option can be used to shield your neck, or forehead, from the sun. As a bonus, they can both be used as headbands to keep hair and sweat off of your face.

When I felt overheated in the 100+ degree temperatures of the California desert at Coachella, I soaked my bandana in cold water then tied it back around my head. The relief was instantaneous. Soak your bandana or buff then put it on your head, face, or neck for a quick cool down.

#### SUNGLASSES

You can spend any amount that you're comfortable with on sunglasses. From a few dollars at a convenience store, to hundreds of dollars on designer shades.

To hedge against breaking or losing my glasses, I like to keep my costs low. I wear Knockaround sunglasses which have polarized lenses and cost less than \$30.

## SUMMER SHOES

In summer, you have to walk the fine line between weight and comfort. Heavily padded sneakers are comfortable but will leave your feet and socks soaked in sweat. The lightest option is a pair of flip flops. In many tropical countries, everyone will be wearing flip flops or sandals. You'll fit right in.

If you don't want to show off your feet, choose a shoe with more coverage. Flats, boat shoes, and espadrilles are all good options.

If blisters are a concern in your shoes, grab a pair of no show socks to protect your feet without looking like the dorky tourist in sandals and high socks.

## COLD WEATHER

For colder weather, choose one great outer-layer that will keep everything dry underneath.

— Chez Brungraber, Founder of Gobi Gear

One of the reasons that I live in Northern California is the weather. San Francisco's weather is inconsistent but temperate. Most importantly, we don't have a winter like back home in Pittsburgh. At home, the temperatures drop below freezing, and the snow piles up so high that our dog can barely walk through it. That weather isn't for me.

I may not like winter, but many attractive destinations are cold. Traveling in the shoulder season or off-season, when a country's weather may be colder, is also a great way to save money.

If cold weather travel is inevitable, what do you pack?

And how do you pack it in just a carry on bag? All those layers, sweaters, and coats take up a lot of space. Let's start with two basic principles then cover the details.

First, pack in layers, not bulk. Heavy sweaters and sweatshirts eat up a ton of space in your luggage. Dress in thinner, insulating layers. The individual layers will take up less space in your bag and give you more clothing options.

Second, when picking clothes, wear wool. Wool is natural and versatile. A wool layer will help regulate your body temperature in any weather. If the temperature heats up, you can still wear a thin wool t-shirt. If you had packed a heavy sweater, it would be sitting uselessly in your bag.

Now, let's talk specifics.

## BASE LAYERS

Despite being thin, a good base layer can add as much warmth as a bulky sweater. Paired with a shirt or pants, a base layer will insulate you from the cold without adding much volume to your luggage. Base layer shirts can be short or long-sleeved, depending on how cold your destination will be and what works best with your wardrobe. You can wear a short-sleeved layer under a button down shirt or hide a long-sleeved layer under a blouse.

A base layer shirt is the first thing you should pack when traveling to a cold climate.

## SOCKS

Socks can be tricky. In cold weather, you want big thick

socks to keep your toes warm. But you don't want to use half of your packing space on socks.

The best compromise is to choose thinner socks that can still keep you warm. They will take up less space in your bag and dry faster. The latter is important so that you can hand wash them every few days. By hand washing your socks, you can wear them again between laundry cycles and avoid packing seven to ten pairs for longer trips. When space is a concern, I pack three pairs of socks or less.

My favorite brands are Smartwool, Wigwam, and Darn Tough. Smartwool hiking socks are thinner than most winter socks, made of wool to keep you warm, and reinforced in all the right spots to stay snug and not slouch. All three brands are expensive but durable.

## BOOTS

With your socks taken care of, let's focus on shoes.

The menswear site *Put This On* says, "For minimum slippage on snow and ice, you want an outsole that is relatively soft with maximum tread."

In other words, no leather-soled shoes in inclement weather.

Whether you wear boots or shoes, choose footwear that will be comfortable for whatever activities you'll be enjoying on your trip. Of course, boots are often the warmest choice. Hiking boots are great if you'll be doing a lot of walking or hiking.

Blundstone, an Australian brand, have a line of insulated boots and are highly recommended by travel writer Rolf Potts. For day-to-day wear, I have a pair of Clarks Desert Boots. They aren't ideal on ice but are fine for the two wintry weeks per year I spend in western Pennsylvania.

Regardless of your choice of shoes, never pack your boots. Always wear them while in transit. Even a compact pair of boots will take up one third of your carry on luggage.

Wear, don't pack, your bulkiest items.

## COAT

The same rule applies to a coat or a jacket. Wear it. Don't pack it.

If you're hot on the plane, just stuff your jacket in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you or use it as a pillow. By dressing in layers as described earlier, you can stay warm without wearing an enormous coat.

My warmest coat is a vintage US Navy peacoat. It's tough and warm but absurdly heavy. I love it, but would never travel with it. Instead, I wear a Patagonia R2 fleece jacket. The style I have was discontinued, but you can find comparable gear in Patagonia's Regulator line for men or women.

North Face and other outdoor brands also make jackets with a high warmth to weight ratio. If you're unsure what to buy, stop at a local outdoors store and tell them that you need the best balance of warmth and weight.

## ACCESSORIES

For the coldest climates, you'll need accessories like gloves, a scarf, and a hat. Don't pack these in your luggage. Stuff them in your jacket to conserve space in your luggage without sweating through your flight.

For cold weather accessories, go with wool. I like to shop at L.L. Bean for high-quality commodities like these. They sell ragg wool gloves and hats for under \$30 each. Most of the brands mentioned earlier, like Smartwool, also make accessories.

If you don't own any winter accessories and won't use them after your trip, just buy them at your destination. Then you will have less stuff to carry. In many countries, you'll also save money on the purchase. At the end of your trip, sell or donate them.

## WET WEATHER

On the walk back from dinner, the rain started. We ducked under an overhang to wait it out. Ten minutes later, the rain was still coming down, harder than before. Now the winding, narrow streets of Old Town Prague were flooded. "Oh well," I thought, "We'll just rough it. Run through the ankle-deep water until we can get back to our hostel. Then I can take a hot shower and hang my clothes to dry."

Great plan. Until, after running a half dozen blocks, we realized we were lost. And out of breath. And still wet. After a series of trial and error sprints through twisted alleyways, we finally got our bearings and made it back indoors. Completely waterlogged.

As travelers, we encounter every kind of weather from sweltering heat to freezing cold to torrential downpours. Sometimes on the same day. Packing light won't allow us to bring ideal gear for *every one* of these situations. Yet, walking around in wet socks is gross. Here are a few ways you can tweak your packing list if you're expecting wet weather on your next trip.

## QUICK-DRY GEAR

Let's assume that your destination will definitely be getting rain. For example, a trip to London.

If you're going to be getting wet anyway, take advantage of quick-dry clothing so that you can dry faster. My favorite brand is ExOfficio but most performance apparel brands offer quick-drying fabrics. Most of these fabrics, if handled correctly, can dry overnight, if not faster.

Having one water-resistant pullover that can dry quickly will get you through most rainy days. For heavier downpours, you'll need a rain jacket. We'll get to those in the next section.

Rain really tests my loyalty to jeans. Because they're so heavy when wet and so slow to dry, I avoid wearing jeans in rainy weather. Instead, I wear my Outlier Slim Dungarees. They are cut like jeans but are thinner and dry faster.

## RAIN JACKET

Light packers know to avoid specialized clothing in favor of multipurpose tools. Rain jackets aren't warm enough to be beneficial in the cold relegating them to rain duty

only. However, if you're expecting to face a lot of rain, you can still bring a jacket or shell on your trip.

Here's why: if you're wearing it most days, it's part of your wardrobe, not a "just in case" item. Secondly, you can buy one that folds up very small.

I use a Patagonia Torrentshell Jacket. Patagonia offers used gear through their Common Threads program if you're looking for a cheaper jacket. Any reputable brand will suffice.

If you're on an extended trip and only part of the journey will be rainy, pick up a cheap rain jacket at your destination and pay it forward to another traveler when you move on.

## TRAVEL TOWEL

Carrying a travel towel probably sounds like a bit of an indulgence. If you're staying in hostels, it's not. If you're staying in hotels, skip to the next section.

Since many hostels charge for towels, you can save money by bringing your own. A good travel towel will also fold up as small as your rain jacket and dry as fast as your quick-drying clothes.

If you need your quick-dry clothing to dry in a few hours, instead of overnight, here's a trick. Wring the item as dry as possible with your hands. Then lay it flat on a towel. Roll the towel up as tightly as you can to get even more water out. Finally, hang both up to dry.



## WATER-RESISTANT BAG

We've covered how to keep yourself and the clothes on your back dry. But what about the rest of your gear?

Make sure to buy a bag that's water-resistant. Water-resistance is usually enough protection.

You don't need a waterproof bag. They're more expensive and provide extraneous protection that you don't need unless you expect to be standing in the rain for hours or submerged underwater. Save the cash and buy a nylon bag that's water-resistant. Most product descriptions don't address this issue, so be sure to ask before buying your bag.

Once you buy one, you can discreetly test it in the shower. Just be careful not to ruin it in case you need to return it "unused."

If you already have a bag, or are otherwise worried about exposure to the rain, you can buy a rain cover on Amazon or at REI. A rain cover is basically a big shower cap for your bag. Rain covers are sized by volume, so make sure to get one that will fit your bag.

## DRY BAGS

Are you expecting a lot of wet clothes? Will you be swimming a lot during your trip? Pick up a small dry bag to prevent your wet clothes from ruining the rest of your stuff.

Dry bags are designed for hikers who don't have the same resources at their disposal as travelers. You'll have more

opportunities to hang your stuff to dry or even use a clothes dryer. Just remember to dry your clothes ASAP to prevent them from getting musty. I once forgot a pair of wet board shorts in a dry bag for several months. When I finally found them, I had to throw them out immediately to prevent triggering my gag reflex.

Dry bags can also double as packing cubes, so you're not wasting space on them if you don't have any wet clothes. You can pick up a dry bag for on Amazon for less than \$20. For budget travelers, a Ziploc bag will work almost as well.

## SHOES

Frequent downpours, and the resulting flooding and mud, can ruin most shoes. If you're heading to a rainy climate, wear waterproof boots or flip flops. Anything in between will get ruined. Good boots should be able to keep your feet and socks dry. Unfortunately, good boots can also be very expensive.

Alternatively, you could concede that you're going to get wet and wear flip flops or sandals, especially in tropical climates during the rainy season. Yes, your feet will get wet, but you won't ruin any shoes and can dry your feet once you get indoors. You brought a travel towel, remember?

## UMBRELLA... JUST KIDDING

Please don't waste space packing an umbrella, even if you'll need it. Pick up a cheap one at your destination. Buy an umbrella before the rain starts when vendors

double their prices. When your trip comes to an end, give your umbrella to someone who could use it.

## WHAT'S WORTH BUYING

Buying everything listed above would be *prohibitively* expensive. I don't recommend it.

The items listed above are the ideal. Look at your current wardrobe, find the weak points, and invest in high-quality pieces that you can wear on your trip and for years to come. A warm base layer and good socks are a great place to start. A high-quality jacket can be worn for years.

My strategy when buying new gear is to buy either the best or the cheapest depending on how important it is and my budget.

If you won't use your gear again after your trip, buy cheap stuff then sell or donate them when you leave. The REI used gear sale is a great source of budget clothing and equipment. If you will be taking many similar trips, invest in one new item each trip. You'll slowly build up an arsenal of weather-specific gear without breaking the bank.

## HIGHLIGHTS

When traveling in warm weather, shield yourself from the sun with breathable and moisture-wicking fabrics. Consider a summer-weight shoe and don't forget you sunglasses.

If you're traveling in cold weather choose wool for your base layers and accessories, pack layers, and remember to

wear your coat and other bulky items on the plane to save space in your bag.

If rain is in the forecast, pack quick dry fabrics, a light, packable rain shell, and a travel towel. A water-resistant backpack will protect your belongings though a dry bag is a useful addition.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/weather>.

## CHAPTER 4.

### PACKING SPECIFIC ITEMS

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Ball up your socks and underwear and stick them inside your shoes – this saves space in the rest of your bag. Don't bring toiletries you can just buy there for cheap – shampoo, conditioner, bodywash and sunblock, for example.

— Isabel Clift, Senior Content Editor at Web Reservations International

*This chapter contains contributions from Laura Lopuch.*

Some items are harder to pack than others. This chapter is dedicated to three of the common offenders in the “hard to pack” category: shoes, underwear, and toiletries. Shoes are difficult because they're a specialized item, bringing only one pair is limiting, and the “dirt factor” makes them a packing challenge. Underwear seem like they'd be simple but provide their own set of challenges. How much is too much? How, and where, to pack them is as important as the type you wear. Toiletries are the bane of every traveler's existence between the spill and mess factors.

#### SHOES

Pack no more than two pairs of shoes. For guys especially,

shoes can take up a lot of room so it's important to be selective when packing. I usually take a nice pair of sneakers that can be used for everything from hiking to happy hour as well as a light pair of loafers for more dressy travel occasions.

— Matt Long, Travel Blogger at Land Lopers

What's the hardest item to pack? For most people: shoes. They take up a lot of space and are too specialized to bring just one pair, even for short trips.

On my first backpacking trip to Europe, I carried around a pair of dress shoes. I had heard that you needed nice shoes for "going out" in Europe. For two weeks I lugged around heavy, thick-soled dress shoes. I never wore them. In retrospect, I was an idiot. Luckily, I was carrying around a *giant* hiking bag. I had plenty of room, but they were still a waste of space and weight. Never again.

I've learned a lot since then. These are some of the shoe packing tactics I've learned from other travelers and through trial and error. After reading this section, you'll know which shoes to bring, where in your bag they go, and how to pack them.

## WHICH SHOES TO PACK

We recommend wearing one pair of shoes and, if necessary, packing another pair. Bringing more than two pairs of shoes makes traveling carry-on-only difficult. Removing shoes from your luggage is an easy way to free up space for clothes and other necessities.

For leisure trips, start with a pair of comfortable walking shoes. You'll be wearing these shoes most of the day. Make sure they won't hurt your feet. Your second pair of

shoes should be packable. A light, flat pair of shoes will take up as little space in your bag as possible.

Packable shoes include:

- Flats
- Boat shoes
- Espadrilles
- Low-rise Converse (or other sneakers with minimal padding)
- Sandals
- Flip flops (or thongs or jandals depending on where you're from)

Always pack your lightest pair of shoes. Packing heavy dress shoes, high heels, or boots of any kind is not recommended. I've been able to pack *lightweight* dress shoes in my bag when traveling for a wedding. It's do-able when necessary but inadvisable on most trips.

#### WHERE TO PACK SHOES

Don't stuff your shoes into your bag on top of your clothes at the last minute.

Even lightweight shoes are heavier than most of your clothes. To balance the weight in your bag, pack your shoes in the vertical middle of your bag, as close to your back as possible.

Here's an illustration that should help.



Packing your shoes close to your back will keep your bag's center of gravity near your body. Your pack will feel like an extension of you, not like an unbalanced weight swinging around you.

To ensure your shoes are in the right spot, pack your shoes first. Then pack your clothes around your shoes. Many travelers pack in the exact opposite order. Starting with your shoes first will result in a better, more efficient pack.

The TSA says to, "[p]ack shoes, boots, sneakers, and other footwear on top of other contents in your luggage." Their advice is for *checked*, not carry on, luggage. If you're traveling carry-on-only, ignore their recommendation.

## HOW TO PACK SHOES

Before packing your shoes, stuff them. Don't waste the



space inside of your shoes. Those square inches are valuable real estate. Ball up socks, roll up a belt, or pack anything else that's soft and can conform to the space, like a t-shirt or underwear, into your shoes.

Next, interlock your shoes as shown to the right. The right shoe's toe should be touching the left shoe's opening and vice versa. Picture how shoes come packed in a shoe box.



Arranging your shoes like this will make them one solid rectangle for packing. Now you can easily pack around the shoes.

Don't let your dirty shoes ruin your clothes. Wrap your shoes in a plastic grocery bag or a shoe bag. A shower cap also works well. If you'd rather not use plastic, consider a reusable, cloth bag. You could also pack your shoes with the soles flush against each other, but this shape is harder to pack around.

If you're carrying flip flops, or sandals, as your third pair of shoes, pack them along the edge of your backpack for structure. Otherwise, pack sandals in your backpack's exterior pockets or hook them to the straps.

## UNDERWEAR

I'm not afraid to mention your

unmentionables. Underwear is small, light, and easy to wash. Don't waste too much packing space on your undies. This section outlines the best travel underwear options and how to pack them efficiently. You don't need special underwear for travel, but some brands and fabrics lend themselves to the rigors of the road.

The best travel underwear have the same properties as other performance clothing. They're lightweight and odor-resistant. Most importantly, they are quick-drying so that you can wash them yourself to cut down on the number of pairs you need to bring on longer trips.

In case you couldn't tell from the last paragraph, cotton underwear are the worst for traveling. You don't want your skivvies hanging around your hotel room drying for days and days.

#### THE BEST TRAVEL UNDERWEAR TO BUY

I've long been a fan of ExOfficio underwear. The Give-N-Go line has multiple options for both men and women. ExOfficio meets all of the qualifications mentioned above. They're light, odor-resistant, and quick to dry.

Eytan at Snarky Nomad recommended the more affordable Uniqlo Airism boxer briefs, which also check all of the boxes.

Women should visit the website [Her Packing List](#) for an entire guide to travel underwear and bras.

By packing travel-friendly underwear, you can bring as few pairs as you can tolerate. Bringing fewer pairs of

underwear will save space in your bag, but will require you to hand wash them more often. It's a tradeoff that some travelers (like me) find worthwhile.

Okay, now you've got the goods. Time to pack them.

## HOW TO PACK TRAVEL UNDERWEAR

In most cases, rolling clothes is more space-efficient than folding them. The same is true when packing underwear. Roll your underwear to conserve space.

Like socks, underwear can be stuffed into any available spaces. For example, inside of your shoes. When packing, you can save your underwear for last. Fit them into any available space to act as filler in your pack.

If you like to be more organized, pack all of your underwear into a packing cube at the bottom of your bag. Lightweight clothes, like underwear, socks, and t-shirts, are perfect for packing at the bottom of your backpack as seen here.



## UNDERWEAR PACKING HACKS FOR WOMEN

As a man, I'm not qualified to tell women how to pack their underwear. Instead, I talked to some experts and, of course, consulted Cosmo.

Their number one tip was to bundle pack your bras and underwear. Stack your bras on top of each other, stuff your underwear inside of the cups, then fold the bras in half. The underwear will prevent your bras from collapsing inwards and will help the cups maintain their shape.

Pack the bundle near the vertical top of your bag so that the rest of your clothes don't smash it. Or pack the bundle in a packing cube, which has more structure, and place it at the bottom of your bag as described earlier.

## TOILETRIES

*This section was contributed by Laura Lopuch. As a woman, her toiletries and advice vary somewhat from mine.*

Let's get really honest here: sometimes, the hardest part of switching to a carry on, from a checked bag, has nothing to do with clothes.

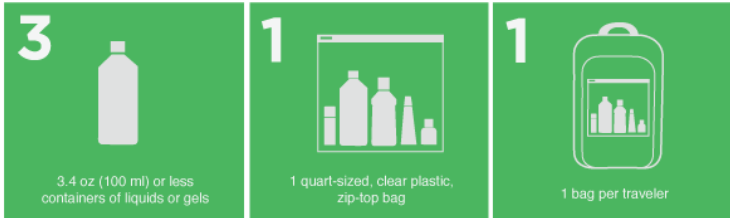
The quart Ziploc bag is the spot where people tend to run into trouble. It is the Bermuda triangle of small spaces: necessary, finite, with too many options. Yet, this is where we can save more space, especially in carry on situations.

Over the years, I've tested, sworn, swapped out, and perfected products to include in my quart Ziploc bag to fit my three specifications:

- essential
- multi-tasking
- proven to work

Remember, that to abide by the TSA rules for what can be packed in carry on luggage, each passenger may pack 3 ounce bottles or less, into 1 quart-sized Ziploc bag, and 1 bag is allowed per passenger. This is affectionately referred to as the 3-1-1 rule.

# THE 3-1-1 RULE FOR CARRY ON LIQUIDS



## PACK YOUR FAVORITE PRODUCTS

Can't live without a specific moisturizer? Not to worry, you can still pack it. Simply re-package it into something smaller and travel-sized. In other words, squirt some into a smaller container and take it with you.

Some of my favorite smaller containers are re-purposed from their original intent:

- Contact cases to store cover up, tinted moisturizer, eye cream
- Squeezable bottles from trial sizes of shampoo, lotion, day moisturizer, sunscreen
- GoToob: tougher than your usual re-purposed trial-sized bottle, these are ready to be filled up again and again

## LEAVE IT PACKED

Have you ever found that sublime balance between excess and just-enough? The trip where you never wanted for

anything and where your products worked beautifully? And now, on the eve of your next trip, you're rushing around to recreate that bliss. You can stop this disaster in its tracks: don't ever unpack your quart Ziploc bag.

Take your quart Ziploc bag on a few trial-run trips and test your products. See if you like them, or swap them out for other products that might fit the Three Golden Rules of Quart Ziploc Bag Paradise:

- essential
- multi-tasking
- proven to work.

*Keep refining until you find that perfect balance again.*

When you do, don't unpack your quart Ziploc bag. Nestle it away with your other travel gear and when you're packing for your next trip, it's ready to go.

#### FIND WHAT WORKS

Okay, now we're ready for the good part: what to put into your quart Ziploc bag? What products are you currently using that could be swapped out for more-travel friendly products?

Of course, these are items that I've found work perfectly for my skin and hair types. The products you choose, and your results, may vary. Get inventive and try new items. You'll find some that work perfectly on the road just like they do at home.

I've broken the products down into three main categories: hair, makeup, and face.

## **Hair Products**

I've started with the hardest one: hair products. Right now in my bathroom there are five different kinds of hair products. Each one is specifically formulated to tackle a different hair issue. But are there really five different hair issues I face on a normal morning?

No. Definitely not.

I'd be willing to bet it's the same for you. Figure out what your Number One Most Horrible Hair Issue is that you battle on a daily basis. That's the issue you're packing for.

### **Here are some products that travel well:**

- **Klorane Extra Gentle Dry Shampoo with Oat Extract:** Non-aerosol powder so it packs into your bag. This is what I travel with and it's awesome.
- **Argan oil:** Amazing for taming flyaways and a little drop goes a long, long way; bring it with you in a contact case.
- **Dr. Bronner's Soap:** Use for shampoo, shaving cream, body wash, mouthwash.
- **Trick for shaving:** Use hair conditioner for shaving cream.
- **Bar Shampoo:** From a company like Lush. Add their little travel tin and you're ready to roll.



## **Makeup Products**

As for makeup, I aim for dry products whenever possible to save room in my quart Ziploc bag. These dry products you can pack right in your carry on. For instance, instead of cream blush, I pack powder. Sure it means packing an extra brush to apply, but that's minimal. Or get a eyeliner crayon instead of liquid eyeliner. You can even get dry foundation instead of tinted moisturizer.

What about perfumes? Rollerball perfume applications have become popular recently. But what to do when your favorite fragrance isn't available in a rollerball application? Here's a little known secret that's well-loved by airline attendants: most major perfumes or colognes have a perfume oil version. A perfume oil is a concentrated version of the scent that you rub into your wrists.

I've been using these oils for five years now. They travel extremely well, keep their scent, and don't smell any different than the super-expensive misting perfumes. My favorite part: the little vial lasts a long time since you only apply a little oil at a time.

Buying a few glass vials, some perfume oils and spending an afternoon nets your own rollerball perfumes. Oh, and did I mention they cost a fraction of the cost of those designer fragrances yet smell just as lovely?

## **For Men**

Try the solid cologne by Alfred Lane that Shawn recommends.

## Face Products

You don't need to bring your normal-sized 6+ ounces of moisturizer or foundation with you. Really. You don't need to. Even at home, you don't go through an entire bottle in a week. Being on a trip isn't going to change your routine.

If worse comes to worst on your trip, and you run out of product, consider it an opportunity for adventure. It's a foray — nay, an expedition, seeking untold treasures — into the local culture to find an alternative product. It won't be hard since we all live in this world, and we all want to look good, regardless of where we live. I'll bet you'll find something amazing.

So, be brave. Squeeze some lotion into a smaller container, and take that smaller container with you.

## My Standard Quart Ziploc Bag Packing List

1. Bumble and Bumble sea salt spray
2. Neutrogena UltraSheer Dry Touch Sunblock 55 SPF
3. Secret deodorant
4. The Honest Company healing balm (works wonders on super dry skin!)
5. Dove Oxygen Moisture Conditioner & Shampoo (when I stay at a hotel, I forgo these as they usually have them in the rooms)
6. One old contact case with night face moisturizer and argan oil (for moisturizing dry lips, skin, hair)
7. One old contact case with BB cream and regular face moisturizer
8. The Body Shop Tea Tree Face Wash

9. Contact solution
10. Toothpaste

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Shoes**

- Wear your heaviest pair.
- Place the packed pair in the vertical middle of your bag, as close to your body as possible.
- Stuff small items in your shoes to maximize space.
- Bag your shoes to keep your clothes clean.

### **Underwear**

- Buy underwear designed to travel well.
- Roll or bundle them to minimize the space they take up.
- Pack delicates near the top of your bag so they don't get smashed and misshapen.

### **Toiletries**

- Remember the 3-1-1 rule.
- Transfer your favourite products to smaller containers.
- Go dry where possible.
- Leave your toiletry bag packed.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/specificitems>.

## CHAPTER 5.

### MINIMALIST PACKING

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How is it that some people can barely fit everything into an 80L bag while others have room to spare in a 30L one? Do these two travelers really need drastically different stuff? Probably not. They just think that they do. Many travelers have the noble intention of packing less but most find it difficult, if not impossible. Have you found yourself in this scenario? You lay out everything you want to bring on your trip. Then you try to fit it into your luggage. No dice.

Breaking away from what you think you need is tough. “Pack less” isn’t actionable enough advice. While it sounds simple, most people need a roadmap to paring down their luggage.

Many travelers profess to want to embrace minimalism but find it impractical. In this chapter, we’ll show you how to pare down and pack only what you need, as well as let you know what you don’t need and how to repurpose everyday items you already have to streamline your travel experience and make minimalism work for you.

To understand how to apply the principles of minimalism to our travels, let's first take a look at an extreme case: the No-Baggage Challenge.

Travel writer Rolf Potts spent six weeks traveling around the world with only the clothes on his back and what he could fit in his pockets. While he wasn't really cheating, I should point out that he was dressed entirely in Scottevest clothes, which come equipped with tons of extra storage space compared to most jackets, shirts, and pants. While the challenge certainly proved its point, the average person will never travel like this. I know I won't.

Being away from home can be tough, so why make it harder on yourself? The purpose of a pared down packing list should be to make your trip easier and less worrisome, not gross and uncomfortable. Let's apply the lessons of the No Baggage Challenge to a more reasonable packing list. First, where can we begin to lighten our load?

## **WHERE TO SIMPLIFY YOUR PACKING LIST**

In the quest to minimize our packing list, we'll have to make some sacrifices. Where to begin?

### **CLOTHING OPTIONS**

For me, the key to packing light is clothing choice.  
— Blaine Ballard, Bag Reviewer at Loaded Pocketz

First up is a change in strategy from bringing anything that you *might* wear to bringing only what you absolutely *need*. Instead of a variety of outfit combinations, we'll be bringing two of everything: one to

wear until it's dirty and another to change into. That's it. One in use. One on standby.

Here are a few strategies for paring down the clothing you pack:

#### GET RID OF HALF

When preparing to travel, lay out all your clothes and all your money. Then take half the clothes and twice the money.

–Susan Heller

This advice sounds like a copout but is actually helpful. Sometimes the simplest, most obvious solution is the best one.

I find this advice especially helpful when packing more than one of an item like t-shirts, socks, or underwear. You can usually get by with fewer of these redundant items. Plus, if you follow the next point, no one will notice that you've worn the same shirt three times.

#### WEAR PLAIN CLOTHES

Packing light means keeping your color palette simple. All of your clothes should be basic colors and interchangeable. You should be able to turn 3 shirts and 3 pairs of pants into 9 outfits, not 3.

Dressing in neutral colors, while not exciting, will give you more total outfit combinations and require less effort to plan. If you'll miss wearing bright colors and patterns, use accessories as your "flair." When not in use, they'll take up much less room in your bag than a colorful shirt or brightly-patterned dress.

## DRESS IN LAYERS, NOT BULK

If you've ever packed away your winter wardrobe, you know that sweaters are space-eaters. Don't pack bulky items for cold-weather trips. Pack clothes that you can layer.

Instead of a heavy sweater, pack a t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, and a thin cardigan or sweater. Collectively, they'll take up as much (or less) space as the thick sweater, but you'll have a much more flexible wardrobe.

## BUY QUICK-DRY FABRICS

Quick-dry fabrics can be hand-washed and hung to dry overnight. You can carry fewer items since you won't need to carry enough to get you between 1-2 week laundry cycles. Performance apparel companies make moisture-wicking, quick-dry versions of every item of clothing you might pack.

Underwear and socks are the most beneficial since you wouldn't wear either again without washing them. I hope. Plus, most performance apparel is fairly ugly so you won't mind relegating it out of sight. If you aren't sweating profusely, most pants and shirts can be worn more than once without being washed or becoming smelly.

## DON'T BUY CLOTHES JUST FOR THE TRIP

You could easily fill your bag with a whole new wardrobe of travel clothes from Magellan's or TravelSmith. Those clothes may have lots of nifty features, but, if you don't wear them at home, you won't want to wear them on the road. With limited space in your bag, you can't afford

to carry something you won't wear. Plus, if you wore *all* technical gear, you'd look like a tourist caricature.

Instead, pack your normal clothes. You'll feel more comfortable and look better.

#### EVEN ON EXTENDED TRIPS, PACK FOR TWO WEEKS

Traveling for a month? A year? No matter. Pack as if you were traveling for two weeks. You'll have to do laundry by then anyway. Many travelers make the mistake of imagining everything they wear or use in a year then trying to fit that into a backpack.

Don't create your packing list based on your entire trip. Break it into a smaller chunk: two weeks.

Earlier, I mentioned that 3 shirts and 3 pairs of pants should work out to 9 outfits. That's already over a week's worth of clothing.

#### KEEP YOUR SHOES ON YOUR FEET

Many people pack their shoes first. Then, even before packing anything else, they realize they're already low on space. Here's an easy fix: don't pack your shoes. Bulky shoes should be worn, not packed.

Wear your sneakers or boots onto your flight. If you need another pair of shoes, bring flip flops, sandals, or flats in your bag. They can be packed without sacrificing much space.



## USE PACKING ACCESSORIES

Compression straps in a bag are great, but packing cubes and stuff sacks can help you further maximize your space. Packing cubes are great for organization and offer some compression.

Stuff sacks are less organized but great at squeezing the air out of your clothes to condense them down. Be warned: they'll probably come out extremely wrinkled.

## BUY A SMALLER BAG

Here's another tip that *should* be obvious: clothes have a mysterious way of expanding to fill the amount of space in your bag. If you have a carry-on-sized, 45L bag, you suddenly become a minimalist, but, if you buy an 80L bag, you'll pack your entire closet.

Give yourself constraints. They're surprisingly useful.

## TOILETRIES

You only need enough toiletries to stay (relatively) clean. You don't need to be "camera-ready." As long as you don't stink, you're okay. This restriction means leaving behind the gizmos and elixirs you normally use. You'll have to rely on your natural beauty and charming wit to seduce the locals.

### **No Toiletry Gadgets**

Ladies, no bathroom appliances. Guys, no electric shaver. Use a disposable razor.

Remember, these gizmos are for beauty, not hygiene. They are nice to have but aren't necessities.

The only hardware we're allowing on this list is a toothbrush. As for liquids, you might not like my suggestion. We'll get to that in the packing list.

### **Don't Pack Anything Cheap**

Whether it be toiletries or accessories, if it costs less than \$10, buy it at your destination.

If you're flexible on brands, you can easily forego any liquids in your bag (saving you time and hassle at airport security) and just buy them at your destination. In many countries, you'll save money.

The trip to the grocery or drug store can even be a fun little adventure.

If you don't speak the language, ask an employee for help. Don't poison yourself in the interest of packing light.

### **ELECTRONICS**

Obviously, you can't include a computer on a super-minimalist packing list. For your computing needs, you can rent time at your hostel or an internet cafe instead of carrying your own computer or tablet. You can also pick up a cheap phone and local SIM card at your destination. The card will need to be switched out as you travel between countries, so there's no need to bring everything from home.

The one gadget worth making space for is an unlocked smartphone. These electronic multi-tools can be used as

mini computers whenever you have access to a WiFi network. You can even use the Skype app to connect with friends and family back home. Good smartphones can replace most point and shoot cameras, notebooks, maps, books, and standalone mp3 players. A smartphone may be an indulgence on a minimalist packing list, but its usefulness and versatility vastly outweigh the additional baggage.

## THE PRACTICAL MINIMALIST PACKING LIST

Now is time for the easy-to-understand, if hard-to-implement, minimalist packing list. This isn't extreme minimalism, but you'll get 80% of the results with only 20% of the sacrifices.

### CLOTHING

- 2 short sleeve shirts
- 2 long sleeve shirts (optional for cooler climates)
- 1 jacket (optional for cooler climates)
- 2 of any combination of pants, shorts, skirts, or dresses
- 1 pair of shoes
- 2 pairs of underwear
- 2 pairs of socks (if wearing boots or shoes)
- 1 belt (if needed)

### TOILETRIES

- 1 toothbrush
- 1 bar of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap (to be used as body wash, shampoo, soap, and even toothpaste)
- 1 bar of deodorant

Done! Short, right?

At first glance, this list may look impossible. Keep in mind that you'll still be clean, have clean clothes to wear, and have more than a week's worth of outfit combinations. Plus, your bag will only contain (at the most) three shirts, a pair of pants, a pair of underwear, a pair of socks, and a small toiletry bag.

That's light!

#### WHAT IF I NEED SOMETHING ELSE?

You'll inevitably need other things along the way, but they can be borrowed or purchased locally, often for much less than you would pay at home. Consider these occasional shopping trips an opportunity for exploration and adventure.

#### WHAT NOT TO PACK

Packing carry-on-only is as much about what *not* to pack as what to pack. Getting your load down to just a carry on is all about subtraction.

In this section, we'll cover which items you can safely leave at home to lighten your load, reduce your risk, and make your trip easier.

#### TOILETRIES

We addressed this above. There's just really no good reason, short of serious allergies to ingredients in most products, to schlep a huge bag of toiletries across the ocean.

#### LAUNDRY DETERGENT

Detergent is even less necessary than your toiletries. For

trips lasting longer than a week, plan to do laundry. Spending a few dollars for wash-and-fold or an hour at the laundromat means that you can pack less clothing.

If you drop your clothes off at a wash-and-fold, you won't need your own detergent. If you hand wash or launder your clothes, you can buy a small, single-use packet of detergent very cheaply.

To cut down your toiletries and avoid packing detergent, use Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap. The concentrated soap can be used as toothpaste, face wash, body wash, shaving cream, or detergent. To save money, buy a large bottle of Dr. Bronner's, but only bring enough to fill a reusable, three ounce bottle like a GoToob.

## VALUABLES

Don't bring your valuables. This suggestion is to benefit your wallet, not your packing space.

Leave expensive jewelry and electronics at home. Do you need your phone, laptop, tablet, and Kindle? Only bring one or two devices. Your phone is powerful enough to accomplish most tasks.

## POINT-AND-SHOOT CAMERA

If you're a photographer, pack a DSLR camera. It's big, but that's okay. Your DSLR probably has its own dedicated bag. That bag qualifies as a personal item and won't subtract from your carry on bag's space.

If you don't have a DSLR, don't waste space on a point-and-shoot. Your smartphone camera is just as good, and

you're already carrying it. The fewer expensive items you bring, the less you can lose.

#### OVER EAR HEADPHONES

I love my big Sony headphones. They're perfect for shutting out the noise of a busy office environment, and the sound quality is great. They pack flat but are still *too bulky* to bring on the road. I know that you're proud of how much you spent on your Beats by Dre headphones, but leave them at home.

When I travel, I use my Apple or Sol Republic earbuds. The latter stay in better during workouts. The sound quality is pretty good, and they're tiny. I'm not an audio engineer. I can live with the downgrade in sound quality for the ease of packing.

If you don't already have a pair, the Wirecutter has multiple earbud suggestions depending on your budget.

#### EXTRA SOCKS, UNDERWEAR, AND SHOES

Most people tend to overpack shoes and basics like underwear. I certainly fall into the "one more pair..." trap. Save space by limiting the number of socks and underwear that you bring. Both can be easily washed in the sink every few days. Products made of quick-dry fabrics will be dry by morning.

By hand washing your socks and underwear, you can easily get by on as few as three pairs of socks or underwear. Packing less doesn't mean you're dirty.

Shoes can take up a lot of space in your luggage. Never

bring more than two pairs of shoes including the pair you're wearing.

## COLD-WEATHER CLOTHES

When packing for a cold-weather trip, think in layers. One bulky sweater or coat can take up most of your carry on bag. Instead, plan to dress in layers. Two or three thin layers of the right material will keep you warm. With layers, your wardrobe will be versatile enough for any weather. Just add or remove clothes as the temperature changes.

Buy merino wool base layers. They work well in any climate but are expensive. Save up and invest in a few pieces that you'll wear often.

## SLEEP SACK

Read the reviews of anywhere you plan to stay. If the place has bed bugs, you'll hear about it. Even non-hotel accommodations must keep their sheets clean or run the risk of bad reviews. You don't need an extra layer of protection from a sleep sack when staying in Airbnbs or hostels. Some hostels forbid sleep sacks so that guests don't bring bed bugs into the hostel.

## THE TRAVEL CAPSULE WARDROBE

Your ideal travel clothing is durable, takes up minimal space and weight, is wrinkle-free and opaque, and matches with the rest of your clothing in style and fit.

— Alex Jimenez, Founder and Editor of Travel Fashion Girl

Steve Jobs wore his trademark black

turtleneck. President Obama keeps his wardrobe simple to avoid decision fatigue.

Forbes even made a list of celebrities who wear the same clothes every day. What can we learn from the idiosyncrasies of the rich and famous? You don't want a closet with dozens of the same outfit. You aren't Superman. We can learn to keep our wardrobes simple, especially when we're traveling.

Building a capsule wardrobe will pare down your packing list.

#### WHAT IS A CAPSULE WARDROBE?

A capsule wardrobe is a collection of basic, functional clothing that will not go out of style. Each item should work in a variety of situations and be compatible with the rest of the wardrobe. Pack the staples that you wear over-and-over again, not this season's must have's.

An ideal capsule wardrobe will have a small number of quality items, not a lot of cheap stuff. You shouldn't need to replace everything on your next trip. Each item should be higher-quality and longer-lasting than your average item of clothing. Fast fashion has no place in a capsule wardrobe.

Brands like Uniqlo (value) and Outlier (high-end) make the exact type of clothing you'll need. Plain yet stylish. Simple and functional doesn't have to mean ugly. We'll get to some examples later.

#### CAPSULE WARDROBE EXAMPLES

You may be thinking that you can't limit your fashionable



self to a basic wardrobe, not even for the length of your trip. Let's look at a few extreme examples. Prepare to be humbled. I was.

I first had the idea for a travel capsule wardrobe after reading a Reddit post by a man named Matt titled, "One Year, One Outfit has begun." Matt's challenge (to himself) was to build a collection of the best, most versatile clothes for his lifestyle. Aside from the "one outfit," he included a few items for specific situations like working out and inclement weather.

This approach is extreme, but it gives us a good starting point. The author's wardrobe is also a good reminder that one size does not fit all. He included extra stuff to fit his lifestyle and the weather he would encounter. You should do the same for your travel style, your favorite activities, and the weather at your destination.

A capsule wardrobe is just a base. Adapt it to your travel style and destination.

Even with his extra items, Matt ran into some difficulties traveling with his one outfit. We're building a wardrobe, not an *outfit*, so we can plan around these potential problems.

Long-term travelers create a capsule wardrobe even if they aren't familiar with the concept. Clayton at Spartan Traveler wrote "How to Wear the Same Clothes for a Year." In the post, he details his core wardrobe and how he supplements it at each multi-month-long stop on his travels.

Nadia Eghbal took this idea another step further as documented in her blog post, “Why I Wore The Same Outfit Every Day for a Year.” In an attempt to break a shopping habit and simplify her life, Nadia pared her wardrobe down to one outfit. The experience taught her an interesting lesson.

I realized that when I cared less about what I (and others) wore, I cared more about what I (and others) said and did.

Remember that line when you’re traveling and meeting new people every day.

Now that we’ve looked at three minimalist examples, let’s build our own capsule wardrobe for traveling.

## BUILDING A CAPSULE WARDROBE

We’ll build our capsule wardrobe using the light packing advice we outlined earlier.

Remember that a good capsule wardrobe is made up of a small number of durable, classic pieces. No cheap throwaways. No fast fashion. This wardrobe is an investment. If something costs more than you would usually pay, that’s okay, as long as it lasts longer and never goes out of style.

I’ve worked to pare down my clothes over the years but don’t have a minimalist closet yet. The list below is more of a thought experiment than an expert’s how to guide. We’re figuring this out together.

We’ll base our wardrobe on the carry on packing list from Chapter 2 because the list is designed to last a week in a carry on bag.

Due to my experience, the list will be biased toward men's clothes though many examples are unisex. For advice on a fashionable capsule wardrobe for women, read the Capsule Wardrobe Essentials ebook by our friend Alex. Her site, Travel Fashion Girl, has lots of great advice for what to pack, including her 10-piece travel essentials packing list.

## CAPSULE WARDROBE PACKING LIST

- 4 t-shirts
- 2 long-sleeved shirts
- 1 light jacket
- 1 pair of jeans or chinos
- 1 pair of shorts
- 6 pairs of underwear
- 6 pairs of socks

## T-SHIRTS

Merino wool is the ideal t-shirt fabric because it regulates your body temperature and repels odors. You can wear a merino shirt multiple times before needing to wash it. The problem is that merino wool is expensive. Icebreaker is the most popular brand, but I own an Ibex t-shirt. Both brands look like 'technical' clothing. They have very visible logos and, in the case of the Ibex, excessive seams. Wool & Prince and Outlier make more stylish versions.

For non-wool t-shirts, my favorite brand is American Apparel. Their shirts are a good balance of price and

quality. Choose a cotton or poly-blend shirt based on fit and preference.

## LONG-SLEEVED SHIRTS

For larger items like long-sleeved shirts, remember to avoid anything bulky. Don't pack any huge hoodies or cable knit sweaters. Choose thin shirts that you can layer with t-shirts or a jacket. Thin, merino wool shirts work well. Some of the brands from the last section also make long-sleeved versions of their t-shirts.

## LIGHT JACKET

Your choice of jacket is highly dependent on the weather in your destination. Is it cold? Is it temperate? Is it rainy? Rainy weather is easy. Most outdoor companies make thin, packable rain jackets. I carry a Patagonia Torrentshell. The Wirecutter recommends the Marmot PreCip. Cold weather is trickier. Warmer jackets are typically heavier jackets. The biggest question is how variable the temperature will be at your destination.

Will you always need to wear your jacket? If so, you can carry a heavier jacket because you won't ever need to pack it in your luggage. Remember that you can always stick your jacket in the overhead bin during flight and leave it in your room when necessary. However, you're still carrying it in those situations. Weigh how often you'll need it against how willing you are to wear it in unideal situations.

I avoid cold weather when I travel. I grew up in Pittsburgh. Eighteen years of northeast winters were more than enough for me. Temperate or warm weather

makes packing easier and lighter. I'll stick to Mediterranean and tropical climates for my travels.

## JEANS OR CHINOS

For jeans, skip the performance gear and go with your favorite style and fit. If you wear jeans at home, you can wear them on the road. Just remember to wear them in transit as they're big, bulky, and hard to pack. Most "performance" jeans look like dad jeans from an 80s department store.

Outlier's Slim Dungarees look good and, while not cheap, are priced comparably to high-end denim brands. Bonobos' Travel Jeans are cheaper and designed to travel well. They're made of 10.5 ounce denim, which is relatively light for wearing and packing. The jeans also have a 1% stretch.

If you prefer chinos to jeans, check out Bluffworks. Their pants are made to look office-appropriate but still work for outdoor adventures. Michael at Art of Adventuring, Eytan at Snarky Nomad, and James at The Savvy Backpacker all gave the pants positive reviews.

Chinos are classics. Every brand from Gap to J. Crew to Banana Republic makes its own version. Find a pair that fits you well and isn't too bulky.

## SHORTS

Athletic shorts are a versatile option on the road. They can be used at the gym, for outdoor adventures, as a substitute for pajamas, and as swim trunks.

Under Armour and Nike Dri-Fit work well but look

like gym shorts. Most pairs are bright and covered in logos. Myles Apparel and Olivers Apparel both make basic, plain shorts that look good outside of the gym. Outlier's New Way Shorts were made to be worn as casual wear shorts or as a swimsuit.

## UNDERWEAR

We have been long-time fans of ExOfficio underwear. They dry quickly, wick sweat, and repel odors. ExOfficio has a variety of styles for men or women.

Eytan from Snarky Nomad recommended another option: Uniqlo AIRism boxer briefs. I've tried and would recommend them too. They look better than ExOfficio underwear and are made of a smoother, softer material. Plus, you can get two pairs for under \$20 when they go on sale.

Choose any brand that looks good and feels comfortable. Avoid cotton at all costs. You need a fabric, like the underwear above, that will repel odors and dry quickly.

## SOCKS

I've been wearing Smartwool socks for years. Their wool socks stay up and fit snugly. The only downside is that I've had a few pairs wear out above my heel.

Smartwool makes men's and women's socks in every style from thick, calf-high hiking socks to thin, low-rise athletic socks. Wigwam and Darn Tough both make similar high-quality socks in the US.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Sometimes, less really is more. Learn to pack like a minimalist and you'll feel the freedom while you're on the road.

- Pack for two weeks, regardless of how long you're traveling.
- Don't pack anything that you can cheaply buy at your destination.
- Develop a capsule wardrobe of high-quality items that travel well.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/minimalism>.

## CHAPTER 6.

### PACKING LIGHT FOR MEN

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*This chapter contains contributions from Shawn Forno.*

In this chapter, we'll address some of the manly concerns you'll need to pack around and that can be a challenge to your carry-on-only commitment. We'll cover how to look dapper on the road and how to pack that all important suit that will occasionally be required for business, or pleasure.

Packing light is easier for men, but at least women get advice on how to look good while traveling. If I see another scruffy guy in zipper pants and hiking boots at the Eiffel Tower I might lose it. It doesn't have to be that way, guys. You can look great on the road – even with a carry on!

#### **GROOMING**

Looking good starts with basic grooming and hygiene, but that doesn't mean you need to check a bag loaded with liquid goop, or spend 45 minutes in the bathroom. You're on vacation – so look as relaxed (and as good) as you feel in just minutes with a few alternative products.



## POMADE NOT “GEL”

Take care of your coif. If you don't know what a “coif” is, it might be time to get rid of the spiked blonde tips. The best part about modern men's haircare is that looking fresh has never been easier. You really only need one thing: a tin of pomade.

Hands down, my favorite pomade is Mr. Natty's. The wax base means it holds like a champ without tons of shine. That gives me the casual look I like without even using a comb. This pomade is the equivalent of your hair shrugging...but sexy.

Perfect for fades or pompadours, this utility hitter even doubles as beard wax if you're a hirsute gentleman. It's only thing my barber lets me buy. He yells a lot. Get a haircut right before your trip. Ask the barber what you should buy. They will get a little too excited.

## SOLID COLOGNE

I love this stuff. Just rub a bit behind your ears or on your neck and get ready to smell like the woods during a thunderstorm. Alfred Lane features three options (I rock the Vanguard), and the 0.5 oz tin – with the suave slide top lid – travels like a champ. I've had mine for 6 months and it's still kicking. It's pocket sized so you can reapply during a three-day rave.

Apple Valley Natural Soaps makes a nice body wash bar that comes in like a bajillion delicious scents – from “Italian Garden” to “Cowboy.” Travel with as many as you like – take that TSA – and use up the weight as you go.

## SHAVING

### TSA Carry On Rules for Razors:

- Straight Razor: **NO**
- Safety Razor (the old school ones with removable blade heads): **NO**
- Disposable Razor w/ Extra Blade Heads: **YES**
- Electric Razor: **YES**

Yes, disposable razors are TSA approved. You no longer have an excuse to look like a hobo yeti. Stand out from the scruffy masses and keep your face clean cut on your journey without the hassles of electric razors, plug confusion, and voltage math.

Get an average razor, then rock a sweet travel shave kit from the experts at The Art of Shaving – complete with “pure badger” brush, 1 oz. pre-shave oil, foam, and aftershave, razor, waterproof leather case. Sure it’s pricey, but you get to brag about your “badger brush.” Worth it.

## ORGANIC BEARD SOAP BAR

If you *are* going for the grizzly look, do it right and keep that beard soft, shiny, and clean with an organic beard shampoo bar. From the guys over at Whiskey, Ink, & Lace (best company name ever), this conditioning shampoo beard bar will keep your viking chin carpet soft and smelling like the a barber’s leather chair.

## FLOSS

Bring floss. It weighs next to nothing, and you’re better than that.

## WARDROBE

### ALL HAIL THE TRAVEL BLAZER

I've always been a light raincoat kind of guy, but after seeing the Pinehurst Cross-Country Jacket from Travelsmith, I'm rethinking everything. Not only is it reasonably priced, but stylish as hell and oh so functional.

It features padded elbow sleeves, spandex woven into the corduroy for stretch, and 9 specially-sized pockets (3 outer, 6 inner) for passports, phones, etc. Two of the pockets zip closed, and one even has a lead hole for your headphone cable!

I'm wearing this every time I go through airport security.

### HENLEY SHIRTS

Yes, these are everywhere, but they're a wardrobe staple because they're perfect for travel. Stylish but not too fancy, rustic without being ragged – toss a few nice henley shirts – J. Crew makes a good one – in your bag and look like the lumberjack poet every woman wants. They even have short-sleeved options.

While you may be tempted to pack a nautical-themed short sleeved dress shirt, I argue against packing any dress shirts for your trip. Why? They wrinkle easily and you'll tire of them, but mainly because it's way more fun to buy dress shirts abroad.

It's super cheap (except in Europe), hilarious, and I promise you you'll come home with some amazing finds. Bonus: now your wardrobe has a story.

## SLACKS WITH STRETCH

Travel pants are tough to find because travel pants are terrible. So here's my crazy idea: pack regular pants.

If you pack pants you don't want to wear (and that don't look good on you) you won't wear them (or you'll look stupid). Avoid both of these problems by packing like you dress back home. For me that means stylish, fitted, slacks with a little give – so... jeggings.

Uniqlo jeggings are my go to – I rock climb, bike, dance, and play kickball in them – and as one satisfied customer on their site puts it they are, “The only things I'll wear now.” Right on, brother.

Jeggings aren't for everyone, but find a balance between style and comfort and realize that one doesn't mean sacrificing the other.

## ESPADRILLES

Even though I've always thought espadrille was Spanish for “tool” (it's not) it's hard to overlook the versatility of these extremely travel friendly shoes. Espadrilles are the traditional shoes that TOMS are based on. They are light, stylish, and durable.

## PACKING A SUIT

As budget travelers, we fancy ourselves to be rugged adventurers. But even adventurers have to attend weddings and go on business trips.

How can you uphold the carry-on-only ethos without ruining your expensive suit?

The solution is two-fold: folding and packing. By now you've likely mastered the latter. Folding is the tricky part.

If you're like me, you roll your clothes when packing because rolling is easier than folding. I'm the guy that unfolds a shirt in a store but can't figure out how to re-fold it. Apologies to the retail employees who have to follow in my wake folding clothes to make them presentable again.

Despite my shortcomings, I have successfully packed a suit in a carry on along with enough other clothes for a month in cold, rainy spring in London.

I'm not good enough at folding to have done this on my own. Instead, I turned to Jesse Thorn of the menswear blog and video series *Put This On*.

## SUIT JACKET AND PANTS

I followed Jesse's advice when folding my suit jacket and pants. His method is similar to bundle packing, an alternative to rolling your clothes.

Hold your suit jacket by the collar, reach down into one sleeve and turn it entirely inside out, including the shoulder pad. Then, tuck the other arm inside the arm you've turned inside out. By following Jesse's advice, your suit jacket will be folded with the lining facing outward so you don't dirty your suit. Lay your suit jacket into your bag so that half is inside the bag and the other half is draped out over the edge.

Fold your pants in half, and in half again while carefully

preserving the crease. Lay your pants onto the half of your jacket that is inside the bag. Fold the remainder of the jacket over the pants so that they are sandwiched inside the jacket and the lining is still facing out. For a demonstration of this method, find the YouTube video, “How to Pack a Suit from Put This On S2E1.”

If you’re traveling first class, consider packing your suit separately, in a garment bag, and asking a flight attendant to hang it up on a hook or in a closet. My suit’s garment bag folds in half and would likely qualify as a personal item on many flights. Even if you’re in coach, a flight attendant may be willing to hang your suit for you. Carrying a garment bag means dealing with a second bag. However, the tradeoffs are worthwhile to save your suit, especially on a short trip.

For longer trips where you will only need a suit once, rent or buy one for the occasion. In many parts of Asia, you could have a custom suit made for you for just a few hundred dollars. Don’t drag your suit all over the world with you.

## SHIRT

Your shirt can be folded into a similar shape and even bundled with the suit itself. Learn to masterfully fold a dress shirt to minimize wrinkles.

Lay the shirt face down and smooth out all of the wrinkles. Then, place the edge of one hand at the shoulder seam of the arm of the shirt, using the other hand, fold the arm inward onto the back of the shirt forming a nice, crisp, line and the shoulder. Now, place

the side of one hand where the elbow falls in the shirt and with the other hand, turn down the arm of the shirt at a 90 degree angle, so that the shirt cuff is facing the bottom of the shirt. Just one fold left to go. Using the same method, fold half of the remaining length (elbow to cuff) upwards toward the collar. The arm of the shirt will now have three folds in it and be tucked nicely into the shoulder area of the dress shirt. Repeat for the other side.

Once the unwieldy arms are tamed, simply fold the sides of the dress shirt in on themselves, with the fold falling just outside of the shirt collar, smoothing out wrinkles as you go. Then, fold up the lower edge of the shirt, 6 inches or so, and fold the entire remainder in half, so that the folded bottom edge falls at the back of the shirt collar.

Presto, a perfectly folded shirt! You can tuck the shirt, with your suit pants, inside the lining-outward folded suit jacket in your bag.

For a video demonstration of this method, watch the YouTube video, “How to fold a suit, pants and shirt to go in a suitcase without wrinkling.”

If you’re packing multiple shirts, use a packing folder to condense and organize them.

## SHOES

Shoes are often the hardest thing to pack, especially on a trip where a specific wardrobe is required. When you’re backpacking Europe or adventuring in South America, you can get by wearing boots or sneakers and packing a light, alternate pair of sandals or boat shoes.

Regardless of the purpose of your trip, always wear your heaviest pair of shoes and pack your other pair (if necessary). On business trips, a pair of thick-soled oxfords are likely your heaviest shoes. Wear them on the plane. Don't worry about being overdressed. Oxfords look great with jeans. Plus, you can scoff at all the bums in sweatpants and flip flops.

## TIE, SOCKS, AND ACCESSORIES

The rest of your wardrobe is easy. Drop your cufflinks in the pocket of your suit before packing it so that you can easily find them.

Roll your ties and socks. Fold your pocket square. If you packed an extra pair of shoes, stuff your ties and socks in the shoes. Alternately, you can stuff them in the shoulders of your suit jacket to help maintain the jacket's shape.

If you can't put your accessories to use anywhere, just pack them in a packing cube with your underwear and other small items.

Congratulations, your suit is packed and will survive your trip.

## Highlights

The dapper dude pack is prepared for everything – except checking a bag.

- To up your style game, pack pomade and solid cologne.
- Fold your suit with the lining side out and stuff your accessories into your pockets.



- Don't feel bad packing a second bag if it's a garment bag that will keep your suit looking good.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/men>.

## CHAPTER 7.

### PACKING LIGHT FOR WOMEN

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*This chapter was written for women, by women, and contains contributions from Laura Lopuch and Brooke Schoenman.*

I stood at the baggage carousel, shifting my weight. The machine spit out bags at random intervals. Each time the rubber curtain moved, dividing the interior machine from the belt, I held my breath.

Perhaps my bag would be the next lucky one spinning from the machine's dark mouth.

One by one, the crowd surrounding me hauled their bags from the conveyer belt until it was only me and three others still waiting, anxiously watching the conveyor belt. It kept churning out empty air with a straggler bag occasionally popping loose, its owner sighing in relief. My watch said I'd already missed two trains headed downtown.

It's silly, but I felt like the last kid selected for a softball team. The kid that couldn't hit a ball to save her life. All because of a bag filled with stuff that I believed would

make or break my trip. Finally, my black suitcase broke free of the rubber curtain. I hauled it off the conveyer belt and, on my way out to catch the next train, I intentionally hit it on a few sharp corners.

I hate waiting. For anything. That's why I now pack in a carry on. When the plane lands, I simply pull my bag down from overhead storage, sling it over my shoulder, and catch the first train. Forget about waiting. To make that possible, I mined my existing closet for clothes to fit my new carry on lifestyle.

Take only what you need. The key word here is "need", and I know that you know what I'm talking about. That amazing pair of heels, just in case, or that extra coat, are not going to be on the list. Before your final pack, lay out all of your clothes and then take half of what you think you'll need. Sounds tough, right? But, you have probably taken a number of trips before where some supposed necessities never saw the light of day.

## **FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU NEED**

When choosing your clothing for a trip take a look at each item's fabric and consider the following factors: quality, thickness, weight, wrinkles, transparency, and texture.

— Alex Jimenez, Founder and Editor of Travel Fashion Girl

## **EXAMINE YOUR CLOSET**

Chances are you wear the same favorite clothes over and over, with some variations on pants or jackets. These are the clothes you want to take on your next trip. Identify your favorites.

Here are two strategies for figuring out which are your favorite (most worn) pieces of clothing:

1. Move your entire wardrobe into an empty closet. Over a couple months, move only the clothes you wear back into your main closet. Congrats, your favorite clothes, those you most often wear, have now been identified.
2. Rotate your hangers so the hooks face you, rather than facing the closet's back wall. Over a couple months, as you wear your clothes, switch the hangers of the worn items so that they face the correct direction. After a few months, you'll have a good visual of exactly which clothes you regularly wear and which ones just take up space in your closet.

#### TAKE MULTIPURPOSE ITEMS

Versatile, low-maintenance clothing is key to packing light.  
— Netanya Trimboli, Hosteling International

What does double-duty mean? These are clothes that you can layer, easily wash, and which complement each other.

It's a cliché, but true, packing tip: layering clothes is the simplest way of dressing appropriately for any type of weather. You can skim off a layer when it's too hot or add a cardigan when you're cold. Ball up the clothing to see how small it can become when you pack it.

Types of clothes that layer well:

- Tank tops
- Light cotton shirts in any style of neck line

- Cotton, or merino wool, cardigans
- Collared button down shirts
- Leggings or heavy tights (to layer under a dress or jeans if super cold)
- Jersey dresses that wrinkles shake out of

Be aware of your color palette when selecting clothing. If your color palettes are cross compatible, you will have many outfits from less clothing while you are on the road.  
 — Lina Stock, Travel Blogger at Divergent Travelers

If you're having a hard time deciphering which of your shirts will layer and not feel bulky, here are some brands I've found work well:

- Victoria's Secret Essential t-shirts
- Old Navy t-shirts
- J Crew tees
- Banana Republic stretchy t-shirts
- American Apparel shirts
- Target t-shirts like the boyfriend, burn-out or simple cotton shirts

Next up, check the tags to cull out any high-maintenance clothes that need to be dry cleaned, ironed or wrinkle easily. Typically, a patterned button-down shirt will hide wrinkles better than a solid color. Also, try to select shirts with rayon, or polyester, in them to help them keep their shape after multiple wearings.

Make sure the fabric can take a beating. To me, that means no white, as I'm the girl who manages to get food

stains on any white clothing. Your clothes need to hide the rigors of travel and make you look good. Chances are you've already figured out which clothes do that just from living your daily life.

Base layers should be in neutral, or complementary colors. Your tank tops and cotton shirts will be pulling heavy duty. So you need them to flatter your other clothes. When packing, select shirts in colors that compliment each other. For example, my closet has lots of blue t-shirts, so I typically pack black and pink tank tops. I know the two colors look good together. And, if needed, I can wear the black tank top on its own.

Plenty of items on the travel market are designed to give travelers more bang for their buck by being used in more than one way. Take for instance the sarong, which can easily become a scarf, a towel, a hair wrap, a pillow case or a picnic blanket.

I was skeptical of the infinity dress at first, but you can actually wear it about 100 different ways. This one item easily goes from dress to skirt to top to wrap, and the layers of different patterned fabric make it appear as though you have far more than that in your bag.

The classic zip-off pants are not the best looking but do help when packing light. Some of these pants will convert to capris and then to shorts and are often made of a special fabric that is quick drying and packed with sun protection.

When it comes to make-up, why not tone it down and either wear less (or none) on the road or try a

multipurpose powder that can give color to your cheeks, your eyes and your lips (if coated with gloss) in one?

## MAX YOUR ACCESSORIES

Adding in a scarf (which can ward off chilly winds) or a statement necklace can change an entire outfit's look from casual to dressy. The best part is that these small accessories don't take up tons of space in your bag. And if you're like my friend — her entire outfit is built around her jewelry — you can wear almost the same outfit every day, but make it look totally different based on your accessories. Get creative!

### Basic Accessories To Pack:

- Brightly colored scarf
- Necklace: chunky fashion one or delicate
- Earrings: dangly, studs, or hoops
- Bracelets: thin bangles, chunky
- Belts: skinny, leather, or colorful
- Hats (these can take up more space so I would only go with one)

## PUT IT TOGETHER

By now you should have a pile of clothes that do several things:

- Play well with each other, in similar or complimentary colors
- Can easily be layered without feeling too bulky
- Can be dressed up or down with your accessories

- Wash well and hide stains
- Make you feel good

Congratulations, you've now pared your closet down to a choice selection of your own clothes to bring on your next trip! Pack from this selection and pick clothes — short sleeve or long sleeve — depending on your destination's weather.



#### SAMPLE PACKING LIST

Just for you, here's a sample of what I pack for a trip:

- Two Old Navy tank tops in black and pink
- Three cotton t-shirts (short sleeve or three-quarter length) in black, blue or purple from Victoria's Secret, Target, or American Apparel
- Three-quarter sleeve cardigan from Target in navy



- Flowery scarf with pink, blue, and green accents
- Two necklaces: one delicate and one statement
- Three pairs of earrings: diamond (or CZ) studs, silver dangly, and silver hoops
- One pair of jeans (wear them — don't pack)
- Black jersey dress for a nice dinner out
- Lightweight jacket (I used to bring an Under Armour jacket, but now I bring FlyLow Gear's Vixen jacket)
- Sometimes I pack a baseball hat if I'm going to a game or driving at night (the brim shields my eyes from passing vehicles' headlights)
- If it's a colder destination, I throw in a long sleeve cardigan or wear a blazer underneath my jacket on the plane

## HOW TO PACK IT ALL

I hate folding and ironing clothes almost as much as I hate waiting. What I've found works best for my clothes is rolling them. With this method, you can see all shirts at a glance, use minimal space, and you can pull out shirts without messing up the general organization of your bag. It's much easier to pack like this with a bag that unzips from the front than a normal hiking backpack that opens only from the top.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AIRLINE HANDBAG ALLOWANCES

You might be able to squeeze in a bit more luggage if you are able to account for your extra personal item. When I travel carry-on, I have my backpack and a tote

bag holding my netbook (not laptop), magazines, purse and other little bits and pieces that won't fit in the pack. Sometimes, I use a small, stuffable daypack as my personal item, which can be stuffed to the brim with my netbook, DSLR camera and a number of small items, while still looking tiny and compact.

However, you will want to make sure you aren't on a super strict airline – one that actually makes you account for the weight of your personal item in addition to your carry-on.

#### **WEAR IT ALL AT CHECK-IN**

If you can handle being a bit warm at check-in, wear as much of your clothing as you can. As soon as you get on the plane, you can take off some of the layers and relax. Why not put on 3 shirts, your heaviest jeans and your boots or sneakers and leave all the little things for the actual packing? While this is funny, it can save you money on baggage fees, and saving money means having more fun while traveling.

Stuffing your pockets is yet another trick. I once forced myself to bring along a light jacket that looked like it was from an army surplus shop just so I could take advantage of the extra pockets. I threw in my travel alarm clock, book, reading glasses and so much more. No one really noticed that my jacket was actually acting as another carry-on since I was wearing it.

#### **TRAVEL MAKEOVER**

If you're still looking for more inspiration on how to actually pare down your bag, you might want to check out

one of the travel makeover posts on our blog, Packsmith. Real travelers, taking real trips, bring their packed bags to our expert packer. She helps them eliminate the non-essentials, rethink their packing, and get it all in to a carry-on-sized bag.

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Select items of clothing that layer well, complement each other, and can be easily washed.
- Skip high-maintenance clothing that needs to be dry cleaned or ironed.
- Use accessories to juice up outfits.
- Maximize your personal item and wear as much as you can onto your flight.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/women>.

## CHAPTER 8.

### PACKING LIGHT FOR LONG-TERM TRAVEL

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Only pack enough clothes for 7 days, no matter how long you're traveling for. It is easier to find a laundromat once a week than it is to carry all of the extra weight around with you the entire trip.

— Nick Huggins, Chief Adventurer at Nick's Travel Bug

*This chapter contains contributions from Jeremy Michael Cohen and Shawn Forno.*

If there's one thing I've learned from over a decade of long-haul travel it's this: every trip is the same.

You are not a beautiful snowflake, neither is your once in a lifetime journey. An 18-month trek from Alaska to Chile is identical to crossing Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railroad, hitchhiking Europe, or an Indonesian surf safari – at least as far as your bag is concerned. There are exceptions of course, but long trips all face the same obstacles – lengthy transportation, harsh weather, shifting cultural norms, and budget issues, to name a few. Packing is about overcoming these obstacles.

You can't prepare for everything, but if you master these

three packing pillars – Mobility, Multi-Purposing, and Compromise – you’ll be well on your way to long haul travel bliss. My focus isn’t solely utilitarian; I believe we can look and feel great on the road while packing everything in one bag.

## MOBILITY

### FEWER CLOTHES = MORE TRAVEL

When we hear “packing tips,” we always think of clothing, but longer trips actually need *fewer* clothes than short ones. In fact, clothing should take up less than half of your carry on bag for any trip over three months. Long term travelers have different needs than people traveling for just a few weeks – remote work, specialized gear, climate fluctuations, and shifting cultural norms. Limiting your wardrobe to essentials frees up room for those other concerns.

Barring OCD hygiene habits or Arctic exploration, this basic wardrobe template is a great start for your around the world packing list:

- 2 pairs of comfortable pants
- 1 pair of shorts
- 1 top and 1 bottom insulating layer
- 1 swimsuit
- 3 t-shirts
- 3 tank tops
- 1 long sleeve shirt
- 1 button up/collared shirt

- 1 pair of light, flat shoes
- 4 pairs of underwear
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 belt
- 1 wool knit cap
- 1 light, water-resistant windbreaker/jacket
- 1 fleece shell

### THE GOLDEN KEY: LAYERING

It sounds obvious, but the key is layering. Don't try to bring clothing designed for only one climate. Doing so would be expensive and waste a ton of space in your pack. Everything you bring should be able to be worn in any weather. Winter-weight fabrics will weigh you down and frustrate you on the road. Any specialized items you may need, like gloves, can be bought locally and passed on afterwards. Focus on versatility and layer-ability.

You can always find a stylish piece that can be layered with other options to make it perfect for any climate. Use layers to dress smartly and look good.

### **Base Layers**

Base layers are the foundation of a versatile wardrobe and will quickly become your best friend. Be thoughtful about your base layers and choose wisely. You don't even need to worry about how they look, because odds are no one will ever see them with the lights on.

You'll need several high quality, breathable base layers that you can wear basically all the time. Your list should

include underwear (plus long underwear or tights for a trip through cold weather) undershirts, socks, and t-shirts. These base layers should be made of wool or synthetic microfiber. They're both breathable. Also, when you're hot, wool and microfiber wick sweat away from you; when you're cold, they keep you warm. They also tend to not get stinky like cotton does.

Another super important quality about these two fabrics is that they dry really, really quickly. I can't overstate the importance of quick drying fabrics. If any of your base layers happen to get wet or sweaty, they'll always be ready to wear again after a few hours of air drying. Most importantly, you can hand-wash and hang-dry your socks and underwear whenever you want in your hostel room. Because you can wash and dry your base layers so quickly and easily, you only need to bring a few pairs of each.

Two to three pairs of socks and underwear is all you need for any long-term trip. One pair of long underwear for both top and bottom will be sufficient. Long underwear make jeans or khakis and any long sleeve shirt an ideal outfit for even the most frigid conditions.

My highest recommendations for base layers go to Smartwool for socks and ExOfficio for underwear. I generally travel with two pairs of Smartwool socks and two pairs of ExOfficio underwear.

Really. That's all you need.

I've also had great luck with Under Armour Cold Gear for long underwear, which are the tight fitting but warm undergarments football players wear under their

pads in the snow. They're incredibly comfortable, take up barely any space, and have kept me warm at the Sundance Film Festival and in Sweden during Christmastime.

You can find a huge variety of great base layer t-shirts these days. I've worn Under Armour, North Face, and store brand microfiber t-shirts, and they've all served me well. Go with what fits your budget and style needs. Just stay away from cotton if you're serious about layering.

## **Bottoms**

At Tortuga Backpacks, we're big believers that jeans are the best, most important pair of traveling pants. They're versatile, stylish, durable, and stain resistant. But lots of people disagree. Nonetheless, I highly suggest you take at least one pair of jeans with you on your multi-climate trip. You can wear them to the club, museum, or for a hike. With some long underwear below them, they're great for a snowy day. Best of all, you're probably making a mistake if you wash your jeans more than twice a year.

For an approximately eight week trip through hot and cold weather areas, I would bring two pairs of jeans – one fancier and one more rugged – one pair of khaki shorts, and possibly one pair of synthetic fiber shorts for rugged adventuring and/or swimming. That's it.

If you're really into lightweight travel and don't care too much about going out at night, you can get away with one pair of convertible pants/shorts that zipper off around the knee. To be honest, I think convertible pants are ugly as sin, but lots of people like them, and they're surely efficient. I wouldn't hesitate to bring a pair (and maybe no



other bottoms) if I were taking an outdoor-focused trip like a safari.

In all, I'd recommend two to four pairs of bottoms. Jeans get my highest recommendation.

## **Tops**

Shirts and tops are your opportunity to get creative and show your personal style, but durability is still key. Remember that you'll be wearing your base layer t-shirts almost every day in almost every environment. My style is pretty classical, so I go with grey, black, and blue generally. You can never go wrong with a grey t-shirt and khaki shorts or a pair of jeans. If your style is a bit louder or more colorful, make sure that your base layer t-shirts match that.

Bring two shirts for going out, unless you know that you don't plan to socialize. Again, let your personal style shine and don't stress about efficiency. For guys, two button down shirts are probably perfect. Or, bring one button down and one polo shirt. For girls, bring two blouses that make you happy that you're not in your base layer T anymore. Bring what you find to be wrinkle resistant at home, but don't fret whether it's perfect "travel gear." Socialize on the road in the clothes that make you happy and confident, but keep in mind you only need one or two options.

I recommend one very durable and versatile sweater or fleece pullover. I tend to pack either a black fleece pullover or a grey wool sweater. A nice sweater is generally acceptable for any semi-formal affair – like a

dinner party – in a cold weather city. This heavier weight top will also be great for wearing over your base layer t-shirts and under your jackets for those freezing nights. If you're moving from city to city, no one will notice that you've worn a sweater multiple times that week.

## **Outerwear**

You'll only need one-and-a-half pieces of outerwear: a waterproof, windproof shell jacket and a fleece jacket. I say one-and-a-half because I don't consider the fleece jacket only as outwear. It's also the second most essential layering piece behind your base layers. You'll wear that fleece jacket on chilly summer nights in the Mediterranean and underneath your shell in the most frigid Scandinavian winter. It's great if your shell and fleece jackets are a convertible set that attach in some way (zippers, snaps or Velcro), but it's not essential.

Your waterproof, windproof shell jacket will be a worthwhile investment because it'll be your rain jacket year-round, in any climate. These jackets are very stylish, so they're appropriate anytime, except for in the most formal settings. In reality, it's oftentimes the wind and precipitation that chill us to the bone during the winter, so you'll quickly realize that your shell jacket is more useful than lots of heavy "winter" jackets that let through plenty of wind and rain. That's why so many skiers wear these jackets with just base layers underneath.

I wear a North Face fleece and shell set. I fully recommend North Face, and you can find very affordable used jackets on eBay or Craigslist.

## BEWARE THE DAY BAG

Travelers, like goldfish, expand to fill all the available space. A secondary “day bag” can quickly become an extension of your carry on, adding 10-20L of weight, fees, and hassle. “*But everyone needs a day bag!*” you squeal. Yes, day bags are awesome, but only when they are part of your carry on, not an additional bag. Let me put it this way: Your fully loaded day bag needs to fit inside your fully packed carry on bag.

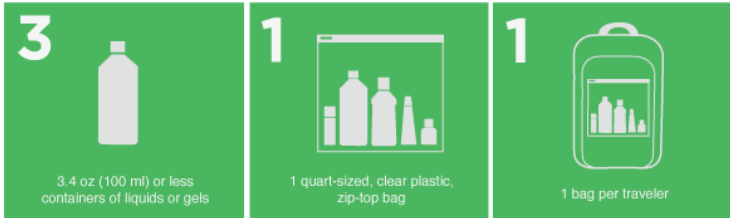
Why? Because the stuff in your day bag is the stuff from your carry on. If you pack your carry on to the brim and then pack a full day bag you now have two bags – a checked bag and a carry on. Plus, you have to wear the bag on your chest which is so terrible I can’t even stand the thought of it.

Find a day bag that rolls up to fit in your carry on, or put what you want in the day bag, then pack it at the top of your carry on for easy access. Commit to one bag, even for a much longer trip.

## MULTI-PURPOSE

No area requires more multi-purpose mojo than your carry on toiletries. Liquid restrictions suck, but don’t sweat the 3-1-1 because it’s easy to pack for months without breaking the TSA rules.

# THE 3-1-1 RULE FOR CARRY ON LIQUIDS



Here's what to bring:

- 1 full-size deodorant stick
- 1 3.5 oz tube of toothpaste
- 1 regular toothbrush
- 1 roll of floss
- 2 3.5 oz bottles of combo body wash/shampoo
- 1 quick dry towel
- Nail clippers

## **Fancy Upgrades:**

- 1 tube of rosemary scented hair gel (oh yeah)
- 1 tin of solid cologne (it's a thing)
- Solid shampoo bars
- For the ladies: powdered mineral makeups are a great alternative to the liquid ones
- Athletic tape: it's a waterproof band-aid, custom-sized blister pad, bag repair kit, and a billion other things

The key to carry on compatible toiletries that go the distance is simple: avoid most “travel-size” items. You need deodorant for months, so buy one that lasts more than a few weeks. A 3.5 oz. shampoo bottle is tiny, so bring two. Fill each with body wash/shampoo combo and refill as you go. It’s ok to use full-size stuff if you limit your total number of items and use dry goods when possible.

If you clean your teeth, wash your hair and body, and smell nice you’re getting the job done. *\*Golf clap.\** The only exception is travelers with contact lenses. That’s a whole different thing and I feel your pain.

Whatever you do, don’t compromise on dental hygiene. Travel toothbrushes are a waste of money, and floss only weighs a few ounces. Do your mom proud and just floss already.

Frequent travelers should consider applying for TSA PreCheck. Once approved, you’ll have access to an expedited screening process including a separate security line. In the PreCheck security line, you can leave your laptop and liquids in your bag and don’t have to take off your jacket or shoes. PreCheck is the closest you can get to being treated like a human being at the airport. The PreCheck program costs \$85 for 5 years. If you travel abroad, join Global Entry. Global Entry offers all of the benefits of PreCheck plus expedited re-entry into the United States for \$100 for 5 years.

## **COMPROMISE**

Every item in your bag is a compromise; doubly so for the

long haul carry on traveler. Luckily, the value of each item really only comes down to two factors:

- How heavy is it?
- How often do I use it?

Nowhere are these two questions more easily answered than your tech and gear. So let's trim the fat without losing too much function.

#### THE "RULE OF TWO"

Do not pack more than two tech items. Phone, laptop, DSLR, tablet, e-reader – each one is useful, but you can't bring them all. Below are pros and cons for each:

#### **Phone**

Smartphones are so useful that I assume you'll travel with one. The question then is how to *best* travel with your phone so it can replace other heavier tech.

I use T-mobile's Simple Choice International Plan on my totally-not-unlocked iPhone and it's awesome. I can text and browse the web from 120+ countries without roaming fees. However, losing my phone in Colombia and reminded me that while phones keep you connected on the road, it's easy to disconnect from where you are.

Invest in some good headphones. Quality earbuds are worth every penny. Steer away from Beats and over the ear style headphones (they're big), but drop an extra \$20 for a pair of earbuds with noise reduction or dynamic bass. You're going to wear them a lot.

## **Laptop**

To bring or not to bring. The answer is easy: if you don't work *regularly* from the road do not bring your laptop. A laptop doubles the liability factor of your bag. They're fragile, valuable, a target for theft, and heavy. Don't forget that hefty charger and all those cables.

I'm currently lugging around a 17-inch MacBook Pro. I got an amazing deal on it and it's sweet for editing audio and video and making graphics, but I'll opt for the lighter Macbook Air or even a portable keyboard and a big screen smartphone on my next long haul.

## **Tablets, iPads, and E-Readers**

I love my iPad Mini. The battery lasts forever, I have hundreds of books, songs, and it travels well. However, I can't really work on a tablet. It also doesn't have the "pocketability" of a phone. For the long haul, tablets and e-readers don't quite cut it, unless you're super lean and don't need to do much work.

## **DSLR**

If you aren't a professional photographer – someone who makes money or displays their work – do not bring a DSLR. A DSLR completely changes how you travel. A decent set-up includes: multiple lenses, a padded case, flash, extra batteries, charger, SIM cards, carrying strap, tripod, and possibly an external mic. DSLRs are bulky, heavy, fragile, and expensive. Worse, you might not even use it that often. The stress of theft or damage might be

worth it for short trips but definitely not for the long haul.

Plus, smartphone cameras are getting ridiculously good. Upwards of 16-megapixel resolution, water-resistant cases, 4K video, and all kinds of software and apps like Hyperlapse let you shoot quality video. The days of traveling with a DSLR are numbered.

#### **ACCOUTREMENTS: THE GOODIES THAT MAKE IT ALL ALRIGHT**

Bring some accessories that make you really happy. For guys or girls, a scarf takes practically no space and individualizes almost any outfit. Or, perhaps it's a hat that's not absolutely necessary but makes you feel whole. Don't give up your personal identity on the road just because some traveling expert recommends all utilitarian outfits. You won't look cool or be happy if you're dressed like a hunting guide, so don't bother.

Take along some jewelry or a beloved hoodie, even if it's not high-tech fleece. Wear your favorite vintage cotton t-shirt on your flights; you never know who might be sitting next to you. Don't feel guilty about bringing one or two accessories that make you happy. If they become too big of a burden, you can throw them out. They're only stuff, and there's plenty more stuff to be had in this world.

#### **PACKING FOR A LONG HAUL FLIGHT**

Long-haul flights are a brutal test of endurance. You really have to love to travel to endure them. How do you survive them without going crazy? With proper preparation. Pack a toolkit of comfort items to survive



long international flights and you'll make the journey much more pleasant and arrive more rested.

## CLOTHING FOR LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS

Starting at the bottom, you will want comfortable, slip-on shoes. Slip-ons will get you through security faster and are easy to remove on the plane. Your feet will swell during your flight. Shoes with extra space will be the most comfortable.

Shower before you leave so that you can go shoeless without offending other flyers. We recommend Smartwool socks for any situation, including in-flight. These wool socks will keep your feet warm in a cold airplane. Unlike cotton, they won't get smelly or soggy. Smartwool socks are snug, don't droop, and will last because they're reinforced at the stress points. Some people swear by compression socks, but I haven't found them to be necessary.

For your upper body, bring an extra layer for warmth for when your plane feels like an icebox. As a San Francisco resident, where the weather is perpetually cool, I consider myself a light jacket expert. Hoodies work well and can be used to cover your head as a not-so-subtle "do not disturb" sign to your neighbors. If you need to look presentable at either end of your flight or are angling for an upgrade, wear something more refined like a cardigan or unstructured blazer. Both are still comfortable and can be rolled up into a pillow if you don't need the extra layer.

Sleeping on planes is hard. I can only do it out of pure exhaustion. To make sleep easier and to stay asleep, pack

an eye mask and ear plugs. For accessories with personality, check out Flight001's eye masks.

## FOOD FOR LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS

Every article about long-haul flights starts with one recommendation: stay hydrated. That is sound advice. Plane cabins are dry, so drink plenty of water to hydrate your body and skin. Instead of waiting for thimbles of water from the flight attendants, bring an empty water bottle that you can ask to have filled up or that you can fill in the bathroom. Any plastic bottle will do. My go-to reusable bottle is a Camelbak. The Wirecutter recommends the Klean Kanteen Classic.

Once I'm dressed and hydrated, my next concern is what I'm going to eat. An edible inflight meal is uncommon. Don't count on eating airline food. Bring your own food and, if you get something decent from your airline, consider it a bonus. Melissa d'Arabian of the Food Network's *Ten Dollar Dinners* recommends "protein plus complex carbs" for inflight snacks. On flights, and in general, I try to avoid anything refined, processed, or artificial.

Snacks that work well on flights:

- **Nuts** – Especially almonds. Avoid salted nuts which will make you *more* dehydrated.
- **Fruit** – Bananas, apples, or dried fruit without added sugar work well and won't make a mess.
- **Trail Mix** – Stick to mixes of nuts, dried fruit, and seeds. Avoid ones with chocolate-covered anything. Trader Joe's has a huge selection of good trail mixes.

- **Bars** – Clif Bars work well as do fruit and nut bars. Just check the nutritional information because many bars are loaded with sugar and artificial ingredients.
- **Whole Grain Salads** – d’Arabian recommends quinoa-based salads with olive oil. Unlike leafy green salads, they won’t wilt.
- **Dark Chocolate** – For enduring a 12-hour flight, you deserve a treat.

As a courtesy to the rest of your row, avoid smelly foods. Tuna may be compact and healthy, but it also stinks. Some studies recommend fasting for 12-18 hours before breakfast in your destination city to combat jet lag.

#### ENTERTAINMENT FOR LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS

Now that you’re clothed and fed, let’s make the flight fun, productive, or at least pass more quickly. Entertainment is a matter of preference. Books, a Kindle, or neither? Music on your smartphone? Movies on your iPad? Work on your laptop? Whatever works for you.

Long-haul flights are a great time to disconnect. You will be unavailable by phone and disconnected from the internet. Download movies to an iPad or sync Spotify playlists to your phone for offline listening.

Even after watching a movie or two, you’ll have plenty of time to clear your head. For me, flying is a time to think about the future of Tortuga Backpacks, sketch product ideas, and write. Regardless of your distractions of choice, make sure to bring a pen. You’ll need it for customs forms. If inspiration strikes while you’re in the

air, you'll have the pen for jotting notes or making sketches. Leave room for serendipity.

#### TOILETRIES FOR LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS

If you arrive at your destination without dying of starvation or boredom, the next step is to feel good. Even short flights can leave you feeling exhausted and disgusting. Longer flights are worse.

If you follow our advice to pack everything in a carry on, you will have your toiletries within reach on your flight. Grab what you need and make a quick visit to the bathroom to refresh yourself in the last hour before landing. Brushing your teeth and washing your face are the easiest ways to feel alive again. Aside from your toothbrush and travel-sized toothpaste, bring either face wipes or face wash in a refillable travel bottle. Applying deodorant wouldn't hurt either.

Jeremy and I are huge advocates for Burt's Bees lip balm. Your lips will dry out. Apply lip balm before and after your flight to keep them hydrated.

#### LONG-HAUL FLIGHT PACKING LIST

- Slip-on shoes
- Wool socks
- Light jacket
- Eye mask
- Ear plugs
- Water bottle
- Snacks

- Entertainment
- Pen
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Face wipes or face wash
- Deodorant
- Lip balm
- Moisturizer

## HIGHLIGHTS

There's no one "right" way to pack for the long haul. Anyone that tells you there is, is a crazy liar. However, if you use this framework to pack light, multi-purpose items, and you're not afraid to compromise, you'll be traveling the world for years.

- Pack fewer clothes for longer trips.
- Splurge on a good lightweight coat.
- Use multi-purpose toiletries and dry items.
- Only bring two "tech" items.
- Join Global Entry or TSA PreCheck if you live in the US.
- Pack comfort items for your long haul flights.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/longterm>.

## CHAPTER 9.

### PACKING HACKS

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*This chapter contains contributions from Shawn Forno and Shannon Whitney.*

We've almost reached the end of the book. By now you're prepared to pack for any adventure, in any climate, on any continent and do it in a bag that you can carry on. Goodbye checked bag fees and hassle, hello freedom. This final chapter addresses some last minute topics that may increase your efficiency by saving you time and money, while maximizing the usefulness of the little things in life.

#### **NEVER UNPACK**

##### THE BUG OUT BAG

Ever heard of a bug out bag? Or, a go bag?

As defined by Wikipedia:

A bug-out bag is a portable kit that contains the items one would require to survive for seventy-two hours when evacuating from a disaster.

Bug out bags are popular with disaster response

personnel, survivalists, and those anticipating a zombie apocalypse. What does a bug out bag have to do with travel? Fleeing from a natural disaster doesn't sound like a fun trip. Eating MREs doesn't qualify as a *culinary experience*.

You may not need a small bag packed *in case of emergency*. Do you have one packed in case of a last-minute trip? You don't need to be disaster ready, but are you travel ready? Have you considered creating a list of items to *keep* in your travel bug out bag. You don't need to unpack or re-pack from scratch every time you leave town. Keep your travel-only gear in your bag so you're *almost* ready to go at any moment.

## CLOTHES

You probably don't have a capsule wardrobe packed away in your travel bag to be worn only on the road. Do you have any clothes that you *primarily* wear on the road? Good candidates are merino wool t-shirts, any clothing made of "performance" fabrics, a rain jacket, a down jacket, travel jeans, or a wool buff. Every item that stays packed in your bag is one less thing you need to pack and one less thing you might forget.

## TOILETRIES

Toiletries are easier than clothes. Buy extras and keep your travel toiletries packed, filled, and in your travel bag at all times. Don't pack from the toiletries that you use every day at home. Buy an extra toothbrush and comb to keep in your bag. Use refillable GoToob bottles for liquids and refill and replace when you get home. When you're ready to travel, you won't have to worry about

checking your toiletries. You will know that they're filled and ready to go.

For any toiletries that can't be squeezed from a GoToob, buy travel-sized extras from Target, a drug store, or the website 3FLOz. When you get home, replace any empties in your toiletry kit with an extra from your reserves. I have handfuls of travel-sized toothpaste, shampoo, and body wash in my bathroom at home.

## ELECTRONICS

I was recently in a cab about to leave for the airport when I realized I hadn't packed my computer. Luckily, the laptop pocket of my bag was open so I noticed something was wrong. Yes, even the pros screw up.

Like clothes, you probably don't have an extra computer stashed away in your bag. That's okay. A computer is a big item that you'll *probably* remember, even if it isn't packed ahead of time. You *can* pack up everything other than your computer or tablet.

Buy extra cables and keep them packed in your bag. I keep a spare phone charger, laptop charger, and set of earbuds in a small, zippered pouch. I usually carry that pouch in my day-to-day bag but move it to my travel pack when I leave home. Keep your travel adapter and power strip in your bag at all times. The latter will let you charge multiple devices through one adapter when in foreign countries. The Wirecutter recommends the Accell Home or Away power strip. The Belkin Mini Surge Protector is also popular.



## ACCESSORIES

What else can you keep packed? I have a medium-sized packing cube in my bag, which I use for underwear, socks, and t-shirts. A travel towel is also useful on most trips. Travel towels are compact yet absorbent. If you're staying at a hostel or apartment, you should definitely bring a towel. I carry an REI Multitowel Lite. PackTowl is another popular brand.

Other travelers like to carry carabiners or first aid kits. Everyone has his, or her, favorite “one little thing.”

## FIVE ITEMS TO NEVER BE WITHOUT

Rubber bands. While they won't make your bag lighter, you'll be able to fit more into a smaller bag. I use rubber bands to tie up each piece of clothing and use up the most space that's available to me in my bag. It's also a great way to keep the clothing in your bag neat and organized.

— Michael Tieso, blogger at Art of Adventuring

The smallest items can be the biggest life savers. A plastic bag or a roll of duct tape is invaluable compared to the specialty gear you bought from REI. The right multipurpose tool takes up hardly any space and can do a variety of jobs for just a few dollars, especially if purchased abroad.

Some people pack specific clothes “just in case” the right situation arises. We recommend packing the following items because they're helpful for *every* situation that you'll find yourself in. Just try not using them on your next trip.

## ZIPLOC BAGS

Zip-top plastic bags are versatile and pack completely

flat when empty. Most travelers use quart-sized plastic bags in place of a dopp kit to transport liquid toiletries through security in their carry on bags. Plastic bags are a cheap barrier for anything wet or dirty in your bag. Pack dirty flip flops or sandals in a bag to keep them from soiling your other clothes.

Keep wet clothes, swimsuits, and towels away from the rest of your gear. I put an extra plastic bag in my travel towel's carry bag to handle wet items. Packed this way, the plastic bag uses zero extra space. You should only use a bag for this purpose for a short time. The plastic bag prevents your clothes from airing out and fully drying. Eventually, anything you have packed in the bag will start to smell musty and grow mold. I once forgot a swimsuit in a plastic bag in my luggage. I packed the luggage away in my closet where it sat for months. The next time I used my luggage, I had to throw the swimsuit away. The smell hit me as soon as I opened the bag.

#### DR. BRONNER'S MAGIC SOAP

Our favorite, do-it-all cleaning product. Bring a bottle of Dr. Bronner's soap and leave every other liquid at home. Dr. Bronner's products are all-natural, concentrated, and can be used for anything. Bring a small bottle and use it as detergent, body wash, face soap, shaving cream, and even toothpaste.

I tried brushing my teeth with the unscented liquid soap. The taste wasn't *enjoyable* or similar to toothpaste, but I survived. You shouldn't have any reservations about using Dr. Bronner's soap externally or on your clothes.

## SCARF, BANDANA, SARONG, OR BUFF

Bring a thin, multi-functional piece of cloth like a scarf, bandana, sarong, or buff. I prefer a bandana or scarf, but any of these options will work.

Depending on the size of your scarf or alternative, you can use it as a:

- Scarf
- Headband
- Dress
- Belt
- Shirt
- Head covering
- Handkerchief
- Pillow
- Blanket
- Towel
- Makeshift tote bag
- Privacy curtain in a bunk bed

A merino wool buff is a versatile option in this category. Wool transitions well between warm and cool weather and won't stink like synthetic fabrics will.

## US DOLLARS

Stash away a few dollars from home in case of emergency. In some countries, you can pay with dollars at the airport and near the border until you can withdraw

local currency from an ATM. Dollars are also good to have on-hand for when you land back in the States.

Having money stashed is a great hedge against theft. Extra cash can also be used if you need to “grease the wheels” to get out of trouble. If you stay alert, the world is a pretty safe place. When things go wrong, dollars are a powerful tool for persuasion. Of course, *I’ve* never had to do this.

### CARABINER

Even a cheap carabiner meant for keys, not mountain climbing, can do multiple jobs for you on the road. A carabiner can be an attachment point for a clothesline at your hostel or apartment. You can use a carabiner for hanging clothes or shoes from your backpack.

Heavy duty carabiners can do even more work. Doug Dymont, at [OneBag.com](http://OneBag.com), uses carabiners to:

Provide a comfortable handle for (sometimes multiple) shopping bags, secure luggage to stationary objects, attach shopping bags... to the shoulder strap of my luggage, keep my day bag off a dirty floor.

### MORE HANDY GEAR

We asked for our readers’ favorite multipurpose tools and received a lot of great suggestions, including:

- Duct tape to fix clothes, mend backpacks, and seal drafty windows
- Deck of cards to stave off boredom

- Tea tree toothpicks to keep your mouth clean and tasting fresh
- Ozonol for “minor medical mishaps”
- Leatherman tool without a knife so that it’s TSA-friendly
- Cell phone
- iPad Mini
- Pillow Pets

## MINIMALIST HACKS: REPURPOSING EVERYDAY ITEMS

I’m a big fan of objects and items that can perform a double duty... Having one item serve many purposes keeps my packing to a minimum.

— Katie Coakley, Travel Writer

### BEFORE YOU GO

You can find most of these items around your house or at a local Dollar Store so I recommend getting what you can *before* your next trip. Some might be tough to find on the road.

#### **Sunglass Case Cord Organizer**

I actually hate sunglasses (never wear ’em) but the case they come in is super useful. Find one that zips and presto – you’ve got a convenient padded organizer that’s the perfect size for holding all your charging cables, cords, and even an extra set of headphones.

## **Shower Cap Your Shoes**

This is an oldie, but a goodie. Simply wrap the shower cap around the soles of your shoes and never worry again about mud on your cashmere.

## **Contact Solution Case Lotion Holder**

Again, this is a popular hack, but it's everywhere for a reason. It works. I don't travel with lotion, but packing fancy schmancy cologne for full moon parties has never been easier.

## **Tic Tac SD Card Case**

I usually travel with a DSLR camera – complete with a handful of SD cards, and at least one USB thumb drive for transferring photos in a pinch. A Tic Tac box is the perfect size for safely storing both. Plus it's lightweight, water-resistant, and minty fresh.

## **Cassette Tape Phone Stand**

An empty cassette tape case can also hold your USB drive and SD cards, but I love how these lightweight durable cases fold open into the perfect smartphone stand. Now you can show YouTube kitten videos the way they were meant to be seen.

## **Prescription Bottle First-Aid Kit**

An empty prescription bottle makes a *great* mini first-aid kit. Toss a handful of dramamine tablets, diarrhea pills, aspirin, some safety pins, and a few band-aids in and you're ready for most accidents short of the ER.

Complete the kit with tweezers and a tiny pair of scissors (TSA compatible) for extra credit.

**Pro Tip:** The orange-tinted glass protects medication from UV rays making them last long enough for multiple trips.

### **Bike Light Headlamp Hack**

*Bye-bye dorky headlamp. Hello, bike light.*

A handlebar mounted bike light is a simple, cheap solution to hands free lighting. Wear the bike light on your finger like a ring or clip it around a variety of other things – a backpack shoulder strap, necklace, or even your belt or belt loops – and point it in the direction you want. Bike lights are small, light, durable, waterproof, and the batteries last *forever*.

**Pro Tip:** Bike lights are free at bike events if you live in a big city and range from \$7-\$50 retail.

### **Stretchy Belt Daypack**

This is as close to a Batman utility belt as you can get:

1. Wear a stretchy belt (I like the Uniqlo “stretch tape belt”)
2. Hang stuff from the back (jackets, shirt, book, etc.)
3. Hands free daypack.

**Pro Tip:** Hang a wool cap off the back and use it like a little satchel to hold smaller items.

## ON THE ROAD

You can prep all you want, but once the rubber hits the road things are bound to get weird on any trip. Here are a few hacks to help you adapt to the hiccups on the fly:

### **Garbage Tie “Lock”**

In a world where you can pick a kryptonite lock with a pen having the strongest heaviest lock isn't always the best defense. Thieves are like lions – they cull the weak from the herd. The key to preventing theft is simple – don't be the easiest target. Enter, garbage tie “locks.”

Simply twist a garbage tie through two zippers toggles and voila, your bag is 5-seconds harder to open. It might not sound like much, but that five seconds is all that stands between a pickpocket and your passport.

**Pro-Tip:** Garbage tie locks make you bullet-proof on crowded public transportation.

### **Dryer Sheets in Your Suitcase**

You smell bad. Toss a dryer sheet in your bag and smell better.

### **Electrical Tape Band-Aid**

I always travel with a roll of red electrical tape. It makes a great custom-sized waterproof band-aid or blister pad and if you have a bright color (red/yellow), you can tag your luggage with it for quick recognition. Plus...you know...tape fixes everything.



## ChapStick Safe

Stash a little emergency cash in an empty ChapStick tube. Roll up a twenty, stash it, and toss it in your day bag for a little peace of mind in case the worst happens.

## Body Lotion = Shoe polish

If you travel with boat shoes, like I do, shine them up for a night on the town without lugging shoe polish across half the planet. Simply dab body lotion on the leather and rub vigorously. Ta-da: shiny shoes.

**Pro Tip:** Ask a lady at your hostel to borrow some lotion. When she cringes and says, “Ew, you’re a creep,” just smile and tell her you’re shining up your dancing shoes. Then ask if she wants to come along. Shiny shoes *and* a dance partner. Way to go.

## Egg Timer Time Lapse Photography

If you’ve ever seen those beautiful panning time lapse travel videos and drooled with envy but thought you could never get that same effect with your smartphone, worry not.

***Up your travel photography game with an egg timer.***

Place the egg timer sideways (or buy one that’s flat on top) and set the timer to about an hour. Place your camera on top and set the time lapse setting to anywhere between .5 – 3 secs. When the timer dings, you’ll have a flawless time lapse photo session you can quickly edit into something cool.

## PACK AHEAD OF TIME

Procrastinating is easy, but that doesn't make it the right thing to do. We all love thinking about our next trip. Some people even enjoy planning it. Hardly anyone likes packing for it. That's the purpose of this book. We've done the research and the dirty work for you. To make your life easier. To save you from (one of) the least fun parts of travel.

This section is our attempt to convince you to pack ahead of time. Yes, I know it sounds crazy. You probably pack the night before most trips. I've done the same, and still do, sometimes. Give it a try on your next trip. If packing early doesn't help, you can go back to packing at the last minute... as usual.

## REMEMBER WHAT YOU (ALMOST) FORGOT

My memory becomes amazingly sharp on the way to the airport. That's when I remember all of the stuff that I forgot to pack. Packing at the last minute leaves you without any time to remember what you forgot to pack.

Packing even *one day early* gives your mind time to remember that "one last thing." Give your subconscious time to work. You might remember something crucial when you're in the shower. You might even see something you almost forgot sitting around your apartment instead of in your luggage where it belongs. Give yourself a margin for error.

## BUY WHAT YOU NEED

In addition to remembering what you forgot, you can

also see if you need to buy anything. I don't recommend buying a whole new, trip-specific wardrobe. Don't waste your money on clothes you'll only wear on your trip. By packing early, you might find that you need packing cubes or that your travel-sized toothpaste is empty. Or, like me, you might find that you left your wet swimsuit growing mold in a plastic bag for months and need to burn it and buy a new one.

## FEEL CONFIDENT, NOT ANXIOUS, ABOUT YOUR LUGGAGE

People procrastinate out of fear, not laziness. We put off packing to avoid the anxiety.

*What should I bring? Should I pack less? Should I pack more? What if this happens? What if that happens?*

We pack at the last minute, leaving those questions to linger in the back of our minds. Reduce your mental burden by packing early. You can answer these questions and put your mind at ease by figuring out what you (almost) forgot and buying anything else that you need. Give yourself enough time to do it right. This is the mental side of the 'packing light' ethos. You have enough to think about when you travel. Take your luggage off that list.

## FIND MORE SPACE IN YOUR BAG

We'll end with one for the over-packers. By packing early, you can get 8% more space in your backpack. After you've packed your bag, gravity will condense your clothes down so that they take up less space. Your pack will "settle,"

just like a house, as air takes up less space between your clothes.

You may have noticed that your bag, which was bursting at the seams when you packed it, feels less tight after your flight. That's the same effect at work. By packing the night before, you're paying an 8% "tax" in storage space. *Is it worth it?*

## **PACK WITH THE TSA IN MIND**

There are a few inevitable things in life: death, taxes and getting caught behind the slooooooowest person in line for airport security. Use these ideas to speed up your next TSA screening in the US. Other countries have differing standard practices, but these general tips will serve you well. Be sure to check out the website for international airlines, as some do not allow any liquids and others have no restriction on shampoo at all.

## **WHILE PACKING**

While the TSA agents might not greet you with the warmth of your best friend, you should still get friendly with their website. The convenient search engine on the right side called "When I Fly Can I Bring My...?" will save you postage on mailing things to yourself or throwing away a precious souvenir. Often passengers contact airlines with questions about bringing this or that. Before calling or emailing your carrier, check the TSA website to see if the item in question is allowed. Then use the airline's website for dimensions and be sure to follow the carry on luggage rules. Be sure to lean on the site as a resource if you're traveling with a pet, art or anything unusual.

As they scan your bags, the agents glance at the contents for anything alarming or dense. As simple as it sounds, pack neatly and there's less to see. By coiling cords instead of wadding, they are easily identified. Same goes for neatly folding or rolling clothes as well as separating other irregular items.

If you've flown in the last 14 years, you know the 3-1-1 rule for liquids, etc.: 3.4oz per container, all in 1 quart-sized bag, 1 bag per passenger. Pack that little plastic bag on an outside pocket of your suitcase or backpack for easy access. Nothing makes me cringe like watching someone unzip their luggage and rifle through unmentionables to find that cursed Ziploc.

If you travel with a laptop, keep it reachable. It needs its own bin for the scanner.

Before leaving home, double check that none of your everyday items are prohibited on the plane. Commonly confiscated items, like pocketknives, pepper spray and small tools, need to be unpacked. I recommend following TSA on Instagram to see all the wild things they find as well as their service dogs.

## ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT

TSA rolled out an app for the road warriors called My TSA. From the airport, you can post your wait time and see what other fliers are experiencing. It features the handy "Can I Bring?" option as well as the weather and on time performance of your local station. A quick check before leaving the house paints a picture of how much

time you'll need to get through security and make your flight.

On the ride to the airport, I empty my pockets into my coat pockets or purse. Since the coat comes off, those pockets can be full. I usually loosen my shoes so I can slip them off easily too. I always jot my confirmation number on my hand so I can waltz up to the kiosk and tap it in to print my boarding pass. No digging it in my backpack or scrolling around in my phone looking for that number. You can use your credit card to pull up your reservation as well, print it at home or access it via a mobile boarding pass. Whatever you do, keep it handy as well as your ID or passport.

#### IN LINE

The most helpful tip for standing in line is know the drill. Shoes off, belt off, coat off, bag of toiletries ready, laptop in a separate container, GO! On the other hand, remember what you don't have to take off. No need to dig out your phone, camera or any electronics smaller than a computer. Keep all that in your bag or coat pockets. You can keep your jewelry on, too!

If you have Global Entry Access, you might be lucky enough to keep your shoes and belt on. To learn more about the program and to apply, check out the TSA site. Practice makes perfect. With every trip I take, I pack more efficiently and find one more edge to smooth off this process.

#### PACKING TO SAVE MONEY

No matter how frugal you try to be, international trips

are expensive. Every dollar (or pound or euro or rupee or dinar) you save counts. Before you even leave home, you can start saving money by packing the right way and bringing the right stuff. Here are four easy, money-saving tips for your next trip.

#### CARRY-ON BAGS ONLY

Your biggest potential savings is in avoiding airline baggage fees. Checked luggage fees typically average \$25/flight. Ouch! Packing modestly enough to fit everything into a carry-on bag is the first step toward savings. If you're looking for a carry-on backpack, I, of course, recommend the Tortuga Travel Backpack.

#### PACK MULTIPURPOSE TOOLS

Limit the amount of toiletries you bring by leaving your body wash, shampoo, toothpaste, and laundry detergent at home. Yes, I'm serious. Save money and valuable packing space by using Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap. One awesome product can take the place of four.

Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap is one of the most versatile products you'll ever find. You can use it to wash your body and hair, eliminating the need for soap and shampoo. A few drops on your toothbrush can stand in for toothpaste. You can even use it to hand-wash your dirty clothes in a hostel sink.

Since Dr. Bronner's only carry-on-sized bottle is 2 ounces, you may want to bring a bar of his soap for shower use on longer trips. Bonus: the bar (a solid) doesn't have to fit into your 1-quart bag.

## BRING SMALL ITEMS INSTEAD OF RENTING THEM

Yes, I'm suggesting saving money by bringing *more* stuff. Hear me out. Some hostels make a few extra dollars by renting out items that you may forget, like padlocks and towels. Rather than pay these fees at every stop, include these small items in your packing list.

I recommend a small, quick-drying, microfiber towel and a TSA-compatible lock. You can use the lock on your bag or a locker as needed.

## WEAR HIGH-TECH FABRICS

Instead of spending money on laundry, pack clothes, especially shirts, socks, and underwear, made of high-tech fabrics. The antimicrobial, quick-drying fabrics found in the most cutting edge travel clothes reduce odor and can dry in a few hours after being hand washed in a sink.

My favorite brands are Smartwool for socks and ExOfficio for underwear and everything else.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Pack a bug out bag.** A partially-packed bag will simplify packing and maximize your readiness to travel. Keep travel-only clothes, a full toiletry bag, extra charging cables, a pair of earbuds, a travel adapter, a power strip, and a travel towel in your bag so that you're ready to go at a moment's notice.

**Pack ahead of time.** You will forget fewer things, have a chance to buy anything you need, reduce your mental burden, and save space in your bag.



**Pack with the TSA in mind:**

- Research any items in question.
- Pack neatly.
- Keep your flight info handy.
- Know what needs to be scanned and what you can wear through the metal detector.
- Download the TSA app to make life easier.

**Save money.** Travel carry on only, pack multipurpose items, and carry your own towel and lock.

For the links from this chapter, visit <http://plbook.co/hacks>.

## AFTERWORD

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Welcome to the Carry On Club. Congratulations on making the commitment to travel light. I hope that this change will be as beneficial to your travels (and life) as it has been to mine.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. During the six years since I co-founded Tortuga Backpacks, I have spent countless hours thinking and writing about packing. Hopefully that time investment will benefit you. With the right gear and clothes, you can relax and enjoy your trip instead of being weighed down, literally and figuratively, by your luggage.

You can find links to the companies, products, articles, and videos mentioned in the book in the online appendix at [plbook.co/afterword](http://plbook.co/afterword).

Your feedback about this book is greatly appreciated. Please leave your comments in a review on Amazon or email them to us. Let us know how else we can help.

For your free carry on packing list and even more packing tips, join our mailing list.

Happy travels,  
Fred and the Tortuga Backpacks Team

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Finally, thank you to Team Tortuga: all of the awesome travelers whose support makes everything that we do possible. Without you, Tortuga Backpacks would not exist. We will do our best to live up to your expectations and continue helping you to travel better.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Fred Perrotta** is the co-founder and CEO of Tortuga Backpacks. He oversees the company's products and marketing.

Fred is originally from New Castle, Pennsylvania. After graduating from the University of Maryland, he worked on the AdWords team at Google. That job allowed him to visit India for the first time and to live in Sydney, Australia for three months. In 2010, Fred left Google to co-found Tortuga Backpacks.

Fred is an avid traveler and has visited, lived in, or worked in over a dozen countries. Aside from travel, he nerds out about live music, standup comedy, nonfiction books, black coffee, and the NBA. When not traveling, Fred can be found eating his way through San Francisco.