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Recommended by Members of the Canadian Institute of Travel Counsellors

Top Packing Tips

- Sample packing List, courtesy of Travel Cuts
- Pack comfortable and sensible shoes. High heels, new shoes, sandals etc may be comfortable but may not be sensible. Those old shoes with the low heels that you wear on your day off—are most likely perfect for strolling, exploring, discovering and getting on and off bus tours. Save the fancy shoes for the dress-up evening..
- Make sure you take a change of clothes in your carry-on bag (and a bathing suit if you're going to a sun destination); Use a carry-on suitcase, where possible
- Always pack prescription medications in your carry-on bag
- Put all liquids in zip-lock bags—things like shampoo, conditioner, hairspray and sunscreen can make a big mess if they leak! Be aware of new carry-on restrictions
- Zip-lock bags are also great for wet clothes, dirty clothes or anything that needs to be—or should be kept 'reasonably' air tight.
- Always pack bags as "half yours - half mine" anytime you are travelling with other travel companions - there is nothing worse than 1 suitcase getting lost and someone completely devastated with nothing to wear! It's better everyone has 2-3 days worth of clothes than none at all - it eats up valuable vacation time if calling baggage claim centres, travel insurance companies, shopping for replacement items and retaining receipts for baggage delay claim allowances, etc. Garment bag all professional or valuable clothing (wedding dresses, tux, suits etc) and carry on the aircraft rather than check it.
- Put all medications, camera equipment, ipod, valuable in your carry-on or purse.
- Be wary of any size and weight limitations for all baggage from each airline, cruise line, coach company, rail or local transportation
- Travel light—Over-packing is one of the chronic problems that many travellers face. Pre-plan your packing, carefully consider what you need and pack accordingly.
- Take an expandable piece of luggage or an empty foldable carry-on bag – you know you are going to buy something on your travels.
- Mix and match so you don't have to bring too many clothing items
- Clothing made from man-made fabrics will be easy to wash and quick to dry.
- Don't take too many outfits or shoes. Research the temperature/weather of the destination beforehand and pack accordingly. Try to take only 1-pair comfortable walking shoes, 1 dressy pair for more formal occasions (coordinate with all evening apparel) and a destination appropriate shoe or sandal can double as slippers in your room or for around the pool deck.
 - A bathing suit cover up is very useful and doubles as a robe in your room.
 - A leisure/walking outfit serves many purposes: light jacket for cool evenings, a quick change from room to pool, bathing suit cover up, lounge wear in your room, workout gear, and definitely easy to put on in case on fire alarm requires an early morning exit.

- Make use of your bathroom scale and weigh your suitcase after it is packed. The airlines are very strict with their weight allowance policy.
- Don't waste space—pack small items in your shoes
- Make sure your address/contact information is also listed inside your bags
- I usually pack folded t-shirts, shirts and pants in Ziploc bags or old shopping bags from the grocery stores and press all the air out of the bag. Then, if they move around in the suitcase, as they can do while flying, the clothing won't get all wrinkled. I have done this for years, before the packing bags they sell now came out. This isn't rocket science but it works!
- Pack photocopies of the information pages of your passport—2-3 copies in different areas of your hand or checked luggage. That way, if your passport is stolen or lost, you have immediate information to provide to get your passport replaced.
- Put a layer of bubble wrap in your suitcase for any breakables you may buy at your destination.
- Use the space bags (where you can push the air out of the bags) - clothing takes up a whole lot less room.
- Roll all your clothes and put them in your suitcase. Less wrinkles and more space
- Keep a toiletry/cosmetic bag packed with small travel sizes at all times. The bag can include such items as make-up, first aid supplies, a travel clothesline and detergent, nail supplies and even a corkscrew (checked luggage only). No more last-minute running around and you won't forget any necessary items – just re-fill as necessary and go!
- Rule of Thumb: Bring half the clothes and twice the money!
- Be sure to back a Sun Survival Kit: hat, sun glasses, water bottle, snacks (energy bar), waterproof sunscreen, lip balm SPF15, sunburn relief lotion or jelly containing lidocaine, insect repellent, topical antibiotic ointment, OTC pain reliever and anti-inflammatory, antacid and a beach bag.
- Pack a carryon with a change of clothes for a cruise so you can start enjoying right away. Basically if you don't need it with you on the plane don't bring it in your carry-on. For Cuba bring your own peanut butter and ketchup.
- Always place a piece of paper inside your luggage--(preferably right on top of your contents) detailing your emergency contact at home while you are away, and also the name, address and phone number of where you will be when you are travelling. This helps should your luggage get lost and all identifying baggage tags on the outside of your bag are removed.
- Forget the big bottles of your favourite shampoo and conditioner - they are unnecessary weight. Pack a bathing suit, black skirt and black pants, then any combination of tops that will match, and you're done! Pack once, then leave 1/2 of it at home. Good excuse to go shopping!
- Always identify your personal luggage with something colourful and outstanding on the handle of the bag....
- Don't put your home address/phone on baggage tags. Strangers at airports have been known to engage you in a conversation at the airport only to be noting your address and cleaning out your home while you are away. In addition if your baggage is delayed/lost/mistakenly claimed by someone else, it is better to have a contact number where they can leave a message with someone to contact you. (eg use a business card) But remember that the name on the luggage still has to be yours, for security reasons. Nothing says that the address has to be your personal home address.
- Always pack your own "emergency kit". Don't rely on the hotels, tour company or cruise ship...what YOU need is not necessarily what the rest of the world needs.
- bundle wrapping
- Don't pack too early. You end up pulling something out and forgetting it.
- Don't forget those baby wipes! Big and strong enough to clean up any messes and keep your hands fresh and clean!

- Ladies: a broomstick skirt will help you cover all bases: modest yet cool, suitable for all occasions.
- A sarong - can use as a shoulder bag, towel, skirt, sunshade, sail when canoing / kayaking, arm splint, shawl when visiting temples/mosques, sheet if a bed looks 'dubious', pillow case enclosing clothes for a pillow on those long train/bus rides, and as a present for someone less fortunate at the end of your trip
- Only take on your trip what you can afford to lose. (after being robbed of everything in Spain, a few years ago, it was a lesson well-learned to not travel with your favourite, one-of-a-kind items --luckily for us, everything was recovered)
- Africa/South America/Asia travels: handy to pack "wet ones", because of the local washroom facilities (and packing toilet paper into ziplock baggies on these journeys also helps).
- Bring along inexpensive flip-flops for those public showers/youth hostel accommodations.
- For longer trips, taking some photos of "home (family, winter in Canada etc), to show the locals what your home is really like (additionally, a small map of the world, and pointing out where Canada is, to where you are, many people are very interested in "where are you from, and why are you here?")
- Although you cannot bring beverages through security, there is no issue with food. Trailmix + Pringles travel very well, as does cheese/crackers/cookies... Just remember to garbage it before you arrive at destination customs, or you can face big fines.
- I recently was on a 15 day trip and one person had purchased 15 cheap t- shirts, 15 cheap tube socks and 15 pairs of cheap underwear.....and threw out, one set of each every day after he wore them....I thought that was pretty interesting.
- Make sure you have an extra pair of contact lenses, eyeglasses or sun glasses along.
- Often when travelling there are senior discounts and perks, so if you are a senior (65+), be sure to pack your senior's card.
- If visiting a foreign country, invest in a phrase book or language dictionary.
- Take along some J CLOTHS as face cloths as they are light and pack and dry easily. Some countries do not supply facecloths.
- Extra batteries are a plus because the camera always goes flat at the most wonderful places. Don't miss that "Kodak Moment"
- Remember a travel alarm clock in case you cannot get a wake up call.
- Take a kite when you go on a cruise. Great to fly off the stern!
- Take a beach mat (either bamboo roll up or the new expandable fabric ones that "pop" out) so that you are not always paying for chaise lounges.
- For those who are Hawaii-bound:
- Thermal underwear, warm hats, mitts and socks if you plan on doing the Haleakala Sunrise trip (Its very cold up at the top!)
- Polysporin in your beach bag! (You need to apply it immediately if you cut your foot on coral)
- Water shoes to prevent you cutting your feet on coral!
- Place your liquids and gels into a litre-size plastic bag before you leave for the airport. They do provide this service at the airport, but there could be a line-up. If you are checking your bags—then no need to do this BUT you may wish to put toothpaste, crèmes, ointments, shampoo etc in sealable plastic bags just in case they leak.
- Check out your local travel store. These are stores that offer not only durable, multi-purpose travel clothes, but items that can make life on the road a lot easier and environmentally friendly. Even if you don't buy anything, it can give you ideas re packing tips etc.
- Pack according to your itinerary. Does not matter if this is for business or pleasure. Look at your daily itinerary and decide how many change of clothing you may have per day based on what you are doing. Make a list. Then pack accordingly. How many casual, good casual, semi-formal, formal etc. outfits you may need. Also, try to wear some items more than once.
- Use the Eagle Creek "Pack-It" System
http://www.eaglecreek.com/travel_insights/travel_toolkit/travel_tips/tips.php?id=1002 or something similar to organize clothes and keep them wrinkle free

- Packing some sort of stain remover - spot treatment like Tide-To-Go is great as it's travel-size friendly and works for most stains.
- Always pack a small, light, but powerful pen/flashlight. You'll be amazed how often you'll use this, especially when going to off-the-track places. Do pack a multi-use Swiss army type knife/scissors/etc. Pack a post-it note pad: multiple uses. Pack a small roll of masking tape or similar tape. Don't forget a 'hotel-type' sewing kit, especially for 'out of the way' places.
- Just before leaving home ask yourself three things: Do I have my airline tickets and travel vouchers? Do I have my passport or other required identification? Do I have my credit card and/or travellers cheques? Anything else you have forgotten can be bought.

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