

# Packing Tips

Some travelers jam two weeks' worth of gear in their bags for a long weekend. Others pack a bit too lightly and forget important things like [medicine](#) or [passports](#). Savvy travelers strike the perfect balance and bring just what they need -- with a little help from our list of road-tested packing tips, of course!

## Tips for Air Travelers

You may not pack liquid or gel substances in your carry-on unless they are in individual three-ounce containers, enclosed in one clear, quart-size, plastic, zip-top bag per passenger. Any larger containers of liquids and gels must be packed in your checked luggage. For more information, see [Know Before You Go: Airport Security Q&A](#).

Be aware of restrictions on the size and number of bags you may bring onto your flight. Certain discounters (including Spirit Airlines, Ryanair and easyJet) now charge a fee for every checked bag, while many other airlines have been lowering the maximum permitted weight limits for checked luggage. While most airlines allow passengers one carry-on bag and one personal item, travelers headed to or passing through the U.K. may only bring one small bag through airport security checkpoints (and the size restrictions are rigidly enforced). Your best bet is to [check your airline's Web site](#) as well as the [TSA Web site](#) before every trip to be sure your bags are compliant with the latest rules and regulations.

Do not lock your checked bags except with [TSA-approved locks](#); otherwise, if your bag is selected for random screening, agents will have to break the lock to get inside.

Do not over-pack your bag. Screeners will have a difficult time closing your luggage if selected for inspection, which will only lead to wrinkles and the potential for lost articles.

Carry all film with you onboard, as screening equipment for checked luggage can damage undeveloped film.

Place any packed belongings you don't feel comfortable with strangers handling in clear plastic bags.

Do not stack books and other documents on top of each other; instead, spread them out throughout your bag.



## Packing Methods

When packing your clothes, you don't want to neatly fold them



individually as you would in a dresser. If you do, they will crease when compressed. Here are a few alternatives:

### **Rolling Your Clothes**

Backpackers swear by this method. Rolling works well with pants, skirts and sports shirts. Lay the item face down, fold back the sleeves and then roll from the bottom up.

### **Fold Clothes Together**

Take two or more garments, for example trousers, and lay half of one pair on top of the other. Fold the one on the bottom over the pair on the top. Then take the other and fold it on the top. This gives each pair some cushion where you've folded it so it's less likely to crease or wrinkle in the folds.

### **The Bundle Approach**

This ingenious method of packing which we learned from Judith Guilford, co-founder of the Easy Going travel store and author of the "The Packing Book," has now become our favorite. It's a bit difficult to explain without a demonstration, but we'll do our best. You need luggage that opens up and lays flat to do this. You will also need a flat, soft, pouch-like rectangular "core" with dimensions that are at least 1/2 to 3/4 the size of your luggage compartment. This can be a pouch filled with underwear or something similar.

Start with your sports jacket or the longest, most wrinkle-prone item you have. With the collar or waistband flat, place it against the bottom edge of the bag and drape the rest of the garment over the opposite side of the bag. Take another garment and place it in the opposite direction, flattening and smoothing out both garments in the bag and draping the remainder over the side. If you have trousers or other narrow items, do the same with them in the narrow direction of the bag. Keep alternating your items, ending up with the most wrinkle-resistant clothes you have.

When you finish, place your "core" in the middle. Now you're going to start folding the garments over the core and each other in the reverse order you put them in. If you fold something over and there's excess draping over the sides of the bag, tuck it underneath the bundle you are creating.



What you will end up with is a bundle of all of your clothes that looks like a pillow. You can pick it up in one piece. It's compactly packed and doesn't waste an available space in your luggage. Plus, because of the way things are folded, your clothes will wrinkle less.

To find something in the bundle, lay it flat and unwrap until you reach the layer you want. Take the item out and refold the remainder. If done properly each layer

should result in a self contained bundle at each layer.

### **Tissue Paper**

For delicate items, try tissue paper. Lay the item face down and place tissue paper on top. Fold it up with the tissue paper inside. Use additional layers of paper as you fold the garment so it is completely wrapped in and around paper. This is easy enough the first time you pack, but becomes a pain if you have to keep repacking. We only use this approach for evening clothes that we don't want to crush.

Make your own must-pack list with our [interactive packing checklist](#) before your next trip!

Source: <http://www.independenttraveler.com/resources/article.cfm?AID=96&category=9>

## **21 Tips to Help You Pack for a Trip**

We have compiled a great deal of packing tips after years of traveling and together with some members suggestions, we thought we should share them with other travelers setting out.

### **1. Security and Keeping Details Safe**

Scan your passport, passport photos and paper tickets (if not the e type) in. Store this (in an email for e.g.) in your web based email account.

You can also store the details of your emergency 'lost card' telephone numbers in your web based email account so you know who to contact if your credit card or ATM card is lost or stolen.

This way, even if you lose everything, you have immediate access your all important information. You can even email the details page of your passport to the embassy or consulate when applying for a new one. *(Tip from a member)*

### **2. Split up your valuables**

Split up your bank cards, cash, travelers' checks and credit cards as much as possible in different pockets, your bags and wallet when packing. In case you do get robbed, at least you won't be strapped for cash (unless you have all your bags AND your wallet stolen of course!).

### **3. Nalgene/Small Bottles**

Use nalgene/small bottles to pack toiletries and other small items. There are several sturdy and (very nearly) waterproof ones, with clear/see through ones being preferable (easier for security purposes post August 2006). You can also use small bottles to repack shampoo or lotions so that you don't have to always carry a big bottle with you. This is especially useful if you normally take these items in your carry-on luggage, which as of early 2007 is much more restricted than before.

### **4. Backpack Tips**

When you are packing things into a backpack, place the lighter items at the bottom and the heavier ones on top. Your bag will feel lighter this way as the pack rests on your lower back. It is also smart to place the things you use the most on top. Dirty clothes are perfect to pack at the bottom of a backpack.

### **5. Plastic Bags**

It is always handy to have a few plastic bags around certain items, especially toiletries. Not only does it counter any leaking, the bags can also come in useful to keep dirty clothes in, as garbage bags or even as a makeshift umbrella. Ziplock or other airtight plastic bags are the best.

### **6. Pack in Plastic**

Pack everything in clear plastic bags (preferably zip lock), divided into items e.g. underwear, t-shirts, shorts etc. before packing in your suitcase or backpack. One plastic bag for each type of clothing. This is extremely useful in various ways. When you unpack your bag you just take out a series of bags and you can see immediately what you want. So an overnight stay somewhere just means taking 1 item out of a bag - no rummaging!! In addition, if you have to unpack at customs etc, instead of having to disgorge all of your clothing etc out in front of everybody, you can calmly take maybe 5/6 bags out, the contents of which can be clearly seen by the officials. To repack then is also dead easy. Just be sure not to leave your plastic bags lying around if you are traveling in nature! (*Tip from a member*)

### **7. Clothes**

Pack only what you know you will use and if you are traveling for more than three weeks, plan to wash on the road.

### **8. Split up clothes when traveling with others**

When you are flying somewhere and especially if you have a few stopovers, divide the clothes between different suitcases/backpacks/bags etc. If one persons luggage doesn't arrive at the destination, they'll still have clean clothes available. Airlines generally don't compensate lost luggage for the first 24-48 hours so this will save you money if it happens to you. *(Tip from a member)*

### **9. Separate Beach Bag**

When packing to head to the beach consider pre-packing whatever you might need at the beach into a beach bag inside your backpack or suitcase. Especially if traveling with kids, this will prove a timesaver!

### **10. Suitcase lovers**

For those using suitcases without a divider. A piece of cardboard makes an excellent divider and helps keep your clothes organized and neat as you are able to lay them out flat on the cardboard. It also makes airport inspections a lot less of a hassle as you can lift out your divider with clothes on top easily.

### **11. Gifts**

While it is a good idea to take some small gifts with you while traveling, pre-wrapping them can be a waste of time if you are flying and your bags are opened. *(Tip from a member)*

### **12. Flashlights or Torches**

When packing a flashlight or torch (or any other item with batteries for that matter), turn the batteries around so that if the item is accidentally turned on, you won't empty the batteries. Don't forget to turn the batteries back around when using the flashlight.

### **13. Diaper Bag**

If you are traveling with babies, then the diaper bag is an excellent place to hide your valuables. This most likely will not be the first thing to be stolen. It's also a great to use as a waste bag (even when not traveling with a child!), especially at places that do not allow you to flush toilet paper. *(Tip from a member)*

### **14. Shoes**

If you want to make sure everything else in your bags stays clean and odor free, place the shoes inside old socks and then inside airtight plastic bags (ziplock).

### **15. Carry-On**

Keep any medication and important papers in your carry-on bag. On long flights with multiple stopovers (especially if flying via London, LA or other major airports), packing a fresh change of clothes is a good idea as bags tend to get delayed or lost on long haul, multiple stop flights. You don't want to end up stuck without medication, clothes or your important papers even if it is just for a few days.

## **16. Roll Technique**

Somehow it seems that bags will hold more if the clothes are rolled rather than folded. If you roll in tissue paper, the clothes will also get less wrinkled.

## **17. Traveling to warm destinations?**

If you appreciate cold drinks think of using a six-pack cooler as a toiletry bag. Once you arrive at your destination and unload your toiletries your 'toiletry bag' guarantees cheap cold drinks on the beach, no matter how remote.

## **18. Local Tourism Offices**

The best source of information is usually local. Check out Tourism Offices to find unbiased feedback on the best accommodation to suit your needs. Exercise caution in countries where you feel the information might not be so unbiased!

## **19. Minimize on toiletries**

Take only half a tube of toothpaste rolled up tight, store shampoo in small containers, only take half a roll of toilet paper (for emergencies only) and crush it so the middle is folded.

## **20. Take solid shampoo bars and tooth powder**

Solid shampoo bars and tooth powder (instead of tooth paste) can be easily located on the internet and make carry-on travel in this age of liquid restriction possible. Places like Beijing now bar all liquids in carry-on bags, and you'll still be able to breeze through without checking. *(Tip from a member)*

## **21. Planning on carrying a lot of luggage?**

While carrying a lot of luggage is not recommendable, sometimes it is necessary in the case of relocations and so on. If you have the possibility, fly via the US as airlines will allow you 64kg (two 32kg bags) instead of the 20kg in the rest of the world. Even if it is just a stopover in the US, you will be allowed to carry the extra weight. Check with your local travel agent for the details.

## **22. Packing List and Trip Planning**

Ready to start packing? Or is there still more trip planning to be done? Check out our [Packing List](#) and [Trip Planning guide](#) to help you get the most out of your trip by planning well and packing everything.

Source: <http://www.travellerspoint.com/packing-tips.cfm>