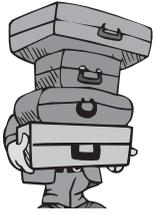


Packing light — the bare necessities of travel



Last month we consolidated the packing lists of dozens of readers into The Ultimate Packing List. Not that anyone ever could take it all, but just about everything you ever would want to remember to pack is on that list. This month we're going the opposite route and focusing on how LITTLE you can get by with on a trip.

We'll start with The Ultimate Carry-on Packing List — the basic essentials you would take with you on board a flight and from which you could survive for a few days if your checked luggage were lost. Listed are just the items that would be in your carry-on bag; it's assumed that, if applicable, you would be carrying your purse, laptop computer or briefcase separately. It's also assumed you would be wearing a money pouch, a watch, carrying your keys, etc. (What a

shame we no longer can carry on board one of the most popular travel accessories: a Swiss Army knife.)

Note that in his "Discerning Traveler" column this month, Dr. Wagenaar updates his travel medical kit. Also note that another *ITN* Contributing Editor, Rick Steves, shares his packing list at the website www.ricksteves.com/plan/tips/packlist.htm.

Following The Ultimate Packing List, we present readers' suggestions on how to not only pack light but get by with less. *ITN* readers are among the most experienced travelers, so these tips are tried and true. Maybe they will inspire some of you to leave the steamer trunk at home next time.

With all you'll learn about packing light, you're sure to have room for a copy of *ITN* and a sample-copy signup sheet for other learned travelers you meet.

THE ULTIMATE CARRY-ON PACKING LIST

- Passport, airline tickets and other travel documents
- "Just in case" list (phone numbers to call, insurance policy, credit card numbers, etc.)
- Photocopies of passport information pages and other travel documents, ATM cards, etc.
- Extra passport photos
- Itinerary/brochure/guidebook
- Prescriptions, medications and personal medical history summary
- Health and hygiene items
- Cosmetics
- Extra eyeglasses
- A couple of days' clothing change
- Extra pair of shoes
- Windbreaker
- Scarf
- Photographic equipment and instructions/film/
FilmShield Bag
- Flashlight (small)
- Alarm clock
- Batteries — for camera, clock, watch, flashlight, hearing aid, etc./recharging unit
- Tiny first-aid kit
- Packets of facial tissue
- Moist towelettes
- Zip-lock baggies
- Snack food
- Water bottle
- Notepad and pen

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Special clothing for specific areas (Antarctica, the desert, etc.)
- Hat/visor
- Raincoat or poncho
- Swimsuit
- Sunglasses
- Suntan lotion, sunblock
- Collapsible umbrella
- Insect repellent
- Insect bite medication (Campho-Phenique, After-Bite)
- Mosquito net
- Water purifying tablets/iodine
- Electronics
- Power converter, transformer/electrical adapter
- Phrase books/foreign-language dictionary/Quickpoint
- Maps
- Reading light, book light
- Neck pillow (inflatable)
- Eyeshades
- Earplugs
- Fan (small, battery run)
- Surgical mask, dust mask
- Moisturizing cream/lip balm
- Moist towelettes (Wet Ones)
- Quick-drying towel
- Pillowcase/sheets (for hostel)/sleep sack
- Spot remover (Shout Wipes packets)
- Laundry soap (Woolite)/clothesline/clothes pins
- Sink stopper (universal)
- Sewing kit
- Eyeglass repair kit

Readers tips on 'packing light'

Have you ever wondered how some travelers can manage for weeks at a time with just one suitcase — and a carry-on, at that!? Following are tips, suggestions and insights from experienced travelers sharing their personal knowledge on how to save space in luggage as well as get by with less.

We each travel (for any length of time) with just one carry-on; these fit under the seats in front of us and make great footrests when we're sleeping on long flights. Thus, our luggage never gets lost or damaged by handlers. We have been to Antarctica (cold) and Thailand (hot) with this amount.

Ask yourself what you really need for this or that situation. Go to see, not *be* seen. Think what you need to get ready for bed or started for the day. These are the essentials.

Use one basic color for clothing and everything goes with everything else.

Items packed each serve more than one purpose. For example, tights for lounging or walking to down-the-hall bathrooms — they can be worn with a long top during the day or for extra warmth under slacks.

Wear layers of clothing — no coat but rather a long-sleeved shirt with a sweater, windbreaker, sweatshirt and/or fleece jacket — lots of warmth and each usable alone.

Wash laundry almost every night so it doesn't accumulate and there are no dirty clothes to carry. Clothes not dry? Put them in a plastic bag and finish up at the next stop.

How to make a few clothes seem like more? Wear short-sleeved tops under long-sleeved, then long-sleeved under short-sleeved. For variety or dress-up, add jewelry, a belt and scarves and day wear becomes evening wear, as on a cruise.

We take one pair of shoes that are sturdy for walking but look good enough for dinner.

Take the smallest-possible sizes of shampoo, toothpaste, etc.

Photocopy or tear out pages of guidebooks, then toss them once they are used.

Our usual luggage weight, for each of us, is about 18 pounds, including reading material (paperbacks to be tossed as read).

Before leaving, list everything you've packed, then revise and evaluate the list as soon as you get home. Eliminate items where possible.

DOROTHY PEAVY, GRASS VALLEY, CA

A few years ago I did a 6-week trip, including Amsterdam, Berlin and a farmstay in Poland, all with a 22-inch suitcase. My trusty Gucci bag (so ugly, they sold it to me for a song) held jeans and sneakers (for the farm visit); a 3-piece dress with two extra blouses; another dress; a scarf; a sweater with pockets and collar (for the flight); four pairs of underwear, and dress shoes (backing up the walking shoes I flew in). I also have sleep clothes and slippers that are lightweight and used only for trips.

I weigh everything.

The scarf was not only for dress and to wear against the rain (you can expect rain about a third of the time in

Europe) but for entering certain churches.

Take nice old clothes that you're tired of and leave them. I left the jeans and sneakers on the farm, knowing I'd be asked at Customs if I had visited any rural areas.

I travel wearing only cotton, for utter comfort. I also take two cheap watches.

Items I do *not* take include leather belts, shorts, clumpy jogging shoes, jewels, leather coats or jackets, dress boots or anything in glass bottles.

Purchase foreign maps there; they're too expensive in the States. Same for batteries and film — buy there and save the weight.

DOROTHY KEARN, SONOMA, CA

Since most of my traveling is to cities, I can get by with three dresses and lingerie that can be washed and hung to dry overnight plus two or three pairs of shoes, a jacket or sweater and many of the small essential items on my list. I usually take one small suitcase with wheels plus a carry-on.

ARLINE AMES, GLENDALE, CA

I have an "all-purpose, fits-in-one-carry-on" packing list. I think I have it down to a science. We have been on many trips of eight to 19 days when this is all I took, and I probably could go much longer without adding anything.

I carry everything I might need *with* me, as I don't want to waste precious time looking for cold medicine, for instance, when I could be sightseeing. But everything is in the smallest size that can be found: tiny toothpaste, soap, comb, etc. There's no point in taking more than I need.

Pills are shed of all unnecessary packaging, only making sure they are properly identified so I don't get detained for carrying illegal drugs.

This means prescription drugs stay in the containers they came in.

I take fewer clothes. I don't always need a skirt or swimsuit, for instance. Needs depend on the destination and expected weather. (We mostly avoid cold climates and fancy cruises, which cuts down on clothes needed.) My favorite clothes for traveling are lightweight, roll for packing without wrinkling badly, have hidden pockets and are easy to wash by hand.

When we are in a location for more than one night, I wash clothes as needed in a washbasin using shampoo or soap (you don't need detergent). I hang them up to dry on my tiny nylon clothesline.

Shout Wipes packets (my favorite stain remover) are handy when I spill spaghetti sauce or coffee.

I pack a lightweight but roomy tote bag that can be used to carry stuff on the bus or for shopping and can also be used to pack all those souvenirs and gifts for the trip home.

Passports and tickets remain in a large, hidden pocket

My husband and I use three lists: mine, his and ours. That way, we cover everything.

CYNTHIA NEUMAN & RICHARD RAWSON, SACRAMENTO, CA

of a shirt or jacket or in my belt bag until I no longer need to constantly show them, then they get transferred to the money belt. I wouldn't go anywhere without a safe place to store tickets, passport, credit card, etc.

The notebook I carry in my purse has, written on the back pages, vital information such as phone numbers of family, friends and credit card companies and the addresses of our hotels. The rest is used as a sort of travel diary, for daily notes, a list of purchases (for U.S. Customs), etc.

My last tip, another trick to packing light — the book I take to read on the plane is always a paperback (often a secondhand book). As it is read, the pages are torn out and thrown away!

MARGARET R. SCHWAB, CASTRO VALLEY, CA

Take in your carry-on only what you can't live without, such as comfortable shoes, prescription drugs, one change of clothes, etc.

Pack items in containers.

With clothing, take only two tops for every bottom (including jackets).

I always take a small compass with a suction cup and a swivel mount, purchased at Target. I stick it on the dashboard of our rented car or on the window next to my seat in a bus or train.

*CARROLL CHANDLER,
DALLAS, TX*

Be sure you have lots of pockets.

Hang three garments on good wire hangers, cover them with plastic dry-cleaner bags, then basket-weave them in your suitcase.

Pack no electrical stuff at all.

How light can I travel? As long as everything on my

master list and/or my personal list is kept to an absolute minimum size and weight (including clothes), all of the items will easily fit into a 22-inch carry-on suitcase.

On any journey, it is much more important to be able to travel quickly and effortlessly than it is to be the fashion king or queen.

BARBARA HUBINGER, DANVILLE, CA

My packing list is on a 3"x5" card. Clothes make up the smallest part of the list!

I have always found that it is the small incidentals which make the difference when traveling and they are the most likely to be forgotten.

CAROL BLUCHER, MAMARONECK, NY

It's hard to compile a definitive packing list, as each trip has different requirements, but here are a few favorite ideas that work for me.

Ladies, take a lightweight shawl in a neutral color. It's great for those warm climates that have chilly evenings or for open-air drives in the early morning. Keep it plain and it goes anywhere.

Take a pair of black pants or a black skirt. Even on a casual trip, this can help you look dressy for when you find a nice restaurant. A white, long-sleeved T-shirt can go with the black pants for that dressier moment. And a colorful neck scarf can be added to the outfit to make it look differ-

ent for another wearing.

Small black flat shoes or sandals go with the outfit above and can double as bedroom shoes for cold or rough floors.

Here's a tip for the men: get one of those khaki jackets they sell at TravelSmith (60 Levern, Novato, CA 94949; phone 800/950-1600 or visit www.travelsmith.com) that has all those good pockets. The fabric doesn't wrinkle, so it can also be worn in the evening.

JUDY EISEN, PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL

I take older underwear and socks and discard them along the way. Doing so allows me room to bring back a few items I buy. Also, I do not bring toiletries back home.

I make one pair of shoes the only shoes I wear, except for a pair of flat sandals that also serve as slippers.

I buy one-time-use cameras upon arrival and take them to local one-hour developers, so only the photos are brought back, not exposed film or bulky cameras.

I wear a comfortable, older outfit on the plane ride to Europe and replace it with a new one purchased there. I wear the new one home.

CHARLOTTE ROTHER, OCALA, FL

Regarding how travelers pack for a trip, I am listing below what I packed for our 16th trip to Europe last year. The categories help me visualize what I'm taking and where it will be packed: the suitcase, the carry-on or my purse.

I am 68 years old, so luggage is a careful consideration. I prefer strong yet lighter-weight bags with sturdy wheels. TravelPro bags have been very serviceable. My 20-inch bag weighs about 8½ pounds and my 22-inch bag weighs 10½ pounds. If I'm on an escorted tour I take the 22-inch bag, but when traveling independently I use the 20-inch one. The tote bag, 10½"x15½"x9", fits over the handle of either bag.

At the airport, I check my suitcase. Lifting it up to the overhead bin is not easy anymore.

I could take less clothing, but I've always taken a variety of items that are discarded at the end of the trip, especially lingerie and shoes. Comfortable shoes are essential and I take three pairs plus slippers. Two pairs are discarded, leaving a pair on my feet and more room in the suitcase for souvenirs on the return home.

In case of cooler weather, a lightweight wool scarf and my Polartec 200 fleece jacket/blazer are especially useful. The jacket is lightweight, warm and packable.

All of my clothing is packed in plastic envelopes or zip cases for easy identification, so I don't need to search long or repack constantly. I also take kits of miscellaneous items in zip cases; each is a different pattern or color, so it is easy to identify and grab one from my luggage as needed. One kit holds travel information, another small tools and another sewing and eyeglass repair items. There is a laundry kit, a first-aid kit and a cosmetic roll. All kits are reviewed and refilled at the end of each trip and at the beginning of a new one.

PAULA STRAIN, ROCKVILLE, MD

On our European trip, we stayed in 3- and 4-star hotels. My black silk pants and black knit silk sweater plus a colorful scarf were perfect for dinner and the theater. There was no need for all new clothes.

Just be sure your clothes are clean, well pressed and coordinated so that you are neatly and simply dressed. Comfortably attired, you will be able to savor all that a trip offers!

Following is the list of what I packed for our 15-day Paris/Switzerland trip, June 13-28, 2001 (**asterisked items were thrown away at the end of the trip*):

Bags — 20-inch wheeled TravelPro, TravelPro Tote, nylon purse, zippered net bag (foldable).

Documents — passport, airline tickets, railpass, hotel confirmations, travelers' checks, cash.

First day's traveling clothes — knit jacket, T-shirt, pants, hiking boots*, Cool Max socks, undergarments.

Outerwear — fleece jacket, nylon parka, silk sweater set.

Outfits — denim jumper, black silk sweater and pants.

Tops — four short-sleeved tees, two long-sleeved tees in various colors.

Pants/shorts — two pairs pants, one pair shorts.

Shoes — sneakers, black flats*, folding slippers.

Lingerie — five pairs underpants*, three bras*, one pair kneehighs*, two pairs pantyhose*, four pairs socks*, nightgown.

Accessories — four scarves, necklace, watch, mittens, swimming suit.

Don't bother taking a suit bag. Pack all shirts, jackets and dresses on hangers in a regular suitcase and check it. When you unpack, just hang up all the garments. I've found that they tend to wrinkle less in a regular suitcase than in a hanging one.

NILI OLAY, NEW YORK, NY

Miscellaneous — journal, camera and film, snacks, water bottle*, book*, maps, stationery, umbrella, folding cane, zip-lock bags.

PAT LEM, LOS ANGELES, CA

For women, I suggest two bras, four pairs of panties, one slip, four tops, two pairs of slacks, one skirt, one sweater, one jacket, two pairs of socks, one pair of nylons or knee-length hose, one nightgown/PJ, dress shoes and two sets of comfortable walking shoes.

Do use a mix and match of colors in two or three shades.

I take a trench coat and use that as a robe in the evening.

I have mostly silks and lightweight rayon items that pack easily and don't wrinkle and which dry overnight after washing. Plan to wear everything more than once and wash out the hose, undies, etc., each evening.

One of my tricks is taking old underwear and, at the end of the trip, simply leaving it in the wastebasket at the hotel. (However, one time I received a package from Greece with all of my old underwear in it!)

Here's one of my best tips. Cut two pieces of cardboard to a size a couple of inches longer than your suitcase. Bend up the

sides of the cardboard about two inches and use them as separators in your suitcase. Put shoes and heavy items on the bottom, clothing in the middle and underwear, nightclothes, cosmetics, etc., in the top layer.

Now, each time you want something, rather than removing everything, you simply can lift out the piece of cardboard to get to the layer you need!

PIM DODGE, FRANKFORT, MI

Clean out your wallet and purse, leaving behind all cards you don't plan on using on your trip. I change my wallet and take only those credit cards and ID that I may need.

Leave behind your keys.

Don't take your appointment books or address books. For any dates or information you'll need, copy it out and take just that page of information.

Leave behind the expensive jewelry.

PATRICIA SETZER, SACRAMENTO, CA

Take only as much lotion, makeup or shampoo as you will need. I save motel shampoo bottles and put what I need in them. I also put everything in plastic rather than glass (glass is too heavy). All such items go into small zip-lock bags which then go into a large zip-lock bag. One large zip-lock contains basic things I *might* need, such as Imodium, antibiotic cream, Pepto-Bismol, etc. The other zip-lock bag has the things I use every day. I also tape a list of things within each bag onto the inside of that bag.

I put over-the-counter pills in a small zip-lock bag with the label taped on it, such as vitamins, etc. As you use things, the bags get smaller and lighter.

I use lots of suntan lotion, so if I'm going someplace

sunny and hot I carry a container of suntan lotion in both my day pack and my suitcase. That way, it's always handy when I need it.

I never take more than four pairs of pants (one in polyester). My dress pair of pants is black, and my tops are interchangeable with all of them. A neck scarf dresses things up and is handy if it gets cold. I roll

On a trip, washing clothes in the sink means you need a good stopper, but sometimes the rubber ones don't fit. You can carry a small piece of wooden dowel and use duct tape to wrap around the dowel until it fits the drain securely. Or dry off the area and cover the hole with two pieces of tape.

For washing clothes in the sink, Fels Naphtha is strong and works well. If liquid detergent is preferred, carry it in a plastic container for drugs or vitamins. Be sure the lid is non-childproof and the gasket of good quality. For extra protection against a spill due to pressure changes during the plane flight, store it in a plastic zip-lock bag.

*GEORGE S. DEHNEL
SAN DIEGO, CA*

all of my clothes and they unroll almost wrinkle free.

I take several pens (which you can get free from many businesses) as well as postcards with pictures of animals in my home area to be distributed to children I might meet. On my next trip I'll take a small world map so I can show people where Alaska is (I was in Thailand in March '02 and most people there had no idea of Alaska's location).

I carry an Eagle Creek bag that fastens around my waist and has a shoulder strap. It has three zippered pockets which I fasten shut with a large clip. It can't easily be snatched from my shoulder or unzipped without my being aware. It holds a lot and I have both hands free. We also both wear money belts all the time.

RACHEL BALDWIN, ANCHORAGE, AK

I wash my underwear each night and my shirts every couple of days. That way, I can take less.

I always take long-sleeved shirts with sleeves that I can roll up if it is hot. That way, they work for layering — an important factor in keeping my packing light.

I allow myself one disposable camera per trip.

I never check anything on an airplane.

NANCI MICKLON, LAKELAND, FL

I stuff my carry-on with necessities so that, if my checked suitcase is lost, I can manage while waiting for the magical reappearance of the luggage or until I can shop for replacements.

I pack a foldable robe, a nightie, slippers, clean underwear, hose and socks, all rolled up tight in plastic bags. Then I add a toilet kit, small first-aid kit and personal medications.

My carry-on is a light-gray, wedge-shaped (so it fits under the seat in front) American Tourister from 1959. I won it as a door prize in a "how to pack" workshop at a local department store. If I am forced to check it, I can spot it easily on a carousel.

Ms. MARTY RAUCH, LOS ANGELES, CA

I have successfully traveled up to three weeks in China, Europe and England with one small, carry-on size suitcase (soft-sided, with wheels and backpack straps) and a day pack.

In my day pack, which converts from tote bag to backpack, I carry my camera, medications, toiletries, inflatable neck pillow, eyeshade and reading material for the flight.

In my suitcase I carry a skirt ("broomstick" styles are great!), one or two pairs of slacks (in warm climates I wear slacks with zip-off legs that convert to shorts), four or five tops (long- and short-sleeved and mostly knit, which roll into a compact size), a denim shirt (doubles as a light jacket), windbreaker (folds compactly into its own pocket), umbrella, nightshirt, four changes of underwear and socks, bathing suit (if needed), several silk scarves, laundry kit and extra reading material (paperbacks, to be discarded as read).

Color coordination is crucial. Don't take any top that doesn't go with all your pants and skirts. To dress up, use colorful scarves (which take NO space) and inexpensive

Pack a sport coat that's neutral colored so it goes with everything. When traveling, wearing clothing with pockets really helps. Take washcloths; they're not supplied in many hotels overseas. Also, a big bar of deodorant soap is a joy when abroad.

JOELLYN ROSS, PHILADELPHIA, PA

costume jewelry (I never pack anything that I'd be upset about losing).

Because shoes are the weightiest item and biggest space-taker, I try to keep to one pair, whenever possible. I take a pair

of good walking sandals for warmer climates and heavier walking shoes (trainers) for cooler. Clarks makes good shoes that can be worn with skirts or pants.

In shopping for travel clothes, I found that TravelSmith has good travel clothes. I look for Cool Max or similar fabrics for easy laundering.

I get my zip-off pants from REI Travel Outfitters (phone 800/426-4840 or visit www.rei.com or www.reioutlet.com), which is where I bought my laundry soap (a tiny bottle lasts for a month; just a few drops are needed) and my day bag.

Magellan's (110 West Sola St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101; phone 800/962-4943 or visit www.magellans.com) has a line of travel clothing that is easy-wash and fast-dry. A bonus is that their pants also have hidden pockets that will hold a passport or money safely.

I always wear a money belt to carry passport, travelers' checks and cash. (After being pickpocketed in Athens a few years ago, I always conceal these things on my person!)

There are books on packing light. A good "freebie" is "Passport to Compact Packing," available from Magellan's, but experience is the best teacher.

DEE POUJADE, PORTLAND, OR



My packing list is organized according to the containers I use (Airplane Bag, Husband's Suitcase, Carry-On, Cosmetic Case, etc.). I assign a letter to represent each container (A for Airplane Bag, CC for Cosmetic Case, etc.).

On my packing list are two columns, one to check off when I've packed the item and one to indicate in which container the item is packed. Using a list like this enables me to pack everything except clothes far in advance, thereby avoiding any last-minute panic about forgetting something. In fact, most of my "containers" remain packed all the time so that they are ready for the next trip. Upon return, I refill items as needed.

Additional lists include Getting Ready, House Sitter/Exchange, Just in Case and Addresses/Phone Numbers. No trip of mine would be complete without each of these lists.

BARBARA HUBINGER, DANVILLE, CA