

The Ultimate Packing List



ITN asked readers to submit their “master packing lists” with everything they would, at some time, consider taking on a trip. We have compiled the results into The Ultimate Packing List.

Of course, as J. Arthur Freed of Los Alamos, NM, commented when submitting his list, “No one in his or her right mind would take *everything* on this list on any trip. It is meant to be a checklist from which to pick and choose depending on the situation.”

And, in fact, there are even more items to be listed than what you see here. Coming up we’ll have a list of items for specialty travel (camping, bird-watching, etc.).

Of course, many travelers aren’t looking for what *else* to pack but for ideas on how to get by with less. Next month, along with The Ultimate Carry-on List, we’ll print the tips from travelers who go weeks with just a carry-on. Find out how they do it. Coming up after that is a compilation of readers’ pre-trip “to do” lists — plenty of travel tips.

A note to go with this month’s list — aside from the obvious

choices, among items most frequently mentioned on readers’ packing lists were the following: plastic baggies (all sizes), moist towelettes, packets of facial tissue, comfortable walking shoes, fold-up extra tote bag, dirty clothes bag, extra glasses, extra camera, folding umbrella, photocopies of important documents, highlighter (for marking maps, etc.), preprinted address labels, duct tape and sink plug.

And here’s a tip from *ITN* Contributing Editor Wayne Wir-tanen: “Before your trip, call your travel insurance company, tell them where you’re going and ask if the toll-free 800 number in the U.S. is accessible from your destination. If not, ask what number or numbers will work so that you can get approval for any treatment you may need (especially emergency medical evacuation) BEFORE treatment or action is undertaken. The same goes for your credit cards — ask what number to call from overseas in case your card is stolen.”

And now to the list. (Note: items starred with an asterisk* may not be allowed in carry-on luggage for security reasons.)



DOCUMENTS/MONEY

- Passport/visas
- Airline tickets
- Transportation tickets, vouchers and confirmations for train, ship, ferry, shuttle, rented auto, etc.
- International “yellow” health card showing immunizations
- Travel insurance policy (trip cancellation, baggage loss, medical coverage, emergency medical evacuation, etc.)/travel insurance card (with number to call in case of emergency)
- “Just in case” list — phone numbers and e-mail addresses of health insurance provider (or HMO) and physicians as well as family contacts, in case of illness or emergency
- List of locations of hospitals accepting your medical insurance
- List of IAMAT doctors
- Personal medical history summary (allergies, blood pressure level, blood type, etc.)/copy of directive to physicians/copy of living will
- Trip itinerary (listing places, names and contact numbers where you will be staying)
- Group tour company phone number to call, if necessary, while overseas
- Hotel vouchers and confirmations
- Directions to hotels, residences, etc.
- Hostel card/hostel directories
- Frequent-flyer ID cards
- Air courier card
- Driver’s license — U.S./international
- Proof of auto insurance
- AAA card
- Park ‘n’ Fly card (for repeated airport parking)
- Handicap tag

We have a Park ‘n’ Fly card that we got at the airport. The company operates at both the San Francisco and Oakland airports. If we leave our car for three days, the card will be punched three times. After so many punches, we get a free week’s parking.

*RUTH & HUBERT RUSSELL
ORINDA, CA*

- Money (U.S. currency, including clean one- and 5-dollar bills)
- Foreign currency (including small change)
- Credit cards and debit cards as well as (to be kept in a separate place) a list of the cards and their expiration dates plus phone numbers to call in case of loss
- ATM (cash machine) cards and (to be kept in a separate place) a list of the cards’ access numbers/lists of ATM locations at destination
- Travelers’ checks and (to be kept in a separate place) a list of the travelers’ checks
- Personal checks
- Currency converter/list of current exchange rates
- Calculator
- Money pouch (neck, belt, waist or leg)
- Wallet/decoy wallet/purse/coin purse
- Phone card (ex., AT&T)/prepaid phone cards
- List of countries’ telephone access codes
- Overseas phone number(s) of your airline(s)
- Photocopies of... passport information pages/visas/airline and other transportation tickets/travel insurance policy and card/medical ID cards (ex., Kaiser)/itinerary/hotel vouchers/auto insurance card/credit cards/ATM cards/phone number of travel agent/driver’s license/eyeglasses or contacts prescription/serial numbers of cameras, computers, etc.
- Extra passport photos
- Photos of luggage and description of luggage, including brands
- Waterproof holder for documents
- Receipts of new-looking electronics
- Business cards

Even if you’re retired, you can print up business cards with your name, address, phone number, fax number and e-mail address. These are fun to pass out to people you meet along the way.
JUDY EISEN, PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL

- Member club cards — airlines, hotels, national parks, etc.
- Area entertainment discounts guide/vouchers/Coupons
- AARP card

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

- Prescription pills and solutions with accompanying prescription information/list of medicines
- Allergy medications — antihistamines (Claritin, etc.)
- Asthma inhaler
- Antimalarial medication (Lariam, quinine, etc.)
- Jet lag remedies (melatonin, etc.)
- Sleeping pills
- No-doze tablets
- Anti-nausea remedies, motion sickness medications (Dramamine, Mareline, Bonine)/acupressure bands
- Vitamins (vitamin C, multivitamins, calcium, zinc, echinacea, etc.)
- Electrolytes (sports drinks)
- Cold medications — decongestants, antihistamines (Sudafed, Actifed, Contac, Comtrex, Benadryl)/nasal spray
- Cough drops/throat spray
- Pain reliever (Tylenol, aspirin, Motrin, ibuprofen, etc.)
- Antacid (Mylanta, Pepcid, chewable Pepto-Bismol, Beano)
- Anti-gas medication (Phazyme)
- Anti-diarrheal medications (Imodium, Lomotil)
- Laxative (Ex-Lax, Dialose, Senekot)
- Medication for regularity (Citricil)
- Fiber pills
- Tucks
- Suntan lotion (sunblock)
- Insect repellent
- Insect bite medication (Campho-Phenique, After-Bite)
- Anti-itch medication (hydrocortisone cream, aloe vera, calamine lotion)
- Antifungal medication (Lamasil, Tinactin)
- First-aid kit*
- Dental emergency kit*
- Orthodontic wax
- Antiseptic cream/antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Polysporin)/iodine wipes
- Band-Aids (extra)/spray-on bandage/surgical tape/athletic tape
- Moleskin/blister-block pads/bunion cushions
- Ace bandages
- Knee (or other joint) brace
- Heating pad
- Thermometer (plastic strip, not mercury)
- Glasses (plus extra pair)/reading glasses/contacts
- Copy of glasses and/or contacts prescriptions
- Glasses case/contacts case
- Contact lens cleaning solutions/eyedrops (liquid tears)
- Hearing aid/extra batteries
- Breathe Right nasal strips

I pack a “bathroom bag” to carry toiletries when the facilities are “down the hall.”

*SHERRY BARBER
WHITTIER, CA*

One unique item on my list is a tongue scraper, a wonderful invention I discovered in India over 40 years ago.

JULIAN P. DONAHUE, LOS ANGELES, CA

- Surgical mask/dust mask
- Water-purifying tablets/iodine/purifier wand/purifying system
- Air sickness bag

PERSONAL HYGIENE & CLEANING PRODUCTS

- Soap — small bar/liquid soap/facial soap/body wash
- Soap case
- Scrub brush
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Shower cap/shower cap hook
- Washcloths/compact sponge that expands in water
- Quick-drying towel
- Hand sanitizers — packets of moist towelettes (Wet Ones, Olay cleansing cloths)/waterless gel
- Antiperspirant, deodorant
- Feminine sanitary supplies/panty liners
- Talc/body powder
- Foot powder
- Lotion — skin, face
- Moisturizer, salve (ex., Vaseline for nose during flights)
- Astringent
- Perfume/cologne
- Hair dryer/curling wand
- Comb/brush
- Curlers/bobby pins
- Hair spray*/setting lotion, hair gel, mousse
- Hair tint
- Makeup/cosmetics
- Facial tissue packs
- Cotton balls/Q-tips
- Mirror/magnifying mirror
- Shaving kit, dop kit
- Shaving cream
- Razor* (disposable or reusable) and blades*/shaver (electric or battery)
- Styptic pencil
- Tweezers*/forceps
- Manicure set — nail clippers*/emery boards, nail file*/nail brush
- Nail polish/polish remover
- Dental floss and threaders
- Toothbrush and case/water pick
- Toothpaste, baking soda, salt
- Mouthwash
- Breath spray, drops or mints
- Dentures/denture cleaner
- Retainer/bite guard
- Chapstick/lip balm
- Laundry detergent/Woolite/fabric softener
- Anti-static laundry sheets
- Spot remover — Shout Wipes packets/stain stick
- Toilet paper/toilet seat covers
- Travel urinal
- Mini lint-brush
- Handi-wipes for shoe cleaning
- Shoeshine packets/polish
- Glass-cleaning cloth, liquid (for bus window)

I love the cloth-and-mesh “packing cubes” from Travel-Smith (Novato, CA; phone 800/950-1600 or visit www.travelsmith.com). I have several, keeping underwear in one, T-shirts in another, turtlenecks, etc. It speeds up the packing and unpacking processes.

NILI OLAY, NEW YORK, NY

CLOTHES, SHOES & ACCESSORIES

- Shirts or blouses — casual (long-sleeved, short-sleeved) and dress
- Dress — casual and formal
- Skirts
- Sarong/pareo
- Pants/jeans/slacks
- Shorts
- Leggings
- Underwear/silk underwear/thermal (long) underwear
- Undershirts
- Lingerie — bras/slips/panties
- Socks — regular/thick for hiking/dress socks
- Nylons/hose
- Garter belt
- Jacket/wind-breaker (with hood)
- Sweaters
- Sweatshirt/pullover/jogging suit
- Vest
- Travel vest (with pockets)
- Sport coat
- Suit
- Formal accessories — cummerbund/ handkerchief/cuff links
- Ties, bow ties, bolo ties/tie clips
- Collar expander
- Belts
- Gloves (leather)
- Evening bag
- Jewelry
- Watch/extra watch
- Light shawl/evening wrap
- Scarves/bandanas
- Handkerchiefs
- Muffler
- Hats/visor/rain hat/beach hat/canvas hat/straw hat/stocking cap/*ITN* hat
- Headband
- Earmuffs
- Flats (for walking and travel)
- Mid-heels (for dress)
- Dress shoes
- Tennis shoes/sneakers
- Sandals — sport sandals/thongs (for shower)/water socks (reef runners)
- Slippers
- Airline slippers or socks
- Rain boots/rubber boots/overshoes
- Hiking boots
- Spare shoelaces
- Shoehorn
- Shoe bags
- Raincoat (with zip-out lining)/poncho
- Pajamas/nightgown
- Robe (doubles as beach coat)
- Swimsuit

I pack mesh laundry bags purchased at WalMart or K-Mart to hold underwear, socks, etc. It's easy to see what I have, and things don't get "lost."

JUNEAL REITAN, NORTHOME, MN

TRAVEL ACCESSORIES

- Luggage — suitcase(s)/carry-on bag/suit bag/duffel/backpack/briefcase
- Extra fold-up tote bag
- Packing "cubes" (of cloth, to separate clothes in luggage) or other dividers for clothing
- Luggage locks/plastic cable "ties"
- Extra luggage lock keys
- Light chain or steel cable (to secure luggage to structures or into car trunk or train compartment)
- Luggage tags/straps/marketing ribbon or cord
- Tag showing destination hotel
- Luggage carrier (folding, wheeled)
- Cushion (inflatable)
- Neck pillow (inflatable)
- Earphones — for radio/TV/airplane
- Earplugs
- Eyeshades
- Fan (small, battery run)
- Flashlight — waterproof flashlight/penlight/extra bulb
- Reading light, book light
- Alarm clock — battery run or windup/folding
- Pillowcase/sheets/sleep sack
- Doorstop (rubber)
- Immersion heater coil with converter
- Tea leaf strainer
- Cup (folding cup)
- Coffee-making kit
- Sink stopper (universal)
- Laundry bags — mesh/plastic
- Clothesline/small clothes pins or clips, safety pins or extra-long straight pins* (for hanging skirts or slacks)
- Clothes hangers — plastic covered (for drying clothes)/inflatable/paper-covered wire hangers
- Travel iron/steamer
- Sewing kit*
- Small scissors*/folding scissors*
- Swiss Army knife*/Leatherman tool*
- Binoculars/opera glasses
- Power converter, transformer (220V to 110V)
- Electrical adapter (ex., 3-prong to 2-prong)
- Extension cord
- Mosquito net

For each leg of the journey, tie a tag on each checked bag naming your next hotel stop and the dates of your stay there, in case the bag does not arrive with you.

*VALERIE BULKELEY
BLOOMFIELD, CT*

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT

- Camera
- Lenses/filters
- Strobe (flash) attachment
- Tripod/spare parts
- Single-use camera as a backup
- Panoramic camera
- Film (plenty of it)
- FilmShield Bag (lead lined)
- Videocamera/videotapes, cassettes/extra battery/charger/accessories
- Cleaning cloth or tissue/lens brush/lens-cleaning fluid
- Dessicant

- Gray card
- Camera bag/camcorder bag
- Camera, camcorder instruction booklets/notes

MISCELLANEOUS

- Guidebooks/background info/brochures
- Field guides (birds, mammals, plants)
- Phrase books/Quickpoint
- Maps
- Pocket atlas
- Compass
- GPS (global positioning system) unit
- Altimeter
- Pedometer
- Cell phone and charging unit
- Laptop computer/Palm Pilot
- CD or cassette player (Walkman)/CDs, tapes
- Travel radio
- Shortwave radio
- Tape recorder/blank tapes
- Batteries — for camera, clock, watch, flashlight, etc./recharging unit
- Books/Bible(s)
- Magazines
- Copies of *ITN*
- ITN* sample copy signup sheet
- Pens — ballpoint pens/highlighter (for maps)/Sharpie marker/pencils/mechanical pencils plus extra lead
- Post-it Notes
- Small notebook
- Journal/diary
- ITN* Report Cards
- Greeting cards
- Envelopes — regular and small (for tips)/large (for shipping stuff home)
- Gummed labels — preprinted with addresses (for postcards) and blank
- Stamps
- Glue stick
- Addresses of friends, family
- List of e-mail addresses
- List of favorite Internet sites
- Church directory
- Gifts — for host/for family/for locals (ballpoint pens)/things to trade
- Gift list (with sizes; bring tape measure)/shopping list (for self)
- List of birthdays, anniversaries, upcoming appointments
- Photos of family/postcards of U.S. sights (to show people overseas)/small map of U.S.
- Cardboard tube for posters
- Shopping bag (string or canvas)
- Paper bags (for litter)
- Plastic bags — zip-lock (from small to large)/dry cleaning/large “trash” size
- String
- Rope/nylon cord
- Fasteners — safety pins*/long pins*/twist-ties/rubber bands/paper clips/binder clips

Bubble wrap is great for wrapping stuff to get it home unbroken, and you can toss it if it's not needed; it weighs nothing.
BARBARA BARRETT
St. LOUIS, MO

- Tape — Scotch/duct/electrical/masking/strapping, packing
- Bubble wrap
- Super glue/glue stick
- Magnifying glass — lighted/handheld/strip
- Tape measure
- Bottle stopper
- Can opener*/corkscrew*
- Eating utensils* (metal or plastic)
- Chopsticks*
- Vegetable or potato peeler*
- Orange juicer
- Sharpening stone
- Paper towels
- Toothpicks
- Food bag (insulated)
- Hot water bottle/ice pack
- Umbrella — folding/cheap
- Folding cane*
- Folding seat or stool
- Fanny pack
- Exercise strap
- Whistle
- Pepper spray*
- Gas mask
- Lighter*/waterproof matches*
- Candles
- Air deodorizer*
- Plastic vase
- Spray bottle
- Bath mat (small, rubber)
- Suction-cup hooks (for holding bathroom items onto mirrors)
- Night-light
- Beach blanket/towel
- Beach bag
- Playing cards/games/crossword puzzles
- Dictionary
- Calendar
- Cigarettes/cigars
- Sunglasses (regular and clip-on)
- Strap for glasses, sunglasses
- Small glasses repair kit*
- House keys

We take paper grocery bags on trips. If we rent a car, we'll use one as a litter bag. Also, some trains don't have anyplace for disposing of trash.
CARROLL CHANDLER
DALLAS, TX

FOOD

- Water bottle
- Gum
- Mints
- Trail mix/gorp/dried fruit
- Granola bars/power bars/protein bars
- Crackers
- Candy — hard candies/candy bars/M&Ms, etc.
- Hot chocolate
- Drink powder (Crystal Light)
- Coffee/tea bags/herbal tea
- Sweetener/sugar packets/Sweet'n Low
- Salt and pepper
- Peanut butter
- Tabasco sauce
- Mustard
- Liquor/airline Scotch (for emergencies)

Our thanks go to the many readers who contributed to this list!

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