

By Dan Friesen on May 25, 2016



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During my years as a traveler and walking tour guide, I have developed a system when it comes to packing. My focus has been to pack light while ensuring I have back-up gear for any mishaps or delays that may occur along the way. My goal is not to avoid checking any luggage - I have never yet been able to travel with just a carry-on bag - but to keep things as basic and efficient as possible.

This post is the first in a short series detailing some of the packing tips I've picked up over the years. If you have questions or comments, please leave them below! I would love to hear back from you on some of your tricks of the trade as well.

Here are some general packing concepts to start off with:

- **Use a packing checklist.** Keep a packing checklist and continue to update it as you learn what you need and like.
- **Try to do most of your packing a few days before travel.** Allow yourself extra time to pack so that you can fill in those missing pieces and run errands to replenish supplies. Taking this approach also allows time for you to think the requirements of your trip through and add any forgotten items to your bags before you depart.
- **Consider a second, travel-only wardrobe.** There are some items in my closet that I only wear while on tour - these include lightweight vests with multiple pockets and breathable quick-dry pants. Travel gear can be expensive so I save it for times on the road when it is most effective.
- **Use a separate storage area in your home for your travel gear.** I like to use a plastic bin kept on the top shelf of my closet. This not only allows more space among my everyday clothes, but also ensures that I keep an accurate count of the travel items I currently have, since I don't mix travel gear with regular apparel.
- **Compartmentalize - avoid packing loose stuff.** Using packing cubes and envelopes is a great way to organize and categorize different travel gear. Keeping smaller items in packing cubes also helps to insure that these items don't get lost or buried under the other supplies in your suitcase.
- **Minimize, simplify and go small.** I have discovered that it is worth it to buy and bring smaller versions of items I use on a daily basis - toothpaste, deodorant, hair gel, etc. If I can repackage an item I use regularly into a more compact container, I will do

so. I then keep a box of my travel-sized items under the bathroom sink until the next time they are needed. I also only pack enough of certain clothing items to cover about half of the time I'll be gone – these include lightweight quick-dry items like shirts and pants. I'll then take a small bottle of laundry soap and wash them in my hotel sink or bathtub. I find that letting clothes soak for awhile takes less effort and seems to increase cleanliness.



Packing tip from India – you can always find a space to add one more item!

You don't want to have your travel experience adversely effected by having to haul around more luggage than you really need, but there are also items you can take along that will make your experience that much smoother and more enjoyable. Finding the balance and packing practically is my goal as a traveler.

Stay tuned – I'll be sharing some of my favorite gear to use aboard the plane in my next post!