

The Ultimate Trip Prep and Packing List

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THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Check to see that your passport is valid for up to 3 months past your date of return.
- Advise post office to hold mail.
- Place valuables in safe deposit box.
- Stop delivery of newspapers, organic box, milk etc.
- Consider buying travelers checks and prepare to bring a decent amount of cash, including some small bills for tips, etc.
- Consider sending a check to your credit card for a positive balance in case you need cash advances (prevents hi interest)
- Pay off pending bills so you don't worry about them while away.
- Ensure car is parked safely; arrange for moving car if affected by street cleaning.
- Put address labels on all baggage (inside and out). Write last name in large letters on tags.
- Leave extra house key and itinerary with relative or friend.
- Arrange for pets and plants. Put away all yard equipment and furniture.
- Make copies of maps from guidebooks and other handy reference sheets to carry in pocket.
- Check with doctor about pre-emptive supply of cipro, enough usual meds, malaria prevention and other vaccinations.
- "Away from office" messages on voicemail, email, pager.

BEFORE YOU LOCK THE DOOR HAVE YOU:

- Turned off all appliances and taps? Unplugged electronics and hot water boiler and turned off power strips?
- Closed and locked windows and doors?

DO YOU HAVE: (Do not pack in checked luggage.)

- Passport.
- air tickets.
- Travelers checks / money / ATM and credit cards.
- Special IDs (copies or originals): medical license or ID (for good samaritan emergencies), PADI cert & log, etc.
- copies of all important ID and documents in case you lose the originals; keep separate from originals
- calling card and access numbers in the countries you will be traveling
- Luggage keys.
- Sunglasses, extra glasses or contacts
- Camera, film, flash, extra batteries
- Prescription medicines required while traveling.
- ear plugs, all-purpose bandana to cover your eyes with, blow your nose with, etc.
- valuable electronics: MP3 players, PDA, laptops, cameras and video cameras
- small things you want with you on the plane: knitting, books, movies, etc.

Adage: Lay everything out that you absolutely must take, halve it and take twice as much money.

LUGGAGE

Try to take only a 25-35 liter backpack and one daypack with waterproof bags to carry everything inside. Money belt to carry on your body. Don't forget travel restrictions for carry-ons: size and weight limits; no knives; no lighters or liquids > 3 oz.

CLOTHING: Roll rather than fold, put in ziplock plastic bags and compress further.

- 2 t-shirts, moisture-wicking
- 1 long-sleeved shirt, light, moisture-wicking, ability to roll sleeves up
- 2 quick-drying pants (not jeans!!), consider one heavier pair if it'll be cold
- women: wrap-around sarong or long skirt
- women: cardigan to wear over tanks
- swim gear: one conservative piece
- shorts: consider one pair if you don't mind sticking out like a sore thumb
- one lightweight fleece jacket or pull-over
- 3-5 pairs of quick-drying underwear
- 3-4 pairs of easy to wash socks, consider trekking socks if hiking a lot
- cold weather: consider long underwear, down jacket
- shoes: one pair of sandals only in tropical weather; one pair sneakers/boots + sandals for mixed weather
- hat to block sun +/- bandana to hold hair back
- spare pair of glasses or contacts

MEDICAL KIT: Make your own! Consider the following.

- lip balm with sun protection
- cold/flu pills (with decongestant),
- something for a sore throat,
- band aids, consider special blister dressings
- condoms or contraceptive pills
- antiseptic cream (antibiotic ointment)
- travel/motion sickness pills
- anti-histamine pills,
- laxative,
- 3-5-day course of cipro 500 mg (for traveler's diarrhea or UTIs), consider enough for 2 courses
- mouth ulcer (aka canker sores) treatment (especially if taking Chloroquine malaria medication),
- hydrocortisone cream (1-2%)
- a needle (part of a mini-sewing kit) for blisters,
- pain killers: ibuprofen, tylenol
- pads/tampons if going to a place that doesn't have 'em
- sunblock 30-45 SPF
- insect repellent with at least 25% DEET

USEFUL EXTRAS TO MAKE TRAVELING EASIER:

- tissue mini packs.
- premoistened towelettes.
- towel for supplemental use and between-hotel swims.
- silica gel packets and zip-lock bags for keeping electronics dry and fungal free.
- wirelock for your luggage
- bathroom stuff: 2-in-1 shampoo, liquid soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, comb
- postcard address list.
- stamped envelope to send stuff home at the airport in case TSA/security tries to take a swiss army knife, etc.
- water bottle, one quart, check for leaks.
- swiss army knife (not as a carry-on). Make sure to bury it, as these are often stolen through luggage handlers.
- compass
- Binoculars
- Watch (waterproof).
- maps, travel and field guides and reference materials. Field guides can be often found at the site you're going to.
- insurance certificates
- addresses and telephone numbers of whom to contact in case of emergency.
- micro umbrella
- flashlight with spare batteries and bulb; consider a headlight
- MP3 player (PDA, other music player, etc.) with chargers (check for voltage and plug compatibility)
- plug adapters and voltage converters if bringing electronics and if needed in the place you're going
- Cell phone with charger: if GSM or with compatible technology
- Reading material, writing material, playing cards, knitting supplies, copies of projects you'll make
- Repair kit: duct tape, needle, thread, buttons, 1/8" nylon cord, ripstop tape, etc.
- Regular sunglasses: spare pair if you wear prescription lenses.
- Stuff bags: various sizes, heavy duty, zip-lock for film, books, and small items; trash bags for wet clothes and dirty shoes.
- consider a compact mosquito net if traveling in Sub-Saharan Africa and not staying in hotels (cheaper if you buy it there)

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

- valid passport with visa as needed
- traveler's insurance – copy important phone and policy numbers onto the itinerary you carry with you.
- plane tickets
- itinerary, contact phone numbers and names

INOCULATIONS AND MEDICATION

Check CDC website for recs: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>

MONEY

- cash- don't forget entry and exit fees at terminals and airports
- ATM card, where available- the best way to get a good exchange rate and not have to carry a lot of cash
- credit card (Visa seems more widely accepted worldwide but Mastercard preferred in some countries, like in Japan)
- traveler's checks: safer but expensive to buy and cash in; plus you have to find an open reputable bank.