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THE TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO PACKING

*"Lay out all your clothes, and all your money. Then take half the clothes
and twice the money"*
- Susan Butler Anerson

While I lack all manner of natural ability when it comes to the art of packing, I've been forced, by circumstance, to learn a little bit about the subject. Mostly, I have learned the hard way, finding only long-sleeve blue oxford shirts in my pack in Calcutta, or forgetting that I might need earmuffs walking along the outer perimeter of Hamburg's Alster Lake in December. I've forgotten my folding raincoat while visiting Singapore during a monsoon and have arrived on tiny Palm Island in the Grenadines without sunglasses.

But I've tried, over the years, to learn from my mistakes and to advise others so they might be more prepared than I when they set off on a journey. The trick is to travel as a Traveler, not as a Tourist. There are many differences but I've always felt that the primary difference is that the tourist has a return ticket. Here are some suggestions about packing that I hope will help you prepare for an adventure to exotic lands, or at least to places where they've never heard of Jerry Springer.

LUGGAGE:

- Don't ever buy expensive, name-brand luggage. It's like advertising "rob me - I'm rich". You don't want to be mistaken for someone from Beverly Hills or Manhattan.
- Don't get conflicted trying to decide between hard or soft luggage. Hard luggage is tougher to slice open with a knife than but soft luggage will carry more.
- Do know your fabrics. When it comes to fabrics, many synthetics are good. Avoid Nylon but look into something called Ballistic Nylon. Cordura is another strong synthetic. Do consider duffel-style luggage with several handles. Who knows, you may be transporting your gear on the back of a yak next year. Duffel luggage is a sure sign of a real Traveler.
- Do buy luggage with wheels and invest in good wheels with metal, not plastic, ball bearings. Look for recessed wheels. The free-standing type tend to break off. There are several good brands, TravelPro is one of the most reasonably priced.
- Do get a matching set of luggage, and pick any color you like, but be sure to tape some large, easily-identifiable tape around on the outside of each piece. Have the kids create a "family crest" with a sticky back that can be affixed to all luggage. It should be done in such a way that your suitcase cries out "I'm Yours" as it first appears on the baggage carousel.

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- Don't play the "I live in the suburbs and I must have look-like-new tidy luggage" game. Tourists have new luggage. Travelers have actually been places - their luggage is beat up.
- Don't buy leather luggage. It looks great - if you're filming a television commercial or meeting Donald Trump for lunch. Leather is a heavy fabric and damages easily. It is not well suited for long-distance travel.
- Do consider buying one of those aluminum camera cases for storage of all photo supplies. Soft cases simply don't protect expensive cameras as well.

Don't believe what they tell you about "film safe" security detectors at the airport. While most film under 400 ASA will be fine, it is a good idea to purchase a lead-free bag to store your used film.

CARRY-ONS:

Do put lots of thought into selecting a carry-on. Consider getting one that has several deep, outside compartments.. Look into a soft, duffel-type bag instead of the more bulky hard-tops on wheels. Be aware that many nations, particularly those in Asia and Europe, now strictly enforce carry-on baggage-size restrictions.

TRIP PREPARATION

- Do select a DDD (Designated Departure Drawer) somewhere in your home. This drawer is the collection point for all of those hard-to-find items that should be packed before a trip. I'm talking about things like extra pairs of glasses, small paper packs of medication, and those small size cosmetics that are available at Walgreen's.
- Do get a copy of one or more outfitter's catalogs. Travelsmith's is probably the best. These catalogs will help you find hard-to-get travel-related items eliminating the need to run all over town.

PACKING TECHNIQUES

- Do try to pack in wearing stages. Try to put the first five days of vacation in one suitcase - everything you'll need that isn't in your carry-on. You should only be living out of one of your two suitcases on any given day. If you're combining a land tour with a cruise, designate one suitcase as "Cruise-Only"
- Do try to pack with a two-color scheme. It's much easier to plan a trip around two colors with a series of color coordinated clothing. When it comes to color - keep it simple.
- Don't bring your fancy jewelry along when you travel unless you are actually going to meet the Queen. There is nothing more insensitive than a display of expensive baubles while walking among people who are existing on a subsistence level. Harry Winston will understand if you keep his stuff under lock and key at home while traveling abroad. It just isn't worth worrying about the safety of your jewels while you are on vacation. A practical note: Thieves usually select their marks based on the quality of the jewelry being displayed.

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- Do remember to use the famed “El Cheapo technique” to maintain wrinkle-free clothing. Layer your suitcase, beginning with pants, and cover each few items with the clear plastic that your local dry cleaner puts over shirts, suits, and dresses. This really works.
- Do bring along several packets of Woolite. It’s perfect for washing out socks and undergarments in your hotel room.
- Don’t overdo the Polyester. Particularly in Western Europe. They already think we dress like slobs and there is little value in reinforcing the stereotype. Bring washable, breathable fabrics. If it’s going to be over 80 degrees think Banana Republic. If it’s going to be under 70 degrees, think Eddie Bauer. If it’s going to be 75 degrees, I can’t help you.
- Don’t get the “Shoes Blues”, a depressing state affairs that afflicts those who not think long and hard about their vacation footwear. This, my friends, is the most important single packing decision you will make. Go for lightweight, walking shoes that provide good support. Think about buying those inexpensive sole inserts. Break in shoes before you take them on a vacation. One brand that is unusually comfortable is Rockport. New shoes don’t deserve a vacation.

Part II

“I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train”

- Oscar Wilde

We are going to conclude our two-part series on packing with a list of suggestions appropriate to travel outside the United States. Although much of this information will be familiar to you, hopefully a few of our opinionated recommendations will be helpful as you prepare for your upcoming vacation. Let’s see what might fit in your suitcase and carry-on:

THE CARRY-ON PACKING LIST:

- Do line your carry-on bag with two days worth of shirts, sox, undergarments, and toiletries. Assume your bags will be lost. Pack to be self-sufficient. Don’t pack sport jackets, dresses, etc. Just one pair of slacks to line the bottom of your bag and two clean shirts.
- Don’t pack all of your toiletries together. Prepare a “fresh-up kit” of your own to use aboard aircraft en route to your destination. You might want to pull this small bag out of your carry-on before placing it in the overhead bin. There is no reason why you should not be able to brush your teeth, sprinkle on your favorite skin moisturizer, or even use your favorite perfume or cologne in mid-flight. Do remember to bring eyewash and a small washcloth.

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- Don't bring a ton of reading material. The chances are that your eyes will get tired after a while. Instead, consider taping some of your favorite radio shows, talk is better than music, to play at 33,000 feet. If this is too much trouble, pick up a few books on tape. That way you can read a book without opening your eyes. You can get a small cassette head-set for less than \$15.00.
- Do bring along your own personal EMK, Emergency Medical Kit. Start working on your preparation now, keeping all of your materials in your DDD, Designated Departure Drawer. You will want to include thin packets of aspirin, anti-diarrhea medicine such as Immodian, a few Band-Aids and patches for blisters, etc. You may want to combine your EMK with your "fresh-up" kit.

PACKING FOR CRUISES AND TOURS:

- Do buy a "white noise" portable sound machine, such as those sold at Sharper Image stores. These machines allow you to block out annoying hotel/cabin noises with soothing sounds that might include gentle rain, waves gliding up on shore, or a neutral sound that helps cut down the noise of slamming hallway doors or conversation from an adjoining room.
- Don't bring thick copies of guidebooks to your destination. Generally, there are only a few pages you are going to really need. Photocopy them instead of carrying twenty pound of Fodor's or Frommer's et. al.
- Don't leave home without packing your favorite wide-brim hat or baseball cap. En route to the airport, repeat these words "The Sun is an unethical, dangerous, enemy. I will defeat the Sun".
- Do pack a top-quality Swiss Army knife, preferably the kind that comes with a knife and fork extension. You never know when you're going to find yourself on a picnic with a loaf of crusty French bread and soft chunk of Brie. Do remember to pack the knife, it may be illegal to place it in your carry-on.
- Don't bring a diary. You are on vacation. It is hard to take notes while you're moving, the primary disadvantage of a diary.
- Do bring along a micro-cassette. As you are walking past that sweet-smelling fruit market in Bali, or wandering the Hermitage hallways, simply take out your small recorder and record the name of the place and a description. You can tape the sounds of Big Ben peeling in the late afternoon, or the sound of the monkey's as you walk through a rain forest in Costa Rica. Better than a camera or a diary, a small tape recorder allows you to cuddle up in bed months after your trip to relive the sounds of your adventure. And it takes up virtually no space and sells for less than \$40.00. Later, if you wish, you can transcribe your recorded notes into a diary, without sacrificing valuable vacation time.
- Do bring "Home Cards". We are constantly meeting people when we travel for whom a business card is inappropriate. Have a set of cards printed with your home address and telephone number. Use them just like business cards to

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give to new friends. If you really want to do it right, have your picture appear on the card.

- Do hunt down an over the shoulder cloth carry-all. This can be used for trips to the beach or as a laundry bag during your travels.
- Don't leave home without at least one copy of the photo page of your passport and/or a copy of your birth certificate. Should your passport be lost or stolen, the copy will prove invaluable in obtaining a new document. Also carry copies of the front and back of your major credit cards.
- Don't wait until you reach a sun spot to purchase suntan products. You will find that the really strong 25 and above, SPF ratings may not be available at your destination.
- Do purchase one of those around-the-neck waterproof tubes for keeping lotion and money with you while in the water.
- Don't pack nightgowns, bathrobes, or pajamas. Tee-shirts will suffice in most "close-in" situations.

PACKING FOR TRAVEL TO NON-INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS:

- Do bring scarves, belts, and inexpensive costume jewelry to dress-up basic clothing.
- Do bring along some photos of your house, your neighborhood, or your place of work. You will invariably meet locals who would find such photos fascinating.
- Don't wait until you arrive at a destination before trying to learn the monetary system. Buy a \$100.00 Introduction packet from a currency dealer for each country you are going to visit for more than two days. You can learn the currency en route.
- Do consider buying the Lonely Planet Guide to the countries you will be visiting. This guidebook series is a tad more honest than the others about local conditions regarding health, crime, and tourism infrastructure.
- Do try to visit a Chicago memorabilia shop before you go. Children the world over would cherish a Chicago Bulls hat or a photo of Michael Jordan. At one time, studies showed that the best known person on the planet was Mohammed Ali. These days, it might just be MJ.
- Do bring a small, portable fan if you're traveling to the tropics. It might be just the thing to help you sleep. Brookstone sells them as do the major catalog outfitters.
- Do bring mosquito repellent. Select a brand whose major ingredient is Deet.
- Do prepare to quench your thirst at all times. Dehydration is a problem when traveling in warm areas. A small portable plastic water bottle might be a good investment.

DO HAVE A SAFE, FULFILLING, AND MEMORABLE VACATION!

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