

Packing for the Journey

Adventure Travel Packing

Let's talk adventure travel; mild adventure travel. Lots of exploring, ambling around, but probably not climbing Mt. Everest. On this kind of journey, you can plan on spending a good amount of time outdoors, trekking around. Whether that trekking involves ancient ruins, fabled lost cities, climbing pyramids or walking the cobblestone streets of old colonial cities, trek you will.

Many more people than ever before are interested in pilgrimages to sacred sites around the world, learning about past civilizations, visiting ancient temples, and advancing themselves spiritually.

We want to know about the civilizations that came before and discover what messages they left for us. We have heard of inter-dimensional doorways and gateways that are activated at these sites, and we may want to have intimate knowledge of how that works.

Whatever our quest, this type of exploration is a calling; it runs deep in the soul and enriches us spiritually and culturally. We need to have the right outfit for the experience. Climbing pyramids in high heels makes humorous film material, but it doesn't get the job done and can be dangerous.

Journeys I have taken and lead throughout the world have taught me a few things about packing and preparation. There are some helpful and indispensable items to take into consideration when preparing for this type of travel. Let's start with the most important thing of all, the item you will use again and again that must be strong, durable, lightweight – even attractive.

LUGGAGE: Don't scrimp on this. A good piece of luggage can be relied upon for many trips to come. I recommend people bring one suitcase on their journey...about the size of a large backpack. That's right...one piece of luggage will be sufficient for your travel needs. Think about how good it will feel to streamline and release the various collections of luggage you may have acquired as you make the choice to opt for one good bag.

The bag I recommend is the [Eagle Creek travel gear switchback max 22](#) (or similar). It can be wheeled along like any piece of luggage, or if I feel like backpacking it instead, that works too. Otherwise it has the standard

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wheels and a zip off daypack. The bag is a good shape and size without requiring a forklift to manage it. Recently, on a short flight to San Diego, I made the discovery that the bag is within the size for carry-on (I should have know that!!).

No matter how much you put in the bag, it can always be managed by one person. The zippers and fabric are top quality and when you get that baby loaded up to where it looks impossible to ever close - she will zip right up and take you where you want to go.

The cost for this quality bag is in excess of \$200. When you consider this is the only piece of luggage you will ever need (except for the foldable duffle to bring treasures home in), the investment is worth every penny.

Another advantage of this bag is how it teaches you to travel light. My bag has been to Asia, Europe, all over the US and Central and South America and looks like the day I bought it...pretty much. Poised to go anywhere my heart desires, it takes up little closet space and I have the confidence and assurance of a reliable bag when I travel.

In a bag like this you can easily pack everything you need; and you don't need much. We will get to that part soon.

Remember, you are not going on world tour – but even if you were, this bag would be a good choice for the journey.

NAMETAG FOR THE BAG

Purchase a nice durable nametag to affix to your luggage with all your contact information on it; including your home address. I have had incidents of stolen luggage, lost luggage and other fiascos – without this vital information my bags would have been lost forever.

CARRY-ON

Airlines only insure your belongings up to around 300 dollars. Carry small travel computers, other electronics and valuables in your carry-on. Your carry on is likely to be the daypack you will be carrying around throughout the journey.

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THE PURSE

Forget the purse. Leave it home. It's an unnecessary and useless accompaniment for this type of journey. It is also the least useful and probably most dangerous way to carry important things. Again, leave the purse at home. Besides, you may end up buying a new purse to take home on one of your shopping excursions.

DAYPACK

This is a backpack that is suitable for a day's outing (there is one that zips right off the Eagle Creek luggage). Find a daypack you love and that fits your specific needs. The one I am currently using has three vertical compartments and a small area in the front. This is the travel bag that will go on the plane with you and will go on most of your daily outings.

I carry a computer notebook and paper in one compartment. The other two are free for a light jacket/hat/rainwear. The daypack can hold whatever is necessary for a particular outing and have space to spare for things you might acquire along the way.

Water is always essential, and this fits nicely into an external pocket on the daypack. This is your purse for the journey. Choose one that will have the size and space requirements you need. I sometimes carry my camera and camera case in the daypack when I tire of having the camera and case around my neck.

CAMERA CASE

If your camera is larger than the pocket sized, you will need a camera case and one that straps the camera in front of your will be most useful and safe. Hanging a camera around your neck, unprotected, is not the best idea. With a camera case, you can have your camera within easy reach and safely protected when you are not using it.

TRAVEL VEST

[Ex-Officio Women's or Men's Gobi Safari Vest](#) - This is a new discovery for me and I came by it indirectly. I inherited the vest from a friend and put it in the closet. While gathering my gear, I found the vest and took it along. What an upgrade!

My vest has two vertical front pockets that Velcro closed and another pocket behind each of those. Additionally, there are two pockets at the breast level

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that Velcro. The vest has a zipper front, although I am not sure that feature is necessary.

I use the right front pocket for passport and the left for cash, with loose change in the pocket behind the passport and my phone and travel documents in the pocket behind the cash. Credit cards are kept in the left breast pocket. This eliminates searching for necessary documents and money along the way and totally eliminates the need for a purse.

Everything you need is readily available for navigating airports, taxis and so forth.

On my last trip to Peru I used this vest quite a bit but found it indispensable for the travel portions of the program. Being around town I made other provisions.

WHAT TO BRING

Less is more and you will begin to love the luxury of having space in your bag to cart home purchases. You cannot pack too little if you handle the essentials – but you can certainly pack way too much and overburden and confuse yourself. I sometimes bring along a foldable duffel bag if I am planning on making lots of purchases. It will cost to bring the extra luggage in to the U.S.A. but there are many countries where shipping is unreliable or amazingly expensive and I may choose to cart home some art objects.

Back to the packing list for that one wonderful bag. As far as clothing goes, I do like the rule of 2.

2 pairs pants or slacks

2 - 4 pairs socks

2 pair shoes

2-4 tops (microfiber or other scrunchable easy care material)

2 shirts

2 underwear – panties

2 underwear – bras (unless you get the built in kind...amen)

1 lightweight fleece jacket (not the heavy bulky kind)

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1 lightweight washable nightgown & sock-type slippers (stone floors are cold)

Sarong – large scarf that wraps around the waist and can act as a skirt

Rain jacket and hood (that scrunches into the size of a baseball or so)

Sunscreen

A guidebook for the country you are visiting. This will help you to find places to visit and restaurants you will enjoy

Contact lens items, prescriptions, camera, toiletries (or use what the hotel offers), photocopies of passport & all credit cards you are taking, binoculars,

Take a look at [Travel Smith](#) or your local sporting and outdoor goods store. There are some great travel clothes out there. Ex-officio makes great shirts, pants, underwear, etc. Look for items that are lightweight, easy care, and those that can be rinsed out in the sink and quick dry.

SHOES:

Clearly, your choice of shoes is most important. Unless you are actually planning on scaling a large mountain, forget the hiking boots. They are heavy and overkill in many situations. Of course, if you feel safer with these, go for it. Generally, a pair of lightweight low cut hikers, like [Merrill's](#) are adequate for just about any task. Make sure the shoes you select are lightweight – this does matter. You will be wearing these during travel times as well (generally don't want to be taking up space in our bags for these). If you are buying new shoes for your journey (as I keep promising myself I will do) – take a couple weeks of wearing them before you leave home.

While the low cut hiker/walkers do not usually require a break in period like hiking boots can, it is still a good idea to get used to wearing them and to make sure all is well before leaving home.

Your other pair of shoes can be a nice pair of sandals that can do some walking and hiking as well. [Ecco](#), [Teva](#), [Keen](#) and many other brands out there fit the bill nicely. I find these are great for daytimes and nighttime walking around town. This type of shoe is viable for walking about three miles but they do not have the support you might desire for a longer trek.

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It's nice to have a change of shoes and there is no need for formal shoes that I know of. Comfort is the option to choose; comfort and ease – and if they can look great...that's a bonus.

SOCKS

Choose your socks with care. Make sure they are well padded in the toe and heel area. This will help you treat your feet gently. Do not waste your money or time or feet with thin socks; you will pay a price for it. They just don't have the resilience and comfort for a journey where you rely on your feet a good part of the time.

A thinner sock might work for under your sandals when walking around town. It might be a little cooler in the evenings and a thinner sock might feel a bit more stylish. Of course, if you feel better taking four pair of socks that is fine. Socks take a while longer to dry out if you have to wash them along the way...but look at those made especially for travel.

LIGHTWEIGHT FLEECE

Make sure you have one that scrunches up to tiny ...and keeps you warm. These garments are fabulous and work perfectly with your layered wardrobe. When it's too hot for the fleece you can tie it round your waist and have it handy for should it get cold later in the day.

JUNGLE WEAR

If your travel includes some time in the jungle, or any place where mosquitoes or other biting bugs might be present, be sure and outfit yourself for this part of the journey. Long pants and long sleeve shirt are essential. Mosquitoes generally make their appearances at sunrise and sunset, dawn and dusk – but can be around any time of day.

A regular mosquito bite is not the end of the world, but some of the mosquitoes in the jungles carry malaria and dengue – and that type of bite will change your life.

Mosquito repellents include:

Large doses of Vitamin B12

Natural oils

And chemicals with Deet

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Yes, Virginia, there are instances where DEET is the required item and the others will just not do. Check it out and dress for success. If your travel includes a hot, humid climate, it will definitely feel like living in a sauna with this kind of outfit on. Yet, for the short amount of time you will spend in this outfit, it is worth the peace of mind.

COSMETICS

Hair products and cosmetics quickly lose their appeal and necessity on a journey like this. A good part of our time is spent out in nature and there is no reason to be concerned about a look.

You may find it feels good to have a nice hot shower or bath and to rest and to be ready for the next day of exploring...and that is quite enough.

Take the necessities, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, facial cleansers...keep it simple. Use small sized items and bottlesyou will not need much and replacements, if necessary, are easy to find. Many of these items are included at your hotel.

HIKING STICKS

I use collapsible [Leki Ultra Lite hiking sticks](#) on all my journeys. They have saved my life many times – stabilizing, balancing and taking a lot of stress off the body. In many ancient temples and ruins you will encounter climbing on uneven surfaces, no handrails, slippery descents.

Several people at Machu Picchu remarked how they wished they had a pair of hiking sticks with them. They practically eliminate the possibility of a fall in these precarious places.

If you are not an experienced walker or hiker you may not want to create a learning curve or buy an expensive item you may not use again. However, if you are likely to be getting outdoors more, it pays to invest in a set of sticks. This item can be found in all price ranges.

Machu Picchu, will allow these sticks, but “likes” you to have a rubber tip at the end, to eliminate any damage to the earth or specific pieces of earth around the site. The steps in these places are tall, and after a hundred or so of them with no railing, it’s definitely a pair of stix to the rescue.

A carrying case is available for your walking sticks so they don’t poke around in your luggage; rubber tips can also be found at sporting goods stores.

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HAT

Go for a completely collapsible hat you can scrunch into a pocket if needed. The sun can be a factor to consider and you will be glad you have your hat.

NECK PILLOW

You have probably seen these “U” shaped pillows at airports. They are easy to bring along and support your neck on long flights and bus rides. The comfort they provide is well worth carrying them along. There is a standard foam variety and a blow up kind that collapses. I have both and definitely prefer the foam kind.

COMFORT IS KING

Shop with comfort in mind. Women...tops with built in bras are ideal. Layers work wonders. Pockets are indispensable. Sunglasses are necessary. Yes, you will be wearing the same things over and over – consider it a travel uniform with small variations. You don't have to think about what you might wear, the selection will be minimal.

I welcome the reader to add to my thoughts and share your own experience – this will be appreciated by all.