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# Packing Light

## Travel in style — and simplicity

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As of this writing it's Masters Week in Augusta and you know what that means... road trip! Yes, my husband and I rent out our house during the big tournament and hit the road for an adventure of our own. This week we're enjoying a leisurely descent from our starting place in Louisville, Kentucky, returning home via Nashville, Chattanooga and Atlanta.

Whether it's a journey of constant motion like this particular trip, or an airborne one entailing close encounters with TSA, travel can sometimes be made or broken by what and how much you take along with you. The over-packer is stuck lugging heavy baggage in and out of planes, trains and automobiles, and enduring inevitable teasing from her travel companions, usually while lamenting the fact that she has nothing to wear. The expert counterpart aims for style and comfort appropriate to her destination, as well as a light load.

### Planning considerations

Artful packing requires, as so many things do, proper planning. Some key considerations include:

**Weather** — Check the forecast for your destination before you begin. Don't assume it will be warm in Florida or dry in Las Vegas. You know what they say about "assume." (It makes for a cold, wet vacation of misery.) Regardless of your destination, pack clothing that layers. Even a ski trip might require a T-shirt for a stuffy lodge and warm island days are often concluded with chilly evenings or overly-air conditioned restaurants. Throw in a light jacket, a small umbrella and a pair of waterproof shoes as insurance.

**Local style** — Obviously, you will pack differently for a hiking weekend than a city excursion. But you should also consider the local customs of your destination. Comfy jeans are appropriate for casual cities like Seattle, Washington, even if you plan to dine out. You'll be better prepared for a trip to Manhattan, though, with at least one pair of nice pants and shoes.

**Length of trip** — Pack only enough clothing for each day or activity you have planned. Spontaneous tossing of clothing into a suitcase almost guarantees a packing failure.

### Practical tips

Packing light means making some key decisions, too. Here are some that help my suitcase zip easily:

- Black or brown. Choose one.

Decide whether you're going to wear black shoes or brown. Sticking with one or the other means packing fewer pairs of shoes, as well as fewer coordinating accessories, such as handbags, belts and sunglasses.

- Start with one versatile basic. Then layer.

Lay out one or two pairs of jeans or pants that you will wear several days throughout the trip. From there, choose only shirts that work with those items. For example, I brought two pairs of blue jeans with me this week. I chose only tops that go with this shade so I didn't need to also pack black jeans.

- Ladies, be frugal when choosing jewelry and cosmetics. Decide on silver jewelry or gold, and bring one or two sets that will work with all of the outfits you've chosen. Rather than pack all of your lipsticks, choose one or two that will work with a variety of looks. (One red shade and one pink, for example.)

- Streamline your toiletry routine

Begin by pulling together all of the toiletry items you use regularly. Add in any infrequent-use items, such as migraine medication or weekly cleansers. Now, think about which elements of your routine you might afford to skip for a few days. If you can, for example, get away with wearing glasses on your trip, you save yourself having to pack contact lens paraphernalia. I usually choose to forego mouthwash on vacation because it's bulky, heavy and not totally necessary on a daily basis.

- Double up.

Make the most of the items you choose to bring. For instance, travel clothing worn on the departure leg can usually be re-worn for the return. Workout clothes can double as pajamas — as long as you wear them as PJs first. Ladies, pack only one or two bras — a neutral and a black, for example. These can usually be worn several times before requiring a wash.

Once you've chosen a minimal volume of versatile, appropriate items for your trip, pack them neatly into your smallest suitable bag. I place immediate-need items on top (such as pajamas and clothing for the following day) and later-in-the-trip items toward the bottom. If you feel compelled to purchase a new piece of clothing on your trip, the limited suitcase space will force you to think twice. Memories make better souvenirs than T-shirts.

Remember, the purpose of travel is the experience itself, which should be unencumbered by the usual quotidian concerns. Better to wake up and hit the streets (or the footpath, or the café, as the case may be) than to spend time and energy digging through a burdened suitcase.

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