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PACKING TIPS FOR TRAVELLING LIGHT

I have never been a person who could easily pack a small rucksack. No way a minimalist – I was a maximalist. I always had a tendency to pack a table, bed, and fridge. I was quickly cured of this by the discovery of low-cost airlines where you can cheaply buy tickets to nearly anywhere – as long as you manage to pack everything into your hand luggage. The heavy fee for hold luggage forced me to revise my packing strategy.

Today I can set off for a week with a small rucksack on my back, though the packing might be a bit of a battle. I am therefore living proof that even a maximalist can pack small luggage and have everything they need. I have discovered how to do this by the trial and error method. Now I would like to share my experiences on how to set off into the world with only hand luggage so that your journeys would be preceded by fewer trials, mistakes, and by less stress.

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1. CREATE A PACKING LIST

Before each journey prepare a list of things to pack. A list written in advance with a clear head will help you to take only what you truly need. When you pack using the “whatever I spot I throw into the rucksack” method, preferably at the last moment, it results in many unnecessary things. The list will allow you to think about what is really important and without which you can do. If you keep to your list, it will make your life much easier. If something is not on your list it doesn’t belong in your luggage.

You can write and save the list on the computer and then print it out before each journey or you can use one of the mobile applications for this purpose. You can also have for example a summer and winter list, or a general list which can be adjusted according to need. Find some inspiration about what to pack in [my packing list](#).

2. DON'T LEAVE PACKING TO THE LAST MOMENT

“We are flying in a moment and I am not packed! Panic! Help!”

This way of packing will certainly result in you throwing a lot of unnecessary things into your luggage. The best is to use the list you made and pack one or two days before you leave. When you start too early there is the danger that you will be adding to the pile more and more things you “cannot do without”. I definitely don't recommend packing on the day you are leaving – apart from the stress, there is also the danger that you won't be in full control of what you are adding to the luggage.

3. PRIORITIZE

Before you add something into your luggage ask yourself: “What's the worst that could happen if I don't have this with me?”

At the top of your list, there should be the things whose absence would cause you serious trouble. If the answer is: “Nothing much,” then you can safely leave such a thing at home.

4. MINIATURIZE

Get miniature versions of things you usually use. Instead of a big hairbrush a small folding one or just a small comb. Instead of a large towel a light quick-drying one from microfiber (I'm usually fine with size M). Instead of a normal toothbrush a small folding one. Nearly everything you use daily can be found in a miniature version. You only need to look.

Cosmetics are a special category – all liquid stuff anyway has to be in small bottles of up to 100 ml, at most 10 pieces, and in a Ziploc bag or a see-through travel bag of at most 1-liter volume.

Today it is already possible to buy lots of cosmetics in small travel packaging, fulfilling these requirements. Many possibilities to choose from can be found for example at the cash desks of Drogerie DM. And if you are not happy with the product you can easily reuse the bottle for your favorite one.

You can also buy all sorts of travel bags with empty small bottles for your own cosmetics, or completely pre-prepared travel sets.

5. ORGANIZE

Well-organized luggage will allow you to keep good track of what is already packed and what is still missing. While traveling, a well-organized suitcase or rucksack is completely priceless. No burrowing in a rucksack or throwing out piles of stuff to get to what you need. While packing, get used to putting similar types of things in the same place, then you will always know where to reach.

Life can be made easier with packing cubes, into which you can arrange your clothes and other things. It is possible to find them cheaply for example at Aliexpress. Compression packing cubes will also allow you to reduce the volume your clothing takes up in your luggage. My favorite is Eagle Creek Pack-It Specter Compression Cube size M in white, which is partially see-through.

If you travel with a rucksack, those which can open like a suitcase are very useful. This requirement is fulfilled by for example Osprey Farpoint 40l (feminine version Osprey Farview 40l) rucksack, which is light and sits well on your back. It also fits into the size requirements for hand luggage of most airlines.

To use the volume of the luggage better, don't fold your clothes, roll them. Not only will they take up less space, but they also won't crease. If you have a hollow object, for example shoes, pack smaller items of clothing like socks inside them. Don't leave any bit of the space unused.

6. BUY IT AT THE DESTINATION

Especially when you are traveling for a longer time it is not worth it dragging around large items, which you can easily buy at your destination. Toothpaste, sun lotion, repellent... maybe even some clothes. Consider what from your list can be bought at the spot and therefore nothing would happen if you didn't pack it.

I don't apply this rule on short journeys, for example a long weekend, as I don't want to waste time shopping.

7. COMBINE AND LAYER CLOTHING

Always choose clothing for the journey in such a way that you can ideally combine each item with any of the others. It will save you space in the rucksack and time when deciding what to wear. You should also think about which items you can layer in case of need, or which can be used in more ways. Leggings can be worn under a skirt, as comfy clothing 'at home' and when it is cold they can serve as a warm underlayer under your trousers. A large shawl can be used as a skirt or you can use it instead of a towel to lie on at the beach. With a bit of inventiveness, you can considerably reduce your travel wardrobe.

8. DON'T TAKE WITH YOU ANY CLOTHES YOU DON'T WEAR NORMALLY

"This dress which is hanging in the wardrobe for two years because it's a bit tight? But it is so pretty and I want to look pretty on my holidays!"

Definitely not.

I learned this rule the hard way when I commonly threw into my rucksack items which I would not wear normally but I might look good in. As would be expected I didn't put them on once. They only got in the way.

While packing for a journey choose comfortable, tested items. Pack what you enjoy wearing and wear often. Of course with regards to the weather at your destination. The question: "Would I put on this in similar weather at home?" can save you a lot of space. And it will ensure your comfort while traveling.

9. FIND OUT WHAT YOU REALLY USE

When you travel repeatedly you can easily grasp what you really use and what you carry unnecessarily. It's enough to put things into two piles after each trip: in one the things you used, in the other things you didn't use. Take a picture. Write a list. After few trips you will know your needs and what you can leave at home.

This rule, of course, does not apply to important things which you should carry always, whether you use them or not, like a first aid box with basic medicines.

10. AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT: WHAT YOU MUST NOT MISS

Last but not least, an exemption from all the rules: Absolutely take with you what you need to feel comfortable. It varies from person to person. One digital nomad and avid traveler I know for example always takes a travel coffee maker. I need my 'lounge' trousers, without which I cannot relax and gain energy for the next day.

Whatever is your thing, if it is important for the peace of your mind, it definitely belongs into your rucksack. We are all different and what is useless for one can be a necessity for another. Travel should be something to enjoy, so it is important that you are not anxious but contented. While traveling we are all a bit uprooted so especially

when staying somewhere for longer it is good to have something which grounds you and reminds you of home.

AND NOW - GET ON THE WAY!

I hope these tips will make your packing easier and you will be able to travel with a lighter head and luggage. :)

Don't hesitate to write me your tips which help you with packing! You can simply send me a message at behindthenextcorner@gmail.com. If there is enough of them I will make a summary for this newsletter's subscribers. Of course, I will state your name and a potential link to your travel blog along with your recommendation.