

BOOMERS AWAY

Travels at the Edge of the Comfort Zone

PACKING



As soon as anyone gets serious about a long term journey one of the first questions that pops to mind is; what to take and how to carry it? Before we embarked around the world we gave these questions a lot of thought. You want to be as prepared as possible for any eventuality, but compromise is inevitable; you can't take everything.

Our first decision was about luggage. We're not suitcase types, so our choices quickly narrowed to backpacks or hybrid/roller-packs. We've watched other travelers totter around under overloaded backpacks nearly as tall as they are, and it didn't feel like what we had in mind. So, roller-packs it was and the decision served us extremely well. Extend the roller handle and you're ready to zip across an airport or wobble down some cobbles. Need to negotiate some stairs or toss your bag onto a bus, retract the long handle and grab one of the suitcase handles. And... if the going really gets rugged, you can always whip out the shoulder straps and lug it on your back. We did all three, but mostly we rolled.

We settled on bags with similar features from two different manufacturers. Each roller-pack has a large front opening main compartment with pockets around the edges, compression straps, and a zippered mesh compartment on the flap. On the outside there's

a detachable compartmentalized daypack, and a couple of water-bottle-sized pouches. Both bags are small enough that, with the daypacks removed, they fit in an airplane overhead.

Besides our modestly sized roller-packs, we agreed that we'd each carry small shoulder bag and that was it. We also agreed that if we couldn't fit it into those four bags, it wasn't coming; no steamer trunks!

We decided to approach the "what to take" question from the standpoint of the old hikers' adage; watch the ounces and the pounds will watch themselves. We planned to dress casually, layer clothing, and mostly stick to warmer climates.

The bottom line for what anyone takes on an extended journey is a personal decision that results from hundreds of choices. We're not going to bore you with all of ours. Instead, we'd like to share with you what we actually took. The following are two annotated packing lists, one for me and the other for Denise. We offer them not as checklists of must-take items but rather as suggestions. Scouts honor, everything we carried fit into our four bags, wasn't too heavy, and we used everything we brought.

Here's What Denise Carried

Luggage

- 1 22" Osprey Backpack/Roller Suitcase
(Roomy and rugged)
- 1 nylon shoulder bag
(One zipper broke, but otherwise a good lightweight bag)
- 1 14x14x5 microfiber tote bag
(To be filled and emptied as needed)

Clothing

- 1 pair quality sandals
(Stay in the tropics and they're all the footwear you need)
- 1 pair open-heel closed-toe hiking shoes
(If you hike, you need closed-toe)
- 1 pair flip flops
(So you're not barefoot in the communal shower)
- 1 lightweight, packable, breathable waterproof jacket
(Rain is a fact of life)
- 1 pair fleece glove liners
(Lighter than gloves, but still keeps you're fingers warm)
- 1 pair nylon zip-leg convertible pants
(They scream tourist, but save you weight and dry quickly)

- 3 cotton sundresses
(Light and versatile, one doubles as a nightie)
- 1 calf-length nylon/spandex zipper skirt
(A necessity for mosque and church visits)
- 3 skirts
(They're more comfy than pants)
- 1 long sleeve nylon blouse
- 1 short sleeve nylon blouse
- 3 short sleeve t-shirt
- 2 long sleeve t-shirts
- 5 lightweight cotton tank tops
(For layering and warmth)
- 1 pair pajamas
- 2 bathing suits
- 1 lightweight beach cover-up
- 5 pair cotton briefs
(Wash em at every opportunity so you don't run out, ditto for socks)
- 3 bras
- 1 pair nylon briefs
- 3 pairs of lightweight ankle socks
(Tilley socks are awesome)
- 1 pair compression socks
(So you don't get thrombosis on those long flights)
- 1 zipper t-shirt with hood
(A nod to cooler weather)
- 1 pair cotton leggings
(Ditto)

Packing Items

- 7 nylon and mesh packing cubes and pouches assorted sizes
(Packing cubes make living out of a suitcase much easier)
- 3 nylon 1" compression straps w/buckles various lengths
(Hook stuff together, tie stuff down, double as belts)
- 1 plastic zipper pouch
(For wet stuff)

Toiletries

- 1 8oz bottle sunscreen
(You can find it, but not always when you need it or for a good price)
- 1 shower puff
(Girlie stuff)
- 1 ditty bag: exfoliate, gel cleanser, deodorant, toothbrush, paste, body lotion, radiance fluid, empty spray bottle, dental floss, hair color, cosmetics, nail clipper, dental floss
(Some things you'll find along the way, others you won't)
- 1 shower ditty bag: lotion, shampoo, body soap, razor, conditioner, gel
(Ditto)
- 1 microfiber beach towel w/mesh carrying bag
(The only way to carry a big towel)

3 terrycloth "baby" wash cloths
(They're tiny but they work)

Sleep Gear

1 100% silk sleep sack
(There are lots of times you'd rather use your sheet than theirs)

Electronics and accessories

- 1 unlocked GSM quad band smartphone w/charger and earbuds
(Phone, camera, Internet, tunes, etc. Swap the chip and it works anywhere)
- 1 laptop computer w/case and power cable
(If you don't truly need one, leave it at home)
- 1 eBook reader w/case, cable, and charger
(eBooks are the only way to go when on the road, and easier to read than on your phone)

Security Items

- 3 combination mini padlocks
(You'll use them constantly)
- 1 6ft computer security cable w/nylon zipper case
(If you brought your computer, you can lock it to the toilet)
- 1 security wrist pocket
(Handy and inconspicuous)
- 1 security bra pocket
(Ya wanta hide the cash)
- 1 security waist pocket
(Ditto)

Personal Items

- 1 travel umbrella
(So you don't have to interrupt your stroll)
- 1 pair reader sunglasses w/case
(If you're a certain age, they're the bomb on the beach)
- 1 pair reading glasses w/cases
- 1 pair sunglasses with case
- 1 3oz bottle hand sanitizer
(Use it)
- 1 1oz bottle 100% Deet
(On the road 100% is hard to find, and 3% doesn't cut it)
- 1 digital alarm clock
(Backup for those early departures)
- 8 noise reduction ear plugs
(Sleep when and where you want to)
- 1 eye mask
(Ditto)
- 1 plastic spork
(For those al fresco meals)
- 1 pack post-it notes
- 3 pens and pencils
- 1 pack tissue

- 1 coin purse
- 1 nylon mini shopping bag w/carabiner
(Squishes down to a golf ball, expands to carry all your purchases)
- 1 lip protectant
(Soft kissable lips)
- 1 package moist wipes
- 2 pair earrings

Misc

- 2 LED micro lights w/ carbiners
(Photon Micro Lights are the bomb)
- 1 Swiss army knife
(Yeah, we've still got the toothpick)
- 1 butane lighter
(Candles, incense, stoves, oh my!)
- 1 mini sewing kit
(You'll use it)
- 1 Laundry ditty bag: soap, clothes pins, clothes line, shout wipes
(Rinse the underwear, wash the socks and t-shirts, get out the stains)
- 1 round flat rubber drain stopper
(You'll use it again and again)
- 2 plastic inflatable hangers
(Lightweight and holds shirts and blouses open so they dry quickly)
- 10 safety pins assorted sizes
(A million and one uses)

Health and Medical

- 2 envelopes with Rx copies
(If they ask, you what to have them!)
- 2 icy-hot patches
(For those two really bad days)
- 2 pair surgical gloves
(Sooner or later you'll want to pick up something icky)
- 1 assorted over-the-counter medications: aspirin, Excedrin, pink bismuth, anti-gas tabs, Tylenol PM, Tylenol, allergy pills, antacid, milk of magnesia tabs, naproxen, anti-itch crème, artificial tears, Alka-seltzer, Zicam swabs, Neosporin, throat lozenges
(You'll use every one of them and wish you'd brought more)
- 1 three month supply multi-vitamins
(Gotta keep up your strength)
- 1 assorted prescription medications in original bottles or in packets with pharmacy printed labels: anti-malarial pills, anti-diarrhea pills, pain killers, and daily meds
(If you need them, or think you might, bring them from home!)
- 1 assorted first-aid items: band-aids, moleskin, sterile pads, blister pads, alcohol preps
(There are always ouchies)

Here's what Don carried

Luggage

- 1 North Face Backpack/Roller Suitcase
(The daypack zipper broke and screws worked loose, but oh well)
- 1 PacSafe Shoulder Bag
(Internal wire mesh for security)

Clothing

- 1 pair Chaco sandals
(Chacos are awesome. Stay in the tropics and they're all you need)
- 1 pair Keen closed-toe hiking shoes
(If you hike, you need closed-toe)
- 1 pair Flip flops
(So you're not barefoot in the communal shower)
- 1 lightweight, packable, breathable waterproof jacket
(Rain is a fact of life)
- 1 pair fleece glove liners
(Lighter than gloves, but still keeps you're fingers warm)
- 1 pair nylon zip-leg convertible pants
(They scream tourist, but they save you weight and dry quickly)
- 1 pair cotton zip-leg convertible pants
(Ditto, except they don't dry as fast)
- 1 pair lightweight nylon warm up pants
(Lounge wear or casual street clothes when the zip-offs are in the wash)
- 1 rayon Hawaiian shirt
(Come on, ya gotta take at least one)
- 1 cotton short sleeve sport shirt
(For when you need to spiff-up a little)
- 1 cotton long sleeve "fishing" shirt
(Breathes and has lots of pockets)
- 1 polyester long sleeve outdoor shirt
(Dries quickly)
- 2 plain cotton t-shirts
(Who knew dark green reminds everyone in Turkey of their army service)
- 1 sleeveless cotton t-shirt
(For those too-warm-for-sleeves days)
- 2 cotton undershirts
(Rinse these and go longer between outerwear washes)
- 1 pair boxer style pajama shorts
(Doubles as lounge wear)
- 1 bathing suit
(Take a Speedo and you can pass for Eastern European)
- 1 pair nylon gym shorts
(More lounge wear or another bathing suit)
- 4 pairs of cotton briefs
(Wash em at every opportunity so you don't run out, ditto for socks)
- 3 pairs of Tilley ankle socks
(Tilley socks are awesome)
- 1 pair compression socks
(So you don't get thrombosis on those long flights)

- 1 nylon long sleeve pullover turtle neck undershirt
(A nod to cooler weather)
- 1 nylon breathable waterproof poncho
(For that tropical monsoon)
- 1 cotton baseball cap
(Doesn't every tourist rock one?)

Packing Items

- 5 nylon and mesh packing cubes and pouches assorted sizes
(Packing cubes make living out of a suitcase more bearable)
- 2 16" compression sacks for sleep sacks
(you want to squeeze everything as small as possible)
- 8 nylon 1" compression straps w/buckles various lengths
(Hook stuff together, tie stuff down, double for belts. You will use them all.)
- 6 Velcro straps
(To tame all those charger and USB cables)
- 4 nylon stuff sacks assorted sizes
(More compartmentalization)
- 1 small zippered nylon pouch
(For those small loose items)

Toiletries

- 1 8oz bottle sunscreen
(You can find it, but not always when you need it or for a good price)
- 1 med. Ditty bag with razors, toothbrush, nail clippers, etc
(Good razors are hard to find.)
- 1 microfiber beach towel w/mesh carrying bag
(The only way to carry a big towel)
- 2 terrycloth "baby" wash cloths
(They're tiny but they work)
- 1 roll toilet paper
(Yes, you'll find it along the way; just maybe not when you really need it!)

Sleep Gear

- 1 100% silk sleepsack
(There a lots of times you'd rather use your sheet than theirs)
- 2 REI travel sack/sleeping bag liners 55 degrees
(Not quite a sleeping bag, but you'll be glad you brought it)

Electronics and accessories

- 1 unlocked GSM quad band smartphone w/charger and earbuds
(Phone, camera, Internet, tunes, etc. Swap the chip and it works anywhere)
- 1 eBook reader w/case, cable, and charger
(eBooks are the only way to go when on the road)
- 1 battery-powered mini-speaker
(For those in-room house parties)
- 1 digital camera w/USB cable, mini tripod, and extra memory cards
(Can't take over 7,500 pictures without one)
- 1 8 GB USB drive with military grade encryption
(More or less safe way to carry important documents)

- 16 batteries AA and AAA
(You can buy AA and AAA batteries all over the world; stick to devices that use them)
- 1 set of international plug adapters
(Indispensable)
- 1 CPAP w/carrying case
(If ya need it, ya need it)
- 1 lithium CPAP battery FAA approved
(For those inevitable power outages)
- 1 16' extension cord
(Because the wall socket won't be near by)

Security Items

- 3 combination mini padlocks
(You'll use them constantly)
- 1 6' braided steel security cable
(So you can lock stuff to the bed frame)
- 1 Kryptonite retractable cable ski lock
(Ditto)
- 2 security wallets
(Ya wanta hide the cash)

Personal Items

- 1 travel umbrella
(So you don't have to interrupt your stroll)
- 1 pair reader sunglasses w/case
(If you're a certain age, they're the bomb on the beach)
- 3 pair reading glasses w/cases
(Because I'm always breaking mine)
- 1 pair sunglasses with case
(Cheap, I broke 4 pairs)
- 1 3oz bottle hand sanitizer
(Use it)
- 1 1oz bottle 100% Deet
(On the road 100% is hard to find, and 3% doesn't cut it)
- 8 noise reduction ear plugs
(Sleep when and where you want to)
- 1 eye mask
(Ditto)
- 1 three piece cutlery set
(Put the butter knife in your luggage or some airport guy will take it away)
- 2 ball point pens
- 2 small spiral notebooks
(Be ready when inspiration strikes)
- 1 zippered nylon document pouch
(Handy for plane tickets, maps, etc)
- 1 nylon mini shopping bag w/carabiner
(Squishes down to a golf ball, expands to carry all your purchases)
- 1 aluminum water bottle w/carabiner
(Refill it often)

Misc

- 1 LED headlamp
(For reading in bed and really dark nights)
- 2 LED micro lights w/ carbiners
(Photon Micro Lights are the bomb)
- 1 leatherman tool
(You'll use the pliers)
- 1 leatherman micra tool
(Ditto for the little sissors)
- 2 butane lighters
(Candles, incense, stoves, oh my!)
- 1 mini sewing kit
(You'll use it)
- 2 aluminum carbiners 3"
(Lots of uses)
- 2 mini bungee straps
(Ditto)
- 20 ft braided nylon rope
(Come on, if you're a guy, you gotta have some rope!)
- 1 tube superglue
(Fix stuff, glue torn clothes, close cuts, don't leave home without it)
- 1 roll clear tape
(Another fixer-upper)

Health and Medical

- 4 surgical masks
(Smog, disease, if you need em, you'll be glad ya got em)
- 1 pair anti-seasickness wrist bands
(It's the thought that counts)
- 1 backpacking style first-aid kit
(Be Prepared)

At the start of these lists, we pledged on scouts honor that we fit everything into our four bags. Well... that wasn't entirely true. On the outward leg of our journey where we crossed the Atlantic on a cruise ship, we decided to bring along some fancy duds and get into the whole cruise ship elegant dining experience. Were talking; a tuxedo and a gown for formal nights, and a suit and cocktail dresses for semi-formal nights. Throw in high heels, dress shoes, dress shirts, etc. and we had a packing problem. Here's how we solved it. First, I went to a Salvation Army store and bought all my semi-formal wear for about \$10. Next, we made an airplane-carry-on-sized "suitcase" out of a couple of layers of recycled cardboard box and packed it with all the fancy duds. When we reached Spain, I gave away the Salvation Army clothes, a mailing label converted the "suitcase" into a shipping crate, and the fancy keeper clothes headed home.

Here's a final thought about packing. If you need it or if you really like having it; try to bring it from home. On a long journey, consumables get used up and clothes wear out; you'll try to replace them along the way, but results are often mixed. Familiar products are often hard to find, prohibitively expensive, or both. Clothes marked XX Large are actually sized to fit your cat and a comfortable bra in your size; forget it! If you've got big feet, take new shoes that have just reached the comfortable broken in stage.

For more about our pre-trip planning, see the "First Steps" chapter of our book.

HAPPY TRAILS ON YOUR JOURNEY



Boomers Away; Travels at the Edge of the Comfort Zone



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