

## 14 TRAVEL

### Go light, don't forget your solar panel

The same old luggage just doesn't work as well anymore. While checked bags are growing to accommodate bulky items and other problematic items (sorry, musicians), airlines have brought in tougher weight limits. In response, travel product manufacturers have reengineered and redesigned their lines.

**The bigger the better?** To accommodate stuffed bags, companies are increasing the size and shape of their bag designs. From the outside, the bags look sleek and streamlined, but inside they can resemble a closet.

The 45-by-20-by-28-in. Hallow Hallow suitcase from Hallow (416-255-3325, www.hallow.com) has a ribbed shell that opens up to reveal a pair of hangers and two mesh ripper pockets with zippered pockets. To create in that extra space, the 74-by-20-by-28-in. Samsonite X-ten Spinner (www.samsonite.com) can expand by two inches, and the super-expensive will appreciate the company's 46-by-20-by-28-in. Pro-DLX Collection, which comes with a hallow kit and a suitcase to hold in necessary for hanging and filling dress shirts, skirts and suits.

**Lighten up.** With all of these add-on features, you could easily overpack. Instead, the airlines are changing the rules. Weight restrictions, says Peter Cobb, co-founder of Cheap (905-889-0110, www.cheap.com), the online purveyor that sells 6 million bags a year, but "it doesn't travel online." It doesn't mean much to go over 20 pounds (22 kilos). To sleep down—and most of the airlines extra pounds charge—manufacturers



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## STEP 1 Plan ahead, don't start packing the night before

CONTINUED FROM L1

- 1. Plan ahead.** Start thinking about what you'll take at the same time you buy your plane ticket, book the cruise or confirm the availability of a friend's condo.
  - Write down everything you think you'll need. Don't just make a mental list — get it on paper. It'll serve as a good checklist, and if you're suddenly pressed for time, you'll have something to go by.
  - Before you start assembling items, check website to see what is and isn't permitted in checked luggage and carry-on bags. In Canada, see <http://canada.gc.ca>. In the United States, see <http://www.tsa.gov>.
  - Think about what you're going to wear from the start. Would wearing clothing such as a bikini or deep-plunging neckline create an international incident? If you are going south, do you need more than one outfit? If you're going north, do you need a heavy coat? If you're going east, do you need a heavy coat? If you're going west, do you need a heavy coat?
  - Never pack the night before or day of a trip. Do it at least a day (preferably two days) ahead. Even if you don't have all the contents into your luggage, at least have the items stacked and organized. Once packed, if you must dip back into your bag at the 11th hour, do it only to weed out items you won't need.
  - If you take an annual ski or beach trip, you generally bring the same items each time. List those items on an index card and consult it before each trip, suggests Maria Ching, a professional organizer in Irvine, Calif. (www.fyileady.com/fyileady). When you return from the trip, add the list.
- 2. Prep your luggage.**
  - If you're going to arrive in one piece, your vacation may fall apart, too. Take extra precautions, both inside and out, to ensure that you both arrive in good condition.
  - Don't pack so much that your suitcase looks like a marshmallow or can't close without the aid of a strap or hinge. If a security inspector cannot close it properly, you risk losing possessions.
  - Use non-colored duct tape, security tied colorful yarn or ribbons or an over-the-shoulder luggage strap to make nondescript bags (red, black, black) stand out on the baggage carousel. Or tape to be different and opt for a brightly colored bag.
  - Be sure your name, address and telephone number are on the bag, both on a luggage tag and on a card tucked inside the handle. Include contact information at your destination.
  - If you want to lock your bag and are travelling to the United States, use a lock approved by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration. TSA locks can be opened by U.S. security inspectors if using special tools provided by the lock maker. If you don't use an approved one, screeners may deliberately break your lock to search your bag. Of course, they may do this anyway with TSA-approved locks, but at least you'll know the truth.
- 3. Choose your wardrobe carefully.**
  - A lot of people have regretted this, because they don't think about it in a constructive way. They just think, "I'll wear it."
  - Pick mix-and-match separates in neutral colors, such as black, navy and beige, wearing each item more than once. You can dress up an outfit with an easy-to-pack scarf, belt, or jewelry (preferably non-valuable, non-essential pieces).
  - Opt for wrinkle-free fabrics, such as microfiber, nylon or a cotton-polyester blend.
  - Avoid bringing thick sweaters or fleeces by packing thin layers. Judith Gilbert, author of *The Packing Book*, suggests merino wool. It's light, appropriate for most cool and warm climates and resists odors.

man and reshapes itself after with

one will suffice.

If you must bring bulky items — heavy shoes, fluffy blankets, ski

sweaters or winter coats — wear them on the plane instead of packing them.

Include a few quick-drying items that can be handwashed in a sink, including shirts, underwear and light-weight trousers.

**4. Keep toiletries to a minimum.**

Most travellers are surprised how much extra weight a full array of beauty products can add to a bag.

Bring travel-size, not full-size, items. If you can't find a travel-size version of what you need, check out Minimus, www.minimus.com, which sells only travel-size products. Its inventory ranges from soap and miniature deodorant to packets of light ranch dressing.

**5. Pack items in leakproof resealable bags or clear plastic bags, which will help you find items without having to**

check everything.

Consult experts' packing lists for more suggestions, so you don't end up bringing more than you'll need.

If you're headed somewhere where replacement toiletries won't be readily available, look for products that do double duty, such as shampoo that's also body wash or a sunscreen that's also skin moisturizer.

**6. Pack thoughtfully.**

The key here is using every bit of space in a bag without overpacking. Experts battle over which packing method is best, go with the one you're most comfortable with.

Consider rolling as many of your clothes as possible. "When soldiers pack their stuff, they roll and nest things to take up as little room as possible, they are taught to roll everything," explains Bonnie Cook, a professional organizer who runs OnlineOrganizing.com.

Be alternative to rolling by bundling clothing items together into one

right, pillow-like mass that takes up the entire volume. Gilbert suggests in her book, Lay all your clothing items across the entire width of the suitcase, and once all items are piled up, begin folding in the seams and legs.

Stuff shoes with socks, rolled ties, jewelry, underwear or other small items. Make use of this seldom-used space. If dry shoes should be wrapped in shoe bags or plastic bags.

Books are dead weight. Instead of packing a library's worth of guidebooks, photocopy the relevant pages or even print out the book.

Electronics (cameras, iPods, printers, prescription medication and important documents, passports, tickets) should always be carried on. Remember that security agents cannot see through chocolate or peanut butter with X-ray machines, and packing those items may provoke a security check.

**More advice from the experts:**

OnBag.com (www.onbag.com) is for the ultimate minimalist, yet even packers can take away ideas from the stellar packing suggestions.

The tips section of the travel site Walkabout Travel Gear (www.walkabouttravelgear.com) includes fun-to-peruse advice from readers, including this one: "When packing for a trip, lay out all the stuff you plan to pack, including your money. Use half the stuff and twice the money."

The general advice website eHow.com (www.ehow.com) has a section on How to Pack a Suitcase that includes four dozen tips.

The specialty product company TravelSmith (www.travelsmith.com) has 10 different packing lists each for men and women, based on destination and include "Words travel," "far" and "city excursion."

Backpackers should consult the specific must-haves at Art of Travel (www.artoftravel.com), an e-book written by seasoned independent traveller John Gregory.

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