



# PACKING CHECKLIST

A resource for travellers from [www.deanstarnes.com](http://www.deanstarnes.com) and *Roam: the Art of Travel*

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There are two principal methods of packing. The proponents of the first school-of-thought have a 'trial' pack about six months before their actual departure. This approach involves putting items (no matter how questionably useful) on their bed in a series of neat little piles. Here they stay, effectively forcing the 'packer' to sleep on the floor or on a pile of dirty laundry in the corner of the room. The second widely employed tactic is to wait until the cab taking you to the airport has arrived. When it starts to honk its horn, the 'packer' springs to life and starts stuffing the first things they see (pot plants, small children, etc.) into their bag. In either case it is worth remembering that you can usually buy whatever you have forgotten on the road for a fraction of the cost it is back home – besides, the airline will probably lose it all anyway.

Everyone has their own heart-felt opinion about what goes and what stays. I've found that once you have decided on what you're going to take, halve the clothes and double the money. Here is what I would take if I was backpacking in a climatically temperate Third World country, say Australia, for two months.

## Bags

- Backpack – side opening and lockable with the mandatory non-American flag sewn onto it. To seem mysterious, choose a really obscure country.
- Day pack – lockable and sometimes sold as a 'zip-on' to the main pack. Under no circumstances attempt this. I once saw a tiny Irish girl tip backwards under the combined weight. She looked like an upended turtle with her skirt over her head. As far as I know she is still there.
- Money belt.
- Wallet.

## Documents

- Passport – some countries need them to be valid for a minimum of six months after the trip's completion. Carry a photocopy.
- Two ATM cards – Visa is the most widely accepted. Take a spare card (eftpos is fine) in case one is stolen.
- Cash – US dollars are the most widely accepted.
- Yellow vaccination certificate detailing all your shots.
- Passport photos – useful when applying for entry visas.
- Airline tickets / confirmation of hotel reservations.
- Travel insurance.
- Student card – ISC (US) and ISIC (UK) cards are more widely accepted than ID supplied by universities. Not a student? You can buy forgeries in South East Asia.

## Shoes

- Shoes or boots – whichever are sturdy, semi-waterproof and you can walk in for bloody ages.
- Sandals or thongs.

## Clothes

- 4 x Socks.
- 4 x Underwear.
- 1 x Thermal underwear – it may not be hip but nothing keeps you warm like these babies.
- 1 x Trousers/skirt.
- 1 x Belt – so if you get sick and lose weight you can still keep your pants up.
- 2 x Shorts – if it is hot enough I live in them, but then again that could be the New Zealand influence. In the past, businessmen in New Zealand wore 'dress shorts' with their suit and tie. Now that's a statement.
- 1 x Swimsuit – only required if you can't swim in your shorts.
- 3 x Shirts/blouses – I like T-shirts, but that's just me. Usually I take 2 tees, and either 1 short-sleeved or long-sleeved shirt. Whatever you choose, make them baggy and any colour except white. Always take your favourite 'getting lucky' shirt if you are looking for some action.
- 1 x Tank top
- 1 x Sarong – courtesy of Asia and the Pacific these things are great. Wrap one around you on the way to the shower, use them to sit on at the beach or as a stand-in towel when your regular towel becomes too stinky to bear.

- 1 x Travel towel – get one that is thin, easily wringable, compact and dries quickly.
- 1 x Hat – choose one that still looks okay when crushed and, if you are a college student, cool when worn backwards.
- 1 x Sweater – the one I take is flash enough to go out in – but my idea of going out is so low key, some might call it ‘cheap’.
- 1 x Rain jacket – lightweight and wind-resistant.
- Something to ‘go out’ in.

#### **Toiletries**

- Toothbrush and toothpaste – available everywhere in small tubes. Top up as you go.
- Shampoo and if you must, conditioner. You don’t need as much as you think you do. A 75 ml bottle is enough.
- Soap in its own soap box.
- Deodorant – now available in ‘travel pack’ sizes.
- Toilet tissue – you don’t need the bulk of a whole roll, just a couple of tissue packs is enough to start with, then ‘stock up’ from well-appointed toilets as you go.
- Tampons – apparently they can be very difficult to get in some countries.
- Comb/brush.
- Shaving stuff – razor and a tube of shaving cream. The cans of foam are bulky and can explode at altitude, which usually involves a serious clean-up operation when you reach your destination.
- Lip-balm/ChapStick® – some people, and I’m tempted to name names here, won’t share. Bastards.
- Sunscreen – Fill a ‘trial size’ bottle.
- Insect repellent – strength depending on where you are going, but typically the more DEET the better. Of course DEET will eat through plastic and in large enough quantities is probably lethal.
- Condoms – probably won’t get used.
- First aid kit – see the checklist in Chapter 3.

#### **Books**

- Guide book – sure it’s bulky and expensive but it’s also full of valuable information.
- Novel – you’ll be amazed at how much reading you get through while waiting for buses and trains. Make sure it has ‘trade-on’ value. No one will swap with you if your book features a Fabio-like hero and a windswept sky.
- Diary and pen.

#### **Miscellaneous**

- iPod & charger.
- Camera and lens.
- Swiss Army knife.
- Sleeping sheet – leave the sleeping bag at home.
- Cutlery, camping set and maybe a stainless steel mug.
- Flashlight – the smaller the better.
- Watch – the cheaper the better, equipped with a reliable alarm.
- Padlocks – combination; so you can’t lose the keys.
- Sunglasses.