

Packing

- Above all else, **pack lightly**. You'll be lifting your bag out of the trunk of the car, through the airport, off the luggage carousel, to the train station, to the bus stop, onto the bus, off the bus, back a few kilometers because you missed your stop, up six flights of stairs, and onto the dresser. If you can't carry your luggage around the block three times, you're taking too much.
- Choose luggage that's sturdy, on wheels (2" diameter or larger to navigate curbs and cobblestones), and portable (even into a bathroom stall). If on the move, use a backpack instead, especially one with an internal frame, padded belt and shoulder straps, and side pockets.
- Find out your airline's luggage limits (dimensions and weight) and if there is a fee for oversized or overweight baggage. Baggage limits on the major carriers vary by destination, so check with your carrier(s) before finishing your packing.
- Check the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov just prior to departure to find out what items are allowed in your carry-on bags.

What do I pack?

See packing list that follows.

Don't forget:

- A **day pack** to hold maps, phrase books, guidebooks, water bottles, sunglasses, etc.
- A **neck wallet or money belt** is recommended, regardless of where you're going or how you're getting there.

Clothing:

- Plan on **bad weather**; specifically, plan on colder and wetter weather than you'd expect, or, in the tropics, hotter than you'd expect. Ask yourself: what would I put over/under this outfit if it gets cold/starts to rain?

Luggage:

- What you carry needn't be expensive, but ask yourself: Will I be carrying my luggage a lot (**big backpack**), or am I staying in one place for a long time (**suitcase**)?
- Could my luggage withstand a lot of **rough treatment**? Are the straps and handles strong enough? Will the zippers hold?
- Does all my luggage **lock** (to discourage theft)? If not, buy a TSA-approved lock or locking strap.
- Can TSA easily search and reclose my luggage?

- Does any of my luggage have **wheels**? Wheels smaller than 2” diameter are bound to snap off at the first cobblestone or curb. A suitcase with big wheels or a sturdy folding luggage cart with big wheels can really help the suitcase traveler.
- Label the inside of your luggage with your name and address, in case your luggage is lost. Attach distinctive ribbons or yarn to luggage. Everyone has black!

Other packing tips:

- Research **culturally appropriate clothing** (for religious sites, discos, conservative Muslim countries, etc.), as some places may not let you in with immodest dress. In some Asian countries, shoes are removed at the door and must be easy to slip on and off.
- Take **nothing you’d be sorry to lose**, as it is easier to lose things while traveling than in everyday life.
- A **tiny flashlight** comes in handy.
- Put a copy of your itinerary in each bag.

Electricity and appliances:

- Appliances such as hairdryers run on a certain voltage of electrical current. There are two standard voltages in the world: 110 (used in the U.S.) and 220. An appliance designed for 110 voltage cannot run on 220 without a **converter** (or may run for a while and then burn up). In addition, plug-in (outlet) types vary the world over and require an **adapter**. If you must take an appliance, be sure to take the proper converter and adapters. If you will be abroad for a while, consider buying the necessary appliances abroad. Better yet, consider living without your appliances altogether.

Packing valuables:

- Do not bring valuables unless absolutely necessary.
- Carry passport, cash, credit cards, and other important documents on your body in a neck pouch or money belt. Pack photocopies of important documents in one place and never pack them in checked luggage.
- Photocopy valuable documents such as passport, visa, credit cards, prescriptions, driver’s license, etc., and keep copies in your bags and separate from the originals. Leave a copy at home with your parents, too.
- Pack prescription medications in your carry-on, in case your checked luggage is lost (see “Health” section of this handbook).

How to pack:

- Stuff socks and underwear in plastic bags and then stuff the bags in shoes.

- Roll your clothes to take up less space.
- Pack largest items first (clothes, shoes, toiletry bag), then tuck smaller items in between.
- Bring toiletries in plastic bottles, not glass (lighter and unbreakable).
- Carry toiletries in a plastic bag.
- Consider buying toiletries abroad unless your trip is short or you need certain kinds (e.g., plastic applicator tampons, specific brand of contact lens solution).

For the traveler on the move (i.e., backpacking):

- Bring half of what you think you'll use. You only need three of anything: "One to wash, one to wear, one to spare."
- Prepare to wash clothes in the sink and hang dry. Bring a thin towel (one that will dry quickly).
- Choose a backpack carefully, as it will determine the number of miles you are willing to walk to find cheap or clean housing or to see the sights.
- Bring an old sheet for hostels in case required.
- Bring flip-flops or Crocs for nasty showers and cheap and easy beachwear.

Packing Lists

Essentials (in a neck pouch or money belt):

- passport/visa
- credit cards/ATM cards
- travelers' checks
- tickets
- cash
- driver's license
- prescriptions
- glasses or contact lenses

In Your Carry-on Bag:

- photocopies of all important documents
- prescription medication (see "Health" section of this handbook)
- list of traveler's check numbers
- laptop computer
- cell phone charger
- camera

Toiletries:

- glasses and contact lens equipment
- extra pair of glasses or contacts
- cosmetics (if necessary)
- shower gel
- toothpaste
- toothbrush
- small towel
- deodorant
- comb or brush
- razors
- shampoo/conditioner
- pads/tampons
- manicure items
- small, unbreakable mirror
- Kleenex
- hair equipment
- condoms (may be unavailable or difficult to obtain)
- zip-lock plastic bags (for wet or leaking items)

Accessories:

- a **day pack** or small canvas bag
- **neck wallet or money belt**
- reading material for traveling

- adapter/converter for voltage
- flashlight (small)
- battery-operated alarm clock
- camera/video camera
- batteries for digital camera
- address book
- journal
- a good guide book
- phrase book or dictionary
- gifts
- nylon expandable luggage, for more space
- sunglasses
- compact umbrella
- combination locks for luggage
- a few photos of family and friends
- something to remind you of home
- flash drive for extra media storage
- blank CDs to burn for photos

Taking Your Computer Abroad

Taking advantage of cybercafés can be a great alternative to carrying your computer with you. Remember to bring memory sticks and to take them with you when you leave the café.

Books that can provide you with a wealth of information on how to stay connected include:

- The Rough Guide to the Internet, Angus Kennedy, Rough Guides
- Cybercafés: A Worldwide Guide for Travelers, Kath Stanton (Ten Speed Press)
- Internet Café Guide, Ernst Larsen

Also check out the Web guides at <http://www.netcafeguide.com> (also by Ernst Larsen) or <http://www.cybercaptive.com>.

Safe Computing While Studying Abroad

Using public computers at Internet cafes, airports, libraries, and other public facilities is not without risk. Some may have keystroke loggers or other software installed on them to capture information. If you must use public computers, try to find a reputable location and keep the following in mind:

- Never leave the computer unattended. Watch out for people looking over your shoulder who might be trying to discover account names and passwords.

- Don't enter sensitive information when using a public computer. It is not recommended to do any kind of banking or purchasing with these machines. If you use your e-mail accounts at these locations, change your passwords regularly.
- Delete all files you have created on hard drives.
- Always logout of all applications. Logout of Web sites by pressing logout instead of just closing the browser. Close down all applications and reboot the system when you are finished.
- Remember to remove CDs, memory sticks and other personal belongings as you leave.

If you are taking a computer with you and plan to use networking resources available to you while you are abroad, do the following before you leave:

- Update your operating system with the latest patches. Also apply the latest updates to any application programs that you'll be using.
- Verify that you have installed and are running a current antivirus program. Make sure that the virus definition files are up-to-date.
- Many machines become compromised because there are poor passwords on the machine accounts. Check to see that all accounts have complex, hard-to-guess passwords. Do not share your passwords with anybody.
- Close down any file sharing that might allow a hacker into your system.
- Install an anti-spyware program that will regularly check for spyware on your machine.
- Check to see if you need a special power adapter.