

Packing Tips



1. Pack Smart

Keep four things in mind when you pack:

- the climate of your assigned country
- the culture of your assigned country
- airlines rules and restrictions for luggage
- the work of your ministry assignment.

Regarding the clothes you pack:

- Bring modest, rather than revealing clothing. No tank tops or sleeveless blouses.
- Avoid graphic T-shirts and clothing that conflicts with Christian witness and values.
- Plan to be comfortable, but not sloppy.
- Choose low-maintenance clothes in basic colors.
- Bring washable fabrics rather than dry-clean only.

Remember that the way you dress makes a statement (whether you realize it or not) about how you think about yourself, your views of the country you will be entering and, most importantly, your view of God. The American dress code is typically more casual and immodest than in many other cultures. You don't want to offend people before you ever open your mouth.

Packing a carry-on well is more important than ever. Be aware of size limits, but maximize what you can pack in your carry-on. It should include your most essential items: medicines, glasses, toiletries, at least 1 or 2 change of clothes, money, passport,

and visa form. Remember that any liquids, creams, aerosols, or gels are limited to 3.4 oz each and should be put together in a 1-quart plastic ziplock bag. If you bring any item that has a lithium battery, it cannot be packed in your checked luggage. Avoid anything that can be construed as a weapon such as a pocketknife or scissors.

2. Pack Light

Take this literally. Pack only what you can carry. You may be dashing to catch connecting flights, chasing trains pulling away from stations, and hauling your luggage upstairs in your lodging. You should be able to walk quickly without being burdened by your luggage. Pack only what you need.

Know your baggage limits. Check with the travel agent or airline about how many checked pieces of luggage you can take. Typically you can check two bags on international flights, but know that the allowable number and weight of checked bags varies by airlines. Your travel agent will know the amount of checked luggage you can have and the weight limit per piece for your airline. You will be charged if your luggage exceeds the weight limit.

A WORD TO THE WOMEN.

The prospect of having to wear the same thing twice in a week may be painful to you, but we promise that no one will be scandalized if you do. Most of the people in your host country will be doing the same. Pack sensibly. Two to three pairs of shoes are enough—tennis shoes or hiking boots, comfortable everyday shoes and flip-flops or sandals. Take a few tops and a few bottoms (pants or skirts depending on cultural appropriateness) that mix and match. Get several looks out of a few pieces.

3. Essential Items to Bring in a Carry-on Bag:

- Airplane boarding passes and itinerary
- Passport/visa—Do not pack your passport in your checked luggage!
- Cash and/or debit card (knowing your PIN is essential in most countries)
- Local contact information of your host in country
- Eye-glasses and/or contacts, if you wear them
- Travel size toiletry items—shampoo, soap, cleansers, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb or brush, antibacterial hand soap that doesn't require water, etc. There are security regulations about the amount of liquids that you can have in your carry-on baggage. All liquids, gels, and aerosols cannot exceed 3.4 ounces (by listed volume), packed together in a one-quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag with a limit of one bag per passenger. Greater quantities of liquids or gels must be placed in checked luggage or left behind. For more information, visit: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips>.
- Any prescription medications you need (in their original containers), even if you won't need it during the flight. If you packed prescription in checked baggage your luggage is lost, you may not have your medications(s) the entire trip.
- At least one extra set of clothes—your luggage may not arrive when you do. You'll be glad for an extra set of clean clothes (including several pairs of underwear) while you are waiting for your luggage to catch up to you.

4. Essential Items to Bring in Checked Luggage:

- A photocopy of your passport and visa. (Include in each bag you check.)
- Clothing—Remember the climate, culture and your project assignment.
- Good shoes—Make sure they're made for walking and well broken in.
- Rubber flip-flops or thongs—To wear in the shower.
- Hat—For protection from the sun.
- Sunscreen/lip balm with sunscreen
- Wet wipes/tissues/waterless antibacterial soap
- Toilet tissue—It's never a bad idea to have some on hand. Travel tissues work as well.
- Insect repellent—If relevant to your destination. Check the recommended Deet level.
- Women: feminine products—These may not be readily available in many countries.
- A simple First-Aid kit
- Travel adaptor for electrical outlets (check online for the right kind for your host country)
- Towels and washcloths—Often the towels that are provided at the lodging are not the same as towels in the U.S. Wash cloths are not available in many countries.
- Ministry-related materials (Your field host will advise you on this.)
- Pictures of your family, friends, city and favorite activities. Use these to make conversation with new friends at the project, but not to make a statement about your living standards.

THE NON-ESSENTIALS

What to Leave Behind:

- **Make-up**
Most of your make-up—Take only what you absolutely can't live without.
- **Jewelry**
It is risky to travel with and wear valuable jewelry in many countries.
- **Hair-dryer / curling iron**
High-powered American appliances aren't likely to work or will blow circuits. You will not only need an adapter, but also a transformer.