

THE *Traveller's Handbook*

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SMARTER, EASIER TRAVEL



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Travel Packing Checklist

Here is my ultimate travel packing checklist, designed to get you ready for your next trip even faster. Never again worry about forgetting an essential item at home!

For a detailed explanation of each of these items check out my tips on [What Everyone Ought to Know About Effective Travel Packing](#).

	✓	Qty		✓	Qty		✓	Qty	
Gear:			Luggage			Pen			Small Daypack
			Personal Item			Notebook			Money Belt/Neck Wallet
			Luggage Lock			Journal			
Paperwork:			Passport			Itinerary			Emergency Cash
			ID			Contact Info			Debit/Credit Cards
			VISA			Passport Pictures			Insurance Cards
			Passport Wallet			Vouchers/Tickets			Confirmation Emails
			Boarding Pass			Maps			Guidebooks
Toiletries:			Toiletries Kit			Medications			Contacts/Solution
			Toothbrush/Toothpaste			Shampoo			Shaving Products
			Soap/Body Wash			Conditioner			Makeup
			Deodorant			Comb/Brush			Pain Reliever
			Hand Sanitizer			Hair Styling			Sunscreen
			Glasses			Sunglasses			Nail Clippers/Scissors
Clothes:			Short-sleeve Shirts			Swimsuit			Sandals
			Long-sleeve Shirts			Underwear/Bras			Shoes/Boots
			Pants/Skirts			Socks			Cover-up/Sleepwear
			Shorts/Gym Shorts			Scarf/Sarong			Ties/Belts/Jewellery
			Sweater			Jacket/Windbreaker			Gloves/Hats
Electronics:			Smartphone			GPS			Travel Adapter
			Digital Camera			Headphones/Earbuds			Portable Media Storage
			Laptop			Chargers			Portable Power
			Music/MP3 Player			Batteries			USB Flash Drive
			eReader						
Other:			Water Bottle			Flashlight			Gum
			Fold-up Tote			Binoculars			Snacks
			Travel Sewing Kit			Reading Material			



Carry-on Packing Checklist

Whether you are travelling exclusively with a carry-on, or you are also checking your main luggage, this checklist will ensure you have all your essentials.

For a detailed explanation of each of these items check out my tips on [How to Pack a Carry-on Bag](#).

	✓	Qty		✓	Qty		✓	Qty	
Essentials:			Passport/ID/VISA			Itinerary			Emergency Cash
			Camera			Important Documents			Debit/Credit Cards
			Boarding Pass			Passport Pictures			Insurance Cards
			Smartphone			Headphones/Earbuds			Portable Power
			Charger(s)			Travel Adapter			Portable Media Storage
			Music/MP3 Player			Reading Material			Snacks/Gum
Toiletries:			Toothbrush			Medications			Contacts/Solution
			Toothpaste			Shampoo			Shaving Products
			Soap/Body Wash			Conditioner			Makeup
			Deodorant			Brush/Comb			Pain Reliever
			Hand Sanitizer			Hair Styling			Bandages
			Nail File/Clippers			Sunscreen			Insect Repellent
Clothes:			Short-sleeve Shirts			Swimsuit			Sandals
			Long-sleeve Shirts			Underwear/Bras			Shoes/Boots
			Pants			Socks			Cover-up/Sleepwear
			Shorts/Gym Shorts			Scarf/Sarong			Ties
			Skirts			Sunglasses			Gloves/Hats
			Belt			Glasses			Jewellery
			Sweater			Jacket/Windbreaker			Travel Sewing Kit

* Liquids and gels must be in 100mL bottles. Store all in one 1L plastic bag.



Carry-on Luggage Rules

Rules for carry-ons vary by airline, so I highly recommend verifying the specific rules and measurements for your airline before arriving at the check-in counter. It's a good idea to consult your airline's website directly to avoid inaccurate or outdated information.

Carry-on Luggage Size

The commonly accepted rule for carry-on luggage size is 45 linear inches (measured as length + width + height). Sometimes you will see the dimensions specified explicitly; the most common is 22 x 14 x 9 inches (which works out the same as our 45 linear inches limit). It is important to note that cheaper or *budget* airlines are often the strictest with luggage size rules.



Carry-on Luggage Weight

Carry-on luggage rules for weight can vary widely between airlines. Some airlines allow carry-on bags weighing up to fifty pounds, but would you really want to carry around 50 pounds? I recommend aiming for the 15-25 pound range.

Carry-on Toiletries

Toiletry size rules are consistent around the world, so for liquids or gels remember 3-1-1:

- 3.4 ounce (100ml) bottles or less
- 1 litre-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag
- 1 bag per passenger

In other words, your liquids and gels must be in 3.4 ounce (100ml) bottles. Those bottles must fit into a one litre plastic bag. Each passenger may only carry one of these plastic bags.

For more details, be sure to visit my [carry-on luggage rules](#) blog post.



Tips for Using Your Phone Overseas

Leaving our phones off or travelling without our smartphones is not an option most of us are willing to exercise! The possibility of returning home to surprise phone bills for data roaming fees and excessive charges for texts or calls can lead to many people to turn off their phone for much of their time away. There are a few simple ways to use your smartphone abroad for free. The key is to be somewhat flexible, understanding that constant access to texting, calling, and the internet may not always be possible.

Sending Texts for Free

If you have an iPhone or Blackberry, you will have iMessage or Blackberry Messenger (BBM) included, respectively. For Android or Windows users, or those occasions when you need to communicate across different devices there are a number of free Apps out there to aid you, such as WhatsApp, BBM, Facebook Message, Skype, or Google Voice.

Using these services while travelling will only be free as long as you are on Wi-Fi, which is easy to find in most cities around the world. You may not be able to text at any given moment but at most restaurants or cafes you will be able to connect.

Browsing the Web and Emailing for Free

Browsing the web over Wi-Fi will provide the same experience as using your data plan at home. Once again, while away do not use any international data. Usually as soon as your plane touches down or you enter a new country you get a text from your carrier about some data plan which almost never turns out to be the best option. If your phone is automatically downloading emails you can expect an enormous cell phone bill.

Turn off your data roaming. Just like messaging and calling you can browse the web, and send/receive email for free using Wi-Fi.

Paid Options

Contact your mobile phone service provider, to find out about travel plans and features they offer. These are temporary add-ons to your normal plan, allowing you to use your phone as usual while travelling. These travel plans offer better rates than making calls and texts without them. I recommend them for when you absolutely need them but try to stick to Wi-Fi. The best part is, travel plans are one-time fees and will not automatically renew each month.

Download Necessities and Clear Space

If you use your phone for navigation, the first thing you'll want to do before travelling is download required maps to your phone. The best free option for this is Google Maps where you can download maps for offline viewing. Note that with Google's offline maps, you have a map of the area in your pocket, but you still don't have access to navigation or location search. You'll want to write down addresses and cross streets of places you want to go so you can find them on the map.



It's easy to forget what it's like to not have internet. If you stream podcasts, music, or books, download what you want to read or listen to before you leave. Don't forget to sync everything too, to make sure your backups are up to date. Specifically, if you're using a translation app make sure the required data is stored locally before you go. For example, Google Translate is great, but make sure you download the [language packs first](#).

Now is also a good time to clear storage space on your phone by transferring photos, videos and podcasts to your computer. If you're on vacation, there's a good chance you'll want to take more pictures than usual, and the last thing you want is to run out of storage. Take the time to go through and delete what you don't need and free up all the space you can before you go.

Go Pay-As-You-Go

Signing up for a full smartphone contract for a short trip abroad doesn't make sense, but you can get a pay-as-you-go SIM card from most providers if you have a device that supports one. By searching online for the technical specifications of your phone, you can find out which bands it supports. Then look for an international carrier that uses those bands for their LTE service.

Once you find a compatible carrier, there's still one more problem: your phone must be carrier unlocked. In some cases you can ask your carrier to unlock your phone for travel purposes, but this will come at a cost. In the end, a pay-as-you-go SIM card is a great way to save money, but will take a bit of work on your part to get it set up.

Alternatively, you can pick up a pay-as-you-go [Wi-Fi hotspot](#) from a carrier abroad. This will allow you to use your phone's Wi-Fi to connect to the hotspot and freely use data without paying any international roaming charges. The downside to this option, of course, is that your connectivity relies on the hotspot. For data usage, this won't feel much different. Calls, on the other hand, will drop more easily when you're moving about because VOIP doesn't recover from dropouts like traditional cellular calls can. Additionally, you'll have two devices to charge: the hotspot and your smartphone.

With a little pre-planning, some attention to the settings on your smartphone, and Wi-Fi management you can get away with using the features you have come to love and rely on from your smartphone for free (or for very little cost) while travelling!

For more tips and details visit my [Using Your Smartphone Overseas](#) blog post.



Must-Have Smartphone Apps for Travellers

Now that it has become easier to travel with our smartphones, we're all looking for the best apps to make our travels better, easier and smarter.

Here are my [Top 10 Smartphone Apps for Travellers](#):



[Airbnb's](#) mobile app lets you plan your travel while on-the-go. Reserve anything from a spare room to a docked boat to an entire furnished home directly from someone who is local to your destination.



[Dropbox](#) eliminates the need to scan and email important documents to yourself prior to travelling. One of the best consumer cloud storage services available, you can start with two gigabytes of free storage and upgrade to paid options if you need more.



[Google Translate's](#) app brings the ease of translating pieces of text from their web service to your smartphone. You don't even need to type in the word or phrase you need translated as the app will also work using your phone's camera.



[JetLag Genie](#) is a great health app for those cases where your trip is going to include a long flight. This is one of the paid apps on the list, but it's small price could pay huge dividends when you arrive at your destination without losing a few hours (or days) to jet-lag!



[Transit](#) makes your next commute simpler. Get upcoming departure times for all nearby transit lines, easily plan your trip, set reminders, and get notifications about disruptions.



[TripIt](#) is a vital travel planner app – especially on those longer, more complex trips. Simply forward all those confirmation mails that you get from hotels and airlines to plans@tripit.com to have them magically combined into a digital itinerary that you can refer to on your smartphone.





[Triposo's](#) app compliments their website to provide smart personalized suggestions so you can skip the long reviews to find what you'll love. Get real-time information about what's in your immediate area, or dynamic recommendations about activities, museums, beaches, dancing, etc.



[Uber](#) allows you to get a taxi, private car or rideshare from the convenience of your smartphone. You are connected with a driver in minutes and can see exactly where they are and when they arrive to collect you.



[Waze](#) is the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app. Join other drivers to share real-time traffic and road information, saving everyone time and gas!




[XE Currency Exchange](#) is incredibly useful any time you travel internationally to instantly translate the local currency into one that's more familiar to you. XE.com is one of the best known and most reliable currency-related sites on the net, and its app is no different.

For more details on these apps, be sure to visit my [Top 10 Must-Have Smartphone Apps for Travellers](#) blog post!



Essential Travel Accessories

Here are the 10 accessories that have revolutionized the way I travel ... I no longer leave home without them!

	<p>A decent pair of noise isolating earphones is essential for every smart traveller. Shure SE215 Noise Isolating Earphones are a great option to help keep your sanity when surrounded by screaming kids, noisy train stations, or high-volume karaoke on a long bus ride. Shure's SE-215 earphones are small and light, comfortable to wear for long periods, have great sound reproduction and (most importantly) effectively silence the outside world.</p>
	<p>Grid-It! organisers are great ways to keep organized while travelling. They are designed to keep things in place; helping you avoid a tangle of cables, chargers, stationary and other items. They come in a variety of sizes so you're sure to find one that suits your needs from snacks to toiletries to electronics!</p>
	<p>Olloclip camera lens attachments for smartphones includes 3 little camera lenses that quickly transform the standard camera on your phone for fish-eye, macro and wide angle shots. As a word of caution, these clips generally do not fit over your phone case, but attach directly to the phone itself. They are great for those moments when you don't want (or don't think you'll need) to carry a 'real' camera.</p>



	<p>Backing up your pictures or data is vital for piece-of-mind, as is ensuring you won't run out of battery power while on the road. The MAZZO PowerDrive includes a 7800mAh battery that can charge an iPhone up to three times, perfect for those long flights and bus rides! You also have the option to move individual files backwards and forwards using the included app. This drive comes in four different storage capacities, ranging from 16 to 128GB.</p>
	<p>A notebook and good pen are must haves for every traveller. I love to make some quick notes after every day or every excursion. It's amazing what you'll forget when reading through these notes later! Notebooks are also great for tracking your travel plans or jotting down a new friend's contact info. I prefer the look, feel and size of Moleskine notebooks.</p>
	<p>If you plan to travel internationally you'll want to have an All-in-1 universal travel adapter. Not surprisingly, there are different power standards around the world, and these adapters will prevent you from scrambling to charge your essential electronics.</p>
	<p>You'll definitely need a lightweight carry-on suitcase, and you'll want to go with a 4-wheel spinner version to reduce arm strain. I love the eco-friendly build of the Heys EcoOrbis. If you are regularly travelling with a laptop, I recommend the Samsonite Silhouette Sphere for its large external pocket, removing the need to carry-on an extra laptop bag.</p>





A [packable down jacket](#) will prepare you for almost any kind of weather. They are lightweight, breathable, warm, and often come with their own carrying bag for quick and easy storage at a fraction of their size.



You are allowed [1 personal item](#) in addition to your carry-on, so this is where you'll pack those items you know you'll want access to during your flight. The ideal personal item has integrated straps to secure the bag to the handle of your wheeled luggage, further alleviating shoulder strain while waiting in lines or walking to your gate. I recommend the [STM quantum shoulder bag](#). Its laptop pocket protects your device in high-density foam. There are compartments for your tablet, charging cords, extra battery, and headphones so all are neatly tucked away. There's even room for a change of shoes.



A [GoPro](#) is a fantastic camera for any smart traveller. It's easily portable, lightweight, extremely durable, and easy to operate; the only limit is your imagination! The waterproof, dust-proof, weatherproof construction makes it ideal in just about any situation on land, by air, or in sea. Not only that, but the picture quality is truly remarkable.



Thank You!

I hope you've enjoyed this Traveller's Handbook!

My passion is to serve to inspire you to follow your dreams - in travel and in life. If you're looking for help taking the vacations of your dreams at prices you can afford, reach out to me today.

I want to say a **HUGE thank you** for reading my blog and connecting with me via email and social media! I'm truly grateful for your continued support.

You are welcome to contact me with any questions, suggestions, or comments. I look forward to hearing from you!

- Bruce Schinkel

Keep in touch!

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