



Where Is She Heading

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Packing – Part 1 - The Balance Of Bringing Versus Waiting!

Packing involves several steps: what to take, style of luggage, and how to organize our stuff. While there are many packing lists, there is an issue that must be addressed before anything goes into the suitcase.

Packing is an art; a combination of security and exploration, safety and adventure, and the balance of **Bringing** everything you need from home, or **Waiting** to buy things upon arrival. How to pack is unique to each person and most travelers use a combination of both before each trip.

When I left in 2006, my ratio was 80:20 Bringing to Waiting. By the end of the trip I was closer to 50:50. No one travels 100% either way and each trip and different destination can change the ratio. There are pros and cons to both and experiences you may miss if you pack exclusively at one end of the spectrum.

BRINGING

The benefits are obvious. You have everything you need, recognize every brand and recommended dose, and outfits are preplanned with coordinated accessories. If it works at home, it will almost certainly perform the same way abroad.

A drawback is that you unless you have amazing packing skills and unlimited weight limits, you may bring more than you need and add weight to your luggage.

Also consider if you bring everything, you miss the experience of a grocery, clothing store, or pharmacy (“chemist” in foreign countries.) These businesses quickly expose you to everyday life in your new home. Plus it can be an adventure to go down the aisle to see what is unique for the country. (Aspirin next to the canned peas or socks beside the screwdrivers) Another bonus of exploring these shops is you develop a feel for what brands from home are also available abroad. Consider it research for subsequent trips.

WAITING

The benefit here is you probably have lighter luggage because you plan to pick up consumables and local clothing once you arrive.

Early shopping excursions acclimate you to local currency as you practice the local language. Avid shoppers can scope out what is available and think ahead for last minute shopping before you leave for home.

A problem with waiting occurs if your plane is delayed and you depended on shopping upon arrival. Another problem can be if you forgot something that is critical such as medicine. Even when you prefer to shop when you arrive, savvy travelers usually bring at least a few days worth of supplies and one complete set of clothes to start each trip.

Experienced travelers usually have a few things that they always carry from home. While you may be willing to buy local socks, you really prefer your own brand of deodorant. Or you like to buy local cloths, except for shoes or underwear. Identify your “must-have” items to bring from home. But I also encourage you to leave some of your regular stuff at home, so you can explore foreign shops for their equivalents.

Lastly, please be gentle with yourself when you’ve left something at home. Even veteran travelers can forget things. *For all my planning before going around the world, on the flight between Dallas and Lima I realized I had NO SHAMPOO. My first shampoo was with a bar of soap. Right after breakfast, I walked to the market and bought several small packets of shampoo that I carried for the rest of the trip. Note to self – Bar soap is hard on my hair!*

How you pack is unique to you. Determine your special items and your ratio between Bringing and Waiting. No matter which you prefer pack lightly and remember that anywhere you go there is always a store available. Have a great time and please let me know what you never leave home without!

I always travel with a mechanical pencil with an eraser for my sudukos!

Travel in Safety.

Jane Stanfield