



Where Is She Heading

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Packing – Part 3 – HOW TO PACK!

You are so excited to leave you can hardly wait! As your departure approaches, it is time to get serious. How will you fit everything in your luggage?

Take the advice of many who have gone before you and repeat after me –

***THE LESS I CARRY, THE LESS I WILL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT
AND THE MORE I WILL ENJOY MY TRIP!***

Packing to Leave

Lay everything you plan to take in one area including money, documents, clothes, toiletries, personal items, books, electronics, and food. Before you leave, play a game and try to estimate the number of items you will never use during your volunteer trip. At the end of your trip, you may be surprised what you thought you needed was really superfluous.

To lighten your load from the start, take out everything that does not pertain to your trip from your luggage, shoulder bag, wallet, purse, daypack or brief case and leave it at home.

Determine what you will wear and take on the plane and put all those items near your carry on pieces.

Pull out what you will need immediately upon arrival so they can be placed in your carry on or in the top layer of the luggage.

Clothes - You will find it easier if all your clothes are of like colors and interchangeable. For a two week volunteer trip, consider taking three sets of “volunteer” clothes, one set of nicer clothes for travel, three sets of undies and socks (wash every night), raingear, sleepwear, sweater, swimsuit, and no more than three pair of shoes.

Prepackaging - Breakables and dripables should be padded and packaged in ziplocks, or small, see-through Tupperware boxes. Label each one with what they will contain. For example, your ziplocks can hold everything from laundry supplies, airplane comfort, snacks, vitamins & medicines, bedside needs, soap and shampoo, tooth care, bugs and sun, makeup, first aid, or your travel toolbox.

Nesting - Large items make a great place to store small or breakable items. Pack your hiking socks in your hiking boots or long items inside oxford style shoes. Check if a pouch has extra pockets. For example, your camera bag may also hold your map, compass or flashlight.

Bottom Layer - Place the largest and heaviest items on the bottom to form a base. This can include shoes, equipment, extra supplies and adapters. If the bottom layer has open sections, add smaller zip locks or non-crushable items for a snug fit. Use a layer of plastic bags to form a level surface. These can be used later to store dirty or wet items.

Middle Layer – Put sturdy clothes like jeans or sweaters, or larger packing cubes or ziplocks with sets of clothes on this layer. Belts can be rolled to fit or opened and tucked around the large items.

Top Layer – Finally, place the most crushable items such as blouses or scarves on the top, or items that you may want immediately upon landing.

To protect clothes from wrinkles, carefully fold and roll snugly, or pack them open and flat, alternating other clothes on top, and then folding sleeves or pant legs over to form a square or rectangle.

Carry On – Obviously your most valuable or important items will be carried on your person or with you on the plane - documents, money, fragile electronics, reading material, medications, snacks and anything that you will need in-flight.

Packing to Return Home

The same suggestions apply when flying home. You can always free up space for new purchases by leaving items behind. New purchases or fragile items can be padded with the items you will wash when you return home.

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At your departure airport, if you bought items that are eligible for a VAT (value added tax) or GST (goods and services tax) refund, you may need to show them to the official BEFORE you check your luggage. Once verified, you can place the items either in your carry on or checked luggage. Arrive early for check in to accomplish this task and save time at the airport by itemizing the goods in advance.

As you unpack at home, compare the items that you used on your trip with your pre-volunteer-trip packing list. If you find there were things that you never used or used only once and could make do without in future, you can modify your volunteer packing list for next time.

It is a fine art to pack efficiently for your comfort while minimizing excess items in our luggage. But after one or one or two volunteer trips, you will be packing like a pro!

Travel in Safety.

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