

## Pack and Prep for a Successful Trip

When it comes to packing, less is more. Confident travelers know that carrying heavy bags full of clothes, toiletries and accessories that won't all be used is a waste of time and energy, and quickly becomes the bane of any traveler's journey. Our advice? Lighten up!

If you don't believe us, try this exercise: pack the planned-upon suitcase with a 50 lb. bag of kitty litter, dog food or books; whatever you can find to hit the 50 lb. mark. Now, walk around with it. Haul it up and down the stairs (elevators will not be available everywhere abroad!). Take the bag in and out of the car a few times. Go for a stroll with it. Now is the time to reconsider your packing list! Always pack less than you think you will need. An experienced traveler always travels light. Don't worry about wearing the same clothes several times. Only your travel companions will know and they will be doing the same thing. Items like valuable jewelry should always be left at home!

Xperitas participants are permitted one suitcase and one carry-on in order to accommodate group travel on trains and in chartered motor coaches; luggage racks on trains and luggage compartments in buses are very limited in size.

Airline websites provide the most current luggage weight and size limits; oversize and overweight luggage creates extra cost that must be paid by the passenger at the time of check-in. Please visit the Travel Security Administration web-site; [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) to review current limitations for items allowed in your carry-on. Your carry-on must fit under the plane seat. Both bags must be marked inside and outside with your name and home address - including "USA."

Before you leave for the airport fill out and attach your Xperitas colored luggage tags securely to your bags.

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Items you may want to pack in your carry-on include:

- digital camera
- foreign language dictionary, things to study on the plane
- essential medications in their original containers if possible (carry along a generic prescription for all medications)
- toothbrush and toothpaste
- a change of clothes
- eyeglasses, contact case and solutions
- female sanitary products
- anything else you would not do without in the event that your suitcase is lost and catches up with you a day or two later

Suggested Packing List:

This may vary depending on the length of your stay abroad.

- 3-4 changes of clothes (mix and match for variety).
  - Nice jeans are okay.
  - Girls should bring at least one skirt or dress
  - Boys should bring at least one fairly dressy pair of slacks, dress shirt and sweater
- Rain gear – coat, hat, umbrella and/or poncho
- Two pairs of comfortable shoes
- Underwear & socks
- Slippers or flip-flops
- Swimsuit, sunscreen & towel
- Toiletries (travel size soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)
- Gift for your host family (see [What to Bring your Host Family activity](#))

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## Tips for Packing & Other Handy Items:

- Dress in layers to be best prepared for possible extremes in weather.
- Spring and even summer can be very damp and cool in Europe.
- Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Mexico & Peru's daytime temperatures may be warm, but many areas cool down quite a bit in the evening.
- Most groups travel to Costa Rica during the rainy season – be prepared for rainy weather and cool nights. You may also want to bring comfortable hiking shoes/boots, binoculars, a rain poncho and bug spray with you to Costa Rica.
- It is not suggested to wear short shorts.

## Other Handy Items

- Money belt or neck pouch
- Plastic bag for dirty clothes
- Band-Aids and Kleenex
- Travel alarm clock
- List of addresses for correspondence
- A copy of your birth certificate, extra passport photos and a copy of the 2 inside pages of your passport that show your picture, date and place of issue. (This information can be very helpful in the case of a lost or stolen passport).

## Voltage/Electrical Appliances:

Europe: The electric current in Europe is 220V and will quickly burn out any 110V appliance. Bring dual voltage appliances with adaptor plugs.

Mexico and Costa Rica: The electrical current is 110V – the same as in the US.

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Before leaving for the airport:

- Make sure you have your passport with you.
- Make sure you have your debit/credit card (leave a copy of it at home in case it gets lost or must be cancelled).
- Make sure to leave a copy of your final itinerary with your parents.
- Fill out and attach your Xperitas colored luggage tags securely to your bags.

Aside from determining the contents of one's suitcase, it's also important to think about these important steps to get you ready to travel. Here's a checklist to get ready to travel successfully!

- Twenty-four hours before scheduled departure, check online to confirm that the flight is on time.
- Check online for any particular security rules at the departure airport.
- Find out if your carrier charges extra fees for baggage and/or an additional fee if you check your bags in person at the airport. Make sure you are ready to cover any of those fees if they apply.
- Verify what the airline's weight limits are for baggage. To avoid extra fees, weigh bags at home to make sure they're not overweight. You do not want to be weighed down while abroad. Packing light is the preferred way to travel.
- Now is a good time to practice carrying that bag up and down the stairs a few times! Make sure you will be able to carry your bag a couple blocks or up and down stairs.
- Make sure you have all your travel documentation in one, easy-to-access place (purse, carry-on, etc.). Include a copy of emergency information and numbers with these documents.
- Make extra copies of important travel documents, ID/passports, important phone numbers, etc. Place a copy in each piece of luggage.
- If you are traveling with a carry-on bag, make sure there are no full-size toiletries inside. All liquids and gels must adhere by the [3-1-1 rule](#), and be stored in a clear, plastic quart-sized bag.
- Ensure that you are not traveling with any prohibited items.
- Before arriving at the airport, make sure to confirm the meeting place at the airport for members of your group.
- You should add your baggage claim receipt to your collection of travel documents. If you have connecting flights, especially on separate carriers, it's especially important to keep the baggage claim tag with you to avoid any delays.
- Remember to have your ID and boarding pass handy before entering the security line.
- Throw away or empty any water bottles or other liquids outside of your checked baggage before going through security.