

I traveled frequently on business for 50 years, and since retirement my spouse and I still wander away from home and hearth at least once a month for pleasure. After considerable experience and doing all the possible over-packing mistakes travelers can make, we have some very simple rules. We hope they'll help others travel lighter and happier:



1. Go lite to save both cash and carry woes: Unless you're sailing on a super-formal cruise or will attend a function at an upscale hotel, White House or Buckingham Palace, take just an adequate supply of basic, comfy clothing. Many airlines charge for all check-in bags, starting at from \$15 to \$25 each, and pile on more fees for those weighing more than minimum allowed.

2. Take only what you can carry and wheel yourself: Until we were retired for a couple of years, we went everywhere with one or two big suitcases each, the kind you have to lug around, check at the airport and, after flights, wait by the merry-go-round hoping they're not lost.

Recently, at ages 65 and 75, we went to Europe on our own, enjoying three weeks of casual travel where we didn't make plans for the next day until the night before. We stayed at small hotels and bed'n'breakfasts in England, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy. We each took only a wheeled carry-on suitcase and a small backpack.

3. Take only essentials: For several days before our departure, we make stacks on the bed next to our carry-ons of everything we'll absolutely need for the trip. Then, the night before we leave, we pack about half of the stacks and leave the rest at home.

One secret is that we take along some old clothing that gets one wear during the trip, and then is discarded. For most every other article of washable clothing, we take the minimum because every night during the trip we take the day's used items into the shower with us. We wash it, wring it out and let it dry overnight.

4. Take your medicine: For those on regular prescription meds, pack along enough for the days you'll be away from home, plus another full week's supply. It's wise to take along with the

medications the names and contact numbers of your physicians.

5. Keep it clean: Don't anticipate you'll have essential hygiene items available at all times, especially if you travel to unfamiliar foreign countries. Take small supplies of alcohol wet wipes, toothpaste, mouthwash, bathroom tissue and basic first aid items. However, because of airport security regulations, make sure you take only approved items on flights.