

There are occasions when dragging along heavy bags when flying is necessary. Long overseas journeys away from home, cruises and group excursions. But even most of those trips don't always require heavy luggage that needs checking every time a traveler needs to board another ship, bus or train.

There are seasoned travelers who've flown often throughout the world, including cruises and group excursions. They've managed to bring along the absolute minimum in just one wheeled carry-on. Of course, they've never lost any luggage, nor had to wait at airport merry-go-rounds for hours after each flight hoping nothing was missing.



Today's average of lost and pilfered bags that were checked in is from 5 to 12% of every flight, depending on airport and nation location. That means chances of losing your checked-in bag is one in ten for each of your upcoming flight schedules. Those odds are not worth the risk of inconvenience, loss and anger.

Here are tried and true tips on making traveling more fun and less of a hassle:

1. Get wheeled bags of flexible fabrics (not leather) up to the size limit for carry-ons. Be sure they have outside, zipper-closing pockets for quick access to documents, as well as see-through webbing on the inside lid for items needed frequently. This can handle all needs for up to a three-week trip, if there are no fancy dress-up events. If necessary, take along another bag that is small enough to go under an airline seat, preferably a back-pack with over-the-shoulder straps.
2. The day before departure, lay out the clothing, footwear, hygenics and other stuff you consider absolutely necessary. Put it in nice neat piles. Then go through and take away at least a quarter of the stuff to leave behind. You won't regret it, and the truly necessary stuff should fit nicely into your carry-on bag and backpack. If you've mistakenly left out any vital items, such as over-the-counter medications, you can always buy them at airport and hotel shops and elsewhere.
4. For trips of longer than two or three days, take as many washable items as possible,

including outerwear. Then, every night in the hotel room or aboard ship, take clothing used that day into the shower with you. Dry thoroughly with your bath towel and hang all night as close to the room heat or outside air source as possible.

5. Another idea for lightening the load is to take worn-out clothing. Old underwear, shirts, socks, sneakers and other items can be use once on your journey, then trashed. You'll have a much lighter load on your homeward trip, or more room in your bags for those souvenir doodads you absolutely need to take home with you.

Follow those rules, and you'll make your travels easier, lighter and less stressful.