



TEN NO BRAINERS

What to pack for your
short term trip

created by
Todd Ahrend

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It's the night before your big trip to another country. You have everything laid out on the bed and you're staring back and forth from the pile of stuff to the small bag you are allowed to bring... what makes the cut and what stays in the closet? Aside from your toothbrush, there are some non-negotiables for foreign travel, but these are not always so obvious. Here is a list of your top 10 must-haves.

- ❑ **A PRINT-OUT OF YOUR ITINERARIES.** I was amazed that as I stood in the passport line awaiting admittance to a country, the first thing I was asked was for proof of my returning flight! Many countries won't let you in unless you can show you are leaving. Have that return trip itinerary handy for the passport lane.
- ❑ **MEAL REPLACEMENT BARS.** You never know what your schedule will be like when you get to your destination. You may be slam-packed with things to do, stuck on a train for hours, or you may just need a break from unfamiliar food! A handful of these will go a long way. And, hey, who says you can't sell them to fellow team-mates for three times the actual cost!
- ❑ **PLUG ADAPTERS.** Your iPod or laptop has a limited amount of juice. You'll need to hit the travel store and get the appropriate plugs for the region of the world you are visiting before you leave. Don't think you can buy a Western adapter there and don't assume those hosting you will have them. You can't, and they won't!
- ❑ **GIFTS.** You will want to have a few nice gifts to give to either host families, new friends you meet, or special people you come across. I suggest something like a hat/shirt from your campus, a magnet or stationary from your home state, or a best-selling book. All of these make great gifts. Postcards of American natural wonders or unique architecture make great thank-you cards also.
- ❑ **SMALL FLASHLIGHT.** Whether it's getting up in the middle of the night to navigate your way through an unfamiliar room, up the stairs to the end of the hall to the restroom, or just reading while those in the same room want to sleep, this is a must have for any bag!
- ❑ **DIVERSIFICATION.** In case the improbable happens (your bag gets stolen), make sure to have a second copy of all important information kept somewhere else. This could mean your travel partner carries it or you store it online. Things to include: passport info, flights, credit

card numbers, contact information, directions, etc. Also, diversify your cash. Keep small stashes in different bags (especially your carry-on) so that if one gets stolen, you're still OK.

- **TRAVEL SIZE TOILETRIES.** Every country on the planet will have toothpaste, soap and shampoo. It might smell funny or look different, but you will be able to find it. So don't waste valuable room on the biggest tube of toothpaste. Pack only enough of the essentials to get you through until you can visit a supermarket in the country where you are traveling. At that time, buy just enough to get you through to the next store visit, or to get you home.
- **TRASH SACK.** Sounds funny, doesn't it? Don't laugh, just pack it. This "no-space-taker-upper" will come in handy in a few ways. If it rains while you're are hiking with your pack, pull it out and cover your stuff with it! If you want to separate dirty clothes from clean ones in your bag so they don't contaminate each other...voilà! Poke three holes in it and you have a poncho! You will be amazed at how much this little addition to your suitcase will become your most valued item.
- **SPACE.** The number one rookie mistake is to stuff the suitcase full. Major no-no. You want to leave room for expansion, because you will come across those must-have souvenirs and many times locals will give you gifts. Make sure you leave enough space, you will likely come home with a full bag!
- **TYLENOL PM.** One of the many beauties of Tylenol PM is that it will give you a leg up on jet lag if you're pro-active about it. For the first few days of travel your inner time clock will be very confused. You may be ready for lunch at 3 AM. So just beat the system by taking one dose at bed time the first night to give you a good night's rest. Use it until your body is adjusted to your new time zone. Secondary benefits include: small size and helpful for treating many other symptoms you may encounter.

Go in faith. God will use you.