

Ramble On

Because the Road Goes on Forever

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Tramping Pack List

On my first trip to Europe, I followed the advice of veterans and brought a pack that could fit under an airplane seat (at least back in those days). My buddy Mark met me in Paris with an enormous backpack plus a duffle bag full of various and sundry (I recall a clipboard being among the items). We left a huge pile of his stuff for the local Les Misérables on the streets of the capital before departing for our adventures.

You will be getting on and off trains in Amsterdam. In and out of Ubers in Uruguay. Lugging it up narrow stairways in Rome. Dropping it in front of a yurt in the Himalaya. Trust me, that when you think “I might need this item” you won’t. And you won’t want to carry it. Worst case, bring more money and buy whatever it is that you decide you really should have brought.

Forget about fashion and variety. If you can’t bear to wear the same shirt again on a trip, toss it and buy a new one.

Here's the short list of what to pack for a tramp abroad:

Essentials:

- **Backpack** – Only ever bring a roller bag if your trip is limited to a few stops with smooth surfaces to roll over. Otherwise, get a travel pack. We like Osprey and Gregory packs.
- **Toiletries** – get a *small* dop kit. Ladies, you look fine. Don't bring your entire makeup kit. Remember, 3 oz or less on all liquids and gels. You can always buy more of everything.
- **Socks & Underwear** – not cotton. Get polypro or merino wool so it doesn't smell and dries fast. We like Darn Tough socks and Duluth Trading Post underwear. Patagonia and many others are great.
- **Shirts** – Bring 4. Buy more once you can't bear to wear them again. Not too much cotton.
- **Shorts & Pants** – depending on the climate pack accordingly. 2 maximum of each. Pockets are important. You will have stuff in them.
- **Shoes** – depends on the trip, but a pair of sandals/flip flops (I like Keens) for the sun and sand. A pair of light hiking boots or rugged running shoes for the mountains. Anything else might be pushing it, but if you have a comfortable pair of walking shoes with a little more fashion sense than your running/hiking shoes, okay.
- **Sun hat** – get a real brim for long days on the trail or beach. Make sure it can pack flat.
- **Day pack** – something light and small but big enough to put a water bottle, camera, book, snacks, etc. in for your daytime hiking or exploring. One per couple might be enough. You can also use this as a second carryon for flights.
- **Books** or ebook – maps and guides used to be essential but if you can digitize everything, that's great. But know that wifi will not follow you everywhere.

- **Passport & Wallet** – Know how to secure these well to avoid pickpockets. Don't bring a purse as it's a pain and a magnet for thieves.
- **Phone** – load it up with the travel apps you will need.
- **Sunglasses**

Maybe: depending on destination and activities

- Camera – phones are fine for most things but if you're getting serious.
- Camp Towel – lightweight polypro
- Tablet or Laptop – if you need to work or do more than your phone can manage.