

Pack Like a Pro:

The Ultimate Packing List for Aid Workers and Adventure Travel

**Not sure what to pack on your travels?
Not sure what will be available at your destination?**

Never fear: we've got a list of the key items you will need and some practical tips to make your trip go more smoothly - whether it's just for a few weeks or for a year or more. This information is especially useful for aid workers or adventurous travellers visiting developing countries.

We've spent over 10 years living and working in developing countries, including Kenya, South Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia and many others. We've spent more time packing and unpacking than we would have liked! All too often, we've found ourselves saying "if only I'd brought...". We've also packed countless things we didn't need, and have been the guys holding up the queue at the airport counter because we're over-weight (Top Tip - weigh your luggage before you go to the airport. You don't need a fancy luggage scale - just weigh yourself on your bathroom scales, weigh yourself again holding in your bag, and calculate the difference).

This packing list is the one we use for every trip, and has been honed to perfection over the years. Not everything may apply to your journey, but it will help you to pack more quickly, with less stress and it will save you from that horrible feeling that you've forgotten something.

	✓
DOCUMENTS & MONEY	Passport ¹
	Visa
	Travel documents (tickets, schedules, etc)
	Insurance documents
	Details of your accommodation ²
	Contact details for your hosts at destination
	Money

TRAVEL TIPS

Take photocopies of all your documents and carry these photocopies with you at all times.

¹Check this is in date and has the requisite number of blank pages for immigration stamps at your destination

²You often need this at immigration

	✓	QTY
BASIC TOILETRIES		Soap/shower gel
		Shampoo
		Conditioner
		Razor
		Shaving Gel
		Aftershave
		Deodorant
		Moisturiser (with sunscreen)

	✓	QTY
		Toothpaste
		Toothbrush
		Lip Salve (with sunscreen)
		Comb/hairbrush
		Cotton buds
		Basic makeup
		Toiletries bag
		Travel toiletries ¹

TRAVEL TIPS

If you're going on a short trip, take everything you need with you. If you're staying for longer, you'll be able to buy toiletries at your destination, so you can pare this list down to the essentials. However, we've found it can be nice to have some of your favourite brands with you - scent can be a powerful reminder of home and can make you feel more comfortable when in unfamiliar surroundings.

¹Travel toiletries in containers less than 100ml (e.g. hand sanitiser, facewash, wetwipes)



CLOTHES	✓	QTY	✓	QTY	✓	QTY	
			Underwear			Dresses	Gloves (colder climes)
			Socks			'Going out' clothes	Towel ⁴
			Vests			Jumpers ¹	Sunglasses
			Trousers			Scarves ²	Hat
			Skirts			Sleep wear	Swimming gear
			Tie			Belt	Running/exercise gear
			Suit Jacket			Flip Flops	Small bag
			T-shirts			Shoes ³	Day sack
			Tops			Raincoat	Clothes hangers ⁵
		Shorts			Umbrella		

Photo © Aid Works



¹ Even in hot countries, you may be grateful for a lightweight jumper

² Good for cool evenings and for situations where it's culturally appropriate to cover up

³ Include some practical shoes or trainers for rough terrain

⁴ Don't always expect these to be available in your accommodation. Of course, you can always buy towels at your destination, but often they are of poor quality and just rub water around your body! We like to take our own. A travel towel can also be really useful if you'll be going on short trips to remote locations. These specialist towels pack down very small and dry quickly.

⁵ These aren't always available, especially on short trips. If you have to be smart, it's worth taking a few to hang your important work clothes.

TECHNOLOGY	✓
	Phone ¹
	Phone charger
	USB charger and cable
	Camera
	Camera charger
	Travel adaptor
	E-reader/tablet
	Torch
Torch batteries	

¹ Open to any network - you can pick up a sim card when you arrive



WELLBEING	✓
	Pain killers/ Paracetamol
	Anti-diarrheal tablets
	Oral Rehydration Salts
	Anti-malarials
	First aid kit (with lots of plasters)
	Sun cream
	Insect Repellent
	Insect bite treatment ¹
Multivitamins	
Personal medicines	

¹ We find HC45 cream particularly effective

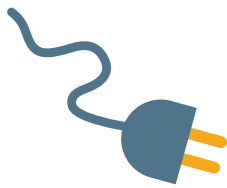
TRAVEL TIPS

ALWAYS check with your doctor/a health specialist for specific health requirements for your destination. And of course, make sure that you are appropriately vaccinated.

REMOTE AREAS	✓
	Padlock ¹
	Sturdy boots or shoes ²
	Mosquito net
	Bed sheet
	Travel towel
	Water purification tablets
	Swiss army knife/leatherman multi-tool
Book	

¹ For locking your door or tent

² Possibly wellies if it will be really wet



WORK ITEMS	✓
	Plastic folders
	Pens
	Marker pens
	Notebook
	Business cards
	Powerpoint clicker
	Basic stationery
	Receipt book
	Laptop
	Laptop charger
Back-up hard drive ¹	
Flash drive ²	
Multi-socket extension cord ³	

¹ Great for storing work files and films/music for leisure

² Useful for transferring files to colleagues when the internet goes down

³ There are never enough plugs in a hotel room

USEFUL EXTRAS	✓
	Luggage tags
	Travel guide
	Spare glasses/contact lenses
	Glasses case
	Eye mask
	Ear plugs
Flight socks	

¹ If you're joining an expatriate team, bring a newspaper and/or copy of the Economist from the airport – they will love you for it

² There is no end to the ways you can use this

³ In your hand luggage (in case your main luggage goes missing)



IDEAS TO MAKE A HOME	✓
	Board games/games consoles
	Cooking equipment ¹
	Decent Tupperware
	Rugs/wall hangings
	Pictures/paintings
Favourite food items	

¹ Not everything you're used to will be available

TRAVEL TIPS

Some of these things will be available at your destination. You can always see what's around and then bring some of these with you when you return from your first trip back home.

LOST LUGGAGE

In 2014, 24.1 million bags were either delayed, damaged or stolen (that's 7.3 bags per 1,000 passengers). It's best to be prepared!

We recommend that you have some sort of luggage tag on your check-in luggage, carry a spare set of clothes in your hand luggage and remember that these things happen - the bag normally turns up eventually. However, never put anything you would hate to lose in your check-in luggage, and make sure that essential items - such as medications - are packed in your hand luggage.

Photo © 222222



LIVING SOMEWHERE FOR A LONG TIME?

We've lived in Liberia, Sudan and South Sudan for several years. We've always taken items to make life easier and more pleasurable. Airlines usually allow additional luggage for a fee - check with the airline in advance to get the best deal. Your host organisation may provide funds to move additional bags - use it! Over the years, we've checked-in a cheap barbeque, a bag of favourite food, games consoles, decent frying pans, a bike... Basically, think about taking anything that will make living overseas more comfortable and enjoyable. Be careful with glass items - make sure that you pack them well. We've listed a few items in this document which are small and can easily be put in your check-in luggage.

WHICH BAG?

It's important to spend time researching what is right for you and suitable for your destination. How much will you be travelling when you get there? Make sure you buy a decent brand, which may cost more, but which will stand up to a few years of rough handling - saving you money in the long run. If you're based in one location, a suitcase with wheels may be ok; however, it will add around 5 kgs of dead weight.

We do a lot of short term trips these days, and we usually don't know what the trip may entail. We therefore stick to a decent, soft-case wheeled bag and pack a small waterproof duffle bag. This compresses easily into our main luggage and is perfect for short trips in-country, where bags may be left in the rain and local flight weight allowances may be small. If we know we're trekking, our main bag is a rucksack with decent back support.

Hand luggage is always a decent rucksack with lots of pockets for storing and finding items easily. We usually carry some travel toiletries and a change of clothes.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

Ask your hosts or do some google research to find out what the climate will be like during your stay: What's the temperature now? Is there a seasonal change? What are the evenings like? In some countries you'll find two seasons: dry and rainy. Others will have more variation through the day or year. Natural fibres are a good choice for hot environments; lots of layers are good for cooler climates. If you're going to be travelling during the rainy season, you may want to take some waterproof shoes or boots - although in warm countries it's often easiest to go with the flow and wear flipflops.

You should also research what is culturally appropriate - not only is this respectful but your life will be a lot easier if you dress with this in mind. For example, in some Islamic countries you will be expected to cover up, no matter how hot it is.

