

Destination is Primary in Packing Plan!

by Chase Binder

Last month I wrote about the importance of adding some safety items to your packing list when heading out on vacation. But really, safety items represent just a tiny percentage of what we worry about when we pack for trip. Mostly, Bud and I think about how comfortable we'll be and what we'll look like—from head to toe, from beginning to end of the vacation! Here's how we go about making decisions.

But before I begin, let me point out that Bud and I each assume responsibility for our own packing. We have several travel companions, both relatives and friends, who don't do things that way. The wife always packs for the husband. There are lots of possible reasons why this might work for a couple: wives sometimes like to "dress" husbands who have less-than-attentive attitudes towards fashion; men sometimes prefer to delegate; and men sometimes can even be (face it) a bit lazy. Me? I would never, ever try to pack for Bud...nor would he ever ask me. That being said, we often begin the process in side-by-side fashion, chatting back and forth about what to bring.

We start, of course, with basic packing imperatives—where are we going, how are we traveling and how long will we be there?

Destination is the primary driver. Europe... the Caribbean... Las Vegas... a Transatlantic cruise... a coastal or lakeside home with the whole family. They all require different wardrobes and different approaches and we always start with basic research. Bud loves finding out about the weather. What's the expected temperature range? Rainfall (or snowfall)? Humidity—often more important to know than the temperature! There are lot of websites, but we like wunderground.com for its great historical data as well as forecasting, but Bud also likes weather.com. We have accumulated a stash of layered rain gear, small travel umbrellas and wind breakers—all very lightweight, that we're still using years after we first purchased them. We attribute this to buying quality to begin with—and like to start at Fort Eddy's Plaza's Eastern Mountain Sports, especially on sale days!

I like to research local customs and cautions, and often just use Google—"how to dress in...wherever". In general, if we



Chase Binder

are going out of the country our main concern is to blend in as much as possible. In Europe we pack black and neutral clothes, never sneakers. I bring a handbag with a sturdy cross-body strap, large enough to hide my camera and any other electronic devices I'll carry. Ebags.com and travelsmith.com both have great selections, or you can try local stores like Kohl's. After many trips to the tropical areas like the Caribbean and Florida, we've found that restaurants are more casual than ever and that our lifestyle revolves around beach or poolside and tennis—no dressy clothes needed, or perhaps a single outfit at most. If we're facing lots of humidity, I make sure we have lightweight cottons and linens, as well as the nifty new breathable microfiber fabrics with built-in SPF 40 or 50. These are ubiquitous now... everywhere from Target to amazon.com.

Once we have decided what to bring, the next thing is how much to bring. This is a matter of math (number of days/nights) and laundry options. I'll admit that each year we bring less and

less. When we have a washer and dryer, it's no problem. But even without laundry facilities, quick-dry fabrics make handwashing so easy that we can really cut down and LG Laundry Detergent Sheets (amazon.com \$10.99) replace liquid, pods or powder and work great! For a two-week trip, we'll typically take 4-5 pants/shorts, 6-8 shirts, underwear for 4 days and 2 sets of nightclothes. I dress things up with scarves and jewelry and always, always care Tide Sticks to deal with occasional spots.

Footwear is a critical aspect of packing. But again, we are taking fewer and fewer pairs of shoes/sandals and making sure that they will work for the weather, are truly and completely broken in and comfortable for possible long hours on our feet or in the air. Bud always carries moleskin for possible blisters—a lifesaver!

Adopting a thoughtful plan for packing should also incorporate your mode of travel. Taking a road trip? Not much of a problem. Flying? That can be tough! Bud and I both plan our "airplane" outfits with comfort and convenience in mind. Layers help keep us warm/cool. Minimizing jewelry/belts/lace-up shoes or boots makes getting through security easier. Minimizing "stuff" altogether means reducing luggage fees as well as making it easier to get around the airport.

In all honesty, we haven't made the transition to "carry-on only" that some friends have. The ultimate in that approach was a couple we met cruising the Irrawaddy River in Burma. They travel for 2 months at a time using just carry-on—and they always looked fabulous at dinner! Perhaps someday!

World Travelers Return!

Back in January this column outlined the upcoming world cruise of Bow residents, Bruce and Lorraine Harris.

After four months at sea, sailing from Los Angeles to London, the Harris's are back!

During their voyage they have kept in touch with us, recording their thoughts and observations about the world they encountered.

Next month's expanded Travel Talk will give lots of details about their trip and provide stunning photos as well as keen insights into world cruising. **Don't miss it!**



World travelers Bruce and Lorraine Harris pose in front of London's Westminster Cathedral with a well-worn copy of the Bow Times! The December issue has been traveling throughout the world with them!

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