



Hand Luggage Only - Tips and Tricks You Need to Know!

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In this day and age, traveling with hand luggage only is becoming more and more attractive. Unless you have been living under a rock, air travel around the world post pandemic is in chaos, and lost luggage is becoming the norm, rather than the exception. Personally, I know of at least 3 friends who have lost their luggage in Europe recently.

But guess what? There is an easy way to prevent it happening to you!



Move faster without waiting for your luggage

Choosing to travel with hand luggage only looks scary at first. Especially if you are like my partner, and like to bring everything in the wardrobe, closet, bathroom cabinet and kitchen pantry with you. But once you learn to be minimalistic, and take a realistic look at what you actually USE when on a trip away, you will quickly become accustomed to packing light.

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Hand Luggage Only - The Positives

Ok, so first let's take a look at the positives of packing light, and jetting off with hand luggage only. There are probably more, but here are the main reasons that I choose to do it.

Travel is easier and quicker

How much time do you waste waiting for your bags in airports? I can tell you that it is a lot! Go on some budget airlines in [South East Asia](#), and I can tell you that from experience I have stood at the carousel for hours. And that is no exaggeration. Once, the bags were all stuck coming up the conveyor belt, but there was no one around after the late night flight into Bangkok to fix the problem. Two hundred passengers could SEE their bags, but not get to them.



Moving around is easier in a Tuk Tuk with Hand Luggage

Take hand luggage only though, and you walk right by the carousel and out the doors, smack into your holiday.

It's not just at the airport though that things are easier. Taxi's, [Tuk Tuks](#), even walking through hotel lobbies becomes a LOT easier. Don't even get me started on the cobbled streets of Rome, either...

Hand Luggage only travel is cheaper

How many times did you find a nice, cheap flight, then end up paying an arm and a leg once you added a luggage allowance? All the time, I bet.



Not checking your bag is a great way to save money

This is no longer an issue when you travel with hand luggage only. Just be aware of the airline restrictions, and make sure that you adhere to them. Then, it's off on your cheaper than usual holiday!

No more lost luggage

This is a big issue right now. Everywhere around the world flights are being canceled, passengers moved around, and flights delayed. This all means that baggage handlers are overworked, and luggage simply goes missing. You end up in Jamaica, while your swim suits have gone to Nepal. Great.



Lost Luggage is a big issue

Eliminate it all by flying with hand luggage only. It's pretty hard for an airline to lose your luggage when it's strapped to your back. It can't go missing when it's in the overhead compartment, two feet from you. Be smart, and keep your belongings with you.

You can be more flexible with plans

Traveling with hand luggage only means you have more options. When we were in Cambodia recently, we had the option to fly to our next destination, or save a LOT of money traveling in a mini bus. The only issue was that the mini bus only had a small luggage capacity.

We ended up saving all of that money because we were able to be flexible.



Hand luggage only will allow you to be more flexible

Changing flights is easy when you haven't checked your baggage. Sometimes, flights will be overbooked, and they will ask for volunteers to take a later flight. Usually there is a really great offer involved. If you only have hand luggage, you can be the first to throw your hand up.

It's just smart traveling.

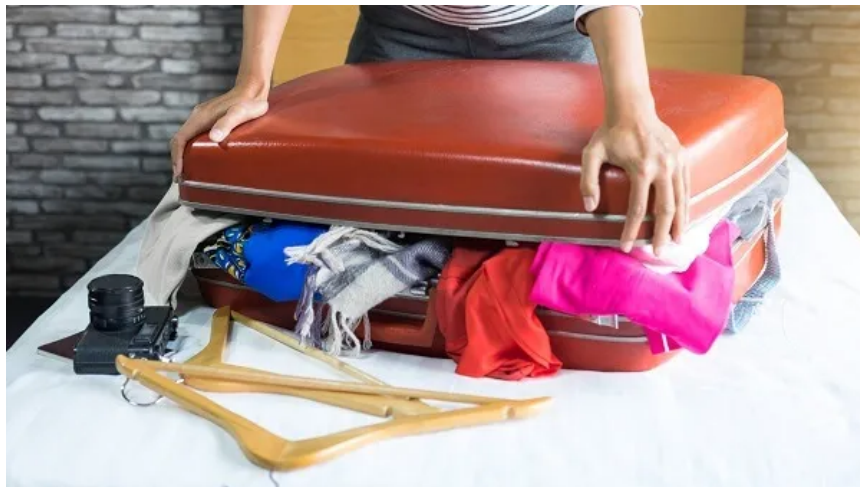
Hand Luggage Only - The Negatives

Like everything, there are negatives to traveling with hand luggage only. Not THAT many, but there are some. You can get past them all though, and I firmly believe that the positives out weigh the negatives anyway.

Your packing is limited

This is a no brainer really. If you can only take 7kg onto a domestic flight, then you will not be able to pack those 3 big jackets and 5 pairs of shoes. Although I am sure some people would try.

Instead, you will have to pick and choose what you can take. If you are going to be in a destination with varying climates, then it will become even tougher. Find a way around it though, and you will find it very beneficial.



You don't need it all - seriously

Recycling your clothes

Not REALLY recycling. But you WILL have to use the same clothes over and over again. Now, this is not going to be much of an issue if you are only going away for a few

days. But then, you would probably take hand luggage only in that case anyway.

But if you are on a serious vacation, or trip, then you are going to have to wash those clothes a few times and wear them again. You can utilize laundry services if they are available, but either way, you will have to think ahead.

Make this a non issue by being versatile with your packing. Pack clothes that you can mix and match, and if traveling in cheap South East Asian countries, just buy your clothes when you arrive there!

You have to abide by Airline Restrictions

Traveling with hand luggage only is easy when you are moving around by bus, train or car. It's when you have to get onto a flight that things get tight.

I flew to South East Asia recently with hand luggage only. My bag was well under the capacity limit as I had packed very lightly. That's pretty easy in a part of the world that has a perpetual summer.



Airline Restrictions can change

The problem came 6 weeks later when I had to get on another flight, and realized I had shopped a bit too much. Some creative packing skills had to come to the fore to get me out of a jam.

So be aware of those flight restrictions. If you buy a new shirt, then you may have to leave an older one behind. Remember that everything you add, also adds weight.

Packing Tips for Traveling with Hand Luggage Only

Through most of my travels, I have gone with hand luggage only. I hate hauling a big suitcase with me, and enjoy having the flexibility of movement that just a back pack gives me. When I really HAVE to carry something bigger, it is usually a hybrid bag that is generally just a back pack with wheels anyway.

Here are a few tips that I have gleaned on my travels, and things that I know will make it easier for you as well.

Make a list – Then Cut it in Half

This is one of the most important tips that I have for traveling with hand luggage only, but I still struggle with it myself. It has saved me many times though.

Make a list of everything you want to bring. Then, go to your closet and take it all out, as per the list, and lay it out on your bed. Then, halve it! If you have 6 shirts, take 3. If you have 4 pairs of shoes, you will only need 2.

Traveling light means just that, traveling light. Don't take all the extra stuff when you don't need to. Which brings to to another tip that is slightly related to this one.

If you have extra room in your luggage, don't just fill it! Don't throw in that extra shirt JUST because there is room. I have done this many times and end up carting the extra clothing around the world, and when I get home it is still folded at the bottom of my pack.

What was the point?

Invest in Packing Cubes

Using packing cubes had me dubious at first. But I invested in them anyway, and now, I am never without them. In fact, recently I traveled to Australia on a quick trip, and couldn't believe how much I missed them! I had only taken a few items of clothing with me, but wow! I noticed the difference.



Eagle Creek Packing Cubes

I have a set of 3 Eagle Creek cubes that I bought off **Amazon**. I will put a link to some below. I use them all the time and roll all my clothes before packing them into the cubes. They fit SO MUCH it is incredible, and save a heap of space. This allows you to use smaller packs and get just as much clothes into them, so they are a no brainer when traveling with hand luggage only.

[CHECK HERE FOR PRICE ON AMAZON](#)

Also, check out my full review on my Eagle Creek Packing Cubes at the link below.

[EAGLE CREEK PACKING CUBES REVIEW](#)

Get Some Portable Scales

I take my little scales everywhere with me. They are light and I just toss them into the top of my pack when I am done packing. What they save me in time and stress makes the small investment worth it though.



Luggage Scales will come in very handy

I weigh everything when I travel. Especially before I go to an airport. No one likes to be surprised with overweight baggage, and paying the criminal fees that they charge you at the check in counters. (I mean seriously, what's up with that anyway?)

Instead, have your luggage all weighed and know exactly what you are in for before you leave home. Stick by the hand luggage restrictions imposed by the airlines, and you will never have an issue again.

[CHECK HERE FOR PRICE ON AMAZON](#)

Use a Backpack

This is a life changer when traveling with hand luggage only. Ditch the old, small wheeled suitcase, and invest in a good back pack. You will notice the difference.

There are a couple of great back packs on the market that are specifically made to conform with airline sizing restrictions. My favorite is the **Osprey Farpoint**. You can fit so much into it that it almost seems unfair. It is also very easy to carry around with you, is comfortable, and surprisingly light and versatile.



A backpack will make traveling easier

You will notice the difference between having a backpack and a small suitcase. You can fit so much more into a backpack and still be under the weight limit. They fit easier into overhead compartments, and usually have special laptop sleeves and spaces to keep your electronics separated from your clothing.

For me, it's an easy decision.

[CHECK HERE FOR PRICE ON AMAZON](#)

Be Smart with Clothing

This sort of goes along with the first point about not packing too much. But there are a couple of other tips I want to mention here.

Pack clothing that you can mix and match. Choose outfits that are versatile. I know a few people that I follow on Instagram, and I was genuinely shocked when I found that they only pack about 4 different outfits when they travel. In their photos, they always looked different.

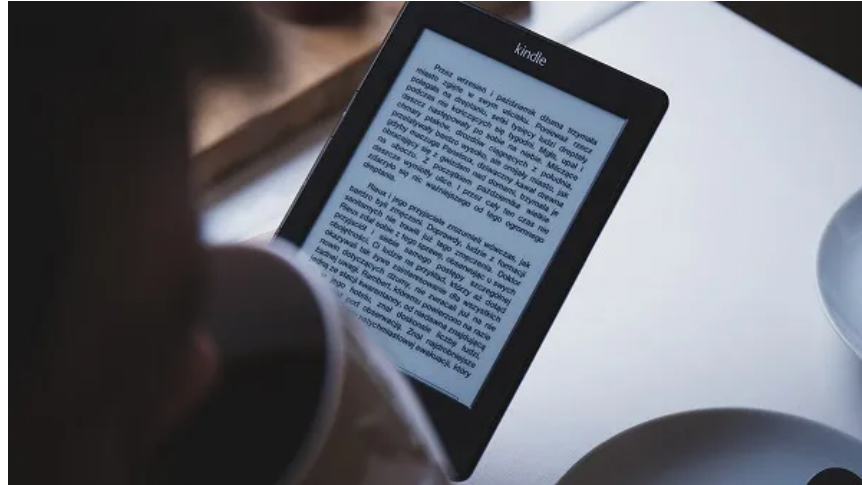
The secret came in the versatility. They could interchange tops and wear with different shorts or skirts. Every time they went out, they looked different. It was so smart that I do it myself now. Every time I pack.

The other idea is to look at your destination, and decide if you can shop when you arrive. If you are heading to Bali, or Bangkok, then it means that you can travel VERY cheaply. Simply buy a few 2 dollar shirts when you arrive. You don't even have to bring them home again!

Put your Entertainment Online

I am a big exponent of this one, and even did it before I turned to traveling with hand luggage only.

Being a big reader, I used to carry a book with me everywhere I went. Now, it is simply a Kindle. I have a couple hundred books on there, and the biggest issue I have is choosing what I want to read.



A Kindle is light and easy to pack

[CLICK HERE FOR PRICE ON AMAZON](#)

On flights, I like to watch movies or tv shows to pass the time. Unfortunately, on budget flights or domestic flights, most of them will not have any in flight entertainment, other than watching other passengers being unpleasant human beings.

Therefore, I put all my movies and tv shows onto a USB. This simple plugs into the bottom of my phone via an adapter that I purchased online. I now have no issues on flights and watch movies while everyone around me looks on with jealous eyes. You can also do this with Netflix, by downloading shows to watch in the app when you are offline.

Click one of the buttons below to check out the adapters on Amazon.

TYPE C USB ADAPTER

LIGHTNING USB ADAPTER

Cut down on Shoes

This is one for the ladies, at the risk of being sexist. But then, maybe for the men too.

If you are heading to a sunny beach in Jamaica, how many shoes do you really need anyway? I take a pair of flip flops everywhere I travel, and a good comfortable pair of walking shoes. Beyond that, MAYBE I will take a good pair of Converse as well, just in case I have a night out.



Leave the extra shoes at home

But I think even that is overkill. Pack versatile shoes. If you can use the same shoes for walking, exploring, AND a night out, then that is a sure fire winner.

Wear Heavy Items on the Plane

This goes along with the previous tip. Pick your heaviest shoes, and wear them on the plane. When I travel with

hand luggage only, I ALWAYS wear my shoes onto the plane.

I also wear, or carry, my heaviest jacket, jeans and longest shirt. If you can wear a couple of shirts, say, a long sleeve with a t shirt over the top, or some variation, then do it. The more you wear, the less is in your luggage, and the more likely you are to be well under that weight restriction.

Act like your Hand Luggage is Light

ALWAYS act like your hand luggage is as light as a feather. I always toss my bag onto my shoulder like it weighs nothing, and saunter off through the airport like I'm walking on air. No one can tell that my shoulder is screaming in pain, and my dodgy knee nearly just collapsed.

If they did, then someone is bound to stop me and ask to weigh my bag. I don't want that, even if I have already weighed it myself a dozen times before I came to the airport. Who needs that stress?

This is especially important if you are flying close to the weight limit. All it takes is a set of scales slightly off calibration, and suddenly your hand luggage only flight just turned into an expensive checked bag flight. Don't take the risk, and DON'T draw attention to yourself.

Be Prepared at Check in and Security

This is another place that you really don't want to draw attention to yourself. For more reasons than one, but

really, you don't need someone from the airline rattling around in your luggage.

When you are standing at check in, leave your bag by your feet, out of sight. Or simply leave it hanging on your shoulder and don't draw attention to it. They might ask to weigh it, but usually only if they SEE it.



Be prepared at Security

When you get to security, be the dream traveler. Have your laptop out and ready. Get your electronics separated and be aware of the local laws. For example, in Thailand they need your power bank separated from your luggage, just like your laptop. Be aware of that and ready for it.

Take off your belt (actually, I never wear a belt. It's just another thing to slow me down at security) your phone, wallet and keys. Have them all ready and whisk through security without anyone giving you a second glance as they are already worried about the slow passenger behind you that WASN'T prepared, is slowing up the line, and about to cop the rubber glove search as a result.

Summary

Flying and traveling with hand luggage only is a dream compared to hauling around large suitcases everywhere. Try it out yourself on your next trip.

I hope these tips help you out. They are sure fire winners for me when I am on the move around the world. **Drop me a comment below** to let me know what you think, or to let me know any tips YOU might have.

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Designed by Jason Lee

