

The Photographers Guide On How To Pack For Travel



Travel photography is an interesting genre that almost every photographer finds inspiring.

Wherever you are headed, it is uplifting to have new sights, scenes and people to photograph, and you never know exactly what to expect. From a weekend getaway to a luxurious 3-week vacation in the Maldives, you are sure to grow your portfolio with dramatic travel images.

To help achieve those brilliant shots, you need to pack the right gear. Not too much, not too little. The right equipment to get the job done. So let's take a little trip right now and find out what you might need you hit the road, board the train or jet off to an exciting destination.

Planning Ahead

There are so many factors affecting how much camera gear you can take on your trip. Physically how much can you carry? Where are you going and what are the weather conditions like? How long are you traveling for? What is the purpose of your trip? What do you want to create in terms

of your photography work - art, vacation memories, or work for a client? The questions could go on and on. That is why packing for a trip isn't easy. It takes some careful planning.

Start by making a list of everything you want to photograph. Then Google to see if any events or festivals are happening while you are in town and check the weather. Once you have this information, it will help you plan what camera gear you need to take.

Taking the Essentials

Start with your camera bag, which should be sturdy, waterproof and lockable for traveling. A bag that can fit your laptop will be handy if you want to edit during your travels.

If you are traveling for leisure, then one camera body is enough. If you are traveling for work, you should have two camera bodies if possible. If you are flying, be sure to check the luggage allowance. Most airlines allow you to carry on your camera gear with a reasonable weight allowance. If you are flying internationally, then domestically check the allowance for every leg of your trip. Often domestic airlines, especially budget ones, will have a lower allowance which can surprise some travelers.

Select your lenses carefully. A zoom lens will be versatile for many situations, but fixed lenses are lighter. Aim to carry 2-3 lenses. Pack a point-and-shoot camera for days when you might not want to lug your DSLR around. Consider investing in an underwater camera if you are traveling somewhere tropical or warm. You also have your Smartphone camera.

With this collection of 3-4 cameras, you should always be ready for any shot.

- DSLR
- Point-and-shoot
- Underwater camera
- Smartphone camera

A wide-angle lens is great for travel photography and you will probably use it often to create dramatic shots. A 24-70 mm lens can cover a range of situations including lifestyle, portraits, nature and street photography. When you need to zoom in it will be ideal. The 70-200 mm lens can be golden during travel, but the weight is seriously cumbersome, especially when you are covering long distances in hot climates. If you are taking a short trip without your family, then you might appreciate this zoom lens, but most of the time, the 24-70 mm or similar lens can get the job done.

Make sure you have everything you need, including small accessories like memory cards, chargers, filters and spare batteries. Depending on where you are heading, you may not be able to buy those items. Or they might be expensive or not the exact brand you would usually use.

Add some ziplock bags, dry cloths and rain covers for your camera and bag if you expect to be shooting outdoors.

Option Items - do I really need it?

There are so many accessories that you might often use but could do without during a trip. Packing light is an art, and there is a fine line between feeling glad you packed well and feeling like you are missing items you normally use.

Ask yourself if you need the tripod, reflector, flash or macro lens.

Can you improvise? Can you achieve a similar effect during editing? How many times will you use this accessory, and can you justify carrying it for days or weeks? It's not easy packing camera gear for a trip. Starting with packing your suitcases might be an easier first step.

If you have children, you will understand what it's like having to travel with a lot of gear that you would like to have, but that might not be essential. But then, if you need it and don't have it, that is also disastrous or at least very inconvenient. You won't get it right every time, but the key is careful planning and research.

Your Suitcase

If you are going to do a lot of photography on your trip, your suitcase will also need some gear related to your hobby or job. Comfortable walking shoes, non-slip beach shoes, light clothing with pockets, and conservative clothing including scarves, pants, and long-sleeved tops (if you are visiting religious sites) might be needed.

Make sure your travel insurance covers your camera gear for recreational and commercial use if applicable. Put your contact info inside all your bags, including your camera bag, so you can easily be contacted if you lose any of your precious luggage. Never check-in camera gear.

Traveling to a new place is exciting. Anticipating where you will go, what you will eat and activities you might try is all part of the attraction of travel. For photographers, we also get hyped about what we can photograph. In fact, it's often the first consideration or even purpose of the trip.

Plan your trip in detail, pack only what you expect to use and get creative if you discover you are short on camera gear. You might be surprised what you can achieve with one lens or just a phone camera. Safe travels and happy shooting!

