PACKING 101

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABBY WOOD

For the past few years, I have been working with clients on improving their packing skills. This might seem silly until you experience the ease of packing less, which alleviates stress while traveling. I have heard it from lots of people; packing stresses them out. I can relate! Long ago before I learned how to pack smart, not having my closet with me while traveling gave me real anxiety. What if I wanted to wear something I didn't have? What if I didn't realize I needed a certain something until it was too late? I can feel my heart rate rising just thinking about those times. This self-induced panic caused me to bring way too much stuff. Then I would spend way too much time deciding on what I was going to wear instead of enjoying my trip!

Wouldn't it be nice if getting dressed were the last thing you had to worry about? If so, let me help you! My packing process will help you learn how to pack only what you need, exactly when to wear it and exactly how to style it, resulting in less stress while traveling and a heightened sense of confidence. You have heard me say it a million times: if you look good, you will feel good. This saying goes for all aspects of your life, even when you're traveling.

Make an itinerary

Start with your first travel day and any event in between until your last travel day. If you don't have exact activities planned, the more detailed the better. I like to hand write my schedule but some like to use a spreadsheet. Include weather for each day as well. This will determine type of clothing you will be taking. Leave space to include written-out outfits under each day. We will use that space later.

Figure your set number of outfits

Based on your itinerary, determine how many outfits you need to take from travel day to travel day. Depending on where you are traveling and what you are doing, you may need two looks a day or perhaps only one.

Determine luggage situation

Are you traveling by air or car? Do you want to take more than one bag? How large is your suitcase? Once you figure this out, you are ready for the next step.

Start formulating your looks

If you need some inspiration, browse Pinterest or Instagram and save images of outfits that speak to you. These images may also give you some ideas of what is appropriate or not for the place you are traveling. Creating an inspiration board will help to set the tone for your overall travel style. Then choose a color palette for your trip. This will maximize your outfit options and give you more room to mix and match. Pull potential items from your closet that you might want to take. Then day by day, start to put your outfits together to go with your itinerary.

Style and try on session

Hang your outfits together and try each one of them on. This is extremely important. Sometimes looks in your head just do not compute in real life or maybe something needs a little altering before it can be worn. Note how you style each look. Is your top tucked in? Are the bottoms of your jeans cuffed? Which shoes go best with each look? Paying attention to details like this will elevate your look from so-so to ultra polished while you're away.

Create your look book

Once you have finalized what you're wearing for each day of your travel, lay each look out and photograph with your cell phone. Include shoes, jewelry and any styling details that need to be done. Using your look book, write out each look on your itinerary on its coordinating day. Include styling details, jewelry and shoes.

Pack it up!

If you're traveling for longer periods of time, packing cubes are a lifesaver. They will compress your items inside your suitcase to save space. Place lighter weight items in your cubes. If you don't use packing cubes, you can roll everything else up to save space and to help with wrinkling.

Items such as jeans or thicker items don't need to be rolled. You will save more space if they are folded flat. Pack shoes last. Shoes can be wedged in between clothing in your suitcase to save space. Throw a couple of dryer sheets in your suitcase to help keep everything smelling fresh. Take a travel steamer, because you can't look stylish in something wrinkled. ■

AWW TRAVEL TIPS

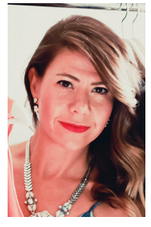
• The best color palettes for traveling include neutrals and a pop of color. The main goal is that you want everything to mix and match together!

• Try to re-purpose as many bottom options and third piece options as you can. These are the pieces that tend to take up the most space.

• Packing too many pairs of shoes puts most people over the edge. Try to use your shoes in as many looks as you can.

• Follow the packing rules. If you don't have a set reason for an item, it does not go on your trip. No more last-minute throwing stuff in. Be confident that what you have planned out is all you need.

• If you're packing for your kiddos, this method works wonders for them too.



Abby Wood is a wardrobe stylist and style blogger in Kansas City, and her education in design plus retail experience make her an expert in fit, fabric, style and trends. Her professional experience in fashion began with an apprenticeship with a bridal designer, shifted to creating and showing her own line, moving up to management and training at a retail level and now professional styling as an independent consultant. Abby loves to help individuals develop and evolve their own sense of style.

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