

Best Advice for Short-term Mission Packing

Best Advice: *Don't overpack*

Packing can be overwhelming. You want to pack what's important, but also what is comforting. The downfall for every packing job is the idea of including too many "choices". Giving yourself several daily choices of shoes, jeans, and jackets can lead to a situation where you will find that you have overpacked. This cannot be stressed enough: *pack light and plan to re-wear clothes and shoes*. After all, this is the way most of the majority world manages. Grand Canyon University has developed a packing list that is brilliant and concise. Having experienced both sides of packing- including too many choices and having only one choice for an entire trip (luggage did not arrive), I find this list to be great middle ground. Find it here <https://www.gcu.edu/blog/theology-ministry/theological-packing-list-short-term-mission-trips>

Next Best Advice: *Don't forget to include these often-overlooked items*

Through years of traveling on international mission trips, I have found the following items to be very useful and take up very little space in luggage:

- **Sleeping Bag Sheets:** This article from REI explains why you would need these liners and includes product comparisons here: [REI review of sleeping bag liners](#)
- **Pillowcase:** Bring your favorite pillowcase from home. It takes very little space to pack, and you won't regret it.
- **Small lantern:** In the majority world, power outages are common. In rural areas, finding power is a challenge as well. That is why having a small, portable lantern (as well as a small flashlight) is a great idea. Some of these lanterns are battery powered and some are solar. They take up very little space in luggage. (do remember to bring extra batteries!) The following is a great review of small lanterns for travel. Here is the link: [REI lantern review](#)
- **Micro Travel Towels:** These towels are small and take up little packing space. They are very useful for times when there are not enough dry towels or there are none are provided. For more information, this review is helpful: [NY Times review of travel towels](#)
- **Ear plugs:** Earplugs help tremendously when trying to sleep in new surroundings with new and sometimes startling noises. I suggest finding them at a Walgreens or CVS near you.
- **Inflatable travel pillow:** a pillow is always great for travel on airplanes, but it can also be useful for the long overland trips on the way to your destination. Having a pillow that is inflatable will take very little space in your luggage or day pack. Find out more here: [Review of Inflatable travel pillows](#)
- **Fanny Pack:** I have become a fan of wearing a fanny pack when traveling. It leaves my hands free and allows me to store my cell phone, hand sanitizer and other small valuables when traveling.
- **Day pack:** A daypack is a small, lightweight backpack that can be very useful for long trips to rural sites. It will allow you to carry water, snacks, hand wipes/sanitizer, a camera, cell phone, and that inflatable travel pillow! Find more information here: [Best Day Packs for Travel](#)
- **Portable Rain Jacket:** A portable rain jacket will fold into a very small package and will be useful for unexpected wet weather. Find portable rain jackets for under \$25 here: [Portable Rain Jackets under \\$25](#)

- **Travel Adapter and Converter-** Will you need an adapter or will you need a converter for your devices as you travel? Learn more here: [Adapter and Converter differences explained](#) . My suggestion is to purchase a combination pack such as these products from Best Buy: [Converters and Adapters from Best Buy](#)
- **Insect Repellent** (natural and DEET)-Bringing insect repellent is important when traveling in areas endemic with mosquitoes and other disease carrying insects. Both natural and the more powerful DEET formulation are listed as you may want to apply one to your skin and one on surfaces around you. Here is a review of insect repellents here: [Review of Insect Repellent for travel](#)
- **Hand sanitizer-** This is a must as soap/water will not be easy to find as you travel into rural areas. It will be important for your health and the health of those you serve. You can find travel size containers of sanitizer in places like Target, Walmart, CVS, or Walgreens.
- **Ziploc bags-** Bring a few gallon-size Ziploc bags with you in your luggage. They can be used in numerous ways. For instance, use one for storing wet/damp clothing or for disposing of waste when no trash receptacle is found. There are many other ways you will find to use them, and they occupy very little space in luggage.

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