

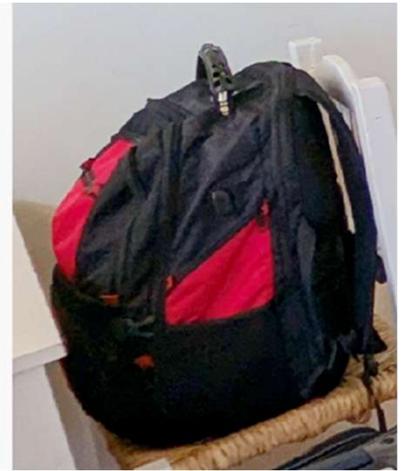
# Travel Light Guide



## The Ultimate Independent Travel Packing List: Expert Guide for Global Adventures

To help you prepare for a seamless journey, we have detailed the importance of every item on our **Backpack and Snorkel Purple Travel Guide Packing List**. This guide focuses on home security, legal compliance abroad, and self-sufficiency while exploring. If you pack like we do, everything should fit into a single backpack (with the exception of the beach tent).

I use this [backpack](#) that has traveled with me for years and multiple times around the planet. It still almost looks like new, except for a couple of scratches that occurred when I had to check it because it exceeded the weight or dimensions of some Asian and South American budget airlines.



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## 2.1 Disclaimer

In this guide we are doing our best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and [backpackandsnorkel.com](http://backpackandsnorkel.com) cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

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## Pre-Travel Preparations: Securing Your Home and Documents

Managing your home and documentation before departure prevents legal hurdles and domestic disasters.

- 1. Verify Passport Expiration:** Many countries require your passport to be valid for at least six months beyond your date of entry. Checking this early prevents you from being denied boarding at the airport.
- 2. Get Visas:** Check if you need a visa to enter your destination. Most **Backpack and Snorkel** travel guides have links to the respective embassies, or you can use services like [iVisa](#) to find a comprehensive list of requirements.
- 3. Get International Driver Permit (IDP):** Some countries require both your home license and an IDP to operate a car or motorcycle. This serves as a formal translation. In the USA, you can obtain an IDP for a few dollars from AAA.
- 4. Get Travel Insurance:** We typically buy annual travel insurance from [Allianz](#). While many travel blogs recommend specific insurances due to affiliate commissions, we provide our honest opinion without having an affiliate agreement with Allianz.  
To support us, please consider purchasing one of our **Backpack and Snorkel Purple Travel Guides** ([website](#)).
- 5. Turn Off Water:** A small leak can lead to a flooded home and thousands of dollars in damages. Shutting off the main valve provides peace of mind.

## Essential Documentation and Electronics

These items are the 'brain' of your trip, managing your identity, finances, and memories.

- 15. Passports, Visas, and International Driver Permit:** These are your most critical items. They are the only documents that prove your identity and legal right to cross borders.
- 16. Credit and Debit Cards and RFID Blocking Card:** Carry at least two types of credit cards (ideally Visa and Mastercard) and one debit card. Ensure your credit card has no foreign transaction fees; we prefer the [Chase Sapphire Reserve](#) for its travel benefits, including airport lounge access.  
**Note:** Ensure the name on your card matches your driver license as some car rental companies will not rent you a car if the names differ.  
**Note:** Credit and Debit card fraud is widespread, and it is only a matter of time when you will become a victim. Please read the [Guarding Against Card Fraud and Theft](#) section and consider using [RFID Blocking Cards or Sleeves](#).
- 17. Travel and Destination List:** We create a PowerPoint itinerary with all flight and hotel data, which we convert to PDF. We store copies on our phones, laptops, a portable SSD, and the cloud (OneDrive). Digital backups are essential if a device is lost, stolen or dies.
- 18. Travel Insurance Info:** Store your policy number and emergency contact line on all digital devices and the cloud. You will need this immediately to authorize medical treatment in case something happens.

## Health, Hygiene, and Comfort

Staying healthy is the difference between a dream vacation and a miserable stay in a hotel room.

**32. Ear Plugs:** Essential for sleeping on loud airplanes or in city hotels with heavy nightlife.

**33. Floss:** Vital for dental hygiene and useful as emergency string for repairs.

**34. Medicine (Pain Relief and Diarrhea):** Having basic relief on hand is a necessity, as pharmacies may be closed or difficult to find in an emergency. We always carry a small 'travel pharmacy' to handle common ailments immediately.

Some travelers experience 'Traveler's Diarrhea' within the first 48 hours. Having your own supply means you do not have to leave your hotel room when you feel your worst.

It is generally recommended to keep your medications in their original packaging, in case you are questioned at customs.

However, I have traveled internationally for over 30 years and never been questioned.

Ensure your kit includes:

- **Pain and Fever Relief:** Pack your favorite headache and migraine pills, and make sure that you have Ibuprofen and/or Paracetamol (Acetaminophen) as a fever reducer.

Some people find that alternating between Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen every 4-6h gives the best fever reducing results. Make sure to never exceed the daily maximum dosage for each drug, especially for Acetaminophen as it can cause severe liver damage. Avoid taking Ibuprofen on an empty stomach, as it can cause pain, nausea, vomiting, or worse.

## Clothing and Specialized Gear

Versatile clothing allows you to explore any environment with ease.

**44. Raincoat and Umbrella:** A lightweight jacket is essential for weather. A foldable umbrella is also an excellent tool for sun protection, a common practice in Asia.

**45. Quick-Dry Clothing:** We follow a 'Rule of Three' for packing (3 shirts, 3 pairs of underwear, 1 pair of pants) in addition to what we are wearing. Use [convertible zip-off quick dry travel pants](#) for versatility in cold and warm weather.

It is absolutely essential that they are all quick-dry, so that you can use them the next day after washing.

**46. Laundry Kit:** We put our large, [thick plastic bag](#) in the hotel sink to soak clothes with laundry detergent (that we bring from home in a small Ziplock bag). This is far cheaper than hotel laundry services.

**47. Six Hangers and Six Clamps:** [Foldable plastic hangers](#) ensure you have space to dry laundry, as not all hotels provide enough hangers. Clamps are great for hanging socks or keeping hotel curtains tightly closed.

**48. Hat:** A foldable hat with a cord to prevent it from blowing away protects your scalp and keeps you cool outdoors.

**49. Sweatband:** Keeps salt and sweat out of your eyes during humid hikes.

**50. Sunglasses:** Essential for protecting your eyes from UV damage and glare reflected off water or snow. If you wear eyeglasses, make your next pair one with "Transition Lenses", meaning that they darken when exposed to sunlight and brighten back up when indoors.

## Utility and Organization

These items solve the small problems encountered when living out of a suitcase.

- 58. Ziplock and Plastic Bags:** Essential for keeping electronics dry and separating wet swimsuits from dry clothes.
- 59. Plastic Utensils:** Allows you to eat grocery store meals, a yogurt, leftovers, or cut fruits and vegetables in your room, saving money on expensive restaurant dining.
- 60. Water Heater Spiral:** An immersion heater allows you to boil water for coffee or tea in any room with a power outlet.
- 61. Water Filter:** We use a [Brita filter](#) for safe but highly chlorinated tap water. For unsafe tap water, we recommend boiling it in your hotel or Airbnb, or buying large multi-liter bottles at a supermarket where you vacation to refill your thermal flask.
- 62. Foldable Cutting Board:** Allows for hygienic preparation of local produce in your hotel room.
- 63. Scotch Pad:** Essential for cleaning your reusable utensils and cutting board.
- 64. Can Opener:** Perfect for budget-conscious travelers who want to utilize local canned goods.
- 65. Bottle Opener:** Many unique local beverages and craft beers use traditional crown caps. Having a small bottle opener ensures you are never frustrated by a refreshing drink you cannot open.
- 66. Small Daypack:** A lightweight backpack is perfect for daily trips, grocery shopping, and keeping your essentials within reach.

## Special Needs

- 68. Backup Eyeglasses:** If you wear eyeglasses, having a secondary pair of prescription glasses is a vital safeguard. Common experience suggests that mishaps often occur when finding a replacement is most difficult. If you depend on corrective lenses, ensure you pack a spare set to maintain your vision and independence throughout your journey.
- 69. USB Nose and Ear Hair Cutter:** On longer trips, growing nose or ear hair can become a nuisance. Opt for a [USB rechargeable model](#) to eliminate the need for bulky proprietary cables or disposable batteries. Keeping it in your carry-on luggage ensures you comply with the strictest safety standards. This small tool provides high utility for grooming without adding significant weight or volume to your travel kit.



# Backpack & Snorkel

## Making Memorable Moments

### Closing Remarks

#### ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.



# Backpack & Snorkel

## Making Memorable Moments

### MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music.

Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

**Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!**



# Backpack & Snorkel

## Making Memorable Moments

### PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see this [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.