How to Pack a Carry-On for Two Weeks (Step by Step)

Travel · about 15 minutes · 2026-11-11

A fully illustrated 28-step guide to packing a carry-on for a two-week trip: check the rules, build a capsule wardrobe, fold compactly, and keep documents and tech within reach.

Phase 1 — Check the Rules and Choose the Bag

1. **Confirm your airline's size and weight limits**
   Confirm your airline's size and weight limits.
2. **Learn the liquids rule for your route**
   Learn the liquids rule for your route.
3. **Weigh the empty bag first**
   Weigh the empty bag first.
4. **Check electronics and battery rules**
   Check electronics and battery rules.
5. **Pick a shell that suits your trip**
   Pick a shell that suits your trip.
6. **Test the wheels and handle**
   Test the wheels and handle.
7. **Use packing cubes as removable units**
   Use packing cubes as removable units.

Phase 2 — Build a Two-Week Capsule Wardrobe

8. **Choose two neutral colours and one accent**
   Choose two neutral colours and one accent.
9. **Count outfits, not individual items**
   Count outfits, not individual items.
10. **Plan around one laundry day**
    Plan around one laundry day.
11. **Choose layers over bulky garments**
    Choose layers over bulky garments.
12. **Favour wrinkle-resistant fabrics**
    Favour wrinkle-resistant fabrics.
13. **Limit yourself to two pairs of shoes**
    Limit yourself to two pairs of shoes.
14. **Pack one smart-casual backup outfit**
    Pack one smart-casual backup outfit.

Phase 3 — Fold and Pack Compact

15. Roll or military-fold soft clothing

Roll or military-fold soft clothing.

16. Assign one cube per clothing category

Assign one cube per clothing category.

17. Fill gaps with small soft items

Fill gaps with small soft items.

18. Flatten belts along the case wall

Flatten belts along the case wall.

19. Seal shoes and stuff them with socks

Seal shoes and stuff them with socks.

20. Pack liquids in one transparent bag

Pack liquids in one transparent bag.

21. Swap to solids where you can

Swap to solids where you can.

Phase 4 — Keep Essentials Close and Check Before You Go

22. Put documents in one slim waterproof sleeve

Put documents in one slim waterproof sleeve.

23. Pack chargers and a power bank in your personal bag

Pack chargers and a power bank in your personal bag.

24. Add a compact health and comfort kit

Add a compact health and comfort kit.

25. Keep a change of clothes in your personal item

Keep a change of clothes in your personal item.

26. Tick items off a written list

Tick items off a written list.

27. Check for prohibited items

Check for prohibited items.

28. Weigh the full bag and photograph the contents

Weigh the full bag and photograph the contents.

Sources

1. TSA — travel security and packing rules
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2. U.S. Department of State — travel information
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3. USA.gov — Travel and Immigration
   https://www.usa.gov/travel-and-immigration
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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/How-to-Pack-a-Carry-On. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/correcti