

What to Pack for an Extended Stay

You're leaving for an extended stay remote work trip, so *let's get packing*. There's a lot of advice in the form of blogs and youtube videos on the subject. This pre-trip resource is meant to guide your thinking, but if you have outstanding questions or concerns please feel free to do further research or to reach out to our team at Zeal. We've broken down this list by general categories, so let's jump into the first thing to consider—your luggage. The size, type and number of bags you bring for an extended stay will directly impact your travels, so let's make a plan.

Luggage:

Most airlines around the world consider a normal checked-bag to weigh less than 20 kilograms, or about 44 pounds. That's a good amount of weight and means you can plan to take one large sized suitcase. Planning on traveling with one checked bag is a good balance between bringing what you need for a long trip, but also you won't spend too much on extra fees for luggage and you'll be able to navigate airports and travel days with minimal struggles.

Along with your one checked-bag, you'll want to have one carry-on bag that goes on the plane with you. This can be a digital nomad work-style backpack (dedicated laptop slot), or a small rolling suitcase that accompanies your larger rolling suitcase. [According to luggagepros.com](https://luggagepros.com), a common sized bag for carry-on luggage is 22"x 14"x 9", and most airlines have a carry-on weight limit of 18 kgs or 40 pounds.

Two recommended luggage set-ups:

1. 20 kg checked bag with a large work-style backpack.
2. 20 kg checked bag, with a 18kg carry on suitcase plus a small "extra item" (purse or small backpack)

There are pros and cons of both set ups. If you go with a backpack, you'll be moving a little easier on travel day, but if you go with a carry-on sized piece of luggage, you'll also be able to bring a large purse or small backpack as your "extra item" This is a matter of preference, but in general—try not to convince yourself you need more than either of these two set-ups.

What to pack:

What should you pack for an extended travel experience? That's a loaded question. You'll find a lot of strong opinions and "expert advice" on the internet, *as well as the next group dinner you attend*. Everyone has a different idea of what the right amount of things is to bring, so this resource will hopefully direct your thinking and give you an example of a well-planned list of clothes and items to consider for a long trip.

First, the primary thing to consider is the environment you'll be spending your time in. If you're going to spend six months all over Europe, you'll need clothes for all weather. If you're going to be three months in the Caribbean, you can probably get away with shorts, t-shirts, and flip flops

for the majority of your packing. However, be sure your preconceived notions of a place don't cloud your judgement—do your research about the exact places you know you'll be going. *Sometimes, in some seasons, in some places—it snows in Mexico. You can make a snow angel in Ecuador if you decide you want to hike up Mt. Chimborazo. So, if you have an idea of the type of trip you're taking and where you'll be—that should inform your packing.*

What to pack: (This example is for a tropical trip. 6 months in a warm part of Mexico)

- **8 pairs of underwear/bras**
 - Seems like a lot, but it will likely still be the thing that causes you to do laundry when they're all dirty.
- **4 pairs of socks**
 - In a warm climate you might go weeks without putting on shoes, so you'll likely not need many socks (Bring more if you're not a sandals person)
- **8 t-shirts or tank tops**
 - One for every day of the week, plus an extra! If you get sweaty, you'll likely go through more than 1 shirt a day. Plus these pack down small and it's nice to have some variety.
- **3 nice tops for warm weather**
 - These can be for nights out or simply to break up all the t-shirts you'll be wearing most days.
- **6 pairs of athletic shorts/swimsuits**
 - In tropical environments, you'll likely wear some type of lighter short every day, and you'll likely sweat through them or get them wet, so you'll want a good amount.
- **3 nice pairs of shorts**
 - These can be khakis, jeans, or whatever is your style, but you'll want some type of shorts for nice dinners and nights out.
- **1 pair of nice pants**
 - For example, this could be one pair of dark jeans.
- **1 pair of comfy pants**
 - This could be your favorite pair of comfortable sweatpants. Both the nice jeans and sweatpants will likely get used fairly frequently, but since they are bulky—*try to limit your pants to two pairs.*
- **1 warm sweatshirt**
 - For the airplane and any potential chilly nights or chilly adventures. (You'd be surprised how cold you can get on a boat, even during a sunny day.)
- **1 raincoat/light coat**
 - Sometimes having a rain coat is essential—especially if it's the rainy season—and it doubles as an outer layer to add warmth beyond a single sweatshirt. If you have a water resistant coat that you like, that could also work.
- **3 pairs of Shoes—4 MAX!**
 - **Our recommended shoe set up is:**
 1. Every day sandals (Flip flops or slides)
 2. Every day *nice* tennis shoes (Hopefully, you can find a style that can even work when getting dressing up for an occasion)
 3. Every day athletic/adventure shoes (These are for running, hiking, and walking)

Additional Advice: Packing cubes are a great option for type-a personalities who enjoy organization and structure. Also, depending on the type of bag—**consider rolling everything** (rather than folding). It often keeps clothes nicer inside of luggage, and can also help with space. Also, don't forget that once you're on the ground where you're travelling—if you wish you had bought 3 more pairs of underwear, you can just go buy them! Try not to stress too much, because in the worst case—you can pick up what you need on the road. *Bonus, you just got a souvenir from your travels!*

Finally, this list above is simply an example—it's not a recipe. Pack whatever you think you'd really love to have with you on an extended trip, just make sure you can get it through an airport on foot. What you want to bring is a personal choice that truly only impacts you, *as long as you don't bring so many things that you need to constantly ask people around you for help.*

Things to leave at home:

Hiking boots—Unless you're going on a hiking trip, leave the hiking boots. You'll be surprised at the adventures you can have in tennis shoes or flip flops. Try to keep your shoe total to three or less, including sandals. *See our recommended shoe set up above.*

Yoga mat—Unless you practice daily, you can skip bringing the mat. There are yoga classes now in every corner of the world and they'll provide the mat if you need a good stretch.

Some amount of your toiletries and beauty supplies: You'll certainly want deodorant and a toothbrush, but try not to over do-it and bring the entire CVS store with you abroad. There are pharmacies and corner stores in every country in the world, and you can pretty much always find lotion, chap-stick, pain-killers, or whatever you might need close to where you're staying.

General Rule: After you pack, take 25-40% back out of your bag and put it in storage. You can always buy those boxers, t-shirts, or a new pair of dress shoes wherever you are. Also, if you do find you need to buy dress shoes (for example) because you were unexpectedly invited to a local's wedding on your trip—then you'll have cool dress shoes from Belize (or wherever you're going), which is a great story to tell when somebody compliments them in the future.

Remote work specifically

When packing for a remote work extended trip, you'll want to make sure you have everything you need to work comfortably. You'll certainly need your computer, charger, and headphones, but you might want to consider some additional remote work tools:

- **Universal Adaptor**
 - This is an essential tool for any traveller, but especially a remote worker. There are a lot of models out there, so read the reviews and make sure you're getting something that works for your trip and that other nomads recommend.

- [We recommend this adaptor by Targus](#). It has two USB ports, so you can charge 3 devices at once, and it's also small and lightweight for easy packing.
 - **Laptop Stand and Wireless Keyboard**
 - Laptop stands are primarily to help with your posture and discomfort that can come from looking down at a computer all day. So, you'll likely want a wireless keyboard as well. If you decide to travel with a stand and external wireless keyboard, your eyes will be up, but your arms will be down—so your shoulders and neck won't get sore during a 6-hour call marathon.
 - [We recommend this laptop stand by Roost](#). This nomad favorite is light weight, folds down small, and is incredibly dependable. _
 - [We recommend this wireless keyboard by Apple](#). This is a very light, durable, and beautiful keyboard.
 - **External Microphone**
 - This will largely depend on what type of work you'll be doing, but if you're on calls for the majority of your work, or say you are a frequent podcast guest (or maybe a host!), you might want to make room for a nice microphone
 - [We recommend this microphone by Blue](#). The Snowball mic is both small and easy to use—along with being a high quality microphone by one of the industry leaders.

Medicine & Supplement Travel Advice:

If you take prescription medicine or any controlled substance as part of your health and fitness routine, make sure to pack enough for the duration of your trip—plus a little extra in case of delays in your travel. You also might be able to find your prescriptions and any over the counter drugs you take in your country of destination, but just in case—*bring what you need*. For long term travel, the [CDC recommends](#) that *if you plan to be gone for more than 30 days, talk to your doctor about how you can get enough medicine for your trip. Sometimes insurance companies will pay for only a 30-day supply at a time.*

Be sure you have enough before you leave, be sure to investigate if you can get more in the country you're visiting, and lastly—be sure the medicine you take is allowed to cross the border with you. For example, Japan has some restrictions on what medicines are allowed in. It's best to do your own research and to consult with a medical professional based on your specific situation. If you have any outstanding questions, feel free to contact our team at Zeal.

Other Things to Consider:

Along with what goes into the bags you'll be travelling with, there are some other variables to consider related to packing for your trip. You'll find information and helpful links on how to internationally ship extra luggage or gear ahead to yourself, and how to think through what to do with the rest of your stuff (store, sell, loan?) in this additional [Zeal resource: Extended Travel Trip Preparation Guide & Check List.](#)