

# Travelling Light? Just Carry-On

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Melody Wren

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I recall the trip I was on when I firmly decided it was carry-on luggage only from then onward. I was flying to Milwaukee out of Toronto's Air Canada terminal 1. I arrived the prescribed 2 hours ahead with one suitcase to check. Piece of cake, right? Not so. The ordinarily short line to check baggage snaked around one corner, and down the next hallway. As people arrived to join the line, they were shaking their heads in disbelief when airline staff pulled people out of line ensuring no one missed their flight. Standing in the queue for over 90 minutes to drop off one bag, I became fearful that I would miss my flight and vowed only to take carry-on luggage for my next trip.

Since that trip, I have researched the correctly sized case for carry-on. It should be a simple task, but it is not. Each airline has its own measurements for what is acceptable, and the difference in the sizes is astounding. It is vital that you check the measurements and weight restrictions for each airline, and if you are travelling on several airlines on one trip, it can get tricky.

*See our summary of the Canadian carriers' restrictions at the end of this story!*

Many people think they cannot whittle down a wardrobe into just carry-on. Travelling to hot climates makes it easy and I once went to Kenya for two weeks with carry-on only. It was the most challenging packing I ever did, but I survived, had a wonderful trip, and didn't focus on the clothes, but the experience.



**Plan your wardrobe around the activities on a trip.** Similar to making a grocery list, I make a list of each day I will be away and pack accordingly, resisting the urge to include that extra cute top. Consulting my itinerary of events, meetings and dinners, I plan specifically what to wear, writing it on the list beside each activity. Even if a day is simply going to the beach followed by a casual taco restaurant in the evening, if you note what you are wearing and wear it again two days later, you won't waste a second wondering what you are going to wear.

**Light is best!** Always remind yourself that if you have to hoist that suitcase up and down endless times, into a train, a boat, or public transit pack as little as possible. If worse comes to worse, you can always buy something.

**Does it still fit?** When prepping for travel, I try on everything I intend to take as it helps me decide if it's a good choice. I lay out everything on the bed and match up different looks, making sure each top and bottom do double duty. If it can be only worn once, it doesn't qualify for the trip. If I have too many of one item, I choose my favourite or whatever is most comfortable.

**Accessories are your friend.** And they are small! Dress up a basic black t-shirt for dinner out with a statement necklace (something to pick up while travelling) or add a silk scarf with casual capris for a walk.

**Layers!** A jacket is always a good idea anywhere you are travelling, even it is hot, so ensure that you can wear it on the plane or roll it up super small for easier packing.

**Pack it in.** What is the best plan for packing the bag? Some swear by rolling clothes, others prefer layering, but both work well. Just remember to fill the gaps with smaller items such as socks which can fill in the corners, or underwear which tucks easily into shoes. Packing cubes are also a beneficial option for carry-on travel, making organising your case much easier, and keeping your items together should have to open your bag at security.

**On your feet!** The most challenging item manage is footwear. Always take a comfy pair for walking or touring and depending on where you are going, flip flops for the beach or pool, and a pair of dress-up shoes or sandals. Wear the heaviest shoes on the plane.

## What do the Canadian carriers consider carry-on size?

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WestJet (WS) allows one carry-on bag and one personal item (purse, briefcase, laptop bag) per passenger fee-free. Carry-on should not exceed the following size and weight restrictions: 45 linear inches (21 x 15 x 9 in) or 114 centimetres (53 x 38 x 23 cm) including handles and wheels. There is no weight limited noted however the case must *“be light enough to allow you to place the bag in the overhead compartment unaided.”*

Air Canada (AC) allows one carry-on bag and one personal item (purse, briefcase, laptop bag) per passenger fee-free. Carry-on should not exceed the following size and weight restrictions: 46 linear inches (21.5 x 15.5 x 9 in) or 118 centimetres (55 x 40 x 23 cm) including handles and wheels. The weight limit is 10 kilograms per item.

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About The Author

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Melody Wren



Melody is an Ontario based travel writer who believes travel stories are meant to encourage and inspire and considers her age (over 60) a gift in her journeys, bringing wisdom, experience, humour and a major 'if not now, when' attitude to her writing. A formerly nervous traveller, experiential travel has helped her conquer fears as she snorkelled through the Galapagos islands, glacier trekked in the Northwest Passage, danced around a fire in Africa, learned how to make the perfect tiramisu in Florence, kayaked amongst spawning salmon in Ontario, snow-shoed in Colorado, and sailed in the British Virgin Islands . Her work appears in Canadian Yachting Magazine, Canadian Jewish News, The Toronto Star, Kitchener Waterloo Record, Caribbean Beat Magazine, Cottage Life Magazine, Waypoints Global, Active Over 50, and Inspired Seniors.

