

Packing It In

The ultimate gear for when you're on the go. BY JILL BECKER



Hitting the road? Journey for miles with a smile when you stuff your suitcase with these travel niceties and necessities.

You've Got Baggage

Rick Steves Drop-Bottom Duffel \$80

Rick Steves, the guru behind the popular *Europe Through the Back Door* franchise, puts a lot of miles on his bags. So who better to design a carry-all that's roomy enough to hold almost a week's worth of gear yet weighs less than 3 pounds. Personally road tested by us, we can attest it's both sturdy and secure, and is stain- and water-resistant to boot. www.ricksteves.com



Pathfinder Checkpoint-Friendly Compubrief \$150

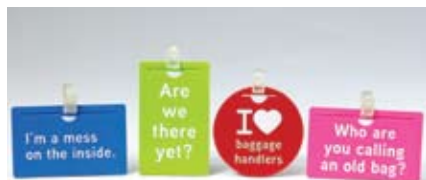
Coming this fall to a retailer near you is this handy rolling laptop carrier that won't make you squirm next time you have to go through airport security. One of only five designs approved by the TSA



in a recent test of prototype bags, Pathfinder's new Compubrief has three zippered main compartments, the

first of which opens at a 90-degree angle. So instead of having to take your laptop completely out of your bag and placing it in a bin, you can just unzip, lay the bag flat, and slide it on through.

www.pathfinderluggage.com



Talking Luggage Tags \$8

Looking for a gift for the traveler who has everything? Consider these snappy bag tags that will spice up their journey with sayings like "Are we there yet" and "Who are you calling an old bag?" The tags' bold colors and shapes also help make it easy for them to pick their suitcase out of the crowd at the carousel.

www.brookstone.com

Pacsafe M100 Messenger Bag \$100

We don't like to think about it, but occasionally bad stuff happens when you're on the road—one of them being having your bag stolen. That likely won't be an issue with Pacsafe's anti-theft travel gear, like this chic messenger bag, which comes with slash-proof straps, tamperproof zippers, and snatchproof anchors you can safely attach to the nearest fixed object.

www.pacsafe.com

Good Things, Small Packages

For all things travel size—from shampoo to spray starch—check out www.minimus.biz. The site features more than 2,000 trial-size products specifically designed to take up the least amount of space in your dopp kit.



Style File

Vivo Barefoot Aqua Shoe \$150

People always extol the virtues of wearing a comfortable walking shoe when traveling. Well, there's perhaps no more comfortable shoe than those in this Italian-made line, which claim to offer the benefits of going shoeless. Better yet, their 3mm puncture-resistant soles protect your feet yet are flexible enough to fold in half, making Vivos perfect for packing.

www.vivobarefoot.com

Columbia Sportswear Sun Goddess Shirt \$45

Ladies, you'll have it made in the shade with this beautiful blouse from Columbia's new line of clothes with built-in sunscreen. Called Omni-Shade, the garments are pretreated with UPF 50 protection that effectively blocks 98 percent of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. Their ventilated weaves and moisture wicking also assist with cooling and breathability.

www.columbia.com/omnishade



Jos. A. Bank Traveler Cashmere Sweater \$295

Okay, cashmere is a little pricey, but there's nothing like it for comfort when you're stuck on a plane or motorcoach for hours on end. And this fashionable men's V-neck comes in a multitude of colors and is both wrinkle- and stain-resistant, so that, like you, it travels exceptionally well.

www.josabank.com



Don't Leave Home Without It

Here's what some frequent roadies had to say when asked about their must-have travel item.

"My item—zipper-top plastic bags of various size—is really mundane, but oh so useful. They keep wet from dry, contain dirty and/or smelly items for washing or disposal, are much more compact than boxes, and you can always see what's inside them."

—CAROL WHITE, speaker, marketing coach, and coauthor of *Live Your Road Trip Dream*

"One thing I cannot live without is a Skype account. Skype is absolutely essential. I not only make long distance calls back home, but I make local calls, say, in London and Paris, for only pennies! Last time I used Skyeout (the service you pay a little bit for), I called friends in England and France while there for only 2 cents a minute."

—DR. MICHAEL BREIN, aka The Travel Psychologist, creator of the *Sightseeing by Public Transportation* travel guides

"In today's world, you have to have a GPS to get around."

—DIXON SINGLETON, president and owner, *There and Back Again Adventures*, Savannah, GA

"My cellphone, wallet, checkbook, and magazines that I haven't had time to read. Oh, and my credit cards, of course."

—LOIS STELIGA, owner and president, *Travel America*, Milwaukee, WI

"A compact raincoat, because you just never know. And a camera, because you want to be able to bring the memories back with you."

—ALEXA POULIN, director of marketing, *Explorica, Inc.*, Boston, MA

"Bring your medicines; don't forget them. The next must for me is a curling iron."

—MARY FRANCIS, owner, *Francis Custom Tours*, Arkadelphia, AR

Get-Smart Gadgets

Sony HDR-CX11E Camcorder

Price to be announced

Don't ask us how it works, but this new high-def digital camcorder, due out in August, has a smile-detection feature that automatically takes 7.6MP stills whenever a smile is detected. With the supplied 4GB memory stick, you can record 85 minutes of footage or upgrade to a 16GB stick with just under six hours of footage.

www.sony.com



Solio Hybrid Charger

\$100

Can't travel without your iPod? Or your iPhone? This solar-powered charger captures the sun's rays to give you juice for things like digital cameras and MP3 players when there are no plugs to be found. It folds up nicely, too, so it doesn't take up much room in your gear.

www.solio.com

Kindle Wireless Reading Device

\$359

Like to take along a book when you travel but tired of lugging it around? Check out this handy portable reading device (pictured on page 22) from the folks at Amazon, who know a little something about books. It fea-



tures a quite-readable 6-inch diagonal display, and at 10.3 ounces, weighs less than your average paperback.

Plus, its wireless delivery system uses the same 3G network as advanced cell-phones, so you'll never have to locate a hotspot.

www.amazon.com

Clean & Shield Surface Wipes

\$6 (for a package of 10)

There's nothing remotely techy about this product, but we couldn't help but include it, because we all know there are germs out there—from the hotel sink to the steering wheel on your rental car. Luckily, these convenient one-step wipes not only



clean and sanitize, but provide on-going protection from recontamination. Let's face it, while you're on a trip is no time to get sick.

www.cleanandshield.com

Toys for Tots

Fisher-Price Fun-2-Learn Laughtop \$33

This faux laptop for the preschool set will keep their active minds—and hands—occupied with its silly characters, cool mazes, and fun games, all while quietly teaching them about letters and phonics.

www.toyrus.com



BedBug Inflatable Bed Rails \$40

Another great item to have on hand when you're on the road with the kiddos are these blow-up bed rails, which turn any ordinary hotel bed into a safe sleeping spot. All BedBug have child-friendly patterns and washable covers.

www.toddlercoddler.com

Trunki Ride-On Suitcase \$40

This, the world's first ride-on suitcase, not only makes traveling fun for the wee ones, but lets them push themselves along or be towed by an adult when their little feetsies get tired (don't worry, parents, it has stabilizers to prevent tipping). Inside, it's got room enough for a few toys, games, and clothes, along with their favorite teddy bear. And kids have their pick of several fun colors.

www.target.com



"Smaller City, Bigger Benefits"

- 160,000 square feet of meeting and banquet space
- Direct jet service from Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth and Memphis
- 1,987 convention quality guest rooms – 600 within walking distance of the convention center

Hosting Meetings Since 1908!



www.FortSmith.org

Fort Smith
ARKANSAS
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
Where the New South Meets the Old West

800-637-1477