

We've traveled the world frequently for nearly 50 years, throughout North, Central and South America, Europe and Asia. Since retirement, my spouse and I still wander away from home and hearth at least once a month. After considerable experiences in the sky, at sea and on the road, we believe we can offer some very simple tips that may help others travel safer and happier:

1. Go light to save both cash and carry woes. Unless you're sailing on a super-formal cruise or will attend a function at the White House or Buckingham Palace, pack just the very basic comfy clothing.



2. Take only what you can carry and wheel all by yourself without checking anything. We used to go everywhere with one or two big, heavy suitcases each, the kind you must lug around, then check them at the airport. After flights, we'd always have to wait by the merry-go-round hoping they were not lost. Many airlines now charge for check-in bags, from \$15 to \$25 each. It can be avoided if you go light with carry-ons.

Recently, we went to Europe, enjoyed three weeks of casual wandering where we didn't make plans for the next day until the night before. We stayed at small hotels, motels and bed'n'breakfasts in England, France, Holland, Belgium and Italy. We each took a wheeled carry-on suitcase and a small backpack. And they were all we ever needed.

3. Take only essentials. For several days before each departure from home, we make stacks on the bed next to our carry-ons of everything we'll absolutely need for the trip. Then, the night before we leave, we take half or more from the stacks and leave the rest at home.

One secret is that we pack some old clothing that gets one wear during the trip, and then is discarded. For most every other article of washable clothing, we bring the minimum, because every night we take the day's used items into the shower with us. We wash it, wring it out and let it dry overnight.

4. Take your medicine. For those couples on regular prescription meds, pack enough for the

days you'll be away from home, plus another full week's supply. It's wise to have written prescriptions and contact numbers of your physicians.

5. Keep it clean. Don't anticipate you'll have essential hygiene items available if you travel to some foreign countries. Take small supplies of alcohol wet wipes, toothpaste, mouthwash, bathroom tissue and basic first aid items. However, because of airport security regulations, make sure you take only approved items on flights.

6. For traveling couples, perhaps the most important need today is personal security. We call it the buddy system, similar to our old camp days. Each one should know where the other is at all times, including standing guard at bathroom entrances while the other is inside. Never allow the other to walk alone in an unfamiliar area, especially at night.

Couples far away from home should always be aware of street dangers, and when abroad, consider ethnic conflicts, terrorism and anti-Western attitudes. You don't have to stay home hiding under the bed, but when you venture out as a couple, always be aware of your surroundings.

Submitted by Julie and Frank Bonanno