

## GLOBE TROTTER

# Packing requires restraint and forethought

As a travel columnist I consider myself a dedicated public servant.

Well, not really, but I do want to answer a question repeatedly asked in emails from News Journal readers: What do you pack for a world tour?

Very little. Or less than you need. Since everything you bring will be carried on your back, it pays to pack light unless you're training for a career as a sherpa. As one friend noted, I packed less for this trip than she takes on a long weekend.

I have five shirts, four briefs, two skirts, two pairs of pants and socks, a fleece and a plastic poncho all crammed into a 3,000-cubic-inch pack. I have a winter coat too, but because of the cold, I seldom take that off. Long underwear is essential for the preservation of a) body heat and b) modesty, considering most hostel dorm rooms are coed.

It's not much, and I do a lot of laundry. In South America this involves dropping it off at the lavanderia, then picking it up eight hours later. It costs between \$3 and \$6, depending on the load size and strength of the local currency. For footwear I carry boots and san-

dals. (OK, I did buy two pairs of incredibly cute sneakers in the madness of a Chilean shoe sale, but I'm shipping them home.) The boots I use for cold weather and hiking. The sandals are for warm weather (not that I've seen much) and showers of questionable cleanliness (seen plenty of those).

The clothes take up less space than the medicine and gear. Thanks to a helpful physician's assistant and the doctors at Wilmington Hospital's travel clinic, I left for my trip with enough drugs to open a small pharmacy. At first it seemed excessive, but two months into my trip I've used almost everything.

Amoxicillin treated my (very disgusting) infected blister from the Inca Trail. Hydrocortisone cream soothed the sandy bites that covered my legs after an afternoon by the pool in Coritico, Bolivia. I have yet to use Cipro, prescribed for, ahem, gastrointestinal distress, but I realize I'm one dodgy empanada away from downing that stuff like it's the elixir of life.

My gear bag contains a Leatherman knife, needle and thread, nylon cord, safety pins, rubber bands, emergency

blanket, Gold Bond Medicated Powder for stinky feet, Wet Wipes, sunblock, a flashlight, insect repellent with enough DEET to kill small children, and of course, the mightiest fixer of them all, duct tape.

Finally, there are the items I use to document my trip, to pass the time and to remind me of home. A camera and travel journal. A good book, replaced as needed from the wares of the world's English-language book shops. Marchbooks from bars in Las Vegas and Chicago that I visited with friends. Photos of my family and adored Siamese cat, Sasha.

I also wear a leather necklace with a metal pendant stamped with a "C," a gift from the same friend who commented on my packing. I leave it on even when I shower and sleep. At least once a day, more if I'm scared or lonely, I squeeze it between thumb and forefinger and say to myself: "Friends. Family. Home."

*Clare Bushey is a freelance journalist and Wilmington native who worked for The News Journal before leaving for her grand trek. To contact Bushey, go to [www.clarebushey.com](http://www.clarebushey.com).*



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