

# Packing as an Expat

*Future Expats Meetup – November 2019*

1. Examine your motives. Why are you moving? Is this a lifestyle change, wanderlust, or a need for an adventure? Will you be coming back? Are you going to a First-, Second-, or Third-World country? Each of these require a different set of “things” so consider carefully!
2. Make a plan.
  - a. Passport - although this sounds strange, make sure your passport has at least three to six months on it before it expires
  - b. Clothes - climate, comfort, and culture. What can you buy there? Can you use the 3-month rule?
  - c. Gadgets and electronics - what are your essentials? What power supply needs will you have? Will your gadgets make you a target? Will your cellphone and power adapters work in your new home?
  - d. Sentimental items - what will you need during your travels? Can you scan images and books? Can a family member hold some of these items for you?
  - e. Items of interest - what hobbies will you need to entertain? Are sports equipment, music instruments, game systems, and craft supplies available where you are going?
  - f. Textiles - towels, sheets, and blankets can provide comfort. Not every place will have the textiles that you expect, so plan accordingly.
  - g. Furniture - do you really need to take furniture? Remember, moving furniture only risks damaging property and local furniture may be available.
  - h. Medical equipment and medications - be aware that there are limits that vary from country to country, but CPAP machines, three months of meds, and other medical equipment should be considered.
  - i. “Special” items - are you taking special purpose items that might need special allowances, like ashes of a loved one?
3. Don't forget!
  - a. Important or essential documents - this will vary by country, but here's a start:
    - i. Legal identification (passports, certificates, visas, letters of entrance, etc.)
    - ii. Insurance documentation (life, health, property)
    - iii. Medical records from ALL of your doctors (MDs, dentists, eye doctors, specialists)
    - iv. Immunization records (if needed)
    - v. Shipping documents for anything that you are having shipped to your new home
4. Before you leave...
  - a. Double-check your travel plans and any boarding passes for flights / proof of onward travel
  - b. Unlock your cellphone / research doctors / make a plan / arrange transportation for your first week, including identifying backup hotels if your accommodations are not as promised
  - c. Double-check your visa requirements
  - d. Review the security on your electronic devices

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- e. Get cash in your new currency for the first week or two, as well as a stash of American dollars in case you need to come home unexpectedly
  - f. Tell your bank you are leaving. Then tell them again.
  - g. Develop a “list of 10” - the people who need to be alerted if something significant happens to you, and give them each a copy
  - h. Leave a copy of your passport, credit cards, American identification, itinerary, and legal documents with someone in the US
  - i. Get all of your vaccinations, if needed
  - j. Register with the U.S. Embassy's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and identify where the nearest embassy or consulate is to your new home
5. Small but mighty:
- a. Extra passport photos
  - b. Copies of important documents (keep them separate!)
  - c. Copies of legal identification (keep them separate!)
  - d. Painkillers and anti-diarrhea meds
  - e. Earplugs + headphones
  - f. Collapsible bag
  - g. Small combination lock in case you need to secure your luggage
  - h. Essential “travel toiletries” - toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, etc.
6. Let it go...

Kitchen appliances Television Entertainment systems	Books DVDs and Discs Clothes Shoes	Items you are hoarding Broken items “Just because” items	
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Other links:

<https://www.expertsforexpats.com/expat-news-and-opinion/latest-expert-opinion/moving-abroad-what-to-take-what-to-toss-what-to-store/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexandratalty/2018/05/31/the-12-things-every-expat-needs-to-do-before-moving-abroad/#758973986b6b>

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/travel-tips/how-to-prepare-to-move-abroad>

<https://www.expatinfodesk.com/expat-guide/organizing-your-departure/what-to-take/>

<https://www.goabroad.com/articles/jobs-abroad/what-to-pack-working-abroad>