

ANATOMY *of a* WELL-PACKED BAG

Travelling is made so much easier with a small, well-packed bag. You can fit it under the seat of a bus, swing it over your front when on motorbikes and rickshaws, avoid baggage check-ins on flights and be happy walking around all day with it.

But there are many things to take into consideration, which can make the whole business daunting for the first-time backpacker. How much to take? To fold, roll or stuff? How do you minimise the chances of being robbed? What are the essential items?

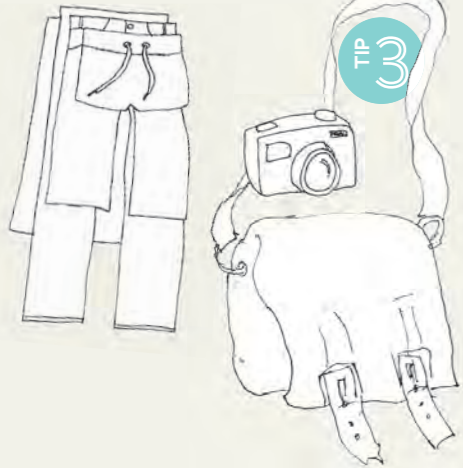
Of course, the climate and style of travel will affect your packing list, but these tips aim to be as universal as possible.



TIP 1

THE ART OF LAYERING

Clothes can be easily washed and dried so only take one item of every length of clothing – that way you can easily layer up if it's cold.



TIP 3

DAYTIME TRAVELS

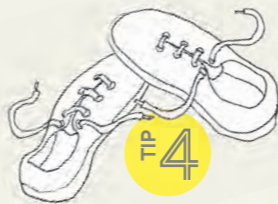
Take a separate easy-to-fold shoulder bag that you can take out on daytrips.



TIP 2

SLEEPING SOUNDLY

A sleeping bag liner is much more portable than a full sleeping bag but will still protect you from those slightly questionable hostel sheets. Go for silk over cotton for coolness in the heat and warmth in the cold.



TIP 4

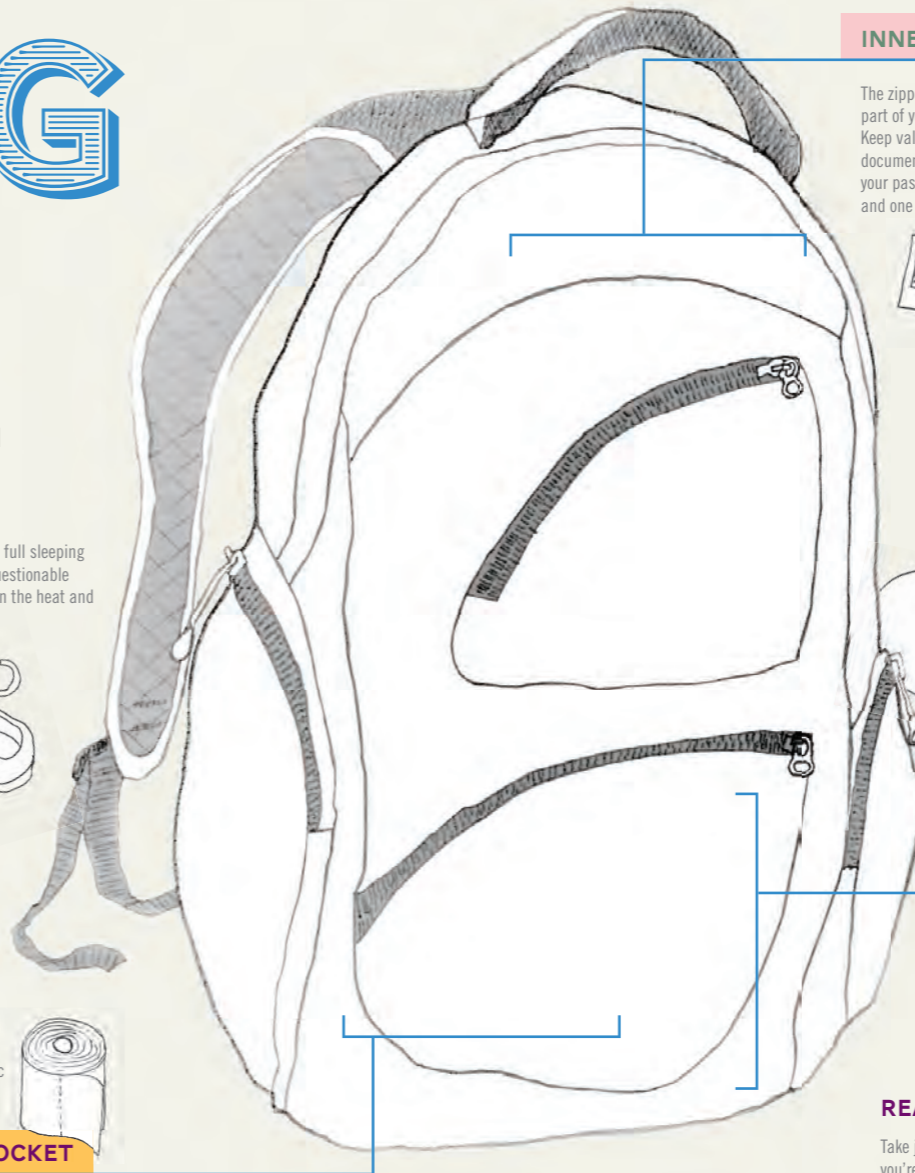
FEATHER LIGHT FOOTSTEPS

Keep bulky footwear on your feet when moving around and pack some lightweight, more compact footwear.



FRONT OUTSIDE POCKET

Wrap loo roll around the lids of toiletries and place inside a plastic bag to avoid messy accidents.



INNER BACK POCKET

The zipped inner pocket is the safest part of your backpack, closest to your body. Keep valuables here along with important documents and tickets. Keep a photocopy of your passport and other documents at home and one on an internet mail account.



TIP 5

HOW WHITE ARE YOUR WHITES?

Avoid taking any white clothing as it's unlikely to stay bright anyway. Go for light greys, khakis and beiges instead.



THE AGE-OLD DEBATE: TO ROLL, FOLD OR STUFF?

Rolling will save you much more space, make it far easier to get at everything and keep your clothes less creased.



TIP 6

BOTTOM OF THE BAG

To avoid taking everything out to get at certain things, fill the bottom with less-often needed items such as first-aid kit, washing detergent and a couple of drawstring bags for your dirty washing. Be careful to keep valuables away from the bottom of your bag in case of 'slashing'.



MAKE A MEAL OF IT

Useful for travelling in developed countries where eating out is expensive and self-catering preferable: a cheap plastic bowl and cutlery set.



TIP 7

READING MATERIAL

Take just one or two paperbacks and when you're finished with them, swap for others people have left in hostels and cafes.



TIP 8