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The Family Backpacking Worldschooled Packing List

The honest, tested, family-backpacking checklist for long-term travel for family of four

ADULTS

Backpacks

- Main backpack or suitcase x 2
- Lightweight day pack for journeys and excursions x2
- Padlock x 2

Clothing -- Adults

- Lightweight t-shirts x 3
- Vests / singlets x 2
- Short sleeve shirt x 1
- Dresses x 2
- Lightweight long pants x 1 (zip-offs are good idea to convert to extra pair of shorts)
- Shorts for going out in daytime x 2
- Shorts for lazing around home / sleeping in / PJs x 1
- Lightweight foldaway waterproof jacket x1 each
- Lightweight fleece / hoodie x1 each (merino is a good option as its lightweight but warm)
- Underwear x 8 (1 pair per day plus a pair to wear on the 8th day when doing the washing)
- Socks x 2 (if going to hot climates, you will likely wear sandals / flip flops)
- Belt x 1 each
- Sun hat / caps
- Swimwear x1 each

Tip: We buy warm layers second-hand in SE Asia before heading to colder climates, then leave them behind when worn out. Saves space and money.

Footwear -- Adults

- Sandals x 1 pair (we found a good pair was more comfortable than flip flops when on long walks)
- Flip flops x1 pair (worn most days)
- Trainers / walking trainers x1 pair (optional)

Toiletries -- Adults

- All in one body was / shampoo to share
- Nail clips
- Lip balm (with sun factor)
- Earplugs
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Razor / beard trimmer
- Feminine hygiene products if needed

Tip: toiletries can be bought easily whilst on the road so don't need to take large volumes

Documents and Admin -- Adults

- Printed copies of travel insurance policy
- International driving permit (only last a year so get last minute to make it last)
- Bank card + Credit card
- Wise card
- Cash – local currency for first destination (& some back-up US Dollars)
- Copies of all documents stored in Cloud storage / on phone

Other -- Adults

- Water bottles x 2 (1 x each – 600ml)
- Several pens scattered amongst hand luggage
- Small moleskin notepad
- Wrist watch
- Extremely lightweight Fold away rucksack (an absolute essential for us)
- Sunglasses x 1 each
- Lightweight latex exercise resistance band
- Travel tea mug (optional - but I have to take a brew on the go)
- Sunglasses x 1 each

KIDS

Backpacks -- Kids

- Hybrids suitcase / backpack – 10L x1 per child
- Small day pack for each child
- Padlocks x 2

Tip: Let the kids personalise their backpack with patches or keyrings -- it gives them ownership and they carry it more willingly.

Clothing -- Kids

- T-shirts x 7 per child (kids go through them fast)
- Shorts 3-4 per child
- Lightweight long pants x1 per child
- Lightweight foldaway waterproof jacket x1 per child
- 1 x long sleeve hoodie / fleece each
- Underwear x 8 per child
- Socks x 2 per child
- Swimwear x1 per child (including goggles)
- Sun hat / cap x 1 each

Tip: Don't pack for every size as they grow – just buy on the road

Footwear -- Kids

- Sandals x1 pair per child
- Crocs x 1 (for youngest)
- Flip Flops x 1 (for eldest)
- Trainers x 1 each

Education and Worldscooling Kit -- Kids

- Notebook and pencils per child
- Text books (1 x maths and English each – everything else to be learnt online)
- Memory stick to download documents for printing (or backing up photos)
- Pencil case with various pens, pencils, colours, pencil sharpener, ruler etc

Fill in your actual worldscooling setup here -- this section is the most personal part of your packing.

Entertainment -- Kids

- Lego – we packed approx. a 4-litre bag of mixed pieces
- Pack of playing cards
- Pass The Pigs game (we ditched the box to save space & just carried the two tiny pigs)
- 1 x soft toy each
- 1 x plastic toy each
- Colouring book and pencils (buy cheap ones on road, leave when done)
- Activity pack for first flight
- Downloaded movies and shows on tablet and laptop

Other -- Kids

- Water bottles x 2 (1 each x 500ml)
- Handkerchiefs (for allergy)

SHARED KIT

Tech and Connectivity

- Laptops x 3 (1 x Mum, 1 x Dad, 1 x Eldest child) – don't forget your chargers
- Tablets x 1 (just our youngest had a tablet)
- Laptop hub (optional – if need to connect multiple devices to a limited port laptop)
- E-Reader (Kobo) x 2 (we just mixed them up as and when needed – pre loaded with adult and kids books)
- Portable power bank for smaller devices (EG: phone)
- Portable power bank for laptop (Larger and more powerful – needed in case no power supply when working on the road)
- Mobile phones x 3 (2 x Adults & 1 for Kids for photos only)
- Universal travel adaptor x3 (with USB ports)
- Charging cables for all devices (don't go over the top – 1 cable may charge several devices)
- Earphones / headphones (x 4: 1 set each)
- Portable Bluetooth speaker (small)
- SLR Camera + SD Card
- Go Pro camera & accessories
- e-SIM (organise before leaving)
- Camera charging cable

Health and Medical

- Sunscreen
- First Aid bag, which contained:
- Plasters (unbelievable how many we got through with the kids!)
- Bandages
- Tweezers
- Painkillers: adult and child doses (i.e. Pamol)
- Antihistamines
- Rehydration sachets
- Diarrhoea medication
- Antiseptic cream
- Sterile wipes
- Medical scissors
- Safety pins
- Medical tape
- Cotton swabs
- Mini First Aid booklet
- Insect repellent -- kids-safe formula
- Motion sickness tablets
- Any prescription medications (EG: Epi pen with long end date)

Travel Accessories

- Travel washing line
- Sarongs x 3 (has many uses)
- Multi-functional knife
- Cable ties x 10 mixed sizes (came in useful a few times)

- Carabiners x2 (attach things to bags)
- Small Collapsible dining bowls x 2 (we didn't use much but found helpful to avoid plastic and also when some accommodation was very low on crockery)

Other

- Coins from home to share with curious local kids
- Small gifts from home to share with helpful locals or cute local kids (we took some pencils with kiwi birds on them and some small key rings also with kiwi birds on them)
- Passport photos: for visas
- Wet wipes – for sticky moments on the go

OTHER / DON'T FORGET

Pre-Departure Checklist

- Passports valid for 6+ months beyond trip end date
- Visas researched and applied for all countries
- Travel insurance purchased and policy printed
- Vaccinations up to date -- doctor consulted
- International driving permit obtained
- All important documents scanned and saved to cloud
- Home secured -- mail redirected, house sitter arranged, tenant contracted
- Kids school / worldschooling plan in place (download apps / sign up to programs)

Apps to Download Before You Leave

- Google Maps (download offline maps for each country)
- Grab (SE Asia taxi app)
- Google Translate (download language packs offline)
- Wise (if using a Wise card)
- Viber (for international & local calls to landlines)
- WhatsApp (many worldschool groups use WhatsApp to communicate)
- Airbnb / Booking.com / Trip.com
- Triplt (to keep track of all of your bookings)

Things to Buy on the Road (Don't Pack From Home)

Extras that were useful that we picked up on the road:

- Warm layers and colder weather gear when leaving warmer climates (if applicable – all depends on what climates you're passing through)
- Tea towel (may seem odd but we stayed in a lot of places without one)
- Kids clothing as they grow or mess stuff up
- Toiletries in bulk at local supermarkets
- Laundry powder
- Small Plastic Cutlery set – useful to avoid plastic and also needing to cut food on the go

Things we originally packed by ditched

These items that we did originally leave home with but decided to ditch as we weren't using:

- Travel-size magnetic 5 in 1 multi board game: seemed like a great idea and we did play it a bit at the start but kids soon got bored
- Other games hardly used: Spot-it & Top Trumps
- Water purifier tablets (didn't take up much space and were in case of emergency but no emergency happened so binned)
- Micro fibre travel towels: we were so indecisive before we left on these. As a solo backpacker, this was critical in hostels but in Airbnb's, apartments, guesthouse they always have towels so we didn't need them
- Computer mouse – started with two but just didn't use them
- Haki sack – we had ideas of learning a new skill and becoming Haki sack juggling champions. Hardly got used.
- HDMI cable – we thought we would hook laptop up the TV for better viewing but hardly used it and just watched the laptop direct when needed

- Spare batteries – took some but the only thing that actually needed batteries was the computer mice and we ditched them so also ditched the batteries
- Car cigarette lighter USB charger – seemed like a good idea for when we hired a car but turned out ours was broken so clearly we didn't need it anyway (just used power bank instead)
- Head torch – just didn't use it as used phone if need a torch
- Bum bag – didn't get used once (was too small to take all our stuff and we had enough smaller bags/day sacks to choose from that carried all we needed)
- When we moved from hot climates to cooler climates, we just ditched warm out summer clothes and bought the warmer clothes. After 5 months in South East Asia, many of the kids clothes were wrecked already and so bought a jacket and extra fleece for Korea/Japan in Spring.

Our Golden Rule

If you haven't used it in two weeks, leave it behind.

You can buy almost anything, almost anywhere.

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