



Travel Tips

Additional Packing Pointers

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A Novel Holiday UK Travel Tips

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Zippity Doo DO!

Extra zip lock bags are incredibly handy to pack and bring with you, for a multitude of reasons.

According to Rick Steves:

“Bring a variety of sizes. ... they're ideal for packing leftover picnic food, containing wetness, and bagging potential leaks before they happen. The two-gallon jumbo size is handy for packing clothing. Bring extras for the flight home, as they can be hard to find in Europe.”

In addition to being perfect for packing an extra pair of underwear in your carryon, zip bags are wonderful organizers for things such as sales receipts with attached VAT forms, miscellaneous expense receipts, post cards and pamphlets. Basically, the list of stuff you can store in a zip bag is endless!

While zip bags *can* be purchased in the UK, it's far cheaper to buy them in the US (or Canada). And, since empty zip bags can be condensed down to such a light weight, low volume package, there's no reason not to bring extras. Roll up several sizes of empty zip bags and put them into one gallon-sized bag. Roll out the air, zip it, and stuff it in a checked bag.

If you buy a box of jumbo two-gallon zip bags for packing small items of clothing (instead of, or in addition to, things like **Samsonite Space Saver Bags**), roll up the extras for packing.

There's no need to bring extra tiny zip bags, because you'll have plenty of empty ones after using the camera batteries or taking the pills you pack in them.

Please remember that all your carryon liquids and gels must be in 3.4-ounce or smaller containers, and all of these items must fit within a **single, quart-size zip bag**.

Miscellaneous Must-Haves

Many of the following items can be inexpensively purchased at discount department stores such as Walmart or Target. For one-stop-shopping convenience, the items listed with a red-star [★] can also be found in the **Travel Supplies & Gadgets** section of the **Harry Potter Places** (HPP) website **Travel Store**. <http://harrypotterplaces.com/travel-store/>

★Balega Hidden Comfort Socks Tara Bellers swears that she's never suffered a single blister since discovering these socks. “Though I've worn and washed them many times over the years, the first Balega socks I bought are still protecting my feet. Well worth the price!” A variety of sizes and colors are available in the HPP Travel Store. Alternatively, use the store finder on Balega's website to search for a sales source near you. <http://www.balega.com/>

Binoculars The size and expense of binoculars needed vary according to individual interests. CD Miller carries only a small pair of plastic folding binoculars she once received as a party gift. Although they cannot be focused, their 3x18 magnification allows for reading street signs a block away (“saves having to backtrack because I went the wrong direction”). Travelers interested in enjoying close scrutiny of UK flora and fauna should consider the **★Emerson Mini Binoculars** (\$10.24).

Carabiners A carabiner is a metal loop with a spring-loaded gate. Heavy-duty carabiners are used by mountain climbers for quick and easy attachment or detachment of equipment to or from a belt—or, for securing life-lines to anchors that prevent them from falling. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carabiner> The not-for-climbing variety of carabiners are far less expensive, and perfect for a traveler's needs.



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Yes. Clipping stuff to your belt might make you look like a silly tourist. But, carabiners are too helpful to be avoided merely due to appearance concerns. **You are a tourist.** Embrace it!

By using carabiners to attach things such as shopping bags to your belt, you'll be able to **tour with your hands free**, and thus will **avoid losing things** because you had to set them down to take a pic and forgot to pick them up again.

*The HPP Travel Store offers a 6-pack of **Grizzly Grip Utility Carabiners** for \$9.95. However, if you find a smaller and cheaper collection of non-locking, not-for-climbing Carabiners somewhere else, buy it. An individual traveler doesn't need more than 2 or 3 of them.

A Compass is Crucial From CD Miller: "Whether wandering a big city or meandering over the moors, you *must* have a compass. Even the cheap, pin-on, plastic versions work well. I bought mine at Walmart for a couple bucks." From DC Carson: "I have one permanently pinned to my jacket. It's come in handy in the mountains more than once." Below left is Miller's Walmart compass. Below right is the *Keychain Compass available in the HPP Travel Store for *80 cents*, which can easily be attached to the zipper of a jacket or touring bag. [Photos below are not of equal scale and do not represent a size comparison.]



Condensable Zip-Out Travel Bags DC Carson says: "I have one of those nylon bags that zips-out to be quite large. It's great for grocery shopping, or for stowing several bags of stuff purchased during a day's tour, or for packing the few things I'll need on a short train trip. When empty, it folds down to about the size of a coaster! Wouldn't go anywhere without it." Check your local discount department stores to find the most inexpensive varieties. If cheaply found, consider bringing two in case of a blow-out, or an unbridled shopping spree. *The spruce-colored (light navy) Rick Steves Hide-Away Tote featured in the HPP Travel Store is far cheaper than the same totes offered in Steves' Travel Store. You'll not need a blow-out backup for this sturdy bag, but you still might want to purchase and pack two of them.

***Flashlight** Buy a small, inexpensive LED flashlight (aka "torch") to bring on your trek. Keep it in your touring purse, bag, or backpack. Pack one reload of fresh batteries in a tiny zip bag if your torch isn't disposable.

***Insect Repellent Potter Style!** The UK, especially Scotland, is home to malicious little monsters called **midges**. Though some tourist sites insist that a midge bite is less painful than a mosquito bite, a swarm of midges can inflict about 3,000 bites in an hour, and 40,000 midges can land on an unprotected arm over the same period. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/outdoors/articles/midge/> Furthermore, the aftermath of each midge bite is just as itchy and uncomfortable as any individual mosquito bite.

When filming in Scotland, the Harry Potter cast and crew were menaced by midges, and couldn't find an effective repellent. At last, someone told them what the British Army uses, **Avon Skin So Soft!** The original form of Avon Skin So Soft (SSS) credited with repelling midges is the dry oil body spray packaged in green bottles. (The pink SSS bottles don't repel anything.) You'll find an 8-pack of Avon Skin So Soft with Bug Guard individually packaged towelettes in the HPP Travel Store for \$8.84. A cheaper but less convenient option is to buy a bottle of Avon Skin So Soft with Bug Guard, and fill a 3.4-ounce travel bottle with it.

***Laundry Kit and *Tide-To-Go Stick** These items are small, light weight, and vital to minimizing the amount of clothing you pack. Along with a few packets of detergent, the laundry kit includes a sink stopper (something not always found in a UK bathroom) and a suction-cup-anchored laundry line for hanging hand-washed clothes to dry. Consider also packing some ***Travelon Laundry Soap Sheets**.

Paper Clips Put a bunch of them in a tiny zip bag and stick it in a quart- or gallon-sized zip bag. Use that bag for saving **purchase receipts paper-clipped to VAT forms**.

***Rain Poncho** Hooded, full-sized rain ponchos constructed of durable plastic weigh only a few ounces, and—when not removed from their original package—take up barely any room at all. Murphy's Law dictates that being sure to pack one may even *prevent* rain! Since they cost only a couple bucks each, buy several to stow in your checked luggage. Stick one in your touring purse, pouch, or backpack. If you use it, stick a new one in your bag as soon as you return to your lodgings and toss the opened one.

Shower Shoes Cheap, rubber thongs—aka Flip-Flops—are important to personal hygiene and can double as slippers.

***Survival Sewing Repair Kit** Everything you'll need for a variety of sewing or repair jobs on clothing or luggage is in this marvelous kit—a super suggestion offered by DC Carson! It even includes a short roll of brass **wire** and 36 inches of **Duct Tape**.

Most travel-size rolls of duct tape (such as the HPP Travel Store item mentioned next) come in packages of two, 4-foot or 50-inch rolls. If you're happy with 36 inches of duct tape you'll not need to buy it separately, unless you're restocking your kit.

Please Note: Because this kit includes a "Military Approved Derma Safe Knife" (a razor blade that folds up into plastic handle for safe storage), it must be **packed in your checked baggage**.

***Travel Rolls of Duct Tape** Both Rick Steves and Reid Bramblett identify duct tape as being a vital item to pack. Obviously, it comes in handy for any number of repair-related reasons. But, here's a use many may not know about: If you've suffered blistered feet during holiday walking in the past, **protect the previously blistered areas with small sections of duct tape *before* you go out walking.** It's important that the tape is applied smoothly—no wrinkles!

Please Note: Some travelers suggest making your own, less expensive, travel rolls of duct tape by winding duct tape from a large roll onto a golf pencil or old credit card. However, some who've done that report that the rewound duct tape ends up sticking to itself, becoming difficult (if not impossible) to use. A Novel Holiday authors and contributors prefer spending a couple extra bucks to be sure that the travel duct tape we pack will quickly and conveniently save us in times of need.

***A Whistle** Especially when meandering o'er moors or hiking in the highlands, you need to have a whistle with you. The universal signal for "I need help," is three, sharp and equally quick whistle blasts. Rest, then repeat the three blast pattern.

Visit the **Travel Supplies & Gadgets** section of the Harry Potter Places website Travel Store to see other handy items we have discovered.

Please Note: The products seen in the **Similar Items** list at the far left were not put there by A Novel Holiday authors or contributors. That section is automatically generated by **Amazon.com**. But, if something looks interesting, check it out.