

# Packing Pointers

# Travel Documents & Baggage ID

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# A Novel Holiday Packing Pointers

## Travel Documents and Baggage ID

Keep Original Copies of Important Documents on Your Person at All Times, and *Pack* Photocopies of Them

Savvy sojourners know to stash photocopies of all important identification documents somewhere within their luggage. This practice assists with obtaining replacements if any of your original documents become lost or stolen while traveling abroad.

We suggest that you print several sets of important ID document copies, so that one set can be stashed within *each* item of checked luggage, as well as within *each* carryon bag. That way, no matter which of your bags come up missing, you'll always have a stashed set of document copies.

Because these documents usually are valid for several years, their photocopies can be left in your bags. You'll not have to recreate, reprint, and re-stash them each time you travel.



**Please Note:** Be sure to **mark** each important ID document copy with a statement such as “**Copy for Travel Purposes**” in a place that doesn’t obscure vital information, but prevents someone from using the copy to create false IDs.

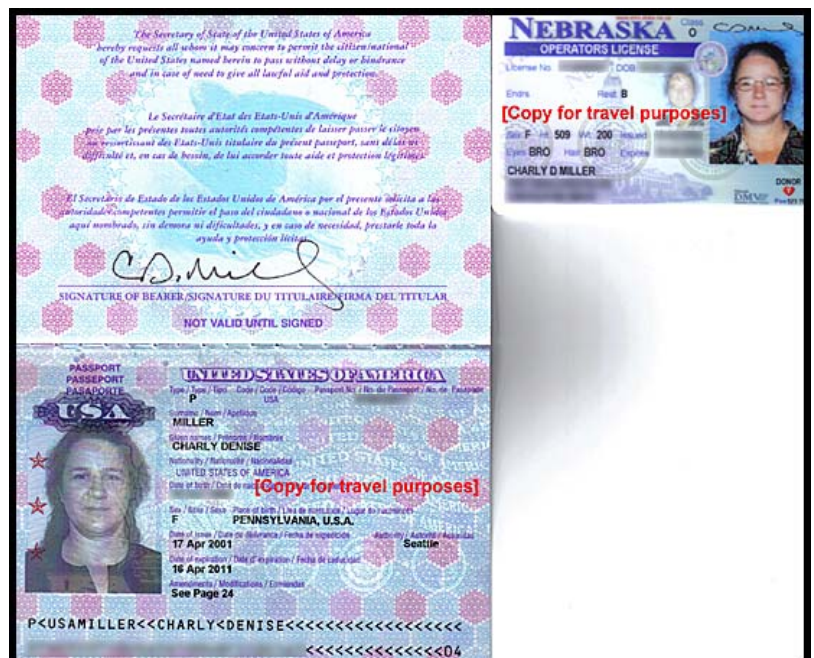
Whether neatly typed on a scanned jpg file before printing, or scrawled on a printed photocopy with a permanent marker, the trick is to interrupt water marks, seals or emblems, so that your statement cannot be removed without destroying the copy’s legitimate image.

### Carry at Least TWO Photo IDs With You

Your passport will be one of them.

A driver’s license works well as the other. If you don’t have a driver’s license, obtain another form of Photo ID, such as a State-issued ID card.

Include marked copies of both photo IDs in your document stash.



## Important Baggage Identification Practices

### Baggage ID Tags

All airlines dutifully instruct travelers to attach baggage ID tags to the handles of checked bags. They even provide elastic-attached paper tags for this purpose. Unfortunately, few airlines ever advise travelers to **tag the bags they carry on**, nor do they advise travelers how to **ensure that checked or carry on bags retain identification information**.

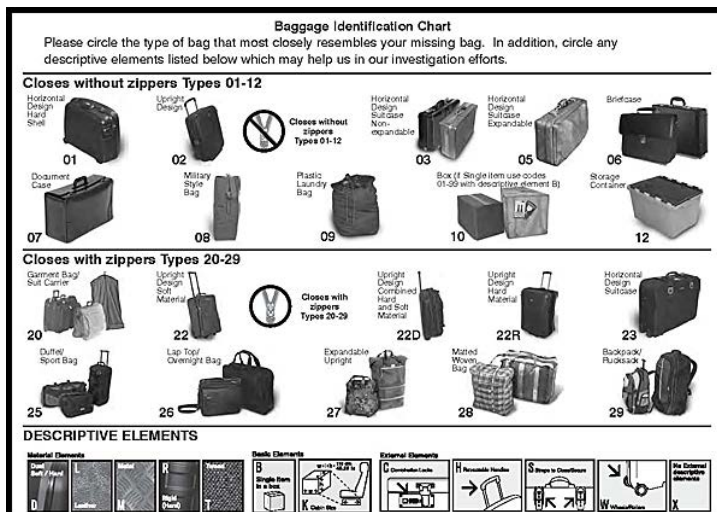
### Baggage ID Practices Important For Traveling to the UK—or Anywhere:

- Put your **name and UK cell phone number** on each external baggage tag.
- Do **not** put your **home address or home phone number** on your external tag when **heading to the UK**. You're not going home—you don't want your bags sent back there!

Instead, put the address and phone number of your **first UK destination's lodging** on your external tags, so that you can be contacted *there* (or your bags delivered *there*) if one or more of your bags is lost while enroute to the UK.

- If you'll be flying to other locations during your holiday, repeat the steps above for **each flight**, listing the address and phone number of your **next UK destination's lodging** on that tag.
- **Stash a copy of your baggage tag information INSIDE each piece of baggage**. If your external tag gets ripped off—something that *can* happen, whether the tag is paper *or* leather—having baggage information stashed inside is invaluable to being reunited with it. The internal baggage info document should include all your travel dates and first-lodgings-after-a-flight contact information, as well as your **home address and phone number**.
- **Tag ALL CARRYON items in the same way!** After all, carryon items can be lost or stolen almost as easily as checked baggage. Without accurate information attached to (and within) carryon items, airline personnel may not be able to contact you when they're found.
- The only time you should put your **home address and home phone number** on your *external* baggage tags (for both checked and carryon baggage), is when you are **on your way home**.

### Pack Photos of Your Checked Bags and Carryon Items



Filling out a claim for lost luggage is a **nightmare**, for a variety of reasons in addition to the fact that something you need has been lost or stolen.

While some airlines offer photos of standard luggage types to assist in filling out a lost luggage claim (such as **United Airline's Baggage Identification Chart** at left), generic pix really *aren't* that helpful.

Take photos of *all* the bags and carryon items you travel with, whether or not you're taking all of them to the UK. Paste each of those pix in a document file, noting each item's dimensions. (Include Model Numbers if pertinent.)

Print several copies of your travel baggage photo page and stash one in each bag. This practice is invaluable if something comes up missing. You just give your photo page to the lost luggage rep and have them photocopy it.

**Please Note:** When filing a lost baggage claim, be sure to mention that your baggage ID info is also stashed *inside* the lost item!

Like identification documents, your luggage doesn't change that often. So your stashed pic page can remain in your bags for future trips.



### Prescription Medication Information

Rick Steves promotes packing prescription medications in their original containers, labeled with legible Rx identification and replacement information. If you take more than a couple Rx drugs, however, packing each container can take up a ton of room. Additionally, if the pills or capsules within each original container aren't cushioned against travel motion, they may become damaged during travel. [Pill packing pointers are provided in the Pill Packing Blog entry.]



Instead, we suggest carrying the original copy of your most recent Tax Receipt for each Rx drug on your person, and packing copies of them with your other stashed documents.

Each Rx tax receipt contains all the information that Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) personnel may want to see, as well as all information vital to replacing your medication if it becomes lost or damaged.

**\*Insulin-dependent (diabetic) travelers**, or those who require other forms of injectable Rx medication, should also bring a signed physician's statement—written on a **prescription pad page**—attesting to your need for carrying syringes with **needles**. TSA personnel consider these items to be potentially dangerous, and Rx receipts bearing your name aren't commonly pasted on syringe packages.

## Additional Stuff to Stash—and Your Stash Checklist

Below is a checklist of **all** the important information and documents that should be stashed in each of your checked and carryon bags, beginning with those we just described. Everything on the checklist will **fit into a single envelope** that can be **hidden in the lining** of any-sized bag, especially if related information is printed on the front and back of each page.

### Stash Checklist

- **Photocopies of all important identification documents.**
- **Your interior baggage information page.**

The one that includes your UK cell phone number, *all* your travel dates and first-lodgings-after-a-flight contact information, *as well as* your home address and phone number.
- **Your baggage photos and dimensions information page.**
- **Copies of your prescription medication tax receipts** (and Doctor's syringe note if needed).
- **Your Travelers Checks List.**

If you'll be purchasing Travelers Checks, put a copy of the check numbers (and denominations) list in each stash envelope. If you include a check in each envelope, note each hidden check number's location.
- **Stash a list of all the Credit Cards you'll be traveling with.**
  - ◆ Note the **account number for each credit card**, but *not* its expiration date or verification number (the 3 numbers near the signature strip on back, or the 4 numbers on the front of an American Express card).
  - ◆ Note the **toll-free phone number** found on the back of each card, in case you need to *cancel* a stolen or lost credit card while abroad.
- Stash a page containing **the model and serial numbers (with photos)** of any expensive personal belongings you travel with—such as cameras, laptop computers, and the like.