When Traveling: 5 Things to Bring; 5 Things to Leave Behind

Career Development

he movie *Up in the Air*, starring George Clooney, showed some realities of business travel and navigating airport labyrinths. When done correctly, it's almost an art to be mastered. When done incorrectly (think Anna Kendrick's lopsided suitcase and full size, fluffy pillow) it can just be a really, really huge pain.

We've compiled some tips that can refresh the most savvy traveler, and clue in any GC traveler novice on how to avoid those pitfalls. So buckle up, note the exits, and have a happy journey.

TAKE:

Snacks. Healthy ones. And this is especially important if you have any kinds of food allergies. You never know when airport and hotel concessions may be closed, a long flight delay may leave you stranded, or the types of snacks you want may be unavailable.Think fruit, crackers, energy bars, carrot sticks, anything portable that will keep and will tide you over until the next client breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

LEAVE:

Any kind of liquid. Most flights allow you to bring 50-100ML on board, which is about one to three and a half ounces. When in doubt, leave it behind or put it in your checked luggage. If you must bring something liquidy in flight, purchase TSA compliant travel containers (available at most drugstores) and only take what you need.

TAKE:

Your prescribed medications. Include extra doses, even if you plan to just be gone for the day. A good rule of thumb is to include an extra dose for each hour of time change you'll be experiencing. In case of any last minute unexpected delays, or passenger bumps, you won't have to worry about calling in emergency prescription refills, which may be especially difficult in overseas locations.

LEAVE:

Cigarettes. If you're a smoker, think about bringing nicotine patches to hold you over on the flight. The inconvenience of carrying all the paraphernalia that goes with smoking isn't worth the possible delays during security checks, not to mention cramped and poorly ventilated airport smoking lounges. Consider purchasing a pack of cigarettes when you get to your destination, if need be.

TAKE:

Any work documents in a scanned PDF format — saved to your flash drive if necessary. This will save you the hassle of losing or ruining any important papers, and extra weight in your luggage. You can always find sources to print out anything you need when you get to your destination.

LEAVE:

Non- functional luggage. If you know you'll be traveling for work frequently, invest in a few pieces that will be easy and portable enough to store in small spaces, keep everything organized, and be durable enough to withstand being thrown onto luggage carousels or crammed under a seat. Start with a good carry on, and a multi-use shoulder or messenger bag with room enough for a laptop and separate compartments to store keys, loose change, and your smartphone. Leave the prettier luggage for your vacations and weekend trips.

TAKE:

Pens and copies of your passport identification page. It's amazing how much hassle you can save yourself by tossing a couple spare pens in your bag, for anything that you may need to fill out at the airport (luggage tags) or in flight (landing cards.) Also when traveling overseas, bring copies of your passport identification page that you've scanned and saved to a flash drive, or emailed to yourself. In case the inevitable happens and you lose your passport, having a copy can save you time during the process of applying for an expedited one.

LEAVE:

Your friendliness. Just kidding. But all joking aside, bring a sense of awareness when you're in an airport, especially if you're in foreign territory or an unfamiliar place. Always keep an eye on your luggage, be cognizant of your surroundings, and follow your instincts. If something or someone seems off, it probably is. Don't risk your safety for the sake of seeming impolite.

TAKE:

Grace. This may seem like a contradiction to leaving behind friendliness. But airports are highly stressful environments. People are nervous, frustrated, in various states of jet lag, and generally not in a Zen mindset. Don't add to the atmosphere by taking your anger or irritation out on ticket agents or airport personnel. Stay calm, and remember that a little graciousness can go a long way. When airport staff decides on who to upgrade, or who to put first on a plane at the onset of bad weather and canceled flights he/she is going to remember the traveler who treated them kindly.

LEAVE:

Any kind of facial 'misters' that claim to keep your skin from getting dried out. They take up room in your luggage and can actually leave your skin more dehydrated. Stick to drinking lots of water in flight, avoiding too much salt, and bringing a good quality, fragrance free moisturizer in your hand luggage. In a travel safe size, of course.

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