



distant francophile

For when France seems too far away...



How To Avoid The Ultimate Packing Mistake

First, Know Your Enemy

Can you guess what I consider to be the ultimate packing mistake? The thing that sees travellers leaving home with way too much baggage?

'What is it ', I hear you say?

It's the inability to make a decision.

Being unable to decide on what you are going to wear while you are away makes packing extremely difficult. It sees travellers lugging the extra weight of clothes they won't wear. And it only continues the pain – eventually the 'what will I wear' decision has to be made.

You don't have to do too much digging to understand that this overpacking comes from fear based thinking. The words 'what if' seem to feature prominently when it comes to overpacking.

- What if everyone else says they're wearing high heels? What if I don't fit in?
- What if it's hotter/colder/wetter than I expect?
- What if I'm uncomfortable?
- What if I feel too skinny/fat/short/tall?
- What if I change my mind?

The stories we tell ourselves can be debilitating.

So – rather than making a decision and sticking to it – we provide ourselves with the insurance that comes with heaps of options. And overpack as a consequence.

So how do you overcome these obstacles and make packing decisions you never regret?

Read on my friend...

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One: Develop A Signature Style That Works For You

This is the best advice I can offer to help overcome packing fears. Once you are comfortable with your look, and you fill your wardrobe with clothes that you not only love but that look fabulous on you, choosing what to pack becomes so much easier. Having confidence that your signature style looks good also means that you are more likely to stop comparing yourself to others. Comparison is a killer when it comes to fun, happiness and feeling content with your choices.

Two: Never Pack An Item That You Wouldn't Wear At Home

This tip is super simple, yet so many of us forget to employ it. If you don't wear it in your day to day life, it's extremely unlikely that you will want to wear it in France. Or anywhere else for that matter! I fell into this trap way too often on our early trips to France. I packed some unwise choices, thinking they would tick all of the comfort boxes. But, unsurprisingly, I didn't like them any more when I was on vacation than I did when I was at home.

Three: Don't Take Dressing Too Seriously

Yes, I know everyone wants to look their best, which is an excellent thing. But at the end of the day we are talking about getting dressed and in reality there is not too much you can muck up. Remember that everyone is the star of their own movie and that people are generally thinking more about themselves than they are about you. Wear what you feel comfortable and confident in and it is unlikely that you will go wrong.

Four: Remember - The Stores Will Remain Open

Unless you're travelling to somewhere extremely remote, you'll usually have the chance to buy something new, if required. This means that if you misread the dress code or you get a last minute invite to a black-tie event (as happened to me once) – you can do a little shopping. I promise you that the need to do this doesn't come up that often. And remembering that you can always buy something can save you from feeling like a pack horse as you trudge through the airport.