

Volume 09, Issue 13: Organized Travel

This week I was working on an article titled “*Just Show Up*”, but a few things have happened in my personal space in the last 24 hours I decided to change trajectory for this week, and maybe the next two weeks to bring forth those thoughts whilst still fresh in my mind. What I want publish starting next week was birthed in a conversation I had first with daughter and later with my son yesterday when I made my first call home after arriving at my current location. The point came alive during my quiet time this morning as I started to jot down my take home from a 7 days’ YouVersion Bible study plan I had just completed.

As writing about that was settling in my mind, my trajectory changed again shortly after as I was getting ready to go to the gym when I noticed I was missing some gym gear. Being a highly organized person, I quickly picked up my phone to make a new reference list – a travel packing list. I usually make a temporal ‘*what to remember to pack*’ list a few days before travelling, but this trip was a bit rushed so I didn’t get to go through the motions this time. I started the packing process 3 days before the trip – got the suitcase out and started putting in it items as they came to mind over time. But since I wasn’t working with a list, I missed a few things by the time I closed the bags to hit the road. That’s the problem of relying on our brains to store information as we saw in last week’s post.

So, as I stood perplexed in front of my wardrobe to get dressed for the gym this morning, I picked up my phone to quickly put together a travel packing list to make sure I don’t run into the same dilemma on my future travels. Although I am not a frequent traveler, I prefer to have access to everything I use like I do in my home environment, so I tend to pack large. This being just a 4 days’ trip, I started with a small suitcase before I realized it was a joke and switched to a standard medium-sized suitcase. Let’s go to the list I came up with this morning that would make a travel packing list for highly organized people that we could all benefit from.

- ***Hand luggage essentials***

Before coming on this trip I visited my office’s security advisor’s desk to bring me upto speed on security and culture protocol for traveling to Hargeisa. One of the things he advised me to bring with me is a hand sanitizer to clean potential germs off my hands at airport screening points. I found this quite interesting for a mention, but he was right. Other hand luggage essentials on my list are hand cream, lip gloss, sun hat and sun glasses - as you may get off the airport or

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Written by Lillian Chebosi
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train station to a scorching hot sun, rain coat - although most airlines would give you one if its raining when you land, dental floss - if you are not friendly with toothpicks, pocket tissue - should you need to blow your nose, notebook and pen, or just your phone to jot down things to remember, ideas or thoughts that come to mind, reading material - unless you have purposed to use your travel and waiting time as zoning out time, and last but not least, ankle socks for getting through airport security gates where you have to remove your shoes and walk on dirty carpet.

- ***Equipment bag – part of hand luggage***

When travelling for work, I like to keep my slim backpack laptop bag light with just my laptop, planner/notepad and laptop charger which sits in its special storage bag to keep it in place. With like-purpose items first in their own mini bags, the contents of my equipment bag include a book, head phones, travelling chargers and cables, power banks, iPod for my recorded declarations and music, quiet time notebook for morning pages, iPad – the platform where I organize my life, do Bible study, read and write, and last but certainly not least, phone for communication and socialization with family and friends.

- ***Refreshments***

Being at a point where I have experimented and seen what happens to my body when I eat certain things, I like to limit my intake of processed foods as much as possible. Depending on the length of a flight, they may serve lunch/dinner and/or a snack, most of which come with processed carbs and something sweet for dessert and a drink. Although I enjoy the chicken or beef servings for lunch, I prefer to bring along my in-flight pie or wrap to substitute the processed carbs. The thing is, by the time that food comes around you will be ready to eat, because you probably left home at least 3 hours prior to your departure time to be at the airport 2 hours before takeoff for an international flight, and not significantly later for a domestic flight. So, to not fall victim to airport snacks and indulge in the in-flight processed carbs, I bring along my own snacks. Its also good to keep your water bottle with you, the one you empty before checking in as you will need it to store the water you are served on the plane if you know it's not good to take water right after your meal. And lastly, this may not be of interest to you but to limit my meals at the hotel to breakfast and dinner, I recently started to carry frozen smoothie packets for short trips when I know I will find a fridge in my hotel room. I am good with hotel breakfast as there are always a variety of healthy delicious options to choose from, but when it comes to lunch and dinner, I know the effect those have on my waistline if I overindulge. A glass of homemade smoothie for lunch fills me up enough to not require a big serving at dinner. Besides, I didn't like how full I used to feel all day when I went for full board accommodation option. Managing portions at a hotel can be real challenge for some of us if you know what I mean.

- ***Accompanying accessories***

In addition to your paired outfits, you should remember to pack the accompanying accessories for each. These include just belts and jewelry for simple dressers like myself. I have once ended up with a tuck-in trouser outfit without its accompanying belt, quite odd. Talking of belts, when dealing with young people's grooming etiquette, we need to sensitize them that a belt is an accessory, not something meant to keep an over-sized trouser from falling off. Try and picture the scene of a young man at an airport's security gate when he has to take off his belt at the screening point and his trouser falls off to his feet before he can grab a hold of it with all the other things he has to juggle. It's quite a scene to hold off bursting in laughter.

- ***Exercise gear***

My main form of exercise is walking. When home, I walk out in nature for about an hour, then work out in the gym for 30 minutes or so, 5 times a week and I like to keep this up when I travel. Depending on the location, I may have my walks on the treadmill. My just developed exercise gear list to pack for travel includes gym clothes, gym undergarments, gym gloves and walking shoes. Remember to include socks for your gym shoes. Walking shoes don't require socks. Most people walk in gym shoes but I prefer to walk in true walking shoes as they are much lighter and built for comfort for long walks. When home, I change into gym shoes after my walk. When I travel, I usually pack just my walking shoes for space management as I can use them for both walking and a brief gym workout.

- ***Toilet bag essentials***

Fancy hotels provide you with lotion, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, shower cap, earbuds, safety pins, a sewing kit, comb, shoe shiner and a nail file, but some hotels don't, so be sure to bring your own based on your needs just in case you find your room ill-equipped. Include a nail cutter to clip off a painful side of the nail cuticle. I remember once frantically searching for a nail cutter at a hotel's front desk to no avail and vowed to always bring my own on future trips. This being my first time to travel here, my office's human resources manager advised me to carry a towel and shower gel. Some hotels may not have trustworthy looking towels, so you want to be sure to have your own. Some places like Hargeisa have hard water, so I brought along my soap. Basic soap will hardly lather in hard water. You also need to pack face towels as not all hotels will adorn your bathroom with those for your baths and showers. Toothpaste is a must have, nobody gives you that, at least not a real one. A few hotels may give you a basic toothbrush, but just bring your own. Don't forget your roll on and perfume to be sure you smell

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just right. I also carry flip ons for use in the room in case the hotel doesn't provide. For beach travel, I carry water shoes or fitted crocs for walking on the beach and in the ocean as you never know what you are stepping on in the ocean.

- ***Swimming bag essentials***

For this, I have a prepacked swimming bag in my wardrobe that I just pick and throw into my suitcase when packing. Its contents include swimming costumes, goggles, swimming caps and two sets of by-the-pool wear that ladies use over their costumes for decency and style when not in the water. You must have noticed by now that most of these items are at least two for each, going by the mantra two is one and one is none as we saw in last week's post.

- ***Other basics***

We don't have to mention undergarments and pajamas, as well as a set of evening wear so you don't show up for dinner in the clothes you had on all day. Include socks on your list for use with your closed shoes, especially for men, and certainly for ladies too if you are packing sports shoes for your trip. If you don't keep your shoes with laces on them after cleaning, remember to look out for that while packing. You absolutely must have your house keys on your list as you don't want to have locked yourself out of the house when you return at a time when no one is home. Finally and most importantly, your traveling documents. I have a small traveling documents' wallet that holds my passport, yellow fever card, tickets, visa copies and boarding passes as relevant. I slip it in the side pocket of my hand luggage for ease of access on the queues.

I am glad to have my travel packing list in place, customize your list based on your needs and preferences and travel smart.

For His Glory,

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