



Pack Your Family's Bag

Prepare for the unexpected when you're packing for a family vacation. What if your luggage lands in Montreal and you're in Monterrey? Or you have to make an emergency overnight stop? Organizer Ann Sullivan helps you get ready with a carry-on, carry-all overnight bag filled with everything your family will need.



Essentials

Make a list of must-haves. That is, not items your family may want (like your tween's straightening iron) but items you can't do without for the night: medications, alarm clock, first aid kit, bathing suits, pj's and a spare pair of underwear per family member.

Entertainment

Bring along little gifts to keep your kids happy and relieve boredom: a pretty journal, a Fisher-Price Doodle Pro or *Lithgow Paloozas!: Boredom Blasters Travel Edition* from Running Press.

Mini musts

Pack a waterproof cosmetics bag with travel-size versions of toiletries your family uses daily. Place it on the top of the bag or in a side pocket—that way you don't have to dig around for it.

Sustenance

Traveling with children is a lot easier if you don't have to rely on the airline for snacks. Stock up on crackers, bottled water and juice boxes. Gum can help prevent getting an earache on landing.

● **Assess:** Packing smart takes planning—don't make it up as you go or rely on generic lists from the Internet. The most common mistake is overpacking. Carry the bag around the house when you're done packing. It will inspire you to simplify. ● **Sort:** Place like items together, such as everyone's pajamas. This way you can all get ready for bed at the same time. ● **Activate:** The best bag for the job has the following features: light weight, durability, several compartments or pockets and a padded shoulder strap. This medium Wide-Mouth Duffel by L.L.Bean (www.llbean.com) fits the bill. ● **Preserve:** Make a copy of your packing list and stash it in your carry-on bag in order to keep track of all the items you have with you while on the road. Take along plenty of plastic storage bags for dirty laundry. See *Buyer's Guide*, page 94, for more information.