

organize today!

Ideas and tips to help you live
an organized, simpler life at work and home

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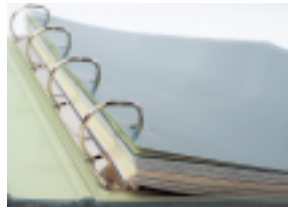
Planning an Organized Vacation

Everyone needs some rest and relaxation now and then, but sometimes the planning, packing, and prepping leave you more stressed out than if you had just stayed home!

No need to fear — this issue of *Organize Today* will help you plan an organized vacation, whether it's a quick weekend getaway or a month-long European vacation.

From helpful packing tips to keeping kids (and grown-ups) happy on a long journey, you'll learn how to leave home happy — not harried. Bon voyage!

Perfect planning



Perfect vacations rarely happen without some thoughtful planning. While not always as exciting as a spur-of-the-moment getaway, a well-thought-out trip may be less likely to deliver stress and

frustration. To start the vacation planning process, compile all your trip details in a 3-ring binder or a spiral notebook plus a 2-pocket folder. Whether you're in the early planning stages or just days away from your trip, gather these items so they're at your fingertips when you need them.

- your travel agent's phone number and email address
- airline or train reservation information, plus phone numbers and website addresses (to check in online or verify on-time status)
- car rental agency phone numbers, coupons, and confirmation numbers
- hotel brochures, phone and confirmation numbers
- maps of the area you're traveling to, as well as maps and directions to help you get there
- brochures of interesting places to visit on the way or upon arrival at your destination (museums, state parks, theme parks, historic sites, etc.)
- complete itinerary of your trip

Also, to keep your home tidy in the days or weeks leading up to the trip, dedicate *one* central location (such as a laundry basket tucked away in a closet or a suitcase stashed in the laundry room) for take-along items. As you encounter things that must be packed (such as travel books and beach towels), toss them in and forget about them until packing day.

Pack it up

How — and how *much* — you pack can greatly impact your comfort level while on vacation. Follow these tips as you pack your bags.

- Pack light. When in doubt, leave it out! Adopt a European standard for fashion by wearing your favorite things multiple times while on vacation. You can hand-wash in the hotel sink if necessary. No one ever wishes they had brought *more* stuff on vacation! (But you might consider bringing an empty duffel bag or backpack to cart home souvenirs.)
- If you're flying, consider taking only a carry-on to save time and frustration upon arrival. If you're checking luggage, make sure to pack essentials (change of clothing, bathing suit, medications, toiletries, snacks) in a carry-on bag, just in case you're separated from your checked bags.
- Invest in some handy travel accessories, such as a mini-clothesline, "compression sacs" to compress your clean or dirty clothes, sleep mask, ear plugs, and inflatable neck rest.
- Know the current airline carry-on restrictions by visiting www.faa.gov/passengers before you go.
- Clean out your wallet before you leave. Take only the base essentials, such as two major credit cards, ATM card, your driver's license or state ID, passport (if traveling abroad), health and car insurance cards, and cash or traveler's checks. Leave all other cards at home. (You can't lose them if you don't bring them!)
- Make a photocopy of the front and back of your wallet essentials and stash it in your suitcase or leave it with a trusted friend or relative back home. If you should lose your wallet, you can more easily get replacements. Also, leave a copy of your itinerary in your suitcase in case you misplace your original.

Home safe home



Take these simple precautions to keep your home safe while you're away.

- Don't put out the "we're not home" sign — install timers on lights and a radio or television so your home looks and sounds lived in.
- Let trusted neighbors know how long you'll be gone and how to reach you in an emergency. Ask them to keep a watchful eye on your place. Have them collect your mail and newspapers, or suspend delivery until you return. Perhaps they could park their cars in your driveway occasionally. In snowy climates, ask them to shovel your walk and driveway.
- Remove home address and phone numbers from your luggage tags and add your cell-phone number instead, in case an unscrupulous baggage handler gets any shady ideas.
- Lock up and hide your valuables. Keep some shades *partially* closed to keep expensive items (such as your big-screen TV) out of view. (But don't completely close all window coverings, or it will be obvious that no one is home.)
- Set the thermostat to an energy-saving level. Unplug most appliances to save electricity.
- Remove all perishable items from your refrigerator, and take out the trash so you don't return to unpleasant odors.
- It may seem obvious, but don't forget to lock all doors and windows. If you leave a vehicle in the driveway, be sure to remove any garage door openers.

Packing list

Use this packing checklist as you gather clothing, toiletries, carry-on necessities, and more for your next trip. It may be helpful to make photocopies of this list before you start checking, so you can use it each time you pack. You may want to make a separate list for each member of your family. At the end of each trip, review your packing list and cross off any items that you found you didn't really need to bring.



CLOTHING

- short-sleeved shirts
- long-sleeved shirts
- sweater/sweatshirt
- pants - dressy
- pants - casual
- pants - jeans
- shorts
- capri pants
- skirt/dress
- suit/dressy clothing/ties
- swim suit/cover-up/goggles
- underwear/socks
- shoes - dressy
- shoes - casual
- sleepwear
- work-out clothing/sweatsuit
- jacket/rain poncho/umbrella
- beach hat/baseball hat/flip-flops
- accessories/jewelry
- _____
- _____
- _____

TOILETRIES

- shampoo/conditioner/soap
- deodorant
- lotion/lip balm/make-up
- toothbrush/paste/floss
- shaving equipment
- personal hygiene products
- nail file/clipper/polish
- comb/brush/hair dryer
- laundry detergent/spot remover pen
- first aid kit
- glasses, contact lens, sunglasses
- prescription medications

- sunscreen/insect repellent
- electrical adapter (if overseas)
- _____
- _____
- _____

FOR CARRY-ON

- wallet/passport/cash/traveler's checks/money belt
- reservation confirmations/tickets
- itinerary/maps/guidebooks
- travel ear plugs, sleep mask, neckrest, pillow
- books/magazines/travel games/laptop
- camera/film/batteries/memory card/tripod
- MP3 player/CD player
- cell phone and charger
- snacks/gum
- notepad/pens/stamps/address book/journal
- _____
- _____
- _____

OTHER LITTLE NECESSITIES

- pillowcase (for dirty laundry)
- antibacterial wipes
- extra zip-top bags
- beach bag/towels/beach toys
- alarm clock/small flashlight/candle
- _____
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Happy travels with children

Vacations with children are wonderful memory-makers. Some thoughtful planning will make them — and you — happy campers (so to speak).



- Help kids pack their very own backpack full of favorite books/magazines, toys, snacks, activity or coloring books, hand-held games, a change of clothing, and other comfort items.
- Bring some surprise items as well. Gift wrap some dollar store trinkets and hand them out at predetermined intervals, such as when you enter a new state or every two hours. A disposable camera will delight a preschooler. A frisbee or jump rope will inject some exercise into roadside stops.
- A small travel journal or notebook can bring hours of entertainment and education for kids of all ages. Include a new package of colored pencils or gel pens, stickers, and other fun items.
- Don't depend upon the airlines for food service. Pack your own to ward off major melt-downs. Granola bars, mini carrots, juice boxes, bagels, dried fruit, apples, and goldfish crackers are great for the whole family.
- Books on tape or CD can provide quiet time. Rent them at your local library before you go. Consider bringing a portable DVD player for long trips.
- Bone up on some travel games if you're traveling by car. There are tons of inspirational ideas on the internet. Just search for "travel games." Remember how much fun the license plate game was when you were a child? It's still fun today!