

One, Two, Three Luggage Advice

by Debra Asberry

LUGGAGE is a subject I re-visited recently as my suitcases of 15 years ago were starting to show too much age, and were being held together by safety-pins in one case! There are three things I think about when purchasing luggage: 1. Ease of use; 2. Size; and; 3. Recognize-ability (okay, maybe not exactly a word but you get the idea).



- 1. Ease of use:** Make sure the suitcase is light before putting in stuff. Weight alone tends to favor nylon (or some other cloth-type material) over hard sided luggage. Some of the newer suitcases may have all sorts of neat stuff, but they weigh a lot before you even put your clothes into them. Look at the wheels. It's become vogue to have the wheels that turn in 100 different directions, but my experience with them has been negative. They never want to point in the direction you want to go without a bit of prodding, and who has time when you're on the move.
- 2. Size:** I recommend that you buy two suitcases, one that is small enough to fit in the overhead (which is perfect for trips 1-5 days in length) and the next size up for longer trips. Anything bigger means you have to lug it around, and trust me, after several days of being responsible for a huge suitcase, you'll wish for a small one and less clothes. Consider the new suitcases that expand. Always pack for your trip with some room for expansion. Then as you travel and purchase things, you'll have room for them. I also always pack a small nylon bag that I can use as a carry-on on the return flight should my purchases exceed my luggage capacity.
- 3. Recognize-ability:** The balance here is to find a color that you don't normally see on the carousel, but that doesn't stand out too much as you leave the luggage carousel. That rules out all the bright colors that seem to be currently popular. Black is always an option, but then you'll have to put a tag or other marking on the suitcase so you can recognize it on the baggage carousel. My recent suitcase purchase was a deep green.

What I pay the least attention to is who the suitcase is made by, and made of. It has been my experience that spending a lot of money on a suitcase is the fastest way I know for the airlines to prove how quickly they can tear it up, severely scratch/dent it or lose it. All of my suitcases have been nylon or one kind or another, and every one of them have been eventually damaged by the airlines. The lesson here is to buy a suitcase that does what you need it to do, but skip the designer stuff. Anyone who travels a lot should expect to have to replace their suitcase every 5-7 years because of the wear and tear they receive. Remember that as you are looking at suitcases and it will temper your urge to buy Gucci. ❖