

How to Pack Carry-On for >3 Weeks in Europe

A Real-Life Packing List for Families Traveling With Kids

26 Days • 5+ Cities • UK, France & Spain • Carry-On Only

Planning a Europe trip and wondering if carry-on only is even realistic? What about if you have kids, what about then?

We traveled for 26 days across Scotland, England, France, and Spain with a 6-year-old and a 3-year-old and packed everything into carry-ons.

This guide shows you:

- Exactly what we packed
- How we layered for multiple climates
- What made travel smoother
- What we'd adjust next time

Let's simplify your packing so that you can travel more...together!



Jordan Ashley



Fantastical
VACATIONS
by Jordan Ashley

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LUGGAGE & ORGANIZATION

- Carry-on suitcase (airline compliant)- [here is the one we use](#)
- Personal item backpack
- Packing cubes | Compression packing cubes or vacuum compression bags
- Laundry bag (washable, smell-resistant)
- Laundry detergent sheets
- Folding travel hanger
- Shoe bag or dirty laundry bag
- Small daypack for excursions
- Stroller (lightweight, travel-friendly, ideally fits in overhead compartment)
- Luggage tags
- AirTags or tracking devices (optional but recommended)
- Travel umbrella

ADULT CLOTHING (Layered Capsule Wardrobe)

- 1 jeans
- 2 skirts
- 1 leggings
- 1 biker short
- 5 dresses (can dress up or down/layer)
- 6-8 tops (mix of short sleeve and long sleeve)
- 2 sweater or cardigan
- 1 waterproof layer i.e. trench coat
- 1 pair waterproof walking shoes
- 1 additional comfortable shoe option (sandals)
- Undergarments ~10-14
- Socks (5-7)
- Sleepwear
- Swimsuit
- Light scarf or button up shirt (cathedral coverage + warmth + fashion)
- Minimal jewelry



KIDS PACKING LIST (Per Child)

- 8-10 pants
- 7 short sleeve shirts
- 3 long sleeve shirts
- 7 dresses
- 1 jumper
- Sweatshirt
- Rain jacket
- 1 pair tights
- 1 bathing suit

Extras:

- Extra underwear + socks (intentionally overpacked)
- Character outfits (Hogwarts robes for themed experiences)
- Layering was key. Everything mixed and matched.

TECH & POWER

- Universal travel adapter (UK + EU compatible)
- Power strip compatible with Europe + UK
- Portable power banks
- Charging cables
- Tech organizer pouch
- Tablet devices
- Foldable headphones
- Camera or phone accessories/chargers (I love the ease of the gopro but I also brought my mirrorless)
- Portable WiFi device (optional)
- Sound machine
- e-sim
- download the best apps for travel
- download the google translate for the languages you will need on your trip
- download the google maps of the cities you will be in



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DOCUMENTS & MONEY

- Passports
- Passport holder
- Driver's license
- International driving permit (if renting car)
- Travel insurance information
- Flight confirmations
- Hotel confirmations
- Train tickets or other pre-purchased experience tickets if you have them
- Credit cards | notify banks before travel and ensure you are bringing the best cards for international travel (for insurance, points, usability, rewards, security, etc)- email me if you have questions about this)
- Digital copies of all documents
- Emergency contact list

HEALTH & MEDICAL

- Basic medications (fever, pain relief, allergy)
- Prescription medications
- Children's medications
- Band-aid
- Thermometer
- Hand sanitizer
- Wet wipes
- Travel tissues
- Lip balm
- Sunscreen (especially Spain, Monaco, South of France)
- Reusable water bottles



KID-SPECIFIC ESSENTIALS

- Ride Safer vest or approved travel car restraint
- Silicone sippy cup covers
- Portable straw
- Snack kit
- Favorite comfort item
- Compact sound machine
- Sleep masks (adults)
- Small activity kits (our favorite activities our in our amazon storefront)
- Downloaded shows for offline viewing

FOOD & OUTINGS

- Magnetic camping utensil set
- Reusable utensils
- Pocket blanket (Mediterranean beaches + parks)
- Collapsible tote bag
- Compact grocery bag
- Travel laundry sheets



TRAVEL DAY STRATEGY

- Wear bulkiest shoes
- Wear heaviest jacket
- Keep one outfit easily accessible in carry-on
- Pack one spare kid outfit in personal item
- Pack essential medications in personal item (and double check the rules of the country your are traveling to regarding traveling with medications)

EUROPE-SPECIFIC NOTES

Scotland & England:

Expect rain and cooler evenings year-round. Layering is pretty important.

France & Monaco:

Modest clothing is needed for cathedral and be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes essential for cobblestones.

Spain & South of France:

The sun is stronger here so wear lightweight breathable fabrics. And don't forget to hydrate.

Train travel:

You must carry your own luggage. Avoid oversized bags when traveling to Europe in general

Many buildings do not have elevators so pack accordingly. Cobblestone streets are not roller-friendly so durable wheels matter.

PRO TIPS

- Plan a capsule wardrobe where everything mixes and matches.
- Schedule at least one laundry stop during trips longer than 10 days.
- Wear your heaviest items on the plane.
- Keep essentials in your personal item, not your overhead bag.
- Pack for mobility, not just outfits.
- Prioritize comfortable walking shoes over fashion.
- Bring universal adapters that cover both UK and EU plug types.
- Always pack medications from home.



CONTINUE THE ADVENTURE

This packing guide is just the beginning of our full Europe travel season. We're sharing:

- Overnight flights with kids
- Disneyland Paris planning
- Edinburgh Castle
- London highlights
- Spain with little kids
- South of France and Monaco
- What worked and what we'd change

For full trip breakdowns, detailed itineraries, and planning insights: [Visit the blog](#) for expanded guides.

Keep checking in for destination-specific cheat sheets that will be added to the free resource library, and I will send some of our favorites out to our newsletter family.

Subscribe to the [YouTube series](#) so you don't miss the next episode.

If you'd like help planning your own European family vacation, we'd love to help you travel more, together. [I offer planning services](#) to help you save time and stress planning so you can focus on making memories with the people that matter most.

Talk to ya soon pal,



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