

The 10 Things I Always Carry With Me When I Fly

Note: None of these suggestions are shockingly new. They're simply meant as helpful reminders to scan over before you head on a trip!

1. A notebook, a pen, and a pencil. It's not often the muse strikes me when I'm wedged in the middle of two people, but it has happened. [Since I love lists](#), I also often find myself taking the time in flight to map out the thoughts floating through my brain—ideas, initiatives, goals. Of course, you can input these into your laptop or phone, but I like the physical act of writing them down. And you just never know when you're going to need a pen or a pencil: you may find yourself in possession of an unfinished NYTimes crossword puzzle left over from a previous flight, or sitting next to *oh my goodness, it's Colin Firth!* Without a pen or pencil in these instances, life will pass you by.

2. A scarf or shawl. Why must the temperature vary so widely on airplanes? One moment you feel hot and sticky being in such close proximity to people, the next moment the air is blowing in your face and you're freezing. Either dress in layers or bring a large scarf or sweater. This will also keep you from having to ask for a plastic-wrapped blanket—one less thing to throw out.

3. A snack or food of some sort. Not that my palate has ever been eager for the taste of airplane food, but after [reading this article last year](#) I think I can safely say I will endeavor to abstain from plane food for all eternity. A better and healthier option is to bring your own food. On my last flight I carried a container of trail mix (raw almonds, currents, and pumpkin seeds), and two apples. For longer flights, [The Kitchn has some great advice on food you can bring on the plane with you](#). Another reason to bring your own food: it prevents you from needing to buy pre-packaged food in the airport, which is ultimately less wasteful.

4. Lotion. Plane air dries me out and makes me feel icky all over. One small way I combat that is to always have a small tube or bottle of lotion with me. For serious hydration, I like [Weleda's Skin Food](#). But it's also nice to have an unscented lotion when you're trying to be mindful of scent-sensitive neighbors.

5. Tylenol or Advil. Getting a headache on a 6-hour flight with no way to relieve it is not my idea of a pleasant trip.

6. Audio player and earphones. I'm not one for watching films or TV shows when I fly. But I do like to take this time to catch up on podcasts in my [iTunes](#). ([Radiolab](#) is a favorite.)

7. Ear plugs. I sleep with ear plugs every night (hello, I live in New York), so they are my go-to when the noise around me reaches heights of irritability. They're good to have around when you fly, too, in the case of chatty neighbors or a crying baby.

8. A small bag to carry all the little stuff. Once you have your lotion, your Tylenol, your ear plugs, it doesn't do any good if you can't find them! I find a small bag like this is just big enough to hold a few make-up essentials and the items mentioned above.

9. Something to read. It's much better for me if I bring some reading material from home, because otherwise I get desperate and end up buying a book or a few magazines in the airport. If I have the space, I like to bring a fiction option (I'm currently reading Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom*) and a non-fiction option, since I'm never sure what mood I'm going to be in!

9.5 An E-Reader. Does the thought of lugging books on a plane seem so *last year* to you? I hear you. I'm still old-school, but it'd probably be much easier and wiser to just take your Kindle or iPad on the flight with you. So be it!

10. A water bottle. You can't bring a full bottle through security, but there's no stopping you from bringing an empty bottle and then filling it up somewhere in the airport. Having your own water bottle ensures that a) you'll stave off the dehydrating effects of flying, b) you won't have to accept the plastic refreshment cups. Win!



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