



Teardrops like the one the author and her friend Sterling Mulbry (above) rented have a space for cooking.

NO ONE'S IN NEUTRAL

To hit the road with economy or ease,
with just enough or lots of space,
all it takes is an RV and a destination

BY PATRICIA BORNES | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

SANIBEL ISLAND, Fla. — “Diane and I camped in tents when we got married,” said Marvin Rosenberg, explaining how he and his wife came to buy an RV. Their trajectory from pitched poles to home on wheels interested me because I was embarking on my first off-ground camping trip. The Rosenbergs were full of advice.

“Ask me about sway bars and hooking up a sewer hose with a mask and rubber gloves,” said Marvin. (I didn’t.)

“There’s everything from fly-in RV resorts to overnighing in Wal-Mart parking lots. People will tell you what’s wonderful,” said his wife, Diane, offering a list of her favorite campgrounds.

RV travel came of age with the automobile and the US highway system after World War II, said the Rosenbergs, who know because they belong to the Wally Byam Club of Airstream owners. Byam, who grew up summering in a covered wagon in the Oregon mountains herding sheep, created the aluminum Airstream travel trailer in 1936 and popularized it by leading caravans across all of North America and beyond. “Go see what’s over the next hill, and the one after that,” Byam urged.

So with a truck stuffed to the max and a teardrop in tow — teardrops are pint-sized campers shaped like a ham tin — my friend Sterling Mulbry and I joined the RV nation of motorhomes and travel trailers rolling into state parks and relatives’ driveways with their jet skis, all-terrain vehicles, and children.

From northeast Florida, the way through the state’s interior passes cow towns and cattle ranches. Sterling watched for promising taquerias and rare caracaras (falcon-like birds) while I drove. As we neared the densely built Gulf Coast, the treeless RV parks packed tight as crayon boxes filled us with unease.

That was until we found Periwinkle Park and Campground on Sanibel Island: sleepy sand streets, no concrete pads, and spaces where a camper can spread a little in the cane palms’ filigreed shade. Run by three generations of Muenches, the park is remarkable for its aviary of macaws, parrots, and swans, not to mention ring-tailed lemurs, which draw visitors from across Sanibel. “Slow down!” a bird named Lola called out, warning us to obey the park’s 7 miles per hour speed limit, while another, Terri, imitated a cellphone.

Walter Martilla from Vineland, Ontario, was the first to come ‘round and inspect our rig. “You live in this?” he said with a smile.

RVs are as diverse as their owners, who routinely check everybody’s out. In the stratosphere are dream machines like Terra Wind, an amphibious model by the South Carolina makers of Boston’s Super Ducks that was so radical no one bought one (“The concept didn’t fly,” a corporate spokesman said). There are luxury and off-road vehicles costing \$225,000 to \$3 million, like EarthRoamer, whose founder, Bill Swails, has traveled in his company’s expedition RV from the Arctic Circle to

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PHOTOS BY PATRICIA BORNES/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

At Periwinkle Park and Campground on Sanibel Island, people relax, bike, picnic, garden, grill, have guests, enjoy the native flora and fauna, sleep, bathe — live as they wish — out of their RVs.

HEAVY VS. LIGHT



PHOTOS BY ISTOCKPHOTO

LUGGAGE FEES? NOT IF YOU LEARN TO PACK WHAT YOU CAN CARRY

By Kari Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Years ago, my husband and I took off for a 10-day trip through Europe by train. We sipped Prosecco by moonlight at one of the finest outdoor cafes in Milan, skied through knee-deep powder in Zermatt, and practiced our French while exploring the narrow streets of Avignon. We also logged

through blizzards and experienced southern Europe’s worst flooding in 50 years. The kicker: We each toted nothing more than a daypack, and we were appropriately dressed for every dinner, day trip, outdoor adventure, and meteorological drama.

Packing light frees you from the annoyance of toting bulky bags when you’re on the go. It also saves you hefty

luggage fees and overweight charges imposed by most airlines.

“If you’re trying to get away from it all, you shouldn’t take it all with you,” says Anne McAlpin, author of “Pack It Up: The Essential Guide to Organized Travel” (Flying Cloud). “You’re just going to worry about it — that people are going to steal it or that there’s nowhere

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INSIDE

Take your pick of **night life** and music festivals, be it at Bonnaroo or in Barcelona. **M2**



OLD ORCHARD BEACH PALACE PLAYLAND

EXPLORE NEW ENGLAND | MAINE

Repeating remembered **childhood delights**, from fort to festival, petting zoo to playland. **M6**

Craft a coastal itinerary of **outdoor adventures** with the family (including the shopper). **M6**

With extra planning, packing smarter pays off

► PACKING

Continued from Page M1

to store it. And it's a hassle trying to get a super big bag into a taxi or other tight spaces."

Rick Steves, a pioneer of minimalist travel who launched the Europe Through the Back Door travel and book series, says "lightweight travelers can turn on a dime if there's a problem. If your train is stuck in the middle of nowhere in Italy, as happened to me, you have the option of sitting there for eight hours with your bags or getting off the train and walking into town. Mobile travelers travel better. Others just end up complaining."

A little extra planning can make a world of difference in how easily you travel. First, consider the type of trip you'll be going on. Will you be required to transfer your bags from the train station to your lodge each day on cobblestone streets? Or will porters whisk your luggage into your condo or ship's cabin where it will remain for the duration of your journey? Will you be attending fancy dinners or flopping on a beach?

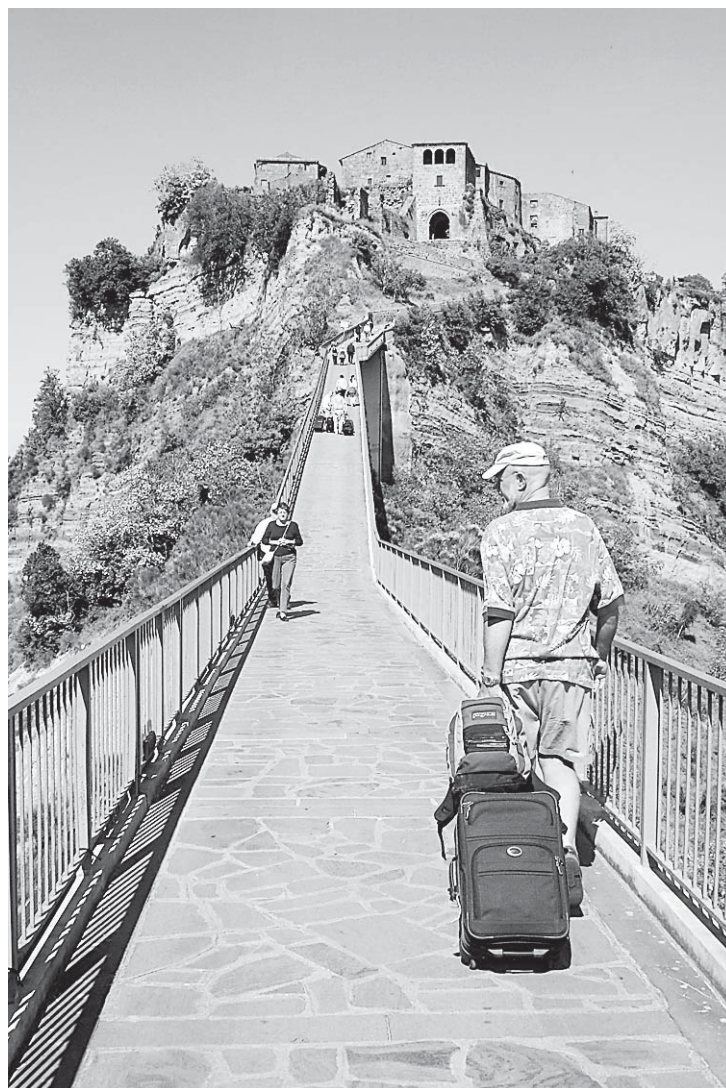
The answers will help you determine which type of bags to bring: a small carry-on suitcase, a larger checked bag, a wheeled suitcase with built-in backpack straps, or a backpack.

"I always start with the size bag that I can manage on the trip and then fill it with the things I need," says Susan Foster, author of "Smart Packing for Today's Traveler" (Smart Travel). "If you start with a big bag, it's human nature that you'll fill it."

McAlpin says, "If you haven't bought luggage in the last three to five years, it's time. Every year it gets lighter and the technology gets better."

Look for something that maximizes interior space, is lightweight and well built (made with tear-resistant nylon or polyester fabric, aluminum handles, and durable wheels).

"You want to find a bag that comes with a lifetime warranty because it could just fall apart," says McAlpin. "The nice thing about a buying a good bag is that



RICK STEVES

A man wheels a bag in Civita di Bagnoregio, Italy. Consider which type of luggage is best for your trip: a small carry-on, a larger checked bag, a wheeled suitcase, or a backpack.

you can replace the wheels and the zippers are self-repairing."

Eagle Creek offers well-made bags in all shapes and sizes, as well as Pack-It Compression Sacs that let you compress bulky items like a sweater up to 80 percent. Travelpro makes luggage that's popular among flight crews. And Steves sells his own affordable line of lightweight, carry-on luggage made by Kiva Designs.

When choosing what to bring, think about the cultural nuances of your destination. Will you be in Europe where people dress up just to run errands? Or Australia where casual is the norm? Or perhaps in a place where you

need to keep covered for religious or cultural reasons? (Consider packing lightweight scarves to cover your shoulders when entering a temple, for instance.) Then research the local climate.

"You need to pack for what you know is going to happen: I'm going to England and it's probably going to rain," says Foster. "People who pack for the what-ifs are the ones who over-pack. It's a suitcase, not your closet."

Always look for lighter alternatives when possible. For instance, take a fleece top or a merino wool sweater instead of a bulky sweatshirt. More technical, higher-end outdoor clothing may

If you go . . .

Resources

Many of the following sites contain packing checklists.

Travelpro

800-741-7471

www.travelpro.com

Sells luggage of all shapes and sizes.

Rick Steves' Europe Through the Back Door

425-771-8303

www.ricksteves.com

Sells its own line of luggage and travel gear and has tons of tips.

Minimus

805-480-1415

www.minimus.biz

Sells all things travel size, from condiments to toiletries.

TravelSmith

800-770-3387

www.travelsmith.com

Clothes, luggage, and travel accessories.

Magellan's

800-962-4943

www.magellans.com

Clothes, luggage, and travel accessories.

Ex Officio

800-644-7303

www.exofficio.com

Lightweight, wrinkle-free, and performance clothing through airport stores, at local outdoor shops like REI, and by mail order.

Eagle Creek

800-874-1048

www.eaglecreek.com

Luggage, packing cubes, compression sacs, and travel accessories.

"Smart Packing for Today's Traveler" (Smart Travel Press)

Susan Foster

503-452-9384

www.smartpacking.com

In-depth packing tips, checklists, folding diagrams for clothes, and sketches showing how to mix and match clothing items; DVD available.

lighten your wallet as well as your bag, but the benefits outweigh the cost: It typically weighs less, packs small, and can keep you more comfortable on the go.

"I don't often travel with jeans," adds Foster. "They're ubiquitous, but they're one of the bulkiest things to pack and they take forever to dry. I take a pair of wool gabardine pants because the wrinkles will come out and they're going to pack much smaller than khakis or jeans."

Magellan's and TravelSmith offer stylish, travel-specific clothes by mail order. L.L. Bean and Ex Officio sell performance and outdoor travel wear, while, according to Foster, "Nordstrom has travel clothes for men that don't wrinkle, and Brooks Brothers sells clothes that are no-iron, no-wrinkle, and 100 percent cotton."

Pick two basic colors, like black and tan, and build your wardrobe around them. You can

create more outfits by accessorizing with jewelry, scarves, or ties. On our whirlwind European tour, my husband and I brought just two sets of clothes each — quick-drying, wrinkle-free shirts and pants — plus rain pants for skiing and bad weather; silk underwear to sleep in and layer under our clothes; and wool coats that were functional enough for the slopes and fashionable enough for first-class travel and upscale events.

We washed our clothes every few days using hotel laundry facilities or in the sink in our room and then left them to dry overnight. And, since shoes can be bulky, we limited ourselves to just two pairs each: comfortable, somewhat dressier shoes and sandals.

Cut down on the contents of your Dopp kit, as well. According to Foster, toiletries often make up as much as half of your luggage weight.

"I have really difficult curly

hair that frizzes in humidity," says Julie Ann Martin, author of "Travel-Ready Packing: Pack Light, Dress Right — Anytime, Anywhere" (Argo & Cole). "I go to a salon wherever I am and have someone blow-dry my hair and it's good for three days. I don't even have to carry shampoo."

Make sure you don't cut corners in order to shave weight. For instance, don't empty your prescription medicines from the original bottles into plastic baggies to trim ounces and space, since officials can be suspicious of unmarked medications. Similarly, don't bother with a collapsible hairbrush if it can't do the job; you want to feel comfortably lightweight, not deprived.

Many travel books and websites offer helpful packing lists for cruises, adventure trips, beach escapes, and other types of getaways. If you follow them closely, they keep you from throwing in extras at the last minute.

Finally, pay attention to airlines' weight restrictions, especially when going on multi-leg trips. You may be able to fly to and from Europe with a maximum of 50 pounds per bag of checked luggage. But if you fly within Europe, your carrier may have a lower weight restriction.

It may take a few trips to break old habits. But once you master lightweight packing, you'll enjoy tuning into your surroundings rather than straining under the load of your beefy bag.

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