

travel. That light-as-a-feather suitcase will feel like a ton of bricks when you're running to catch a train. Carry your luggage around the house a time or two to see if you'll be able to handle the load. So, don't overpack; you'll want to leave some room to cart home the goodies you'll surely buy when you get where you're going.

- Always keep at least one change of clothes in your carry-on bag, in addition to toiletries, medication, identification and other essentials that you absolutely, positively couldn't travel without.

- Pack cleverly, simply, and with versatility in mind. A navy blazer can do double duty as a sports coat and dinner jacket; espadrilles will be good to your feet when you're on them all day, and they'll look good enough for dressier occasions. Stick with wash 'n' wear clothes, which you can rinse out in your hotel bathroom for a second wear.

- Prepare for the worst, as far as weather is concerned. A light slicker and an umbrella will always come in handy, and both can be found in easy-to-pack travel sizes and styles.

- Travel with your health-insurance cards and related information. Accidents will happen, and it's a smart move to check your medical insurance to see which out-of-state or foreign hospitals will honor your coverage.

- Pay attention to jet lag. It can be a serious problem, even for experienced travelers. If possible, try to schedule an extra day to recoup and regroup at each end of your trip; the only thing worse than losing your first day abroad to jet-lag-induced sluggishness is returning home on a Sunday night before school or work with the same condition.

- Whatever you decide to do, call to confirm. Even if you've got a confirmation slip from your travel agent, or from your air carrier, it never hurts to make one last call to make sure your plans are in order. (In most cases a toll-free 800 number will be available.) If you're flying, check to see that the flight is scheduled to depart on time before you leave for the airport.

## CASE IN POINT

Like most students, Beth, a 26-year-old graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, thought she had everything covered when she set off on her dream trip to celebrate graduation. She had a carefully planned itinerary taking her first to Paris and then going off to explore the French countryside; she packed carefully and sensibly, and she carried enough traveler's cheques to see her through more than a few shopping sprees. (She also had a few of her parents' credit cards on the chance that she'd overextend herself.)

But what she didn't have was the foresight

to anticipate that something might go wrong. "That's what did me in," she recalls of her first vacation on her own. "I went to all this trouble to make sure that everything was done right, and it just never occurred to me that something would happen to upset everything."

What started out as a monument to careful planning turned out to be a vacation full of worst-case scenarios. A tiring itinerary almost proved her undoing: Beth let herself doze off on a train, and when she awoke her backpack was missing. "I was sitting there with three other people," she remembers, "young people; they seemed very nice. We were talking and everything, and then I just got tired and fell asleep and when I woke up everything was gone. I don't know if they took it, or if they just got off at some point and somebody else wandered by and took it, but it was gone. I was so sure that nothing would go wrong that I didn't pay enough attention to what might go wrong."



To make matters worse, she also had her passport and wallet zippered into one of her backpack's side pockets. Beth immediately cleared the panic from her head and got off at the next station to report the theft. She spoke French fluently, so language wasn't a problem, but if it had been, she says, she would have been in even deeper trouble. "The people at the station couldn't have been nicer," she says, "but there was really nothing they could do for me. They told me they'd put an alert out at the other stations on the route. Sometimes people just pull out whatever valuables they find and abandon the rest, but they told me not to expect anything."

The next step was to see about her passport and traveler's cheques. There was an American Express office adjacent to the station, and so Beth raced over to report her stolen cheques. "I didn't copy my numbers down or anything, which is a big mistake," she says,

"but they were able to trace the numbers when I told them where and when I bought the cheques. Luckily I had some identification with me in my pocketbook, and some of my father's credit cards, or there's no way I could have gotten them replaced."

Replacing her passport was a bigger headache. "I phoned the American Embassy and they also went out of their way to help," she recalls. "But still it was a hassle. They had to wire home to my parents to corroborate my i.d., and then I had to wait two days before they could even issue me a new one. I didn't even plan on staying in that town, but I wound up staying there three days because of all the hassle."

Beth's lesson has taught her a thing or two about traveling that she wishes she had thought of in the first place. "Now, I always carry all my money, my credit cards, i.d., everything, on me," she says. "Not even in a pocketbook or anything, but zippered into a pocket in my pants or shirt or something. I keep my passport there too, and I copy down the numbers of my traveler's cheques and leave them with someone back home. That's the easiest way to do it. Maybe I'm paranoid or something but now if I sleep on a train, no matter who I'm with, I keep my bags on my lap, or I use them as a pillow."

Words to travel by.

## THE RIGHT MIX: LEISURE AND TRAVEL

There is no underestimating the restorative value of a good, relaxing holiday, but if you're interested in expanding your horizons you can return from your travels with more than just peace of mind and a bunch of nice pictures.

Fun in the sun is one thing; a broadening cultural experience is something else entirely. We're not suggesting that you pursue one type of vacation any more than another when you travel, only that you consider how rewarding it would be to combine a little bit of both. Combine the leisure with the travel, and you'll build a well-rounded vacation to remember long after your pictures have begun to fade.

Think about it: when will you have a better chance to meet new people, to immerse yourself in the lore of a place you've only heard or read about, to return from the experience a better person? Your vacation can be a tremendous learning experience, the chance to get up close and personal with an entirely different culture, the chance to feel a part of a community other than your own. It can also be that much-needed chance to recharge your batteries, to forget your troubles and unwind from your real life pressures.

Learn to establish the right mix between working on your mind and working on your