

UMass Journalism -Travel Writing and Photojournalism in Sicily Packing List 2014 Revision

3 Bags:

“Hand Bag”: The “I’m stuck in this freaking seat for 8 hours” bag

Carry-on Bag: The “Without this stuff I’m screwed” bag

Checked Luggage: The “Thank God I have clean clothes” bag

Alitalia Weight Limits: Baggage: 23kg/50.7lbs Carry-on: 8kg/17.6lbs

Carry-on Dimensions: 55-35-25cm/ 22-14-10inches

****Trip Insurance:** If you want trip insurance, go to www.insuremytrip.com - for the best deal.

****Read TSA Carry-on Restrictions!**

<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>

Don’t miss your flight by getting held up in the security line.

Mandatory Items (in your Carry-on Bag). [Don’t get on the bus without the following and **don’t check these items to baggage.**] Ugly possibility: This may be all you have for a while.)

1. **Your Passport** (make 2 copies, leave one with someone here and carry one in a separate place from your real passport) and a **second picture ID**.
2. Your **Airline E-Ticket receipt**.
3. Your money (don't carry a lot of cash, ~\$150, avoid \$50 Bills) and credit/bank cards.
4. Prescription medicines if you need them. (See TSA regulations re: zip-lock bags)
5. Extra glasses or contact lenses if you wear them.
6. Plastic ties or an approved lock and a strong **ID tag(s)** for your checked bag.
7. An inexpensive **Watch** and an **Alarm Clock**. Wake up calls can be quite unreliable. (Being late impacts 40 people and disrupts the whole days schedule!)
8. A small flashlight - **you should never travel without a flashlight**.
10. Anything else that you can’t live without, like **your CAMERA, CHARGERS and MEMORY CARDS**, your iPod, a plane book, clean socks and underwear, and a toothbrush.
11. **Put a copy of you itinerary in all of your bags.** (A redundantly identified bag is way more likely to find you after it strays to the wrong luggage queue.)

Clothing.

We will need **layers**. It could reach 70-78 degrees during the day and it can be cold at night. It will definitely be cold on Mt. Etna (5000-8,000 feet above sea level depending on where we go). However, **please pack lightly**. (We have 42 bodies and one bus.) You should be able to survive with one medium size suitcase and your carry-on. Plan on washing a few things out in your room

(bring a little laundry soap). We will never fit on the bus if you all bring steamer trunks full of fashion statements and shoes.

DO NOT bring expensive jewelry. Wear costume jewelry or, preferably, none at all. It is always better to not look like a tourist (particularly a rich American one) when you are traveling anywhere, but it is foolish to lose valuable jewelry that you should have left at home. I do, however, require everyone to **wear a** (cheap?) **watch** (see above). It is very important while traveling in a group to not ruin the day for the others (or **you** as you watch us drive away) because you are late for the bus.

Always Include:

Good walking shoes! (This probably should not be the pair you just bought - use them first.)

A raincoat/parka with wind protection. A sweatshirt or polar fleece cover-up. Washable, layerable (Is that a word? Spellchecker say no.) light clothing.

Photography Equipment/ Journal Materials

Your camera. Perhaps a second "point and shoot" or an iPhone for snapshots. Extra Batteries! Memory Cards - should be in some kind of a case that is easy to notice (brightly colored) so you won't leave it in the hotel room or on the bus or..... Microfiber cloth to clean your lenses.

A daypack and/or camera bag. (This could also be your carry-on baggage on the plane.) We have the bus for the week, so think of this as your "bus bag".

Your **Camera Instruction Manual**. (You can find this on-line in PDF format and put it on a "device" if you wish.

Your journal and your writing implements.

Highly Recommended, Really Handy Stuff:

Kleenex (Ladies - there just seems to never be paper in public rest rooms, enough said.)

****Please read the note below on restrooms in Sicily.**

ZIP LOCK BAGS - The plastic industry's gift to travelers. Take many in a variety of sizes. Pack with them. If your bag is inspected, this makes both the inspection process and re-packing much more efficient. And should your bag get wet, your stuff does not.

Wash and Dry towelettes and/or **hand sanitizer**. Have it, use it.

Imodium - You never know. And diarrhea on a bus? - it's bad for you, bad for us, and the driver will curse you.

Sunglasses and a hat that won't embarrass you or us.

Security Wallet (For carrying your money and valuables under your clothing.)

Luggage strap (brightly colored). Available in the travel stuff section – extra security around your bag and it helps identify it in the airport baggage chaos.

Travel-size Febreze - removes odors from stale rooms or smoky clothes. (**Dryer sheets** in your luggage/laundry make for a higher quality experience when you unzip your bag later in the week!)

Bubble Wrap – unless you don't shop. (Is that likely?!)

Restrooms in Sicily: There are no facilities on the bus. (They're sometimes there, but there is no place to empty them so you can't use them.) In the rural parts of Sicily in which we travel, roadside rest areas are infrequent. Take every opportunity to use the facilities, particularly just before we leave an area. If you are in a bar or a restaurant, use the restroom not only when you arrive, but **before you leave**. **Perhaps you really don't need those 12 glasses of water a day?** We don't want you dehydrated, but it's to your benefit to try being a bit conservative with that bottle of water that is constantly attached to your back pack. And then there's those 4 cups of coffee in the morning(?!)..... enough said.

Money: Travelers checks are becoming less and less useful in Europe. Many places either won't take them or charge a surcharge for using them. They still make good emergency money, but don't depend on using them instead of cash or charge cards. VISA has a travel debit card (not connected to your other banking information) that you can "fill" with money and take out in small amounts at ATMs. Warning: some are domestic only -make sure before you buy one. (AAA in Hadley sells these cards and they can get Euros as well - at a cost.) Regular ATM cards work fine in Sicily as long as they are supported by one of the international banking networks like Cirrus. [**Your PIN should be in numbers and be less than 6 digits long.**] Using a credit card will get the best exchange rate for that day, it avoids the need to carry cash, but most of them charge a "Foreign Currency Exchange" fee (*Capital One* does not!) **Tell your bank you will be in Italy** so the security program doesn't stop your use of the card.

Personal Safety Issues

Whenever you travel, assume that everybody you encounter wants to steal your stuff. Trust no one, including children. (We may encounter Gypsies in our travels and they are very, very good at leaving the area with your belongings. It is usually the kids who pick your pockets or grab your bag.) Be aware of your immediate surroundings and be particularly careful in crowds. Dangling bags can be grabbed by a thief on foot or on a motorbike, sometimes injuring the victim in the process. Be "street smart" and you won't be a victim.

In the airport: **Get rid of the metal before you go through so you (we) won't be held up.** Watches, coins, belt buckles, jewelry, piercing hardware, metal coat zippers, etc. can all set off the detector. Don't make any terrorism jokes or cop an attitude with the TSA personnel - you'll end up missing the plane. Wear slip-on shoes.

Don't fall asleep with your carry-on bags unattended.

Women: Political Correctness will stay behind you at UMass. Sicilian men may whistle, make comments, and generally be more aggressive than you may be accustomed to. They often think of American women as "easy". (Sometimes, American women **are** easy compared to Sicilian

women - so that's the reputation you're dealing with.) It is best if you just ignore them. Always travel in groups. You will notice that you rarely see unaccompanied Sicilian women out at night. Their families do not allow it. Therefore, you are the target of all the Italian male charisma. The mere fact that you are out at night means (by Sicilian values) that you are not a particularly virtuous woman. Resist the charm, it is rarely sincere.

Men: Don't carry your wallet in your back pocket. It's equivalent to giving it away. Keep your cool and ignore the non-physical aggressiveness of the Sicilian men. The boys should hang around with the women on the trip. Your presence will spare them from some of the more obnoxious (by our standards) behavior of the Italian men.

Other Issues:

Make sure your luggage gets tagged through to Palermo when you check in. Have your Frequent Flyer number ready (I keep a list of mine in the back of my passport.) Join Delta Skymiles (partnered with Alitalia) before we leave - foolish to lose 8000 FF miles.

It is your responsibility to get to your next gate in the airport in Rome. It can be a very, very long ways, you will have to ride a little train, you will have to go through security and passport control, and you will be dazzled by consumer goods along the way. We can't possibly stick together and I guarantee that the next gate is further than you think, so **MOVE! And check the information board to make sure the gate hasn't been changed from what it says on your ticket.**

CVS and Walgreens sometimes have \$2.50 fleece blankets. You can bring one to avoid the sketchy one on the plane. At \$2.50, you can just leave it on the plane.

Bring non-liquid snacks for the flight and stay hydrated (note that alcohol is **dehydrating**).

A product that is almost gone is "travel size". So are free samples.

Those plastic snap-on caps for soda cans can be quite useful when traveling.

Lower your parents' expectations of hearing from you constantly - they'll be happier, you'll be happier.

Leave the hair dryer at home - it won't work there. The hotel rooms all have them.

Most camera, cell phone, and iPod chargers work on both currents. **Check that your charger says "Input 110 - 220 (or 240) Volts"**. You'll need a plug adaptor but not a power converter.

Don't count on having constant access to your carry-on bag on the plane. Try to have what you need when you sit down and buckle your seatbelt. (See "Hand Baggage") above.)

Don't whine. It doesn't help and it can be disturbingly contagious.