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**Why is it that packing lightly seems like the one skill even the most successful women can't always master?** One major reason: When it comes to the beauty and body products you bring along on your trip, it's important not to skimp (you never know what'll be available where you go, so bringing the basics is a must). But if you think about it a little beforehand (this means before you haul the suitcase out the night before your early flight), you don't have to bog down your bag to pack efficiently.

First (this is the before-the-suitcase bit), get thee to a salon. Before any vacation I recommend getting a manicure and pedicure, a good haircut, and waxing—brows, bikini, legs, and underarms! This will cut down on your beauty routine and hair/nail maintenance gear.

As for what specifically to pack, once you've done the above, all you need are the following 10 items. That's right, only 10. There's no hairdryer on this list because every decent hotel has a hair dryer. There's no elaborate brush collection here—that's why god invented makeup kits. That fancy shower gel you love? Leave it at home and use soap like a normal person. Here's all you'll need, whether you're out of town for a weekend wedding or a 12-day trip to an exotic island:

#### All-in-one Makeup Kit

My favorite everything-you-need kit is [Pop's Palette](#), which alleviates the need to throw random tubes of lipstick and never-been-used-before eyeshadows into your cosmetics bag. It's even small enough to fit into your purse for touchups. Each kit contains everything you need for your eyes, lips, and cheeks in a streamlined tin, including brushes.

#### Awesome Mascara

Every woman needs a product that doesn't smudge if you fall asleep during a long flight, won't embarrassingly drip down your cheeks after a dip in the pool, and just overall makes your lashes 10 times better than when they are naked ... that's where waterproof mascara comes in. Every cosmetic company and their mother make a version, but sometimes the best products are actually found at the drugstore: And nobody does it better than [Maybelline Great Lash](#) in very black. Collect the cash you save to blow on souvenirs—or another round of Mai Tais.

#### Makeup Remover Towelettes

We're all slaves to our drawn-out evening grooming routines, but when you're on the

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go, all you need is something to get the gunk off your face. The smoothing, softening towelettes from [Sephora](#) wipe all your makeup off in one sweep. And they pack flat. No more mascara clumps, foundation streaks, and lipstick stains on the pillowcase for the hotel maid to clean up. Plus, you can use these to wash your face instead of that super-drying hotel soap.

### **Styling Spray**

Depending on your travel schedule, you won't have much time for flat irons and hot rollers. [Bumble and Bumble Does it All Styling Spray](#), de-frizzes, styles, and, well, does it all (and it smells yummy, too). Smooth it into damp hair and let it dry for purposefully messy waves or apply to ends on a day you didn't have time to wash your hair, and it'll straighten out the bed-head kink. Comes in a convenient travel size, too.

### **Travel Brush**

Of course you need to brush your hair, but you don't need that massive horse paddle you use at home. The itty-bitty (yet totally functional) travel-size by [Frederic Fekkai](#) is, simply, perfect. It eliminates static, is compact enough to throw into your handbag and is tough enough to brush through even the worst airplane seat/bed head.

### **Headscarf**

A nice headscarf is so versatile and takes up the tiniest space in your bag. Headscarves can be used lounging at the beach, for air or boat travel, or just a bad hair day (we [LOVE](#) them). Also try as a neckerchief, a headband to hold hair back for applying or taking off makeup, or even as a belt. This [neutral one](#) from Alloy will match everything.

### **Breath Saviors**

In the category of "how did I get through college without these?" comes Oral B's answer to kitten breath. Whether you are masking the cheese plate you just ate, forgot your toothbrush again, or you're freshening up before landing, [Brush Ups](#) are just perfect.

### **Sunscreen**

Duh. If you don't know you need to bring sunscreen with you everywhere you go, well, there's no helping you. But if you're smart enough to realize the wrinkle- and cancer-fighting magic in the goop, might I suggest [Kiehl's Vital Sun Protection](#). It isn't greasy and it comes in a slender bottle, which means no excuse for not packing it. This one is SPF 15, which is for body parts you wouldn't mind getting a nice glow. But for the face, you need [more SPF](#).

### **Backup Shampoo/Conditioner**

When you're staying in a hotel, packing shampoo and conditioner is a lot like packing body lotion and a hairdryer—repetitive, as they are all waiting for you in your room. But if that makes you nervous—you could find yourself in a hotel that skimps on the products—try [Charles Worthington Take Aways](#). These mini-sized bottles come in a variety of formulas; full volume, color treated, moisturizing, and shine enhancing. Best of all, they can be found at several drug stores, including Duane Reade and Walgreens.

### **Travel Makeup Case**

Now, where to put all these great products? Kate Spade's whimsical patterns and practical design make her [Large Manuela](#) the best travel cosmetics case around. With this design, you literally can't help but be organized. If you can't afford Spade-level prices, look for any flat case like the Manuela—it fits perfectly on top of your packed clothes or in the outer zipper-pouch of a standard wheeled suitcase. Honestly, if you can't fit in all in here, you're bringing too much.

***What do you pack to make your travels easier? Tell us at [mail@sirensmag.com](mailto:mail@sirensmag.com). And don't forget to sign up for our free [newsletter](#)!***