

Packing for a Winter Trip

Simple ways to pack lighter, stay warm, and travel more comfortably

Packing for a winter holiday used to completely overwhelm me.

I would pack far too many clothes, too many shoes, and inevitably come home having worn only half of what I'd taken. Over the years though, I've realised that travelling comfortably is far more important than having endless outfit options — especially on longer overseas trips where you're moving between cities.

These days, I pack much more intentionally.

Tony and I often travel for around three weeks at a time, particularly during the European Christmas season, but I still only pack enough clothing for around one week. Staying in apartments with a washing machine makes this so much easier and means we're not dragging enormous suitcases across train stations and wet or snowy streets.

The biggest thing that changed packing for me was creating a simple capsule wardrobe built around one base colour. It makes getting dressed easy, keeps luggage lighter, and means almost everything works together.

This is the practical winter packing list that works for me time and time again.

Anita

A *Joyful* Ordinary Life

Start With a Simple Colour Palette

The easiest way to pack lighter is to choose a base colour and stick with it.

I usually choose black or navy, then build everything else around that colour palette.

This means:

- everything mixes and matches easily
- you need fewer shoes and accessories
- getting dressed each morning becomes simple
- your suitcase feels much more organised

For winter travel especially, I focus on warm, comfortable pieces that still feel polished enough for sightseeing, dinners, and evenings out.

My Winter Clothing Formula

For a typical one-week winter capsule wardrobe, I usually pack:

Clothing

- 3 bottoms (warm pants, tailored stretch pants, or skirts with tights)
- 5 knit jumpers (usually merino or cashmere because they're warm without being bulky)
- 1 lightweight dressier outfit (something simple for dinners or special occasions – I like knit dresses as I can also wear them during the day)

- 5 pairs of warm socks
- underwear and sleepwear
- thermals for extremely cold destinations

I rarely pack jeans for winter travel anymore because I personally don't find them warm enough. I prefer softer wool-blend pants or warm tights under dresses.

Comfort matters far more to me these days than overpacking "just in case."

Invest in Good Winter Basics

If there's one thing worth investing in for winter travel, it's a really good coat and comfortable waterproof boots.

We walk a lot when travelling, often starting sightseeing early in the morning and staying out most of the day, so being warm and comfortable makes a huge difference.

I know layering is often recommended, but personally I prefer:

- one warm coat
- a good knit
- scarf, gloves, good socks and a beanie

I find this much easier than constantly removing multiple layers every time you go indoors somewhere warm.

A warm pashmina in my carry-on is also something I never travel without.

Keep Accessories Simple

Winter travel is one of the easiest times to simplify accessories because your coat and boots become the focus most days anyway.

I usually pack:

- a watch
- everyday jewellery
- one or two pairs of earrings
- scarves for adding a little colour and variety

Scarves and hats are where I'll often introduce a little personality into my outfits without needing extra clothing.

The Things I Never Forget

Over the years I've also learned there are certain travel items that make a huge difference to comfort while travelling.

My essentials include:

- a magnifying mirror with lighting (I am a certain age after all 😊)
- tweezers
- universal travel adaptors
- chargers organised in a pouch
- ipad or e-reader
- a supportive travel pillow
- gloves and thermals
- a compact jewellery roll

I also keep my makeup very simple while travelling and focus mostly on products that work multiple ways.

The Truth About Overpacking

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is this:

You really don't need as much as you think you do.

Especially in winter.

Most people won't notice if you repeat outfits and honestly — they're far more focused on their own holiday than what you're wearing.

What matters most is:

- being comfortable
- staying warm
- moving around easily
- enjoying the experience

Dragging heavy suitcases through airports, train stations, and wet and snowy streets quickly loses its appeal.

These days I'd much rather pack lighter and enjoy the trip.

The goal of packing isn't to prepare for every possible scenario. It's to make travelling easier.

A thoughtful capsule wardrobe, comfortable shoes, and a well organised suitcase can make such a difference — especially on longer winter holidays.

And honestly, after a full day of sightseeing in freezing temperatures, you'll probably be just as happy as we are to head back to your apartment, make a cup of tea, and settle in for an early night before doing it all again tomorrow.

You can find a great travel checklist in our freebies library.

With Joy
Anita