

UMass Journalism -Travel Writing and Photojournalism

Sicily 2007 Packing List

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.

Category 1 - Mandatory Items (Carry-on Bag).

[Don't get on the bus without the following and **don't check these items to baggage.**]

1. Your Passport. (Make 2 copies, leave one with someone here and carry one in a separate place from your real passport.)
2. Your Airline Ticket.
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.
6. A small flashlight.
7. Plastic ties or approved lock and an ID tag for your checked bag.
8. An inexpensive Watch and an Alarm Clock. (Being late impacts 45 people!)
9. Anything else that you can't live without, like **your camera and film** (in a zip-lock bag or, preferably, an X-ray bag), clean underwear, and a toothbrush.

Category 2 - Clothing.

We will need layers. It may reach 70-75 degrees during the day and can be cold at night. It will be cold on Mt. Etna (8,000 feet above sea level). However, please pack lightly. 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 could have left at home. I do, however, require everyone to **wear a** (cheap?) **watch** (see above). It is very important in a group like ours to not ruin the day for the others (or **you** as we drive away) because you are late for the bus.

Include:

Good walking shoes.

A raincoat/parka with wind protection.

A sweatshirt or polar fleece cover-up.

Washable, layerable (is that a word??) light clothing.

Category 3 - Photography Equipment/ Journal Materials

Your camera. Perhaps a second "point and shoot" for snapshots.

Extra Batteries!

Memory Cards or Film: 10 - 15 rolls, 100 or 200 speed, slide or print. (Put film in a Zip-lock bag and try having it hand inspected, **if allowed**, (don't argue about this) at the airport. **Film should not be put in Checked Luggage!** X-ray bags can help with multiple passes through security.

A daypack and/or camera bag. (This is also useful for that important stuff that you shouldn't check to baggage on the plane.)

Your National Geographic Photography book and Camera Instruction Manual.

A good journal and writing implements.

Category 4 - 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.

Wash and Dry Towelettes and/or hand sanitizer.

Imodium - You never know. And on a bus, it's bad for you, bad for us, and the driver will hate 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 section – extra security around your bag and it helps identify it in the airport chaos.

Travel-size Febreze - removes odors from stale rooms or smoky clothes.

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. We need to form the **TEOP Club** – “Take Every Opportunity to Pee”. Try to use the facilities 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 you might try being a bit conservative with that bottle of water that is constantly attached to your pack. And then there's the morning 4 cups of coffee..... enough said.

Money: Travelers checks are becoming 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. American Express has a debit card that you can “fill” with money and take out in small amounts at ATMs. Regular ATM cards work fine in Sicily as long as they are supported by one of the international banking net works 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 they all charge a “Foreign Currency Exchange” fee. 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: Don't put your bag through the X-ray until you are sure that you are the next one through the metal detector. Professional thieves deliberately cause confusion at the safety check while an accomplice grabs your camera bag, etc. **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 security personnel - you'll end up missing the plane.

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. You guys 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.