

Buon Giorno Travelers!

It all started over a glass of wine with friends. “Let’s Go To Italy,” someone said. I’m always up for traveling, and so our 10 day Tuscan Adventure began. Since we were all on a budget and using mileage points, we wanted to travel with just carry-on bags (numerous flights meant lots of opportunity for delayed luggage).

The challenge: Could I actually travel 10 days, including 3 days in Florence and 7 days in a Villa in Chianti with just a carry-on? The answer: Yes! Here are some valuable tips:

1. I called the airline to confirm their specific carry-on restrictions (it varies). I was thrilled I was allowed a 22” wheeled carry-on bag & a personal bag, however, my carry-on could only weigh 18 pounds -packed!
2. I only took three pairs of shoes (one I wore) and flip flops. I could have survived with just two pairs and flip flops.
3. I packed my handbag inside my “personal bag” which was a large tote. Also packed in the extra room in the tote: Healthy snacks, comfort items for the plane, books, i-pod, etc.
4. I only packed items I could use more than one way, i.e. my handbag converted into a backpack for sightseeing and the tote bag was perfect for shopping and carrying bottles of wine, cheese, etc.
5. By asking in advance, we discovered we didn’t need to pack hairdryers, they were provided as was a washing machine (no dryer).
6. We all brought different books to read and then exchanged them with each other when were finished, saving lots of weight in our bags. A regional favorite: 1,000 Days in Tuscany.
7. I was glad I packed my swimsuit- who knew we’d start each day off poolside with cups of espresso (we took turns making & serving it).
8. And, I’m glad I took my favorite runners. These were invaluable for long walks through the vineyard (day three we discovered the family plot dating from the 1700’s- amazing!)
9. For the trip home, I carried on the same bags, but checked an expandable tote bag that I had brought from home- perfect for the extras we had picked up along the way like museum brochures, laundry, etc. (my 1st checked bag was free of charge).
10. When traveling with a group, use a travel coin purse as a community “Kitty.” Everyone in the group contributes evenly, using it for gas, group dinners, groceries, even gelato. This avoids keeping track of who owes whom what, and it solves the problem of splitting checks which is frowned upon in many countries.

Another cost saving tip: Staying in a Villa sounds extravagant but it can actually be less expensive than a hotel room if you’re traveling with a group of friends or family. Shared car-rentals are also helpful in keeping the budget under control. You can share the cost of gas & parking fees. And share the driving to alleviate stress. We even scored two brand new Alfa Romeos just by asking if they had any available!

Absolutely Everything I Packed For My Trip To Italy *In my Carry-on Bag*

Bag: TSA Quart-size Ziploc® of liquids:

- Liquid Makeup
- Sunscreen
- Deodorant
- Fragrance (in 2 oz. atomizer)
- Eye moisturizer
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Toothpaste
- Hair Mouse
- Mascara
- Lip Gloss

Bag: Anne's Tote Bag

- I-pod/Adapter
- 3-in 1-Towel/Blanket/Sarong
- Inflatable Neck Pillow, Ear Plugs
- Paperbacks: 1,000 days in Tuscany & Too Much Tuscan Sun
- Freshen-up bag: Toothbrush, mints
- Hairbrush/Comb
- Pill organizer w/aspirin, etc.
- Empty water bottle (eco-friendly)
- Healthy Snacks (tea bags, etc)
- Instant Soup
- Blackberry Charger
- Nikon Charger
- Adapter for Cell Phone/Camera

Bag: Anne's Convertible Handbag/Backpack

- Water bottle
- Travel Wallet
- Digital Camera
- BlackBerry
- Flashlight (micro)
- Guide Book

Security Wallet:

- 2 credit cards
- \$100 in Euros
- USD \$ cash
- Photos of traveling companions
- Photo copies of all documents

Anne's 22" Travelpro® Carry-on Bag

- 1 pair dress sandals
- 1 pair flip flops
- Runners/Tennis Shoes
- Swim Suit w/wrap
- Black Capri's
- Khaki Capri's
- Shorts & Tank
- 7 pair Ex-Officio Undies
- Black floral Skirt
- Black Ex-Officio Travel Skirt
- 2 knit tank tops
- 2- ¾ sleeve shirts
- Khaki Sweater
- Lightweight UBU® Jacket
- 2 bras
- TSA Lock/Bag Tag

Plane/Travel Outfit

- Walking sandals
- Dark Denim Stretch Jeans
- V-neck White Short Sleeve Shirt
- Long Sleeve Fuchsia Sweatshirt
- Ex-Officio® Black Zip Sweater
- Compression Socks (put on when on plane)

Return Trip Home:

I used the collapsible tote to pack my laundry and non-valuable items. (I put a TSA lock on my tote, just to keep the zippers from accidentally opening.) I checked this tote though and carried-on my 22" rolling bag with my small tote. I packed all my purchases/valuables in my carry-on.

