

VACATION TIME... LET'S GET PACKING!

by Arlene Converse



Vacation time countdown!!! Woohoo!! You've worked all year planning for your much deserved time off from work and the daily grind. Kids are out of school and it's time to take that long awaited vacation with family or friends. No matter what you choose, be it a cruise to the Caribbean, flying to visit family or taking a drive, one thing is always certain, you have to pack! Nothing is worse than pulling out that shirt or dress for the evening's event and finding out that it's wrinkled and you have no iron or any other way to resolve the issue. Or how about finding out that your bottle of cologne leaked all over your favorite outfit ... ouch! There is no question that packing for travel has become more and more challenging with all the airline requirements, not to mention the "gentle handling" of your nice luggage, all packed very carefully, only to open up your luggage and find all your stuff crumpled and messed up before you even get a chance to begin your vacation. Dry Cleaners usually get involved in one or all of these issues either in the front end or the back end of a customer's vacation. Can't say we know all the tricks but we certainly have learned a few. Before you throw away all those dry cleaner bags, twistie ties, hangers and sweater bags, here are a few suggestions ... and they will cost your NOTHING!!

Q: How can I avoid my clothes from wrinkling while traveling?

A: One word ... PLASTIC!!! If you remember only one word in your packing efforts, this is the one. And here's why: friction causes wrinkling, plastic reduces friction. It's just that simple. The best way to utilize this basic concept is with dry cleaning bags. All items should be placed in individual bags (one outfit per dry cleaner bag). Clothes arrive in a perfectly preserved state. Really!! Not only does it prevent your clothes from wrinkling but it also can protect your clothes from potential stains during the travel process from other items or liquids that are being transported in the same suitcase. Folding shirts and other items are also a great travel tip. Toudanines Cleaners will fold and bag each item separately so that they travel well. Ask us!

Q: How can I protect my clothes while in the suitcase?

A: Dry Cleaner sweater bags ... utilize the dry cleaner sweater bags to store your shoes, dirty clothes, wet garments as well as liquids. If you utilize a small travel bag for your liquids and toiletries, slide the toiletry bag into one of the sweater bags and snap it closed for additional protection from leakage of the items you are transporting. Liquids can leak out easily due to the pressure in the aircraft while flying, so double protection is always a good thing! Another great use of sweater bags is for transporting wet bathing suits, dirty clothes or shoes. Save the sweater bags, fold them and store them in your suitcase so they are convenient when you take your next trip. Line the bottom of your suitcase with extra sweater bags, or even the plastic poly bags off your orders, so that you have them in the event you need them. They occupy no additional space and yet can save you lots of headaches from wet and dirty clothes or for emergencies.

Q: Cruise ships and hotels never have enough hangers!

A: NEVER!!! If your traveling for more than just a few nights, you're sure to have plenty of clothes to hang and cruise ship and hotels are notorious for giving you only a few hangers to utilize. The hangers that you get from the drycleaner are easily packed so that when you arrive you don't have the struggle of how to hang your clothes. Cruise ships give you minimal hangers, hotels aren't much better. Take a few clothes hangers by wrapping them in the plastic poly bags your orders come in to protect them from getting caught on your clothes. Lay them flat down in the bottom of your luggage staggered to use the space wisely. The hangers, known as struts, have a brown cardboard center. Those hangers will allow you to hang multiple pants on one hanger using fewer hangers. Some have even left the clothes on the hanger, folded the clothes in half and pack them this way. Then all you do is open the suitcase, grab the hanger and hang.

Q: Wow, how else can I utilize the "dry cleaner bags"?

A: Reusing the bags from the dry cleaner is a great recycling idea. Turn them upside down and tie a knot in the bottom where the hanger hole is. Use them as garbage bags. The twistie ties that secure your clothes hangers in your orders can be removed and placed in a small container. When you're ready to throw out your trash, secure it with a twistie tie. You'll save a lot of money recycling and make use of what you already have from your dry cleaner! Recycle and save money all at the same time. If you need to, get a container, place all your dry cleaner poly bags in it and use them as you go.

Safety pins found on your garments that secure the garment tags from the dry cleaner are also recyclable. Take some of the safety pins, link them together and connect them to the zipper tab inside your suitcase. If you ever need a safety pin due to a missing button, broken zipper or other emergency while traveling, you're good to go. They take up zero space and when you need one, you have one and nothing else will substitute for a safety pin.

Q: What about Sunless Tanning Lotion?

A: Everyone loves sunless tanning lotion!!! Who wants to get on a cruise ship without a tan! NO ONE!! Your clothes look better and you look better! Right? Let's talk about this! First, if you're going to pack it, be careful! It can and will leak on your clothes. Carry on is not an option so you must use great care in the packing of sunless tanning lotion. It has dye in it and the dye is not always easily, if ever, removed, depending on the garment and the fabric. Secondly, sunless tanning lotion can rub off on your clothes. There are a million different brands and types of sunless tanning lotions from spray on to rub on. If you want to keep the lotion from rubbing off on your clothes, allow the lotion to dry at least 24 hours before dressing. We see garments all the time that are expensive and dryclean only and depending the fabric, that lotion is not coming out. Lotion or spray applied 24 hours in advance is less likely to run off.

When you return from your cruise or vacation, you will have plenty of clothes to clean. Toudanines Cleaners is here and prepared to address all the issues as a result of your fun times. Wine stains, dirty, wet, and destroyed are our specialty. All we want you to do is get there safely, with all your clothes in tack and we will be here on the back end to address all the damages and remove all the evidence (if you know what I mean!) and keep it just between us! Start packing and BON VOYAGE EVERYONE! ☺

Arlene Converse is President of Toudanines Cleaners in Boerne, San Antonio and Schertz, Texas. They currently own and operate 3 locations in Boerne and throughout the San Antonio area. In 19 years they have owned and operated 17 stores in 11 cities throughout the state of Texas. For more information visit our website at www.ToudaninesCleaners.com, Facebook and Twitter. If you have a question for The Dry Cleaning Lady, please submit it to info@ToudaninesCleaners.com.



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