



Air Travel, Kids And Carry-Ons

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After a week in the bush we were ill prepared for the long lines and heightened security that awaited us at the airport in Mombasa, Kenya. We had too much hand luggage and it was packed completely wrong. And if it weren't for a delay, we would have missed our flight home.

While the recent carry-on restrictions do not affect travel to all countries, they do apply to more than just flights to and from the U.S. and UK and could well be extended without advance notice. India and Canada have adopted similar policies and EU leaders have agreed, at least in theory, to harmonize their approach.

The following tips will ensure you're not repacking your luggage curbside and that you are prepared for long haul travel without your child's well-stocked bag of toys.

- Check both the airline and airport's website for policy changes before your outbound and, if possible, again before your inbound flight. If neither site offers information, call the airline or airport.
- Arrive at the airport at least 2 hours in advance.
- Keep your hand luggage light and simple.
- Check or ship rather than carry large and oddly shaped souvenirs.
- Pack all liquids and gels in your checked luggage.

- Ensure your single carry-on does not exceed 56 cm x 45 cm x 25 cm (including wheels, handles and external pockets), the equivalent of a small rollaway, even if you are not flying to, from or transiting through the UK. Please note that you may be asked to put your handbag inside your hand luggage as it is considered a carry-on.
- Be prepared to remove your laptop and all other electronic items from your carry-on and take off your shoes for x-ray.
- Consume any drinks you may be carrying (except the contents of your child's bottle, which can be carried through) prior to arriving at the security checkpoint. Drinks can be purchased and consumed in the departure area but cannot be carried on flights in or to the U.S.
- Revisit your repertoire of travel games. Age-old car travel games such as I spy, scissors, paper, rock, hang man, tic tac toe and knock, knock jokes can provide hours of fun even on a plane.
- Get creative with the material onboard. Make puppets out of airsickness bags and put on a show.
- Snacks such as Cheerios take up little room and can keep younger children occupied for quite some time.
- Relax screen time rules for older children. In-flight entertainment programs on most intercontinental flights offer music, videogames and more.
- Be flexible.

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About the Author:

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