

CHECKLIST: HOW TO BUY LUGGAGE

_____ **Step 1: Pick a Size**

If you're not planning on using the luggage for air travel, size is purely a matter of personal choice. If you plan on flying with the luggage, however, you'll need to choose between carryon and checked sizes:

- o Carry-on — requirements vary by airline, but 22" x 13" x 9" will currently meet all major airline's restrictions. Subject to change — check with your airline before flying!
- o Checked luggage — usually not restricted by size, but most airlines limit weight at around 50 lbs., making truly oversized bags pointless.
- o Specialty luggage — necessary for odd or oversized items like instruments, portfolios and art cases, etc.

Save money and personal effort by buying as small as you can. There's no reason to have a bulky suitcase that goes mostly empty if you can get by on a smaller, carryon-sized suitcase.

_____ **Step 2: Identify the Luggage You Want**

_____ Select a style of bag:

- o Dopp kit — small toiletry bag; usually packed in larger bags
- o Briefcase — light, standard business bag
- o Attaché case — latching, hard-sided briefcase with internal tray
- o Laptop or messenger bag — shoulder-strap, soft-sided rectangular bag
- o Backpack — simple, portable option; pairs badly with business clothes
- o Carry-on suitcase — rectangular luggage, usually with rolling wheels, sized to carry-on dimension requirements
- o Upright suitcase — large, rectangular bag too big for carryon; usually stiff-sided enough to stand on its base
- o Garment bag — broad, flat bag with built-in hook for hangers
- o Duffel or athletic bag — long, horizontally-oriented bags with soft sides and both shoulder straps and handles
- o Frame pack — oversized backpack designed for camping and hiking
- o Steamer trunk — old-fashioned, hard-sided rectangular chest

_____ Select a material:

- o Nylon/synthetics — simple, sturdy, and affordable
- o Canvas — soft, flexible, and a bit dressier-looking than nylon
- o Wool — old-fashioned option for sides of larger suitcases
- o Plastic — durable, affordable option for hard-sided cases
- o Leather — usually used for straps and handles rather than whole bags, except for briefcases and attaché cases

_____ Select a color:

- o Black — basic, universal, and forgettable; occasionally hard to pick yours out of the crowd on the luggage carousel
- o Navy blue or dark gray — good business-appropriate alternative to black
- o Dark colors (hunter green, burgundy, etc.) — more unique than black/gray/navy but still fairly dressy-looking

- o Brighter colors — not business-appropriate; usually reserved for family vacation luggage or athletic bags only

Shopping for luggage is usually fairly simple. Once you know the style, material, and color you want, there should only be a few brands or options to choose from. Don't be afraid to check a few different places — if you've got a good idea what kind of bag you're looking for, it will only take a few minutes at each stop to see what your options are.

_____ **Step 3: Pick Your Source**

_____ Select a type of store:

- o Department stores (Sears, Macy's, etc. — low prices, but limited selection/quality)
- o Brand stores (Samsonite, etc. — easy shopping and typically good service/returns, but selection limited by brand)
- o Independent luggage and travel stores (large selections, often have markdowns/sales; quality can vary widely)
- o Luggage boutiques (designer brands and high quality, but expensive and limited selections)
- o Online (easy shopping and huge selection, but returns can be tricky)
- o Handcrafted luggage (highly specialized and expensive; best quality and personalized options)

_____ **Step 4: Go Shopping**

_____ Head to your target store or stores (see step 3)

_____ Identify the luggage that fit your selected description (see step 2)

_____ Within that selection, find the bags that fit your measurements (step 1)

With the information in this checklist, you should be able your selection down to just a few pieces of luggage. Find the one that suits you best at the price you like — or move on, if you need to, and use the same information to shop elsewhere, until you find a purchase you like.