



The Ultimate Beach Vacation Packing List

At **Caribbean Journey**, we specialize in **luxury hotels in the Caribbean**, Mexico, and Central America, and many of the items below are available at our preferred hotels. When you book your family vacation with us, we are available to answer all your questions about what to pack for the beach. We believe that a well-prepared traveler always has the best time. Many **family-focused all-inclusive resorts**, such as **Beaches Resorts**, also go above and beyond to ensure parents traveling with kids have everything they need and more.

THE BASICS

Beach Bag – Most **luxury hotels** provide complimentary beach bags in the hotel rooms; however, I always bring along my own. I prefer a mesh option, so the sand stays on the beach and is not carried into my hotel room and suitcase.

Cash – Only a few **all-inclusive hotels** have a full-stop ban on cash tipping. For all other hotels, it is nice to have some cash on hand to show your appreciation for anyone that goes above and beyond. I like to carry \$10-\$20 USD in singles for every day of my trip. A small gratuity is also standard practice for your airport transfer driver or taxi.

Copies of your passports, credit cards (front and back), medical cards, prescriptions, and anything else that would be helpful if you lost the original. I always pack a copy of my passport in a separate bag from where my passport is packed.

Hats – Don't forget to pack one for every member of the family. The tropical sun is brutal.

Outfits – A typical day at a **beach resort** can involve 2 to 3 wardrobe changes. Breakfast + lunchtime could be workout clothes or a swimsuit + coverup. Dinner is usually a sundress or skirt for the gals while guys wear slacks + collared shirts for the finer establishments, or shorts + tees if venturing out to eat local.



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Long Sleeve Shirt, Sweater, or Light Jacket – it's a common misconception that the Caribbean and Mexico are warm 24/7. The evenings can be quite cool – sea breeze on sunkissed skin will make 75 degrees Fahrenheit feel much cooler.

WELLNESS

Bug spray – While all the [best resorts in the Caribbean](#) & Mexico maintain a routine mosquito prevention regimen, you will likely find yourself looking for bug spray should you do an off-property excursion or spend an extended amount of time on the beach at dusk.

Disinfecting Wipes – these have two very different purposes for being included in my travel bag when headed to the beach. First, even pre-pandemic, I was that person who wipes down my space on the airplane as soon as I boarded. Secondly, I love to try local flavors, which often means eating from beach stalls or food trucks. Having wipes handy gives me added peace of mind above and beyond using my favorite hand sanitizer.

Reef Safe Sunscreen – Sunscreen is one of the highest-priced items in resort gift shops, so pack your own. Please do our oceans a favor and make sure your selection is safe for coral reefs. I usually travel with 3-4 sunscreen items per trip.

First Aid Kit – a few band-aids, ointment, safety pins, and medicines for headaches and upset stomachs can make treating a small issue very simple.

Medical Explanation Card – if someone in your party has an allergy or other medical issues, it's wise to bring some cards explaining it in the native language of your destination. This way, you are armed with something to show the waitstaff or hotel staff if there is a language-based communication concern.

Vitamin C – Travel equals germ exposure. When you combine that with immune-suppressing actions such as late nights and increased alcohol consumption, you could find that you bring home more than just memories and souvenirs from your vacation. A box of single-serve vitamin C supplements accompanies me on every trip.





FOR BABIES & TODDLERS

Baby Powder – this isn't just for the babes; by the end of the trip, you'll be swearing to yourself that it will come on every future **beach vacation**. A few shakes of baby powder on your sandy feet, and the sand falls right off with a quick rub. Great for arms, elbows, and anywhere you have stuck sand.

Swim Diapers – pack what you think you need, then add five more. I always used more of these than I thought I would with my kids due to my fear of a soggy bottom causing a diaper rash.

Swimmer's Ear Drops – I found it helpful to use them as a preventative measure whenever my little ones' heads were submerged in water. They were too young to communicate if water was still in their ear or, worse if they experienced the beginning pain of an ear infection. **This is not official medical advice; please check with your pediatrician first.

White Noise Machine – even the best hotels can host awful neighbors. Be prepared to drown them out since babies & toddlers are too young for earplugs.

FOR BIG KIDS

Nightlight – if your kids are old enough to sleep on a regular bed, do yourself a favor and bring a nightlight so when they wake up in the middle of the night, in a strange place, they can see a clear path to the bathroom.

Snorkel Gear – We bought our own before we traveled so that our kids could practice at home and get used to breathing underwater. We didn't want to be dealing with any meltdowns due to being unfamiliar with the process while on vacation.

EXTRA, EXTRA, EXTRA

Binoculars – especially for when you have an ocean-view room, binoculars can help you spot dolphins, check out boats, and more! This is an excellent entertainment option for little kids who might find they are stuck in the room while the baby sibling takes a nap.

Charging Station – if you are traveling with friends or kids with multiple devices in the family, you will want to be prepared with a quick way to keep everyone charged.



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Clips – so many versatile uses for these! Most hotel blackout drapes have a fatal flaw – they don't quite meet up in the middle. Stick a clip on there and avoid that tiny sliver of light pulling you out of a deep morning sleep! A large enough clip can also help keep your towel in place on your beach chair on a windy day.

Jewelry Organizer – A travel jewelry case does the best job of keeping necklaces secure if you want to avoid arriving with a tangled mess.

Over Door Shoe Organizer – hang it on the bathroom door. It is perfect for storing all of the small kid stuff that you don't want to be strewn around your room. It also helps create more storage space for families traveling together with 3-4 people sharing the same bathroom.

Packing Cubes – total game changer! You can unpack in less than 5 minutes when everything is already organized. I pull these right out of my suitcase and into the drawer – done!

Reusable Ziploc Bags – every size, and lots of them. Great for keeping your phone, cards, and cash safe on the beach, and for sticking wet clothes or seashells in for your trip home.

Secure Card Wallet – if you plan to leave the hotel and explore the local markets or other populated areas, a secure card wallet is a good idea to protect your plastic from being scanned and duplicated without your knowledge.

Travel Steamer – some luxury hotels have started providing steamers now. I find that these work so much better than any hotel room iron so it is worth the space in my suitcase.

Waterproof Phone Case – a sand, water, and slimy kid hand-proof phone case is one of the best things I've recently thrown in my suitcase.

Waterproof Speaker – booked a [private plunge pool suite](#)? Then you might be wishing you had a little soft music as the background for what will surely be the most relaxing hotel room you've ever stayed in.

A well-prepared traveler always has the best time. Enjoy!

