



# Travelling is a mixed bag

It pays to be up to date with airlines' baggage restrictions, advises **Caroline Pierce.**

**PACKING** for your holiday seems to be getting more and more complicated. The big question is no longer whether your one-piece or bikini is better for days spent lazing on the beach but whether you can negotiate airport check-in and security.

Governments and airports are constantly updating security procedures, and airlines are getting stricter on luggage allowances.

Being up to date with the latest rules is essential if you want to arrive with your luggage (and spending money) intact.

The latest changes affect cabin baggage, bring Australia in line with much of the rest of the world and come into force next Saturday.

Any liquid, gel, paste, cream or aerosol can be carried in cabin baggage only in containers of 100ml or less. Not only that, but the containers must be carried in a clear, re-sealable plastic bag that is X-rayed separately from your other luggage.

There are also new rules regarding medications and duty-free purchases.

It's all for our safety, but it means packing is no longer a matter of tossing the contents of your wardrobe and bathroom cabinet into a suitcase while the taxi driver beeps at your front door.

And it doesn't stop once you've left home.

Australians, in general, have got used to quarantine restrictions, carefully checking wood, leather and food items to make sure they'll pass through Customs.

Now, no matter which airline you fly or your luggage allowance, if you're travelling to or from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates or the United Kingdom, you can't check in any single item of luggage weighing more than 32kg.

If it weighs any more than that, you'll have to send it as unaccompanied baggage — which means it may or may not be on the same plane as you.

This one was brought in to reduce injuries among baggage-handling staff, but means a life-size Buddha probably won't make it on to the plane.

And airlines are getting tougher with their luggage restrictions. These can be based on your destination, the number of pieces of luggage or their total weight — and with size and weight restrictions per bag thrown in to complicate things.

Flying business or first class will increase your allowances, as will membership of an airline's loyalty program.

If you're travelling through, or departing from, the United Kingdom, though, you can have only one piece of hand luggage, no matter which class you're flying or how many loyalty programs you're enrolled in.

The argument is that luggage slows the movement of passengers through airports, means more time spent on security screening and increases fuel costs.

Overseas, low-cost carriers have a luggage charge and some full-service airlines offer discounts for passengers who travel with no checked-in luggage.

A more common solution, though, is for the airlines to hit passengers with stiff penalties that make travelling with more luggage than you're allowed, hurt.

It can hurt a lot. British Airways' new rules, brought in in February, mean an extra bag on your flight to or from Europe, no matter how small, will cost you \$299 to check in at the airport.

A 30kg bag on your Qantas flight, where the economy-class allowance is 20kg, will cost you

\$480 in excess charges; on Virgin Atlantic, it would cost \$400.

Other airlines charge a percentage of the full economy fare for excess baggage.

If this all sounds too much to bear, there's an option other than staying home.

A service launched in Australia last month means you can travel without luggage, avoiding not only excess luggage charges but the interminable wait at the other end searching in vain for your bag among all the others on the carousel.

By using Personal Porter, passengers can arrange to have their luggage picked up at their home or office and delivered to their destination: hotel, home or office.

Depending on what you're carrying, it can even be cheaper than taking it with you.

A 32kg bag on a flight from Sydney to London could cost you as much as \$576 in excess baggage charges. The same bag, delivered door to door with Personal Porter, would cost \$465.

Another service, World Baggage, will send your excess luggage airport to airport for as little as \$5.50 a kilogram. It can also pick up your luggage in Australia and deliver it anywhere in the world with its World Baggage Plus service, for about the same cost as Personal Porter.

Either way, you'll have to send your luggage a few days ahead, but skipping the baggage carousel and waltzing through Customs luggage-free to be greeted at your hotel, bags already delivered to your room, does sound like the ideal start to any holiday.

> Personal Porter: (02) 8216 0793,  
[www.personalporter.com](http://www.personalporter.com)

> World Baggage: 1800 010 388,  
[worldbaggage.com.au](http://worldbaggage.com.au)



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Case pending: Keeping tabs on their luggage can be a source of frustration for travellers



## Baggage restrictions

### AIR NEW ZEALAND

**Economy** Checked in: 20kg.  
Carried on: one piece, up to 7kg.  
**Business** Checked in: 30kg.  
Carried on: two pieces, up to 7kg each.  
**Charges for excess** Charges vary according to destination.

### BRITISH AIRWAYS

**Economy** Checked in: one bag, up to 23kg. Carried on: one piece.  
**Business** Checked in: two bags, up to 23kg each. Carried on: One piece and a laptop bag when travelling to the UK, only one piece when departing from UK.  
**Charges for excess** Fixed charge of \$299 a bag, or \$209 if pre-paid online. Anything over 32kg must be transported as unaccompanied baggage.

### CATHAY PACIFIC

**Economy** Checked in: 20kg.  
Carried on: one bag, up to 7kg.  
**Business** Checked in: 30kg.  
Carried on: one bag and one garment bag. Up to 10kg in total.  
**Charges for excess** \$60 per kg.



**Economy** Checked in: 20kg.  
Carried on: one bag and one non-rigid garment bag.  
**Business** Checked in: 30kg.  
Carried on: two bags and one non-rigid garment bag.  
**Charges for excess** \$48 per kg.

### SINGAPORE AIRLINES

**Economy** Checked in: 20kg.  
Carried on: one piece, up to 7kg  
**Business** Checked in: 30kg.  
Carried on: two pieces, up to 7kg each.  
**Charges for excess** Charges based on a percentage of fare.



**Economy** Checked in: 20kg.  
Carried on: one piece, up to 6kg.  
**Business** Checked in: 30kg.  
Carried on: two pieces, up to 8kg each.  
**Charges for excess** \$40 per kg.

*Charges for excess based on flights between Australia and Europe*

