



A Genealogist's Packing List

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Here is a basic packing list that works for most genealogists when preparing for a research trip:

Items to print

Don't forget to store these printable items on a flash drive (see below) as well as at a cloud computing site like **Dropbox** (www.dropbox.com) as a backup in case you lose the printouts. Don't store these printouts with your checked luggage if you need instant access to them!

- **Directions:** Include directions mapped online using **Google Maps** (maps.google.com) or other mapping sites. Include your basic destinations and your "if I have time" destinations.
- **Hours of operation:** Call each site you intend to visit including archives, court houses and libraries. **DO NOT RELY ON WEBSITES.** Many facilities have experienced furlough days or budget cutbacks so you need to call ahead.
- **Policies and procedures:** Make sure you know if you can bring your own scanner or even a camera into an archive and the policies on usage.
- **Confirmation numbers:** For air travel, car rental, and accommodations.
- **Emergency information:** Phone numbers for police, ambulance, hospital, etc. Have the address and phone number for an urgent care facility nearby. Also print information of a local office supply store or a pharmacy in case you need batteries, disposable cameras, etc.
- **Research information:** Print out any reports, family trees and charts from your genealogy research database that you will need to consult on your trip.
- **Blank forms:** Blank copies of your research log, family group sheets, and family trees.
- **Contacts:** List names and addresses of relatives or other genealogy researchers in the area.
- **Favorites and bookmarks:** If you are not taking your own laptop or tablet computer with you, make sure you have access to all the favorite websites you need for research.
- **Accounts and passwords:** Print a list of all your accounts and passwords you'll need. Keep this in a safe place!



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- **ICE – In Case of Emergency:** A card or piece of paper with your emergency contact information in case something happens to you. Also list any allergies for medical personnel. Check out mobile apps that keep this information.

Technology

- **Flash drives:** One or more USB flash drives to store research information. Also, have one flash drive with just the Printed Materials listed above. **Tip:** also include a text file on each drive named “_Contact Info” and list your name, phone number and email in case you leave the drive at the library or lose it!
- **Cloud storage:** Make sure you’ve set up one or more cloud computing accounts such as Dropbox and that you’ve also downloaded the app to a smartphone or mobile device. You should be able to use a computer at the library or archive to access these files.
- **Computer:** A tablet computer or laptop. Make sure you pack the necessary chargers and peripherals.
- **Cameras and recorders:** Either digital devices or a smartphone that can accomplish the task. Use these devices not just to record your trip but also to scan documents and other items during research.
- **Smartphone or cell phone:** Take your personal phone and purchase insurance in case it is lost or stolen on your trip. Also consider a cheap disposable phone for \$20 or less purchased at a drug store or office supply store.
- **Global Positioning System (GPS):** Most smartphones already have GPS included, but take a standalone device if desired. Remember not to leave it on display in your car when parked since it will attract thieves!
- **Mobile scanner:** Make sure you have a way to scan original documents, photos when visiting relatives and other items. Keep in mind that you may never visit this area again, so your scans should be high quality and kept in a safe place.

Miscellaneous

- **Batteries:** Take rechargeable batteries (and the charger!) or purchase various sizes of batteries you will need.
- **Change:** Coins for photocopiers and parking meters.
- **Power strip:** Purchase a mini power strip so you can charge multiple devices. This is also a great way to make new friends!
- **Office supplies:** Highlighters, pens, folders, magnifiers, and the like.



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- **First aid kit:** Include specific items depending on your type of trip; cemetery research could result in sunburn or bug bites.
- **Food:** Pack your favorite snack foods and beverages.
- **Clothes:** Include clothing appropriate to the weather forecast and pack an umbrella. Also one set of dressy or semi-dressy clothes for last minute invites!
- **Thank you gifts:** Hopefully you'll meet many helpful people along your trip. Pack small thank you gifts for those people plus family members, interview subjects, and helpful staff. **Tip:** a small plastic bag filled with candy and your business card is a great idea!