

SAFN Sails the Seas Update #6, Packing Tips

Before I share some packing tips, I have a few reminders:

- *email Kay Fryman kfryman1@aol.com if you want to pre order your memory book
- *make sure your passport is current & will be until March 2018
- *if you have not yet, make your hotel reservations
- *if driving & staying @ the hotel, reserve parking for the week with hotel
(parking, return shuttle, and post cruise hotel night reservations at the Embassy Suites can be made by calling Tara Wengert at Embassy Suites: 954.315.1308, refer to SAFN Group)
- *make your free ship entertainment reservations on the Royal Caribbean site
- *make flight reservations (email Susan scombs@dreamvacations.com a copy of your return flight schedule if you have or will order post cruise transfers between the ship and airport)

***From Susan:** Do not worry if you have not seen your final payment charged yet. It is a back of the house process at Royal Caribbean and it may take until June 15 or so to show up on your charge account, and up to a week later to receive your confirmation. Also, Royal is running the private San Juan excursion payments and post cruise transfer payments as separate charges, so in many cases, members will see up to three charges equaling their total cruise payment, while their insurance and hotel to ship transfer charges will show up as separate charges as well. All together, they will equal the total shown on the Dream Vacations invoice and confirmation that you will receive once payments have posted.

Let's Get Packing!

It is never too early to start packing, so do not wait until the last minute. If you followed my update tips for planning your vacation, you will already know all of your show times, dining reservations, and shore excursions which will make picking out your outfits and packing your clothing a breeze. I recommend you go day by day and decide which outfit you want to wear on each day. This should help you pack only what you need. But, beyond the essentials, do not forget all of those little accessories that make for a perfect cruise. Here are some of my top suggestions, do not worry, they will not take up much room or add too much additional weight to your luggage:

1. **Highlighter.** this will definitely be useful when reading through the ship's daily *Cruise Compass. You will want to highlight any important information and all the activities and entertainment that interest you so you don't miss out!
2. **Laundry bag** (or a trash bag can serve the same purpose). It can be easily hung in the closet to discard dirty clothes making packing at the end of your cruise a breeze. Those pop up mesh hampers at the Dollar Store are ideal since they pack flat and weigh nothing.
3. **Ziploc bags.** these can come in handy for easily waterproofing items for your beach break or for transporting wet bathing suits in your beach bag. Also, use Ziploc bags to pack toiletries to avoid any potential leakage. With only limited packing room, you would not want shampoo to leak on any of your clothes. They are also ideal for packing small garments and underwear to save space, as you can squeeze out all the air prior to packing. Then keep them in bags on the shelves or in your drawers in your staterooms to stay organized.
4. **Soft sided cooler.** These are great for keeping you drinks cool beside the pool. Or, if you are going to a beach, you will have something to take snacks and drinks.
5. **Wrinkle release.** since you are NOT allowed to bring an iron or steamer of any sort on board a ship, wrinkles are inevitable. You may try all sorts of clever packing tricks, but wrinkle release maybe the best option. The trick: spray the clothes with wrinkle release following the bottle directions then place in the bathroom while showering for additional steaming of the garments and an effective to remove wrinkles.
6. **Small bills.** Last trip I tipped four different shuttle drivers, two porters, three tour bus drivers, two tour boat crews, and our room steward. On top of that, I used small bills to pay street vendors for photos and small purchases in port. While there are ATMs on the ship and you can get change from the customer relations desk, it is just easier to come prepared (and not pay the high ATM fees). While most vendors now accept credit cards, be careful as some credit card companies will charge international fees.

7. **Moleskin.** On a cruise, you walk. A lot. And you walk in those really cute sandals that have been sitting in your closet since last summer so you have forgotten that the strap rubs your heel until it is raw. And then you walk in those gorgeous heels that are normally reserved for those “sit and look pretty” occasions rather than trekking from your cabin to the dining room. Pretty soon, your feet hate you. Moleskin is a sheet of soft, felt like material on an adhesive back that you can cut to size. I have used it on various parts of my shoes to prevent injury. Alternatively, if you already have a blister, you can apply moleskin to your skin (on top of a bandage, ideally) to minimize friction.

8. **Travel scissors.** A million reasons exist as to why you should have scissors, but I take them if for no other reason than to cut the aforementioned moleskin to the size you need. Make sure it is not a sharp pointed one.

9. **A folding tote.** If you buy souvenirs or just need an extra bag for port or by the pool, it is hard to go wrong with a waterproof folding tote.

10. **A water bottle.** Guess what? The water that comes out of your bathroom tap on a cruise is filtered, purified, and as clean as anything you are likely to drink out of a bottle. This means you have, essentially, unlimited free bottled water in your stateroom! While water is free in the dining establishments, buying a bottle of water to carry around the ship or take ashore will run you anywhere from \$2.50 to \$5 depending on the size of the bottle.

11. **WATER SHOES.** This was something I was glad I packed when I swam in unfamiliar water. Some beaches are really rocky in the water. Some beaches had rental water shoes, but you could save some money by packing your own. You can find these in most stores during the summer, or on Amazon.

12. **COVER.UP.** When you are heading off the ship to visit a beach you will probably want to wear your swimsuit when disembarking. A cover up is the perfect way for ladies to wear their swimsuit and still feel comfortable riding in taxis or walking around town. These also work well for grabbing a snack after taking a dip in the pool.

13. **Towel clips for the deck or beach.** Use clips to hold towels onto your chair so a gust of wind doesn't claim them captive of the sea.

14. **Seasickness pills or bracelet.** There are many forms of seasickness relief. Some swear by ginger, others by Bonine, and then there's the Sea Band bracelet crowd. Consider bringing some form of aid that works best for you. While I have NEVER been sea sick, if you have never sailed, you may want to bring something just in case you are one of the few who may need something. The cruise industry recommends Bonine because it is non drowsy. Just one little chewable pill each day, beginning the morning before you embark, does the trick. It is available over the counter just about everywhere, and WalMart pharmacists will sell you a 30 day generic supply for \$4.

15. **Over the door storage hanger.** All of the little essentials, knick knacks, accessories, and even small clothing items can go in one of these over the door shoe storage hangers. This is a lifesaver since the bathroom is small. You can fill the shoe bag with bathroom necessities; deodorant, hair products, sun screen, lotions, brushes, hair clips etc. Basically, if it is small, put it in the shoe bag. It is even better if it's a see through one.

16. **Sticky notes & Magnets.** Sticky notes are perfect to leave little notes for your cabin mates on where you will be, what time to meet for dinner, etc. Magnets are good for hanging the daily activities newsletter (Cruise Compass), as well as anything else you find important. The cabin doors are metal, so your stuff can fit easily.

17. **Disinfecting wipes.** For everything from your TV remote, to your bathroom counter, door handles, and more, sometimes it is better to be safe than sorry. If you're prone to sickness or would just feel better about it, bring some wipes to do your own dirty work. (OK, I know, as a nurse, you probably would have done this any way!)

18. **Jacket or sweater.** It can be chilly in the restaurants and theaters & on deck in the evenings.

19. **Do not** pack a hair dryer. They are provided in each cabin.

20. **Wine or Champagne.** Royal Caribbean allows each adult to bring one bottle of wine or champagne onboard during embarkation in Fort Lauderdale, only, in your carry on luggage, only (maximum 2 per stateroom). Do NOT pack it in your luggage.

21. **Wear a wristwatch** and set it to ship time. There's ship time and there's local time, and the two may not be the same. Your cell phone's clock will automatically update to local time, which can cause great confusion since shipboard activities and port departures will be on ship time. Also, while at sea, sometimes cell phones set to the wrong local time, which will really mess you up. Ignore your phone's clock. Instead, pack a wristwatch and set it to ship time.

22. Pre addressed **stick on labels.** Now, you don't have to carry bulky address books. Also bring your own return address labels to use on things like luggage tags.

23. Take a personal **first aid kit** to deal with everyday medical issues. The on board medical center is expensive and the ship stores only open when you are at sea. They usually cannot sell over the counter medicines you can buy in your local drugstore. It may be hard to find or communicate with a pharmacist in the ports of call. So be ready to self treat small medical related issues yourself.

24. **Jewelry travel bag.** If you can find a hanging jewelry bag, you can hang it in the closet to keep your jewelry from getting lost. It is recommended that you do not pack fragile or expensive items (such as expensive jewelry).

25. **Lanyard.** A great 'hands free' way to carry your key card ******(Sea Pass) on board. You will be provided one from SAFN, so you do not need to bring one.

26. **Gift** for your room steward. I have been doing this for many cruises because these people work so hard and are not paid by American standards. Easiest gift, **remember their name (for the Guest Survey).** Then, you could ask what they like and buy it in port. Or, the gift can be anything from your state. But I know gift cards (like a master or visa card) are appreciated as well as cash and a nice note.

27. **Gym clothes.** If you are planning to visit the fitness center, be sure to bring extra shorts, Tshirts and socks that you won't mind working out in, plus a pair of tennis or running shoes.

28. **Long pants and socks.** If you are planning to ice skate, all skaters are required to wear long pants and socks for their own comfort and safety. Socks are also required to zip line!

29. **Clothes hangers.** For wrinkle free garments, leave them on their hangers, cover them with dry cleaning bags, and fold over once before placing them in the suitcase. Unpacking is a snap.

30. **Bring a nightlight.** Some cabins have them, some don't, so be prepared. It's easy to get bumped in small, unfamiliar quarters in the dark, and helps if you're sharing a cabin with someone else and keep different hours.

32. **Bring an extension cord and/or multi.outlet adapter.** There are typically only one or two outlets in a cabin, so this comes in very handy.

33. **Unpack everything from your suitcase and slide the cases under the bed.** Having them out of our way is a great space saver! Store the items you aren't sure you will need in the luggage under the bed.

34. Adhere to that old traveler adage, "Pack your suitcase and then remove half the contents before you close it." **RESIST the urge to over pack and pack light.** Try to only bring what you know you will need. You may need room in your suitcase to hold souvenirs on the way home. (I know my husband, Ken, is laughing as he reads this. I have NEVER been able to accomplish this "pack light" tip. He usually leaves half his suitcase space for me!!!)

35. Sounds funny, but works great: Pack as many items as possible in zip.top baggies. Then squeeze the air out of the bag when closing. Accomplishes three things: saves space in your luggage, saves unpacking time as you keep like items in their baggies, and helps keep your items organized on the shelves and in the drawers of your cabin. Use the medium size for socks, undies, etc., and the large for

tshirts, shorts, swimsuits, etc. Great for toiletries and accessories, too. Especially helpful when sharing a cabin, too, to keep everything in order. Once you try it, you will swear by it!

36. Carry on luggage Remember that you need a carry on for the first and last days of your cruise. On the day of embarkation, this bag should contain any valuables, prescriptions and items you may need the first afternoon & early evening upon boarding. That's because your checked luggage will be delivered directly to your cabin at an unknown time sometime between the time of boarding and that evening. (The ship has about 8,000 pieces of luggage to board and deliver in just a few hours .an amazing feat, if you think about it!) I suggest including a swimsuit and coverup for warm weather cruises, if you plan to use the ship pool facilities upon boarding. Dress the first night is always casual, so you can just plan to wear a travel outfit that day that you can wear the first afternoon/evening aboard the ship.

The purpose for the carry on the last day of the cruise is to hold whatever you have left after packing your checked luggage the last night of the cruise. It needs to be left outside your cabin door that night, for pickup by the bell staff so that they can unload prior to debarkation of passengers. You will meet up with your checked luggage right after you disembark. Always remember to keep an outfit out to wear that last morning, along with any toiletries, prescriptions, tickets, etc. that you will need late that night and in the morning. One of the biggest laughs of any cruise is watching people disembark who have forgotten this critical tip, and end up wearing towels, sheets and borrowed clothing to disembark!

37. Leave your cruise information with someone at home in case of emergency. Provide them the ship to shore or emergency phone number included in your cruise packet from the cruise line. Keep copies of your documents in another place from the originals. Bring your packing list with you in your carry on so you'll have documentation of contents if you lose your bag.

38. Harmony of the Seas Dress Code: During the day, the dress code is casual: jeans, shorts, bathing suits and cover ups, sundresses; anything goes. Cover ups or shirts and shoes are required for indoor dining .. and indoor spaces in general. **You do not have to dress up at all!** If you want to wear shorts and tank tops all day, every day of our cruise there is no reason you cannot. For breakfast and lunch (if open,), the main dining room has a less stringent dress code of no swimsuits, hats, tank tops or other pool clothing. At night, the recommended style is "resort casual." For women, that means dresses or skirts, capris or slacks and blouses. For men, khakis or dress pants paired with button down or polo style shirts work. There are two formal nights. Formalwear options for women include evening gowns, cocktail dresses or fancy blouses with slacks. Men generally go with dress shirts, ties, jackets and slacks, full suits or even tuxedos. The specialty restaurants always have a dress code that falls somewhere between casual and formal that Royal Caribbean calls "smart casual". Royal Caribbean defines it as, "jackets and ties for men, dresses or pantsuits for women". The Windjammer (cafeteria style) simply requires shoes and a shirt. Some people enjoy dressing up and others despise it and it's okay for both people. Royal Caribbean offers dress code suggestions with alternative dining venues if you choose not to dress up. In fact, a lot of veteran Royal Caribbean cruisers will tell you they really enjoy dining in the Windjammer for the wide variety of food and relaxed atmosphere. Enjoy your Royal Caribbean cruise experience without worrying about what you will be wearing at any given time.

39. What Not To Pack

The following are examples of items that guests are not allowed to bring onboard. These and other similar items will be confiscated upon being found. Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, flammable liquids, explosives, and dangerous chemicals will not be returned.

- Firearms & Ammunition, including realistic replicas.

- Sharp Objects, including knives and scissors.

- Illegal Drugs & Substances

- Candles & Incense

- Coffee Makers, Clothes Irons, & Hot Plates

- Baseball Bats, Hockey Sticks, Cricket Bats, Bows & Arrows

- Skateboards & Surfboards

- Martial Arts Gear

- Self Defense Gear, including handcuffs, pepper spray, night sticks.

- Flammable Liquids and Explosives, including lighter fluid and fireworks.

- HAM Radios

- Dangerous Chemicals, including bleach and paint.

- Alcoholic and Non Alcoholic Beverages

 - (except one bottle of wine, brought in your carry on only)

 - Potentially hazardous food and/or food that requires refrigeration

**Ships are cashless. Upon check in for your cruise, you will receive an all purpose credit card style room key, called a Sea PASS. They act as a key to let you into your Stateroom. They allow you to embark and disembark the ship. They allow you to purchase items on board a cashless ship. Needless to say, this card is an important item during your cruise and you will want to keep it on you at all times. At the same time, this may also be the only thing you want to carry around with you, which can be a huge pain if you have no pockets or bag. This is where your SAFN lanyard comes in handy.

***Daily Newsletters or Cruise Compass:** When you check in, you may receive your first newsletter (or it may be in your stateroom). It lets you know what important things are happening on your first day (like your Lifeboat Drill), and the various shows and entertainment that are taking place. Each night, when your bed is turned down for sleeping, your Stateroom Steward will deliver your newsletter for the next day. You will learn to love these newsletters. They are the heart and soul of your ship, from restaurant times to pool games and movies to stage shows. If it is a port day there will also be tips and (shopping) maps included with it too. This is where your highlighter comes in handy...mark up activities that are of interest to you. There are usually multiple events happening at once, so this allows you to easily highlight activities of interest to you for the next day. I usually use these newsletters as my scrapbook when I return home. I put them in my book with photos all around & can easily remember what activities I participated in that day.

Well, there you have it...you should be all packed and ready to set sail with SAFN! Next update I'll be sharing things to do on embarkation day, updated agenda, cell phone information, on line check in and disembarkation (yes, we will have to leave). See below a suggested Packing List and the Cruise Convention Agenda.

Until Next Time,

Kay Fryman, Convention Chair
Susan Pretkus-Combs, Cruise Specialist

Susan's Suggested Packing List: Warm Climates

Accessories/Essentials for Everyone:

Documents/I.D.'s

(keep a copy of these in another bag)

tickets

cash, travelers checks, credit cards

sunglasses

prescription glasses/contact lenses

sunscreen/lotions, after sun lotion

hat/visor

small umbrella

camera/camcorder & accessories

film/memory cards, batteries, chargers

cell phone and charger

nightlight (optional)

travel alarm clock (or use wake up calls)

extn. cord or multi outlet adapter (helpful)

toiletries/shaving kit

medications, prescriptions

books/magazines

port & cruise information

*blow dryer provided!

*pool/beach towels provided!

Women's Apparel:

2 swimsuits

Cover up

sleepwear

lingerie

hosiery/socks

2 formal outfit(s)
(don't forget matching shoes, hosiery, evening bag, accessories!)
1 casual outfit for return travel
daytime casual outfits
(shorts, tshirts, sundresses .mix n' match)
evening outfits **
(pantsuits, capris/slacks, blouses, dresses/skirts, mix n' match)
Work out wear for gym
Walking/athletic shoes
Casual shoes
Formal shoes
Sandals/thongs for poolside & beach
Sweater or light jacket for evenings

Men's Apparel:

2 swimsuits
sleepwear
underwear
socks
dark suit/tux for formal night (don't forget matching shoes, sox, tie, shirt)
1 casual outfit for return travel
daytime casual outfits:
(shorts, tshirts, mix n' match)
evening outfits:
chinos/khakis, nice jeans, slacks, polo shirts, tropical shirts, etc.
Sport coat/tie
workout wear for gym
walking/athletic shoes
casual shoes
formal shoes
belts
Sandals/thongs for poolside & beach
Sweater or light jacket for evenings

First Aid Kit: Just in case

adhesive bandages
first aid antibacterial cream
waterless antibacterial hand sanitizer
aspirin or non aspirin pain reliever
anti nausea medication
anti diarrhea medication
antacid tablets
antihistamine
Bonine/seasickness remedy
zipper.top plastic bags
prescription medications

Misc. Options:

Mesh pop up hamper
Hanging shoe organizer
Address labels
Empty bags/zip lock bags
Business/calling cards
Diary/notepad
Pen
Fold up tote bag/beach bag

2017 SAFN Convention @ Sea Agenda

Friday, 8 September:

1600-2000 Registration open in Embassy Suites Hotel Lobby*

Saturday, 9 September: Boarding Day

0700-1000 Breakfast in hotel
1100-1300 Busses depart for ship**
1300-1500 Hospitality Desk open in Conference Room***
1400 Must be checked in at the pier
1545 Mandatory ship safety briefing
1600 Harmony of the Seas departs
1600-1700 Hospitality Desk open in Conference Center**
1700-1800 Informal get together, at "Bar TBD" Deck TBD
1800 Dinner in Dining Room, Deck TBD#

Sunday, 10 September: At Sea

0830-1030 Board/ Leadership Meeting****
1030-1100 Opening Ceremony
1100-1200 CEU class #1
1300-1430 Business meeting
1430-1500 Induction ceremony
1630-1730 Welcome Cocktail Party, Hosted by SAFN, Dazzles, Deck 8
1800 Formal Dinner ##

Monday, 11 September: Patriot Day (at sea)

0900-0930 Memorial Ceremony
0930-1030 Region Meetings
1030-1130 Committee Meetings
1230-1330 CEU class #2
1330-1430 CEU class #3
1430-1530 CEU class #4
1700-1800 Veterans informal get together ###
1800 Dinner

Tuesday, 12 September: Philipsburg, St. Maarten (0800.1700) (

Wednesday, 13 September: San Juan, Puerto Rico (0700.1500)

TBD SAFN group shore excursion/tour
1800 Dinner

Thursday, 14 September: Labadee .Haiti (0930.1800)

1800 Formal Dinner

Friday, 15 September: At Sea

0900-1030 Leadership meeting
1030-1130 2017 & 2019 Convention committees
1130-1230 CEU class #5
1800 Banquet (bring critiques) ##

Saturday, 16 September: Arrive Ft Lauderdale, FL (0615)

Disembark according to ship instructions and assignments. Transfers according to what was planned/ordered specifically for you.

*Luggage tags will be provided for everyone staying at the Embassy Suites Hotel

** check transfer schedule notice at the hotel for your assigned transfer time

*** Convention check.in at SAFN Hospitality Desk (Conference Center, Deck 3 Forward) For those who did not already check in at the hotel, only. Desk will be closed during muster drill.

****All meetings and CEU classes will be in the Conference Center, Deck 3,

Assigned seating first night, then open seating for the rest of the cruise

in Dining Room (open seating at assigned tables)

Lounge to be announced

