



Buying the Right Luggage That Lasts

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Introduction

I often get this question a lot on what type of suitcase should they buy and what should they look for in a good product.

Buying a great suitcase can be save you money in the long run. Carrying the right luggage to fit today's rules will help you to avoid extra airline fees and improve your comfort-level while traveling.

The challenge is trying to figure out what is the correct luggage to buy especially since there are many styles and sizes. This book is to help you with your luggage decision.



Two-Wheels vs. Four-Wheels

Today most suitcases come with four or two wheels. The wheels quality attachment is the key to a good suitcase. Weak attached wheels will easily break when handled roughly. Verify the wheels roll smoothly and stay in place. Jiggle them gently with your hands to ensure they are firmly attached.



Now let's do a comparison of the two luggage types:

4-Wheels

The Pros to Four-Wheels:

Four-wheel suitcases are preferred because they can spin 360-degrees. The four-wheelers make them easy to move around with and you can easily wheel the luggage next to you, in front of you, or behind you. You can push one bag and while pulling the other one. You can use the four-wheelers to support you and eliminate a need for a cane. The wheels are easy to navigate in the plane aisles and other close spaces.

The Cons for Four-Wheels:

When you are on an incline, that piece of luggage will roll away. It can be difficult to walk fast through the airport with the luggage unless you have a tall bag. The wheels are

usually attached with poor quality material and could come off after a few flights. If you are going with this type of bag, you want to buy a suitcase that has a lifetime warranty.

2-Wheels

The Pros for Two-Wheels:

The two-wheelers are better for taking on uneven surfaces like curbs, rolling on sidewalks, cobblestone streets, and inclines. They are less susceptible to wheel damage as the recessed wheels are protected by the bag. The wheels only roll backwards and forwards which puts less wear and tear on them. Having recess wheels gives you more room in the luggage. Two-wheelers also tends to cost less and weigh less.

The Cons for Two-Wheels:

A two-wheeler, on the other hand, goes only forward and backward. It's less ergonomic than a four-wheel spinner. These suitcases put some pressure on your joints since you are pulling the bag behind you. Due to tight airline aisles it can be harder to roll them down because they don't maneuver sideways. Another thing that happens is running into others with your luggage while dragging it behind your body.

Zipper-dee doo dah

Zippers breaking during traveling are frustrating. The quality of the zipper matters, for example, the brand YKK is believed to be the most reliable zipper on the market. Chain and coil are the two types of zippers. The chain zipper is sometimes made of metal and has two sets of interlocking teeth. Chain zippers are better and sturdier than the coil zipper that slides on two parallel coils usually made of polyester.

From a security perspective, chain zippers are difficult to break into as coil zippers can be pulled apart with a pointed object like an ink pen. You also want to look for zippers that have two D-rings that overlap and a lock can fit in the holes. You are probably asking can you lock your suitcase due to security issues and the answer is Yes. The lock must be a TSA approved lock where they can open it with a TSA master key.

Handle Me with Care

The handle should have little to no wiggling or shake as you push or pull the suitcase for that maximum durability. When the suitcase is fully extended, you want to make sure that there is not rattling. You want to choose a handle that retracts completely inside the bag as it is less likely to be damaged. When the handle is all the way down, you want to ensure that it is locked in place.

The handle should have smooth movement as you pull it up and retract it out of the bag. You do not want it to stick as it glides in and out of its holder. Poor quality is frustrating and hard to get repaired. It is always a great idea to buy suitcases with a lifetime warranty. Therefore if the handle gets broken, you can get it repaired.

Hard vs. Soft Shell

Should you get a hard or soft type of suitcase? If the primary concern is for the protection from tears and the items you packed, then a hard-sided suitcase is the better choice. Hard-shell or hard-sided luggage is usually made with high technology plastics like ABS and polycarbonate. Both materials are light-weight, ABS is the lightest and polycarbonate is more durable. Out of all the hard-sided materials, which one is the most durable? It will be aluminum, but it comes with a drawback that it's also the heaviest.

The majority of the hard-sided suitcase has a 50/50 split opening where you can pack both sides equally. But due to this clamshell opening, you will need double the surface space to pack and unpack them.

Soft-sided luggage is lightweight and allows you to overstuff the bag. The other thing that is a benefit, is the flexibility to decrease the size when you need it to fit in overhead bins. You want to get a high-quality material meaning a high fabric weight. Not only do these suitcases expand but they usually have external pockets where you can put things like jackets, tickets, phones, laptops, and itineraries.

Soft-side bags come in materials like Cordura or ballistic nylon. Ballistic is shinier than Cordura, and over time it can scratch. These scratches will not decrease the durability of the bag. Cordura is softer and scratch-resistant.

Other Nice To Know

Bag Color

The most popular luggage color is black. Although this is great for hiding dirt and scuff marks, it is difficult to find your suitcase on the baggage claim belt. You will spend a lot of your time looking at luggage tags to find yours. Now I know some habits are to tie a ribbon to distinguish your bag from others, but those ribbons have been known to fall off. You want to buy a suitcase that is easily recognizable. Buy suitcases that are bold, bright, and/ or unique.

Luggage Tags

Buy a luggage tag that is sturdy and not the flimsy ones that will be torn off in a few flights. You want to only put on the luggage tag your name, cell phone number, and email address. Never put your address as someone could use it to break into your house. When traveling internationally, put an international cell phone number where you can be reached encase something happens to your suitcase.

Baggage Size

There is no industry-wide regulation that dictates the size for a carry-on. Airlines force their own restrictions with baggage size and unfortunately, the limits can vary among airlines and even among their aircraft. You should look up their rules of the airlines before you fly. Some will allow you to check the bags at the gate for free; others may have an extra charge for this service. Get a ruler and measure the dimensions to account for all parts, including outer pouches, wheels, and handles. A good rule of thumb is to keep your carry-on less than 22 inches by 14 inches by 9 inches deep.

Lifetime Warranty Suitcase Manufacturer

If you found a suitcase that you love or you travel a lot, I highly recommend buying a suitcase with a lifetime warranty. You want to get a lifetime warranty to repair or replace the bag. Below is a list of some manufacturers that offer the best warranties:

- Away
- Briggs & Riley
- Boyt (not on all product lines)
- Eagle Creek (not on all product lines)
- eBags (only on their house brands)

- Lands' End
- L.L. Bean
- Osprey
- Travelpro (Platinum Collection)