

# 7 things under \$10 that can help travelers save money, time and stress

By Rick Seaney

If you plan to travel this summer, there are still ways to save on plane tickets like flying on weekdays and always comparing airfare when you shop. There are also way to save time and stress, even a little more money, but availing yourself of these seven little things that cost less than \$10. Note: I am not vouching for any of the brand names dropped here; they are mentioned simply as a courtesy (and maybe as a starting point for shoppers).

## **1. Extra charger cord**

Remember how these little cords used cost a bundle? So much that when the cord inevitably began to fray and separate at the plug, many of us would patch the thing with tape rather than buy a new one instead of buying another. Good news! Cords are cheap now. In fact, a friend doing her grocery shopping last week excitedly told me she saw a huge display of cords (in the produce section, no less) for \$7 or less. At prices like these, you can be a sport and buy two.

## **2. Plastic rain poncho**

You will not look the least bit fashionable in this this one-size-fits-all wearable, but these ponchos can save the day during unexpected downpours. I've seen some of this rainwear for under \$10 online (including one model delightfully priced at \$0.85) and most come with a hood and fold up into small packages about the size of your palm so they're easy to pack.

### **3. Hand-held luggage scale**

Avoid overweight bag fees, which can range from about \$75 to \$450 (on certain Asian routes) by knowing your airline's weight allowances and weighing your bag. That's easy with a hand-held luggage scale and I found plenty online including several lightweight models that take up very little space. Prices for several brands like My Carbon, Etekcity and Dr.Meter began at less than \$10.

### **4. Energy or protein bars**

I know some folks who don't consider themselves cheapskates wouldn't dream of eating three big meals a day while traveling because they consider it a waste of time and money. What they do instead is, eat the free breakfast in their hotel (an increasingly common perk), then have an energy/protein bar for lunch, and shoot the works at a nice restaurant for dinner. I am told, the best part about having an energy

bar for lunch means you don't have to break away you're your sightseeing fun for an hour or more. Pack several of these bars in a few zip-close bags.

## **5. Zip-close bags**

These small, clear plastic bags (quart or gallon size) with sliding "zip" closures are perfect for packing. Stuff your energy bars in them, keep earrings together, bag up any medications you'll need. It's also a great way to protect your phone in soggy weather; place in bag and zip it shut. The gallon size bags are perfect for packing, too. Take a casual top or pair of shorts; fold it, then roll it up tight and place in the bag but before you zip it shut, sit on the bag to squeeze all the air out and then zip. You end up with a nice flat package that takes up very little room in a bag.

## **6. Ear plugs**

Yes, noise-cancelling headphones are wonderful (I never leave home without mine) but you can find bags of cheap disposable or reusable ear plugs online (brands like Mack's, Flents, EarJoy) and you can find them for under \$10. This can be a lifesaver when there's a crying baby on a flight, and you can be a hero by passing out ear plugs to seatmates.

Pack a few in a zip-close bag and place in your carry-on so they're easy to get to when needed.

## **7. Adhesive bandages**

Stick a few in your purse or wallet. Don't ruin a day of vacation because you got a blister on your foot.

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