



1 2 T I P S F O R T R A V E L K N I T T I N G

BY MARYNA SHEVCHENKO

WWW.10ROWSADAY.COM

A few bits of experience to help you get better prepared for knitting during your travels. I learned some of these tips the hard way. I'm giving them to you so you could avoid the "hard way" learning, and enjoy knitting instead.

CHOOSE A SMALL PROJECT

This tip seems to be common sense logic, but I decided to mention it as number one because your choice of project matters a lot if you want to enjoy knitting on to go. Why?

(a) A small project is small. You won't need to dedicate a separate suitcase for it, and then haul it with you and try to fit in into a car trunk, luggage compartment on a bus or train, or even pay extra for it if you travel by plane.

(b) A small project is light. That's a huge benefit if you plan to do a lot of walking (sightseeing, going on a trail, or visiting museums and galleries). Even if something feels light in the morning, it can feel like heavy stones after a day of walking.

(c) Chances are you won't be able to finish a bigger project anyway. Often when I planned a trip, I used to think I'd be knitting all the time and finish all my UFOs and make sweaters for the whole family. Ha-ha. Never happened.

But I have no regrets that I somewhat ignored my knitting during my travels, because I saw a lot of exciting places, experienced fantastic food, met incredible people and really FELT the place I travelled to. No regrets at all.

For a few years now I don't bring half-finished sweaters and blankets with me on vacation, because I know I won't have time to finish them. My go-to travel project is socks – 1 ball of yarn, small needles, mindless knitting – what could be better?

Speaking of "mindless knitting", if you like to challenge yourself a bit, it's okay to bring a project that is a bit complicated. In fact, you can take two small projects with you – a simple one for knitting in a car / on a bus / train / plane, and a more challenging one for knitting in the hotel.

2 CHOOSE YARN IN A LIGHT COLOUR

If you've ever knit with black yarn, you know how hard it is. You have to strain your eyes to see the stitches, to count rows and to fix mistakes if they happen (they usually do ...). That's not the kind of experience you want to get during your trip.

It gets even worse if you knit in a car or on a bus because you can get nauseous. And that's no good at all. So stick with light colours and leave all the blacks, charcoals and burgundies at home.

3 KEEP YARN IN A ZIPLOCK BAG

This tip is a logical extension of the previous tip. If you use yarn in a light colour, it can get dusty and dirty. That's usually not good unless you want to bring dust from Paris or Machu Picchu with you as a souvenir (I'll talk more about souvenirs in tip #12).

A ziplock bag will keep your yarn safe and clean. Half-open the bag when you knit and close it when you don't.

4 WIND YARN IN CENTRE PULL BALLS

You don't want your ball of yarn to travel around you while you are travelling. Centre pull balls will make sure your ball stays put, and the yarn easily comes from the centre of the ball whenever you need it. This is especially important if you keep your yarn in a ziplock bag, as suggested in the previous tip.



USE A TINY PROJECT BAG

Forget about big bulky bags with numerous pockets. The best project bag for travelling is the one that fits into your purse. You can buy an adorable project bag on Etsy or at your local craft market, or make it yourself. Otherwise, a simple cotton pouch will do just fine.

Stay away from pouches with zippers – yarn can get caught in zipper teeth and become damaged. Drawstring bags are a much better option.



USE CIRCULAR NEEDLES WHENEVER POSSIBLE

There are three main reasons for that – circular needles are safer for you, your project and people around you. It's less likely that you accidentally poke someone with circular needles (as opposed to long straight needles), and it's less likely that you accidentally yank your needle from the project and lose stitches.

If you have a habit of anchoring a needle in your side, and knitting with circular needles is not an option, use shorter straight needles instead.



USE BAMBOO NEEDLES

If you don't have any particular aversion to bamboo needles, use them instead of metal needles to work on your on-the-go project.

Bamboo needles are safer than metal ones. That's especially important if you plan to knit on a bus / train / plane when other people are sitting next to you.

Bamboo needles are lighter. Not a big deal really, but like I mentioned in tip #1, "even if something feels light in the morning, it can feel like heavy stones after a day of walking".

Bamboo needles are allowed on all means of transportation (more about that in tip #10).

Bamboo needles are not slippery, so you won't lose your stitches if your car / bus / train / plane shakes.

DON'T TAKE ALL OF YOUR TOOLS



Take only the tools you will need for the project(s) you bring with you.

When you choose a small project bag (see tip #5), think about buying or making a small pouch for tools. It should be big enough to fit small scissors, a measuring tape, a few markers, a wool needle and a cable needle. Those are the tools you will need in most cases.

Personally, I prefer to use fabric pouches with a zipper rather than plastic or tin boxes because when you open a box, it can shake and all your tools will get scattered around. It could be hard (and quite embarrassing) to get all your stitch markers back into the box.

USE POINT PROTECTORS

Point protectors are a must for travelling. Those little lifesavers will keep your stitches safe, and that's a vital task, especially when you are on the move.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Speaking of safety and regulations around it, all knitting needles are allowed in carry-on luggage when you travel by plane. Here's a quote from TSA (Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Department of Homeland Security):

"In general, you may place your knitting needles and needlepoint tools in carry-on or checked baggage. Circular thread cutters or any other cutter or needlepoint tools that contain blades must be placed in checked baggage. You are permitted to keep scissors smaller than 4 inches in your carry-on baggage.

Even if an item is generally permitted, it may be subject to additional screening or not allowed through the checkpoint if it triggers an alarm during the screening process, appears to have been tampered with, or poses other security concerns. The final decision rests with TSA on whether to allow any items on the plane."

Here's a similar message from CATSA (Canadian Air Transport Security Authority):

"Knitting needles and crochet hooks of any size and made from any type of material (e.g. plastic, aluminium, bamboo) are permitted in carry-on or checked baggage."

UK Government website also states that knitting needles are allowed in hand luggage and hold luggage.

It never hurts to check regulations in your country and in the country you are travelling to, but generally, whatever is allowed by TSA is allowed in most countries.

That being said, a lot depends on the screening officer at the safety checkpoint. Sometimes they might not allow long metal needles on board, so it's safer to use bamboo, wooden or plastic needles for your on-the-go project.

TAKE AN EXTRA SET OF NEEDLES

The biggest drawback to bamboo / wooden / plastic needles is that they can break. There are very few things more frustrating than a needle that breaks in the middle of a row in the middle of your project when you are in the middle of a foreign country or in the middle of nowhere in your own country.

And don't forget that there is still a slight chance that your needles could get confiscated at the airport (remember this message from TSA: "Even if an item is generally permitted, it may be subject to additional screening or not allowed through the checkpoint if it triggers an alarm during the screening process, appears to have been tampered with, or poses other security concerns. The final decision rests with TSA on whether to allow any items on the plane."?)

That's why it's a good idea to bring an extra set of needles in the same size you are using for your project. Put it in your suitcase to make sure it survives the airport security check no matter what.

KNIT A SOUVENIR

If you are travelling to a place that has a yarn store, don't bring a knitting project with you. Instead, go to a local yarn store and buy a ball or two of some exceptional yarn like silk, cashmere or locally spun alpaca. Use this yarn to knit something simple, yet gorgeous during your trip. That will make the best souvenir ever.

Have a nice trip!

Maryna @ 10rowsaday.com
