

# Light way to travel

IT seems the Kiwi tradition of a two-year OE or sabbatical in the UK will be continued.



By Heather Campbell Hapeta

Time for us travellers, of all ages, to grab our bags and take off – leave our never-arrived summer, spend some time in the Asian heat and get to the UK for their summer.

What bag will you take – small wheeled case, top-loading backpack, suitcase backpack, a large suitcase or a daypack? It seems the longer people travel, or the more they have travelled, the smaller the container for their gear.

What do I recommend? As always it depends on the destination, your lifestyle and the activities you will indulge in. Use your common sense, but the often mentioned plan of laying all your gear out on the bed then take only half is eminently sensible.

Beach holidays take very little ... sunscreen, togs, hat, sarong and something for a night out. A cruise will require more. If you are going to London for work it could be easier to send your work gear as unaccompanied luggage or freight. However, for those who have not travelled much I offer these ideas as a way of sorting out what's necessary and what's not.

Clothes take little room and weight compared to the other stuff but it's still important to be frugal. One of each; skirt, shorts, long pants for women; men two long pants and shorts, and for both three tops that will mix and match – that's it. Add something for that special event or venue that requires a little more style – a scarf or piece jewellery does wonders. Remember, long sleeves and skirts are needed for some places if you want to feel accepted and comfortable.

It's your back that will carry your bag through miles of airport corridors, down city streets, up steps and over cobblestones. The lighter the better. To the above add a guide book, basic toiletries and first aid kit, some light reading along with a pen, journal and camera and you are ready to go.

We all have must-haves, but keep them light and basic too. I carry a fabulous purple and pink tie-dyed silk sleeping bag liner that has become a scarf, a cover in an over-air-conditioned bus and once a wrap-around skirt. As well I have the luxury of sleeping in silk no matter the conditions. The contrast of silk and surroundings has been weird, however it's the silk that helps me lie down and promptly go to sleep on a rooftop in Jerusalem, a riverbank in Zimbabwe, an old caravan in Wales and on the deck of large and small ferries.

Have the events in New York and Washington altered your perceptions of travel?

Have countries come off your list of places to visit? Travel planning for me remains the same as always.

I start with one or two places on a list and then as I see or hear of places I add them – the current list is on the back of a free postcard. My wish list says "Kerala, India; Churchill Bay, Canada; Tsavo West National Park, Kenya; Petra, Jordan; Antarctica; Cambodia; Oasis in Egypt."

After watching a programme on the treatment of polar bears in Churchill it now has a line through it and, I am not sure if Jordan is a wise choice just now.

However, as with my other trips I will keep my eyes and ears open and closer to decision-making time, and the type of ticket combinations that I can afford, a decision will be made.

Finally, pack the lightest, most valuable piece of equipment available – an open and inquiring mind.

[travel@thecitizen.co.nz](mailto:travel@thecitizen.co.nz)