

Color in Your Suitcase

To prepare for a trip to China, I attended a packing “light” workshop. **I was told to pack neutral tops and bottoms** and mix and match them. You know what? I couldn't do it.

I'm not neutral about this vacation; I'm alive with excitement! **And I want to wear color to express it;** not beige or black. **I wouldn't look authentic.**

I want you to know that you don't have to give up color to pack light. As a matter of fact, working with color will give you more options for the same number of garments than if you work strictly with beige, browns, blacks, and grays.



The formula that I suggest is to start with two neutrals. In my case I chose olive green (Photo #1) and brown (Photos #3 & #4). Then select a connecting color that works with both neutrals. Purple was my connector (Photos #1 & #2). Finally, select a color that will serve as an accent that works with the neutrals and the connector (Rust in Photo#2). Now here's the secret, if the intensity (how bright or muted) of the connector color and the accent color are similar everything will work together beautifully.

In the photograph, I'm modeling 8 of the 11 garments that I plan to take. Only a t-shirt, a brown vest, and a raincoat are missing. **Ten garments (excluding the raincoat) combine to produce over 20 fun, elegant, and surprising outfits.**

You can see how little luggage room they require in the photo below. I'll wear what's in the pile on the left, on the flight and pack the rest. **Wouldn't you call that packing light?** Here's how it works:



Tip – To make two color blocks work, like the purple and green in photo #1 and rust and purple photo #2, you need to integrate them by adding a patterned item, like a scarf or another garment.

Tip – Choose garments that serve multiple purposes. The jacket in photo #1 is also used as a shirt in photo #3. The sweater in photo #1 is also worn as a third element for warmth in photo #2.

Tip – Accessories require a tiny amount of packing space, but look at the impact of the scarf and necklace in photo #3, and the hat in photo #4! You

won't get bored wearing the same garments, when you can spice them up with accessories.

Tip – Colors that combine best are those in the same intensity family. In photo #2, the rust, purple, and the colors in the scarf all have the same rich intensity. Had one color been dull and the other colors very bright, they wouldn't have combined as well.

Now, how do you think I'm going to use all that extra luggage space?

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About the Author

Nicole Mertes, AICI, CIP, Founder and Director of the Women's Image Institute, provides transformational training and services to help women glow. She is one of fewer than 100 Certified Image Professionals recognized worldwide by the Association of Image Consultants International. She received their highest member award, the Award of Excellence, in 2006. She offers information, advice, and transformation through her workshops, articles, products, booklets, newsletters, and web site: www.womensimageinstitute.com