

SAVE 35-70%
ON NAME BRAND
CLOTHING & GEAR



Practical Travel Gear

Adventure Gear Business Gear General Gear Kids and Family Travel Light

For Quick Trips: eBags Professional Deluxe Tote



With all the well-publicized changes in air travel, not having to check your bags has a lot of advantages these days. And for quick trips, I've found the [eBags Professional Deluxe Tote](#) a roadworthy addition to my luggage collection.

Usually, I travel with a lot of gear. A lot.

But for short trips, I can leave behind some of the larger bags and carry the eBags tote instead. That's liberating!

One of the most important things I looked for was a bag that will fit on any commercial plane I've ever flown. Space is often limited on smaller, regional jets and turboprops. Airlines are also cracking down on carry-on bags that are too large.

Many airlines are now charging for checked bags—for example, many of the “legacy” airlines such as American, Delta and Continental charge \$15 for the first bag and \$25 for the second bag (unless you have elite status or travel with someone who does.) United and USAir just started charging \$20 if you don't purchase this checked bag “service” in advance.

Avoiding the checked-bag fees a few times will more than cover the cost of the tote. That's a big plus during these difficult economic times. Plus, you'll avoid waiting for checked baggage at the end of the flight.

Even though it's small and only 2.3 pounds, the eBags Professional Deluxe Tote is versatile. The main compartment is suitable for clothes, with built-in shoe pockets. Another section, the business compartment, includes an office organizer and is ideal for a notebook computer, papers, energy bars, even a small video camera.

There's also a zippered side compartment with a pocket and a couple of side pockets good for carrying a cell phone, itineraries, boarding passes, receipts, car-rental contracts and notes.

The tote is made of nylon and has a rugged, padded shoulder strap that can be removed if you just want to just carry it by the handles.

eBags offers an impressive lifetime exchange warranty (five years for commercial use.) The list price for the bag is \$75, but the actual sale price is often half that amount.

The eBags Professional Deluxe Tote gets high marks from many road warriors and is ranked as a “Best of the Best” on the company's website—meaning more than 90 percent of buyers who took the time to review it would buy it again. I would.

[Free Shipping On Order Over \\$75 at eBags.com](#)

Search carryon luggage at up to 60% Off



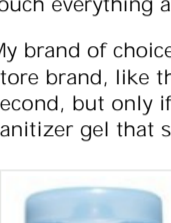
Posted by JohnG in Business Gear, Travel Light on May 25th, 2009

No Comments

Frais Hand Sanitizer

Since having children, I always carry a travel-size bottle of hand-sanitizer — whether I'm taking a plane ride cross-country or driving to the grocery store. Moms know that children tend to touch everything and then stick their hands in their mouths constantly.

My brand of choice has always been whatever is cheapest — and usually that means the grocery store brand, like the little sample-sized Kroger bottle that sells for 99 cents. (Purcell is a close second, but only if it's on sale.) I'm not that picky when it comes to killing germs; so the hand-sanitizer gel that smells like alcohol and dries my hands doesn't really faze me.



That is, until I tried a a luxurious product on the market: moisturizing, aromatherapeutic Frais. Infused with 8 essential oils, from grapefruit to tangerine to ginger, Frais smells delicious. Its active ingredient is sugarcane alcohol, instead of generic rubbing alcohol, so it's more moisturizing than other standard brands.

Plus, the company is environmentally friendly, with manufacturing taking place in a Sydney-based wind- and solar-powered factory. Apparently sugarcane alcohol is more energy efficient to produce than grain or corn alcohol, so the company preserves some of earth's resources that way, too. A portion of proceeds from Frais sales goes to Just a Drop Foundation, which brings clean water to communities around the world.

I found the Frais hand sanitizer a bit stickier than my usual no-name brand. But once it evaporated on my hands, that residue feeling went away. As I said, I think the perfume-y scent is heavenly. While my husband called the scent too “girly” and “fruity,” my children — ages 7 and 9 — liked it. So if that encourages the kiddos to want to use hand sanitizer more often, then this mom is a fan.

The kicker: the product is not cheap. It retails for \$7 for the 1.7-ounce container. Mini, smaller-than-lipstick-size .2-oz containers are \$3.50. I'm not sure I'd go out of my way to order the product online, but I wouldn't hesitate to buy it as a gift for a female traveler who appreciates the finer things in life. (Nor would I turn it away if someone bought some for me!)

Buy Frais online or at a handful of salons in cities like New York, Miami and Los Angeles. See the [Frais website](#) for details.



Posted by Kara in Kids and Family, Travel Light on May 22nd, 2009

1 Comment

ExOfficio Men's Cruz'r Travel Shirt



For looking good during your travels and having a sink laundry option for packing light, this men's [Cruz'r short-sleeve shirt](#) from ExOfficio is a dream.

When I was a hard-core backpacker setting out on year-long travels through [the world's cheapest destinations](#), clothes were a secondary thought. After all, you can revamp your wardrobe in Bangkok or Delhi for next to nothing when you get tired of your faded t-shirts. No way was I going to spend the equivalent of a few nights' lodging for a shirt just because it would make me look nice. The standard scruffy backpacker wardrobe was just fine.

Now I travel more on business or vacation and need to look, well, more presentable. I still want to travel with a carry-on whenever possible though, which means stepping up and packing quality lightweight clothing with extra benefits. This ExOfficio shirt is a real winner in that regard. It weighs just a few ounces, but feels expensive: good stitching, quality

buttons, vented sections, and a zippered pocket, for instance. It's 41% cotton so it feels nice on the skin, but it dried in three hours on a hanger on a shady porch when I washed it in a sink. (It even has its own little fabric hook on the back if you're hanger-less.)

It's wrinkle free and low-maintenance, so this is a great travel shirt to wear on a voyage short or long. Based on my experience with ExOfficio items like this I've used before it'll still look great a year or two later. It's comfortable when you don't need to look nice but will hold up well for when you do.

ExOfficio products are to travel gear what [Julemon](#) clothes are to workouts and yoga. Not cheap, but great quality. The regular price of the Cruz'r shirt is \$64. Pack a couple of these though and you don't need to bring much else. Great for traveling light and traveling smart.

Click on the photo above to see more or see the men's shirt section here:

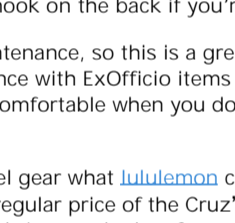
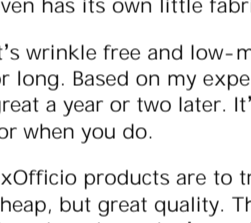
[Free Standard Shipping On All ExOfficio Orders Over \\$50](#)



Posted by Tim in Travel Light on May 20th, 2009

No Comments

Garmin Mobile: GPS for Smartphones



Much of my work involves flying to cities I'm not familiar with, renting a car and driving to several different places.

I depend on my Garmin Nuvi 650 to get where I need to go. But now my phone (AT&T Fuze) packs virtually the same features as the Nuvi using [Garmin Mobile XT](#) for Windows Mobile (a Blackberry version is also available.)

I'm amazed by what Garmin Mobile can do. Turn-by-turn routing with spoken directions is no problem, of course. But I've also used it standing at Dupont Square in Washington, DC to see what restaurants are nearby. It can guide you to millions of points of interest—gas stations, stores, airports, attractions, entertainment and much more.

Garmin Mobile XT can also use your cell phone's data plan to tap into Google Local Search. Or you can download a photo from Panoramio and get directions to where it was taken.

Garmin Online, available at no additional charge when you buy the program, also uses the cell phone data channel to give you weather and traffic information, gas prices and flight status.

I see this is a better solution for smartphones than using the GPS services offered by the phone carriers. You can pay \$10 a month for GPS from some carriers, while there are no recurring charges with Garmin.

Another important feature is Garmin Mobile already has the maps on the memory card, without the need to download them. Downloading the maps while driving can bog down the phone and make the mapping sluggish—not a problem with Garmin.

The program and maps come pre-loaded on a 2 gb micro SDHC card. Garmin Mobile XT with North America maps retails for \$99.99 if your smartphone has a built-in GPS. Or Garmin also sells the program with an external GPS for \$199.99 for Windows Mobile.

The Blackberry version is similarly priced at \$199.99 for phones with a built-in GPS. But the Blackberry version with an external GPS is \$149.99, cheaper than the Windows Mobile version with the external GPS.

I'm not ready to give up my Nuvi as a GPS for driving. Mounting and powering a phone for use in a car are still a bit awkward. But Garmin Mobile is a full-featured backup and handy when walking.

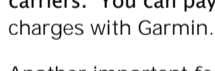
The ability to download data and incorporate it with the GPS features has intriguing possibilities—things a standalone GPS would never be able to accomplish.

A new feature I'd really like to see Garmin incorporate would overlay weather-radar data on the street maps. When I'm getting battered in a thunderstorm, I want to see what the weather is like ahead.

The XM satellite versions of weather radar for GPS are just too expensive for casual use. But the information is readily available from the National Weather Service and could be downloaded over the data channel on a smartphone.

That just begins to touch on the possibilities. I'll be looking for more innovation from Garmin Mobile in the future.

[Get the Garmin Mobile XT at Amazon](#)



Posted by JohnG in Business Gear, General Gear on May 18th, 2009

No Comments

UBrand Personalized Luggage Labels

Brightly colored, stick-and-go luggage labels from UBrand are hardly a traveler's must-have item. But they sure are fun.

The flexible-plastic, 3-D tags stick securely on suitcases and duffles and help airline passengers ID their bags on luggage carousels. The adhesive is designed to strengthen over time, and if you ever want to peel off the labels, they don't leave a sticky residue.

I tested the monogram labels — my three initials in black on white square blocks — on a suitcase that I checked on four different flights. Indeed, they remained on the bag through baggage handling. And when my daughter, who has the same initials, decided she wanted the monogram stickers for her own bag, we peeled them off with no damage to the bag.

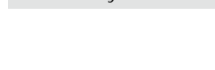
Use UBrand tags not only to label luggage, but your kids' sports bags, backpacks, musical instrument cases, camera cases or snow gear. They come in more than a dozen different styles — from the Hawaian hibiscus pictured above to a simple peace sign to a soccer ball.

UBrand tags cost \$2.99 per monogram initial (less if you buy more than 2) and \$3.95 for the other designs. Purchase them at [UBrand.com](#).

Or leave a comment below that lists your favorite design and you could get some UBrand decals for free! UBrand is giving away a set of two designs or three monogram letters to five different PracticalTravelGear.com readers. I'll take comments until Thursday, May 21 at midnight (EST) and then use a random-number generator to pick the winning commenters.

Check back May 22 for the list of winners. U.S. residents only; one entry per email address. Good luck!

WINNER UPDATE: As chosen by random.org: #4 MRS.MOMMY, #29 Barbara Rawe, #18 hazel hunt, #9 susan varney, #20 Lisa. I'll email you to get your choices for 2 designs or 3 monogram letters, as well as your snail mail addresses. Thanks!



Posted by Kara in Kids and Family on May 15th, 2009

34 Comments

Older Entries



Subscribe in a reader

TAGS

airplane gear bags carry-on bag cheap and light cleanser coolers daypacks double-duty Eagle Creek earbuds earphones eBags electronics ExOfficio Frais garmin mobile gift ideas gps green gear hand-sanitizer Heys IcyBag Keen Kensington adapter luggage luggage decals mobile gps MomSpit Ultra player packing aids portable music power adapter professional deluxe tote quick-dry REI Sandisk Sansa se530 se530pth Sea-to-Summit shure smartphone sound isolating survival gear Tom Bihn travel clothing travel pants travel security UBrand

PAGES

About Us Get Your Gear Reviewed

ARCHIVES

May 2009 April 2009 March 2009

RECENT POSTS

For Quick Trips: eBags Professional Deluxe Tote
Frais Hand Sanitizer
ExOfficio Men's Cruz'r Travel Shirt
Garmin Mobile: GPS for Smartphones
UBrand Personalized Luggage Labels

