

- How to pack for any trip -

Luggage: evolution

Luggage has come a long way over the centuries – from the animal-hide holdalls of the Middle Ages to the plastic ride-on cases sported by kids in airports today. Modern suitcases, born out of hefty

trunks of wood with iron frames, saw their evolution leap forwards with the arrival of steamships. Waterproofed with canvas or tree sap, these chunky clunkies were the height of technology.



1153: The first wheeled luggage rolls into existence during the Crusades, when the Knights Templar use it to carry arms, chain mail and shoe-mending tools.



1596: The term 'luggage' is coined, from the Middle-English word 'lug' meaning 'to drag'.



1870: Louis Vuitton debuts a flat-top 'steamer trunk' designed to stack easily on ships: the prototype for the modern suitcase is born.



1910: The Shwayder Trunk Manufacturing Company launches with the tagline 'strong enough to stand on'. Later (in 1966) to become Samsonite, it pioneers the hard-shell case.



1920s--'50s: The evolution of mass transportation sees a boom in luggage design. There's now a case for every occasion and item, from cameras and dresses to cigars and hats.

The suitcase spans every transportation revolution, from steamer to passenger jet. With the late 19th century came mass tourism and, a handful of decades later, mass aviation. Today, luggage design is intricately

linked to aircraft, from practical demands of baggage handling to what can squeeze into that overhead locker. In their myriad designs, our cases carry not just our stuff but also a history of human movement.



1972: A US company patents suitcases with wheels.



1987: Pilot Bob Plath invents Rollaboard® luggage, a vertical rather than horizontal suitcase with wheels that can easily be towed through airports and stowed on planes; the granddaddy of today's wheelie cases.



1994: The telescopic/collapsible handle is invented and patented by Don Ku.



2006: British company Trunki launches and soon dominates the world of family-friendly luggage with its ride-on suitcases.



2014: Luggage with GPS tracking capabilities becomes available.