

# Gear List

*Updated for  
2015*

THE  
QUEST FOR AWESOME

# Gear Post: 2015 Edition

Welcome to my new and updated for 2015 gear list.

I put together the original [gear list](#) you can find on The Quest For Awesome in preparation for my year long trip around the world in 2013.

As I traveled throughout the year I made little tweaks here and there and I discovered:

- How to efficiently organize my gear to easily access items I used frequently
- Truly important items to have
- Nice-to-have items
- Items I overlooked and added as I traveled
- Completely unnecessary items I brought

That's what this updated gear list is about.

I want to give you this updated version so you can see what I carry now, as well as some tips and things I learned along the way after more than a year of experience traveling long term, as minimally as possible.

One of the major things I learned from traveling and from numerous discussions on the road with other travelers about their gear choices is: everyone's different.

People have different interests and travel styles and this manifests itself in the types of gear they choose to bring on their trip.

However, most people agree it's terrible to lug around unnecessary items while you travel. So my advice has always been to pack less. A good metric to shoot for is to keep it minimal enough to be a carry-on-only traveler.

What follows is the gear and organization working for me and my travel style. It's a versatile set-up for how minimal it is and it allows me to experience many different activities comfortably, while also allowing for creativity and learning.

*"Absorb what is useful, discard what is not, add what is uniquely your own."*  
–Bruce Lee

The updated list is organized as follows:

- New/Updated Gear
- Gear That Stayed The Same
- Eliminated Gear

Hopefully this helps you in some fashion if you're getting ready for a trip or if you're just mulling the idea of long term travel over in your mind.

If you have any questions or are simply just looking for some advice for your travels, feel free to send me an e-mail at [dave@thequestforawesome.com](mailto:dave@thequestforawesome.com) and I'll try to help you the best I can.

## New/Updated Gear

### Exofficio Give-N-Go Boxer Briefs



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

I've switched over to wearing Exofficio undies exclusively, and I carry five with me now.

They are my favorite.

They are form fitting, they don't ride up like the Icebreaker undies did and they have a pee-hole.

If you've been traveling for a while and haven't washed them, my go-to-advanced-move was to fill a sink with water and soap, hand wash them, roll them up in my towel like a burrito and then sit on it for a few minutes to dry and they were good to go.

Seriously the best undies I've ever owned.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

### Icebreaker Men's Seeker Pants



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

Finally, Icebreaker came out with a pair of pants I like. These replaced the Prana pants from my world trip.

Stylish travel pants are hard to find and you usually end up with cargo pockets, synthetic fabrics or zip-off-to-shorts style pants. The other option is jeans, which are heavy and take FOREVER to dry.

These bad boys are 70% merino wool and look like dress pants. You could wear these to work and to drinks afterward and then go hiking in them the next day (they are super breathable and durable).

*Note: They run big, so get a pair smaller than your actual size.*

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Darn Tough Vermont Men's Merino Wool No-Show Ultra-Light Cushion Athletic Socks

Level of necessity: **Must Have**

I used Icebreaker and Smartwool socks for my trip around the world.

However, I switched to Darn Tough because they have a lifetime warranty. If they ever get a hole, just fill out [this form](#) and they will replace them for you. I've already had them replace two pairs and it was no problem.

I travel with four pairs now (instead of two).

● [View On Amazon](#) ●



## Icebreaker Men's Tech Short Sleeve V-Neck Tee

Level of necessity: **Must Have**

This is my everyday shirt and I have updated to five of them in various colors.

In my original gear list I only had 2 everyday shirts and while this lasted me for the entire year, I wouldn't recommend it.

Four gives me some variation and it's easier to keep things clean.

They are made of Merino Wool so they are odor resistant and quick drying, which is why I recommend them so highly.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●



## Converse Chuck Taylor All Star High Top Sneakers



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

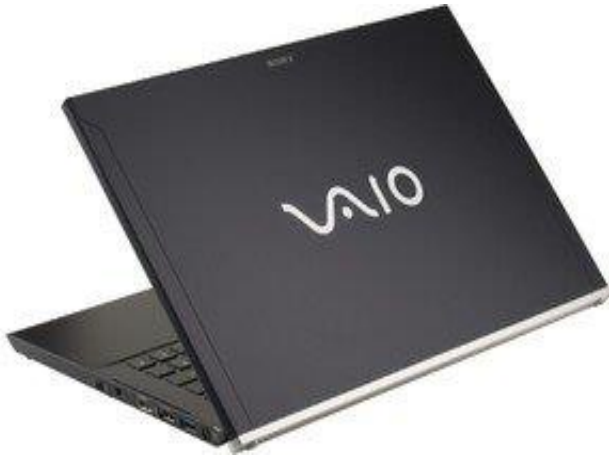
Obviously a decent pair of shoes is necessary while you're traveling, but, these specific ones aren't necessary.

I average about 7.5 miles of walking per day, so I burn through shoes pretty fast, which is why I have yet to put in the time and research to find a pair I really enjoy.

The Converse Chuck Taylor get the job done and are decently priced as well.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## 13-Inch Sony Vaio Pro (With Charging Cable)



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

I do all of my work from the computer now and while I was traveling, I had all of my electronics stolen about 6 months in. While I was ok for the rest of the trip without a computer, I lost a major outlet for my creativity—writing, editing photos, working on my blog, etc.

So for me, a full computer is a must have, however, it's possible to travel without one.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Nikon D5200 (With Charger)



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

It's very nice to have some sort of a camera to document your travels, but you by no means need a professional camera like the D5200.

I have really grown to enjoy taking photos as an activity while I travel, so it's why I choose to carry such a large camera with me.

If you're looking for something a bit more compact, that still takes great photos, I recommend the [Sony NEX-5TL](#).

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## iPhone 5s 32 GB (with charger)



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

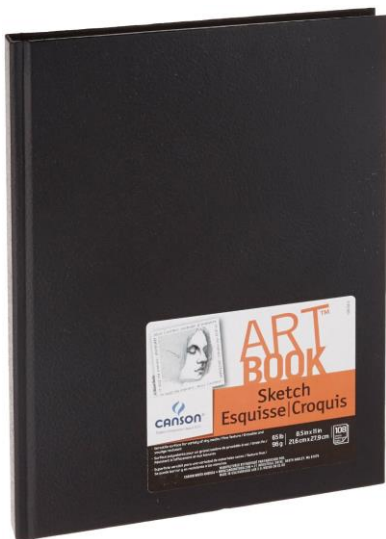
The way I travel, it's very important for me to have a way to connect to the internet. It allows me to do research on a new area before showing up, look for things to do, stay in contact with friends/family back home (and new friends I meet on the road) and book places to stay.

I also use it for my alarm, flashlight and for a going-out/quick camera/video recorder when I don't want to bring out my nice camera.

Whether you have a smartphone, tablet or laptop, I doesn't matter, but I think you should have at least one while you're traveling for extended periods.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Canson Basic Sketch Book, 8-1/2" x 11"



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

Since I work from the road, I bring this sketch book along for note-taking, brainstorming and fleshing out ideas.

The Moleskine is rigid in structure—one page per day. So if I need to flesh out an idea, I'll do it in here and leave myself a note in the Moleskine, like, "Blog post ideas fleshed out on page 53 of sketchbook."

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Fitbit (With Charger)



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

I use the Fitbit to track my steps throughout the day to help me better track my diet.

It's also great for tracking sleep and it's fun to see how far you walk while exploring during a trip.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Pilot G2 Retractable, Ultra-Fine Point, Black



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

As you travel you're going to need to write something down, usually directions or other travel information. It's a pain to always be looking for a writing utensil.

Plus, I keep a daily journal so I write every day. I like precision and writing small at times, which is why the ultra-fine (0.38mm) has been my go to for the past year.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Adidas Pirate Pants



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

These bad boys are custom made, custom fitted.

For my year long trip I had some Icebreaker shorts, but they had no pockets and were too short.

These pirate pants are perfect for me. They may not be everyone's style, but you should definitely have something to relax/exercise in.

If you DO want pirate pants I recommend cutting [these](#) about 3 inches below your knee.

## Reusable Grocery Bag



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

This is one of the best things I added during my travels. I was constantly having to take off my backpack to get at items I needed regularly, like my camera, journal (where I wrote directions) or maps of the area.

Also, since I was on a budget, I'd cook a lot of my food when I was in more expensive countries and it was a pain to try and carry everything as I traveled from hostel to hostel.

It's also a nice way to keep things together if I was just going on a day hike and didn't need everything in my backpack. I could just pack the unneeded stuff in the reusable grocery bag and leave it in the hostel.

I bought this bag in Australia for about .99 cents and it is still going strong. Best .99 cents ever spent.

You can find them in most grocery stores and [Tom Bihn](#) even sells a high quality version, which I might buy if my current bag ever dies on me.

## Tom Bihn 3D Clear Organizer—For Toiletries



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

Updated to fit all toiletries into one bag.

Meets TSA standards and it's ultra-durable.

I use it to carry:

- Shampoo
- Sunscreen
- Toothpaste, Toothbrush & Floss
- Cologne
- Eye Drops
- Razor & Nail Clippers
- First Aid/Sewing Kit
- Nyquil, Imodium AD, Motrin, Claritin, Excedrin
- Deodorant (Too big, so I carry it in a backpack pocket)

●[View On TomBihn.com](#)●

## Gear That Stayed The Same

### PackTowl UltraLite XL



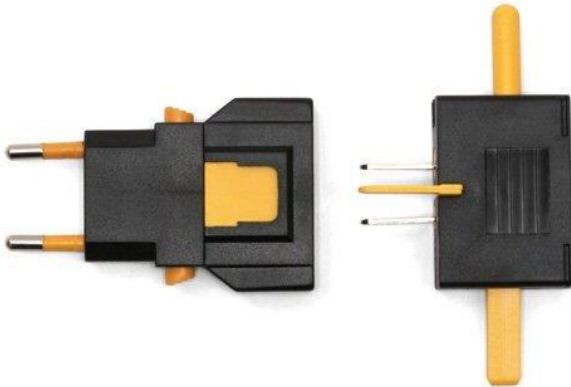
Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

Full sized, ultra-light (just a bit over 3 ounces), compact (folds to the size of a large index card), and quick-drying towel.

This thing is great and while most hotels will have towels, most hostels make you pay to use their towels, so while this isn't a must have while you're traveling, I highly recommend it.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

### Kikkerland uL03-A Universal Travel Adapter



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

This bad boy is a must for any international traveler.

It adapts to any plug you'll find around the world and is super compact and amazingly designed.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

### 20oz Klean Kanteen Insulated Water Bottle



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

When people look at my gear list, one of the items they always point out as being unnecessary is my water bottle. Most people suggest just buying bottles of water wherever you happen to be, and saving the plastic bottle for refills until it gets gross enough to get a new one.

I agree with this strategy if we're talking about normal water bottles, however, this Klean Kanteen is insulated and there's nothing better than taking a drink of ice-cold water when you've been riding in the hot sun on a scooter in Indonesia all day or taking a sip of steamy hot tea while you're looking for street art in London during winter.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Seagate 1.5TB Slim External HDD



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

If you're taking lots of high resolution photos you'll probably need an external HDD.

It's ultra slim so I can fit it in my money belt if I'm in a sketchy area and worried about keeping all of my photo memories safe.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Moleskine Classic Large Plain Notebook



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

I use this as a daily journal to track where I am, what I'm eating, how much I'm spending and highlights from the day.

I also use it to keep track of traveling information like: recommendations, flight information, directions, etc.

Many people argue you can just use your phone for stuff like this. I like the feeling of the physical pages, but more importantly, I don't have to take out my phone in sketchy places to look for directions, which could signal to a potential thief I have something to steal.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Joby GorillaPod



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

This tripod is nice to have if you're traveling solo.

You can set it up by wrapping it around trees, poles or just setting it on the ground and it's much smaller than a traditional tripod.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Icebreaker LS Outback



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

This shirt is perfect for those early morning or late night outings when it starts to get cold.

Since it has a collar and buttons I often wear it when I'm out for drinks to keep it classy.

It's made from Merino Wool, so you can even wear it when it's hot outside instead of having to put on sunscreen, which is nice when you're in a country where sunscreen is hard to find (and ultra-expensive).

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Dream Essentials Sweet Dreams Contoured Sleep Mask with Earplugs



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

I didn't use these as often as I thought I would, but, when I did need to use them I was glad I had them.

I like them better than other sleep masks I've used because they are contoured so you can blink your eyes without interference.

They are compact and very light so I don't mind keeping them in my pack even if I don't use them often.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Arc'Teryx Spiro Cap



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

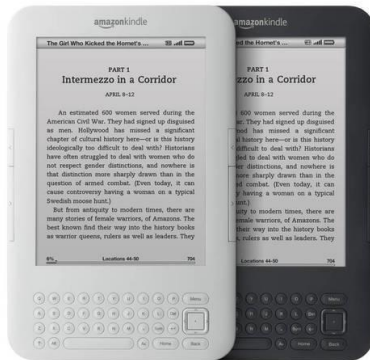
A hat is right on the brink between must have and nice to have.

But, if you do a lot of hiking and outdoor activities it's a must have.

The back unrolls for full ear and neck protection, which is huge if you are fair-skinned like I am and don't want to deal with sunscreen all the time. It dries quickly and can fold up very easily without damaging the brim.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## E-Reader (With Charging Cable)



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

When I was traveling for a year I thought I'd be reading much more than I actually did.

However, when I did read, it was nice to not have to lug around full books, which is why I recommend an e-reader of some sort, especially if you are traveling where books in English might be hard to find.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Throw Away Wallet

You can use any wallet for this. Basically, the idea is to carry something that looks real, but if you get robbed or pick-pocketed, you don't lose much.

I fill the wallet with old hotel keycards, business cards, etc. and then fill it with 10 one dollar bills and no more than \$50 dollar's worth of the local currency.

It gives me easy access to cash, so I don't have to pull out money from my money-belt and is a great decoy.

I prefer a wallet like [this](#), because you can show there's stuff in it very easily and if you threw it while being asked for your valuables, everything would fly out, which could give you time to run away.

## Patagonia Super Shell Jacket



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

I probably only used the rain shell a handful of times because if it was raining out, I just stayed inside.

The one time it truly came in handy was when I was exploring Indonesia on a scooter and it started raining really hard when I was still an hour away from home. I had my backpack with me, which had my computer and camera in it, so I used the jacket to protect my backpack.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Mont-Bell Ex-Light Down Jacket



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

This jacket is almost too good. It keeps you so warm I only needed to wear it when it was extremely cold outside, otherwise I'd get too hot.

When I did need to wear it (which rarely happened), I was glad I had it. Otherwise, I'd be warm enough wearing my long sleeve Ice Breaker shirt.

The only problem is neither of them have hoods. One solution is an Ice Breaker hoodie, [like this](#). This is the direction I'll probably go when it's time to retire my long-sleeve shirt.

● [View On Amazon](#) ●

## Tom Bihn 26 L Smart Alec Backpack



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

There are lots of things to think about when choosing a backpack to travel with. Ultimately, I chose this one because it looks unassuming (small, black, not a lot of zippers) so it doesn't scream backpacker/tourist, which could be a signal to a thief you have something valuable.

It was also designed with great customizable, organizational capabilities; it is made from super durable material and has aquaguard zippers, which helps to keep the contents dry if it starts raining.

●[View On TomBihn.com](https://www.tombihn.com) ●

## Eagle Creek Pack-it 2-Sided Half Cube



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

I use this to hold all of my cold weather gear, it makes it easy to keep it all together and easy to pack:

- Patagonia Super Shell Jacket
- Mont-Bell Ex-Light Down Jacket
- Mittens
- Beanie
- Neck Tube Scarf

●[View On Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) ●

## Eagle Creek Undercover Neck Wallet



Level of necessity: **Must Have**

I had my stuff stolen from a hostel while I was out to dinner. The thief would have taken my passport and credit cards had they been in my bag. Losing my electronics was a bummer but losing my passport and all of my money would have been devastating.

This is why I ALWAYS keep my passport, money and credit cards on me (and hidden) at all times using this money belt.

I wear this around my waist and under my pants, not around my neck.

[●View On Amazon ●](#)

## Tom Bihn Clear Organizer Pouch (Small & Medium)



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

These hook into the side pockets, the small holds:

- Kikkerland Travel Adapter
- Nikon Battery Charger
- iPhone and Kindle charging cables
- USB Drive
- USB to wall outlet converter
- Fitbit Charger

The medium hooks into water bottle pocket:

- Copy of passport, driver's license and other travel documents

[●View On TomBihn.com ●](#)

## Tom Bihn Padded Organizer Pouch (Small)



Level of necessity: **Nice To Have**

Hooks into side pocket with other small pouch and holds 1.5TB external HDD.

[●View On TomBihn.com ●](#)

## Eliminated Gear

### Kodak Play Sport

This was going to be my “rugged” camera.

It is waterproof and takes 1080p video. However, I found my phone worked just fine when needing to take quick pictures or videos.

### Fenix LD15 Flashlight

I only really used it at night in the hostels when I came home late and didn't want to wake anyone and the flashlight on the iPhone works just fine for this.

### I/O Bio Merino ¾ tights

I never wore these once, even when it was below freezing cold outside.

### Invisible Shoes Connect 4mm Barefoot Sandal

These sandals were great, and ultra-compact. However, the knot on the bottom would occasionally break and fixing it while on the road was annoying.

Anytime sandals would be useful, I just go barefoot and if I really NEED sandals for some reason, I just buy a cheap pair at the store wherever I am.

### Griffen USB Mini-Cable Kit

While these are nice and compact, it's annoying to use your devices (like my iPhone) while they are charging.

### Rick Steve's Travel Gear Clothesline

Awesome product design, but I really only think it would be useful if you're doing a lot of camping.

I don't travel with many clothes and I found there were always plenty of places to hang stuff to dry without having to use the clothesline.

### Sea To Summit 100% Premium Silk Travel Liner (Traveler Size)

I took this with me in case I ever stayed in any sketchy hostels. I stayed in a hostel for 207 nights all over the world and never had an issue.

I think I used it once while I was couchsurfing in Indonesia because my host didn't have any extra blankets.

### RayBan 54mm Foldable Wayfarers

These are actually pretty awesome sunglasses and I'd still be carrying them with me had they not been stolen and broken by monkeys in Indonesia. [Click here](#) to check them out.

Currently, I just don't wear sunglasses and if I ever need to I'll just buy a cheap pair.

### Toiletries

My original toiletries used two bags and took up a lot of room.

I eliminated enough of the stuff I didn't use much so all of the toiletries fit into one bag, which gave me lots of extra room. *See above to see what I kept.*