

6 Things You Should Not Bring to College

As you get ready to start your collegiate journey, it's easy to stuff your car full of things you think you might need.

While you may be sure you need 10 pairs of shoes and your trusty futon, think twice about what the essentials truly are. To help, we've put together a list of six things you definitely do not need to load into your car:

Your entire wardrobe. Here's the deal: You probably won't have the same amount of closet space you do at home, so make sure to pack only the essentials.

Be sure to bring these types of clothing:

A small collection of T-shirts. A basic tee will fit the bill in many college wardrobe situations. A T-shirt can be worn casually or dressed up a bit. Bring several understated, versatile T-shirts—and maybe a few of your loud favorites too—to provide the base of your wardrobe.

A few dress shirts or blouses. Sometimes a T-shirt just won't do. But pack just a few nicer tops—there won't be so many dressy occasions that you need to worry about recycling outfits too soon.

Some pants, and if it's warm where you are, shorts. Like basic tees, classic blue jeans are almost always appropriate on campus. Pack a few pairs, and grab some khakis or dress pants for the few times jeans won't do.

Just enough shoes. Unless you're packing flip-flops, shoes are a space hog in your suitcase and closet. Bring as few pairs as you think you can get by with: a pair or two of flip-flops, a pair or two of sneakers and a pair of dress shoes.

Remember: Pack for the season you're in. When you move, you'll be at the end of summer and looking toward fall. It's the perfect time to bring your flannel button-downs and jeans with a few pairs of T-shirts and shorts for those stubborn late-summer days.

When you go home for Thanksgiving or fall break, trade in your summer and fall wardrobe for something that will help you fare better in winter weather if you're in that kind of climate.

Big luggage. When you're trying to fit your entire life into the back of a car, you'll be tempted to use the largest suitcases you can find. The more space you have to pack, the more you can bring, right?

But what are your plans for the luggage once you've occupied your new residence? Where will you store those giant roller cases or footlockers?

Think about packing in smaller suitcases for a few reasons:

It will limit you to just the essentials. It's easy to pack way more than you need to begin the school year. Committing to only the essentials will allow you to get settled and assess whether you need more. If you do, you can work out a plan for how to get it and where it will go later.

You'll get more use out of small suitcases than large ones. Dorm rooms are notoriously short on space, so take advantage of every storage opportunity you have. Smaller suitcases can also be used as underbed storage once you're moved in. They can hold your shoes, extra clothes or bulky items like extra notebooks or textbooks.

You don't have to carry them. Sure, a big bulky suitcase is no big deal on move-in day when family, friends and other students are there to help you lug your stuff. But you'll need to go home every so often for home-cooked meals and family time (it's important to get that time away). When you do, you

won't have to lug a giant suitcase back and forth. And there's a bonus: You'll have the chance to grab a few things you wish you'd brought the first time.

Collections and knickknacks. Your collections are reflections of your personality. You started collecting shells on your family's first trip to the beach. You've had a passion for baseball cards since you were big enough to hold a ball. Each keychain in your collection represents a memorable moment in your life. Collections often have a strong sentimental pull.

But whether you collect stamps, trading cards or state quarters, the cold, hard truth is: You likely won't have enough room to store them in your room. Not only are dorm rooms notoriously short on storage, they also have precious few flat spaces for displaying such items. Chances are you won't be able to keep and admire your collection in your new home away from home. So just leave it in your room at home or another safe spot for now.

If you simply must bring a few of these items along, consider space-friendly ways to store them:

Make them art. Use shadow boxes, picture frames or other decorative solutions to showcase a few pieces from your collection.

Make them functional. Bring a couple of keychains to hold your dorm or car keys. Bring a few of your T-shirts to wear on special occasions. Bring that one special stuffed animal to hang out on your bed and remind you of home.

Make space for them. If you just can't leave your collections at home, be prepared to sacrifice storage for some of your other items.

You can still add to your collections as you find new items, make new memories and maybe even discover new friends with the same collections. But be sure to keep them in a safe

place—maybe in one of the small suitcases under your bed—and then bring them home later.

Furniture. Furniture can be a fun way to personalize your dorm space. However, though it might seem like a great idea to bring a couch or futon, it's important to think about space. While some dorms have a healthy amount of room, the last thing you want to do is haul your favorite couch to campus only to haul it back once you discover it doesn't fit.

Give it time. Wait until after you and your roommate move in to see if you actually have the space to bring some furniture to personalize your room. Work together to come up with a list of pieces you'd like to bring and that you think will fit. Then check with your families, shop online or browse local stores for the best deals.

Check the college handbook. Many schools have specific rules as to what kinds of furnishings are and are not allowed in the residence hall. For example, some won't allow upholstered furniture from thrift stores because of the potential for bedbugs and other pests. Others have rules about where furniture is placed and how much of a walkway it blocks. If you have questions, ask a resident adviser (RA). They're there to help!

Consider small-scale alternatives. There are many furniture options today for students and others looking to maximize their small dorm or apartment spaces. Grab some collapsible lawn chairs that can be stored under your bed or in a closet corner to save space. Fold-up or nesting tray tables can add handy eating or homework surfaces without taking up valuable floor space. Furniture doesn't have to take up a lot of space to add personality to your room.

Duplicate items. Like two people showing up to a party in the same outfit unplanned, it can be awkward when you and your new roommate—to whom you may not yet have spoken—both show up with

a minifridge, microwave and what you think is the world's best coffeemaker. A little planning can prevent such an uncomfortable introduction.

Reach out ahead of time. Most schools will provide your roommate's contact information before it's time to move in to your living situation. Get in touch and take the opportunity to learn a little more about your roommate's preferences on keeping the room clean and sharing furniture or fridge space. Also, find out what appliances your roommate plans to bring. That way, you won't be complete strangers trying to make conversation while filling your sock drawers.

Be willing to compromise. It's always more comfortable to have your own stuff. You know how it works, don't have to ask for permission to use it and won't feel guilty if it breaks. But your new roomie feels the same way about their things. If you really want to bring your coffee pot, let your roommate bring the microwave.

Coordinate your efforts. Find out who has what, especially if you're missing anything you'll need. Come up with a plan to get the missing items that's fair to both of you. Don't take on the full burden yourself or expect your roommate to pick them up without communicating about it.

A frown. When it's time for you to move, be sure to pack a smile and a positive outlook. Your first year at college can be stressful, but if you're ready to get involved and do your best, you're on track to succeed.

Be together. Don't be the student who just goes to class, eats alone, studies and goes to sleep. Get to know your roommate, join a club that interests you and cheer on your school's football team.

Be present. Engage others—in class, in intramurals, in conversation. Fully enjoy this stage of life.

Be open. Letting new people get to know the real you can be scary, but it can also be rewarding. College campuses are diverse in their student bodies, have different personalities and offer opportunities for everyone. So let the you inside shine and discover how enriching the college experience can be.

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