

# Packing Cubes Are the Travel Must-Have You Didn't Know You Needed

GQ's Best Stuff played a whole lot of carry-on luggage Tetris to find the best packing cubes for every kind of traveler.



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**If you told** me six months ago that I would become an expert on—nay, *evangelist* for—packing cubes, I would have been offended at best. Had I really become so boring as to wax poetic about what is essentially a Russian-doll OCD packing system? Surely this must be some cruel joke or conspiracy from the travel industry, trying to push us to buy more things we don't need. Who actually buys bags to pack within bags?

As much as it pains me to admit it: I was very wrong, and packing cubes are actually life-changing travel accessories.

I discovered the joys of packing cubes while transitioning from my life as a frequent business traveler to a full-on fancy digital nomad. Living permanently or semi-regularly on the road means becoming accustomed to a certain packing arrangement: specifically, one that is efficient enough to whisk me through TSA, keeps all my important items accessible and organized, creates somewhat of a spatial paradox—leaving enough room for every worst-case scenario item (plus extra to bring back gifts)—and is lightweight to help expedite those unexpected moments, like sprinting across an airport terminal. Packing cubes somehow manage to tick all of the boxes, and I am here for it.

What's so great about them? First, they make **packing and unpacking** a total breeze (you'd be amazed by how much space a nylon zipper compression bag saves you). I recommend investing in

a multi-pack to separate shirts, pants, **underwear**, and toiletries into different cubes that easily slide into your suitcase or backpack. Packing cubes also minimize the likelihood of TSA agents tearing up your neatly packed bag to look for some innocuous object that you didn't think was a threat to national security, such as a slightly oversized toiletry kit or hotel candle (TSA agents *LOVE* rule-following travelers who don't require them to do extra work). Beyond that, they're light enough to barely add to your overall luggage weight, easy to store when not in use, and make great self-contained drawers if you plan to spread out in your hotel room for a few days. Man, I almost tear up just thinking about how much I love packing cubes.



That said, there are many, *many* kinds of packing cubes out there. Just as with **suitcases** or **backpacks**, some are sharper than others. So here are six of them to help keep your travel life as organized as it is stylish.

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## The Best All-Around Packing Cubes



### Eagle Creek Pack-It Original starter set

Amazon \$46

[Buy Now](#)

This packing cube sampler platter from Eagle Creek is the most versatile bang for your buck. Along with two mesh-top packing cubes that make it easy to quickly find what you're looking for, the Eagle Creek Pack It Original Starter Set includes a garment folder that is handy for keeping **dress shirts** unwrinkled and folded neatly. I've started using these packing cubes as drawers to keep everything organized and easy to shove back into my bag when I'm ready to go.

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## The Best Packing Cubes for Business Dudes with Dry Cleaning



IAmARunBox Origami organizers

IAmARunBox \$73

[Buy Now](#)

If you freak out over wrinkles, these new Structured Origami Garment Cubes from Swedish company IAmARunBox might be your lifesaver. Lightweight and compact, these packing cubes feature a hard shell exterior that adds an extra level of protection to shirts. Despite its small size, there's a lot in here, including: a garment organizer, laundry bag, and a pocket to store your laptop.

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## The Best Packing Cubes for Extreme Overpackers



**Peak Design packing cube**

Amazon **\$40**

[Buy Now](#)

Are you the type of traveler who often finds yourself throwing your entire weight onto your luggage in order to zip everything in? This packing cube from Peak Design is the best space saver, with a double compression/expansion zipper component so you can really shove those extra shirts and jeans in. Bonus: An internal divider makes it easy to separate dirty clothes, so you don't have to worry about mixed-clothes stank toward the end of your trip.

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## The Best Packing Cubes for OCD Travelers



**Travelon Packing Cube**

Amazon **\$18**

**Buy Now**

Do you find yourself disgruntled about the lack of pockets and zippers in most products? These multi-purpose Travelon packing cubes have different compartments and pouches, so you can keep things tightly organized in your suitcase. Along with *deep cube space* for holding larger apparel

like pants and shirts, there are three mesh pockets that make it easy for storing boxers, ties, socks, and other accessories. Plus, it comes with a removable nylon pouch for separating dirty clothes.

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## The Best Packing Cubes for Guys Out Here Trying to Live Like James Bond



**Fab Seventies Antique White Packing Cube**

SuitSuit \$50

**Buy Now**

Who says functional travel items can't have a little swagger? For those who don't mind throwing a few extra bucks on something that looks a bit nicer, luxury luggage manufacturer SuitSuit has a very '70s, retro-inspired travel cube set in timeless antique cream and brown that is among the most stylish options for staying organized.

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## The Best Grotesquely Luxe Packing Cubes



**Louis Vuitton packing cube**

Louis Vuitton \$595

**Buy Now**

When you want something that's durable, designer, and might have resale value someday, this is your packing cube. Legacy luxury luggage company Louis Vuitton is the ultimate splurge, but you get what you pay for (as one should for a packing cube that costs \$520–\$670). Along with LV's iconic monogram-coated canvas exterior and gold details, these durable packing cubes feature natural cowhide leather trim and textile lining worth using every day beyond your latest adventure.

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