

...pack for a winter season

WITH SNOW+ROCK, GUIDES US THROUGH THE PITFALLS OF PACKING TO ARRIVE IN STYLE IN RESORT



The hard bit's over – you've bagged yourself a great job for the season, you're heading out to the resort of your dreams and you've heard the snow's been falling thick and fast. In a haze of excitement you've piled everything you think you'll need on to your bed, but how on earth are you going to cart all this out to resort without looking like an over-worked pack horse? The answer lies in mankind's greatest invention since the Post-it note: wheeled luggage.

K.I.S.S.

Everything you're staring at on your bed can be packed into one of three bags – that's all you're going to need. The trick is to Keep It Simple, Stupid. The last thing you want is to be struggling with eight little bags and cases. Armed with just the following pieces of luggage, that mountain of kit will simply glide out to the snow.

A big wheelie snowboard bag

For your hardware, helmet, shovel and anything else bulky, grab a nice long wheelie snowboard bag. Skiers, I hear your cries, but snowboard bags are wider and deeper than skinny ski bags so you get more volume for your money. And pack things like towels or clothes in to protect your valuable equipment and to save space in your holdall.

A holdall for all your clothes

The rest of your clothes can go into a decent wheelie bag. Look for one that zips open around the middle so you can open it like a suitcase. This makes packing it and finding your favourite t-shirt on arrival much easier. No need to be a hero though, go for the wheelie option every time, most of which are around 100 litres, which is plenty. If you've followed the advice then you won't need any larger. Go bigger and you'll end up taking things that'll fester in the corner of your room.

A decent technical daypack for on the hill

Finally, take a daypack that you can put all your kit in for on the hill. Most leading manufacturers have at least two models on the market between 12 and 20 litres. If you intend to do lots of backcountry, go for the higher end of the scale. Pick one that's made of a decent tough fabric so it won't wear out (that freebie your local gym gave out will fall apart on day two). It's extra-helpful if you can strap your skis or board to it to keep your hands free on hikes. If you fancy, you might also want to pick one that has a hydration sleeve in the pack to hold a drinks bladder for long days away from the crowds. But basically, it needs to be comfortable to wear and not get in your way when you're riding.

Packing pointers

Start big, work small. Put your big, heavy bits in first like your board and boots. Then stuff and squeeze other bits and pieces in around the sides.

Fill the space. There are a few spare litres of space inside each of your ski or board boots for socks.

Personalise your luggage. Stick a tag on the outside, ink your name on the side or sew a patch on the top – anything to help you pick your big bags out from the crowd.

Stick a drinks bladder in your daypack to save you stopping for a drink all the time.

Keep electronics dry. Pick up a small canoeist's dry bag from an outdoor store to keep your camera and phone dry, even if you don't.

It's worth getting a combination cable lock for your board or skis. They're cheap and small and they'll deter thieves



Clockwise, from above: DaKine Split Roller 120L £100; DaKine HeliPro 16L £65; Snow+Rock Deluxe Wheelie 180 £75 All available from www.snowandrock.com

away from your prized kit. Ditch the duffle coat. Take a few thin mid-layers rather than your one favourite thick hoody. Lightweight fleece or merino wool keeps you warmer and more comfortable, and takes up much less space in your bag.

Compress! Packdown sacks make sorting and finding your clothes much easier. Fold your clothes into these tough sandwich bags that have flat one-way valves along a seam, roll them up and squeeze all the air out, and you end up with vacuum-packed clothes.

Go versatile. When buying your clothing for your season remember you're going to be out in everything from blizzards to sunburnt spring days, so pick versatile stuff. Shell jackets work all season long, whereas a massive down parka will only be useful for about the coldest four weeks of the year.

Finally, don't forget the basic rule when packing – if you don't need it, don't take it. You'll be amazed at how much you'll be tempted to take with you that will sit idle in your room all season long. Remember, K.I.S.S. ☺