

Organizing Tips for a Headache-Free Summer Vacation

New Haven, CT – Studies show Americans are working harder and longer than they ever did before. This places a higher premium on already prized vacation time. But for most, preparing for, going on and coming back from a break can prove just as hectic and tiring than just staying home.

“You’ve earned the time off, enjoy it!” declares Organizing Guru Rosemary Chieppo. “Whether you’re going to the Caribbean for a week or visiting family over the weekend, the key is to plan ahead.” Chieppo reminds that once organized, there’s nothing left to do but to have fun.

In her new organizing handbook, “Clutter, Chaos & the Cure,” Chieppo offers guidelines ranging from maximizing closet space to deciding when important documents should be thrown out, but also offers tips for organizing a less stressful trip.

The longtime member of the National Association of Professional Organizers suggests doing the following before leaving town:

- Make sure everything at home is in order so returning home is more enjoyable, including:
 - o Arranging for pet care
 - o Paying the bills due before return
 - o Halting deliveries
 - o Taking out the trash
 - o Washing all dirty clothes
- Roll clothes into tight cylinders to save space when packing
- Pack a bag for dirty laundry
- Leave extra space in suitcases for souvenirs

“Once you return,” Chieppo stresses, “put everything back in its place!” That’s the basis of her unconventional approach, which she admits is “more Rachael Ray than Martha Stewart.” For Chieppo, organization does not mean being rigid or perfect, but rather being able to find what you need when you need it.

“Think, toothbrush,” she reveals. “You never lose it because its home is where you use it.”

Chieppo encourages travelers to apply the same logic while on a road trip, “Make sure your jumper cables, tire jack and emergency kit are actually in the car.” When not traveling, those items are often removed to make trunk space for items like groceries. Additionally, packing a cooler with snacks and drinks can be a great money saver, but she warns, “It can also be dangerous if the cooler isn’t within easy reach and you’re trying to grab a sandwich from the backseat while driving 60 miles per hour!”

Whether in the car or on a plane, Chieppo advises parents to have each child pack a survival kit with games, books or iPods, “Airport waits or long-hauls can be more enjoyable for the ‘little-ones’ if they pack their own entertainment.” She includes that travelers should dress comfortably and, when flying, carry an extra change of clothing in case luggage ends up lost. Chieppo notes most bags are black so she advises tying on a colored ribbon for easy identification.

Chieppo relates that if successfully planned, last minute ‘bumps in the road’ can easily be handled and retreats can end up truly relaxing, “The last thing you want before, during or after a vacation is to be overwhelmed.” She adds that preparation and organization are the keys to a delightful getaway, “It ain’t rocket science.”

About the Author

Since 1999, Rosemary Chieppo of Born to Organize has made her living doing what most people hate to do: organizing! Chieppo is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and has written the book “Clutter, Chaos & the Cure.” She writes for Connecticut’s “Around the Towns” magazine and the “New Haven Register.” Several magazines, including “Connecticut,” “MORE,” and “Lifestyles in Connecticut” have shone a spotlight on Chieppo’s unconventional approach to organization. Her down-to-earth style has made her a hit on numerous radio and television shows. Chieppo’s website is www.borntoorganize.com.

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