

As seen in the "Ask the Organizing Expert" Column in the Lake Oswego Review and the West Linn Tidings

Organizing Your Summer Vacation

I've just returned from summer vacation. Four just-turned-forty girlfriends and I flew to New York City for a little "us" time. We did it all – the sites, 5th Avenue, Broadway. Central Park was delicious, the Waldorf was a dream, and the subway tunnels, of course, were positively dreadful. Looking back, it was the perfect vacation, public transportation and all. But navigating the Big Apple as a pack of five took some serious pre-planning. We made lists aplenty and met regularly to map our daily agenda.

Whether you're renting a beach house or touring Europe, a little pre-trip organization can make the difference between vacation chaos and calm. To start your getaway off on the right flip flop, just remember the four simple steps in **TRIP**:

Track your Info:

Make a "Vacation" file. Place it on your desk and fill it with all things trip-related: hotel confirmation numbers, flight info, and necessary phone numbers. This file should be front and center in your carry-on.

Ready your House:

Stop the newspaper and mail. Arrange for a house sitter, pet sitter and plant waterer. Put your lights on timers and give a neighbor your itinerary and cell phone number. Clean out the fridge.

Include Everyone:

Meet with family members or fellow travelers and make a wish list of who wants what from the vacation. The golfer, the sight-seer, the hiker and the reader will all have different ideas of "relaxation." Be sure to make time for everybody.

Pack Your Bags:

Create a comprehensive packing checklist. Include outfits for every day and night, workout clothes if you're so inclined, and outer ware. Don't forget electronics and all necessary chargers. Make additional checklists for the kids, the car, or your carry on. Once customized, these lists can be used again and again.

Summer vacations are great memory makers. And though a well organized trip doesn't guarantee you won't lose your luggage or get caught in a monsoon, at least you're more likely to capture the moments with your fully charged camera! My gal pals and I couldn't do much about temperatures and humidity in the 90's or jetlag from the redevye, but I think our pre-planning resulted in Manhattan memories that were mostly magical. I hope your summer vacation is one to remember.

Danielle Liu, MPA, CPO® is a board certified professional organizer. She is the owner of Totally Orderly, a professional organizing company based in West Linn, Oregon. She can be reached at 503.750.7111 or Danielle@totallyorderly.com. For more organizing tips, visit her website at www.totallyorderly.com.