



INSIDE TODAY:

Calgarian in Thailand Web-show host explores Thai culture through western eyes See Page I-4

Music to your ears

Salzburg tour for Sound of Music fans See Page I-8

LATEST NEWS AT CALGARYHERALD.COM/TRAVEL

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What our travel scribes never leave home without when they hit the road CALGARY HERALD

Travelling can be a frustrating experience, but we're lucky to live in a world of creature-comforts and gadgets galore, all of which can make just about any travel hiccup or

hassle more bearable. If you have someone who travels a lot on your holiday list, here are some ideas for any budget.

We asked some of the Calgary Herald's frequent travellers and freelance contributors what they absolutely cannot travel without.



Mark Sissons
Travel essentiales Size does
matter Especially when you
specially such you
prove your gear in and out of
planes, trains, automobiles
and hotels. With ever-shrinking baggage allowances,
every ounce saved is critical
that's with Johen wound
hot wound
that's with Johen wound
bear or mortised material,
lean cram thousands of
books, magazines, newspapers and even personal
documents into an eightounce gadget. And pay a lot
less per item: Plus, its build
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ille paper, with no glane. Battery life is amazing — up to glane. Battery life is amazing — up to on enchange. — up to on enchange. — up to one on the state of t

MARK SISSONS IS A VANCOUVER-BASED WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER AND HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN NUMER-OUS PUBLICATIONS.



Joanne Sasvari

Joanne Sasvari
Travel essentials;
■ Cashmere or pashmina
shawl — This is the most
versatile piece of clothing/
accessory you can pack. It
keeps you warm on chilly
flights, can be used as a pil
low, can dress un an est keeps you warm on co.
flights, can be used as, so flights, and be used as, so low, can dress up anyal fit and fits into a small purse. When I'm not wearing my shawl, I drape it over a chair in my hotel room to make it feel more like home. \$298 at Hotel Renfrew Hotel R

DSLR
quality and
point-and-shoot
convenience (which
for me is always). The big
selling feature is the highquality Leica lens, but this
petite camera also offers 14.1.
Is petite camera also foffers 14.1.
Is petite camera also foffers 14.1.
Is petite camera also foffers 14.1.

selling teature services this petitic camera also offers 14.1 "asado" (barbecue) and sip a glass of high-altitude Syrah. Argentinean cowboys would be a bonus, of course!

JOANNE SASVARI IS BASED IN VAN-COUVER AND WRITES ABOUT COCK-TAILS, TRAVEL, FASHION AND FOOD.



Lisa Monforton :: A recent onverted me Travel essentials: A recent acquisition has converted m from being an over-packer to someone who now has a lot more luggage space for important things — like

a lot more luggage space for important things — like shoes. Lauren Bagliore har made this possible with nos of her more should be shorted the space of the space arry-on ready. Available at DaDe Gallery in

allable at Dabe Gallery in Inglewood or at Lauren Bagliore's Guudio, by appointment only (info@laurenbag-liore.com) it's pricey at \$599, but I've won apything I've ever owned. 2012 wishlist. The new Kindle Fire and a long swaited trip to Thalland.

LISA MONFORTON, CALGARY HERALD TRAVEL EDITOR



Mysha Theriault Travel essentials: As a mobile media professional, I really can't travel without my Terba. The Terba large messenger bag is the only gear senger bag is the only gear both my 17-inch patop and both my 17-inch patop and pockets for extra slots and pockets for extra slots and pockets for sunglasses, tablet device and sunglasses, tablet device and trickets and press tickets and press tickets and press tickets and press kits. It has

a stable water resistant bottom panel and

heavily padded shoul-der strap which is essential for long jaunts across airport terminals. The Tenba Large Engravable Messannon on Amazon terminates to the control of the con Engravable Messenger on Amazon for \$109.95

MYSHA THERIAULT, SPENDS A LOT OF TIME ON THE ROAD. SHE'S FOUNDER OF TREKHOUND.COM AND A SYNDICATED TRAVEL COLUMNIST.





JANUARY'S

SAVEUPTO CAN

FROM PAGE I-1

Gifts for people on the go

Travel essentials: Apart from the ever-present MacBook and Canon compact-but-super-spiffy camera, I never travel without earplugs and my little travel alarm clock.

earplugs and my little travel alarm clock.

Line be with the same coin: the chasp form earplugs and be with the same coin: the chasp form earplugs and be me to sleep anywhere without being disturbed by unfamilian robes; while the clock ensures I wake up on time to this the place I my sisting... or to thake my next flight.

I never trust hotel alarm clocks or wake-up call services and, after leaving a price; colck behind in a hotel once and never seeing it again, I we learned never to spend too much on this essential "gadging." The larned never to spend too much on this essential "gadging." The larned never to spend too much on this essential "gadging." The larned never to spend too much on this essential "gadging." The larned flarned flows.

get."
Timex Travel Alarm Clock,
\$34.99, available at the Bay,
2012 travel wish list: It's almost
time to retire my old matte-black
MacBook and replace it with a
MacBook Air — much less effort
when it comes to lugging and
tweeting while I'm on the road.



Courtesy John Lee Travel writer John Lee.



The extremely durable Lowepro backpack Rover AWII is Andrew Penner's must have travel near

Travel essential: My LowePro

W II. It's perfect in that it is the exact It's perfect in that it is the exa size I need to carry my camera, three lenses, filters, memory cards, plus it also has enough extra space to pack a book, a fe snacks, a water bottle, a light jacket, and a toque and mitts if I'm working outside in colder weather.

I'm working outside in colder weather. It's heavy duty with waits befure the say duty with waits befure the say duty with waits befure the say and lead-adjustment straps. Gear If lip over the top part of bag and all my gear is right there in the second bottom compartment. It's the perfect bag for me and easy to stash into the overhead bins. Extremely durable. I've available at the Camera Store for available at the Camera Store for 2012 while list's a round of gold.

\$164.14.
2012 wish list: A round of golf on The Old Course at St. Andrews Scotland.

ANDREW PENNER IS A TRAVEL AND GOLF WRITER BASED IN CALGARY.



or layer it for a dramatic or layer it for a dramatic evening look. Stays on for hours. I current-ly have four in my purse. Available for \$6 at Superstore. 2012 wish list: Buenos Aires,



Travel essentials: The must have in my suitcase are my runners and a pair of running socks with the Canadian flag or the maple leaf wrapped around the top.
They are only about \$10 so makes for a great "stocking stuffe."
Like to run off the beaten path

for \$3.99

Ladies will like JOE Fresh Lip
Stain. Dab on a little for a day look

I like to run off the beaten path where ever I go. Running the trails in Switzerland, the dusty roads in the Himalays of India, along the beach in The Bahamas, I laps around the outside of Disneyland, all show me a different side of the destination. If I have the Canadian socks on — especially at foreign races — other Canadians notice them and instantly lanker a friend. I don't collect tridge magnets or T-shirts. I collect rough.

Available at Gord's Running Store on Centre Street for \$10

TOR TO THE CALGARY HERALD TRAVEL SECTION. SHE'S RUN IN MANY RACES, INCLUDING MARATHONS SINCE 1991 IN MORE THAN A DOZEN COUNTRIES.



Travel essentials: Here are several things I can't travel without.

■ Every little bit of suitcase real estate counts, that's why the fold-flat, freezable and washable state counts, that's why the fold-flat, freezable and washable accompanies me on every trip to the airport, to the beach and sightseeing. Ladies, it's also small enough to fit into your purse—filled or flat. Just remember to suit the suit of the

2012 wish list: Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mauritius, swimming with pigs in Exumas, Bahamas and a telephoto lens for my iPhone (\$35 US) Driving



LIMITED 1-800-667-8122 HON PICK

Mexico safer than headlines suggest

Mexico tourism secretary doesn't sugarcoat

violence reports

CAROL PUCCI MCCLATCHY TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MCCLATOW THRUME NEWS SERVICE

Il be taking my first trip to
the Yucatan in Mexico later
this year, and I'm excited to
delve into Merdia's music scene,
explore ancient ruins and relax
I'm also thirlled about the
prices. I'm paying 860 for two
nights, including breakfast, at
the Hotel Julamis, a boutique inn
ights, including breakfast, at
the Hotel Julamis, a boutique inn
with a garden and pool in Merida's historical centre.
town of Puerro Mordeos. I found
a studio apartment for 880, with
free bikes thrown in.
I've travelled in Mexico for
years, and I always look forward
to going back.
The travelled in Mexico for
years, and I always look forward
to going back.
The proper than Hawaii
and, to me, more interesting than
Costa Rica.
But with all the reports of
drug-related violence and killings, people ask, "Is it safe to
Mexico"

I put the question to Mexican

Mexico²⁷
I put the question to Mexican
Tourism Secretary Gloria Guevara, who was in Seattle recently
for meetings with airline executives and travel agents.
Her answer: "Get a map,"
Surprisingly, Guevara didinsugar-cost the effect of the grace of the grace

Asking if Mexico is safe is a little like asking if something happens in Atlanta, is it safe to go to Seattle?

GLORIA GUEVERA, MEXICO TOURISM SECRETARY

MENCO TOURISM SECRETARY

places most travellers go.

"Asking if Mexico is safe," she says, "is a little like asking if something happens in Atlanta, is tsafe to go to Seattle?"

Fair enough. So what is the biggest misconception people here in the proper of the same of t

In of destinations such as Los Cabos, Puerro Vallaria and the Moyan Riviera, all areas as safe and the such as the

It's Guevara's job to promote travel.

But I get her point.

Two never fed tunasie in MexTwo never fed tunasie in MexTwo never fed tunasie in MexTwo never fed tunasie in Mexico
Giry, Not riding a longdistance bus to Maztalan in the
state of Sinaloa, home to one
of the most powerful drug cartels. Not walking the streets of
Gundalpiaro.

Gundalpiaro.

Gundalpiaro.

Gundalpiaro.

Gundalpiaro.

Hore who go to Mexico
feet this way, Guevara said.

Ninety-nine per cent of travellers who responded to a recent
government tourism survey said
they had a good experience and
would go back again, she said.



Despite reports of drug-related violence, mostly in the n of Mexico, North Americans are still flocking to the populor its diverse attractions and affordability.



WestJet Vacations pre-holiday package sale. Hurry, sale ends December 21, 2011



Caribbean Mexico

