

2011 4-H Consumer Choices Study Guide

Junior and Senior Division

Luggage

Introduction and Background

Luggage is an essential purchase for those who travel, even if it's only on occasion. Because buying luggage can be expensive, considering your purchase before you make it is important. You have several things to consider when buying luggage that may help you decide how much to spend on it.



Luggage can be stylish and practical. The more usage your luggage gets, the more quickly it will wear out. If you are a frequent traveler, you should consider durability and practicality to be the most important features. If your travel always includes checked baggage, you should not only consider durability and practicality; you also need to think about cost. Nothing is more frustrating than owning expensive, designer luggage only to find it lost or damaged by the airline. While statistically, the amount of lost luggage that never is recovered is fairly low; your odds increase the more often you travel.

Repair vs. Replace

In today's marketplace, much of the luggage sold in the United States is made by overseas manufacturers who do not provide replacement parts for their products. This means if something breaks, you have little, if any, chance of having it repaired. Even if you purchase luggage that can be repaired, replacing those parts or repairing the damage may be as expensive as buying a new set of luggage. As a result, the initial purchase you make is very important.

Things to Consider When Buying Luggage

Size and Weight

Whether for convenience, cost saving strategies or to minimize the chance of lost or damaged bags, many people prefer to fly with a carry-on bag. The typical maximum external dimensions for carry-on bags are 22 inches by 14 inches by 9 inches, including any wheels and pockets. A carry-on bag larger than these dimensions will be taken from the passenger and checked with the rest of the luggage stowed in the cargo area of the plane, and is subject to regular checked baggage fees.

The weight of your luggage is a factor you should consider before purchase. Heavier luggage can prove to be more durable, but several manufacturers are creating lightweight products that can stand up to the pressure of travel. Today, most airlines have a weight limit for checked luggage. If your bag exceeds a certain weight, you will have to pay an additional charge.

Siding

The durability of the outside fabric or shell of a suitcase is very important. This area is exposed to the greatest amount of abuse, wear and tear. Luggage manufacturers use a variety of fabrics, including nylon, polyester, canvas, tapestry, denim, vinyl and leather.



Hard-sided shells tend to offer more protection for fragile items, but also may be heavier to carry. Hard shells are quite durable, resistant to heat and stains, and less likely to tear or rip. But they have a tendency to crack or dent in the corners if handled roughly. When purchasing hard-sided luggage, be sure the shell of the case is fairly thick. Thinner plastic shells are more prone to cracks and dents.

Soft-sided cases offer little to no protection for fragile items but are much lighter weight. Soft shells often are lined with urethane to make them water resistant. In addition, they often are treated with stain repellent.



Handles and Zippers

Your luggage should have a variety of smaller handles to help you carry your case. Helper handles, often found on the top and sides of a case, should be securely fastened to the luggage and should be comfortable in your hand during use. Always use these handles when placing luggage in overhead racks or pulling luggage over curbs.

Luggage has become much easier to maneuver with the upright handle system that most manufacturers use. This system brings convenience and ease to the travel industry. However, some of these handle systems have their downsides. Some manufacturers mount their handle on the exterior of the bag, leaving them open to damage. Other handles do not remain locked in place or if they are hit, they may bend or break. Many manufacturers have taken precautions against these flaws and use strong materials to build their handle system. Strong handle tubes are less likely to dent or bend, which could disable the handle system. The handle is best if the tubing is on the interior of the bag. Few manufacturers who mount handles on the outside of a bag provide adequate protection for them.

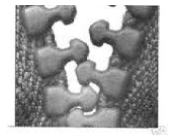


You also should look for a handle locking system that locks in the extended and storage positions. If the lock does not work during a flight or other transit, the handle could be damaged. Handles that store flush with the suitcase are less likely to be damaged in transit. Make sure to test your handle for ease of operation before your purchase. It should extend to a comfortable length for your height to keep your bag from hitting you in the back of your legs.

Luggage today has two basic types of zippers. The coil zipper is made of one continuous strand of nylon or polyester that is wrapped and stitched into the zipper tape. This is the most common zipper.



The molded or chain zipper has individual teeth applied to the zipper tape. The chain zippers are more durable than coil zippers.



Avoid smaller-sized zippers. Many manufacturers use zippers that are commonly found in clothing items. These zippers are not strong enough to stand up to the stress of use on a suitcase. The larger, oversized zippers are much more durable, making them better able to withstand the repeated wear, tear and stress on a suitcase.

Frames

Many manufacturers have greatly increased the quality of their luggage frames. You can look on the inside of a suitcase to determine what type of frame a bag has.

Be aware of any frame that is plastic or metal. The single-ply plastic frames used by some lower-end manufacturers tend to crack and shatter. This makes them impossible to repair. The metal frames, though lightweight, tend to bend and provide little protection for the contents of the bag. They also have plastic corners, which tend to crack.

The most common type of frame used today is the honeycomb. It is lightweight and durable, and it has the ability to withstand pressure by flexing upon impact. Luggage salespeople say, "One thing has to give when the baggage handlers throw your luggage, and it usually isn't the concrete."

Wheels

Typically the most popular luggage for many is the suitcase on wheels. This makes taking even the heaviest luggage on vacation easy because all you've got to do is drag your luggage behind you. If you buy wheeled luggage, always ensure that the wheels are sturdy enough. A broken wheel on a suitcase can render a perfectly good piece of luggage useless.



Beware of luggage wheels mounted on the exterior of a suitcase. Any protruding objects are more susceptible to being caught on other items and becoming damaged. Wheels inset into the case are less likely to be damaged or broken.

Stitching and Hardware

Be sure you examine the stitching and hardware on any piece of luggage you plan to purchase. After all, the stitching and hardware hold it together and keep your clothes inside.

A well-constructed bag will have even stitching, and the closer the stitching is together, the better. Any stress points on the case, especially handles or shoulder straps, should be reinforced with extra stitching or rivets to ensure greater durability.

You also may want to check seams on the case where the material is stitched together. Poorly constructed suitcases have only a small amount of material that overlaps the stitch line, making it more likely to pull or tear loose from the bag.

In addition, you may want to check the bag's hardware, which includes locks, handle posts and zipper pulls. While determining the durability of the hardware on a suitcase is not easy, you can look to see whether it is made of a heavy, solid metal construction. Any hardware made of plastic or lightweight metal is more susceptible to damage than the heavy, solid metals.

The Bottom Line

- ❖ **Look for a long warranty.** Experts say this is the simplest way to estimate luggage quality, especially if the warranty covers accidental damage. However, a higher price tag doesn't always mean a better warranty.

- ❖ **Look for industrial nylon construction.** This is especially important for frequent travelers or for big bags that always will be checked rather than carried on. The two main types are Cordura by Dupont, which has more abrasion resistance, and ballistic nylon, which is slicker and is more resistant to tears. Leather is heavier and prone to mold in humid climates.
- ❖ **Check the denier of the fabric.** Denier is a unit of measurement for thread. Denier refers to the size of the yarn in the fabric; the lower the number, the finer the thread. Higher denier fabrics (larger threads) are more durable.
- ❖ **Consider water resistance.** Only a few bags pass soaking tests. This feature is especially important with bags that will be checked rather than carried on.
- ❖ **Handles and zippers are potential weak points.** Most complaints about durability involve handles and zippers breaking, bending or sticking. Chain zippers, which are fused to the fabric, are more durable than coil zippers, which are sewn on. Check handles for comfort, too.
- ❖ **Helper handles make a bag easier to lift.** Extra handles on the sides and bottom, as well as the top, make maneuvering bags into and out of luggage bins much easier.
- ❖ **Wheels or no wheels?** One-bag travel experts tend to recommend bags without wheels because they are lighter and have more capacity. If you do choose a wheeled bag, look for skate wheels set widely apart. Tests show that wheels set too closely together make luggage unstable and hard to maneuver in tight turns. Larger wheels will maneuver more smoothly over uneven terrain, and softer wheels will lessen vibration and noise.

Resources

Consumer Reports – www.consumerreports.org
Road & Travel Magazine – www.roadandtravel.com
The Savvy Traveler – www.thesavvytraveler.com
Consumer Search – www.consumersearch.com

Information compiled by Monique Stelzer for North Dakota 4-H Consumer Choices

2011 Consumer Choices Sample Class
Junior & Senior - Luggage
Sarah

Situation Statement:

Sarah is going to camp this summer. She wants to purchase a duffle bag to pack her clothes in for camp. Sarah has \$50 to spend on her bag. She is planning to pack a lot of clothes, so she would like her bag to have wheels to help her move it. Since her favorite color is red she would like a red duffle bag.

Standards:

	1	2	3	4
Duffle bag	X	X		X
Costs \$50 or less	\$30 X	\$64.99	\$60	\$43.99 X
Has wheels		X	X	X
Available in color red		X		X

Class Items:

1. Adidas Duffle Bag
2. Samsonite Casual Wheeled Duffle
3. Coolstuff4u Giraffe Print Wheeled Suitcase
4. CalPak Arctic Circle Wheeled Duffle

Placing: 4-1-2-3

Cuts: 4-3-6

Reasons:

I placed this class of luggage 4-1-2-3.

I placed 4 over 1 because 4 has wheels while 1 does not.

4 is available in the color red while 1 is only available in black/white.

I placed 1 over 2 costs less than \$50 at \$30 while 2 costs \$64.99.

Grant: 2 has wheels

Grant: 2 is available in the color red.

I placed 2 over 3 because 2 is a duffle bag and 3 is a suitcase.


2 is available in red while 3 is only available in black and white with pink trim.

I placed 3 last because it is not a duffle bag.

It costs more than \$50.

It is not available in red.

PD600



Judging Card

Sarah
(Number or Name)


Sample Class
(Class)

Luggage
(Class)

Placing Score 4-1-2-3

Cuts 4-3-6

Reason Score _____



A 1234	26
B 1243	39
C 1324	20
D 1342	27
E 1423	46
F 1432	40
G 2134	23
H 2143	36
I 2314	14
J 2341	18
K 2413	40
L 2431	31
M 3124	11
N 3142	18
O 3214	8
P 3241	12
Q 3412	22
R 3421	19
S 4123	50
T 4132	44
U 4213	47
V 4231	38
W 4312	35
X 4321	32

For these reasons, I place this class of luggage 4-1-2-3.

Sample Class
Luggage
Sarah

#1

Adidas Duffle Bag



- Zipper main compartment with zipper mesh valuables pocket and key fob; Easy-access front pocket; Wet/dry shoe tunnel with mesh panel for ventilation
- FreshPAK™ is a unique technology which inhibits odor-causing bacteria. Your bag and gear stay fresher, longer.
- Removable, dual adjustable shoulder strap
- No-slip contoured shoulder pad
- Wrapped haul handles
- Available in black/white
- Screen-printed adidas brand mark on front, end caps and shoulder pad; Screen-printed 3-Stripes on front
- Dimensions: 26" x 12.5" x 12"
- Polyester doobby
- Cost is \$30.00

Sample Class
Luggage
Sarah

#2

Samsonite Casual Wheeled Duffel



- Constructed of Samsonite's ballistic polyester
- Push button locking handle
- Extra carry handles on side and top of duffel
- Padded velcro carry grip for comfortable carrying
- Smooth rolling in-line wheels
- Available in red/black/gray
- Heavy-duty, self mending, #10 nylon zippers on main compartment
- Dual adjustable compression straps help to secure packed items
- Quick release buckles on nylon compression straps
- Padded velcro carry grip for comfortable carrying
- Bottom feet keep duffel lifted off floor when laying down flat
- Drop bottom/split case features
- Fully lined interior
- Large wet pocket
- Cost is \$64.99

Sample Class
Luggage
Sarah

#3

Coolstuff4u Giraffe Print Wheeled Suitcase



- Made of leather-like black and white PVC vinyl, with hot pink vinyl trim, the suitcase has an animal skin texture
- Features an expander zipper, which gives an extra 3 inches of space
- It has double zippers, which can be locked together
- ID holder on the back
- The suitcase has wheels, a telescoping handle and strap handle for easy carrying
- The pink nylon interior features a mesh pocket with a zipper closure, and crossed elastic straps to keep belongings secure
- The exterior dimensions are 22 inches tall, 14 inches wide and 8 inches deep
- Cost is \$60.00

Sample Class
Luggage
Sarah

#4

CalPak Arctic Circle Wheeled Duffle



- **Product Material:** Rip stop with polyester
- **Product Weight:** 10.16 lbs.
- Roomy main compartment is great for bulky clothing or gear
- In-line skate wheel system with ball bearings for smooth, quiet rolling
- Longer handle is more comfortable across a variety of heights
- Available in red/black/gray
- 2 side zippered pockets plus 3 additional zippered pockets on the front
- Side cargo handle aids in short lifts
- Self-repairing excel zippers
- Cost is \$43.99

Yogurt Cheese: <http://lowfatcooking.about.com/od/quicktips/qt/yogcheese.htm>

How to Make Yogurt Smoothie: http://www.ehow.com/how_4536718_make-yogurt-smoothie.html

What is Greek Yogurt? http://www.cookthink.com/reference/257/What_is_Greek_yogurt