

An Oregon Cottage Podcast

Episode 59: Traveling Light + Easy Summer Menu

Brian: Welcome to episode 59 where we're going to talk about the advantages of traveling light. Plus we're going to share some travel tips around that. Things that we've learned.

Jami: Yes because we're learning how to bring less stuff along on these trips. It really simplifies a number of things, especially when we fly.

Brian: Yes. And plus in this episode we're going to give you some updates on the garden and a couple of other things that have been going on.

Jami: Yes. And I have a June menu that I want to share with you and there's something special about it. So stay tuned.

Brian: That's right. Or skip to the end right now.

Jami: (laughing) Well, or the middle. Where's the food section?

Traveling Light

Brian: Yeah. You don't know where it is. So don't skip, don't skip. It's kind of a no brainer that it's good to travel light. You know, you take less stuff along these days. Yeah. Especially with, there's so many more people flying and for us there is a nice thing in simplifying your wardrobe, having less to worry about. You know when you're there you don't have four or five suitcases, you know like the classic Hollywood movie starlet when she would travel. Where some people we know who I won't mention.

Jami: Oh I've traveled to conferences with people - the conferences are three days and they bring, one woman brought two checked bags.

Brian: Oh my goodness.

Jami: For a 3-day conference.

Brian: Her carry on plus two check bags?

Jami: Yeah, right. Well, her carryon was just a tote bag. You know, she didn't want to carry anything really into the plane. But two large checked bags for three days.

Brian: Yeah. Yeah. Some women, one suitcase is their makeup, right?

Jami: Oh well, I guess that - I don't know. I'm not that person.

Brian: I guess if you're, if you're taking equipment I could totally understand. But for travel, for fun, actually, even for business, we figured out how to take less. And it really is the checked bag thing because when you get off, especially for air travel though, this has been true on other modes, that train or whatever. But when you get off and you've checked bags, you've got to go find where the carousel is. You're probably in a strange airport. And then you've got to wait because it's never the first bag that comes out. Well no, plus they're unloading, I mean, I know they're working quickly, but they have to load it, put it on the little thing, throw it in the well.

Jami: And the other benefit of not checking a bag is, you don't have to worry about your bed getting lost. Right. And you don't have to worry about your bag getting damaged. Well, any more damage than it gets, right. Just with simple handling.

Brian: Yeah. And so it's, I mean, it's with you the whole time and it's good. So your valuables or whatever.

Jami: And even we take some little, you know, depending on where you go, you might have to take a little plane that doesn't fit the carry ons in the overhead bin and you have to put them on, what do they call that? A cart trolley?

Brian: Well, there's the luggage cart that you put them on, they put them in the plane and they put them back on the cart.

Jami: But you watch them do that. So it's like, you know it's going with you and then you pick it up on the way. So it's still with you is just underneath the plane.

Brian: And by the way, we would things that are sensitive like laptops we would keep with us in our personal bag. (Yeah). The way they throw things.

Jami: And so I really enjoy knowing where my luggage is because I always used to be afraid of lost luggage. And then do you keep an extra pair of, you know, underwear and a change of clothes with you? Because you don't know if your luggage is going to come.

Brian: Right, keep it all with you. And as we were talking about, when you go from place to place, so if you have a trip and there's several destinations, the stuff you bring tends to expand. So getting it stuffed back into the suitcases to go to your next thing. If you just have one smaller suitcase, it's easier to do that.

Jami: Yeah, and a few years ago I wrote about it on the blog so I'll link to it in the show notes. But we took, you know what was for us, a trip of a lifetime there. We got to go to Greece and visit some friends who had been living there for quite a few years.

Brian: Not just Greece. We made it up into central Europe.

Jami: Well, right. So we went up into northern Greece and then over into Macedonia and Kosovo where my cousin was living, but we had to take a train. Could you imagine a couple of big old suitcase carry ons, you know, schlepping across

Europe, you know, in the train. We then we had to keep it with us when we tried to get a..

Brian: Because you're right, we took the subway to the train station. (Right.) And then, yeah, so it would have been, yeah. Because we always figured, look, we need to be able to carry easily whatever we have because of all of our connections we were needing to make. Yeah. (Right.) So yeah, that was a big thing because we were gone - it was almost 20 days? It was more than two weeks. (Yeah) And we were going to be in a variety of, like Greece was warmer, it was going to be cooler up in Kosovo and along the way. And so we were wondering could we pack everything we'd need for a trip in in all these different countries. And we'd be going out to dinner in a few places, so we couldn't just wear, you know, sweat pants and flip flops the whole time. So it was actually, it was really good because- oh and we were working while we were traveling, so we had to bring all that stuff too. (Yeah.) And the answer was what, could we do it?

Jami: Yes, we did it. And in fact I wrote an article about how to pack in a carry on for two weeks and there's some tips that you do you, you know. They're kind of simple, you do layering, but I do have one special way that I fit more stuff into my bag. You don't have to do it, but I had to do it because I bring more stuff than you.

Brian: I would, I would generally have like three or four square inches that I could then give to something of yours, remember? (Yeah) And they were tight, those poor little carry ons - just the zippers were just, you know, one pair of socks and bursting.

Jami: But we did it and I have some tips in that article. So if you're interested, that will be in the show notes.

Brian: Yeah. So that was, that was really good, and all the connections and all the places we knew we had our luggage with us. We were thinking of some funny stories on that trip. The one that cracked me up was when we had, we were out walking in a neighborhood in Athens and I guess marble is just all over the place.

Jami: Well, that's what you should say, it's like literally when they talk about streets of marble, that's Greece. They, they make curbs out of marble, streets of marble.

Brian: Yes, curbs and stuff we do cheap.

Jami: All their floors are made of marble. They don't care. They don't want marble. They want wood floors.

Brian: Yes, Right. That's expensive stuff. I guess marble's everywhere. So we're out- I think it's where they'd been building a house or something. We're out walking around, it'd be like a construction site near there. And of course there's marble carved up scraps, like you'd find wood scraps. And so it was um, I don't mean we weren't really even trespassing,

Jami: No, it was on the street.

Brian: But it was this perfect square of marble about a little bit smaller than a paperback book. And I thought, oh, this would look kind of cool. It'd make a cool coaster piece of marble from Athens. We weren't stealing it off a monument or anything,

Jami: It was in the road.

Brian: It seemed legit. Okay. So I, it was kinda dirty. Even when I washed it, it seemed to exude dirt. So I put it in a plastic Ziploc bag and put it in my luggage. It was fine. All the other places we checked on the way home. But, um, the US it's really funny going back.

Jami: And this is the con we should mention about carry on. As you do have to have your bags checked and you do have, you are limited on a number of things that you can carry as far as liquids. And we'll talk about that. But it's a con, you will have your bags checked.

Brian: The con is checked, meaning checked by the TSA, right? X-Rayed, looked at, you got to pull, you know.

Jami: Sometimes you might have to pull your stuff out. If there's something in there that looks like a chunk of marble (laughing).

Brian: So this was really funny. Yes. So it was this a square flat square of white in a plastic bag. And as soon as they pulled me off to the side, and it's happened a couple times, they've pulled either one of us off to the side to take a second look at our luggage. And as soon as he opened it up on like, oh my gosh, that looks like a brick of cocaine. It's sitting in my suitcase on top of everything. And at that point there's nothing you can say. In fact, they just tell you, don't say anything. I may have said, Oh boy, that doesn't look good. I may have said something like that. It's just like you guys test it. Have the dogs sniff it, you know, I don't care. Snort it or lick it, or whatever you do. It's just a piece of marble.

Jami: And he took it out and felt it he could see what that was.

Brian: Yeah, but he did. It was funny because he didn't really see the appeal of it. I remember he just kind of gave me this funny look and put it back. And then they leave you - It's like a burglar has gone through your bag and they're okay. You're stuff and underwear, it's just all over. Okay. And they just slide you down the thing and you now in front of everybody try to stuff it all back in.

Jami: And it was just barely packed.

Brian: Yes, and you may not even have your shoes and your belt on. You don't even feel fully clothed. It's like, oh, it's wonderful. That was pretty funny, we're laughing about that.

Jami: I've got a couple like that. The big thing is, you don't wrap anything up like a gift. Yes, because then they can't see it immediately get pulled over. Well, I had forgotten and I, I've written about this before. I really like this Arizona Chipotle spice that we can get in Arizona.

Brian: So shake-on, like a salty, shake-on pepper spice.

Jami: It's a spice, a chipotle spice. It's really good. And so it's glass and I didn't want them to break and so they had wrapped them in, you know, the stuff they wrap glass in when you're buying it at the store. And I just left it like that because I didn't want them to break and I stuffed them in my shoes and every crevice I could find and then piled all the other stuff on it. And so of course,

Brian: Drug mule.

Jami: Ha! And of course they were just like, my shoes are the first thing I pack. I had stuffed them in my shoes so they had to take out everything and they're looking at them. They pull out this thing and they're like, what is this, mam? I'm like, it's spice. And then I had to open it for them and show.

Brian: And then we got home with the spice.

Jami: Yes, we did get home. As soon as they see what it is. But then you have to repack. Yeah, there's that.

Brian: When we say travel light, we mean everything you need in a carry on size suitcase. We take those little rolling suitcases and then overflow into the personal bag, which is, it's about the size of a computer bag. Basically. You have a,

Jami: I have a backpack that keep everything in.

Brian: I have a computer bag that I keep everything in, so. Right. And how would we do that? What are some tips?

Jami: Well, you mentioned, it was your cool thing in a previous episode. I can't remember, but I'll link to that in the show notes. You mentioned your favorite travel bag that's super light.

Brian: Oh, the rolling suitcase? (Yeah.) Oh that, well we reviewed it in the video one where we talked about, we kind of went back and looked at cool things that we still like. And I was amazed because it was so, it weighs like four pounds. I thought the handle was gonna snap off and it's been actually quite a sturdy and durable and it's still going. So, and I love how it rolls. It's the upright. You can roll it upright or drag it or whatever.

Jami: It has the wheelies that go every way. Well, I mean they go either way. They're like, I can't remember what that's called, but they're 360 so you can,

Brian: Yeah, you can walk out like a little dog or drag it.

Jami: So yeah, that's a good bag. However, the thing with me is you do lose about an inch, sometimes more, of interior because they count the wheels that stick out. They count those on the airlines in the measurement. So you do lose some packing space. So I have not gone to that kind yet because, so I still use the inline wheels because I need that extra inch of packing space. We're going on a trip in a week or week and a half about and I'm going to try the travel cubes, the

packing cubes. And we kind of did a little bit before and they came in three different sizes, like small, medium and large. And I just found, I didn't use the medium and large sizes at all, but I really liked the small ones. So I found a set that is only small cubes because I want to be able to fit my shirts in one, my underwear and stuff in one. And my, you know, I just want to be able to segment it that way and it didn't really need the big ones to take up all the room.

Brian: And these are little, they're like nylon cloth bags are kind of square and you can stuff. What it prevents is all your stuff looks like it's been in a blender by the time you get there, like you, you have all your different kinds of clothes and it's all mixed up. Like it's in a duffle bag. So the cubes you can put all of one kind of thing in the cube and then you just find the cube and all your socks or whatever. All your shirts or whatever are easy to find.

Jami: Yeah. Some people will use them and have like an outfit in every cube. So they'll separate it that way. But there's different ways you can use them. I'll put a link it to the ones we got. I'm going to report back how they work, but I just kind of wanted to say that I know a lot of people love the packing cubes and they really make traveling.

Brian: And then they stack inside your suitcase. I mean, yeah.

Jami: They also like them for when you get to the place because you can kind of use them in the, in the dressers or whatever and they keep everything kind of neat and tidy, so. Okay. Yeah. So that's, I'm looking forward to that.

Brian: Part of taking everything carry on is your toiletries, that little thing where you got to take them all. You got to have your plastic Ziploc bag with anything that's liquid or Gel. Right. So how do you get around that?

Jami: Right. Well they have the three one one rule and it's three ounces in one quart bag and only one bag, one bag. I can't remember what the, they call it, the 3-1-1-rule TSA does. I know it's three ounce is the limit for the size of bottle. And actually most travel bottles are much smaller than that. So I went and got actual, in fact, our daughter, when she traveled last year, she used these silicone bottles and she loved them because they're easy to fill and they're easy to get out to squeeze because they're not the hard plastic. But they also have these special lids that are guaranteed not to leak. So I went and got some of those so we can put our lotion, shampoo, we're actually going to put sunscreen in one because we know sunscreen's expensive. Then I bought an actual clear see through TSA approved quart size bag, but it's squared off. So it's bigger than a ziplock. I can fit more in it than I can fit my Ziploc and it's still TSA approved. So you kind of have to do those kinds of things to get through with the liquids because you can't bring full sized stuff and you, and you can't bring more than will fit in that. So I'm really rethinking some things. I'm bringing a makeup that is a powder makeup instead of a liquid makeup. And I'm kind of really rethinking things.

Brian: I'm kind of interested, I've got a new, uh, to test out a technology bag. That's what we call it. It's a computer bag. It's, kinda cool because it's got the loop, I forget what they call that. There's a loop on the back of the bag, like a strap that the handle of your suitcase of your rolling suitcase goes through. So the bag will,

when it's not on your shoulder, will sit on top of your suitcase and then be held in place by the handle having gone through this retaining strap, whatever - later after we're done recording, we'll figure out what it's called. And I found in other bags I've had that were smaller, weren't quite as suitable. It stays on there really well when you're walking briskly or even jogging through airports that's like, and your shoulders and body get tired of carrying everything. It's nice to rest it on the suitcase. This one was highly rated on Amazon, you know, for sturdiness and it's got, I could probably take double the number of laptops that you and I need. It's got so many pockets and it just looks like it's going to be really good. It's a little bit bigger than the one I was using.

Jami: And the reason that the tech, the technology bag we call it, is because you will have to bring out your computers and put it in a separate bin going through security. So, um, it's easy to grab it quickly.

Brian: And then we call it that because also in a lot of when you go, you need adapters and cords, and I don't know other stuff, it just gives us a thing to keep it all together.

Jami: Yes, that's a good tip - keep it all together.

Brian: Something else I read about, this isn't packing your luggage, this is like packing yourself. That you should not eat right before you fly. There's been a number of studies done that show that at altitude, this sounds really weird.

Jami: So I heard that it was not eating during flying. You heard before?

Brian: Well right before. So they see the last time you should eat should be several hours before you fly to give your food time to digest. Because what happens is, I know this sounds nuts, but how does your body know? But at altitude your digestion kind of stops. It goes on to pause. The problem is you're sitting stuck in this little seat for hours and hours, so to pass time, you probably eat extra. You eat everything they bring you, right? Snacks and everything.

Jami: It's kind of fun, different things. You bring snacks in there and it kind of helps. Yeah.

Brian: And so what happens is you land, you're maybe in another time zone. You've been sitting for way too long and you're kind of tired and discombobulated. Well then they say your digestion kicks in again and it takes all this blood that could be used for thinking and walking around to digest the food. And so you feel even more tired. So they say that a good thing to do if you can stand it, is to don't eat a couple of hours before your flight, don't eat during the flight. You can have things, you can have liquids. And then when you get off, reward yourself with a nice meal and you'll feel much, much better.

Jami: I read some travel blogs and a number of them say, and it doesn't matter if they're flying, you know, a nine hour flight, they don't eat during the flight. I haven't heard that eating two hours before, but the don't eat during the flight. They find that it really helps them with their jet lag when they get to where they're going.

Brian: Yeah. Okay, yeah.

Jami: It also just simplifies everything, if you're not having to worry about food.

Brian: There's a number of sources for this, but Reader's Digest kind of had it all in a compact form, kind of the studies and stuff. So we have a link to that article in here. (Okay.) And then another thing we like to do to pass the time as you're sitting there for hours and hours is listened to audiobooks. And so one little piece of technology we bring is a splitter for Jami's iPhone and then we listen the old fashioned way, we just each have a pair of favorite headphones that we plug in, kind of the kind that sort of plug your ears from the cabin noise.

Jami: And we've talked about that in a previous episode because it's really fun. And in fact, I think the last time we did that on a trip, it wasn't this last trip, but we listened to one of our favorite series, the Red Rising series. And it was so fun to be able to react to what was happening to each other.

Brian: Oh, together, right. We'd laugh, we'd go, I can't believe it. You're right, because we're hearing it together. Yeah, that was really cool. So, those are some of the tips we've learned and some of the advantages for traveling light, being able to do it with, just to carry on.

Farmhouse Garden Update

Brian: We have a couple of updates, not really an update on the farmhouse. It's sort of been sitting there while we've been frantically working on the garden and we have a, we will soon, not not right now, but we will soon have an update on the garden because we've been putting in a watering system. This could be really cool.

Jami: I'm so excited for this and you guys, I think you will really love it too. If you have any kind of watering to do in raised beds. This is a simple DIY raised bed, automatic watering system, but also work for just mounded beds that are low because you can have something go in there and works with soakers. It's easy to put together. It's relatively inexpensive and I'm super excited about it. So that's coming up and that's what we've been working on. So we can have that article ready for you to go in June, but it's taken a lot of time.

Brian: Yeah. Anyways, so we will, that's the update on the updates

What's Cooking

Brian: Well in June in Oregon it's usually really pleasant and the weather changes and so it kind of changes how we like to eat. And so you have come up with some menu ideas.

Jami: A menu- a week of menus. Seven days of menus for, kind of summer menu, that will work, actually June, it will also work in July, August too. But actually, and there's a bonus meal in there. So actually eight days if you choose to do the bonus meal. And I wanted to switch it up because I've talked about menus before here in the podcast, usually like what we'd eat in the previous week or some

holiday menu that I thought, you know, put together for you and that's great. But this one I really wanted to make kind of a little more special. So what I've done is I've made a PDF download of the entire menu, all the sides, and the shopping list. So if you go to the show notes and you click on the link to open the PDF, you can print them out, you can tape the menu onto your refrigerator, or cupboard or whatever you want. So you know what you're eating and everybody in your house knows what you're eating. You take the shopping list with you to the store, buy all the stuff on it and anything else you need, and you won't have to worry about it again for another eight days. You can even just repeat this again if you want.

Brian: No one will remember.

Jami: You can, keep going. I really wanted it to do that for you. I hope that you guys go and download the shopping list. It's a little bit, it's a tweak on one of the menus that I have in the free ebook of menus- seasonal menus that I have in the library for all subscribers to An Oregon Cottage. So I took one of the weeks and I kind of tweaked it and changed a few things and this is what is available for you. So to give you some ideas, some of the meals include grilled sausages, but what brings them up a level is you serve it with Tomato Chutney. So if you don't have the Tomato Chutney, you can use ketchup because we have a homemade recipe for that too. But the tomato Chutney makes them really cool. There's a Greek tuna tomato salad. This is super easy to make. It's like a quick 15 minute meal. It's refreshing. You serve it on a bed of lettuce. It's great in the summertime. Sausage and Corn Tart, that sounds complicated, but it's this wonderful press in the pan crust and it's made with oil so you just mix the ingredients together. You press it all into the pan and it's actually really flaky. Greek style, shrimp and Orzo. And some grilled chicken, but you marinate it in honey mustard dressing, a homemade honey mustard dressing. So that's just a little bit of what's on there. There's some other recipes, there's all the sides that you need with ideas. You can mix and match and switch them around like you like. But um, that will be available in the show notes as a PDF download.

Brian: That sounds really good, I've had all that. It's a very good.

This Is Really Cool!

Brian: Well, a thing that people may wonder about. I mean we do a podcast, but they may wonder, well what podcasts do we like? We certainly, I certainly don't listen to our podcast over and over again. You know, I've already heard it once. Right? And actually when I edited, I hear it repeatedly. So when we're doing projects, like especially working outdoors, working on the house, working everywhere, it's fun to have a podcast going where you can learn something or be sort of entertained. And one of the ones I wanted to talk about that I really enjoy is called Astonishing Legends. And it's two guys that just take a deep dive into kind of topics that are mysterious. Topics that other people have are a little bit kooky when they research, other people tend to run and do a lot of speculation. These guys look at, they just interview original sources, they do a ton of research and it's a much more thoughtful approach. So it's almost like if, uh, if NPR took a look at some mysteries. But these guys are quite open to strange things and they've had some very strange experiences happen to them personally. Their personal

views on what is possible in this world has changed. Just for an example, like they did a series on Oak Island, you know, we've talked about my family being from Nova Scotia, part of our heritage, and it was like six hours, wasn't it?

Jami: It was long, yeah.

Brian: They went to the story and researched everything all the way to the current day. Right now they're doing the Patterson Gimlin bigfoot film, which is actually quite an amazing artifact that's been easily dismissed. I'm on, I think episode five. (Wow.) These are like two hour episodes where they're, right now they're doing a special effects costume film expert and they're going to talk to him for like two hours about his book on it

Jami: So you have to be committed to this podcast.

Brian: But it's quite entertaining. They're really fun and self effacing and anyway, so it's great. Astonishing legends. It will help you as you're out putting together the garden water system.

Jami: So my cool thing is an autobiography that I read, actually listened to, while I was out working in the garden recently, on Lucille Ball. And the reason that I'm having this as a cool thing because,

Brian: I love Lucy. Everybody knows that, though, right? Lucille Ball, I love Lucy. The 1950s TV show?

Jami: I think everybody knows that, but maybe not. Okay. But that's good. Thanks. The thing is really cool about it is that this particular, it's her words to as told to someone else, and she did it in the early 1960s but then she put it away somewhere and no one knew she did it. So they didn't find it until after she had passed away. And in fact, I think a couple of years after she passed away in 1989. So this was then published in the 1990s I think sometime? And then the book that, I think it's an audible original, that I listened to was narrated by her daughter Lucille Arnaz and just, it just sounded like Lucille ball was talking to you, basically. And it was fascinating. I mean it's fascinating that era that she came to be and always like in the twenties and thirties. It was like really before movies as we know them, like, we kind of think of movies really from the forties. You know, the thirties movies were kind of... Twenties they're just barely starting, you know, in the 30s, but she started in late twenties and thirties, had all these movie roles, you know, very small. But, but she was a contract player and she actually got paid in the 1930s a thousand dollars a week as a contract player. And she wasn't even a big star. She just, you know, I mean she got paid that whether she worked or not. In fact when she works, she got paid more. So it was just fascinating things like that about the movie system and how it worked. And you know, she doesn't, she's very nice. She doesn't dish about people. She doesn't say things about them. There's no like gossipy kind of things. She's just telling her story. Um, she does talk about when she met Desi Arnaz and how they just fell in love. She talks a little bit about how they fought a lot, but she never really talks about what they fought about. She was very generous to him. You could tell that she loved him even all these years later and they had been divorced. So it wasn't catty. It was just really refreshing. It was really interesting and fun and I

loved her voice coming through. And when she talked about the show and how they developed I love Lucy and how some things were just happenstance that now have impacted so many shows because of their, you know, pioneering techniques.

Brian: Well, just the thing about filming in front of a live studio audience. We take it for granted because Seinfeld and Friends. (Right.) Well and way even before that that that was amazing. Nobody had ever done it, especially a sitcom.

Jami: And it was a solution to a problem. Like they were, you know, their sponsor was saying, no, we want it to be live, but if they couldn't do live on both coasts then how are they going to do this? So they just were brainstorming and came up with it. It is really fascinating.

Brian: It really invented the modern sitcoms, the multi-camera monitors sitcom.

Jami: Yeah. Yeah. So anyway, if you get a chance to either listen to it or read the book, I'll have a link to the book, and there's also the Audible one in there. It's just, I think it's three or four hours. It's not very long. And it ends in, you know, the early sixties but her daughter does do an intro and talks about the background of finding the book and it just really, it was very cool. I thought it was pretty interesting.

Brian: Yeah. I listened to part of it too is it was, there was nice. Well we've appreciated the feedback we've been getting lately. We would love to hear if you have any ideas, tips on packing light. I don't know, favorite summer things you like to eat, other podcasts that you just really liked that would recommend. Let us know. We'd, we'd love to talk about them and hear from you. We've really appreciate, the reviews and the ratings we've been getting lately. It's helping people find the podcast. So thank you very much for that. And we will be dead for three weeks instead of the two.

Jami: Dead?

Brian: Dead air. We're not going to be dead. We will be dead air. That's what I'm trying to say, the podcast will be dead.

Jami: (laughing) Okay, we're going to take a vacation, how about that?

Brian: Yeah, we'll be missing an episode. I guess. We won't be dead. I hope we won't be dead. Because of traveling, but we are going to record a special episode. We're planning on recording a special episode on location, so yeah, we'll see how that works out.

Jami: But so we will miss a week so we won't get the next one for three weeks.

Brian: Yeah. So anyway, thank you so much for listening and we will talk to you soon.

Jami: Thanks. Bye. Bye.