



Packing a Bike for Travel

If you are travelling with your bike on a flight or on a long journey you may need a decent bike bag or box to make sure it arrives safely and in one piece.

Bike boxes can be purchased or rented in different forms, either a hard or a soft case or a hybrid of the two. The soft cases are easy to store and will protect your bike from scratches and scrapes to the frame. A hard case offers firmer protection and has designated areas for the wheels and the bike frame to be slotted into. A combined hard bottom case with a soft top section will give you a great mixture.



Bags and boxes can be obtained from your local bike shop or online. If your local shop does not rent specific bike bags/hard cases then a cardboard bike box from a new bike can be a good option. These are lightweight, not as durable as a hard case but if packed well will give a good amount of protection.



Disassembling your bike into a bike box can be a tricky process and if you are unsure your local bike shop will be able to assist you in the best method. Or you can follow our instructions:

Packing a Bike for Travel



Follow this link to watch a handy video on how to pack a bike bag [link](#).

What you'll need:

- Pipe lagging/bubble wrap/cardboard
- Zip ties
- Rag
- Electrical tape
- Allen key
- Pedal spanner



1. Handlebars, seat post and pedals

Start off by putting a bit of tape around the handlebars near where the stem is attached and some tape on the stem face plate. Mark on both pieces of tape a line. When you come to reattaching the handlebars it will help with realignment. Unscrew the stem face plate, remove the handlebars and reattach the stem face plate tightly to avoid any rattling. Depending on the size of your bike and bag, either turn your stem sideways and turn your bars downwards and under the top tube on the chain side (padding the top tube and strapping the bars against it), or, if the bag is too small, remove the bars and strap them in that position (try to leave the stem on or strap/zip tie your forks and head set together to prevent the loss of headset parts).

Next put some tape around the seat post above the seat post clamp, to mark your current saddle height, and remove. Cover the seat post in bubble wrap to prevent any grease transferring to the bike bag. Remove the pedals and carry them in your regular luggage if you don't have a bike bag with side pockets. Don't leave these items loose in the bike bag, as they could rattle around and cause damage.

2. Remove the wheels

Put the chain on the largest chain ring on the front, and on the smallest sprocket on the rear. Remove the wheels and deflate the tyres slightly as it'll be going in the airplane's hold (don't deflate them too much as this can cause rim damage if the bag gets dropped). Take out the quick-release skewers and tape them to the spokes, or store them safely in any bag pockets available, possibly with your pedals.

2. Remove the wheels (continued)

If you have plastic fork/rear triangle spacers (which come with new, boxed bikes and forks – your local bike shop might let you have some), put them in place to prevent any damage. Slide the wheels into the bike bag, preferably wrapped to protect both the bike and wheels.

3. Frame Protection

Attach some bubble wrap/cardboard/pipe lagging around your frame tubes. This will prevent any rubbing and damage to the frame in transit, and the transfer of oil from your chain to your bike bag. Wrap the rear mech in a rag for extra protection.

4a. Bag it up

Unless your bag has a hard base, the bike goes in the bag upside down to protect the chain rings. If the bag has padded wheel bags then use these and place the wheels on either side of the bike, staggered for less bulk. If you have no wheel bags then follow the padding procedure as with the box, but strap the wheels on the chain side of the frame, staggered for less bulk.

For bike bags with a hard base with fork attachments, strap the front forks into position, and place the bottom bracket on a block (support) within the bike bag, making sure that the frame isn't resting on the chain ring. Extra cardboard padding can be added to elevate the bottom bracket. At the rear of the bike you can fasten the wheel spacer on to another block within the bike bag, preventing the frame from shifting about in transit.



Packing a Bike for Travel



Place the seat post, with bubble wrap around it, into the bag securely, along with any other packed/padded items such as gels, bottles and tools.

One end of the handlebars should be fastened to the stem of the bike, and the other end should be attached to the top tube. A protective layer can be added between the handlebars and top tube to prevent any rubbing.



It does not pay to padlock the bag, as security may wish to open it – but a zip tie between the zips will aid security and can easily be cut when you arrive. Be sure to write your contact/destination details and flight info on the box

4b. Box it up

If you are using a box then place the bike inside, normal way up, and put in both wheels. One wheel goes to the front and the other towards the back of the bike (both chain side), with sprockets in the gap in the frame.

Pad the contact points or put cardboard sections in-between, and zip tie or strap the wheels to the frame. Seal the box with duct tape and be sure to write your contact/destination details and flight info on the box.

5. One final tip – important

Always check your bike for damage/loss before clearing customs, otherwise the airline's liability is limited and based on weight and not the price of the bike. Be sure to get written confirmation of any damage from baggage handlers too.

6. Insurance

You should always make sure your bike is insured for the journey.

