

# Grace's Cruises – Insider Travel Tip: 2026 Carry-On Rule Update

## “Pack Smart for 2026: New Carry-On Rules You Can’t Ignore”

If you haven't updated how you pack in a few years, 2026 is the year it could catch up with you. Airlines and airports worldwide are rolling out stricter, technology-driven enforcement of carry-on rules — and many travelers won't realize it until they're stopped at the airport. Here's what's changing — and how to stay one step ahead.

### **1: A Global Carry-On Standard – Strictly Enforced**

Airports are introducing advanced scanners that can detect oversized bags — even if your suitcase is only slightly over. Shockingly, over 60% of carry-on bags currently in circulation may not comply.

- The most common current standard for carry-on luggage (for major North American and many international airlines) is: 22 inches × 14 inches × 9 inches
- Some carriers vary slightly (ie. Air Canada ~21.5 × 15.5 × 9 inches) so it's worth checking your airline's exact policy before travel.
- These measurements include handles, wheels and any bulging pockets.
- Airlines and TSA are no longer turning a blind eye to oversized bags — even 1 inch too big can cost you time or fees.

✨ **Tip:** Measure your bag at home fully packed. If it expands, it counts — even if it technically fit when empty.

### **2: Carry-On Weight Limits Are Now Real**

Most airlines are enforcing a strict carry-on weight cap of 8–10 kg (17–22 lbs)

Expect to see:

- Built-in scales at check-in kiosks
- Gate-side weigh-in stations
- Automatic alerts if your bag is overweight

Smart Strategy:

- ✓ Use a luggage scale at home
- ✓ Wear heavier items (jackets, boots)
- ✓ Move dense items into your personal item

### **3: Personal Items Are Being Measured Too**

Your “personal item” must now fully fit under the seat in front of you.

- The most common current standard for personal item (for major North American and many international airlines) is: 18 inches × 14 inches × 8 inches
- Some carriers vary slightly (ie. Air Canada ~17 × 13 × 6 inches) so it's worth checking your airline's exact policy before travel.
- Backpacks, totes, and purses that bulge or stick out may be flagged.
- Use a soft compressible bag for your personal item so it's easier to fit under the seat and less likely to be rejected.

### **4: Liquid & CT Scanner Reality**

Even though liquids are still regulated (ie. the 3-1-1 rule), new scanners and stricter checks mean improperly packed liquids are getting pulled more often.

✦ **Tip:** Place your liquids pouch on top of your carry-on bin content so security doesn't have to dig for it — reducing delays and repacking hassles.

## ⚡ **5: Electronics & Battery Rules Are Tighter**

Security officers may now require any electronic device to power on — phones, tablets, laptops.

Power bank limits:

- Under 100 Wh: Allowed
- 100–160 Wh: Airline approval required
- Over 160 Wh: Not allowed at all

There's also a cap on how many battery-powered devices you can carry. Always check your specific airline's website before flying for precise limits and requirements as rules differ.

✦ **Tip:** If your device won't turn on, it may not fly — charge everything before leaving home. Dead devices might be confiscated.

## 🔒 **6: Smart Luggage Has One Non-Negotiable Rule**

Smart suitcases with built-in chargers or tracking devices are only allowed if the battery is removable. This rule exists due to the risk of lithium-ion battery fires in overhead bins.

**Always check:**

Can the battery be removed quickly? If not, the bag may be denied.

## 📦 **7: Overhead Bin Space Is a Competitive Sport**

Planes are fuller. Seats are tighter. Overhead space is limited.

If you're flying basic economy, you're usually boarding last — which means a higher chance your carry-on gets gate-checked.

Smart Strategy:

- ✓ Board as early as your fare allows
- ✓ Keep essentials in your under-seat bag
- ✓ Coordinate packing with travel companions

## ✦ **Final Thoughts From Grace**

The biggest change in 2026 isn't just the rules — it's how strictly they're enforced.

Airports are relying less on discretion and more on automation, scanners, and scales. Travelers who pack smart will move effortlessly through the airport, others may face delays, fees, or gate-checks.

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