



# Bagless in Brisbane?

## Some tips to ensure your bags go where you do

**AIRLINES in the US alone lost 10,000 pieces of luggage a day in 2005 and globally, they mishandled about one per cent of the three billion bags checked last year. Although airlines claim to return roughly 98 per cent of lost luggage within a few hours, the inconvenience is, at the least, a pain in the checkout.**

But according to Tim Jacobsen, vice president of Luggage Online and Brooke Dowd of Wellpacked.com, there are things we can all do to minimise risk.

Dowd says the best solution is to carry on luggage. "But with carry on luggage restrictions down to 45 maximum linear inches, for most travellers it is nearly impossible to carry on enough, even for a long weekend getaway," she said.

Jacobsen advised: "Ship it. Couriers are more reliable than the airlines, and they have much better tracking technology in place." Which is fine if you're that organised, but not if you typically lock the suitcase in the taxi on the way to checkin.

Nevertheless, there are some tips that help (even if they do take a bit of planning):

- Have your luggage shipped directly to your destination: For a fee, there are many services out there that will ship your luggage directly to your destination, cutting out the airlines all together.
- Use a global tracking service such as <http://www.globalbagtag.com>, a unique item retrieval service enabling you to register your valuable items on a secure database.
- Book direct flights. Connections and extra flights increase your chances of lost luggage.
- Remove any old airline stickers from your luggage. You don't want any confusion about your bag's destination.
- Arrive early. Checking in at the last minute can be the cause of your luggage being lost.
- Make sure the person who checks your baggage attaches the correct destination to every bag, and get a claim ticket for each.

• Make your luggage stand out. There is a sea of black luggage out there and if yours is black too, it's that much more difficult to find. Buy colourful luggage or use yarn, tape, neon luggage tags, or bright straps to make it more noticeable.

• Put your name on the outside and inside of every bag. Better yet, if you can, place an itinerary of your trip inside your bag. This will make it easier for the airline to locate you.

• Sounds simple, but pack your valuables in your carry on. Expensive electronics and jewellery are more likely to be stolen than your socks and underwear. And if the entire case is stolen, at least you still have your valuables.

You should also note that if your bag is not on the carousel, wait around. Frequently, bags that don't make the right flight end up on the airline's next flight. If all else fails and your luggage is lost, be sure to file a complaint with your airline immediately. Some airlines will only have a small window of time for filing one.