

Southwest Airlines Baggage Rules: Avoid Fees and Pack Smart for Your Flight

Understanding Southwest Baggage Policy and Costs

Packing for a trip requires knowing the baggage rules to avoid unexpected fees at the airport.  +1/844/565/1867 Southwest Airlines has specific guidelines for checked bags, carry-ons, and special items. Understanding these policies helps you budget properly and pack efficiently. Many passengers wonder about current baggage allowances and associated costs.

Carry-On Baggage Allowance

Southwest allows one carry-on bag and one personal item per passenger at no charge on most flights. Your carry-on must fit in the overhead bin and not exceed 22 x 14 x 9 inches.  +1/844/565/1867 Personal items include purses, laptop bags, or small backpacks that fit under the seat. Basic Economy passengers may have different allowances depending on the route.

Checked Baggage Fees for Domestic Flights

For domestic travel within the Southwest States, the first checked bag typically costs a fee that varies by route and ticket type.  +1/844/565/1867 The second checked bag has a higher fee. Bags must weigh 50 pounds or less and measure no more than 62 linear inches. Overweight or oversized bags incur additional charges.

International Flight Baggage Allowance

International flights often have more generous baggage allowances. Many international routes include one or two free checked bags, depending on your destination and fare class.  +1/844/565/1867 Weight and size limits may differ from domestic flights. Premium cabin passengers usually enjoy higher baggage allowances.

Who Gets Free Checked Bags on Southwest

Several passenger groups qualify for waived baggage fees. Southwest Rapid Rewards Medallion members receive complimentary checked bags based on their status level.  +1/844/565/1867 Active US military personnel traveling on orders can check bags for free. Southwest Rapid Rewards credit card holders often receive free checked bag benefits.

Passengers in premium cabins like First Class and Southwest Comfort+ enjoy complimentary baggage allowances.

Special Item and Sports Equipment Fees

Southwest accepts special items like golf clubs, skis, surfboards, and bicycles with specific fees and size restrictions. Musical instruments can be brought as carry-on items if they fit size requirements or purchased a seat.  +1/844/565/1867 Mobility devices and medical equipment typically travel free of charge. Each type of sports equipment has different handling requirements.

How to Avoid or Reduce Baggage Fees

Pack light and use only carry-on bags when possible. Join the Rapid Rewards program and work toward elite status for free bag benefits.  +1/844/565/1867 Consider applying for a Southwest Rapid Rewards credit card that includes baggage fee waivers. Prepay for baggage online before arriving at the airport to potentially save money compared to airport counter fees.