

College Holiday Break Packing Checklist

A realistic packing and dorm shutdown guide for Thanksgiving, winter break, spring break, long weekends, and any trip home from campus.

What this PDF includes: what to bring home, what to leave in the dorm, dorm shutdown steps, travel-day bag ideas, parent and roommate reminders, return-to-campus prep, and a notes page.

Student	Dorm / hall	Break dates

Quick Start

- ☐ Check residence hall closing and reopening dates before you pack.
- ☐ Ask what must be unplugged, cleaned, emptied, or taken home.
- ☐ Pack medicine, IDs, chargers, and valuables in your personal bag.
- ☐ Bring home laundry, seasonal clothes, schoolwork, and break essentials.
- ☐ Empty trash, food, and fridge items before leaving.
- ☐ Ask your roommate who is leaving last and what needs to be handled.

Dorm Blueprint Tip: Pack like you are leaving for break, but reset your room like you are coming back tired. Future you will be grateful.

2 Weeks Before Break

This is the planning stage. You do not need to pack yet, but you should know the rules and timeline.

☐ Confirm residence hall closing and check-out time.	☐ Check final assignments or exams due before break.
☐ Check whether you need to sign up for break housing or late stay approval.	☐ Start using up fridge food and perishable snacks.
☐ Ask your RA what must be unplugged or cleaned before leaving.	☐ Make a list of what you need to bring home and what can stay.
☐ Book your flight, bus, train, or ride home if you have not already.	☐ Ask your roommate what they are taking home or leaving behind.
☐ Tell your family or ride what time you actually need to leave campus.	☐ Order anything you need for travel before it is last-minute.

1 Week Before Break

☐ Do laundry so you do not pack dirty clothes home by accident.	☐ Clean out your backpack so travel documents are easy to find.
☐ Set aside clothes for travel day.	☐ Plan what schoolwork you realistically need during break.
☐ Pack weather-appropriate clothes for home, not just campus weather.	☐ Check gift, outfit, or event needs if break includes holidays.
☐ Gather medicine, contacts, glasses, documents, and chargers.	☐ Start a return-to-campus list for anything you need to bring back.
☐ Back up important school files or bring your laptop home.	☐ Remind your roommate who is handling trash, fridge, and windows.

Check before leaving	Where to confirm	Notes
Dorm closing time	Housing email / portal / RA	
Break housing rules	Residence life website	
Mail/package pickup	Campus mailroom	
Transportation time	Ticket, parent, friend, rideshare	

What to Bring Home

Pack for how you will actually spend break: home, family events, work shifts, studying, travel, and rest.

☐ Everyday clothes for the length of break.	☐ Prescription medicine and basic health items.
☐ Weather-specific items: coat, boots, umbrella, gloves, or lighter layers.	☐ Laptop, tablet, chargers, headphones, and power bank.
☐ Pajamas, socks, underwear, and comfy clothes.	☐ Textbooks, notebooks, planner, and schoolwork you will actually use.
☐ Shoes for home, events, work, or travel.	☐ Wallet, ID, student ID, insurance card, keys, and travel documents.
☐ Toiletries you use daily.	☐ Gifts, holiday outfits, or special-event items.
☐ Skincare, hair products, contacts, glasses, and retainers.	☐ Anything valuable you do not want sitting in the dorm.

Pack Separately: Do Not Bury These

☐ Phone charger	☐ Keys
☐ Wallet / ID	☐ Laptop
☐ Medicine	☐ Snacks / water
☐ Glasses / contacts	☐ Comfort item
☐ Travel tickets	☐ One clean outfit

Realistic rule: If you are not going to study over break, do not drag home every textbook. Bring only the work you have a real plan to complete.

What Can Usually Stay in the Dorm

Only leave items that are allowed to stay, not valuable, and not needed at home. Always check your school rules first.

☐ Extra bedding if your room is secure and allowed.	☐ Desk supplies you do not need for break.
☐ Non-perishable sealed snacks if allowed.	☐ Cleaning supplies in original containers.
☐ Bulky storage bins and organizers.	☐ Seasonal clothing you will not need at home.
☐ Decor that is safely secured and allowed to stay.	☐ Mini fridge if your school allows it to remain.
☐ Laundry basket or hamper if empty.	☐ Microwave or appliances only if housing rules allow.

Dorm Shutdown Checklist

☐ Take out all trash and recycling.	☐ Close and lock windows if required.
☐ Empty perishable food from fridge, shelves, desk, and drawers.	☐ Turn off lights, fans, and electronics.
☐ Wipe sticky spills and crumbs.	☐ Secure valuables or bring them home.
☐ Wash or take home dirty laundry and towels.	☐ Check under the bed, desk, and closet for forgotten items.
☐ Unplug items your school requires you to unplug.	☐ Leave your key / card where your school says to keep it.

Check your school rules: Some halls require mini fridges to be emptied, unplugged, defrosted, or left open. Do not guess; confirm before you leave.

Travel Day Bag

This is the bag you keep with you, not buried under bedding bins or in the trunk.

☐ Phone and charger.	☐ Water bottle and easy snacks.
☐ Wallet, ID, student ID, and keys.	☐ Travel tickets, boarding pass, or ride info.
☐ Prescription medicine and glasses/contacts.	☐ A clean layer or hoodie for temperature changes.
☐ Laptop or tablet if traveling with it.	☐ Small toiletries or hygiene items.
☐ Headphones.	☐ One small comfort item for long travel days.

Travel type	Do this before leaving campus	Do not forget
Driving home	Load valuables last so they are easy to reach.	Gas, parking, tolls, snacks, water.
Flying home	Check bag weight and liquid rules before leaving.	ID, boarding pass, chargers, medicine.
Bus/train	Confirm pickup spot and timing.	Ticket, headphones, portable charger.
Getting picked up	Send exact building and pickup time.	Keep your phone charged.

Parent and Roommate Reminders

☐ Parents: ask what the student actually needs brought home, not what you think should come home.
☐ Parents: leave space in the car for laundry, bedding, and random last-minute items.
☐ Roommates: decide who is leaving last and who handles final trash/fridge check.
☐ Roommates: do not throw away shared items without asking.
☐ Roommates: confirm windows, lights, and valuables before the last person leaves.
☐ Students: text your arrival plans and travel updates if someone is picking you up.

Buy, Wait, Ask, or Check

Decision	Good examples	Why it matters
Buy before travel	Travel-size toiletries, laundry bag, medication refill, charger, snacks.	These are annoying to replace during a rushed travel day.
Wait until you know your room	Extra bins, seasonal storage, bulky organizers.	You may not know what fits until after break or next semester.
Ask your roommate first	Shared fridge food, cleaning supplies, decor, shared purchases.	Avoid duplicate buying and confusion over what stays.
Check your school rules	Mini fridge, microwave, candles, heaters, extension cords, break housing.	Rules can change for long breaks and building closures.

Return-to-Campus Prep

☐ Make a list of what you are taking home so you remember to bring it back.	☐ Bring back chargers, keys, student ID, and important documents.
☐ Refill medicine, toiletries, laundry supplies, and basic snacks before returning.	☐ Pack winter/spring clothing based on the next month of campus weather.
☐ Wash clothes and bedding before packing back to campus.	☐ Add any items you realized you actually needed during the semester.
☐ Check move-back-in or hall reopening time.	☐ Leave behind anything you kept bringing to campus but never used.

Return List

Bring back	Why / where it goes	Packed?

Important dates	Time / location	Notes
Dorm closes		
Travel home		
Dorm reopens		
Travel back		

For more dorm checklists, tools, and move-in planning guides, visit DormRoomBlueprint.com.