Travel Sans Laptop



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As a writer, I have historically traveled with my laptop as much as possible: in case inspiration strikes on vacation, in case I'm the only one awake during everyone else's siesta, in case I need to handle work (a more recent development in the past two years).

Naturally, I'm far too distracted in vacation mode for inspiration to strike, I'm also asleep during the siesta, and work is work when I'm away for work, so I'm not opening work on my free time when traveling for work.

You understand, right?



So for the first time ever, I broke the rule in Montreal, on a weekender vacation which felt about as close as I'm going to get to Hemingway's seven-year stay in Paris. Big Lost Generation vibes. Multiple economic collapses will do that to you.

Also, my baggage of choice: a carry-on suitcase holding my suit, my Topo Design Quick Pack (I didn't want a bulky backpack under the seat in front of me), and the CPAP bag, which would've been my best hope for fitting a laptop—none of them fit my chunky Linux driver. And I'm getting picky about my keyboards again, so the GPD Win Max 2 wasn't an option.

No laptop it was, then.

I immediately knew I'd made the right choice when the TSA agent asked me to remove any electronics larger than a cell phone. Hell, I don't even carry a Kindle anymore. Power move at security.

What I kind of miss, and might even still be missing, is this ability to write on my flights. A laptop doesn't fit in economy class seating anymore. (*Especially* when the guy in front of you tilts his chair back out of the blue and nearly crushes your screen.) And if I have any chance of preventing carpel tunnel syndrome in my thumbs, I better find a way to type on my phone with all ten fingers.

Something my weekend in Montreal also revealed is that if inspiration was going to strike, I looked far less interesting typing notes or passages out on my phone than I would've on a laptop or in a little notebook. That let me squeeze out a few paragraphs while waiting for a wedding to start. Because of this, nobody asked me what I was writing, which is the fastest way to get me to stop writing.

My phone has become a significant driver of all things as well. Most browsing and shopping happens there. I read books both owned and checked out of the library on my phone as well, because I have apps for that. Music, email, calendar--obviously the phone. And when I finally got my notes together in digital form, well, there was the OneNote app for download as well. Being glued to a spot with either my laptop or my desktop computer is now focus work. Life is more agile than ever.

Smartphones remain a distracting item though. I scroll too much on mine. Growth is difficult. And inevitably, I also check work stuff through my Outlook and Teams apps, because I can't stop, won't stop, and it gets worse whenever someone learns that the fastest way to reach me is to tag me in chat. And God forbid you make a near-daily habit of tagging @Everyone in a 50-person chat.

So I quit my job. I go to Montreal between jobs. I spend way too much time trying to read French, which is the English of Romantic Languages. (Much like English is the French of Germanic Languages.)

I toss my phone, wallet, and a game (Azul, mini edition, at the moment) into my bag wherever I go. I read maps and reviews on the move, and pay 10 CAD a cocktail, marveling that you can still pay 7 USD for a mixed drink somewhere in the coldest reaches of North America. A guy buys us a shot of Jameson.

Somehow, I live without my laptop.

I didn't check if my phone's plan still covered international roaming though. Crap. I'll cross that bridge when I get to it.

To Do List

I thought I'd tackle the easy stuff first, but then I realized I needed to take pictures and it got so much more complicated. My bad.

Flick 'n' Fire is available on MakerWorld and Itch.io to download. I'm not sure how you can play without 3D printing your own pieces, but since I have an Itch.io already (see: Deception: A Metagame, and The Phantom Hamlet) I figured I'd just throw the PDF and STL in there and let someone else figure it out.

Side note, opening the Coquidados page on Itch.io is like examining ancient history. Even crazier, Evil Hat put my Fate World, *Arecibo*, on the site! Wow!

Now on to the next production task. *Whiskey Dogs* and *Human Hawke* still need cover art. Progress is that I started looking at the current landscape for cover art in these genres, and I've sent out a couple of briefs for Whiskey Dogs. I've set a deadline for some quotes by the end of the month, at which point, I'll choose the artist. Once that's moving without me, I'll do the same for *Human Hawke*. I know this is in backwards order, but since I wrote the werewolves a lot more recently, I'm way more excited to put action into it, and figure that will drive the inspiration and motivation to go ham for the spacefarer.

Tickadeedee,
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