

Take a Little Trip

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Traveling in a Model A is one of the highlights of our hobby. Combining an interest in Model As, travel, and era fashion is about the best thing I can think of to experience all aspects of this hobby. Where are you going? Is it for the weekend? What's the weather forecast? A few things to ask yourself before beginning to plan your wardrobe and luggage requirements.

"Each year motoring becomes more and more a favorite pastime as weekends grow in popularity..." according to the June 1931 issue of *Good Housekeeping*. This sentiment is



Figure 1; Picnic set

very similar to the short tours so many of our chapters take each year. Do you and a few Model A friends like to take day trips and pack a lunch? Have a little fun with it! One of my favorite trips involved the Southeastern Touring group and a trip onto the Blue Ridge Parkway. My husband and I packed a lunch and brought our picnic set along. Add some fried chicken, potato salad, and lemonade for a trip you won't soon forget. (Figure 1) These luncheon kits were suggested for anyone "motoring much". This cobra-grained Fabrikoid kit was setup for six-place settings and to fit



Figure 2; Luncheon kit ad from June 1931, *Good Housekeeping*

the running board. (Figure 2) Kits like these were available during all years of the Model A era. They range from simple sets to more elaborate. I have seen kits with eight-place settings, multiple thermoses, tin, or enamel boxes to carry a variety of items, cups, and various other accessories. They are not the easiest to find at antique stores, but I have seen several in my travels. It may look like a suitcase if it is setting on the floor closed. Look a little closer and you may find a treasure.



Figure 3; York Daily Record, July 1927, "new zippered cases"

"Talon Hookless Fasteners," "slide fasteners" or "Zip-O-Grips" were all names for what we would call a zipper. These started showing up in luggage before the Model A era. Here is an ad from July 1927 in the *York (PA) Daily Record*. (Figure 3) The same ad, two months earlier, from Austin, TX did not mention the "new zippered cases" noted in the "For Long Trips" section.

Of other interest is the mention on short trips using "light luggage for feminine travelers". Not only were motoring trips becoming commonplace, the ads were focusing on females and the needs of traveling with multiple dresses, shoes, and hats.

In our effort to reproduce an authentic trip in our Model As, we may not be able to go into every aspect, but pick something you enjoy and try it! If you love hats, find a nice hat box and throw it in the back seat, trunk or rumble seat. If you're lucky enough to have a truck, you have plenty of room for luggage. Be sure, if you're using originals, to keep them protected from the elements. They aren't making any more "Wheary Wardrolettes of buffalo rawhide." (Figure 5)



Figure 4; Luggage from June 1931, Good Housekeeping

“Brimmed hats having returned to fashion importance, a large hat box is required, as proved by the Mendel-Drucker model, covered in Scotch tweed duck.” Also shown, is the Oshkosh duffel bag of orange and red striped cord duck which is great for shoes. In the lady’s hand you see a Zip-O-Grip handbag made of bright-colored goat skin. At her feet is the Revelation suitcase of black cobra-grained cowhide with locks and adjusts to 14 sizes. The Seward Aero-Pak suitcase, to the far left, included wardrobe conveniences. Hanging over the Seward is a Snuggle Rug of English plaid woolen, which, on motor trips, is a “wise precaution”. This rug is bag shaped and uses a Talon Hookless Fastener closing. (Figure 4)

The items in Figure 5 include the Oshkosh hat box, with cord duck to match the duffel bag mentioned earlier. Trunks were used for longer trips, usually rail or sea travel. Wardrobe trunks would keep your clothes

organized and less wrinkled. Dresses of lace, such as Chantilly, were invaluable for travel as they don’t show wrinkles as easily as silk. Wool suits were also great for cool days and less prone to wrinkling. Bringing along wraps or “tiny jackets” which can be used with multiple outfits is also a smart idea. Those with light fabric such as chiffon or “transparent velvet, require almost no space at all.”



Figure 5; Luggage from June 1931, Good Housekeeping

This February 1930 ad from the *Kansas City Star* for Aerolite Bags specifically mentions they are “designed for air travel.” It also featured a Zip-Lock fastener. (Figure 6)



Figure 6; February 1930 ad from Kansas City newspaper, Aerolite Bags featuring Zip-Lock fasteners

Next time you travel in your Model A, think about your luggage and packing for the era. Many of these suitcases, duffels, and trunks can be found on eBay or in antique stores, for a decent price. Even if you only use it as a prop in your “A,” or for your next trip down the runway at a fashion judging event, you’ll be adding a little more authenticity to the occasion.

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