

# "Official → Baggage → Info"] Southwest Backpack & Carry-On Policy

Many travelers 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞 flying with Southwest Airlines want a clear, detailed understanding of what they are allowed to bring onboard, especially when it comes to **backpacks, carry-on luggage, and personal items** 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞. Packing incorrectly can lead to unnecessary stress at the gate, last-minute bag checks, or confusion during boarding 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞. While Southwest is known for being one of the most passenger-friendly airlines in the United States, its carry-on policy still has specific rules that travelers 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞 must follow 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞.

The short answer is **yes, you can bring both a backpack and a carry-on bag on Southwest Airlines**, but how those items are classified and where they must be placed matters 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞. Understanding the difference between a carry-on bag and a personal item is key to avoiding problems and boarding smoothly 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞.

## Can I bring a backpack and a carry on Southwest? Overview

Southwest Airlines allows **every passenger to bring two items onboard for free** 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞. This allowance applies to all fare types, including Wanna Get Away, Wanna Get Away Plus, Anytime, and Business Select 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞.

The two permitted onboard items are:

- **One carry-on bag**, which must be stored in the overhead bin
- **One personal item**, which must fit completely under the seat in front of you

Unlike many other airlines, Southwest does not charge extra for standard carry-on bags, making it especially attractive for travelers 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞 who want to avoid baggage fees 📞 +1 855 838 4886 👤 📞.

## What Southwest Considers a Carry-On Bag

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A carry-on bag is the larger of your two allowed items 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦.

This is typically a small suitcase, roller bag, duffel bag, or structured travel bag that goes into the overhead bin 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦.

Southwest has specific size limits for carry-on luggage 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦.  
The maximum allowed dimensions are:

- 24 inches long
- 16 inches wide
- 10 inches high

These measurements include wheels, handles, and any external pockets 📦👤

+1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦. If your carry-on exceeds these limits, Southwest may require you to gate-check the bag, especially on full flights or smaller aircraft 📦👤

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## What Southwest Defines as a Personal Item

In addition to your carry-on, Southwest allows one **personal item** 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦. A backpack almost always 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦 falls into this category **as long as it is small enough to fit completely under the seat in front of you** 📦👤 +1☎️855☎️838☎️4886 👤📦.

Examples of acceptable personal items include:

- Backpacks
- Laptop bags
- Purses or handbags
- Briefcases
- Small tote bags

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The key requirement is **under-seat fit** 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑. If your backpack does not fit fully under the seat, Southwest may no longer consider it a personal item 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑.

## Bringing a Backpack and a Carry-On Together

Yes, Southwest Airlines allows passengers to bring **both a backpack and a carry-on bag onboard** 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑, provided each item fits its assigned category 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑.

In practice, this means:

- Your **carry-on bag** goes in the overhead bin
- Your **backpack** goes under the seat in front of you

This setup is ideal for travelers 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑 who want easy access to essentials such as electronics, medications, documents, snacks, or personal items during the flight 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑.

## What Happens If Your Backpack Is Too Large?

If your backpack is **too large to fit under the seat**, Southwest may classify it as your carry-on instead 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑. When this happens, you are no longer allowed an additional overhead carry-on 📞 +1 855 838 4886 🧑.

In this situation, you may be required to:

- Gate-check your larger bag
- Rearrange items between bags
- Place one item in checked baggage

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To avoid this, travelers 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 should always 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞 test their backpack size before arriving at the airport 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞.

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## Boarding Order and Overhead Bin Space

Southwest uses **open seating**, which means boarding order plays a major role in overhead bin availability 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞. Even if your carry-on meets size requirements, overhead bins may fill up quickly on busy flights 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞.

Passengers who board later may still bring their carry-on but could be asked to gate-check it if space runs out 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞. This is one reason many travelers 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞 choose to pack essentials in their backpack rather than their overhead bag 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞.

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## Items That Do Not Count Toward Your Allowance

Certain items are allowed onboard **without counting toward your backpack + carry-on limit** 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞. These include:

- Assistive devices such as canes or walkers
- Mobility aids
- Child safety seats
- Umbrellas

However, additional bags like shopping bags, large purses, or extra backpacks **do count** toward your two-item limit 📞 +1-855-838-4886 🧑 📞.

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## Southwest Checked Bags vs. Carry-On Bags

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Southwest also allows **two checked bags for free**, which is separate from your carry-on allowance 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟. Even if you check luggage, you may still bring a backpack and a carry-on onboard 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

This generous policy allows travelers 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟 to distribute items efficiently and reduce the risk of carry-on restrictions becoming an issue 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

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## Common Mistakes travelers 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟 Make

One of the most common mistakes is assuming any backpack automatically qualifies as a personal item 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟. Large hiking backpacks or overstuffed bags often exceed under-seat limits 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

Another mistake is bringing additional bags, such as duty-free purchases or shopping bags, without realizing they count toward the two-item limit 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟. These misunderstandings can lead to last-minute gate checks or repacking at the airport 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

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## Tips to Avoid Carry-On Problems on Southwest

To avoid issues, travelers 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟 should:

- Choose a backpack designed for under-seat travel
- Measure carry-on bags including wheels and handles
- Pack essential items in the backpack
- Arrive early to improve boarding position
- Avoid overstuffing bags

These steps help ensure a smooth boarding experience 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

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Frequently Asked question 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886



**Can I bring a backpack and a carry-on on Southwest Airlines?**

Yes, one backpack (as a personal item) and one carry-on are allowed 🌟📞  
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**Does the backpack have to go under the seat?**

Yes, personal items must fit completely under the seat 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

**Can Southwest force me to check my carry-on?**

Yes, if overhead bins are full, your carry-on may be gate-checked 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886  
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**Are carry-ons free on Southwest?**

Yes, Southwest does not charge for standard carry-on bags 🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑  
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## Conclusion

So, can you bring a backpack and a carry-on on Southwest Airlines 🌟📞

+1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟? Yes—Southwest allows **one carry-on bag for the overhead bin and one personal item, such as a backpack, that fits under the seat** 🌟📞

+1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟. As long as both items meet size requirements and you understand how boarding order affects bin space, traveling with both is simple and stress-free  
🌟📞 +1📞855📞838📞4886 🧑🌟.

By packing smart, choosing the right bag sizes, and boarding strategically, you can take full advantage of Southwest's generous carry-on policy and enjoy a smooth flight experience 🌟📞  
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