

Generations

Introducing the new 'Smart' Bag

I used to do a bit of traveling in my early years: twice to West Africa, three times to Europe, visits to states on both the East and West coasts, and a bunch of sporadic trips to states in mid-America.

Luggage and packing was always a worry, but mostly a problem of trying to fit everything that I considered a necessity into a worn-out suitcase.

Even after careful planning, someone had to sit on the suitcase to get it closed. And most of the time, outfits that I swore would appear in a stack of Polaroid pictures didn't and would have to wait until the next trip. My middle name could have easily been "Overpack."

However, the days when luggage was only meant to store clothes, toiletries, electric hair curlers, shoes that hurt and shoes that didn't has evolved into a suitcase for trendy travelers known as the "Smart" Bag.

Marketed as "the case unlike

any other," the Smart Bag was developed by a New York-based company called Raden.



Peg DeMarco

In the bustling world of the busy traveler, this new electronically charged invention promises that its user won't miss his or her flight, computes its weight during and after packing, provides traffic updates on the day of travel, sends an alarm for flight delays, predicts the weather, and even tells the traveler how long he or she will wait in the security line.

Now that's some suitcase.

The suitcase comes in two sizes, has a flexible shell that withstands impacts and prevents cracks, and syncs to a smartphone app to deliver important travel updates.

It's even thought about the busy traveler forgetting about

its own maintenance because it recharges itself via a built-in phone-charging station with a battery and two USB ports.

Available in 22-inch and 28-inch, and colors that include white, black gloss, green, navy, light blue, lavender and pink, the sleek pieces of waterproof, travel-friendly luggage have a light, but hard-as-nails polycarbonate shell with a compact interior design that uses every nook and cranny to store belongings.

The built-in sensor calculates the weight and displays it on the app when the case is lifted off the floor. Cases even feature a TSA-approved lock, polyester interior and 360-degree wheels.

Alerts on airport mayhem are relayed to a companion app to take some of the stress out of travel.

Proximity sensors use Bluetooth technology to locate the bag when it is nearby and send an alert to the app when

it is coming down the baggage carousel.

Best of all to those travelers who can't get a real, live human being on their mobiles when their flight is in the air and they're on the ground, the Smart Bag provides 24/7 customer support via a live chat.

Sounds like it would cost a mint? Well, pricing wasn't bad. Raden's larger, 28-inch cargo suitcase costs \$395, and the smaller one is \$295 and fits handily in the overhead storage bin. A set discounts at \$595.

Josh Udashkin, Raden's founder and CEO, said the Smart Bag was long overdue.

"The \$40 billion luggage industry is built on providing a basic travel product with little innovation in design and technology," he said. "We've spent nearly two years in stealth mode developing a case that successfully combines design, technology and value in an effort to solve the headaches we all experience

while traveling. We eliminate the worry about getting to the airport on time, the anxiety of being subject to overweight-baggage fees and the fear of your phone dying in transit."

Raden has some heavyweights behind it to ensure success, with financial backing from First Round Capital, which also backed Uber, the highly successful "tap the app and get a ride" program, and participation from fashion designer Rachel Zoe.

Ah, now I know where the lavender, black gloss and pink colors originated, but I still can't figure out who would purchase a white Smart Bag.

For those interested, check out www.Raden.com. The Smart Bag is only sold on Raden's website and only ships to the U.S. and Canada, but the company is planning to open shops in the future.

Rest easy, weary travelers.

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