

How to minimize airline baggage fees when you have a lot of stuff?


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As I move my stuff from my storage locker to my apartment in Cusco Peru I often chose to pack as much as I can. Three tips that have helped me get more than the weight allowance on a flight: use a **duffel bag**, **be friendly**, and **try a different check-in agent** if the first one doesn't work.



I recently traveled on American Airlines and LAN from Washington DC to Cusco Peru. I had a 69 lb suitcase, a 58 lb duffel bag and 15 lb backpack and a handbag. I was concerned at having to pay for two overweight bags at \$100 each according to AA's website. I knew the minimum fee would be \$30 for one extra bag (AA gives you one 50 lb bag for free on international flights).

I prayed to the travel angels, connected with the light, expanded my heart and asked myself "**what would it take** to pay \$100 or less in fees". Then I smiled and kept a positive and friendly attitude with the ticketing agent and struck up a friendly conversation with her. And when I put the duffel bag on the scale the ends must have been drooping off the edges of the scale



because it only showed 42 lbs! The suitcase showed the whole 69 lbs that I was expecting so the scale wasn't broken. Then the agent researched the fees and discovered that instead of paying the \$100 AA overweight fee I could pay the \$90 LAN overweight fee. Yippee!

Update: My flight was canceled and I had to return the next day. I could have left my bags to travel without me and picked up in Cusco but I wasn't keen on leaving them at the carrousel in Peru for hours without me so I took them overnight to a friend's house and checked back in the next morning at curbside. This agent was not so friendly and he put the duffel bag on the scale himself end up instead of me putting it on with the ends hanging over the edge. The true weight of 58lb showed. I asked for a break due to flight delay and when he said no I just went inside to check in at the ticket counter instead. This time I showed the agent that I have already checked in and had luggage tags - she just printed new ones and put them on without reweighing. So sometimes it pays if you don't get by the first agent to try another one...