

The best... travel essentials

If you are planning a long trip this summer, or just going away for a quick weekend, these gadgets and accessories may help enhance your experience

► **Skype headset**
Roaming charges can leave you with an enormous mobile bill when you get home. With a Skype headset you can talk for free online from the comfort of a cybercafé or, if it has WiFi access, your hotel room. Price: £16. Contact: www.skype.com.



► **20Q Version 2** This "little ball of knowledge" is an electronic version of the old back-of-the-car favourite, 20 Questions. It asks you to think of something – animal, vegetable or mineral – then asks questions to work out what it is. "The weird thing is, it's almost always right." Price: £11. Contact: www.amazon.co.uk.



► **Balanzza Digital Luggage Scales** If you plan to do some shopping while abroad, this little gadget could save you a fortune in excess baggage charges. Hang your suitcase on the strap, and it will tell you if you're in danger of exceeding your weight limit. Price: £20. Contact: 01234-744787; www.balanzza.co.uk.



► **Click! Don't Scratch** This inexpensive gizmo is supposed to stop insect bites from itching and getting infected. Press the button to deliver a high-voltage, low-intensity current to the bite. "A must-have for the first aid box." Price: £5.99. Contact: 020-7292 9750; www.itchyfeet.com.



► **Flaresafe safety device** Designed to make even the most nervous travellers feel safe, the compact Flaresafe works as a powerful torch, a panic alarm and – if you hang it up in your room – a smoke detector. Price: £40. Contact: 01202-762380; www.flarebrands.com.



► **Overboard dry bag** Whether you're cruising the Med or on a barge in the Midlands, you'll be grateful for a waterproof bag in which to put precious bits and bobs. Even if it goes overboard, it will stay afloat without letting any water in. Price: £20. Contact: 0844-922 1010; www.firebox.com.



► **Dermalogica travel set** If you're travelling light, the last thing you need is a bulging bag of toiletries. Travel beauty sets are the solution. Dermalogica's skin cream kit contains all the essentials to keep your skin healthy, in handy, travel-size bottles. Price: £20. Contact: 0800-591 818; www.dermalogica.co.uk.



► **Solar iPod Speakers** Compact and eco-friendly, these mini iPod speakers run on two small solar panels that you plug into the side. If the sun goes in you can switch to mains or battery power. Price: £95. Contact: 0870-979 9600; www.minispeakers.co.uk.



SOURCE: THE INDEPENDENT

Tips of the week... how to cut down your food waste

- Avoid the supermarket. The idea of a "one-stop shop" encourages people to buy more than they need. If you really can't avoid it, take a list and stick to it.
- Resist two-for-one offers. Unless it's something that can go in the freezer, there's every chance the food will go off before you get around to eating it.
- Shop daily for perishables. If you buy mounds of vegetables and meat to last an entire week, some is almost certain to end up rotting in the fridge.
- Bulk-buy non-perishables. Buying pasta, rice and tinned goods online saves money, and keeps you away from the supermarkets.
- Storing food properly will increase its longevity. Keep fruit and vegetables in the fridge, and top and tail your carrots.
- Plan your meals for the entire week. Being efficient is the only real way to cut down. And think about the leftovers – for real cooks, leftovers can always be incorporated into the next meal.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

And for those who have everything...



The butterfly pavilion is a reusable butterfly habitat that makes the perfect "improving" gift for children. You send away for a set of ten caterpillars, and then you watch them turn into butterflies, for eventual release into the wild.

Price: £33. Contact: 020-7099 3649; www.wickeduncle.com.

SOURCE: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

The internet... the best pay-as-you-go car clubs

With petrol costs rising, now could be the best time to ditch the car and go communal www.carclubs.org.uk tells you all you need to know about car clubs, from which club is nearest to you, to how they work.

www.citycarclub.co.uk (0845-330 1234) operates in London, Brighton, Bristol, Bath, Edinburgh, Norwich and Camberley. Standard cars (Vauxhall Corsas) are £5 an hour and yearly membership is £75.

www.streetcar.co.uk (0845-644 8475) has 800 cars across London and the south of England. Membership is £50 a year and cars start from £4 an hour with the first 30 miles of petrol free.

www.whizzgo.co.uk (0844-477 9966) operates in London, Brighton, Southampton, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Birmingham and York.

www.zipcar.co.uk (0800-011 2555) is great for London driving. It costs from £4.95 an hour, including the congestion charge and fuel, but mileage is extra after 60 miles.

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH