

# **Flying Home For Christmas**

by  
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I stand the suitcase on the scales. Damn. Fifteen kilograms over the allowed luggage weight. Opening the suitcase, I sift through my clothes. A fleece-lined jacket? I don't need that. Christmas Day in Australia will either be flooding rain or a heatwave. Dad will have a spare raincoat if I need one.

Closing the suitcase, I stand it on the scales.

Ten kilograms over. Bugger.

Opening the suitcase, I pull out a pair of jeans, and my red dress. Why did I pack that? I'll be on a sheep farm in the middle of Victoria. Those strappy shoes can go, too. We'll be dancing around a bonfire, not under disco lights.

Removing the shoes and clothes, I close the suitcase and stand it on the scales.

Eight kilograms over. Fair dinkum.

Opening the suitcase, I remove a floral blouse, a slinky skirt, and three sets of lingerie. Who did I expect to charm? The sheep? Closing the suitcase, I stand it on the scales.

Seven kilograms over. What?

Opening the suitcase, I take out two books, another pair of jeans, put the books back, swap the Ugg boots for thongs, ditch all the socks. Close the suitcase. Stand on scales.

Five kilograms over.

Gritting my teeth, I open the suitcase, lose another dress, swap a tee shirt for a singlet. Close the suitcase. Stand it on the scales.

Four kilograms over.

A horn blares; my taxi ride to the airport. Hurrying to the door, I dodge the neighbour's cat, signal the driver to wait, bolt back inside, open the suitcase, remove a towel; why did I pack a towel? Ditch the soap and the toothpaste and toothbrush holder and the soap holder and why are there two hairbrushes? Tossing the items, I close the suitcase. Stand it on the scales.

Seven kilograms over? What the?

Open the suitcase. Remove the cat. Close the suitcase. Weigh on scales.

Three kilograms over.

Horn blares. Time ticks. Chase away cat. Find a bandaid for cat scratch. Open suitcase. Remove books. Study titles. 'One Midnight's Dream', a romance, stays. 'Across a Crowded Room', a thriller, goes. Repack romance book. Don't crush the cover! Wrap book in pyjamas. Close suitcase. Weigh suitcase.

Two kilograms over.

Open suitcase. Ditch pyjamas. Put the book in my carry-on bag. Remove makeup bag, another blouse, another skirt. What was I thinking? Did I pack my entire wardrobe? Close suitcase. Stand on scales.

Half a kilogram over.

Horn blares. Time ticks. Open suitcase. Upend contents. Repack shirt, shorts, singlet, thongs, hairbrush, pyjamas, underwear. Hat. Where's my hat? I'll faint from heatstroke without a hat. I search my apartment. No hat. Don't panic. Mum has hats attached to her hands. She'll shove one on my head the second I arrive. Horn blares. Driver yells. Time's up. Close suitcase. Stand on scales.

One kilogram under.

Do I?

Grab thriller. Weigh on scales. Eight hundred grams. Open suitcase. Add book. Close suitcase. Essentials packed, run to the taxi.