



# GEAR PATROL

## Gear Patrol

July 8, 2010

Light on Your Feet

Featuring: Kestrel 68

Monthly Traffic: 150,900

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/252w379>

The **Kestrel 68** is classified as a multi-day backpack, ideal for carrying 40 to 60 pounds on long weekends or week-long trips far from civilization. The 68 in the name refers to the 68 liters of gear it can haul (M/L size) and it does it intelligently. One gripe I've had about packs in the past is the lack of large outside pockets for quick access to key items. The Kestrel 68 has two long slash pockets along either side, as well as a stretchy mesh back panel, the latter of which is perfect for holding a pair of sandals to wear around camp and a rain shell. In addition, the Kestrel also has two stretchy side pockets that are sized right for liter water bottles. Even the hip belt has two small pockets, which allow your energy bars and GPS to be close at hand. The floating top has no less than three zippered compartments in different sizes. Multiple bungees and compression straps make for easy lashing of loose items such as tent poles or a camera tripod. There is a smartly-placed pair of loops made specifically for stowing trekking poles on the fly. Brilliant. So how does it fit? Like a dream. Osprey uses a curved rigid frame called the Airscape™ that keeps the load close to the body and keep it all stable. A ribbed back panel allows for air circulation and the whole torso panel is adjustable to fine tune for different length backs. The result is a pack that I'd happily take on a week-long backpacking trip. On a couple of test hikes, I loaded the Kestrel down with camera gear, food, clothes and a tent, totaling around 40 pounds. By the end of the hikes, I still felt fresh and ready to keep going, which might be the best thing you can say about a pack.

