



## PracticalTravelGear.com

September 4, 2012

Featuring: Aura 50

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/98orckl>

I've been overnight backpacking for about 25 years, and last July was the first time I'd been four days on the trail without experiencing shoulder and neck pain caused by my pack. I was also carrying more weight than ever before. I'm convinced it was no coincidence I was wearing my new Osprey Aura 50. What makes the Osprey Aura better than my previous packs? For starters, the ability to custom fit the pack through its adjustable harness and 'fit-on-the-fly' hipbelt. The Aura comes in 50 or 65 sizing, but the harness comes in three additional sizes per category (I recommend stopping in at your local outdoors store to size it in person instead of online), and can be further customized after you select the one that works for you. The hipbelt is also further customized by use of dual-density foam and spacer mesh, which can be adjusted even while hiking. The result: a pack that's snug to your body, but not clinging, thanks to the incredibly advanced ventilation (the pack proper never sits directly on your back).

The Aura utilizes a traditional top-load design, and there are plenty of pockets and compartments to stash stuff, as well as a deceptively large main compartment. I love the two vertical zippered pockets that run the length of the lower pack; they fit either a full day's clothing, a pair of water shoes, or, as I used them, a filtration system on one side, and a camp stove and fuel on the other. The top pocket is removable, but you'll want it on: it fits all the little items you don't want to lose (but want access to): cameras, paperbacks, phones, or keys. The hip belt includes two small zippered pockets on each side. There is a compartment ready for a filtration system such as a platypus, with hooks and holes ready for the hose as well. Two water bottle pockets are also located on each side. I like that almost all the pockets are stretchy, allowing for various sizes and shapes of bottles and supplies. The Aura 50 has a load range of approximately 10 lbs to 55 lbs. I loaded it with 45 lbs for my multi-day trek, and, as mentioned, it was easily manageable. There are plenty of ways to attached items to the exterior of the pack: I attached a sleeping bag, pad, tent, and small camp chair with no problem. The interior is roomy enough to fit a bear canister. There's a place to stow your trekking pole, should you be lucky enough to have one. Dimensions are 29x17x14, and volume is 3051 cubic inches in the medium (small and large are also available). The pack itself weighs only 3 lbs. The pack sits up on the hips nicely, and I never felt the weight on my shoulders. My back got far less sweaty than my companions', too, thanks to the mesh ventilation frame that keeps the pack off your back.

The Aura comes in eggplant purple or pinion green. It's available at REI, Backcountry, or Moosejaw for \$199 (a more than reasonable price for a high-quality piece of essential camping gear), or can be found on Amazon for a few bucks less.

