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Trail Transformers: 5 Convertible Backpacks to Save Space and Hike Further

Featuring: Aether and Ariel Series

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I am, I've recently come to realize, a pack hoarder. Somehow over the years, I've amassed five separate hiking bags—and all for myself! Stuffed haphazardly into my gear closet are an expedition pack, a midsize pack, a simple day pack, a hydration pack and a lumbar pack. Add those to my husband's personal collection, and we could outfit a small troop of Boy Scouts. Though I don't regret purchasing a single one—they've gotten me through everything from long treks across Kenya and Patagonia to weekend hikes near my home in the Northeast—I do wonder if I could have been a more conscientious buyer. The bags took up too much precious real estate in various shoebox New York City apartments before we moved into a bigger home and, when added together, cost a pretty penny.

It turns out there's an alternative to buying dozens of single-purpose packs. In fact, several gear companies offer convertible packs with components that can be removed and used as smaller bags. In addition to being excellent space savers at home, these packs allow backpackers setting up centralized basecamps to bag peaks on day trips without bringing a separate small pack or hauling along their big one. Click through to the slideshow to read up on the top five convertible packs.



Osprey Aether and Ariel Series

Osprey offers two backpack series with removable day bags: Aether for men and Ariel for women. The mid-size expedition bags are super light, weighing roughly 4.9 lbs, with gender- and size-specific harness and hipbelt systems. The bags are also sleek and non-bulky. The lid detaches and converts into a lumbar pack.

Pro: Highly tailored fit options.

\$239-299

