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Featuring: Meridian 28"

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/d7tb2uy>

It's luggage, it's a backpack, and it does a better-than-fair job at both. That's the quick take on the Osprey Meridian 28-inch luggage system that includes a detachable daypack and a smartly designed soft-sided suitcase that converts from wheeled luggage to backpack.

I'd been in the market for something to replace the old soft-sided suitcase that didn't survive my last trip to the Caribbean almost two years ago for some time when I stumbled across the Osprey Meridian system. I hadn't been satisfied with the standard case simply because it was just, well, a suitcase. I'm a sucker for multipurpose equipment that still manages to remain reasonably simple, so I was quite interested in the Meridian. In particular, I detest carrying a suitcase up or down staircases, and I'm an avid observer of what other people use as luggage. I'm also not fond of dragging wheeled luggage around for any distance, whether it's an airport or on the sidewalk. I'd rather carry something as a pack, so long as it's comfortable and convenient. I also like to have room for extra items, when possible. Several years ago, I took a trip to Churchill, Manitoba to view the polar bears that gather there in the fall. For that trip, I toted a soft-sided duffel/hockey bag that was at the maximum end of the size scale for air travel to accommodate my heavy and bulky winter clothing. While that bag worked for size, it certainly wasn't convenient to lug around, as it lacked any kind of shoulder strap.

The 28-inch Meridian solves all of those problems for me in a good-quality, smartly designed package that's full of features and lightweight. The main case glides along beautifully and smoothly on its in-line wheels, and is full of cunningly designed features designed to make it easy to organize clothing and other items. There is an assortment of pockets and compartments that would likely satisfy even a ninja.

The detachable daypack is an awesome feature. It can either be zipped directly onto the main pack, or buckled in for easy on and off. Its main pocket easily accommodates a 15-inch laptop or even slightly bigger, and there is another wealth of pockets inside and outside. Very cool! So all in all, the Meridian gets a double thumbs up.

