



## REVIEW: Osprey Packs Escapist 30 Backpack



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Featuring: Escapist 30

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When we start our search for a new piece of gear we often look for things that can cover more than one activity. Maybe you're looking for a baselayer that is going to be good for skiing and also just as at home on a multi-day bike or hike. One place where gear claims to be multi-use but is sometimes really stretching it is with backpacks. With their Escapist series, Osprey Packs aims to build a pack that can get you out the door, on multi-day hikes, adventure races and even comfortably on a bike. Here's our take on the Escapist 30.

### **MATERIALS and CONSTRUCTION**

The large majority of the Escapist 30 is made using 210D nylon mini hex. This fabric makes for super durable performance combined with shape that isn't distorted and keeps the pack balanced. In addition, the pack sports narrow side panels that use a 420 HD nylon pack cloth. These panels sport 14 reflective elements each for great visibility should this be one of your preferred cycling packs (with the added bonus of looking like you're rocking some glow-in-the-dark zebra print). Each of the seams of the Escapist 30 is fully reinforced giving the internal structure just as much durability as the exterior. For the shoulder harness and hipbelt, Osprey uses full-on EVA foam that includes ventilation slits. The foam, used in most shoes for cushioning, means that this pack has a dense and very solid feel in its contact points. The shoulder harness itself is wrapped in a very open Biostretch mesh and rather than thin straps, they've opted for a wider harness which again, aids stability and fit.

### **FEATURES**

The Escapist 30 a really feature-rich pack so get ready! As I mentioned above, the shoulder harness is substantial though still very lightweight. Adjustability of the harness comes in four key areas. First, the adjustment at the bottom of the harness is ample and would have no problem adjusting to heavier coats or slimmer, hot weather gear. Additionally, the excess of these straps is held to the lower strapping to avoid the ends flapping around. Second is the sternum strap which can move vertically roughly 5 inches to adjust however the wearer desires. Third, the suspension adjustment straps on top of the shoulders have plenty of play to bring the pack higher and tighter when the activity calls for it. Finally, the yoke of the Escapist uses a hook and loop system to allow for a lot of adjustability depending on torso length. This being primarily a bike pack, the adjustability is primed to be on a body leaned over a set of handlebars though, even on longer hikes it handled well and the adjustability was more than enough for my needs.

The back panel of the Escapist 30 has quite a lot going on for something that is sometimes not so well considered. First is Osprey's Airscape ventilation system. This setup is made up of 5 sections of horizontally ribbed EVA foam, between each of these sections is a gap of about an inch and the whole system is covered by very open Biostretch mesh. Between the horizontal ribbing and the gaps, the ventilation of this pack is very good and kept me comfortable, even on hot days. An added bonus of the ribbing is that it adds an element of stability when the going gets bumpy.





The hipbelt is clearly designed with biking in mind as it's relatively minimal as packs go. If you're loading this pack down with 40+ lbs of gear, it may not be the most appropriate pack for that purpose. However, with it's easy to use ErgoPull strap system, you can tighten it pretty far down to get back that stability if you're hiking.

Now on to the pockets (of which there are plenty). Starting at the top, the harness sports a pocket on the left side which is a bit small for most smartphones but just the right size for a multi-tool of any sort. The hipbelt has two pockets, one on each side, that have plenty of room for your digital compatriots and also have nice, large pulls that don't thwart gloves. I found that while the side pockets were certainly useful, opening or closing them with one hand was tricky unless the pocket was full enough to maintain its structure. The sides of the pack rock a mesh pocket each. These give plenty of room for an extra water bottle with a strap that can hold it down. On the outside, back of the Escapist 30 is a very convenient mesh stash pocket that is über-convenient for holding a jacket or something else that you may need to get to without going into the main section of the pack. Just below this stash pocket is what Osprey labels as a "sleeping bag compartment" which, if your bag is compact-able enough is excellent. While it resides within the main compartment, there is an internal zipper that keeps it conveniently separate. Above the aforementioned stash pocket is a pocket that is perfect for more sensitive things, such as cell phones. This pocket's positioning keeps it safe from most bumps and bruises by abutting the back panel and ideally being covered by whatever pillowy goodness is residing in the main pack compartment.

The main compartment of the Escapist 30 is a great size – and large enough to fit my 17" MacBook Pro! Side retention straps keep things nice and balanced should have a load that's a bit unruly. That zipper into the sleeping bag compartment that we mentioned a minute ago lies at the bottom of the main compartment and adds a lot more room if you choose to unzip it and enlarge the main compartment. Outside the main compartment lies the utility pocket of this pack, the front panel pocket. Within this pocket lies eve more pockets to keep all the things you may need nice and organized. The pocket itself is plenty large but its internal pockets give room for a couple of spare bike tubes as well as tools and the like.

A few bonus features that I really like on the Escapist 30 are its integrated (and wonderfully hidden) raincover, a spot specifically for a rear light, built-in hydration reservoir pocket and Osprey's LidLock system. The raincover sits right at the bottom of the pack and, when deployed, is plenty large to cover the fully loaded pack. The spot for the rear light is a small but wonderful thing that can keep the wearer safe both on road riding as well as when you've got a buddy bombing down some singletrack behind you. For those long days in the hot sun, the hydration reservoir pocket plays right to the packs features with elastic along the harness for controlling the hose. Once you're off the bike though, the LidLock is a very intuitive and secure way to hang your helmet off the pack without fear of it dropping off.

## **OVERALL**

The Escapist 30 is a pack that is very versatile regardless of it's biking pedigree. It's ample pockets and smart design make it something that even a novice would have a hard time saying, "no" to. For some, it may actually appear that this pack has too much going on but once past that intimidation, I think that it's a good pack for a lot of people. All of the features on this pack may add a touch of extra weight but, as I mentioned earlier, I felt this was very well balanced and the additional weight is negligible at best. At \$129, its durability and features make the Escapist 30 from Osprey Packs well worth trying out.

