



An Updated Winner: Osprey Waypoint Backpack

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An Updated Winner

Featuring: Waypoint

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Despite the ever-increasing competition in the travel gear world, some items seem to remain perennial bestsellers that you'll spot from Bangkok to Bariloche. The Osprey Waypoint 80 is clearly one of those.

A lot of the old guard travel backpack makers have moved more into luggage or have disappeared, while many newer companies are focused more on hiking packs than ones for travel. If you're going bopping around the world for months though, on a lot of buses, trains, and ferries, you need a **real travel backpack** instead of one meant for a few nights on a trail.

Primarily, you need to be able to get to your stuff easily. That's no problem with this Waypoint pack since the U-shaped zippers in the front go all the way to the bottom. No feeling around with your arm like you're trying to get the prize out of a cereal box. The zippers can be fastened together with a tie or locked too, in two places, which is also very important to travelers. You've got compression straps on the inside to keep everything in place though, plus another set on the outside to really lock it all down.

There's a detachable daypack that zips onto the front, though whether this is all you need for a daypack depends a lot on whether you're carrying a laptop and a big camera or not. It's a great daypack if you don't have anything too thick to put in, like DSLR camera and a couple old-school guidebooks. What it does have is a see-through tablet compartment, plus lots of pockets for gadgets and cords.

This is not the lightest backpack you're going to find, at 5 pounds 10 ounces (2.56 kilos). But that's because it's well-made, has thick 420D nylon that will hold up to abuse, and has serious zippers and pulls. It also functions as a suitcase, with a (tuck-away) zip flap that goes over the back straps. Not only is this handy when it's getting tossed on a bus or you want to look nicer entering a hotel, but it also keeps you from getting hassled by airlines when you check it. No straps hanging out.

There are also nice padded handles on the top and the side, so you can pick this pack up and carry it without killing your hand. The padding on the straps is excellent, including a nice hip belt. The Waypoint is easy to adjust too, so if you spend a little time tweaking it you'll find it to be extremely comfortable, with the weight well-distributed. The sternum strap design really allows you to get it in the right place and the back panel moves with Velcro attachments.

Other nice features include a pocket in the top where you can store items you need to get to quickly, as well as a hidden pocket on the back to stash valuable things you don't want to have easily accessible to other people in your pockets while you're on the move. There are three zippered pockets on the inside of the main pack: one on each side and a mesh one along the flap. You get two side water bottle pockets as well.

The Osprey 80 sells for \$280, which may be more than you were expecting to spend, but it comes with their All Mighty Guarantee saying they'll fix or replace it whenever if you have a problem with it. It's one of the best guarantees you'll find anywhere, from any pack or luggage maker. The Waypoint won't let you down when you're halfway around the world. Get it **direct from Osprey** with free shipping, or look for it at **Moosejaw**. Usually I say it's better to try a pack on before you buy, but this one has so many adjust-to-fit options that you'll be fine buying it online.

