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Featuring: Hornet 32

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Osprey Hornet 32 Backpack

We love light comfortable packs in the 30-liter range, because the size is ideal for clothing- or gear-laden day trips, and just big enough for hut trips and ultralight overnights. Osprey's Hornet 32 (the middle of three sizes in their Hornet series) fits those criteria perfectly, staying light and easy to load, yet not scrimping on the features that fastpackers and ultralighters appreciate. It has twin hipbelt pockets, energy gel/iPod/sunscreen pockets on both shoulder straps, and a mesh shove-it pocket on the front.

The single compartment top-loading backpack, and a two-compartment top pocket, maximize space while providing just enough organization to avoid chaos. A large hydration sleeve, located between the pack bag and foam back panel, can be easily refilled with the pack loaded, or take a folded foam pad for bivvy use and increased load support.

The Hornet really shined during a three-day round trip to climb the northeast ridge of 14,130-foot Capitol Peak in Colorado. "It was light and flexible enough to fold into my 45-liter load-carrying pack for the approach," that tester wrote. "Then it carried ropes, technical, clothes, and helmet comfortably for 2,000 feet to the technical section." Once he collapsed it down using the narrow side compression straps, he "barely knew it was there, during all the knife-edge straddling and scrambling. It hugged my back like a scared koala."

