



GEAR

## Osprey Escapist 32 Goes Big

Most hydration packs stumble in multi-day adventures, but the Escapist 32 smartly handles large loads and miles.

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Featuring: Escapist 32

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Hydration packs have come a long way since 1988, the year that a young EMT named Michael Eidson invented the CamelBak by stuffing a pilfered IV bag into a tube sock and safety-pinning it to his back during a century ride.

But while hydration packs are ubiquitous today, anyone who has ever attempted a multi-day mountain bike trip can attest to their main shortcoming: most of them are too damn small. You can't, however, say that about Osprey's Escapist 32, which boasts a load range of 15 to 30 pounds.

The Escapist 32 is designed with mountain bikers in mind and if bikepacking isn't your thing, it also makes for a great day hiking pack.

### YES, IT'S BIG

Osprey actually offers several Escapist models, including the smaller Escapist 18 and 25, but for my money 32 liters of storage is the way to go. It's big enough for me easily to fit my sleeping bag, bivy sack, stove, spare set of clothes, 100-ounce hydration bladder, two spare water bottles, bike pump, spare tubes, three energy bars, my cell phone and...well, this is getting tedious, but you get the idea: the Escapist 32 is a big, honking old pack.

While size matters, it's also important to have easy access to your essentials. The Escapist 32 fares well in this regard, with multiple pockets for tools, bike repair kits, and other necessities that prove unexpectedly useful.

### SMART STORAGE

The pack also features two large storage compartments—the smaller bottom one of which is ideal for stashing a sleeping bag (admittedly, one that compresses well) or any funky socks and underwear you don't want contaminating the clean stuff. Not digging the division of those compartments? Simply unzip the interior divider and you're looking at one positively cavernous compartment.

The Escapist verily brims with storage options. There's a small stash pouch on the shoulder harness, two hip belt pockets (great for energy bars, multi-tools, and anything you need quick access to), and a roomy compartment atop the bag that, thanks to its heat-embossed nylon liner, won't scratch sunglass lenses, cell phone screens, and the like. Finally, there are two cinchable side pockets that are perfect for water bottles. While your main source of water is probably going to be hydration bladder (the Escapist 32 has an external sleeve that'll accommodate as big a bladder as you can find), you can rarely have too much water.

### SURPRISINGLY COMFORTABLE

The potential Achilles heel of any big pack is comfort. Osprey has clearly spent a lot of time working to remedy that pitfall. This is a big pack—that's the whole point—but it's surprisingly light (two pounds, six ounces) for a pack its size. What's more, you can easily fine tune the pack's fit and evenly distribute its weight so that you're not tackling technical trails with a massive, unbalanced load bobbing about on your back. Between the sliding sternum straps, side and lower compression straps, and adjustable back harness, Osprey has created a pack that can be tailored to just about any torso size and build. Finally, the shoulder straps, hip belt, and back panel make extensive use of perforated EVA foam, which helps funnel air across the pack's main contact points.

Other cool features include reflective highlights on the sides and bottom of the pack, an attachment point for blinking commuter lights (a plus for anyone putting in road mileage with the Escapist) and a built-in rain cover.

Additional features include a mini-bungee for a place to store your keys, a small mesh pocket for a first aid kit, and a small mesh pocket for a first aid kit.

While the Escapist 32 is a bit larger than the smaller, you can always go with the 18- or 25-liter models and, honestly, I wouldn't strap anything bigger than the Escapist 32 to my back while riding a bike. Despite its light weight, the 210D nylon exterior is surprisingly rugged and the double reinforced seams are exactly up to the task of handling big loads. My only nitpick is that the Escapist 32 doesn't come with a hydration bladder—you'll need to add your own. Then again, that also provides you with the option to run whichever bladder you prefer, so there's even a silver lining to that one gripe.

All in all, the Escapist 32 is an impressive piece of equipment—if you're eying a hut-to-hut trip or some dirt touring, this pack should definitely be on your radar.

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Downsides? It's hard to find any.

