



Outside Online

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Gear Guy: What's the Best Minimalist Overnight Backpack?

Featuring: Kestrel 38

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Q:

I am looking for a solid pack that is large enough for a bivy, a 32- to 45-degree down sleeping bag, an inflatable pad, and food for a night stay. But I also want to be minimalistic. There are so many choices. Any suggestions? What should I be looking for?

A:

I should think that anything around 2,500 cubic inches will suffice. The wild card is whether you need to carry water, and how much. Otherwise, the load you describe will fit nicely into a typical day pack, with room for food and clothing and Wild Turkey.

A great example would be the [Osprey Kestrel 38](#) (\$139). It has 2,300 cubic inches of capacity, plus adequate external stowage for poles, a jacket, that sort of thing. It's a simple top-loader with a fixed flap/pocket, so you can't over-fill it much. But you should be fine. And its suspension will take pretty substantial loads, as it has an internal steel frame that gives it structure and transfers weight to the hip belt.

