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Gear Guy: What are the Best Packs for a Family Trip?

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Q: WHAT ARE THE BEST PACKS FOR A FAMILY TRIP?

My wife and I are taking our two teenage kids on a trip to Europe. We'll be traveling for 15 days and to avoid hassle, we've decided to carry only backpacks. How do I choose the right packs?

A: Ah, fun! Putting everything on your backs may be a bit ambitious, but it'll certainly streamline your luggage footprint. You will, however, need to decide whether you want to check your bags or carry them with you when you fly. Carrying-on will require smaller luggage.

For you and your wife, I'd suggest fairly large packs to allow room for any common gear (maybe a toiletries kit), or any souvenirs you purchase. If you're okay with checking your bags, then look into the **Osprey Meridian Wheeled Convertible Pack** (\$329), a nicely designed piece with 4,600 cubic inches of volume. Features include a main compartment with an organizer pocket; a removable daypack; and the ability to switch between a pack and a wheeled suitcase. That last feature might come in handy.

