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Higher Summits for Today's Backpacking Gear

Featuring: Atmos AG 50

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Review Higher summits for today's backpacking gear

OK, California didn't get any snow again. Water rationing is now mandatory. Spring is the new summer. But look on the bright side: It's a great time to go backpacking. On top of that, the basic gear you need, the big four — boots, tents, poles and backpacks — just keep getting better. Just remember to stay hydrated.

Body-hugging pack

Osprey Atmos 50 AG EX Pack: The 50-liter, heavy-duty nylon backpack with load capacity of 25 to 40 pounds features seamless body-hugging mesh webbing from neck to hip. This supposedly reduces fatigue and gives the perception of a lighter load.

Likes: Very comfortable and efficient during long treks. That's due to two things: the well-ventilated yet close-to-the-body design and the instant access to food and water from the hip pockets and the hydration-compatible internal hydration sleeve. (Packs that lack these are a hassle because you have to stop to dig nutrition out of your pack; that prompts many to skip it to keep moving.) Other nice features include side compression straps to minimize and stabilize the load; a zippered sleeping bag compartment in the bottom; a removable floating lid with two pockets for valuables, including rain cover and dry sack (included); external loops and attachments for tools and poles; and numerous stretch pockets for extra water, maps and gear. It weighs 4 pounds in a medium size.

Dislikes: Hydration bladder not included.

Price: \$229. ospreypacks.com

