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Featuring: Atmos AG 65

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Osprey Atmos AG 65

Written by The Adventure Post Editors on July 24, 2015

While hauling a heavy pack into the High Sierra, we felt the burn in our legs and lungs. But, fortunately, our shoulders weren't suffering. During a weeklong trip on the Rae Lakes Loop, we tested Osprey's Atmos AG 65 backpack, which is outfitted with the new Anti-Gravity suspension system

As a top pack manufacturer, it would be easy for Osprey to coast along, but instead, it continues to push the envelope in design and innovation. After testing the new Atmos AG, we're convinced that Osprey has taken pack comfort to a higher level with the Anti-Gravity suspension.

Here's what we liked about Osprey's Atmos 65 AG backpack...

The Anti-Gravity suspension delivers superior comfort

Because we always haul too much stuff into the backcountry (and we had to carry bear-proof food canisters), we decided to test the large 65-liter Atmos AG pack for our hike. While we didn't stuff the pack completely, we did start the hike with about 45 pounds. No matter what pack you wear, you'll feel this load in your shoulders and hips to some degree. But, the Atmos AG never gave us aches and pains, and we attribute this to the Anti-Gravity suspension, which is a continuous panel of mesh that runs from the top of the back panel to the hip belt. From the top of your back to your hips, the stretchy mesh stays in constant contact with your body, which achieves a few things.

First, the Anti-Gravity mesh allows the pack to contour to your body for a precise fit, and we especially noticed this at the tops of the shoulders. With many packs, you have to set load-lifter straps at a certain angle to prevent the shoulder straps from lifting off your shoulders and pressing hard against your shoulder blades. But the Anti-Gravity mesh eliminates this problem. When the load lifters pull up the shoulder straps, mesh remains seated against the shoulders to provide cushioning and reduce pressure. As a result, the load lifters never squeeze your shoulders, even if they're not set at precise angles. At the same time, the mesh helps the pack hug your back, so the load stays closer to your body to be more stable.

At the hips, the Anti-Gravity mesh also makes constant contact with your body. This not only distributes the load of the pack evenly across the hips, but the mesh also cushions the load as it rides against your body. When you cinch the hipbelt to relieve stress on your shoulders, the mesh prevents the belt from squeezing and bruising your hips.

At all points—from the shoulders to the hips—the trampoline action of the stretchy mesh also allows the bag to move with you, so it won't shift easily if you're scrambling over rocks.

We were also impressed with how well air flowed through the mesh to keep us cool and dry. Sure, the mesh got a little wet as we hiked in high summer temperatures, but it prevented our backs from getting especially hot. Also, the suspension shed sweat and dried easily.



It's easy to adjust the hipbelt and harness

Osprey has done a good job of simplifying the process of adjusting the pack to fit different body types. By lifting levers on the harness you can quickly lengthen or shorten it to fit different torso sizes. Also, you can extend or shorten the hipbelt by simply peeling apart Velcro-type material on each side and sliding the belt to the necessary position.

The pack has plenty of smart design details

With the Atmos AG 65, you get all the smart bells and whistles that you really appreciate on the trail. On the hipbelt, the pockets were large enough to hold a small camera. On the main body, zippers on the sides allowed us to access the main compartment without unloading the pack from the top. Plus, there's the usual separate sleeping bag compartment at the bottom.

Because we had to carry bulky bear-proof food canisters, we really appreciated that the floating lid expanded greatly to accommodate large loads. Also, the top lid has two separate zippered compartments to further help you organize smaller items. (We do wish there was a zippered compartment on the underside of the lid, because that would be a good place to secure a wallet or other valuables that you don't need to access during the hike. When stored in a main lid compartment, these things run the risk of falling out.)

One of our favorite aspects of packs is the large, elastic exterior pocket, because it was the perfect place to stash a shell, toilet kit, maps, and other stuff we wanted handy.

The downsides...

We had few complaints about this pack, and there was really only one obvious flaw. Almost immediately, reflective material on the exterior elastic pocket peeled off. While this wasn't a big deal, Osprey might want to investigate the problem. Overall, this was one of the most comfortable backpacks we've ever worn, and we highly recommend it.

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