



If you've got your sights set on a backpacking holiday, and you've already got your flights booked, accommodation sorted out, and your phrase book ready to go – then all you've got left to do is choose the best backpack to house your gear for your journey.

But, where do you start? If you're trapped scrolling endlessly through a black hole of forums, product reviews and recommendations, then we'll get you started with a quick video on how to fit your travel pack. Then, we'll take on the frequently asked questions about [travel backpacks](#) below.

Want to know how to fit your backpack? Hit play above for a full rundown.

What size travel backpack do I need?

There isn't a perfect size that will fit everyone. The size and volume of pack that you choose will depend on the size of your torso. Before you start looking for a pack, it's important to measure your torso length. This taken from the start of your neck to just above your hip. If you're looking for a pack online, compare this measurement to the size of the pack and go from there.

Travel packs start at 55L, with the maximum volume size reaching up to 90L. When scoping out what's available, the rule of thumb is the shorter you are, the smaller the pack. It is tempting to get a larger pack – especially if you're planning on picking up a few souvenirs on holiday. But, if you overload your pack, you'll end up with a sore back, or the weight will pull you back causing you to overbalance.

Some packs will have an expansion gusset that allows for an extra 10 or so litres. This is a feature to consider if you'd like a little extra room for souvenirs.



Travel packs come in a range of sizes - pictured is the Black Wolf Cedar Breaks 55, 65 and 75L sizes.

Can I just borrow my mate's pack?

While it's certainly the economical option, what works well for you, could be a totally wrong fit for someone else. If you and your friend are roughly the same height and width, and it's comfortable - then, by all means, go for it!

How should a travel backpack fit?

Put the pack on, then clip the hip belt on so it sits just above your hipbones - as 80% of the weight that you'll be carrying should rest on your hips. If the belt is too low or high, adjust your shoulder straps so it sits where it should. Then clip the sternum strap and tighten it to secure your shoulder straps (but not too much!), and adjust the load lifter straps to take the weight off your shoulders.



The Deuter Traveller 70+10 Travel Pack is the perfect size for Ben here, as it matches up with his torso.

How much does a travel backpack weigh?

Most large travel packs will weigh between 2-4 kg depending on the size. This isn't going to make a huge dent in the load you will carry, so it's not something to stress about when making your decision.

How much should I spend on a travel pack?

9 times out of 10 you do get what you pay for regarding features and quality. But there are definitely value for money packs that are just as comfortable as their high-end counterparts. What usually bumps up the price is the additional features that it comes with, and the quality of materials used.

If you don't think you'll get more than one or two trips out of it, then go for a simpler design. But, if you've got several overseas adventures planned. Or you know you'll be living out of your pack for long periods of time - you might want to spend a bit more for lighter fabrics, and a few extra features.



Make sure that the hip belt is fitted to distribute the weight, and the sternum straps are secure!

What features do I actually need?

With so many extra features available on travel packs now, it can be tricky to figure out which ones are essentials, and which ones are a bonus. Here are a few to consider...

Stowable straps

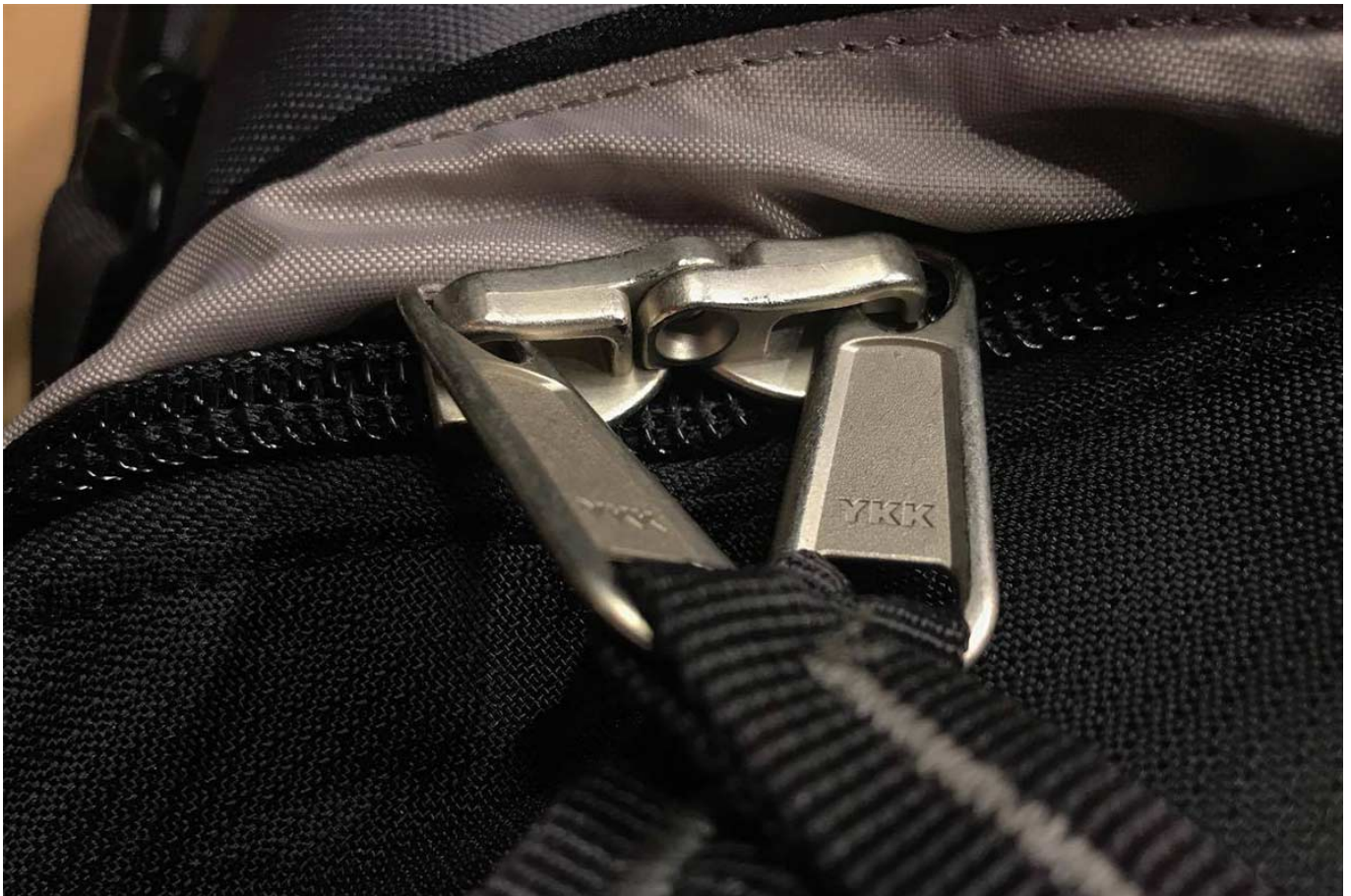
Most travel backpacks should have a compartment where you can zip away the shoulder straps. If your straps are left exposed in transit, they can get caught on conveyor belts. To prevent this, airport staff will, in some cases, resort to cutting the shoulder straps off. This is why it's quite important to get a travel backpack, as most hiking packs don't come with this feature.



Having a compartment for stowing straps is a must. You don't want them being cut off by airport staff in transit!

Lockable zips

Lockable zips are probably one of the most important features on a travel backpack. When you're spending a lot of time in airports, and on public transport in general - it's best to be able to secure your bag. Look for packs that come with two zippers that can meet in the middle, so you can loop a lock through them to keep your gear secure. If your pack doesn't come with lockable zips, there is the option of a pack cover. Pack covers can be put over and locked when you're in transit. But keep in mind that you have to remove the whole thing if you need to grab something from inside.



Check the pack to make sure the zips can be locked together for security at airports and on public transport.

RFID protection

This technological feature is a fairly new one that's become more popular in the last few years. RFID blocking material is used to help prevent the information from your credit card or passport, from being scanned by thieves. This is a nifty feature that not everyone will want, but it does offer peace of mind.



RFID protection is a nice addition, but not necessarily a must-have feature for everyone.

Integrated rain cover

Rain covers are usually located at the bottom of the pack and are built. This is so that you A) can't lose it, and B) can pull it over your pack quickly when it starts bucketing down. It's a pretty useful feature, as aside from rain protection, it's also handy for keeping your gear clean if you have to stow it somewhere grimy on your travels. Detachable rain covers are also available separately, so either way, they're a good insurance policy to protect your stuff from the elements.

Padded laptop compartment

If you're a techy person, who likes to be able to upload and edit photos and footage from your GoPro or your SLR camera as soon as you can - then a padded laptop holder might be a necessary feature for you.



Padded laptop compartment is a valuable feature for tech-heads.

Hydration compatibility

This isn't going to be a deal-breaker for lots of people, but if you prefer to use a hydration system, then this is a feature to keep on your radar.

Extra features aside, the most important thing is that your travel backpack is comfortable and the right size. You'll end up spending a lot of time lugging it around, so it's got to be *just* right. With that said - bon voyage, and have a safe trip!

Now that you've got your gear sorted, what's the plan for your upcoming overseas adventure?