

FRAME/TOPTUBE BAGS

While large bar bags and seatpacks are great for multi-day rides, a clever combo of smaller bags allows you to ditch the rucksack for shorter trips

RIDING WITHOUT a rucksack — or without spares, snacks and phone stuffed in a multitude of pockets — always feels good. Even more so in the warmer months. Stick a waterbottle or two on your frame and all you need for most days out can be carried in a mix of smaller on-bike bags. Here's a few ideas...

#1 ORTLIEB FRAME PACK RC SMALL/FUEL PACK

■ Framebag capacity: 4L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 1L
Two spanking new products, each with unique features. Like Ortlieb's panniers, the framebag has a rolltop closure, kept watertight by rubberised clips on the main straps; it's long enough for a full-size pump or even tent poles. Meanwhile the toptube bag has a snazzy magnetic cover and either bolts directly to a frame or uses (slightly fiddly) rubber straps.
■ ortlieb.com; £106 (frame), £57.50 (toptube)



#2 CUBE ACID PRO 1

■ Framebag capacity: 1L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 1L
The smallest pairing on test, but often that's all you need — and both have proven extremely water resistant. While the framebag has moveable Velcro straps and room for spare tube, inflator, tool and snacks, the toptube bag is the real star, with fixed straps and room for a windproof, battery pack, wallet and more. Plus there's a clear window on top so you can follow mapping apps on your phone.
■ cube.eu; £50 (frame), £30 (toptube)

#3 EVOC FRAMEPACK WP/TOPTUBE PACK WP

■ Framebag capacity: 1.5L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 0.8L
Fully waterproof, with welded seams, the bigger framebag capacity allowed us to stow all our bike spares plus jacket, charger and cables here, with phone, compact camera and wallet in its smaller sibling. Velcro strap mounting.
■ evocsports.com; £69.99 (frame), £34.99 (toptube)

#4 OXFORD AQUA EVO

■ Framebag capacity: 4L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 1.5L
Lightweight, waterproof and fitted via a mix of Velcro and buckle straps, this was our value pick and first choice for longer trips or overnights. With careful packing we squeezed all our bike spares in the framebag (including a proper pump), and a tech tee, underwear and socks. Top marks!
■ oxfordproducts.com; £39.99 (frame), £19.99 (toptube)

#5 PASSPORT BIKEPACKING

■ Framebag capacity: 2.1L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 1.8L
Despite being super slimline this framebag still swallowed our bike spares, windproof and lunchtime bagel; the top and bottom are made from durable tarpaulin, with a flouro inner fabric for faff-free rummaging. The toptube bag is almost as voluminous and needed to be cinched tight to stop wobbling, but the touchscreen phone compartment is an added bonus.
■ ison-distribution.com; £34.99 (frame), £24.99 (toptube)

#6 PRO DISCOVER

■ Framebag capacity: 2.7L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 0.75L
Like other 'half-length' models this Pro framebag allows you to easily access waterbottles; it also holds your riding basics and a decent lunch. The set's waterproof, but seams aren't sealed. The smaller bag is minimal, though that outer bungee has been really useful for gripping a damp jacket or banana.
■ freewheel.co.uk; £49.99 (frame), £34.99 (toptube)

#7 RESTRAP FRAMEBAG SMALL/TOPTUBE BAG

■ Framebag capacity: 2.5L
■ Toptube bag capacity: 0.8L
Hand-crafted in Yorkshire, we found this set to be incredibly versatile across a range of bikes. We particularly love the extra wide, frame-protecting straps, innovative headtube clip and neat phone/GPS cable routing.
■ restrap.com; £59.99 (frame), £39.99 (toptube)

