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## REVIEW: THE BEST GEAR DUFFLES AND LUGGAGE

### Mountain Hardwear Lightweight Expedition Duffel

\$80, 90L/5,500 c.i., 1 lb. 5 oz. (medium)

Sizes: XS-L (\$60-\$100, 30L/1,830 c.i. to 130L/8,000 c.i.)

[backcountry.com](http://backcountry.com)

**Pros:** Supremely packable, lightweight, and affordable.

**Cons:** No harness or shoulder straps for throwing it on your back; minimal organization.

Flying from the States to Italy for 10 days of [trekking hut-to-hut through the Dolomite Mountains](#), I used this packable duffel as luggage on the flight—fitting a [58-liter backpack](#) and all of my gear and clothes for two weeks inside it—and when we started trekking, I stuffed the duffel inside its own pocket and into the bottom of my backpack. Its supreme packability alleviated the need for me to find somewhere to store luggage during our trek (partly because I brought only absolute necessities). I also used it on several multi-day car trips to go hiking and backpacking in California and Washington from my home in Boise, and my wife used it to carry her personal clothes and gear inside a dry bag on a six-day rafting trip down [Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon River](#).

The duffel **stuffs into a zippered external pocket** on one end, packing down to the dimensions of an inflated travel pillow (and it works as one if you wrap it in a soft garment like a fleece). With a **U-shaped, zippered top opening** and **adjustable straps** that lay out of the way to each side, loading and unloading is easy; although being so light, the duffel has no structure or rigidity, so it lies flat when empty. But the minimalist design provides only **one zippered, external pocket** for valuables or accessories (it wouldn't hold much dirty clothing).



Mountain Hardwear Lightweight Expedition Duffel pocket.

heavy.

The **100-denier nylon fabric in the body (210-denier on the bottom)** isn't as bulletproof as found in heavier duffles, but it suffered no damage on several trips; I wouldn't leave it out in rain falling snow unless everything inside was in waterproof stuff sacks. The **cross-hatch webbing** through the body helps distribute the weight, and there are **big grabber handles on each end**, but the **lack of a harness or shoulder straps** precludes carrying it like a backpack, making it less comfortable for hauling on a long walk through an airport if it's



Mountain Hardwear Lightweight Expedition Duffel stuffed.

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