



Roll top keeps rain water out

4000 miles ON TEST

Kriega R16 Backpack £159

'Good investment'



Tested by Al Silcox for 12 months

This fully waterproof backpack has a roll-top closure and 16-litre capacity. It's large

enough to hold my laptop, lunch and gym kit but not too big that I am tempted to overfill it on my commute to work.

As with many Kriega backpacks it has the Quadloc harness system. The straps clip at the sternum, are wide, fully adjustable and distribute the weight of the bag evenly across the chest, making it very comfortable to carry. There's a waist strap for extra security, mesh on the back pads for increased airflow and reflective panels.

If there are any issues, the bag comes with a 10-year guarantee, which is great for peace of mind on pricey gear like this. If you do need extra storage space there are hook on points for the modular US-Drypack bags, that start at 5-litres in size and cost £85

But there's no getting away from that fact that £159 is a serious amount of cash to spend on a rucksack. But, so far, I feel it's been a good investment with no issues or signs of wear and tear after 4000 miles of motorcycling.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.kriega.com



No need for fixed mounts

Oxford T30R Tail Pack £144.99

'It's a versatile luggage solution'



Tested by Dan Sutherland for six months

I got hold of this Oxford T30R Tail Pack ahead of a trip to the 2023 Isle of Man TT races

aboard my long-term test Suzuki GSX-8S naked. Although said to be 'sculpted to suit modern sportsbikes and riders' it worked on top of the Suzuki's flat pillion seat with ease, and I've used it for many other trips since – and for the odd bit of food shopping too.

Strapping in beneath the pillion perch and further secured by sturdy webbing, it sat in place fully loaded for hundreds of miles at motorway speeds going to and from the TT, with no need for any adjustment.

Although removing your ability to ride with a pillion passenger, it does have the benefit of not requiring fixed mounts, which can look ugly on a bike when the luggage isn't in place and can be a faff to install.

With a capacity of 30 litres, featuring multiple zipped pockets, and an elasticated pouch on the top, you can easily cram in everything you need for a few days away without the need for panniers.

The stretchy net on top is also handy for bulky items such as chain lube, which could take up valuable space inside the inner compartments.

Annoyingly, you can't really use it with a rucksack though unless you're prepared to squeeze right up against the petrol tank, and you can only waterproof the insides using the additional liner provided. I took a backpack with me to the IoM and although there was only a laptop bag and some waterproofs inside, I found the pairing restricted my movement significantly. That's not necessarily the fault of the tail pack though and it could be less intrusive on other bikes/for taller riders.

Outside of that though, consider me very impressed, with the Ripstop Nylon construction providing a reassuring level of quality, backed up by an Oxford lifetime guarantee. The bag can also be converted into a backpack when you reach your destination and is available in three colour options.

What's more, because it's not designed for just one model, I can continue to use this on plenty more bikes in the future – making it better value if you've got more than one machine in the garage.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

1500 miles ON TEST



Stay at the ideal temperature

3000 miles ON TEST

Rukka Outlast base layers £69.99 each

'Tech and spec are worth the money'



Tested by Gareth Evans for six months

These base layers are remarkably effective. I've worn them in pretty much anything the barmy British weather can throw at them – over 30 degree heat and below five degree chill – and they've been seriously impressive.

You'd expect that, given that the shirt and long johns add up to an RRP of two pence shy of £140 (although they're heavily discounted at many shops now). And don't be too concerned when you open the packaging and they feel a little fragile, because actually

they're made incredibly well and have stood up to everything I've thrown at them.

The science is the key feature here: they're built using what Rukka call 'phase change material', which contains paraffin that can absorb body heat, and when conditions rise it turns from a solid state to a liquid. You can't feel this happening, in my experience, but I'm in no doubt that it works. The technology also keeps you warm when it's cold, with its solid state able to store and retain body heat. Clever stuff all round.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.bikerheadz.co.uk



Richa base layers £69 (top), £60 (bottoms)

'Capable but costly comfort'



Tested by Carl Stevens for six months

These all-season base layers have been impressively dependable. Although they

aren't the chunkiest, toastiest base layers for extreme situations, they have a huge operating window that keeps things cosy enough from freezing all the way through into double digits thanks to a mixture of thickness and breathability. They fit well and sit comfortably on the body for the most part with no exposed seams, while the elastic that has endured a shed-load of washes so far, with no sign of loosening. My only gripe comes with the price... and the zip mechanism which isn't quite as plush as I'd like on the skin when fully up.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.richa.eu

2000 miles ON TEST