

# Great bag is not all cut & dried

Tough Kriega backpack is brilliant - until it rains

## Kriega R15 Rucksack, £79

Tester: Andy Davidson

Time tested: 20 months/26,000 miles

**What's good?** The R15 has been my rucksack of choice for the last 20 months. I use it for my 500-mile a week commute, when I travel abroad and for off-roading. It's my do-it-all backpack. It's small, light, compact and extremely tough. After all those miles there is no fraying or damage to the bag. It's in perfect nick and comes with a 10-year guarantee. It's got two inner pockets and one outer. If you want to increase capacity it's easy to strap other Kriega bags to it and you can use the Kriega hydration pack with it too on your adventures. It's a short backpack so it can also double up for use with Kriega's RS3 waistpack.

**What's not?** It's not waterproof! What's that all about? For £79 I'd expect it to be. I use a cheap waterproof liner instead, as this fact is the only thing that lets down an otherwise perfect product. Also, it is the smallest rucksack Kriega make, that's why I like it, but be warned, it is only 15 litres and may not suit everyone as an everyday bag.

Contact: www.kriega.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Perfect in every respect - except it's not waterproof so you have to wrap up anything that needs to stay dry in a deluge

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## RUCKSACKS 5 THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**1 Chest and waist straps.** Carrying everything through your shoulders can quickly become a pain. Having straps to let your chest and waist support some of the weight helps a lot. Make sure chest straps aren't so high they'll strangle you, and check that the waist buckle won't scratch your tank's paintwork.

**2 Low centre of gravity.** You want the bag to sit low, so the weight sits around your waist rather than high up. Bikes with upright seating positions help here, as much of a bag's weight will be supported by the pillion seat, especially if you relax the straps to make it happen.

**3 Waterproofing.** Best to find out which areas are waterproof before you send that expensive electronic gadget towards a watery grave. Many bags are only water-resistant in the main body, so don't automatically trust external pockets.

**4 Storm hood.** Does it have one? If it does, the bag isn't inherently waterproof. Where is it? Have it somewhere that's readily to hand so you can stop and quickly deploy the hood to keep your gear dry if you need to. Good rucksacks have them stowed in a zip-out panel.

**5 What's it like off the bike?** If you're travelling, rucksacks can be exceptionally handy when you reach your destination. But some of the more technical bags make for terrible tourist rucksacks, so ensure it's up to the job before you leave.



## Falco Ayda boots, £129.99



Tester: Alison Silcox

Time tested: Two months/1600 miles

**What's good?** These were comfortable from the off with one slight exception: the top of one of the zips scratching my leg, I rectified this by robbing my hubby's longer socks. I like the styling of the Falcos, as they look more like a fashion boot than a riding boot so when I'm just popping out in jeans and jacket they look good. They do offer some ankle protection but I'm slightly concerned it may not be sufficient if I needed to test it. They're made from leather with a waterproof membrane and they've proved to be showerproof when caught in a light shower.

**What's not?** There is a removable gear change pad but obviously I've removed this and lost it. I think it's a shame there isn't one integrated into the boot.

Contact: www.tri-motive.com

Value: ★★★★★ Quality: ★★★★★



## Astars Duly Sound Disk beanie, £34.99



Tester: Michael Neeves

Time used: Nine months

**What's good?** Music in a hat? Whatever will they think of next? This is brilliant piece of kit, which is basically a knitted beanie hat with a pair of slim-line speakers fitted neatly inside. Plug it into your iPod etc and you can spend hours in your garage listening to your tunes, working on your bike with a warm head and without annoying anyone with your taste in music. There's a built-in microphone on the cable, which you can use with an iPhone or Blackberry, too. I also use it for running and whenever I want to block out the world without appearing outwardly rude!

**What's not?** It's too hot to wear in summer, but I've removed the speakers and put them in a headband, making me look like Jane Fonda when I'm out for a run.

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★ Value rating: ★★★★★



## Halvarssons Panzar textile jacket, £369



Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: Six months/5000 miles

**What's good?** There's very little to fault with this jacket, which is up with the best in terms of quality without having the expensive pricetag to match. The construction quality is superb, the fit is perfect for me, elbow armour can be repositioned to suit and the Dryway waterproof/breathable membrane has been highly effective in horrible weather and still didn't bake me alive in 37°C temperatures in Italy. The removable Outlast warmth lining is thin yet effective and doesn't get sweaty until the temperature is in the high teens. There's also a pocket for a very comfortable Halvarssons back protector (£54 extra).

**What's not?** An extra internal pocket would be handy. Otherwise, nothing to report.

Contact: www.jofama.se

Quality rating: ★★★★★ Value rating: ★★★★★