The Best Lightweight Hiking Backpacks

Whether you're heading out on a quick hike this summer or a longer trek to a hidden spot, you're going to need to bring a backpack to hold your gear. But unfortunately, finding the ideal backpack for your specific needs is no easy feat. Gone are the days of strapping on a heavy hiking backpack that's half the size of your body. You still want the durability, storage, and organization, but it's also important that it's lightweight and comfortable enough for warm summer hikes. Keep reading to discover 8 of the best lightweight hiking backpacks to get you through the season.

1. Mini Backpack

Chances are, if you carry a large backpack on your hike, you're going to end up overpacking it with stuff you don't need. Mini backpacks are a great solution because they're smaller and lightweight, while still giving you ample space for the items you need. As with any hiking backpack, you're going to want to pay attention to the fabric with your mini backpack. You want something that's comfortable to carry on a hike and durable enough to last, like a nylon, leather, or suede backpack.

2. Crossbody Sling

Crossbody slings are the perfect backpack for those heading on short hikes, and hikers that aren't carrying much gear with them. These lightweight backpacks typically come with one large main compartment and an outer compartment for smaller items, which will fit all of your hiking essentials like a water bottle and sunscreen.

Rather than the traditional two straps of a backpack, crossbodies have one, which goes around your shoulder and to the opposite hip. The result: a comfortable bag that'll keep you cool on your hike when the weather starts to warm.

3. The Basic Daypack

Daypacks are one of the most popular types of backpacks and for good reason. Featuring the standard backpack design – front-loading main compartment, large front pocket, and two shoulder straps – these backpacks are extremely versatile, lightweight, and spacious. They may be simple, but these bags can be used for any time and occasion. Use it as a work backpack, a school bag, or even use it to pack your travel essentials for your next trip.

4. Drawstring Backpack/Gym Sack

Gym sacks aren't just for the gym anymore! One of the most lightweight backpacks, these small bags are excellent for holding your summer hiking essentials, without weighing yourself down. Consider gym sacks to be a simplified version of a traditional backpack. Instead of the two wide-width straps, main compartment, and front pocket, this bag gives you two thinner drawstring straps that close the one main compartment holding your items. Gym sacks are a quick, lightweight alternative to a traditional backpack for your next hiking adventure.

5. Rucksack

If you still like the style of a classic backpack but want more room and organization, rucksacks are a great option. Similar to backpacks, rucksacks have one large compartment and the traditional two shoulder straps. The main difference is their closure – a buckle and flap, rather than a zipper. Why is that such a significant difference? By having this closure instead, you have way more room for your hiking gear since you're not stuffing your items down so the bag will zip. In addition, instead of one front pocket, most rucksacks will give you two or more outer compartments, making access to your small items easier than ever.

With the ample space provided by rucksacks, be careful not to overpack. You always want to pack light for long hikes *and* short hikes so you're not weighed down!

6. Tote Backpack

Though totes aren't known for being ideal for bringing on hikes, two-in-one tote backpacks are! They're essentially just like a regular tote, just with two extra straps. Built for versatility, tote backpacks can be worn as a tote for everyday carrying, then worn in its backpack form for hikes. These lightweight backpacks give you their fair share of space, providing a large main compartment for plenty of hiking necessities like a water bottle, sun protection, and snacks.

7. Smell-Proof Backpacks

If you're on a day-trip or longer hiking adventure, a smell-proof bag can work wonders, deterring small animals away from the scent of your belongings. This helps you carry around the foods you need without worrying about attracting critters. Not only that, you can find smell-proof backpacks that also guarantee the freshness of your perishable items with water-resistant fabrics.

8. Hydration Backpack

Staying hydrated on the trail is extremely important, especially if you're hiking in hot or humid

conditions – like during those warm summer months. Simple and straightforward, hydration backpacks are primarily made to do one thing: provide hydration. These small and very lightweight backpacks are designed for hands-free hydration for physical activities like hiking, running, and cycling.

These backpacks come with a main compartment built to hold a hydration bladder and its attached sipping tube, which enables you to sip water in the summer heat without needing to stop hiking or open your bag. They also typically come with a front pocket for holding small items like your keys. If you're looking for great functionality and practicality, this is the perfect option for you.

Keep Your Summer Hike Cool and Comfortable

Finding the right hiking backpack is tricky enough. Finding one for summer is even trickier. In addition to holding your hiking gear, you want to make sure you can carry enough hydration to beat the summer heat and that your bag is lightweight to fit the season. If you don't want to carry a large hiking backpack, there's no need to worry. With one of these lightweight backpacks, you'll be cool and comfortable throughout each summer hike you take.

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