



GEAR REVIEWS

Top Gear

Eagle Creek Packing Cubes

www.eaglecreek.com

These packing cubes come in various sizes allowing us to find one just the right size for each need. They also come in various colors making it easy to identify the bag we are looking for. The mesh fronts on each bag also reduce weight, allow ventilation, and allow us to see what is in each bag. These packing cubes make it easy for us to organize and find our things and even offer some compression allowing us to pack more into less space.

Red Oxx Shopping Bags

www.redoxx.com

This Montana-based company makes our favorite suitcases, the ones we use to travel for weeks at a time with just one carry-on bag. They are comfortable, virtually indestructible and come in lots of colours. Red Oxx makes several other types of bags that are just as versatile and sturdy, including the Market Tote that we carry for trips to the market at home and while traveling. This is a handy item to have along, not just for the markets but for trips to the beach and the Laundromat too. It even seems to work well as a pannier liner for some models.

Small Alosak Storage Bags

www.loksak.com

The small size of these re-sealable element-proof storage bags are just the right size to hold a passport and vaccination card with room to spare for credit cards and other small documents. It fits nicely into a security waist pouch, allowing us to keep our documents protected from moisture without adding bulk.

www.SmilesAndMiles.com

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Seal Line Document Cases

www.cascadedesigns.com

These watertight cases come in three sizes suitable for documents, maps, netbooks, tablets, iPods or mobile phones. They pick up black marks on the inside from ink wearing off of documents. Other than this small issue, these cases perform extremely well.

Original Buff Neck Tube

www.buffwear.com

Tracey always wears this to cover her head and neck under her helmet. The soft merino wool is comfy, keeps my exposed neck warm, and never picks up odours. It can be worn 12 different ways and Tracey regularly converts it to a headband, toque, or scarf.

Ex Officio Men's Give-N-Go Sports Brief

www.exofficio.com

We wash these briefs in the evening and they are clean and dry when we wake up. You could get away with packing just one pair, though we packed two. They are lightweight, durable, breathable, odour resistant, and decrease the infamous motorcycle "monkey butt". All other men's briefs in our home are soon to be replaced by these.

Patagonia Women's Active Briefs

www.patagonia.com

Just like the men's briefs above, these get washed in the evening and are ready-to-wear in the morning. They are lightweight, breathable, moisture-wicking, seamless, tag-less, and super-comfortable. Mine all look like new after over 100 days of wear each.

German Army Rain Poncho

What can we say? It keeps you dry, no matter what. Tracey owes a huge debt of gratitude to Stefan Gardt for lending his poncho to her for several days in South America. We're heading to Germany again in September 2014 and you can bet that a trip to the Army Surplus store will be on the agenda.

Exped Down Mat

www.exped.com

A good night's sleep dramatically improves the quality of our days and the Exped Down Mat makes this possible. These are relatively easy to inflate, provide a comfortable body cushion, and dramatically reduce heat loss without making us too warm in hotter climates. We were able to purchase them in widths and lengths just right for each of us. The mats are very durable and compress to the same size as our other, far less comfy, sleeping mats.

Update: We've just purchased a new Exped accessory called the Schnozzel, designed to make inflation an easier process. We'll provide an update once we've put it to the test a few times.

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Samsung Galaxy Smart Phone (exact model varies)

www.samsung.com

For many North Americans, Apple's iPhone is the phone of choice, but Samsung has one our loyalty with this tough and functional tool. This lightweight piece of equipment really performs for us, both at home and on the road. We haven't come close to maximizing the usefulness of these devices, but here is a partial list of what they do for us:

- Operates applications that allow us to translate languages, convert currencies, carry out first aid, contact emergency agencies in any country, and play games.
- Holds copies of reference books such as repair manuals and travel guides.
- Holds dozens of books for late-night reading.
- Holds thousands of songs and audiobooks.
- Allows us to connect to the internet.
- Allows us to take notes and photos.
- Of course, you can use it as a phone if the need arises.

Leatherman Multi-Tool

www.leatherman.com

With over 30 styles to choose from, we easily found the size and tool combination most versatile for each of us. These never leave our pockets and are used several times every day. They eliminate the need to carry several other tools.

Equipment Duds

North Face Base Camp Duffel

www.thenorthface.com

At the time that we purchased this bag we weren't able to find a proper waterproof bag with the dimensions that we needed (at least not in time for our departure). North Face advertised the Camp Duffel to be highly water resistant, so it seemed like the best available option. The reality is that this bag is probably not resistant to a sneeze. In addition, the beautiful red colour faded to pink after one day on the bike. Although North Face Customer Service has offered us no solutions, we notice that they have now removed "water resistant" from this bag's description and added a new "waterproof" bag to their line. Taking a look at the design of this new bag, we can't see how it could be truly waterproof. We recommend waiting for reviews before purchasing one.

Medium and Large Aloksak Storage Bags

www.loksak.com

Although the small size works well for passports and items not used every day, the larger sizes are not as practical. With daily use, the bags puncture and seals fail within one month of regular use.

www.SmilesAndMiles.com

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