

# The Best Travel Backpacks for Business Trips, Weekend Getaways, and Going Off the Grid

Whether you're taking a short vacation or leaving town for good, these guys have your, uh, back.

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The best travel backpacks might serve a need you already have, like carrying your life around with you everywhere you go. Maybe after years of splitting your time between frequent business trips and impromptu weekend trips, you've realized it's time for a [luggage upgrade](#). On the other hand, simply owning the best travel [backpack](#) might inspire you to *create a need for it* in your life. As in, yes, 2022 might be the year that you finally release your job and go full digital nomad with a [virtual office](#). Well, if you get a haul-all, tough-as-nails backpack, you're already one step closer to living that dream. Whether a travel backpack is a necessity for your current lifestyle or a nudge toward the life you've always wanted to live, there's no better time to invest in a solid backpack that can seamlessly tote your belongings through TSA without breaking a sweat.

Sure, it might seem obvious, but an important disclaimer: Not all backpacks are created equal. There are about a billion on the market right now to choose from. When it comes to travel luggage, function will always be more important than form, but if you're prepared to spend some serious money on a serious bag, we think you should be able to have both. After all, travel gear is getting smarter with all sorts of cool ways to keep organized and stay plugged in (hello, [packing cubes](#)). Might as well look good while you're doing it.

We took the following bags on planes, trains, and taxis. We dragged them through customs. Baggage handlers abused them. We carried them through extreme weather conditions and temperature-controlled five-star hotel lobbies. Whatever life throws you, these backpacks can get handle it. Here, our top picks for the best travel backpacks out there that are ready for the long haul.

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## The Best Travel Backpack for Most People: Patagonia Black Hole



**Patagonia Black Hole 40L duffel bag**

Patagonia \$125

**Buy Now**

You've probably spotted Patagonia's instantly recognizable Black Hole duffel in many an airline terminal or baggage claim carousel over the years. This ruggedly handsome bag comes in a variety of sizes, whether you're toting it in economy class or checking it for later, and is a classic of the genre beloved by off-the-grid trekkers and budget shoppers alike. We've previously deemed this shiny convertible bag one of the **best carry-ons** overall, but it also secures the top spot in the backpack category for its versatile design that allows you to schlep it via its reinforced top handles like a duffel, on your back like a student of learning, or by its grab handles when you're hauling it into the overhead compartment. Its weather-resistant exterior, made of recycled ripstop materials, keeps your goods dry when rain's in the forecast, and at \$125, it's also extremely accessible for anyone on a college student budget or beyond. Another big plus: As its name suggests, the depths

of its large main compartment feel virtually bottomless. In it, you can make several changes of clothes disappear, along with any camera gear you're taking off the grid.

## **Another Solid Convertible Travel Backpack: Away F.A.R.**



**Away F.A.R. convertible backpack**

Away \$220

**Buy Now**

Away's fleet of travel bugs cut through the noise of all the boring black nylon options out there with metallic spinners and millennial-friendly colors. This convertible backpack doesn't fall too far from the tree in that regard: It's another blessedly convertible option made from recycled, water-resistant materials, but feels a little less flashy than the shiny weatherproofing of the Patagonia option above. Removable padded straps smoothly transition the bag from a duffel to a backpack, while a reinforced chest strap adds another layer of support when you wear the bag on your back. It's also slightly larger than the Black Hole, with a 45-liter capacity and multiple side pockets inside and out for stuffing in toiletries and small tech accessories. At about \$100 more, it's not as affordable as our top pick, but also not a huge stretch.

## The Best Rolling Travel Backpack: Eagle Creek Expanse International



**Eagle Creek Expanse convertible international carry-on**

Eagle Creek \$199

**Buy Now**

Turns out you don't have to choose between wheels or shoulder straps—hybrid, convertible luggage exists and you can have it both ways. Eagle Creek's Expanse Convertible International Carry-On is a rolling carry-on bag with removable straps tucked into the back for instances such as sprinting across the airport to catch your flight after realizing you in the wrong terminal or dealing with a five-story walk-up to your [Airbnb pied-à-terre](#). More importantly, it's tough as hell and made with high-quality stitched "Bi-Tech Armor Lite" material that can withstand the worst wear and tear, durable wheels for pounding the pavement, and compression straps that can easily lock in two large packing cubes.

## The Best Travel Backpack You'll Never Have to Replace: Goruck Slick GR2



### **Goruck x Huckberry Slick GR2 travel backpack**

Huckberry \$415

**Buy Now**

If you want something with military-grade durability that looks like something you just picked up at the local surplus store, GoRuck's GR2 is your best bet. Developed by a former Green Beret, GoRuck's collection is best known for its grit in extreme conditions. It's also the only backpack on this list that touts a laptop compartment which is both rainproof and *bombproof*, so if your traveling destinations are more 38th parallel than Cabo, your valuables are protected. This Huckberry collab is a slight spin on the original GR2, with silent YKK zippers, extra padded shoulder straps for trekking heavy loads, and a design that opens flat so you can rearrange your meticulously packed essentials more easily. Other perks: It comes with a lifetime warranty, so you basically never have to worry about buying another backpack again.

## **The Best Really Big Travel Backpack: Tortuga Outbreaker**



### **Tortuga Outbreaker backpack**

Tortuga **\$299**

**Buy Now**

If your long-stint travel tends to take you off-road more than into the city, the Outbreaker Backpack by Tortuga is a solid bet to make sure your gear stays protected. At 45L, you're essentially wearing a comfy, carry-on size suitcase, but it fits in way more than your average rollie. Ample pockets and compartments can squeeze in at least one week of travel clothes, a 17" Macbook, 9.7" tablet, Dopp kit, and more chargers than you probably need. Since the bag is geared towards carrying your life around with you, keeping your valuables safe from the elements is key. That's why the Outbreaker is encased with waterproof sailcloth woven with all kinds of impressive but indecipherable materials that we won't bother listing here.

## **The Best Business-Class Backpack: Tumi William**



**Tumi William backpack**

Tumi \$475

**Buy Now**

Tumi's long been a favorite of the business class for its sturdy and dependable luxury bags that don't make you look completely pedestrian when you hop off the red-eye to your first meeting of the day. For someone who wants an upscale business backpack, William keeps it clean with a minimal, leather-accented silhouette, but packs in helpful details like a key leash and built-in USB port that will keep you from fighting over an outlet at the airport. Plus, Tumi's anti-theft Tracer program ensures that you'll always know if it's **spinning out in the middle of the ocean**.

## **The Best Cheap Travel Backpack: AmazonBasics Carry-On**



### **AmazonBasics Carry On Travel Backpack**

Amazon **\$50**

**Buy Now**

When you're truly married to the road, you don't want to skimp on long-haul luggage. That being said, a budget is a budget, and if most of yours is going to airfare and lodging, this carry-on size backpack from AmazonBasics will more than do the trick for hoofing it to your next hostel. It's lightweight and compact with removable sternum straps and a waist belt if you're not planning on using it as a hiking backpack. And it still provides ample dividers for storing folders, a laptop sleeve, and multiple packing cubes for longer trips.

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## **6 Other Travel Backpacks We Like**





### **Black Ember Citadel R2**

Black Ember **\$225**

**Buy Now**

Black Ember's Citadel R2 is the health goth of travel backpacks. Developed by a team of Nike and North Face vets, it's a true form-meets-function backpack made of neo-futurist textiles like "Microhex 800 denier," "T6 aircraft-grade anodized aluminum," "laser-cut hypalon," and "durable YKK aquaguard zippers." Don't expect to fit your whole life in this sleek minimalist bag, but with a more-than-decent 25 liters of storage and room for a 15" laptop, it is perfect for an impromptu day trip or the airport-to-office hustle.



**Aer Travel Pack 3 X-Pac**

Aer \$275

**Buy Now**

When you need to lug around a ton of stuff but want to look good doing it, the Travel Pack 2 from Aer is the best of both worlds. Don't be fooled by its simple black facade—this bag is tough as nails. Made from Cordura ballistic nylon and Duraflex plastic hardware, it's as ready for the Hunger Games as the airport. There's a solid amount of utility for the business traveler such as a shoe compartment, plenty of internal pockets for accessories and storage, easy laptop compartment access, and side compression straps for shoving every last bit in. Did we mention it also looks really cool?



**Cote & Ciel Sormonne obsidian backpack**

SSENSE \$325

**Buy Now**

Cote & Ciel's blacked-out Obsidian Backpack is similar in spirit to the Black Ember above, but is more of a style flex for minimalists that want a sleek day-tripper which doesn't skimp on practicalities. The washable canvas outer makes that mysterious spill a thing of the past, the detachable neoprene handle feels cushy in the hand, and the stealthy zip pockets in the front take it over the top.



### **Knack Pack Medium Expandable Knack Pack**

Knack Pack **\$195**

**Buy Now**

Don't judge the Medium Expandable Knack Pack on the relatively small size impression, because this pack is basically the inflating frog neck bubble of bags. With a quick unzip it expands to double in size from 17 liters to a max of 31 liters. That's enough space to fit up to three changes of clothes (or even more, if you're an above-average packer). It's small enough to fit under an airplane seat in case you want to travel light, or can pull double-duty for any overflow that won't fit in your carry-on suitcase. It's totally water-resistant down to the zippers so your valuables are be protected from the elements. Also, a 180-degree opening makes for easy access, along with lots of hidden, zippered pockets for stashing everything from soiled laundry and shoes to your passport and RFID wallet.



### Topo Designs Travel Bag

Topo Designs \$229

**Buy Now**

If you're the kind of guy who would rather be hanging off a cliff in Denali or shooting hot dog photos in Reykjavik, you'll probably want a bag with a splash of personality like this one. Aside from the head-turning colors that make it easy to spot on the luggage conveyor belt, the bag is a total workhorse. It can fit up to five packing cubes, a **Dopp kit**, 15" laptop, and accessories, all inside a carry-on compliant size.



### **The North Face Router laptop backpack**

Amazon **\$159**

**Buy Now**

Though this North Face commuter backpack would be right at home on any college campus, with a 17" slot for securing your laptop on the way to class, it has merits far beyond the academic. Two water bottle pockets, a vented suspension system, and a generous 40-liter capacity make it a sensible choice for any backpacking trips or treks at a higher elevation. For what it's worth: It even secured an endorsement from the American Chiropractic Association for its comfy accoutrements (a plushy and breathable back panel plus supported straps) that protect your back and shoulders, and keep your posture nice and upright.

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## **More Best Stuff Recommendations from GQ**

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