

While The Walking Dead may not become a reality anytime soon; it's never a bad idea to be prepared for a zombie apocalypse or a total catastrophic event. Whether you plan to be out alone in the wilderness for the long haul or just with a few friends with the weekend a good backpack can make or break the trip. A survival backpack can mean anything between the bags designed for the military to civilian hiking packs.

What suits you might not be either, but there is something out there for everyone. Extra features range from hydration sleeves to rain covers. There are a few things that are essential to these sort of backpacks; they're not the average bag that you use to carry a few things to the shops or into town on the bus – these are serious pieces of equipment and can be a big investment. So you want to make sure you get the right backpack from the get go.

Factors To Consider When Choosing The Right Survival Backpack

It's not an easy decision to make and with so much choice it's hard to find exactly what you need.

Factor One: Capacity

First up, you need a bag that can carry enough to see you through whatever trip you're taking. You can't afford to over pack so if you can find a bag that will take everything you need plus a little more than you've found what you need. Carrying everything you need, there are certain things you need to hand and quickly, so a backpack with a few external pockets clips and other attachments is pretty important too. You don't want to be putting down the bag to fetch your water or knife from it when you can grab it a side pocket with ease.

Factor Two: Comfort

These are big packs and any sort of trip is going to mean you'll be carrying it for a long amount of time. So you need to be comfortable; any sort of strain or sharp point is going to feel ten times worse after a couple of days. You need to make sure the straps won't dig into your shoulders, the back is strong and nothing rubs against your skin or there is no undue pressure. Most bags come with waist straps or a padded belt to help keep the pack stable and soften the press of it against your back, hips and waist.

Factor Three: Weight

As well as affecting the comfort of the bag, the weight of the actual bag itself will make a lot of difference to how much you can pack and how long you can carry it for. A lot of different things can make a difference to the weight of the bag; the material it's made with, the internal frame, everything adds up. You want a light backpack, but a solid frame and it can be hard to find a balance between a solid frame and a light bag.

Factor Four: Durability

A durable backpack is a must, you don't want your bag to fall apart in the middle of being chased through the wilderness by zombies. Or bears. Or at all. Any backpack worth its salt is going to be waterproof or at least water-resistant and come with a rain cover. You need something that is going to stand up to anything and you want something that will last. It's no

good having a backpack made of substandard materials or have a tear-resistant backpack only to have the zippers break on first use.

The Top Ten Survival Backpacks

I've narrowed down the vast choice of backpacks out there to ten of the best and will take a look at each of them individually to help you choose the best one for you.

1. Osprey Atmos 65 AG Backpack
2. TETON Sports Scout 3400 Backpack
3. Arcteryx Altra 65 Pack
4. The North Face Banchee 65 Pack
5. Osprey Xenith 75 Backpack
6. Gregory Mountain Baltoro 65 Backpack
7. The North Face Terra 65 Exploration Pack
8. Deuter Aircontact 65+10 Backpack
9. Osprey Aether 70 Backpack
10. Mountaintop 70L+10L Backpack

1.Osprey Atmos 65 AG Backpack

First on the list is an Osprey backpack, that comes in a few different sizes depending on how tall you are and what you're needs are. There an internal frame, several external pockets and an external storage slot for hiking poles.

Feature #1: Comfort

The Atmos 65 has a few different features that make it a comfortable backpack. There is an antigravity suspension feature; the back is one seamless padded piece that fits the contours of your back so it fits everyone and is comfortable. It's also meshed to encourage ventilation and keep you from overheating in whatever weather. The hip belt is extendable so you can adjust it to fit your hips and keep it secure against your body without rubbing or hampering any movement.

Feature #2: Adjustable Harness

As well as adding to the overall comfort of the backpack, the adjustable harness means that anyone can use this backpack without worrying about pulling too far down your back and over your behind. The straps are adjustable too but the harness changes the size of the torso of the back so that it can be fit to the size of your back. Long legs but a short torso? Not a problem with the Atmos 65.

Feature #3: Storage

The bag has a large capacity, and to help stabilise the load there are internal and side compression straps to hold it in place and keep it secure. The side straps also double as storage for holding gear externally. There are five external pockets, including two for stuff that can be accessed quickly while on the move. The main compartment can be accessed from the top of the bag or through a zippered front panel so you can place your gear in layers knowing where you can access it.

Real Users Feedback

4.8 out of five stars over 185 reviews; this bag is popular for how well it fits any body shape or size. The comfortable fit also makes the weight you carrying feel less and is easier to carry compared to other bags owners have used, despite the bag itself being relatively heavy. The main complaints seem to be that the hip belt isn't very comfortable

Pros

- Comfortable
- Angled Water Bottle Pocket

Cons

- Heavy When Empty
- Small Hip Pockets

2.TETON Sports Scout 3400

This backpack is well padded for maximum comfort, had a hi-vis rain fly that's kept in its own pocket until it's needed and has external storage for trekking poles and similar equipment.

Feature #1: Durable

The bag is made with a 600 denier canvas material with a diamond rip-stop fabric. The bag can withstand a lot of abuse over a short amount of time and last a long, long time and many trips into the middle of nowhere. It is scratch and tear-resistant, holding up over time without thinning or fraying and keeping your gear safe and secure on the first trip and fiftieth trip. The rain fly covers the entire pack and keeps your pack dry in the worst weather.

Feature #2: Storage

The bag holds 55 Litres and has a 3400 Cubic, not the biggest amount but there are extras that make up the difference. There is a front mesh pocket for easy access to items you may need on the move without searching through the bag. There is a specific storage compartment for a sleeping bag, two zippered side pockets and two lower side pockets for bottles of water or smaller stuff you need to hand.

Feature #3: Comfort

The back panel and shoulder straps are both padded for comfort. The back is padded with foam for lumbar support and the main torso of the bag can be adjusted to size. The straps

are lined with mesh to encourage air flow and the waist straps are padded too. The sternum strap helps balance the load and help you carry it for longer without strain.

Real Users Feedback

4.5 out of five stars over 1,580 reviews; people like how much weight they can carry in this bag comfortably and how well it holds up. For the price, owners say this is a bit of a bargain, but there are complaints about the zippers.

Pros

- Inexpensive
- Limited Life Warranty

Cons

- Entry-level pack.

3.Arcteryx Altra 65 Pack

The Arcteryx has a few tricks up its sleeve when it comes to features – it's sturdy and offers load balancing, compatibility with hydration sleeves has aluminium.

Feature #1: Extendable

The top lid of the bag is closed with tough straps that extended quite a bit to hold larger amounts or longer pieces of gear. The collar of the bag is also extendable so you can play around with the size of the bag to fit in the most gear so you don't have to leave anything behind when you head off on a trip. Having the ability to fit in everything you need regardless of size does make packing for the trip a little easier.

Feature #2: Comfort

The Altra 65 has several different features that make it a comfortable carry. The shoulder straps are anatomically shaped to match the natural shape of your back and are padded to stop the weight of the backpack digging into your shoulders. The sternum strap is adjustable and helps balance the load correctly on your back so you can carry it for longer. The back panel is padded and lined with mesh for ventilation, as well as sitting away from the back a little. The waist belt is padded and lined with the same mesh.

Feature #3: Hydration Pack Compatibility

The backpack has an external pocket that is compatible with a hydration pack. It has easy access for when you're on the move, and the external access means that it can be filled while the pack is full. This is great for longer trips, you don't want to be on the trail and have to empty out your pack so you can hydration sleeve you so can fill up with precious water.

Real Users Feedback

Four stars out of five stars over eleven reviews, owners like the dual zippered openings and that it's easy to load and unload. The main complaints are that at first, the bag can be a little noisy as you walk.

Pros

- Durable
- Good Fit For Different Body Shapes

Cons

- Small hip belt pockets.

4.The North Face Banchee 65 Pack

North Face has an aluminium frame for load balancing, a decent capacity and a few extras up its sleeve that make it a great backpack.

Feature #1 Capacity

The capacity is 65 litre so you can fit in everything you need to survive the harshest of conditions. It's filled from the top with a floating lid so you can extend the capacity further. It also means any piece of gear or equipment you need to pack that is bigger than the backpack itself doesn't have to be left behind. You don't want to find yourself stuck without something vital because it was a few inches too tall to fit.

Feature #2: Organisation

With a large capacity will need to keep everything organised for easy access as you're out and about in the wilderness. There are eight pockets, internal and external. It has a separate zippered compartment for your sleeping bag so if you find that perfect spot to camp you can pull it out and settle down without having to rifle through your entire backpack. On top of this, there are two tool keepers so you always know where they are when you need them.

Feature #3: Wet-Gear Pocket

Part of the pockets and organisation of this bag is a separate breathable beaver-tail pocket. This gives you somewhere to keep anything wet when you need to that is apart from your dry gear. Handy for getting caught in wet weather or if you need to cross any bodies of water as you travel.

Real Users Feedback

Five out of five stars over one review, it's interior is well organised, but it's a little on the small size for longer trips out in the wilderness.

Pros

- Load-balancing
- Light Weight

Cons

- Not enough reviews to be sure of the quality.

5. Osprey Xenith 75 Backpack

The second Osprey on the list is made with a tough high-density nylon, has several external pockets but has a smooth look overall.

Feature #1: Easy Access

This backpack has several ways to access your gear as well as extra pockets on the hip belt for smaller items you'll need on the go. There are also dual access stretch mesh pockets on the side of the backpack, you can pack everything you need to have to hand in these pockets so you don't have to keep stopping and unpacking while you're on the move. The bag also has side zips to access the main compartment so you can organise everything within the bag to get hold of whatever you need whenever you need it without too much effort.

Feature #2: Durability

The material of the pack is made with a high density 420 denier nylon, so it stands up to a good amount of wear and tear. The tough material will protect everything inside the bag and any sharp tools won't rip through the bag, even if you're running and everything is getting jostled around and will last longer than a regular backpack. You don't want to be out running something and having your bag fall apart and spill out your precious gear.

Feature #3: Comfort

The bag comes in different sizes; the litre capacity stays the same regardless but what changes is how it fits your body. The back is well padded and it has a lightweight frame that balances the load well so you can carry more gear comfortably. The waist belt and harness are both well padded with bio foam so they don't rub or add any pressure. The back panel has padded sections that fit your back and the shoulder straps are padded too.

Real Users Feedback

4.7 stars out of five over nine reviews, owners of this Osprey bag like the overall comfort of it and with the stronger suspension you can carry more weight without strain. It's not overly user-friendly and can take a little while to figure out all the adjustments.

Pros

- Four ways to access the main compartment
- External hydration sleeve

Cons

- No rain cover included

6. Gregory Mountain Baltoro 65 Backpack

Gregory have made a slimmer streamlined backpack that carries the same amount but balances it better.

Feature#1: Custom Fit

The backpack is highly customizable in terms of fitting it to your body size; when you buy the backpack there is a chart to show you how and where you should measure yourself to buy the right size backpack. This is before you get the backpack and can adjust it once you get hold of it. The back panel adjusts so that the bulk of the weight is sitting properly on your body. The hip belt and shoulder straps are both padded and ergonomically shaped for the best fit. The back panel has two levels of lumbar support; a removable shim means you can find the best level of padding for your body and the weight you carry.

Feature #2: Capacity

The bag has a 65 Litre capacity – not the largest but it makes up for the lost with little extras along the way. The hip belt has a small waterproof zip up pocket for electronics such as a phone or a GPS. There is a sleeping bag compartment that has front zippered access, and the divider that separates the two is removable so that you have a single large compartment for larger pieces of gear.

Feature #3: Removable Daypack

The back comes with its own side pack that doubles as a hydration sleeve and a day pack. This means you can always have water without as on top of this there is a side pocket for bottles with a drawstring closure. Or you can set up camp somewhere and head out for the day without having to take everything with you and having just the bare essentials with you for short trips away from camp.

Real Users Feedback

4.7 stars out of five over twenty-one reviews, users of the backpack find it lighter than previous models, keeping many of the great features of the previous one with some great improvements. The waterproof pouch on the hip belt is a little small for larger model smartphones, however.

Pros

- Hydration sleeve included.
- Easy loading and unloading.

Cons

- Heavy when empty.

7.The North Face Terra 65 Exploration Pack

The second North Face pack on the list has the same capacity and offers great comfort and ventilation.

Feature #1: Comfort

The bag has several features to make it more comfortable to carry. The shoulder straps are shaped to fit the shape of the human body, padded and lined with breathable mesh to encourage air flow. The back panel and hip belt is also padded and lined with the same mesh material. The hip belt is also shaped to correctly fit the hips and help balance the load.

Feature #2: Easy Access

The main compartment is both top loading with an adjustable lid for larger gear. The pack also has two zippers on the front of the bag for access to the compartment. This means access is easy even if the item you want is further down the bag, and means anyone you're travelling with can access the bag while it's still on your back. No need to shift the weight off your bag if it's in the perfect comfortable position.

Feature #3: Capacity

As well as holding up to 65 Litres, the Terra 65 has nine or ten external pockets depending on the size of backpack you buy. This means there is always somewhere to put those all important tools you'll need on hand when surviving rough terrain and harsh conditions. There is a sleeping bag compartment at the very bottom of the back, and two of the external pockets are on the hip belt so you can have your valuables close by.

Real Users Feedback

4.7 out of five stars over forty-seven reviews, owners like that it's a nice middle area between comfortable and capacity. Some people have even bought a second bag they liked it so much. There are some complaints that the shoulder straps a little uncomfortable

Pros

- Lightweight
- Versatile

Cons

- Doesn't come with rain cover
- No pockets on the hip belt.

8.Deuter Aircontact 65+10 Backpack

The Aircontact 65+10 has been redesigned to be slimmer and even more comfortable than before. There are loops to hold ice axes, hiking poles or similar and holds a good amount of gear.

Feature #1: Durable

The backpack is made with a tough 330denier blended nylon fabric called 330D Micro Rip 6.6 that is both waterproof and rip-proof. It'll stand up to a lot of punishment as you use it, and won't wear or fray easily, and everything inside it is kept safe and dry however long it rains for. The bottom of the bag is made with a stronger Polyamide material at a 1000 denier that is also tear resistant and scratch resistant too.

Feature #2: Comfort

The Deuter Aircontact has a system to balance the load at the body's centre of gravity so that everyone can carry the load properly without strain. It comes with a special system that also helps move the air around the body so that there is less sweating when you move and keeps you cooler. The shoulder straps are padded, the hip belt ergonomically shaped and is firm, stable but well padded to reduce the pressure as the frame balances and shifts the load better onto the waist.

Feature #3: Storage

The pack has several pockets and places to store everything you need to survive wherever you go. There is a separate zippered bottom compartment and a zippered pocket inside for valuables. There is a special compartment for wet items such as clothing, keeping them separate from everything that is dry in the bag. There are side pockets, for maps, and smaller items and a height adjustable lid so you can overfill it with larger items you need to.

Real Users Feedback

4.4 out of five stars over twelve reviews, this backpack is comfortable and how cool you remain while carrying, the adjustments are quick and easy to make so if you need to make adjustments on the move you won't be wasting any time.

Pros

- Durable
- Well padded.

Cons

- Heavy when empty.
- Bulky in places.

9.Osprey Aether 70 Backpack

The third Osprey in the list has a 73-litre capacity, and offers a lot of little extras for your money, making it useful pack for long trips or short stints.

Feature #1: Comfortable Fit

This pack has an anti-gravity system that sounds technical but means it stops the weight from pulling down on your shoulders and the frame transfers the weight to the hips. The hip belt is sturdy and comfortable and completely adjustable to fit your body size and balance the load better. The harness is also adjustable and, the back, shoulder straps and hip belt are all lined with a comfortable mesh wrap to improve airflow.

Feature #2: Storage

The bag has a large capacity, eight exterior pockets and internal compression straps that help you make the most of the space available. There is a sleeping bag compartment at the bottom with a removable divider so if you don't want to carry a sleeping bag in there you don't lose any space. There is a special pocket on the bag for a hydration sleeve, keeping separate from your gear so there is no risk from spillage damaging it.

Feature #3: Removable Daypack.

The lid of the bag is extendable for those larger items but also converts into a small daypack that is a well-built piece of kit of its own. The daypack has an external hydration sleeve, a loop that tucks away to hang tools on and small zippered pocket on the front. The shoulder straps and sternum strap are highly adjustable so this is a comfortable carry too.

Real Users Feedback

Four out of Five stars over fourteen reviews, users love how light the pack is when empty and how comfortable it is to carry it when it's full. The hip belt pockets are easy to access and the pack holds enough for some of the longest trips. However, some of the side pockets are hard to access when the pack is being carried.

Pros

- Lightweight
- Hydration sleeve compatible

Cons

- No rain cover.

10. Mountaintop 70L+10L Backpack

The Mountaintop is a good looking backpack that's highly adjustable and holds a great deal of gear for a very low price.

Feature #1: Adjustable

The back panel is adjustable in eight different settings so you can choose the correct fit for your height and torso length. Everything else is adjustable too, the shoulder straps and hip belt fit your body shape to balance the load properly on your back. The sternum strap is

adjustable too so you can make sure you can carry the most without too much strain on your back or hips.

Feature #2: Capacity

The backpack has a 70 litre capacity with an extra ten litres on top of that thanks to an adjustable lid and extendable drawstring collar. There are several external pockets, including mesh side pockets for items you need to access easily. There is a side pocket for a hydration pack up to three litres with easy access for refilling; good for long stretches between stops or bodies of water. The zippered pocket on the hip belt lets you keep valuables close at hand.

Feature #3: Ten compression Straps.

There are more compression straps on this than any other bag I think. They help tighten and secure your load, keep everything tucked in close to the bag properly packed and balanced. It also means that you can make the most of the litre capacity. The straps give you extra options for clipping and hanging tools to the bag, so you can carry a few extra items externally that you need to access on the move. You can even hang larger items from them such as rolled up sleeping bags or tents.

Real Users Feedback

4.3 out of five stars over one hundred and twenty reviews, owners have managed to carry up to 100lbs of gear in this bag without trouble, find it spacious and good value. However, the buckles have a tendency to break and some of the zippers are a little awkward to open.

Pros

- Inexpensive
- Spacious

Cons

- Not very durable

Final Verdict For The Best Survival Backpack

Even narrowing it down to the top ten still offers a lot of choice for getting the best survival backpack, but if you know what's the most important factor for you I can tell you which is the best suited for you.

Factor One: Capacity

The Osprey backpacks offer the best capacity for the price. The Ospreys have the largest litre capacities of all the bags on the list and all come with extra pockets and spaces for external tools and gear. The lids are all extendable for an extra few litres capacity or larger items. The Aether 70 has with a removable divider between the sleeping bag compartment and the main compartment giving you the choice of storage and extra capacity if you don't

carry a sleeping bag. The external pockets mean there is a place for everything and you don't have to worry about leaving anything behind when you hit the road or make your escape.

Factor Two: Comfort

While the Deuter Aircontact is one of the heavier packs, it is the most comfortable to carry, the air flow system over the back means you are cooler for longer, no matter how hot the weather is. It pumps the air around the back panel and over the hips for up to 15% less perspiration. This means less dehydration too. The Osprey Xenith and the Gregory Baltoro are also very comfortable backs to carry so you don't have to worry about straining your back or being uncomfortable as you get towards the end of a long day.

Factor Three: Weight

The lightest bags aren't always the best, but the ones that are decent quality and light weight are definitely something you want to get. The North Face Terra and Osprey Aether are definitely the lightest bags that retain a quality build. With the capacity of the Aether being over seventy litres this means that most of the weight of the backpack is the gear you carry.

Factor Four: Durability

The most durable bag is, without a doubt, the Deuter Aircontact. It's tear resistant and scratch resistant, and it's well made. It's definitely the bag that will last the longest and it's waterproof too, so while it doesn't have a rain cover you won't actually need it. It'll see you through the harshest conditions and may last longer than you do. The Teton backpack also durable with its diamond rip-stop fabric is hardy and long-lasting.

Overall Final Verdict

The bag I'd choose for any impending disaster or zombie apocalypse would be the Osprey Aether. It's the lighter pack so you can carry it for longer more comfortably, and carry heavier loads without having to worry about shaving off any extra ounces by cutting straps or removing bits. While it's not the most comfortable bag on the list that in no way means it's an uncomfortable carry. It has the anti-gravity system that a lot of Osprey bags have, are well padded and can be adjusted to any body shape and size.

It's got a large enough capacity for everything you need, at seventy litres it can carry enough to see you through to a post-apocalyptic future or to survive the weekend in the Appellation Trail. The extra external pockets mean you've got plenty of places to store everything and keep it organised as well as a choice of having that sleeping bag compartment or just one large compartment.

With the extras such as the removable daypack that are comfortable to carry too and the pocket for a hydration sleeve, it's definitely the best bag on the market for survivalists.

