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Gearbox: A Backpack on Wheels

Featuring: Meridian 22

Monthly Traffic: 3,000,000

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/4d3xk7t>

Name: Osprey Meridian suitcase

What it is: A 22-inch-long roll-aboard suitcase that doubles as a backpack. It also features a detachable smaller backpack. With that removed, the main bag fits in an overhead airline bin.

How it works: The Meridian is yet another version of an increasingly popular bag: the suitcase that doubles as a backpack. You can roll it through the airport or unzip the back, pull out the straps and wear it on your back through Paris.

The good: Sturdy construction and a solid frame, which includes the large, gripping wheels and a secure, extendable handle. It is comfortable on the back for short periods, even if it initially rode high for me and I had to adjust it into a more agreeable shape. The backpack straps zip up tightly to make this a compact and easy-traveling bag. The detachable day pack includes a padded slot for a laptop. I recently stayed at a remote lodge that required a half-mile hike to the front door. This would have been perfect.

The tough, stiff material, which means it probably will age well, makes the suitcase slightly more difficult to manipulate than the average. Though relatively comfortable on the back, it is not a long-route hiking pack, which I almost expected from such a respected maker of outdoor equipment. Also, there are a few odd features, such as the deep zip pocket atop the bag that extends into the bag's main compartment. If the bag is full, the pocket is mostly worthless. Cost: \$269 to \$299 Available from: Several stores and online retailers. A list can be found at ospreypacks.com.

