



Pros & cons
 + Practical for utility cyclists
 + Durable, lockable, waterproof
 – Fixed capacity



Velobin

Velobin lockable pannier

Box-style plastic pannier with a lockable lid

£64.99 velobin.com

The Velobin pannier is something I tested 15 years ago in its previous incarnation as the Bikebin. It seemed like a bit of a novelty item at the time but proved surprisingly useful. My husband used it regularly for years to carry bike and gardening tools, and I used one for commuting until, after too many bashes into a narrow railing, the rack hooks gave way. The basic design of the Velobin seems to be much the same as the Bikebin but with a few refinements – for example, the Rixen Kaul hooks seem a lot stronger. (In any case, Velobin now offers a five-year warranty.)

The rigid, recycled plastic box is a convenient alternative to a fabric pannier for trips around town. No more fiddling with clips, zips or straps: just flip open the lid and grab what you need. As with any single-compartment

pannier, you may need to rummage for small items.

Quick-release hooks, a carry handle and a shoulder strap enable it to go with you easily. Or if you're just popping into a shop you can leave it on the bike, locking the lid of the Velobin and securing it to the bike's rack with a cable lock. (Assuming you have the lockable version of the pannier – there's also a non-lockable model for £59.99.)

Velobin claims the product 'will never leak' and it certainly withstood a heavy Cumbrian downpour. The polypropylene material feels robust and the carrying capacity of up to 10kg is perfectly adequate for small shopping trips, utility journeys, and commuting – any clothing can be neatly folded rather than squashed up.

While I wouldn't use the Velobin for touring (I'm a 'take

everything you can squeeze in' kind of traveller), the flat lid does provide a handy platform for carrying more stuff on top – assuming you attach a pair of Velobins. There are five handy loops around the lid to hook luggage straps onto.

There's a choice of colour combinations: black with a blue, red, yellow or black lid. Velobins are sold singly and can be fitted to either side of a rear rack due to the tapered shape. Each has a capacity of 17.5 litres and weighs 1,100g.

Julie Rand

Verdict

A practical alternative to traditional panniers for everyday cycling journeys. Some rattling and shaking might make it unsuitable for things like cameras and laptops, unless they are well-padded and secured safely.

Other options



ORTLIEB BIKE-SHOPPER £80

Waterproof 20-litre shopping pannier with a shoulder strap, Quick-Seal closure, and excellent QL2.1 hooks that allow single-handed removal from the rack. ortlieb.com



SPECIALIZED COOLCAVE PANNIER £45

A 19-litre pannier made of rigid, 50% recycled plastic. It's equipped with KlickFix hooks and comes with a cargo net; a lid is an optional extra. specialized.com