



Pros & cons

- + Waterproof and tough
- + Good value
- Cumbersome off the bike



Oxford

Aqua V32 Double Pannier Bag

Bombproof, waterproof bags that can't be used as singles

£64.99 oxfordproducts.com

Double panniers go over a bike's rear rack like saddlebags over a horse's back. They're what I used for my first cycle tours because I was a student and they were cheap. These Oxford Aqua V32 panniers are better in every respect than my old nylon bags, yet are still relatively inexpensive.

At £65, they're less than half the price of a pair of today's benchmark waterproof panniers, Ortlieb Back Rollers. While you're getting a bit less volume – 32 litres for the Aqua V32 versus 40 for the Back Rollers – these are also completely waterproof, thanks to welded seams and a roll-top closure.

They're similarly tough, too. They're made from 500D PVC tarpaulin that's reinforced with a plastic base plate, while a stiff

back panel prevents them losing their shape. The Aqua V32 may actually be more durable than more expensive single panniers because the attachment system is so simple. There are no upper hooks with moving parts to break, just a central tarpaulin panel with Velcro straps. (The lower hooks that tuck behind the rack struts are like other panniers' but these aren't weight bearing.)

In common with many waterproof panniers, each bag has one big internal compartment, without dividers. There is an external pocket on the front of both of them, however, accessed via a water-resistant zip. This pocket is a decent size, almost big enough for me to fit both hands in, but it's shallow. A phone, Kindle, tools or gloves will fit fine; a D-lock

Verdict

Durable, waterproof panniers at an excellent price. I couldn't get on with the double-bag design; I'm too used to the versatility and convenience of separate bags, especially for everyday journeys. But for rides where you can put them on and leave them on, they work well.

probably won't. My short-shackle Abus lock didn't quite fit.

Reflective detailing is excellent, with hexagons or logos visible from all directions. Despite that, this double-pannier wouldn't be my first choice for commuting or similar utility trips. The joined-together design means it's cumbersome to carry off the bike, carry handle notwithstanding. And you can't ever ride with just one pannier; you have to lug around both.

It goes on the rack easily enough: hang it loosely over the top; slide it into position, tucking the lower hooks in place; then fasten the Velcro straps. Removal is even easier. Once you've unfastened the straps, you can lift the double-bag off one-handed using the handle. The central panel is 16cm wide, which will work fine for most racks but not road bike ones like a Tortec Velocity or Tubus Fly.

Each bag has a 16-litre volume, hence the 32V name. Total weight: 1,670g. ●

Dan Joyce

Other options

ORTLIEB BACK ROLLER £150 (PAIR)

Deservedly popular panniers that are 100% waterproof and very tough. Retracting hooks enable one-handed removal from the rack. Volume: 20 litres each. (Members get a 10% discount – cyclinguk.org/ortlieb.) ortlieb.com



DECATHLON 20L WATERPROOF BIKE BAG FOR PANNIER RACK

500 £29.99 (EACH)

A roll-top pannier that's waterproof to IPX4 (splashes or rain, not water jets or immersion) and costs just £30. The single-position Klickfix upper hooks will fit rack rails from 8-16mm. decathlon.co.uk

