

Osprey Ceres 70

PACK ALL YOUR MOUNTAIN TOYS WITH THIS TOOL-FRIENDLY RUCKSACK.

As much as I aspire to Thoreau's "simplify, simplify," my gear list is anything but simple. I climb, I ski, I haul gear Thoreau could never have imagined. But perhaps we would agree on the Osprey Ceres 70. This internal frame says purist all over, but it gives me plenty of tool attachments and a suspension that can handle mountain-size loads.

On a winter trek, the extra-large shovel pocket kept a battered blade out of the way while letting snowmelt drain. Gear loops are placed for quick-draw convenience, and adjustable side pockets easily secure odd-size items like skis.

The Ceres's midsize capacity and floating lid yielded plenty of space for a 4-day trip down Yellowstone's Bechler River Trail, yet the pack also cinched down for an overnight. Osprey's signature StraightJacket compression system cocooned loads big and small, and did an admirable job of stabilizing a snowboard on sidehills. And kudos to the designer of the internal compression strap's easy-to-see red webbing: You understand dimly lit alpine starts.

The Ethereal suspension system employs a two-thirds-length stay, a removable framesheet, and vertical "struts" that enhance load transfer to the hipbelt. The rigid support, combined with a lightly padded belt that cradled my hips without pressure points, let me comfortably haul everything from light-and-fast 30-pounders to a 50-something winter load.

The pack's 420-denier twill fabric and quality construction survived scrapes with everything from boulders to metal gear, and the double-layer bottom is reassuringly strong. A crampon patch and other high-abuse areas are reinforced with 500-denier fabric. Nitpicks are few: While the Ceres has a hydration sleeve, there's no outlet port, and the quick-release pad straps loosened at inconvenient times.

Dan Kostrzewski

\$239 • 4,300 cu. in. (M)
3 sizes/14"-22"+ torsos
4 lbs. 6 oz. (M)
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