

Reviews

Gear up

COMPONENTS, KIT, AND MEDIA SELECTED
AND REVIEWED BY BIKE JOURNALISTS AND CYCLING UK STAFF

Put to the test

Is there a product you'd like us to test? Write to: Cycle, Cycling UK, Parklands, Railton Rd, Guildford, GU2 9JX or [@editor@cyclinguks.org](mailto:editor@cyclinguks.org)



Pros & cons
+ Lightweight, elegant support
- Won't work for all loads
- Expensive for what it is

Carradice

Bagman Universal Bar Rack

Saddlebag support that's been redesigned to carry luggage up front

£65 carradice.co.uk

Carradice has long sold metal saddle racks to give extra support to their range of saddlebags. Its latest rack – the Bagman Universal – takes things to the front of the bike. The target audience is people who want to run a top-opening bag on their handlebar; or people who want to carry a dry-bag or bikepacking roll but either don't have a harness or have a harness that sags or compresses their cables.

You still strap your load to the handlebar, but the rack stops it gradually sinking or slipping, the bane of a tourist's life. It

also leaves plenty of space for your cables between the bag and the frame, and avoids the need to run stabilising straps from the bag round the head tube, which can rub. The rack has a 13x18cm platform, a load limit of 6kg and can be secured either above or below the handlebar, giving a 16cm or 22cm drop.

Whether it's right for you depends on your bike, your loads and your preferences. I found both pros and cons.

On the positive side, at 378g it was a largely stable, elegant and lightweight way of supporting a medium-sized top-



opening bag – particularly one of Carradice's own models with a base flap for sliding onto the rack. And the rack also gave the reassurance that the load was never going to slip or bounce onto the front wheel.

Downsides? Fitting was more of a faff than it needed to be, particularly because the positioning of the bolts made small adjustments a headache. And while medium-sized loads were fine I found the 26L Odyssey XL bag that Carradice kindly lent me more challenging to keep from moving on the rack or on the handlebar when full.

I didn't have much luck with using the rack to carry a dry-bag on my MTB, but your experience may be different. While I could make quite a wide, bulky 4kg dry-bag really stable even with ordinary bungees by cinching them around the rack and up to the handlebar, this pressed the load right against the vulnerable point where my hydraulic cables joined the brake levers. Strapping the load only to the rack instead and not the handlebar gave too much bounce. ●

Sean Fishpool

Other options



REVELATE DESIGNS HANDLEBAR HARNESS
£92

A masterpiece of super-stable, durable design. Very fast to load, unload and tighten, with neat features like cam-locking straps. revelatedesigns.com



JACK THE BIKE RACK
£79.99

Ingeniously simple bar-mounted rack with tool-free fitting. Larger and more stable than the Bagman Universal, but heavier at 730g. wholegraincycles.com

Verdict

The Bagman Universal is a tidy way to keep handlebar loads stable and off your front wheel. For bikepacking bar rolls, you may still be better off with a harness-style support, while bigger loads may feel more stable behind the saddle.



Cycle's test promise

At Cycle, we are proudly independent. There's no pressure to please advertisers as we're funded by **your** membership. Our product reviews aren't press releases; they're written by experienced cyclists after thorough testing.