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Verdict

Both the Passport and Decathlon bags are good entry-level systems that will suit most people in most circumstances. They'll cope fine for a wide variety of riding applications.

With the Apidura and Ortlieb bags you are getting higher quality, and their waterproofness is impressive, especially given the relatively low weights. If you can afford the extra, it's worth splashing out on them. But I'd also be happy touring with either of the two cheaper bags.

All of the bags tested had good stability while riding. The Ortlieb – as you'd expect, given the design – was the most stable on really rough stuff. Whether you need that depends on what sort of terrain you plan to ride and if you have a dropper post.



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1 Decathlon Riverside Saddle Bag Harness & Saddle Bag

£55 & £20 deathlon.co.uk

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT setup here in that you get a large waterproof bag and then a separate harness to fit it to the bike. This means it's straightforward to take your dry-bag on and off. The dry-bag is robust and can fit between 7 and 15 litres of stuff, plus there is an air valve so compression is very easy. The harness fits to the bike securely, and the whole thing straps together and cinches up to make a solid package. There's a bit of extra storage on top of the harness. The straps are all nicely designed to be neat and secure when cinched. [Don't forget that Cycling UK members get 10% off from Decathlon.]

▼ **Very solid feel, a high-capacity dry-bag and a pretty good price**

2 Passport Bikepacking Saddle Pack Large

£70 passportcycles.co.uk

A MORE TRADITIONAL water-resistant outer bag that comes with an internal dry-bag for packing stuff into. You will need this unless it's bone dry. The pack can be rolled down and compressed to fit your luggage. There's a nice addition of two zipped side pockets, which are great for small things that don't need to be kept dry, and there's a bungee cord on top for extra storage. Attachment is by two straps on the seatpost and straps under the seat; it's a pretty stable set up whilst riding. Capacity is 9.8L for this Large version. There's also a 7L Medium bag that's a fiver less but otherwise the same.

▼ **A good basic setup at an entry-level price. Don't forget the dry-bag!**

3 Apidura Expedition Saddlepack 14L

£133 apidura.com

THIS BAG IS made from Apidura's three-layer laminate fabric with welded seams, which makes it impressively waterproof even in grim winter conditions. Attachment straps are robust and rubberised, ensuring a stable riding feel plus a degree of frame protection. It comes in three sizes, although compression of the bag is nice and easy and allows good load security however much you've packed. A bungee cord on top provides extra storage. There's a handy compatibility guide on the website to ensure the seatpack will fit before purchasing. For those with droppers, Apidura also does a bag with dropper attachment.

▼ **Not cheap but very well made, with great waterproofing**

4 Ortlieb Seat-pack QR

£168.50 ortlieb.com

THIS IS A robust 13L waterproof sack, which clips onto the saddle rails with a sturdy plastic bracket. Once you've got the knack, it's quick to take the bag on and off – check the compatibility of your saddle on the website before you buy. [Ortlieb also makes a version without the QR system.] The plastic bracket makes it incredibly stable while riding, plus it comes with an adapter enabling it to be used on dropper as well as standard seatposts. The adapter takes away about 4cm of travel from the dropper. There is an air valve in the bag, making compression very easy. It's expensive but should last a long time. The non-QR version is £150 [11L] or £159 [16.5L].

▼ **Very well designed and made, and typically Ortlieb tough and waterproof**