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Review: Vaya Bags' Long Backpack is designed for the ride

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AT A GLANCE ⌆

Vaya Bags Long Backpack [\(/product/1252849/vaya-bags-long-backpack.html\)](/product/1252849/vaya-bags-long-backpack.html)



[\(/product/1252849/vaya-bags-long-backpack.html\)](/product/1252849/vaya-bags-long-backpack.html)

[\\$160.00 \(/product/1252849/vaya-bags-long-backpack.html\)](#)

(/article/2032400/review-

vaya-bags-hand-makes-simple, custom bags intended to haul your gear while you're on a bike.

vaya- While the price may be a little high for some, the bags are durable, waterproof—and made entirely
bags- from recycled...

long-

backpack-



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Vaya Bags makes straightforward, upcycled bags designed primarily with bicyclists in mind. The New York-based company was started by environmental scientist Tianna Mellinger after she handmade herself a messenger bag to use while riding around Boston. [Vaya Bags \(http://www.vayabags.com\)](http://www.vayabags.com) hand makes all of its bags from reused materials—the outside is typically recycled canvas from sailboat factories designed to withstand rain and harsh sunlight, while the inside is vinyl coated polyester, a durable material used for truck tarps. This means that all of Vaya Bags' products are both environmentally friendly, and waterproof.



The bags themselves come in a few varieties: A messenger bag in four sizes, a pannier/messenger hybrid, [bike tube messengers \(http://www.techhive.com/article/2028721/review-vaya-bags-recycled-bike-tube-laptop-bag.html\)](#), and a backpack style. (Full disclosure: I've owned a Vaya Bags messenger for about five years and it served me extremely well while riding a scooter around the Bay Area). We tested out an 11 inch by 7 inch by 18 inch Long Backpack that came in shades of orange and brown canvas and stripes of bike tubes, much like the one seen here on [Vaya Bags' Etsy store \(http://www.etsy.com/listing/126131707/long-recycled-bike-tube-canvas-striped?\)](#).

The Long Backpack has a strip of reflective material near the bottom of the flap,

is a top-loading design, and has a reinforced vinyl bottom so you won't be out of luck if you accidentally set your bag down in a puddle. The top flap seals with Velcro strips and can also be secured with the clip. There are no external pockets on the bag, but the shoulder straps are nicely padded.



The straps on the Long Backpack also feature a horizontal clasp for better weight distribution.

The inside of the bag is similarly straightforward: Two Velcro pockets can hold a phone, a wallet, or sunglasses, and there's a center slot for a pen. The main compartment of the bag is, for the most part, entirely one big interior—save for the tablet/laptop pocket which can hold a laptop up to 15 inches.

It's a pretty simple set up, lacking additional pockets or extra frills; it's designed to be an expansive carry-all that will hold a wide variety of objects from laptops, books and notebooks, to lunch boxes, tools, accessories, game controllers, six packs... Basically we're talking about one massive compartment intended to hold anything you can throw into it.



These are the Long Backpack's only pockets.

Indeed, while testing the Long Backpack I was never unable to carry something. Whether I was bringing lunch to work, needed to carry home review product (including other bags), or just had too many books, notebooks, and papers, I never managed to pack the Long Backpack entirely full. Additionally, it never *felt* full or unwieldy, either when packing it up or while carrying it on my back.

I can't lie—I initially missed having a host of tiny, specialized pockets to slide all my small items into, and I did find myself putting my ultrabook into a padded sleeve for added cushioning, but I was always able to carry everything I needed, and then some. And despite the massive main compartment, I didn't really encounter any problems with reaching in and finding just what I was looking for.



You've got to love a bag that can carry your computer AND a twelve-pack.

Another advantage? Because Vaya Bags' products are all handmade, they're also easy to customize with colors you select yourself—or you can design a

whole scene to play out on the flap of your messenger or backpack. Vaya Bags has a [whole gallery \(http://www.vayabags.com/custom.php\)](http://www.vayabags.com/custom.php) of custom bags they've done for customers including air balloons, a bee hive, and the Golden Gate Bridge. Now, the bad news—because Vaya Bags' products are all handmade, they are not bargain bags. Still, they're not unreasonably priced either: You're looking at \$160 for a basic Long Backpack, which is on the high side but comparable to similar bags from other companies, such as Chrome. However, if you're often on a bike and are looking to buy one bag that will last you for years, or like to support environmentally-friendly small business, Vaya Bags' Long Backpack will definitely meet your expectations.

Vaya Bags Long Backpack

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At a Glance

Vaya Bags hand makes simple, custom bags intended to haul your gear while you're on a bike. While the price may be a little high for some, the bags are durable, waterproof—and made entirely from recycled materials.

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Price when rated: \$160

Pros

- Entirely waterproof
- Has a huge compartment that can carry almost everything

Cons

- Price is a little on the high side
- May not have enough pockets for some users



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