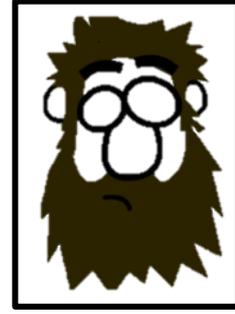


# Uncle Wacko's Gear Corner



## TRAMPING GEAR ADVICE FROM THE EXPERT

### How to Get Yourself a Cracker Pack

Some of you have serious mis-conceptions about packs, here's what you need to know:

**Volume** 50-60 litres is all you need. That'll do you for a week plus. Unless you're mountaineering. Think you need more? Then you're as clueless as a possum in headlights – you've got too much gear, or it's too bulky.

**Weight** 600g to 1.2 kg is the sweet spot. Any more is overkill.

**Comfort** No, you don't need no new-fangled ventilation system or unique harness giving superior ride comfort, or any other marketing twaddle they try to sell you. All packs are pretty good comfort wise these days.

**Mesh pockets** Part of pretty much all lightweight packs, but our NZ bush can obliterate 'em. Not all mesh is equal though so choose stronger stuff.

**IMPORTANT!** Don't ever, *ever* let Uncle Wacko see you in an Aarn pack – you'll get both barrels. They're bloody ridiculous. Nobody should be seen charging around the hills looking like Michelin Man. And every bloke should see to pee. They're crazy complicated - remember the KISS formula?? Get your pack weight down and you won't need no bulging boob bags to balance an overweight load.

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Here are the 3 ways to get yourself a humdinger pack:

#### Option 1: Cheap and good - buy from the US

Some smaller outfits in the US turn out cracker lightweight packs that'll do you proud at down to earth prices. Here are Uncle Wacko's picks:

**Granite Gear Crown 60.** All the features a latte-sipping Aucklander could want, and built to take the knocks. Cheap as chips at USD 200. Beat that!

**ULA Circuit.** Thru hikers drool over the Circuit, and fair enough. Solid design, compact, long-lasting. Has been a damn fine pack for many years.

**Gossamer Gear Mariposa.** Don't let the poncy name put you off. Ticks all the boxes and another proven performer. Great pockets.

**Six Moons Designs Minimalist.** Uncle Wacko salivates over this one. Solid as, all the features, kill the frame and it morphs into a 740g weekender.

## Option 2: Buy the lightest – take a bow ZPacks

The Arc Blast is in a class of its own – 55 litres and just 600 grams. Stone the keas, me nana’s crochet bag weighs more than that!

They’re crazy light cos they’re made from cuben fibre. That means two things – they probably won’t last as long as other packs, and they’re nosebleed expensive – the Arc Blast will set you back around USD 380.

It’s the pack for those who want the lightest (and why wouldn’t you?) and are happy to part with the extra dosh.

Uncle Wacko reckons it’s a cracker, well worth the price.

## Option 3: Buy local – it has to be Osprey

This option is for the Nervous Nellies and Dithering Dickeyes reluctant to buy online. Or who just have to try it on. Locally there’s really only Osprey – everything else is just too heavy.

Osprey always seem to have a well-priced model around the kilo mark.

Personally, Uncle Wacko doesn’t like ‘em much – they’re so goddam strappy, flappy and buckley. They look like they need a good seeing to with a pair of scissors. *(Editor: that’s rich coming from him!)*

Head into Bivouac and see what you think. The Levity/Lumina 60 at 890 grams and \$330 looks the go, but no belt pockets would kill it for me.

Here’s a summary of your options:

Make	Litres	Grams	Price
<b>Granite Gear Crown 2</b>	60	1070	USD 200
<b>ULA Circuit</b>	68	1162	USD 235
<b>Gossamer Gear Mariposa</b>	60	865	USD 270
<b>6 Moons Designs Minimalist</b>	54	960	USD 210
<b>ZPacks Arc Blast</b>	55	680	USD 380
<b>Osprey Levity/Lumina</b>	60	890	NZD 330

So that’s your pack sorted.

Gotta go – I’m off to check on that pair of huia I seen in the bush out the back a coupla days ago.

Spot ya.

*Uncle Wacko*

