



As people strive to move faster in mountainous terrain and manufacturing technology advances, gear on the market has become super lightweight. When it comes to guiding in the harsh geology of the Cuillin mountains in Skye then robust, hard wearing and super simple is the order of the day. Our boots, clothing and bags take a constant battering, coming into contact with the highly abrasive volcanic rock. As a company of very busy guides we spend hundreds of days in the mountains every year, moving through this tough environment with clients. In order to move people safely in this terrain we use a range of techniques involving ropes but often rely on a method of moving together called short roping, this often involves sitting down, using body belays (running the rope around ourselves), constantly being in contact with the rock itself which means punishing our gear, particularly our bags.

The Kaipak's super durable G1000 fabric and robust construction work beautifully for us, not only is the material hard wearing but it's the most weather resistant we have come across. When off our backs and sitting on damp ground bags can often absorb moisture, the Kaipak's weatherproof bottom seems to resist this more than other packs we have encountered, after a good year's use, all of our bags are showing the most minimal sign of use. As we mentioned earlier we like to keep things simple, the no fuss styling of the Kaipak results in a super practical rucksack that won't snag easily or shed items from unnecessary pouches and pockets. The long vertical front zip which we thought on initial inspection provided access to the main compartment is actually just for a flat storage compartment the length of the bag, an unusual feature which has turned out to be extremely useful for storing maps, guidebooks, abseil tat and even a basic mountaineering rack. The mesh side pockets, not a feature we'd normally look at have again turned out to be surprisingly useful, particularly for storing a walking pole or pair of ice tools (see picture).

The Kaipak's spacious, simplistic construction comes with an easily removable ergonomic back panel (which we have removed to make it lighter and allow for extra space) but would be a great feature for longer treks on flatter terrain. For a typical day guiding in the Cuillin we line the Kaipak with a 60 litre exped dry bag (it does come with the best fitting rain cover we have encountered) however we favour an internal dry bag for the mountain and the rain cover for lower level where wind is less of an issue.

A typical Cuillin Kaipak easily fits the following -
a 4-6 person group shelter, another dry bag containing 2 pairs of gloves, a hat, a headtorch, first aid kit, an alpine climbing harness, 40m rope, a Cuillin mountaineering rack comprising a half set of nuts, 2 x 8ft slings, a 16ft sling (all with screw gate carabiners), a nutkey, a snap gate carabiner with 2 prusiks and a knife, a quick-draw, a mid sized cam, 2 large pear shaped screw gate carabiners 1 with a guide belay plate on it, a full set of Fjallraven Keb ecoshell waterproofs and a Keb power stretch fleece, a climbing helmet which doubles as a packed lunch box, a 750ml water bottle, in the useful under the lid pocket I have a compass. In the zip pocket on the top of the lid I have gloves and my car keys attached to the handy key clip, in the front bag length zip pocket I have a map in a waterproof map case and a 4m length of abseil tat.