

Tests



Crux Torpedo 500 €460/£385

Sleeping bags are a relatively new venture for Crux, a small firm better known for their range of mountaineering rucksacks. The brand has always been strong on the technical side and the Torpedo range (there are 2 other bags, the 700 and 900) continues in the same vein. Firstly the outer shell is made from eVent, which is probably the most breathable waterproof fabric on the market at the moment. The insulation comes from 500grms of premium grade Polish down with an 850 fill power, temperature ratings are given as 0° comfort, -6° limit and 23° extreme. The whole thing weighs 1130grms with a packed size of 30x21cm (uncompressed). The big feature of this bag is its level of waterproofing, not only is the eVent shell waterproof and extremely breathable, all the seams are welded rather than stitched to stop water getting in, even the stuff sack is waterproof! The ¾ length zip is water resistant and works both ways; this allows you vent excess heat effectively. It's obvious that Crux have put a lot of thought into the Torpedo, with baffles arranged vertically across the chest and horizontally elsewhere to make best use of the insulation. The Torpedo also has a slanted foot, allowing your feet to relax as you sleep rather than pressing against the bag, which is uncomfortable and causes cold spots. This is an excellent, well made sleeping bag that is certainly expensive, but then of course quality costs money. It's available in small, medium and large sizes. It may be heavier than other down bags with similar temperature ratings, but this is due to the extra waterproofing from its eVent shell, which should show dividends in performance and longevity.



Golite Adrenaline 20° €360/£300

The first thing you notice about the Adrenaline 20° is its zipper – a half-length affair that runs down the front of the bag rather than at the side. Apart from that the Adrenaline is down insulated with a Ripstop nylon DWR treated outer. Both hood and foot areas are covered with Pertex endurance fabric for extra water resistance, as these are the areas most likely to be pressed up against condensation-covered tent walls. The Adrenaline 20° is rated to -7° but it's unclear as to whether this is its comfort rating or its limit. Given that it's classed as a 3-season bag, I'm presuming this is a comfort rating. The men's model weighs 850grms, women's 820grms, which is very light given the temperature rating. Golite reckon the front zip gives you more options when it comes to venting excess heat since it's sited directly over the body's core and it certainly makes life easier if you sleep on your side rather than your back. It certainly isn't snag-free though, I found that I had to hold the 2 sides closed with one hand and pull the zipper with the other to make sure it closed smoothly, but at least you can do this fairly easily since it's central to both hands. Being a half zip means that if your feet get too warm though you will be in bother, there's no way of venting the bottom half of the bag. In summary, the Adrenaline 20° is a very light, usefully designed bag with a temperature range that should cover you for most of the year.



Snugpak Softie 9 Hawk €120/£100

A classic 3-season synthetic sleeping bag from one of the few manufacturers which hasn't outsourced production to Eastern Europe or Asia, the Softie 9 Hawk weighs 1500gm with a comfort rating of -5° (lower limit -10°). Snugpak make a lot of gear for military users, so this bag comes with a reinforced foot section allowing you to wear your boots to bed if needed. The Hawk also comes in a civilian model without this feature. The bag tested was a regular size, which will accommodate anyone up to 6'6" (220cm) tall, with sufficient room in the chest area for a girth of 65in/165cm. That'll be more than enough room for a large man wearing an insulated jacket. It's worth mentioning that Snugpak also make a thermal liner, which will upgrade the bag's performance significantly. As expected, the Hawk comes complete with a compression sack and can be squeezed down to a pack size of 21x19cm (compressed). This is a simple, no-frills design which has seen extensive service with armed forces personnel around the world and continues to be one of Snugpak's top sellers for one simple reason – if it ain't broken, don't fix it!



Ajungilak Shield 3 €410/£340

Now here's something very different. We've already seen a bag with a waterproof outer shell (Crux Torpedo 500) but Ajungilak's Shield 3 takes this concept a step further by introducing a jacket-type hood that covers the face, protecting it from rain and snow. It's also interesting that Ajungilak have given two sets of temperature ratings for the bag; they reckon the lower comfort temp for women is -2° while for men it's -8°. The extreme rating is given as -26° (all figures are based on the same European standard, EN13537). The shield uses 460gm of goose down for insulation and weighs 1050gm. Its outer shell is made of Shelter TX, a waterproof/breathable membrane and innovative design means that there are no seams on the top part of the bag; the necessary side seams are bonded to stop water getting through.

This bag uses half zips on each side; these are two-way so you can take your arms out to read/cook etc. As I mentioned earlier for another bag, half zips won't let you vent the lower part of the bag, so hot feet could be a problem on warm nights. Ajungilak have opted for a sloped foot section, allowing your feet to adopt a natural position when sleeping on your back. This may seem a small thing, but it improves your comfort significantly. The Shield combines the features of a sleeping bag and bivi in one package but it's lighter and cheaper than the combination of the two says the bumpf and I reckon that's true, but it still leaves your kit out in the weather all the same. I reckon this bag would be ideal for situations where you might be worried about getting it wet (snowholes, bivvyng, alpine climbing) and could suffer the slightly increased weight and price!