

GROUP TEST

# SINGLE-PERSON TENTS

*A single-person tent can pack small enough for a mountain bike or a road bike, as well as a tourer. Journalist **Mike Davis** considers four options*

**CYCLE TOURING** in a group allows you to distribute camping gear between you. If you're going solo, you'll have to carry everything yourself. Some tourists opt for lightweight two-person tents for a bit of extra space, but most 'one-person' tents are pretty generous for one person. Many will take two people... in a pinch. (If you're well-acquainted and not too big-boned.)

A one-person tent has nearly as much pole and fabric as a two-person, but is usefully lighter: 1.5 to 2kg is typical, with some lighter yet. They're more compact when packed too. Usually you'll find a couple of spare pegs, guy ropes and possibly a repair patch and pole repair section. If you're desperate to save weight, you can leave these (and the bags) behind. On a long trip, it's best to take them.

## YOUR THOUGHTS?

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### SPACE

A vestibule outside the inner tent is useful for stowing kit that wants to be kept dry but doesn't need to be in the tent with you. If it's positioned such that you don't have to climb over stuff to get in and out, so much the better.

### PITCHING

Tents pitch either inner first or flysheet first. Fly-first tents often have the option of leaving the inner attached for quicker pitching. Inner-first risks the inner getting wet before you get the fly on, but you can use the inner alone if it's warm and dry. Inner first offers more consistent clearance between inner and outer, so you should get more space for a given size.

### FABRIC

Lightweight tents are typically polyester. You'll see 'hydrostatic head' quoted, which is a measure of how waterproof a tent is. Anything above 1500 (all these tents are) isn't going to let water through the fabric; any leaks are usually at the seams.

### VENTILATION

In a smaller tent, there's less air volume so condensation is more of an issue. Plenty of vents, ideally high up, are important for small tents. It's best if you can open and close them from the inside to make adjustments according to the conditions.

### POLES

Poles will be aluminium, fibreglass or carbon fibre for low weight. Tents that pitch by clipping poles onto hooks are less fiddly than ones that rely on threading poles into sleeves.

### PEGS

Lightweight tents generally come with light aluminium pegs. These are fine on soft grass, but if you expect to encounter harder surfaces you might want to substitute steel ones. They're heavier, but harder to bend.





### 1) ROBENS STARLIGHT 1

£99.99

[robens.de](http://robens.de)

Pitching the Starlight is straightforward. It goes up flysheet-first, with just one aluminium pole to deal with – the four short corner poles stay attached. The inner then clips and hooks on, and you can leave it attached if you like. There's 85cm of height inside, and the corner poles eliminate the awkward shallow angles inside traditional tents and make it a little less claustrophobic inside. There's a generous vestibule alongside the inner and a lot of vents – two at the top and one at each end, plus the actual doors. All the zipped vents do add a bit of weight – it's 2.1kg complete – but it's hardly heavy. The flysheet does sit quite close to the outer, so you need to take care not to accidentally push them together; water will start to seep in if you do. Packed size: 56x17cm.

● **Quick to put up and plenty of space and ventilation, but a little heavy**



### 2) JACK WOLFSKIN GOSSAMER

£90

[jack-wolfskin.co.uk](http://jack-wolfskin.co.uk)

The Gossamer is a tunnel-style tent with two hooped aluminium poles. It's quick to put up: peg out the inner, clip on the poles, throw the fly over and peg/guy out. Usefully, the guying points and zips are reflective, making them easy to spot if you're pitching by torchlight. The inner is made entirely of mesh, so while condensation tends to form – there aren't any vents other than the main door – it does so on the inside of the flysheet and isn't too objectionable. In settled hot and dry weather, you can use the inner by itself. There's only 75cm of headroom inside which is rather tight for anyone of above average height, and the vestibule is small. But the Gossamer's simplicity, relatively low weight (1.75kg) and affordable price are plus points. Packed size: 46x15cm.

● **Light, simple and good value but a bit short on headroom and the vestibule is small**



### 3) EASTON RIMROCK 1

£199.95

[madison.co.uk](http://madison.co.uk)

The Rimrock uses two aluminium poles running lengthways and crossing at each end. Fortunately the poles and clips are all colour-coded so you get the right bits in the right place. It goes up inner-first and looks very tall and thin until you put the flysheet on. The pole arrangement means that interior height is generous for a small tent at 91.5cm – high enough (just) for a 6ft person to sit up. The overlapping poles mean that you've got that height for quite a substantial area in the middle of the tent, too. There aren't any obvious vents, but the inner tent is very porous, the large inner door is all mesh and you can unzip the large outer door from the top for a little more airflow. With the flysheet in place there's a large vestibule, with half of it away from the inner door. At 1.6kg it's very light for what's quite a roomy tent. Packed size: 38x15.2cm.

● **Very light and spacious, but inner-first pitching won't suit everyone**

### 4) HILLEBERG AKTO

£490

[hilleberg.se](http://hilleberg.se)

The Akto is hugely more expensive than the other tents here, but this is the state of the art in lightweight tents. If you're planning a very long tour or just intend to use your tent a lot, it's worth paying for the sturdy yet lightweight construction. The layout comprises a single hooped pole across the middle, with four stubby poles that stay in place at the corners to give better head and foot room around the edges. Handily, while the Akto can be pitched with the inner and outer together in one go, it can also be used with either the inner or outer by itself. Using just the outer gives you a minimalist shelter for when you want to travel even lighter than the Hilleberg's already-low 1.6kg weight. As well as the large door, both ends can be opened for ventilation, with a further vent at the top. At 90cm inside, there's plenty of headroom. Packed sized: 58x17cm.

● **Expensive, but ready for anything**

