

WATERPROOF JACKETS



Craghoppers Kiwi Long/ Madigan Long **£100**

One of the most common requests we get at **Trail** is for more reviews of longer waterproof jackets. So here goes! The Kiwi for men and Madigan for women come in a 'standard' version (£90) and the Long version featured here at £100. A damp derriere is a thing of the past when you are wearing this jacket – and you can leave those waterproof overtrousers in the rucksack longer too, as this really protects those nether regions! The material is heavy-duty polyester with a waterproof membrane, which while not offering the lab test results of higher-priced waterproofs still controls condensation well, thanks in part to the mesh lining. The styling may be a little too 'traditional' for some users; but you do get six external pockets, and an OS map just about fits in the chest pockets, while all the pockets can be accessed while wearing a rucksack with a hipbelt. The hood can be zipped off and has a stiffened peak, but it does not move with the head as easily as others. The main drawback here is the weight of 1080g (size men's L), which is pretty heavy. Some weight could be shaved with small design changes, like fewer pockets for example, but a longer jacket will of course always be heavier than a shorter equivalent. A lot of jacket for the money though.

VERDICT

The longer design will please many, the style may be less appealing and the weight is a drawback for backpacking. But no complaints about the price!

RATINGS	
FEATURES	*****
DESIGN	***
COMFORT	****
PERFORMANCE	***
VALUE	*****
OVERALL	****



Mountain Hardwear Plasmic **£100**

The Plasmic is one of many jackets costing around £100 that weigh about 296g (size men's L). The big difference though is that the Plasmic has a 'normal' fit on the body, so you can wear a fleece or other insulation underneath without all the air being squashed out. Also the pockets on the Plasmic are sealed, so there is no mesh lining to allow water to pass through the jacket. Finally you also get a more water-resistant main zip, so leaks are less likely. With all that the Plasmic still weighs a little less than many similar products, which makes it very appealing. The fabric is a 2.5-layer Dry Q. Evap product, which does not control condensation as well as 3-layer materials or jackets with mesh linings, but it is lightweight. The pockets are placed reasonably high but do extend below most rucksack hipbelts, which makes retrieving small items a challenge, but they are map-sized. The hood fits and moves well with the head but misses out on a wired peak. So this jacket isn't perfect by any means, but what it has in its favour does tip the decision of what to buy more towards this than some other similar-looking products. It's a very effective lightweight jacket for wet-weather hillwalking, scrambling or backpacking.

VERDICT

A very light jacket with some good features; and while it isn't perfect it's better than many other lightweight waterproofs for hillwalking.

RATINGS	
FEATURES	****
DESIGN	****
COMFORT	****
PERFORMANCE	****
VALUE	*****
OVERALL	****



Sprayway Hydrolite II **£110**

A weight of 578g (size men's L) makes the Hydrolite II instantly appealing. I also like the location of the pockets as they can be easily accessed while wearing a rucksack. The hood gets a wired peak so it can be moulded to provide a really good visor, even if you've just unstuffed the hood from the collar or your pocket, as the hood can both be rolled down or fully removed. The hood also moves well with the head. But all that instant appeal is dampened a little when it comes to this jacket's other features. The fabric is a 2.5-layer material with Print Technology on the inside to manage condensation. The lab results for the fabric indicate that it isn't the most breathable option out there, and it feels a bit clammy even when you aren't being active. The higher-priced 2.5-layer materials control condensation better than this, so at this price I would generally favour a 3-layer fabric or a mesh lining for comfort. But you can't have everything at this price. Those two main chest pockets are useful but they are mesh lined, so they're not going to keep rain out as well as sealed pockets will. The third chest pocket is quite small and only really of use for a mobile phone or perhaps a GPS receiver.

VERDICT

It wouldn't be my first choice for hillwalking; but it has a good hood and two pockets you can access with a rucksack, which can be hard to find.

RATINGS	
FEATURES	****
DESIGN	****
COMFORT	***
PERFORMANCE	****
VALUE	****
OVERALL	****

TRAIL GROUP TEST



Montane Atomic
£110



If you want low weight and minimal cost then the £110 Montane Atomic, which tips the scales at just 328g (size L), is a winner. The fabric is Pertex Shield, which – while it can't boast the lab test results for breathability of jackets twice its price – does offer more than most around the £100 mark. It's a 2.5-layer fabric, so it's a little clammy than 3-layer jackets or 2-layer jackets with mesh linings, but that's the price you pay for the minimal weight. The front zip is exposed and doesn't have the water-resistant coating of some jackets, but you do get a wide flap on the inside with a gutter to funnel leaks away. I found the cut quite close for a size large – indeed the manufacturers say it's designed to be closer-fitting – therefore it's a little more restrictive than some others, so I'd go up a size personally, but you do get good sleeve movement. There are just two pockets and they're quite high so you get good access while wearing a rucksack. Those pockets are large too and easily swallow maps. The pocket lining is mesh, however, so it's not the best option for keeping water out. The hood is exceptional as it fits and moves really well with the head and has a good wired peak. The hood can also be rolled down and held in place at the collar with a Velcro tab.

VERDICT

A very good lightweight jacket for the price, but you might want to check the body size as the fit is closer than average.

RATINGS	
FEATURES	****
DESIGN	****
COMFORT	***
PERFORMANCE	****
VALUE	*****
OVERALL	****

TRAIL
MAGAZINE
BEST VALUE

TRAIL
MAGAZINE
BEST IN TEST



Target Dry Element
£110/
Odyssey £90



It's so hard to find a jacket that has a decent length on the body, so when you finally discover one it really is an uplifting experience. The Element jacket is long enough to nicely protect my groin from getting wet in the rain when I'm not wearing overtrousers, which is really useful. The jacket is made from a coated fabric that doesn't offer the lab test results for breathability and waterproofness that high-priced jackets can, but it keeps you perfectly dry in heavy rain; and the mesh lining means condensation is well-managed. The Oxford nylon outer fabric also feels durable, making this great for rubbing shoulders with rock or rucksacks. There are also pit zips in case you overheat, while the two hip pockets are zipped and can be accessed beneath a rucksack hipbelt, thanks to the longer body length. The two Napoleon chest pockets swallow OS maps with space to spare too. I was also really pleased to find a great hood with a wired peak on this jacket. If I'm being picky then tiny details are better on some pricier jackets, such as a bit more movement in the hood, very slightly better movement in the sleeves so the cuffs don't ride up, and higher-spec fabric that leads to lower overall weight. But I am being picky. For the price this jacket is stunning.

VERDICT

An outstanding jacket with a long body and well-designed features: ideal for general hillwalking. If this fits into your budget, buy it.

RATINGS	
FEATURES	*****
DESIGN	****
COMFORT	****
PERFORMANCE	****
VALUE	*****
OVERALL	****



Berghaus Fastrack
£120



This is designed for 'high-octane trail sports' according to Berghaus, although at 547g (size L) it's quite heavy for moving fast. The fabric is Berghaus's own AQ2, a material with good waterproof and breathability lab results, although higher-priced jackets do offer better performance in this respect. There's a mesh lining, and pit zips, to help manage condensation. The style is typically short and relatively close compared to some designs, with well-designed sleeves that don't ride up easily. The front zip isn't the most water-resistant design but it does have a double internal flap system to deal with leaks. The pockets are large enough for maps but they extend to the hem, so getting into them when wearing a rucksack with a wide hipbelt isn't easy. These pockets aren't mesh-lined, however, so they tend to keep water out. The hood is okay, but not as good as many Berghaus hoods, as it doesn't move quite as well with the head as others and the peak isn't wired either. Overall this is an odd one, given that there are lighter jackets, better-designed jackets and longer jackets out there. It's so much of an all-rounder than I'm not sure who this is best for, although it is good for the price.

VERDICT

Some good features, but none makes this a must-buy product; however it offers a good overall performance.

RATINGS	
FEATURES	****
DESIGN	***
COMFORT	****
PERFORMANCE	****
VALUE	****
OVERALL	****

TRAIL GROUP TEST



The North Face Pursuit **£140**



The Pursuit is a lightweight jacket at 364g (size M), and it's made from 2.5-layer HyVent fabric. Like other 2.5-layer fabrics it tends to show condensation a little more easily than 3-layer fabrics or jackets with mesh lining, but the benefit is low weight and bulk. The Pursuit costs more than some other lightweights, but the fabric is rated as having a higher waterproofness and breathability specification so it should provide better performance over the long term. This is also one of the few jackets in this test to have pit zips for extra airflow. The style is averagely short, like many lighter jackets, but there's enough room underneath to wear a mid layer such as a fleece. There's good movement in the sleeves, making it ideal for scrambling, while the pockets are well-placed to avoid obstruction from rucksack hipbelts and they're big enough for a trusty OS map too. Those pockets are mesh-lined, though, so they won't keep the water out as well as sealed pockets. Also that front zip isn't the most water-resistant design, although it does have a gutter inside to channel away any leaks. The hood fits and moves with the head exceptionally well, although a better peak would be a good addition in the wind and rain.

VERDICT

The addition of pit zips and use of a higher-specification fabric set this jacket apart from some other lower-priced lightweights, although it still has its shortcomings in terms of design.

RATINGS

FEATURES	*****
DESIGN	****
COMFORT	***
PERFORMANCE	***
VALUE	***
OVERALL	****

Waterproof jackets comparison guide

Your at-a-glance guide to the main features of each jacket, and how the products stack up against each other.

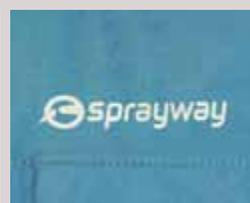
POOR *
BELOW AVERAGE **
AVERAGE ***
GOOD PERFORMANCE ****
BEST IN ITS CLASS *****



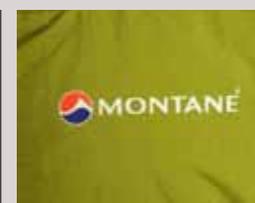
Craghoppers
Kiwi Long/
Madigan Long **£100**



Mountain Hardwear
Plasmic **£100**



Sprayway
Hydrolite II **£110**



Montane
Atomic **£110**

	Craghoppers Kiwi Long/ Madigan Long £100	Mountain Hardwear Plasmic £100	Sprayway Hydrolite II £110	Montane Atomic £110
WEIGHT	1080g (size men's L)	296g (size men's L)	578g (size men's L)	328g (size men's L)
FABRIC	Aquadry polyester	2.5-layer Dry Q Evap	2.5-layer Print Technology Hydrodry Flex	2.5-layer Pertex Shield
LINING	polyester mesh	none	none	none
MEN'S SIZES	S-XXL (Kiwi Long)	S-XL	S-XXL	S-XXL
WOMEN'S SIZES	8-20 (Madigan Long)	XS-XL	none	8-16
EXTERNAL POCKETS	6	2	3	2
CAN HOOD BE ROLLED DOWN?	yes	no	yes	yes
SIDE/PIT ZIPS?	no	no	no	no
WEBSITE	www.craghoppers.co.uk	www.mountainhardwear.com	www.sprayway.com	www.montane.co.uk
FEATURES	*****	****	****	****
DESIGN	***	****	****	****
COMFORT	****	****	***	***
PERFORMANCE	***	****	****	****
VALUE	*****	*****	****	*****
OVERALL RATING	****	****	****	****

WATERPROOF JACKETS

Mountain Equipment Vector **£150**



What sets the Vector apart from many of its lower-priced lightweight counterparts is that here you're getting a much higher-spec fabric, which means it should remain waterproof for longer while also being more breathable. It's only a 2.5-layer fabric though, and 3-layer fabrics and jackets with mesh lining will control condensation better, although there are vent holes under the arms to improve airflow. The Vector also only weighs 291g (size L) and it can be worn over a fleece or other mid layer without feeling restrictive. The design is typically short, but it's not as short as some others, which considering the weight is a remarkable achievement. The front zip is exposed but it's a water-resistant type, which again not all the lower-priced lightweight jackets can offer. There's a flap on the inside to trap leaks as well. The two pockets are well-placed to allow easy access to their contents while wearing a rucksack hipbelt and they are large enough for maps, but they are mesh-lined, so they are not the most waterproof design. The sleeves are outstandingly good and allow more movement without riding up at the cuffs than any jacket here. The hood is very good too, thanks to a close fit and good movement with the head, while a wired peak provides good protection.

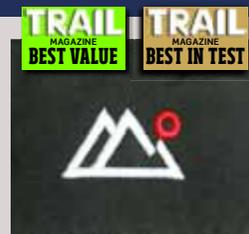


VERDICT

This waterproof carries a higher price than some other lightweight jackets, but you're getting a better fabric and some details of design that make it more suitable for hillwalking.

RATINGS

FEATURES	*****
DESIGN	*****
COMFORT	***
PERFORMANCE	*****
VALUE	***
OVERALL	****



Target Dry
Element/Odyssey
£110/£90



Berghaus
Fastrack
£120



The North Face
Pursuit
£140



Mountain Equipment
Vector **£150**



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>> Details of two waterproof jackets that just missed getting into the magazine – the £105 Adidas Terrex Swift Light 2.5-layer Climaproof Storm and the £150 Quechua Bionnassay 600 – will be online from 20 March.

Target Dry Element/Odyssey £110/£90	Berghaus Fastrack £120	The North Face Pursuit £140	Mountain Equipment Vector £150
776g (size men's L)	547g (size men's L)	364g (size men's M)	291g (size men's L)
Oxford nylon with Teflon coating	AQ2	2.5-layer Hyvent	2.5-layer DriLite
polyester mesh	mesh	none	none
XS-XXL (Element, £110)	S-XXL	S-XXL	S-XXL
8-18 (Odyssey, £90)	8-18	XS-XL	8-16
4	2	2	2
no	yes	no	no
yes	yes	no	no
www.targetdry.com	www.berghaus.com	www.thenorthface.com/eu	mountain-equipment.co.uk
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*****	***	*****	*****
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