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Perfect Bag for Traveling with Kids

Hours before my family headed off to the airport this past summer for a three-week trip to Israel in honor of our daughter's bas mitzvah, a package arrived at my doorstep. Inside was a backpack—which happened to have been exactly what I needed, because I didn't know what I was going to use as my carry-on luggage. But it wasn't an ordinary backpack; it was a Baby Sherpa diaper bag, and the company wanted me to try it out. I did exactly that, and I'm happy to tell you about it because I can honestly say that this backpack was everything they said it would be.

Shlepping two parents, four children, and two grandparents on a trip halfway around the world presents logistical challenges (understatement). For me in particular, as the mommy, it was a challenge to figure out how I would carry all the stuff we needed (on the plane as well as during everyday touring), plus have a hand left over to carry a newly walking 18-month-old all over the place, plus have a hand left for helping other kids or holding their hands, helping with their stuff, turning doorknobs, rescuing drippy ice cream cones, and things like that.



I was very grateful to have this backpack! They call it a diaper bag, but that's a little like calling a Swiss army knife a can opener. It has plenty of room for diapers and everything else a baby needs, but it also has a built-in cooler, lots of roomy pockets on the sides. (I didn't know what to do with all these pockets at first, but they filled up nicely and from then on I always knew where my camera, water bottle, notebook, crayons, wallet, cell phone, and miscellaneous other things were. They had homes!)

The bag comes with a separate changing pad. There are clips for holding keys or toys. There's a place for everything.



As important as those features are, the most important thing to me was whether or not the backpack would be comfortable to lug around. I had their full-size model, which was very roomy, but compact enough to be carry-on luggage. And it was definitely very comfy to carry. The shoulder straps are designed well (there's also a sternum strap) and even when the bag was crammed with stuff, it felt light on my back. I can say this even after walking bogged-down and bleary-eyed through Italian airports in the middle of the night.

My one and only quibble with the bag was that the big, main compartment was just an inch or so too short in height to easily fit the coloring books and other assorted activities I packed for my kids to do on the plane. I had to smash them in a little at the top in order to zip the zipper. But the convenience of having the cooler (which is at the bottom of the bag) helped make up for that, and overall, having lived with the Baby Sherpa for three weeks of traveling, I was very happy I had it along on the trip!

The company also makes a 3/4 size version of the backpack, which they call the Short Haul, as well as other diaper bags and accessories. These products are of very high quality, and they do not come cheap—but they fall into the "better" diaper bag category. They're rugged. For traveling, my Baby Sherpa was wonderful to have along.

You can get more information at www.babysherpa.com.

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