Bike Friday All-Packa

**FRAME**
Custom U.S.-made, 4130 chromoly, rack and fender mounts, two triple mounts, one quadruple mount

**TIRES**
Odyssey Aitken Knobby 20 x 2.35in.

**HANDLEBAR**
Bike Friday Packalope, splittable alt-bar

**FORK**
Two triple mounts, rack and fender mounts

**QUICK RELEASES**
Seatstay, steerer tube, axles

words and photos by ALLY MABRY
BIKE FRIDAY ALL-PACKA

- **Best uses:** Gravel riding, bikepacking
- **Cassette:** Mercoa 11–40T, 9spd
- **Wheelbase:** 1050mm
- **Time to fold:** 30 seconds (including steerer tube), 10 seconds (“quick fold”)
- **Crankset:** Shimano Sora
- **Wheelsize:** 20in.
- **Price:** $2,495 (complete)
- **Rear derailleur:** microSHIFT Marvo LT
- **Brake levers/shifter:** Avid
- **Tire clearance:** 2.4in.
- **Weight:** 26.2 lbs.
- **Folded size:** 36 x 29 x 14in.
- **BB height:** 273mm
- **Ideal rider weight:** up to 220 lbs.
- **Ideal rider height:** from 4'6" to 5'8"
- **Size tested:** Medium-ish

**General**

- **Ideal rider height:** from 4'6" to 5'8"

**Geometry**

- **Ideal rider weight:** up to 220 lbs.

**NOTABLE COMPONENTS**

- **Brakes:** Hybrid hydraulic disc brakes, all bearings in sealed cartridges, high-quality cables and housing.
- **Wheels:** Novatec 366 hubs, Odyssey Aitken Knobby tires, Samsonite Novaire 30 airline-approved suitcase.

**Misc. Notes**

- **Ideal rider weight:** up to 220 lbs.
- **Ideal rider height:** from 4'6" to 5'8"

**I could not stop yelling “THIS THING RIPS!” as I was swooping back and forth on one of Missoula’s newest ridgeline trails.**

While evading the hooves of livestock, and their delightful, docked tails, are not just to magnify the creature’s cuteness; they’re shortened to decrease the liability of having them stepped on by their herding target. Yeah, corgis might be a little smaller than a greyhound because of the breed standard, but they weren’t designed to be the fastest dog on the racetrack. Their breeder’s had more important priorities in mind.

If you’re sick of my flawless corgi metaphor, allow me to end my missive with Bike Friday, an all-lowercase capabilty. Founded in 1992 by brothers Hanz and Alan Scholz, Bike Friday offers a whole slew of folding bikes, tandems, and now eBikes. Their latest design, the All-Packa, is billed as a bikepacking folding bike, which should be music to any bikepacker’s ears: it’s a folding bike that’s capable of off-road riding this bike with humor, but I was also enamored in the novelty as I passed by. Weird bikes aren’t just for weird bikes. I learned to possess a set of Allen keys, you’ll be fine. I was building the bike around Adventure Cycling’s office when it was opened the metal box (half of that time was spent unpacking the metal box). Bike Friday is a business steeped in care. They supply manuals and videos for packing their bikes for shipping a bike to a new owner. In addition to the tubeless-compatible rims alone. Even so, all the components worked great on the various terrains I tested. I was especially impressed by Bike Friday’s All-Packa. (You expected me to introduce you to the alphas, but no — the beta tests.)

I have a thing for weird bikes. I learned to ride a double-decker tall bike in 2019 by floating down a new world of bicycle possibilities. By building and riding the All-Packa, I gained both literal and metaphorical perspective. The baseline parts may be underwhelming and seemingly impractical features that make them appear seemingly impractical features that make them seem less efficient. I was briefly confounded by the eight-speed gearing. I was briefly confounded by the eight-speed gearing, but was pleasantly surprised when I put the bike on the road. The bike is no monster, but it’s a delight to ride. The bike is no monster, but it’s a delight to ride. The bike is no monster, but it’s a delight to ride. The bike is no monster, but it’s a delight to ride. The bike is no monster, but it’s a delight to ride.

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to these spec decisions. Occasionally, due to ever-changing supply, baseline components are sometimes substituted with approval from the customer. Bike Friday will work with you to meet your personal vision if you desire higher-quality components.

I asked the expert and All-Packa designer, Willie Hatfield, to articulate how gearing and tire clearance play together in the bike’s geometry:

“Some chains and rear derailier cages in the lowest gears, especially with narrower chainline cranksets, will limit the maximum tire clearance. Mountain bike 1x cassettes don’t fit and have gearing that’s far too low to be practical. Road drivetrains have too limited range. The best balance I’ve found is up to a 40T cassette and a mid-cage rear derailier with a road-sized chaining, but the derailier is close enough to the tire that small differences in adjustment can cause clearance issues.

To improve this situation, I’ve tried a variety of mid-cage derailiers, from MicroSHIFT and other manufacturers. I believe your bike has a MicroSHIFT Marvo mid-cage derailier, and we have recently switched to the MicroSHIFT R9 mid-cage derailier because even though it is a “road” derailier, it has stronger springs for better chain retention and a differently shaped cage for greater tire clearance.

For our All-Packas with 2x9 drivetrains, we are going to be specking and recommending tires under 2.3in. so that this drivetrain has sufficient clearance. If All-Packa riders want maximum tire clearance, I recommend a 1x drivetrain.”

My first real outing atop the All-Packa was an afternoon adventure to ride nine miles from my home along a separated bike path that follows the slow, meandering Bitterroot River. Once in Lolo, Montana, we would begin the second phase of our quest: packrafting down the river back home. My two companions were both on standard bicycles: a Surly Ghost Grappler and a 2012 Bianchi Volpe. Regardless, the process was pretty much the same for all three of us. Because it was an afternoon trip, we didn’t need to bring anything other than our rafts, paddles, personal flotation devices, one inflation bag, and some snacks. I also packed my camera in a fanny pack. With some creative strapping, I attached my paddle (which can be broken down in half) to the All-Packa’s seatpost and fork.

Everything else went on the Packalope bar, Bike Friday’s alt-handlebar that splits in half for easy folding and has bullhorns for extra hand positions and attachment points. After a requisite stop for ice cream at the Dairy Queen in Lolo, we unloaded our Alpacka Rafts (no relation to the bike) from our handlebars and began inflating them for the return journey.

The biggest logistical difference between my friends and me was the process of strapping bikes to rafts. Where they had to remove both wheels and stack their relatively massive bicycles to the front of their rafts, it took me about 20 seconds to release the All-Packa’s quick-release points and fold it into a compact bundle that was easily attached using two Voile straps. The only additional steps I had to take were removing one pedal to avoid puncturing the raft, and removing the steerer tube with handlebars still attached (the All-Packa’s steerer tube is attached to the fork with a quick-release and stabilized laterally by a small retractable button).

After double-checking that our bikes were secure, we loaded them into the river and enjoyed a mellow two-hour float back to a river access point right off the bike path. After pulling our rafts onto the shore, we began the quick deflation of our rafts, rebuilt our bikes, strapped everything back together, and gleefully pedaled a mile back home. Rebuilding the All-Packa was as simple as reattaching the steerer tube and pedal, unfolding the hinges, and then securing the frame with two quick-releases. This perfect first date with the All-Packa had me easily envisioning a whole life of adventurous possibilities together.

With 20 x 2.35in. tires, the All-Packa can handle a shockingly broad variety of terrain. Designed with riding logging roads and flowy singletrack in mind, I felt comfortable on any terrain up to medium-technical singletrack. The small wheels and low center of gravity are confidence-inspiring on trails because bailing is super low consequence with such a low step-through height, though I’ll admit even the smallest rocky section felt like a black diamond rock garden to me. It really thrives on flowy singletrack (for instance, I could not stop yelling “THIS THING RIPS” as I was swooping back and forth on one of Missoula’s newest ridgeline trails) and manages fine enough on rocky, bumpy trails. By the end of a two-mile section of bumps, I was ready to return to the glorious swoops.

When snow hit and actually stayed around in Missoula only a few weeks after I’d been riding the All-Packa, I headed south to Tucson, Arizona, to continue riding. The folded All-Packa took up about one third of the cargo space that a standard gravel bike did in the bed of my truck. In Tucson, I had my heart set on a bike overnight along a mellow section of the Arizona Trail. I loaded up the All-Packa and got dropped off at the Loma Alta Trailhead, where I’d begin the 12-mile ride to the Pistol Hill Road trailhead.
The All-Packa takes some creativity to pack all the camping gear needed for an overnight, but the folks at Bike Friday designed it with many packing possibilities in mind. Although there are Bike Friday–specific bikepacking bags on the market now, I used only equipment I already owned for bikepacking on my standard bikes: a Revelate Designs Pronghorn handlebar harness, an Oveja Negra Half Pack framebag, an old Blackburn Outpost seatbag, two Salsa Anything Cages on the fork, and the PRO BikeGear Smart Bottle Cage System on the top tube. With this setup and a large hip bag, I was able to carry everything I needed for an overnight, including a hefty 0°F sleeping bag. If I was going on a longer tour, I’d probably consider adding some racks and panniers — many standard racks will fit on the All-Packa, sometimes requiring longer struts to reach rear mounts. The bike can still fold with most racks, but check out Bike Friday’s own front and rear pannier racks to take the guessing out.

Loaded up, the All-Packa performed as you’d expect: stable, agile, and really comfortable. Even riding through sandy arroyos, I was surprised at how well the 2.35in. tires handled the terrain. I only got off the bike to push up steeper rocky sections — the pedal clearance is not as generous as a standard bike, given the low bottom bracket height.

The big question I’ve been asking myself while I’ve been testing Bike Friday’s All-Packa is: would I trade having the familiarity of a standard touring bike for the convenience of a folding bike? I think your answer lies in the ethos of your desired adventure. The way I most like to travel by bike is not dependent on being super fast or predictable, like a greyhound — I’d rather approach my adventures with creativity. How can I incorporate multimodal transportation? How do I get from the bike path to the river? What’s the best way to portage a bicycle on my back for bushwhacking, or fit it into an Uber? Though yours might be different, I know my answer: I’ll pick the corgi.

Ally Mabry is the Art Director of Adventure Cyclist.