

# KITE OPTICS VIATO



We'll admit that the first time we heard about the Viato, we were perplexed. It's an undeniably unique concept: a 15-litre backpack that lets you carry your tripod while open. But sometimes the line between genius and madness is thin...and so we wondered which side the Viato is on. Is it something that should have never made it past the "crazy idea" phase—or the new brilliant solution to a long-standing problem?

After taking a closer look at the backpack, we realized that the idea wasn't as hare-brained as it might have seemed at first glance. In fact, this invention is sure to thrill quite a few photographers. We'll try to explain how it works. As everyone who uses a tripod knows, once you set one up, there is a triangular-pyramid-shaped space delineated by the tripod's legs. The Viato ingeniously wraps around the tripod legs to create a bag in the shape of a tetrahedron (and yes, I'd like to thank my colleagues for reminding me of this geometry term). All you have to do is add your equipment. The gear adds weight and increases your tripod's stability, and the design means that your bag won't ever touch the ground so it'll stay cleaner.

That's great and all, but is it comfortable? Surprisingly, yes! The bag and straps are particularly well cushioned, and once it's on your back, it's comfortable to wear. You might, however, want to avoid leaving the tripod legs fully extended if you're in a group so that they won't catch on nearby people or objects as you move about. Other than that, no problem! You'll probably get some strange looks, though, if you're using the system in an urban setting, but we expect that we'll be seeing more and more nature photographers using the Viato in our magnificent national parks in the coming years.

In short, we applaud Viato for their creativity in thinking outside of the box. And we're reminded of the wise advice to never judge a book by its cover. It's clear that certain products can prove incredibly useful, even when they seem a little strange at first. ●

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