

Tailfin

X Three Rack & Bag Set

Quick-release luggage for bikes that don't always carry bags

tailfin.cc £519



Pros & cons

- + Quality manufacture
- + Tool-free installation/removal
- Fiddly assembly
- Expensive

Tailfin's unusual, futuristic looking rack enables you to carry panniers and a trunk bag on a bike without frame fittings. It's designed for Tailfin's own luggage but will carry other bags with Tailfin's 'third-party pannier adapters'.

The rack itself is made up of a one-piece, 'aero' cross-section, rear arch, which passes over the rear wheel and is connected to the seatpost by a twin-prong top stay with a quick-release strap system. It is impressively rigid once installed.

The X Series rack is offered in three versions, using different combinations of aluminium and carbon-fibre for the arch and top strut. (There's also an S Series, which will carry only a top bag.) The arch, which leans backwards once installed, sports a pair of spigots on each side at roughly tyre tread height. These provide

the mounting points for Tailfin's panniers – or for the third-party pannier adapters. The top strut can be dispensed with if the trunk bag is fitted, as that has its own internal frame and seatpost strap.

The rack can be attached to frame eyelets at the dropouts but is primarily designed to clip onto Tailfin's proprietary extended quick release skewer or 12mm thru-axle. The waterproof, fold-top panniers (light and heavy-duty versions available) clip immovably to the arch spigots via lever-and-cam-operated claws, while the top strut or trunk bag is attached to the rear arch with spring-loaded pins. Rack, panniers and trunk bag can be installed or removed in a few seconds. The quick-release wheel skewer can be swapped between machines almost as quickly.

It's all very neat and ingenious. On the downside, assembly is

a bit of a faff, not least because there are lots of small screws, and their matching female threads are made to very tight tolerances. Instructions are available online; I'd like to see printed examples in the box.

Performance-wise, the system is sturdy and the panniers, trunk bag, and their various pockets are weatherproof. The capacious but narrow panniers give plenty of heel clearance. It's not the lightest rear luggage, at around 3.3kg for the set tested, and it's certainly not the most affordable. Yet its versatility, ease of use and, yes, high-performance aesthetic give Tailfin's system a real edge over the opposition.

The X Three rack costs £169 by itself, with the trunk bag costing £159 and the panniers £109 each. (There's a discount for buying them as a set.) ●

Richard Hallett

Verdict

Tailfin's modular cycle luggage system is well thought-out and versatile, while being suitable for rapid, tool-free attachment to almost any bike.

Other options

TOPEAK MTX TRUNKBAG DXP £85

Trunk bag with expandable side panniers. Fits Topeak's Super Tourist DX rack (which costs another £40). topeak.com



ORTLIEB & TUBUS £277 APPROX

Tubus Cargo Classic rear rack fitted with Ortlieb Back Roller Classic panniers and an Ortlieb Trunk Bag RC. tubus.com, ortlieb.com

