

Field-tested: Aerostich Ultralight Bike Cover

Words by Lisa Morris, images by Jason Spafford

Whether you commute, ride for fun or are motorcycling around the world, it only takes a lick of sense to realize that if you protect your ride from salt, dust and dirt, tree sap and bird crap, as well the elements with a decent cover, it will stand your steed in good stead for years to come. Aside from weather exposure, rust build-up and accelerated depreciation, for me, I also warm to the idea that a cover will act as an invisibility cloak, to deflect any unwanted attention from prying eyes when I'm camping near the road. Not to mention thwarting opportunists when leaving my sole mode of transport unattended. In possession of a bike that's relatively easy to steal, anything that diminishes its conspicuity, I'm in.

The Aerostich Ultralight Bike Cover comes in small, medium and large to oblige anything from scooters, mid-size motos to the behemoths of the biking world (in a choice of white, grey and black.) Snugly, the small shields my DR650 and the medium adequately covers Jason's F800GS. Billed as "small enough to take on all your road trips," the wrap isn't designed as a luxurious means in which to swaddle your baby. It targets those for whom space and weight matters. No interior frame/fabrics present, but the Ultralight is constructed from a gloriously lightweight 30-denier rip-stop nylon. Packing down easily into a handy built-in storage pouch that will stash in the tank bag, a pleasing little bonus. Silicone-urethane coated on top, which coupled with the parachute-strength fabric, makes it resistant to most weathers and tearing.

In light showers, droplets were repelled like water off a duck's back, with no leakage underneath. There are no technical claims that it's waterproof so don't expect the same in heavy downpours over long periods. No UV treatment applies so some fading is to be expected down the road, but the product by its nature lends credence to some UV protection and is backed with a two-year warranty. Further, I wouldn't subject the cover to toasty engine components and pipes; I allow a 30-minute cooling off period before strapping it on.

There's elastic all the way around the bottom, which can make a cover tricky to don. Thoughtfully, Aerostich has overcome this by making the elastic easy to stretch, resulting in a cover that's simple to get on and off. Aerostich has located a label at the front bottom center on the hem, my starting point. For optimal fitment once it's over the bike, I pull the elastic draw-cord in the hem tight, secure with its cord-lock, then pull the free end over the saddle and hook it to the shift lever (or brake pedal if the cover's inside out). By no means a deal breaker, no vent holes are in attendance to let any moisture out but scooping up the excess cover around the shift lever combats residual condensation collecting underneath, maintaining its lightweight benefits.



Other considerate details include a form-fitting shape, where a tailored fit further inhibits pockets of condensation forming. Namely, less moisture-retention prevents unwanted corrosion developing. Sturdy grommets accommodate the attachment of anti-theft devices to add security, and minimize billowing should an absolute hooley be blowing. Pleasingly, the tech-savvy fabric is also non-scratch. Although the convenience-outer material is thinner and less puncture resistant than some heavy-duty offerings, it's far from a bare bones, basic offering. Despite its positioning as travel-friendly, thanks to the mindful features present, it's like having a portable garage for your moto.

To my mind, the Ultralight works well as a highly serviceable cover that will protect your bike through the seasons and thanks to its stealth attribute, against plunderers as well. Best of all, lightweight doesn't mean fragile. If durability and weight, fit and function are your criteria, this wrap is the benchmark in which you should compare to all other travel-friendly solutions. As a mot-traveller that's been on the road for four years, it's a must-have addition to the ensemble worth every penny—I wouldn't be without mine. Aerostich | \$157

Pros

- Simple design and operation.
- Robust construction and durable materials throughout.
- Good weather protection.
- Deterrent from thieves.
- Lightweight, packs down small and stows easily.

Cons

- A little engine cooling required before usage.