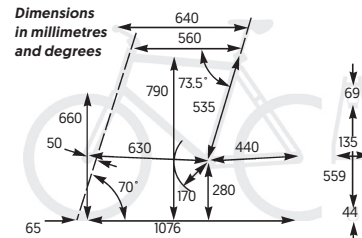


Photos: Simon Withers



**Biketest**



**Tech spec  
RIDGEBACK EXPEDITION**

**Price:** £1,349.99. **bottom bracket,** Shimano HG chain, Shimano CS-HG400 11-36 cassette.

**Sizes:** XS, S, M (tested), L, XL. **Shimano Alivio shifters and front and rear derailleurs.** 27 ratios: 19-112in.

**Weight:** 15kg (33lb). **Braking:** Shimano Deore levers, Promax DSK-300 cable discs, 160mm rotors.

**Frame and fork:** TIG-welded Reynolds 520 steel, two sets of triple bosses, two pairs of double bosses, rear kickstand plate, mudguard/rack mounts, pump peg, nurse's lock bosses. **Steering & seating:** Ridgeback grips with bar ends, 620mm bar, 90mm Ridgeback stem, Prestine PT-1767D headset. Ridgeback Custom saddle, 27.2mm seatpost.

**Wheels:** Jalco DM25 rims, 36 14g spokes, Shimano M475 hubs, 47-559 Schwalbe Marathon tyres. **Equipment:** Front and rear Sunnywheel 55mm mudguards, 18kg-capacity rear rack. [ridgeback.co.uk](http://ridgeback.co.uk)

**Transmission:** FPD road pedals, Shimano FC T-4010 48-36-26 chainset, Shimano BB-ES300

# Ridgeback Expedition

When it comes to tourers, 26 ain't dead. **Simon Withers** reviews a robust, flat-bar trekking bike that eschews 700C wheels

**R**idgeback's UK-designed, Taiwanese-made Reynolds 520 steel tourer lives up to its Expedition name. Out of the box this is ready to take you far and wide without the need to add anything other than you, your map (or GPS – this is 2023) and your sense of adventure...

If you're travelling fully laden you may (I wouldn't) want a greater capacity than 18kg from its rear rack, but that's about the only minor criticism. You're certainly not short of options for carrying bottles or frame bags on the frame and fork, with top tube 'bento box' bosses the only absentee. To maximise strength, the neatly TIG-welded steel frame has an open gusset under the down tube where it joins the head tube.

Those 26in wheels might seem retro but you'll be able to buy replacement tyres all over the world, and Schwalbe's Marathons are tough and have effective reflective strips. Triple chainsets are also rarely seen today but yes, they exist, and the Ridgeback's 26-tooth inner ring pairs well with the cassette's 36t big sprocket for a



**Above:** A 48-36-26 triple chainset drives an 11-36 cassette, giving a low bottom gear and nicely spread ratios

19in bottom gear, which is what you need when crawling up hills with fully loaded bags. The 27 gear ratios mean you can maintain a consistent cadence for knee-friendly riding, regardless of the terrain.

I'm a fan of forward-facing bar ends on flat-bar bikes, and while the Expedition's forward extensions may only be 6cm, this is enough to give you a variety of handholds, and the grip's flatter outer section offers good support for your palms. The wide riser bar provides excellent stability and the shortish riser stem ensures an upright and back-friendly

riding position that's ideal for big days out.

Cable disc brakes may lack the light action and supreme power of hydraulic setups, but the dual-piston Promax brakes proved easily powerful enough while laden and with very good control, and I'd personally prefer these to hydraulics for fettling in faraway foreign lands. The full-length mudguards have mudflaps, with the front's stays neatly shaped to steer clear of the disc brakes. They also have patented 'safety pop-offs' to prevent wheel lock should something get trapped between tyre and 'guard. ●

**Other options**

**GENESIS TOUR DE FER 10 FLAT BAR**  
£1,299.99

Very similar to the Ridgeback but with 700C wheels, marginally narrower tyres and a slightly less expedition-flavoured build. [genesisbikes.co.uk](http://genesisbikes.co.uk)



**SPA CYCLES 725 TREKKING BAR STEEL TOURER** £1,075

Reynolds 725 frame with Deore V-brakes, BBB trekking bar, quality handbuilt wheels (26in for the smallest size) and your choice of tyres and gear ratios. [spacycles.co.uk](http://spacycles.co.uk)



**Verdict**

Capable long-distance cruiser with well-chosen components throughout, including excellent expedition-friendly gearing, tough tyres and a comfortable handlebar setup. The mountain bike style 26in-wheel tourer lives on.