

Which Handheld GPS is right for you?

Key features

Geocachers can take one of two routes when considering which type of GPS to use when geocaching; the technical route using pocket PC/PDA or Mobile phone to download multiple caches direct to the device or by using a handheld GPS from one of the current range of GPS manufacturers most of which actively support Geocaching and provide geocaching managers & paperless geocaching.

Our experience as one of the countries leading retailers of outdoors GPS and the recommended training partners to most of the leading GPS & Digital mapping brands is that the first group of technical geocachers are supremely confident in the technology and can in most cases make their own informed decisions without any help from the likes of us.

Most outdoor enthusiasts, hill walkers and geocachers fall into the second category; they simply want an easy to use GPS that supports their needs by providing access to quality mapping at no extra cost, allowing free & easy route planning, management & data transfer to/from the unit and allowing the user to navigate using direct routes on the trail and whilst geocaching and provide turn by turn routing on the road. It's not a lot to ask is it?



When choosing a GPS for Geocaching we think you should consider these key features

- **Greyscale or Colour screen?** – if you have no need for a map in your GPS then you could manage with a basic handheld which should still offer paperless geocaching and USB connectivity. However if you would like a detailed Ordnance Survey map on screen of your GPS then you will need a mapping device offering a sunlight readable colour screen.
- **Waterproof & Robust** – when choosing a device it should be waterproof to the recognised international standard and robust. To keep your purchase in good condition we recommend that you protect the screen of your device with a screen cover and use a carry case when the device is not in use. Some retailers will bundle a carry case in with your purchase.
- **Internal or External Memory which is best?** – In an ideal world you are best having both. External memory uses the SD card slot in the device to allow the insertion of pre-programmed memory cards like OS Whole GB 50k mapping for instance. Internal memory is ideal for storing user data like routes & trails and downloading additional mapping like OS Explorer 25k mapping.
- **Bundled Whole GB OS 50k mapping on SD card** – most GPS devices these days are sold bundled with OS maps pre-loaded to a SD or MicroSD card; allowing users to simply change cards when using different mapping. The best bundles can save up to £150 when you buy OS whole GB maps bundled in this way

- **Maps for your GPS - Maps for your PC** – in the past users have had to purchase additional PC based maps for route planning on their PC's – check out whether the map bundle you purchase allows you to use the maps bundled with the device for route planning on your PC or Mac at no extra cost.
- **Turn by Turn routing with your bundled OS mapping?** - Most GPS devices are able to offer on road navigation giving turn by turn routing; generally this routing is not included with the initial software included with the device and has to be purchased as an expensive additional extra. Some offerings include auto routing included with the OS mapping in the background.
- **How easy is it to buy additional mapping?** Historically additional mapping like OS Explorer has come pre-programmed focussed on National Parks like say the Lakes this has two issues its an expensive way to buy it and in many case it comes on another SD card. Far better to be able to buy inexpensive map credits and buy just the area you need
- **A wide range of compatible international digital mapping** – many GPS users travel widely and consider it important to be able to access additional digital maps for international travel or be able to create their own custom maps...
- **Access to free PC/Mac route planning software for easy data transfer to/from GPS** – check out whether your package offers free PC based software to easily upload/download GPS files to/from GPS, manage, edit, save files on their PC.
- **Electronic compass** – all GPS offer a compass page of some sort; however having an electronic compass offers additional navigation features like north reference, GoTo bearing when stood still and Sight and Go
- **Paperless Geocaching, wireless sharing & geocaching** – Into Geocaching? Then make sure that any device you consider offer the full range of geocaching features like access paperless downloading of caches, access to Chirp wireless geocaching and wireless sharing of data between compatible devices.

GPST Summary

We hope you find the above tips on what to look for in the GPS of your dreams useful; however at the end of the day the choice is yours; just bear in mind that the cheapest is rarely the best. We regularly hear from GPS owners who have purchased a device that doesn't deliver the features they wanted or thought they paid for.

You could get a perfectly good GPS that will offer you all the GPS features you would expect and paperless geocaching with fast USB connection to your PC for around a hundred pounds. Our experience is that the most people want a GPS that offers at least a full OS map with all footpaths and bridleways included and free access to route planning and paperless geocaching as a minimum.

We recommend that you use our list in mind when deciding on which is the right GPS for your needs; if in doubt feel free to contact us and we'll guide you through the choices and offer you a great deal too!



GPS Training offer both nationwide hands- on GPS navigation course and online GPS training for all Garmin GPS, Memory-Map software & Adventurer 2800 and the Satmap Active 10 devices. For GPS sales or more information on any of the products included in these articles visit www.gpstraining.co.uk or call 01768 885855.

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GPST Review – September 2011

Our experience is that most people's starting point in the UK when thinking about the purchase of a new GPS is the requirement to have full Ordnance Survey maps on display in the device; so naturally this has become the bench mark for us when putting together our list of featured GPS in this review.

All devices on our list offer Whole GB Ordnance Survey 50k mapping as part of the bundled package; we believe that you should compare not just the cost of the device but the device plus maps. The exception is the new eTrex 20 which in our book offers a great entry level device with access to OS maps at an affordable price.

Featured Products

- Garmin eTrex 20 with BirdsEye Select OS 25k voucher £19.99 – RRP £179.99
- Garmin GPSMap62s with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping – RRP £399.99
- Garmin Oregon 450 with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping – RRP £399.99
- Garmin Montana 600 with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping – RRP £479.99
- Lowrance Endura Safari with Quo Whole GB 50k – RRP £499.99
- Memory-Map Adventurer 3500 with Whole GB 50k Maps – RRP £379.99
- Satmap Active 10 plus with Whole GB OS map card – RRP £587.99

Garmin eTrex 20 with BirdsEye Select OS 25k voucher worth £19.99 - £179.99

Website – www.garmin.co.uk



The long awaited update of the eTrex has arrived (October 2011) the eTrex 20 is tough & waterproof and takes the middle ground by offering a 2.2" sunlight readable colour screen, familiar easy to use button operation, great GPS reception with Hotfix, pre-loaded worldwide basemap, MicroSD card slot and massive 1.7GB internal memory, is geocaching friendly with geocaching manager and supports paperless geocaching, BaseCamp compatible.

Why have we included this device in our recommended list? We believe that the unit offers outstanding value for money and ticks almost all of our boxes with the exception of electronic compass and Whole GB map bundle. So for some one looking for a reasonably priced starter unit the eTrex 20 will take some beating.

With its MicroSD™ card slot and 1.7 GB of internal memory the eTrex 20 lets you load the full range of Garmin maps; the voucher included in the bundle will allow you to download 600sqk of Explorer Ordnance Survey maps. We recommend that users think of adding a 50k OS Discoverer regional map card to your purchase adding OS Landranger for one third of the country and whole GB road map with turn by turn routing in the background.

Garmin GPSMap62s with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping - £399.99

Website – www.garmin.co.uk



In all fairness for most people it's very hard to choose between the GPSMap62 & the Oregon 450 in the end it comes down to the whether you prefer the familiar easy to use buttons of the 62s or the touchscreen of the Oregon range.

We like the fact that the OS Discoverer Whole GB 50k mapping with NavTeq turn by turn routing comes on one MicroSD card which simply slots into the GPS and you're ready to go. The device which is fully waterproof & robust offers 2.6 inch sunlight readable screen, high quality GPS reception with HotFix, 3 axis electronic compass, wireless sharing, free & easy access to Garmin BaseCamp PC software

for route planning, a huge range of UK, international mapping, satellite imagery and custom maps. The item that makes all the new generation Garmin devices stand out from the crowd is that you can now view the contents of your OS Discoverer mapping in BaseCamp for route planning; solving that old issue of buying your maps twice.

Understandably the unit is very popular with fans of the GPSMap60 as the guys at Garmin have more or less kept the familiar look, screen and easy to use operating system, they've simply updated the processors to be compatible with the new OS maps and added the a huge internal memory, worldwide basemap and wireless sharing across the range.

Garmin Oregon 450 with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping – RRP £399.99

Website – www.garmin.co.uk



Now well established the Oregon 450 has been the market leader in the UK for nearly 2 years; justifiably the 3 inch sunlight readable display offered by the Oregon and the easy to use touchscreen operation bundled with the OS mapping whole GB bundle put the unit in a class on its own only challenged by its new big brother the Montana 600.

Like the GPSMap62 range the Oregon 450 comes bundled with OS Discoverer Whole GB 50k mapping with NavTeq turn by turn routing comes on one MicroSD card which simply slots into the GPS and you're ready to go. The device which is fully waterproof & robust offers 3" inch sunlight readable touchscreen, high quality GPS reception with HotFix, 3 axis electronic compass, wireless sharing, free & easy access to Garmin BaseCamp PC software for route planning, a huge range of UK, international mapping, satellite imagery and custom maps.

The Oregon 450 is ideal for all outdoor enthusiasts, cyclists and can be used on the trail, on the water and on the road. Although it is possible to purchase the device without the OS map bundle you would be mad to do so the saving when you bundle Whole GB 50k is £149.99 meaning that you pay just £50 for the map card.

Garmin Montana 600 with Whole GB 50K Discoverer mapping – RRP £479.99

Website – www.garmin.co.uk



They've done it again! Garmin have raised the bar with the launch of the Montana range. Essentially the Montana 600 takes all the features included in the Oregon and adds 4" sunlight readable touchscreen with dual orientation, and dual battery options.

The Montana is possibly aimed at a wider market; in your vehicle or on your motorcycle with the correct auto mount and OS Discoverer or City Navigator maps it offers spoken turn by turn directions. As yet there is no Cycle Mount which is a shame.

Our customers are going for the Montana in a big way; at only £80 more expensive than the Oregon 450 the main attraction is the larger 4" touchscreen which makes more sense when combined with OS Explorer mapping and power options have greater flexibility with cleverly engineered dual battery options. The Montana is going to be the UK's number one best selling GPS without doubt.

Lowrance Endura Safari with Quo Whole GB 50k – RRP £499.99

Website - www.mapyx.com

Lowrance who are massive in the world of marine GPS have teamed up with OS PC digital mapping supplier Quo to provide a GPS package that delivers a dedicated mobile version of Quo software and OS Whole GB pre-loaded on to a MicroSD card. Once licensed; users can copy the contents of the Map card to their PC for route planning etc. This middle of the Lowrance Endure range GPS which is waterproof & robust offers a good quality colour screen, 3D electronic compass, access to both PC & GPS mapping



with easy data transfer using GPX files or the QUO PC software, turn by turn routing for the whole of Europe by way of an additional map card (£99.99). Additional mapping for UK, Eire, Northern Ireland & Slovenia is available from the Quo website

This range of GPS will appeal to existing owners of Quo mapping software; the device does offer an impressive array of features like MP3 player etc, however we think the unit is a little chunky and perhaps dated and could do with updating.

Memory-Map Adventurer 3500 with Whole GB 50k Maps – RRP £380

Website – www.memory-map.co.uk



We prefer the Adventurer 3500 to the Adventurer 2800 for three very good reasons; we like the larger touchscreen, the fact that the battery is replaceable & removable (not so in the 2800 series) and the device is waterproof are huge steps forward. You should be aware that there is no electronic compass and the range of features doesn't compare with a dedicated handheld device.

The device with integrated GPS comes with a dedicated version of Memory-Map mobile & OS Whole GB 50k pre-loaded to a MicroSD card and a PC version of OS Whole GB 50k on CD and you can copy any existing MM V5 maps that you own to the device.

The unit fits neatly into the hand is weatherproof & robust, data is easily transferred using the Memory-Map PC software included all GPS navigation features are on offer if at a basic level. A wide range UK and International of additional mapping is available from the Memory-Map website and a custom map feature for MM is available on request from MM support. Turn by turn routing for the whole of Europe by way of an additional map card (£99.99).

Satmap Active 10 plus with Whole GB OS map card – RRP £587.99

Website – www.satmap.com



This chunky, waterproof & robust GPS offers 3.5 inch colour screen and electronic compass, rechargeable lithium battery, and unlimited access to the Satmap route planning & sharing feature (£80 built into the RRP of the unit); moving around the pages is by way of a combination of soft keys and joystick, on board route planning is made easy when in planning mode.

Routes created on the Satmap route planner are transferred to/from the device using SatSYNC their dedicated data transfer application or in a 2 step operation from your favourite PC mapping software. The Active 10 offers a wide range of European maps available from the firm's website – there is no access to turn by turn routing for this device.

We think the unit is a little dated and could do with a revamp; some of our customers find the operating system difficult to get to grips with, access to additional mapping is by SD card only and the in the clouds route sharing is a bit clunky. The Active 10 Plus package is popular but we think there is better value in the market.



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