

VANGUARD VEO 3T265HCP TALL TRAVEL TRIPOD, £319.99

A good tripod is vital for making best use of your scope, but what about one that packs down small and light?

David Chandler takes a look...

What makes a good travel tripod? It has to be portable enough, stable enough, tall enough to enable comfortable viewing, and have good functionality. This tripod is not inexpensive – it represents a fairly serious investment. But is it a good travel tripod?

For starters, it's well made – this feels like a quality item and the 'mechanics' work well. Its minimum packed length is 44cm ('circumference' about 30cm) and it

weighs 1,640g. That will fit in what most airlines allow as carry-on luggage. Is it a 'Tall Travel Tripod'? I'd say so. The legs have five sections, with a maximum 26mm diameter. Extending those gives you a height of 124cm, which, with a bit of stooping, I found usable, and I'm a tad over six foot tall. The centre column is 'two-part-telescopic'. Raising the first part enabled me to view more

comfortably. That's with an angled scope. If I were using a straight scope I'd need to raise most of the second part of the column as well. At its maximum extension this tripod stands 163cm tall.

What about stability? I tried it with a Nikon ED50 (small and light) in a moderate breeze and a Kowa 773 (bigger and heavier) in a light breeze. With the first part of the centre column raised, stability was good with both combos. I pushed the magnification on the Kowa up to 60x and let the scope settle – stability looked good even at the top end of the zoom. If you do need more stability there's a hook at the bottom of the centre column that you can hang a bit of weight on. Some tripod heads sag – you get on the bird, lock the head, and the bird has moved up the view. With this tripod head sag is well controlled. It's a two-way head (pan and tilt) that is Arca compatible – but if your scope isn't Arca compatible you can use the quick release plate. The head moves quite stiffly – which meant it held its position well without being locked in place (pan and tilt have separate locks). I liked that, though it did mean that movement was a little jerky at times. For portability, the handle

on the head can be folded down and has a lock nut to hold it in place when it's in use. I also put my M43 camera on the tripod, in a light breeze, with the zoom at 800mm equivalent – that view was stable too. The maximum load capacity of this tripod is 6kg.

Other features include a leg that can be unscrewed and then screwed onto the centre column to create a monopod (76cm folded, 167cm extended), a reversible centre column and a low angle adaptor for low-down photography, legs that can be splayed at three different angles, and spiked feet that can be used instead of the rubber feet. The package includes a tripod bag and with one section of the legs extended you can carry this tripod with a Mulepack.



SPECS

Weight: 1,640g

Info: Two-year warranty

Web: vanguardworld.co.uk

VERDICT

Is this a good travel tripod? It's a very good travel tripod.