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# MISHMI TAKIN WOMEN'S VIRUNGA WATERPROOF HARD SHELL JACKET

Gear that breathes with you 



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Out in Colorado, weather can change in the blink of an eye. One minute you're basking in glorious sunshine, the next you're scrambling for shelter from sleeting rain or snow. It's safe to say that the unpredictable nature of weather in Colorado is sort of, well ... predictable.

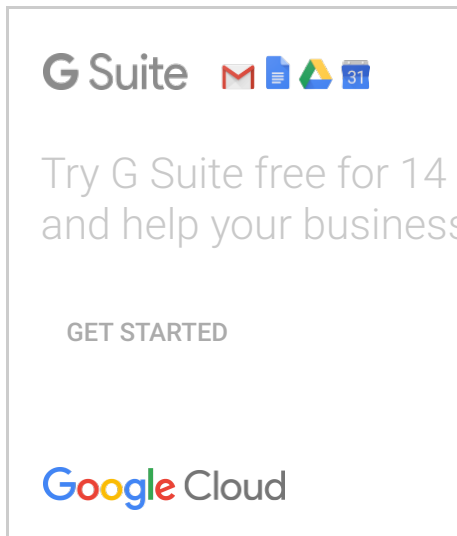
Layers, layers, layers. This is some of the most important advice anyone will give you when it comes to dressing for exploration. In any given situation, whether I'm riding my bike to work, walking to the store, heading out for a day hike, or venturing into the wilderness for days on end, layers are the key. There are two things I always throw in the car or in my pack before I head out there: my insulated jacket and an outer shell.





A good outer shell jacket needs to do two things:

1. Shed the rain and water on the outside that is falling down on you and
2. Shed the moisture that is forming on the inside of your jacket (you know, all the sweat you're building pushing yourself up that mountain).

It must keep you dry from the inside out. If it's not performing in this way, then it has not served its purpose. Of course there are a lot of jackets out there that do a solid job of keeping your clothes from getting soaked, but if the jacket isn't breathing with you, then you've got problems. No matter if it's freezing cold, or ungodly hot, if you're wearing a shell, and you are active in the outdoors, you are going to sweat. That's why ventilation is key, and [Mishmi Takin](#) gets that. After some time testing the Virunga Women's Outer Shell in a variety of conditions I was impressed by the quality and utility of the product

they produced.

A screenshot of a G Suite advertisement. At the top left, it says "G Suite" followed by icons for Gmail, Google Docs, Google Drive, and Google Calendar. Below this, the text reads "Try G Suite free for 14 days and help your business". In the center, there is a "GET STARTED" button. At the bottom left, the "Google Cloud" logo is visible.

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Kapil Dev Singh, the creator of Mishmi Takin is designing breathable jackets, ones that stand up to the test in the most humid of conditions. Though he did not know this would be one of his callings, like many before him, Mishmi Takin is now making their mark on improving the science of the outer shell. As an avid hiker, and an entrepreneur with MIT training under his belt, Kapil realized that he had something to contribute to the field after his travels in the Himalayas.



## **ABOUT MISHMI TAKIN:**

- Independent start up company.
- Mishmi Takin is the name of an endangered goat-antelope indigenous to India, Myanmar, and China.
- All Mishmi Takin jackets are named after National Parks.
- Virunga is the oldest National Park in Africa – inside the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## **ABOUT THE VIRUNGA JACKET:**

This jacket lets the sweat out. Mishmi Takin utilizes what they refer to as a “dry system” as opposed to a commonly used “wet system” of rain jackets. They describe the dry system thusly:

“When the humidity outside is as high as inside, the ‘wet system’ does not work and breathability becomes zero. In comparison, the dry systems employed by Mishmi Takin are microporous and air permeable, resulting in immediate expulsion of water vapor, a slight air exchange and a big difference in user comfort.”

I can attest to this personally through a comparison with my ultralight backpacking rain shell. Though great on my back and adding little weight to my pack, when I actually had to rely on that jacket in a torrential downpour last summer, I remember how it just clung to me. It hugged my arms and body, and simply stuck to my damp cold skin.

The Virunga is a high tech, top of the line, outer shell that is durable and the first of its kind in their repertoire of weather resistant wear. The Virunga is ideal for adventure travel, hiking, mountaineering and urban exploration.

### **Virunga Specs:**

- 100% Waterproof, Direct venting eVent fabric for quickest sweat transport
- 3 layer fabric for durability while hiking in hard brush forest
- Laser cut vents in front and back for enhanced air exchange
- Pit zips for additional venting and moisture control
- Helmet compatible, adjustable hood
- Twin napoleon pockets, 2 pack pockets for easy access while wearing backpack
- Abrasion resistant panels on hip area
- YKK Aquaguard Vislon zipper, velcro cuff adjuster, hem cinch cord
- Waterproof – 20,000 mm, Breathability – 26,000 gsm, Air permeability – 0.1 cfm
- Shell – 100% Nylon ripstop, Tricot – 100 % Polyester

## Pros:

- Customizable double zip pit zips with Aquaguard zippers that are extremely waterproof.
- Laser cut vents (micropores) in the front, back, and pit zips.
- The core of the jacket vents through mesh lined pockets.
- Extremely durable with three layer fabric system.
- The cut provides more coverage in front and in back.
- It has longer sleeves that fully extend over your wrists covering your under arm layers.
- Extremely eye catching colors (this is both positive and negative).
- The bright color of the jacket certainly helps you stand out, it makes you visible and easy to spot which can be a good thing in emergency situations while hiking, for photography in the outdoors, or as I've found in my case, riding my bike in the city.
- Adjustable hood that is large enough to fit over a helmet and any sort of hat, extending quite far in front of you, thus providing full coverage of your face and head.

## Cons:

- Zippers are slightly sticky and difficult to pull up or down on the move.
- Not as light weight compared to other backpacking style rain jackets on the market.
- Color selection for women is disappointing for people like me who tend to prefer color schemes that allow me to blend into the environment, or at the very least sort of despise the color pink (I'm certainly an earth toned kind of girl).



## TESTING IN THE FIELD: IN SNOW, IN HEAT, IN RAIN.

I've had the chance to take this jacket out in a variety of different conditions. First I tried it out in the snow. The jacket was extremely windproof and did a solid job of keeping my insulated jacket and underlayers dry. Although it wasn't snowing, the knee deep powder I was kicking up was no match against the protection of the Virunga jacket. I also appreciated the length of the sleeves in that situation. They covered most of my hands keeping my wrists dry and free of snow.

I also took this jacket out on a hot day during a bout of extremely dry weather for the region in March. I went out searching for a waterfall I could stand under to test the waterproofing. Despite my efforts, there was no moisture to be found — but I did have a chance to try it out in the heat.

Although I would never have actually been wearing the shell on a sunny rain free day, I committed to wearing it for a while to see how breathable it actually was in hot conditions — and it was pretty nice for a while. The side pit zips did a great job of



ventilating the heat and moisture I was building up, but once I really got moving I had to take it off as sweat built up inside. Now, if it was that hot and actually raining, it would be a totally different story — I would hike through a wet humid jungle in this jacket all day.

It finally did rain in Colorado, and while most people were hiding out in their homes from the rain and cold, I was eager to get out there and give this thing a go. I went storm chasing, made my way to a trailhead, and set out in the cold rain and “semi-snow” that often falls here — and the jacket performed great. I wasn't for one second concerned about getting wet. I was dry and breathing with the jacket. The hood had excellent coverage and kept my head dry.



I think my favorite part about this jacket is the front cut. It zips all the way up to about



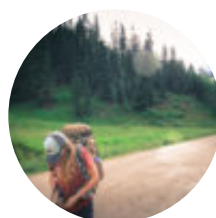
your nose, keeping your neck not only dry while also letting you breathe through the ventilation without building up moisture. I kept the jacket covering my mouth and nose for most of the hike, trying to brave the cold and wet wind from whipping my face. It released the heat from my breath, kept my face dry and ventilated, and left me without that suffocating feeling that can sometimes arise in those situations. There's nothing worse than being cold and trying to mask your mouth and nose from wet icy conditions, only to have fog building up on your glasses or goggles.

Overall I was really impressed by this jacket.

There are a lot of details that I can really appreciate, and this lets you know that Mishmi Takin is really putting some thought and innovative effort into their product. I think that the technology they are utilizing is what really makes the jacket great, along with its fitting and cut. I also really enjoy getting more acquainted with new gear and brands that aren't as well known as the giants in the industry. Now, if only there were a variety of colors for an earth toned girl like me...

## **UPDATE:**

After recently publishing this article Kapil of Mishmi reached out to me personally to address my "complaint" about women's color options. I'd first like to say that I think this action is truly what makes a company great. When they care and personally take the time to take feedback to heart and work to improve the brand for the consumer, it is the making of a great business. Kapil has informed me that in response to the the color choices for the Virunga Jacket, they have added two new options; Teal Blue and Pirate Black. Head over to the [website](#) and check out the new Women's options. They look rad and now I am even prouder to support this brand. Thank you.



by Alicyn Lane



*I am an aspiring freelance writer and photographer living in Denver, Colorado by way of Columbus, Ohio. 5 years ago I visited Colorado and saw mountains for the first time. That's when it all began...*

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## PROS

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- Breathable
- Great fit
- Windproof
- Moisture wicking
- Durable
- Great seal on zippers
- Multiple pockets and stash spots inside and out of the jacket

## CONS

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Sticky zippers

Not ultra light

Small selection of colors for women

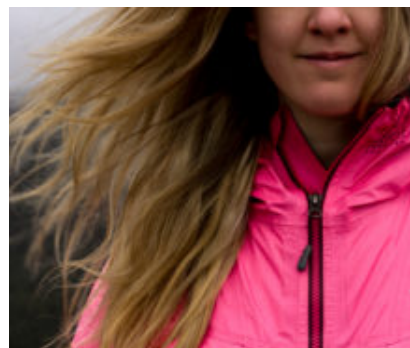
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