

SUNGLASSES

(1) Zeal Tensai

These versatile shades are a great choice for multiday treks in variable light conditions. The Tensai's polarized lenses offer excellent clarity and depth perception whether it's partly sunny or blindingly bright. Despite their dainty appearance, less light seeps through the lenses than through the slats of a Levolor—and they wrap around the head for superior peripheral vision. "No blind spots," pronounced one tester. Silicon pads slip a bit when your nose gets sweaty, but spring-hinged arms make for a tight fit. Size-wise, they sit best on smaller faces. Feel-good extra: The nylon frames are made with 20-percent recycled content. \$130; zealoptics.com

(2) Rudy Project Jekson 2.0

How tough are these lenses? Rudy Project guarantees that their so-called impactX material—bulletproof, featherweight, and used in Apache chopper windshields—is indestructible for life. The photochromatic lenses we tested are completely transparent indoors ("I felt like I was wearing lab goggles," joked one tester), but darken to a smoky gray outside. During early-morning hikes in the Boulder foothills, they were perfectly shaded; on a bright day in Great Sand Dunes, they were adequate. The Jekson's ventilation is excellent, and everything weighs in at a scant 0.95 ounces. Additional lenses will cost you 80 or 100 bucks—but you only have to worry about losing them, not breaking them. \$150; rudyproject.com

Bargain!

(3) Tifosi Ventoux

Get more than your money's worth with the Ventoux: three interchangeable lenses, a reflective coating that reduces glare, and a form-fitting shape that doesn't pinch. All that, and they're so light (0.85 ounces) that one tester noted: "I spent about five minutes searching my pack for the shades before realizing they were sitting on top of my head." A unique lens shape gives the Ventoux an extra-wide field of vision with low distortion; the flipside is that the frames are too wide, and slip down, on narrow noses and faces. Bonus: The temples' hydrophilic rubber gets stickier the stickier you get. \$60; tifosioptics.com



(4) Julbo Trail

TLC needed with these shades, thanks to their ultra-pliable lenses and frames. One tester stuffed a pair in the side pocket of his pack and bashed it against the wall of his garage 10 times—and they didn't break. Even better, because the Trail is flexible, there's no "nose pinching, temple cramping, or ear grinding." The mask-style frame impressed even large-headed testers with its coverage. The Trail's only drawback? The photochromatic lenses—which go from clear to slightly smoky in about 30 seconds—didn't get dark enough for sunny rides or above-treeline hikes. Extra: They come with a thick elastic strap for high-action days. Or squash. \$150; julbousa.com

(5) Native Ignition

These rugged shades have incredibly sharp optics. One tester wore nothing else for three months, including high-noon paddles on the brilliant waters of Cape Cod. Secure nose pads and temples kept the frames in place even on sweaty hikes in Colorado's Indian Peaks. The venting system—three holes in the frame above each eye—eliminates fog-up. One caveat: The Ignition's lenses are interchangeable (like the Trace's, below), but popping them out is trickier. \$100 (polarized, \$115); nativeyewear.com

Best Buy

(6) Smith Trace

Interchangeable lenses can look pretty dorky—in a Megatron-meets-Bill-Nye kind of way. Not the Trace, which combines a closed-frame style with the ability to swap lenses. Dubbed Interlock, the system works like so: Twist the temple 90 degrees, pop the lens out, insert new lens, twist back. It's the fastest, easiest, and most secure setup we've used. On bluebird days in the Sangre de Cristo Range, the Polar Bronze Mirror lenses kept out the brightness; in sun-dappled forests, the Clear Mirror lenses allowed for just enough contrast. The only drawback? It's easy to smudge the lenses when switching out, so carry a microfiber cleaning cloth. \$139; smithoptics.com