

Some people always carry a bear canister in the back-country as it makes food access easy and works as a seat. That's not me. I loath the extra weight and bulk of a canister, and I have yet to have a problem with a bear in the backcountry, so I only carry one when absolutely required. That said, I have had problems with critters and crows. In fact I lost much of my food to crows picking apart a thick plastic bag that I had property counter-balance hung. So while I don't carry a canister most times I no long carry plastic sacks. I carry the Ursack. At less than 8 oz and with a volume of 650 cubic inches, similar to most large canisters, it is a bear-proof Kevlar sack. It is approved in most locations in California as bear proof storage but not all places. Yosemite is an example of a NP that does not list the Ursack as an approved bear storage method, so in Yosemite I carry a very expensive (\$333) 2 lb carbon fiber canister, plastic cannisters are substantially cheaper (and >3 lbs). We're hopeful that Yosemite and other locations will approve the Ursack at some point. It should be noted that while a bear might not be able to get your food out of the Ursack it will absolutely maul the bag and your food inside. So I still hang the bag.

When I do carry a canister I used to carry the 700 cubic inch Bear Vault, because I like that it's see-thru and it was cheap. The lightest rigid canisters are carbon fiber Wild Ideas Bearikade canisters: one was recently given to me as a present. They're significantly lighter than plastic canisters (10 oz) but they also cost >4X the price. As for other canisters and brands they all have about the same 8" to 9" diameter and similar weigh. There are various canister heights that provide different storage volumes (and canister weight). But since only the height of the thin plastic canister wall changes and not the heavier top and bottom, the weight savings isn't as much as one might expect for vastly different storage volumes. As an example Bear Vault makes both a 440 cubic inch and 700 cubic inch canisters. They weight 33 and 41 oz respectively. So for 60% more canister volume the weight goes up 24%. I only have the 700. Some people have both, or just use the smaller one. I like the bigger one;

- when I use it alone I don't have to crush my food
- it will fit more food for longer trips (compacted)
- it may fit 2 people's food for a shorter trip
- I always cram in other non-food stuff to fill any unused volume, especially anything that might crush in my pack, or I'll fill space with clothes

Here's a good article that compares canisters:

<http://andrewskurka.com/2012/bear-canister-shopping-guide/>

Here's the link to the Ursack if you're interested:

<http://www.ursack.com/product/ursack-s29-allwhite/>