

Hands on with the Garmin Dakota 20

The [Garmin Dakota 20](#) is a smaller version of Garmin's successful [Oregon](#) models. It appears poised to replace the eTrex series, bringing all of the Oregon's touch screen goodness while retaining the eTrex's small form factor, light weight and long battery life.

Both units in the two-model Dakota series sport a 2.6" screen. On the Dakota 20, you get a tri-axial electronic compass, barometric altimeter, wireless data transfer between units and the ability to accept a micro-SD card, all features lacking on the [Dakota 10](#). Neither model comes with pre-loaded topo maps.

EDIT: *The Dakota 20 also supports Garmin's new [BirdsEye aerial imagery](#).*

Touchscreen display

While the Oregon has a brighter backlight, the Dakota is a bit more visible under daylight and outdoors conditions. All of the newer generation high-resolution GPS screens [suffer a bit](#) when it comes to visibility, but it seems like Garmin is making some progress in this arena. I do a fair bit of mountain biking, and the Dakota is the first hi-res touch screen unit I consider suitable for fixed mount, non-powered use (e.g., bike handlebars). Visibility isn't a big deal when you carry one of these units in your hand, as you'll intuitively tilt it for the best view without thought. Nor is it an issue when powered with a car adapter, etc. But after being disappointed with previous touch screen models, I was pleased to see how readable the display was on my bike's handlebars, even when wearing tinted glasses.