

NEW  
KIT

**WE SAY**  
A superb option if  
you need a saddle to  
ease your passage  
over rough stuff



UPGRADE

# TIOGA UNDERCOVER STRATUM

★★★★★ £169.99 > Webbed seat

**TIOGA'S ORIGINAL STRATUM SADDLE COMPRISED** a weblike shell with no padding at all, and many mountain bikers – Tioga's core market – found it plenty comfortable enough. As the name suggests, the Stratum Undercover sees that design mostly covered with a thin X-Pad SL closed-cell EVA foam pad, which is as much about aesthetics as comfort.

Whereas the original Stratum's SpyderWeb shell used two durable plastics for a supple, springy feel, the Undercover uses just one. With the foam layer taking care of vibration and posterior conformity, the shell's major role is to flex, something it does extremely well. Hand pressure alone results in significant flex in all areas of the 285mm x 140mm shell, but this model's carbon rails maintain a rigid foundation. Cheaper, heavier CrMo and titanium rail models are also available, with an open-cell foam topping.

Weighing in at less than 1g per pound, the Undercover's feathery 145g is extremely light for a saddle designed to take a pounding. The initial feeling is like sitting on a firm hammock, so obvious is the deformation due to your weight, but the webbed structure ensures that the shell retains its form, while giving just enough to alleviate pressure. When shifting your weight in the saddle, the Undercover's localised flex doesn't reduce its support, providing impressive comfort.

It's rare to find a saddle that stays comfortable for hours on end, whether on the tops or deep in the drops, but the Undercover delivers a supple ride on any terrain, helped by its 136mm x 20mm maximum central oval-shaped cutout. There can be a slight bounce at high cadence on a road bike, but on larger volume tyres it's hard to notice and, after five minutes aboard, wasn't something that bothered us at all.

<b>HIGHS</b>
Amazingly plush ride; very light
<b>LOWS</b>
Fairly expensive; 90kg rider weight limit

BENCHMARK



**PROLOGO DIMENSION NDR TIROX CPC143**  
£139.99

★★★★★

This 143mm wide short-nosed saddle, with its grippy CPC patches, is designed to keep you sitting in one position to help eradicate potential discomfort. All-over padding and the wide central channel with cutout improves comfort by reducing localised pressure, and this model weighs a very reasonable 200g. The alloy-steel-railed Tirox rides wonderfully, and the balance of weight, performance and price make it a winner for whatever riding you do.

Perfect  
Partner

**CHAMOIS BUTT'R**

£12.99

This mineral oil-based cream includes lanolin and aloe, and is easy and hygienic to apply. It has minimal perfume, and we got good mileage from it. Also available in female-specific and cooling versions, this is the best high-quality, budget-friendly cream.

ALSO CONSIDER



**SPECIAL VALUE SPECIALIZED TOUPE GEL COMP** £80

★★★★★

This flat-profile, chromoly-railed saddle has a carbon-reinforced shell that flexes and moves as you pedal, with a non-slip cover and firm but forgiving gel padding. It comes in three widths: a 143mm example weighs 245g.



**SHEER FABRIC FABRIC ALM ULTIMATE SHALLOW** £199

★★★★★

The 150g, 142mm-wide ALM has a firm but forgiving ride thanks to its one-piece carbon shell and rails. The widely spaced rails act like leaf springs, and the thinly padded microfibre top dampens shocks.



**SPLIT TAIL SELLE ITALIA SP-01 BOOST KIT CARBONIO SUPERFLOW** £249.99

★★★★★

With tech borrowed from the car industry, the SP-01's V-shaped carbon shell sits on CarbonKeramic rails, allowing each side to move independently in a surprisingly natural way.