

[Field Test: Trayvax Element Wallet Review](#)

When it comes to leather minimalist wallets, it's tough to beat the ruggedly handsome [Trayvax Element](#).

Minimalist wallets are growing more popular as guys ditch their overstuffed bi-folds and tri-folds in favor of a streamlined solution. If you don't believe me, ask a couple of your coworkers to show you their wallets — politely, you don't want it to sound like a stick-up. Chances are, one of your buddies has joined the slim wallet revolution.

I largely ignored the call of minimalist wallets, telling myself that I couldn't imagine going about my day without an arsenal of bank cards and used gift cards. God forbid I stop at Starbucks and don't have my rewards card.

So, when I was presented with the opportunity to try out the [Trayvax Element](#) wallet, I was admittedly a little skeptical. Maybe it would become my casual weekend wallet for camping and BBQs, but there's no way I'd retire my bi-fold wallet.

Fast-forward two weeks, and guess what? I broke up with my old bi-fold and moved in with the slim and sexy Element. The minimalist wallet is now my everyday carry wallet, and the bi-fold is reserved for rare occasions where a suit and tie call for a formal leather wallet.

Consider me converted, baptized, and born again — now it's time to spread the good word.

About Trayvax

Believe it or not, the original Trayvax wallet was the unintended byproduct of [Mark King's](#) mission to create a product that cut down on plastic bag waste. Instead of the reusable plastic bag carrier that King envisioned, he wound up with something entirely unexpected — a minimalist wallet.

After a series of prototypes and revisions, King launched [Trayvax Enterprises](#) in 2013 and introduced the world to a slim wallet designed to withstand the toughest conditions while delivering the utmost utility of any wallet on the planet. In an age where most products are manufactured overseas with profit margins in mind, King broke the mold by using premium materials to handcraft his wallets right here in the United States.

Initially, King machined every Trayvax wallet by hand and powder-coated the aluminum faceplates with a small countertop oven. Today, Trayvax employs more than 25 workers who assemble, package, and ship several hundred wallets and accessories every day. Even with the

company's growth and expansion, they're committed to remaining an American company powered by American workers — and we respect that.

The Trayvax Element Wallet

The Element wallet is Trayvax's flagship product. It's a rugged take on the classic leather wallet, blending top-grain oil tanned leather with a stainless steel frame and MIL-SPEC paracord stitching. The result is a handsome everyday carry wallet that's tough enough for the outdoors and classy enough for a night on the town.

The Element features a single pocket that can hold up to 10 cards, with a card selection window on the front where you'll use your thumb to slide out your cards. There's also a hidden money clip on the backside concealed under a leather flap, offering just enough space to stash up to five bills so you have a little cash to tip the valet.

If you're wondering what that metal extension is on the right side of the wallet, you're actually looking at an integrated bottle opener — because no man should ever be unprepared to pop open a cold one. The card also provides basic RFID protection so you don't have to worry about thieves skimming your credit card information.

Like all Trayvax products, the Element is handcrafted in the USA and backed by the company's 65-year heirloom warranty. In short, Trayvax guarantees that the Element wallet is built to pass down to future generations.

Unboxing The Element

Unboxing the Element wallet immediately left me with two impressions.

First, I could instantly see and feel the handcrafted quality. I could smell it, too — the aroma of fresh leather was reminiscent of opening a shoebox with a brand-spanking-new pair of leather boots inside.

My hands confirmed what my other senses already perceived — supple hand-cut leather, sturdy paracord stitching, and an unyielding stainless steel frame holding it all together. I could actually picture the craftsmen putting the wallet together piece by piece, ensuring everything was just right before they shipped it off to me.

My second impression was that the wallet was a little bulkier and heavier than I anticipated. I expected a minimalist wallet to be more, well, minimal, but the Element was heavier than my bi-fold wallet and I pictured the metal frame being uncomfortable in my pocket.

I'll admit this was initially a turnoff, but ultimately it proved to be a hasty judgement. The Element fit comfortably in my pocket, the profile was still less than my bi-fold wallet, and the metal frame didn't bother me at all. Another reminder not to judge a book by its cover.

All things considered, I was immediately impressed by the Element. Out of the box, it earned an easy A.

Adding Cards

The Element wallet claims a max capacity of 10 cards, but out of the box it'll be a tight fit squeezing in 2-3. Don't worry, the wallet forms to your cards over time with use. My three cards were a little tough to get out at first, but it was a perfect fit within a few days.

Looking for a quick fit? Soak the empty wallet in lukewarm water for 10 minutes, insert your cards with the included instruction card on top, then wait for the wallet to dry. When it's done, simply remove the instruction card and your wallet is ready to go.

Keep in mind, however, that once the wallet forms to the number of cards you carry, you can't decrease the card capacity. You can always add more cards, but you can't slim down. Think long and hard about how many cards you'll want to carry, because once you expand the leather it won't contract.

Field Test

In my mind, the first test with the Element wallet had to be the bottle opener. Sure, it was probably the feature I'd use the least, but my inner caveman was excited.

Unfortunately, a thorough search of the refrigerator was fruitless, so it was off to the store.

Standing at the register with a six-pack and a frozen pizza, I found unbuttoning the strap was easy and sliding my card out was simple, but when it came time to button the wallet back up, I fumbled. The brand-new wallet was still forming to my cards, and that meant it still required a bit of a stretching to pull the strap around and snap it closed.

On the bright side, taking a few extra seconds to fiddle with the closure caught the cashier's attention and drew a compliment. Ditto from the guy behind me in line. They both commented they'd never seen anything like the Element, so I enjoyed a proud moment feeling like a trendsetter.

I'm happy to say that the snap closure loosened up within a week, so I only had to deal with a few public encounters where I slightly struggled to close the wallet. Now it's a piece of cake to close, and while the closure isn't as quick as a standard button, I like that it's more reliable.

More importantly, though — the bottle opener works like a champ.

Conclusion: Two Thumbs Up

After testing out the Trayvax Element for a few weeks, I wholeheartedly recommend it. The Element quickly became my everyday carry wallet, and in the process helped me slim down to the bare basics with my ID, two cards, and a few bills for tips and emergencies.

The Element is a chic, manly wallet that you'll be excited to show off to your buddies. Even better, it's built to last, so when you show it off to your kids, let them know that someday you'll pass it on to them.

The stainless steel frame can get a little uncomfortable in your back pocket, but keep in mind the Element — like most security-conscious wallets with RFID protection — is designed to be carried in your front pocket or jacket pocket.

Who will like the Trayvax Element — guys who want to downsize to a slim wallet with fewer cards and less cash, but still want a classy leather wallet with a strong sense of style

Who won't like the Trayvax Element — true minimalists who prioritize bulk and weight over style

More Wallets From Trayvax

Original 2.0 Wallet

The Element may be Trayvax's flagship product, but [The Original 2.0 Wallet](#) is where it all started (with, as the "2.0" indicates, a few improvements). It's the most affordable wallet in the Trayvax lineup, and an excellent value considering the quality materials, craftsmanship, and durability.

Armored Summit Wallet

The [Armored Summit Wallet](#) is about as minimalist as you can get. The ultra-thin military-grade wallet features a heat-resistant steel Armor Plate that blocks RFID skimming, providing enough space up to seven cards and five bills.

Axis Wallet

The [Axis](#) is a modern bi-fold wallet built for the outdoors. The slim-profile wallet features two stainless steel plates, a money clip, a hidden coin pocket, and RFID protection. The nylon strap makes it easy to connect to your backpack and keep your pockets clear while you're on the move.

Ascent Wallet

If you're shopping for a leather minimalist wallet on a budget, the [Ascent](#) is a great option. It's a few bucks cheaper than the Element, and still delivers top-grain oil-tanned leather, hand stitching, a rugged stainless steel plate, and RFID protection. Basically, you're getting everything except the bottle opener and a slightly lower max capacity.

The Contour Wallet

The [Contour](#) is Trayvax's premier minimalist wallet. It's a unique leather wallet, delivering more capacity than other Trayvax wallets with room for up to 13 cards and 10 bills.

The Contour features a CNC-machined stainless steel plate with a durable PVD coating and top-grain oil-tanned leather. The wallet offers RFID protection, a torx wrench, and of course, an integrated bottle opener.

More On Minimalist Wallets

Still haven't found what you're looking for? Peruse our list of the [top 15 leather minimalist wallets](#), then check out our review of the popular [Ridge Wallet](#).