Inka Ti (Titanium) Pen

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"Less than half an ounce with the legendary durability of both titanium and carbon fiber in an all-weather writing instrument..."

BackpackingLight.com Overview

For years, cool pens have fueled a collector's market that has resulted in a no shortage of counterfeit, over-hyped, and just plain garbage pens. I've been collecting pens since I was a kid and I still own only about five that I consider worthy of a display case. The Inka-Ti Titanium Pen is one of them. But there's only one problem: it's now found a permanent home in my backcountry journaling kit.

The Inka-Ti Titanium Pen is a work of art, sure: clean lines and beautiful simplicity. It has a major cool factor to it, too: morphing from a compact keychain pen that disappears into a tiny plastic Aloksak or pocket to a full-length writing instrument or PDA stylus.

But it's the technology behind the pen that really makes it shine, and sets it apart from other collectors pens. A 100% solid titanium body with carbon fiber fittings gives this pen a level of durability unmatched by any other. And, that just plain "fits" into the lightweight backpacking lifestyle, where titanium and carbon fiber are heralded as two of our most coveted materials for gear due to their tremendous strength:weight ratios.

The technology doesn't stop with the materials, however: it writes like a champ: right side up or upside down, sea level or high altitudes (I've used Inka cartridges at the summit of Rainier and I know others who've taken them higher), not to mention pouring rain, sloppy snow, and even subfreezing temperatures. And yes, I tested it underwater and it writes perfectly, but if you need a pen to write underwater then "you got serious thrill issues, dude".

How I Use It: For backpacking, I keep the Inka pen handy, usually in my pocket with a small Rite-in-the-Rain Mini-Notebook, or in a small Aloksak in the top lid of my backpack. On the trail, I simply pull out the "mini-pen" and write a few short notes. In camp, I assemble the pen fully for extended writing. I've also removed the keychain split ring to save weight and reduce bulk, but if you need the functionality of an attachment mechanism, you can keep it or replace it with string.

Strengths: Impeccable craftsmanship and durability, the finest pressurized ballpoint cartridge I've ever used in real wilderness conditions, and high James Bond morph factor. Oh yeah: very light, too!

Limitations: Some time is required to assemble the full length pen (10 seconds or faster with practice, but the shortie can be pulled from the housing to jot notes immediately as needed), and the shorter length of the fully assembled pen (5 inches / 12.7 cm) is not as suited for extended writing if you have XL sized hands.

- by Ryan Jordan, BackpackingLight.com

Cartridge Performance Testing

After I picked up my Inka samples at Outdoor Retailer last year, I decided to give the cartridge a run for its money:

- **Heat:** I heated the pen in a soil drying oven (temperature 140 °F). I had to wear gloves to handle the pen, but lo and behold, it held up fine. I can't say the same for a competitor's "extreme conditions" pen, which left a permanent stain after the cartridge exploded in the lid of my pack on a sunny day on the Georgia AT.
- **Cold:** My apparatus of choice was easy: Montana. Last winter we had overnight low temperatures down to twenty five below zero. I left the pen on the porch overnight. When I grabbed it in the morning, I wrote in my journal with it. Not exactly a smooth flowing fountain pen experience one finds in a warm den, but the writing was entirely readable and after holding it my hand for about 30 seconds it was flowing smooth again.
- **Water:** I tied my original Inka pen (same construction as the Ti model, but I don't have the guts to do this with my Ti) to a spin fishing rod and drifted it along the bottom of Montana's Gallatin River, using some lead shot to get it down to the bottom of a deep hole (around 8 feet deep). I kept it there for three hours while catching trout flyfishing elsewhere, then reeled it back up. No leaks: the pen is sealed. After removing the pen so that the cartridge writing tip was exposed, I repeated the experiment. Lo and behold, after one shake of the wrist to flick off extra water drops, I put pen to paper and it wrote perfectly.
- **Altitude:** I've written with my Inka pens at the summits of Mt. Rainier (14,411'), Granite Peak (12,799), Kings Peak (13,528'), and Gannett Peak (13,804'). The pens always wrote well. It should be noted that all of these were winter climbs and summit temperatures were subzero in each case (see "Cold" above).

Specifications

- **Weight:** 0.46 oz (13 g) - with keychain split ring removed)
- **Dimensions:** 3.125 inches (7.9 cm) long (closed); 5.0 inches (12.7 cm) long (opened); 0.375 inches (0.95 cm) upper barrel diameter, 0.32 inches (0.8 cm) lower barrel diameter
- **Cartridge Type:** Pressurized Ball-Point