

# ITSY BITSY TOUCH GLOVES

Gladiators of the sky need proper gear – Hugh Miller test drives a pair of €125 paragliding gloves



**T**hey're Swiss-made, they're designed by uber-legend Urs Haari (he was cranking out world records in Namibia while you were in a nappy), and they sport a price tag somewhere well north of €100. They're the sort of gloves that you might spot on an advertising billboard upon arriving in Geneva airport. Think George Clooney drinking a Nespresso coffee, then replace him with Chrigel Maurer.

I've used Gin's winter gloves for three years now. They're a mid-weight glove, but I wear them for late spring and summer flying in Europe; Korean winters must be a lot warmer than UK ones! I've found little to fault with them – they're warm enough, sculpted and not too bulky so easy to work buckles and instruments with. All except touchscreen instruments of course.

And this is the first major scoring point for the Itsy Bitty gloves – touch sensitive panels on the index finger mean you can work your smartphone and Oudie without removing your glove. You know the set-up: you're thermalling close to airspace and you need to zoom in to check the border... so it's grab the brakes with one hand, whip off a glove and frantically stab away at the instrument with half an eye on your leading edge lest it feels like giving you a slap in the face while you're at it.

I've flown with the Itsy Bitty gloves for around 100 hours in Colombia and the UK and they're the first pair I've ever used which have that magic combination of being warm enough and dextrous enough to work an instrument without being removed. A good technical fit for flying, the gloves are sculpted to suit a half-gripped hand; always look for this in a glove as most mountaineering and outdoor gloves are pan-flat, leading to bunching at the tips of the finger. The top shell of the glove is a nicely flexible Gore Windstopper fabric and the palm and thumb is a soft leather adding to the sense of dexterity. Elastic loops mean you can take your gloves off and dangle them from your wrists if you need to. Inside there's a nice soft bamboo lining for insulation.

If you get cold hands, I'd recommend these gloves for all but the sweatiest climates – they did me fine in Colombia – right through to warm late spring and summer days in Europe. A specialist flying glove like this might be a bit pricey and 'pro-orientated' but they're made by Eska, a brand with a good reputation for long lasting kit. In the year I've had mine, the only noticeable wear is on the elastic dangle loops: otherwise they're as good as new and I can't see that changing. **✪**

## IN BRIEF

- Specialist three-season gloves
- Designed for paragliding
- Moulded for grip
- Made of Gore Windstopper and leather
- Touch-screen compatible
- €125

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