



# Best small portable solar panels

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Portable solar panels can be used to recharge devices directly or to charge batteries or solar generators. Some panels can be connected directly to phones or small devices for charging when the sun is out (panels must be angled toward the sun). However, direct sun charging can be inconsistent. It's best to use a solar panel to capture energy and store it in some kind of battery (like a solar controller, battery pack, or charge station), and then connect devices to that--particularly with stronger panels.

A quality, permanent, fixed solar panel should continue producing a solid energy output for 25 to 30 years, but it's a good idea to check if the panel includes a warranty. We've seen firsthand our fair share of cheaper panels that quit working after a couple of years that did not include a warranty.

Many portable solar panels are made of more lightweight materials and aren't likely to last that long. They run the risk of becoming damaged during transport or after prolonged use outside, so it's best to purchase a durable panel that can withstand the hazards of travel.

Most portable solar panels are water or weather-resistant--meaning they should not be submerged underwater but can be left outside in light rain. However, that doesn't mean that every portable panel should be left outside permanently. Check with the manufacturer to ensure the panel will meet your needs.

Our top pick is the Renogy 100-Watt Monocrystalline Panel that's an easy choice for RVs, boats, van travel, or a day at the beach. For something a little more affordable, the Dokio Portable Monocrystalline Controller is an attractive lightweight alternative.

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