



Best solar charger 2021

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This list of solar panels and chargers is the best of the best, fully tested by the GearLab team, so you can't go wrong with any of these. Choose the one that fits your needs the best so you can return to adventuring. Rest assured that we'll keep buying, using, and reviewing the best solar chargers in the industry to keep this list current.

Whether you're backpacking in the Himalayas or working in your backyard, a portable solar battery charger offers a vast supply of power that you can easily fold up and carry with you. While the sun is out, you can catch rays to charge a phone, a laptop, and other small electronics, and (when paired with a separate power bank) you can keep them running long after sundown.

The Allpowers SP012 Solar Panel 100W is the best portable solar charger for anyone who needs to keep their gadgets charged and stay connected during a power outage or off-grid adventure. It packs a lot of power into a relatively small package, works seamlessly with most phones and other devices, has a rugged build and good weatherproofing, and comes with more useful accessories than the competition.

It performed relatively well in our cumulative power tests, fully charging our 10,000 mAh power bank in six hours. With a rated output of 100 watts, it has three USB output ports (one USB-C and two USB-A) and a DC port that can charge a wide variety of devices. An additional DC port can also be used to connect a second solar panel for even more power generation.

It comes with more accessories than most models: four carabiners, five DC adapters, DC and Micro-USB charging cables, and car jumper cables. And its IP65 weatherproof rating means it's well protected against blowing dust and water.

If you want something smaller, lighter, and less expensive than the Allpowers SP012, and you can live with a bit less power, you should get the BigBlue 28W USB Solar Charger. Despite having just four panels and a lower output rating (28 W), it can top off a phone or other small device about as fast in the same sun conditions (it charged our power bank in just five hours).

It's also lighter than the Allpowers model (1.4 pounds), and it folds up into a compact package about the size of a paperback novel (11 inches by 6 inches by 1 inch). This makes it even easier to slip into a daypack or an emergency go-bag.

BigBlue's charger has three USB-A ports, which are covered by a rubber flap to shield them from the elements when not in use. Its IPX4 rating means it's protected against water spills and splashes, though it has minimal resistance to dust and other solid particles.



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I've been a science journalist for nearly a decade, covering a wide variety of topics from particle physics to satellite remote sensing. Since joining Wirecutter in 2017, I've reported on surge protectors, portable power stations, home EV chargers, and more.

For this guide alone, I've spent more than 60 hours cumulatively researching and testing portable solar chargers. Plus, during a monthlong visit to rural Malawi, I got firsthand experience with a subpar portable solar charger--it was so slow that I gave up on it midway through the trip.

A portable solar battery charger is a great option if you're taking an extended camping trip or traveling somewhere with an unreliable power grid, as it'll allow you to charge a phone the size of an iPhone 15 using just a few hours of midday sun. The best ones have enough power to charge several devices at once--say, a laptop, lantern, and portable Bluetooth speaker--and fold up small enough to fit in a backpack, glovebox, or bike pannier.

They're also good to stash in an emergency kit so you can keep a phone and other essential devices charged if the power goes out. However, since they're largely dependent on the weather, you'll also want to pack a power bank designed for phones and tablets, USB-C laptops, or AC-powered laptops.

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