



Portable solar battery pack

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Solar chargers are like giant, invisible extension cords that let us power up gadgets wherever we roam. But they don't just bring life to the devices that fuel our far-flung adventures. The best portable solar chargers free us to focus on the people, places, and activities that truly fill our buckets.

Our experts have been writing about solar panels, charging docks, power strips, batteries, and other trusty travel tech for over 25 years. During that time, charging technology has gotten safer and smarter. Batteries have gotten smaller yet more powerful. Solar panels have become way more commonplace both at home and along the dusty trail.

Specifically for this buyer's guide, we conducted online research and identified over a dozen portable solar chargers ranging in price from \$30 to \$649. After careful consideration, we narrowed down the candidates to a handful that we tested in real-world conditions.

Below are the best portable solar chargers based on our testing. To help you find the best charger for your unique needs, we've included a Comparison Chart, a Buyer's Guide, and a Price & Value section.

Editor's Note: For our November 13, 2024 update, we added a Price & Value section to explain what buyers get at different price points.

Clearly, the EcoFlow 220W Bifacial Portable Solar Panel (\$649) is the elephant in the room. By a wide margin, it's the biggest, heaviest, and most expensive of the portable solar chargers we tested. But it earned our top honors because it has a few tricks up its sleeve.

First and foremost, its bifacial design -- the fact that it has solar cells on both sides of the panel -- means that it can capture more energy than panels of a similar size and power rating. How much more depends on how reflective a surface it's placed on. Flatter, lighter-colored surfaces will reflect sunlight better onto the rear panel, which is rated for 155 W. In this regard, a mirror would be the ideal surface, and grass would be the least favorable.

Despite being so expensive, the EcoFlow 220W Bifacial actually represents a decent value. It delivers the lowest price in terms of wattage and the second-highest wattage as a function of the panel's area. Even its exorbitant weight is dissipated by how easy it is to carry in its weatherproof protective case. Speaking of that case, the one we received was soft and, therefore, couldn't be used to facilitate propping up the panel, as they claim on their site.

The only complaint we have about them is that the power station only turns on by pressing a series of buttons -- first the main power button and then one for the type of outlet you want to engage -- rather than activating



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automatically from plugging into a particular port.

Ironically, Outdoor Tech Dawn Solar Panel (\$130) was a bit of a dark horse. It was among a few related solar products that the company sent us for testing. But we didn't seriously consider it until we noticed how it compared to other contenders.

For example, the GoalZero Nomad 20 and the BioLite SolarPanel 10+ each retail for \$150. This solar panel, which offers two and four times the power, costs twenty bucks less than either of them. So it represents a great value in terms of what you get for what you pay, second only to the EcoFlow 220W Bifacial.

Other than its value, the Outdoor Tech Dawn is well-designed. It's easy to carry since it has built-in handles that magnetically clasp together. Its zip-up pouch stores three integrated (non-detachable) cables, one USB-C for phones and tablets, and two DC for charging external batteries. Plus, it sports a standard USB-A port, so you can charge tons of small devices.

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