



Buyer's Guide

Best Waterproof Ponchos

We are providing a buyer's guide for the best waterproof ponchos. The information will be useful also for other camping supplies you might be considering.

Waterproofing

Let's not kid ourselves; when you search for a waterproof poncho, you want something to keep you dry and protected from the rain. You should read the descriptions carefully because waterproof and water resistance are not nearly identical.

A hydrostatic head rating that indicates how much water pressure they can sustain is something to look for, along with sealed seams. Although you can always maintain your poncho with waterproof treatments, you can generally rely on them to effectively block the rain.

Breathability

Being open at the bottom and sides. This lets air in and condensation out. Most ponchos don't have a problem with breathability. Some waterproof jackets have ventilation issues. However, this is usually because the jackets are tighter-fitting and frequently trap heat in the waist and cuffs.

If ventilation is poor, the material will significantly impact breathability. Breathability is crucial because hiking may be highly strenuous when walking uphill, and condensation forming inside your waterproofs can be just as dangerous when hiking in cold weather.

Resistance to Wind

As with most waterproof textiles, you may anticipate that most rain ponchos will be impenetrable to wind and water. In contrast to rain, wind can come from any direction, and if it's powerful enough, it can make it difficult to wear a poncho.

Ponchos that are more like a long waterproof smock entirely block out the wind! We would much instead choose breathability for hiking than complete wind protection.

Weight and Pack Dimensions

Because a waterproof poncho is often only worn when it is raining and spends the rest of the time in your bag, its weight and packability are crucial. Lighter ponchos will likely be thinner and hence more packable, but they will also likely be less sturdy.

Ponchos that are waterproof can be fastened to the exterior of your pack or tucked away in a pocket until you need them. They are the ideal all-in-one weather protection to keep in your backpack because they can be folded, rolled up, or even stuffed into a small pouch.

Durability

Suppose you've only ever used the throwaway PVC ponchos you can buy at amusement parks. In that case, you'll be happy to know that every product on this comprehensive list of rain ponchos is constructed of far harder materials that don't rip as easily.

We spend a lot of time discussing durability in our reviews because paying for something that tears after only one use are useless to hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts. We want to employ well-made, long-lasting, and dependable equipment to be used on significant outdoor trips.

Design

The hood, sleeves, zippers, and pockets should all contribute to the overall design and function of the garment. When facing the wind, a nice peaked hood will prevent rain from getting in your eyes, and if it is adjustable, you won't have to worry about it blowing down.

Sleeves are a matter of personal preference, but we like ponchos with open arms and popper sides since they offer the most freedom while providing enough weather protection. Fit can vary depending on design, but ponchos are universal and will fit anyone.

Flexibility

In general, ponchos' flexibility shouldn't be a problem because they are composed of naturally flexible cloth. Since ponchos are unusually shaped and large, you won't frequently feel constrained in your motions when wearing one. Ponchos made of heavier material or with numerous layers may stiffen if kept in storage for a long time, although keeping it unpacked will assist.

Value

Regarding outdoor equipment, we often say you get what you pay for, yet most of the ponchos on this list are highly affordable compared to raincoats. To give you an idea of rain poncho prices, they typically range from \$10 to \$25 on average and upwards of \$50 for specialty and quality ponchos.

Practically speaking, every waterproof poncho on this list is a fantastic bargain. However, it was surprising to see some less costly ponchos placed higher than the more expensive ones.

Convenience

Most ponchos with side openings – especially those made for the military or hunting – can be utilized to build an emergency shelter. This feature is perfect for hikers who prefer to travel light because it combines their raincoat and shelter into one item, leaving them with a sleeping bag and camping mat.

Always check the hood's form to ensure that it will keep the rain off of your face, and movable toggles might occasionally be crucial. Although pockets, zips, and sleeves are frequently personal preferences, they should still be considered.

Materials

Materials and a brief explanation of their function are provided for some of the more typical materials found on a waterproof hiking poncho. It's essential to remember that unless they are sealed from the rear, stitches on waterproof textiles are not waterproof. You can do this by utilizing heat to seal the seams, waterproof tape, sealer, or both.

Breathable Laminates

Breathable laminates, made popular by GORE-TEX in the 1970s, remain the best materials for waterproof garments. If they don't breathe, the condensation buildup will drench them thoroughly. Since ponchos typically have excellent ventilation, this is less of an issue, but if you encounter a laminated, breathable poncho, it will undoubtedly be perfect for hiking. Numerous different laminates are available today, but they are all intended to be as waterproof and breathable as possible and have similar compositions.

Sil-Poly and Sil-Nylon

To create Sil-Nylon, liquid silicone is applied on both sides of a thin nylon fabric woven into it.

Woven nylon [silnylon] is utilized in all outdoor equipment since it is lightweight, strong, and can be tailored to serve a specific function. The inclusion of silicone produces a superiorly flexible and waterproof barrier, which helps boost tear resistance. Dry bags, tarps, tents, and other lightweight outdoor gear are frequently made of Sil-Nylon and Sil-Poly.

Polyester

Since polyester fabrics are made of individual strands and water can seep through even the smallest openings, they are not waterproof. DWR (durable water repellent), a treatment or coating used for polyester-based waterproof ponchos, fills all fabric gaps to produce a waterproof layer.

Having stated that, a fabric with a higher denier grade will undoubtedly have more polyester strands and a tighter weave, increasing its water resistance. One key advantage of wearing polyester clothes is that, even if they were to get wet through, they would quickly dry.

Nylon With A PU Coat

It is made of tiny strands woven together to form a strong and lightweight fabric appropriate for outdoor apparel; nylon shares many characteristics with polyester. Although the nylon strands are waterproof (they don't retain moisture), a fabric consisting of woven fibers will require some treatment to make it completely waterproof.

Polyurethane, sometimes known as PU, is a material that will adhere to synthetic fibers to form a waterproof layer. Ripstop Nylon is a unique form of weave that increases the fabric's resistance to tearing and ensures that any punctures won't quickly enlarge.

PVC

The world's third-most produced synthetic plastic polymer, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), is available in various shapes and sizes, including the cheapest and maybe most waterproof poncho. The disposable poncho, which resembles a garbage bag with a hood, is constructed from a single waterproof material.

One major issue with these inexpensive waterproof ponchos is that they are only made to be used one or two times, which is terrible for the environment. The problem with wearing them for hiking is that they are extremely fragile and lack breathability, much like a plastic bag you use to carry groceries.