

Tips for Buying a Good Camping Tarp

Tarps are a versatile and relatively inexpensive alternative to using a tent for camping. Here are a few features to look for when purchasing a durable and high-quality tarp:

- Approximately 10 feet x 10 feet square is a good size
- Made of light-weight rip-stop fabric; has UV light protection
- Select a tarp that has many corner, edge, and central tie-out points. For example, my tarp has 5 tie-out points on each side (3 between the two corner tie-outs on each side), as well as 5 central tie-out points. See the photo below.
- Tie-out points should be very strongly reinforced. Corner and side tie-outs should include sturdy metal gromets. (see photo)
- One of many good options to buy: My tarp is the "MIER Outdoor Ultralight Waterproof Tent Tarp" available on www.Amazon.com

Here are pictures of my tarp. Notice the numerous side and central tie-outs, as well as the reinforced gromets.





One big advantage of tarps compared with tents is their small compact size and low weight. In the photo above, I show my daypack, my favorite camping tent (red bag), as well as my tarp (green bag). When camping with the tarp, I would pack lots of extra paracord (see Backyard Bushcraft issue #5). I also would take collapsible tent poles.

Another tip: use a large heavy-duty plastic shower curtain liner or emergency "space blanket" as a waterproof ground cover under your sleeping bag when you camp out in a tarp.