

GREAT outdoors

Food and drink always tastes better outside – so you're going to need a camping table and chairs. Michael Le Caplain tests a selection

Folding Camping Lounger Chair with Retractable Footrest

This is pretty hefty and proved to be a mighty tight squeeze into its carry bag. Once we got it out, however, it simply amazed us with its ingenious design. It initially folds into a chair shape that's ideal for dining or reading. Should that last glass of wine with lunch finally catch up with you, simply push yourself backwards and keep pushing until you're at the sort of horizontal level you're comfortable with. Meanwhile, your legs are cushioned on a footrest that angles out automatically – surprisingly comfortable.

SUPER COMFY

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £27.99
Contact: 0845 077 8888, homebase.co.uk



Twin Height Folding Aluminium Table

If you can handle the near-£30 asking price, this is a useful addition to any caravanner's fair-weather gear. When folded, it takes up surprisingly little room, thanks to a combination of collapsible sprung legs, a folding worktop and a simple but sturdy set of locking catches – one on each side of the worktop and one on each of the legs. It's a neat set-up, although we couldn't help but notice that the tabletop wouldn't sit entirely flat (this may have been because the table was new and not 'bedded in'). Four adults could dine easily around this table – full marks, too, for the integral carry handle.

PLENTY OF ROOM

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £29.99
Contact: 0845 640 3030, argos.co.uk

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Folding Camping Chair with Drinks Holder

This fantastic little camping chair offers comfort, convenience and affordability, yet can be folded to fit just about anywhere in a caravan or motorhome. You can even carry this on a walk or hike thanks to the securing strap and handy carry bag/shoulder strap – this despite the steel legs. The tough polyester base and back offer a surprising amount of comfort, likewise the wide armrests, one of which contains a net bag for that cooling can of beer. Stylish, cheap and beautifully engineered – what's not to like?

HIGHLY PORTABLE

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £7.99
Contact: 0845 640 3030, argos.co.uk



Folding Camping Picnic Table

This is a pretty straightforward little table that folds flat to just 7cm, making it the ideal choice for anyone with limited storage space. Simply fold out the two U-shaped legs, lock them into position and you're left with a 23in x 15.5in tabletop that two people could – at a pinch – dine together upon. However, there is a problem in that the surface is just 20in away from the ground – there's no way you could sit up to it on a folding chair. As such, it's probably best used as an additional off-the-ground storage area for drinks, bottles and the like.

SIMPLE TO USE

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £17.99
Contact: 0845 640 3030, argos.co.uk

Regatta Deluxe Folding Camping Chair

This is one of the highest quality items here – Regatta takes the concept of the basic telescopic chair and improves upon it. You certainly wouldn't want this on your back during a day-long hike on a hot day, and it's not immediately obvious how it erects properly, but it's supremely comfortable, boasting a thickly-padded base and backrest, plus curved, aluminium armrests. The headrest folds back – perfect for those mid-afternoon snoozes. The chair folds down to a reasonably compact size and comes with its own carry bag.

VERY WELL MADE

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £29.99
Contact: 0161 749 1313, regatta.co.uk

Twin Folding Table

Comprising nothing more than a simple oblong worktop and a pair of detachable scissor legs, assembly seems to require the 'brute force' approach. Turn the tabletop over and align the legs with the rather flimsy slots in its base – go for the ones at either end if you require a low table, or either side if you need a little more height. Getting things to marry then involves pressing your foot against the leg and bearing down with your weight. It feels inexpensive – the top in particular reminded us of plastic garden furniture – but it's a clever solution to multi-height requirements.

BUDGET OPTION

AT A GLANCE
RRP: £14.99
Contact: 0845 640 3030, argos.co.uk

