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Brighten the night

Whether you're pitching a tent halfway up Kilimanjaro or lighting a braai in the campsite at Satara, one thing is universal: When the sun sets, you can't see. Here are some of the best lamps to bring back the light.

A standing lamp and a torch? Genius.

ED'S CHOICE



1

Hang this from a branch over your braai so you know when to turn the chops.



2

At full power, this lamp is so bright you'll need sunglasses.



3

BATTERY-POWERED In the past, Ds and AAs were only good for torches, but with the advent of energy-efficient LEDs you can now use them to power area lights and small spotlights.

1 BLACK DIAMOND VOYAGER FLAWLESS GEM

Need to answer the call of nature? Just unhook this lantern from the tree where it's hanging, flick the switch and it becomes a torch. The Voyager is compact: In storage mode it's about the size of a roll-on deodorant stick; when in use it's as big as a Black Label man-size can. It runs on four AA batteries and delivers a maximum of 75 lumens. On the brightest setting it will run for 13 hours, but it can be dimmed to prolong the battery life.

A cheaper version is available without the torch and there are also bigger, brighter models – without the torch function.

R460 distributed by
rammountain.co.za

2 JOBY GORILLA TORCH I'M STILL STANDING

I'm not sure why they call this a torch; it's more like a spotlight. It features the trademark Joby tripod, which means you can plonk it on the table or wrap it around the bakkie's bull bar. It runs on three AA batteries

and provides a light that is definitely brightest at the centre but still covers quite a wide area. At its brightest it delivers 65 lumens; on this setting your penlights will last for 20 hours. To save power, there are six different settings that are easily selected by turning a dial.

R275 distributed by
singerphoto.co.za

3 EGEAR 10-DAY LANTERN GENTLE GIANT

The 10-Day Lantern is the big daddy of battery-powered lanterns. Not

only can it deliver a whopping 160 lumens, it does so for 40 hours! It's also fully adjustable, offering eight different power settings.

However, it requires four D cells to operate, making it heavy and expensive to run. Changing the batteries is also quite a pain, as they're housed in a cartridge that has to be fully removed and reinserted. Rechargeable D cells are available but they can be problematic. If you want something easier, get a lantern that uses penlights.

R300 capeunionmart.co.za

Although it's called a Kerosene Lantern, it runs off paraffin - kerosene and paraffin are the same thing!

A gas lamp makes sense if you already have a cylinder for cooking. Otherwise you'll have to shell out about R500 for a Cadac 7 kg.

ED'S CHOICE

The mozzie-pad clip is a nifty addition, but be careful when you're handling it - it gets seriously hot.



BURN, BABY, BURN! Granted, they might not be as bright or economical to run as their more modern rivals, but a light that relies on a real flame will always be more ambient. I don't know about you, but camping's not camping without some fire.

4 DIETZ KEROSENE LANTERN
OLD FAITHFUL

This fellow doesn't need much of an introduction: The light of choice in rural Africa for the past century or so is still going strong.

Granted, it's not very bright and it's a bit of a mission to maintain, but for ambience and old-school cool, you can't beat it.

Watch it for the first few minutes after you light it: Funny things can happen with the wick resulting in billowing smoke... It comes in three

sizes - we tested the medium.

R120 sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

5 CADAC ULTRA-LITE
HISS-TASTIC

There's something evocative about the hiss of a gas lamp... This one may have a state-of-the-art ignition system (although I battled a bit to get it to work) and may deliver a 300-candlepower light, but it still makes that reassuring sound.

Attached to a 1,2 m extension pole (R150), it makes a nice standing light - the same extension can

be used to raise your cooking plate. That said, there are lots of drawbacks to gas: The mantle is brittle and has to be burnt in before use; the glass is delicate and has to be transported very carefully; and the price of gas is exorbitant.

R300 sportsmanswarehouse.co.za

6 BUSHLITE
NO MORE BLOWING IN THE WIND

Nobody seems to have told Elton John about the Bushlite... It was invented in Zimbabwe about

20 years ago and because of its glass casing, neither its legend nor its flame will burn out anytime soon.

It features a spring-loaded candle tube that keeps the candle at a constant height, giving you five hours of light from a single candle!

Obviously it doesn't make much light, but it's a lovely little gadget. If you spend an extra R165 on the carry case and candle box, they'll throw in a clip that allows you to fit a standard mozzie pad above the flame. Very clever.

R295 redair.co.za