



# The best Christmas lights you can buy

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- Holiday decorations bring feelings of warmth and cheer even in the darkest and coldest days of the year. Testing, setting up, and connecting Christmas lights can be anything but a joyful experience, though.

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- The [KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights](#) are our top choice because they are controlled by a remote and powered by batteries, so there is no proximity to an outlet or hands-on access required.

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I'm a man who likes his holiday decorations. I spend hours and hours every November climbing up and down ladders and scrambling around on the roof stringing up dozens of feet of Christmas lights on every peak and roofline of the house. Then I spend about 15 minutes taking them all down again in January, thanks to a secret holiday light hanging

technique I came up with a few years back. But that, friends, is a secret. Kind of. I'll probably explain it if you ask. (Cough cough use file clamps on the shingles cough!)

With all those hours spent decorating the home come a fair share of frustrations, though, from the nightly task of plugging the strands in because you can't find a timer to the cord that's too short to reach the outlet and the yearly search for the one burned out bulb, to the pleasure of your ladder falling away from the roof, leaving you deciding between risking a jump or calling your wife to ask her to come help you out of a less than impressive situation.

To that end, this year I've worked to assemble a buying guide filled primarily with holiday lights that not only look great, but that also make your life easier.

Included with a couple of classic plug-in options, this guide features Christmas lights that get their power from batteries and that get power from the sun. We have lights controlled via a handheld remote and those that are beamed out of a projector. Like it or not, the holiday season comes with its fair share of stress, so let's not make hanging the holiday lights one more source of it.

Sure, those old strands of tiny incandescent bulbs you have tangled up in boxes on the garage shelves are probably fine ... but these lights are definitely better. Upgrade your Christmas light game this season with these shining examples of great holiday lights.

Here are the best Christmas lights you can buy:

- Best Christmas lights overall: [KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights](#)

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- Best Christmas lights: [Good Tidings Light Ceramic Multi-Colored](#)

## Holiday Lights

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- Best light projector: [TOFU Laser Projector Light](#)
  - Best solar Christmas lights: [VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights](#)
  - Best mini Christmas lights: [Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights](#)
  - Best permanent Christmas lights: [Everlights Starter Kit](#)
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Updated on 11/07/2018 by Steven John: Replaced a few picks and added a permanent lighting solution. Updated prices and formatting.

Read on in the slides below to check out our top picks.

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## The best Christmas lights overall



KooPower

Why you'll love them: The [KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights](#) are battery powered and operated via remote control, so once they're in place, you can look forward to weeks of effortless enjoyment.

One of the worst things about Christmas lights is the fact that you have to plug them in every time you want them to light up and unplug them when you want them to go dark. That is, unless you have a timer. But even with a timer, you still need the lights to end up near an outlet, or at least be close enough to the outlet that an extension cord can connect the two. This necessary proximity to power happens to be the other worst thing, by the way. With the [KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights with Remote and Timer](#), both of those situations are things of the past.

The KooPower lights are powered by three AA batteries, and when only lit for a few hours each night, these three batteries will keep the lights aglow for days. With good quality batteries, the lights will shine for 60 hours before needing a change, so even if you left the lights on for four hours every night, that's more than two weeks per set, or likely only one battery change per holiday season. And what's more, you could set these lights up 100 miles from the nearest power outlet if you really wanted to.

Then we have the remote control, which eliminates the need for ready access to the lights and for use of an external timer. With the remote, the lights can be programmed for an on/off cycle, set to twinkle, fade in and out, do a chasing flash pattern, and more. The lights stay cool, thus are safe for use on an indoor tree, and are water-resistant, thus suitable for outdoor hanging.

The KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights score a solid 4.4-star average on Amazon, with a customer named Monica saying that for use where "there is no outlet... these [lights] worked perfectly." An owner

named Jennifer said she loved "how small but powerful they are."

A [TopReviewsProduct.com](#) write up about KooPower battery lights appreciated that their "memory function will play the same mode the next time you turn on [the lights] so you do not have to re-set [them] over again."

Pros: Battery power lasts many days, controlled by remote, tiny but bright bulbs, great price

Cons: 36-foot strand too short for some applications

[Buy the KooPower Waterproof Battery Fairy Lights with Remote and Timer on Amazon for \\$12.99 \(originally \\$29.99\)](#)

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## The best classic Christmas lights



Good Tidings

Why you'll love them: The large, softly glowing colorful bulbs of the [Good Tidings Ceramic Multi-Colored Holiday Lights](#) look just like something out of "A Christmas Story."

Sure, LED bulbs are bright, energy efficient, cool to the touch, and last for years. But you have to admit, there's something so warm and comforting about classic incandescent bulb Christmas lights. Especially those oversized bulbs known "in the business" as C9 bulbs.

The [Good Tidings Ceramic Multi-Colored Holiday Light Set](#) comes with 25 big, colorful bulbs that shine with a light both bright and soft at once. They will light up your Christmas tree, they look great framing a window or doorway, and they're hard to beat when strung across the roofline of the home, especially when a blanket of snow rests around them.

The strand measures 24 feet long, a great length for an indoor tree though a bit short for use outdoors unless you're willing to buy a few strands of the lights. They will last for years, though, albeit with an occasional bulb swap needed. Doing so is easy, though. It's just like changing a standard light bulb.

The Good Tidings Ceramic Multi-Colored Holiday Lights are UL listed for indoor and outdoor use and they connect to any standard socket or extension cord. If the soft frosted bulb look isn't to your liking, they also come in a transparent variation. (But listen, these are the ones you want, OK?)

The retro-style Good Tidings Ceramic Multi-Colored Holiday Light Set has a 4.1 out of five-star average online, with one owner named Ali speaking for many when he says: "I love these lights! They were one of my favorites when I was young and have returned!"

Pros: Classic vintage charm, bright lights visible from a distance, easy

bulb changes

Cons: Short strand length, glow much warmer than LEDs

[Buy the Good Tidings Ceramic Multi-Colored Holiday Light Set on Amazon for \\$19.95](#)

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The best Christmas light projector



TOFU

Why you'll love it: Setting up a [TOFU Laser Projector Light](#) takes about five minutes, three of which involve getting the hardware out of its packaging.

Holiday laser light decorations aren't for everyone, I get that. But falling off of ladders, searching for that one burnt out bulb, and realizing you don't have a long enough extension cord to connect the light strands to the outlet? That stuff isn't for everyone, either. And besides, some people find a gently swirling, twinkling display of red and green sparkles quite attractive.

The [TOFU Laser Projector Light](#) makes decorating your house for the holidays easier than ever. You simply plant the projector in the ground using its included stake (or set it on a driveway or patio with a disc-shaped base, which is also included) and aim the thing at your house.

Plug it in, and then turn it on, that's all there is to it. More or less, anyway. You might need to move the projector closer to or farther from the walls a few times as you work to find the perfect coverage. But it's easy stuff overall.

The projector creates thousands of tiny dots of light, which can be set to green, red, or green and red. The lights cover up to 2,150 square feet of surface when the unit is set up 30 feet away, and the projector can be controlled by a remote that is reliable within 40 feet.

Don't worry about rain, snow, or freezing temperatures, either — This little guy is waterproof and rated to work even when the mercury hits 22 degrees below zero. Also it's safe to use in temperatures near 100° F, in case you happen to be in warmer climes this holiday season.

You can also, by the way, set the colored dots to slowly swirl about, or you can add decorative features like little Christmas trees or snowflakes, or bell icons. And here's another idea: Aim the projector up into the trees for a truly dazzling effect, and stick with traditional lights on the house. Those two approaches together make for one fine holiday tableau.

The TOFU Laser Projector Light has a glowing 4.2-star overall rating on Amazon. A customer named Sandy said it was "very bright and easy to set up," while a user named Mark said he loved the lights, which "did an awesome job covering the front of [his] house."

A write up with [NYMag](#) called the unit the "best Christmas light projector with patterned lights." This is probably a good time for me to add that the TOFU Laser Projector Light has about the smallest price tag in its product category, too!

Pros: Amazingly easy setup, remote control operation, good price point

Cons: Lacks charm of actual strands of lights

[Buy the TOFU Laser Projector Light on Amazon for \\$29.99](#)

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## The best solar-powered Christmas lights



VMANOO

Why you'll love them: Once you have your [VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights](#) set up where you want them, they are 100% hands off until it's time to take the lights down again at the end of the holiday season.

Once you have the [VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights](#) where you want them, you don't have to think about these lights again until it's time to put them away after the holidays. That is, except when you admire them or get compliments from others.

The lights are 100% solar powered, requiring no proximity to an outlet, no battery swaps, and no programming with a timer or searching for a remote control, either. The lights have a sensor that automatically turns them on once the ambient light is low enough and that will switch them back off once the sun is again filling the sky.

Though to be honest, they will probably have dimmed or switched off entirely before that happens, as they have an approximate eight hour run time per charge. Don't worry, though, that's plenty long enough. Even with a dead of winter 4:30 p.m. sunset, the lights will still be aglow well after midnight.

The [VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights](#) come in a 72-foot strand, so you will be able to decorate a smaller tree or bush, an entire roofline, or to frame a number of windows and/or doors with a single strand. As they come in pale white, warm white, multicolored, and blue, you can choose the exact look you want for your holiday illumination.

The one major drawback to these lights is that they're hardly suitable for indoor use, as they need access to the sun to power up and need it to be dark in order to power on.

The [VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights](#) enjoy a four-star rating on

Amazon. One customer reported that they were "so nice, [she] had to order another set," adding that they were "brighter than [she] thought they would be."

Pros: No outlet or batteries needed, sensor turns lights on or off, available in multiple colors

Cons: Limited shine duration per charge

[Buy the VMANOO Solar Powered String Lights on Amazon for \\$16.99 \(prices vary by color\)](#)

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## The best indoor Christmas lights



Brizled

Why you'll love them: One 66-foot strand of [Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights](#) features 200 LEDs and should provide enough colorful bulbs to decorate an entire tree.

The [Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights](#) cost about 35 bucks, which isn't cheap in the holiday light arena. But with just one strand of these bright, colorful LED lights, you should be able to decorate even an eight or nine-foot tree. (I traditionally use four 15-foot strands on our trees, which are usually about 8.5 feet tall, so I'm something of the leading expert in the entire world on this, FYI.)

As these LEDs are rated to last for 25,000 hours, you probably won't have to replace the strand. Ever. Even if you leave your lights illuminated for a month straight every year, you can still expect about 35 years out of them.

The best thing about the [Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights](#) isn't their longevity, though, it's their looks. These bulbs approximate the same look as those beloved incandescent mini bulbs you'll remember from holiday seasons past, yet they use about 88% less power than traditional lights and never get hot enough to pose a risk of injury or fire.

And should you want to go full Griswold on your holiday decorations, you can safely connect up to 22 strands of these things. (Yes, that would mean an expenditure of more than \$700 and would mean more than 1,450 feet of lights... but you could do it, is the point!)

I say these lights are perfect for indoor use thanks to their cool physical temperature and warm light quality, and because you never tend to be far from an outlet inside, but for the record, they are perfectly safe for outdoor use in all sorts of weather conditions.

Currently, the Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights have a 4.1-star average rating on Amazon. One owner loves how "physically they look just like old-school 1980s/90s incandescent Christmas bulbs," while another says he "regret[s] not buying a second set."

Pros: Warm and bright light quality, durable lights last for years, spare bulbs and fuse included

Cons: Rather expensive option

[Buy the Brizled LED Mini String Christmas Lights on Amazon for \\$32.99](#)

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## The best permanent Christmas lights



Everlights

Why you'll love them: Once you have affixed strands of [EverLights](#) to your home, you can enjoy holiday lighting year after year without the need to ever remove or replace the lights.

If you love the annual ritual of climbing up and down ladders, scrambling about on the roof, fumbling with hundreds of feet of tangled cords, and that agonizing search for the missing bulb, [EverLights](#) might not be for you. If, however, spending a bit more cash and time this year and then never again worrying about holiday light installation sounds like time and money well spent, oh do read on.

EverLights are unique in many ways. First, there's the fact that these lights are designed to last for years and years even when exposed to all four seasons and the weather that comes with them. Second, there are the myriad installation options that not only allow for perfect custom lighting design but also render them all but invisible by day. And third, there's the fact that you can control them via an app, creating any number of intricate patterns of color, fade or flicker, and that you can program the exact times of day they will be on or off.

Now, the EverLights Starter Kit costs \$250, and that ain't cheap. Also, that's without lights included. [The Starter Bundle will run you \\$400](#) and comes with 25 feet of lighting, with additional 25-foot strands selling for \$150. All told, for an average roofline, you're probably looking at spending \$700. Which is steep, but spread that cost over the years and factor in the time saved each year, and you might just decide that permanent holiday lights are the way to go.

A writer with [KSL](#) praised the fact that "each individual light bulb... has a life expectancy of 50,000 hours" and that they can be left up "year-round and blend in until they are turned on."

Pros: Last for years, customizable lighting, nearly invisible by day, one time ever installation

Cons: Quite expensive, involved installation process

## Buy the EverLights Starter Bundle for \$400

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Check out our other great Christmas decorating guides



Home Accents

## The best Christmas decorations you can buy

A beautifully decorated home is part of the wonder of the holiday season. We've rounded up the best decorating essentials for your home to make it easier for you.

Here are our favorite decorations:

- The best faux tree: [National Tree Company's Douglas Fir](#)
  - The best tree stand: [Krinner Tree Genie Christmas Tree Stand](#)
  - The best ornaments: [Shop all ornaments at Target](#)
  - The best tree topper: [Christmas Snowman Tree Hugger](#)
  - The best tree skirt: [Wondershop Velvet Tree Skirt](#)
  - The best string lights: [GE Energy Smart Colorite LED Mini Light Set](#)
  - The best wreath for your front door: [Woodland Eucalyptus Wreath](#)
  - The best holiday inflatable: [Inflatable Snow Family](#)
  - The best stockings: [Needlepoint Stockings from L.L. Bean](#)
  - The best garland: [Home Accents Holiday Pre-Lit Plaza Garland](#)
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## The best artificial Christmas trees you can buy

Artificial Christmas trees have come a long way since the '80s, and now they look much more realistic and festive during the holiday season.

After researching scores of artificial trees that are available from \$15 to \$1,500 and assessing them for issues like cost, convenience, beauty, and realism, we've whittled it down to the five best artificial Christmas trees you can buy this holiday season.

Here are the best artificial Christmas trees you can buy:

- Best artificial Christmas tree overall: [Balsam Hill Classic Blue](#)

## Spruce

- Best for big rooms: [Pre-lit 12-foot Dunhill Fir Tree by National Tree](#)
  - Best for small spaces: [Home Heritage 7-foot Pre-Lit Artificial Half Christmas Tree](#)
  - Best budget tree: [Best Choice Products 6-foot Artificial Christmas Tree](#)
  - Best non-traditional tree: [Treetopia Silver Shadow Ombre Artificial Christmas Tree](#)
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## The best tree skirts you can buy on Amazon

Tree skirts add a dash of color and style to your holiday decor while hiding away that unsightly tree stand and all the Christmas light cords.

Here are the best tree skirts you can buy:

- Best tree skirt overall: [Primode Holiday Images 50-Inch Tree Skirt](#)
- Best traditional tree skirt: [Valery Madelyn 48-inch Tree Skirt](#)
- Best mini tree skirt: [VHC Brands Burlap Ruffled Mini Tree Skirt](#)
- Best affordable tree skirt: [SANNO Snowflake Rustic Beige Tree Skirt](#)
- Best large tree skirt: [Kurt Adler Embroidered and Pleated 60-Inch Tree Skirt](#)
- Best lighted tree skirt: [Teresa's Collection Woodland Reindeer Christmas Tree Skirt](#)

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## The best Christmas tree stands you can buy

The best Christmas tree stands are designed to last for many decades, have a stable base that holds plenty of water, are easy to set up, and store easily after the holidays are over. The [Krinner Tree Genie Christmas Tree Stand](#) is the best one you can buy, thanks to its innovative design.

You should also consider the [Jack-Post Welded Steel Christmas Tree Stand](#), the [National Tree Folding Tree Stand](#), the [Good Tidings Cinco Tabletop Christmas Tree Stand](#), and the [Cinco C Express Tree Stand](#).

Also, if you're doing holiday gift shopping, you can [check out all of our 2018 gift guides on Insider Picks](#).

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