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REVIEW – GoalZero Nomad7 / Guide10 AA & AAA Battery Charger

Edit

Posted on July 22, 2015 by AH



Yesterday I posted an article reviewing the SolPad7 Solaraid solar charging unit. I was impressed with it. But it was only fair that I test and

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the GoalZero Nomad7.

Well, Grant, the owner of [GetPreparedStuff.com](#), was kind enough to send me a GoalZero Nomad7 solar charging unit to test and review. If you don't know Grant, you should. I have known Grant for...I am thinking...5 or 6 years. While we don't always agree on everything (who does?), I can tell you that Grant is a man you can trust, he has honor and ethics. And he runs his website that way ([GetPreparedStuff.com](#)) That is a rare combination in this world today.



OK, back to the review...

Remember, I tell you the little impressive details of a product along the way so bear with me. I love GoalZero packaging! Yeah, stupid thing I know. But whoever designs their packaging should get a raise. You can just feel how cool it is. I am talking the package so far.



review the GoalZero option (Nomad7) as well. Problem was, I didn't own one. Yeah, minor issue right. Now, before I go with this review I am thinking that somewhere down the road I am going to do this head-to-head chart of the Solpad7 vs. the Nomad7 but that is when I get bored sometime later this summer. For now, this is the review of

UV-5RA : Tenq Vps-001
 Vehicle Power Supply
 TIP & REVIEW :
 Powerwerx TRCrimp
 for
 Anderson Powerpoles
 My "Go Bag" and
 myth buster!
 My buddy called me
 despondent, needing
 to talk...
 REVIEW – Baofeng
 UV-5RA : Tram 1185
 Amateur Dual-Band
 Magnet Antenna
 REVIEW & FIX –
 Baofeng UV-5RA :
 ExpertPower XP-771
 Elite 14.5-Inch Dual
 Band Antenna
 FIX for the Baofeng
 UV-5R car charger
 problem :)
 Things that make my
 head explode #8 :
 Special Edition – Cops
 vs. Children

I get the package open and get the unit
 out and I can it is typical GoalZero
 quality...just that, *quality*.



In the package you get the solar panel array, the Guide10 battery charger, 4 x AA rechargeable batteries, AAA battery adapter tray, and the 12vDC cigarette socket. FYI, the 12vDC cigarette socket is kind of the universal gizmo that you would use to try and connect anything else to this unit for charging or other uses. I don't and won't. Why? I am only expecting the Nomad7 to recharge my AA or AAA batteries; that's its only mission. That being said, back to the review...

Then I dug into all the accessories that comes along with it, I wanna see the different

options to hook things up to charge and recharge. The 4-battery recharging unit just looks like the standard AA battery charger, which it is. It has the adapter tray to hold AAA batteries but that is expected. The Nomad 7 comes with four AA batteries, 2300mAh rating. Not bad, not as good as my Tenergy rechargeables but fine all the same. But then I get a pleasant surprise.



The "power port" on the back of the actual folding panel is sweet! There are four connections, three with wires and connectors hanging off of it. There four connections are:

- USB port at the end of an 8" wire.
- 12vDC connector at the end of



an 8" wire.

- The Guide 10 battery charger port at the end of an 8" wire.
- And a port with no wire labeled "Chain Input"



Couple things struck me:

1. The wires are all thick walled and at least 12g wire.
2. The wires all have the little tension, bend protection "boots" on them to protect the wire from breaking or coming out of the connector or the power port itself.
3. Each port is clearly labeled in easy to read bright green on black. And you can access the power port. Oh yeah!

But what the heck was the "chain input" port for? So I decided, "What the heck, read the instructions."

Oooppsssss! The instructions don't match the unit exactly. But the instructions were good enough to let me know that the "chain port" was a way to daisy chain multiple Nomad7 units together to boost the amount of wattage

charging your batteries. And that my friend, cuts the charging time to about half.

NOTE: There are a couple



versions of this unit; older and newer.

Immediately I wanted to test the output of this puppy so I peeled the protective layer off the panels and set it up in the sun. FYI, I am estimating that I was getting about 75% sun that day due to some



old version of the Nomad7



high-level cloud cover. I tested the 12vDC cigarette socket and I am showing 14.92 vDC coming out. Respectable and plenty sufficient.



Next up, I hooked up the Guide10 battery pack and tested the current flowing to each of the battery charging terminals, 2.887 vDC. Again, respectable and plenty sufficient. So the battery charger and the cigarette socket are doing exactly what they are supposed to do. No, that is not a pretty low standard. In today's world with all the cheap crap coming out of China, the fact that something does what it is billed to do is a good standard to initially judge something by.

So then I turned my attention to the Guide10 battery charger case itself. I am not impressed. I mean it will do its job but here are the issues that I have:

- 1. There is no readily seen and easily understood battery level or charger status

lights. You have to look at a single LED and then flip the unit over and try and read the tiny black on silver "key" to what the blinking light means.

2. The battery charge level is in 50% increments. Too large of a range for my liking, I prefer a minimum of 25% increments to get a better idea what is going on.
3. Then there are three different colors; green, orange and red. Each of which mean something different.
4. The built-in LED light is 1/4 the brightness of the Solpad7 unit.

The sad part, the front panel of the Guide10 has plenty of room to have put a couple more LEDs and made the status an easy "glance" vs. interpreting different color blinking lights and the speed at which they are blinking to understand what it going on. But GoalZero chose to use that valuable space for advertising vs. end-user functionality. Too bad.

The Guide10 charged a set of Energizer batteries I had in pretty decent time. I am estimating that four fully discharged AA batteries would take about 3 – 4 hours to fully recharge. I am going to verify that today again. That is a very respectable recharging time and well within my mission parameters.

The coolest thing of all in this little package of goodies...carabineers! Yeah, in the package were two little carabineers that are about 1-1/2" long, by about 1" wide at the widest part. Of course they are GoalZero green. Bu they are awesome and obviously good quality. They are there to hook the dual panel Nomad7 panel to your pack or whatever else you are going to hang the panel from. Bad part, I would never trust a \$100 solar



recharging panel/kit along with my only other set of batteries to two little carabineers. Four maybe, but never two. I will contact the company and see if I can buy more.

Technical Information & Specifications –

Features:

- Recharge by: USB, Solar Panel
- Power Output: USB, AA/AAA Batts.
- Ideal for: Phone, GPS, Headlamp

Kit Includes:

- Guide 10 battery charger and LED light
- Nomad 7
- Weight: 1.2 lbs
- Light Compatibility: Luna, Firefly

Guide 10:



- 1 On-off switch for USB output and LED flashlight
- 2 Charge indicator light
- 3 Standard USB port
- 4 LED Flashlight
- 5 Solar charging input port
- 6 Mini-USB charging input port
- 7 Rechargeable AA or AAA battery case



Charge Times

- Any USB Power Source:
6-10 hours
- Nomad 7 Solar Panel: 3-6
Hours
- Nomad 13 Solar Panel:
2.5-5 Hours

Ports

- USB port (output): 5V, up to
1A (5W max), regulated
- USB-mini port (input): 5V,
up to 0.8A (4W max),
regulated
- Mini solar port (input): 6.5V,
up to 1.1A

Battery Details

- Cell Type: NiMH
- Peak Capacity: 11Wh

General

- Product SKU: 21005
- Chainable: No

(4.8V, 2300mAh)

- Single Cell Equivalent

Capacity: 9200mAh at 1.2V

- Lifecycles: 500 cycles
- Shelf-life: Keep plugged in, or charge every 3-6 months

- Fuses: none
- Management system

Charging and low-battery protection built-in

- Weight (w/batteries): 0.4 lbs (181 g)

- Dimensions: 2.5 x 4 x 0.75 in (6.4 x 10.2 x 1.9 cm)

- Operating usage temp.: 32-104 F (0-40 C)

- Certs: CE, FCC, ROHS
- Warranty 6 months

- User Guide [Download PDF](#) – [Guide 10 Plus](#)

*When using Goal Zero NiMH rechargeable low self-discharge AA cells.

****AAA Cells require an adapter
which is included with purchase.**

Light Detail

- LED Output: 100mW, white

LED

Nomad7 (Solar Panels) –

Charges the following:

- Goal Zero Switch 8: 3-6 hours
- Guide 10 Plus: 3-6 Hours

Solar Panel:

- Rated Power: 7W
- Open Circuit Voltage: 8-9V
- Cell Type: Monocrystalline

Ports

General

- USB Port: 5V, up to 1A (5W max), regulated
- Solar Port (blue, 8mm): 15V, up to 0.3A (5W max), regulated
- Mini Solar Port (2.5mm): 6.5V, up to 1.1A (7W max)
- Product SKU: 11800
- Weight: 0.8 lbs (363 g)
- Dimensions (unfolded): 9 x 1.5 x 17 in (22.9 x 3.8 x 43.2 cm)
- Dimensions (folded): 9 x 1.5 x 6.5 in (22.9 x 3.8 x 16.5 cm)
- Certs: CE, FCC, ROHS
- Warranty 12 months

With the Guide 10 Plus Recharger and Nomad 7 Solar Panel you have a portable, rugged charging kit as adventurous as you are. Charge AAs from the sun or any USB port, then power your phone, MP3, GPS, or perk up your tablet in a pinch.

So let's cut to the chase, the bottom line...the GoalZero Nomad7/Guide10 combo kit is a solid **"buy"** unit.

So a couple closing thoughts...

1. Yes, it is more expensive than the Solpad7 unit. But I also firmly believe that the Nomad7 unit is better quality. And teh SOIpad7 unit is not available for sale anywhere I looked.
2. Yes, there are other units/panels out there. No, I haven't tested them all personally but I have researched them extensively. Some are larger and more powerful, some are smaller and less expensive. But for the balance of size, power, mission and efficiency the Nomad7 is the correct panel for me.
3. I read a lot of reviews on the Nomad7 / Guide10 combination kit. There are number of bad reviews out there. What I found was three category of bad reviews; 1) using to charge phones & iPads, 2) getting used units sold as new, 3) the bad reviews were almost exclusively on the "older" version Nomad7.
4. Here is my response to the "bad reviews" – first, Grant at



GetPreparedStuff.com would never, ever try to sell a used product as new. So that is not an issue here. Second, I don't get a rat's rear-end about charging phones or iPads...that is not the purpose for this unit. I want it to charge AA and AAA batteries, period. I have other options if I want to charge phones or iPads. Both of those take far more power than this unit is designed for. So I am not going to task the unit with per-determined failure built it. I will stick to what I need...battery recharging. Lastly, I know Grant is carrying only the newer version.

And finally, buy from Grant. First he is giving a great discount off what the street price is. Second, Grant will stand behind the sale 100%. Third, the big box stores have

enough business...why not support the little guy who is busting his a\$\$ to be productive in this world...while he is helping out fellow preppers.

Here is the link to purchase the GoalZero Nomad7/Guide10 unit :

<http://www.getpreparedstuff.com/Goal-Zero-41022-Guide10-Plus-Kit-USB-Solar-charger-p/gz-41022.htm>

The ad will read "*Before Discount: \$119.95*" when you add it to your cart the price will show as "\$94.95"

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• Q: *What batteries can be used in the Guide 10 Plus?*

• A: Any AA or AAA* NiMH batteries can be used and recharged. We do not recommend other types of batteries. 4 same-sized

• Q: *Is the Guide 10 Plus waterproof?*

• A: No, but it is weather-resistant. Care should be taken to shield it from direct sunlight and the elements. Unexpected rain storms

batteries MUST be charged

probably won't harm it.

at once, but not all batteries

- *Q: How is the Guide 10*

need to be empty.

Plus protected?

*AAA cells are sold

- *A: Usage is plug-and-play.*

separately and come with

The built-in battery

an adapter to use with the

management system

Guide 10 Plus.

prevents over-charging and

- *Q: How do I charge the*

over-discharging of

Guide 10 Plus?

batteries. The USB output

- *A: From Solar: Use Goal*

will only supply the amount

Zero Nomad 3.5 or Nomad

of power needed.

7 with solar charge cable

for fast charging. From

USB: Use any USB power
source, such as a computer
or any Goal Zero power
pack.

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