



FASHION

The Best Packable Sun Hats That Make for Stylish Travel Companions

Madewell Packable Braided Straw Hat is where style meets sun protection.

By [Caitlyn Martyn](#) | Published on July 27, 2022 @ 09:20AM



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Desperate to keep my face from frying in the Italian summer sun a few years back, I picked up a five Euro fedora from an Amalfi Coast street vendor. When I got home, I realized that not only did I look ridiculous in every photo, but I *still* got sunburnt. So, take it from me: buy a stylish, non-mortifying sun hat prior to jetting off on your next vacation.

You might be thinking, *But I don't have any room in my carry-on for a floppy sun hat*. So, allow me to introduce you to packable sun hats. As the name suggests, they offer the same protection as regular sun hats, but they fold into themselves for easy packing. The magic really happens when you arrive at your destination: The hat pops right back into its original form without any structural damage.

There are plenty of flattering designs available, from resort-worthy straw hats to on-trend visors and everything in between. But with so many options, it's hard to know where to begin. To help you out, I searched high and low for the best packable sun hats and chatted with stylists and fellow editors to compile a list of hats that you'll *actually* want to wear.

Read on for the best packable sun hats.

Our Picks

Best Overall: Madewell Packable Braided Straw Hat

Best Value: Land's End Women's Packable Visor

Best Splurge: Janessa Leoné Hamilton

Best Visor: Hat Attack Roll Up Visor

Best Bucket Hat: [Lack of Color Wave Bucket Hat](#)

Best for Boating: [Baggu Packable Sun Hat](#)

Best for Hiking: [Wallaroo Hat Company Women's Victoria Sun Hat](#)

Best for All Head Sizes: [J. Crew Wide-Brim Packable Straw Hat](#)

[Best Overall: Madewell Packable Braided Straw Hat](#)



[View at Madewell \(\\$40\)](#)

What We Love: The ribbon ties around the hat and secures it in place when it's folded up.

What We Don't Love: It sells out fast.

one from Madewell has just the right amount of everything: Structure, sun protection and style. Thanks to its 95 percent paper straw composition, the hat has just enough stiffness so that the sides stay upright, while still having a considerable amount of flop. The brim offers three and a half inches of protection – aka enough to cover your face – but you're still able to see what's ahead of you. It comes with a multipurpose elastic ribbon that, aside from adding a subtle stylish detail to the hat, ties around the hat and keeps it secure when it's folded in your bag. Beauty expert and content creator [Kristina Rodulfo](#) swears by a similar Madwell sun hat ([the Scarf-Strap Straw Hat](#)), which is made with the same idea in mind. "I'm currently on a 10-week trip through Europe and I absolutely love how the hat covers my face but is made from a lightweight material that doesn't trap heat," she says. "I always pack a straw sun hat with a wide brim for added protection from UV rays and it looks at home on the beach or matching with a sundress."

Material: Paper straw, Elastic | **Size:** S/M, M/L | **Number of Colors:** 4

[Best Value: Land's End Women's Packable Visor](#)



View at Land's End (\$17)

What We Love: This classic visor has a velcro strap that can be adjusted to properly fit your head size.

What We Don't Love: The color options are slim.

Lover of long walks on the beach? Spend hours tending to a garden? Trying to get in on the coastal grandmother trend? The visor, a total classic, checks all of those boxes. As Rodolfo tells *InStyle*, "Visors are great for when it's so hot you need to wear your hair up but still want shade over your face." For under \$20, you can snag this elegant-looking, incredibly comfortable sun hat that shields your face from the sun without making an up-do feel complicated. The paper and polyester straw blend are smooth to the touch (instead of scratchy or itchy like other straw hats), and, thanks to a hidden band sewn into the interior of the hat, it stays where it's supposed to and doesn't contribute to hat hair. When you're ready to pack it up, simply roll it into a cone shape, then tie it in place.

Best Splurge: Janessa Leoné Hamilton Hat



[View at Janessa Leoné \(\\$260\)](#)

What We Love: With four sizing options, this hat makes it easy to find your optimal fit.

What We Don't Love: We wish there was a darker color.

If you're going to splurge on a packable hat, let it be this one. [Chloe Anello](#), Senior Commerce Fashion Editor at *InStyle*, recommends this hat, which was gifted to her, for hot summer days because she describes it as "very lightweight, which is great for days when hats are necessary but can easily make your head sweaty," she says. "I shoved it in a bag to take to the pool on two separate occasions, and each time I went to grab it from my overpacked tote, it unfolded as if I never

past. It also offers a UPF rating (like SPF but for textiles) of 45+ to really protect your face from the sun. It comes in four different sizes, each with the same folding capabilities for a proper fit, but you can only purchase it in two neutral shades. However, the brand offers a plethora of other styles in case you would like to shop around.

Material: Straw | **Size:** S, M, L, XL | **Number of Colors:** 2

Best Visor: Hat Attack Roll Up Visor



[View at Hat Attack \(\\$106\)](#)

Also available at [Revolve](#), [Bloomingdales](#), and [Saks Fifth Avenue](#)

What We Love: Made from beautiful raffia, this visor is surprisingly durable and comfortable.

If you're looking for a packable sun hat that protects you both during action and leisure, you can't go wrong with Hat Attack's Roll Up Visor. I recently wore this hat (which I was kindly gifted by the brand) during an afternoon filled with sports and lounging around. Made with 100 percent raffia straw, it has more structure than the Lands' End visor, but was still surprisingly lightweight. The texture feels a bit rough to the touch, but thanks to the attached sweatband (aka the area that hugs your forehead), it never scratched my skin, keeping me comfortable the entire time. The brim extends out almost five inches, covering my whole face while laying by the pool yet still allowing me to comfortably read my book without needing to contort my neck in an awkward way.

Material: Raffia | **Size:** OS | **Number of Colors:** 1

Best Wide Brim: San Diego Hat Company Perfect Unisex El Campo Ultrabraided Sun Hat



Also available at [Free People](#) and [San Diego Hat Company](#)

What We Love: This structured hat's wide brim stays in place.

What We Don't Love: The brim might be too big for smaller face shapes.

For those uninterested in big, floppy hats, the Perfect Unisex El Campo Ultrabraided Sun Hat from San Diego Hat Company has got you covered (literally). The hat, which is woven from recycled post-consumer waste, has structure with a hint of bohemian flair synonymous with a bigger brimmed hat. After trying the hat (which the brand gifted to me), I immediately appreciated the sewn-in band that absorbs sweat and ensures a more comfy fit. Although the hat comes in three sizes – small, medium and large – the brim might be too large for smaller face shapes. Nonetheless, it packs down to a small size, unfolds easily and feels as light as smaller hats, which is pretty impressive.

Material: Paper, Polyester | **Size:** 3 | **Number of Colors:** 7

Best Bucket Hat: Lack of Color Wave Bucket Hat



View at Lack of Color (\$99)

Also available at [Revolve](#)

What We Love: The terry cloth hat comes in 15 bold colors to pair with any aesthetic.

What We Don't Love: We wish there were more size options.

I distinctly remember hating the bucket hats my mom would force me to wear on beach trips as a kid. Wearing one made me feel so uncool. Fast forward a few years, bucket hats are cool again, thanks to celebs like [Hailey Bieber](#) and [Kaia Gerber](#), who have resurrected the style made famous by '90s street style icons and hip hop artists. This hat from Lack of Color (which is anything but) won the top spot in [our Best Bucket Hats](#) for a reason: It checks off all the boxes. Between the wide, circular brim that offers 360 degree sun protection and 16 fun colors to choose from, it's hard not to love this hat. Influencer [Lindsay Silberman](#) says she's "tried so many hat brands," but she always comes back to Lack of Color. "They offer classic styles but feel totally unique *and*

UPF 50+ rating, it's basically the perfect hat to roll up and bring with you on your next vacation.

Material: Terry cloth | **Size:** S/M, M/L | **Number of Colors:** 15

Best For Boating: Baggu Packable Sun Hat



[View at Baggu \(\\$36\)](#)

Also available on [Shopbop](#)

What We Love: The elongated brim keeps you covered while the drawstring elastic band secures the hat to your head.

What We Don't Love: There is only one size option.

Out on the open water with no shade? No problem. This packable sun hat from Baggu packs into itself and then bursts open like a tent when

comes in one size, it can be altered to fit most head shapes, up to 23.5 inches (about 1 inch larger than the average adult head). The 100 percent cotton hat packs into its own circular pouch for easy carrying and storage, no matter how much room you have in your bag. The machine washable fabric comes in nine patterns, ranging from a mod floral to trippy checkers, so you can pick one that best suits your aesthetic.

Material: Cotton | **Size:** OS | **Number of Colors:** 9

Best for Hiking: Wallaroo Hat Company Women's Victoria Sun Hat



[View at Amazon \(\\$46\)](#)

Also available at [Wallaroo](#)

What we don't love: It doesn't have a soft lining like some other hats from the brand do.

Designed to join you on all of your outdoor adventures, this hat (and its three and a half inch wide brim) from Wallaroo works to protect your face, neck and ears from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.. Because it's made of a poly-straw weave material that's ultra-lightweight, comfortable, and breathable, we can ensure you won't overheat while on the trail. "It blew my mind how lightweight it is," Anello shares. "Because of the hat's hidden drawstring closure, you get a custom fit and never have to worry about your hat flying away." The best part is that the hat folds up into a tiny ball that can be squeezed into that overstuffed backpack without causing damage to the hat.

Material: Poly-straw | **Size:** OS | **Number of Colors:** 22

What to Keep in Mind

Material

When looking for a sun hat, consider the material of the hat. If the fabric is uncomfortable, you won't get the most wear out of your hat. In addition, Silberman explains that the more durable the material of the hat, the better. "I've found that hats made out of straw are more sturdy and less likely to break compared to something more delicate," she says. Material also matters when it comes to packing. If the shape of your hat gets messed up while in transit, she recommends steaming the brim and then setting it on a table underneath something heavy like a set of books to get rid of creases and dents.

Keep in mind that although many hats come with a label that says "one size fits all," that's rarely true. To find a hat that *actually* fits if your head tends to be on either end of the size spectrum, look into options that come in a variety of sizes. Then, try measuring your head and comparing your measurements to those on the accompanying size guide. It's also helpful to consider options that feature adjustable cords that can alter the size a bit.

Sun Protection

According to Rodulfo, your first line of defense should always be ample sunscreen application. But "to make sure you have added layers of protection, wearing a hat is your best bet," she says. "Plus, skin on your scalp is susceptible to sun damage, too, and there aren't really great options for applying sunscreen there."

Your Questions, Answered

What are packable sun hats used for?

Designed to fold easily, packable sun hats are particularly travel-friendly and an ideal choice for someone looking for extra sun protection while on vacation. These types of hats roll up easily to toss into a suitcase or beach bag, then unravel at the destination with no structural damage.

How can you pack a sun hat?

your suitcase and fill the base with clothes to help it keep its shape. Silberman also recommends using a hat holder, like the [Top Tote Hat Holder](#) to attach her hats to her carry-on bags.

How can you style a sun hat?

Sun hats go with everything — seriously. Silberman tells InStyle, "When I'm on vacation, you'll catch me wearing a sun hat from the minute I wake up until the minute I go to sleep. Bad hair day? Throw on a sun hat. Worried about wrinkles? Sun hat. Too hungover to be seen in public at breakfast? Yep, you're gonna need a sun hat for that." Plus, she says, sun hats make for great photo props. "You'll feel 20 times less awkward posing for a photo if you're holding a hat in your hand."

What is UPF?

Not all fabrics are the same, especially when it comes to protecting skin from the sun. To determine how effectively a garment protects the skin from the sun, check its UPF (also known as ultraviolet protection factor) rating. UPF indicates how much UV radiation (both UVB and UVA) light a fabric allows to reach the skin. The highest a garment or accessory can rank is a UPF of 50, which blocks about 98 percent of the sun's rays, reducing your exposure significantly. So, when shopping for a sun hat, it's helpful to pick one with protection built in.

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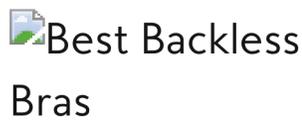
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