



# Buy solar panel for home

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It's almost Cyber Monday! See the best Cyber Monday deals our experts have found so far.

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The final price to install solar panels on a rooftop might be \$50,000 different from one house to another. But some costs are common to almost every installation.

As you sketch out your dream system and think about your budget, our aim is to give you the knowledge to ask potential installers detailed, informed, and revealing questions.

A solar-panel system is expected to last for 30 years. The more you know now, the better the odds are that you'll get a system you'll want to keep for that long.

The answer to that question: It's complicated, and it depends.

At the other end of the range is the Central Florida home of Erik Erickson, Wirecutter's director of platform engineering. To manage hurricane threats and routine power outages, Erik has specced out a slightly oversize solar array coupled to four backup batteries. Capable of powering the home if the grid goes down for a week or more, the system will come in at about \$68,000.

The average price falls somewhere in between. The median price of a US residential solar installation was \$4.20 per watt in 2022 (down from \$14 in 2000), and such a system produced 7.2 kilowatts, according to a report from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (PDF). (That number skews low because California installs the most residential systems, but they're relatively small; other states average above 8 kilowatts.) That works out to a total cost of about \$30,240.

EnergySage, a "solar matchmaker" whose expertise we've highlighted before, has a detailed chart of state-by-state average costs that may give you a rough idea of what to expect for your home. Just be aware that the results shown there are limited to an average system size installed in that state, which may not match your own needs, and the figures are lower by about 25% than the numbers in the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory report. In part, this is because EnergySage factors in savings that you can get only if you use EnergySage to connect with contractors in your area.

The federal government will subsidize 30% of the cost of your solar project.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 made several important changes to how federal solar tax credits work. For one, it extended the credit for years, until 2034; it also raised the rebate to 30% of the total cost of



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installation until 2032, after which it tails off to 26% and 22% the next two years.

There's no cap to the cost, either--whether you pay \$10,000 or \$100,000 for your solar project, you get the full value of the credit.

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