



Bitesized Review: PowerTraveller Powermonkey Classic Portable Travel Charger

The guys at Picstop (www.picstop.co.uk) asked me to review the PowerTraveller Powermonkey classic portable travel charger and by coincidence it arrived a few days before I was going on a 10-day trip. Essentially it is a rechargeable unit that can be used itself to recharge numerous portable electronic devices such as phones, media players and games consoles which will save you having to pack all their different chargers - or put up with the hassle when you forget one.

When it arrived I was first impressed with the sturdy Perspex packaging - it gave the unit a feeling of quality.

I received the black version for the review but a silver one is also available.



Two pieces of clear tape on either side need to be removed so that the lid can be taken off.

The charger itself is clipped into a small cradle at the top.



Once removed you can again feel the quality of its sturdy construction. This isn't something that is going to get damaged easily. This is version 2 of the Powermonkey and has a sliding on/off switch and recessed LED lights.

Here photographed against a twenty pence piece for size comparison.



Removing the cradle reveals a plethora of attachments - both for charging the Powermonkey and for attaching it to numerous mobile devices.

Let's have a look at what you get....



Bitesized Review

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1) A handy fold-out instruction leaflet.



2) A mains charger to recharge the Powermonkey. This comes with interchangeable heads which means it can be used in the UK, Australia, USA, Japan, China and Europe.

The Powermonkey will fully charge in 3.5 hours using the mains charger.



3) A retractable USB charger that will recharge the Powermonkey from a PC, laptop or a USB port in a car.

The Powermonkey will fully charge in 6 hours using the USB charger.



4) Nine tips (they call them monkeynuts) that can be used to charge mobile devices; iPod tip, Sony Ericsson 750i tip, Female USB tip, LG Chocolate tip, Micro USB tip, Mini USB tip, Samsung G600 tip, Mini Nokia DC2.0 tip and a PSP & digital camera DC 4.0 tip.



5) A handy pouch to put all those pesky 'monkeynuts' in when you are not using them.



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Now the packaging states that the Powermonkey is 60% charged when it arrives - but to put it fully to the test I decided to charge it to its maximum.

This just means attaching the appropriate charging head to the mains charger, plugging it in and switching on (the Powermonkey needs to be switched off during charging). The LED shows red whilst charging and turns green when charged.



It took approximately 1 hour to charge which, based on the quoted charging time for the mains charger vindicates the '60% charged on arrival' claim.

The Powermonkey will work with any electronic device up to 5.5 volts (provided you have the appropriate 'monkeynut').

So, how did it do on its mini-trial:

The first thing we tested was my wife's Samsung Galaxy Ace. A monkeynut was quickly found and it fully charged the phone from 20% in about one hour.



Next we tried my iPhone. It was also at about 20% and so the appropriate monkeynut was found and we started charging. However, when it reached about 35% charged the Powermonkey ran out itself.

The Powermonkey had to be recharged for a hour-and-a-half.

It later charged the phone fully in about one hour. To be safe I recharged the Powermonkey again since there is no way of knowing how much charge is left.



Bitesized Review

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My wife then wanted her iPod shuffle charged. Unfortunately the earphone socket plug is not included as a monkeynut. This is a charger that would still need to be packed.



Our Garmin Nuvi sat-nav ran down and so we charged that in about half-an-hour.



My wife's Nintendo DS game machine was dead. Unfortunately this was another gadget that had no monkeynut to charge it.



Our final gadget to test was my wife's second phone (see who likes all the gadgets in our house?), a Samsung GT-E1195. This charged without problems - although once again the Powermonkey was left depleted.



Bitesized Review

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Conclusion:

Well I have mixed feelings about this. It's a well-made piece of kit which certainly justifies its price tag and the theory behind it is solid enough. In practice, however, it does have its shortcomings.

I can see it working for someone backpacking a long distance but who could pre-select the gadgets they were taking ensuring that the required monkeynuts were available. But even then, if two or more gadgets run out of steam at the same time it appears that the Powermonkey would struggle to charge them all up without a recharge - and you never know how much charge is left in the unit itself (until it runs out).

For me, I think it works better as an emergency back-up in case your gadget runs out unexpectedly - rather than as a substitute for the actual charger itself.

Pro's

- Well made
- Good concept
- Useful as emergency backup
- Good storage box

Con's

- Not enough monkeynuts
- Needs recharging itself too often
- No charge-life indication

The black version that Picstop sent me to review has a RRP (recommended retail price) of £49.99 but they sell for at just £32.99 (with free delivery). The silver version has the same RRP but Picstop are selling them for just £24.99 (again with free delivery).

Similar products from other manufacturers and retailers are also available.

If you found this review useful please let me know by leaving a comment on my Facebook page (or just 'Like' it) at <https://www.facebook.com/johnhallettphotographs/> . Thanks