



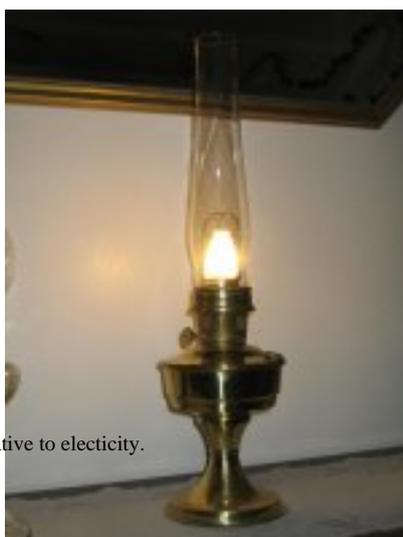
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Genie's Magic Lamp

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- Gear reviews and tests - Lamps and Lanterns -



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Description :

Petrol/oil lamp a good alternative to electricity.

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This is the time of year for those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere are putting the finishing touches on our winter preparedness plan. This can be a fairly comprehensive plan needed to survive extended blizzard conditions or a plan put in place to live through a power outage of short duration. Those of us who have lived through these types of experiences and learned from them, know a little preparation now goes a long way. I want to share with all of you some of my thought that does not appear to have been covered by other articles in our little corner of the internet. I hope that maybe I can in some small way repay all of those who helped me learn to not only survive, but to live and thrive in this world of ours.



Alladin lamp

The scenario I wish to present you with is dark and cold, which is a reality to many "surprised" people every winter here in North America. Many of our less forward thinking neighbors believe that whenever they flip a switch, there will always be light and that only a nudge of the thermostat, will bring a wave of refreshing warmth gushing into their house. The rest of us think it is nice when it actually happens that way, but know that there will be times when it's just not going to happen. I find that I always want to have at least two layers to every aspect of my winter plan and three layers makes me much happier. No matter if it is heat, light, transportation or whatever, depending on only one source is just asking for a winter "adventure" to come your way.

I thought that we would examine one of our options for making light in today's modern fast paced world using equipment and technology that has proven itself to be dependable over many decades of daily use. Oil lamps of the late 1800's are familiar to many of you and I would hope that there are still many old table lamps and barn lanterns waiting to be dusted off and pressed back into service should the need arise. What is news to many people is that the work on improving and perfecting these oil burners did not end with the invention of the light bulb. People in rural

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America used many of these improved lamps until after World War II when electricity finally made its way to most of rural America.

The biggest name in these improved lamps here in America is Aladdin, which got its start in 1909 with a lamp utilizing a round wick, a central draft tube and an incandescent mantle. In the almost 100 years since its introduction the Aladdin lamp has proven itself to be a dependable and useful source of light.

The Aladdin lamp puts out light that is equivalent to a 60-watt light bulb. An oil table lamp this bright is surprising to most people when they first see it, as is the 2000 BTU's of heat output that warms those around it. The high temperature combustion insures an odorless light source that can run on the regular K-1 kerosene that you can buy at many filling stations and quick-stop stores across North America. Its quart capacity tank allows for extended run times. These run-times depend of course, on how high you have the light turn up but I would not consider 6-8 hours to be unusual.

My personal preference is to turn the lamp down to about 80-90% so I do not have to watch it too closely. The mantle will build up a layer of carbon if turned up too high and running it at 100% is asking for it to mess up the mantle while your back is turned. Still 45-55 watts of light go a long way when the power is out or you want a little extra heat and light while you are reading or in my case, working on the computer.

There are two things to know about these lamps when you first start using them. First like all mantles, the Aladdin mantles are fragile all things considered. When I move to a new house and have to pack the lamp, I know I will need a new mantle on arrival at our destination. Also, since the lamp does not operate without its glass chimney, an extra one of those should be on hand as well. The chimney locks or screws onto the lamp instead of being held on by the more familiar metal fingers like most table lamps. The Aladdin's chimney must never be screwed down tightly since the metal and glass expand at different rates as they get hot breaking the chimney of those careless enough to not leave it the space it needs.

My normal lamp maintenance kit includes a wick trimmer as well as at least one each of the mantles and chimneys as well as a spare wick which is about 10 years old and still waiting for the first one to die of natural causes. I have gone through several mantles as well as one glass chimney, which helped me to learn the correct amount of torque to use during its installation. The wick trimmer is used to keep the wick clean and even and should be used about every other tank-full of fuel. Performed on a cold lamp, wick maintenance takes about a minute or less and is not a complex procedure. The company resources state that a lamp burned every day for extended periods of time will need a new wick about once a year. They also detail all the normal advice about using clean fuel and keeping the wick clean and trimmed to extend the its life.

I have found the Aladdin lamp to be a very useful addition to my preparedness kit. It complements the more "normal" oil table lamps, barn lanterns, Coleman lanterns, flashlights and headlights that comprise the rest of my arsenal used to fight the dark cold world of a winter storm.

For those who care about such things the lamp's solid brass body and tall glass chimney make it attractive enough to fit in to the decor of most houses which, while more important to my wife, does allows me to have it sitting out on a side table ready to go year around. Having decorative items that are useful as emergency gear not only make my preparations for hard times less visible to others, but help to integrate them into our normal everyday lives ready at a moments notice.