

Wood-Powered Camp Kettle Heats Water Fast ... if You Can Light It

- [Ultra Light Kettle Co. mKettle](#)
- [Sports and Outdoors](#)
- · \$82
- · [Ultra Light Kettle Co.](#)

Reviewed by [Rachel Zurer](#) ✉ · September 15, 2011



Photo by Jon Snyder/Wired

Normally, a camper has to choose between the whimsy of cooking over an open fire and the efficiency of a backcountry stove. But with the mKettle, a double-walled stove/kettle combo, you can have the best — and worst — of both worlds, all in a compact, lightweight package.

To use the [mKettle](#), you build a mini fire in its removable base. The flames travel up through the chimney at the center of the aluminum canteen, heating the surrounding cylinder of water to a boil inside 10 minutes. That's the theory, anyway.

In practice, the heat transfer is extremely efficient, and the neoprene sleeve around the outside of the canteen ensures that the warmth goes into your soup-to-be, not into the surrounding air.

But for the magic to happen, you need actual flames, and those are more easy to imagine than create.

The major advantage of the mKettle over gas-powered camping stoves is that you don't have to lug your fuel with you. Instead, you burn whatever you find in camp. But what if it's raining? And windy. And you need boiling water in order to eat. *Shudder.*

You get the point: Unless you're a Navy SEAL or an Eagle Scout, trying to light a fire in a tiny space under non-ideal conditions is enough to ruin your day. Even under ideal conditions, it can be frustrating and time-consuming.

If you do get a fire going strong, your 18 ounces of water can be hot in as fast as 3.5 minutes, if you [believe mKettle's specs](#). I never did better than 6 minutes myself.

I also tried alternative fuels,. I can tell you that a lemon-scented soy votive candle is not sufficiently powerful to boil water in the mKettle, even if you're willing to let its delightful fragrance fill your campsite for nearly an hour.

The kettle comes with a food-grade silicone stopper so you can use it as a canteen to transport water. But don't leave the stopper in once you light your fire or it'll turn into a projectile.

The mouth of the kettle is too small for cleaning, so you're limited to heating water inside of it. But the company has very recently introduced a new accessory, a titanium cross-stand that fits over the chimney so you can place a pot there, letting you cook a meal and heat your water at the same time.

I can imagine a situation — say, natural disaster or zombie attack — where having a light (13-ounce), portable, fuel-agnostic water-boiling tool might mean the difference between game over and level up. But for regular camping? I'll stick with gas.

WIRED Transfers heat extremely well from flame to water. Neoprene sleeve stays cool as water boils. You can use it as a canteen, too. Base nestles inside canteen's chimney for compact storage.

TIRED Building and maintaining flames can be tricky and is not for the impatient. At 13 ounces, doesn't really qualify as ultralight.