



Home / Lighting

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Best smart plugs: These gadgets will turn any electrical outlet into a smart socket

Here's an easy and inexpensive way to control the lamps and small appliances in your smart home. There are dozens to choose from; we'll help you find the right one.



By **Christopher Null**
Freelance Contributor, TechHive | JUL 21, 2020 9:38 AM PDT

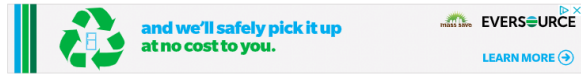


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Every room in your house has them: power outlets, and they're about as dumb as **technology** can be. To create a true smart home, you need to upgrade the way your wiring works, so that it can be controlled, managed, and monitored from afar.

You could hire an electrician to rip out your existing outlets and replace them with smart in-wall models, but there's an easier, less-expensive way: Stick a smart plug in those outlets. They work just the way they sound: The outlet in the wall doesn't change, you just configure the add-on plug using an app, connect it to your network, and use it to control whatever's plugged into it.

Smart plugs are handy in all kinds of ways. Some models have built-in dimmers, so you can adjust the brightness of the lamp that's plugged into them; others can power small appliances, such as a fan or space heater. Others can be scheduled, so you can make your home look lived in while you're away on vacation, or so that you can limit the hours your kids can play video games or watch TV.

[Further reading: A smart home guide for beginners]

Which smart plug is best for your home? Here are our top choices, plus a shopping guide that will help you decide which one is right for you if none of our picks fits your needs. You can also [click here to see a list](#) of all the smart plugs we've reviewed to date.

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Updated July 21, 2019 to add a link to our news story announcing Hampton

Products' entry into the Wi-Fi smart plug and smart bulb market. The Peace by Hampton Wi-Fi 15-amp smart plug will be available exclusively from Best Buy in a two-pack for \$18.99, making each smart plug a very reasonable \$9.50.

Best smart plug for most people




Leviton Decora DW15P smart plug
●●●●○ [Read TechHive's review](#)
\$21.50 [See It](#)
on Amazon

With its streamlined design and lower price, Leviton's latest smart plug is one of the most compelling on the market.

Leviton's Decora DW15P smart plug is our new favorite in this category. It connects to your network over Wi-Fi, so there's no hub required. And its slim form factor means you can plug two of them into the same duplex outlet. But what renders it unique in this class of products is that it's a dual-band device, meaning it can operate on both 2.4- and 5GHz Wi-Fi networks. That's a great feature if you live in an area that's saturated with devices operating on the 2.4GHz frequency band.

Runner-up




Curren WiFi Smart Outlet
●●●●○ [Read TechHive's review](#)
\$30.88 (\$4.82 / oz) [See It](#)
on Amazon (Prime Eligible)

With thoughtful design and loads of features, Curren raises the bar on what you should expect from a smart outlet.

The Curren WiFi Smart Outlet costs quite a bit more than Leviton's offering, but in addition to looking prettier, it delivers two independently controllable smart outlets while consuming just one receptacle.

Best smart plug for power users




Lutron Caséta Wireless Smart Lighting Lamp Dimmer Starter Kit (Model P-BDG-PKG2P)
●●●●○ [Read TechHive's review](#)
\$89.99 [See It](#)
on Amazon (Prime Eligible)

This top smart plug choice includes just about everything, including two dimmers, two remote controls, and a bridge to control them—and many other devices in the Caseta Wireless product line.

The hub in Lutron's starter kit can control more than just the smart plugs that come with it. It also supports Lutron's in-wall dimmer switches and you can use it to schedule and automate Lutron's line of [Serena powered window shades](#). What's more, you can incorporate the kit into a broader smart home system, and it's compatible with Apple's HomeKit ecosystem, too.

Best smart power strip



TP-Link Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Power Strip (model HS300)
●●●●● [Read TechHive's review](#)
\$69.99 (\$2.13 / oz) [See It](#)
on Amazon (Prime Eligible)

TP-Link's Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Power Strip makes all the right choices, from a sleek design that fits in with home decor to a set of advanced scheduling options for every kind of routine and travel need—and surge protection.

There's isn't a lot of competition in this area, but it's not just that TP-Link wins by default. The Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Power Strip features six grounded outlets that can be independently controlled and scheduled, plus three fast USB charging ports. It of course offers protection from power surges as well. It might seem expensive at around \$80, but it's actually a pretty strong deal when you compare it to dual-outlet smart plugs that cost about \$60.





Best outdoor smart plug



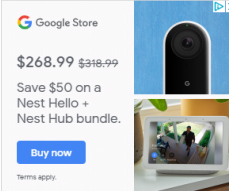
TP-Link Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Outdoor Plug (model KP400)

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●●●●○ [Read TechHive's review](#)

\$24.29 [See It](#)

on Amazon (Prime Eligible)

TP-Link brings its smart home system to the outdoors, but you'll pay extra for it.

TP-Link has a strong smart lighting control lineup in its Kasa Smart line, and the all-new Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Outdoor Plug extends that range outdoors for the first time. What sets this device apart from the competition is its ability to control its two electrical outlets independently, and the LED indicators that report the status of each outlet as well as its Wi-Fi connection. Apple HomeKit fans, however, might prefer the [iDevices Outdoor Switch](#), at least until TP-Link has finished its work to add HomeKit support to its Kasa Smart lineup.

What to look for when shopping

Smart plugs might seem like a commodity, but they cover a wide range of design styles, capabilities, and compatibilities. If you're in the market for a smart plug, consider how your environment—and what you plan to connect to the smart plug—matches the following list of features.

As always, full reviews of all the smart plug hardware on the market follow at the end of the buyers' guide.

Indoor vs. outdoor: Most smart plugs can only be used inside, since they aren't weatherproof. (These are almost invariably white in color.) Weatherized switches (almost always black) are clearly denoted as safe for use outside.



This iDevices Outdoor Switch is one of the few smart plugs that are rated for outdoor use.

Hub requirements: If you need to control the switch through a third-party hub like SmartThings or Wink, that's one more piece of gear you'll need to budget for. In many cases, a switch vendor will also offer its own hub as an option, though these can be limited in flexibility and features. Using a hub will also make it easier to interconnect various devices, so if you want to press a single button to turn on both overhead lights and lamps at the same time, a hub's a great way to get this done.

Wireless standard: As with all smart home gear, smart plugs support one of several wireless technologies, including Zigbee, Z-Wave, or Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi plugs typically don't require a hub—your router serves that role—while Zigbee and Z-Wave models do. You'll also encounter two proprietary standards: Clear Connect, used in Lutron's Caséta products; and Insteon, a hybrid of wireless and powerline home networking.



Zigbee Alliance

Zigbee is one of the more popular smart-home protocols on the market.

HomeKit support: If you're looking for compatibility with Apple's HomeKit devices (and want to tell Siri to turn lights on and off), you'll need to look for this support, which should be well-labeled on a product's website and packaging.

Voice assistant compatibility: Many smart plugs work with Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, or both. Support for Apple's Siri is less common, but not hard to find. If you have Amazon Echo, Google Home, or Apple HomePod

smart speakers in your home, you'll love being able to turn sockets on and off with voice commands.

Power limitations: You can't plug *anything* into a smart plug. Most are rated to handle just a few hundred watts of power consumption, which is fine for a lamp or a coffee maker, but you might encounter problems if you connect a hair dryer or a professional blender to one. Power plug manufacturers tend to bury their maximum wattage ratings in the fine print, so check carefully beforehand if you expect the outlet to support high-draw appliances.

What to look for when shopping

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TP-Link's Kasa Smart Wi-Fi Power Strip includes six grounded smart outlets in one.

What to look for when shopping

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Number of plugs: Designs vary widely here. Some smart plugs replace a single plug, some replace two. Some designs offer two plugs, but only one of them is smart; the other is an always-on pass-through plug. Whichever design you choose, be sure to consider the physical design of the device itself. Many of these devices—even those with a single-plug design—cover up both wall sockets, which can greatly limit their utility. Smart power strips—which offer multiple, individually controlled smart plugs in a single device—are also entering the market. TechHive recently showered praise on a [model from TP-Link](#).

Grounded or ungrounded: Some smart plugs offer only two-prong, ungrounded power. (This is done in part to dissuade you from attaching heavy machinery to the outlet.) If you need three-prong, fully grounded electricity, be sure to purchase one of the many smart plugs on the market that includes this feature.

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Some smart plugs, such as this GE by Jasco model, accept only two-prong plugs and are not directly grounded.

What to look for when shopping

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Energy monitoring features: Curious as to how much power your connected device is sucking down? Energy monitoring features let you use the device's mobile app to track power consumption over time, giving you a better argument to use against your wasteful, wasteful children who never turn off the TV.

Integrated dimming: If you're hooking up a lamp to a smart plug, you can easily turn it into a dimmable lamp if the switch includes an onboard dimmer. These switches include hardware buttons to control dimming directly on the switch itself in addition to app-based control.

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Our smart plug reviews

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<small>on Amazon</small> | See It |
| ▶ Centralife 4-Series Smart Outlet
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Christopher Null is a veteran technology and business journalist. He contributes regularly to TechHive, PCWorld, and Wired, and operates the websites Drinkhacker and Film Racket.

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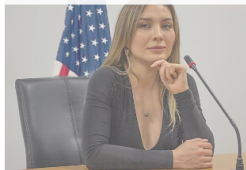
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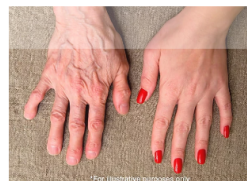
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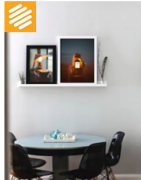
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