

Plan Triplewax PVA Chamois

£4.49 Rating: ★★★★★
Weight: 80g Wet weight: 300g
 Thought-out PVA Chamois from CarPlan was a dry cloth to come with a tube to keep it damp. It proved to be the greatest on test, but it still needed to soak up a lot of water in one pass, leaving the bonnet reasonably dry. But because of its size, this proved hard work. Price is fairly competitive, although there's nothing special about this chamois.

Kent Giant Microfibre Synthetic Chamois Cloth

Price: £10.72 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 250g Wet weight: 1,000g
 MIDDLE-of-the-road performance from this Kent, as it provided only average absorbency. It's large enough to soak up a lot of water in one pass, leaving the bonnet reasonably dry. But because of its size, this proved hard work. Price is fairly competitive, although there's nothing special about this chamois.

Kent Extra Large Microfibre Drying Towel

Price: £6.68 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 200g Wet weight: 1,800g
BEST BUY Super-absorbent and very soft, this sucked up the most water on our bonnet in a single pass, and was effortless to use. What's more, it didn't leave behind a tell-tale thin film of moisture. The Kent tipped the scales at nearly two kilos after our absorbency test – nearly 10 times its dry weight. Keen price confirmed it as our winner.

Kent 5 sq. ft. Wholeskin Chamois Leather

Price: £15.31 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 225g Wet weight: 500g
 BIG, heavy and cumbersome – that's how we'd describe the Kent Wholeskin Chamois. It's not great value for money, either. It doubled in weight when wet – which simply isn't good enough in this company. Although this is far performance from a leather, it's nowhere near as capable as the Autoglym or CarPlan.

CarPlan Triplewax Genuine Chamois (Large)

Price: £6.99 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 100g Wet weight: 475g
 WE found the large, triangular-shaped product from CarPlan easy enough to use. After we had dunked it in our bucket, it had a wet weight of 475g – far from the best absorbency here. What's more, it left a thin layer of moisture on the bonnet. But it's a decent enough chamois at a competitive price.

Armor All Massive Microfibre Drying Towel

Price: £9.99 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 200g Wet weight: 1,100g
 BRIGHT orange soft waffle weave made this large Armor All a cloth to remember. It performed well for absorbency, increasing to nearly six times its original weight. Plus, the soft construction was kind to our car bodywork, and made it easy to pass over the bonnet. Again, it left a fine film, but it's good value for the size.



THROW IN THE TOWEL

Remove water marks after washing your car with the latest in drying kit. We pick from 12 of the best

It's not rain!

It's tempting to just rinse your car after washing. But if you don't dry it, too, all that effort could go to waste. Minerals and impurities in tap water will leave marks if left to dry, especially in summer. Drying is vital for a streak-free finish. Trouble is, it's a chore, and car care specialists have tried for years to find a user-friendly alternative to the natural chamois leather. The latest microfibre cloths are designed to soak up masses of water with minimal effort, but do they spell the end for chamois? We tested 12 of the best natural, synthetic and microfibre cloths to find out.

The test

BEFORE we got to work on our test car, we measured exactly how much water each of our products could absorb by weighing them dry and then after being soaked and allowed to drain for 30 seconds.

For the practical test, we covered a bonnet in water and then ran each contender over it. We were looking for the best progress on drying, and also took into account how much effort was involved. Finally, we factored price into our verdict, although none of the figures we've quoted here includes postage costs.

The verdict

LEAVING dead! Kent's Extra Large Microfibre Towel is best for drying your car. It swelled to nine times its dry weight in our absorbency test. Add the generous size and fluffy side, and it's a clear winner. In second is the Poundland, which sucked up seven times its weight, and is only £1. Triplewax PVA, with its handy storage tube, completes the top three.

1. Kent Extra Large Microfibre Drying Towel
2. Poundland Microfibre Drying Towel
3. CarPlan Triplewax PVA Chamois

Contacts

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Poundland 0800 731 5822 www.poundland.co.uk
Spautopia 01780 721460 www.spautopia.co.uk
Turtle Wax 01697 722165 www.turtlex.com

Turtle Wax ICE HUE Microfibre Drying Towel

£15 Rating: ★★★★★
Weight: 250g Wet weight: 1,150g
 Ice is a mouthful, but the Aqua-coloured Turtle proved with its increase in weight when we dried it in a bucket, this towel lives up to its name, too. And, made light work of drying our bonnet. Expensive, you can get better results from the All and Kent Extra Large for over a fiver less.

Poundland Drying Towel

Price: £1 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 100g Wet weight: 700g
RECOMMENDED Back cloth from the high street budget chain is by far the cheapest on test, but it's also the smallest. Don't let those proportions put you off, though, as it gained seven times its weight in our absorbency test. Even when damp, it's light, so it's easy to drag across a bonnet. The size means you'll be swinging it out often, which is the only thing that it does.

Meguiar's Natural Chamois

Price: £17.99 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 75g Wet weight: 625g
 AS the most expensive cloth here, the Meguiar's chamois gave us high expectations – and it didn't disappoint. It tipped the scales at a hefty 625g after 30 seconds in our bucket – that's four times its original weight. Yet it was still easy to use, and the compact dimensions made wiping out simple. Only that high price tag prevented it taking a place in the podium.

Meguiar's Water Magnet Drying Towel

Price: £12.99 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 175g Wet weight: 700g
MAGNET by name, magnet by nature! While the firm's Natural Chamois (left) is quite traditional, this is more towel-like. It took on a lot of water, but the 300 per cent weight gain wasn't competitive in this test. It's costly, too, even though you get a lot of material for your money. Not as good as its Meguiar's stablemate.

Autoglym Aqua Dry Chamois

Price: £9.99 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 50g Wet weight: 300g
 THE lightest cloth when dry, the small Autoglym Chamois has a perforated design – allowing maximum absorbency. It swelled to six times its original weight, and when used slightly damp, it performed well on our bonnet, gliding across the panel effortlessly. One of the best leathers, but not a contender for top honours. And it's expensive, too.

Spautopia Valuing Towel

Price: £12 Rating: ★★★★★
Dry weight: 250g Wet weight: 1,000g
MASSIVE blue microfibre from Spautopia measures 90cm by 60cm, and was one of the heaviest on test when dry. It swelled to four times its weight when we dried it, and performance on our test car's bonnet was impressive, too. Didn't leave a thin film like others on test, although even after wringing, this heavyweight would be left to use after a while.

