

Laundry Day

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Going back in time a few years, here is laundry day on summer solstice, 2015. We washed the laundry in the creek, in buckets, by hand, and hung it on ropes strung between the trees.

Laundry has always been challenging here. We don't have the electricity necessary to run a full-sized washer and dryer, nor would I want such appliances if we did have the power.

To date, everything has been washed by hand, usually in icy cold water. This has presented a few problems over the years. My hands tend to lock up in cold water, so washing is slow and difficult.

Wringing the laundry out is particularly hard for me, so I end up hanging the stuff out soaking wet, and it takes days to dry. Laundry is also a challenge because we must balance two resources ... electricity and water. During bright, sunny days, we have lots of excess electricity to run appliances; however, on these days, we are often in water conservation mode. During rainy days, we have lots of water, but little electricity and can't use the outdoor laundry line to dry our clothes.

Over the past four years, we have tried a number of different laundry methods ... a big bucket using a modified toilet plunger (yeah, well ...), an old hand crank clothes wringer (good, but really hard on stuff with zippers), a system of 5 gallon pails that could be twisted back and forth to slosh the laundry around (not very good at getting things clean), but ... nothing was very effective.

While we like to keep our lives simple, sometimes even very basic, we are not technophobes. Appropriate technology is great! What we needed was a small washing machine that was efficient in terms of both water and power consumption. In North America, you say? Nada. We checked around, but all anyone was selling were "apartment-sized" washing machines ... relatively huge appliances that would take up way too much valuable space in our cabin. As for efficiency, well ...

And so Amazon came to the rescue. For \$160, we purchased an "*Intexca Portable Compact Twin Tub Capacity Washing Machine and Washer Spin Dryer*". These are truly small units that are popular with the European caravaner crowd and with sail boaters. They're plastic, Chinese-manufacture, and not much to look at, but man they work! They operate on 110 V, so they can be run off of an inverter or a gen set. Their power consumption is 260 W, which means we can run ours on our solar panels on a sunny day. The downside is that **they are small**, and can only wash or spin 3.6 kg of wet laundry, which is equivalent to one sheet or one pair of jeans or three or four shirts. We pre-soak our laundry, usually over night, and in a couple of hours with the little washing machine the next morning, we can fill our entire clothesline with laundry. And best of all, no aching frozen hands!



The Intexca Portable Compact Twin Tub Capacity Washing Machine and Washer Spin Dryer.