

Adirondack Chairs: The Ultimate in Outdoor Comfort

Introduction

An Adirondack chair is the combination of form and function in outdoor relaxation. Also known as a Cape Cod chair or Muskoka chair in different areas of the world, Adirondack chairs are usually made from durable, insect resistant woods like cedar and redwood, although other materials are also used. Well made Adirondack chairs are quality pieces of outdoor furniture that can last for generations.

Design

The ancestor of today's Adirondack chair was designed by Thomas Lee in 1903. After arriving at a final design for the "Westport plank chair," Lee offered it to Harry Bunnell, a carpenter friend in Westport, New York, who built the chairs during winter for sale in the springtime. Harry Bunnell eventually patented the robust design, which combined a slanted back and wide armrests.

While the original Adirondack chair was thought to have a straight back, contemporary designs often include more curves. Adirondack chairs are comfortable because the chair back usually has an incline of 30 degrees and excellent lower back support. These chairs also feature wide, level arms that double as tables for drinks and books.

The basic design of the Adirondack chair has been expanded over the last 100 years to include chaise lounges, loveseats, rockers and other outdoor furniture that follow the lines of the traditional Adirondack chair. Other variations of the chair's design feature a curved back and rolled seat made to wrap around the body and cushion the legs, something you just do not get with any other type chair. And no matter what style you choose, these robust All-American chairs will offer years of pleasure and comfort.

Wood Types

Nothing is quite as relaxing as sitting in a wooden Adirondack chair with your hands on the large, smooth armrests. This is one reason for their enduring appeal; another is the fine looking wood of which many of these chairs are made. Other than the most popular (red or white cedar,) woods used in the manufacturing of Adirondack furniture include teak, cypress, mahogany, alder, eucalyptus, and southern yellow or white pine. The wood can be stained to preserve its natural color, painted in any shade you desire, or left to weather naturally. Certain woods, like pine, most definitely need to be treated regularly with a protectant.

There are those who prefer resin rocking chairs to wooden ones because they are easier to maintain and are more durable. Plastic Adirondack chairs are not considered to be as beautiful as wooden ones, but are less expensive and can last for a very long time. Winning the longevity award for a natural material, however, is teak. With an average lifespan of 75 years, teak wood has long been commended as the ideal choice for outdoor furniture. Teak is exceptionally expensive, however, and is out of reach for many on a budget.

Conclusion

Adirondack chairs are a unique combination of man-made ingenuity and craftsmanship in combination with the beauty of natural design. Adirondack chairs were once found only on campgrounds and summer retreats. Now, these chairs are found more and more on porches, lawns and in the homes of people who have fallen in love with them while on vacations in the mountains, at the lake, or similar places. While Adirondack Chairs are not confined to a single manufacturer, or even a single style, they are still beautiful pieces of furniture that can call to mind a vacation-like experience for just about anyone.

About the Author

Jay Gerth writes about [outdoor furnishings and outdoor living](#). Specializing in [Adirondack chairs](#) and other furnishings, his expert opinions have helped others find satisfaction with and great uses for their outdoor living spaces.