

OUTDOORS

Life Cube tent is an inflatable camping micro-cabin for truck and lake

By C.C. Weiss
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Camp on your truck, on the ground or even on the water Life Cube

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A new camping option that seeks to bring the worlds of truck camping, tent camping and boat camping into perfect harmony, the "Best Truck Tent" from California's Life Cube Inc. is a tent like no other. It

travels to the night's destination in the trunk of the vehicle, inflating into a standing height six-sleeper micro-cabin on the back of a pickup truck. For those without a truck or with an aversion to climbing up and sleeping on it, the tent also works as a roomy ground tent and floating water tent.

Since its founding in 2006, Life Cube has focused on developing rugged, air drop-grade emergency shelters. It offers several different hard- and soft-walled solutions, but the one that really stands out as a "Life Cube" is its LC-12, a self-contained shipping container with an outer shell that drops down on arrival to create a 12 x 12-foot (3.7 x 3.7-m) raised floor. The tent stored inside then inflates to create a 12-foot-high temporary shelter for disaster relief, military operations, outdoor events and more.



The Life Cube LC-12 emergency shelter, in pitched and packaged form Life Cube

While its company mission has always aimed at emergency and tactical usage, Life Cube eventually began marketing the LC-12 to the recreational segment, presenting it as a portable shelter option for campers, hunters, anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts. It's simpler and more flexible than a permanent

structure but more rugged and capable than a basic camping tent. The company has also tossed out the idea of using the LC-12 as an Airbnb-style rental unit.

We can see how the LC-12 could be an interesting alternative to a permanent log cabin, towable [tiny home](#) or build-it-yourself [yurt kit](#), but a US\$25,000 military-ready shipping container shelter has limits as to how many recreational customers it might attract. So this year, Life Cube shrank and streamlined its inflatable shelter construction into a tent it's named the Best Truck Tent, presumably to detour all kinds of Google traffic to its website. It also uses the less Google-friendly but more objective "LC-8."



The Life Cube LC-8 isn't small by any means, but it packs up into convenient carry form and fits in the trunk Life Cube

The LC-8 tent breaks free from the heavy shell, coming in a more everyday consumer-friendly package split out between two carry bags sized to fit in a car trunk, pickup bed or SUV load area. The entire package weighs just under 100 lb (45 kg), making it easy for one or two people to transport the bags to and from the car.

At camp, the drop-stitch base inflates to create the foundation, and the tent body inflates and straps down to the base. Life Cube estimates a 10-minute setup time with a 12-V inflator and says it breaks down just as quickly. Once pitched, the tent offers an 8 x 7-foot (2.4 x 2.1-m) floor below a 6.5-foot-high (2-m) roof. The large-diameter air tubes in the frame are more robust than other inflatable tents, and Life Cube says the roof can handle snow loads.



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The LC-8 can pitch on the ground, but it's also designed to set up on top of a pickup truck bed, its inflated base serving as a stable platform. It can then strap down to the truck for stability. As compared to simpler in-bed pickup truck tent designs, the LC-8 offers the advantage of setting up over top the bed so cargo can stay in place so long as it doesn't stick up higher than the truck box walls. The LC-8 can be lifted and carried by two people, taken on and off the truck as needed.

For a different experience all together, LC-8 campers can tie the tent to a dock or tree and use it as a floating base camp on a lake. Alternatively, owners can detach the base and use it independently as a sundeck on the water.



Floating the Life Cube LC-8 off the dock Life Cube

If the idea of an inflatable vehicle tent-cum-water cabana sounds familiar, it's because there's at least [one](#) other roaming around on car and sea. The LC-8 diverges from that model and non-floating [inflatable vehicle tents](#) by camping atop the pickup bed, not the [roof](#). Its six-person capacity also separates it from every other RTT on the market – not counting this [inflatable monster](#), which was originally billed a five-sleeper but now advertised a six (and has more overall floor area than the LC-8).

Life Cube launched the LC-8 during this year's multi-stop Overland Expo tour. At \$2,750, the new tent is well more expensive than the typical inflatable ground tent or non-inflatable truck bed tent, pricing more in line with [rooftop tents](#) and [floating tents](#). Its large size and heavy-duty military-derived design certainly make it worth a look if a versatile vehicle-to-ground-to-water tent piques your interest enough to shop for one.

<https://www.lifecubeinc.com/store/c1/BestTruckTent>

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