



RV Lifestyle

Discover RVs

Would you describe yourself as a travel enthusiast or adventurer extraordinaire? Do you like being in control of your own trip — able to stop, go and sleep where you please?

A recreational vehicle provides all of that and more, which is why so many Americans are hitting the open road in RVs.

RVs are the perfect choice for travelers looking for convenience and reliability, but also for close-knit family time you just can't get any other way. Imagine yourself behind the wheel of your RV while your family rests comfortably in the back with plenty of room to spare.

Traveling in an RV provides you the privacy and comfort you deserve, with all the amenities you could want.

Tired after a long day of driving? Pull up to a campground or alongside a lake and sleep in comfort in your own bedding.

Have a little more driving in you before you call it a day? No problem. You're not on a schedule to make your flight or get your rental back on time. An RV opens up a world of travel freedom that is hard to beat.

SEE AMERICA

One of the best aspects of a long RV road trip is being able to take in the sights, smells and sounds of Mother Nature. Unlike from the seat of a plane or inside a cramped car, you can do so comfort-



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ably in an RV.

Mountains, sunsets, rivers and oceans — you can see it all from your RV. Your travel

flexibility allows you to veer off course if there is a specific destination you would like to see.

From the Grand Canyon to Niagara Falls, there are countless must-see spots in the United States ready for your

viewing pleasure.

If you haven't planned out your next trip, what are you waiting for?

New or Used?

One of the main factors to consider when deciding between a new or used RV is how long you plan to use the vehicle.

Your plan can make the difference in deciding whether or not you should invest in an RV off the lot. Along with this consideration should be how much you are willing to pay overall and per month.

Think about your usual summer schedule. Would you use your RV two or three weeks out of that time period? Maybe shelling out thousands of extra dollars for a new RV isn't the most financially sound plan.

Alternatively, let's say you plan on spending the majority of the summer season on the road. You may be more apt to invest more knowing you'll get great mileage and experiences out of a newer, more reliable model.

WHAT TO BUY

There are many different kinds of RVs, so finding one that fits your needs is easy. Motorhomes come in Class A, B or C and offer the most space, but other options

include travel trailers, fifth-wheel trailers and pop-up trailers.

Obviously, bigger RVs contain more parts and could cost more to maintain over time. But what fits your needs? If a larger, Class A makes more sense for your travel plans than a fifth-wheel trailer, your decision could be made for you.

READ THE FINE PRINT

When signing a lease or contract, be aware of what is covered in any type of service plan offered. These plans include different levels of coverage based on the cost.

And a tricky part of choosing the right plan is whether or not other RV dealers or repair facilities will honor it.

A service plan with no locally affiliated shops to maintain or repair your RV will not do you much good when you're in need.



Airstreams and Ramblers

RVs are all the rage at fairgrounds across the country, especially the ones that are fortunate enough to host conventions for the popular Airstream and Holiday Rambler brands.

Clubs of those two industry leaders flock to their local fairgrounds every summer to socialize, attend seminars and help out various charitable endeavors.

Both brands host highly attended rallies that draw loyalists from across the world and have been part of their histories for decades. Even if you're not a driver of either vehicle, you can attend part of each rally that is dedicated to community members.

AIRSTREAM

The Airstream international rally is slated to take place June 26-July 4 in Farmington, N.M., this year. For parts of three weeks from June 13-July 5, Lewisburg, W.Va., and Escanaba, Mich., are scheduled to host the 2016 and 2017 editions, respectively.

The Wally Byam Caravan Club International organizes the event and gets its name from the Airstream founder. The rally celebrates the popular recreational vehicle and the RV lifestyle.

The first Airstreams were developed in 1931 with the goal of creating a lightweight travel trailer. They are known for a sleek, unique appearance that is created by inner and



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outer layers of aluminum stretched over their frames. Schrader described Airstream owners as passionate and loyal.

RAMBLER

An event similar to the

Airstream assembly also takes place in the middle of the summer, offering adventurers and curious community members the chance to intertwine. The Holiday Rambler International Rally routinely draws more than 300 vehicles

to its event, which is scheduled this year for July 21-25 in Escanaba, Mich.

The Holiday Rambler Corporation was founded in 1953 and manufactures various classes and types of motor homes and towable

vehicles. The company's use of aluminum frames helped it gain popularity in the 1960s.

Community work and charity are crucial to the club's makeup. The group has donated thousands of items such as quilts to shelters.

Setting Up Camp

Arriving to camp after a long drive can feel like a minor victory, but now comes the time to set up. Even for the novice RV driver, doing so should require a few simple steps that will have you relaxing in no time.

The first step you'll want to take when arriving at camp is to check-in. From the main building, you can ask if the campground provides an escort service or can give you any tips on the best places for you to find level parking.

You'll need to know a few basic things about the site, such as whether it is a back-in or pull-through and where the water, electrical and sewer hookups are located.

Once you find your spot, follow these simple procedures:

- Be sure there are no low-hanging branches that could damage your RV — particularly if they are in the way of awnings that need to extend.
- Don't forget to apply your parking brake to ensure your safety and the proper functioning of your slide-outs and awnings.
- If not quite level, use any blocks or stabilizing jacks that your RV is equipped with.
- Plug your electrical shore power cord into the campsite receptacle, making sure to match the amperage requirements of your RV.
- Attach your potable RV drinking water hose to the tank on the side of your unit and run the other end to the campground water supply; make sure to check for any leaks before leaving it unattended.



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ASK FOR HELP

If you're new to a campground or stumped on how to handle a certain malfunction,

don't be afraid to ask your neighbors. RV drivers are like a community, always ready to help out a fellow adventurer in need.

If you're new to the RV experience, don't be surprised to receive offers of help — even if you aren't in need of any assistance. You can return the favor

by providing a helping hand when needed and by offering tips on travel or road conditions you have learned through your journey.

Pre-Drive Safety Check

There's nothing more exciting than waking up to a fully packed RV and hitting the road for a cross-country drive.

Taking a trip with an RV offers great freedom, amazing scenery and the ability to follow your own schedule. Ready for lunch and a stop? You are the boss of this trip and are not bound to train schedules or flight layovers that can make you feel out of control.

As the boss of the trip, you also have a responsibility for keeping your RV in great working condition, while also ensuring optimal safety for you and your passengers.

Many accidents are caused by simple mistakes made by drivers, such as leaving doors unlatched, tires unchecked or trailers loosely hitched.

Follow this pre-trip checklist to make sure you're at least covering your basics. Of course, accidents can happen even if you're well prepared. Just be ready to handle emergency situations and make sure to teach anyone driving your RV the same.

Conduct a "walk-around" visual inspection before driving away. A preflight checklist should include:

- Check under your vehicle for signs of fluid leaks; this includes oil, transmission and coolant.
- Be vigilant of your surroundings, including the weather and any kind of road hazards that may be upcoming.



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- Check and double-check to make sure your bay doors are not only closed but latched, as well.

- Put your brakes, parking brake and tow brakes to the test.

- Assess your tow bar and all related safety cables.

- Properly disconnect all power, phone water and sewer lines you are hooked into.

- Take a quick overview of

your stove, oven and heater to make sure no burners are lit.

- Assess your propane tank for leaks and your exhaust lines for blockages.

- Inspect the inflation levels

of all of your tires; also check for tread wear and tear.

- Review your safety mechanisms, such as smoke and propane leak detectors; replace any batteries if necessary.

Avoid Blowouts

While cruising down the highway headed for your next adventure, the last thing you want to happen is a tire blowout.

Not only will it slow you down, but it also can be a major hazard to you and whoever you're sharing the road with.

Some blowouts may not be preventable, especially if they are caused by a foreign object that hits your tire. But many others can be avoided with a little bit of driver diligence.

MAIN REASONS FOR BLOWOUTS

Blowouts normally occur because of improper inflation, worn tread or an overloaded RV. With the proper preparation for your trip, you can prevent many blowouts from occurring.

This means having your tires checked by a professional or simply taking a 15-minute walk-through yourself, checking air pressure and the physical condition of each tire.

Many times, you will see cracks on the sidewall that can be caused by weathering or UV exposure. This is normal. You should have your tires checked by your local shop to determine if new tires are needed before hitting the road.

You also can implement regular cleanings of your tires with mild soap, water and a soft brush to help remove



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some of the buildup that can cause cracks.

Don't forget to keep your tires covered when your RV is not in use. This will help prevent ozone and UV damage from the sun, which could put your tires at risk of blowout.

TIRE PRESSURE

Blowouts can occur if your tires are under-inflated or over-inflated. Checking your tire pressure regularly can help prevent this.

You should measure your

tire pressure at least once a month and always before heading out on a trip. Don't forget to also check your tire pressure once you make it to your destination to ensure proper working order.

While gauging your pres-

sure, also keep an eye out for nails or other objects stuck in your tire. Experts recommend that you have the tire dismounted and plugged from the inside instead of trying to install a plug from the outside.

Changes in RVing

The Smokey Mountains and California coastlines are must-visit destinations for any RV road-tripper, but treasures in your own backyard are not to be overlooked.

There are thousands of public and privately owned campgrounds across the nation, which means there is a scenic spot for your RV in a place near you. The “stay-cation” is gaining more traction for RVers everywhere.

Local campgrounds are popular because of the wide array of activities they offer families. Fun-filled times can be had in swimming pools, playgrounds and game rooms, or kids can enjoy fishing in a nearby lake.

Luxury RV parks are popping up throughout the country with tennis courts, golf courses and even health and beauty spas.

The opportunities are endless in a rapidly changing industry.

SHORTER TRIPS, MORE INTEREST

Many studies show that Americans are re-defining what it means to take a vacation, as economic factors have forced shorter, more locally based adventures.

These changes favor the RV industry, which can help families save money in the long run because of reduced costs for hotels and plane tickets.

Among U.S. households that have never owned an RV, more than one in seven expressed interest in purchasing one in the future, according to a recent study by the University of Michigan.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

From younger generations to senior citizens, the RV industry knows no



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limitations.

Empty-nesters are traditionally strong potential RV buyers, but younger buyers also are emerging as manufacturers are incorporating new innovations to make the vehicles more tech-savvy and enabled.

Fuel efficiency also is at the forefront of focus for RV makers. Green technologies such as solar panels,

lighter towable equipment and more efficient engines are leading the charge and making RVs less expensive to keep fueled.

ON THE RISE

A recent Harris Interactive study uncovered some interesting statistics that offer a promising glimpse into

the future of the RV industry:

- Generation Xers (birthdates ranging from the 1960s to 1980s) exhibit interests in outdoor activities that are highly compatible with RVing.

- Ownership and demographic trends favor substantial RV market growth, with baby boomers entering the age range of 55 to 64 boasting a traditionally high RV ownership rate.