

# RV

MAGAZINE

**GAS OR DIESEL**  
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RV ADVENTURES?

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CAMPGROUND

## **PARTY OF 3**

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# Contents

NOVEMBER 2022

## Island Time

Just 50 miles from Houston, Texas, Galveston offers visitors more than 30 miles of beaches, plus shopping, restaurants, amusement parks, fishing, and a whole lot more. See page 20.

12



## FEATURES

### 12 RV ROAD TRIP: ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

With mountains, mansions, museums, and music, the “Paris of the South” is the perfect place for your next adventure.

### 16 RVING 24/7

Any of these RVs will have you wanting to extend your vacation.

### 20 SNOWBIRDS IN THE SUNBELT

Follow the sun and head south for the winter to one of these top retreats that welcome seasonal campers.



### 24 HOME ON THE RANGE

Take a visit to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, where the bison roam, the Little Missouri flows, and RVers and adventurers play.

### 28 HOLIDAYS IN AN RV

There are plenty of ways to deck the halls in the limited space of your home on wheels.



**ON THE COVER:** Full-timers Tiffany Mitchell and Steve Forrest, along with their toddler, Noah, travel across the US in their Winnebago View. Photo by Jacqueline Pilar. See page 34.



# Contents

NOVEMBER 2022

## DEPARTMENTS

### 7 MESSAGE FROM MARCUS

Birds of a Feather

### 8 THE BUZZ

Here's what our readers are saying.



## Foodie

### 10 LOCAL FLAVORS

After a day exploring California's legendary Pacific Coast Highway, trade your surfboard for a luscious fall charcuterie board.

*Basking in the sun while beach camping in Baja California makes it easy for snowbirds to forget the snowy conditions back home. See page 48.*

# 44



## In the Know

### 32 HOLIDAY TRAV-L-PARK

Spend the day exploring the Virginia Beach shoreline, then recharge at the resort while planning an overnight trip to our nation's capital.

### 34 NEAT VIEW

After buying a Winnebago Class C motorhome, an entrepreneurial RVing couple decided to hit the road full time.

## Rigs + Gear

### 36 ALWAYS A PLEASURE

Whether you're on the road or at the RV park, you'll be all smiles in the 2023 Ontour 2.0 Class B from Pleasure-Way.

### 37 TECH Q&A

You've got questions, and our RV expert has answers.

### 41 GAS OR DIESEL?

Which engine type best suits your RV lifestyle? This month's Casual Tech With James has the answer.

### 44 REMOTE POWER

A portable generator grants you freedom from the campground pedestal to provide juice to your campsite.

## Life on the Road

### 48 FAMILY NESTING

How this full-time RVing family enjoys snowbirding, and why you should join the flock.

### 52 BE A HERO!

Borrowing a shelter dog can unlock the personality of a precarious pooch and help her get adopted.

### 54 THE PICNIC TABLE WORKOUT

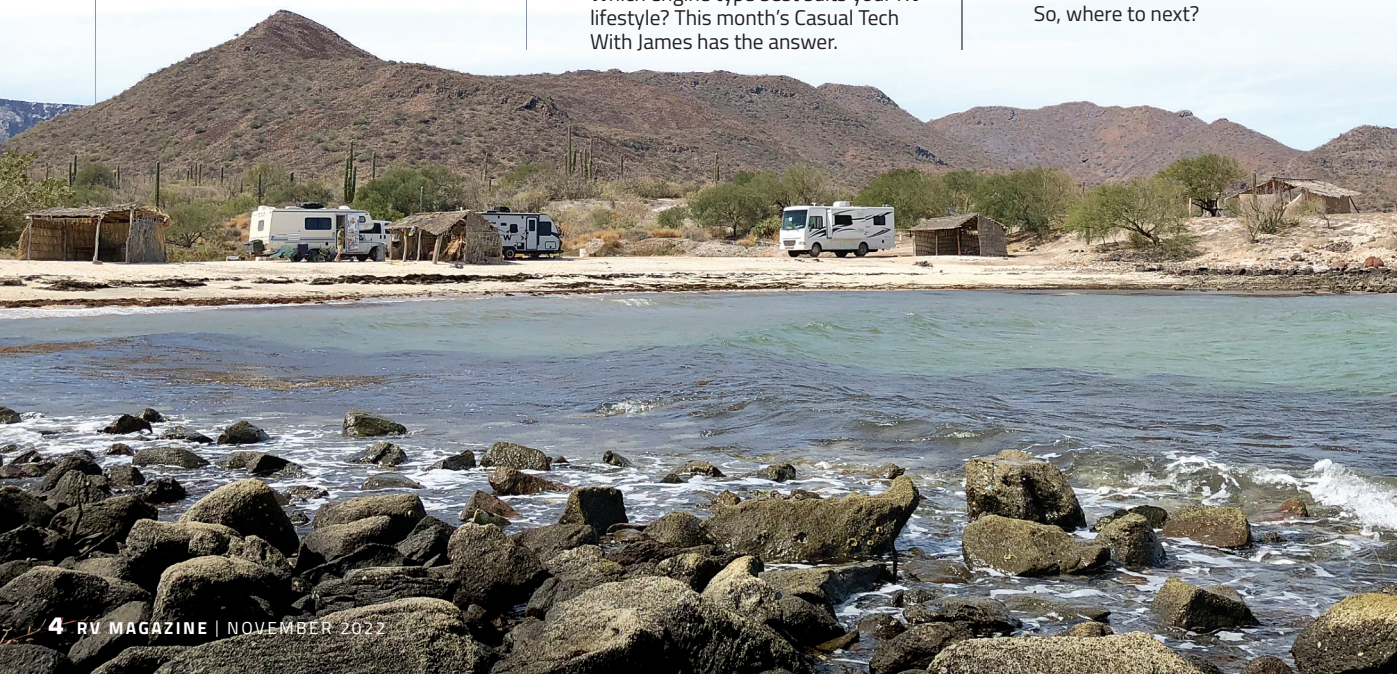
The humble campsite staple that doubles as a gym.

### 53 FUN + GAMES

Spread your snowbird wings and fly into the heart of this month's brain buster.

### 58 SNAPSHOTS

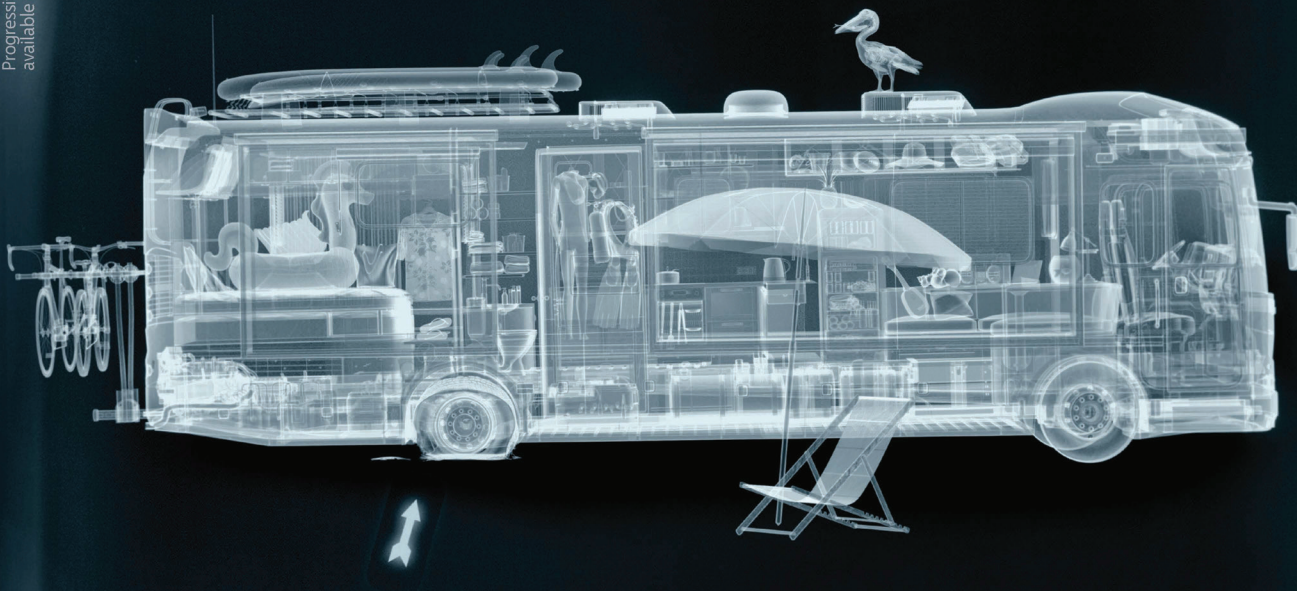
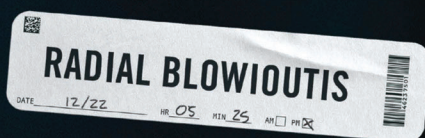
So, where to next?





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FICO Score 800+

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**RV**  
MAGAZINE

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# BIRDS OF A FEATHER

**This time of year**, it's only natural that a certain bird comes to mind. But I'm not talking about the golden-brown turkey and all the trimmings that will grace the dining-room tables at many of our homes and RVs; it's a different type of bird that has my attention: the snowbird.

Every year, thousands of RVers from colder climates migrate to warmer environs down south. The plan is to wait out the freeze, instead relaxing on the beach or by the campfire, and extending the summer feeling that only an RV can deliver for a few months more. Snowbirds enjoy the adventure, the excitement, and perhaps most of all, the camaraderie of other like-minded travelers who wish to keep the RV party going while the snow falls back home.

Many choose to do so in the Sunbelt, a region in the southern half of the US that runs from California in the west all the way to Florida in the east, where the weather is mild and even downright warm during the winter. Check out "Snowbirding in the Sunbelt" on page 20 for some of our favorite stateside destinations. And to see what it's like to snowbird with the whole crew, "Family Nesting" on page 48 offers some sage advice on what to expect when you join the ever-growing flock.

**Snowbirds  
enjoy the  
camaraderie of  
other travelers  
who wish to  
keep the RV  
party going.**



And speaking of families, we'd like to welcome Wildsam Field Guides to ours. Wildsam publishes books and online stories that help travelers and locals alike explore and appreciate destinations across the country. For more than a decade, Wildsam's field guides have provided great itineraries and stories, combining a sense of history with the best of what's going on right now. Turn to page 32 for a small taste of the expert insight Wildsam brings to the table, and stay tuned for even more in the future.

From our family to yours, we wish you a wonderful holiday season. We hope it won't be long before turkey isn't the only bird on your mind as the year winds down. ■

**Marcus Lemonis**  
Publisher  
@marcuslemonis





## DRINKING WATER

I agree with all the items that James Adinaro wrote in the “Drink Up!” article in the September issue, and I’d like to add a few things about drinking water.

While my trailer is not being used and just sitting around waiting for me to take her out, I add ½ cup of bleach and 3 gallons of water to the freshwater tank. I’m told this will help keep the holding tank sanitized. Additionally, I use a PUR water pitcher inside the trailer, and I always take 5 gallons of prefiltered water with me.

Since you changed the *RV Magazine* format, I truly enjoy ALL the articles, especially Tech Q&A and the other tips. I consider myself a very satisfied reader.

**Jere O. Myers**, Roseville, California

### FROM TWITTER

**What’s something you had to learn the hard way while traveling?**

**@TheArtPencil1**

Don’t lean the level on the back of the trailer while jacking up the front.

**@MurrayA94543317**

No matter how “planned out” you think you are you forgot something! Roll with it and just enjoy the experience!

**@rogrtheshrubber**

DO NOT trust anyone else to check that the pin is in the hitch.

• • •

### CONNECT WITH US

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### FILTER STORAGE

Great article on water filtering by James Adinaro in the September issue. We always hook up a water filter when we camp. My question is how to properly store a little-used filter? If we only go out for a week, there’s not much mileage on that filter. I have been putting the filter in a zip-top storage baggie and storing it in the refrigerator.

**Wally Adelman**, via email

*The baggie and fridge approach you’re using sounds fine to me, but I’d suggest one modification: Before putting the filter in any kind of sealed container, make sure to thoroughly drain it of any water.*

*With that, you should be good. Those of you who’ve seen me walking around campgrounds frantically windmilling my arm over my head while holding a water filter ... now you know what I was doing!*

—James Adinaro

### WATER WORKS

I enjoyed the “Drink Up!” article in the September issue. I agree with James Adinaro’s approach to freshwater management. We rarely connect directly to campground water and use it only when we need to refill the RV’s freshwater tank. We live off the freshwater tank, which provides another benefit in systems management: Many tank-monitoring systems aren’t particularly dependable for showing how full they are. Our RV’s freshwater tank is 40 gallons, as is the gray-water tank. We know that when we refill the freshwater tank, we should be thinking about finding a dump station to empty the gray water. It’s not an exact indicator, but a reminder to pay attention to the waste-tank levels. We had an unfortunate incident of gray water backing up in the shower that we don’t

want to have again. I also have another bit of advice.

At the campground, I always run water through the faucet before connecting anything to it. One time we were the first campers of the season, and the water that had remained in the system during the winter was full of rust. Luckily, I ran the water first and saw the brown water. The water soon cleared up and the person helping open the campground confirmed it was only rust and told us to let it run for a few minutes.

Since then, after running the water lines clean, I then connect the filter and anything else with a “Y” adapter and a water-pressure regulator if I am connecting the water source to the RV. I run water through that link before either filling the RV’s freshwater tank or connecting directly to the RV. That second stream of water clears out anything that may have taken up residence in any of those fittings (including the hose).

**Dennis Jauch**, via email

### KEEP ‘EM CONNECTED

One note about the “Drink Up!” article in the September issue: In the “Keep It Clean” sidebar the author says to keep hose caps on the ends of the hoses when in storage. I prefer to keep the hose ends connected.

Doing so keeps the internal clean and helps keep the hose from getting tangled. I do the

### MIND THE FLAMES

*I know that campfires are a big part of camping (and we also enjoy them). However, while we were at Yellowstone National Park this past summer our neighbor had a campfire every night, which is fine, except it was right under our bedroom window and he kept the fire going all hours of the night. The smoke billowed into our bedroom and made it impossible to sleep. With today’s campsites as small as they are I think all RVers and campers need to be careful of the fact that their campfires may be disturbing their neighbors.*

— John Hickcox, via email





same thing for electrical cords. There's nothing worse than trying to untangle hoses and cables when you need them.

**Brad Kennedy**, via email

### SLIDEOUT SAFETY FEATURES

The "Slideouts, Revisited" letter in the September issue was interesting. When we did our shakedown trip with our new 32-foot Forest River Georgetown motorhome in 2017, the slideouts were slow to operate. The RV dealer advised us to be sure the engine was running when we operated the slideouts. From that time on we have made it a point to have the engine running when we operate the slideouts, and it makes a noticeable improvement and difference. There is a safety feature: The slideouts will not operate unless the emergency brake is engaged.

We also make it a point to already have the hydraulic levelers extended so the rig is level and steady.

**Oscar Wiltse**, via email

*Editor's Note: Different RVs will have different safety measures in place regarding slideouts (and other systems). It is important to read the owner's manual and become familiar with them before hitting the road.*

### GOT A SPARE?

We recently traveled from Arizona to Missouri and Pennsylvania to visit family in our Class B motorhome. When we purchased the RV, we were told it did not come with a spare tire. Concerned about safety, we negotiated a spare tire and swing-away carrier.

Recently, as we were traveling between Kansas City and Springfield, Missouri, we experienced a blowout on the motorhome's right rear tire, which totally shredded the tire.

We called Good Sam Roadside Assistance, and it took two men and a heavy-duty jack to change the tire. The jack provided with the vehicle was useless. Had we not negotiated the spare for our van, the outcome could have been much different. The tires are 10-ply inflated to 80 psi and cannot be easily managed by one person.

It is our opinion that motorhomes should not be sold without a spare tire, and that a roadside assistance plan is a necessity.

**Roberta and Jim Bayles**, via email

### DREAM RV

Over the years, my husband and I have owned all types of trailers and motorhomes. We would love to see more Class C motorhomes with portable tables instead of dinettes, and swivel captain's chairs, in the 25–29-foot-long range so they're easily drivable. We think these shorter units should be designed for retirees traveling alone. One disappearing TV is perfect, but a swivel TV would work nicely. Plus, some comfortable RecPro recliners (no sofa),

and a queen or king super-comfy mattress. And while we're at it, power everything, including steps, awning, and leveling system.

**Glenda, Ogden, Utah** ■

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION

*If you could build your own RV from the ground up, what are some key features you would include? Are there any popular features you'd avoid?*

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## LOCAL FLAVORS

## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, CALIFORNIA

by TERRI PETERSON SMITH

► **The Northern** California coastline along State Route 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), is spectacular. The 30-mile stretch known as Coastside between the Point Montara and Pigeon Point lighthouses offers a list of things to see and do that's as large as the whales that appear off its shores. About 50 miles south of San Francisco, the area is a mecca for surfers,

foodies, and nature lovers.

Each of the many state beaches offers something different in terms of terrain and marine and bird life. The area is home to more than 20% of all North American bird species and two refuges—Pescadero Marsh and Pillar Point Marsh.

In Pillar Point Harbor, visitors can chat with local fishermen who, depending on the

season, sell fresh-off-the-boat crab, salmon, and tuna directly to the public. In Half Moon Bay, many ranchers, beekeepers, and artisans converge every Saturday, May through December, at the Coastside Farmers' Market.

At Harley Farms Goat Dairy in Pescadero you can buy cheese in their lovely shop and watch the goats caper in the field.

### On the Menu

## Fall Charcuterie Board with Goat Cheese and Marinated Fruit

*Goat cheese topped with a luscious combination of dried fruits, nuts, and honey serves as the centerpiece of this showstopping charcuterie board. Be creative and add other colorful ingredients you have on hand.*

### YOU'LL NEED

- ½ cup grape-seed or vegetable oil
- 1 cup of any combination of dried fruit including chopped apricots, chopped figs, cranberries, and golden raisins
- ½ cup pine nuts
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ½ cup honey
- 8 oz goat cheese plus a hard cheese such as Manchego
- Pitted Greek olives
- At least two types of Italian meats, such as prosciutto and sliced salami
- Fresh fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, or sliced mandarin oranges
- Nuts such as Marcona almonds and cashews
- 2–3 types of crackers
- Sprig of rosemary for garnish

### MAKE IT

- 1) For the marinated fruit, combine the oil, dried fruit, pine nuts, honey, and salt in a medium-size bowl. Stir to combine. Set aside to marinate for at least 30 minutes. You can do this at home ahead of time.
- 2) Place the goat cheese in the center of a large cutting board or platter (even a cookie sheet will do) and top with the marinated fruit.
- 3) Add the other cheeses to the board, then layer or fold the meats and place in different spots on the board. Add the other items to the board, ending with crackers and rosemary garnish.



## TrailManor 2720

The easy-towing, low-profile fold-down TrailManor is ideal for driving coast-hugging State Route 1. Weighing around 3,000 pounds dry and battered down for travel, the 2720 is 6½ feet tall and 20 feet long and then sprouts into a 27-foot-long hard-sided travel trailer with 6 feet, 4 inches of headroom. Setting up the trailer is simplified via TrailManor's Torsion Lift Technology by releasing several exterior clips. Some assembly is required inside

for the full kitchen and bathroom with shower. The 2720 is offered in three floorplans, all with a queen bed, three-burner stove, and three-way 3.3-cubic-foot fridge. The 2720QB has a 40-gallon freshwater tank, while the 2720QS (shown) and 2720QD have a 20-gallon tank. Base MSRP: \$37,100. [trailmanor.com](http://trailmanor.com)

### WHY WE LIKE IT

**Low-profile to fully outfitted trailer in 15 minutes | Easy to store | Can be towed by many midsize trucks and SUVs**

PHOTOS: TERRI PETERSON SMITH, COURTESY TRAILMANOR, LUCKY-PICTOGRAPHER/BETTY IMAGES





## FINE PAIRINGS

With salty foods such as the meats on this charcuterie board, we try to avoid very tannic wines, which tend to take on a salty flavor when served with salty food. We've chosen two California wines that make a great accompaniment. The **Dry Creek Vineyard 2020 Chenin Blanc** is especially yummy with the cheeses we're serving. It's a light-bodied wine and incorporates small amounts of sauvignon musqué and sauvignon gris, which adds a layer of depth to its flavor. \$13.

You'll say only positive things about **Daou Vineyards Pessimist Red Blend 2019** from Paso Robles. Its combination of petite sirah, zinfandel, Syrah, and grenache yields the flavors of ripe juicy fruits, sweet spices, and oak. \$25 ■



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# RV Road Trip \* ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

**THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, THE BILTMORE, THE CULTURE, THE HIKING TRAILS ... WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK FOR IN AN RVING DESTINATION?**

BY JULIE PERRY NELSON  
@TRAVEL\_FERRET

**N**estled in the Blue Ridge Mountains is the picturesque city of Asheville. This funky and varied destination offers a wealth of activities for your group's differing tastes. Ranging from outdoor adventures to cultural events, boredom is not on the menu in Asheville.

Downtown Asheville is preserved like a time capsule from the early 1900s with art deco and neoclassical buildings housing restaurants, shops, and art galleries. The most well-known attraction in Asheville is the enormous Biltmore Estate, but the mansion is just one of the unique attractions in the area. Quirky tours and museums, abundant opportunity for adventure, and tasty local cuisine make Asheville an intriguing place to visit.

"America's Favorite Drive," the Blue Ridge Parkway, winds through the surrounding mountains and skirts Asheville, making the city an ideal day-trip hub for biking, hiking, and leaf peeping. Layer after layer of mountains encircle Asheville, and in the fall, leaf colors appear as if an artist had dabbed their brushes in every hue.

One of Asheville's best qualities is its mild climate, which allows for all-season camping. So, sip a local brew and revel in this gem of North Carolina from your mobile living room.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE LOCATIONS; MARGARET WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

## RETIRED RVERS



### ◀ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Thomas Wolfe Memorial State Historic Site ([wolfememorial.com](http://wolfememorial.com)) preserves Wolfe's childhood home, the setting for his novel *Look Homeward, Angel*. The author lived there with his mother who used the property as a boarding house. The site has retained much of the original furnishings.



### ◀ ON THE MENU

Spend some time at Battery Park Book Exchange and Champagne Bar while perusing thousands of books. Stay awhile to enjoy wine, champagne, paninis, and salads. The bar is in historic Grove Arcade ([grovearcade.com](http://grovearcade.com)), a striking indoor mall.

### MUST-DO

The Asheville area boasts one of the most stunning and extended fall foliage seasons in the world ([fallinthemountains.com](http://fallinthemountains.com)). With more than 100 types of deciduous trees and a variety of elevations, the colors just keep going. Drive the Blue Ridge Parkway to Grandfather Mountain and hike, picnic, or just sit back and enjoy the view.

**STAY  
HERE**

Mama Gertie's Hideaway Campground ([mamagerties.com](http://mamagerties.com)) offers a peaceful place to relax between sightseeing activities. The Good Sam Park has full hookups and a dog park. Mountain view sites are unavailable November 1st–March 31st.



## WEEKEND WARRIORS



From early November–early January, Biltmore visitors are treated to elegant holiday-themed decor and shopping.

### MUST-DO

The Biltmore Estate ([biltmore.com](http://biltmore.com)) covers 8,000 acres and includes a massive mansion, extensive gardens, and even a family-friendly village. Built from 1889–1895, the home was constructed for George and Edith Vanderbilt and still contains much of the original furnishings and priceless artwork. The mansion is the largest privately owned home in the US.



### OFF THE BEATEN PATH

The Urban Trail ([exploreasheville.com](http://exploreasheville.com)) is a free, self-guided tour around Asheville with 30 stations that detail the history of the area through statues, plaques, and art. Be sure to stop for a photo at the giant iron along the 1.7-mile stroll.



### ON THE MENU

Visit Isis Music Hall & Kitchen 743 ([isisasheville.com](http://isisasheville.com)) to experience the burgeoning music scene of Asheville. Enjoy delicious Southern comfort food in the dining room, lounge, or patio and listen to live music most nights.

### STAY HERE

Family-owned Wilson's Riverfront RV Park ([wilsonsrvpark.com](http://wilsonsrvpark.com)) is conveniently located 4 miles from downtown Asheville. Half of the sites are on the French Broad River, allowing for relaxing views from your front patio.

## FULL-TIME RIVERS



### MUST-DO

The River Arts District ([riverartsdistrict.com](http://riverartsdistrict.com)) houses more than 250 artists who work with various media. Enjoy the Fall Studio Stroll November 12–13 and use the free trolley to help experience as much art as possible. Artists' studios are open the second Saturday of each month, and you can sign up for classes where artists teach their trade.

### OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Take a walk on the wild side with No Taste Like Home ([notastellikehome.org](http://notastellikehome.org)). On the three-hour Foraging Tour, guests find and gather wild, seasonal edibles from the forest. Taste your treasures on the less than half-mile stroll.

### STAY HERE

Admire fall colors from your campsite at Lake Powhatan Recreation Area & Campground ([adventurepiscagah.com](http://adventurepiscagah.com)). Nestled in Pisgah National Forest, a prime destination for leaf peeping, the area is a favorite with sightseers and mountain bikers.

### ON THE MENU

Spoil your pooch with delicious made-to-order dishes from Twisted Laurel Downtown ([twistedlaurel.com](http://twistedlaurel.com)), which offers a menu just for dogs (their owners have their own menu, too). Humans will love the juicy steaks, Mediterranean-style homemade pasta, and stone-hearth pizza pies. Yum!





## FAMILY RVERS



### ◀ OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Longtime Asheville resident Bob Moog pioneered the use of synthesizers, transforming music to the rich sound we hear today. At the Moogseum ([moogseum.org](http://moogseum.org)), learn about Moog's inventions, experiment with synthesizers to create your own sound, and watch a cool display that explains how electricity becomes sound.



### ◀ ON THE MENU

Unleash the kids at Creekside Tap House's ([creeksidetaphouse.com](http://creeksidetaphouse.com)) playground and lawn games while you enjoy a local brew or cider. Nosh on sandwiches and salads while watching the brook flow by peacefully.



### MUST-DO

Hop aboard the big purple bus and embark on an unforgettable ride with LaZoom ([lazoomtours.com](http://lazoomtours.com)). The Lil Boogers: Kids Comedy Tour will entertain the whole family while sneaking in facts about the city between jokes. Kids will have so much fun they won't realize they are learning.

### STAY HERE

Asheville Bear Creek RV Park & Campground ([ashevillebearcreek.com](http://ashevillebearcreek.com)) is close to town and the impressive Biltmore Estate. The Good Sam Park has wonderful views of the surrounding mountains and features laundry facilities, a playground, and a dog walk. ■



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# RVING 24/7

WHETHER YOU'RE A SNOWBIRD CHASING THE SUN OR YOU SIMPLY HAVE A CASE OF WANDERLUST, THESE EXTENDED-STAY FAVORITES ARE WORTH A CLOSER LOOK.

**F**inding the perfect RV for extended stays or full-time living, whether that's in one or two locations a year, or constantly moving from one area of the country to another, is like picking out one pair of shoes that best fit a person's lifestyle and interests. It's not easy and requires a lot of preplanning. You'll need to take into consideration everything from anticipated seasonal weather conditions to what furnishings will make your home on wheels comfortable for an undetermined length of time, to the vehicle needed to

make the move when it's time to raise the stabilizer jacks and hit the road.

Fortunately, RV manufacturers have given those with aspirations of being full-time RVers a multitude of great choices from traditional motorhomes, travel trailers, and fifth-wheels to custom RVs. RV manufacturers are not only pushing their production limits, they are also coming out with a plethora of new models for 2023.

Those stepping into the world of extended-stay RVing will quickly find that the lifestyle requires a few more options and sometimes more elbow room than an RV used solely for vacations. Those added options, features, nicer furnishings, and a bigger overall floorplan can mean a larger investment. With that in mind, here're a few RVs that we'd enjoy for extended stays or even full-time RVing.

BY BRUCE W. SMITH

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS





## DRV LUXURY SUITES JX450 FULL HOUSE

The floorplan of the 44-foot DRV Luxury Suites JX450 Full House gives full-time (or extended stay) RVers a lot of options in how to utilize and configure this luxurious fifth-wheel toy hauler. In addition to the spacious master suite with a king-size bed in the front of the unit, and the amidships living area that features a true residential-style kitchen and beautiful entertainment center, the 10-foot-long garage can double as a second bedroom. In the garage, an electric-lift queen bed is an option, and the area can also be used as an office, a man (or woman) cave, or a rec room when the toys are unloaded. The garage's loading ramp becomes an enclosed patio, too. The 24,000-pound GVWR JX450 fiver provides plenty of room for a couple who loves a lot of space, or a family of four to spread out and enjoy life on the road wherever it leads. MSRP: \$242,818

[drvsuites.com](http://drvsuites.com)



*Extended-stay construction features on the JX450 Full House include a gelcoat fiberglass exterior, Thermo-Pack high-density insulation, extra-thick compartment doors with gas struts, and even removable storm panels.*



## EARTHROAMER LTI

Affluent folks with a thirst for adventure and full-time RVing wherever the road may lead anywhere in the world will find the 2023 EarthRoamer LTi more than capable to handle the job. This is the ultimate "pickup camper." It's built on the Ford F-550 Crew Cab 4x4 6.7-liter diesel chassis with air-ride suspension, and features a vacuum-infused carbon fiber camper body. Most everything else is custom. Communications and entertainment are all satellite linked. Electricity is provided through lithium-battery-based, marine-grade electrical systems from solar panels on the roof or via the truck's diesel engine. It also has a freshwater filtration system with a 100-gallon capacity that supplies the wet bath, external shower, and needs of the full galley. The interior is all custom-finished in teak and alder. Four-season comfort comes from a 20,000-Btu A/C and 13,600-Btu diesel heating system. As far as off-road capabilities, it's as good or even better than most of the heavily accessorized 4x4s you see on the road. MSRP: \$695,000

[earthroamer.com](http://earthroamer.com)

*EarthRoamer buyers can choose from one of six floorplans, each named after a city in Colorado. The list of standard features for any EarthRoamer is impressive, to say the least.*







*The Yukon's galley contains what Dutchmen says is the largest countertop space in the industry. Large tinted windows throughout the interior provide scenic views and allow for plenty of natural light.*

### DUTCHMEN YUKON 400RL

Claustrophobia should never be an issue living full time in a 42-foot, 5-inch 2023 Dutchmen Yukon 400RL, a beautiful mid-level fifth-wheel built on an 8-foot, 4-inch wide-body platform with large tinted dual-pane windows and a curved 8-foot-tall cathedral-style ceiling. The triple-slide design of this 13,800-pound fiver provides deeper storage in all the cabinet spaces, and more room to move around the master suite, bathroom, kitchen, and rear living room. Dutchmen says this model has the largest countertop space in the industry, and the residential-size oven, fridge, and four-burner cooktop give the sense of living in a nice home. Dutchmen takes great pride in the construction, four-season thermal package, and lifetime warranty of the Yukon's roofs. MSRP: \$105,000 [dutchmen.com](http://dutchmen.com)



### DYNAMAX DX3 37RB

Living large. That's what life on extended road trips is like if you're living in the 2023 Dynamax DX3 37RB—a truly luxurious condo on wheels. Built on an air-suspended Freightliner truck chassis and powered by a 375-hp Detroit DD8 turbo diesel, the Dynamax is the ultimate Super C motorhome. It can tow up to 20,000 pounds and coddles the occupants with all the amenities and features one would expect in a high-end luxury coach. Inside you'll find

premium hardwood cabinetry and doors, a spacious kitchen with an 18-cubic-foot residential fridge, and an elegant living area with an entertainment system. There's a full bath in the master bedroom, a half-bath amidships, and an optional bunk bed over the cab. This triple-slide Class C has an 8-kW diesel generator and massive storage, and is loaded with the latest in state-of-the-art electronics and safety features. It's one of the best of the best in this class of RVs. MSRP: \$402,462 [dynamaxcorp.com](http://dynamaxcorp.com)



### WINNEBAGO VOYAGE 2730RL

The Winnebago Voyage 2730RL is a spacious and elegantly furnished travel trailer. With opposing slides in the living room and a 7-foot ceiling, this floor-plan's creative use of space helps this trailer live much bigger than its 31-foot length. The comfortable lounge area features theater seating, a trifold sofa with side table, and a large LED TV and fireplace. In a clever use of space, a large pantry is hidden behind the TV and fireplace's sliding wall. Large residential-style appliances, ample storage, a large shower, and a choice of a queen or king bed—plus dual wardrobes and nightstands—make the 2730RL a cozy home on wheels for two. The side walls are 33% thicker than typical trailer side walls for added acoustic and thermal insulation. A standard 200-watt solar panel with a 30-amp charge controller provides free power when you're unplugged and off-grid.

MSRP: \$60,561  
[winnebago.com](http://winnebago.com) ■



*The peninsula-countertop configuration in the Voyage 2730RL combines with the large-basin sink, high-rise pull-down faucet, 30-inch microwave, and 12-volt 15-cubic-foot fridge to give the galley an upscale, residential feel.*





STAY HERE

# Yacht Haven Park & Marina

Featuring 222 motorcoach sites with stunning waterfront, canal, and garden views, welcome to South Florida's premier motorcoach resort.

...

Above: Rendering of the luxurious new Yacht Haven Clubhouse and 3,400 square-foot resort style pool. Set to open early 2024, it will wow guests with a full bar, pool service, and cozy cabanas.

**What a view!** Set along Fort Lauderdale's glistening New River and surrounded by luxury yachts, you'll find Yacht Haven Park & Marina. It's being called South Florida's premier motorcoach resort for good reason. The new ownership group is investing more than \$20 million on a resort transformation that includes new sites with pavers and tropical landscaping, a newly renovated pool, tiki huts, outdoor recreation area, fitness center, new facilities, boat rentals, dog park, and much more. Plus, there's more on the way, highlighted by a spectacular new Clubhouse set to open in early 2024.

With easy hookups, high-speed fiber optic Wi-Fi, and all those great amenities, Yacht Haven is transforming this already top-rated resort into one worthy of a *Good Sam Campground & Coupon Guide*

perfect rating. You'll also love the location. Yacht Haven sits right off I-95 just minutes from Fort Lauderdale's legendary beaches, shopping, and award-winning culinary scene. Plus, Miami is an easy drive south and Palm Beach, just a short drive north.

Yacht Haven is everything you want in a South Florida escape. The amenities of a luxury resort are right outside your rig. Everything else is just minutes away – beaches, offshore angling, championship golf, professional sports stadiums & arenas, thoroughbred racing, casino action, waterparks, family attractions, museums, Everglades adventures, restaurants, clubs, shopping, and so much more.

Put it all together, and you've got an absolute paradise.

[www.yachthavenpark.com](http://www.yachthavenpark.com)



Once you've set up camp, Yacht Haven's location is convenient to South Florida's popular attractions.





# SNOWBIRDS IN THE

BEAT THE  
SLEET AND  
CHILL OUT  
FOR A SOFT  
SEASONAL  
LANDING IN  
THESE TOP  
ROOSTS.

BY JOHN SULLAWAY

**Who needs Jack Frost** when you can spend winter with good old Sol? Follow the highway south for warmer company in the Sunbelt before the mercury dips too far. Have fun in the sun at your favorite snowbird destinations and stay in parks that pamper visitors from the north.

As a snowbird, you'll be staying in the Sunbelt for quite some time; make sure the area you're visiting has the attractions and amenities that you desire while on vacation. But before you join the legions of RV travelers descending from America's cold regions, carry out due diligence. Secure the house you've left behind and make reservations well before spaces fill up.

Ready to bask in the sun? The following places and parks welcome snowbirds with open arms. And, for some firsthand snowbirding insight from a full-timing RV family, check out "Family Nest," beginning on page 48.



## ALABAMA

### Gulf Shores and Orange Beach

Alabama makes the most of its 32 miles of Gulf Coast. Both Gulf Shores and Orange Beach offer long stretches of sand to explore, while fishing charters take anglers to Gulf Coast waters yielding pompano, speckled trout, and black drum.

◀ *Stay: On the banks of its namesake body of water, Lake Osprey RV Resort in nearby Elberta treats guests to golf, fishing, a clubhouse, pool, and tiki bar. Guests can take a dip in the zero-entry pool and hot tub or work up a sweat on the pickleball courts. [robertsresorts.com](http://robertsresorts.com)*

## ARIZONA



Fossil Creek Waterfall



## CALIFORNIA

### Desert Hot Springs

This Coachella Valley town caters to lovers of relaxation and comfort. The name is no joke: Several spots in town offer pools of hot water fed by an aquifer directly beneath the city. A backdrop of the towering San Bernardino Mountains looming over the city completes the picture.

Folks who crave a bit more action can take the 20-minute drive south to Palm Springs, famous for fine dining, eye-catching architec-

ture, and stellar golfing. Take a stroll through the El Paseo Shopping District, considered the desert's equivalent to Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive. Find more robust adventure in Joshua Tree National Park, 31 miles to the east, and the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, 14 miles south.

► *Stay: Catalina Spa and RV Resort features odorless mineral hot springs and five swimming areas. Other amenities include an event pavilion, a convenience store, pickleball, water volleyball, and bocce ball. [catalinasparvresort.com](http://catalinasparvresort.com)*



# SUNBELT



Naples shoreline



Naples Motorcoach Resort

## FLORIDA

### Bradenton

This Gulf Coast town and the nearby islands offer just the right blend of laid-back charm and Florida adventure. Go kayaking, bird-watching, and hiking in some of the area's nature reserves tucked away throughout the region. Explore thick mangroves and get up-close looks at roseate spoonbills, wood storks, and other native birds. Afterward, take a sunset walk on the beach or enjoy a fresh seafood dinner at a local restaurant.

About 40 miles north, Tampa pulses with big-city action. Watch master cigar rollers at work in the Cuban enclave of Ybor City or take a fishing charter to catch a big one.

*Stay: The Tides RV Resort in Palmetto is a gated, upscale getaway occupying 95 acres of landscaped grounds. It has large RV sites, world-class amenities, a clubhouse, and a fully stocked lake. [thetidesrvresort.com](http://thetidesrvresort.com)*

### Naples

Situated on the Gulf Coast, Naples enjoys sunny winter days. Catch a sunset cruise from Naples Bay or enjoy a fine sunset meal. Shop for designer labels in town, or peruse Gallery Row and take in a performance at the Naples Philharmonic.

*Stay: Northtide Naples Resort features a boat ramp into Rock Creek with water activities. [northtidenaples.com](http://northtidenaples.com) Naples Motorcoach Resort caters to boaters with a ramp into Henderson Creek. A rec hall, sauna, and dock keep the fun going. [naplesmotorcoachresort.com](http://naplesmotorcoachresort.com)*

### Bullhead City

Camp near the Colorado River just minutes from casinos and desert recreation. For waterborne recreation, hit the H<sub>2</sub>O from one of the marinas in town or head to Lake Mohave in the north or Lake Havasu in the south.

Across the river on the Nevada side, Laughlin entices snowbirds with gaming, entertainment, and fine dining in the

high-rise casinos that line the banks. Hungry for more? Las Vegas is less than two hours away.

*Stay: Vista Del Sol in Bullhead City is a 55-plus gated, active community and RV resort near the river and gaming in Laughlin. Two large pools, a hot tub, pickleball, and planned activities in a luxurious setting keep the party going. [robertsresorts.com](http://robertsresorts.com)*

### Camp Verde

Sitting on the banks of the Verde River, the small town is home to rafting, fishing, bird-watching, and hiking trails that wind through the wooded valley. Whet your whistle at one of the local wineries or venture to Montezuma's Castle, a cliff dwelling built by the Sinagua people in AD 1100.

Some of Arizona's most popular attractions, including

Sedona, Prescott, and Jerome, are just a short drive away. Longer day trips include north to the Grand Canyon or south to Phoenix.

*Stay: On the banks of the Verde River, Verde Ranch RV Resort has a pool, a splash pad, a pickleball court, and a dog park. Launch a kayak or drop a line. You can also stay in one of the resort's covered wagons. [verderanchrvresort.com](http://verderanchrvresort.com)*



## LOUISIANA

## Tangipahoa Parish

Tangipahoa may be hard to pronounce, but it's easy on snowbirds seeking a location close to top Pelican State attractions. The area sits 50 miles north of New Orleans and 48 miles east of Baton Rouge. Closer to town, Lake Pontchartrain hosts abundant trout during winter. Outfitters are available to take you into the deep water.

In Hammond, visitors can feast on Cajun and Creole cuisine in restaurants

Reunion Lake  
RV Resort

and at local festivals. Stick around until late winter for the strawberry harvest in the "Strawberry Capital of the World," as nearby Ponchatoula is often called.

*Stay: At Reunion Lake RV Resort in Ponchatoula, visitors can play in the pools, outdoor hot tub, and lazy river; relax in one of the luxury cabanas, tiki bar, and restaurant; or go kayaking or fishing on the lake. [sunoutdoors.com](http://sunoutdoors.com)*

## HAVE FUN IN THE SUN AT YOUR FAVORITE SNOWBIRD DESTINATION AND STAY IN A PARK THAT PAMPERS VISITORS FROM THE NORTH.



Boomtown Casino

## MISSISSIPPI

## Biloxi

Biloxi is a good bet for snowbirds. The Gulf Coast town boasts plenty of fishing and championship golf courses, along with charming neighborhoods. Plus, eight casino resorts lure gamblers in town with slots, table games, and entertainment.

Visitors can skip the slots and take their chances fishing off the coast for redfish, speckled trout, and flounder. Next, head to Gallows Fresh Catch Seafood Restaurant in town, where the chefs will cook your catch the way you like it.

*Stay: Boomtown RV Park is the only RV park in Biloxi attached to a casino. A cocktail lounge and snack bar serve customers between gambling jaunts. [boomtownbiloxi.com](http://boomtownbiloxi.com)*



Taos

## NEW MEXICO

## Angel Fire

It may not be the place for snowbirds to escape the snow but Angel Fire in northern New Mexico is a beautiful destination for skiing and chilling out. At 9,000 feet of elevation, the town is close to Wheeler Peak, the highest point in New Mexico and a magnet for downhill skiers. Also nearby is Taos, an artist colony known for dazzling holiday luminarias. Just north of Angel Fire, Eagle Nest Lake State Park is home to miles of hiking and snowshoeing trails.

*Stay: At the foot of Carson National Forest, Angel Fire RV Resort features an upscale clubhouse with outdoor firepits, a hot tub, a spa-like bathhouse, leisure games, and on-site laundry. Enjoy the crisp, cool air and take in the views of Wheeler Peak. [angelfirervresort.com](http://angelfirervresort.com)*

## Galveston

Part of a chain of barrier islands along the Gulf Coast, Galveston is a beach destination that rivals its West Coast counterparts. Accessible from the mainland by a bridge, the island has 32 miles of shoreline, making it ideal for beachcombers who enjoy strolling along uncrowded coasts. Watersports here run the gamut, from kayaking on one of the paddling trails that run through the island to catching waves close to the town of Galveston.

*Stay: Close to the Pleasure Pier, Sandpiper RV Resort has 43 paved and landscaped sites, including both big rig and beachfront sites. An infinity pool with a hot tub and lounge area overlooks the Gulf of Mexico. Take Fido for a walk in the dog-walking areas. [sandpiperrvresort.com](http://sandpiperrvresort.com)*

## San Antonio

Few big cities in Texas are more inviting for snowbirds than San Antonio. Standing on the banks of the San Antonio River, the town preserves its rich history, with famous structures like the Alamo evoking the region's pivotal events. Along the waterway, the River Walk is a 15-mile path that leads guests to shopping, dining, and boat rides on the current.

*Stay: Alsation RV Resort & Golf Club, a 55-and-plus resort, in nearby Castroville occupies 156 acres and sits adjacent to the 18-hole Alsation Golf Club. When guests aren't hitting the links, they're relaxing in their paved sites or taking a dip in the swimming pool. An enclosed dog run and high-speed fiber optic Wi-Fi will keep both canine and human guests happy. [alsationresort.com](http://alsationresort.com) ■*



Galveston, Texas



# ADVENTURE AWAITS



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## NEW 2023 INTERIOR DESIGN OPTIONS

Whether you're a snowbird or spend your time camping in the heat, Entegra Coach's Esteem is one of the very few 30 amp coaches with the option for two A/Cs, keeping you cool however close to the equator you get. New 2023 interior design options include solid-surface countertops and theater seating. Take in the whole view with the one-piece, seamless, fiberglass front cap with automotive-bonded panoramic window and power shade. It also has the industry's largest travel-view window in an entrance door.

### TOP FEATURES

- E-Z Drive™ Elite ride and handling package featuring computer-balanced driveshaft, Koni® FSD shocks, heavy-duty rear stabilizer bar, standard front stabilizer bar, Hellwig® helper springs and rubber isolation mounts
- Standard 190W solar panel with dual controller and 2nd house battery
- Automatic hydraulic leveling jacks
- Winegard 2.0 Wi-Fi/4G Antenna
- Standard 15,000-BTU ducted A/C with heat pump or optional dual A/C with power management system

### THE ENTEGRA COACH ADVANTAGE

#### ONE-PIECE SEAMLESS FIBERGLASS FRONT CAP

A motorhome's front cap bears the brunt of road travel. This makes the front cap one of the most important parts of a Class C in terms of durability. Entegra Coach's seamless one-piece front caps help keep your coach out of the service bay, as they resist damage from moisture and debris better than the competition.

*Without compromise.*

[EntegraCoach.com/Esteem](http://EntegraCoach.com/Esteem)



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ENTEGRA COACH, CIRCLE 108 ON READER SERVICE CARD



**I**n 2016 during the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS), I had the opportunity to interview NPS employees across a broad spectrum of positions and geographic locations, including park superintendents, rangers, researchers, naturalists, biologists, law enforcement officials, and even Jonathan Jarvis, director of the NPS at the time. When I asked each person what their favorite national park was, Jarvis answered, “all of them,” a politically correct response given his position, but surprisingly many of the others mentioned Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) near Medora, North Dakota.

“The place affects you,” said Winona Peterson, an historian at Gettysburg National Military Park and Eisenhower National Historic Site in Pennsylvania. “You can see why Native Americans attach legends to the land. The whole conservation ethic is personified in that landscape. Conservation and preservation are at the heart of what the National Park Service does. And I got to see a bison!”

# Home *on the* Range

**THERE'S SO MUCH  
TO DO WHILE RVING  
IN NORTH DAKOTA'S  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT  
NATIONAL PARK.**

BY LISA BALLARD

Conservation and bison do indeed represent the two backbones of TRNP. The park played a vital role in bringing bison back from near extinction during the 1900s, and it's the only national park named exclusively for a United States President, Theodore Roosevelt, oft called America's conservation president. During his time in office, he conserved 230 million acres of public land, created the U.S. Forest Service, and established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, several national game preserves and monuments,

*The Little Missouri River, which is fed by rivers and streams within TRNP, flows through all three units of the park and is constantly changing as it carves its way through the badlands.*

PHOTOS: LISA BALLARD; ZIRPHOTO; ALLEN ALLNOCH/GETTY IMAGES





Above from left: Male bighorn sheep butt heads during the summer by practicing sparring atop a cliff in preparation for the late fall rut. A young mule deer buck trots across a road-way in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, its new antlers in velvet.

and five national parks, though not TRNP, which was originally a national memorial when it was created in 1947—28 years after Roosevelt died. President Jimmy Carter made it a national park in 1978.

If you wish to see bison and other iconic wildlife of the Great Plains and learn about Theodore Roosevelt, TRNP is a must-visit national park. It's also relatively uncrowded. About 800,000 people go to TRNP per year, substantially less than

places like Yellowstone National Park (4 million visitors), Grand Teton National Park (2.5 million visitors), or even Badlands National Park in South Dakota (900,000 visitors), which are more commonly on an RVer's national parks itinerary in the north-central part of the country. Consider it. TRNP doesn't engulf you. It spreads out before you. It's big open country, a taste of the badlands as Roosevelt saw them, separated from the rest of the world.



## THEODORE ROOSEVELT, THE RANCHER

In 1883, Theodore Roosevelt, a gaunt, bespectacled, 25-year-old from New York City, visited what was then the Dakota Territory to hunt bison. He fell in love with the rugged badlands and the physical demands of life there. Near the end of his trip, he bought the first of his two ranches, known as the Maltese Cross Ranch (also called Chimney Butte Ranch). A year later, after the tragic deaths of his wife and his mother on the same day, he returned to North Dakota for solace and solitude. His experiences as a rancher and outdoorsman later influenced his conservation policies as president from which we all benefit today.

## WILDLIFE IN THE PARK

Remember the folk song, "Home on the Range"? It could easily be about TRNP, a place where "the buffalo [actually, bison] roam, and the deer and the antelope play." The park's steep, hilly badlands form a number of microclimates, including arid slopes, temperate juniper woodlands, and moist river bottoms, in which a wide variety of animals reside. Herds of bison freely roam throughout the park, along with elk and mule deer. Wild horses thunder across the prairie if something startles them. And prairie dogs

### TRNP BY THE NUMBERS

# 800,000

Number of visitors per year, slightly more than the population of North Dakota (760,000)

**70,447**  
Total acreage of the national park.

**2,000**  
Weight, in pounds, of a large, male bison.

**185**  
Number of bird species found in the park.



kiss, dance, and nibble blades of grass with their tiny handlike forepaws. A glimpse of some of the Plains species you may see in the park includes bison, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, mule deer, coyotes, mustangs, and black-tailed prairie dogs.

## THE UNITS

TRNP has three close but noncontiguous units. From north to south, they are known as the North Unit (24,070 acres), Elkhorn Ranch Unit (218 acres), and South Unit (46,159 acres). Here's what you'll find at each location:

**North Unit.** Located about 50 miles north of Interstate 94, the North Unit is out of the way, which is part of its appeal.

Most people visit the North Unit for its 14-Mile Scenic Drive, an out-and-back route that takes you past River Bend Overlook and then along the rim of the badlands. The road is open to RVs and motorcycles, but there is one section that is not paved. You're almost guaranteed to see bison, sometimes blocking the road. Look for mule deer at sunup and sundown, and bighorn sheep butting heads on the cliffs.

Hiking is also a big draw. You can access the several short hikes including the Sperati Point Trail, Little Mo Nature Trail, and a trail through the "concretions," otherworldly sedimentary rock balls, from the North Unit's Juniper Campground. Backcountry

hard-cores who wish to venture more than a mile or two will find the renowned 18-mile Achenbach Trail and several other wilderness trails in this unit.

**RV Camping at Juniper Campground:** *First come, first-served. No hookups.*

**Elkhorn Ranch Unit.** Elkhorn Ranch became Theodore Roosevelt's home-away-from-home after the deaths of his wife and mother. The unit is small without a visitor's center, facilities, or a wildlife drive. The road to the ranch house requires a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle to get to the parking lot, then a 0.7-mile walk on a mowed path to the stone foundation of Roosevelt's seven-room cabin. Placards around the site have meaningful passages written by Roosevelt on them. It's a peaceful place and a step back in time that allows you to better understand why he treasured his time here during the late 1880s.

The ranch name, Elkhorn, is based on the interlocking antlers of two elk that Roosevelt found at the site. He concluded that the elk, while sparring during the rut, got their antlers stuck together, causing them to starve and die. All that remained was their antlers.

Roosevelt built Elkhorn Ranch in 1884, a year after buying the Maltese Cross Ranch, with the idea of becoming a full-time cattle rancher. He paid \$400 for the site (about \$12,000 in today's currency).

As a working ranch, the house, made from cottonwood logs, was



## Bison Basics

- The national mammal of the US, bison numbered in the hundreds of millions in prehistoric times, but were reduced to only a few hundred by the late 1800s due to loss of habitat and over-hunting. Today, wild bison number about 10,000 in carefully managed herds across 12 states.
- Bison did not live in TRNP when it was founded in 1947. The NPS introduced 24 females and five males in 1956. Today, park biologists manage the herds in the North and South Units at a maximum of 300 and 400 animals, respectively.
- The largest land mammal in North America, bulls (males) can weigh up to 2,000 pounds. Cows (females) are half that size. Calves, nicknamed red dogs for their red-brown fur, can weigh up to 70 pounds at birth.
- Don't call them buffalo! Bison in North America are a completely separate species from true buffalo that live in Africa, such as water buffalo and cape buffalo.
- Keep your distance! Bison may graze placidly and appear docile, but they are wild and temperamental. They can spin quickly and charge at 35 miles per hour, without warning.

**"The place affects you. You can see why Native Americans attach legends to the land."**





Did you know that Polaris was not always the North Star? You can find out why during one of the family astronomy programs at TRNP. The park is a real-life planetarium thanks to North Dakota's ultra-dark sky at night.

completed in 1885, along with a barn, cattle shed, chicken coop, and small blacksmith forge. Despite his fondness for Elkhorn Ranch, Roosevelt abandoned the ranch house in 1890, then sold the ranch in 1898, which was gradually stripped to its foundations by the time Roosevelt became President of the United States in 1901.

**No camping in this unit.**

**South Unit.** The largest unit in TRNP, the South Unit is adjacent to I-94 and the town of Medora. It is the most popular unit in the park. Like the North Unit, it has a scenic drive and hiking trails.

The scenic drive is longer (36 miles), makes a loop, and is entirely paved. It's open to RVs and motorcycles. Note: It

longer backcountry routes, including the Petrified Forest Loop, a 10.3-mile trek in the northwest corner of the unit that takes you through one of the last remaining and largest petrified forests in the country. During the summer and fall, you can also join a ranger-led hike, full-moon tour, or bison education program in this part of the park.

Roosevelt's Maltese Cross Ranch is in

this unit. His cabin is not the original one; it was reconstructed to reflect what it looked like when he purchased the ranch in 1883 at the end of his first hunting trip to the Dakotas.

**RV Camping at Cottonwood Campground:** *Half of the sites are by reservation and half are first-come, first-served. No RV hookups. Reservations are through recreation.gov or via phone (877-444-6777).* ■



Top: A colorful lazuli bunting songbird perches on a blade of grass in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which is at the eastern edge of its range. Above: Of the five species of prairie dogs in North America, only the black-tailed prairie dog can be found in TRNP.

starts 7 miles east of Medora, not at the Painted Canyon Visitor Center. You can easily spend an hour taking photos of just the prairie dog town. You can also see bison, pronghorn, deer, elk, coyotes, and eagles depending on the time of day.

For hikers, there are self-guided nature trails less than a mile each and

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CELEBRATING THE

# Holidays in an RV



## A FULL-TIMER SHARES HER FAMILY'S "NICE LIST" ON HOW TO DECK THE HALLS IN YOUR RIG.

BY LINDSAY LANE @LANESLESSTRAVELED

### For most people

the holiday season brings about a feeling of joy and warmth to their hearts. We are filled with memories of holidays past and we look forward to creating new memories during future holidays. And, for most people holiday memories are centered around a particular home or aspect of said home.

So what happens when you decide to spend the holidays on the road, away from that home? Do you forego traditions you've always held near to your heart or do you create new ones? Well, what if it could be both?

*Spending time together and sharing activities strengthens family bonds and values. Even during the holidays, time spent with loved ones doesn't need to be costly—enjoying each other's company playing a game or conversing is quality time, made especially cozy with a fireplace.*

Whether you're a full-time RVer, part-time RVer, vacationer, or weekend warrior, a holiday season on the road can be just as special and meaningful as holidays spent in a sticks-and-bricks home. The key to making sure your time on the road for the holidays is just as meaningful as it's always been is to make sure you keep old traditions alive while traveling or being in your RV. As a bonus, along with keeping old traditions alive, the novelty of being on the road gives you the opportunity to create new memories and traditions for your family. By using holiday decorating as an anchor, you can transform your rolling home into the memory maker your stick home has always been.

### LET'S TALK TURKEY

Maybe festive gobblers and colorful leaves are a focal





point for Novembers around your sticks-and-bricks house. Just because you're in a smaller space doesn't mean that has to change. The only change may be bringing in smaller elements of themed decor and placing them around your rig. Remember making paper turkeys in grade school by tracing your hand on brown paper, cutting it out, and adding colorful feathers? That still makes for a fun, affordable project, and the materials (and even the finished product) takes up very little space. You could also take a colorful fall bunting and

***It's the most wonderful time of the year in an RV! Make it a holly, jolly holiday by outfitting your home on wheels with festive homemade garlands and decorations that bring joy to your family. And don't forget one of the best traditions—baking up scrumptious cookies. Everyone will have fun creating their own masterpieces and sharing with neighboring RVers.***

themed items, or draping colorful holiday bunting, are simple ways to make your home on wheels feel more festive.

While you're decorating for the holidays don't forget to take advantage of the trim around your RV's slideouts as a space to hang decor. Using the slide trim as an alternative to a mantle (if your RV doesn't have an electric fireplace) is the perfect way to give your rig that special holiday touch.

Taking garland or pine swag that is interwoven with (or includes) miniature tree lights and hanging it around the slide can be done just like you would on the mantle in a stick home. Adding simple ornaments or pompom bunting adds an even more fun design element to the decor.

If decorating the bedrooms and bathroom is also your thing, don't forget to add touches like more throw pillows and blankets in the bedroom, and holiday-themed towels or even a shower curtain in the bathroom.

## O TANNENBAUM

And, let's not forget the tree! For many of us, holiday decor is centered around a tree. Even with the smaller confines of an RV, a holiday tree is another easy element of decorating to continue while you're in your home on wheels. The key here is finding a small-scale tree that fits in your rig. Many hobby or big-box stores (not to mention online markets) sell smaller artificial trees that are

the perfect size for an RV.

Once you've found the perfect tree for your space, decide whether you'd like a tree skirt or some sort of covering for beneath the tree. Most standard tree skirts will likely be too big for your small tree, so you'll need to get creative with this decor element. Maybe you purchase a yard or two of holiday-themed fabric and try your sewing skills, or maybe you simply place the tree in a basket of some sort.



draped it across the windows. Another fun, yet simple, decor aspect could be switching out your throw pillows for Thanksgiving color plaid or printed ones. Even just one or two pillows can help get you in the holiday mood!

## FA-LA-LA-LA-LA

Do you typically decorate your sticks and bricks with elves, reindeer, and Santa Claus? Or maybe it's all blue and white, or even black, red, and green. That doesn't have to change just because you're in your RV. Simply find smaller, more RV-friendly pieces that bring just as much joy to your space. Just as you can make your rig Thanksgiving-friendly by adding themed accessories, the same can be done in December. Changing out your normal throw pillows for some featuring jolly old Saint Nick or other

## Get Creative

**A basket for your holiday tree would also provide a multipurpose purchase that can be used after the holiday season is over and the tree is put away. So always keep those multipurpose items in mind when making any purchase for your rig!**





## TRIM UP THE TREE

What about decorating the tree? This is where you can get really creative. One extra special way to bring your travel memories into your holiday memories is by choosing to make your own tree decorations. Some fun examples we've done are an old-fashioned popcorn garland and drying out slices of oranges and cranberries to create some custom decor. What makes this option even better is that once you are ready to put the holiday decor away these garlands can be thrown away instead of taking up storage space somewhere in your rig.

Make it personal: Ornaments can be made using shells you've collected at beaches all over the country, or you

could also use pinecones or interesting rocks you discovered during your travel adventures.

Many families collect ornaments from each place they travel throughout the year and place these on their RV holiday tree, but the cost can add up quickly. Our budget-friendly solution for this is to collect magnets at each stop and hot glue a little twine to the back of each one. That way, our holiday tree is a personal road map of all the fun places we've visited over the years.

Decorating in a smaller space doesn't mean a smaller dose of holiday cheer—it just means decorating on a smaller scale. Doing so provides a great way to challenge yourself and your family to get the creative juices flowing with each element of decor in the smaller area you have to decorate. So, put on your Santa cap, fire up the hot cocoa, and create some new decorating traditions for your home on wheels. Happy holidays! ■

*The Lane family of seven incorporates homey elements into their full-time RV, a Keystone Cougar, that they renovated. A wreath over a door during the holidays and cheery plants in their rolling home lift the mood and put the whole family in the spirit to celebrate year-round.*

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PERFECT PARKS

# HOLIDAY TRAV-L-PARK

BY JOHN SULLAWAY

**As ocean playgrounds go,** it's hard to beat Virginia Beach, Virginia. The town's 28 miles of public shoreline stretches along both the Atlantic and the Chesapeake Bay, giving visitors an abundance of choices. Stroll or cycle the bustling 3 miles of oceanfront boardwalk, grab a surfboard for some wave riding, or hunker down to make a sandcastle.

Holiday Trav-L-Park gives vacationers a

haven to rest and recharge between adventures. Located near the Atlantic shore, the park spoils guests with a generous array of amenities. Take a dip in one of the four pools (open from May–October) located throughout the park. Hit the 18-hole miniature golf course, take your four-legged companion to the dog park, or grab a bite at the Safari Café. A convenience store and nearby Holiday Food Mart offering fuel and groceries will keep you well supplied.

The 687-space park gives guests lots of camping choices, and all RV sites have 30/50-amp power. Concrete supersites measure 100-by-50 feet, with patios, picnic tables, and fire bowls. Pull-through sites are abundant, and some full-hookup sites have cable. Campers can also opt for basic tent sites, rental trailers, and basic- or full-service cabins that feature air conditioning and heating.

During the warm-weather months, the park hosts DJs and entertainers at the main pool or in the park's pavilion. Nightly bingo and evening hayrides (weather permitting) keep the fun going. [campingvb.com](http://campingvb.com)

▲ Holiday Trav-L-Park is close to Virginia Beach's popular boardwalk and the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center in the downtown area. The park received high marks (8.5/10\*/9) from the *Good Sam Campground & Coupon Guide* for the facility, overall cleanliness, and visual appeal.



## Culture Stop: Washington, D.C.

*No trip to the Chesapeake is complete without a swing through the nation's capital. Wildsam Field Guides discovers streets (and marble halls) rich with history and vibrant life.*

### ART & HERITAGE

The Smithsonian's American Art Museum weaves our artistic story from Revolution-era paintings to modern surprises, like "outsider" artist James Hampton's stunning sculptures made from scavenged materials. [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu)

### FOOD & DRINK

D.C.'s global status powers a diverse food scene. At Anju, Angel Barreto's Korean menus win national acclaim, while the Peruvian roast chicken at Huacatay is the smart-money pick to feed the family.

### ACTION

D.C. is secretly a live-music powerhouse. Blues Alley, one of the nation's longest-running jazz clubs, rolls on with two shows most nights. And after three decades, The Black Cat remains an indie treasure. ■

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BIZ RV

# NEAT VIEW

After buying a Winnebago Class C, an entrepreneurial couple hits the road full time and documents their adventures to promote the RV lifestyle.

BY DONYA CARLSON

**T**wo years ago, Tiffany Mitchell and Steve Forrest decided to change up their version of the American dream. The married couple worked hard, owned a house, had recently had a child, and all was right with the world. Except that they were restless. They were at a standstill—literally—their house wasn't cutting it; they wanted to be on the move. Tiffany said, "I really got the bug after Noah's birth, sitting at home watching travel channels. And I thought, 'why are we dreaming about this when we can just do it?'"

Tiffany, an influencer (@tifforelie) who is also a photographer, videographer, and an illustrator, can work from anywhere, and Steve (@steveforrest), a musician whose work had slowed down during the pandemic, was starting to travel again for gigs. Tiffany told Steve, "Listen, if you intend to adventure around, then I'm coming!" Without having any RVing experience, they bought a 25-foot Class C Winnebago View, rented out their house in Nashville, moved some stuff into storage, and off they went in their motorhome.

## Promoting the RV Lifestyle

Since buying the View, they started a YouTube channel (Neat View) and document their adventures and offer advice. Their goal—and they're still learning as they go—is to promote the RV lifestyle as an affordable alternative to renting for those who like being on the road. They talk about everything from calculating gas prices, to doing laundry, to buying groceries, to

cutting out the cost of campgrounds by boondocking.

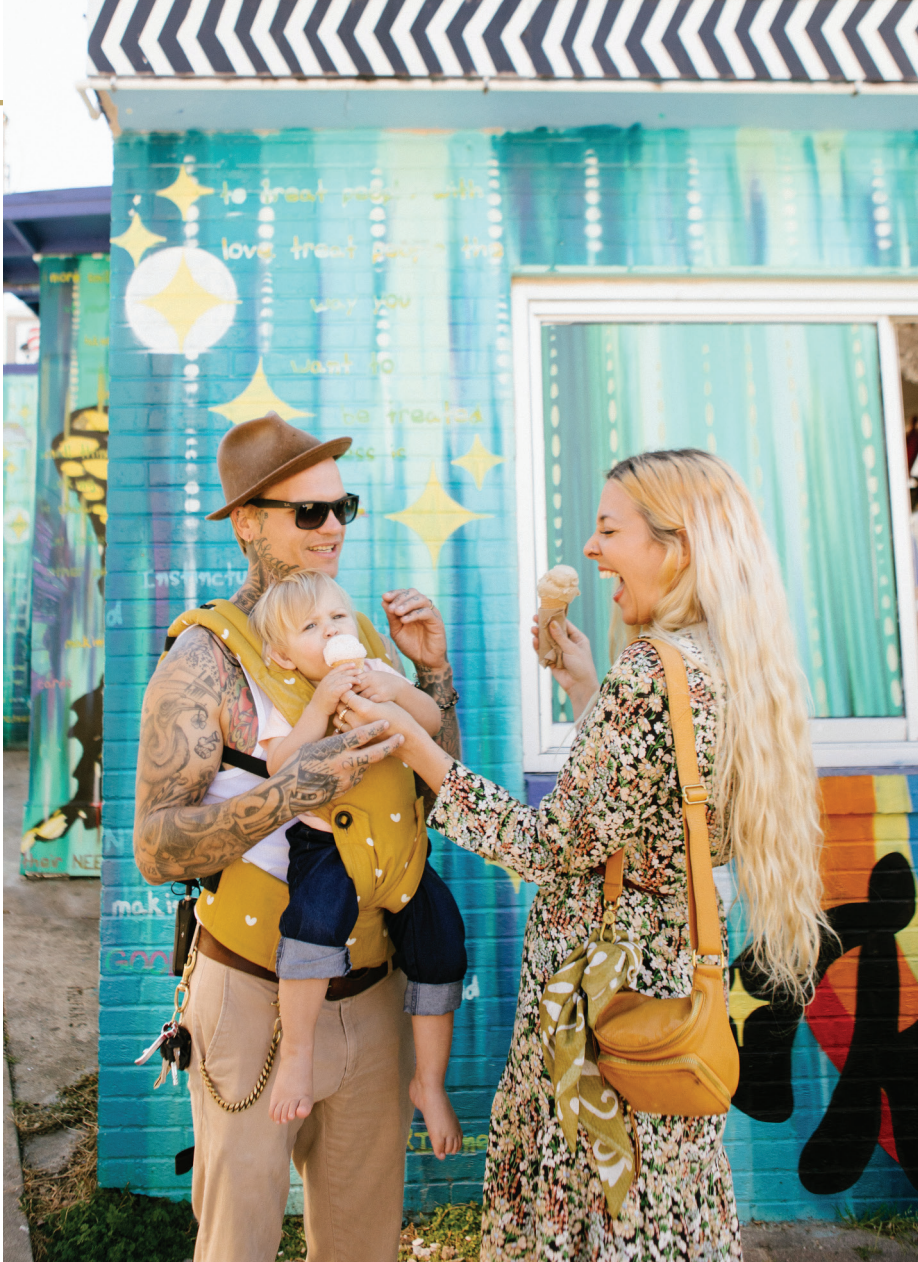
Making your own meals is more cost effective and Steve loves to cook, mostly outside. "I can get as creative as I want, whether that's an involved recipe or I get lazy and throw some hot links on the grill. I'm outside with a beautiful view—just heaven!—and I'll put on some yacht rock, like Billy Ocean, in the background. It's a wonderful way to take in the day."

## Together as a Family

"Now that we have a kid, it's very important to us that we spend significant time with both of our families, and flying

back and forth just would not work," said Tiffany. Steve's family lives in California, while Tiffany's is spread around Florida, Kentucky, and New Jersey. With their RV, they're able to ping-pong across the US and camp on public

*Tiffany said of her husband, "Steve is such an amazing partner and father that he wouldn't want to travel without us," which was a big factor in the couple's decision to RV full time.*



***"This lifestyle supports everything we're passionate about ... these different places are inspiring and keep the creativity flowing."***





## LIVING IN HARMONY

So how does this work with two career-focused adults—one with an occupation that can be loud—living together under one 25-foot roof?

First off, when Steve is practicing he uses a standard drum pad, not a drum set. When he's recording, he tracks drums on an electronic drum sampling pad. Steve chimed in, "It took a while to get a rhythm going but we've got a good system in place now. You get real good at communicating! We are each other's sounding board." Said Tiffany, "Literally ... and luckily, I like Steve's music! We start the day with coffee! Then we take turns working. If I am doing any voice recording that requires silence, Steve will take Noah outside. Then once I'm into the editing or shooting of video, we can all be together. Steve also needs silence, and when he has a deadline for turning in music, we plan ahead so he can focus on that."

land along the way.

Steve, best known as the former drummer for British alternative rock band Placebo, had moved back to the US after spending eight years overseas, and now pursues his own music career. He plays drums, guitar, and piano, plus writes and records music. "It's the creation I love so much," he said. "I listen to everything under the sun, and I like to get into the nitty-gritty of the music. I constantly have ideas and gotta get them out." He has a licensing agreement with Gold Sounds Entertainment and does full production on the music he writes, which varies from rock to electronic to country. His favorite is creating Jimmy Buffet-style songs with musician friend Andrew James.

Steve's memories are of being 7 or 8 years old and his uncle's band would stay with them when on tour. "Every instrument I could get my hands on I was trying to learn. I started writing my own music and by the time I was 19 I was signed to Warner Bros. It's been a real blessing to have a career which I'm passionate

about, and it was worked out in all these different ways."

Content creator Tiffany's talents lie in illustration and photography, which she does professionally. Much of her photography is related to travel and the RV lifestyle and also promoted on her Instagram. She loves learning about all things RV, like when she recently filmed the installation of a Truma air conditioner. She illustrated a cookbook, *Southern Lights*, due out by the year's end.

"This lifestyle supports everything we're passionate about," she said. "It supports Steve's music; these different places are inspiring and keep the creativity flowing. It's the same with me with photography and videos and illustrations."

### The Open Road

"There's something about being out on the road that both of us are attached to," said Tiffany. Steve explained, "One thing we found comforting was that there were no moments of feeling claustrophobic because of the small space; we fit together

naturally. I guess because of our backgrounds with traveling, it was liberating to not need as much stuff."

When Tiffany was growing up, her mom took her four children on many adventures. "Sometimes she didn't even have a plan where we were going. One morning we left New Jersey and ended up in Canada on Prince Edward Island and it was just so cool!" Tiffany also traveled all the time as a single adult. "I'd get into my Jeep and take a two-month road trip every year. I'd do random stuff, like drive across the country to meet up with friends. I look back and think how lucky I am. And doing these same things with Noah makes us so happy."

At first, they were worried about Noah's socialization with the constant moving. "But we've met so many full-time RV families who have kids who are smart, outgoing, and kind that it's been an overwhelmingly positive experience. And we had no idea there were so many kids living this RV lifestyle and thriving, not only in their socialization but also in their education. That took that concern off of us. We're now confident we can continue doing this." Tiffany and Steve love the RV community so much that they want to invest in it, expand it, and bring more people into the lifestyle. ■



Steve does side gigs as a drummer, here with singer Andrew James, in Austin, Texas, while touring the country in an RV.





# Rigs + Gear



## Always a Pleasure

by KRISTOPHER BUNKER

### PREVIEW



### PLEASURE-WAY ONTOUR 2.0

**BASE MSRP**  
\$149,305

**DIMENSIONS**  
Exterior Length: 19' 8"  
Exterior Width: 8' 1.5"  
Exterior Height: 10'

**CAPACITIES**  
Freshwater: 25 gal  
Black-water: 11 gal  
Gray-water: 15 gal  
Propane: 12 gal

**WEIGHTS**  
GCWR: 11,200 lbs  
GVWR: 9,070 lbs  
GAWR, F/R: 4,130 lbs/5,515 lbs

CIRCLE 150 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**One of the first things** we look for in a new motorhome is livability. Naturally, if you're going to be living in an RV, you need to be comfortable. Second is maneuverability; if you can't get it to the campground, what's the point? For more than 35 years, Pleasure-Way has combined interior comfort with a nimble, easy-to-drive platform, and the 2023 Ontour 2.0 continues that trend.

Based on the Ford Transit chassis and powered by the 3.5-liter EcoBoost V-6, the 2.0 measures less than 20 feet long, making it a breeze to cruise from campsite to local attractions and back. The infotainment system with navigation and rear camera help make operation even easier, as do niceties like blind-spot warnings, lane-keeping assist, and enhanced active park assist.

Inside, new for 2023 are the 3M

Thinsulate insulation, radius laminate cabinetry, Corian countertops, and ultra-leather fabric. The rear electric sofa folds into a queen bed, and the Lagun Table System delivers additional versatility. The roomy private wet bath is a nice touch, while the fully equipped galley includes a single-burner induction stove, stainless sink, and 3.2-cubic-foot fridge. Multiplex wiring and the 10-inch touchscreen control panel allow for control of conveniences such as the Truma furnace and instant water heater, tank levels, and solar charge controls and monitoring. Rear- and side-door roll-up screens keep you close to nature while enjoying the interior, or you can keep to yourself thanks to MCD roller shades and cockpit privacy/sun shades. It's your pleasure, after all.

[pleasureway.com](http://pleasureway.com) ■

**Power Up** The standard 200-watt solar package, plus a 2,000-watt inverter, 200 Ah lithium coach batteries, and Onan GC2800i generator ensure there's plenty of juice flowing.

**In Style** The interior is easy to care for while retaining a luxurious feel, with vinyl flooring, laminate-wrapped partitions and wall boxes, hardwood cabinet doors, and a soft-touch ceiling.

[1] The 24-inch smart TV and Bose soundbar provide hours of entertainment. [2] The 10-inch touchscreen control panel monitors everything from battery charge to tank levels to DC electrical system diagnostics. [3] The well-appointed galley includes residential flair like a high-arch faucet and large sink.

PHOTOS: COURTESY PLEASURE-WAY



# TECH Q&A

## Current draw from an RV's A/C, a weathered toy-hauler ramp, a missing diagram, and an A-frame toolbox.

by **KEN FREUND**

### Air Conditioner on House Current

**Q** In 2005, we purchased an R-Vision Trail-Lite hybrid and enjoyed it for 15 years. In 2020, we upgraded to a 2018 Rockwood 2509S travel trailer. The air conditioner was never tested on our home circuit because the 2005 always tripped a circuit breaker. I was in the process of purchasing a soft start to be able to use the A/C during prep for trips. In 2005, while outfitting our new hybrid, I had purchased a 25-foot, 30-amp extension cord for extra-long power runs, but I never used it. Recently, while disconnecting after a 10-day trip, I heard something running. I discovered the A/C had been left on accidentally, and when I plugged in to the house using the extension cord, it came on. I had never tried the A/C on house current because the previous trailer would pop circuit breakers. I turned the A/C off. I cycled it a couple of times, and it ran without a problem. I suspect the difference was the use of the 25-foot, 30-amp RV extension cord that I bought years ago for emergencies (I hadn't used it until then). It saved me \$300 on a soft start kit. Was this a fluke, or was it because the heavy-duty RV extension cord allowed the A/C to work on house current? I wanted to share this with others that it may be able to save some expense to use the A/C on house current.

Jack Price, via email

**A** When the air conditioner starts, it draws far more current than when running. Using an undersized power cord reduces the amount of available starting voltage, which further increases amperage requirements. This may have been the cause of the breaker tripping on the first trailer. Some air conditioners, particularly the newer ones, require less starting and running current than older ones of similar size. However, without being able to perform a comparison test with both trailers, it's not possible to say for sure. A soft start is still a good investment for those times when your RV is connected to a sketchy power source. It also saves some startup wear and tear on the A/C, so it's a good investment.

### Toy Hauler Ramp

**Q** I have a 2006 Keystone Raptor toy hauler. The ramp is wet and swollen where the hinges mount. I emailed Keystone, and all they said was they haven't heard of that before and that it may be time to get a new trailer. Somehow water is getting into the ramp. Could it be condensation? I don't see any drain holes. It needs to be repaired, but I want

to fix the water intrusion first. Dan Baker, via email

**A** Keystone was founded in 1996 and bought by Thor in 2020. They currently offer a three-year structural warranty, so you're out of luck there, as I'm sure you know.

You didn't mention what city and state you keep it in, so I can't use that information on climate to help figure out what is happening to the ramp. Unless you live in a very wet, swampy area, I suspect the problem is caused by rain entry. Carefully inspect the weatherstripping and sealants all around the ramp/tailgate.

I suggest you try to dry out the affected area (you might need to place a tarp or cover over it for a while to keep rain off). Once it is dry, have an assistant inside to watch for water intrusion, and spray a garden hose all over the outside of the rear of the coach, simulating the way rain would hit it. Look for any gaps or voids where water can enter. Once you find the problem, you may want to repair it yourself or take it to a shop that specializes in RV body repairs. Keystone RV's ([keystonerv.com](http://keystonerv.com)) customer service can be reached at (866) 425-4369.

## Winnebago Wiring Diagram

**Q** We have a 2020 (made in 2019) Winnebago Spyder 23FS toy hauler, which is not listed in the online Winnebago wiring diagrams library. I have searched the Winnebago website for other things concerning this rig, and I believe someone else made this toy hauler and just slapped the Winnebago name on it. Am I right, or is this listed on its website elsewhere?

—David Cardenuto, via email

**A** The online wiring diagrams listed on the website are for Winnebago motorhomes (made in Forest City, Iowa), not Winnebago towables. Winnebago makes its towable product line in Middlebury, Indiana, and for whatever reason, does not provide wiring diagrams for them online. I contacted the Winnebago Towables division's customer service at (574) 825-8052 on your behalf and had them send you a request for your trailer's 17-digit VIN and phone number. They will work directly with you to get the information you need. This information is required by Winnebago customer service upon initial contact, and owners with inquiries should have the VIN available when requesting assistance.





## Excessive Tongue Weight?

**Q** We have a front-wheel-drive Hyundai Palisade with a towing package, and with less than 5,000 miles on the odometer. Our trailer is a 2019 Liberty Outdoors Mini Max teardrop trailer. When we bought our trailer, the dealer offered to add a large toolbox on top of our trailer's tongue (A-frame). They installed two propane tanks, two batteries, and a power A-frame jack. My trailer repair shop told me the tongue weight was about 450 pounds. I removed the extra propane tank, replaced the remaining 5-gallon propane tank with a 2.5-gallon tank, removed the extra battery, and moved all the heavy items (such as tools) to the storage bin at the rear of the trailer. When I attach the trailer to our car, the rear of the car still drops about 4 inches despite the load leveler feature in our SUV. On two-lane roads at night, oncoming cars frequently flash their bright lights at me even though I am using the low beams.

The tires were in great condition but are wearing rapidly. And, to add insult to injury, when I had the first four-wheel alignment done today on the SUV, they told me, "Whatever you are towing is causing alignment issues on the rear wheels." We primarily use this SUV as our vacation car, and it has towed our trailer every vacation for the past year.

Is it time to cut my losses and have the toolbox removed from the trailer (see attached photo)? I could probably put a roof rack on our SUV to store the light items (ground cloths, hoses, plastic leveling blocks, etc.) that I currently store in the toolbox.

Robert Sigal, San Diego, California

**A** According to this 2019 test article ([rv.com/archive/tiny-trailer-little-guy-mini-max](https://rv.com/archive/tiny-trailer-little-guy-mini-max)), your trailer's maximum gross trailer weight is 2,900 pounds, and tongue weight is 280 pounds stock. So you should be able to tow it with your Palisade, which (with the tow package) is rated to tow a trailer with brakes up to 5,000 pounds.

You didn't mention what year model Palisade you have. Earlier models show 350-pound maximum tongue weight ([letstowthat.com/hyundai-palisade-towing-capacities](https://letstowthat.com/hyundai-palisade-towing-capacities)). Later manuals show a maximum tongue weight of 500 pounds ([palisadeforum.com/threads/towing-maximum-ball-weight-factory-spec-confusion.3328/#lg=thread-3328&slide=0](https://palisadeforum.com/threads/towing-maximum-ball-weight-factory-spec-confusion.3328/#lg=thread-3328&slide=0)).

If your estimate of current tongue weight is 450 pounds (this should be verified), and the rear of the vehicle drops 4 inches when hitching up, that's excessive and something needs to be done. The storage box shown in the photo is the type commonly used behind the cab of a pickup and is quite heavy. That needs to go, along with the heavy items you mentioned. However, to maintain safe balance, trailer weight should be distributed with 60% forward of the axle centerline and 40% aft of it. Tongue weight should be about 10% of overall trailer weight; a tail-heavy trailer can easily sway out of control.

If you transfer heavy items to the tow vehicle, place them low and forward as much as possible. Propane must not be carried in the passenger compartment. Also, the maximum gross rear axle weight is 3,159 pounds (see tag on door jamb). That should be checked on a truck scale to make sure it's not exceeded when fully loaded with fuel, cargo, passengers, and trailer.

In addition, buy a weight-distributing (WD) hitch and have it properly adjusted when installed. Several WD hitches are designed for lighter-weight trailer-and-tow-vehicle combinations. The WD hitch will solve or seriously reduce most of the towing stability, tire wear, and headlight-aiming problems.

## READER COMMENT

### TRAILERLEGS

*I read the "TrailerLegs Tire Protector" letter in the August issue. A word of caution, you might want to mention that many trailers prohibit jacking the rig anywhere but the frame. That means not on the axle, not on the spring pad, nor anywhere but the frame. My Outdoors RV 24RLS owner's manual has a warning on this issue. So yes, Mark Condon might damage the axle by storing as you suggested.*

—Steve Albert, via email

Thanks for writing to us. I looked through that owner's manual and the only reference to jacking I saw was this: "If after-market stabilizer stands are used, they must be placed only under the chassis frame rail. Do not place these stands in any other location as damage may occur which will not be covered under warranty." This does not apply to jacking or lifting such as routine tire service. It basically warns against placing a stabilizer stand under a location such as an unreinforced floor.

## Lippert PSX2 Stabilizing Jack Problem

**Q** I have a 2021 Forest River Flagstaff Micro Mini model 25FBLs with Lippert PSX2 stabilizer jacks. Three of the four jacks work great, but one of them does not come down. Any ideas on how to rectify this problem?

Ed Umberger, Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania

**A** Look underneath at the nonworking jack. Is the screw mechanism or any other part damaged or twisted? When the switch is operated, does the electric motor make noise, like it is trying to work? If the motor is trying to work, the mechanism may be jammed. If it appears intact and the motor doesn't make any noise when activated, check for voltage going to the motor when the switch is on. The most common problems are bad switches and connections, and physical damage, often from overloading



A member of the Good Sam family since 1988, **Ken Freund** has been helping readers better understand their RVs for more than 30 years. Throughout his career, he has been a service manager, technician, shop owner, an ASE Certified Master Technician, an instructor of the California Smog Check Program, and author of Haynes Repair Manuals.



them. They are designed only to stabilize the coach, not lift and level it. Here's a URL ([youtube.com/watch?v=BHICHdoDxSQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHICHdoDxSQ)) for an instructional video of the use and care of the stabilizer. It also tells how to extend it manually. Based on the age, if undamaged it may be eligible for warranty repair.

Follow the manufacturer recommendations concerning lubrication. Many stabilizing jacks are almost devoid of lubrication from the factory, especially the screw drive shaft, and rust can quickly start up and make it much harder for the drive motor to operate. Use something like a "dry lubricant" such as a graphite-based product on the screw threads to avoid the dirt and grit buildup that can occur if you use a "wet" grease or oil lubricant.

## Five Dead Electric Outlets

**Q** We have a 2002 Holiday Rambler Ambassador motorhome. Five 120-volt AC receptacles stopped working. One is for the power converter underneath in the converter bay, three are in the bedroom, and one is under the dining table. I checked both GFCIs near the sinks, reset and tested them, and both work fine. Re-setting and checking the circuit breakers in the coach did not solve the problem. Has anyone had this problem or know how to solve this issue?

Wade Cooper, Chicago, Illinois

**A** The two most likely causes of a string of dead outlets like this are a tripped GFCI or a tripped circuit breaker. A third and much less likely cause would be something like a wire that became disconnected at the beginning of the string of outlets. My initial reply to Wade was: "If it's not a circuit breaker, it pretty much has to be a GFCI hidden somewhere. Please try to look around more and check every outlet and GFCI carefully. Let me know what you find"

I soon heard back from Wade: "Hey Ken, you were right on spot. It was a GFCI that I half checked. I checked the line receptacle and didn't check the load receptacle of that outlet. The test and reset button worked fine, but the power wasn't

passing through. You saved me a boatload of money. I will cancel my RV appointment tomorrow morning."

## Water Leak—Comment

*This is regarding the "Water Leak" letter in the August issue about a 2015 Jayco losing freshwater on the road. We have a 2007 Jayco BH27. It lost freshwater on the road, and I finally noticed in the side mirror that water was pouring out of the tank's under-trailer vent hoses when going around corners. I went to a hardware store and purchased two plastic fittings that fit into the hoses and two caps. I installed the fittings and secured them with hose clamps. The problem was solved for just a few dollars and has been good for several years. I reach under and remove the caps when filling the tank and replace them when done watering up.*

Tim McCormick, Colville, Washington

Thanks for taking the time to write to us. You may have been lucky to avoid the following problems: Perhaps you don't use much water from the tank or vary

altitudes much. The tanks have vents for several reasons, not just filling. When a large amount of water is drawn out of the tank, without a vent it could cause a partial vacuum in the air within the tank. Also, when barometric pressure changes significantly, as it does if you change altitude by several thousand feet, it could raise relative pressure (ascending) or lower it (descending). This could cause the pump to be unable to draw water. The large tank surface areas could result in serious distortion of the tank as a result of significant pressure changes. This could result in cracking of the tank, especially as it gets older. Therefore, I recommend running vent tubes up high if possible and keeping them open. If necessary, put a small hole to act as a restriction in the end cap, to allow for slower pressure balancing without allowing large water loss.

If you have access to the area, consider adding an inverted P-trap to the overflow vent line. Most fresh-tank overflow outlets are on the tank side near the top. When the water sloshes that way,

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## RIGS + GEAR / tech q&a

it simply runs a bit out of the downward-facing vent line. Start with a 90-degree fitting at the tank outlet, aimed up. Add perhaps a foot of line straight up, then do a U-turn with fittings, then route the new line back down more or less to its original location. Add a small air filter or breather, available at auto parts stores, to the end of the line to keep dust and insects out of the tank while allowing the excess water to drain through.

When the freshwater casually sloshes toward the overflow port it needs to travel all the way up to the U-turn before draining out. This will significantly reduce over-the-road sloshing leakage while allowing free water flow when filling the tank and equalizing the air pressure due to the altitude variations mentioned previously.

### Water Leak—Another Comment

*Regarding the letter from Glenn Brown in the August issue about a leaky water tank, my unit is a Forest River Grey Wolf 20RDSE travel trailer. I read with interest the problem Glenn is having with his fifth-wheel's leaky freshwater tank. I encountered the same problem, especially when traveling in hilly country. I solved it by adding a simple ball-style valve on the end of the vent hose. I extended the vent hose so it exits just in back of the rear tire and added the ball valve at the end. I open the valve when camping and filling the holding tank. I close the valve for travel. I can open and close it by kneeling and simply reaching under the camper. No more lost water for me. I hope this helps others.*

Mark Klevene, Nekoosa, Wisconsin

Thank you for writing, Mark. Please see the previous letter and answer about this subject. ■

### HAVE A QUESTION?

Looking for answers on all things RV, including systems, engines, accessories, or construction? Submit it to our expert at [techqa@rv.com](mailto:techqa@rv.com) and it may be selected for publication. You must include your name, city and state, phone number (will not be published), and type and model of your RV.

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# GAS OR DIESEL?

Which type of engine is right for your RVing lifestyle?

by JAMES ADINARO

*The answer to this fuel-burning question is different for each of us, and should depend on more than just dollars and cents.*

**When I was asked** to write about this topic, my first thought was to ask for something slightly less controversial, like: Are cats or dogs better pets? If you read many online forums or user groups, you know opinions can get heated when it comes to gas versus diesel. I was a little anxious at taking a stand on this perennial hot topic.

But it doesn't have to be that way. It's not gas versus diesel (a battle), but instead gas or diesel (a choice). And there's not even a right or wrong answer to the question. It's a choice we all get to make depending on our own circumstances. For the record, we've owned both gas and diesel motorhomes, and I can tell you we'd gladly own either again.

## What's the Difference?

Let's start with the very basics. Both gasoline and diesel engines are types of internal

combustion engines, which means they produce power by igniting a fuel/air mixture inside a cylinder. The power from that explosion is harnessed and converted to mechanical energy to do things like move the vehicle or turn the alternator.

The fuels are different, naturally. Gasoline has a lower flashpoint than diesel, which makes diesel fuel generally safer to handle. Diesel fuel is thicker, and my better half tells me it smells weird. But the key to remember about the two fuels is this: Diesel fuel has, chemically speaking, more energy per gallon than gasoline. This gives diesel a leg up on gasoline when it comes to fuel economy.

Gasoline engines ignite their fuel/air mixture by means of a spark plug. Diesel engines have a much higher compression ratio, and the fuel/air mixture is compressed so much that it heats and explodes on its own, without the need for an external spark.

Another key difference is that diesel engines tend to run at a lower rpm than gas engines. Our Class B diesel redlined at about 4,500 rpm, and our current gasoline Class C redlines at 6,000 rpm. Since diesel engines run slower and they're usually designed with commercial-level service in mind, there's less wear and tear, so they tend to last longer.

Now you know enough to be dangerous. And while all that is interesting stuff, it doesn't help you decide on an engine for your next motorhome or tow vehicle. So how do we get there?



### DYED DIESEL

If you've ever seen a pump with cheaper "died diesel" or "farm diesel" and wondered if you could use it in your RV, the answer is no. While not chemically different, the diesel in these pumps is not taxed, so using it could result in a hefty fine!



## Cost

Everybody likes saving money, so “How much does it cost?” often takes center stage in the gas or diesel debate. If you want a complete picture, you have to look at the whole life cycle of your motorhome or tow vehicle. There are the initial purchase costs, fuel costs, maintenance costs, and the resale value when you’re done with it.

As far as the purchase costs, there’s no way around this, diesel motorhomes and diesel trucks are just more expensive. Depending on the vehicle you’re considering, a diesel powerplant could cost anywhere from \$4,000–\$10,000 more than its gasoline counterpart. For this extra expense, you get an engine with a longer life and a higher resale value. Some diesel engines are still on the road at a million miles. Typically, gas engines are shorter lived. But as they say, your mileage may vary. I once owned a gas-engine Mazda B-2000 for 32 years, and though it broke my heart to sell it, it’s apparently still on the road today. On the flip side, we blew the engine in our last motorhome at 59,900 miles, so “long engine life” is a bit of a crap shoot.

Remember before we said that diesel fuel has more energy per gallon than gasoline? Well, that greater energy density (about 20%) translates into greater fuel efficiency. You should investigate the fuel economy of the specific motorhome or tow vehicle you intend to purchase but, generally speaking, fuel economy can be 20–30% higher with diesel models. But it’s not all about miles per gallon.

We’ve all seen the wild swings in fuel prices lately. With diesel currently costing more than gas, miles per gallon may not



### ROLL CALL

If you want to hear firsthand accounts, a stroll around the campground will likely reveal owners of both gas and diesel vehicles. All of these were spotted at our last campground. 1) Ford F-250 diesel towing a travel trailer; 2) Gas-powered Chevrolet with a travel trailer; 3) Gas-powered Class A motorhome; 4) Diesel-powered Class B motorhome.

be the same thing as miles per dollar. There’s also diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), which is required in newer diesel engines to assist in lowering emissions. It’s a consumable like gas, so you should take DEF costs into account as well. See the sidebar for more details.

Diesel engines are more expensive to maintain. That’s the bad news. The good news is that diesels may require less frequent maintenance than gasoline engines. Diesel spec oil is more expensive, and diesel engines usually take more of it—12 quarts for a diesel versus 7 for a gas engine, for example—so even things like oil changes tend to be more expensive than they would with a gasoline



## Hi-DEF

If you don’t own a diesel vehicle, you may not be familiar with Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF). Contrary to what you may have heard, DEF isn’t urine, it won’t evaporate at normal temperatures, it’s not deactivated by freezing temperatures, and you don’t need a license to fill it. It’s a nontoxic, nonhazardous, and nonflammable solution that’s injected into the exhaust gases in diesel vehicles to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides. You can buy and fill it at most places that sell diesel fuel.



engine. You also need to replace the diesel fuel filter according to the maintenance schedule, and both the oil and fuel filters are more costly than their gasoline counterparts.

Regular service on a gasoline engine can be handled at most any repair shop. But diesel engines require more specialized service, and the shops that can work on them are fewer. This tends to drive up the prices on diesel service. Prices vary by geography, so if you're considering a diesel purchase, I'd recommend finding the local shop you'll use for service, and then pricing out the scheduled maintenance for your ownership time frame.

When you decide to part ways with your vehicle, a diesel engine will typically have a higher trade-in value. It's difficult to say how much more that diesel will be worth. As with any vehicle, it depends on many factors.

But if you're purchasing a motorhome, there's something extra to consider. The diesel engine in your motorhome will likely be going strong after 200,000 miles. But that robust engine won't fetch you a premium if the rest of the RV is rusted, threadbare, and worn out. For motorhome purchases especially, you really need to consider your ownership horizon and total miles driven if you're assessing future trade-in value.

## More Than the Money

A pure cost calculation wouldn't include some intangible factors (including some where diesel really shines). How much these factors are worth to you is something you'll have to answer for yourself.

For example, one of the things we really miss about our Class B diesel-powered motorhome is how far we could drive on a single tank of fuel. When we drove conservatively, we could travel 600 miles on a single tank. Not having to fill up very frequently was a huge benefit to us. This may be a moot point, however; regardless of the engine type of your RV or tow vehicle, you still need to make numerous bathroom and leg-stretch breaks during that 600-mile drive and you can easily do those things at a service station. So the range is nice, but not critical to RV driving success.

On the flip side, not all gas stations carry diesel. According to the Diesel Technology Forum, "Recent estimates show about two-thirds of all retail fueling facilities have diesel pumps, with almost all newly built stations including diesel fuel." Two-thirds is pretty good odds, and interstate travel is typically a safe bet, but we had a few instances where this really caused us some stress. (And if you're wondering, most stations that sell diesel fuel also sell DEF.)

But the main area where diesel engines shine is in their outstanding torque and towing capacity. Diesel engines produce more torque than similar gasoline engines. This torque means that diesel engines can pull harder than gasoline ones, particularly at low rpm, like when taking off from a stop. This also translates into more towing capacity—sometimes a LOT more than a gasoline engine. For example, a RAM 3500 with a high-output diesel engine has a towing capacity of more than 37,000 pounds, which is more than double the capacity of the gas engine option. It's tough to put it into a few words, but let's just say that if you pull heavy loads or frequently

### NUMBER CRUNCH

Wondering when the better fuel economy of a diesel breaks even with the higher price? I created an online calculator to check (example at right). Scan the QR code below to find the online version, where you can enter your own assumptions.

## GAS VS. DIESEL BREAK-EVEN CALCULATOR

Price per gallon of gas:	3.29
Gasoline miles per gallon:	11.8
Price per gallon of diesel:	5.59
Diesel Miles per Gallon:	15.5
Price per gallon of DEF:	4.09
DEF miles per gallon:	1000
Extra cost for diesel engine:	10495
Miles until break-even:	NEVER

CALCULATE

CLEAR FORM



climb mountains, you should definitely consider a diesel powerplant.

## Aren't Diesels Dirty?

If you remember the soot-belching diesels of yesteryear, you might be concerned about this. The good news is, modern diesel engines are much cleaner than their ancestors, and you can buy either a gas or diesel motorhome (or tow vehicle) without fear that you made the wrong choice and are single-handedly killing the planet.

Today's diesel engines are equipped with particulate filters that trap most of the soot you're remembering. Diesel engines also emit less of the greenhouse gases carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) than gasoline engines. Say what you like about Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel and DEF, but they work. The amount of nitrogen oxides produced by diesel engines are still a problem relative to gasoline engines, though. But on the balance, it's difficult to pronounce either gas or diesel engines as one being better than the other for the environment.

In addition to the reduced emissions inherent to the use of a DEF-equipped engine, implementing that technology has allowed the powertrain engineers to dial some of the performance back into the engines that was lost due to earlier, less-sophisticated emission systems.

So which power plant should you choose for your next motorhome or tow vehicle? I can't tell you, but hopefully now you've got some more information to help you make that decision on your own. Neither one is wrong, so whichever you choose, you can look forward to many happy miles of RVing. ■





GENERATORS

# REMOTE POWER

Portable generators offer greater flexibility for off-grid camping, snowbirds, and even home backup.

by **TOM MORR**

**Without a generator,** your RV's appliances and gadgets are subject to the limitations of shorepower availability, vehicle batteries, and/or solar panels. Generators help add campground freedom and are particularly attractive for snowbirds and off-grid camping. They allow for running the fridge, lights, and devices without depending on shorepower or battery/solar capacity. Although original-equipment, permanently mounted onboard generators normally have adequate output to power a number of accessories, portable models offer greater flexibility. They can be quieter and moved among vehicles for activities such as tailgating that might not include an RV.

PHOTOS: COURTESY THE MANUFACTURERS



## Narrowing Down the Choices

For permanent generators, space often dictates the options. If the RV had a factory-installed generator, researching the original-equipment model's specs can help zero in on desired size and output. Geography can further limit the options. In California, new generators must be CARB-certified for emissions. Models that don't comply are usually marketed as 49-state. Along these lines, carbon-monoxide (CO) sensors are a high-priority feature for permanent generators. Other considerations include Forest Service-approved spark arrestors, noise levels, and vibration mitigation. If the RV isn't factory-plumbed for fuel and wiring,

HONDA GENERATOR PERFORMANCE? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!



Take charge of compatible Honda gensets with the Honda My Generator Bluetooth App. The smart device app offers remote generator operation and monitoring via Bluetooth within a 75-foot line of sight. It allows for remote starting (electric-start models only), stopping, and monitoring of information such as run time based on usage, output power, engine operating hours, and routine maintenance reminders.

The app also makes it possible to control multiple compatible Honda generators from a single mobile device.

SMART PERFORMANCE



many owners will likely want to have the generator professionally installed. The installer will often have suggestions on the best generator for the application.

Portable generators offer more flexibility than permanent ones and are available in a wide range of sizes, power ratings, and fuel styles. More features usually mean higher cost. Aside from budget, the primary considerations when choosing a portable generator are similar to the permanent-model decision process: power needs, available space in the RV, and generator weight relative to what you can lift and handle. Peripheral considerations can include backup home power, especially if you live in areas prone to grid outages during inclement weather.

Fuel type is fairly straightforward. If your coach or tow rig runs diesel, it makes sense to look for a diesel generator. Multi-fuel models add propane or even natural gas. This can increase flexibility for home-backup duty.

Power (watt) capacity is a decisive factor. Some RV owners begin with a budget, then look for the highest-capacity generator they can accommodate. Air-conditioning is a dividing line. If you want to use A/C while powering lights, electronic devices, a microwave, and the fridge, you'll need a generator with a higher wattage rating. Ditto if you want to use the generator as an emergency home backup in the event of a power outage. The higher-capacity generators often have steel frames and wheels, diminishing portability.



Some manufacturers' websites have configurators that recommend wattage ratings based on how many appliances and accessories you select. Mathematically, wattage is calculated by multiplying each appliance's/accessory's amp draw by 12 (for 12-volt appliances), adding up all the watt ratings, then adding a 15% margin for error. The lower the load on the generator, the longer it will run on its fuel supply. For convenience, remote-start features are desirable for permanent mounting. Remote and push-button starting require a battery, and many generators also have pull-cords for manual starting.

### Inverters and Parallel Options

To safely run computers or other electronics that have circuit boards from the generator, an inverter is necessary to produce grid-style 60-hertz electricity. This is particularly important if you plan to use the generator for backup household power. Many name-brand portable generators have integral inverters; later-model RVs often include inverters as factory equipment.

Outlet styles and quantity vary among generators. Popular options are obviously household 120-volt AC as well as cigarette-lighter-style 12-volt and USB ports. Some generators also include a standard 30-amp RV outlet or a commercial or industrial-type outlet, and others include automotive-battery jumper cables.

If you're snowbird-prepping and air-conditioning isn't a high priority, a parallel-compatible generator offers flexibility for upgrading later. Many inverter-style generators are parallel-compatible and are pre-wired to piggyback a second unit. In some cases, two smaller generators can be less costly than one larger one with the same total watt rating. Further, the smaller generators are more portable and tend to be easier to maintain.

Most manufacturers recommend that parallel generators have the same watt and voltage outputs to spread the load



Honda's EU2200i is powered by the 121cc Honda GXR120 Commercial Series engine. Bluetooth capability means you can remotely stop the unit and monitor performance; it will also send warnings and service reminders to your smart device.



evenly and prevent damage to either or both. However, some larger-watt alternators are parallel-compatible with smaller, inverter-style generators. Champion offers parallel kits designed for two of the company's generators, at least one of which must be at least 2,800 watts. The highly popular Honda EU2200i is available in two versions (more on that in a bit) designed to be connected in parallel. The generators' or parallel kit's instructions outline the powering sequence to safely combine power.

The generator market now offers solutions for almost every camping scenario. A few examples are included here.

## Pro Tip

*Some RVs are pre-plumbed for generators, but if buyers don't check that option box, the compartment will likely be configured for storage. You can choose to add a generator at a later date; however, you must replace the solid hatch door with a vented version.*





### Honda EU2200i

The just over 47-pound EU2200i 49-State Inverter Generator with CO-MINDER offers 2,200 watts of peak power. Other features include quiet operation rated between 48–57 dBA and a carbon-monoxide (CO) monitor. The EU2200i has a one-gallon gas tank and a run-time range of 3.2–8.1 hours. The 15-amp, 120-volt outlets make the EU2200i ideal for RV household appliances, and perhaps even a small household-style window air conditioner. It can be paired with a nearly-identical model for double the power when buyers add an EU2200i Companion for more RV-specific options. [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)



### Honda EU2200i Companion

The EU2200i Companion 49-State Inverter Generator with CO-MINDER also offers 2,200 watts of peak power, and its features are nearly identical to the standard EU2200i, with a pretty RV-centric exception: Outlets include a 30-amp commercial-style locking plug (which can accept a 30-amp RV-outlet adapter) and a 20-amp household 120-volt. The 30-amp 120-volt output can be achieved by parallel operation, accomplished with a cord, without the need for an external more-complex parallel kit. Pairing with the EU2200i results in 4,400 watts of RV-friendly power. [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)



### Honda EU7000iS

This model is a higher-end option for RV owners who are potentially also looking for home backup power and possibly jobsite use. Features include a Bluetooth phone app that allows remote start/stop, monitoring, and more. The EU7000iS also has a carbon-monoxide detector, 120-volt/240-volt selector switch, two 120-volt GFCI outlets, circuit breakers, and parallel capability. Additional outlets are 30-amp 125-volt and 30-amp 125-volt/250-volt. The 5.1-gallon gas tank has a rated run time of 16 hours at 25% load. Noise-level range is 52–58 dBA. [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)



### Cummins Onan P4500i

The Onan P4500i Inverter Portable Generator weighs 98 pounds and comes with wheels and a telescopic handle. Starting is via push-button, remote start, or a pull-cord. Rated at 4,500 peak watts and 3,700 running watts, the 4500i inverter-style generator has a 3.4-gallon fuel tank that runs 18 hours at 25% load. Outlets: one RV 30-amp, two 120-volt, and two USB. It's parallel-compatible with another Onan P4500i to produce a combined 50 amps of power output. [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)



### Champion 3500 Dual Fuel

Champion offers a 3,500-watt dual-fuel inverter-style generator that runs on gasoline or propane. Gas output is 3,500 starting watts and 3,200 running watts with a run time of 7.5 hours at 25% load. Propane power is about 10% less, with a 5-gallon cylinder run time of 14.5 hours at 25% load. Outlets: a 120-volt 30-amp RV, two 120-volt 20-amp household, and a 12-volt DC automotive-style with dual USB adapter, plus parallel-operation receptacles. Sound level is 59 dBA from 23 feet. [campingworld.com](http://campingworld.com)



### Yamaha EF2200iS

The EF2200iS is an inverter-style generator that produces 2,200 peak watts and has a carbon-monoxide detector. Its 1.24-gallon gas tank offers 10.5 hours of operation at 25% load. Sound range is 57–65 dBA. Outlets: 30-amp RV, two 120-volt AC, and one 12-volt DC. Its 55.2-pound weight and tri-carry handle design make for easy transport. Parallel capability combines two EF2200iS generators to produce 3,600 peak watts or 30-amp 120-volt AC when using the optional parallel kit. [yamahamotorsports.com](http://yamahamotorsports.com) ■



# Family Nesting

A full-time RVing family shares its secrets on flocking to the warmer states during winter.

BY BRYANNA ROYAL @CRAZYFAMILYADVENTURE



**Snowbirds.** Otherwise known as those smart people who get in their RV to leave the cold weather behind and head somewhere warm for the winter. Snowbirds tend to flock in the region known as the Sunbelt, which is essentially the southernmost states beginning with California and extending eastward to Florida (see more on page 20).

Being an RV snowbird is an exhilarating experience. As a full-time family it is the time of year when we can reconnect with old friends and know we are all going to be in the same area for an extended

period. The other seasons usually have families moving at a faster pace and doing a lot more exploring. Winter is a time to settle in and relax for a few months.

## Why We Do It

To us, being a snowbird means lots of campfires with new and old friends. The parents talk about life, and the kids run around enjoying crisp winter nights. And there are impromptu field trips to local museums, zoos, or attractions that are way less busy than in the summer. The pickleball courts are busy with adults of

PHOTOS: BRYANNA ROYAL





## GREAT GEAR

...

When planning your snowbird winter, there are a few things you will want to make sure you have with you.

A **comfortable chair** to sit in while you hang out around the campfire with your fellow snowbirds.

A **propane firepit** is so easy to use and so nice to have! Starting a real fire means getting wood, making sure the wood stays dry, and cleaning up after the fire. With a propane firepit, you simply turn it on. It also means your hair and clothes don't smell like a campfire at the end of the night, and it cuts down on annoying smoke wafting in to neighboring campsites.

Winter will be when you slow your travels down a bit and stay in one spot for longer, so investing in a good set of **tire covers** will help your RV's tires last longer.

Warm winter campgrounds will most likely be full and that can mean electricity issues. Protect your rig and appliances with a quality **surge protector**.

all ages learning a new sport or playing challenging matches. And the pools are filled with kids splashing around or adults lounging during "adults only" swim time or in the "adults only" pools.

Snowbirding in an RV park is like living in the 1980s, "Stranger Things" style, but without the monsters. People ride bikes all over the place. Everyone is out and about chatting and getting to know each other. It is a fun thing to experience. And I guarantee, once you experience it, you will want to do it again!

### Where We Go

You do need to plan in advance for your stay. Parks can quickly fill up in the winter, and you may end up at a less-than-desirable campground if you haven't booked your

preferred place ahead of time.

Popular snowbird locations in the US include Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Southern California. And for good reason. The weather is normally MUCH milder in these locations compared to the northern states. However, we have learned (after 7 years of being snowbirds from Wisconsin) that if you are looking for the warmest weather in the winter, including warm nights, you will want to be somewhere south of Orlando, Florida. Here's why:

Southern California does not normally experience beach weather in the winter (at least to us) and can be rainy (despite its reputation). It still beats being in the cold northern states and Southern California has a lot of great food and fun cities



*The Florida Keys are a top snowbird destination for the Royals. Few things are as enjoyable as long days of fun in the sun while the flurries are flying back at home. Buckle up for an exhilarating parasail, paddle along (or be towed) in a banana boat, or simply chill out on a boat ride.*

## Snowbirding Tips



Above all else, just do it. When your friends and family send pictures of the latest snowfall or iced-over driveways, you can send pictures of you sitting outside enjoying the sunshine, toes in the sand, and a cold drink in hand. That never gets old. Well, maybe it does to some of our friends and family, but not to us.



Have a solid idea of where you want to go and where you want to stay. Then research to find out when you can book your stay. Some places book a year out, some just a few months, so don't wait until the last minute. But if you do procrastinate, you can still enjoy the snowbird lifestyle, but you'll have to be more flexible about where you end up staying.



Once you arrive at your destination, be social! Get yourself out there to meet and talk to people. The majority of snowbirds we have met are super friendly and can't wait for Happy Hour to get together to share a drink and good conversation. Don't be shy; part of why we love RVing so much is the sense of community.



to experience. There are also some national and state parks you can explore during the winter months.

The same can be said for Texas; wintertime there isn't exactly the epitome of beach weather to us, and there are a lot of storms and wind. We liked getting to know the awesome community at South Padre Island, which is at the southernmost point in Texas. While the water is still warm in the fall, in the winter it is cold so we wore wetsuits. We enjoyed saving turtles from the freeze (yes, it did get that cold) and many fun nights out on the town.

Arizona can have beautiful sunny days, but cold nights. If you like the high-desert climate, this is the place for you. And there are lots of opportunities for hiking. And hiking in 60–70° F is much better than hiking in the summer heat.

We highly recommend the state parks of the Florida Keys. They tend to fill up a year in advance. There are cancellations, but it can be hard to grab one.

***Be sure to check the monthly rate at the RV park; it may be discounted when compared to the nightly rate.***



### **FAMILY NIGHT**

*Break out the projector and watch the game under the stars. Be mindful you don't disturb your neighbors; they're on vacation, too.*



### **Our Favorite**

Our overall favorite place for snowbirding is Baja California, in Mexico. Similar to Florida, you have to get way down to the Baja California Sur area, which is the southern half of Baja.

Compared to California and Florida, Baja offers super-cheap winter RV resort prices and camping options. There are also lots of boondocking locations on the beach for FREE or only a few dollars a night. And don't forget there's always tons of tacos, fresh fish, and margaritas.

Be sure to take a road trip down the whole Baja Peninsula. Remember that it is Mexico and can be very

different from the US, but it is an awesome adventure and a gorgeous place to explore. If you prefer a bit more adventurous winter, and don't mind leaving some of the luxuries of the US behind, Baja is a great option.

### **The Time is Now**

Regardless of where you decide to nest for the winter, take the time to enjoy being in the sunshine and outside all winter enjoying the endless summer life. Trust us; after just one season of endless opportunities for swimming, boating, barbecues, shopping trips, tours, and the like, you'll wonder why you didn't do it sooner. ■

*One of the benefits of planning ahead and making reservations is being able to spend the winter at an RV park with waterfront sites. Looking out over the waves works wonders for the soul.*



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# Be a Hero!

Borrowing a shelter dog to celebrate National Adopt A Senior Pet Month will bring happiness to you and a furry friend in need.

BY RACHAEL JOHNSON @2TRAVELINGDOGS

As much as I love dogs and cannot imagine my life without them, I know that not everyone has the ideal circumstances to welcome a dog into their family. Some travelers may be gone long hours, some families may need to focus on their children without fur, and some may simply not have the financial means to care for a dog. The good news is that if you find yourself in a situation where you cannot adopt a dog, you can borrow a shelter dog! And since November is National Adopt A Senior Pet Month, it is the perfect time to contact a shelter along your travels and borrow a dog for the day. Yes, the day! The ASPCA and [petfinder.com](https://www.petfinder.com) founded Adopt A Senior Pet Month to improve the perception of senior pets as quality animals for adoptions. And RVers are the perfect people to make a difference during their adventures.

## The Gift of Companionship

Shelters and rescues across America have implemented programs that enable dogs to get outside for the day. There are benefits for both the dogs and the people who take them out of the shelter for a few hours. If you have ever visited a shelter, you know that some can be loud, chaotic, and stressful. Many times, potential adopters do not see the rescue dog's true personality in these circumstances. Taking a dog out to a place where she can be seen can mean an adoption.

Maybe you are an RV traveler who also works on the road. You don't have extra time between destinations and work to fully care for a dog, especially a senior dog. But you miss the companionship a dog can add to your life. Do you have some free time on the weekend to get a break for yourself and take a senior dog for an easy stroll around a lake? The possibilities are endless.

The Kauai Humane Society in Hawaii is the first shelter that introduced me to the idea of dog field trips. Its website explains the program: "Enjoy the natural beauty of the Garden Island, get your 'dog fix,' and give a shelter dog a break from the kennels all at the same time! Taking the dog out of the shelter and allowing him or her to have a fun day is incredibly beneficial to the dog's mental health, it often helps the dog get adopted, and most importantly, we get to learn more about the dog's true behavior. Schedule a pickup time, let our staff match you with an appropriate field trip buddy, and then off you go. A non-refundable donation is requested to help defer the cost of running the field trip program and making sure all our amazing Kaua'i dogs have everything they need while waiting for their forever homes."

Seeing a dog outside of the shelter environment is key for volunteers. As a dog is exposed to other people, animals, and situations while under less stress, her true personality often comes out, helping the shelter to better match dogs with potential adopters.

## ○○○ TIPS FOR BORROWING A DOG FOR A FIELD TRIP ○○○

Verify that the campground you are staying in is **dog friendly** and has any specific rules and regulations regarding dogs.

**Pack a bag** with plenty of water, snacks, and meals. Ask the shelter for specific dietary needs and restrictions.

Unless allowed, be sure to **keep the dog on a leash** and under your care and control at all times. Don't forget the waste bags!

**Don't feel guilty** when you return the dog to the shelter, and thank yourself for the good thing you did. And be sure to do it again!



# *"If you want to experience your travel world through the eyes of a dog, even for one day, the impact you will make is wonderful."*

## Like a Dog with Two Tails

I talked to Shari Dale, a volunteer at Hearts Alive Village and Animal Help Alliance in Las Vegas, Nevada. She explained how much it helps the rescue and pet when they get out of the shelter for even just a few hours. "We take dogs out for the day to go hiking or when the weather is nice just to run errands with us to get them out of the kennels for several hours. Sometimes they spend the night with volunteers to be in a home setting. We learn so much more about the dogs getting them out doing that than we do just spending time with them at the Rescue House. And in doing so, we are able to write more detailed bios about them and get them adopted more quickly into appropriate homes or get them more specialized training if they need it. And it makes such a difference in the dogs who got to get out like this. A break from the stress of the kennel environment is so helpful."

If you choose to take part in a program like this, consider taking a senior dog out for your first time. Generally, senior dogs are calmer and loving. Because they typically get overlooked in shelters in favor of younger dogs, a day out can mean everything to them. And because they are less active, a sleepover in your RV can be ideal.

We have a senior dog in our house on wheels named Peanut Butter Brickle. Brickle is 13 years old and was with his rescue

brother Digby for more than 12 years. When Digby passed away, Brickle's personality changed drastically. He no longer wanted to hike or to do anything but sleep. Depression affected Brickle in ways I never imagined. However, when we adopted Fruitycake, Brickle's personality shined, his depression lifted, he lost weight, and he had a purpose. For many senior pets in shelters, depression is real. Adopters may just see an older pet with no energy, personality, likes, or dislikes. But when they are given a chance to shine, like Brickle, you will see that they want to live, just like us. Borrowing a senior dog for National Adopt A Senior Pet Month can save a life, give you purpose, and add enjoyment to your travels.

Our rescue dogs have changed our lives and I cannot imagine our travels without them. If you want to experience your travel world through the eyes of a dog, even for one day, the impact you will make is wonderful. Not only are you showing love and care for another living being, but you are helping people like the volunteers at the shelter and that perfect potential adopter who may see their new family member while the dog is with you. Not everyone can adopt, foster, or volunteer. So if you have the time to make a difference for a day, know that it truly matters, and the senior dogs and shelters will thank you! ■

## FUN + GAMES



## Fly Away Home

You may not need the entire flock of snowbirds from the campground to help solve this month's brain buster ... but it would certainly help.

### ACROSS

3. You can do this to a shelter dog to help it get adopted.
4. Along with 2.0, the name of Pleasure-Way's highly livable Class B motorhome.
6. Manufacturer of the Yukon 400RL that's great for extended-stay RVing.
7. Gas and diesel are two types of this.
10. A welcome new addition to the Good Sam family of travel experts.
12. A giant one can be found along the Urban Trail in Asheville, North Carolina.
13. Many people feature this festive gobbler as the centerpiece of their holiday meal.
14. Popular abbreviation for California's State Route 1.

### DOWN

1. An RVer who leaves the cold behind and travels to a warmer spot for the winter.
2. The region in the US that's known for housing (1 Down) retreats.
3. Despite the popular song, don't call these roaming animals "buffalo."
5. Power up the campsite with this must-have accessory.
8. Be sure to spend plenty of time with yours during the holiday season.
9. The type of table perfect for a work-out at the campsite.
11. Tiffany and Steve sold their home and hit the road after buying this model of Winnebago Class C motorhome.

Across 3: Borrow, 4: Outurn, 6: Dutchmen, 7: Fuel, 10: Generators, 12: Iron, 13: Turkey, 14: PCH  
Down 1: Snowbird, 2: Sunbelt, 3: Bison, 5: Generator, 8: Family, 9: Picnic, 11: View



HEALTH + FITNESS

# The Picnic Table Workout

When is this humble campsite staple more than just a place to eat and lounge? When it becomes your gym!

BY STEFANY ADINARO @THEFITRV

**W**hen you're on an RV trip, it might not be possible to continue the same workout routines you have back home. That can make exercise on the road seem challenging. But with a little outside-the-box thinking, you can still get a great workout without schlepping lots of heavy, bulky exercise gear with you in the RV.

Enter the campsite picnic table. So long as your table is sturdy and safe (and the weather permits), you've got a valuable piece of gym equipment right outside your RV door, and you probably didn't even realize it. It can even provide a chance to engage additional muscles you might not otherwise use with typical non-table bodyweight exercises.

The exercises I've shared here are all complementary to one another, so when you do them all together you'll get a full-body workout with a strong focus on your core. Make sure you are strength-training at least twice a week, and that's on top of your regular cardio workouts.

Exercise is nonnegotiable for aging well. The trick is to make your workouts as fun as you can, so you'll want to exercise more often.

## INSTRUCTIONS

*First, test the sturdiness of the table, and only proceed if it can maintain your body weight with no wobble, give, or any other concerns. Do these exercises in a circuit and go through the circuit three times.*



## DEAD BUG GETUPS

10–15 REPS

With a mat on the tabletop, stand with your back to the edge of the table. Carefully, sit on the tabletop and then, very slowly, lie back on the mat, bringing your knees up above your hips. From there, roll back up to sitting and then stand up—all in one slow, controlled movement. You can use your hands on the table to assist you during any stage of the move. For an extra challenge, add a jump each time you stand back up. To make it easier, don't lie all the way back. Instead, lean back just enough to feel your abs engage, keeping your spine straight.



PHOTOS: STEFANY ADINARO



## SPIDER PUSHUPS

8-12 REPS

Place your hands on either the tabletop (easier) or the seat (harder) and get yourself in a plank position. As you bend your elbows to perform a pushup, simultaneously lunge one leg forward. Beginners, shift your weight forward to the lunging foot—this will give you an assist on the pushup. For those who are more advanced, keep your weight on the nonmoving leg and only tap the lunging leg forward to make the pushup harder. Return to the plank start position and repeat the move on the other leg to complete one rep.



## SIT-TO-STAND SHUFFLES

6-10 REPS

Sit facing outward on the right end of the bench seat. Plant your feet at hip width apart and stand up. Then, quickly side-shuffle to the left end of the bench seat, and slowly sit down (slower challenges your muscles more). Stand back up and quickly side-shuffle back to the right side. Again, slowly sit down. All of that completes one repetition. Note: Beginners should do a low impact side-step in place of the higher impact side-shuffle. Take large, exaggerated side-steps to better engage your leg muscles.



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## SIDE-PLANK CRUNCHES

**8-12 REPS PER SIDE**

Get in a sideways plank with your hand on the tabletop (easier) or seat (harder), and your planked arm straight. Your free arm reaches overhead in one straight line with the rest of your body. That's the start position. To perform the move, exhale as you slowly drive your free arm and the knee of your upper leg together. Return to start position. Keep your core tightened and focus on maintaining good alignment. Do all reps on one side before repeating on the other side.



## SKY BRIDGES

**10-15 REPS PER SIDE**

Lie on your back with one heel on the seat. Exhale as you very slowly lift your hips. Your weight should be on your heel and your upper back—not your neck. As you lift your hips, simultaneously lift your free leg up to the sky (totally fine to keep the knee bent). Your core should be tight, with both hips aligned and parallel to the ground. Slowly lower back down to complete one rep. Finish all reps on one side before repeating on the other. ■

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#### ADVERTISERS' INDEX

RS #	ADVERTISER	PAGE #
101	Air Lift Company .....	59
102	B&W Trailer Hitches .....	31
103	Big Pine Key & Florida's Lower Keys ..	15
104	Brazel's RV Performance .....	40
105	Camco, Inc. ....	27
	Camping World .....	51
110	Coleman .....	57
	DISH Network .....	33
108	Entegra Coach .....	23
	Good Sam RV Loans .....	6
107	Hensley Manufacturing Inc. ....	11
109	Lance Campers .....	2
111	Northwood Mfg. ....	30
112	Omnia Stove .....	40
113	Pleasure-Way Industries Ltd. ....	14
114	Progressive Insurance Company .....	5
115	Roadmaster, Inc. ....	9
106	RViBrake by Danko Manufacturing .....	55
116	Sea Eagle .....	39
117	Way Interglobal .....	11
118	Winnebago Industries .....	60
	Yacht Haven Park & Marina .....	19

#### EDITORIAL PRODUCT INDEX

RS #	ADVERTISER	PAGE #
150	Pleasure-Way Outour 2.0 .....	36

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## Million-Dollar View

One of this country's most spectacular landscapes is the Big Sur coast along California's State Route 1, also known as the Pacific Coast Highway, made even more dramatic by several historic open-spandrel arch bridges towering above steep-walled canyons. Secluded beaches wind around cliffs and you may catch glimpses of whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions.

*Photo by DeVante Deschwanden*

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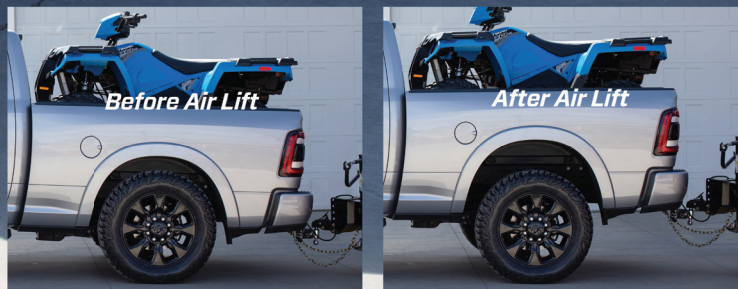




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