

TO RV OR NOT TO RV...



...THAT IS THE QUESTION

Everything you ever wanted to know about a home on wheels,
but were afraid to ask.

To RV or Not To RV... that is the question.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SURVIVE ON THE ROAD

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INTRODUCTION

So you want to travel the country by RV. Congratulations! You are about to embark (if you haven't already) on an amazing, unforgettable chapter in your life.

Perhaps you are a seasoned RVer looking for few tips or ideas for new places to visit. Or, maybe you are undecided about making that leap to becoming an RVer. The good news is, the information in this guide will tell you steps to take to find out if it's right for you.

This guide includes information for everyone from wannabe RVers, to full-timers. It is meant to guide you from deciding if the lifestyle is for you, to buying an RV, to becoming a successful full-time RVer. If you already own an RV, if you are a seasoned part-timer, or if you are currently an RVer only in your mind, I believe you will find useful tips in here. The Resources section at the end includes links to make everything from purchasing to traveling easier.



Deciding to become a full-time RVer wasn't a hard decision for me, but it was a scary one. I had never traveled by RV in my life. In fact, I had hardly traveled at all – I felt like I hadn't been anywhere. That's one of the reasons I decided to see the country by RV.

In July, 2011, I bought my RV and moved into it a few days later. At the same time, I gave away most of my stuff and gave up my (over-priced, suburban California) apartment.

Guess what? It was the most freeing thing I've ever done. I've learned a lot in my years on the road, much of it by trial and error. I didn't realize quite how much, until I started compiling this book. *(Oh, the stories!)*

I tell everyone who shows the slightest bit of interest they should do it. While living on the road, I have met some of the most wonderful people and stayed in some of the most beautiful places. RVers tend to be extremely helpful, willing to assist their neighbor. Every area of the country has its own group dynamic and culture. Every coastline is beautiful in a different way. Pennsylvania Dutch Country is stunning. Texas really is like another country and I'm looking forward to spending more time there. We are blessed to live in this country, but I didn't realize just how much until I got to experience more than a few places.

My favorite things to see, besides beaches, islands, and lighthouses, are goofy roadside attractions - which I affectionately refer to as "cheezy Americana". Where else but in the United States can you see such smile-producing sights as the Largest Ball of Twine and the World's Largest Frying Pan?

Who is RVing not for? It's not for anyone who needs a structured schedule. If you need to plan everything and follow the plan to the letter, RVing isn't for you.

This isn't to say you shouldn't plan a route, and make reservations at your desired destination. RVing is a lesson in flexibility and going with the flow. Trips are best taken slowly, with frequent stops to explore a new town, or to see goofy roadside attractions or national parks. A friendly, out-going personality coupled with self-sufficiency makes for a happy, successful RVer. In addition to being able to read maps, being smart-phone and internet savvy is becoming more of a requirement every day. Your life and travels will be much easier if you fully embrace technology and all it can do for you.

SO YOU THINK YOU WANT TO BE AN RV'ER

You've dreamed of traveling the country by RV, and now you're ready to make the leap. But where should you to start? This is your guide to finding a life of freedom and adventure on the road – and deciding if it's right for you.

Let me tell you a little story about a friend of mine. For the sake of anonymity, I'll call her Stacy. Stacy is married to a wonderful man, with wonderful parents. When Stacy's in-laws retired, they dreamed of becoming RVers, traveling to the warmer southern states during the cold northeastern winters, and spending the mild summers in the northeast, near the family.

Stacy and her husband supported them on this. When the time came, the four of them decided to combine their money with the sale of the in-laws' home, buy land, and build two homes on the property – one being an attached suite for the in-laws to stay in during the warm summer months.

Everybody was happy. The in-laws' attached cottage was completed; everybody was settled in their respective homes. Winter was approaching so the in-laws went shopping for their new RV. Knowing it would have the biggest selection, they went to an RV show.

That day, the mother-in-law returned from the RV show and said to Stacy, "We're not getting an RV. It's like camping. I hate camping." They had never spent any time in an RV and when it came down to it, one of them had no intention of spending half the year in one.

My friend was shocked. It never occurred to her, or any of them, that this wasn't a "done deal". Stacy's husband was in disbelief, "No, they can't really mean that. They're not really living with us year-round?"

They never did become RVers. The in-laws ended up living in the attached house for four years, until my friend and her husband bought them out.

If you are uncertain, rent one for a month. Get out of the county you live in – go somewhere new. If you are really, really uncertain, try it for one week at an RV park near your house. Then spend the rest of the time somewhere far away.