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RV Quick Facts

What is a recreation vehicle (RV)?

- An RV is a vehicle that combines transportation and temporary living quarters for travel, recreation and camping.
- Two main categories of RVs are *motorhomes* (motorized) and *towables* (towed behind the family car, van or pickup). Type A motorhomes are generally the largest; Type B motorhomes or van campers are the smallest and Type C motorhomes generally fall in between. Types of towable RVs are folding camping trailers, expandable trailers, truck campers, conventional travel trailers and fifth-wheel travel trailers. Sports utility RVs (also sometimes called “toy haulers”), which feature a built-in garage for hauling cycles, ATVs or sports equipment, are available in both motorhomes and towable RVs.
- There’s an RV for every taste and budget. Prices for new RVs are typically \$5,000-\$22,000 for folding camping trailers; \$6,000-\$55,000 for truck campers; \$8,000-\$95,000 for conventional travel trailers; \$43,000-\$200,000 for Type C motorhomes and \$60,000-\$500,000 for Type A motorhomes.

What is the RV industry’s economic impact?

- There are more than 12,000 RV-related businesses in the U.S. with combined annual revenues of more than \$37.5 billion. The RV industry employs more than a quarter million Americans. Effects of the recession caused significant RV-related job losses. Since June 2007, RV-related layoffs totaled approximately 280,000 — 55% of the industry’s workforce. RV shipments began to improve in the last half of 2009 and RV manufacturers continue to rehire workers to keep pace with demand. Shipments in 2013 were 12% higher than in 2012.
- RVs are made by American companies employing American workers that are located in America. In fact, more than 60% of recreation vehicles are made in Elkhart Country, Indiana.

Who is the RV traveler?

- U.S. ownership of RVs has reached record levels, according to a 2011 University of Michigan study commissioned by Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). Approximately 8.9 million households own an RV.
- Today’s typical RV owner is 48 years old, married, with an annual household income of \$62,000 — higher than the median for all households, according to the Michigan

study. RV owners are likely to own their homes and spend disposable income on traveling — an average of three weeks annually, RVIA research shows.

- A leading force behind RV ownership's upswing is the enormous baby boomer generation, supported by strong ownership gains among both younger and older buyers. In fact, high RV ownership rates now extend across a 40-year span from age 35-to-75, the Michigan study found.
- More RVs are now owned by those ages 35-to-54 than any other group, according to the University of Michigan study.
- More than 11 percent of U.S. households headed by 35-to-54 year olds own an RV, exceeding the 9.3 percent ownership rates of those 55 and over. The 35-to-54 age group posted the largest gains in the 2011 Michigan survey.

Why do people choose and use RVs?

- **Flexibility and convenience**— RVs offer a convenient, hassle-free way to see America. RV travelers enjoy the freedom and flexibility to go where they want, when they want — without the worry and stress of inflexible schedules, advance reservations, airport waits and luggage restrictions.
- **Comfort** — With fully-equipped kitchens and baths, rooms that slide out at the touch of a button, central air and heat, flat-screen TVs, surround-sound stereos and more, today's RVs provide travelers with all the amenities of home while on the road or at the campground.
- **Family appeal**— RVing is a uniquely enjoyable way to travel as a family. In fact, families that frequently vacation by RV say it fosters an increased sense of togetherness and helps improve family communication. RV owners say that strengthening family relationships is important for their pleasure trips.
- **Affordability** — RV vacations are more affordable than travel by personal car, commercial airline or cruise ship, according to vacation cost-comparison studies by PKF Consulting. Even factoring in RV ownership costs, and considering resulting tax benefits, a family of four can spend up to 59 percent less when traveling by RV.
- **Lure of the outdoors**— RVers can enjoy the mountains, beaches, parks, popular tourist attractions and small towns whenever they want, without giving up the comforts of home. With sport utility RVs, RV travelers can easily haul their ATVs, snowmobiles, motorcycles or other outdoor vehicles right on board.
- **Versatility** — In addition to travel, camping and outdoor recreation, RVs are used year-round for a variety of other purposes, like shopping, tailgating at sporting events, pursuing special interests like horse, dog and antique shows and other hobbies.
- Rentals available — Renting an RV is a popular way to “try before you buy.” The RV rental business is a \$350 million industry, which is continuing to grow.

Where do RVers travel?

- With more than 16,000 public and privately owned campgrounds nationwide, RVers are free to roam America's roads for a weekend — or months at a time.
- Privately owned RV parks and campgrounds are found near popular destinations, along major tourist routes and even in metropolitan areas. These campgrounds appeal to travelers by offering a variety of activities to keep the whole family happy, including swimming pools, game rooms, playgrounds and snack bars.
- RV travelers seeking a resort atmosphere are attracted to the growing number of luxury RV resorts with facilities such as tennis courts, golf courses and health spas.
- Facilities at public campgrounds tend to be simple, but offer great scenic beauty. Public lands are popular for hiking, fishing, white water rafting and many other outdoor recreational opportunities enjoyed by RVers.

What does the future hold for the RV market?

- Changes in the frequency and duration of vacations favor the RV industry. Americans are traveling shorter distances and on weekends with less planning, according to recent studies. For RV owners, this is a convenient travel pattern.

- RV demand remains robust and the potential for future sales is bright, according to a University of Michigan study. Among U.S. households that have never owned an RV, more than one in seven expressed interest in purchasing an RV in the future.
- Both parents and empty-nesters are strong potential RV buyers, and promising future prospects are emerging among younger, ethnically diverse consumers, reveals a Harris Interactive study commissioned by the Go RVing Coalition. Generation Xers exhibit interests in outdoor activities that are highly compatible with RVing, the study found.
- Ownership and demographic trends favor substantial RV market growth, according to the University of Michigan. Baby boomers are entering an age range — 55 to 64 — with high RV ownership rates historically, according to the Michigan study.
- RV manufacturers are innovating to give consumers an array of product choices. Manufacturers are producing lightweight towables and smaller, fuel-efficient motorhomes. Green technologies such as solar panels are appearing on an increasing number of RVs.

How To Prepare an RV for a Freezing Winter Adventure

Do you want to use your **RV** during the Freezing temperatures of **Winter**?

Got Questions: How do I keep the pipes from freezing in my RV? What can I do to stay warm inside the RV? Can I keep my walls from icing over? Will my fuel freeze? Is it even possible to **RV in the Winter**? Watch the two videos below on **How To Prepare the Outside of Your RV for Winter**, and then **How to Prepare the Inside of Your RV for Winter**...then read the post to get additional tips and tricks, and any updates about **How to RV in the Winter**.

To be perfectly honest we've learned how to RV during the winter from experience...**BAD EXPERIENCIES!** So please learn from our mistakes and heed our warnings, they truly come from the heart in hopes to make your Winter RV adventures run much more smoothly.

The majority of **RV** owners do one of two things for **Winter**:

1. Head South to warmer weather (i.e. Quartzite, Lake Havasu City, Yuma, Gulf Shores Alabama, Florida, etc).
2. Winterize the RV and take it to storage for the season.

We RV a little different! Being slightly crazy we know there are tons of adventures waiting in the snow filled mountains. Honestly the best time to be in a ski town is January – February, there's less crowds, the snow is better, and the town is filled with mostly locals.

Enjoy the snow and successfully endure the freezing temperatures there are a few things you need to know BEFORE you go on a winter RV adventure.

Cover Windows, Doors and Stairwell – It blows me away how much cold air seeps in from the windows, the entry door and the stairwell, by adding insulation to these drafty culprits you can keep the inside of the RV much warmer. Purchase a heavy fabric and make curtains to keep the cold from coming in. You can do fun curtains or you can install snaps/Velcro around the windows and doors to add an extra layer of insulation. Some people use bubble wrap, the bubble insulation, or the R-Max Foam boards which are all practical but do not look very good. For the stairwell have a board cut and adhere insulation to the bottom of it, at night cover the stairwell to keep out the cold air.

Skirting your RV – If you have an RV without insulated bays, or a trailer, you will need skirting in extreme weather. The majority of RV's are not made for extreme cold so chances are if you plan to be in consistent freezing temps you should look into investing in this. In some cases if temperatures drop below 0 degrees you will need to run a space heater under your coach (inside your skirting) to keep it warm. I stay away from propane heaters and use an electric commercial heater under our RV.

We had to skirt our first RV and it worked like a champ. We called the Miller Family from RVSkirting.com and even though they couldn't install the skirt for us they helped us get set for a last minute freeze in Breckenridge, CO and gave us the confidence that we could install it ourselves. Most manufacturers and dealers don't understand skirting so make sure you do lots of research or give these guys a call if you have questions about winter camping. If you plan to be in an area with snow you can try the poor man's skirt, it works pretty well: Take a shovel and pile up snow all around your coach up to the bays. Pack the snow well and it can last for months. During an extreme freeze put a space heater under your coach, don't worry it shouldn't melt the snow...I call this the Igloo effect!

Cheap Heat Options – We've seen 2 options that seem to work well for heating the RV inexpensively in the winter (when you're staying at an RV park for a month or more you will often have to pay for electricity, so space heaters might end up costing you some extra money each month in electricity bills). Of course you have to calculate the expense of the product and the install costs:

- **Propane Heater** – This device sips propane compared to the furnace installed on your RV, yet it keeps the inside even warmer. Best part is this heater doesn't use electricity like a space heater but it heats just as well. The downsides: There is no anti-tip shutoff so it's not good if you have pets. The install can be simple but should be completed by a professional. The propane is un-vented and therefore produces deadly Carbon Monoxide so you must keep a vent open at all times and constantly check your CO detector to make sure it is functioning properly. Also as discussed propane heat produces humidity. Our friends the RV Geeks use this propane furnace and swear by it in their Winter RVing post
- **Pellet Stove** – This device will warm up an RV faster and more efficiently than any other heater we've seen. The good news is there is zero moisture produced from the heat, the built in fan uses a fraction of the electricity of a space heater and it's a pretty eco friendly option for heating. The downsides: Install is a crazy mod to both the inside and outside of your RV. If the fan shuts down (i.e. when boondocking and you run out of battery power) you now have a smoke filled RV. Takes up a lot of space so is best for larger RV's. You have to carry and store large, heavy wood pellets in your RV. Some models you are required to vacuum out the ashes which can be a pain make sure you look at the pellet stoves with a removable ash tray.

Heated Water Hose – You can make your own with heat tape and pipe insulation and this works pretty well, although on occasion we have seen people in the bathrooms warming up their frozen hoses during extreme cold snaps. I'd recommend just purchasing a good heated water hose. Camco has one on the market but it looks kinda cheap, from the heated hoses I've seen in person I'd recommend the [Purit Heated Hose](#) as the construction and the warranty seem top notch.

No matter which way you decide to go, make sure you cover and insulate any exposed piping coming from the water supply and the spigot! If your water connection to the RV is on the exterior of the wall (not inside a bay/basement) you will also need to cover and insulate that connection very well. If you do have a wet bay you should consider placing a space heater in the bay just in case temps get low enough to freeze and burst the connection.

Sewer Hose – Use a PVC pipe for your sewer line instead of the standard RV drain hose, it will hold up much better in the freezing temps. If you have a constant water supply and you want to let your grey water drain the safest thing you can do is wrap the sewer pipe with additional insulation, if temps will be freezing for multiple days you may want to install heat tape around the PVC pipe. I always recommend keeping the black tank closed off and dumping only when necessary, getting a #poopcicle stuck in the drain is not a good way to start the day.

Keeping the Inside and the Bays Warm 1. Space heaters are your friend! If you're plugged into shore power why waste your money running the propane furnace inside your RV? For sub-freezing temperatures we typically run 2 space heaters inside: 1 near the front, and one near the bedroom.

2. Mini Space Heater in bay

Typically there is one main bay that holds your black/grey/fresh tanks, your sewer connections, water pump, water filter, etc. This is the MOST important bay to keep warm. I purchased a tiny 200 watt (1.8 x 4.3 x 6.1 inches) ceramic heater and leave it running in the bay during freezing temperatures. It pulls about 5 amps and keeps all my pipes warm (exterior temp 20 degrees,

inside bay 50 degrees). Some people recommend hanging a work light in the bay: I tried this and the bulb melted the plastic bay, and my water still froze so I don't recommend this option.

3. Fresh Water Hose

Your water hose WILL FREEZE! Do not leave your water hose connected during freezing temperatures. There are special water hoses you can plug in to keep warm, you can also make a heated water hose using [Pipe Heating Cable \(Heat Tape\)](#) and [Insulating Foam Pipe Covers](#). During extreme freeze your 'heated' water hose may still freeze. Numerous times I've seen people in the bathroom trying to thaw their heated hoses. Save money and save hassle, just fill your fresh water tank and disconnect your hose, repeat when necessary (it's really not a big deal and it will save you money and you won't have to store a bulky winter water hose all year)

4. Insulate your pipes

It might not do much, but why not. Go to the hardware store and purchase the pipe insulation. Wrap any and every pipe you can find with the insulation. It's easy to do, inexpensive, and maybe it'll help keep the pipes a little warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer?

Keeping the Bed Warm:

Invest in a heated mattress pad, it will be your friend during cold nights. We purchased a dual climate heated pad (not a heated blanket) because one of us is always colder than the other, it works like a champ. Best part is the preheat function warms the bed quickly then continues with your original setting. We chose a heated mattress pad because heat rises right? The heat is nice on our backs, then as the warmth rises its captured between the sheets and creates a nice oven effect. Love it! Although we've heard a heated blanket can mess up your core temps we still use one on the lowest setting when it's sub-freezing outside. **Unfortunately the new mattress in our Fleetwood Excursion is memory foam so it doesn't work with a heated mattress pad....we're so missing our pre-heat button this year!**

RV Tire Chains:

Legally you must carry chains to drive many mountain passes during snow storms (especially in California). If you don't have chains on board and you get busted it's a hefty fine. We've spent winters all over the states, and fortunately we've never had to put our chains on. Of course we watch the weather religiously before we plan to drive anywhere. If you're flexible like we are and you know a storm is coming you have 2 options: 1. Bust out of there ASAP before the snow or 2. welcome the snow with open arms and extend your campground reservation a couple more days.

Keep your engine from freezing

Diesel can freeze! Make sure you fill with winterized diesel which you can find at most truck stops. If you can't find winterized diesel you need to purchase an additive that will keep your diesel from freezing (you can find this at auto part stores and truck stops). Before you depart your destination you should plug in the heating element found in your diesel engine (most diesel engines have a heated core that you can plug into a wall to keep them from getting too cold) to warm up your engine at least 4 hours before taking off.

Protecting the RV Engine and Generator from Freezing – From the Experts

All 3 of our RV's have been diesel, similar rules might apply for gas RV's so ask the Mfr for advice. Diesel fuel begins to gel around 20 degrees and can damage your engine. I have received these tips directly from Fleetwood, Cummins, and Freightliner so this information is solid!

- Fuel – Before entering freezing temps make sure to add a Diesel Anti-Gel Supplement. Both Cummins and Freightliner recommend the Power Service brand of anti-gel claiming that it works best. After adding the supplement make sure you drive and run the Generator to get the additive inside the fuel lines. If possible fuel up with a winter blend fuel which can be found at many truck stops during the winter.
- Engine Block Heater – A lot of mis-guiding information about the engine block heater, here's what the experts say:
 - Temps between 32-10 degrees Fahrenheit: Turn on block heater 4 hours before starting the engine.
 - Temps below 10 degrees Fahrenheit: Turn on and leave on engine block heater until temps rise above 10.
 - Always turn off block heater while engine is running.
 - Oil – Recommended Generator Oil for freezing temps is 15W-40

- Departure – Before you depart the campground in cold weather turn on the engine block heater for a minimum of 4 hours and run the generator for 30 minutes with a low-medium load. This routes the fuel to the generator but not all the fuel is burned. The fuel that is not burned follows a return line back to the fuel tank, effectively warming up the fuel and giving the engine warm fuel for a better start. Make sure your engine and transmission have time to warm up before jumping directly onto the highway.

Condensation

In the winter you'll notice condensation accumulating on the windshield, on walls, etc. Condensation is your enemy. I know it sounds contradictory but you need to crack a vent or a window at all times. Condensation can build up, get in the walls, etc and cause mold. You do not want this! Simply crack a window and turn on a fan to circulate the air, if you're already using a space heater with built in fan you don't have to worry about running a separate fan. You can also put the dehumidifier pellets like *Damp Rid* or *DriZair* (you can purchase at most stores) in the areas that seem to draw the most condensation. We've found the condensation will not pose a problem as long as it's 40% relative humidity or less inside the RV.

Vent Covers

We've always installed MaxxAir vent covers on all 3 of our RV's. During the winter a vent cover is a must as it adds an extra barrier against condensation, and when there's a pile of snow on the roof you can still open the vents while cooking (or if you need to let some condensation escape). We installed a new MaxxFan on the Fleetwood and it combines the vent cover into the fan, it seemed to hold up pretty well to the elements however we didn't have a more than a few inches of snow at a time. In our first RV (the Damon Avanti) we purchased the vent 'pillows' to help keep warm air in, and keep down condensation and they worked well, but we got tired of carrying them around all year for a few days here and there of snowy weather.

Composting Toilet

The solids must be above 55 degrees Fahrenheit in order to compost. If you have a composting toilet like us make sure the surrounding ambient temperature is at or above 55.

and more stuff you need

De-Icer, Snow Shovel, Ice Scraper, Jack Pads (to keep the jacks from freezing to the ground), Winter Wiper Fluid, and some warm boots and winter clothes of course!

Winter RV Campgrounds

Don't assume a campground will be open, make sure you contact the resort before you plan a visit. Many campgrounds close during the winter, especially in areas where it snows. Surprisingly a ton of State Parks close as soon as snow hits the ground, so do your research!

Boondocking

As much as we love Wild Camping our general rule of thumb is: *if its freezing outside you don't want to be boondocking*. Sure you can run your generator and use propane to heat the interior, but you're gonna spend \$20+ per day anyway so you might as well find a nice RV park and plug in.

For the Lazy or the Budget RV'e

Last but certainly not least there is always the option to winterize your RV before you hit the cold weather. Whether you're lazy, cheap, or you just plain don't want to deal with all this crap I've rambled on about above, this option works like a champ. Before you hit the road purchase a couple 10 gallon jugs of water for drinking. Shower & use the toilets in the facilities at the campground (they're usually heated during the winter). Of course this means when nature calls you have to high tail it through the freezing weather to use the Jon, but at least you don't have to worry about your pipes freezing! If you decide to go this route make sure you stay in the site located closest to shower and bathroom facilities, you'll thank me later.

8 Reasons to Go Camping in the Fall

By Jessica Sanders

With the hot days of summer behind us, camping takes on a new life. Chilly mornings, perfect hiking weather and warm comfort food all come together to make fall camping a must-do for

any outdoors enthusiast. If you're not convinced, here are seven very good reasons to keep your tent out just a little bit longer.

The Scenery In almost all areas of the country beautiful colors reign supreme during the fall season, which makes it a picturesque time to go camping. Though New England is known for its array of seasonal hues, there are a number of places to go for a charming autumn trip. Some of the best states for fall camping are:

- Colorado
- Washington
- New Mexico
- Michigan
- North Carolina

The Weather Through tired eyes you watch the sun crest in the east as you clutch your warm mug, steam rising into the fresh morning air. Coffee or hot chocolate never tasted so good as on a crisp autumn morning. With the right clothes and gear, these temperatures make fall camping more comfortable than in the hot humidity of summer.

Affordable Rates After Labor Day many campgrounds drop their rates, stop taking reservations, and become first come first serve. With peak season behind you, now's the time to get the most affordable rates.

Less Bugs Chilly fall temperatures chase the usual overflow of bugs to a warmer climate. This makes forested campsites, which are often flooded with mosquitos and nagging insects, more comfortable. Still, you should always keep bug spray packed, just in case.

Fall Camping Food Cool weather makes comfort food a campsite staple. Warm up your evenings at camp with one of these cold-weather approved meals:

- 2 Quick Cast Iron Meals

A Good Night's Sleep Sharing a small sleeping space in the summer months can make your hot tent even more unbearable. However, sleeping is more comfortable on cool fall nights. Snuggle up with your little ones or significant other for a long, restful sleep under the stars.

Different Activities The fall season is prime time for an array of different camp activities. AccessCamping.com reports, "Autumn used to be a quiet, slow period in the country's parks, but things have changed, notes Paul Bambei, president and CEO of ARVC. He says that although fewer campers are traveling, park operators have discovered they can sometimes fill their campsites and cabins to capacity if they provide enough activities." When you go camping in the fall, try:

- Apple picking
- Pumpkin picking and carving
- Local harvest festivals like Oktoberfest
- Halloween events
- Fall fishing derbies

Fewer Crowds Meeting new people is a great benefit of camping. Still, busy campgrounds can be overwhelming. With less people inclined to camp during the school year, you can enjoy having fewer neighbors and less crowded hiking trails.

Funny story: Where are your glasses

Yesterday my daughter e-mailed me again, asking why I didn't do something useful with my time.

"Like sitting around the pool and drinking wine is not a good thing?" I asked.

Her talking about my "doing-something-useful" seems to be her favorite topic of conversation.

She was "only thinking of me", she said and suggested that I go down to the Senior Center and hang out with the girls.

I did this and when I got home last night, I decided to play a trick on her.

I e-mailed her and told her that I had joined a Parachute Club.

She replied, "Are you nuts? You are 78 years old and now you're going to start jumping out of airplanes?"

I told her that I even got a Membership Card and e-mailed a copy to her.

She immediately telephoned me and yelled, "Good grief, Mum, where are your glasses?!"

This is a Membership to a *Prostitute* Club, not a Parachute Club."

"Oh dear. I'm in trouble again," I said, "I really don't know what to do.

I signed up for five jumps a week!!"

The line went quiet and her friend picked up the phone and said that my daughter had fainted.

Life as a Senior Citizen is not getting any easier, but sometimes it can be ever so much fun.

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"We Sell for Less - Buy from us and save"

Humor for today

Whatever you may look like, marry someone your own age. As your looks fade, so will their eyesight.

Housework can't kill you, but why take a chance?

Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shoveling the sidewalk before it stops snowing.

The reason women don't play football is because eleven of them would never wear the same outfit in public.

Best way to get rid of kitchen odors is to eat out.

I want my children to have all the things I couldn't afford. Then I intend to move in with them.

Most children threaten to run away from home. This is the only thing that keeps some parents going.

We spend the first twelve months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next twelve years telling them to sit down and shut up.

The only time I ever enjoyed ironing was the day I accidentally put gin in the steam iron.

My finest hour lasted a minute and a half.

Old age is when the liver spots show through your gloves.

My photographs don't do me justice, they just look like me...

Tranquilizers work if you follow the advice on the bottle and "KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN".

The reason the golf pro tells you to keep your head down is so you can't see him laughing.

You know you're old when they've discontinued your blood type.

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