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The Ultimate Guide to RV Camping in the Summer 2023

Alyssa Chartier April 29, 2023

*Ready to hit the road this summer? Have you made your RV road trip plans yet?
Wondering where the best summer destinations are?*

Summer is a season that is highly anticipated by people all over the world. The warm weather, long days, and endless activities make it the perfect time to explore and enjoy the great outdoors.

For RV enthusiasts, summer is an especially exciting time because it is the perfect season for RV camping. In this article, we'll provide you with a guide to RV camping in the summer, including the best summer destinations, tips for RVing during the summer months, and advice for preparing your RV for summer camping.

Why Summer is the Best Season to RV

It is no secret that summer is the most popular time of year to hit the road in your RV. But here are some of the best reasons to be traveling this summer.

1. Good Weather

Summer is the time of year when the weather is typically warm and sunny. This makes it perfect for a variety of outdoor activities. You can hike, bike, fish, kayak, and more during the summer months.

2. **“School Is Out For The Summer”**

Since schools are out for the summer, your kids can join you on your adventures. The flexibility families have during the summer makes it perfect for your summer journeys. If you want to create memories with your kids, summer is the best time to do it. Plus there are programs that can help them learn something along the way.

3. **Special Events & Festivals**

Most summer destinations know how to live it up all summer long. There are festivals, special events, live music, and plenty of activities all summer long. It is a wonderful time for people who love music festivals, food fairs, farmers’ markets, and art shows.

4. **Longer Days**

With the sun setting later in the evening, you can enjoy more time outdoors. The further north you go, the longer you can expect the sun to be out. In fact, there are areas of Alaska that experience almost 24 hours of sunlight.

If you are into hiking, this means you can get more miles under your boots in the summer. Instead of rushing back from a day hike at dinner time you find yourself getting back to the car in time for bed. It opens up a lot of options for a long day hike.

5. **Lush Landscapes**

The sunshine and warmth brings the earth back to life. The snow melts away, the lush landscapes expose themselves, and the vibrant blooms start displaying their beauty. Being in the mountains while there are still snowcapped mountains melting into the streams is a special moment you won’t forget.

6. **Water Sports**

Summer is a great time of year to enjoy the water. Whether you are into white waters or looking for a lazy river experience, there is so much to enjoy about the differing waters this time of year.

If you are lucky enough to find a spot at a campground with water frontage, you’ll be in for a real treat.

7. **More RV Friendly Destinations**

Many national parks—and other destinations—that are so popular among RVers are covered in snow most of the year. Come summer, these beautiful places are accessible for RVers. The hours of operation are longer, the sun is out longer, and this provides a better experience for their visitors.

Preparing Your RV for Summer Camping

Before you hit the road for your summer camping adventure, it's important to prepare your RV for the warmer weather. Here are some tips to help you get your RV ready for summer camping:

De-Winterize Your RV

If you haven't hit the road yet and your RV is still in storage, this is the first thing you need to do. You need to clean and sanitize your RV water system. During this process, you can check all of your plumbing lines for leaks or cracks—which can save a huge headache later in the summer.

We have a detailed guide on the full de-winterizing process [here](#).

Check Your Air Conditioning Unit

Your RV's air conditioning unit is a crucial part to enjoying some of those hotter locations during those summer months. Make sure your system is in good working order by doing a routine inspection. You'll want to look for clean—and unbent—fins to help keep air flowing, vents are unobstructed and clean, and your roof cover is in good working order.

While inspecting your roof cover, you'll want to remove it. Be sure to remove the lid to ensure rodents haven't created havoc during those colder winter months. Check out the wires, seals, and any other debris squirrels have stored under there.

Finally, test it and be sure it is working. Don't wait until you hit the road to find out the hard way.

Check Your RV Tires

With changing seasons, your tires go through a lot—especially if they aren't moving. The summer temperatures can cause tire pressures to fluctuate, so it's important to check your RV's tires before you hit the road.

While inspecting your tires, look for cracking on the sidewall, expiration dates, tread level, and the recommended tire pressure. Once you've done this and everything checks out you should be good to go. But don't forget to look at your spare tire too!

Inspect Your RV's Roof

You'll want to do this every season. Driving at high speeds, sitting in the sun, or having snow pile up on top of your RV can all do great damage to your RV. While you are on your roof looking at your air conditioning unit, look at your roof too.

While you are inspecting your roof, look for wear and tear. Look for cracks in the caulking—especially around seams. Where the roof and side walls meet and around any protrusion through the roof are common problem areas.

If these are left ignored, you could have water damage on your summer trip.

Inspect and Clean Awnings

If you are searching for a way to stay cooler this summer, caring for your awnings is one of the best ways to do that. Open up your awnings, inspect and clean them, allow them to fully dry, and then store them.

Along with the cleaning, you will want to inspect your awning. Look for weak spots in the fabric, mold or mildew from being stored wet, and that your rollers are functioning properly. You'll also want to check any stabilizers you have for your awning.

Check the Propane System

If you plan to use your RV's propane system for cooking, heating, or for your generator, you need to make sure it is in good working order. If you want to inspect it yourself, you can do a trial run for each appliance. Try using your cooktop, furnace, refrigerator, outdoor grills, hot water heater, etc. Be sure each one is working.

In the event one of these isn't igniting, there are a number of minor things that could be wrong. Be sure all of your shut off valves are opened, make sure there isn't any corrosion on your ignitors, and determine whether the igniters are battery operated or hard wired. If they are battery operated, you might need to change the battery.

Should the issue be beyond these, you might want to have a professional look into it.

Don't Get Overwhelmed

Summer is a great season to go camping, but it can be a bit daunting as you prepare to head out for an extended trip. Don't let it overwhelm you and stop you from getting out there. There is plenty to learn along the way, but getting out there is the best way to do it.

Some Top Summer RV Destinations

Planning your Summer travels can be a bit daunting, but Harvest Hosts—and their family of products—can help make it all happen. Harvest Hosts and Boondockers Welcome are great ways to help you get to those dreamy locations—and are pretty amazing in their own right.

But before we point out all the ways Harvest Hosts can help, let's look at some of the top summer destinations.

Best Summer National Park Destinations

The best National Park is always up for debate—and perhaps there is no such thing. But summer is the ideal time to visit many of the most sought after national parks

across the continent. Head to the cooler climates, stay comfortable, and get lost in nature. Let's get started.

1. **Glacier National Park**

Glacier National Park is a great summer destination. It has incredible alpine lakes, beautiful rivers, towering trees, and tons of wildlife. Visitors can enjoy hiking, horseback riding, and camping inside the park.

One of the most popular things to do inside Glacier National Park is the Going-to-the-Sun Road. This scenic road is only open during the summer and cuts through the heart of the park. It offers plenty of pull offs for photos and direct access to some of the best trails in the park.

2. **Banff National Park**

This national park is found in the Canadian Rockies and is one of the most scenic places in North America. Banff National Park is a godsend for photographers because it has stunning views of lakes, glaciers, and mountains from top vistas.

If you are an outdoorsman, there are miles upon miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. There are great places for fishing, camping, and places to just get lost in nature.

An added bonus is this national park is only four to five hours from Glacier National Park. Perhaps you could combine the two together for an incredibly memorable road trip.

3. **Yellowstone National Park**

Yellowstone National Park is one of the iconic national parks in the entire United States. Places like Old Faithful, the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, and the Grand Prismatic Spring are some of the most photographed places in any national park worldwide.

Yellowstone is known for being the first national park, roaming buffalo, geysers, boiling clay pots, and more geothermal activity. This park is also incredibly drivable with parking lots very near most of the attractions—or just a short walk.

4. **Acadia National Park**

Acadia National Park is located on the Desert Island in Maine. This great summer destination is known for its rocky coastline, hiking trails, scenic drives, and stone bridges. Here you can enjoy hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, whale watching, and more.

If you enjoy cycling, you might be happy to know this national park has trails set apart for you to share with horseback riders. Acadia National Park has a network of carriage roads that are only accessible to pedestrians. This means you don't need to worry about dealing with cars as you tour this one-of-a-kind park on your bicycle.

A Great Region for the Summer Months

The sun is shining, the snow is melting, and the Pacific Northwest is calling. If you're looking for a region to explore this summer, look no further than the beautiful region of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Here are some of the top spots to consider.

1. The Olympic Peninsula

The Olympic Peninsula in Washington state is a true gem of the PNW—Pacific Northwest. If you are going to explore the PNW, you will most definitely want to make your way here. It is home to some of the most diverse landscapes with towering mountains, rugged coastlines, and dense rainforests.

One of the top attractions here is Olympic National Park. It covers over one million acres of wilderness of the peninsula. Here you'll find those temperate rainforests, alpine meadows, rocky coastlines, and natural marvels. Visitors can explore miles of hiking trails, relax in hot springs, and enjoy one of the quietest places on earth.

Another gem on the Olympic Peninsula is the Hoh Rain Forest—technically part of Olympic National Park. This is one of the largest temperate rain forests in the United States. Here you'll find old-growth trees, mossy ferns, and babbling streams. You can enjoy leisurely strolls through the Hall of Mosses or take longer hikes into the rainforest in search of your own quiet retreat. Just be sure to bring your best rain coat.

2. Leavenworth, Washington

Leavenworth is a Bavarian-style village set in the middle of the cascade mountains. It is a charming destination year-round, but in the summer it puts its best foot forward. It is known for its festivals, outdoor activities, and local wines.

From here you can spend the day climbing rocks, hiking, river rafting, horseback riding, or cycling. Then, come back into town to enjoy a pint at a local pub, summer theater, or enjoy a local winery.

3. Klamath Falls, Oregon

This is a great base camp for exploring southern Oregon. It's surrounded by natural beauty, including Crater Lake National Park, the Lava Beds National Monument, and the Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge all within an hour drive.

This area is great for those who like fishing, boating, bird watching, and star gazing. Its remote location, but scenic town makes it a perfect spot for a family to enjoy the region without needing to unpack and pack up day after day.

If you find yourself here, consider a visit to the historic Favell Museum.

4. North Cascades National Park

North Cascades National Park is one of the least visited national parks in the United States—and that's a shame. This is a true hidden gem and a hiker's paradise. There are over 300 active glaciers—more than Glacier National Park.

When you visit North Cascades National Park, check out Ross Lake National Recreation Area, Diablo Lake, and the Cascade Pass. You'll be rewarded with amazing views that will make everyone jealous of what your eyes were able to feast themselves on. Be sure to take plenty of pictures and even consider jumping in these cool lakes—even if it's only for a few seconds.

5. **Bend, Oregon**

Bend is a charming city situated in the heart of Central Oregon. This town is known for its natural beauty, vibrant art scene, and most of all its outdoor recreation opportunities. Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast or just a fan of being in that environment, Bend has something to offer everyone.

Do You Struggle with the Summer Heat?

Summer heat is no joke in most of the United States. But here are five tips to help you navigate it this summer.

1. **Park In The Shade Whenever Possible**

If possible, park your RV in a shaded area to avoid direct sunlight. Also, be aware of the direction your windows are facing. If your windows are facing the sun, it will act like a greenhouse and will rapidly increase the temperature inside your RV. In fact, your air conditioning won't even be able to keep up in the peak season.

2. **Use Your AC Wisely**

Make sure your air conditioning system is in good working order before hitting the road. Also don't expect it to keep up with soaring temperatures. You might need to give it breaks and strategically spend time outside to avoid overworking your AC.

3. **Utilize Window Shades**

Invest in some high quality window shades to block out the sun's rays. This should help reduce the temperature inside, assist the air conditioning, and prevent sun damage to things inside your RV. Don't underestimate the damage those sun rays can do to your RV.

4. **Stay Hydrated**

It's important to stay hydrated during the hot weather. Be sure to drink plenty of water. Invest in a water bottle you like that measures how much you've been drinking.

5. **Strategically Plan Your Activities**

Try to plan your strenuous activities during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late afternoon. This will help you avoid the worst of the heat and keep your RV cooler.

If you are a remote worker, consider working in the RV in the morning and then transitioning to a coffee shop in the afternoon. You can give your AC a break, stay cool, and enjoy your day without the constant noise of your AC unit.

Your Destination Awaits

There are some pluses and minuses in the RV life. But heading north for the summer while the snow melts, seeing the mountain peaks reveal themselves, and watching nature come back to life are some of the biggest highlights to this lifestyle.

So this summer, it is time to head north, enjoy cooler temperatures, and hike those rugged trails.

Organizing Your RV

Janine Pettit, Editor in Chief of Girl Camper

Every once in a while, you have to clear the clutter and bring order to your RV. Just like a sticks and bricks house, things can get out of hand. I spent a very pleasant day in my RV emptying every cabinet and really deciding on whether what I was unearthing from the depths of the cabinets was worthy of a spot. Each item that you bring along adds not only physical weight but mental weight. When you have to dig past things to get at what you are looking for, your vacation vibe can start fading quickly. I dug in to not only declutter but to organize and better access what made the cut.

The silverware drawer was a real problem. It was plenty large but not being utilized to its full potential. I started by taking out the premade storage container the manufacturer put in because it wasted a lot of real estate. I found some clear shallow lucite pans that fit perfectly in the drawer. Lucky break. This allowed me to separate all the gadgets from the utensils and be able to see what I was looking for at a glance. I also love that I can simply pull out the cutlery bin and take it outside to the picnic table. I not only fit a lot more in the space, but I can now find what I am searching for.

My next problem cabinet was the one over the kitchen sink. It is one large cabinet without a middle shelf which would have made the space more user friendly. My dishes and drinkware are stored there but every time I arrive at a campground it looks like they all went through a rinse cycle. I tried lining the cabinet with shelf liner but that only keeps the bottom plate from sliding all around. I purchased the same lucite containers but taller and stored my plates vertically. These containers have nice built-in handles as well so I can grab the whole container and bring it outside. I used a container designed for carrying crafts to stash my wine tumblers, to-go cups, and straws and I had just enough room left over to squeeze in my coffee tumblers. This brought order to this cabinet, and everything stays in place on driving days.

I used the clear containers next, to corral my t-shirts and socks, two clothing items that are camping staples for me. I used the boat system of folding and stacking t-shirts so I can see them and pull out the one I want. This allows me to put lots of t-shirts in one space and get the one I want without displacing the whole stack. With socks I can also see what's there and grab what I want. The container I used was designed for snacks but it's working just great for socks.

I used the same clear container to manage the refrigerator shelf I keep all the condiments on. A camping hack for me is to buy small containers of condiments that I can refill from larger family sized jars in the fridge. I stash them in this long container that just happened to fit perfectly on my fridge door. I keep the bottom door shelf on my home fridge free to store this container so when I am heading out to camp I can just grab all my condiments at once. Easy breezy.

Tips

1. Do a deep cleanse and get rid of anything you haven't used at least a few times in a year.
2. Buy clear containers to stash things in that allow you to see what's in it.
3. Put rubber stoppers on the bottom of the containers to keep them from sliding around in the cabinet.
4. Stash your food items in containers from least used in back to most used in front of the cabinets.

Travel Trailer Beginners Camping Guide

One time I was just like you. I was part of the Travel Trailer Beginners Club! I've been around the block since then, and this Travel Trailer Camping Guide explains all the newbie RVer lessons I learned along the way. I hope it spares you the frustration of being a beginner RVer.

Don't buy any RV until you make sure it's right for you. First do a test run. Try on camping trailers for rent near you on RVShare.

Plan and Pack for Your First Travel Trailer Camping Trip

Our family couldn't wait for our first camping trip. We were total travel trailer beginners and were ready to hit the road. But we had so much to learn.

Remember the essential camping items.

I kept a list of 19 New Travel Trailer "Must-Haves" for Beginner RVers that would have made our first camp out easier if we had remembered to bring them. Now I recommend buying two of each instead of moving them from the house to the RV, or you'll have to remember to pack it each time. Remember, one of the biggest benefits of a travel trailer is that you can leave all your camping gear packed. Then you're ready to go camping on a moment's notice.

Sure, you have many new things to buy. But don't overload your RV. First, it's no fun to walk around RV clutter. Travel trailers are small enough!

Beginner RV Packing Tips

1. Park the trailer out in front of your house two or three days before departure.
2. Organize things into a permanent spot as you load.
3. Plan meals with as many non-perishable foods as possible. When your trip is over, you can leave the leftovers. Then, only dirty clothes need unpacking.
4. Keep that heavy items like your generator low and toward the front of the RV.

Trailer Towing Tips for Newbies

Don't make the same mistakes I did as a beginner travel trailer RVer.

First, check how much your truck can tow.

This information is usually on a sticker in the driver's door jam. Now check the trailer numbers, usually found on the driver side of the trailer body. That sticker will give you a few different numbers. Make sure none of those numbers exceed what your truck can safely tow.

1. **Dry weight** (weight of just the RV with no water or gear in it)
2. **GVWR (weight with it full of gear and water)**, and tongue weight (weight applied by the trailer pushing down on the hitch of the vehicle).

I recommend giving yourself a buffer of NO LESS than 1,000 pounds between what you're actually towing and what your vehicle says you can tow. Sometimes the vehicle manufacturers are extremely generous in their tow ratings. Follow them precisely and you might end up with a busted transmission or a burned out engine.

Know how to safely tow your trailer.

Trailer sway is a common problem when towing travel trailers. There are many ways to address it, like adding a sway bar or weight distributing hitch. You can also install suspension airbags on your truck. If you have a lightweight trailer (under 5,000 pounds) and a heavy tow vehicle, try going without a sway bar. On my lightweight trailer, I don't have sway issues, even without a sway bar.

If you notice the trailer starting to fish tail, don't turn the wheel, don't hit the brakes. Just let your foot off the gas and drive straight. If you have trailer brakes, lightly tap the trailer brakes remotely from your truck.

Learn how to back up your trailer.

New RVers usually struggle with backing up travel trailers. When you do, just remember two things:

1. The back of the trailer turns the opposite direction of your steering wheel.
2. Make micro-adjustments to the steering wheel. The trailer will take a minute to head in the direction you want it to. Be patient with tiny turns and you'll have better success.

Watch for trees when parallel parking.

Watch for tree obstructions. I discuss the trouble with travel trailers and tree-lined streets. See, I live in a neighborhood with mature trees lining the streets. It's beautiful, but a nightmare for travel trailer parking. For instance, I once pulled up alongside the curb in front of my house to load the trailer and BOOM! The trailer contacted a branch that was hanging lower than I'd thought. The tree versus RV collision caused some damage.

Take it easy on mountain roads.

Drive slowly on steep mountain declines. Not just for safety but your trailer tongue is likely to hit the ground on a little depression. This can bend your stabilizers. Ask me how I know.

As you begin to drive with your trailer, pay close attention to tight curves. Those caution signs illustrating a trailer tipping over are telling you something. I've seen quite a few towable RVs that flipped over because the beginner trailer owner took corners too fast.

How to Set Up Your Travel Trailer at the Camp Site

Save the boondocking for later: use full hookups when you're a newbie.

I highly recommend you go to an RV park for your first travel trailer outing. Sure, it's not as private and serene as boondocking in the mountains. But RV parks are great for beginner travel trailer owners because they have full sewer, electric, and water hookups to make things stress-free. Leave boondocking for your second trip.

Park your trailer on flat ground.

Uneven parking spots can damage your RV's refrigerator. It also feels weird inside the trailer when you aren't level. Finally, the RV bounces around more when you're inside while parked on a slope.

Unhook the tow vehicle.

I think it's a lot easier to set up the trailer when it's not hooked up to the vehicle. This way, all the stabilizers hit the ground and you won't have to match them to the hitch height. Unhitching leave your tow vehicle free for driving kids to the lake or exploring the town.

Put the trailer stabilizers down.

Most travel trailers have four stabilizers that prevent trailer bounce whenever someone walks inside. Put them down unless you want the whole trailer shaking when your kid turns over in bed on the other side of the RV.

Use the correct electric adapter.

Most travel trailers have 30 amp service, but some trailers have 50 or 15 amp service. Each amperage requires a different connector. Without the right adapter, you can't hook up to the RV park's power.

I LOVE my generator. For a portable, it's perfect, but sometimes I think I'd pick an RV with an onboard generator for my next RV upgrade.

After flooring it, RV sales slow down

Henry Epp May 29, 2023

This Memorial Day weekend, an estimated 12 million Americans are taking trips in their campers, vans and trailers, according to the RV Industry Association. But relatively few may be doing it in brand-new RVs.

After an unprecedented spike in the past few years, shipments of recreational vehicles are down over 50% headed into the summer.

At the height of the pandemic, campers and trailers were flying off the lot at Tim's RV in Erving, Massachusetts, said owner Tim Christenson.

"There were days we would sell five or six a day," he said.

Now, it's more like three or four a week. Christenson said that's actually closer to what it was like before tons of people decided to take socially distanced vacations or get into "#vanlife."

"I think there's a little bit of market saturation out there," said Chris Dougherty, who runs Dougherty RV Consulting.

Dougherty said the industry has seen cycles before. He said that in past downturns, "even if people weren't buying new equipment, they were going out and still using their RVs."

That means potential business for parts and repairs. Also, the customer base is shifting, said Monika Geraci with the RV Industry Association.

"Over the past few years, we have brought in a significantly younger and more diverse RV buyer," she said — customers who will eventually be in the market for new RVs.

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