

## **Ten reasons to retire to an RV**

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Is it time to retire or at least make a change in your life? Have you thought about hitting the road in an RV and finally seeing this country and fulfilling some of your dreams? Here are ten reasons to retire to an RV, no matter what your age.

### **1: Live the American Dream**

America was built on the backs of pioneers. The first group headed west across the Atlantic Ocean. Their descendants continued to head west of the original 13 colonies until eventually their children reached the Pacific Ocean.

RVers thrive on the open road. In the words of Willie Nelson, they are "goin' places I have never been; seein' things that I may never see again." Rather than rush through two weeks of intensive vacation sightseeing, you can have years to explore our magnificent country, its natural beauty, historic sites and treasured landmarks.

### **2: Save Money**

Even with fuel prices as high as they are, you can retire to an RV on a limited budget (unless of course you buy a million-dollar Prevost and tow a Beamer). You can purchase a gently used RV from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Especially in the western states, you can camp for free or next to nothing on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service. A number of campgrounds belong to various networks and charge only 50 percent of their regular rate to their members. You can also join membership campgrounds.

Clothing is definitely cheaper. All you need are one or two nice outfits for the occasional wedding, funeral or bar mitzvah that comes along. Food is about the same. Home insurance is not needed but you are insuring all your vehicles. You can reduce your energy needs by going solar. You no longer buy as many toys and gadgets because there is no place to put them. Although an increasing number of RVers are buying iPods and high-definition, flat-screen TVs, you can make choices about where to put your extra money.

### **3: Simplify Your Life**

Reduce your possessions. Do you really need six vegetable peelers and five hammers? Eliminate the clutter in your life by not having all those THINGS. You can always rent a storage unit for the special mementos that are irreplaceable. Or pass them on to your kids so they can enjoy them now.

### **4: Get Close to Family-But Not Too Close!**

The beauty of having your own RV when you visit your children and other relatives is that you see each other as long as you like, but at the end of the day, you retreat to your own space with your bed and music and peace and quiet. Makes for a lovely relationship. Or give your children some respite by letting the grandchildren have a special sleepover in your rig parked in the driveway.

## **5: Give Back to Society -- Volunteer**

Many opportunities exist for RVers who want to do volunteer work in different places around the country, and you will usually save money by having a free or inexpensive site to park your rig. Since you'll be in one place for a while, you'll save money on fuel. You might also be invited as a guest to places of interest nearby. In addition, you'll experience the joy of sharing your time and knowledge with others. Another benefit: the camaraderie among the volunteers often provides deep and lasting friendships.

Here are a few volunteer opportunities:

- \* Habitat for Humanity Care-A-Vanner
- \* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- \* National Park Service VIP program
- \* American Red Cross Disaster Services

## **6: Make New Friends**

The biggest problem on the road is having too many friends! People seem to have more time to socialize when they are no longer stressed by job responsibilities and other obligations. No longer stuck in their old roles, everyone starts fresh and is open to meeting new people, exchanging ideas about the RV, discovering places to visit, traveling together, participating in activities together like golf, hiking, boating, fishing, tennis, shuffleboard, music, crafts and so on.

And of course, there's always eating. The potluck was practically invented for RVers, who can never accommodate more than four to six people in their RV. But just pull the picnic tables together and dinner is ready.

## **7: Travel Despite Physical Limitations**

A legally blind RVer traveled the country by himself -- with the aid of a transportation company to move his RV from campground to campground. An RVer with a heart transplant traveled by herself for five years in a truck and trailer. When her kids finally prevailed on her to change to a less physically demanding motor home, she traveled for eight more years.

As a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and increased awareness of disability issues, campgrounds have built more ramps, paved more pathways and created handicapped-accessible bathrooms and showers. In addition, some RV manufacturers offer wider doorways, wheelchair lifts and barrier-free floor plans to accommodate their customers with disabilities.

You can join the legions of disabled RVers and enjoy the outdoor life and the freedom of the RV lifestyle. A huge travel network will help you make the transition and provide ongoing support. Begin with the Handicapped Travel Club, which was formed in 1973 to encourage RV travel for people with a wide range of disabilities. Check out the resource information and links for a comprehensive view of the lifestyle -- everything from lists of companies that modify rigs to listings of used rigs for sale, traveling suggestions and general support to ensure that the disabled traveler is never alone out there. See also "RV Travel with Physical Challenges."

## **8: Travel Solo**

Say "RV" and most people visualize a couple decked out in matching T-shirts and plaid shorts, with their tiny dog on a leash. Banish the stereotype. RVers come in all sizes, ages and ethnic backgrounds. They also come one at a time. In fact, more women travel solo than men.

Some of the key concerns for solo travelers are inexperience with large vehicles, loneliness and safety. A number of singles groups and Web sites provide the support and information needed. See *Rolling Solo: 25 tips for Traveling Alone*, dealing with safety on the road for solos, and Jaimie Hall-Bruzenak and I have written an e-book/CD for the solo woman traveler; see *Books for women RVers* to order the e-book/CD.

Here are some helpful links for solo travelers:

- \* [Loners on Wheels](#)
- \* [RVing Women](#)
- \* [Wandering Individuals Network](#) (WIN)
- \* [RV Singles Discussion Forum](#)
- \* [Solo Workamping Forum](#)

## **9: Enjoy Freedom**

We live in the land of freedom and yet spend much of our lives having to do things at prescribed times: go to work; come home; pick up Janie from day care, Buster from the vet, your pants from the cleaner; use your two-week vacation to see all of America.

RVing is freedom -- the freedom to choose where you want to go, how long you want to stay, whether you want to volunteer or sit back and just enjoy the scenery, visit every state park or your ancestors' gravesites, travel Route 66 or read all the Great Books. You can work at fun jobs -- be Mickey Mouse at Disneyland or join a traveling circus. Yes, you can make any decision you want. How delicious.

## **10: Live Like a Celebrity**

After all, if RVing is good enough for movie stars Matthew McConaughey and Jeff Daniels, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, NASCAR driver Jeff Gordon and other celebrities, why not you?

Even if you're not quite ready to retire in 2008, you can think about it and begin to collect information. Check out more pages here at our Web site and blog, and you might just put in for early retirement.