

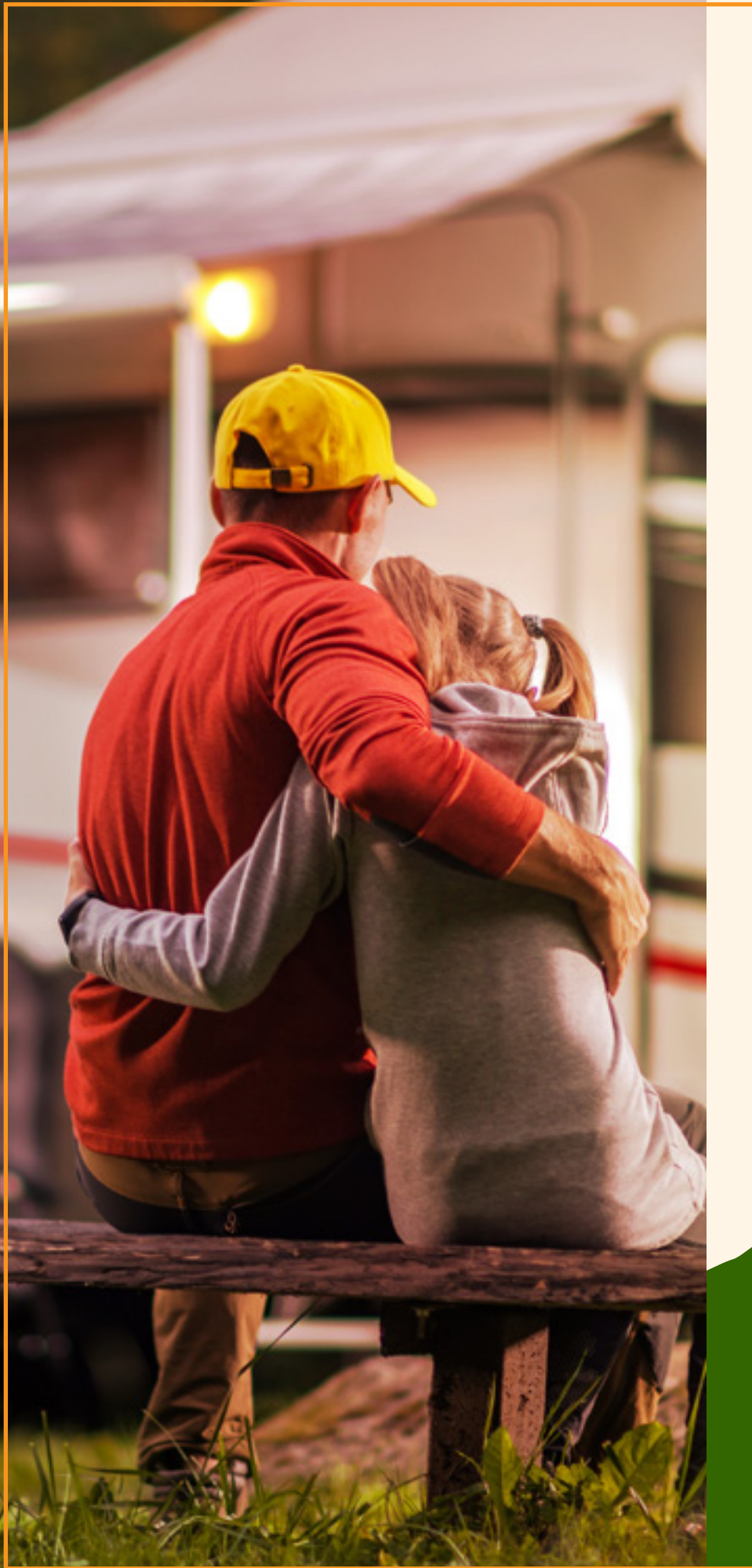


RV Trader®



RV Buyer's Guide

THE OPEN ROAD AWAITS...



RVing has become a great American pastime - and for good reason! Families can embark on adventures together with all the comforts of home. With an RV, your travel possibilities are practically endless from sea to shining sea. RVs expand the opportunity for adventure, quality family time, and a unique sense of freedom. And while the great outdoors haven't changed all that much, the way the world works certainly has.

Over time, things have become increasingly digital, and 2020 certainly accelerated our comfort with technology. The maps we read don't reside folded in the glove box - they exist on our phones, changing in real time, adjusting to our journeys. When planning our trips, very rarely does our first step include heading to the library and checking out books on National Parks. Instead, we turn to influencers on Instagram or download travel guides from the experts to read them on our tablets.

The digital era has modernized every part of our lives, including the way we shop. And while groceries and knick knacks feel like impulse buys, more expensive purchases may feel too important to happen entirely online.

Truthfully, though, a combination approach of in-person and virtual shopping results in a perfect RV-and-Lifestyle match. All you need to get started with this new normal is a helping hand.

To help you feel more confident in navigating the modern buying process, RV Trader and our expert contributors put together this comprehensive guide to ensure potential RVers like you understand:

- ✔ How to get started with your RV buying journey
- ✔ The most common steps you'll take when purchasing an RV
- ✔ High level information about financing an RV
- ✔ Things to check in your perfect unit before making the purchase official
- ✔ What to look for to make sure a listing or dealer is legitimate
- ✔ How to test out the RV lifestyle before making a huge investment

**We hope you find this information helpful
as you join the RV community.**

We look forward to seeing you on the road.

GETTING STARTED

Determining the Right RV for You

3 Questions to Consider

By: Mark Polk, RV Education 101

Buying an RV involves the same considerations given to a car and a home purchase, all rolled into one! How do you know where to begin? What do you need to consider so you're happy with your choice long term? RV Trader contributor Mark Polk - a seasoned RV educator - highlights the three big questions that will point you in the direction of your ideal RV!

1. HOW DO YOU PLAN TO USE YOUR RV?

If you really like to get away from it all and go camping in the backwoods, you may be limited to what size RV will work for you. In this situation, a small, lightweight travel trailer might be the best choice. If you have a favorite destination that you visit all the time, a travel trailer or park model trailer would be a good choice. On the other hand, if you are planning to travel cross-country and not spend much time in any one destination, a Fifth-Wheel trailer or motorhome will make more sense.



Virtual Shopping Tip:

Check out social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to do some lifestyle research. Groups and influencer accounts feature first-hand accounts of how different people use their RVs and what works best in their experience.



2. HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD TO PAY FOR AN RV ?

If you are going to finance the RV, what monthly payment will you be comfortable with? Keep in mind this is something you might only be using a few weeks out of the year. It's common for first time RV buyers on a budget to start out with a pop-up or less expensive RV that fits their budget. If you know for a fact that a motorhome is the right type of RV for you but you can't afford the higher monthly payment, you might want to consider a used motorhome that fits your budget. You can always upgrade when you are in a better position to afford it.

3. WILL STORING THE RV BE A PROBLEM?

Where will you store the RV when you're not using it? Do you have room to store it at your residence and if so, are RVs allowed where you live? A pop-up might fit in your garage, but a 36-foot, Class A motorhome might not even fit in your driveway. If there are codes that won't allow RV's where you live, or the RV you want is too big to store at your residence, check into where you can pay to store it. Is the cost and distance to the storage facility reasonable? Do your research, pick the best RV for you, and hit the open road!



Virtual Shopping Tip:

Check your local ordinances online to determine whether parking your RV at your residence is allowed per city code or homeowner association rules.





THE BUYING PROCESS: WHAT TO DO

By: RV Trader

Mark's three guiding questions provide a strong framework for understanding what to consider when selecting an RV. But how does buying an RV actually work? RV Trader's resident experts highlight the key steps in your path to purchase and what to anticipate during each stage of the buying process.

Buying an RV can be an exciting, yet stressful time. Properly educating yourself prior to beginning your search can help you make confident and well-informed purchasing decisions. Follow these simple steps to make buying your RV an easy and enjoyable experience.

1.

Browse And Research

- Start by browsing a large selection of RVs online to see what interests you most. You can easily conduct your research AND find RVs for sale in your area by visiting www.RVTrader.com. During the research process, it's also a great idea to connect with fellow RVers to share tips, tricks, and best practices. You can find RV groups through friends and family as well as on social media or through a variety of online forums.



Virtual Shopping Tip:

When looking at units in online marketplaces like RVTrader.com you can extensively filter your search by price, location, brand, and more. While logged in to your free MyTrader account you can save your favorites when browsing.

2.

Pick an RV type and class with specs to meet your needs:

- **To Tow or Not to Tow?** - RVs fall into two categories, motorhomes and towables. Motorhomes are self-contained units while towable units require an additional vehicle to pull them. Motorhomes have flexibility while traveling, since passengers can move around the cabin, prepare food, and even use the bathroom while in motion. While travel trailers can give a bit more freedom if you want to disconnect from your unit to explore other areas. You'll want to decide which option works best for you so you can narrow down your search.
- **Decide on Type** - Once you've decided if you'd like to tow or not, there are tons of options out there when it comes to different units. You'll need to determine what type of RV fits your lifestyle and what exactly you'll be using it for in the future. Have a large family and need a lot of space? A Class A RV might be a great fit for you. Have toys like a motorcycle or ATV you want to travel with? A Toy Hauler might be your perfect fit. The possibilities while selecting a type of RV are endless. To help, let's break down the main types.

DRIVEABLE & TOWABLE TYPES



CLASS A - You can fit everything you would normally have in your house or apartment in this type of RV. It's also great for retirees, because there's plenty of room to stretch your legs. And once you park your unit for the night, you're good to go - there's not much maintenance required. Keep in mind though, the size of the Class A RV can make navigating challenging and parking may be restricted in some RV parks.



CLASS B - Class B motorhomes are typically referred to as camper vans and are built on a standard full-sized van chassis. But, these vans aren't your typical minivan - they are larger in size and have extra features and amenities. Class B RVs often include a raised roof so passengers have the ability to walk through the unit. Although Class B RVs are smaller in size than a Class A, they include all the comforts of home.



CLASS C - Class Cs are motorhomes that fall right in between Class A and Class B RVs. They are built on a truck or van chassis and have an attached cab section that includes a bed compartment. Class C motorhomes are typically easier to drive than the larger Class A models considering they are smaller in size and are built on a truck chassis. If you have ever been inside or driven a moving truck, you'll recognize the feel of a Class C motorhome right away.



TRAVEL TRAILER - A Travel Trailer is an RV that is towed behind a vehicle. They are often known as "campers" and have become increasingly popular choices for RVers because they come in at a lower price point than Class A, B, or C models. Depending on the size of the Travel Trailer, you will typically need an SUV or a truck to properly tow the unit. One of the main benefits of a Travel Trailer is that the unit can be detached from the towing vehicle, so you are free to easily travel to nearby destinations and attractions in your car while your trailer is parked in designated areas.



TOY HAULER - A Toy Hauler is a towable travel trailer that features a garage and built-in ramp on the back of an RV or your truck, allowing easy access to any toys or adventure gear the owner might be traveling with - for example, ATVs, motorcycles, mountain bikes, etc.



FIFTH WHEEL - A Fifth Wheel Trailer is a large RV that is designed to be towed by a pick-up truck. One of the main benefits of a Fifth Wheel Trailer is that you can easily park your trailer and disconnect from your truck; this specific feature is a huge plus for travelers as the larger Class A units can be harder to maneuver, especially in national parks and through smaller towns.

3.

Determine Your Budget

When looking for an RV, the first step you need to take is to look at your budget. Break open your piggy bank and see what kind of funds you are working with. There are a wide range of budget options for every buyer and whether you'd like to buy new or used, RV Trader has an option for you. When considering your budget, you'll want to include not only the cost of the RV itself, but any required down payments, insurance, and RV maintenance as well. Keep in mind that there are typically a variety of financing options also available - more on that later.



Virtual Shopping Tip:

A quick Google search will yield various payment and budget calculators. They're a great way to figure out your ideal price range.

4.

Connect With The Seller

Once you've seen a unit that you're interested in, reach out to the seller by phone, email, or chat to see additional photos or schedule time to see the unit in person. If in person is not an ideal option for you right now, just know that more and more people are conducting their purchase digitally so sellers are ready and willing to assist you virtually, just as they would in person at a dealership. Nowadays, you may be able to ask to set up a video chat or virtual walkthrough. Through virtual meetings or through apps like Zoom or Facetime, sellers can give you a complete tour of the unit you're interested in, without even stepping foot on a lot.



Virtual Shopping Tip:

Thanks to advances in technology, many dealers support a wide variety of digital communication channels. In fact, three of RV Trader's most popular tools support virtual retailing:

- 1. Request a Video** - if you see a unit you love while browsing RV Trader, many dealers allow you to request a video be added to the photo carousel to give you an in-depth preview.
- 2. Request a Video Chat** - Through their profile on RV Trader, you can request to connect with a dealer on popular video chat platforms, like Skype or FaceTime. This is a great way to ask questions and learn from the experts before stepping foot on the lot.
- 3. Make an Offer** - Found a unit you just have to have? Make the RV Trader seller an offer they simply can't refuse! You can jump start the negotiation process and maybe snag a great deal.

5.

Get Ready To Buy

There's nothing like finding the perfect RV for you. When you've done your research, contacted the dealer and asked all of your questions, and you feel like you're ready to buy, RV Trader dealers make the purchasing process simple - especially in today's virtual world! Many dealerships offer virtual buying options such as conducting financing entirely online, offering to deliver documents to sign in person, and RV delivery where the seller will bring your RV directly to your driveway.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FINANCING AN RV

5 *Quick Tips To Financing Your RV*

By: Mark Polk

Some people buy their RVs with cash, but others need a more reasonable option for beginning their adventures on the road. Mark Polk shares the five tips that will help you make an informed financing decision.



Virtual Shopping Tip:

Researching options and securing financing for your RV purchase can be done almost entirely online! Make sure to find a trusted site. Your banking institution can help point you in the right direction.

1. **Make sure you can afford the monthly payment without getting in a bind.**

Keep in mind this payment could be over the long-term. Remember, the term of the loan directly affects the monthly payment.

2. **Save around 10-20% for a down payment, as most lenders require that much.**

The more you put down, the lower your payment and the better your interest rate.

3. **Get the best interest rate possible.**

If you have good credit, you deserve a good interest rate. A lower interest rate = a lower payment. Find out what the current rates are, and make sure you get the best rate possible.

4. **Consider additional expenses like RV insurance and maintenance.**

Factor these costs into your monthly payment.

5. **Consider how much is left in your budget every month to actually use and enjoy the RV.**

Following these quick and easy tips will make owning your new RV a more enjoyable experience.

Looking for more details about financing?

The RV Trader team has an entire website section devoted to in-depth information about the topics discussed here. Visit the RV Financing Section of RVTrader.com for more information.



You Found the Perfect RV. Now What?

Items to Check Before You Drive Off the Lot By: Darrin Michael

You set your budget. You did your research online and connected with a seller (in person or online!). You found the perfect (new or used!) RV for your family. Before you snag the keys from the dealer or private party seller, make sure to look under the actual and theoretical hood of your new RV. Darrin Michael offers a targeted list of what to check before finalizing your purchase. Believe it or not, there are a few simple guidelines you can follow to help ensure you leave the dealership with a smile on your face!



WHEELS & TIRES

It's always important to take a look at the wheels and tires on any RV you might be considering purchasing, especially if it's a used model. Make sure the RV's tires are in good condition, all lug nuts are in place, and there isn't any rust on metal components.

Virtual Shopping Tip:

Thanks to the Request a Video Chat feature you can do a pretty robust inspection through your smart phone. Many dealers will happily connect with you on FaceTime, Skype, and more to show you the wheels & tires, interior, and under-the-hood components in real time. This is also a great starting point to determining if driving to the lot to see a unit in-person is worth the trip!



UNDER THE HOOD

- ✓ How does the engine look? Is it covered in dirt or oil?
- ✓ Do the hoses on the radiator appear firm? Are there any loose connections?
- ✓ How difficult will it be to find the engine and other mechanical parts for this motorhome? Is it going to take a while to remove parts to get to the engine?
- ✓ How does the electrical look? Is the cabling frayed or worn? Any signs of a short?



HOW DOES THE INTERIOR LOOK?

- ✓ How are the cabinets and cupboards? Are they working correctly?
- ✓ Does the furniture (beds included) inside the RV appear to be in good condition?
- ✓ Walk through the RV and make sure everything is working correctly.
- ✓ Make sure the kitchen and bathroom areas are clean.



TAKE THE RV FOR A TEST DRIVE!

If you plan to purchase a motorhome, a simple test drive of the one you're interested in can go a long way in helping ensure you're picking an RV which is right for you.

- ✓ How does the RV drive? Do the brakes work correctly? How is the acceleration?
- ✓ How easy are the mirrors to adjust? Are the windows easy to open?
- ✓ How comfortable is the captain's chair? Does it adjust? Have armrests?
- ✓ If it's a larger motorhome, does it have a backup camera?
- ✓ How's the sound system? Does the GPS work properly?



STILL NOT SURE? ASK A MECHANIC

If you're still not 100 percent certain you're ready to make the jump on purchasing an RV you're looking at, you can always have the RV checked by an outside mechanic. After all, the last thing you want to have to worry about is buying a lemon and something happening when you get the RV home, or even worse when you're out on the open road.



SHOPPING ONLINE?

Here's How to Avoid

Scams and Fraud

By: RV Trader

One of the primary concerns RV buyers have when shopping online is the fear of getting scammed. Remaining aware and vigilant during your virtual buying process can ensure that you are only working with real deal sellers and dealers. The RV Trader team recommends a few easy steps that can verify the authenticity of the unit and seller, putting your mind at ease:

CONFIRM YOU'RE CONNECTED WITH A REAL SELLER

Legitimate sellers make an effort to prove they're trustworthy by providing clearly visible information. To put your mind at ease:

- ✓ Check whether the seller lists their company name, phone number, email address, and physical location.
- ✓ Use Google Maps or a similar website to double check the physical address is a real business location.
- ✓ Search the phone number and note any spam calls reported for that number.
- ✓ Cross check the contact information a seller provides against the information listed on their official website.

READ ONLINE REVIEWS

When buying an RV virtually, the product and company reviews are hugely important. Spend time Googling:

- ✓ The company's name
- ✓ "[company's name] scam," and
- ✓ "[company's name] reviews."

Previous buyers who have had bad experiences often want to help others avoid the same fate by planting virtual red flags through online reviews.

PHONE A FRIEND

Remember those connections you made through social media RVing groups? It's time to turn to them for advice! Reach out to fellow RVers in the area where you'll buy your unit, ask them about their purchasing experience. Did they like the dealership where they bought the unit? How was the communication process? First-hand accounts can reassure or redirect you!

LOOK AT THE WEBSITE CRITICALLY

When shopping virtually, a seller's website acts like their in-person showroom. Explore purposefully, asking questions like:

- ✓ Does the website look professional?
- ✓ Is the site riddled with typos or errors?
- ✓ Are images blurry or low quality like they could be trying to hide something?
- ✓ Is the site missing seals of approval or badges from trusted sources like the Better Business Bureau?

One of the advantages of shopping online is that you can leave the virtual store without any awkward interactions. If the website screams (or whispers) "scam," you can close the browser easily.



CONFIRM THE UNIT AND THE DEAL ARE REAL

The old adage, "if it's too good to be true, it probably is," definitely applies when shopping online. You can authenticate validity of the:

UNIT

- ✓ Check that the images of the unit on the website are real and not stock images. You can do this through a reverse image search on Google or other platforms.
- ✓ Ask the seller for specific pictures of the unit you're interested in. One of our favorite tips is to ask the seller to hold a piece of paper with the full date and their name on it and photograph themselves in front of the RV.

DEAL

- ✓ Be wary of any seller telling you that you've won a prize - especially if you have to provide personal information or up-front money to claim it.
- ✓ If the price of an RV is much lower than comparable units from other sellers, it likely isn't real or it's reflective of major problems with the RV.

EXPLORE THE WEB SAFELY

Because online shopping is so common, these final tips will sound like common sense:

- ✓ Visit only secure websites. Keep an eye out for SSL or TLS encryption by looking for the padlock symbol in your browser URL bar.
- ✓ Only click links that lead to trusted sites (you can hover over a link to see the final destination before clicking).
- ✓ If a website asks for sensitive personal information like the social security numbers or birthdates of the buyer(s), proceed with caution.
- ✓ Use secure methods of payment, like credit cards. Money transfers can be impossible to get back if the purchase turns out to be a scam.

Keep in mind that peak camping season and the holidays can bring spikes in scams. But, it's important to stay alert and aware regardless of when you're in the market for a new or new-to-you RV. With these few simple checks, you can feel secure in your virtual RV buying process!

Take the RV Lifestyle for a Spin Before Committing

Want to Try Before You Buy? Try Renting

By: RV Trader



If you're interested in purchasing an RV one day but just can't commit right now, try renting! Renting is a great way to dip your toe into the RV lifestyle without shelling out the big bucks just yet. Check out our quick tips for renting an RV with Trader Rentals.

Consider RV Size

When selecting a rental, you'll need to take a look at the group you're traveling with to make sure the unit you're renting has enough sleeping and living space. The owner of the unit will clearly state the exact number of people the unit can sleep so you can know right off the bat. Keep in mind that many RVs have conversions throughout the vehicle to create additional sleeping space such as dinette conversions, sleeper sofas, pop-ups, slideouts, and more.

Compare Pricing

Once you've decided on the type of RV you want to rent, it's time to select your perfect rental. Price is a big factor to anyone looking to rent, and luckily, our Trader Rentals platform makes it incredibly easy to compare RV pricing. We give you the ability to filter by minimum and maximum price to find an RV within your ideal price range.

Book Early

You'll want to book your RV rental and campsites in advance to make sure you are locked in for your trip. Campsites tend to fill up fairly quickly in the summer and even more so if you're going to a popular destination.

Find the Perfect Destination & Plan Your Route

National parks and state parks are some of the most popular attractions for RVers and they typically have campgrounds nearby, but you'll want to keep in mind that some parks have size restrictions on RVs. Be sure to check size restrictions on the park's website before setting off on your next adventure. We also recommend planning your route before you hit the road so you can find fun pit stops along the way.

Remember - RVs Are Much Different Than Cars

It's crucial to remember that when you're driving an RV, you're not driving a car. RVs are much larger than the average car and you need to take your time out on the road. Practice parking and take a quick test drive with the owner before you head out so you can hear their tips, tricks, and safe practices.

Make a Packing Checklist

Packing an RV is a little different than the average trip. You need to think about all the essentials you'll need out on the road. Check to see what your owner offers and then plan your packing checklist accordingly.

Ask Questions

There are no dumb questions when it comes to RVs - especially if this is your first renting experience. Some common question topics could surround insurance policies, roadside assistance, tours of the unit, test drives, how to tow, general operation, slideouts, and more.



Ready to try before you buy? Visit RVTrader.com/Rent to get started.

CONCLUSION

If you're looking to buy an RV, this guide was designed to help you along the way, but it doesn't stop there! RV Trader wants to be there for you every step of the journey, even after you have made the big purchase. Whether you're new to RVing or an avid enthusiast, take advantage of this resource as well as [RVTrader.com](https://www.rvtrader.com) to get the very most out of your RV and your adventures to come!

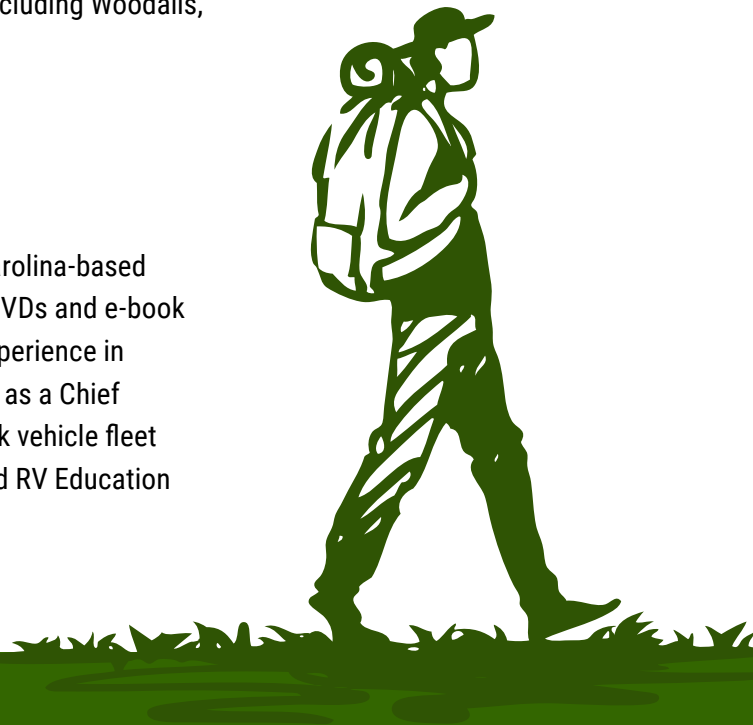
AUTHOR BIOS

Darrin Michael, Dave Arbogast RV Depot

Bio: Darrin Michael currently serves as the eCommerce/Marketing Director at Dave Arbogast RV Depot in Troy, Ohio. In addition, he also teaches Internet Development at Edison Community College. He's been featured on a number of other industry-related blogs including Woodalls, RV-Pro.com, DealerRefresh.com, and more.

Mark Polk, RV Education 101

Bio: Mark Polk owns RV Education 101.com, a North Carolina-based company that produces and sells educational videos, DVDs and e-book on how to use RV's. Mark has more than 30 years of experience in RV maintenance. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1996 as a Chief Warrant Officer Three, specializing in wheeled and track vehicle fleet maintenance operations. He and his wife, Dawn, started RV Education 101 in 1999.



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RV Trader is the online source for all your RV needs. Looking to sell an RV? We can help. Place your RV ad in front of millions of monthly visitors today. Ready to buy an RV? We can help with that too – browse over 120,000 new and used RVs for sale nationwide from all of your favorite RV types like Travel Trailer, Pop Up Camper, Fifth Wheel, Toy Hauler, Truck Camper, Class A, Class B, Class C, Fish House, and Park Model RVs. You can easily estimate monthly payments, get insurance quotes, and set up price alerts for the RVs you're interested in while you search. For more information, visit www.RVTrader.com.



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