

REDISCOVER FREEDOM IN AN RV

OUR BEAUTIFUL CANADIAN WILDERNESS IS A DRAW FOR MANY, BUT SNUGLING INTO A SLEEPING BAG IN A TENT IS NOT EVERYONE'S VISION OF THE IDEAL WAY TO CONNECT WITH NATURE.



BY JOSEPHINE MATYAS

Many campers want to surround themselves with the outdoors, but also crave the creature comforts of home such as a kitchen to cook meals, a bathroom for showers and space to spread out. For families, a dry place to wait out a storm can be an on-the-road lifesaver. For seniors, it may be a simple matter of safety and comfort. This is what's behind the upsurge of interest in travelling by recreational vehicle. RV travel, which includes everything from the easy-to-pull travel trailers to bus-sized motorhomes, provides a flexibility that makes it simple to "pick up and go," moving easily from one campground to the next or embarking on a longer road trip.

According to Go RVing Canada, a non-profit association dedicated to promoting the RV lifestyle, 14 per cent of Canadian households have tapped into the RV mode of experiencing the great Canadian outdoors, spanning the whole range from tent trailers and fifth wheels to recreational vehicles. RVing has always been a popular mode of camping for seniors, however in recent years there has been a definite shift that includes younger campers. These days, two-thirds of RVs are owned by people under the age of 55.



Most are getting into the RV lifestyle with a small tent trailer or travel trailer—something they can easily manoeuvre and tow behind the family minivan. There's been an explosion in RV innovation and many units now include green technology such as solar panels, water systems and state-of-the-art drive technology.

SIMPLE PLEASURES

The Go RVing Canada campaign, known as Wildhood, connects young families with RVing as a budget-friendly lifestyle as well as a comforting reminder to parents of the way things "used to be." They can set aside the stresses of helicopter parenting—the feeling they need to over-schedule and constantly hover over their children—and just let kids be kids, exploring simple pleasures such as cooking s'mores over a campfire, counting the stars and launching into a lake on a rope swing. In campgrounds, children can engage in activities with an abandon to

TOP: A small tent trailer or travel trailer can be easily towed behind a family vehicle or truck.

LEFT: Motorhomes provide a flexibility that makes it simple to "pick up and go." Go RVing Canada

just get out and play again. It is a type of freedom that comes with camping and the RV lifestyle, with the benefit of creating family memories along the way.

An RV vacation—staying at campsites and cooking meals rather than eating in restaurants—can be much less expensive than the average vacation. With new, small RVs starting at \$6,000, there's a unit on the market for every lifestyle and price point. It's an affordable way to travel, camp and even set up a seasonal cottage-like stay. **DS**

TRAVEL PLANNER

The Go RVing Canada website (gorving.ca) is a one-stop resource about RVing, featuring information on buying and renting RVs, listings of RV dealers and RV parks and campgrounds across Canada, and the RV lifestyle. Consumer tools include how-to videos, a trip-planning guide, RV camping and buying courses, a vacation cost calculator, along with a choose-your-RV feature helping you decide what sort of RV and type of trip best fits your travel style.