

Choosing A Caravan That Is Right For You

By Ian Molloy

Before you start choosing a caravan, you need to take a number of things into consideration including your towing vehicle and towing equipment.

It is essential that you not only find the caravan that is right for you, but the combination of the caravan, towing vehicle and towing equipment must all be suitable. After all you do not want to spend a lot of money on a big caravan when you only require a small caravan. You equally, do not want to buy a big caravan and then try to tow it with a small car not suitable to tow that weight. Equipping your van and towing vehicle properly is just as important as choosing a caravan. This will take time, research and legwork. However, by getting things right initially is the best guarantee for a stress-free holiday.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT UNIT

There are many options when it comes to choosing a caravan, camper-trailer or motor-home. Ultimately it is a matter of finding the unit that suits you, your travel plans, your budget and the kind of lifestyle you wish to enjoy while travelling.

TYPES OF UNITS

"Normal" Full-height Caravans

Caravans come in all shapes and sizes. Most people touring Australia travel in caravans less than 7m in length. Caravans provide a good level of comfort and many are well appointed with appliances just like home. In a caravan beds can remain made, fridges can be stocked, everyday utensils are readily available and clothing can be stored in wardrobes and drawers. Many caravans are air-conditioned and most are fitted with annexes or awnings to provide outdoor living areas. There are numerous options in terms of axles (single, double and even triple), door position and sleeping capacity. There is also a choice between on and off-road models.

Folding Caravans and Campers.

These units are constructed of lightweight materials. The internal appointments are similar to those of a regular caravan. The roof section is usually raised mechanically to expose canvas walls, and the ends normally slide out to accommodate the beds. Some manufacturers call these camper-trailers. On and off-road models are available.

Pop-Top Caravans

Pop-top caravans are just like normal caravans, except the top section folds up and down. This makes them easier to tow: the lower profile means far less drag therefore using less fuel. They do lack overhead cupboard space though and require slightly more maintenance. Again, on and off-road models are available.

Camper-Trailers

These units come in a variety of models, Accommodation ranges from couple-only units through to big family set-ups. When collapsed, each model fits into a small, easily towed unit. Two and four-wheel drive configurations are available. Some units include a built-in bed and many include a camping kitchen.

Campervans

These vehicles are designed specifically as delivery vans that you see driving around town all day, before undergoing extensive fit-outs that convert them to a camping van. Sizes range from small models suitable for couples through to larger units with good facilities including, in some cases, a shower and toilet. They are easy to drive and often double as the family car.

Motorhomes

These all-in-one vehicles are nearly always constructed on a truck base. They range in size from 5 m to 12 m. The smaller units, which have many of the attributes of a caravan, can be driven on a normal car licence. The larger units, some of which are spectacularly appointed with luxury fittings, require a truck licence. People buy motorhomes for the convenience of not having to tow, and for the high degree of self-sufficiency they allow. On the downside, they are difficult to park (particularly the larger vehicles), and they restrict mobility: every time you want to use your vehicle, you have to dismantle your campsite. This can be quite annoying if you want to go shopping or fishing and your partner wants to remain in camp. Many owners of larger motorhomes overcome this problem by towing a trailer loaded with a small vehicle (often 4 wheel drive); others carry bicycles.

Slide-on or Tray-top Campers

These units are great for people who own a utility: they can be simply attached to the vehicle as needed. They are popular with off-road enthusiasts, and with travellers who want to be able to tow a boat or other kind of trailer.

This is the second page of 23 with related information about making the most of your caravan holiday. Have a look at our website www.crikey-adventure-tours.com/caravan-holiday.html for all pages.

Ian Molloy is the owner of Crikey Adventure Tours. Visit his website www.crikey-adventure-tours.com for more information about this article and other related topics. He not only has his tour business operating from Peth in Western Australia, but his site is full of very helpful information.

Some of these includes tips on motorcycle holidays www.crikey-adventure-tours.com/motorcycle-holiday.html, driving cross-country, caravanning and generally lots of tips about having a "camping" holiday.

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