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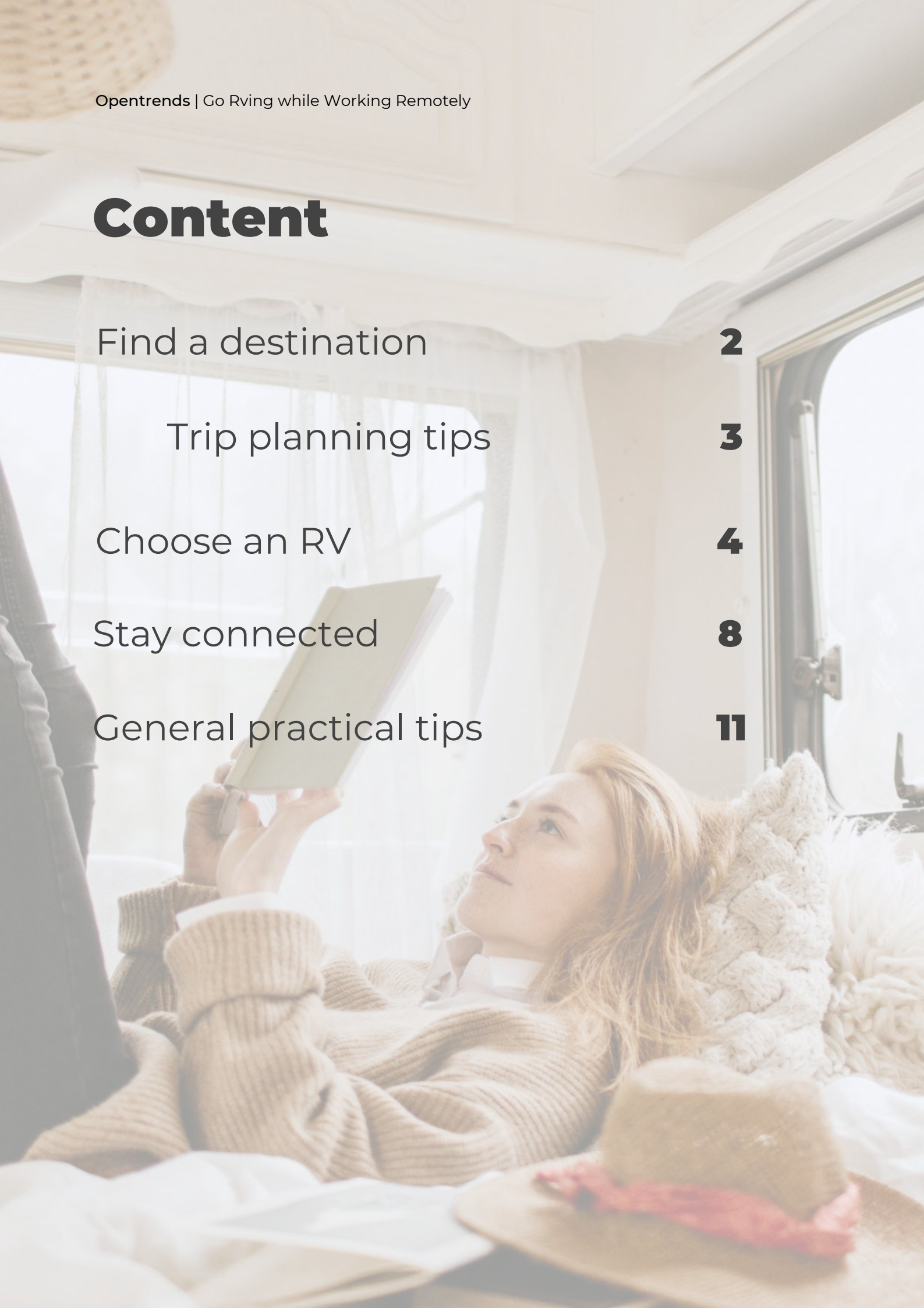
Go RVing while Working Remotely: Where to Get Started and How to Stay Connected

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The ever sought-after work-life balance can now be reimagined as the **work-fun balance**. As described last week in our [article](#) this summer provides the perfect opportunity to experience the U.S. in ways that only a few have. Those who have the privilege to work remotely full time can do so while traveling.

Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, traditional summer vacations that entail mass gatherings (e.g. festivals, amusement parks, restaurants, cruises...) may not be practical while maintaining a good level of physical distancing. Visiting the Great American Outdoors (GAO) is perhaps the most viable and appropriate destination, especially now that US Senate has passed an Act to address campground modernization. While hotels and vacation homes may be available, **visiting the GAO in an RV is likely to be the safest, most self-contained, and adaptive method this summer and more to come**. It looks like many Americans agree, as RV demand through sales and rentals has skyrocketed over the past few weeks.

As a remote worker and part-time RVer myself, I've attempted to summarize the most important aspects to help you find the right RV, destination, and ways to remain connected to remote work in the following guide.



Courtesy of Airstream

Find a Destination

About 28% of the U.S. land surface falls under the category of public lands. These are lands owned and administered in trust by the Federal Government. In all 611 million acres or **95% of these public lands are open to different levels of recreational use.** Most of the public lands are located west of the Mississippi and in Alaska. More details on public lands can be found [here](#).

National Parks (including National Monuments) are the default go-to destinations, but they're also the most desired, so expect difficulty in obtaining a reservation within the boundaries of the actual park. However, **there are many options outside of parks, which may provide to be better for remote-work campers.** Private campgrounds near the parks tend to offer far more amenities than the ones located within. National Park campgrounds hardly ever have “hookups” (i.e. connections to electricity, water, and sewer), and chances to find good data connectivity can be slim. If you rather stay in the wild than in a private campground, know that most parks are actually surrounded by National Forest lands, which may provide additional campgrounds (usually with no hookups either).

To find a campground within the public lands you can go to [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov), but I recommend downloading this useful Allstays' [app](#).



National Forest and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands generally allow for free dispersed camping (boondocking) up to 14 days within a given zone. The rules tend to be published within the specific district's website. To find the desired district for the National Forest go to [U.S Forest Service](#) and for BLM visit this [site](#). Dispersed camping is often referred to by RVers as “dry camping” or “boondocking.” These two terms really mean any time you are camping without hookups. Another term you might hear to describe dispersed camping is “wild camping.”

TRIP PLANNING TIPS

Traveling with an RV is very different from other means. For instance, take into account that **driving distances tend to require 15-30% more time in an RV than a regular car.** RV living requires a little bit of work to set up camp when arriving and to pack everything up when leaving. It's easy to let *fear of missing out* lure us into attempting to see and do too much, too quickly, and hijack our tranquility. Moving from place to place too often may become stressful when trying to combine work and fun. My advice for the perfect remote work-fun balance is to **stay in one place 7 to 10 days at a time** to have sufficient time to work and play. (Though each individual has their own preferences and will need to discover their ideal timing for themselves.) After all, one of the **amazing benefits of RVing is the great freedom it gives you to either stay or move to another place when you please.**



Choose an RV

There are 2 main types of RVs: **motorized and towable**. The first tend to require less work to set up (and takedown) camp and are easier to drive than the second. Also, passengers can make use of the RV's living facilities while en route on motorhomes. However, for extended travel on large motorized RVs it's a quasi-must to tow a small car if you plan to actually drive locally to see sights.

Within the **motorized options**, there are many subtypes. Class A refers to the large motorcoaches, which may require a Class A driver's license. Class B is the smallest, usually a converted van, they'll drive easier but may be too small for extended periods. Class C are those built on a truck chassis, known for their over the cab box which usually houses a sleeping quarter.



Class A
Courtesy of Winnebago



Class B
Courtesy of Roadtrek



Class C
Courtesy of Winnebago

As for the **towables** there are two subtypes, the **fifth wheels and the bumper pull trailers or travel trailers** as most commonly known. Fifth wheels tend to be larger and more expensive, they must be towed with a truck where the truck bed is surrendered to the hitch (i.e. you won't be able to use the truck bed for storage).



Travel Trailer
Courtesy of Airstream

Travel trailers come in a variety of sizes, with the **smaller ones able to be towed by just an SUV using a traditional ball hitch**. The preference for one or the other tends to be determined by the level of comfort in towing, where fifth wheels seem to be the winners as they have no sway. (Keep in mind that fifth wheels are taller than travel trailers, so clearance issues must also be taken into account.) However, many advances in travel trailer towing technology have made sway less of an issue. For the ultimate travel trailer hitch, I recommend [ProPride hitch](#). The less expensive next best is this one from [Equalizer](#).



5th Wheel
Courtesy of Grand Design RV



Truck Camper
Courtesy of Lance

The decision between motorized or towable has to do with your preferences. A larger family with children may benefit from being able to use the living space while en route. If you already have a truck or SUV you may save money with a towable and have the benefit of having a vehicle to drive around while at your destination.



Truck Camper
Courtesy of Travel Lite RV

In between the motorized and the towable are the truck campers. These sit on a pickup truck's bed and they can be easily removed from the truck and left on a campsite for the duration of your stay and then put back on the truck. They tend to be small and require larger size trucks for larger living space.

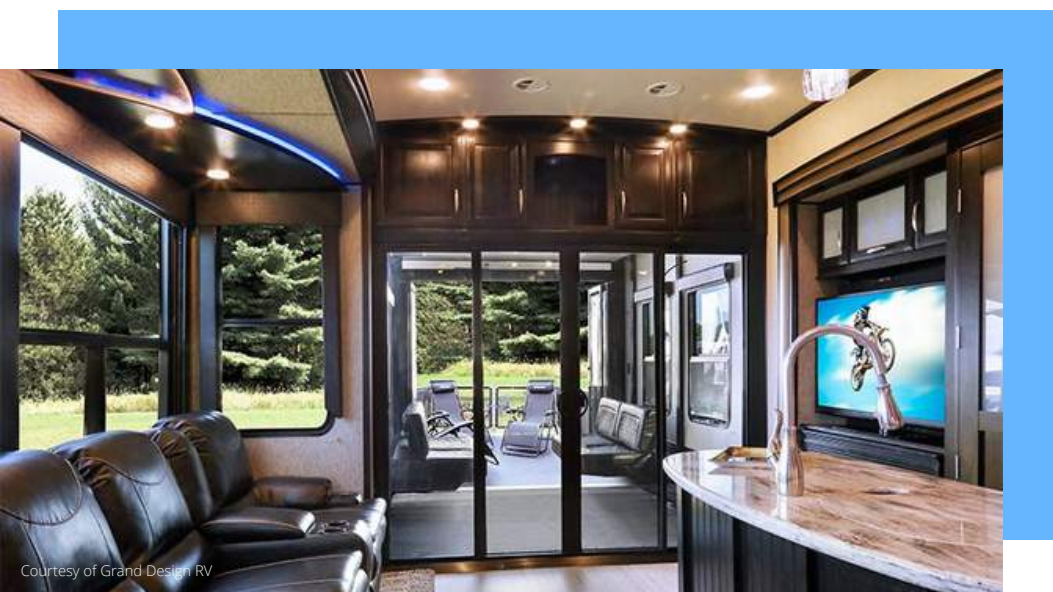


Courtesy of Grand Design RV



Manufacturers offer an immense variety of floorplans. Finding the right one can be a challenge as compromises always need to be made. My recommendation is to prioritize bedroom comfort, closet space, and a spacious bathroom. These tend to be the things you'll miss the most while being away from home in an RV.

Size does matter. For short trips of just a few days, a small RV will do fine, for extended trips not so much. I would say less than 30 feet is probably too small for extended trips or if you plan to use it in the winter for the ultimate ski vacation. Bear in mind that the size of your rig will determine which places you can drive into or not. **About 80% of federal and state campgrounds can accommodate up to 40 feet long RVs.**



You can always **opt to test your preferences out before you commit** by renting an RV. There are many popular RV rental companies that can be found through a simple Google search.

If you do choose to buy, you will want to be **thoughtful in choosing your brand**. Unlike car manufacturing, RV making is largely a manual process. The industry has been doing well to amend quality issues resulting from the manufacturing process. When you find a floor plan you like, **check on the brands' warranty's fine print and user reviews**. Ultimately go for the most established brands such as Airstream, Winnebago, Grand Design, Forest River, Lance, Jayco, Keystone, Coachmen, Roadtrek, Travel Lite, Entegra, etc. Look for resale values on the secondhand market. To date, Airstream holds the best resale value in the industry and offers a prime level of design and reliability!



Courtesy of Airstream

Stay Connected

This is undoubtedly the most asked topic from new RVers! Most private campgrounds offer WiFi. Over the past few years, this option has been more reliable, but you can't count on it. Even if they offer good WiFi you may not receive a good signal at your campsite. You can purchase a WiFi signal extender for RVs, which can be found on Amazon.

Much of the country is covered with LTE or 4G which is plenty to **keep those collaborative cloud tools and video calls working** using your phone's hotspot. Verizon seems to have the most coverage in the GAO, with AT&T coming second. Check your provider's maps for specific coverage when planning a trip.

Additionally, platforms like [FreeCampsites](#) will provide details from other users on available coverage at a particular campsite. You can also find apps that are dedicated solely to cellular coverage maps.



Courtesy of Airstream

For more data-heavy work, like **logging into your company's VPN**, or even if you'd like the **option of streaming entertainment in the evenings**, you may need more data than your phone can provide. Many full-time RVers purchase data plans that are separate from their phone plans.

(**Tip:** often plans say they're unlimited however, those plans will still throttle you once usage gets heavy. You'll want to look for plans that don't do this, if possible.) To avoid being tied down by a monthly contract, look into prepaid data plans.

You will access this data and be able to connect multiple devices through a jetpack (or "MiFi" device), which is a dedicated data-only mobile hotspot device.



WORK HARD.
TRAVEL HARDER.

In order to keep your options wide-open, you may want to consider a signal-booster. This allows you to improve your signal reception in those coverage gap spots. WeBoost is the most popular and most trusted by RVers.

This may sound like a lot of devices to buy. Some RV manufacturers are responding to this need for connectivity and are making it easier for the consumer by providing integrated solutions. Airstream offers an add-on called Airstream Connected that both boosts cellular and extends WiFi signals. The product comes with its own data plan through AT&T.

Alternatively, you can opt for satellite internet. Currently HughesNet is the most reliable source with its Generation 5 network which offers speeds of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. You must use a third-party vendor as the company doesn't deal with RVers. I recommend Mobile Internet Satellite they have been in the business for 17 years! An upside to going the satellite route is that you can buy data as you need it, instead of being locked into a monthly service plan. But the equipment is bulky and requires set up at each location.

It's an overwhelming subject, no doubt! But there are further resources out there to help with your decision making. The holy grail of information is a website called the Mobile Internet Resource Center. They are the subject matter experts and stay on top of this ever-changing landscape. They offer many helpful guides, like this one for part-time RVers.



Courtesy of a private owner

General Practical Tips

Google Maps is great, but it assumes you're driving a small automobile. **Check the route and make sure your rig can actually fit throughout the route.** One way to do so is to check road restrictions within the State's Department of Transportation (or equivalent) website. Alternatively, you can download this [app](#).

Plan to **drive into a destination with plenty of daylight ahead.** Maneuvering into a spot in the dark can be stressful (especially when boondocking) and disturbs the peace of your fellow RVers already camped.

Driving an RV under high winds can be stressful, you can plan accordingly by checking wind conditions using this [app](#).



Going from destination to destination may require more than one day of driving. **The advantage of an RV is that you can stop for the night.** You'll find many rest stops overrun by trucks idling their engines. However, most Walmarts allow you to park overnight. You can find more details [here](#). **Keeping the power going when dry camping (boondocking) can be a challenge.** Some RVs come with

generators or solar panels. If yours has neither, I suggest getting a **generator**. While **solar panels** seem like an attractive option, they are only good to keep the battery charged. If you need real power because you'd like to run coffeemakers, the microwave, hair dryer, air conditioning, etc., solar won't cut it. If you do go get a generator, be sure to get an inverter generator, **as they are a lot less noisy.** Both you and your neighbours will appreciate it!



Courtesy of Grand Design RV

If you're nervous about driving an RV for the first time, YouTube can be a great resource for tips and tricks for backing up, etc. It may be daunting at first, and of course, it's important for you and your family to be happy and comfortable. One piece of advice I like to give newcomers is: **if you decide you love RVing, your first RV will not be your last RV.** Don't stress too much about the decision - you are not tied to it for life. It's a learning process where **you learn by doing!** There's a lot of groundwork to cover in order to hit the road, but I hope I've given you a good overview to use as a jumping-off point. Do your research, physically explore the options as much as is possible right now, make your choice, and then get out on the road and have fun!

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