

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part I: Getting Started	7
Chapter 1: Top Reasons to Take an RV Vacation	9
Chapter 2: Digging Deeper into RVing	19
Chapter 3: Deciding Where and When to Go	26
Chapter 4: Packing It In	38
Part II: Ironing Out the Details	45
Chapter 5: Managing Your Money	47
Chapter 6: Selecting Your RV	55
Chapter 7: Dealing with Your RV	69
Chapter 8: Eating on the Road	81
Chapter 9: Sleeping on the Road	89
Chapter 10: Catering to Special Travel Needs or Interests	97
Chapter 11: Tying Up Loose Ends	103
Part III: Exploring the East	109
Chapter 12: The Coast of Maine: Lobster Land	111
Chapter 13: Western New York: Cooperstown to Niagara Falls	131
Chapter 14: Blue Ridge Mountains: Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway	151
Chapter 15: The Gulf Coast: Tallahassee to New Orleans	171
Chapter 16: The Natchez Trace: Natchez to Nashville	190
Part IV: Discovering Mid-America	211
Chapter 17: Texas Hill Country: Bluebonnets and Barbecue	213
Chapter 18: The Heart of Ohio: A Circle around Circleville	234
Chapter 19: Northern Minnesota: Paul Bunyan Country	254
Chapter 20: The Ozarks and Branson: Hot Springs to Springfield	270
Part V: Seeing the West	289
Chapter 21: Montana and Wyoming: Tracking Buffalo Bill	291
Chapter 22: New Mexico: Billy the Kid Meets E.T.	311
Chapter 23: The Oregon Coast: California to Washington	332
Chapter 24: California Central Coast: Malibu to Monterey	352
Chapter 25: Route 66: OK to L.A.	371

<i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i>	391
Chapter 26: Ten Great Snowbird Getaways.....	393
Chapter 27: Ten Cool Factory Tours	397
Chapter 28: Ten Zany Museums	401
<i>Appendix: Quick Concierge</i>	405
<i>Index</i>	414

Maps at a Glance

The Coast of Maine.....	112
Mount Desert Island.....	118
Western New York.....	132
Blue Ridge Mountains.....	152
The Gulf Coast.....	172
The Natchez Trace.....	191
Texas Hill Country.....	214
San Antonio Highlights.....	217
The Heart of Ohio.....	235
Northern Minnesota.....	255
The Ozarks and Branson.....	271
Hot Springs Highlights.....	275
Buffalo Bill Country.....	293
Yellowstone National Park.....	300
New Mexico.....	312
Carlsbad Caverns.....	319
The Oregon Coast.....	333
California Central Coast.....	353
Route 66.....	372

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
How This Book Is Organized.....	4
Part I: Getting Started.....	4
Part II: Ironing Out the Details.....	4
Part III: Exploring the East	4
Part IV: Discovering Mid-America.....	5
Part V: Seeing the West	5
Part VI: The Part of Tens.....	5
Appendix and worksheets	5
Icons Used in This Book.....	6
Where to Go from Here.....	6
<i>Part 1: Getting Started</i>	7
Chapter 1: Top Reasons to Take an RV Vacation	9
Being Your Own Boss	9
Discovering Something for Everyone.....	9
Saving Money in a Campground.....	11
Best New England Lobster Spots	13
Best Campgrounds around the USA	14
Best Museum Visits.....	15
Best National Parks along the Way	17
Chapter 2: Digging Deeper into RVing	19
RV History: The Tin Can Tourists	19
Remembering Our First RV Journey	21
Uncovering the Myths about RVing.....	24
Chapter 3: Deciding Where and When to Go	26
Revealing the Secrets of the Seasons	26
Scoping Out Your Perfect RV Vacation.....	27
The Coast of Maine: Lobster Land.....	27
Western New York: Cooperstown to Niagara Falls	28
Blue Ridge Mountains: Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway	29
The Gulf Coast: Tallahassee to New Orleans.....	29
The Natchez Trace: Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee	30

Texas Hill Country: Bluebonnets and Barbecue	31
The Heart of Ohio: A Circle around Circleville.....	31
Northern Minnesota: Paul Bunyan Country	32
The Ozarks and Branson: Hot Springs to Springfield	33
Montana and Wyoming: Tracking Buffalo Bill	34
New Mexico: Billy the Kid Meets E.T.	34
The Oregon Coast: California to Washington	35
California Central Coast: Malibu to Monterey.....	36
Route 66: OK to L.A.....	37
Chapter 4: Packing It In	38
Stepping on the Scales	38
Stocking the “Optional” Essentials	39
Stowing Your Gear.....	40
Outside the RV	41
Inside the RV	41
Selecting the Right Kind of Wardrobe.....	42
Part II: Ironing Out the Details	45
Chapter 5: Managing Your Money	47
Adding It Up: Your Vacation Budget	47
Transportation	47
RV and camping supplies.....	48
Campgrounds	48
Food.....	49
Attractions and activities	49
Shopping and entertainment.....	49
Testing the Waters: RV Rentals	49
When to rent.....	50
How to rent	50
How to get the best rate.....	51
Taking the Plunge: RV Purchases	52
Why go to an RV show?.....	52
How to deal with dealers	53
Where not to shop for an RV	53
How to finance your purchase	54
Chapter 6: Selecting Your RV	55
Getting to Know the RV Types	55
Folding camping trailers	56
Truck campers	57
Travel trailers	59
Fifth-wheel travel trailers.....	60
Van campers (Type B).....	62

Mini-motorhomes (Type C)	63
Motorhomes (Type A)	64
Selecting the RV for You	66
Matching an RV to your lifestyle	66
Asking yourself ten questions	67
Chapter 7: Dealing with Your RV	69
Driving Your RV	69
Focusing on the basics	69
Going beyond the basics: Our tips	71
Controlling your speed	72
Saving Money on Fuel	72
Detecting Gas and Smoke	73
Equipping Your RV	74
Monitoring Electrical Hookups	75
Preparing for Winter Camping	76
Furnishing Your RV	77
Cleaning Your RV	78
Outside the vehicle	78
Inside the vehicle	79
Holding tanks	79
Storing Your RV	80
Chapter 8: Eating on the Road	81
Stocking Your Kitchen	81
Eating Takeout Food	82
Shopping for Food	83
Cooking across the U.S.A.	83
Katharine Hepburn's Brownies	83
Mac and Cheese	84
Fried Green Tomatoes	84
Peel-and-Eat Shrimp	84
Chocolate Peanut Butter Cookies	85
Texas Hill Country Chili Cheese Dip	85
Fresh Corn Pudding	85
Garlic Mashed Potatoes	86
Fast Apple Tarts	86
Lentil Soup	86
Posole (Chicken and Hominy Stew)	87
Easy Salmon in White Wine	87
Quick Enchiladas	87
Route 66 Breakfast Casserole	88
Chapter 9: Sleeping on the Road	89
Understanding Our Campground Recommendations	89
Using Campground Directories	90
Comparing Private and Public Campgrounds	91

Choosing a Site.....92
Parking Your Rig.....93
Hooking Up94
Sleeping by the Side of the Road: A Good Idea?.....96

Chapter 10: Catering to Special Travel

Needs or Interests.....97

RVing with Kids97
RVing with Pets.....98
RVing for People with Disabilities.....99
RVing for Seniors.....100
Joining an RV Club101
 Caravan tours and rallies.....101
 RV clubs102

Chapter 11: Tying Up Loose Ends103

Mapping the Way.....103
Staying Connected on the Road104
 Cable TV.....105
 Satellite TV.....105
 Cellphones105
 Computer online services.....106
Buying RV Insurance.....107
Staying Safe and Secure on the Road107
Carrying a Gun.....108

Part III: Exploring the East..... 109

Chapter 12: The Coast of Maine: Lobster Land.....111

Getting There.....111
Planning Ahead.....113
Stocking the Pantry114
Driving the Coast of Maine.....114
 Must-see attractions117
 More cool things to see and do.....121
 Weekend wonder123
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....123
 Our favorite campgrounds124
 Runner-up campgrounds125
 Good eats126
Fast Facts129

**Chapter 13: Western New York: Cooperstown
to Niagara Falls131**

Getting There.....131
Planning Ahead.....133

Stocking the Pantry	134
Driving through Western New York	134
Must-see attractions	138
More cool things to see and do.....	141
Weekend wonders.....	144
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	144
Our favorite campgrounds	144
Runner-up campgrounds	146
Good eats	147
Fast Facts	149

Chapter 14: Blue Ridge Mountains: Skyline

Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway151

Getting There.....	154
Planning Ahead.....	154
Stocking the Pantry	155
Driving on Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway.....	156
Must-see attractions.....	159
More cool things to see and do.....	161
Weekend wonder	162
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	162
Our favorite campgrounds	163
Runner-up campgrounds	165
Good eats	167
Shopping along the Way.....	169
Fast Facts	170

Chapter 15: The Gulf Coast: Tallahassee

to New Orleans.....171

Getting There.....	173
Planning Ahead.....	174
Stocking the Pantry	175
Driving the Gulf Coast	175
Must-see attractions.....	179
More cool things to see and do.....	181
Weekend wonder	182
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	182
Our favorite campgrounds	183
Runner-up campgrounds	184
Good eats	186
Fast Facts	189

Chapter 16: The Natchez Trace: Natchez

to Nashville190

Getting There.....	192
Planning Ahead.....	192

Stocking the Pantry	192
Driving the Natchez Trace	193
Must-see attractions	198
More cool things to see and do.....	200
Weekend wonder	203
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	203
Our favorite campgrounds	203
Runner-up campgrounds	204
Good eats	205
Shopping along the Way.....	208
Fast Facts	208

Part IV: Discovering Mid-America..... 211

**Chapter 17: Texas Hill Country: Bluebonnets
and Barbecue..... 213**

Getting There.....	213
Planning Ahead.....	215
Stocking the Pantry	215
Driving the Texas Hill Country	216
Must-see attractions	220
More cool things to see and do.....	223
Weekend wonder	225
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	225
Our favorite campgrounds	225
Runner-up campgrounds	227
Good eats	228
Fast Facts	233

**Chapter 18: The Heart of Ohio: A Circle
around Circleville 234**

Getting There.....	234
Planning Ahead.....	236
Stocking the Pantry	237
Driving the Ohio Heartland.....	237
Must-see attractions	240
More cool things to see and do.....	245
Weekend wonders.....	247
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	247
Our favorite campgrounds	248
Runner-up campgrounds	249
Good eats	250
Shopping along the Way.....	252
Fast Facts	252

Chapter 19: Northern Minnesota:

Paul Bunyan Country254

Getting There254
 Planning Ahead.....256
 Stocking the Pantry257
 Driving the Paul Bunyan Trail.....258
 Must-see attractions260
 More cool things to see and do.....262
 Weekend wonder264
 Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....264
 Our favorite campgrounds264
 Runner-up campgrounds266
 Good eats268
 Shopping along the Way269
 Fast Facts269

Chapter 20: The Ozarks and Branson:

Hot Springs to Springfield270

Getting There270
 Planning Ahead.....272
 Stocking the Pantry273
 Driving the Ozarks and Branson273
 Must-see attractions276
 More cool things to see and do.....279
 Weekend wonders.....281
 Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....281
 Our favorite campgrounds282
 Runner-up campgrounds283
 Good eats286
 Fast Facts288

Part V: Seeing the West289

Chapter 21: Montana and Wyoming:

Tracking Buffalo Bill291

Getting There291
 Planning Ahead.....292
 Stocking the Pantry294
 Driving Buffalo Bill's Montana and Wyoming294
 Must-see attractions297
 More cool things to see and do.....302
 Weekend wonder304

Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	304
Our favorite campgrounds	304
Runner-up campgrounds	307
Good eats	308
Fast Facts	309

Chapter 22: New Mexico: Billy the Kid

Meets E.T.311

Getting There.....	311
Planning Ahead.....	313
Stocking the Pantry	313
Driving Southern New Mexico	314
Must-see attractions	318
More cool things to see and do.....	322
Weekend wonder	324
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	324
Our favorite campgrounds	325
Runner-up campgrounds	326
Good eats	327
Shopping along the Way	330
Fast Facts	330

Chapter 23: The Oregon Coast: California

to Washington.....332

Getting There.....	334
Planning Ahead.....	334
Stocking the Pantry	335
Driving the Oregon Coast.....	335
Must-see attractions	339
More cool things to see and do.....	341
Weekend wonder	343
Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....	344
Our favorite campgrounds	344
Runner-up campgrounds	347
Good eats	348
Shopping along the Way	350
Fast Facts	351

Chapter 24: California Central Coast: Malibu

to Monterey352

Getting There.....	352
Planning Ahead.....	354
Stocking the Pantry	354

Driving California's Central Coast.....355
 Must-see attractions.....359
 More cool things to see and do.....362
 Weekend wonder364
 Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....365
 Our favorite campgrounds365
 Runner-up campgrounds367
 Good eats368
 Fast Facts370

Chapter 25: Route 66: OK to L.A.371

Getting There.....371
 Planning Ahead.....374
 Driving Route 66.....374
 Must-see attractions.....379
 More cool things to see and do.....382
 Sleeping and Eating on the Road.....383
 Our favorite campgrounds383
 Runner-up campgrounds386
 Good eats387
 Shopping along the Way389
 Fast Facts390

Part VI: The Part of Tens391

Chapter 26: Ten Great Snowbird Getaways.....393

Lake Havasu City, Arizona.....394
 Borrego Springs, California.....394
 Indio, California.....394
 Long Beach, California.....395
 Long Key, Florida.....395
 Kissimmee, Florida.....395
 Pismo Beach, California395
 Donna, Texas.....396
 Mission, Texas396
 South Padre Island, Texas396

Chapter 27: Ten Cool Factory Tours397

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, Waterbury, Vermont397
 Cape Cod Potato Chips, Hyannis, Massachusetts397
 Crayola Crayons, Easton, Pennsylvania.....398
 Hallmark Greeting Cards, Kansas City, Missouri.....398
 Jelly Belly Jellybeans, Fairfield, California.....398
 Louisville Sluggers, Louisville, Kentucky399
 Sechler's Pickles, St. Joe, Indiana.....399
 Tabasco Sauce, Avery Island, Louisiana400

Virtual Factory Tours with Mr. Rogers	400
Winnnebago Motorhomes, Forest City, Iowa	400
Chapter 28: Ten Zany Museums	401
American Sanitary Plumbing Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts	401
Colonel Harland Sanders Cafe/Museum, Corbin, Kentucky.....	402
Circus City Festival Museum, Peru, Indiana	402
Miss Laura's Bordello, Fort Smith, Arkansas.....	402
Metropolis, Illinois	403
Mount Horeb Mustard Museum, Wisconsin	403
National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame, Hayward, Wisconsin	403
Pest House Medical Museum, Lynchburg, Virginia	404
Shady Dell RV Park and Campground, Bisbee, Arizona.....	404
Spam Museum, Austin, Minnesota.....	404
Appendix: Quick Concierge	405
Fast Facts	405
Toll-Free Numbers and Web Sites	405
U.S. agencies	406
Where to Get More Information	406
Helpful Web sites	406
Campground directories	407
Publications for campers and RV owners	408
RV and Campground Lingo	408
Index	414