

The Road Less Traveled: Nomadic Living in a Hostel on Wheels

ACROSS EUROPE

VAL COOK AND TIM BOFFE, FENNA (5), ZIGGY (1), AND LEWIS THE DOG



An enterprising family converts a bus into a hostel, the road into their home, and the world into a classroom.

A man walks into a bar in the alpine village of Risoul, France. He orders a beer. His name is Tim. The bartender that evening is Valerie, a self-described nomad who has been crisscrossing the globe since she graduated from high school. After years of bouncing between the surf towns of Europe and Australia and the ski towns of Canada and Switzerland, Val is trying to decide what to do, or—perhaps more importantly—where to go next. University was an option. Then again, she had always dreamed of running a hostel someday. Tim and Val start to chat. That was 2011. “It was that evening in Risoul,” recalls Val, “that our adventure began.”

A year later, Val and Tim were traveling the world together, on a budget of €9 (\$10) per day per person, plus €2 (\$2) a day for their dog Lewis. While exploring Central America, they had an “epiphany” that would change the course of their future by allowing them to combine their passions for travel, ski and snowboard instructing, hiking, cooking, photography, and meeting new people. “We had talked about the idea of converting an American school bus into a mobile home,” Val says, “but now we started to think we could make a business out of the concept by creating a ‘hostel on wheels’ that would allow us—and our guests—to chase the snow from one ski resort to another.”

