



Choosing Life on the Road

The promise of an ever-changing everyday life has people all over the world taking to the road, downsizing their lives into vans for expansive days ahead.

What if you could pull back the curtain of morning to a new view each day? Call the foot of the Jura Mountains your temporary office? Venture off-road into the sweeping sand dunes of the Sahara for a few days of total peace? Dip into the Mediterranean any day of the week? Or take a hike on the Andes High Plateau, and return to the comfort of your compact roving home at the end of the day?

Every day on the road is an adventure, and never has it been more possible to seek it out for yourself.

Vanlife is the search for a more experiential life outside of dense city centers. It offers an escape from a static life of commutes, work hours that far exceed the nine-to-five, and a few weeks a year to unwind if you're lucky. It is a downscaled, but high-potential lifestyle that has emerged in response to skyrocketing housing prices in our modern cities and the prohibitive cost of living. These shortcomings of contemporary life have been especially laid bare in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, with swathes of people leaving the city quite literally in search of fresh air. Vanlife provides the chance to unlearn the fleeting joys of consumerism in favor of lasting connection: with nature, others, and ourselves.

Life led on the road, ironically, is about slowing your speed and tuning into the minutiae of the world around you—for this is where the adventure lies.

In *Vanlife Diaries*, Kathleen Morton captures the sentiment of many who choose this itinerant life: "This community is seeking out alternatives to the debt-work-consume cycle that rules life in the new millennium. We live out of vehicles to have time to chase our passions. We choose to live on less... Out on our own terms, we're discovering a better, saner way to live."

The roots of roving life run deep. Although we have roamed and transported goods for time immemorial, it wasn't until the postwar period that recreational motor homes were available to the masses. In 1950, Volkswagen (VW) released its first bus, the enduring Type 2. Its boxy design was built to transport goods in postwar Europe, but in it, humans saw greater potential. VW went on to work with Westfalia to create the iconic van we know today, outfitting it with everyday luxuries for the road that transformed an itinerant vehicle into a comfortable home. The model ticked various boxes: it was affordable, comfortable, durable, and, perhaps most importantly to the movement it continues to inspire today, adaptable. It beckoned a free lifestyle and sowed