



Caravanning is an absolute art, especially when it comes to free or low-cost camping. The aim is to reach places far less-travelled, but in considering campsite orientation, terrain, or even proximity to basics like water, these spots are rarely perfect.



Before you head off into the unknown, here's our 10 must-haves for your next caravanning adventure.

Owning a caravan means camping in style, but simply hitching up and heading off into the unknown isn't the end of it. If you want your weekend away or a longer getaway to be a success, here are our 10 must-have items for your caravan kit:



Some of the best locations in Australia are off the beaten track. With our 10 must-have items, you can see them in the comfort of your caravan.

1. Spirit Level or Levelling Device

You've found the perfect spot. You may have even whipped out the compass to check the sun's path over your new-found campsite. The caravan is backed in perfectly.

But wait there's a problem! Your van is on a lean, and the shower door won't stay closed! Or, the water in the shower cubicle just won't flow down the drain. You're not level, and you really need to get it right.

Of course, when it comes to being 'level', there is such a thing as *too* level. You will want to have a gradual fall to allow water runoff from your roof or awning. Overall though, you will want a fairly level caravan to ensure doors close and remain closed, and the water in the shower exits well.

A spirit level to check your left to right and front to back levels will pay for itself. There are also more advanced pieces of technology available that enable you to digitally identify your caravan's position. Check out our full article on levelling & positioning your caravan or RV.



Some of the best campsites also pose the biggest challenges to the positioning and levelling of your caravan.

2. Levelling Ramps & Chocks

The next part is attaining that level caravan. Sure, you could dig some holes and roll into them, but really all you're doing is damaging the campsite for the next group. Perhaps the caravan is positioned on a bit of a hill, so levelling it and then keeping it levelled will be important.

You have a number of options when it comes to levelling ramps. There are kits that include chocks, multi-part ramps, or devices for gradual adjustment. Your goal is to lift your left or right wheels to match the other, and by having a levelling ramp you can achieve this with the help of a levelling device mentioned above. Once in position, use a chock to ensure nothing moves.



Levelling ramps and chocks, as well as a good jockey wheel support, will help keep your van level & secure in position.



3. Jockey & Stabiliser Supports

Always check the ground on which you plan to position your caravan. If it's a little soft, or perhaps rain is threatening, your jockey wheel or stabilisers may sink into the ground. This can cause problems for keeping your caravan level or, when it's time to hitch up again, your jockey wheel may have sunk too deep into the sand or mud.

Use a broad support pad to support your jockey wheel, and even your stabilisers when required. This can be as simple as a piece of wood to distribute the weight over a broader area, or a UV stabilised plastic pads.



Once your caravan is set up, there are some amazing sites to see. But how can you be comfortable exploring, whilst leaving your van behind in a remote location?

4. Hitch Lock

Some of the best campsites we've been to with our caravan have been pretty remote. No campground manager, no ranger, and sometimes no other campers around. You're going to want to explore... but what steps can you take to ensure your caravan is where you left it when you return?

A hitch lock is an inexpensive device to deter amateurs or opportunists. Secure the hitch lock to prevent someone hooking up and taking away your home!



Winds can be fierce, dual guy ropes or ratchet straps at the ends of your awning will help keep everything in place.

5. Guy Ropes or Ratchet Straps & Fixings

Australia is a massive island, and some of the most stunning campsites overlook our beaches. With some of our mountain ranges and outback camp spots in the middle of nowhere, this puts you right in the path of some pretty strong winds.

We've had friends who have lost their awning to strong gusts of winds, basically bent over the top of the caravan! Your awning should be secured using guy ropes or ratchet straps to ensure it stays where it should. We like to use two at each end, and have seen our awning withstand some pretty strong winds.



Good quality matting will help keep your caravan clean.

6. Matting

If you're avoiding caravan parks and heading into the unknown, there's a good chance your front doorstep is going to cop either sand or mud! Having good quality matting out the front of your caravan is the perfect counter to a dirty or sandy caravan.

We like to have matting the full size of our awning. This creates our living room, providing a clean area to sit down and relax or to put on and take off footwear before entering the caravan.



We are yet to find two caravan parks or campgrounds with the same systems or connections in just under 6 months of full-time travel!

7. Hose Connections

If you are staying at caravan parks, be prepared! When it comes to water and waste connections, we haven't seen one caravan park the same in our 6 months on the road. Some are positioned close, some far, some at the back, the front, or the side.

Some have small outlets, high outlets, small tap connections, or large. Having a variety of hose lengths and connections will mean you can hook up your water and drain your grey water with little trouble.



Purchase or create your own water tank filling device. This one is made of food grade hose and brass tap fittings.

8. Water Filling Device

If you are remote and plan to stay, you will need to be able to bring water onsite to your caravan. That might be containers, a bladder, or even a larger water tank in your car. Even just filling your caravan's water from a tap is an art in itself.

When we bought our caravan and filled it up for the first time, we ended up with water all over ourselves. Enter the water filling device. This can take a number of different forms, but it allows you to transfer water into your caravan tanks without wastage.

We've seen them made from watering connections, rubber stoppers, different pieces of hose, and everything in between. The premise is a longer piece of hose that enters deep into your water tanks, allowing air to escape and water to flow in without surfacing again until the tank is full.



A good wheel bin bag is a great solution to pack out your rubbish.

9. Wheel Bin Bag

A key requirement when entering our national parks and low-cost or free campsites is to take your rubbish with you. So many times already we have been to some magnificent sites, only to be disappointed by the sight of rubbish strewn about.

A wheel bin is perfect to add to the back of your caravan, let alone 4WD. We use ours to store our caravan hoses and connections to keep them draining and dry, and when we are remote we use it as a secure rubbish storage space.

Kangaroos and other native Australian animals are very clever... so having a robust bag with zips is essential to prevent them from invading! Then, when heading out of the site, pulling up and disposing of your rubbish responsibly is easy too.



Getting up to your solar panels to keep them clean is really important, so a ladder is a must-have.

10. Ladder

When we first purchased our caravan, we were told we had to carry a ladder with us. Our instant thoughts were, 'surely not'...but as we've travelled, the ladder has become a must-have item and the last on this list to discuss.

There are two main uses for our ladder. The first is for cleaning our solar panels. Side note – when off-grid camping, solar is a must! We use it to run our fridges, power devices, cool us down with fans and to run all of our lighting at night. But a dirty solar panel is really ineffective and, especially around Australia, it doesn't take much for them to become dusty. Every 2 to 3 days, we climb up to clean our solar panels for the best chance of maximising our power capture.

We also use the ladder to help us keep the car and caravan clean. It allows us to get up and into those hard to reach spots, also handy for various maintenance tasks like fixing a lost screw in an awning, or reaching a stuck skylight.

None of the above are included with a new caravan...

...and more often than not, a 'new to you' caravan won't include them either. We've been on the road for a while now and, in our opinion, these are essential 'must-haves' for the perfect caravanning trip!

What are your 'must haves' for a great caravanning adventure?