



Welcome to Part 2 of Travel Setups! If you haven't already, check out Part 1 – [Comparing & Choosing the Best](#) before reading on.

Now that you've wrapped your head around the four key considerations – duration of travel, comfort levels, budget, and what you want to see and do – and figured out which areas you can compromise, we're going to focus on vehicle and sleeping arrangements for specific circumstances, and the pros or cons of each.

We'll keep the conversation focused on vehicle travel in this post, and leave all the other [fun options](#) for another time. Let's dive in...



This is a quick and easy, go-anywhere kind of setup.

Stand-Alone Single Vehicle

When a vehicle is described as 'stand-alone' it essentially refers to the lack of towing an additional load. A stand-alone vehicle can be a Sedan, 4WD, a van, motorhome, bus or even a truck.

Sedans and 4WDs

Smaller vehicles deliver greater maneuverability than larger ones and most travellers prefer 4WDs because of their increased ability to access remote areas. If cruising the highways and soaking up the city scene is more your cup of tea, then a 2-wheel-drive will see you through just fine.

If you sacrifice some comfort, you can keep things super simple by sleeping inside your vehicle. Alternatively, packing a [tent](#) or [swag](#) could potentially offer a better night's sleep with more room to stretch out, but also takes up space to, from, or between destinations. Often people choose to install roof racks by way of a compromise with towing. You can't exactly strap a caravan to your roof racks but you can free up interior space, pack more for a longer trip, or even attach a [rooftop tent](#) for another sleeping alternative.

Typically, Sedans are limited on space and available payload, so if your plans involve a lot of off-road adventuring, a 4WD with its robust chassis, mechanics, and increased storage capacity would be a better choice. Heavily loaded vehicles that are not built to accommodate the weight and are more likely to suffer failures, which is not what you want.



The travellers using this setup had been on the road for 6 months when we met them.

Motorhomes, Buses, and Trucks

Motorhomes, buses and trucks all have a significantly higher payload and the space to make the most of it, but the trade-off is the lack of maneuverability and accessibility due to the vehicle's bulk and weight. Another consideration is the on-road cost – the larger the vehicle, the greater its fuel consumption, insurance, and registration. You'll often need a different level of driver's license too.

Some planning and preparation are required if you decide to explore for the day, as things need to be packed away and secured, which is also necessary for rooftop tents. Some travellers fit bike racks to the rear of their larger vehicle, so they can cycle around the region

they are visiting, but this does not suit everyone.



Motorhomes are popular for 2WD accessible travel.

Converted buses can become one of the most comfortable travelling solutions, but they require a significant investment of time and money. Trucks are a little different in that they can be set up in a multitude of ways. The most common uses a detachable unit on the rear that is similar to a caravan. This affords all the benefits of a caravan without the drag of towing.

You can also camp directly out of a truck without a detachable unit (or without detaching the unit), which offers a versatile live-in space. Similar to a motorhome, however, allowances have to be made around where you go and what you see unless you invest in one that is enabled with 4WD.



A slide on camper can be mounted to your ute tray for an easy solution.

Towing

If the stand-alone vehicle option does not work for your preferred setup, then towing something is your next consideration. This might be a box trailer just for storage and the extra pack-space, or a caravan, camper trailer, hybrid camper, or even a boat that could be used for storage when not on the water.

All of these have their benefits but the moment you tow something, your capability is reduced. There is also the risk for impaired visibility, especially when towing a caravan, which makes towing mirrors essential.

Despite the disadvantages or what it is you are towing, an extra unit enables you to distribute the weight and bulk of your load. This makes your trip safer, more comfortable, and allows convenient access to gear.



Our Recon R2 and Isuzu Dmax.

If your preferred travel experience is to go off-grid, then the supply and storage of water is a primary consideration. So too is ensuring you have sufficient payload and space to accommodate that supply safely. Being able to carry an extra 200L of water is the difference between having to head into town every few days, or being able to stay off-grid for longer. Modern camper trailers and off-road caravans offer a new level of luxury and convenience in their design. Many now include queen-sized beds, onboard bathrooms, slide-out kitchens with permanently mounted gas cookers and sinks, electrical systems, and under-carriage water tanks. They even include storage for recreational toys such as fishing gear, mountain bikes, and surfboards, or even a lounge for kicking back and relaxing at the end of the day. These bells and whistles come at a cost and depending on your budget and/or priorities, they may not be an option.



This caravan is designed for off-road and is equipped with many bells and whistles, including pop-out features. Image: Xan Holyoak

A Split Setup

Most people who embark on extended travel opt to tow either a caravan, camper trailer or a hybrid of the two. However, keen boaties dedicate their towing allowance to pulling a boat and although they have the flexibility of extra pack space and weight distribution, the trade-off is not being able to tow a caravan or camper trailer.

Towing allows you to spread your load but reduces your off-road capabilities, whether it's a boat, caravan, camper or trailer.

Some travellers are able to set themselves up in a way where they tailor their gear to suit specific adventures. For example, they might have a nice caravan that gets left undercover at the local caravan park when they want to head off somewhere remote. On these occasions, they live out of a rooftop tent, easy quick-pitch touring tent or swag, and use a camping stove or campfire for cooking, plus an esky or 12V fridge for keeping food fresh. An arrangement like this requires extra gear and the space in your original set up to store it, not to mention the funds for the initial investment. But if you're otherwise risking costly damage to your caravan or trailer, then it's worth it! Cape York, Lorella Springs Station or remote parts of the Kimberley are all good examples of where towing can be fraught with difficulty, depending on how well equipped you are and your off-road driving experience.

There were many different setups at Ningaloo Caravan Park.

Common Setups

Solo or Couple

Travelling solo or as a couple can be as simple as a swag in the back of the Ute. You can travel long term out of a single-vehicle very easily and with reasonable comfort. If you want more luxury, you can tow a trailer or opt for a rooftop tent, but neither are necessary.

Setups can be as minimal as throwing a swag into the back of a ute. Image: Xan Holyoak

Families

The options for families differ greatly from that of a solo traveller or couple. Once you have a couple of kids, your setup needs to change. Whilst it is possible to travel and live out of a car long term with a family, you will have issues regarding available space, weight and comfort. The best option for life-on-the-road and what seems to be the most popular choice for families is caravans or camper trailers, but some choose to buy a truck, motorhome, or even a bus.

Which one you choose comes down to the 4 core factors we discussed in Part 1, and what you really want out of your travel setup.

This family of 5 lived life on the road with their caravan for over 12-months. Image: Todoing Family

What do you really want, and what works for us?

Before you rush out and buy something just remember: the bigger and heavier your setup, the fewer places you will be able to access.

We love exploring off the beaten track locations and getting away from huge crowds. That meant a 4WD was the best choice for us, as we are a family that has a preference for extended trips away and we like some comfort. So, we have a hybrid camper trailer that includes some luxuries. It is as light and as small as possible so it doesn't hugely restrict where we can take it.

We also have a boat which means on some of our trips, we have to decide between towing the boat and pitching the RV5, or leaving the boat behind and taking our hybrid camper. We can comfortably stay off-grid for 2 weeks at a time with regular showers, and enough comfort to not have us longing to get home. Overall it works for us and we are pleased with it.

There are times where we would love a full-size van, but we would run into issues with GCM (Gross Combination Mass), and it would impact our accessibility more than we are willing to compromise. So we've invested in the best setup for our current situation and preferred travel experiences.

See you out there!

What do you travel in? Are you happy with it?

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