

Safe Travels

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As summer approaches in the Northern Hemisphere, along with school holidays and traditional vacation time from work, much of the world is wondering what kind of traveling will be possible in the near future.

Flights to faraway destinations, trips to crowded beaches or queuing up in amusement parks all seem unlikely for the time being. Many will look for options that are more affordable and closer to home. But after months of sheltering in place, most people are eager for a change of scene, however small, and a physical and mental break from the confines of home quarantine.

Enter the RV (camper van?!). An actual home on wheels! What better option for these times.

Photographer Stanislaw Pytel has first-hand insight into the joys and challenges of taking the family holiday on the road. Inspired by the freedom and simplicity of a short road trip the previous summer, Stanislaw and his wife were hooked.

"It took about a year to find the right camper van exactly as we wanted: with a light interior, space for everyone and an old-school look. My entire family, including kids and in-laws, spent 45 days and nights restoring the motor home, every detail inside and out in a true labor of love.

Immediately after finishing all the work, we packed and started our trip. Originally, we had the plan to drive to Norway and all the way around the Lofoten Archipelago, but due to the weather, we decided to go as far as The Atlantic Road. We covered over 6000km in 10 days! Norway is really friendly for camper travel. You can stop your home in the majority of places- in forests, near to lakes and rivers as well as in the high mountains so we never had a problem in finding the right spot - we always had our morning coffee with a beautiful view.

I had planned to document our adventure as a photographic project, including a new and somewhat frightening experience of piloting a drone, which I crashed a couple of times: on a waterfall, on an Atlantic island and two times almost into the ocean! But in total, we were able to create some nice footage as well as images. The environment in Norway is so unique, with all four seasons possible in the day. You must simply see it with your own eyes, just amazing! Every day bestowed us with new, unrepeatabe landscapes.

Six of us traveled: me, my wife, our two daughters (1 and 3 years old), my wife's sister and father. Everything in the camper van life was new for us but also exciting. Of course living with 6 people on 10 square meters is far from luxury. You may feel a little bit like sardines packed in a can. However, as long as all the sardines cooperate, it's really great!

We learned how to use our limited resources wisely, often doing the dishes outside in crystal clear water from the stream – which was always freezing cold! We also learned how, in a few minutes, to

transform our kitchen, living area and passenger cabin into one big, cozy bedroom, like a jigsaw puzzle twice a day. The one key lesson that carried us through challenges and the highlights of each day: never lose the spirit of adventure.

It is in these moments you realize that one of the greatest pleasures in life is spending time together with your loving family, enjoying tasty food and being surrounded by pristine nature. That feeling is truly unique and irreplaceable. Over the years the memories are the only thing that will last."