



Our “GO-TO” RV Trip Planning

Websites/Apps & Tips++

Find discounts to some of these on our: www.ThePewterPalace.com/discounts

Trip Planning Tools- We are only sharing what we use and trust works well.

RV LIFE PRO: Trip Wizard Planning Software:

(APP AND WEBSITE) Over 30K campgrounds, 114K+ towns/cities, 947K+ campground reviews, 362K+ RVer tips about locations and over 7K RVing articles. Filters for Harvest Host, Branded Campgrounds (KOA, Thousand Trails, Jelly Stone, etc.), Points of interest (museums, grocery stores, gas, golf courses, parks, tourist attractions, etc.) Features include: GPS Routing* once you plan and save your trip, archive trips for future reference/sharing, mileage, gas usage and budget calculations are automatically created. Entire trip is printable, sharable and able to be modified on the fly!

One-stop trip planning (for a weekend trip to any length trip!)= no need to jump from one online platform to another! The annual subscription currently is \$69 but you can save money by using our discount on our webpage above.

***Note:** We DO NOT recommend relying ONLY on the RV Trip Wizard GPS routing program/app. We will run it simultaneously with MapQuest or Google Maps. Some folks like WAZE for routing too.

SHAKA GUIDE and GUIDEALONG: (Two different companies, both have an App & Website)

www.ShakaGuide.com

These are terrific programs to find libraries of narrated automobile and walking/hiking tours. They have a complete library with a special focus on National Parks and National Historic Sites all over the USA. The auto tours are GPS generated so they know exactly where you are, when you stop, when you decide to turn left or right--the narrator will keep up with you and tell you interesting stories, things to watch for...even when an amazing photo op is coming up and to be ready to pull over! We have used this app many times and once you purchase a tour (or bundle which saves \$\$) they are in YOUR library forever and can be reused again and again!

We use both! GuideAlong tends to be more flexible if you want to veer off in a different direction or hop on a tour at a mid point versus where the tour starts. It also seems to have more intuitive GPS. The GuideAlong narrators also seem a little more “human, like Dad is in the front seat with you”. One company may offer better pricing depending on periodic sales, promotional codes, etc. We always compare the two when deciding which tour to go with. Both offer excellent insider style tips, stories, etc. that are NOT covered by public signage.

We have purchased tours from both GUIDEALONG AND SHAKAGUIDE for many National Parks and it's like having an NPS Park Ranger or local resident in your front seat!

EXPLOREHERE:

(Free APP only!!) We only recently started using this APP. It is GPS based and when you open the app on your phone it will show you via icons on a local map what interesting historical, cultural or special places they have cataloged into the app. A narrator tells you a short story when you click onto a specific icon on the map or are driving by. Then you can decide if you want to visit it, save it or keep going. If you open the app while driving it will keep up with you and tell you about things along your route. Icons include; historical markers, historic churches, buildings, historical happenings in the area or specific locations. Its a history lovers must have!

ALLSTAYS:

(APP AND WEBSITE), subscription based, www.Allstays.com. This used to have a free version but we dont think so any more. It appears you can buy a 3 month subscription only which may be great for shorter trips. Many people use this as their sole RV trip planning tool. It has many of the features that RV Trip Wizard like campgrounds (Allstays boasts over 43K) has but it also includes boondocking/lot docking spots, user reviews, unique stay locations. *We have found that the ALLStays reviews of campgrounds to be older and more out of date. As full timers, we do also have a basic subscription to AllStays more for finding the boondocking spots or BLM/Public lands off grid camping locations.*

HARVEST HOST: Can include Boondocker's Welcome & Escapee's RV Club Membership in package

(APP AND WEBSITE) This is subscription based and we have a discount on our website page link above. (no tents, must be self-contained RVs and Van/truck campers). **MOSTLY DRY CAMPING!** This online program allows you to find HH locations around the USA and Canada. Stays typically are for 1 night only but more and more locations are allowing you to request additional night(s) sometimes at a fee. More and more locations are also charging now if they offer electric hookup and/or water- normally this is below a rack rate of location campgrounds, but not always so do your research. These locations vary from rural farms, non-profit museums, breweries, stores/boutiques, to private homes. There are several subscription options and we do the level that includes golf courses. We have found overnighting at golf courses (albeit this is dry camping) is the most restful, quiet and safe. Once the golfers leave at dark you have the whole place to yourselves. HH rules state as a guest you are expected to spend at least \$35 per stay. If a place charges for a stay, that counts towards your expected spend. We also tend to pick breweries or locations with an onsite restaurant, breakfast café, etc. and do our spend that way. Subscription plans can also include **BOONDOCKERS WELCOME** which is normally private home owners offering a stay in their driveway or yard. We have found most are oriented towards smaller rigs, like vans or RVs under 28 foot. Hookups at these locations vary greatly and some may be dry.

But wait!! There is MORE!!

RECREATION.GOV:

This is the mother-lode of all campgrounds within the National Park Service. It allows you to search by geographic area, make reservations directly, gives you up to date info on National Parks, National Historic Sites, etc. as well as alerts that may effect a camping stay or visit. Be sure you have purchased one of the NPS Park Passes to save \$ if you plan on visiting any National Parks more than a few days in one year. Seniors 62 and over should purchase the Senior Lifetime Pass, currently \$80 which gives you 50% off camping fees, free park entry, and where applicable discounts on ranger led tours, free access to certain designated scenic highways that charge a fee.

INSIDER TIP: Occasionally, especially out West in places like Yellowstone NP, Glacier NP a third party vendor like Zanterra Corp may have a contract to manage the reservations for NPS campgrounds. In these cases, I have **called** the phone # listed for reservations instead of making my reservation online. When I CALL and speak to the third-party representative, I have been able to get them to allow me to use my NPS Senior Lifetime Pass discount (in most cases).

ADDITIONAL NOTE! When you visit a National Park Service Visitor Center Gift shop check to see if they sell a special discount card that gets you reciprocity at other locations for discounts in other gift shops! For example, when we were at the National Elk Refuge Center in Jackson, WY we purchased their pass which made a donation to the Refuge but also has netted us a 15% savings at many other NPS & affiliate gift shops when we ask and present our card. It never hurts to ask! It's the only discount that NPS shops offer to the public.

RESERVEAMERICA.COM (Website & App)

This is the reservation platform used by many states, county and even some quasi-public entities to do their campground site bookings, tours and tickets to specific attractions/locations. The online booking is pretty user friendly. They have a feature that allows you to "create an alert" for when an opening comes up in an already fully booked campground OR also for you to set a "date alert" for when the booking window opens up so you can pounce on booking a site for a desired campground.

APPS TO SAVE YOU \$\$\$ ON TRAVEL COSTS:

UPSIDE APP: We have saved hundreds of \$\$ using this APP over 6 years. It is GPS based, knows where you are and will provide you with a list of gas stations that are in their program. The list will include mileage to, amount of discount per gallon (gas or diesel) and a link to automatically plot directions using Google Maps right from inside the app. In summer 2026 due to higher than normal gas prices the discounts we have noticed have shrunk considerably. Hopefully this will change as we were used to saving anywhere from \$.08 to \$.20 cents off per gallon before. Occasionally local grocery stores, many chain restaurants and convenience stores will also offer some decent discounts. You do have to set up an account with them. It is a reimbursement system. See our link above to get more details and to get

started and our tips for using the app effectively! This program does not require you scan a QR code at the pump but you do have to select the station before pumping to activate the savings refund.

GASBUDDY: APP & WEBSITE: Easy to use, similar to UpSide.com in that it will find you local to your route gas stations, GPS directions feature. You can create an account and get money savings. The system uses an app and QR code that needs to be activated when you are at the pump. They also have a fuel cost calculator for when you are planning trips (*we have not used that feature as it is in our RV Trip Wizard program automatically*). Some features are ONLY available on the APP. This program only offers discounts to gas, not any other type of businesses like Upside does.

LEVELMATE PRO: This is a **device (and app)** you install inside the front of your RV and calibrate to your specific length, height, axel measurements, etc. You install their app and it is an easy tool for making sure your RV is level. We even use it when boondocking in a parking lot by simply turning the box inside on, driving slowly around till we find a level or near level spot! We have used this device for over 8 years and it is one of our “best” purchases ever! Leveling is so easy and fool proof!

LIFE360: This is a free online app that allows you to share your location privately to family members, significant others, etc. via your cell phone. It is very good for safety when traveling, hiking, boating, etc. and is a must have to ensure that you can be found if lost or have been unusually out of touch. Police, emergency and fire departments can also tap into this when situations warrant emergency search.

MAPCHART: is a fun app that allows you to create your own maps and then put pins into the places you have been or plot your journey in graphic form. It’s a fun way to share with folks online, your family or to use with an online diary or personal blog that you record your trips on. Free app with basics.

NATIONAL FORESTS & GRASSLANDS: This is a newer app created by the USDA & USFS. It includes stories, features, etc. about NPS properties, parks, etc. and provides updates, alerts, etc. It features more “activity based” things including; Hiking, fishing, camping/cabins, hunting, horseback riding, biking trails, etc. You can select by location desired, or to scan the area you are in to locate these then “start your adventure”. Features allow you to map, save to favorites, and more.

CLIME: NOAA WEATHER APP: This is a terrific app that can keep you aware and safe during weather extremes! We use this in ADDITION to our physical rechargeable weather radio that sit on our dinette table 24/7. CLIME will show you weather by the hour, radar images and predicted weather, wind speeds, directions, precipitation and/or major alerts for hurricane, flood and tornado’s. YES- it has saved us! Worth the small subscription price to get the full features.

OTHER RV APPS & WEBSITES INCLUDE: (We do not subscribe or use them with any regularity so please do your own research to see if they appeal to your mode of travel and preferences.

www.HipCamp.com

www.RVOvernights.com

Bubble (app for leveling)

www.TheDryt.com

Hope these are helpful! Share others you use with everyone!

