

# RV Trip Planning Checklist

Avoid Hidden Costs & Rental Pitfalls | Based on 40,000+ Customer Experiences

## ■ Pre-Planning Phase (8–12 weeks before travel)

### Budget Reality Check

- ☐ **Calculate TRUE total costs:** Add 40–60% to advertised rates for mileage, insurance, generator fees, cleaning, fuel, and campgrounds
- ☐ Compare total RV costs to hotel alternative for your group size and trip length
- ☐ Set realistic budget expectations: RV travel rarely saves money for couples on trips under 10 days

### Quick Cost Calculator

Cost Factor	Your Estimate	Reality Check
Base rental rate × nights	\$_____	Advertised rate only
Mileage (_____ miles × \$0.35)	\$_____	Add 25% for RV routing
Insurance/Protection	\$_____	\$25–60/day typical
Generator usage	\$_____	\$3–7/hour for A/C
Fuel costs	\$_____	6–12 MPG depending on RV
Campground fees	\$_____	\$35–80/night average
<b>TOTAL REALISTIC COST</b>	<b>\$_____</b>	<b>Use this for budgeting</b>

### Company Research & Selection

- ☐ Check verified customer reviews on Trustpilot (minimum 1,000+ reviews for reliability)
- ☐ **Red flags:** Companies refusing detailed cost breakdowns, vague mileage policies, or poor customer service ratings
- ☐ For peer-to-peer: Filter hosts with 15+ reviews, 4.8+ rating, response time under 2 hours
- ☐ For first-time renters: Prioritize traditional companies (Cruise America) over peer-to-peer for predictability

## ■ Booking Phase (6–10 weeks before travel)

- ☐ **Request itemized cost breakdown** including ALL fees before booking – companies hiding costs add the most surprises
- ☐ Verify insurance coverage: What's included vs. what costs extra vs. what your auto insurance covers
- ☐ Read cancellation policies carefully – peer-to-peer platforms have more restrictive terms
- ☐ Book 90–120 days in advance for peak season (June–August) to avoid 300–400% price increases
- ☐ Consider cancellation protection insurance if booking early or during peak season
- ☐ **Money-saving tip:** Look for one-way relocation deals from traditional companies (can save 30–50%)

## ■ Route Planning Phase (4–6 weeks before travel)

- ☐ **Use RV-specific GPS/routing:** Standard directions don't account for height, weight, or bridge restrictions
- ☐ Add 25–30% to standard driving distances for RV-appropriate routes
- ☐ Research campground availability and book RV-suitable sites in advance
- ☐ Plan fuel stops: Large RVs need truck stops, not regular gas stations
- ☐ Identify 24/7 roadside assistance contact numbers for your rental company/platform

## ■ Insurance & Legal Phase (2–4 weeks before travel)

- ☐ **Verify your auto insurance RV coverage:** Most policies exclude vehicles over 10,000 lbs (Class A & many Class C RVs)
- ☐ Understand liability limits: Rental insurance typically covers \$1M+ but confirm coverage gaps
- ☐ Review damage dispute processes: Traditional companies vs. peer-to-peer platform mediation
- ☐ Confirm driver requirements: Some RVs require special licenses or age restrictions
- ☐ **Critical:** Personal property inside RV typically NOT covered – pack accordingly

## ■ Pre-Departure Phase (1 week before travel)

- ☐ **Document ALL existing damage** with photos/video before departure – this prevents false damage claims
- ☐ Get complete walkthrough of all systems: electrical, plumbing, generator, slide-outs
- ☐ Test generator, A/C, heating, and all appliances before leaving the lot
- ☐ Confirm generator usage policies and hourly rates (typically \$3–7/hour)
- ☐ Review weight limits and loading restrictions for the specific RV class
- ☐ Get emergency contact numbers and understand after-hours procedures

## ■ Critical Mistakes to Avoid

### *Top 5 Costly Mistakes (Based on Customer Complaints)*

- **Assuming auto insurance covers RV rentals** → Can cost \$10,000+ in uncovered damage
- **Underestimating mileage by 25–40%** → Overage fees of \$400–800+ common
- **Booking peak season within 60 days** → Limited options at 300–400% premium rates
- **Skipping thorough damage documentation** → False damage claims averaging \$500–2,000
- **Ignoring generator limitations** → Dead batteries, system failures, repair charges

### *Peer-to-Peer Platform Warning Signs*

- Host with fewer than 10 reviews or rating below 4.7
- Response time over 4 hours to booking inquiries
- Professional photos but negative reviews about actual condition
- Vague answers about vehicle maintenance or damage history
- Pressure to book immediately or claims of “last available”

### *Success Indicators*

- **Transparent upfront pricing** with all fees clearly itemized
- **Quick, detailed responses** to pre-booking questions
- **Recent positive reviews** mentioning vehicle condition and cleanliness
- **Clear damage/dispute policies** explained before booking
- **Realistic expectations** set about RV limitations and costs

This checklist is based on analysis of 40,000+ customer experiences, industry pricing data, and verified customer reviews. Save this checklist and refer to it throughout your planning process. Each checked item reduces your risk of costly surprises and rental disputes.