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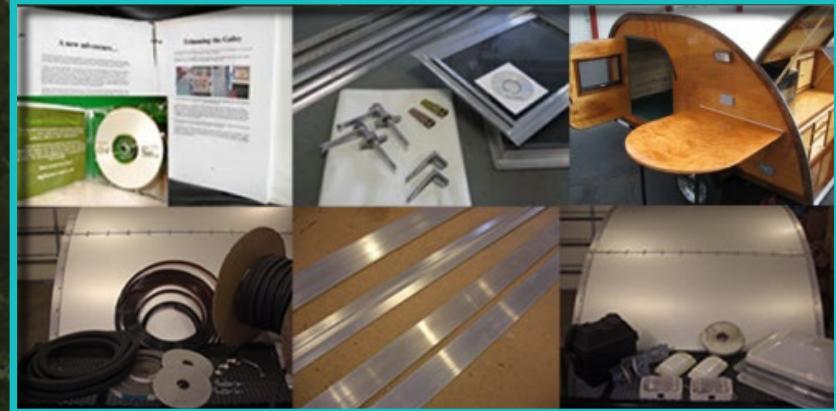
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Vol. 10 No. 2

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## 11 COVER STORY DON'T HESITATE

Kimberly Gossage

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# *Letter from the Editor:*

Tiny Camper Enthusiasts,



Spring has sprung in the northern hemisphere and we are busy trying to create and coordinate our camping plans with family and friends. The pandemic may have altered some of our plans the last few years, but we are planning trips full steam ahead! Well, as ahead as our day jobs allow.

The article submitted by Kimberly Gossage really impacted me. She sends a clear, strong message that it's ok to not do things right. That it's ok to make mistakes. That no matter how much planning you do, everything will not go as planned. But it's clear that despite the issues you will face, that you need to get out there and enjoy life with the ones you love.

Two years ago, we purchased the rights to Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine. In early 2020, I realized that it was time to do something that I enjoy. (In case my boss is reading this, I do like what I do for work.) But I wanted to do something different too and not feel like I had to hold back because I wasn't prepared enough, or it wasn't the right time, I wasn't this or wasn't that. It was my time.

As you make your travel plans for the rest of 2022, don't hesitate. We'll never be as young as we are right now and we may not be able to do everything we want after we're old and retired.

Don't hesitate. Build stronger bonds with your friends and family and enjoy the lifestyle that comes with having a tiny camper. ■

Happy travels and stay safe

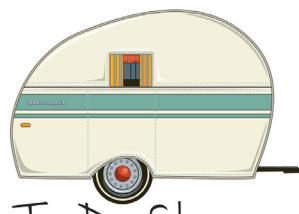
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Lisa Adams

Editor

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# KITCHEN ON WHEELS



## BUTTER CHICKEN

For over twenty years, my career in project management with large manufacturing companies has given me the opportunity to travel internationally for work. Work travel isn't sexy. For me, it involved long flights over the weekends, longer than normal work hours in windowless rooms, different beds, and even a few bouts of food poisoning all while rushing to get back to the airport to get back home.

My pre-pandemic work took me from Asia, to Europe, to Mexico, and South America with sometimes only one week at home in Michigan between continents. For a few years my body had zero clue what time zone it was in. Although keepig that pace was brutal, there were two upsides to this - frequent flier miles (that I use for my own travels) and the FOOD!

One of my favorite Indian dishes is Butter Chicken (Murgh Makhani in Hindi) and it's easy to prep at home for a delicious meal while camping. Butter chicken is one of the most popular dishes at Indian restaurants around the world. The chicken pieces in a creamy curry sauce (not spicy hot) over Jasmine rice is surprisingly easy to make.

You'll need a TemboTusk Skottle, skillet, or Blackstone, a sharp knife, a way to blend or mash the sauce, and an apron! These spices/sauces can be messy.

### Ingredients for chicken marinade

- 4 boneless and skinless chicken thighs or 2 breasts cut into bite-sized pieces. (I always use chicken thighs.)
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger or finely grated
- 2 teaspoons garam masala
- 1 teaspoon tumeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder
- 1 teaspoon of salt

### Ingredients for the sauce

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, sliced or chopped
- 1 1/2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon ginger, minced or finely grated
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garam masala
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 14 oz (400g) can of crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder (adjust to taste)
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt (to taste)



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- 1 cup of heavy cream, thickened cream, or half and half
- 1 teaspoon sugar

### Other Ingredients

- Jasmine rice
- Fresh, chopped cilantro

*For this article, we'll give several tips (in **italics**) on what to do at home versus at the campground to help save time and space. If you don't mind carrying spice jars with you, then by all means, prepare at your campsite.*

### Instructions

*In a ziploc bag or bag that you can vacuum seal, combine all of the ingredients listed in the chicken marinade section. Let marinate for at least one hour or overnight if time allows. We marinate for about 18-24 hours before we're ready to cook the chicken.*

If you use a TemboTusk skottle and no separate pans, now is the time to make your Jasmine rice per the package instructions and then set aside in a covered bowl while you cook the butter chicken. Note that while cooking rice in the skottle, check the rice a few times and add additional liquid if needed.

Once the rice is cooked, it's time to cook the chicken. Put the olive oil in your skottle/skillet and add the chicken marinade and chicken pieces and cook for about 2-3 minutes per side. Remove the chicken from the heat and set aside. It will finish cooking in the sauce later.

Add the butter to the skottle/skillet and saute the onion for about five to six minutes,

scraping the browned bits from the bottom of the pan to incorporate. Keep in mind that we always try to cook on low to medium heat when using the TemboTusk skottle.

Toss in your garlic, ginger, coriander, cumin, chili powder, salt and garam masala and mix completely with the onions. Lastly, add the can of crushed tomatoes and stir to combine. Let simmer with the lid on for about 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally until the sauce thickens and becomes a deep reddish brown color. *If you don't carry spice jars with you, mix the dry ingredients in a small, sealed container or ziplock bag for easy transport. If you don't carry a garlic press or grater with you, buy small jars of the minced or grated and keep in your cooler. This greatly reduces*

prep time.

Remove from heat and blend or mash the sauce until it's smooth. You may need to add a few tablespoons of water to help make it blend. We don't travel with a blender, but if you do, use it to blend your sauce. We have an immersion blender that works well and is small enough to take with us. If we're camping where we don't have power, our Jackery 1000 is powerful enough to do the trick. We can even blend the sauce right in the skettle so there is no need to dirty another bowl or pan.

Put the sauce back in your skettle or skillet, if needed, add the cream, sugar, chicken and juices back in the pan and cook for about



8 - 10 minutes until the chicken is cooked through and the sauce is bubbling.

I like to remove from the heat (turn off the skottle or stove) and add a tablespoon of butter, stirring in well before serving.

Put some rice on your plate or in your bowl and top with the butter chicken and sauce. The sauce is hot enough to quickly bring your rice back to temp. If you like cilantro, add some fresh, chopped cilantro on top and serve. ■



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# Don't Hesitate

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By **KIMBERLY GOSSAGE**

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In 2019, I pulled my teardrop trailer from North Carolina to Banff, a trip that topped 7000 miles (11,265 km). I set off alone, intimidated and excited, and knowing that my cousin Bev would join me in Wyoming.

I picked Bev up at the airport at Jackson Hole after first warning the Tucson native that the weather was turning cold. That turned out to be an enormous understatement - within 24 hours of her arrival, we were caught

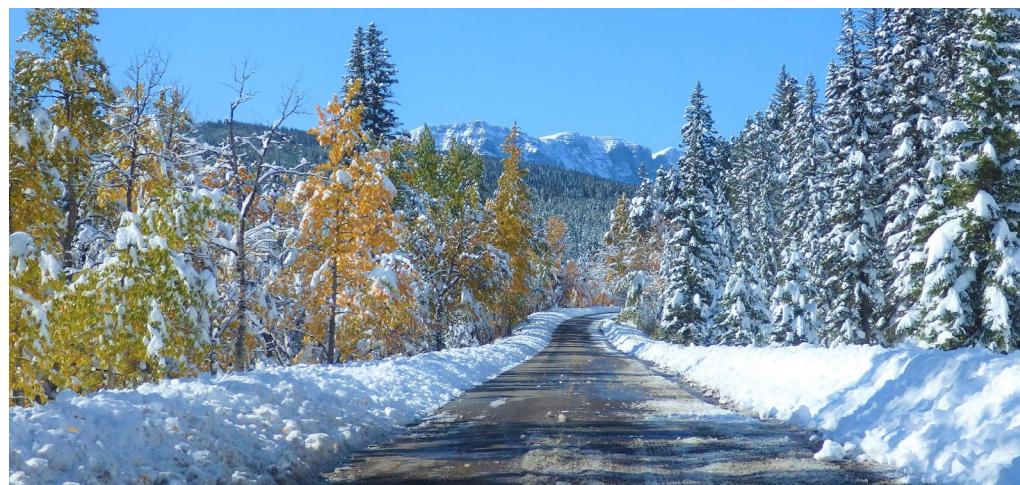


blizzard. In fact, despite temperatures as low as -8°F (-22.2°C) the T@b and its heater were champs! I, on the other hand, could not have been more poorly prepared.

Bev and I drove into Glacier National Park only to find that the campgrounds were all closed due to the blizzard. We might have camped illegally in a closed campground for a few nights (no confessions here) and then moved on to Waterton National Park in Canada, where we might have fudged a little when asked if we had alcohol in the trailer.

in a blizzard that, in one night, dropped 4 feet of snow on our unsuspecting heads.

I was towing a 2005 Dutchman T@b, a predecessor to today's incredible trailers produced by nüCamp. My tow vehicle and my trailer were fully prepared for a



The road to Glacier National Park



Bev kayaking at Emerald Lake

But here's the point: we ran into constant problems. We shoveled snow using kayak paddles. We made breakfast on the side of snow-covered roads. A mouse took up residence in our tow vehicle. Boots became our most precious commodity with propane as a close second. We got frustrated but we persevered. And because of

that perseverance - a fortitude I wouldn't have predicted before this trip - we experienced amazing things. We kayaked the ridiculously clear, deep waters of Emerald Lake near Yoho National Park on the western slope of the Canadian Rocky Mountains.. We silently watched herds of buffalo cross roads in front of us. We marveled at a snow-covered landscape that took our breath away. We had a ball.

I didn't know then that would be my last big road trip with Bev. Metastatic breast cancer was the quiet, unwelcome passenger on every trip and it recently took Bev's life. Thanks to my T@b and to my cousin's refusal to let cancer rule her life, I have fantastic memories I'll carry forever. If you're considering a big trip, do it. Don't hesitate. Things will go wrong but you'll find so much in yourself that you didn't expect. If you're lucky enough to have a travel buddy who is also your best friend, you'll later cherish the memories. Just go. ■



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WHISPER DIAGRAM

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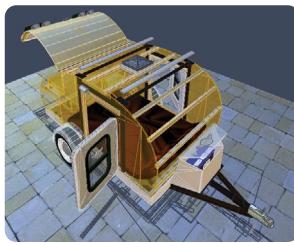
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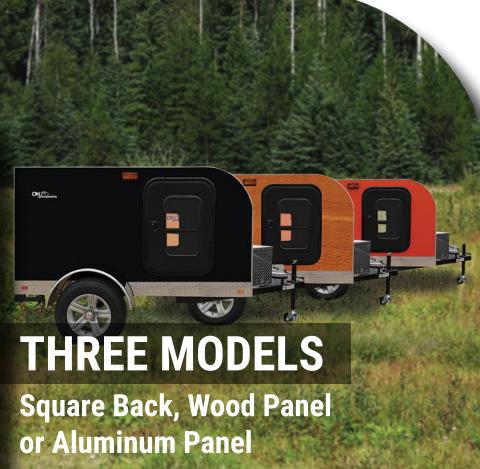
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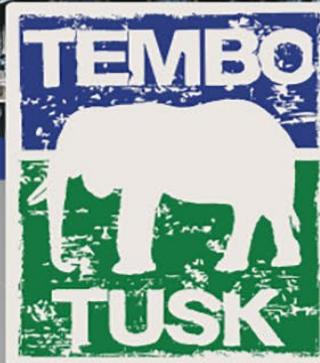


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# Product REVIEW

## GEYSER SYSTEM SHOWER

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By COOL TEARS STAFF

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In the unofficial Cool Tears and Tiny Campers survey in January 2022, when asked where they prefer to camp, 53% of the respondents reported that they prefer state or national forests campgrounds with limited amenities and 37% prefer camping on public land that allows dispersed camping. (Note that the survey allowed people to make multiple selections.) Why is this important? Because a large number of people in tiny campers don't have access to potable water while out camping, it's important to carry and conserve as much water as possible while on their adventures. This water is used for cooking, hand washing, dish washing, drinking, and maybe even showering. That water is heavy and takes up valuable space. The space and weight coupled with the ongoing (and growing) drought conditions across the United States means that every drop of water carried is precious and should be used wisely.

Last summer, while at a group campout in Colorado, we were introduced to the Geyser System shower. We highlighted this product in our [2021 Gift Guide for Tiny Campers](#) in our November/December 2021 issue.

This review will focus solely on the Geyser System shower without the heater since that is the model we have and use. They do offer a different model that includes a heater. (Note: We were not paid for this review nor will we be paid if you choose to purchase your own.)

It's important to note that we enjoy dispersed camping where there are zero amenities; we carry all of our water with us; and my preference would be to take a shower each morning, which wasn't possible with our setup until we received our Geyser System shower.

We do use Venture Wipes and we've gone for dips in the northern Great Lakes (minus the soap) to at least get a clean-ish feeling. We also have a Road Shower mounted on our new teardrop, but we've not used it yet. We will do a review of the Road Shower in our September/October 2022 issue.

## What's Included

The Geyser System comes with the unit itself, a twenty foot 12v power cord, a five foot hose line and one replaceable scrub sponge. The sponges come in green, yellow, or pink and they have a soft side and coarse side. Having easily changeable different color sponges makes it a breeze for each person to have their own sponge, plus you can use one for doing dishes or cleaning gear too.



## How it Works

Attach the sponge to the hose line by pushing together until the two arrows meet. Twist the fastener about a quarter turn to lock it in place. Turn the control valve off to prevent



the water from flowing immediately once the unit is turned on. Place the Geyser on a flat surface, connect the 12v power cord and hose to the unit. The water hose fits via a quick connector that locks in place. Plug the unit into a 12v socket (if using a vehicle, turn the vehicle on), fill the unit with the specified amounts of cold and hot water, screw the lid on and flip the switch on. The water pump will start moving water from the chamber through the hose to the attached sponge. These are the basics of how the unit works. If you want to just clean your gear like a bike, kayak, canoe, paddleboard, etc there's no need to add hot water. Below is our honest review of the Geyser.

## Product Review

Our Geyser System shower allows me to take a "shower" anytime I want because I don't have to wait for the sun to heat my water like in a shower bag or Road Shower. This is a bonus for me since I don't feel like I'm awake until I've had my shower.

The instruction booklet that comes with the Geyser explains how to get the best temperature shower which is great in theory. There is a table in the booklet that says how many liters of 50°, 60°, or 75°F (10°, 15.5°, or 23.8°C) water should be added first to the Geyser before topping off with a certain number of liters of boiling water. We don't travel with a thermometer, so I normally don't have any idea what our "cold" water temperature is. We also don't currently carry an efficient method of quickly measuring in quarter liter increments. Granted, one quart

is probably close enough to a liter, but I don't want to measure out up to 2.5L of cold water using the one-cup measuring cup we do travel with. Getting the right measurements though of cold and hot water is key to achieving the warmest temperature shower. If you err on the side of too much cold to hot water, then your shower won't be as warm as it could be. And considering you're likely doing this either in the open air or in a pop-up tent, it may not be ideal. If you add too much hot water,



then the Geyser will automatically disable the pump until the water cools down. So if your water is above 113°F (45°C) it turns off until the water cools to 85-95°F (30-35°C). Unless

you dump out some of the hot water and add cold, it can take quite a while to cool down to a safe temperature. Even if you do swap cold for hot water, the thermostat takes some time to allow the pump to turn on. Because of the issues above, we normally err on the side of having a cooler than what's possible shower which isn't always ideal in the cool morning air temperatures.

It would be easy enough to carry a small thermometer to gauge our cold water temperature going into the Geyser so we could more accurately know how to achieve the warmest possible shower without disabling the pump. An improvement to the product would be to have a clear, vertical window with graduated measurements similar to electric kettles. Carrying a thermometer and having an efficient way to measure the water would provide a much better experience.

Is it really a shower? Maybe not in the purest sense of the word, but it nearly could be. It's more like a sponge bath, where you control how little or how much water is in the sponge by turning the flow control valve up or down. Once I'm ready for my "shower," I put some biodegradable soap on the sponge and start with just a trickle of water flowing from the Geyser. When using the pump on the lowest setting, the water will last about fifteen minutes. I wash my body on the lowest setting (or maybe one more click up) before I move to washing my hair. I have short hair, so it's relatively easy to use to wash my hair by turning the control valve to allow more water to come through the sponge. With the sponge directly overhead, I wait a second for it to fill up with water, then I squeeze the water out (on my head) until my hair is

completely wet. I turn the control knob to the off position, wash my hair, and then turn the control knob back on relatively high and rinse my hair by repeatedly squeezing the water out of the sponge onto my head. I can usually wash my hair and body before the "low water" light starts flashing on the top of the unit. This light flashes when you have about 10% of your water left, so it's a good indicator that it's time to wrap up your shower. I am always amazed that when I'm done with my shower that I still have water left. I successfully shower using only .8 gallons (or 3L) of water which still amazes me!

I must admit that the first time I used the Geyser, I thought it might be my last. When I put my cold and hot water in the unit, I screwed the cap on tightly, picked it up and gave it a shake. It seemed like a simple solution to quickly mix the hot and cold water to get it just right immediately. Once I set it down, I kept the cap screwed on tightly because I didn't want to lose my water if I accidentally knocked it over while showering. Once I was done and I was getting the Geyser ready for the next person, I couldn't unscrew the cap. We tried for several minutes with two people trying to get the cap off with zero success. Fortunately, we were at the TearJerkers Crossroads of America gathering and not out in the middle of a national forest by ourselves. I walked over to a neighboring campsite to get some additional help. I held the unit on the ground and kept it from turning, while a guy who looked like a bodybuilder finally was able to spin the cap a bit to release the pressure. There is nothing listed in the instructions or on the website about this issue. Last fall, I did exchange a few emails with the Geyser team about this and their advice was to not screw the cap

on as tightly as I did. They did say that can happen and they are looking for a possible solution as a product improvement.

## Geyser Systems

This Colorado company is on a mission “to transform people’s relationship with water one drop at a time.” For those of us that will use the product for camping, it means less water to carry, millions of gallons of water saved over traditional solar bag showers, and it provides us with an economical way to stay clean while out camping. Considering the expanding drought conditions in North America, knowing that I can shower for a week using less than 6 gallons of water (22.7L) instead of at least 35 gallons of water using a solar shower (132.5L) helps fuel my desire to live more sustainably.

Jonathan, the CEO of Geyser, wants to change the world. More than 2.3 billion people live in water stressed regions of the world. Water stress refers to the ability, or lack thereof to meet human and ecological needs for fresh water. Billions of people don’t have water that flows from a tap. They must either carry it from a distant well or have it delivered to them via truck. They don’t have the ability to just hop in the shower to wash up. On a recent trip to rural Mexico, the CEO visited with a woman who explained how she boils water on her kitchen stove, puts it in a large bucket, and then carries it to a shower area. Her family uses tupperware to pour water over themselves to shower. The family spends a large portion of their income on having water trucked in and on propane to heat it. He presented her with an affordable prototype of the Geyser shower and she saw how it could reduce their water consumption by 10x. She will also save a lot of time and money by not having to manage as much water.

The Geyser vision is to “empower the 2.3 billion people living in water stressed regions of the globe to be free beyond the limitations that come with little water.”

## Summary

I’ve tried several other methods for staying clean while dispersed camping and the Geyser System provides the best options I’ve tried



to date. The unit is compact, so it doesn't take up much space in our tow vehicle. The water line and the 12v power cord stow nicely in the water chamber for ease of transport. The system uses so little water which results in being ready to shower or do dishes in less than five minutes. I feel so refreshed and clean while using less than .8 gallons (3L) of water. Plus using less water is best for the environment. I like that the sponges are affordable and easy to swap from one to another. Each person can have their own sponge and you can have a separate one for doing dishes too. The long 12v power cord allows us to shower away from the teardrop so we don't create any muddy places near our tiny camper. We have used the Geyser with the battery from our teardrop as well as with our Jackery if we wanted to be further away from the teardrop.

Despite the potential issue of not being able to get the temperature just right, the Geyser System is a great product that we will continue to use. I can easily carry a small thermometer to measure the temperature of our cold water; however, I would love to see them make the small improvement of adding a clear, vertical window with measurement graduations to help us dial in the temperature better. ■

Overall, the Geyser System fits perfectly with our camping style. We love being remote, which also means no amenities. Being able to quickly take a shower while boondocking is a luxury well worth the price of the product. ■





## RENTING YOUR TINY CAMPER

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By COOL TEARS STAFF

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RV ownership is at a record high with over 11 million people in the United States owning an RV in 2021. During the pandemic, demand for RVs soared; labor and part shortages resulted in lead times of one to two years and the price of raw materials became unmanageable for many DIY teardrop or squaredrop trailer builders. So, with everything stacked against a wanna-be teardrop trailer camper, how can one get outside and explore? Rent!

In January 2022, Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine surveyed over 1000 people around the world regarding the habits of teardrop and squaredrop trailer owners. Nearly 7% of the respondents reported owning more than one tiny camper, but less than 1% of respondents rent their tiny camper when it's not being used by the family.

## Why rent out your teardrop?

There are many reasons why someone may want to rent your teardrop trailer. To see if it's actually a good fit for how they like to camp, teardrops are not for everybody and it's nice to try before you buy. Some people are afraid they will feel claustrophobic or won't fit inside? Offer them the opportunity to rent one for a weekend and find out. Some want to get into the RV lifestyle but don't have a large tow vehicle? Rent a teardrop trailer, most small SUVs and crossovers can easily tow a teardrop with no issues. Going on a cross country camping trip and don't want to sleep on the ground? Rent a teardrop trailer and sleep in a comfortable bed. For those wanting to buy and know a teardrop is right for them but not sure which company to go with. Rent the models you are interested in and see if one suits your style and needs. Have you already placed an order for a teardrop trailer but you won't get it for another two years?! You guessed it, rent one for your camping trips before your new shiny teardrop is ready for you.

You get the idea, renting a teardrop if you don't already own one is a great, cost effective way to explore options as a future RVer and an income stream for owners.

## Renting your teardrop

Cool Tears interviewed four people that rent their teardrop or squaredrop trailers from across the United States to get a feel for what it's like from the owner's perspective. Two of the people that rent their tiny campers are located in the upper midwest; one in Colorado and the last one is located in the Pacific Northwest. Each of the four people interviewed were asked the same questions.

The intent of this article is to share the good, the bad, and the ugly about renting a teardrop or squaredrop trailer and to help dispel any myths about it.

## Rental companies and insurance

Each of the respondents use a third party to rent their teardrop or squaredrop trailers. Outdoorsy and RVShare are the two main companies that are used and they are similar to AirBnB, except these beds are on wheels. There are owner benefits to using a third party like these. First, they help to put your tiny camper in front of people that are looking for what you have listed. For example, if I live in city "x" and I want to rent a teardrop, it is easy to search for the trailers near where I live that are available for the dates that I want. So as an owner, there is no need to do extra marketing to try to rent the trailer. The second benefit is that these companies take care of the insurance with the renter. The insurance is paid upfront when the renter reserves the teardrop. It should also be noted that most of the owners also charge a security deposit that is refundable

if the teardrop is brought back undamaged. One of the people interviewed rents out three trailers and stated that "out of hundreds of rentals, we have not had any damage which rose to the level a claim had to be filled." Two of the other people interviewed did have damage to their trailers, but one could be repaired with the money from the security deposit. One of the people interviewed had their teardrop rear-ended at the height of the pandemic in 2020 (during the summer)

If you're considering renting your teardrop or squaredrop trailer know that you can offer as many or as few extra amenities as you want and you can choose to either include them in the rental price or the extras can be additional charges. Cool Tears specifically asked if the owners provided a wash tub, water jugs, camp stove, and cooler or fridge. The answers varied. A few of them provide everything except food while others provide no extras. A few of the owners interviewed provide a lot of the basics, but do charge a price for more pricey amenities such as generators, solar panels, an extra tent, etc.

## **Location, Location, Location. Does it matter?**

Cool Tears was curious if the location of the rental would make a difference in the number of days the teardrop or squaredrop would be rented. Our theory was that people that lived near national parks would have more success. That myth was busted! None of the owners interviewed limit the mileage during the rental period and several stated that people are renting their tiny campers to take on cross country camping trips. In their experience, an owner in the upper midwest stated that they have a number of renters that pickup one of their campers and go on extended trips to Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons, or Glacier National Parks.



and it took two months for the trailer to be repaired. Not only did Outdoorsy cover the cost of the repair, but they were also able to recover the two months of lost rental income as well.

## **Are extras necessary?**

## **Do you recommend renting your teardrop?**

The answers to this question did vary a little by respondent, but overall the consensus was yes, they would recommend renting out your tiny camper. Some of the owners who were interviewed run this as a part-time family business and said it helps defray the cost of their trailers since it's an asset that you can't use all of the time. Most of the owners also stated that they love hearing the stories when their renters return from their trips.

It is recommended that you be intimately familiar with your trailer and how it works if you plan to rent your trailer so you can answer any questions the renters may have while on a trip.

## **Summary**

The people that were interviewed have had mostly positive experiences with renting their teardrop or squaredrop trailers, but do caution that it's important to remember that the trailer is replaceable. If the thought of seeing your tiny trailer come back dirty or damaged makes you sick to your stomach, then maybe renting is not for you.

It is important to remember that if you choose to rent your teardrop trailer, you are enabling someone else to have an experience that otherwise would not be possible. As teardrop or squaredrop owners, we love talking about our camping experiences, so it's only natural that we love to help others have similar experiences.

If you have any questions, comments, or experiences about either renting a teardrop or renting your own teardrop that you'd like to share with Cool Tears and Tiny Campers let us know! We'd love to hear from you at [Anne@cooltears.com](mailto:Anne@cooltears.com)

# WHEEL BEARINGS: 101



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By COOL TEARS STAFF

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**S**pring is in the air and it's time to hit the road! Maintaining the wheel bearings on a tiny camper is extremely important. Wheel bearings are often overlooked during regular maintenance, but forgetting to maintain them properly is a safety hazard since they allow the wheels to spin properly and carry the weight of your tiny camper. Maintaining your bearings on a regular basis can help ensure safe travels for the upcoming season. Understanding what the bearings are and how they function will help to keep this on your regular maintenance list.

## What are Wheel Bearings

A wheel bearing is a set of small, steel balls held together in a metal ring, called a race. Basically, it allows the wheel to rotate smoothly with minimum friction, while carrying the trailer weight. The wheel bearing is located within the wheel hub, which connects the wheel to the axle. Each wheel has its own set of wheel bearings.

Most trailers have unsealed bearings as opposed to sealed, which prevents debris from getting into the bearings. Sealed bearings do not need to be cleaned and repacked like unsealed bearings do. If you're building your own trailer or need to change wheel bearings, then you may want to consider replacing them with sealed bearings.

## Symptoms of a Bad Wheel Bearing

The good thing about a wheel bearing is that it's pretty easy to tell when one goes bad. Here are some or all of the symptoms you may encounter when a bearing is failing.

### **Unusual Noise**

The most common symptom of a bad wheel bearing is the odd noise they make when the wheel is spinning. Depending how the wheel bearing is failing, it could be a humming, squealing, whirring, rumbling, or grinding noise. Anything that sounds out of the norm when the wheel spins could indicate a problem with the bearing.

### **Uneven Tire Wear**

As the bearings wear down, they loosen within the race and they lose some of their effectiveness. This may allow the wheel to

become "loose." Look for uneven tire wear. Maybe the inside or outside of the tire tread is more worn than the rest. Note that uneven tire wear can also be a symptom of not having properly inflated tires. So to be sure to diagnose correctly, jack up the trailer so the suspect tire is off the ground. Place one hand on top of the tire and one near the bottom and try to wobble the tire. Then repeat side to side. If there is any play in it, then a wheel bearing has gone bad.

### **Vibrations or Feel**

If a wheel bearing is broken or becomes contaminated it could cause a rougher than usual ride.

If the tiny camper is consistently moving to one side of the road, it may be a sign that the bearings have failed.

### **Wheel Lock**

If any dirt or debris enters the wheel bearings, it can reduce lubrication and increase friction. In a short amount of time, the bearing will become very hot and can lock up or grind. If the bearing locks up, the wheel can lock up, creating a very dangerous situation.

## Wheel Bearing Maintenance and Frequency

Note: It is always best to maintain your tiny camper per the manufacturer's recommendations as the intervals may vary. If you made your tiny camper, then follow the recommendations from the trailer or hub manufacturer.

Driving conditions will dictate how often the wheel bearings should be inspected and

greased. If your camping adventures mostly stay on paved roads and you travel less than 20,000 miles (32,000 km) then greasing the bearings once per year might be sufficient. If your travels have you on dirt roads more frequently and you cross the occasional stream that comes to the center of your wheels, then greasing the bearings on a more frequent basis may be needed.



Wheel bearings can be repacked by a DIYer. There are no specialized tools that are required; however, it's messy and can be time consuming for a beginner. Most auto mechanics or tire shops will inspect the wheel bearings and add grease for a small fee.

## Summary

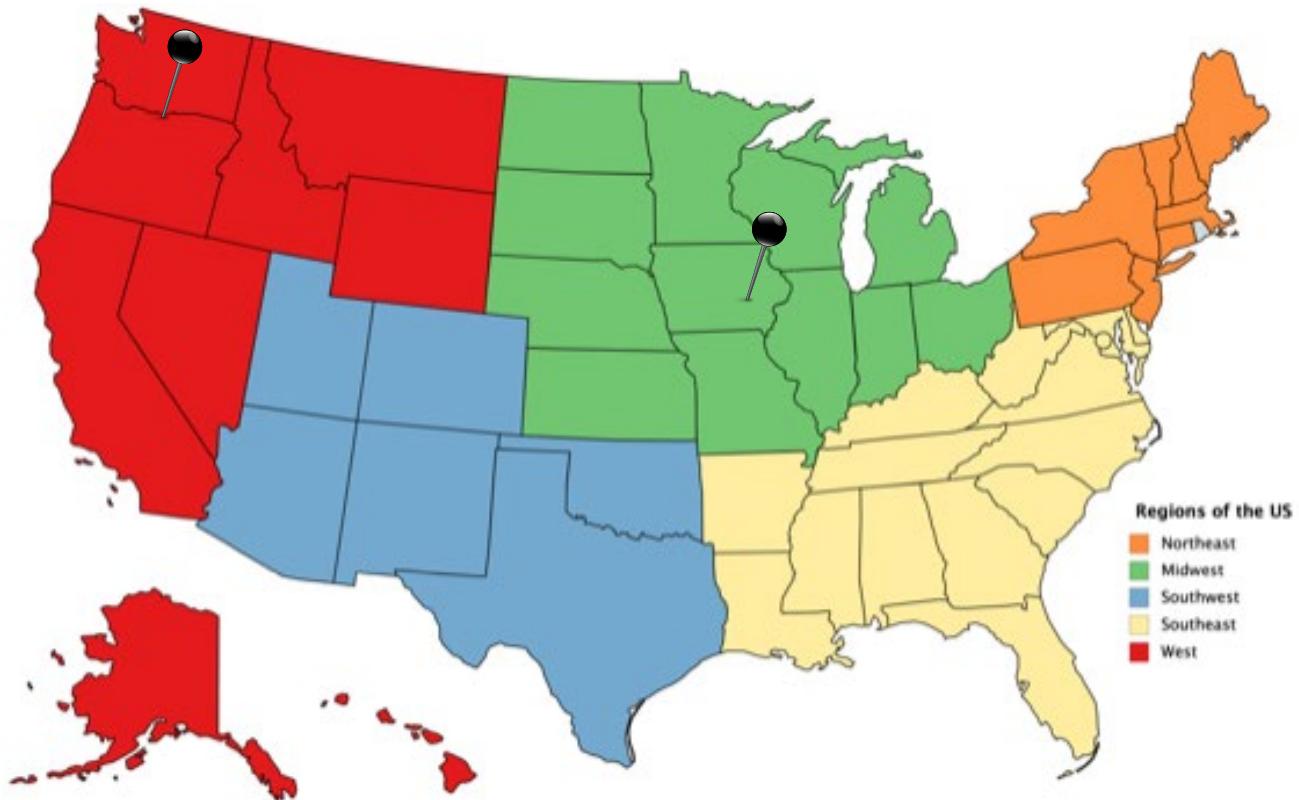
Cool Tears also recommends having an extra set of bearings and grease specific to your trailer in your tool box. Wheel bearings are inexpensive and can be changed on the side of the road in an emergency situation.

Wheel bearings are an integral part of the tiny campers and are often overlooked. However, when a bearing fails, it can stop you in your tracks. A little bit of inspecting your bearings and greasing when needed can help keep you safely on the road for the season.

Safe Travels! ■



# REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT



**"T**he woods are lovely, dark and deep...." ~ Robert Frost

Last summer, we stayed at a US Army Corps of Engineers campground for the first time and learned why so many people love them. There are 450 campgrounds in 43 states and most of them are on waterways. [Use this link to find a great Army Corps of Engineers campground.](#) Happy camping. ■

**Location: Coralville Lake**  
2850 Prairie Du Chien Rd NE  
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

### **Getting There:**

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):  
41.7238, -91.522  
41°43'25.6800"N, 91°31'19.2000"W

Coralville Lake is located just 6 miles (9.6 km) north of Iowa City, Iowa and its southern end is only 2 miles (3.2 km) north of Interstate 80. The lake and the surrounding shoreline have been developed for public recreational use which includes, boating, fishing, hiking, biking, and camping. But it's important to understand the history of the area to know why Cool Tears recommends this as a camping destination.

The Iowa River drains the eastern half of Iowa and flows into the Mississippi River along Iowa's eastern border. In the early 1930's, record floods swept the nation which prompted Congress to establish the Flood Control Act of 1938. The US Army Corps of Engineers constructed several dams on the Mississippi River's tributaries in an attempt to reduce flooding downstream. An earthen dam was authorized to be built by the Corp which would moderate the flow in the Iowa River as well as provide a more controlled flow into the Mississippi River. The 1400 feet long, 100 feet high dam regulates the runoff from over 3000 square miles (7770 square km) upstream of the dam, which provides flood protection for over 1700 square miles (2735 square km) of the Iowa River Valley below the dam. The dam was completed in 1958.

It's important to note that in the mid 1800's, Louis Agassiz, a Harvard zoologist, spoke at nearby University of Iowa about the "Coral Reefs of Iowa City" due to the amount of samples of fossilized coral that were found in the limestone around the mills along the Iowa River. In 1993, the spillway at Coralville Lake was breached due to the heavy and constant rains. For 28 straight days, as much as 17000 cubic feet of water per second (481 cubic meters) flowed down the spillway,





wiping out a campground and road. Fifteen feet of river bottom silt and sand was washed away which exposed the limestone below. Stone slabs weighing two or three tons were carried hundreds of feet downstream.

What is known now as the Devonian Fossil Gorge was unearthed from this flooding. This fossil field shows a prehistoric seabed that is 375 million years old. That's older than the oldest known dinosaurs by about 200 million years. This gorge is just a few minutes walk from several of the campgrounds in this complex. We visited Gorge on our way to Colorado last summer and saw fossilized coral, primitive fish, shells, etc on our walk.

### **Other Nearby Attractions**

Cedar Rapids is less than 25 miles (40 km) north and offers several cultural attractions such as [The National Czech and Slovak Museum](#). West Branch, Iowa, 16 miles to the east (25.7 km), is home to the [Herbert Hoover National Historic Site and Presidential Museum and Library](#). The [Amana Colonies](#) are less than 20 miles (32 km) to the northeast. The colonies are seven villages spanning 26000 acres (11000 ha) and they are now a tourist attraction known for its restaurants and craft shops.

**Number of Sites:** 500 (3 campgrounds)

**Pets:** yes

**Water:** yes

**Electric:** yes

**Price per night:** \$\$ (\$20/night, electric site - \$16 for non-electric)

**Fire Rings:** yes

**Picnic Tables:** yes

**Restrooms/Showers:** yes

Campground has ADA accessible sites.

**Primary activities within the park:** Hiking, biking, boating, water activities, fishing, disc golf, and wildlife viewing.

**Pro Tip:**

This Army Corps of Engineers campground has Life Jacket Loaner Stations set up throughout the park and are available on a first come first serve basis. Just return to the life jacket to the station before leaving the park.



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**Location:** Lepage Park  
LePage Park Road  
Rufus, Oregon 97050

### **Getting There:**

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):  
45.7278, -120.6529  
45°43'42.2299"N, 120°39'4.5500"W

Lepage Park is located at the confluence of the John Day and Columbia Rivers near Rufus, Oregon and the John Day Dam, which is downstream on the Columbia River. This park is owned and operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

This small park features eight pull-through riverfront sites. All other RV sites are back-in sites. All sites are paved. The sites in this small campground are not large and note that they are relatively close together. You may hear traffic from nearby Interstate 84. I know, it doesn't sound great...yet.

Lepage Park is situated in a river basin with a high desert climate. The weather and the water are the main features of this park. Even during the hottest of days in the summer, the night time temperatures usually cool to very comfortable temperatures, so no AC is needed. May is usually the wettest month which still averages less than 1.5 inches of rain (less than 34 mm). This park sits on the John Day River. It is the fourth longest free-flowing river in the contiguous United States and is the longest undammed tributary of the Columbia River. The river system is protected by the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Oregon Scenic Waterways Act. These two acts, the first federal and the latter at the state level, provide the best protection for the natural, scenic, and recreational values for the river.

To get the maximum enjoyment of this park, bring a small boat or paddle board and head upstream. There is little current because the John Day Dam on the Columbia River forms Lake Umatilla. Many people report that while paddling the river that they've been able to paddle near deer and beavers.

### **Other Nearby Attractions**

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument is about 2.5 hour drive from LaPage Park in Kimberly, Oregon. In 2005, the [Thomas Condon Paleontology Center](#) was opened to the public in this national monument. There are also many outfitters upstream on the John Day River for whitewater rafting or more calm float trips. The [Maryhill Museum of Art](#) is about a 20 minute drive from the campground on the Washington side of the river.

**This campground will open on April 14, 2022 and close for the season on October 14, 2022.**

**Number of Sites:** 22 for RVs and 20 tent sites

**Pets:** yes

**Water:** yes

**Electric:** yes

**Price per night:** \$\$\$ (\$30/night)

**Fire Rings:** yes

**Picnic Tables:** yes

**Restrooms/Showers:** vault toilets

Campground has ADA accessible sites.

**Primary activities within the park:** Boating, water sports, and swimming in the John Day River. Fish for smallmouth bass, catfish, and sunfish. The campground has a boat ramp for convenient river access. Wildlife viewing is also popular in the river corridor with animals such as mule deer, various waterfowl, elk, black bear, and birds of prey such as peregrine falcons and bald eagles.

**Pro Tip:** The river (more upstream) offers unmatched habitat for several native fish including wild steelhead, Chinook salmon, bull trout, and westslope cutthroat.



*John Day River, Central Oregon*

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