A LITTLE GUIDE TO MOTORHOMING

The Camping and Caravanning Club

The Friendly Club

A LITTLE GUIDE TO MOTORHOMING FOR NEWBIES...

CALL OF THE OPEN ROAD

The sun is shining, music is playing and the road ahead is clear: you wind down the window and enjoy the feel of the breeze on your face as you make your way from one site to the next. Stopping at interesting-looking villages, you explore the area, sampling local delicacies along the way.

With a motorhome, you're ready to set off whenever the fancy takes you!

TOP MOTORHOMING TIPS

Here are our top tips for a hassle-free start to your motorhoming life:

- ★ Plan ahead! This might sound obvious, but when you're travelling in a larger vehicle some routes won't be suitable. Most sites will include directions for motorhomes and there are also dedicated motorhome sat-navs that will help you avoid getting stuck under a low bridge.
- ★ In a land where the weather can change more frequently than your socks, you need to be prepared for all eventualities. So having a packing checklist will definitely come in handy, and don't forget that bin bags and gaffer tape can be very useful!
- ★ As pretty as it might look, you should avoid pitching under a tree. The shade might seem tempting but the sap droplets that will cover your motorhome are way less appealing! And while your motorhome may well be heated, it can still get chilly in the evening. So taking a quilt with a higher tog count or a couple of extra blankets is a good idea.
- ★ Consider **joining a club** or group. This means you'll always be in the company of like-minded campers who can teach you even more tricks. It could help you feel more reassured, especially if you camp on your own. You could also get some discounted pitch fees which is a bonus.

ROUND, ROUND, GET AROUND

If you want to share the driving or lend your motorhome to a friend or family member, there are a couple of things to bear in mind:

First, make sure they have the right licence. It's easy to find out – just check the categories on the back of the card. Category B means they can drive a motorhome with a maximum weight up to 3,500kg; if they also have category C1, they can drive a larger vehicle up to 7,500kg.

Once that's sorted, it might be worth enrolling on a **motorhome driving course**. These are great for boosting your confidence on the road. You'll generally also learn about things like loading your motorhome and get hints and tips to help you perfect your reversing.

WEIGHING THINGS UP

Something else you need to think about is the distribution of weight in your motorhome. Balancing the load between left and right and front to back will make your motorhome easier to drive. As a general guide, pack bigger and heavier items as low as possible, like in bottom cupboards or bed boxes. You could also add a roof box or a bike rack to your motorhome.

GOOD TO GO

Here's a quick checklist to run through before you set off:

- ☑ Close all doors and windows, including cupboards, external flaps and roof lights
- ☑ Unplug the electric cable (from the mains bollard first)
- ☑ Turn off the gas cylinder (unless the system has a crash switch)
- ☑ Switch the fridge to battery
- ☑ Wind up corner steadies (if your motorhome has them)
- ☑ Make sure mirrors are adjusted for the driver
- ☑ Check your tyre pressures, oil, coolant and screen wash

DRIVING ALONG IN MY AUTOMOBILE

Here is some helpful advice from our technical team and manoeuvring instructors for when you're first setting off on the road:

"Try to avoid sharp or jerky acceleration and braking and remember to allow extra clearance and more time when overtaking. Don't forget that seatbelts must be worn in the cab and in travelling seats in the living quarters.

Also, speed limits are different if you're driving a larger motorhome (over 3,050kg): 60mph on dual carriageways (excluding motorways) and 50mph on single carriageways. And finally, if there's a long queue of traffic behind you, find somewhere safe to pull over and let it pass."

When it comes to deciding on your motorhoming trips, it's often location, location, location that's the deciding factor. There's so much to see and do around the UK, not to mention further afield.

From the rugged Highlands of Scotland to the gently rolling hills of the Cotswolds, the hidden coves on the Cornish coast to the long sandy beaches of Lincolnshire, the bright lights of the big cities to the tranquillity of the countryside – the choice is yours!

DRIVING ALONG IN MY AUTOMOBILE

And what are you going to do when you get there? If you're looking for inspiration, you've come to the right place...

★ **If you want to get active**

Take a hike along Hadrian's Wall or for more of a challenge, try a climb up Ben Nevis, Snowdon or Scafell Pike. There are so many great walking routes all over the UK that you'll be spoilt for choice! Make a list of all the walks you'd like to try and tick them off as you go.

★ **If you want to contemplate the universe**

The UK has some great spots for stargazing, with over a third of International Dark Sky Reserves on our shores. Whether it's a meteor shower or the Northern Lights, take a blanket and some binoculars, lie back and count the stars.

★ **If you want a bit of culture**

We're blessed with a range of great museums and art galleries offering free entry to permanent exhibitions. From the Ashmolean in Oxford (founded in 1683!) to the World Museum in Liverpool, you'll be sure to find out something interesting.

★ **If you want to be at one with nature**

From puffins to seals, deer to sharks (yes, sharks!), the UK is home to a fascinating range of species. See deer and wild ponies in the New Forest, visit Smardale Gill in Cumbria to spot red squirrels or take a boat trip off the Cornish coast to see basking sharks.

★ **If you're in search of local delicacies**

There's a wealth of culinary delights just waiting to be discovered, from Cromer crab in Norfolk to Cornish pasties, Whitstable oysters to Bakewell tarts and Yorkshire puddings to Cumberland sausage. Treat your taste buds to a new gastronomic discovery.

★ **If you're angling for relaxation**

Fishing is one of the most popular participation sports in the UK and, with many campsites located close to rivers, lakes or the coast, easily accessible. Pitch up on site, grab your gear and head for the nearest river.

★ **If you fancy a drive**

A motorhome is surely built for an epic road trip? If you're hoping to explore as far as possible, taking in a route such as the North Coast 500 could be just the thing! Dubbed "Scotland's answer to Route 66", the route traces the main roads along the coastal edges of the North Highlands.

★ **If you want to run away to sea**

As an island nation, Britons have long been fascinated by life on the ocean waves. From Portsmouth to Dundee, there's a whole range of maritime museums to discover: historic ships, ancient dockyards, even a German U-Boat!

★ **If you're the king of the castle**

It sometimes feels like there's a castle on every corner in the UK – in fact, Wales has more castles per square mile than anywhere else on earth! Standing as testament to the country's long and often bloody history, each castle holds its own secrets to be discovered...

LOOKING GOOD

With a little bit of TLC, your motorhome will be the envy of the campsite for years to come.

- ★ Keep it clean – there are specialist motorhome cleaning products available online or from outdoor retailers
- ★ If you're hibernating your motorhome for the winter, you might want to fit a purpose built cover – just make sure it's clean first!
- ★ Treat your windows with particular care – rinse off any grit or grime with cold water, then wash them with a soft cloth and warm water. Don't use any detergents as they could damage the surface
- ★ Use a damp cloth and specialist detergent to clean interior surfaces – don't use household products
- ★ If your basins are plastic, check the manufacturer's instructions before cleaning and always fill with cold water before adding hot
- ★ Drain any water containers completely, clean the outside and then refill with clean water and sterilising solution. Drain once more and rinse thoroughly before storing dry

UNDER COVER

An awning is a great way to increase the amount of living space in your motorhome. From a place to store dripping coats when the weather gets a bit British to an extra dining or sleeping area, they offer fantastic flexibility when you're out and about.

You have two main options when it comes to choosing what's right for you:

- Drive-Away Awnings

  As the name suggests, you can leave this awning on your pitch when you go out for the day in your motorhome. It's self-supporting and can be attached to your motorhome's awning rail (if it has one). It'll also help to keep the worst of any wind or rain away from the door, meaning you'll be even more snug and cosy inside.

  You'll need to get lined up properly when you get back to your pitch, so find a fixed point or place a tennis ball at the front in the centre of your number plate or at the back under the tow bar (if you have one). You can also put grips or levelling ramps next to your tyres. Then you'll be perfectly positioned when you get back from your day's adventures.

- Canopy Awnings

  These can be fixed to the side of your motorhome and unfurl like a roller blind. They usually have a couple of poles to support the outer edge. Most canopy awnings don't have sides, but if you want a bit more enclosed space, it may be worth the extra investment.

Fitting a permanent canopy awning is a specialist job, so speak to your dealer if this is something you'd like to have.

GO GO GADGET

One of the best things about holidaying in a motorhome is that you can really make it your own. With all the gadgets, gizmos and gear on the market today, motorhoming is comfier and more convenient than ever before.

We've put together this list of the top ten must-have accessories for your motorhome...

1. **Wi-Fi booster**
   While some people see a motorhoming holiday as a chance to get away from their devices, for others staying connected while away from home is important. Most Club Sites offer free Wi-Fi, but the signal can vary depending on location.
2. **Bike Rack**
   If you're looking for something a bit more active, fitting a bike rack to your motorhome could be the perfect choice. There are lots of off-road cycle tracks all around the UK, meaning plenty of opportunities for you to explore!
3. **Camping chairs**
   From fishing stools to luxury recliners, there's so much choice in camping chairs that you'll be sure to find one that's just right for you. Whether it's to take to the beach or just to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine on site, a folding chair (or two!) is indispensable.
4. **Games**
   It's always good to have a few games stashed away – something to while away any rainy hours. From something like a pack of cards to board games, having something to do if the weather turns can be invaluable, especially if you're camping with kids!
5. **Lanterns**
   Battery-operated lanterns can come in very handy. Sitting outside your motorhome on a balmy summer evening, relaxing with a glass of wine is one of life's simple pleasures. A little extra light means you don't have to go in when the sun goes down.

GO GO GADGET

6 Camper Hamper
These nifty little cool bags/barbecue stands are a great accessory to have on hand. Not only will they keep your food and drinks cool while you're out and about, but the handles detach to become a stand for a disposable barbecue.

7 E-Reader
If you're an avid reader, investing in a device such as a Kindle will save you loads of space and weight when packing for your hols. There's a wide range on the market these days, which makes finding the one that's right for you much easier.

8 Satellite TV
If you really don't want to miss your favourite shows, having a TV in your motorhome can come in really handy. Most motorhomes already have an aerial and you might find it handy to pick up a signal strength meter to help you get the best picture.

9 Bamboo dining set
When every gram counts, replacing your crockery with a bamboo set could make all the difference. And they're good for the environment too! You can find a wide range of designs available, and sets including dinner plates, side plates, bowls and mugs.

10 Reusable cups/water bottles
Do your bit in the fight against single use plastics and waste by keeping a reusable travel mug or water bottle handy. Many coffee shops will happily refill your reusable cup and with lots of designs offering vacuum insulation, your favourite brew will stay nice and warm too!

For more super handy and ever so useful help and advice on buying a motorhome, or what to do when you've got it you should definitely check out our **New to Motorhomes section!**

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