

A to Z Check List Before your Caravan Road Trip

It feels like there are a million things to do and pack before you take off on a road trip adventure in the caravan. When you are packing everything from the tongs to the toothbrush, the job can take days (or a couple of very late nights) depending on how late you have left it.

Take the pressure off by getting organised early and have a packing list you can check off as you go. Anything you can do in advance will make the job a little less stressful and help get you on the road earlier.

What to Pack for your Caravan Road Trip

You will probably find you take slightly different things on each trip depending on the location and duration, but there are plenty of items that go with you every trip. Keep a list of these essentials to ensure you don't leave home without them.

It is a good idea to write a list of the main meals you are going to eat while you are away. This allows you to buy some of the dry goods in advance and reduces the chance of taking food items you won't use.

Caravan Checklist

Your caravan is a tight living space so only take what you need. Before packing anything, think if there is a smaller, lighter version. To save yourself time each trip, leave what you can in the caravan and have a list of things to keep in the caravan so you know what's there.

After you have finished packing, double check you have locked every drawer and cupboard door to stop the contents flying out while you are travelling.

- Check fire alarm, replace the battery if needed
- Fire extinguisher/fire blanket
- Dishwashing detergent, plug, sponges, tea towels
- BBQ wipes, car or canvas cleaners, big sponge, old towel
- Soap, wipes, hand sanitiser, hand towel, tissues
- Mini vacuum or brush/pan set
- Mats for inside and outside the caravan
- Container for holding shoes
- Small table if you like to prepare meals outside the van
- Folding chairs
- Small bin & bin liners
- Bags for shopping & carrying clothes
- Large bag for dirty clothes, pegs and washing powder, clothesline
- Cards, board games, reading material, pens
- Camera
- Sporting equipment
- Fishing gear

- Umbrella, wet weather gear, sun protection, hats
- Chargers for any devices you take
- Torches, firelighters
- Toaster and kettle
- Toiletries & bath towels
- Extension cord/s for car fridge & caravan on a powered site
- Kitchen utensils including tongs, egg flip, potato peeler, chopping boards

Car Checklist

It's tempting to pack as much as you can into the caravan and leave the car space for passengers, but there is nothing worse than realising you can't access something while you're travelling because you've packed it in the caravan, not the car. Here is an explanation for items to carry in the car

- GPS – the [Hema HX-1 Navigator](#) provides on and off-road navigation with topographic maps and thousands of points of interest to see along the way.
- EPIRB – if you are leaving the road and exploring some remote areas, an EPIRB will ensure emergency services can find you
- First aid kit – keep it in the car rather than the caravan, so you always have it with you after unhitching.
- Baby wipes - can be used on everything from kids' sticky fingers to cleaning up after changing a tyre.
- Rubbish bags - small rubbish bags for food wrappers and receipts that float around the car.
- Device charger – if the kids are using an iPad in the car, plug it in.
- Rubber backed rug – if you need to get under the car or van to change a tyre, you will need something to kneel on rather than the hot/wet bitumen.
- Gaffer Tape – it comes in handy if something breaks and you need to hold it together.
- Rag/Old Towel –protect your hands if you need to open the bonnet or for when the kids spill their drink.
- Tools – Keep a few basic tools handy if your toolbox isn't easily accessible from the caravan.
- Snacks – enough said if you have kids!

Tool Checklist

The tools you take depends on the type of road trip you are doing. If you aren't leaving the bitumen and you're staying in well-equipped caravan parks, you won't need as many tools as an off-road trip in the middle of nowhere with limited passing traffic.

- Electrical tape
- Spare fan belt and radiator hoses
- Hammer and rubber mallet
- Spanner set
- Screwdrivers
- Tyre pressure gauge

- Puncture repair kit
- Socket set
- Mini spirit level to check the van is level
- Scissors
- Stanley knife
- Tie cables

Spares Checklist

If you can't rely on a shop being down the road for part of your trip, you will need to come prepared with some spares.

- Batteries for torch, lamp, fire alarm, camera etc
- Camera memory cards
- Tyre/s for car
- Tyre/s for caravan
- Fuses

Pre Travel Checklist

Here are some suggestions to help get organised early, so you aren't trying to do it all in the last few days.

More than One Week Out

- Cancel the newspapers at home
- Organise for your mail to be collected or held
- Test all the stations on your garden's reticulation
- Ask a neighbour to put out your bin
- Last catch-ups with friends and family
- Book the car in for a service if it's due
- Check the conditions of your tyres and the spare
- Fill up the gas bottle from the caravan, if needed
- Check your wardrobe in case you need to buy any clothes
- Research your location and book any tours
- If you are taking bikes, check tyres and spare parts
- Decide on the route you will take and buy your road maps and guidebooks

One Week To Go

- Vacuum pack and freeze the meat
- Purchase all your dry pantry items
- Give a family member a house key in case of an emergency
- Clean caravan of any cobwebs and dust

- Move linen into caravan and make beds
- Pack dry ingredients and drinks into van
- Start packing clothes you won't wear again before going

Day Before You Go

- Move any indoor plants outside if needed
- Ask a neighbour to put out your bin
- Fill the car with fuel
- Fill the caravan water tanks
- Purchase fresh foods you are taking
- Move any kitchen utensils you need into the caravan
- Finish washing and packing the clothes
- Organise snacks/meals for the first day of the trip to avoid cooking
- Turn on the caravan fridge and then pack food in
- Plug in the car fridge and move into the car
- Charge batteries

On the Morning You Go

The night before, write yourself a short list of everything you need to take with you in the morning (or print out the lists in this article with your own bullet points added) . I've learnt the hard way that it's always doing one final check.

- Pack the last of your toiletries
- Pack your pillows
- Empty the last items from the fridge
- Turn off any electrical appliances at the wall
- Empty any indoor bins
- Check you locked all doors and windows
- Pump up the tyres on the car and caravan after you leave home

Anyone that takes regular road trips declares that next time will be different – they will be more organised. Having lists for what to pack in the caravan and car can reduce the time you need to spend thinking and doing the tasks. Use these lists as a caravan pre-travel check and add your own items next time you are going away. You never know you might even leave earlier in a more relaxed state before the holiday has even begun. Happy travels!

A to Z Caravan Trailer Road Ready Check List

- **WHEEL BEARINGS:** Jack your caravan / trailer, one side at a time. To check the wheel bearings grasp the tyres and give it a rock. If you feel that there is excessive movement make sure to book your caravan / trailer in for a service.
- **LOAD MASS:** Always ensure that your load is under your limit, you never know what you might accumulate over your travels. It is always best to weigh the caravan at a public weighbridge. Check the caravan / trailer's suspension, does it look right? The load needs to be evenly distributed & balance.
- **BRAKES:** Perform a couple of low speed brake tests to make sure that your caravan / trailer brakes are functioning properly. **THIS IS A MUST..** you do not want to be travelling at high speeds before you realise your brakes need adjusting.
- **LIGHTS:** Are all of your lights working? Check your brakes, right & left indicators, park lights, tunnel boot, awning, grab handle, doorway, cupboards, fridge, bathroom, check EVERY light. Always carry spare globes for your internal & external lights (especially brakes & indicators).
- **TYRE INFLATION:** Are the caravan / trailer tyres inflated correctly? Refer to your caravan / trailer manual for correct pressure, alternatively contact your local caravan repairer.
- **CARAVAN/TRAILER COUPLING:** Check that the coupling and safety chains are securely fastened? When you have 2 safety chains fitted make sure they are crossed as this will prevent your drawbar from having contact with the road if your van gets disconnected.
- **CHAIN FIXING SHACKLES:** If your caravan / trailer requires the use of D Shackles, ensure they have adequate strength to hold the ball weight.
- **BATTERY:** Always charge your batteries a few days prior to your departure to make sure they are holding their charge.
- **LOAD:** Make sure that your load is stored securely even in side cupboards & storage areas. Evenly disperse your load throughout your caravan, limiting the amount of load in the front boot.
- **MIRRORS:** Firstly make sure you do not buy cheap towing mirrors, if you do always carry an extra pair because you are bound to lose them. Secondly please be sure to secure your mirrors properly.
- **AWNINGS:** Roll out your awning before each trip and check nothing has broken while in storage or on your last voyage. Secure the awning back into the travel position.
- **JOCKEY WHEEL:** Don't leave your jockey wheel in your driveway!! Ensure you have put your jockey wheel into your designated storage area or if it is on a swivel mount, lock it into position to travel.
- **STABILISERS:** Lock your front & rear stabilisers up into their travel position & store your winder in your preferred place (you want to be able to access this easily).
- **HANDBRAKE:** Always release your handbrake, last job before you are going to head off.