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# CHASING CANDICE

THE ULTIMATE VAN LIFE RESOURCE GUIDE



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*Getting Started*  
*Camping*  
*Safety*  
*Work*  
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## BLOGS

[Project Van Life](#) - Community-led forum with stories, tips and marketplace  
[Far Out Ride](#) - Your bougie one stop shop for electrical and top of the line build info  
[Barefoot Theory](#) - General summary to start van life  
[Gnomad Home](#) - Everything you need to know for a budget build & fiberglass top rig  
[Vanabond Tales](#) - Minimalist travel blog focused on hiking, van life, and sailing  
[Chasing Candice](#) - Stay tuned for this one..

## YOUTUBE

[@LinneaAndAkela](#) - Build tutorials, women's empowerment and the realities of van life  
[@SaraandAlexJames](#) - Custom builders that give quality tutorials  
[@FarOutRide](#) - Build tutorials for those with a higher budget  
[@VanLifeSagas](#) - The ups and downs of van life

## GETTING STARTED

There are a billion ways to van life, RV life, pop tent life, skoolie life, etc. Getting clear on the lifestyle that suits you is key. If you're building your rig/setup, you've got your work cut out for you. But! What a wonderful experience to create your own sanctuary?!

I didn't have any tools and very little experience going into this project. For the first 6 months, I only had a jig saw and power drill that I borrowed from an uncle. Check your local area for tool libraries, tool rentals, second-hand stores, and community Facebook pages to see about borrowing tools.

I was able to build my van with nearly all recycled materials. This method does take longer because you're acquiring things gradually. You also have to get creative and flexible as you build. I got nearly all my materials from community FB groups (ie buy nothing), Habitat for Humanity, junk yards, second-use construction material stores, and just making friends with contractors to take their excess materials.

## TERMINOLOGY

[Chassis](#) - The frame of the van that holds all of the weight and stress, knowing how much your chassis can handle is important so you don't overload the vehicle

[Wheelbase](#) - The distance between the center of the front and back tires

[Boondocking or dispersed camping](#) - Free off-grid camping with little to no amenities (electric hookups, water, or dump tanks)

[BLM land](#) - The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a federal US agency that manages millions of acres of land that we can all use for free camping

[Black water](#) - Your human waste tank, the ol' poop tank

[Grey water](#) - Water that has been used for dishes, showers, laundry, etc

[Shore power](#) - A plug-in option to use AC electrical grid to power your electrical things in the van

[Inverter](#) - converts DC (direct current) power into AC (alternating current) power. Makes house battery power usable for appliances and such in the van

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## HITTING THE ROAD

There is a lot to consider when hitting the road. **EVERYTHING** takes longer when you're in a van. You're making more grocery store trips because you don't have tons of space, and you're planning your weeks around groceries/showers/water refills/dumping the poop tank.

Rarely, do things go as planned, and have a backup plan. Often the site you choose isn't quite what you expected or the gas station no longer has propane.



## CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF

Mental health is one of van life's biggest and most overlooked aspects. Between the uncertainty of not knowing where you'll be sleeping to the ever-vigilant safety anxieties... There is a lot to process and it can feel like you are constantly "on."

Developing your soft skills is essential. What soft skills do you have for van life? Are you resourceful and flexible? How do you handle emergencies and extreme weather? How do you handle uncertainty? Like where are you going to be sleeping tonight?

It's super important to have a regular practice of checking in with yourself and coping mechanisms in place before starting van life. Self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and a robust coping mechanism toolkit are **ESSENTIAL**.

## FREE PARKING

[iOverlander App](#) - user updated map of boon docking, water, showers, propane, etc

[FreeCampsites.net](#) - interactive map of free camp sites

[Other Apps](#) - [The Dyrtr](#), [FreeRoam](#), [Vanly](#), [CampSpot](#), [Campendium](#), there are tons!

## PAID CAMPING

[Harvest hosts](#) - Membership, stay on other people's or businesses' property

[Hipcamp](#) - unique spots/glamping

[Recreation.gov](#) - state and federal sites

[KOA Campgrounds](#) - nationwide, discounts with membership

[Thousand Trails Campgrounds](#) - nationwide, membership option

## NAVIGATION

You're not always going to have service so downloading maps in advance is super helpful.

[Google or Apple Maps](#) - your preference

[Maps.me](#) - free, user updated, good second to google

[Gaia GPS](#) - best for trails and backcountry maps

[Roadtrippers.com](#) is a fun resource for finding things to do along your route: scenic spots, unique attractions, etc

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## SAFETY

This is always a tough one, being alert and vigilant is very important. Being able to discern what is a fearful thought verse an intuitive nudge is a SKILL to learn. There is a fine line between vigilance and paranoia.

What safety concerns are you anticipating and how will you handle them? Like theft, vehicle breakdowns, wildlife, carbon monoxide, harassment, and lack of accessibility to emergency services. As a solo female van lifer, you'll have to ask extra safety questions and be prepared for an increased safety risk.

- If you're solo, put out 2 pairs of shoes and chairs so people don't think you're alone.
- When you leave your van in a parking lot, yell something like "Bye honey, BRB"
- If a stranger is asking obtrusive questions like where are you staying tonight, who are you traveling with, etc.. they aren't entitled to that information. Be discerning and keep yourself safe.



## WORK

There are tons of ways to make money on the road!

Seasonal work - short-term work (couple weeks to months) generally in a tourism-based location

Remote work - usually computer-based, 9-5 Monday - Friday, must have internet

Freelance work - short project-based work, think editing videos on Fivver, or an app like that.

Having your own business of content creation, or selling your own products. Get creative and make your own way.

## GAS

Upside - gives you discounts and cash back

Gasbuddy - gives prices around you so you can plan ahead

Google Maps - shows gas stations along a route and prices (sometimes).

## SAFETY TOOLS

Garmin InReach -satellite phone that works backcountry

Tactical flashlight - a heavy flashlight that is powerful enough to temporarily blind someone and usually has a serrated edge

Safety keychain - usually has pepper spray, alarm, a stabby thing, brass knuckles, etc

Other Tools - Gun, knife, taser, bear spray.

*Whatever safety tools you choose to have, make sure you know how to use them and stay safe with them.*

## WORK

Wonolo - app for temporary work, usually stocking shelves for a day or two

Sites for Seasonal Gigs:

Vaga Jobs

Cool Works

Seasonal Government Jobs

Sites for Remote Gigs:

Four Day Work Week

Remote Ok

Flex Jobs

Sites for Freelance Gigs:

Fivver

Upwork

People Per Hour

## INTERNET

weBoost - signal booster

OpenSignal App & WifiMap

App - maps of wifi near you

Starlink - The best wifi I've found so far

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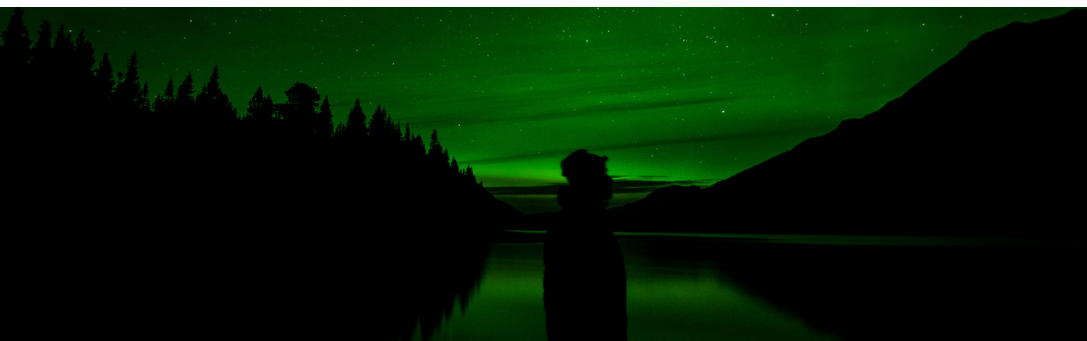


## COMMUNITY

Van life can be incredibly isolating. Before starting van life ask yourself: How well do you handle isolation? What will your current community/family say to you starting van life? How will you respond to that? What community resources will you use while on the road? How do you plan to develop/foster community while on the road?

As a person that leans heavily extroverted, this is something I have to be really conscious of. I've gotten really intentional about phone calls and Facetiming friends/family.

Being introspective is essential, when I need IRL community, I find meetups, go to a town or city, go to a coffee shop/brewery/park, literally any place that is going to have a social bend. One MASSIVE benefit to life on the road is that I have at least 1 friend in most major cities.



## MEET UPS

[Descend on Bend](#) - yearly van life meetup in Bend Oregon. 4 days of yoga, workshops, music, and community building

[TinyFest](#) - festivals held all over the US for tiny homes and nomadic living, from tiny homes to skoolies and vans. All are welcome!

[Adventure Van Expo](#) - build-focused meetups across the US, shop, get inspired, and meet other nomads and future nomads

[Escapar a La Baja](#) - yearly, week-long, meet-up in Baja California Sur at Playa El Tecolote, workshops, music, markets, dance classes, and more

[Vanarky](#) - yearly meet-up in the Ozarks, open to everyone, hiking, music, workshops, and more

\*not an exhaustive list... there are tons of meetups!!

## FACEBOOK GROUPS

[Van Life: Dwellers, Nomads & Vagabonds](#)

[Earning a Remote Income | Van Life](#)

[#VanLife](#)

[Van Life For Women](#)

[VAN LIFE CONVERSION](#)

There are TONS of groups, find the one that fits your needs and wants.

## INSTAGRAM

[Project Van Life](#)

[Van Life Diaries](#)

[Van Life Pride](#)

[Diversify Van Life](#)

[Linnea and Akela](#)

[Gene and Shay](#)

[Towing Wild Oats](#)

[Memes of Van Life](#)

## TIKTOK

[Raychel](#)

[Lita Of The Pack](#)

[Parking on the Wild Side](#)

[Van Life Builds](#)

[Court and Nate](#)

Take what aligns with you and leave the rest. There are tons of van lifers on social media, find the ones that you vibe with.

## REDDIT

[r/VanLife](#)

[r/vandwellers](#)

[r/RVLiving](#)

[r/solofemalevanlifers](#)

[r/skoolies](#)

[r/ConversionVans](#)