

The RV Downsizing Checklist

From a house full of stuff to life on the road — one step at a time.

We've been through it ourselves, and the honest truth is downsizing feels overwhelming at first. The trick is to not look at the whole mountain — just start somewhere and keep going. Work through this list at your own pace. Check the boxes right on your screen, or print it and keep it on the fridge.

2–3 Months Out: Set the Wheels in Motion

The big decisions and the first real momentum.

Decide on your timeline and talk it through together — get on the same page before the sorting starts.

Put the house up for sale (or give notice, if you're renting).

Order a large roll-off dumpster for the stuff that's truly trash.

If you run a business from home, decide what stays, changes, or closes.

Start researching RVs — think honestly about space, storage, kitchen, and how you actually live.

Begin the three-pile system: SELL / UNSURE / NEVER-SELL (sentimental).

— *Tip: Don't look at the whole house at once. Pick one room, one closet, one shelf. Momentum beats overwhelm every time.*

1–2 Months Out: Sell, Sell, Sell

This is where the house really starts to empty out.

List furniture and household items on Facebook Marketplace, eBay, and Craigslist.

Spread the word — friends, family, and neighbors are often your fastest buyers.

Sell business inventory or bulk items at reduced prices to move them quickly.

Buy your RV — and if you can, park it in the driveway before you hit the road.

Start living in the RV while the house is still for sale (see the tip — this one's a game-changer).

Keep a running list of what you reach back into the house for. That list IS your real 'need' list.

— *Tip: Living in the RV in your own driveway is the best trick we found. The house stays showing-ready, and you learn exactly what you need before you're a hundred miles from a store.*

2–4 Weeks Out: The Sentimental Round

The hardest part — and the part worth slowing down for.

Invite your kids and family to take photos, keepsakes, and heirlooms they'd treasure.

Digitize what you can — photos, old videos, reel-to-reel tapes — so the memories travel light.

Choose ONE small 'memory box' of things you truly can't part with.

Find good homes for collections nobody in the family wants — someone out there will adore them.

Let friends come through and take what they'd like next.

— *Tip: Sentimental things are always the hardest. Giving a loved collection to someone who'll cherish it can feel a whole lot better than selling it. It did for us.*

Clear the Rest: Donate, Auction, Give Away

Everything that's left after the selling slows down.

Call a local thrift store owner — many will buy a surprising amount and haul away the rest.

Donate clothing, coats, and household goods you no longer need.

Look into an auction or estate-sale company if the volume feels like too much.

Use the curbside 'FREE' method for whatever's left — it disappears faster than anything you sell.

— *Tip: For full-time RV life chasing warm weather, one good coat is usually plenty. Donate the winter closet.*

Right-Size the Kitchen & Gear

Trade the bulky stuff for things that earn their space.

Swap single-use appliances for multitaskers (an air-fryer/convection combo, an Instant Pot).

Downsize bulky gear — a hand mixer instead of a big stand mixer, nesting or collapsible cookware.

Keep only the tools you actually use — pare the toolbox down to the real essentials.

If your RV allows it, consider a residential fridge — buying in bulk can pay for itself.

Pare the wardrobe down to a few versatile, comfortable pieces.

— *Tip: You don't have to figure the kitchen out perfectly on day one. A month of living in the RV will teach you what you really reach for.*

Moving Week: The Final Push

Tie off the loose ends and roll out light.

Do a final walk-through of the house, sheds, garage, and any storage units — check every corner.

Cancel or transfer utilities, and set up mail forwarding / a mail service for the road.

Confirm your RV essentials are aboard (water, power, waste, safety gear, first-aid kit).

Decide on storage: a small unit for seasonal/sentimental items, or go storage-free to save money.

Take one last look around — then let out that big sigh, and go.

— *Tip: Whatever you don't get to, you'll sort out on the road. Living with less teaches you what truly matters — and that's the whole point.*