

VANLIFEZONE



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Issue 6
09/2022

Harbor the Van Dog

Two years on the road with
a blue shepherd

North & South in Chile

Traveling with
Octavia & Victoria

Life in the Slow Lane

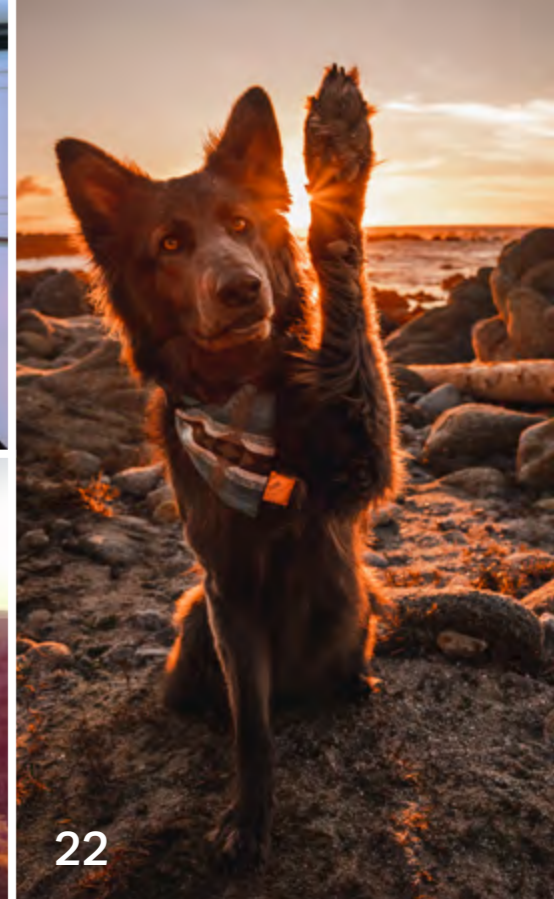
Finding inspiration
amongst setbacks



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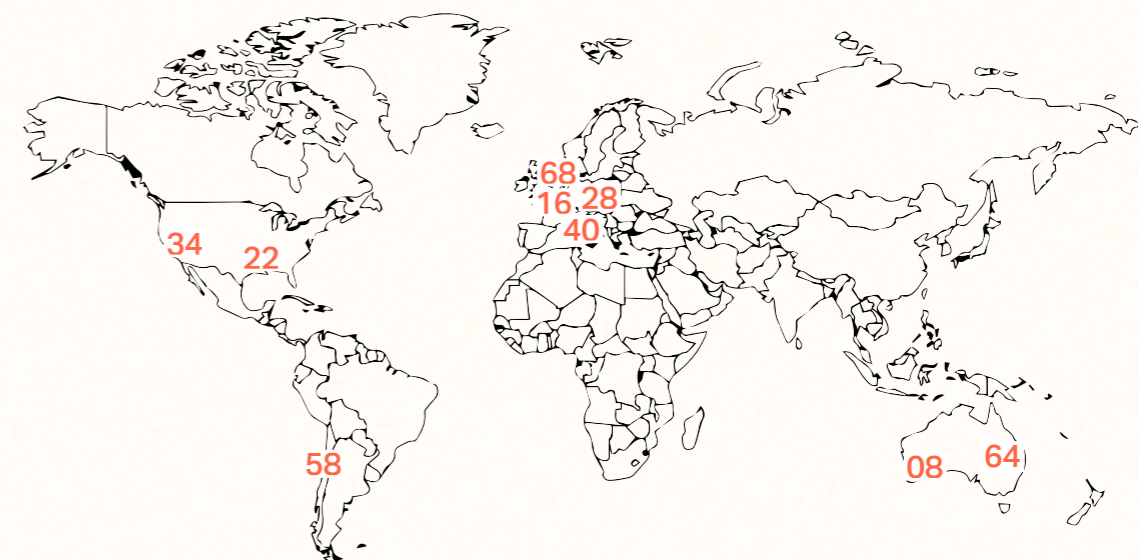
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Taking the Leap

Editorial

3 months have passed since we released our last issue and we have grown, developed and learned a lot already. There are many challenges that we have to face as a bigger team. We have to think about how to streamline the processes involved with the creation of the magazine. How can we go from sent-in articles as pdfs in our email drive to compelling pages in our magazine? How do we determine what articles could do well with some more additional information? And how do we pick the right topics and the right pictures that go along with them? Besides decisions concerning the content we also have to look at new design ideas. New fonts, new colors and a new logo. Wait, a new logo?

There is still a lot more to discover for us and for you but one thing is certain: we have taken the first leap. The first of many. With the release of this issue we also want to release our new logo. We've spent countless hours on many different ideas and versions but finally managed to pick the one that resonates with all of us. We combined our smooth minimalistic

style with the origin of the hippiesque vanlife in a simple, yet thoughtful and elegant way. Our custom retro font is a homage to the fonts commonly used during the 60s and 70s when the hippie trail between Europe and south-east Asia was at its peak of activity and when the hippie subculture boomed in America and the rest of the world. The circular shape of our logo represents the zone which is an essential part of our name and of our identity.

The zone in Vanlifezone ranges from short weekend getaways in small campers, mobile homes or classic air-cooled vans of any kind to long distance overland adventures in trucks, 4x4s or other off-road vehicles, and the stories and adventures that take place along the way.

The Vanlifezone can be anywhere in the world. It is not a place, it is a mindset and a way of life. The two big dots below the center of the logo are another homage to a classic car and represent the lights of a Volkswagen Type 2. The big flat areas provide the possibility for a diverse range

of implementations while ensuring that it is clearly visible and rich in contrast in both large and small scale applications.

Given the fact that Vanlifezone is a project powered by passion with the aim of growing organically, we are certain that we will have more changes in the upcoming issues too. We're constantly experimenting with new designs and we're taking our time until we have the perfect look.



Taking the Leap Means Commitment

We are determined to produce a Vanlifezone magazine every three months. This is a huge commitment for everyone involved and a big step towards making our vision for Vanlifezone a reality. This requires additional dedication. In order to keep on producing at this regular pace, in order to keep increasing the quality and quantity of our articles and in order to create a series of hardcopy versions of our magazine we are required to incorporate traditional advertising pages in our magazine. Up to this point everything we have created was done in our free time and purely out of passion for the adventures and the stories. In the future we will still be driven by passion but with our expansion we often have to face the question of how we can afford certain steps. By incorporating a couple of adverts that fit visually and contextually to our magazine we hope to be able to do all of this.

This commitment is of course something we had to ponder about. It is necessary so we can keep publishing the online magazine for free but bears the danger of being unpopular with you, our community. Please let us know what you think of it! If you know of someone who's product or brand would fit our magazine let them know about it and if you are interested in promoting something yourself don't hesitate to reach out to us at marketing@vanlifezone.com!

Taking the Leap Means to Take a Step Back

In our previous issue we eagerly declared that our festival was going to take place in late September of this year. We, as a team, had to take a step back, reassess and reorganize ourselves. During this process we came to the conclusion that we want to ensure that what we do and what we aim to create deserves to be as good as possible. Because of that and due to the fact that most of our team is working on other full-time jobs and want to give their best we decided to postpone the festival to spring of 2023.

This gives us the ability to put more time and effort into it. It provides us with the resources we need to output the level of quality we strive for in both our magazine and our festival.

Not only do we want to give you the best experience but we also want to enjoy the process of getting there together with you!

Come and Take the Leap

Now that you know what we're currently doing we want to invite you to explore this wonderful issue!

9 amazing stories from all around the world accompanied by several additional articles and annotations will hopefully give you an experience that you can learn from and that makes you fall in love with the beautiful people, corners and stories all around the globe! From the mountains of Chile to the coast of Australia, from California to Turkey and all the way to the Cascades of Saturnia in Italy - this one is a real treat!

Take your time and be sure to enjoy the beautiful stories and their amazing visuals with all of your attention.

Now come and **take the leap** into one big adventure and turn the page!



Florian Jaunegg
Editor in Chief & Project Manager



Salty Van Adventures

Our love for chasing the sun & living a more minimalistic lifestyle is what sparked the idea of traveling around in a van. We wanted to experience a new way of life and in particular easily escape the winters. We have both traveled overseas in the past and explored many places in Australia together. Initially we grew up camping along the coast with our families, where we met many years ago! Both of our parents are very much sun lovers too! Little did we know one day we would be camping full time, traveling around in our own self converted van.

We can now definitely say there is nothing like knowing your own backyard inside & out. This is something we wanted to achieve before exploring the rest of the world. We also loved the idea of waking up by the sea, having everything you need by your side & ensuring no serious plans each day! Freedom alright!

Originally we set off to travel for at least six months to a year. However we had no time limit which allowed us to take each day as it comes. We were both working full time before we set off on the road. Jade as a teacher and Jake as an Electrician. We worked hard for at least a year to save up for our trip of a lifetime.

Six months had passed and we were still exploring Queensland, which was the first state we entered. We realized just how big our country was and at this point there was no going home. We had created our own new reality! There was so much we were yet to explore. We had adjusted so easily to this lifestyle. We are both pretty low maintenance and easy going, therefore it really wasn't much of an adjustment for us. When we first set out to explore Australia we were so excited as it was the first time we had both left home & our destination was unknown! Two years later we don't

have any regrets and can confidently say that starting van life was the best decision we had ever made.

The amount of money each individual spends on the road really does vary. It is important not to compare yourself to others. It really depends on your priorities & what you want to see along the way. You can truly spend as little to as much money as you want while living the van life! We made a pact that we wouldn't hold back, we wanted to take on any opportunities that crossed our path. Some of our favorite things to do while traveling are exploring islands, visiting tourist attractions and eating out every now & then.



We weren't sure how much money this meant we would need to save, and we didn't know of anyone personally that had lived this kind of life before. We set ourselves some goals and winged it from there. All we knew was we wanted to ensure we had enough to fulfill our needs. We have learnt so much along the way, from our own experiences & meeting other travelers. The best thing to do is just to get out there and try it out for yourself.

When the time & destination aligned we decided to work on the road. It is very easy to find work on the road as long as you are open to trying out

new things & giving anything a go. We had been traveling for almost a year, driving clockwise around the country. We made it to the north west, it was time to gain some new life experience and top up the funds. As appreciative of the life we were living, we knew that once we started working again we

For those of you that want to know a little bit about the van life itself.

would be reminded of the incredible journey we were on.

This was also a driving force to work hard while the opportunity was there for our next stint of van life. Starting a new job in a new town with new people is truly a rewarding experience.

Our biggest expenses which I'm sure you could guess are food & petrol. Our idea of van life was to live a more simple life and in saying so deciding to convert a van into our home meant that we had everything with us at all times. Therefore free camping became a norm for us, this is just something we adjusted to and realized how necessary & easy it was.

Being outdoorsy people we spent every minute of the day outside. We literally just sleep in the van. Our set up was designed for following the sun. We do everything outside and it's just how we like it. When you're exploring new places and traveling around in the good weather there is just no other way you'd want to do it!

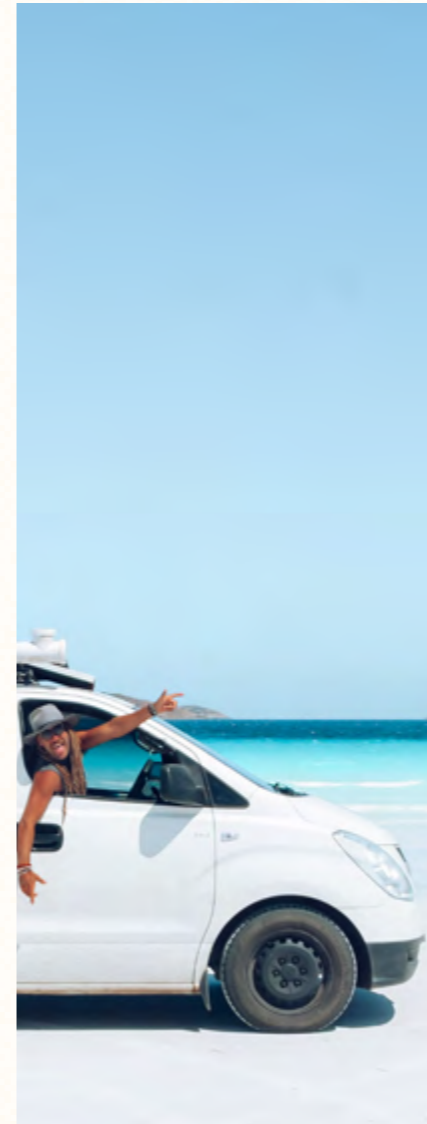
There are always challenges when traveling as things don't always go as planned. Whether it may be finding somewhere to sleep, feeling exhausted after big days of driving and of course washing the dishes isn't so fun when you don't have unlimited running water! However you learn to adapt as these experiences definitely do not outweigh the better ones. When building our van our priorities were... Having a comfy bed, a fridge/freezer, water and storage. Pretty simple right. Oh and comfy camp chairs of course. If you haven't seen ours then you need to!

We converted our van while we were working so it took us a good 4 months, we spent each weekend & Jake even worked on week nights to get as much done as possible. The conversion was completed while we were living at home and was finished by the time we left for our trip. However we made many adaptations while traveling after seeing great ideas from fellow van lifers.

We lined the van and decked it out to make it as homey as possible. It really turned out a vibe. Since Jake is an electrician it definitely made it easier having a background in a trade. However YouTube is pretty handy too! We have two 120Ah batteries which are charged from our alternator and our 110 watt fixed solar panel on our roof. This runs our LED lights, our fan and we also have an inverter. Our inverter allows us to charge all things that need 240 volt. The main things we use it for are our laptop, drone/camera, NutriBullet and milk frother. We love to start our day with a smoothie and a coffee. We have a 75L fridge freezer which enables us to store lots of frozen & fresh food. We store 60 liters of water and have a storage box on top that acts as our garage. Slowly watching our van build come to life was the most thrilling experience, symbolizing the beginning of many adventures.

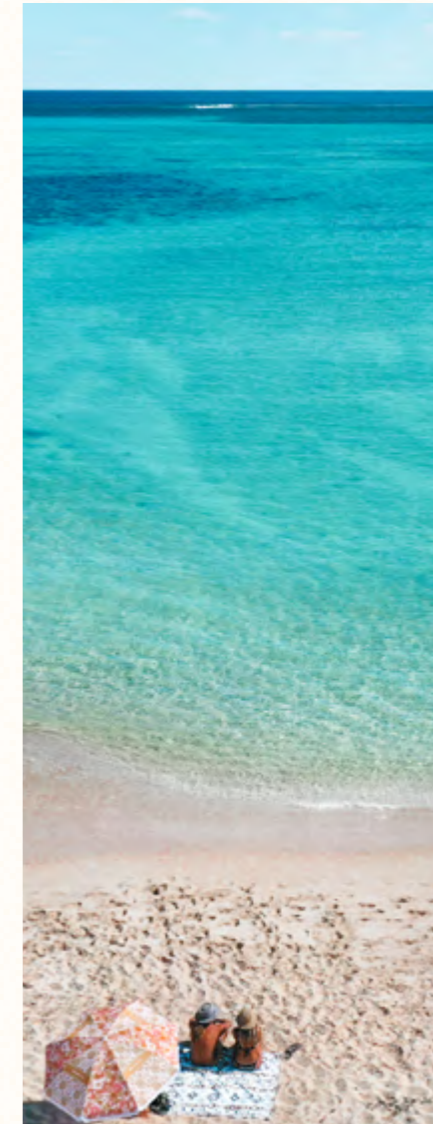
»We are truly blown away by the natural beauty of our country and so grateful that we get to call this part of the world home.

It is impossible to choose one favorite place we have visited, as Australia really does have the best of everything. However we want to share with you three of the most incredible places in Western Australia that struck us, which we had not visited before.«



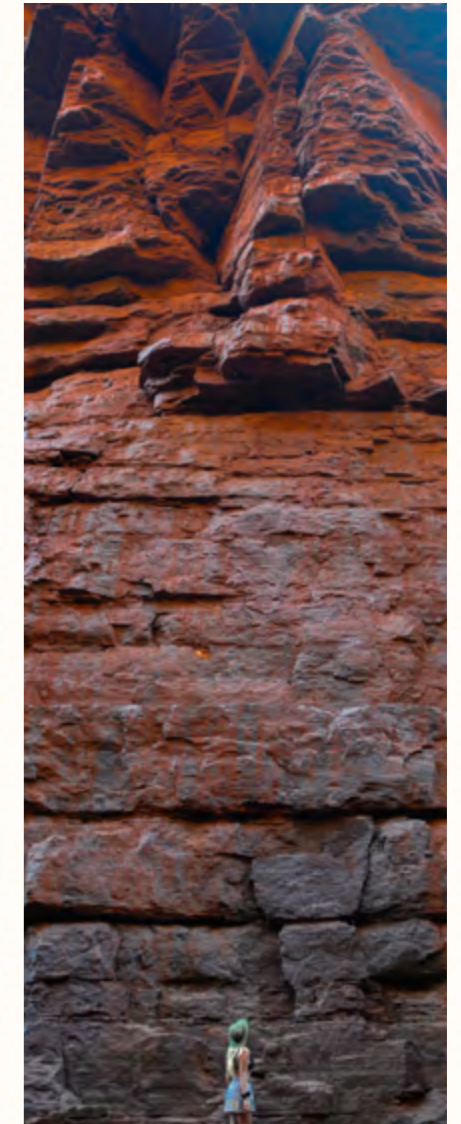
Esperance

The bright blue water & white sand of the beaches in Esperance & its surroundings blew our mind. It felt as if we were on an island in another country. Before the days of social media we had no idea this place existed, as it is very remote & there is not much there. However if you are a beach lover like us & get the season right when visiting you will be blown away. These crystal clear beaches run for miles along the south west coast.



The Ningaloo Coast

The Ningaloo Coast is one of the only places in the world where you are able to walk from the beach straight onto a coral reef! Here we experienced some of the best snorkeling we had ever done. The coral is so alive and there is an abundance of sea life. You can also swim with Whale Sharks between March and July, which we highly recommend.



Karijini

The third place that struck us was even more remote. Karijini in the north west is full of fresh water gorges and ancient red rock. The natural beauty of this place is insane. There is no other place like it. Karijini is amazing for swimming, hiking and it's history.



After completing a lap of Australia we can say there were very few places that we couldn't see along the way. This is something we questioned before starting our trip. As we live in a 2WD (two-wheel drive) van you may be very surprised that the Salty Van didn't hold us back! It has taken us anywhere we have ever wanted to go. You just have to look at our Instagram to believe it! Our favorite thing to do was to park up on the beach for the day! There is nothing like driving your home on wheels on the beach!

Traveling in a van is definitely a conversation starter, there are many people doing the same today whether they are traveling solo or with a partner. Everyone is so friendly and happy, I mean why wouldn't you be!

One thing we didn't anticipate before we started our life on the road was the amount of like minded people we would meet. Every town we went to we got chatting away to someone we knew, sharing tips, giving advice, we learnt so much from each other. The people you meet on the road really do make your experience one to remember. We have found ourselves remembering places by thinking back to the memories & people we were there with. While traveling the country and creating many amazing memories, we have also created friends for life. This is something we will cherish forever.

Our salty van is our little home on wheels and we just love it to bits. We are so grateful for the life it has created for us and to be able to share this experience along the way through our socials.

Thinking back on our journey we have learnt the true meaning of freedom, what it means to us, how it refreshes the soul & the importance of creating new realities. Our whole life perspective has changed in the most positive way & we are continually making new goals. (Stay Tuned)

We have both grown, learnt so much, taken on new opportunities and just let life show us the way! It's true when they say travel because it gives you the freedom to be yourself!

If you're reading this & it resonates with you, maybe it's time to take a new path in your journey of life. You will find yourself a whole new world of opportunities to be free, happy & healthy.

Exploring Together

Our Vanlife really started almost twenty years ago, in a world without Whatsapp, Tinder, Happn or similar apps when Renée (now 36) and I (Joris, now 40) met in a local club. From the beginning we picked up a backpack and started backpacking and seeing the world one month each year. In 2015 we finally bought our campervan and traded in our backpack for our camper, which we quickly gave the name Otto de berggeit (Otto the Mountain Goat). For us it was a test to find out if we want to live out of a van or backpack because we had developed the idea of traveling for a long time. Then with our dog, Doeska. A campervan was eventually the only solution for us and the three of us test drove our camper during a vacation from Holland to the south of France and passed the Pyrenees. Huffing and puffing our old van over the mountains, which we then thought were steep, we made it into Barcelona. After this we drove back north in Spain



following the mountains again and after visiting beautiful towns, mountain ranges and sights we were infected with the vanlife bug.

After a short month we were back in Holland and we quit our jobs almost a year in advance. We started selling everything we didn't need on the road or didn't want to keep. During our test drive we also made a list of everything we needed to sort out and to buy. Such as a solar panel, some maintenance on the engine, a better mattress and some more interior improvement so our camper felt more like a home instead of a camper.

And so we worked for months to improve Otto. And during this hectic period we also planned our wedding, a hippie party and goodbye party in Belgium. In the beginning we started an enormous road trip - 4 days of being together with friends and family. Our life on the road really started on the last day of the trip. We shed some tears and laughter as we drove away leaving the party behind and starting our new life. We went slowly driving to France, doing a Workaway on a huge farm and making friends for life in these short three weeks. We continued to go south, passing the great Dune, lavender fields and huge mountains near Carcassonne. After zigzagging for a bit we finally made it into Spain, where we spent a month exploring before starting a Workaway job working with mistreated donkeys. Exhausted but really happy to be here we left after a month. When we left we took three Workawayers and friends with us for a short, intense journey - traveling, eating, sleeping and partying in our van.

These days are still a core memory of life on the road with friends from different countries, lives and experiences. We dropped them off and continued south to Portugal. This country and especially the coastline is amazing.

Hardly any campers were in the north which made life on the road without a hassle. Following the broken streets with potholes on every corner sometimes made us desperate, wanting to return to the smooth roads of Spain. The nights on the rugged coastline were always crystal clear and full of stars.

Then even in the early beginning of our travels the thought of us running out of money to continue our journey was on our minds. We started in June 2016 and traveled until April 2018 and we were only on the first quarter of our journey and already had to face these thoughts in Portugal.





So we went for a road trip to Greece, one of the easiest countries of Europe to come with your camper living the vanlife. The roads here are familiar to us, the food is great and the people are welcoming. We drove around the Peloponnesos, a huge island full of ancient History, beaches and a relaxed way of life.

After two months of relaxing we went to Sicily, to our surrogate family there, which we met on the last journey. At their fantastic place we helped, worked, ate a lot and felt at home.

We also left for a month walking the Camino the Santiago from Lisbon to Santiago to Finisterre, a great walk of 750km which took us 25 spectacular days, Walking a camino is something we could advise everyone to do once in their life, its fantastic, stupid, unreal and painful all at the same time.

On the way back to Sicily we picked up Otto again, now the plan was to drive to Turkey, the country where we are now. This enormous country is the most welcoming, diverse, spectacular and beautiful country we have driven to date. It has been two months where we saw the balloons go up in Cappadocia, saw pristine ancient buildings, turquoise sea, lakes like the Maldives and mountains that reach to skies and beyond. A country which can never be completely discovered is a country which we love and enjoy daily.

And if you are curious what our plan is after Turkey? We will be starting with a half a year backpack in South America. Leaving Otto for a rest and then returning to go to the north of Europe.

So when we returned in 2018 we were flat broke. We traveled through 21 countries including fabulous Morocco, drove around 50.000 km and saw a lot, made friends for life and memories to fill a book with. The only possessions we had was Otto and the stuff inside. Doeska, our sweet little black dog passed away only a month after the biggest journey of her life, but we are glad we gave her this way of life and being together 24/7.

We started planning and pondering again. The life in Holland gave us our most loved jobs yet but when we were refurbishing the van inside and out, giving it a new paint job, plumbing and electrics, we felt a bit odd. We had our life set, had a perfect job, friends and could carry on having a "regular" life. But something felt like we had to do this one more time.

Different but the same. Otto was ready again, on maintenance we didn't skimp on anything, even a new gearbox was installed, the van looks completely new from the inside, if you don't look too closely, but we are proud of the result. Feeling at home here, our bed, as tiny as it is, feels better than all the mattresses we had in Holland. We left again September 2021, with a little less drama but with a few small going away parties. And then when we drove off we didn't really have a plan. The only thing certain was driving to Sicily in November.





Cappadocia

Did you know?

Cappadocia is a region in central Turkey whose landscape was shaped by past volcanic activity. It is well developed for tourism and is especially known for its towns and villages carved into rock.

One town of outstanding beauty is Göreme. Many of its naturally grown tuff formations have over time been hollowed out by settlers creating rock dwellings, churches and workshops inside them. These so-called fairy chimneys actually do look like chimneys in the landscape and give the city its world-famous appearance. The tuff rock was excellent for building caves because it is soft, yet stable.

Therefore, cities were not only built into rock formations, but even built entirely underground.

About 50 abandoned underground towns are believed to exist in the region and 36 have been discovered by archaeologists so far.

Sites such as Kaymaklı or Derinkuyu extend over several underground floors and used to provide space for thousands of people. Their age is estimated to be up to 4000 years. Some of these historic sites are accessible today and are important landmarks.

Besides the underground, the sky above Cappadocia also exerts a special fascination on tourists. The images of countless colorful hot air balloons are unmistakable.

They take off early in the morning in complete darkness and reach a height of several hundred meters at sunrise. Some say the sunrises over Cappadocia are the most beautiful in the world. Therefore, the interest in a balloon ride is great: on some days, up to 150 hot air balloons hover over the breathtaking landscape at the same time. The numerous historical sights that one discovers from the sky can of course be visited on the ground too.

Besides its culture, Cappadocia is also rich in spectacular nature. The Ihlara Valley in the southwest of the region cuts deep into the volcanic rock and meanders through the otherwise rather barren landscape like a green ribbon. In the valley, quiet paths along the Melendiz Çayı river invite visitors to hike or to just enjoy the calm atmosphere.

Harbor the Van Dog

I'll never forget the moment I realized I was destined to live in a van. It happened when my husband and I decided to spend a couple of months traveling around Europe. We rented a car and were driving through Norway when we passed a van and Brant said to me, "you know we could travel full time by living in a van." I had no clue that this one sentence would forever change the course of our lives. That was my first time hearing about van life, but it wouldn't be the last.

We bought our van in April of 2020, in the height of the pandemic. Our original plan was to spend the next year or so building it out so we could move out of our house and into the van. We were going to keep the house so we had a home base somewhere; a place to come back to. All of those plans got thrown out the window the moment we realized a category 4 hurricane was coming through our town. We evacuated, but sadly lost our home and almost everything in it. We decided that we would move into the van, and build it out while we lived in it. As hard as it was, everything worked out for the best and we've made so many amazing memories along the way.





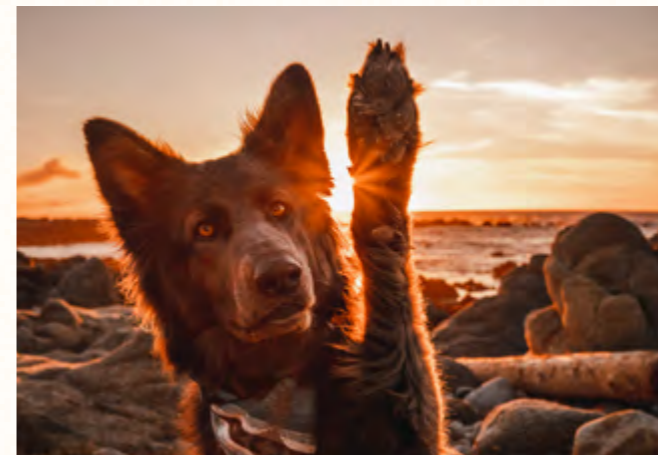
So let me tell you a little bit about us as a family. My name is Madison. I'm a freelance photographer and I'm also the one behind Harbor's instagram account. My husband is a self-taught software engineer. We easily work remotely on the road as long as we get cell service. We grew up in a small town in Louisiana and still visit our family frequently. Harbor is the star of the show. She's a 1-year-old blue shepherd, who's full of sass and loves life on the road. Harbor grew up in the van and has always been so great at adapting to new environments and routines with our everyday schedule.

Here are some facts that Harbor would like for you to know about her (because, after all, she's the main character here.) She's fiercely loyal, she loves other dogs, and she is always down for an adventure. She goes everywhere with us, which isn't an exaggeration. We plan out our day-to-day activities based on where we can go and what we can do with her. One of her favorite things to do is to camp with our friends who have dogs. We're always open to making more friends who love the outdoors as much as we do, so if we're ever in your area please reach out!

One of the best decisions I could've made was making an instagram account to document our travels with Harbor. I started the instagram account because I knew leaving our friends and family and constantly being on the road could get lonely at times. What I didn't know was that making that account would bring me some of the best friends I've ever had. It also gave us endless opportunities to meet so many people (and their dogs, too!). I will forever be grateful to instagram for bringing so many adventures into our life.

In November of 2020, we welcomed Harbor, our dog, into our lives and it was changed forever. To be completely honest, we had a lot going on with not having a house, cleaning up hurricane damage around our community, and building out the van. It wasn't the best timing and it would've been a lot easier to wait and pass up on the opportunity to get her. Regardless, we needed her more than we ever realized.

She was the bright light and hope that came in a storm of uncertainty. That's where her name comes from. The meaning of Harbor is a safe place or shelter.





The one misconception that people have about our lifestyle is that having a dog and living in a van can't work. A lot of people assume that Harbor stays cooped up in the van all day every day, which is far from the truth. We actually spend the majority of our days outside going on hikes or exploring new cities. One of our favorite places to go that has vast, remote camping is the desert. Utah has some of our favorite van friendly camping spots in the US.

We love the pacific northwest and knew we wanted to explore a little more of it in the next year, so that's where we landed. We are loving it so far and are thinking maybe next year we'll go to the other side of the US and spend some time there.

Our journey into van life was rushed and chaotic. However, we feel so incredibly blessed to be living out our dream.



After two years of living life completely on the road, we decided it might be nice to have a place on the side. We didn't want to give up life in the van, but we knew there would be instances where we would want to have some sort of home base. We didn't want anything too permanent, so we didn't buy a house. Instead, we took some time to plan out where we would want to be spending the next year and decided to get an apartment.

There can be challenges that come with living a nomadic lifestyle but I promise it's definitely worth it.

If you ever have any questions on how to get started or just want to get in touch with us, please feel free to send us a DM on instagram!

The Baptism of Fire



How a simple choice of parking space can change everything and almost shattered our big dream.

But let's start from the beginning... Leave everyday life behind and drive away. Further, always further. Into the distance, wherever the road takes you. Who has not dreamed of this? We have also played with this thought. What distinguishes us from most others. For us it has gone beyond dreaming.

We are Lui(26) and Beppo(28) and in 2020, when traveling was not possible due to the pandemic, we made the decision to go on a long-term trip. How, where and especially when? - that was still written in the stars at the time.

But what was clear pretty quickly was that we wanted to document our adventures in detail.

And that meant a lot of work. Not only did we want to record our future travel destinations, but we also wanted to reconstruct and document the journeys we had already experienced. We relived our road trips through Italy, Croatia and France as well as our backpacking tours through Thailand, Indonesia, Costa Rica and Panama. Editing photos, writing texts and building a website meant long evenings at the computer, because we did all that parallel to our full-time jobs. Our travel blog roasn.com was born!

If not now, when? We asked ourselves! After 1.5 years of waiting, we finally got down to business. We could not wait to travel. Our original thought was to take a two-year trip around the world. But when travel was still limited

at the end of 2021 due to the global pandemic, we threw those plans out the window.

Plans are there to be changed. It was going to be a road trip through Europe! Without a concrete destination. Just us, the road and our camper. But wait a minute, our camper?! This little detail was still missing in our new plan. On our past road trips we had to use the old VW T4 from my parents. But this one had neither a kitchenette nor a bathroom inside. We had to get something of our own. We considered for a long time which vehicle we wanted to get, either a motorhome, a Sprinter or a bus, self-made or a complete package.





Back to the roots. After long deliberations, we finally made a decision that we have so far not regretted for a minute. And although we even have created a concept for a self-built van including technical drawings et cetera, Luis training played us in the cards and we finally decided on an old acquaintance. A VW Transporter, which was also used as such in the past and was converted to a camper by a company and included a pop-up roof. This should be it!

We wanted to travel and a DIY van would have cost us too much time and energy at that moment. Then it was finally time. We both quit our jobs, packed our belongings into our new

home on four wheels and rolled out south in February of 2022. And with that, our big dream was supposed to come true. If it weren't for the first sentence of our story.

"How a simple choice of parking space can change everything and almost shattered our big dream."

After an emotional goodbye to our family, we came to a halt after an exhausting drive near Budapest. We wanted to go as fast as possible south to Greece. We wanted to spend the first night in our camper in a parking lot at a rest stop near the highway. We were both exhausted and quickly fell asleep.

When suddenly in the middle of the night a loud crunching near our heads jerked us out of a deep sleep. Our bus was shaking, but we could not comprehend the events at the first moment. I thought at first a tree would have fallen on our bus. But Lui quickly realized that someone had driven into our camper. We pulled the curtains aside and saw a red light through the shattered window. Trying to get attention, we knocked against the brittle glass, but in the process pushed the window out of the hatch and cut our hands on the small pieces of glass. The bus was still shaking. In shock, I jumped out of the van dressed only in my underpants.

At this point, I still wasn't sure if this was just a bad dream or if this was really happening.

When I finally wandered around half naked outside the bus I quickly realized that a truck had crashed its trailer right into our van while trying to turn off. A long night with the police followed, insurance information was exchanged and we still had to decide what to do.

We were both devastated and a trip back home was also up for debate. However, after a short phone call with my father and further discussions, we decided to drive back to Vienna and have the damaged van repaired there. It had temperatures around the freezing point and we had no more window in the trunk. Sporadically we stuck our blanket covered with blood drops into the new opening of the camper and rolled back north at 2:00 am.

Be more Resilient

Massive setbacks such as this one can really put a damper on your whole trip. However, as we can see, resilience and mental strength can help you to come back even stronger, no matter what.

We don't want you to have to go through something like this crash to build up your resilience, which is why we have prepared a few tips on how you can become more resilient and deal with anything life throws at you:

1. Learn to become more relaxed in life. Don't take things too serious.
2. Don't let negative thoughts consume you. Keep a list in your head with great things that happen throughout your day.
3. Look at situations from all perspectives. Sometimes things turn out to be a lot more colorful than previously perceived.
4. See mistakes and failures as an opportunity to learn. How can you improve? Take away the best from bad situations.
5. Remember that you can't control anything except for the way you respond to certain situations. Take a step back before you give up.
6. Build your confidence and know that nothing can bring you down. You will find a solution, one way or another.
7. Be flexible and learn to adapt. Plans will change and that's ok.
8. Embrace change as an opportunity to grow. Who would you be if nothing ever changed in your life?

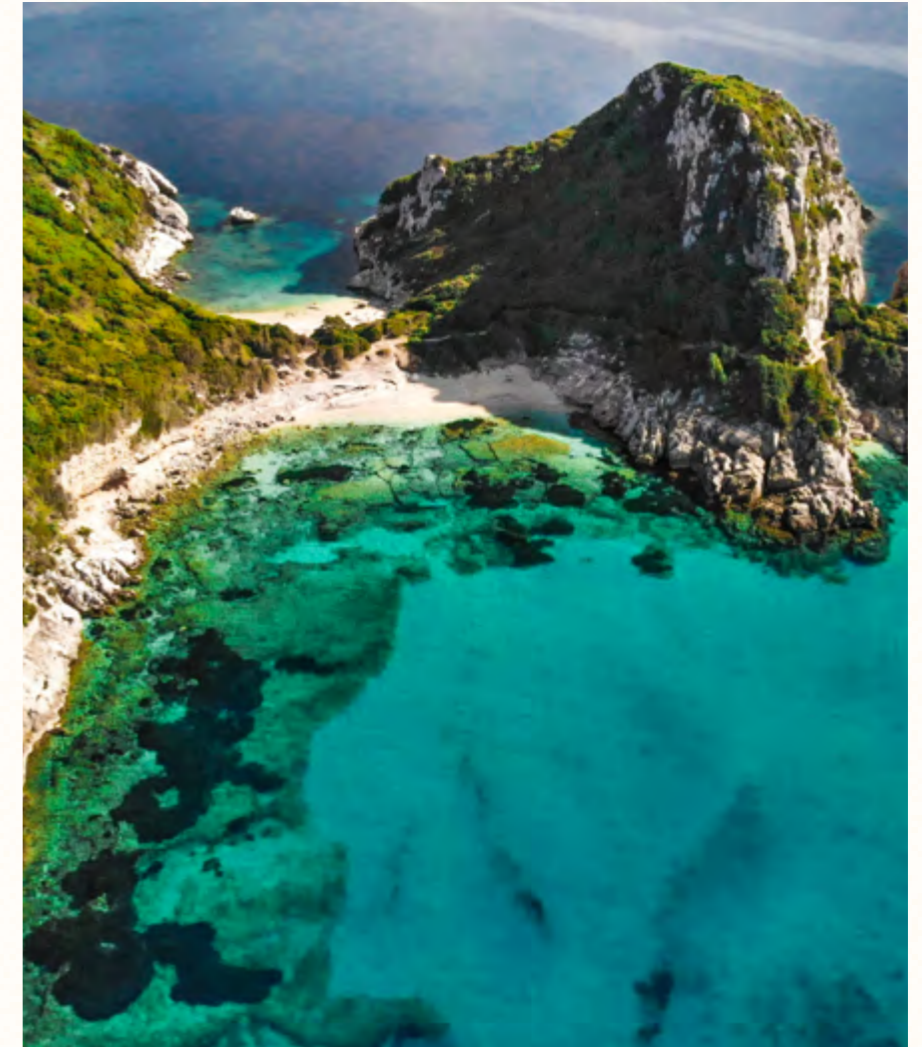


Shipwreck Dimitrios, Greece

After a relaxing but necessary time at the hotel and a new tailgate, we headed south again after 5 days in Austria's capital. This was definitely not the start we had envisioned, but perhaps the baptism of fire needed at the beginning of such a journey. Oh and by the way, since then we no longer sleep with our heads at the end of the van!

In the meantime, we've been on the road for over 6 months and traveled the entire west coast of Greece. We've been to breathtaking islands, immersed ourselves in the history of Europe, explored other Balkan countries like Albania and Montenegro and documented each of our destinations in our travel blog roasn.com.

We are looking forward to the adventures that still await us! By now we can also smile about the incident of the first night and since then we are on the road without any further breakdowns. (I'm knocking on wood three times while writing these lines)



Life in the Slow Lane



If you would have told me what my adult life would look like as a child, I wouldn't have believed you. Then again - I can't say that it's a surprise either. Between traveling throughout the United States and Canada for hockey tournaments growing up, to deploying to various places in the world in my career as an Army Officer, it seems as though I was bitten by the

travel bug early. I remember staring eagerly out the windows of the buses and planes we took on the way to hockey tournaments and being full of wonder and excitement at what might await me at the next new town or place. Those prairie views and small hockey towns turned into military airfields and bases in Afghanistan surrounded by foreboding mountains.

No matter where I traveled to and no matter how boring or mundane others found those places, I fell deeper in love with the feeling of being somewhere new, undiscovered, or overlooked.

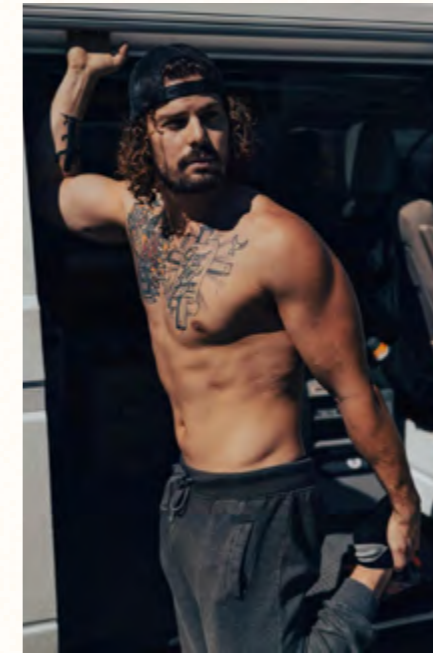
These experiences in my youth and early adulthood ultimately fueled my interest for exploring and learning about new places, different cultures

and people! Presently, I am fortunate enough to have an international audience that I get to interact with through my travels and social media presence. I currently travel out of a 1984 VW Westfalia Van named "Frank," but I didn't always have the dialed-in setup you see today. My favorite part of being involved in the "Van Life" is to be able to tell people where I came from, how I'm living today, and what I want to do in the future to inspire positivity.

I'm sure some readers are wondering the obvious - what do I do for a living? How do I make this lifestyle possible? The short answer is that I am an actor, an influencer, and a retired Veteran. After years of service in the Army and deployments to Europe and Afghanistan, I was unexpectedly retired due to injuries incurred from my training and deployments. I was proud to have served in the military and I was aware of the risks that came along with my service.

While some would have seen these disabilities as a setback, I used them as an opportunity to reevaluate what I wanted the rest of my life to look like. Between the military compensation, my gigs as an actor, and the brands I partner with on social media, I am blessed to be able to have my home base in LA and take as many Van Life adventures as I can! I also sublease an apartment when I'm gone on extended adventures to help with the associated costs.

I first started the nomadic lifestyle in a 35 foot, 1997 Holiday Rambler RV that I named the "Millennial Express." The purchase of the "ME" was a complete impulse buy right after I



left the Army and included trading in my 2007 Harley Davidson Nightster Motorcycle that I had come to love. With a crash course education from YouTube University and some help from my mechanically inclined family members - we were fixed up and on the road. It was the start of my first great adventure!

For six months, I traveled the country, catching up with old friends in distant corners of the US and falling deeper and deeper in love with being on the road. From hitting golf balls off the top of the RV into the desert, to ski resort parking lots, to exploring the Badlands with my Uncle - the "Millennial Express" and I did it all. I was loving my newfound freedom. One of those stops included Los Angeles, which I saw as just another dot on the map for me to visit.

Throughout my time there, one of my childhood best friends convinced me that it was the place for me to plant some (albeit, short) roots. I agreed and

decided to make L.A. my temporary home and base for more RV travels.

Unfortunately, my RV Travels came to an abrupt and unexpected end. My RV that my Aunt had helped me make into a home was stolen and vandalized.

»Again, what some people might have seen as a setback, became a great opportunity for me.«

The situation helped show me how strong I could be when facing the unexpected. It also showed me what a tremendous, supportive community Van Lifers are. Strapped for cash, no full-time employment, and having just lost my biggest asset, my friends set up a GoFundMe account.

I cobbled together the little money I had saved from the military, the generous funds provided by my friends and contributors, and cautiously purchased my new home on wheels - "Frank." I was quite literally all in. "Frank was a beautiful, white, 1984 VW Westfalia van. I had been interested in older model conversion/camper vans for a long time, having grown up going to car shows all throughout Wisconsin.

I loved the older VW buses and kooky conversion vans (Toyota Hiaces, Mitsubishi Delicas and other JDM/ Euro imports), so when I came across "Frank" in Bend, OR on Craigslist, I knew my next road trip would be going to buy my new van! I was on a mission to make the Van Life dream a reality.

I've been traveling in the van ever since that day! From British Columbia, Canada to Joshua Tree, I have been traveling wherever there's new things to see and "green lights" to be found (for all of you McConaughey fans).

Since I purchased my van in 2021, I have become more purposeful with my travels and what I share with my followers. I've taken time to reflect on all that has happened and is happening in my life. Through that reflection, and my daily work to positively influence others is shaping my path and helping me write the chapters of my future. This new perspective and life on the road have helped me develop a set of rules which I use to guide my decisions.

The three rules I have developed and utilize are:

- 1.**
Be Intentional
- 2.**
Work Smart
- 3.**
Live More

I have combined those three rules with the lessons learned from three years of full time traveling and have embraced a succinct philosophy that "Life Rips" no matter what. Even the hardest day on the road (running low on fumes or funds, getting a seat belt ticket, mechanical issues, etc.) is better than the best day in a fluorescent lit cubicle... so Life Rips regardless for me.



As I interact with others, I notice that too many people are "working" frantically to earn money to buy things that they are too busy to enjoy. I want to love the life I enjoy, not just "work" to live. We all have the opportunity to choose what type of life we want to live. Personally, I had to choose between living an "ordinary" life that did not make sense to me, and living an extraordinary life that I was excited about. Every day I choose to hunt down the best version of myself and live my life in a way that allows me to learn, help others, and bring me joy. We all need to recognize that it's okay to live our life, even if it is a life that others don't understand. These rules might not work for you, but they work for me!

As I mentioned earlier, I am currently pursuing acting and happily combining it with my Van Life travels. As someone who is a new actor and influencer, jobs don't come to me - but rather, I have to pursue opportunities, sponsors, and partnerships that align with my values and lifestyle. The same is true for sponsors and directors, my presentation needs to meet their interests and needs.

An added perk of being an actor and Van Lifer is having my "wardrobe" at arm's reach when pulling up to a set. All jokes aside, people ask if it frightens me not to have a steady job - particularly during the years the pandemic seemed to be at its worst. My answer is... it can be!

Living the Van Life can be frightening at times as there are so many unknowns and risks. Going into the unknown is inevitably frightening, but the only way to get over that fear is by going through it and understanding that it never turns out to be as scary as it seemed. It's the unknown that ultimately fuels me to move forward and keeps me on the edge of my seat. I like this feeling. Turning the next corner and having no idea of what beautiful images you will confront is one of the rewards. Those images will be ingrained into your brain forever as wonderful memories. That corner, that blind spot, that unknown split second in your life may seem so foreign to you and might make you hesitate.

However, without embracing those unknown moments and blind spots in life, you may miss what could've been one of the most beautiful memories you will ever have.

At the end of the day each of us must confront our own fears, the unknown, and come face to face with them. How we handle that encounter with our fears will determine where we go in the next moment and with the rest of our lives. Do you want to experience the adventure in life or be limited by the fear of it? What I'll leave you with is this: we are all in full control of how we show up every day, don't let anyone or any circumstance dictate how you show up. I've made my choice. How about you?

See you in the slow lane! -Christian de la Torre



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Vanlife with a Baby



For several years now, we have been traveling around by van and have been discovering the world.

We love this way of traveling and this feeling of boundless freedom. Every day is a new adventure. We also wanted to experience this together with our daughter.

We have already converted two motorhomes together. Our current van is a VW T6 van. We began the expansion when I was pregnant. We put a lot of time and work into our van for three months. After our daughter was born and she was six weeks old we started our first trip. And yes, everything works out if you want it. We moved from 70 square meters to 2 square meters with a baby. The space is of course very limited, but once you think about it, you don't need it anymore. We have everything that is important to us. We have a few clothes, a baby pharmacy, baby equipment and a bit of food supply. We think very minimalistically when traveling and limit ourselves to the essentials.

Our current journey began in April 2022. We traveled for three months with the van and a baby through Europe. Our journey began in Germany and continued via France to Spain until we arrived in Barcelona. From there we went by ferry to Ibiza and to Formentera. These beaches! I can tell you, just madness!

After two weeks there we went back to continue from Barcelona to Sardinia. At that time, we were already traveling for over a month.

Since we experienced so much, it was very important to me to record all of it in my diary. Some day when our

daughter grows up she will get this diary from us. We will never forget the many experiences like this.

But before I get distracted off the subject now, let me continue with our story. After we were in Sardinia, our next destination was the Amalfi Coast in Italy. These incredibly beautiful picturesque towns with the typical Italian flair were really great. However, it was very touristy and we had the feeling that we needed some nature for ourselves again. That's why it drove us further into Abruzzo and high up to Campo Imperatore. When we arrived we were stunned by the beauty of it! Clearly there is a reason why this place is called small Tibet.

This vastness, this natural spectacle and this boundless freedom cannot be put into words. All those who need nothing but their van, freedom and themselves must visit this place! You will be thrilled. Well, our journey had to go on. Our next destination was Tuscany, which welcomed us with all its beauty. It's always crazy to see what the world can offer you if you just dare to drive off and allow all these miracles to happen.

»We swam in the thermal springs of Saturnia, ...«

... hiked around in the great landscape and ate great Italian food in the agroturismo! We had arrived! Bella Italy! But time ran out. We had another month left and used it to explore Lake Garda and went to Austria for our last trip.





A journey that no one can ever take us! Impressions and experiences that we never want to miss again. This trip taught us so much and we were able to get to know so many new wonderful people. Above all we had three months as a family.

To Travel Is Not Something for Everyone

You have to learn to do without, to get involved in new things every day and to live with the certainty that you do not have your comfort zone. But we want to encourage people to do the same thing and to feel freedom. We are young! We can experience it now. What should we wait for? At some point it will be too late. Be brave and make mistakes. Be curious. Life is too short for fears, worries and the constant question of why. We also just dared and we definitely won. We live our dream and no longer dream of living it.

The world has become our home. A world full of adventures, beautiful places and fascinating experiences that have been waiting for us every day.

Of course, not everything is always easy to manage! Our Teething baby, a broken spring, no toilet and no shower on the bus created obstacles. We also had many rainy days. All these are daily challenges that have to be mastered. But hey, don't you always have them in life? It is part of it that not everything runs smoothly, that we make mistakes and learn from them. It is ok for us to allow ourselves to not be perfect. You have to have courage to fall and to get back up again. But that's possible and it's not as difficult as you think.

Just don't take yourself too seriously. We have found our way. It's the right way for us. Maybe you are still looking for yours, maybe you will find it soon or have already found it.

We are travelers and will probably travel forever. Although we both have a permanent job, the urge to explore so much more that is waiting for us out there will probably never let us go.

Mother Nature is our home and we would like to pass this on to our children. Be brave and get involved in life! You can only win! Because as soon as you allow it, you have already won.

And whether your path is similar to ours or you have completely different plans, the only important thing is that you find your own. Be brave to be able to tell your own story and make life your diary!



Cascades of Saturnia

Tuscany's Secrets

With its hilly landscapes, impressive cities and historical sights, the Italian region of Tuscany attracts countless visitors every year. The Leaning Tower of Pisa or the Renaissance architecture in Florence are familiar to most people. But away from these main tourist attractions, there are many other places that make Tuscany such an exceptionally beautiful destination.

The small town of Saturnia counts less than 300 inhabitants and is located on a hill in southern Tuscany, about halfway between Florence and Rome. It is named after Saturn, a god of Roman mythology who, according to legends, founded it as the first town on the Italian peninsula. Saturnia offers many historic attractions, such as the remains of the ancient city wall, the city gate Porta Romana or the former fortress. At the northern end of the village the ruins of the roman thermal bath Bagno Secco are frozen in time. They provide the decisive clue as to what makes Saturnia different from other small towns in Italy.

Vulcanic Heat

Not far from the village, thermal water with a constant temperature of 37 degrees Celsius bubbles up from the ground. The sulfurous water originates from Monte Amiata, a volcano about 40 kilometers away, on whose slopes the rainwater seeps away, heats up underground and is enriched with minerals before it resurfaces at Saturnia. The luxurious Terme di Saturnia just outside of the village collects the hot water, which is said to have beneficial effects on skin and joints, in large swimming pools. The thermal bath also includes a spa, a golf course, a hotel and apartments. Admission is charged, as in any other spa. However, a free alternative is located not far from the resort.

Natures Bathtub

Next to the stone building of an old mill, the thermal water rushes down a waterfall over many small terraces. Cascade del Mulino is the name of this natural wonder, whose turquoise-blue, milky water looks almost unreal. Over time, sediment deposits have created so-called sinter basins on the waterfalls, forming natural pools where you can bathe and enjoy the soothing warmth of the sulfuric waters. The springs are accessible at any time of the day and throughout the whole year. Visits are even possible in Winter; the crowds are much smaller but the water's temperature doesn't change. In summer it is recommended to visit either very early in the morning or in the evening. During the day there are many tourists, which is not surprising given the unique beauty of the location. The access to Cascade del Mulino is free of charge, and so is the adjacent parking lot.





Hot Springs & Cold Exposure

why are they so good for you?

You might or might not have heard about how amazing hot springs and cold exposure can be for you, but what is the hype really about?

If you encounter an ice-cold river or hot springs on your journey, you should definitely stop by and take a dip. Let's take a look at why that is!

Benefits of Hot Springs

Better Than Advil

Are you experiencing any pain from driving around a lot? Hot springs can actually help you block out pain receptors, so that back ache that has been nagging you for days? It might just disappear! Sure, hot springs might not be the end-all-be-all to all your problems, but apart from being super relaxing and fun to visit, you will also reap some awesome health benefits on the way!

Your Skin Will Love It

When it comes to hot springs, the benefits don't just stop at relaxation - it goes way deeper than that. Your skin will love it. First off, your skin will love soaking in hot springs. Hot springs are a really good way to naturally detox your skin. Most hot springs have lots of silica in the water, which can help to soften rough skin, but the minerals (and sometimes sulfur) also help with skin conditions such as acne, psoriasis, and eczema.

You Can Finally Relax

After hours of driving, nothing feels better than a hot bath or shower. It lets you release all the stress from the previous day, and studies have even shown that bathing in hot water helps you to sleep better and increases your happiness, in general! That's probably reason enough to go soak in hot springs!

Your Circulation Will Thank You

Nothing is worse for your circulation than sitting in the same position for hours on end without moving. Sounds like you while driving from place to place? Well, good thing hot springs will help your circulation! The minerals in the water help increase the hydrostatic pressure around your body. Simply put, your circulation works harder and your metabolism gets a boost, too!

Benefits of Cold Exposure

We've been talking about hot springs a lot, and while soaking in warm water sounds a lot more appealing than dipping into ice-cold water, cold exposure is just as great for your health as hot springs!

The Kneipp Cure

It was developed by the German Sebastian Kneipp (1821-1897), who contracted tuberculosis and proclaimed "If there is any cure for me, it will be water".

He proceeded to take dips in the river Danube and recovered. After his recovery, he developed over 120 water treatments, out of which water treading is probably the most famous one.

His treatments were based on holistic health, and he combined 5 pillars:

1. hydrotherapy
2. phytotherapy
3. exercise
4. balanced nutrition
5. regulative therapy

Today, you can find Kneipp treatments at many spas and thermal baths throughout Europe, but you could even do it yourself with a little research!

Kneipp's approach is holistic, meaning he focuses on the body, mind, and soul of an individual.

So to the question of whether you should do it - if you get a chance, why not? It won't hurt and you will reap some amazing benefits from it!

Your Immune System Gets a Boost

Studies have shown that regular cold exposure can really give your immune system a huge boost. Now, while you're on the road, getting sick is the last thing you want, so getting some cold exposure into your routine will really help you ward off those colds!

It Improves Sleep Quality

We all know sleep is important, especially for people who drive a lot! Cold exposure can improve your sleep quality. This is because taking an ice-cold shower or bath helps to reduce anxiety and soothes your muscles.

It Fights Inflammation

When you expose your body to cold temperatures, the amount of adiponectin in your body rises, which is a protein that fights inflammation. However, if you expose yourself to the cold for a really long time, it can actually increase inflammation, so definitely don't stay in there for too long!

You Might Just Live Longer

Okay, frankly, this one is still up for debate as the scientists haven't been studying this for too long, but cold exposure has been known to keep certain animals alive for more than twice as long as they usually live! Now, while there isn't any scientific proof yet, these promising results in animals have sparked the interest for further investigation, so who knows, better try it out than miss out on something great, right?

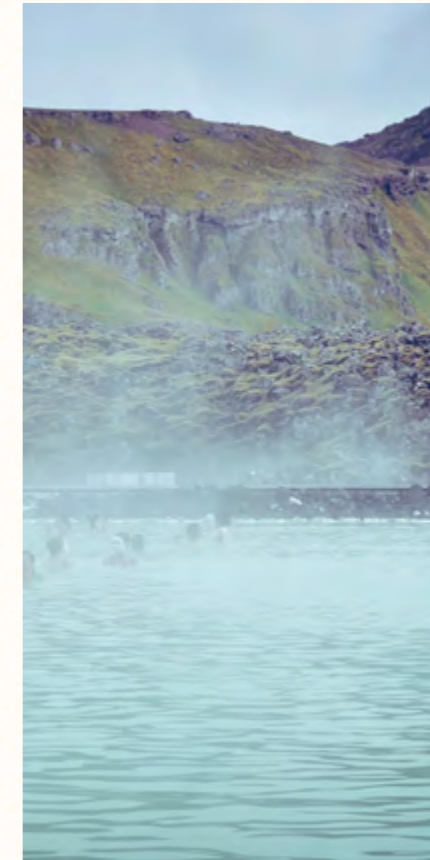
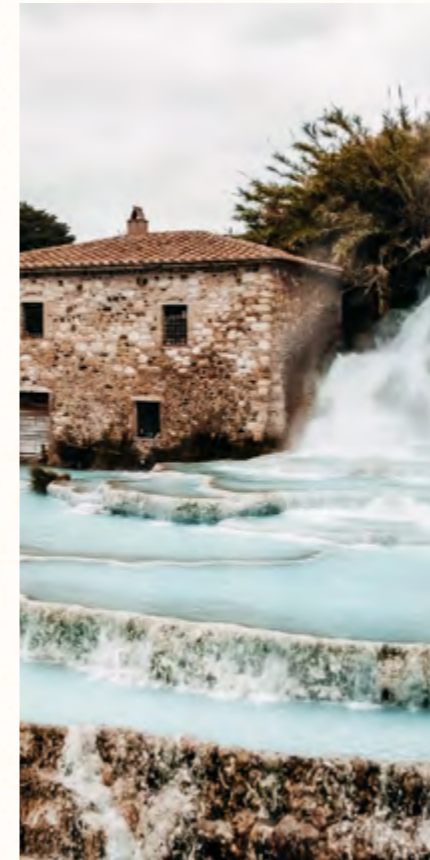
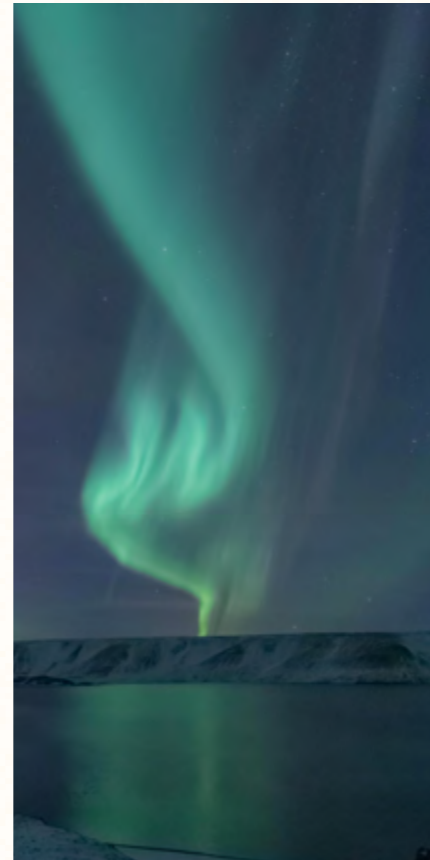
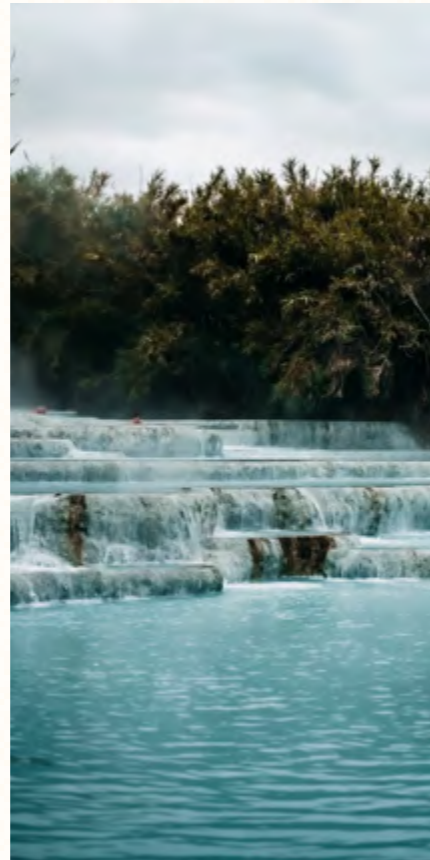
It Speeds Up Recovery

Have you been suffering from an injury? Cold exposure is known to help speed up recovery by reducing swelling, blood flow, and inflammation! But not just that, it also increases the healing speed after small injuries or surgery! So, if you ever sprain your ankle on one of your trips (let's hope not, but it happens!), then cold exposure can get you back on your feet in no time!

The Top 5 Hot Springs Around the World

Let's take a look at the top 5 hot springs around the world, so you can see if one of them might be worth taking a trip to!

Of course, this list is subjective and there are tons of beautiful hot springs, so don't take our word for it, these are just a few suggestions!



Pamukkale Thermal Pools

Turkey

You can find more than a dozen thermal springs in Pamukkale National Park, which is actually a UNESCO World Heritage Site!

Not only will you get the amazing benefits of hot springs, they look breathtaking, too!

Kraus Hot Springs

Canada *

Sure, you could drive up to hot springs and take a dip, but with the Kraus hot springs in Canada, you get the added thrill of paddling 20 miles to get there!

So, if you find yourself near the Nahanni river and are adventure-prone, this might be just the spot for you!

Chena Hot Springs

Alaska *

Do you want to combine hot springs and seeing Aurora Borealis?

Just outside of Fairbanks, this resort is easily accessible and beautiful!

Cascade del Mulino

Italy

Cascade del Mulino is found in Tuscany, right next to the luxurious Terme di Saturnia.

The difference? Cascade del Mulino offers baby blue water and free admission - 24 hours daily!

Blue Lagoon

Iceland

If you find yourself up North, the Blue Lagoon is just 20 minutes away from Keflavik Airport, so it's not even a long drive! And the best part?

In case you're in need of some relaxation, there is an on-site spa!

*GENERIC IMAGE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES

Where are you headed?

Now that you know all the benefits of hot and cold exposure, as well as some travel-inspiration for your next trip, where are you headed?

We'd love to hear from you and find out which hot springs you've already visited!

A Serious Problem.

While Tuscany offers a wide range of beautiful places with stunning scenery, cute villages and houses in the typical Tuscan style with Italian cypress trees, the region - and entire Italy actually - is having a massive problem with waste removal.

Wherever you go, you can be sure to find a patch of land full of small plastic litter. Plastic bags are lying on the side of the road and plastic bottles and other junk made of plastic are lying in the dried up riverbeds. Even though the beaches are beautiful and attract tons of locals and tourists, on closer inspection you will certainly spot small plastic wrappers and particles of all sorts in the water and on the shore. The dunes are often littered with old and new garbage and toilet paper. The locals and tourists don't seem to care and keep adding to the mess.

Clearly this problem isn't exclusive to Italy but every country, be it the UK, Germany, Australia or any other country in the world, has to face this man-made invasion of its natural resources. In 2018 researchers found plastic as low as almost 11.000 meters (36.089 feet) in the Mariana Trench, the deepest known place in the sea! There are traces of microplastic at the top of mount everest

and you can find piles of garbage along the trails to its peak. Wherever there is plastic, there is microplastic. The animals we live with and the fish and livestock many of us consume are increasingly exposed to huge amounts of plastics and it is part of our everyday life.

Look around you, you certainly don't have to look long until you spot something made of plastic.

We cannot keep out microplastic from our body and we consume it through our skin and through what we eat and drink. This leads to new sicknesses,

Researchers at the University of Nottingham have recently linked the decrease in quantity and quality of human sperm to the exposure to microplastics.

to hyper reactions and to infertility. The clearing of unofficial garbage dumps along the roads or on beaches and in dunes is obviously a responsibility the region's government needs to take on. Italy is lacking a good infrastructure and policies in that regard. Nevertheless the operators of the cascades of Saturnia are doing a great job in declaring the area plastic free and in providing a biodegradable and recyclable solution for the use of plastic bottles. The sulfuric water and the stones of the cascades remain free of visible plastic.

The visitors however, who come as early as five in the morning and stay until late at night, do a terrible job at sticking to the rules. As soon as you take a glance to the sides of the cascades you'll find more piles of garbage hidden in the plants. The basin below the attraction is also littered in trash.

It is our own responsibility to not contribute to the mess. Not only in places like Saturnia but everywhere in our everyday life we can reduce our consumption of goods with unnecessary plastic. We can separate our garbage correctly and make sure to discard our garbage in the proper places where there is an infrastructure available for it.

We can support projects like the Ocean Clean Up Project (theoceancleanup.com) or 4Ocean (4ocean.com).

And of course we can go around and collect some of the garbage we find. Even if you just spend an hour collecting some of the garbage and not all of it, it is better than to leave everything out in nature!



A Taste of Vanlife Eats



Italian Style

People often ask us how Vanlife Eats started so let's tell you. It all began in 2020, not a great year for many reasons but time to start a new hobby! Mark and I met in 2018, we both had children from our previous relationships and at the time I was living back

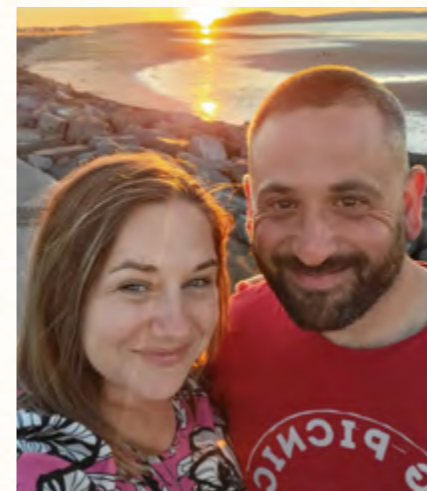
home with my Mum. Mark told me all about his beloved van Betsy and the idea seemed so strange to me, I had been a 5* all inclusive resort kinda girl up until then. The thought of sleeping in a van did not appeal to me. Dating was difficult as I had a 2 & 3 year old and time was scarce. That's when Betsy came to the rescue. On Christmas Eve Mark arrived at my

Mums and parked up outside, the van was decorated in fairy lights, he had lit Christmas scented candles and there was a smell of delicious food. We tucked into a delicious meal of spaghetti bolognese.

It was the start of Mark cooking in the van for me, it was ideal. We could have date nights in the van while being just a stone's throw away from my little ones should they wake up. This began my love of vanlife, and was also when Mark's passion for cooking was reignited. Mark struggled to cook in dear old Betsy as it was impossible to stand up fully. This is when Mark decided to 'look' at an ex ambulance. That's how we ended up with Flo.

Now we were able to stand up while cooking and we began looking for ideas for what to cook in our van. Although we found a spattering of recipes on different websites, there wasn't a one-stop website for van cooking. This is where more of Mark's skills came in handy, he built our website in his spare time and we loaded it with recipes. Not only our recipes but recipes from vanlifers all over the world featuring different cuisines, diets and cultures.

We built our social media pages reaching out to people on a daily basis and so many people had faith in what we were doing and wanted to share.



»That's how Vanlife Eats was born!«

We still run this as a hobby in our spare time and have jobs outside of this. Although we make no money from it, it is something we love to do and share with others and we feel so lucky to have met the vanlifers we have through our hobby.

An ambulance fully kitted out with all the gear, stretcher and all. We spent every spare minute converting her and she has had many adaptations since then. Mark is full-time in the van and we try to get away together in her as much as we can! The kids absolutely love having sleepovers in Flo and we feel it's such an amazing experience for a family to share, even if a little cramped at times.

Mark is half Italian and so good food runs deep in his DNA. One of his classic Dad jokes is that he has tomato sauce running through his veins instead of blood. His family is from a picturesque village called Minori on the Amalfi Coast. His grandfather worked alongside Gennaro Contaldo who went on to mentor Jamie Oliver. This passion of cooking runs through his family and they even have a cookbook of family recipes which is top secret!

Mark's family loves to cook classic southern Italian food and that is what Mark tends to cook. We have made so many Italian dishes, skillet lasagna, gnocchi, handmade pasta and one of Nonna's specialities using savoury pancakes (we won't be sharing that recipe though!)

We decided to break tradition and cook a traditional tuscan dish in our van to contribute to the focus on Tuscany and the cascades of Saturnia. So let's share it with you....

Tuscan Malfatti

Spinach & Ricotta Dumplings

Serves 2

Cook time: 15 minutes

Malfatti means badly made in Italian. So this dish is great for all levels of van chefs as it doesn't matter if it doesn't look pretty. It was meant to be that way! It's really easy to make and doesn't have a long cooking time, crucial for saving gas when on the road.

It's a great vegetarian dish, and can be served with a butter sauce or tomato sauce. We served ours coated with butter as we feel it brings out the flavour of these tasty little dumplings.

Enjoy!

You can find more recipes at vanlifeeats.com

Ingredients

200g fresh spinach

150g ricotta cheese

1/2 cup plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 egg

1/2 slice of bread

1/2 cup parmesan cheese

1 pinch nutmeg

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

1 tbsp butter



Method

1. Add the 200g of Spinach to your skillet pan and cook the spinach for a few minutes until it's all wilted. Do not let it stick to the bottom! Drain and press out as much liquid as possible and leave aside to cool.
2. Add the Ricotta, Parmesan, flour and the egg to a bowl and mix it all up.
3. Once the Spinach has cooled add it the manual blender along with half a slice of bread and blitz it all up. Add this to the bowl and mix everything together. Season with salt and pepper and a pinch of nutmeg. You should have a sticky but firm mixture that you can roll into balls. Add more flour if need be.
4. Add to a pan a shallow amount of water (enough to cover most of the dumpling) and bring to a simmer. Add the Malfatti dumplings and simmer for about 7 minutes.
5. On your tray sprinkle a little flour. Take a tablespoon of mixture and roll into little balls or mini sausage shapes. This should make approx 8 dumplings. Make sure they have a light dusting of flour. The balls should feel slightly firm and yet not too wet.
6. Drain a little of the water but leave a little a drizzle in the pan and add a good knob of butter. Coat the dumplings and serve 3 or 4 in each bowl.



North & South in Chile

Traveling with Octavia & Victoria

It all started on November 14, 2017, the day I bought my long-awaited 1985 Kombi Volkswagen and the story of Octavia Traveling began!

My name is Victoria, I am Chilean and I am 26 years old, an industrial civil engineer by profession, photographer, filmmaker and adventurer by passion. Today I dedicate myself to photography and show the most beautiful corners of my country.

From a very young age I dreamed of having my own mobile home, a small but cozy space, with everything

necessary to survive and travel the world, photographing and working at the same time, that was my dream. I always thought that I should find a partner to be able to start this idea that I had, I thought that alone as a woman I could not or that it would be very risky, but there came a time in my life when I realized that I was wrong and that I should try it alone, and that if one day I had a suitable partner everything would be fine, but I couldn't wait any longer, that's how I made the decision that it was time to start this life project.

When I started to restore and camperize it, I wanted to share the process and that's when I created the Octavia Viajando project. I only had 2 years left to finish university, so I spent a whole year working on it, to leave it super equipped for the trip that would start the following summer.

Once ready we began to travel, the goal was to reach the end of the Pan-American route in Chile, and since I was going to travel alone I began to contact different companies related to tourism, such as accommodation, camping, or adventure tourism, to be able to barter and stay in places where I felt safe, it was the first time traveling like this. I offered them my photographic work in exchange for a place to park my Kombi and sleep. This is how I began to relate to tourism, to learn from the different realities of each region of Chile and how tourism works.

Since I started this project, I have been able to travel from Atacama to Magallanes region in the Kombi, making stops along the way and discovering little-known places in each region, that's what I like the most! As we travel, we interact with different entrepreneurs throughout Chile and we help each other in a reciprocal way. With photography and videos, we generate audiovisual material and they welcome us, giving us a place to sleep, they teach us what they do and what life is like where they live, creating audiovisual content so that they can publicize the experience and services they are offering.



I have been able to climb volcanoes, cross glaciers, navigate lakes and go on kayaking expeditions, rafting, learn about beekeeping and much more. All this without having studied tourism, only by being a lover of nature and outdoor life.

When I finished my Industrial Civil Engineering studies, I continued the trip in my Kombi, this time with the aim of reaching Tierra del Fuego, but as a result of the pandemic we only managed to get to Aysen, where I had to leave Octavia for 9 months. Finally, in November of that year, I made the decision to go look for her quickly, since everything was very uncertain.

Then, in 2021 I resumed the trip, we changed course and went north, reaching the Atacama region, the mountain range above 4,300 meters, all this in Octavia, an 85 Kombi. In 2022, we resumed the trip at the end of the world.

»This time with the more ambitious goal, to arrive in the Kombi to Puerto Williams, the southernmost city in the world.«

We wanted to get to know Navarino Island and do the trek that bears the same name. This is how in March 2022 we reached Magallanes, fulfilling the dream of arriving in my Kombi to this beautiful region that has so much to discover.



Thanks to all this I have been able to meet incredible people with whom I keep in touch over time and some have become like part of my family. Tourism in Chile still has a lot to offer, we should not focus only on traditional places, since there are a lot of destinations and valuable people who deserve to be known throughout the country.



Our goal is to promote a life inspired by nature and a culture that is aware of caring for the environment, as we travel, we share through Instagram and on my blog www.octaviaviajando.com, how beautiful planet earth is and how to let things happen as they should be, destiny surprises us every day! All this has taught me that we are not in control of everything. We believe that it is necessary to know what we have in order to value it, so that the need to protect nature and our environment is born in people, in addition to understanding what is happening in other parts of the country and the world.

I have also started taking people to travel around Chile. In October and November I have 2 new group trips to Torres del Paine, which has me very motivated! Since it is a way to bring my community closer to national tourism and show them what my 85 Volkswagen Kombi is like, it opened the doors to a new nomadic world, which I had never imagined.

So if you are reading this and you dream of visiting Chile, do not hesitate to contact me! And if you want to know the Eighth wonder of the world, the Torres del Paine, you are super invited to be part of these trips!

I hope one day to be able to go around the world in my Kombi Octavia Traveling.

Today I travel with my partner, @naturart.click, we both try to work in a nomadic way and adapt to the needs of the trade and life on the move. For my part, I combine the trip in my Kombi Volkswagen with other types of trips.

Such as the group trips that I have done together with my community of followers, and I attend trips that aim to promote different destinations in the country. Sometimes I go in Octavia and others we travel by plane to the destination when it is something punctual.

Parallel to all this, I do freelance work as an audiovisual content creator, publishing brand articles on my blog, I do Instagram consulting, digital development classes and more, all this allows me to travel and work while I travel in Octavia.

Boost Your Cold Adventures

Just as it is cold and chilly in the mountains of Southern Chile - fall and winter are also creeping in on the northern hemisphere.

To get you prepared for the colder days here's a little recipe that will boost your

immune system and give you the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

The great thing about it? You can drink it like a shot, quick and easy!

Oh, and did we mention that you can easily make this in your van?

Immune Booster Shot Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 tbsp of honey | ¼ tsp of turmeric |
| Juice of 1 lemon | 1 tbsp of hot water |
| Juice of 1 orange | A dash of sea salt |
| 1 clove of garlic, minced | A dash of cinnamon |
| 1 tsp of fresh ginger | A dash of black pepper |
| 1 tbsp of raw Apple Cider Vinegar | A dash of cayenne pepper (if you have it on hand) |

The great thing is, if you're missing an ingredient or two, it's totally fine, just use whatever you have on hand!

And here's how you make it:

1. Mince your garlic and set it aside for 10 minutes so that its enzymes can form
2. Dissolve the honey in the hot water
3. Mix all other ingredients together and enjoy!



Australia with our Kombis

Our first go at vanlife started in 2016 just a few months after we started dating. We decided to travel around Australia in our two kombi vans named Vera and Anna, while we had a loose plan of how long we would be away it quickly changed when 3 weeks into the trip Anna broke down. Anna was at the shop for a week, luckily it was at Airlie Beach in Queensland which is a tropical paradise right on the beach.

We had decided to spend the summer in Tasmania working on a Cherry farm living on Solomons parents property to save up for our next stage of traveling over the Nullarbor to Western Australia.

But unfortunately while we were in Tasmania Anna broke down. This time she required a top end rebuild of her engine which blew through half our savings.



Now in mid 2022 we are finally only one month away from leaving for our second lap of Australia. This time with just the one kombi (Anna) and a new addition to the family which is yet to be named, our vintage folding caravan. We can't wait to start this trip which is going to be epic.

»We have no end date in mind so we might be on the road for a few years which makes us so so happy.«

If you are traveling Australia and see us on the road come over and say hello. We love meeting with fellow travelers and hearing everyone's travel stories.

Follow us on our second attempt around Australia, happy Travels!

We managed to get her engine sorted before heading off again at the start of 2017 getting barely halfway to Western Australia before needing to top up our funds again on a vineyard in South Australia.

By the time we arrived in Western Australia it was the middle of winter and freezing cold so we immediately headed north searching for warmer climates and some coral reef to go snorkeling in. Coral Bay, one of the most amazing places to visit, we went to for just one day and ended up staying a whole month. It was an amazing tiny town that was right on the water where you could snorkel off the beach.

We finally started heading north again with the hope of making it to Broome but as fate would have it we got to barely 1000 kms away before this time Vera broke down.

With the temperature starting to rise it was just getting too hot for our kombis aircooled engines so it was time to head south to Perth and save up some money again. The rest of the summer of 2017 was spent working in a small town saving up so we could head back over to Tasmania to get married.

Fast forward 4 years, we spent the year after getting married in 2018 living in Brisbane saving up our money again and getting qualified in a few different jobs just trying to decide what to do. Early 2019 we decided that we need to do another trip.

We couldn't handle working the 9-5 when we had spent so long on the road, but unfortunately Covid-19 had other ideas and we both lost our jobs. But since we couldn't travel anywhere we had to start new jobs and just wait it out.



Roadoffice

A Bachelor's Thesis on
Working on the Road



Hi, I'm Lucien, the author of Roadoffice Magazine.

Even as a child, I used to make the campsites unsafe on my tricycle. In recent years, I have rediscovered camping, especially in connection with my passion for photography and filming; driving a Defender for days on end over gravel roads, capturing the glow of the mountain peaks in the Alps early in the morning with my camera, or simply enjoying a warm coffee at 2,500 metres above sea level while the world is still asleep. In such moments, time seems to stop for a moment for me and only the here and now exists. Because of this fascination, I have gone camping more and more often in recent years, and I particularly enjoy it when I can do this with a camping vehicle. For me, these vehicles are similar

to children's toys, simply for adults. They arouse in me an enthusiasm as if I were a little boy again. During such camping trips, however, I noticed that time was usually very short. So I often thought after a trip with a few more days, I could have visited this spot and that area. That's how I came up with the idea of writing a magazine this year as part of my bachelor's thesis with the title „Roadoffice“. You don't have to be a travel blogger, novelist or travel photographer to try your hand at „Office on the Road“. You like to travel and camp, want to spend more time in nature outside of your holiday days, but don't want to quit your job or take a sabbatical? In most cases, the „Office on the Road“ is the solution to this situation.

This magazine supports you in your first attempt with this form of work. In 120 pages I explain everything you need to know to find your personal kind of „Office on the Road“, to plan everything and to make your first attempt a success. The focus of this magazine is on all relevant aspects that are important for working on the road and not on basic camping tips.



How did this project come about?

The Roadoffice magazine came into being in the course of my Bachelor's thesis at the University of Applied Sciences Graubünden and forms the core of my teaching project. In my thesis, I investigated which aspects of a work situation are decisive for being able to carry it out from a camper. In doing so, the advantages on the employer's as well as on the employee's side were examined more closely. The content of this magazine is based on interviews with experts in this field and a one-month self-experiment. The experts are employers and employees who have already gained experience in this field. The resulting findings form the basis for this magazine.



My own self-experiment

In order to not only summarise the tips and tricks of others, I really wanted to find out for myself what it was like to work from the „Office on the Road“. I packed my bags and lived and worked in an old Defender 110 for a month, driving from Switzerland via Denmark to Norway and back via Sweden. During this time:

I worked for MyCamper as a video editor

I wrote my bachelor's thesis

I created most of the video and photo content for the bachelor project

All these tasks together made up a workload of about 70-80%. I was able to organise this work myself to a large extent and complete it when it suited me. Anyone who has ever seen the inside of a Defender 110 knows that there is not much room for luxury inside. With my self-experiment, I wanted to consciously find out where the limits of what is possible are and also exceed them. So my fellow student Jonas Lang accompanied me for half of my journey. This made the space even tighter during these two weeks, as he also worked on his thesis while on the road.

The whole self-experiment went more smoothly than I would have thought possible. The average of 21 rainy days in Norwegian April had fortunately not come true. On the next few pages, I'll take you on my journey and tell you some of the highlights. You will also find some experiences and comparative values from my trip.

What to Expect: Models from the Roadoffice

Discover the different models of working on the road in this short sample of the Roadoffice Magazine. Just like every person, every camper and every job, every „Office on the Road“ is different. Finding your perfect model is therefore not something that can be conclusively answered in this magazine. However, there are some variants that can serve as examples and from which you may be able to put together a model that suits you:

Short-Term Model

In a period of two to eight weeks, work is done on a normal or reduced workload. This can be everyday work or work that is specially suited to the job, such as a year-end closing or brainstorming for a new project. This is the ideal model to try out for the first time. Tip: If you choose this model, projects that require little communication with other employees are particularly suitable.

Seasonal Model

This model is conceivable if a work situation requires less work or a different type of work due to the season, for example, more administrative tasks as in the peak season. You can also be classified under this model if you are a warmth lover. For example, you could work in the OOTR from more southern latitudes during the winter. Depending on the season, the period is between three and six months. Tip: This model can also be combined with a seasonal physical job, for example as a ski or surf instructor. This gives you a balance to your PC work.



Sabbatical-Plus

In Sabbatical-Plus, you take a sabbatical for a longer period of time during which you work on the road, usually at a greatly reduced workload. This means that the sabbatical can be extended considerably and, in the best case, slack periods during the sabbatical, such as a period of bad weather, can be optimally used to work. This model is particularly suitable for larger trips and is either pursued over a longer period or even entered into for an initially indefinite period. Tip: It is advantageous if you do not take on a completely new job for this, but build on your existing know-how and ideally work for the same employer.

Retirement-Plus

This is a very similar model to the Sabbatical-Plus. It only differs with the stage of life and the end of the OOTR. Here you continue to work at a very reduced workload shortly before or at the start of retirement and thus finance your passion for the company, an early retirement or supplement your pension. Tip: Those who would like to switch / change to a smaller workload could find a suitable solution in this model. For example, there is the possibility of providing advice to the successor. Full-time OOTR The heading is self-explanatory. It is probably the most challenging way of working and again something different from all the other models.

The difficulty lies mainly in the change of social attitude and contact with the original environment. Tipp: This model is a fundamental and radical change of lifestyle. Therefore, I would advise you to talk to some people who have experience with this lifestyle. I would make the start into full-time OOTR with a different model and gradually expand this.

Travel Blogger

Perhaps the most obvious thing to do when you think of OOTR is to travel and document it on the internet. Although this form of work is very common nowadays and at first glance seems to be the perfect synergy of work and travel, you need to look very carefully here. It takes a lot of effort to run a successful travel blog. In addition, it usually takes years until such a blog or channel brings in a significant income - until then you are (often) working for free.

Commuter

This is a related „office on the road“ model: you commute by van to the place of work for certain days to meet co-workers and do physical work. The rest of the time you work in your home office. With this option, it is possible to take a job far away from home and still maintain social contact with colleagues on site. Ideally, the employer will provide a parking space with electricity and you can use the company's sanitary facilities, which are usually available anyway.



Share your vanlife story with us!

Send an article about your vanlife adventure to office@vanlifezone.com.

You have total creative freedom and can share any aspect or story about your experience of living in a van.

Please make sure that you have roughly 1000 words and that you include 10 - 15 high resolution images.

Promote your brand or product in our magazine!

Not only can you reach travelers, campers and adventurers from all around the world with the Vanlifezone magazine but it also helps us grow and fund the production of it!

Contact us at marketing@vanlifezone.com for more information.



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