

Smart Apps for Smart Travelers

2021 CAC Maintenance and New Member Rally



By Carolyn Beardshear, Colorado Airstream Club, #7982,
Information Technology Committee. Contact me at
cbshear@gmail.com.

Most, but not all, of these apps are available for both Apple or Android / Windows devices. I do not use all these apps personally, but they have been recommended by Airstreamers. **Be sure to read the reviews before making a purchase.** I have highlighted those most valuable to me. App prices may have changed and “pro” versions may now be available. Generally a free app has a “pro” version for a fee, either one time or annual subscription. “Free” versions are designed to make the “paid” version more attractive.

Note: Apps come and apps go. Please let me know if any of these are no longer available so I can keep this presentation current. Prices may have changed (increased, of course).

FIND A CAMPSITE



***Allstays Camp & RV** – Best \$9.99 you'll ever spend! You set the filter for what you want to see on the map: Campgrounds of all kinds: Army Core of Engineers, city/county park, Elks Clubs, National, Forests, Independent, KOA, Military, Moose Places, National Park, Overnight Parking, BLM/Public Lands, State/Provincial Parks, propane dealers, dump stations.

Allstays directory holds more than 28,000 campgrounds. Once you have found a campground, you can view their website, phone number, and directions. **One of the best things about this app is that you can use it with or without Internet!** Available for iPhone and Android devices.

AllStays also has a "Big Truck" app that locates Flying J and Pilots (Good Sam discounts) plus other travel centers.



Walmart Overnight Parking Locator – also Walmarts with no overnights. Additionally, low clearances, RV dealers and service centers, Rest Areas, Scenic Turnouts, **Road Grades**, Stores, Truck Stops



***Campendium** Recommended highly by Airstreamers. Similar features to AllStays, but free. However, for all features it's \$20 annually. One of those features is strength of WiFi signal in the area.



Overnight RV Parking – Annual Fee of \$24.95 Free or almost free overnight parking. “This app is a subscription service \$24.95 per year that has 12864 places in US and Canada where you can spend the night at little or no cost. I have found this to be invaluable on occasion when we were desperate for a spot to stay.”



Freeroam Find the best free campsites.

- Filter by cell signal, weather, safety, crowdedness and more
- US Public Land (BLM, USFS) and cell coverage map overlays
- Find nearby dump sites, fresh water, groceries, propane, cell towers, etc.
- View low clearance bridges and tunnels, for tall RVs

iOverlander



This is a good app for finding dispersed camping. When you see a spot that looks like it might be an interesting place to camp, you can look it up in the app and see what other people have said about it.

You need to be careful since the information isn't necessarily 100% correct. - Rich Howarth

HIPCAMP

The logo for HIPCAMP is displayed within a black rectangular border. The word "HIPCAMP" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters "HIP" and "AMP" are in black, while the letter "C" is replaced by a red triangle pointing upwards.

HIPCAMP

“Hipccamp is the world’s largest provider of outdoor stays. We give a growing community of good-natured people the opportunity to list, discover and book unique outdoor getaways like tent camping, glamping, trreehouses, RV stays and more. By connecting people with the land and each other, we work to support those who care about nature. Camp away from the crowds.” If this sounds like an ad, it is.



USFS & BLM Campgrounds

- 5,650 US United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) .
- Displays campground name, agency (BLM or USFS), local weather, elevation, Internet images and searches of the campground, Flickr geotag search, rec.gov info, Easily locate the campgrounds nearest you. Send location data directly to our Road Trip Planner app.
- Import routes from GPX files. This makes it much easier to find locations along your route.
- Show a route between your location and the campground.
- - Map layers include Apple, Google, and Open Street Maps.
- - No Internet connection required to view campground locations and info.
- - View Flickr photos of each location (if they exist).



BLM Maps \$2.99

The US Public Lands app allows you to plug in coordinates and see exactly what type of land the coordinates are located on. This is a great way to double check that you are, in fact, staying in a location where camping is allowed without carrying physical maps, books, or digging deep online.

Included in the app are on-device (fully works offline), individually selectable & beautifully colored map layers for most of the properties administered by the federal government:

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- US Forest Service (FS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE)
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Department of Defense (military bases & installations)
- Other (National Laboratories, Test Sites, etc...)

Freecampsites.net A website, not an app. If you strike out finding a free campsite on Campendium or Allstays, freecampsites.net is where you should search next. For whatever reason, there are more sites listed on freecampsites.net than on Campendium. The quality of the additional sites found here is typically not as great as the sites found on Campendium, which could be the reason for their choice to not include the sites on their website. Or, it could also be because freecampsites.net allows users to add their own free sites to the website for others to experience as well.



***Harvest Hosts** harvesthosts.com \$99 per year (15% discount with Airstream Club membership) Unlimited overnight stays at over 2210+ incredible locations (including 400+ golf courses) across North America

Wineries, Breweries & Distilleries, Farms, Museums & Attractions. Golf Courses are included in a \$119/year subscription.

Is it worth it? Yes. With 2-3 nights of free camping you've paid for your membership. It is considered good etiquette to purchase something in their gift shop, do a wine tasting, make a small donations, etc.



*Harvest Hosts: The Ultimate Guide to Free RV Camping

Downloadable PDF with Harvest Hosts Subscription.

Excellent compilation of advice on all aspects dry camping.



Boondockers Welcome

Like Harvest Hosts, but camping offered by individuals. \$50/yr.



RV Dump Stations

This app shows over 7,000 RV dump stations throughout the US. and Canada. Includes rest areas, truck stops, KOAs and more. - Location database is included with the app, so all locations are visible when offline.

- Filter what type of location to display.
- Show a route between your location and the selected RV dump station.
- View the dump stations in list view; easily search the list..
- Import routes from GPX files. This makes it much easier to find RV dump stations along a route you've created in another app such as Road Trip Planner.
- Send a dump station location to our app Road Trip Planner. This helps in routing your travels (requires separate purchase of the Road Trip Planner app).

Due to the nature of dump stations constantly changing their status it's recommended you contact the dump station prior to using it to verify its existence.



*Rest Stops Plus – All Stays

Free: Where is the closest rest stop? Where is the next one in your direction? Or one with wifi or a RV dump? The only app that shows you directional access right on the map!

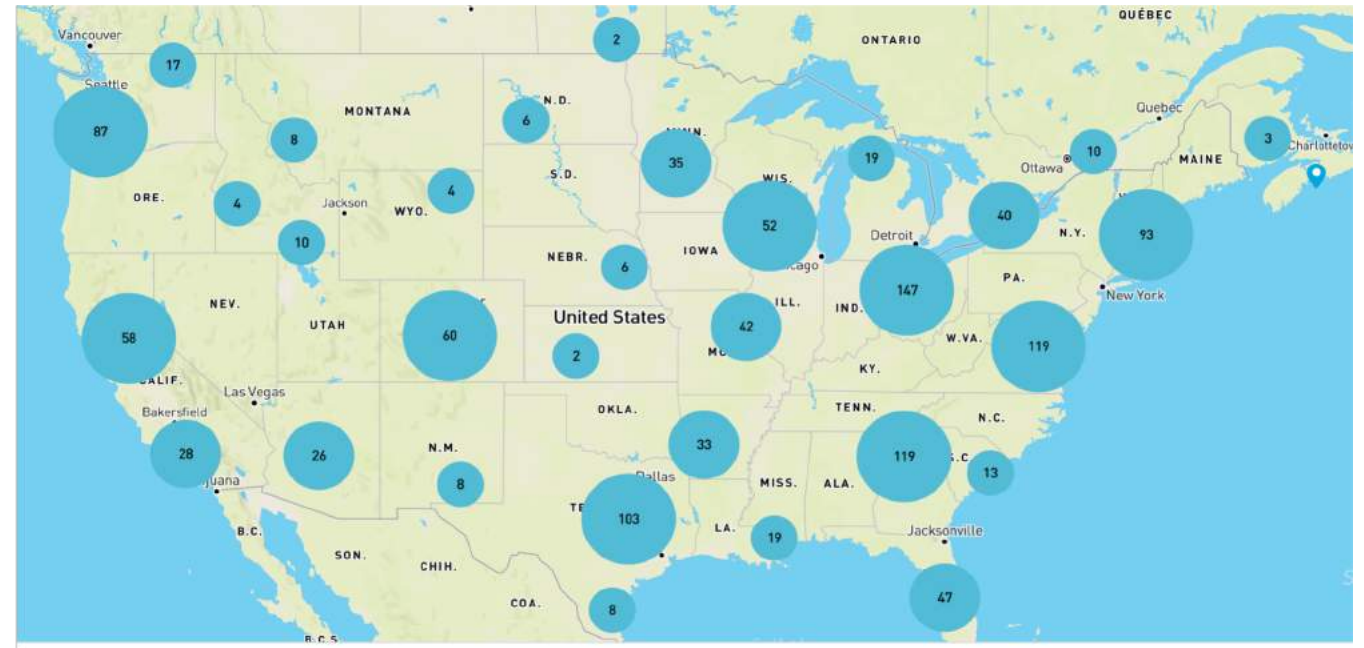
Thousands of Welcome centers, turn outs, service plazas, scenic vistas and rest areas in the USA and Canada broken down by heading. A detail view lists each rest stops amenities like restrooms, picnic tables, vending machines, pet-friendly, RV dump, handicap accessible, security and even wi-fi.

You can now filter the map to see only the amenities you want.

*Airstream Club Courtesy Parking

The next time you are in need of an overnight parking area try one of best kept secrets in Airstream Club International, Courtesy Parking. Currently approximately **500** fellow members offer free, overnight parking across the USA and lower Canada.

<https://airstreamclub.org/members/courtesy-parking-directory>



NAVIGATION



***Google Maps** The free Google maps application is almost a no-brainer to have handy on your phone. It can replace your paper map altogether while helping you find destinations and businesses along the way, plus provide directions, all with the ease of turn-by-turn navigation. **Use maps.google.com STREET VIEW and you can view gas stations to see if your rig can maneuver there.**



***Waze** – The world's largest community based traffic and navigation app. **VERY LEGIBLE and FREE!** Join other drivers in your area who share real time traffic and road info, saving everyone time and gas money on their daily commute. **This app helps you avoid traffic by being alerted of upcoming road hazards, traffic jams or accidents.** View notes from the report such as how long others have been waiting, how fast the traffic is moving and what the exact situation is. If you create an account you can also report road conditions to help other drivers. Also locates gas stations. Displays your speed, estimated time of arrival, and can send ETA to those awaiting your arrival. Note: Since the GPS is on, the battery life shortens



Google Earth – <https://www.google.com/earth/> Want to view the campground layout, view the curves in a mountain road, or check out a gas station? Get a bird's eye view.



MAPS.ME allows you to download maps for specific areas prior to your departure (or during if you will have access to the Internet.) These maps are crowd-sourced so they are reasonably updated and the app & maps are free. The file size is very large, so you may want to download the maps with a strong internet connection. This app is great if you expect to be in a location with no Internet access but you still need access to reliable maps. I used this extensively in Death Valley and never needed an Internet connection. It even had all of the back roads we went on!” – Rec. by Tim Kendziorski



***AllTrails** is your guide to navigating outdoors. Discover the best hiking, running, and biking trails around the world. Explore 200,000+ hand-curated trail maps plus reviews and photos crowdsourced from millions of hikers, mountain bikers and trail runners. Find that dog-friendly or kid-friendly trail that you’ve been searching for. Take that mountain biking or backpacking trip you’ve always dreamed of. Explore a national park, or discover new hiking trails in your area. A great filter allows you to find just the right trail for YOU!

ROAD TRIP PLANNERS



Rv Trip Wizard \$49 per year. Many features listed at <https://www.rvtripwizard.com/>
Customizes to your RV. Points of interest, Trip Cost wizard...more. Rec. by Chuck Gunning



Road Trip Planner \$4.99

Create, edit, and view Road Trip Planner files on your Apple devices. Place pins on a worldwide map for each location you want to visit, then see your route. Enter trip details for each location and create a complete trip itinerary. Unlike other trip planning apps, this app has NO SUBSCRIPTION FEES. Rec. by Rich Nortnik



***Roadtrippers** Plan your journey (adding up to 150 stops with a premium account), collaborate with friends or family, and discover great places to stop along your route, like [national parks](#), roadside attractions, hotels, trails, hikes, scenic points, parks and nature reserves and more. The app is free, but to enjoy all the bells and whistles, upgrade to Roadtrippers Plus for \$29.99 a year.



Footpath Route Planner Map routes with your finger and Footpath will snap to roads and trails. Measure distances and elevations in seconds, then navigate along with turn-by-turn directions.

GENERAL TRAVEL You can also Google “....near me.”



***Trip Advisor** Hotels, Restaurants, **Things to Do**
(ranked according to popularity), Flights, Nearby
Attractions



Around Me – Banks, Bars, Coffee Shops, Concerts, Gas
Stations, Hospitals, Hotels, Movie Theatres, Movies
(Fandango is better), Nearby Sights, Parking, Pharmacies,
Pubs, Restaurants, Supermarkets, Taxis, Theaters, etc.



iExit Interstate Exit Guide \$2.99

iExit helps you find the best exit ahead on the highway for all your travel needs. The app automatically locates you on a highway and lets you look hundreds of miles ahead to **discover services at upcoming exits**. It can be quite frustrating to depend on highway signs to find your next stop. This app will help plan ahead, whether it's finding somewhere for gas, food or even free WiFi. Good results for gas stations and filters for type of fuel.

FIND FUEL



***GAS BUDDY.** lets you search for gas prices by city, state, zip code, with listings for all cities in the USA and Canada. The prices are updated in real time and show the time it was located, allowing you to fill up on the cheapest gas near you with ease. Filters for type of fuel – gas, diesel. There's only one listed because, well, Gas Buddy is the best.



GAS GURU Find cheap gas prices near you. Compare gas prices near work, home, or anywhere
Filter your search by gas/fuel grade/amenities and view results by map or list view.
Get detailed info you need – directions, maps, prices of all grades, addresses, time of last gas price update, and more

FOOD AND DRINK



***Yelp** – Restaurants and more with reviews from real people Need to find a shop that sells RV parts? Not sure where to eat for dinner? The Yelp app is a great way to find businesses and restaurants near you. You can read and write reviews, get directions, and even view menus and photos!



***Our Groceries** A very handy app for creating shopping lists at groceries, pharmacies, home improvement stores, really anywhere you shop. Items you've purchased are deleted with a single tap. You can email or text the list to a spouse/partner/friend.



Paprika Recipe Manager \$4.99. Paprika helps you organize your recipes, make meal plans, and create grocery lists. Using Paprika's built-in browser, you can save recipes from anywhere on the web. Want to access your recipes on your phone or tablet? The cloud sync service allows you to seamlessly sync your data across all of your devices, so you can use your iPad/tablet to display your recipes as you cook.

UTILITIES



Coverage? Shows you how strong the coverage is in your **immediate** area. There might be coverage just a block away. Has separate maps for Verizon, AT&T, Spring, T-Mobile and US Cell.



My Altitude uses GPS signals to determine your current location, altitude (height from sea level) barometric pressure and water boiling point.



Dual Level Level in two directions at once. Great for determining if your Airstream is level in both directions Note: Many compass apps have this function as well. It might already be on your phone.



***Maglite** – For those of us “of a certain age” who appreciate larger type and good lighting when reading maps, fine print, etc. It’s a magnifying glass and a light. Rec by Sue Heist

WEATHER

MyRadar – Great maps of incoming weather

Wunderground – One of many weather apps, but a good one. Lots of information

Accuweather: “One of the best weather apps I have used. –“Tom Smithson



Storm Shield Severe weather alerts for your exact location. Storm Shield gives you storm-based alerts for tornado, hurricane, flood, thunderstorm, winter storms and other life-threatening weather events via voice and push notification and it's loud!

Storm-based alerts help reduce false alarms by alerting you to severe weather **based on your exact location within a county**. County-based alerts can result in false alarms, warning you when your location in the county is not within the threatened area.



Red Cross Tornado (also Flood, Earthquake, Wildfire apps available through the Red Cross) Enter your locations of interest and also your current location to receive Tornado Warnings and Alerts.

SIGHTSEEING APPS – ALONG THE WAY



World Peaks will outline and name mountain peaks all over the world – offline. It also gives GPS coordinates and MAPS of the area, including secondary and tertiary roads for those marvelous off-main-roads experiences.



Roadside America \$2.99 Biggest Ball of String, the Beer Can House, Carhenge...etc. There's a map function, so you know if you are close to something strange, or very strange.



***Geocaching** Join the world's largest treasure-hunting community with the official app for geocaching. There are millions of clever containers called geocaches hidden in almost every country on Earth, just waiting to be found—there are probably even some near you right now. Just getting started? This app walks you through the adventure of finding your first few geocaches. There are tips, hints, and instructions for geocaching as well as using the app. Great for kids on the road, but allow some time.



The National Park Service (NPS) App One app, every park at your fingertips. The NPS App is the new official app for the National Park Service with tools to explore [more than 400 national parks](#) nationwide. Find interactive maps, tours of park places, on-the-ground accessibility information, and much more to plan your national park adventures before and during your trip.



Clio Locates historical spots around your location. Clio puts history at your fingertips. Similar to locator 'apps' that help you find a nearby restaurant or repair shop, Clio picks up your present location and guides you to landmarks, museums, and historic sites. It also acts as a virtual time machine, allowing a user to see images and videos and hear and read about historic events that happened around them. Rec. by Jay Thompson



Explore Here – Historical Guide There are ~130k Historical Markers in the US and the world, marking historically important moments in time. Placed along roads, highways, in historic towns, Historical Markers provide bite sized pieces of history. Now, there's an app to explore them all! \$4.99 for Pro Version.

JUST FOR FUN



Star Chart Infinite – Plots the night sky in your location. Several versions available.



Night Sky / Night Sky Lite – Editors' Choice

This planetarium in your pocket makes it easy to discover the wonders of space wherever you go. Day or night, just aim your device skyward to see a live 3D map of the heavens, complete with beautifully illustrated constellations, stars, planets, and satellites. A special night mode helps you read the map in the dark, while integrated weather reports show the best times for stargazing.

Rec. by Jay Thompson



Geoguessr (NOT Geoguesser). You get a Google Street View of some place in the world and using clues from road signs, vegetation, etc. you try to guess where you are. Play alone or with friends. *Warning: it's addicting.*



PictureThis® identifies 1,000,000+ plants every day with 98% accuracy-better than most human experts. Get your gardening questions answered and become a “green thumb.” Encounter a beautiful, unknown flower during your walk? ID it immediately and add it to “My Garden.”



Merlin Bird ID – by Cornell University Lab
What’s that bird? Merlin will help you find out.

RECOMMENDED BY CAC MEMBERS



The **Garmin Drive App** is a **free** smartphone application that allows you to connect a compatible automotive device and a compatible smartphone in order to add additional live features to your **Garmin** device through your phone's existing mobile data plan, such as weather, traffic, and more. Rec. by Chuck Gunning



Garmin RV 780 GPS for RV and Camping Base
Accessory Kit

OUTSMART THE TRAFFIC: The RV 780 provides road warnings to keep you aware of steep grades, sharp curves, weight limits and more. Additionally, the Custom routing feature takes into account the size and weight of your RV then finds the best route for your vehicle. Rec. by Tom Nguyen