

Caravans – What to Expect

These notes are posted to the Maintenance Rally 2025 event on the ACI website.

Caravan Info on the Website

<https://airstreamclub.org/cac-maintenance-rally>

<https://airstreamclub.org/events/caravan-exploration>

FAQs for Members (with login)

<https://airstreamclub.org/events/caravan-exploration/caravan-information-members>

View All Caravans

<https://airstreamclub.org/events/caravan-exploration/caravan-information-members>

What to Expect on a Caravan

To be sure, not all caravans operate in the same manner, but instead are a product of the leaders' vision. There is no way to describe what every caravaner will experience, but it is possible to clarify specific caravan guidelines that are often misconstrued. Here are a few common "myths" regarding the caravan experience.

Myth: Everyone leaves the campground at the same time, so you have to get up early.

Reality: Rigs leave at different times, depending on the member's preference. Some all-day activities may start early.

Myth: All rigs convoy (single file) between stops.

Reality: No more than 2-3 rigs are allowed to travel together, for safety. A string of RVs causes other drivers to take unnecessary chances when passing.

Myth: Everyone has to arrive at the campground at the same time.

Reality: Everyone is asked to arrive within a window of time, usually 2-4 p.m., but never sooner than the leader.

Myth: The route between stops is prescribed, with no flexibility.

Reality: There is a suggested route that the leaders have scouted, but you can take any route you wish.

Myth: All planned group activities are required.

Reality: The kitty fee pays for all group activities, but you are not required to participate. You may or may not receive a refund.

Myth: A CB radio is required.

Reality: Cell phones and “family walkie-talkies” are used more. CB radios can be helpful, but are not required.

Myth: The group is always together, with little or no private time to explore on your own.

Reality: Some caravans are packed with activities, some have abundant free time. Ask the leaders how theirs is scheduled before you commit.

Myth: All caravans stops have 3-point hookups and WiFi.

Reality: Many caravans involve some dry camping, which will be publicized in the caravan description. WiFi is not guaranteed. Some areas do not have cell phone coverage.

Myth: There is a refund at the end.

Reality: There is no guarantee of a refund at the end of the caravan, but it is common since leaders try to be conservative in their budget estimates.

Myth: The caravan leader will help with mechanical repairs or medical issues.

Reality: Mechanical or medical issues do not stop caravans, but the leaders will help you find assistance. The caravan has to keep moving.

Myth: My dietary restrictions will be considered when planning meals.

Reality: Sometimes this is possible, but not always.

Myth: Sometimes this is possible. Not always. Be flexible.

Reality: There can be short days, but also very long days required by the terrain or geography.

Myth: All/no meals are provided.

Reality: Typically, there is a group meal at each stop. It might be a potluck, or prepared by a cooking team, or catered.

Additional Tips:

What you might not expect. Caravans are **not tours** being led by volunteer leaders. They are **working vacations**, in which everyone is expected to contribute and be responsible for themselves, their own welfare, and their happiness.

Caravaners are expected to help out in some way. There are a variety of jobs to be done: group meal planning and cooking, photography, mail pick-up, etc.

A **day in your trailer** is just fine. We all need a break from socializing sometimes.

The drives can be challenging, but **routes are scouted** in advance so there aren't surprises. If you don't like high, mountain roads, read the caravan description carefully. *A caravan is not the time to get over your fears.*

If possible, know how your body tolerates **altitude**. Read the caravan description carefully. If you have issues with altitude, check the altitude of the caravan stops. Some people have problems at 9000', others at 5000'.

Your pet is your responsibility. Ask your caravan leaders about their "pet policy." Caravans may differ, depending on the leader. The travel guide often lists local day care for pets if there are lengthy tours. Sometimes campgrounds have pet-walkers. If you elect not to participate in an activity because of your pet, you are not guaranteed a refund if the kitty fund has to pay for your spot.

Seek new acquaintances, not cliques. With a little effort, you'll make new friends, and there are periodic "Get Acquainted Meetings" designed to help you meet all the caravaners. The odds are good that you'll make some lifelong friends on a caravan.

Best to praise publicly; criticize privately. Go to leaders with issues, not to other caravaners.

Learn about the caravan before you go! **Talk to others who have been on the caravan you are considering,** but remember that caravans are constantly being revised. The same leaders may lead the same caravan very differently as a result of feedback from previous caravaners.

Read the caravan description very carefully and ask the leaders questions before committing to be sure the caravan is a good “fit.” New guidelines require the caravan description to publicize important aspects of the experience: altitude, dry camping, lack of wifi/cell phone connection, prayer policies, etc. before you apply for the caravan.