

## First Time Out – The Kitchen

As I type this, I am reminded that all of us had to start our RV endeavors at some point in time. I think about all of the stuff that I bought from various sources that were touted as the best thing since sliced bread. Turned out that most of them were not worth the time it took to read the instructions. So with this in mind, I am collecting all of the knowledge from posts on various forums to help new people. I never did like the labels used for some just starting such as newbie, rookie, and so on. So with some help from those who have gone before, I am condensing lots of ideas to one set of PDF files. Where I use someone else's knowledge I will try to indicate such with their name on the signature line. So as they say down around the bayou, "...it done time to put dat boat in de water..."

### Things that you should consider bring and leaving in your kitchen:

- 1. Dishes - We use dishes that we got for our wedding but had never really used before. They stay in the trailer. I am not a fan of paper plates and so on as the dishes can be washed and used hundreds of times. We carry five place settings. By leaving them in the trailer that is one less thing that you have to remember to bring along.**

Stu: Dishes - We didn't have any extra, and I didn't want the added weight of regular dining dishes in the trailer. Plus, I didn't want the risk of things breaking. So we bought a set of plastic dishes at Target. I think we have at least 6 sets and they've done well so far.

Bill: Your camping style will dictate what you need, probably the most important item would be a good can opener and corkscrew!

DieselHorse: We use Corelle dishes because they are thin, light, and extremely break resistant. They look pretty good too. We bought only what we needed from the individual pieces available at Walmart.

Don: You mean my old Army SS compartmented trays won't work, at least they are UNBREAKABLE, but can be dented! The better half loves the old multi-strand Bamboo woven paper plate holders, which I just hate for paper plate holders, I have got to find anything better than that bamboo stuff.

Adrian: I'm going to stay with the paper stuff and Corelle.

Linda: We don't use glass at all--if you go on roads that take out your trailer's suspension you don't want breakables in the cupboards! We use a lot of paper when dry camping to conserve water. We use our insulated travel mugs for coffee. On the subject of glass: We've never broken the glass tray in the microwave as some have, but have broken two or three glass shelves over the vegetable bins in the refrigerator. Don't put glass containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator door!

Lewisdf: Somewhere along the way we ended up with a 4 pc. set of blue and white enameled dishware & buy plastic dishes that fit in them like a glove, this setup leaves the dishes clean and makes the plastic plates rigid for cutting etc--anyway works for us, plus metal plates are indestructible- but not microwavable.

Woody: Corelle makes a set of square dinner ware. Stows away with little wasted space.

- 2. Silverware - We used stainless steel utensils that we found at little china (WM). They stay in the trailer.**

Stu: Silverware - Cheap stuff from Target.

- 3. Glasses - We several sets that we were given over time and they stay in the trailer also.**

Stu: Glasses - We have the typical small and large versions, plus wine glasses. All are acrylic because we didn't feel like breaking stuff as things shift while traveling or sliding off uneven picnic benches. Our coffee mugs are porcelain because I like my coffee warm...but those are extra mugs from our random travels and business conferences.

- 4. Steak knives, carving knife, and utility knives. We use the knife holder built into the back of the stove area to hold the carving and utility knives the others go in a drawer.**

Stu: Knives - We bought a cheap set at Target when we got the trailer a few years ago and their POS. I'll buy a decent set next time around so they last longer.

- 5. Various serving spoons, cooking utensils, and other stuff. This depends on what you cook and need. Again, the idea is to have them in the trailer all of the time.**

Bill: I agree that a nice table setting is better but we carry both so housekeeping chores don't interfere with having fun, I carry a one burner propane stove with the quick disconnect and small folding table for cooking outside when needed (boiling a big pot of water for a crab dinner isn't something to do inside),

- 6. Pots/pans and baking trays. Again this is up to you. We carry a lot pot, a skillet, and several baking trays.**

Stu: Pots and pans - We keep a few 9" skillets in the trailer, various mixing bowls and baking pans. Nothing like eating a fresh baked cookie while searching for your beer.

DieselHorse: She purchased a set of Teflon lined aluminum pans. I don't know how healthy Teflon cookware is, but it sure cleans up easy and saves water in the process because stuff that would ordinarily stick wipes out with a paper towel before washing.

Don: The wife will only use SS pots and pans etc.

Linda: I seldom ever bake in the trailer, but it is plenty big enough for a 9 x 12 inch pan, smaller cookie sheets, regular loaf pans, etc. I carry one of each, plus a 9 x 9 pan and a muffin tin that has 6 slots. They all are stored in the oven while traveling.

- 7. Electrical appliances - we have a small coffee maker (4 cup), a grilling plate, blender, and a small mixer.**

Stu: Appliances - We have a toaster and coffee maker that stay in the trailer.

Bill: To begin outfitting the kitchen, I would avoid electrical appliances unless all your camping is where you have hookups.

- 8. Plastic storage containers - We keep a set of those for leftovers. They "nest" inside each other so they don't take up a lot of room.**

Stu: Storage containers - We keep foil and a few disposable containers for leftovers as well.

Art and Lalah: One thing I might add is the use of various boxes to keep things in place during travel. The key idea is that sturdy cardboard boxes are free and lightweight.

Over time I have found a series of large boxes which I keep in the under bed storage. That way extra chips and other breakables are kept separate from cans of food which are separate from the vacuum and books etc. Everything goes in an appropriate box so we can find things and they are protected.

Also, I use beer 6-packs to keep things like soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, and other liquids in place in the kitchen cupboards.

Linda: One of my best storage purchases was the Rubbermaid (I think) roll out storage bins for cupboards and under sink use--don't know if they are still made.

**9. Under the sink we have a plastic tray that holds all of the dish washing, cleaning sprays, etc.**

Art and Lalah: Not in the kitchen, but I have found that Fiber-One boxes from Costco are very sturdy and fit exactly in the cabinet over our dinette. One is labeled for batteries and chargers, one for remotes and our XM radio, etc.

## **Some ideas:**

**Cook your food that you can before hand and freeze it in meal size servings. This allows you to spend less time cooking (unless of course you like to cook). You can do the same with snacks, fruit, and so on.**

Stu: We also do a lot of prep work on the meals before the trip. Steaks get put into a marinade mid-week and pre-made meals are loaded into the freezer. We keep a lot of food like crackers, rice and similar items in the trailer so we only have to worry about the fresh food.

Bill: For the simple easy camping life, easy meal preparation doesn't require those things, just a selection of easy to prepare victuals, and lots of beverages.

**We use bags we get from little china (WM) as trash bags. Most people don't give a second thought to someone throwing away a little china bag but do notice a full sized garbage bag.**

**We try to recycle as much of the trash as possible. We once carried a bunch of aluminum cans in a net sack all over the western states. Those cans had 8,000 miles them by the time we got home. Some will, some won't. Your choice.**

Stu: Recycling - I bought two small tin garbage cans with lids for recycling. We'll take ours home as well if the park doesn't recycle.

Well, you now have a few ideas to help with what you would like to have and/or need in the kitchen. Depending on the weight you are carrying I would say stay away from some of the lightweight "camping" kitchenware. I have found a lot of it is basically junk. Either way, enjoy!

So long from the Fox's Den deep in the swamplands of Louisiana....Laissez les bons temps rouler!!!!