



Lappin' it up

12 months and counting

Ever dreamed of selling up and hitting the road for good? TRACY MORRIS, the mother behind The Blonde Nomads, has done just that and shares what modern-day gypsy life is all about.

Looking out our caravan window at the lush rainforest of the Daintree, I take a moment to figure out what day it is. It takes me a good minute as my thoughts backtrack through the last week of cruising through the vast Queensland Outback, sleeping under a galaxy of stars and toasting yummy marshmallows on campfires.

That is the beauty of our nomadic lifestyle; the days of the week don't matter. We have no 9am school drop-off to rush to and I can't remember the last time we were stuck in traffic.

It has been well over 12 months since we sold our Sydney house, gave away most of our possessions and drove off into the sunset in search of adventure and, more importantly, a more simplified, stress-free life.

The rhythm of our tribe

Our 22-foot caravan is a great home for our little family of four and our nomadic lifestyle is something we value and appreciate daily.



From rainforest to the desert and beyond, our highlights reel is impressive as we reflect on all the amazing places we have experienced together. We have travelled a full loop around this great Aussie land and are now different people from when we started, having learnt so much about the wonderful world around us.

Less is more

We don't need many 'things' to make us happy. Our 'mini blondies', Marli (5) and Ziggy (3), only have one toy drawer and one book drawer between them – and Australia as their backyard. They play outside, getting down and dirty in nature, and we love this element of our lifestyle.

We enjoy getting away to remote locations, off-grid and out of range in the depths of nature. This is the time when we truly switch off, recharge and reconnect with each other.

Having swapped our three-bedroom house in the 'burbs for our home-on-wheels, we no longer have the usual utility bills, but rely on solar power. We are also very good at conserving water, which sometimes means quick showers, bucket baths or jumping in the ocean or river – or occasionally going without.

Road schooling and life skills

Our outdoor lifestyle has taught our mini blondies valuable life skills. The kids can build a mean campfire, are pretty good at reading maps and have learnt hands-on where food comes from. We have been berry picking in Tasmania, harvested oysters in South Australia's Coffin Bay, caught mud crabs with our bare hands in Western Australia and husked our own coconuts in tropical Queensland.

The kids are constantly eating, and food is always at the forefront of their minds. Because of this they are happy to try anything, including freshly shucked pearl meat, smoked oysters and even mud crabs and cray fish cooked over hot coals.

The flipside

Living without a fixed address is not, however, all rainbows and bubbles. We don't have the luxury of babysitters or grandparents to help us with the kids, so they are with us 24/7. Mundane house chores still need to be done in between travel days, and, to add spice to the mix, we



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are also working as we go, sharing our travels via theblondenomads.com.au and our social media pages.

We are good at balancing our schedule and, after a year on the road, have found a good rhythm that works well for us, with a mix of adventure, drive, work and rest days. We started our trip with the intent of embracing slow travel, and have tried to stick to that concept as much as possible. But, at times, itineraries, bad weather and/or work deadlines have thrown that concept out the window for a short period. Times like these are when we pull back on the travel and make a conscious effort to stop, slow the pace down and prioritise what is needed.

#Vanlife community

There is a real sense of community on the road and when you cross paths with a fellow travelling family it is a little like speed dating. You blurt out where you have been, what you are doing next and how long you will be there for. More often than not, a friendship is formed as you share a few drinks over happy hour, watch the kids play and have a giggle as you sympathise about how much the kids eat, awkward toilet moments and that time your car or caravan became bogged.

It is much the same with our mini adventurers, as there is no time to be shy and their confidence has grown tenfold. Once they find kids, they ask their names and then they are off playing wonderful games. And as long as we keep them in sight, we take a rare moment to relax. ●



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Lap Year Essentials

- Satellite phone for emergencies
- A well-stocked first-aid kit
- Decent solar power set-up
- Water filter for all drinking water
- Extra water tubs, for the back of the car
- Head torches
- Handheld UHF radios
- Recovery tracks for 4WDing



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Watch a video of the family's adventures doing the 'big lap' by scanning the code here, or go to caravanandcampingwithkids.com.au and search 'Lappin' it up'.



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01 The 'mini blondies', Marli and Ziggy 02 The 22-foot caravan is a great home 03 Marli and Ziggy get hands-on in the dirt 04 The Blonde Nomads tribe 05 Out of range in nature 06 On the road in Western Australia 07 Marli and her bounty. All images © The Blonde Nomads.