

Touring – Winter touring

More and more parks are staying open for longer in the year, or even all year round. Modern high-spec tourers and motorhomes are well equipped to make winter touring a warm and comfortable experience. Imagine how snug it would be inside a warm caravan with snow on the ground outside, especially at Christmas or New Year.

Central Heating

Most caravans now have central heating systems, but any gas appliance could be dangerous if left on overnight. Low wattage electric convector heaters are a safer option, and can be used all day for background heat.

Gas

Butane (blue cylinder) is liable to freeze when temperatures fall below zero, so you would need to carry propane (red cylinder). Modern caravan appliances work equally well on butane or propane, however you will need a different regulator, as these are not interchangeable. Propane can be used all year round so there is no need to switch back to butane for the summer.

Insulation

Most modern caravans are double glazed and have well-insulated walls, floor and roof. A porch awning would be useful as an 'air-lock' to prevent winter winds entering the caravan or motorhome direct when the door is opened.

Fresh Water

In sub zero conditions, the outside water container may well freeze so you will need a secondary container inside the caravan. There are several commercial kits available to help you achieve this. If you have a big enough caravan you may want to install an onboard water tank. Many new caravans and motorhomes are fitted with a fresh and waste water facilities inside a locker, accessible from outside the caravan, which should protect against freezing.

Waste Water

To prevent freezing of the waste tanks or porta-potti, it is acceptable to add car-type anti-freeze. Salt is an alternative for plastic waste containers, but it is corrosive and should not be used in toilets with valves etc. Waste pipes should be lagged, and kept as straight as possible to avoid them holding pools of water which could freeze.

General tips

- A porch awning is useful for storing wellies, winter coats, sledges etc.
- Condensation can be a problem, so bowls of moisture absorbing crystals (available from DIY outlets) could be placed strategically around the van.
- Avoid excessive moisture production, especially when cooking or washing. Even if it is cold, ensure free ventilation when cooking or showering.

- High-tog quilts or arctic sleeping bags should ensure a warm and cozy night, even with no heater on.
- With extra electric appliances in use, make sure that adequate fire safety equipment is to hand.
- Don't allow snow to collect under the caravan, and keep the mains cable free moving or it may become frozen to the ground.
- Keep moving parts of the caravan, like the handbrake, jockey wheel, corner steadies etc. well oiled to prevent seizing. If it is safe to do so, leave the caravan handbrake off to avoid it seizing.

Useful contacts

Aztec mains panel heaters

www.aztec-europe.co.uk

01592 630212

Truma winterising kit

www.truma.com

01283 511092

Snowchains – sale or hire

www.snowchains.co.uk

01732 884408

Ventair under mattress/behind cushions material

01386 424427

Mitsubishi portable dehumidifiers

www.meaco.com/mitsubishi.htm

01483 267433