

# Introduction

Exploring the world by camper van offers unmatched freedom to shape your own path, stop wherever inspires you, and wake up to ever-changing landscapes. In 2024, the **vanlife** movement reached new heights — with travelers prioritizing natural beauty, off-grid destinations, and authentic cultural experiences.

This document presents the **top ten trending destinations for van-life in 2024**, organized by continent. Each region includes three standout spots that are especially camper-van friendly — whether for road-trip routes, scenic camping, or flexible travel infrastructure. For each spot, you'll find location details, reasons to visit, and must-see highlights.

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## North America

### 1. Sedona, Arizona (USA)

**Summary:** Red-rock town in northern Arizona, population around 10 000. High desert climate; hot summers (35 °C) and mild winters, mild spring and autumn ideal for camping.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Sedona's iconic red sandstone formations and energy vortex lore make it a spiritual and scenic magnet. Plenty of dispersed camping and boondocking. Excellent trail network accessible directly from van sites.

**Highlights:**

- **Cathedral Rock & Bell Rock** – walkable trails with striking views and sunrise/sunset hues.
- **Oak Creek Canyon scenic drive** – canyon route with picnic spots and creekside van stops.
- **Chapel of the Holy Cross** – built into red cliffs, offering panoramic vistas.
- **Local wineries & art galleries** – nearby Verde Valley villages like Jerome and Cottonwood with local flavor.

### 2. Banff National Park, Alberta (Canada)

**Summary:** Mountain resort town in Canadian Rockies, population ~8 000. Alpine climate: cool summers (~15–20 °C), snowy winters.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Majestic peaks, turquoise glacial lakes, abundant wildlife and well-established RV sites and scenic routes make Banff a bucket-list favorite.

**Highlights:**

- **Lake Louise & Moraine Lake** – incredible alpine lakes against towering peaks.
- **Icefields Parkway drive** – legendary scenic road with glaciers, viewpoints.
- **Hot springs at Banff** – soak after a day exploring.
- **Johnston Canyon hike** – waterfalls and catwalks suitable for families or solo campers.

### 3. Moab, Utah (USA)

**Summary:** Small town (~5 000 residents) in southeastern Utah. Desert climate: hot summers (~40 °C), chilly nights; spring/fall ideal.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Gateway to Arches and Canyonlands national parks, Moab offers red-rock desert vistas, easy off-road access, and dispersed camping among stunning formations.

**Highlights:**

- **Arches National Park** – Delicate Arch, Landscape Arch, scenic drives.

- **Canyonlands Island in the Sky** – mesa drives with panoramic overlooks.
  - **Dead Horse Point State Park** – dramatic canyon rim views ideal at sunrise/sunset.
  - **Off-road 4x4 trails** – like Hell's Revenge or Poison Spider Mesa for adventure seekers.
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## Europe

### 4. North Coast 500, Scotland

**Summary:** Scenic 800 km loop around northern Scottish Highlands, passing small towns. Population sparse; Inverness (~60 000) is main hub. Maritime climate: cool, often rainy; 10–18 °C in summer.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Often referred to as Scotland's answer to Route 66, NC500 takes van travellers past rugged coastline, lochs, castles, and remote beauty — using many free and official motor-home lay-bys.

**Highlights:**

- **Smoo Cave & Durness** – sea-carved cave and coastal cliffs.
- **Castle Varrich and loch views** – historic ruins with sweeping valley vistas.
- **Grey Cairns of Camster** – ancient burial chambers.
- **Beaches like Balnakeil & Achmelvich** – wild white sand and turquoise waters.

### 5. Trollstigen Pass, Norway

**Summary:** A dramatic mountain road (road 63) through western Norway, connecting Geiranger to Åndalsnes. Thinly populated highlands; nearby towns have small populations. Cool alpine climate; route open May-Oct.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Trollstigen is among Europe's most scenic and adrenaline-inspiring drives — with hairpin turns, waterfalls, and commanding mountain vistas. Norway's liberal wild-camping policy makes van life easy here.

**Highlights:**

- **Stigfossen waterfall viewpoint** – near hairpin switchback lookout.
- **Trollveggen (Troll Wall)** – Europe's tallest vertical rock face.
- **Hikes from the top plateau** – sweeping views over fjords and peaks.
- **Nearby Geirangerfjord** – UNESCO-listed fjord with scenic campsites.

### 6. Amalfi Coast, Italy

**Summary:** Coastal stretch in Campania south of Naples, with towns like Positano and Amalfi. Local populations vary; Amalfi town ~5 000. Mediterranean climate: warm summers (~25–30 °C), mild winters.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Though roads are narrow, van travellers enjoy dramatic seaside views, cliff-side villages and delicious cuisine. Many campsites serve camper-vans, and stops allow walking into picturesque towns.

**Highlights:**

- **Positano** – pastel towns cascading to the sea with beaches and boutiques.
  - **Path of the Gods hike** – cliff-top trail above Amalfi and Praiano.
  - **Historic Amalfi & Duomo** – cathedral, piazzas, limoncello.
  - **Fisherman's villages** – Ravello and Vietri sul Mare for arts, ceramics, scenery.
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## Oceania

### 7. New Zealand (South & North Islands)

**Summary:** Island nation (~5 M population) renowned for its camper-friendly culture. Climate varies from temperate to sub-antarctic in south. Freedom camping is widespread.

**Why it's worth visiting:** With well-marked camper-van amenities at grocery stores and parks, endless scenic roads from beaches and volcanoes to fjords and mountains, New Zealand is consistently ranked the most van-friendly country.

**Highlights:**

- **Milford Sound & Fiordland** – sublime fjords reachable by road and boat.
- **Tongariro Alpine Crossing** – iconic volcanic hike in North Island.
- **Rotorua geothermal fields** – geysers, Māori cultural experiences.
- **West Coast glaciers** – Franz Josef & Fox glaciers accessible via scenic runs.

### 8. East Coast Australia (e.g. NSW/Qld)

**Summary:** Coastal corridor from Sydney up to Queensland. Major cities like Sydney (~5 M), Brisbane (~2.5 M), with coastal towns in between. Sub-tropical to temperate climate.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Rising in popularity for road-trip travel, Australia's east coast offers beaches, rainforests, national parks and excellent caravan parks geared to camper vans.

**Highlights:**

- **Great Ocean Way or coastal Queensland routes** – for beaches, waterfalls, surfing.
  - **National parks:**
  - **Byron Bay area** – laid-back surf town with campsites.
  - **Blue Mountains** near Sydney – bushwalks and lookout views.
  - **Margaret River region** (if including west coast) – wineries and surf.
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## Asia

### 9. Central Asia “Stans” (Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan)

**Summary:** Vast sparsely populated countries; nomadic and desert scenery dominate, with cities like Astana (~1 M), Ulaanbaatar (~1.5 M). Continental climate: hot summers, cold winters.

**Why it's worth visiting:** In 2024, region saw surging interest for off-the-beaten-path van-style or overland travel. New tour routes and immersive itineraries—mountain nomad stays, desert drives, Silk Road heritage—make Central Asia a frontier for adventurous van travellers.

**Highlights:**

- **Tien Shan or Pamir mountain drives** – rugged alpine vistas and small village stopping points.
  - **Gobi Desert camps** in Mongolia – nomad-style stays and sand dunes.
  - **Silk Road historic cities** – Khiva, Samarkand, Bukhara in Uzbekistan.
  - **Kazakh steppe roads and yurts** – freedom to camp in remote, open landscapes.
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## South America

### 10. Patagonia, Argentina/Chile

**Summary:** Region spanning southern Andes, vast pampas and glaciers; small town populations, few services early season. Cool temperate to polar climate.

**Why it's worth visiting:** Patagonia is van-trip iconic—unbeatable for winding scenic roads, remote campsites beside glaciers and lakes, and immersive wilderness travel. It frequently complements New Zealand and Central Asian overlanding itineraries.

**Highlights:**

- **Carretera Austral (Chile)** – twisting mountain route through fjords and forests.
- **El Chaltén & Fitz Roy trekking** – trekking base for glaciers and peaks.
- **Tierra del Fuego road networks** – remote drives ending at Ushuaia.
- **Perito Moreno Glacier & Argentine lakes region** – vast ice walls and lagoons.