Review: Microsoft Streets & Trips

plus:
How to Get Rid of RV Odors
RV Safety
With prime camping season quickly approaching I thought this would be a good time to give folks an RV safety crash course.

Getting Rid of RV Odors
Odors in RVs come in many different forms. Here are some tips and tricks to help get rid of all your RV odors.

Outdoor Dutch Oven Recipe
Guest contributor Daniel Dutch offers a great recipe for Dutch Oven Orange Chicken Breasts.

DEPARTMENTS

Editor’s Desk

RV Crossword Puzzle
Solve the RV play & learn crossword and have fun while you learn more about your RV awnings.

Review: Microsoft Streets & Trips
Read my review and learn more about Microsoft Streets & Trips 2013 travel and Maps software program.

RV Buying Tips: The Perfect RV
Get some great RV buying tips on how to find the perfect RV for you.
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Warmer weather is here and that means one thing, it’s time to go camping!

At the beginning of each camping season I like to take a shakedown trip to make sure the RV is ready to go. It just so happens the annual Charlotte Motor Speedway Auto Fair is always held in early spring. It’s only three hours from where we live and it’s a great opportunity for a pre-season RV shakedown trip, at least that’s what I tell Dawn 😊

Now is the time to plan your upcoming RV trips for 2014

This involves making sure your RV is safe and ready to use. Don’t miss my RV safety article this month and if you didn’t see last month’s issue check it out here to get your RV ready to go camping.

Enjoy this issue of RV Consumer and have a wonderful 2014 camping season. ~ Mark
Our new digital RV Product Catalog puts all of our RV training products in one place, and we separate which products apply to which type of RV. For example if you own a travel trailer you can browse through the single DVD titles or go directly to the DVD value sets that apply specifically to travel trailers.

Browse our RV Product Catalog now.
Don’t Forget the Safety Stuff

RV Safety Education Enhances our RV Experiences

It seems like every time I turn around I am reading articles about RV safety related incidents. Just yesterday I read where an RV owner was severely burned when he attempted to light his gas range. Over the winter months I read more than one article about RVs and Carbon Monoxide poisoning. What bothers me most about this is 9 out of 10 of these safety related incidents could be avoided through basic RV safety awareness. As prime camping season quickly approaches I thought this would be a good time to give folks an RV safety crash course.

It’s not only important that you know what safety devices your RV is (or should be) equipped with, but that you understand how to use these devices and what to do in case of an emergency. It’s also important that you check all your RV safety stuff to make sure it is in proper operating condition.

Most RVs regardless of what type or what size it is will come equipped with several different safety devices. RVs come equipped with fire extinguishers, LP gas leak detectors, smoke alarms, emergency escape windows, and carbon monoxide detectors. **Note:** If you own an older RV it may not have a carbon monoxide detector and the fire extinguisher may be missing or not operate properly. If this is the case the first step is to replace/upgrade these important safety devices.

**Fire Extinguisher:** Let’s start with the fire extinguisher. Every adult RVer needs to understand the different types or classes of fire extinguishers and how to properly use a fire extinguisher. Teach all adults that will be using the RV to remember the word **PASS.** This is an easy way to remember how to properly use a fire extinguisher, especially during an emergency. **PASS stands for Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep.**
P- Pull the pin located at the top of the fire extinguisher.

A- Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire, not at the flames.

S- Squeeze the handle or trigger, standing approximately 8 feet away from the fire. Release the handle if you want it to stop.

S- Sweep the nozzle side to side at the base of the fire until it is out. Observe the fire to make sure it does not re-ignite.

**Note:** Read the label on you fire extinguisher for the distance you should stand away from the fire. Different extinguishing agents require different distances.

**Fire Extinguisher Maintenance:**
Inspect your fire extinguishers every 30 days & before each trip. Look to see if the arrow is pointing in the green area in the sight gauge. If it reads empty or needs charging replace it or have it recharged immediately. Inspect the components of the extinguisher to make sure they are in proper operating condition. Inspect the safety pin, handle or trigger, sight gauge indicator, inspection tag, hose or nozzle, tank, and labeling. Every month you should turn dry powder extinguishers upside down, tap on the bottom and shake it so any powder that settled on the bottom is released. If the powder is packed in the bottom of the extinguisher it may not discharge properly, or at all, when you need it.

**LP Gas Leak Detector:** Your RV has an LP gas leak detector. This leak detector will set off an audible alarm to alert you if there is a potential gas leak. It’s usually located close to floor level because LP gas is heavier than air and it will settle towards the floor. If you ever smell LP gas when you’re camping, or if the LP gas leak detector goes off you could have a leak somewhere in the system. If this happens you should:
- Extinguish any open flames, pilot lights and do not smoke, or touch electrical switches.
- Evacuate the RV and turn off the main gas supply valve.
- Leave the door open and do not return to the area until the odor clears.
- Have the system checked out by a qualified RV technician before using it again.
False LP gas alarms can be caused by hair spray, perfume, cleaning solvents and low battery voltage. When ever you have the LP gas refilled, or when stopping to refuel the RV all LP gas appliances should be turned off and the main gas supply valve should be closed.

Smoke Alarm: A properly working, battery operated smoke detector is critical to RV safety. In less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire & within one minute the RV can be filled completely with smoke. A smoke alarm can save lives. You may want to consider install additional smoke alarms in your RV.

Test the smoke alarm mechanism prior to each camping trip you take to make sure it is working properly. Change the batteries when you change your clocks twice a year. If you remove the batteries from any safety device while the RV is in storage remove the device from the wall or ceiling and place it where it can easily be seen as a reminder the next time you use the RV.

Carbon Monoxide Detector: All safety devices are important, but this is one of the most important safety devices in your RV. Carbon monoxide is called the silent killer because it is invisible, odorless, and deadly. Carbon monoxide is created when any fuel is burned; this includes gasoline, propane, natural gas, wood, & coal. It is extremely serious when combustion by-products are not vented outside. Carbon monoxide is the number one cause of poisoning deaths in the United States each year.

All newer RVs come equipped with carbon monoxide detectors. If yours didn’t you need to purchase a battery operated carbon monoxide detector designed for use in RVs. You never know when you might be parked next to an RV that is running a generator or another vehicle’s exhaust. Carbon monoxide detectors should be located on a wall close to the ceiling since carbon monoxide is lighter than oxygen. Test the detector before each trip to make sure it is operating properly. Read the owners manual so you thoroughly understand how it works, and know what the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are:
CO symptoms are similar to Flu symptoms
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Muscular twitching
- Intense headache
- Throbbing in the temples
- Weakness and sleepiness
- Inability to think coherently

If you or anyone else experiences any of these symptoms get to fresh air immediately. If the symptoms persist seek medical attention.

In RVs carbon monoxide gas usually results from:
- Exhaust leaks from either a vehicle engine or a generator.
- Improper use of portable gas powered heaters.
- Someone else’s vehicle or generator when camping in close quarters.

Here are some more important notes about carbon monoxide:

- Inspect the generator exhaust system before using the generator, every time.
- Avoid leaving windows down and roof vents open when in close proximity to vehicle and/or generator exhaust.
- Follow all directions and safety cautions and warnings when operating gas powered heaters.
- If you use a portable generator direct the exhaust away from the camping area.
- Never use the range burners or oven to heat the RV!
- When cooking with the range burners use the range fan & always leave a window cracked open for fresh air and ventilation.

RV Emergency Escape Plan:
Last but not least we want to discuss a topic many RV owners don’t think about; having an emergency escape plan.

What do you do in the event of an emergency and everybody has to get out of the RV quickly and in an orderly fashion?

The National Fire Protection agency requires that RVs have emergency escape windows. Make sure everybody knows where the escape window is located and how to use it. It’s a good idea to practice using it so you are familiar with how to get out of the RV in case of an emergency. You should have an emergency escape plan for the front of the RV and the rear of the RV.
Time is your biggest enemy if there is a fire in the RV. It only takes one minute for smoke to fill the RV. Design an escape plan specific to the needs of the individuals in the RV. Sketch your plan on paper and indicate which windows and doors can be used to escape in the event of an emergency. Here are some tips for creating your plan:

- Review the plan with everybody that will be staying in the RV.
- Make sure everybody knows where the emergency escape window is located and how to use it.
- Make sure everybody knows how to use window and door latches before there is an emergency.
- Practice your escape plan so everybody is familiar with how to get out of the RV in case of an emergency.
- Designate a meeting place outside where everybody will meet immediately after escaping so you can get accountability.
- When everybody is safely out of the RV call 911 for help.
- Never re-enter a burning RV!

~ RV101

Watch Carbon Monoxide Safety Video

Get over 40 RV checklists like this one to serve as reminders and help make all your RV trips stress-free and more enjoyable.

For more information on RV safety topics be sure to check out our wide selection of RV Safety DVDs, E-books and video downloads.
How will you Remember your travels?

The laptop we would’ve used to keep in touch with the kids.

The guy from Ed’s Towing. Spent three hours with him.

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Q&A with Mark

Question:
We have a new Jayco 5th wheel trailer that weighs 10,300 empty and maybe 11 plus loaded. It has Towmax (load range E) tires. I religiously keep the tires inflated to 80 psi, put tire covers on them when parked for a period of time and try to a visual check before every trip. I try to not go over 65mph and try to avoid all the potholes, but I do hit a few! We travel from to Arizona in the winter and take a few short trips in the summer so I would say I put 5,000 miles a year on the tires.

I have heard horror stories about Towmax Tires and in fact all the tires made in China. I would like your honest opinion as to what are the best tires out there for my 5th wheel. If they are a few hundred dollars more, no big deal. I have read that Michelin makes a good tire.

Also, how long do I go before I should replace these towmax tires? I figure to replace them after 2 years...or about 10k miles. Any advise would be appreciated.

Answer:
It sounds like you are doing all the right things from a tire care and maintenance standpoint. I wrote an article awhile back about trailer tires that I think will answer some of your questions. The important thing of course is to make sure that collectively the tires are rated to support the total weight of the 5th wheel and that none of the individual tires are overloaded.

Click here to read the RV tire article

I am also including a short RV Tire video that might be helpful too.

Watch RV Tire Tips video on You Tube

For more information on RV tires and other maintenance related topics check out our RV Care & Maintenance DVD
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Play & Learn RV Crossword

RV Tires

R U RV Educated?

RV Tires Crossword Puzzle
Recently I was asked if I would be interested in reviewing the 2013 version of Microsoft Streets & Trips. A couple years ago when we were producing the Mark’s RV Garage TV Series we gave several of the Microsoft Streets & Trips software away as part of a contest we were running at the time. Microsoft Streets & Trips is a travel and maps software program. It offers RVers and travelers up to date maps, points of interest, ratings and reviews, the ability to personalize your maps and much more.

When I was asked to review the latest version available my concern was with all the RV specific GPS units now available on the market would folks still have an interest in using the Microsoft Streets & Trips product? But my concerns were quickly laid to rest when I discovered some of the advantages Microsoft Streets & Trips had over GPS and online mapping sites.

For example, a GPS is primarily intended to get you from point A to point B and doesn’t really allow for customizing your trips. For the avid trip planner Streets & Trips allows you to customize maps and directions for multi-stop trips, along with neat things to do and see on the way. It actually offers lots of advantages that compliment working in tandem with your GPS. Something else I discovered is Microsoft Streets & Trips encompasses all aspects of your trip like fuel expense, stops, directions and points of interest without requiring internet access or cell phone service.

Other features I really like are:

• You can customize your planned route with rest stops, driving times and road preferences.

• There are free construction updates along with a drag and drop feature for routing so you can avoid construction areas.
• With over 2.5 million points of interest you can locate what is important to you or fun places to check out on the way and when you arrive at your destination.

• You can be flexible and make changes to your plan anytime you want.

• I mentioned this earlier but I feel like it needs to be addressed in more detail. Streets & trips really compliments a GPS. You can use it to plan your entire trip the, way you want, and then share the route with your GPS for navigation purposes along the way.

There are many more features and benefits available, but these are some that I wanted to highlight.

I like to plan our RV trips to take full advantage of getting to our final destination, and all the neat things to do once we arrive. I am looking forward to planning our upcoming RV adventures using Microsoft Streets & Trips. I'll keep you posted on how it all works out.

To learn more about Microsoft Streets & Trips 2013, watch a video, download a trial version or purchase the product visit this informative site

Two brand new RV Education 101 e-books now available.

Don’t go buy your first RV before reading An Introduction to RVs and after you purchase your RV be sure and check out Owning & Operating an RV e-book.
Odors in our RVs come in many different forms, caused by many different sources. There are holding tank odors, pet odors, cooking, smoke, must and mildew odors just to name a few. Some odors are caused when the RV is put in storage for long periods of time and other odors are caused through normal use of the RV. Our concern today is what we can do to prevent some of these odors. I want to tell you about some RV products I have personally tested and use to eliminate some of these RV odors.

Since RVs are small in size, when compared to a house, odors tend to be more pronounced. Add to this that the RV sits closed up for periods of time, compounding odor problems even more.

This leads me to one of the key factors for controlling RV odors, ventilation. Ventilation not only helps with odors, but it can limit the amount of heat build-up in the RV too. Many RV owners store their RVs outside and are concerned with leaving windows or vents open, exposing the RV to Mother Nature. To help solve this problem I recommend MaxxAir® ventilation products. They are designed specifically for RVs. One great feature about these ventilation products is you can leave the windows and vents open, even when it’s raining outside.

With the ventilation problem solved we can focus on other types of odors that can linger in an RV. These odor molecules aren’t just in the air, they get in fabrics, carpets, ceiling, window treatments and other areas of the RV. Pet odors, smoke, and must and mildew odors can be extremely difficult to remove from an RV. I have witnessed RV interiors that were professionally cleaned and odors like smoke still remain afterwards. I have also experimented with many different odor controlling products, but perhaps the best product I have found for eliminating difficult odors is Febreze®. The active ingredient molecule used in Febreze® kind of resembles a donut. When you...
tank odor problems caused by the design of the RV waste water system. One of those products is the 360 Siphon. The 360 Siphon is a redesigned breather system that attaches to the top of the vent pipe and actually draws the fumes out of the holding tank. It works when the RV is stationary and when it’s moving.

Here’s how it works. The 360 Siphon is designed to eliminate any possibility of high pressure occurring by creating a constant one-way draw up the vent pipe, releasing gasses into the atmosphere.

Another problem associated with RV holding tank odors is the use of strong chemicals to help control holding tank odors. Some of these chemicals can dangerous to humans, pets, and the septic systems we empty our holding tanks in to. Because little water is used, in comparison to a domestic waste water system, RV holding tank wastewater is far more concentrated.
The organic strength from the mixture in an RV holding tank can be fifteen to twenty times stronger than a typical wastewater system. This problem is compounded when the RV owner gets some odors from the holding tank and dumps even more treatment in the holding tank, attempting to control the odors.

It’s important that we RV owners use environmentally friendly holding tank treatments that are not only safe to use, but safe for septic systems too. There are many of these products available on the market. I encourage you to try a couple of these different environmentally friendly treatments until you find one you really like.

**One final note about RV odors:**
Lots of RV owners experience problems with odors in the RV refrigerator when it is not being used, either between trips or during winter storage. After the freezer compartment defrosts you should clean the refrigerator and freezer thoroughly. Leave the refrigerator doors propped open and place some baking soda or charcoal (the kind you grill with) inside to absorb any odors.

So it’s safe to say that with proper ventilation and a few good RV products you can eliminate all of the tough odors commonly associated with RVs.

~ *RV 101*
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You can subscribe to our channel and get notified every time we post a new video. We currently have over 180 RV Education 101 produced videos posted on our YouTube channel with over 9,000 subscribers and nearly 3,000,000 video views.

It’s a great place to learn more about your RV and keep up with what is new and exciting in the RV industry.
Dutch Oven Orange Chicken Breasts - a slightly non-conformist, yet delicious dish for all RVers

There are moments in every RVer’s life that you just want to pull over, hop out and start cooking something right under the beautiful blue sky. But you’re sometimes paralyzed - what should you cook?

Chicken is one option, but you probably want to try something new for a change, something that isn’t on the menu everyday, something that can even raise intrigued eyebrows.

And what food is better prepared for the job than the orange, whose delicious juices can penetrate and infuse chicken breasts with a sweet, yet subtle flavor that will make you and your guests swoon when this dish touches your and your guests’ taste buds.

So let’s look at a recipe for chicken breasts that desperately calls for orange juice from the depths of your Dutch oven. And just so the menu is complete, we’ll pair this sweet dish (meant both literally and figuratively) with a more neutral, but just as tasty, mushroom sauce. (Did you just say “yummy?”)

The Ingredients:
The listed ingredients are meant for 3 servings and are prepared in a 10-inch Dutch oven. You can adapt this recipe for a 12-inch Dutch oven by simply
adding an extra 50% of everything or by doubling everything for a 14-inch Dutch oven. The ingredients are listed in the order they will be used.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or any cooking oil
- 3 chicken breast halves
- 3 teaspoons Dijon mustard or Dijon mustard substitute
- Salt and pepper
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 tablespoons butter, cut into 6 cubes
- 1 cup freshly-squeezed orange juice
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar

**Directions:**

1. Pour the olive oil into the Dutch oven and pre-heat to 350˚ Fahrenheit by using about half of the required charcoals at first, both on top and bottom and adding the remaining coals after a few minutes. (Remember, the ratio of coals for roasting is 1:1)

2. Cover the chicken breast halves with the Dijon mustard or Dijon mustard substitute.

3. Place the chicken breast, skin side down, into the pre-heated Dutch oven. Add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle onion over the chicken breasts and place 2 cubes of butter on each piece. Pour the orange juice into the pan, but be careful not to pour over the chicken as this might “wash away” the seasoning.

4. Cover with the lid and cook for 25 minutes. Baste once after 10 minutes.

5. After 25 minutes, gently turn the chicken breast on the other side (the skin side should be yellow or lightly brown) and sprinkle with the brown sugar.

6. Replace lid and bake for another 10-15 minutes. If you have a meat thermometer check and see when your chicken has reached an internal temperature of 165˚, which is the temperature the chicken should be when it’s done.

7. Serve on a plate with some of the orange juice left in the Dutch oven, or check the recipe for the mushroom sauce later in this article.

This recipe will offer your chicken a sweet, but subtle taste. It won’t be overwhelming by any stretch of the imagination. However, you can use more orange juice or any of the oranges’ cousins such as tangerines, mandarins or minneolas, and more brown sugar if you want to “turn things up a notch.”

**Would you like to be an apothecary?**

As already stated, it’s the orange juice that gives the chicken breasts their flavor. (I bet you didn’t see this one coming). But what if you’re not much of a sweet tooth and want to create your own concoction of something sour or bitter, rather than sweet? You can combine half of cup of orange juice with
Directions for mushroom sauce
1. In your Dutch oven or Dutch oven’s lid, turned upside down, or in a large skillet, heat up the butter or olive oil over low to medium heat.

2. Add the shallots (or red onions) and garlic, and sauté for about 2 minutes, until the shallots become translucent.

3. Add the mushrooms, and cook for about 5-6 minutes until tender, by gently stirring them so all the pieces get cooked. It might be that this amount of mushrooms seems large, but in just a few minutes they’ll shrink considerably.

4. Add 1 cup vegetable stock (or 1 cup water), stir in ½ teaspoons of dried thyme and simmer for about 10 minutes.

5. After 10 minutes, stir in cream, tablespoon by tablespoon, and taste after each one, because different creams have different consistencies and different tastes. If after just one or two tablespoons you think it’s enough, stop there.

6. Let simmer for another minute or two and then add salt and pepper to taste.

7. Serve with the orange chicken breasts.

For those of you who like thicker sauces, you can add more vegetable stock and thicken it with cornstarch or arrowroot. Others might omit the cream half of cup of grapefruit, lemon or lime juice. Or, you can forget the orange juice altogether – it’s up to you.

Also, you can add a pinch (or more) of lemon sugar to your brown sugar, if you want to experiment. Be careful to not add too much, as lemon sugar has a very strong sour taste that can be unpleasant if over-used. (Like over-using credit cards, you know?)
altogether, although I think it enriches the taste and gives the sauce a nice color.

You can also run this sauce through a blender, or use a portable blender to make this sauce smoother – it’s up to you. Another option is to prepare this sauce in advance at home, store in the refrigerator and take it with you when cooking outdoors.

But the story doesn’t end here. Your Dutch oven is capable of cooking many more delicious dishes that will make outdoor cooking times memorable. With this in mind, I invite you to visit my website www.OutdoorDutchOvenCooking.info, where you’ll find recipes for cakes, breads, stews and roasts, etc. ~ Daniel Dutch

For more great RV information between magazine issues check out Mark’s Blog
RV Videos of the Month

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www.rvconsumer.com
Buying an RV is a major investment and it’s important that you get it right the first time. RVs come in numerous types, sizes and price ranges. It’s important you find the right type of RV for you based on your needs and how you plan to use it.

After you decide on a type of RV you need to consider your budget. Think about how much you can afford to pay each month, and consider additional expenses like RV insurance and maintenance. Make sure there is some money left in your budget each month to actually use and enjoy the RV.

It’s important that you choose a floor plan that will work for you and your family. Some RV floor plans were designed with two people in mind and others with six or eight people in mind. Take a close look at the floor plan and find one that works best for you and how you plan to use the RV.

There are many other things to consider too. Think about sleeping arrangements, interior and exterior storage, holding tank capacities, cold and hot weather camping and what options are important to you.

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RV Education 101 Learning RVs the Easy Way

2013 Media Kit
Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words you.

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 17 and Josh 23, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie and Gracie.

If you would like to learn more about us and about RV Education 101 please visit www.rveducation101.com

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