BITÁCORA OFF ROAD

May 2026

FURGO EN RUTA: THE ART OF LIVING (AND CREATING) ON THE MOVE

How Marta and Marià turned a van into their home, studio, and passport to the world.



IN THIS ISSUE

El Mini Viajero
Road-Trip Pet Advice from the Vet
Apps, facts, tips, and more.

BITÁCORA OFF ROAD

Birch River
Manitoba, Canada R0L 0E0

bitacoraoffroad@gmail.com
@bitacoraoffroad



Editor-in-Chief
Macarena Orozco

Content Director
Gabriel Jara

Managing Editor

Art Direction

IF YOU'RE A TRAVELER AND WANT TO CONNECT

Want to share your project?
Send us a short bio and photo so the community can get to know you.

Want to introduce readers to your book?
There's a place for you in the magazine.

Have you created a useful app for the travel community?
Send us the details so thousands of travelers can start using it.

Did you take a photo you'd love others to see?
Send it with your name, your Instagram so readers can follow you, and, if you like, the photo's technical details and a short description.





Just good vibes
& SEND IT TO BITACORAOFFROAD@GMAIL.COM



WELCOME TO

BITACORA OFF ROAD

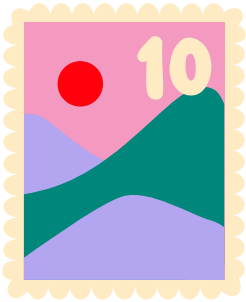
A Refuge on the Move

From the outside, nomadic life is often mistaken for an endless vacation. People romanticize the image of a vehicle parked in front of a perfect sunset, overlooking the fatigue just beyond the frame: long hours behind the wheel on uncertain roads and, often, oil-stained hands after an emergency repair.

Choosing the road isn't running away from responsibility. It's trading predictable comfort for a life where adaptation is the only routine. We quickly learn that our home on wheels is an invaluable companion and our refuge, but it is still a tool; the real engine of the journey is our own resilience in the face of the unexpected. Sooner or later, a forced detour, severe weather, or a mechanical failure in the middle of nowhere will make us scrap the original plan and reinvent ourselves.

And it is precisely there, when certainty falls apart, that the real magic of overlanding appears: the tribe. This lifestyle strips away the barriers of city life and brings us together around a shared campfire, where we learn that other travelers' survival stories and genuine smiles are worth far more than any landscape. At the end of the day, the best gear for the road isn't the most expensive spare part, but the humility to ask for help and the determination to keep moving forward together.

Macarena Orozco
Gabriel Jara



"The best thing to pack for the road is a simple life and the willingness to share it. We find everything else along the way."



ECHOES OF SONORA

The Sonoran Desert makes you feel tiny, as this image by @vancreando_ captures so well. But beyond the sheer scale of the landscape in Caborca, what mattered most was their approach: instead of making the usual quick photo stop, they shut off the engine and spent time learning about ancient cultures from local people. A powerful reminder on the road that the best exploration tool isn't 4WD—it's knowing when to stop and listen.





Caborca, Sonora • Photo: @vancreando_

1. MUSIC, CAMERAS, AND MILES



Furgo en Ruta

"More than a decade of living and creating on the road. Marta and Marià tell us how they turned a van into their home, recording studio, and passport to the world."

@furgoenruta



After returning from a backpacking trip through India, Marta and Marià made a radical decision: they would never again settle for just one month of vacation a year.

They left their television careers behind to bet on a life in motion. Over 14 uninterrupted years on the road, they have turned “La Sayoneta”—their inseparable van—into their home, audiovisual production company, and recording studio. By overcoming mechanical challenges along the way and adapting to YouTube’s demands, they have made nomadic minimalism into a fully sustainable profession. Today, with their own music project gaining momentum and thousands of miles of experience behind them, they share the most real, honest, and unfiltered side of creating, traveling, and living on the road.

LIVING ON THE ROAD

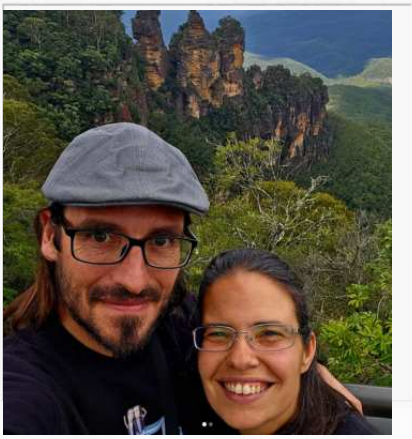
HOME ON WHEELS

By Macarena Orozco
Photography courtesy of Furgo en Ruta



What truly led you to break away from your conventional life in Spain? Was there one specific trigger, or did you simply realize the system did not work for you?

Marta: "I think it was a little bit of all three.
There was a triggering event. About a year after we met, I worked in television as a camera operator, and Marià was a journalist at a newspaper in Andorra. We took a one-month vacation and went backpacking through northern India.
We loved it. It was a shock because the country and culture were so different—unlike anything we were used to, and we loved it—especially at a time when there was no GPS, no phone, nothing. I remember our last day, when we had to leave. We thought, "What a shame to leave now, just when we're finally figuring out how to get around, beginning to understand the people and really savoring India's culture." But we had to go.
That was when Marià and I said, "It can't be that we only get one month to travel all year." We would have to wait another entire year for our next vacation. So we said, "There has to be a way to live while traveling all the time—to work on the road and make both things fit together."



And then there was work. I worked in news, but what I love is filming. I wanted to film what I wanted—not press conferences, politicians, and things like that. I enjoy it much more now because I can film what we truly want to talk about: travel and things that are more interesting to us, rather than news stories disconnected from our lives.
So yes, that was the trigger."

@furgoenruta





Marta: “When we started, YouTube was still a very young platform. Hardly anyone used it to share travel content.
At first, we mainly used it to show samples of what we filmed, hoping a production company might see them. Television worked more like that then: you filmed a teaser or a pilot episode,

Marta: “The third point was that the system did not work for us.
Having only one month of vacation, then returning to an office and spending 11 months saving just to spend it all in one month made no sense to us.
That was when we began figuring out how we could leave and live while traveling.”

Marta: “We used to make objective documentaries, but YouTube pushed us into first-person storytelling.”

You started on a very different YouTube from today’s. With the current pressure for audience retention and fast cuts, how have you adapted your documentary storytelling to stay relevant?









then showed material for the same series. You pitched it to production companies or TV networks, hoping they would buy it so you could produce the episodes. Everything moved much more slowly.

YouTube really boomed just after the pandemic. That was when we changed our format and began treating it professionally.

Our work used to be documentary-driven, with the location as the main character. YouTube forced us to become the protagonists—to tell everything in the first person and share how it felt and what we thought. Our opinions became an important part of the script. Before, we tried to be as objective as possible, like the television journalists we had been.

Now it is much more about our impressions and emotions. What people ultimately value most is the experience we take away from a place and our opinion of the destinations we visit—all told in the first person. It also has to be current. You cannot film something and release it a year later. It needs to go out almost that same week, or within the same month at most."

You have lived on the road for more than ten years. Is traveler burnout real? Have there been times when you felt you genuinely needed to stop?

Honestly, we love living in a van —that is why we have two now. Whenever we return to Spain for a month or two, we really miss having a van there as well.

We are very happy in a small space. It forces you to live more minimally—with what you need and truly want. You learn to define your needs and how you spend your free time more clearly. You become more selective about the objects you keep with you, so you do not

fill your life with stuff, and that helps you live more peacefully. We are genuinely happy in both vans: La Sayoneta in Mexico, where we lived for 13 years, and Wallaby in Australia, where we spent a year. When we arrive in Spain, we move between our mothers' homes. We are fortunate, but we miss our own personal space. We would need a third van for Spain.

If there is burnout, it comes from YouTube. Sometimes you think, "I'd love to stop for a month," but YouTube penalizes such a long break.

That is where we sometimes think, "We need some time off.'"

'El Ritmo del Ajolote' has been a hit, but you have been making music for years. Did this growth happen organically alongside the journey, or did you plan it as a strategy to diversify your content?

Marta: "Music has been connected to the project from the beginning. We asked Marià's sister, Raquel, to compose a theme for the series we hoped to sell to television. That same song still opens every episode of Furgo en Ruta: 'Vamos Furgo en Ruta.'

Once on the road, because Marià is a musician, we carried instruments in the van—a keyboard, a melodica, and more. He composed throughout the journey and began writing his own songs, recording them however we could while traveling.











Marta: “And it’s always been connected to Furgo en Ruta. At first, we uploaded everything to the same channel. Then someone advised us to separate it: music on one channel, which we called Furgo en Ruta Música, and travel on the other. So that’s where we mainly share the music videos. Marià also loves making what he calls astral music. He composes, and I add footage of the places we visit. It’s another avenue for us—a way to give music its own space, because it’s always been so closely tied to our journey.”
Marià: “As for the axolotl effect you mentioned… Honestly, it hasn’t had all the views I’d like! I don’t think things really took off with ‘El Ajolote.’ But we have given the music more room and more promotion with ‘El ritmo del ajolote,’ before that with ‘La Catrina y el Mariachi,’ and now with our latest single, ‘La caravana del desierto.’
“For the past year and a half, we’ve been producing music professionally in a studio with a full group of professional musicians. We also put on a concert with all nine musicians and started performing as Furgo en Ruta y la Banda Nómada…”

“So the music took a real step forward in quality and professionalism. I think that’s the difference between the earlier stage, when some tracks were professionally recorded and others were homemade, and where we are now. A friend who’s a music producer in Tijuana has been helping us…”

Recording in a van with so much outside noise sounds almost impossible. How do you set up your studio to get clean audio, and how much inspiration do you draw from the sounds around you?

Marta: “No, we don’t normally record in the van professionally. What we do is…”
Marià: “…record demos in the van. I make them with MIDI, or record some vocals…”
Marta: “Just as a reference.”
Marià: “As a reference. I know it won’t be studio quality. You can get decent quality—not 100% professional, but fairly close. We actually did that with ‘Fluye,’ though not in La Sayoneta. It was in another musician friend’s van. He put up blankets as a kind of…”

Marta: “In the bathroom, right? He has a little bathroom…”
Marià: “Hmm, I don’t think so. I think it was in the main living area, but he put blankets up everywhere to block out as much sound as possible. And it turned out really well. I was very happy with the final result on ‘Fluye,’ considering it was what we could call a van studio. A van studio! Apart from that, as I said, I mostly make demos in my van. Then it’s one of two things: for the latest songs, I took those demos into a studio and recorded there. And during the pandemic, we stayed at a place in Catalonia. That’s where…”



Marta: “In a house, yes.”
Marià: “In a house. That’s where I did some home-studio recording. As I said, it wasn’t professional studio quality, but those were my first experiences as a music producer, and it wasn’t bad.”

After releasing ‘El Ritmo del Ajolote’ and the success of your concert when you returned to Mexico, what’s next creatively? Are you planning to release a full album soon?

Marià: “After ‘El ritmo del ajolote,’ we recently released ‘La caravana del desierto’—what was it, a week ago? It was a spectacular production, and we’re really happy with the result. We actually have one last song left to produce. We’re deciding whether to release the album now and that song later, or wait until it’s ready. Either way, the album is coming out—soon, I hope. The idea is to bring together all these songs, recorded or mastered in a studio.”

“Along with three or four previously unreleased songs from the past year and a half, there will also be remastered versions and new recordings of older favorites like ‘Que el universo conspire’ and ‘Niñeras del capital.’”

We’ve noticed that you make healthy eating a priority on the road. We remember you saying that while other people invest in luxuries like jewelry or phones, you prefer to invest in your health. Have you always had that outlook, or did traveling change it?

Marta: “Honestly, traveling completely changed the way we eat. Before, our lives were all about going to work, heading to the office, and often when we got out…”
Marià: “A job…”
Marta: “…a steady office job…”
Marià: “…in an office.”
Marta: “Office hours, basically. After work, we’d stop at a bar and eat the usual stuff: a burger, a hot dog—fast food. We weren’t eating well, honestly, and we set out carrying quite a few extra pounds.
“About four months into the trip, I think, we ate some meat that had gone bad. It really knocked us out. We were sick with a fever for almost a week…”
“…It was awful. I genuinely thought I was dying.
“In that sense, though, something good came out of it. We said, ‘We can’t just eat anything.’ We started making an effort to eat a little better and gradually learning more about food quality, nutrients, and what we need to stay well.
“After a while, we also started eating more vegetarian food—a much more plant-based diet.”





"We started cutting out meat, but above all, we try to eat as organically as possible: lots of greens and vegetables. We're trying to live a healthier life. "We know those foods cost more, unfortunately. They shouldn't have to. But we always say we'd rather invest in our health, because that's money we hope to save on doctors later, you know? In principle, if you eat well and lead a peaceful life, you ought to have fewer illnesses. That's what we're aiming for: to feel better and live as organically and green as we can."

Taking on the role of "content creators" changes everything. When it comes to surviving the algorithm, have you kept things organic, or have you had to become very strategic?

Marta: "We'd been making YouTube videos since we started traveling in 2012. But it wasn't until after the pandemic—we'd left the van in Cancún, Mexico—when we returned, I think in January 2021, that we'd seen a lot of friends who also made YouTube videos starting to do well."

"We said, 'Right, let's give ourselves a year to figure out how this works and what we need to do. Let's watch other channels, analyze strategies, and treat it like a job. Let's focus on it.' We gave ourselves a year to try to earn a living from it, because until then YouTube had never paid our bills. The good thing is that after about six months, it had become a significant source of income. But yes, there's a lot of strategy behind it. It doesn't just happen on its own…"
Marià: "Without a strategy, it's very hard to make a YouTube channel work, unless you have something so different from everyone else that it really connects with people. I think the vast majority of channels have a growth strategy behind them, and a lot of work goes into making them successful. We learned that firsthand.
"In a way, you're always battling the algorithm. The trick is not to drive yourself crazy, but you change countries and suddenly the algorithm changes too. It depends on so many factors. It's not like a steady job with the same paycheck at the end of every month. Your income can vary a lot with the context and circumstances."

"But that's part of this profession too, isn't it? Adapting to the algorithm—or trying to outsmart it. And sometimes it's not that easy."
Marta: "No."
Marià: "It's not that easy."

After so many miles and scares like the one in Australia, I imagine prevention is everything. What do you always check on the van before a long trip, and what's the most complicated repair you've faced?

Marta: "In terms of safety—well, not so much safety as mechanics, for example—we've lived in La Sayoneta for 13 years. We knew absolutely nothing about mechanics when we started, but over time we've had to learn."



"Now, when we hear a little noise, we know what it is—or what it might be. We've learned to inspect the van ourselves. If I open the hood, I know what everything is and where it should be. We do that often. Before any trip, we check the oil and coolant, look for leaks on the ground, and make sure there aren't any suspicious spots.
"We always check those things. It takes almost no effort and helps us spot a split hose or something else that can easily happen, especially with older vans. In Spain and some other places, people may not do it as much because it's more common to take your vehicle to a mechanic for an inspection every six months, every year, or whenever it's due, because it's required. On the road, you have to figure more of it out yourself. Sometimes there aren't even mechanics who specialize in this van. Luckily, our other van in Australia is a Toyota, and we bought it there, so…"
Marià: "Right. When we get back to Australia, we'll make an appointment as soon as we arrive for a general checkup, an oil change, and everything else, so we can set out with everything…"
Marta: "Exactly."
Marià: "…in good shape, at least to start with. But some things are unpredictable. Your van can seem perfect, and then suddenly the transmission wears out, as ours did, and breaks down. You can't necessarily see that coming. You're not going to replace a transmission just because you notice a little wear, either. So with this lifestyle, you often have to improvise as things happen. You can get ahead of certain issues, but beyond that, you basically have to keep up with all the scheduled maintenance…"
Marta: "Exactly."
Marià: "…to keep the van in good shape, then deal with whatever comes up."

To wrap up, what realistic, no-romanticizing-it advice would you give people who dream of life on the road? And looking ahead, do you see yourselves putting down roots, or will you keep rolling as long as your bodies let you?

Marta: "We always say this isn't for everyone—just as living in a house isn't for everyone. If you dream about this kind of life, the best thing is to try it. Go away for a while, perhaps first to find out what kind of van suits you."
"Maybe you set off in a smaller van, but you like showering every day and having your own bathroom inside. Or maybe you buy a big van, then find it's too big and you'd prefer a smaller one. It's really important that the space suits you, whether it's large or small—and that you're comfortable driving it.
"You also need to be very clear about what you'll do for work and how you'll pay for this life.
"Some people work remotely and can combine the two very easily. Others see someone getting by selling bracelets or whatever and decide to go, but it's not that easy. This life gets romanticized a lot. From the outside, it can look easy, but it isn't—and it costs money…"



Marià: “There have been people… Well, ‘expensive’ is relative…”
Marta: “But there’s a minimum…”
Marià: “…living in a house in one place, as we did 13 years ago, cost more than living in the van and traveling through Latin America. But you do have fixed monthly expenses…”
Marta: “Of course.”
Marià: “Absolutely. You need money for food, gas, possible breakdowns. We’ve always promoted this lifestyle in one way or another. A lot of people who liked it and tried it have done really well. But others have told us, ‘Damn, we just couldn’t make the money side work.’ They’d say, ‘You make it look so easy.’ But it isn’t that easy. “As Marta and I were saying, we’ve been doing this for 14 years. We struggled to make money at first too. In our case, we set out with savings, which gave us a fairly long cushion of time to adapt and learn how to earn the money we needed day to day on the road.”

“It’s good to plan ahead and have some savings. You don’t need a huge amount, but try to build a little cushion if you’re in a position to save. And, as Marta said, have an idea of what you’ll do when you leave: how you’ll make a living, where the money will come from. There will be expenses, obviously, just as with any lifestyle.”
Marta: “For now, the plan is to keep rolling. Every time we come back to Barcelona to see family—which is probably the closest we get to a conventional life, staying in a house and all that—the walls start closing in. After a few weeks, we’re ready to leave. For now, this is how we like living.”
Marià: “Yes, it’s…”
Marta: “In the future…”
Marià: “…we love spending time with family, but you miss having your own space. For us, that space is the van. It’s our home.”
Marta: “Exactly. We often talk about the future: maybe buying a little piece of land somewhere and setting up a campground or an RV park. We say things like that, but… I don’t know. Who knows?”

“Maybe it’ll happen one day. I don’t know. It’s not something we’re considering right now…”
Marià: “Honestly, I can’t see myself running an RV park right now.”
Marta: “But when we’re older—60 or so…”
Marià: “Oh, sure, when it’s time to retire, at 60 or 70.”
Marta: “That’s a long way off.”
Marià: “Marta and I say that someday—not in the immediate future, but perhaps in the medium term—if we still want to travel as much as we do now, we could travel part-time. Spend part of the year traveling and part of it staying somewhere, developing other projects. Somewhere that inspires us, out in nature. Finding that place will be hard, because we’re not very good at staying put. Still, if we want to keep traveling but not 100% of the time, it might be an option. Setting something up is what we think of as our retirement, I suppose.”



Marta: “I think it’s practical, you know? You’re there, and people come to your place. You look after them. The good thing about an RV park—a simple one—is that people come, use the few basic services they need, and that’s it. Something that isn’t too expensive. You know what I mean.”
Marià: “Sure, sure.”
Marià: “Maybe instead of retiring, we’ll have some kind of…”
Marta: “Something like that, yes.”
Marià: “…accommodation, or a place where people come to stay. Something connected to tourism.”
Marta: “That would be nice.”
Marià: “Something that could give us an income at a certain point without us needing to be on the move. But we’ll be moving for a long time yet. We’re not planning to stop anytime soon.”
Marta: “No.”



A ONE-OF-A-KIND ADVENTURE, NOW IN YOUR HANDS

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION AND FREEDOM

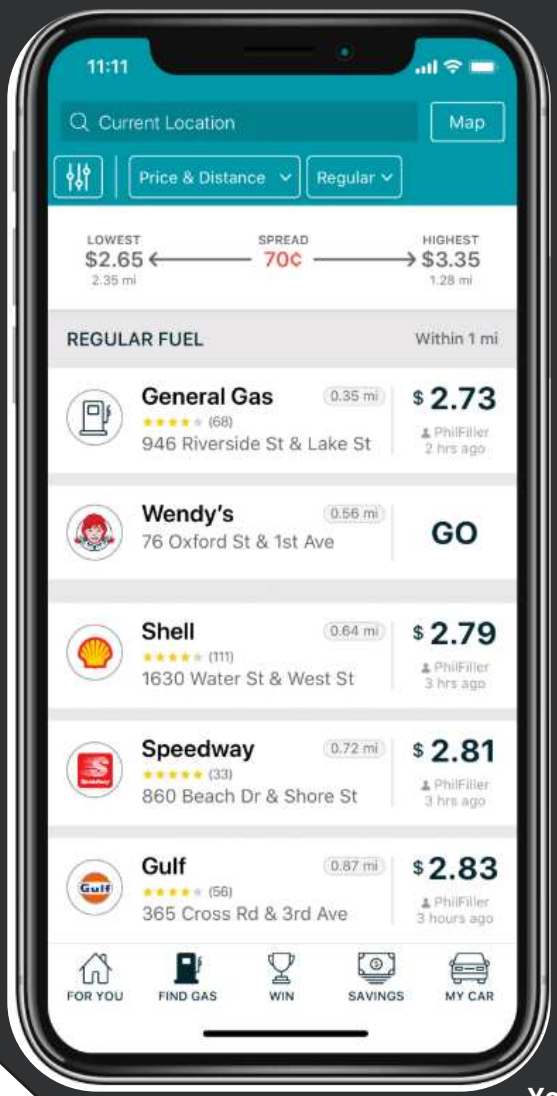


SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET YOUR COPY ON AMAZON.

Available in paperback and digital editions.



GasBuddy APP



If you want to keep travel costs under control, GasBuddy remains an essential fuel-saving tool in 2026. Its crowdsourced model provides real-time information that can make a meaningful difference to your monthly budget.

Where does it work?
GasBuddy offers extensive coverage across North America:

United States: More than 150,000 stations nationwide.

Canada: Widely used across the provinces, making it useful for long-distance and cross-border trips.

Key features
Real-Time Fuel Price Map: Filter by fuel grade—Regular, Premium, or Diesel—and see prices recently reported by other users.
Trip Cost Calculator: Enter your starting point, destination, and vehicle model to estimate fuel costs and identify economical places to stop.
Fuel Availability Tracker: During emergencies or natural disasters, check which stations report power and fuel availability.
Pay with GasBuddy: A fuel-savings payment program available at participating U.S. stations. Eligibility, terms, and discounts vary; check the current conditions before enrolling.
Fuel Log and Alerts: Track your vehicle's fuel economy and receive manufacturer safety-recall notifications.

Tips
Check the report time: Prices in busy areas tend to be recent, but always check when a listing was last updated.

Earn rewards: Reporting prices earns points that may qualify you for promotional fuel drawings, subject to current program rules.

You can also use the web version:
https://www.gasbuddy.com/

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

EL MINI VIAJERO



A couple, an iconic Austin Mini with a rooftop tent, and a conviction forged on gravel roads: the size of your vehicle doesn't limit the scale of your adventure. In this conversation, Andrés and Caro talk about feeling vulnerable in the Atacama Desert, nighttime breakdowns solved with help from strangers, the practical challenges of sharing a tiny cabin when you're almost two meters tall, and their goal of reaching Puerto Williams before pointing the compass toward Alaska.

We all have that “crazy” moment when we decide to cast off. For you, what was it like when the Mini stopped being a city car and became your home and compass?

Andrés: “Honestly, it didn’t happen overnight. It was gradual. I’ve been a gearhead since I was a kid, and I’ve always liked Austin Minis. Growing up, I heard all these stories because it was such an iconic car in Chile—and really, all over the world. Stories about families traveling long distances. I’m from Puerto Varas, for example, and people would talk about a family of five piling into an Austin Mini to visit relatives in Santiago, driving all the way there and back. I grew up with those stories.
“So when I got one—I’ve had this one since the pandemic—I caught the bug. I started going to Mini events, and my first was in La Serena. I hadn’t owned the car long, but I said, ‘Right, I want to go to La Serena. It’s 1,500 kilometers.’ I went, and that was the first trip. It was August 2022, our first big outing. I actually went without my family, with just a friend. From there, everything gradually came together.”

The first mile: How did you feel leaving home for the first time with the tent on the roof? Between the excitement and the nerves, what thought kept running through your minds?

Andrés: “Our first big trip actually wasn’t with the tent. On my first trip with Caro, it was the two of us and our friend Adolfo in another Mini. We’d been invited to an Austin Mini gathering in Paraguay. We started organizing everything, then thought, ‘Hey, instead of going straight to Paraguay, why don’t we explore along the way?’ We ended up traveling through part of Argentina, all the way across Uruguay, southern Brazil, and Paraguay.”













@ELMINIVIAJERO





CERTIFIED PRODUCT - MADE IN CHILE 100% ORIGINAL - PREMIUM QUALITY



“That’s when we started thinking about a tent and figuring out how to make it work. At least here in Chile, nobody had done it. For the rest of the world, I could only find one photo online, and you couldn’t see much. On that trip, we looked for hostels and places to stay, but several times we couldn’t find anything. We’d reach a town or city late and have to sleep in the car. As you know, an Austin Mini is tiny—and I’m 1.93 m tall—so it wasn’t very comfortable. That got us thinking about the tent.

“Our first trip with it was aimed at reaching Ushuaia. We didn’t know how, but that was the goal. We were nervous because it was the first time we’d really headed out alone, without any other cars. We went south through Chile, drove the entire Carretera Austral, then headed back north a little and crossed into Argentina. We visited Torres del Paine and Punta Arenas, crossed to Tierra del Fuego, and made it to Ushuaia.

“On that first trip with the tent, my thought the whole way—because we drove a lot of gravel and rough stretches of Route 40—was: ‘Please hold up! Please don’t fall off or break the car’s roof!’ But we’ve now driven about 30,000 kilometers, maybe a little more, with the tent up there, and we haven’t had any of those problems.”



After so many kilometers, there must be a story you always tell over coffee—or mate—with other travelers. What moment restored your faith in the kindness of strangers?

Andrés: “We have so many stories, almost enough for a book. A lot has happened to us, and some little ‘angel’ always turns up along the way to help.

“For example, coming back from Ushuaia along the Atlantic coast on Route 3, we left Río Gallegos hoping to reach Rada Tilly. We were heading there because I’d written to Fabián, from Fabián Viaja—the Argentine traveler who drives a Ford Ranchero. I never thought he’d answer, but he did. We ended up running late on the road.”









"Around 11 p.m., near Caleta Olivia, we lost drive to the wheels. We'd had a mechanical failure I couldn't fix there. Caro usually reads a book to stay calm when we have a little problem, but this time she could see I was really struggling. She said, 'If anyone stops, ask them for help right away.'

"We'd been driving for hours without seeing anyone because it was late and the weather wasn't great. Just as she said that, a pickup appeared. They stopped and asked, 'Do you need help?' We said, 'Yes, please.' They towed us to Caleta Olivia and dropped us at a hotel, where we could ask about a repair shop. It was about 1 a.m. The guy at reception said, 'I know someone,' and called him right then. The mechanic answered and said, 'Don't worry. I'll come rescue you tomorrow.'

"He picked us up early, we went to his shop, and we took things apart. One part needed repairing. He said, 'I have a friend with a machine shop.' We went there, and in three or four hours, the car was running again.

"We have lots of stories like that. So many good things have happened, always meeting people and making friends. The travel community is incredible—and so are people who aren't travelers. In the end, you realize the world isn't quite the terrible place the news makes it out to be."

They say the car you drive opens doors. Does traveling in such a beloved classic make it easier for people to stop, talk, and share their own stories?

Andrés: "Absolutely. It makes everything easier. Wherever we stop in the Mini, people come over to chat, help us, give us tips. It's incredible. It opens so many doors—it's our passport to all sorts of things. When we head out, we have a destination in mind, like Ushuaia. Last year, for example, we traveled the length of Chile, from Arica to Punta Arenas, without much of a plan. We go wherever the wind takes us, you could say! The car has helped a lot. People smile and come over out of curiosity to ask about it.

"And because it's such an iconic car in Chile and around the world, most people have an Austin Mini story. They had one, or their dad or uncle did, or they learned to drive in one. We've even heard a lot of dating stories..."







“Once we met an older couple, and the husband had asked his wife to be his girlfriend inside an Austin Mini. He used to rest his hand on her leg because the car was so small! There are endless stories.”

A small vehicle brings you closer to everything, including the risks. When has fear crept in on the road, and how did you help each other stay calm?

Andrés: “Being in such a small car really does make you see the world differently. You feel a little more vulnerable than in other vehicles, but you get used to it. What I don’t like is big cities with heavy traffic. Sometimes a truck goes past and all I can see is its wheel—that’s a little scary. But we’ve been lucky. Nothing has ever happened to us: no scares or near misses. We don’t spend much time in big cities, either. My favorite route is the Carretera Austral. Last year I drove the whole thing twice in the Mini, in summer and winter. The Mini really handles it well.

“We have our own way of organizing things. I make sure the car runs, and Caro handles ‘playing Tetris’ with everything inside. Besides the tent, we carry a table, chairs, a camp stove, and a cooler. The trunk is nothing but tools and spare parts. While I check the car, she organizes everything each day and makes sure it all fits.”



Sharing such a small space 24/7 is an art. What have you learned about each other that you might never have discovered living in one place?

Andrés: “The car is really small, but Caro and I don’t have much trouble getting along. We each have our jobs. I keep it running and do the driving; she keeps everything organized inside. It’s funny—as I said, I’m 1.93 m tall, so if I roll down both windows and stretch my arms out, I can put one arm out each side. It really is tiny.

“But honestly, it’s never been an issue. It’s not as though we’ve been traveling for a year straight or anything. We go away for shorter stretches.”



“We haven’t figured out how to fund ourselves indefinitely yet, so we go away in summer, for example. Caro is a teacher and has three months off in the summer, so that’s when we sneak away. I’m self-employed, so I can leave whenever I want, but when I’m away, I stop earning. That’s why we haven’t managed to go for longer.
“We’ve still covered a lot of ground. In 2025, for example, we drove 30,000 kilometers. We traveled the length of Chile, from Arica to Punta Arenas, went to Ushuaia, and explored Argentina’s Atlantic coast. We’re getting there. With all the excitement of the trip, we haven’t had any problems getting along, at least.”

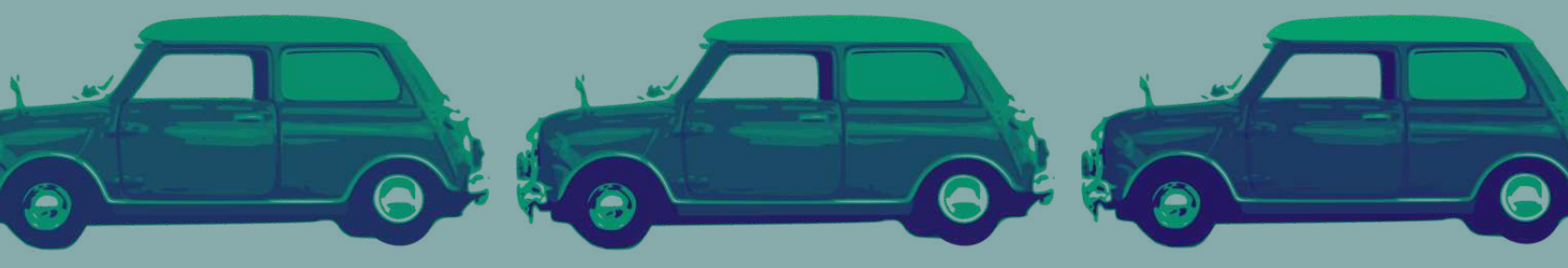
Of all the borders you’ve crossed and heights you’ve reached, where did you look in the rearview mirror and think, “I can’t believe the Mini brought us all this way”?

Andrés: “The place where I felt farthest from home was the Atacama Desert. We were alone, and the sheer size of it gave me a really strange feeling. I felt vulnerable and far away. We’d been to Ushuaia, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, but on those trips we had a friend along in another Austin Mini. It wasn’t the same—you feel you have more backup if something happens.
“But crossing the desert, I really felt far away and vulnerable. On top of that, we had mechanical problems and were alone fixing them three or four kilometers off the highway. It felt like something out of a movie.”

The bond with the machine: The Mini is more than metal and paint now. If it could talk, what would it say about how you treat it and the adventures you take it on?

Andrés: “That’s a controversial question! People think the Mini is saying, ‘Come on, let me rest.’ But I think it’s sitting there itching for the next big adventure. It hasn’t been easy on the car, because honestly, whatever comes up, we do it.”





"We've driven something like 500 kilometers of gravel, gone into the dunes in the Atacama Desert, gotten stuck in those dunes, driven on the beach, through mud, and through snow. The poor thing has had a hard time, but we've always made it there and back. I've never come home on the back of a truck or anything like that. We've had problems, but we've always managed to solve them. I'm sure the car has a soul and is looking forward to the next trip."

After traveling from one end of South America to the other, what new goals have appeared on your dream map? Is there a destination you can't stop thinking about and are already planning to reach?

Andrés: "That's the best question. Wow, goals. My dream—mine, Andrés's; Caro's not quite as keen because it scares her a little—is to reach the northern end of the Pan-American Highway, in Alaska. I'd love that. We have to figure out how to finance something like that, but I want to do it at some point in my life. I don't know whether it'll be now or when I'm old, but that's the dream.
"In the short term, I really want to get to Puerto Williams. It was part of the plan when we went to Ushuaia, but we hit bad weather and the boats were canceled. Since I'm Chilean, I'd love to reach the southernmost city in Chile—and in the world. Last year, we traveled much of the country, from Arica to Punta Arenas. I want to finish that journey and be able to say, 'From Arica to Puerto Williams.' That's the short-term goal. We're hoping to do it this year."

A message from the heart: What would you tell someone reading Bitácora Off Road on their couch, longing to go but thinking of a thousand reasons not to, about not waiting for the "perfect moment"?

Andrés: "My message to people who are thinking about it is: do it. It doesn't matter what car you have. Think about it—the Mini is just about the least suitable car for a long trip, and we've driven something like 60,000 kilometers around South America in the past three or four years."







“Yes, you’ll have bad days. You’ll struggle. But when you weigh the pros and cons, it’s absolutely worth it. You meet people and see places—it’s beautiful. The news paints the world one way, and when you get out there, you realize it isn’t like that. Of course there are bad people, but most people are good, friendly, and willing to help. It’s incredible.

“Those excuses—‘I don’t have the right car,’ ‘I don’t have a fully outfitted 4x4 camper truck,’ or whatever—are just details. What matters is wanting to do it, getting out there, and finding the courage. Go for it.”





TRUE SPIRIT

🎬 *Director: Sarah Spillane*
🎭 *Starring: Teagan Croft, Cliff Curtis, Anna Paquin*
⏱️ *Runtime: 1 hr 49 min*
🍿 *Genre: Biography / Adventure / Drama*

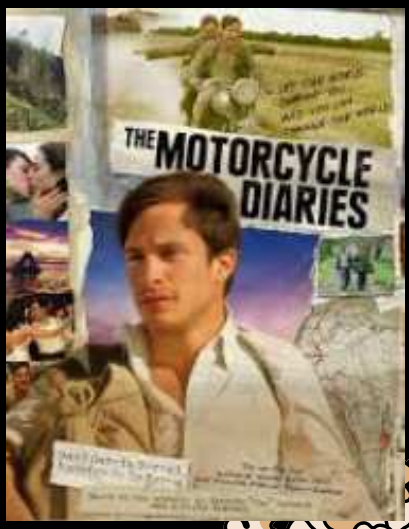
This film tells the true story of Jessica Watson, a 16-year-old Australian who set out in 2009 to become the youngest person to sail solo, nonstop, and unassisted around the world. It follows her technical preparations and safety trials, then 210 days at sea facing 12-metre waves and absolute solitude.



THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

🎬 *Director: Walter Salles*
🎭 *Starring: Gael García Bernal, Rodrigo de la Serna*
⏱️ *Runtime: 2 hr 06 min*
🍿 *Genre: Drama / Adventure / Road Movie*

In 1952, two young Argentines, Ernesto Guevara and Alberto Granado, set out on an old Norton 500 motorcycle to cross South America. What begins as an improvised mechanical adventure driven by a desire to see the world becomes a profound journey of discovery.

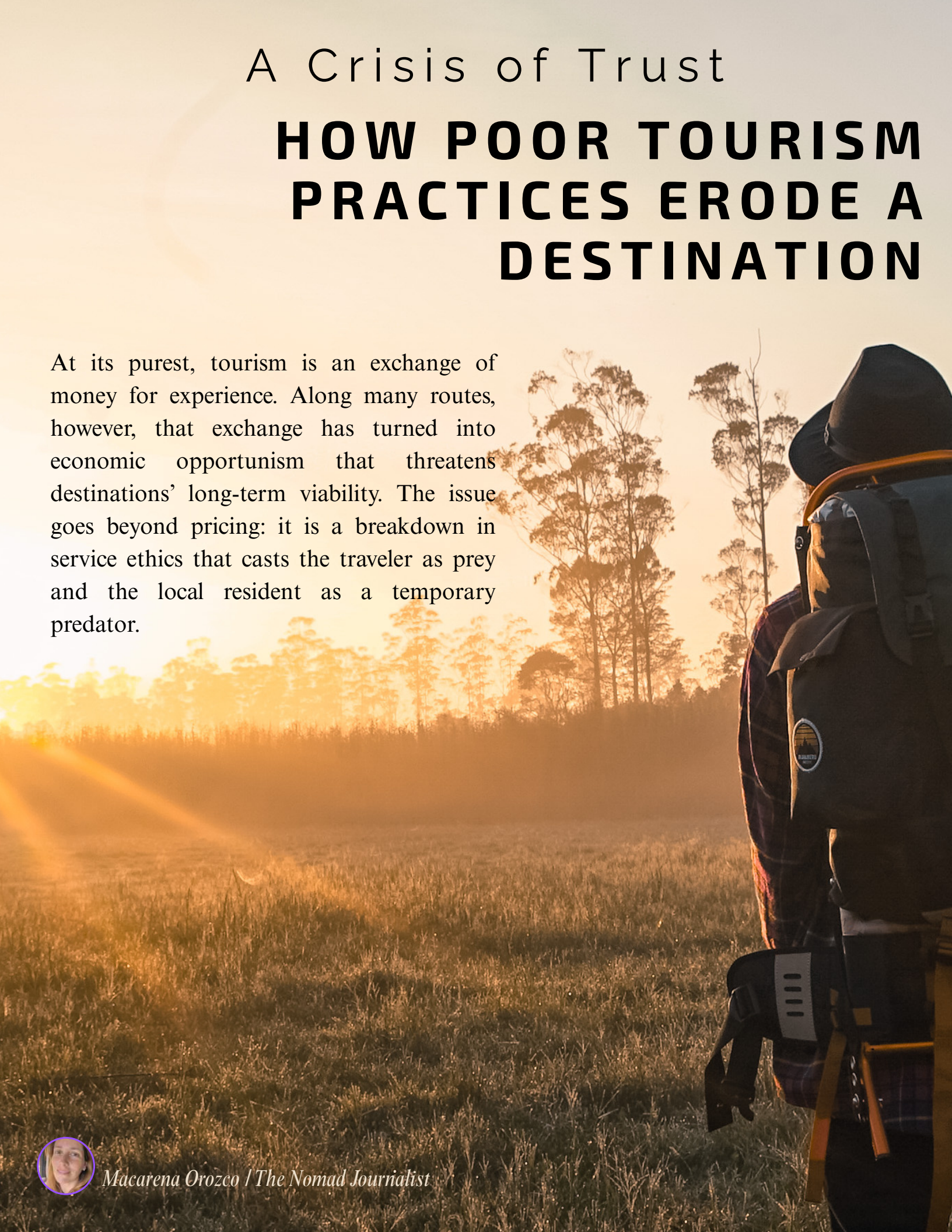




A Crisis of Trust

HOW POOR TOURISM PRACTICES ERODE A DESTINATION

At its purest, tourism is an exchange of money for experience. Along many routes, however, that exchange has turned into economic opportunism that threatens destinations' long-term viability. The issue goes beyond pricing: it is a breakdown in service ethics that casts the traveler as prey and the local resident as a temporary predator.



Macarena Orozco | The Nomad Journalist



Price Opacity and Selective Inflation

One of the foundations of systemic mistrust is the loss of any stable sense of value. When the price of a basic product such as bottled water varies by 500% between a regulated business and an unmarked tourist stand, the message to travelers is clear: their presence is treated as a financial opportunity to exploit, rather than a visit to manage responsibly.

The absence of visible price lists is more than an administrative oversight; it becomes a form of price arbitrage that penalizes outsiders. It creates a psychological barrier to spending. Travelers who want to participate in and understand the local economy pull back, limiting purchases to the bare minimum for fear of being subjected to an institutionalized scam.

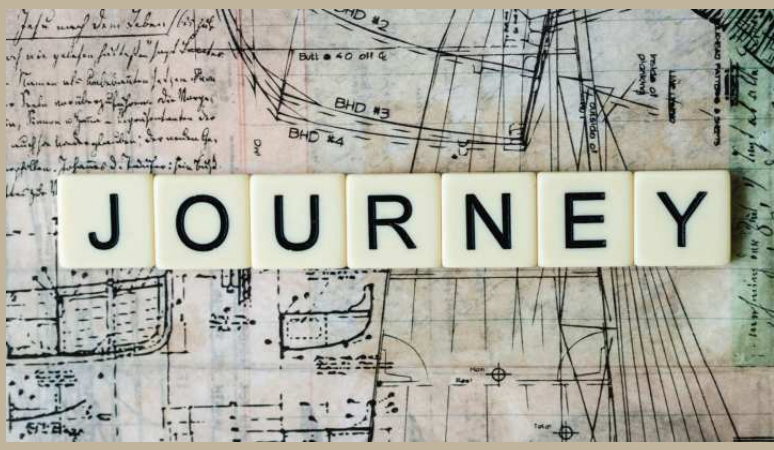
The Psychology of Harassment vs. a Culture of Hospitality

Constant pressure from vendors and service providers in high-traffic areas causes traveler fatigue. For people from cultures that value personal space and autonomy in decision-making, aggressive over-selling feels intimidating. In practical terms, harassment has the opposite of its intended effect: human interaction becomes a defensive transaction, eliminating the cultural enrichment that motivates travel.





There is a mistaken belief that budget or long-term travelers contribute little to a destination. In fact, overlanders inject money directly into the local economy: the neighborhood mechanic, produce stand, and hardware store. Desperate attempts to extract quick profits from passing tourists drive away this steady flow of spending and undermine the community's economy over time.



Honesty as a Retention Strategy

A destination's sustainability depends less on how much can be extracted from a tourist in one afternoon than on repeat visits and organic recommendations.

A transparent business model is a genuine competitive advantage. A business or vendor that posts prices, respects the customer's autonomy, and treats people with dignity creates an oasis of trust. In an era when expedition routes earn their reputations in international online forums, honesty is the safest marketing strategy for ensuring that domestic and international travelers return.



The Currency Mirage and the Flight to Supermarkets

This issue must be considered with structural empathy. In many destinations, visitors carrying strong currencies represent a vital opportunity. For a vendor, winning that customer and maximizing a sale may mean earning the day's income or surviving the low season. The urgency behind the sales effort is understandable.

Yet an opportunistic minority can tarnish the reputation of an honest, hardworking majority. When solicitation becomes hostile and visitors feel cheated, the damage is difficult to reverse: travelers stop buying from street vendors and retreat to corporate chains. The result is devastating for the local microeconomy. Everything from water and food to souvenirs and crafts ends up being purchased in the sterile setting of a supermarket, where prices are fixed and no one applies pressure.

Fear as a Sales Tool

One technical and ethical practice deserves particular attention: selling through fear. For overlanders and expedition travelers, route information is a critical safety resource. We have documented cases in which local informants deliberately misrepresented terrain—claiming that a particular vehicle could not handle a section of road—solely to push travelers into hiring transportation or renting from local partners.

When travelers discover that their vehicle was fully capable of clearing the obstacle, the social contract is broken. Self-serving misinformation is more than an economic scam; it sabotages expedition logistics and damages an entire region's reputation in international forums.

Toward a New Social Contract on the Road

We understand, with empathy, that behind every transaction is a family trying to secure a livelihood during uncertain seasons. We do not ignore the pressures facing local economies or the legitimate need to prosper. We are convinced, however, that the way forward lies in building bridges of trust.

When distrust falls away—when vendor and traveler can look each other in the eye without hidden motives—the transaction gives way to collaboration. Whenever we have encountered honest treatment on the road, the relationship has gone beyond the exchange of a product and, time after time, grown into friendship.

Ultimately, the best marketing strategy for a destination is neither pressure nor opportunism, but human decency. Word of mouth among travelers is immediate and powerful. When a destination treats us honestly, we return and become its most loyal ambassadors. Building that trust is both an act of goodwill and the most profitable investment a host community can make in its sustainability and future.



Welcome to La Palapa de Diana

Authentic Flavors of Mexico's Coast



SEAFOOD SOUP



Shrimp a la Diabla



Delicious Limeade





All Served with a Spectacular Ocean View

Local Ingredients. Culinary Tradition. Passion for the Coast.

PLAYA CERRO HERMOSO, OAXACA, MEXICO. RESERVATIONS: +52 954 167 00

Cooking on the Road

(PLEASE SHARE THE RECIPES YOU ENJOY MOST ON YOUR TRIP)

Recipes, Healthy Eating

THE VIRAL "NO DISHES" DESSERT

INGREDIENTS

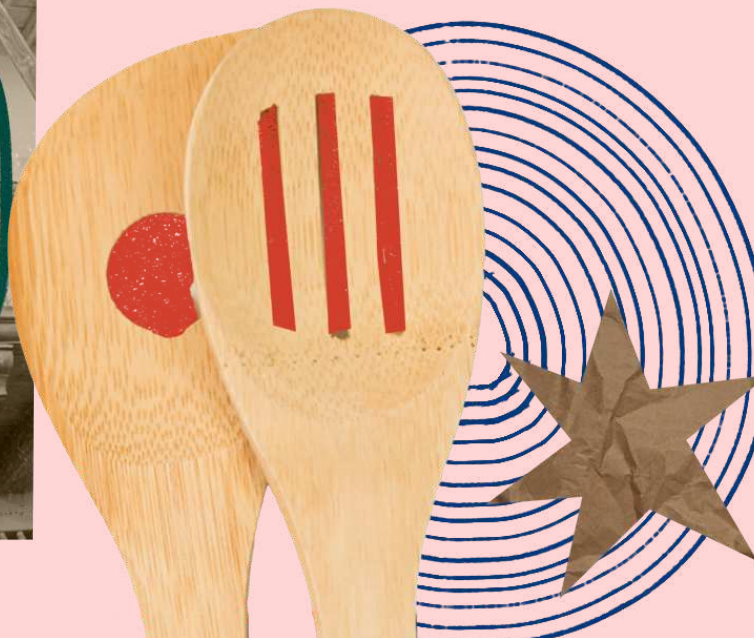
1 tub cream cheese
3–4 generous tablespoons manjar (dulce de leche)
About 6–8 cookies (Oreos, Chilean "Vino" cookies, or vanilla cookies)
A splash of milk or cold coffee

Step by Step:

Make Room: Open the cream cheese. Scoop out about 2 tablespoons and set them on a plate—or eat them; we will not judge. You need room for the manjar.
Mix It: Spoon the manjar into the tub. Whip together with a fork until smooth.
Add the Crunch: Break 2 or 3 cookies into medium pieces and mix them in.
The Dip: Quickly dip whole cookies in milk or coffee and place them on top, pressing gently.
Cover and Chill: Spread any remaining mixture over the top, replace the lid, and refrigerate—or place in your cooler—for at least 2 hours.









More instinct, less cortisol

THE COST OF NOT BEING A DOG: HOW HUMANIZATION MAKES OUR FOUR-LEGGED TRAVELERS SICK



Dr. Gabriel Jara
Veterinarian / Traveler

Traveling with a dog requires understanding its biology—not projecting our own onto it.

The same scene repeats at campgrounds and roadside stops: dogs carried for miles in backpacks, bundled in three layers in mild weather, or kept away from every mud puddle. We do it out of love and want to protect them. But by treating them like fragile human children, we take away something essential: their right to be dogs.

The problem is not merely philosophical or behavioral. From a veterinary perspective, humanization carries a biological cost. Preventing dogs from expressing natural behaviour makes them physically ill.

The stress of a lost identity

Dogs process the world differently. Their universe comes through their noses. They need to track, smell other animals' markings, dig, get dirty, and walk across uneven textures. That is how they read the newspaper and understand their surroundings.

When we block these behaviours —picking them up whenever another dog approaches, stopping them from smelling grass because 'it is dirty,' or demanding human emotional responses—we subject them to constant frustration. A dog cannot understand why it is being deprived of basic instincts. This mismatch and lack of species-specific stimulation create chronic anxiety. The animal lives under stress because it cannot behave as its genetics tell it to.

The destructive cortisol cascade

This is where humanization stops being merely behavioral and becomes a clinical condition.



Chronic stress keeps the body's alarm system on, causing sustained cortisol release. At normal levels, cortisol helps an animal respond to danger. But day after day, the body begins to break down.
Persistently elevated cortisol is a powerful immunosuppressant: it weakens the body's defences.

A compromised immune system on the road
Nomadic life exposes dogs to new water, altitude, parasites, grasses, and bacteria. A healthy immune system adapts. But a stressed dog whose defences are suppressed becomes an easy target. We see the consequences in veterinary clinics:



Severe allergies and dermatitis: The skin loses its protective barrier.

Chronic gastrointestinal problems: A small change in water or diet triggers diarrhea.

Recurring infections: Ear or respiratory infections and difficulty healing minor wounds.

To love is to let go of control

Humanizing a dog does not mean loving it more. It means overlooking its real needs to satisfy our own anxiety about protecting it.

We believe we are protecting them from the outside world when we are weakening them from within.

The best preventive medicine does not come in a bottle. Let your dog be a dog. Let it get dirt on its paws, follow a scent, run at its own pace, and interact with the environment. A mentally balanced dog whose needs are respected has a stronger immune system and is ready to keep adding miles beside you.

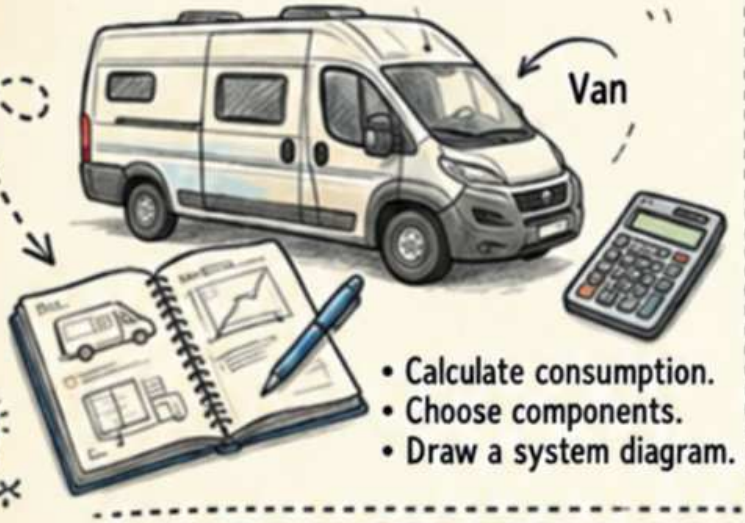





CONNECT AND EARN
ANYWHERE WITH
STARLINK!
Living the camper life? Now you can have
high-speed internet wherever you go.
GET ONE MONTH OF
STARLINK SERVICE
COMPLETELY FREE!*
SCAN THE QR CODE TO
CLAIM YOUR FREE MONTH!
STARLINK
*Offer subject to the terms nd conditions of the Starlink referral program.
Limited to new subscriptions.

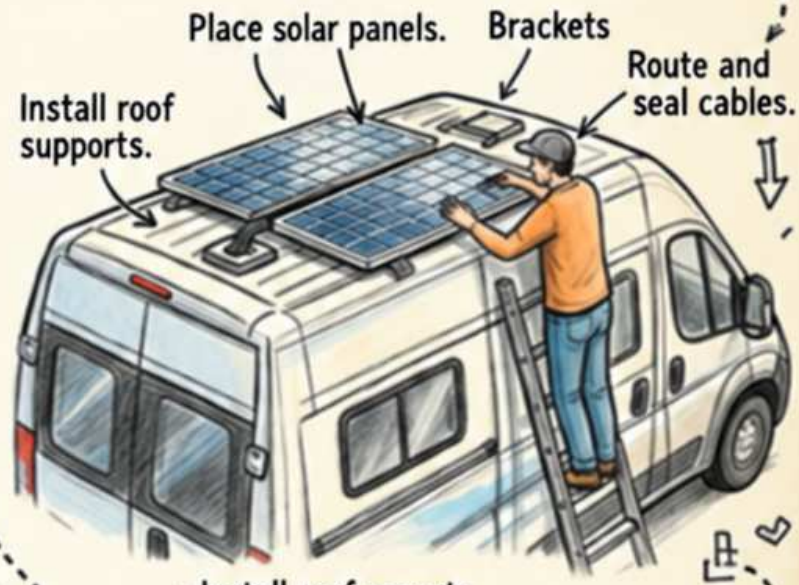
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE:
SOLAR INSTALLATION
IN YOUR CAMPER

1. PLANNING AND DESIGN

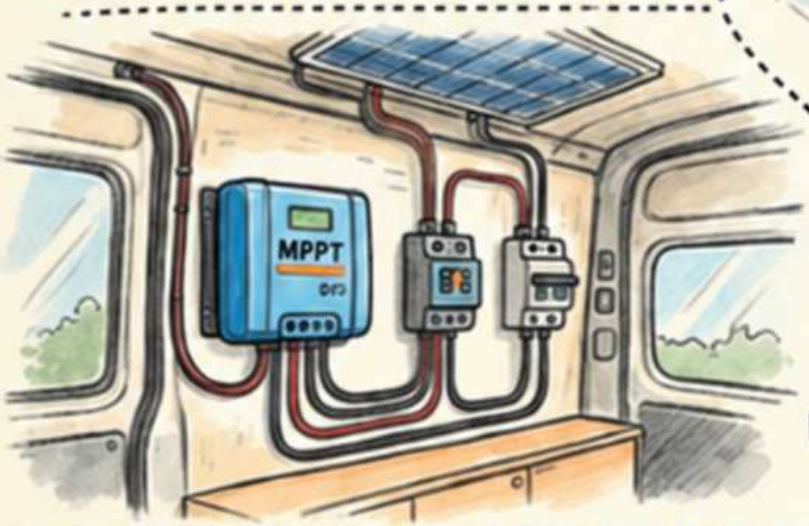


- Calculate consumption.
- Choose components.
- Draw a system diagram.

2. INSTALL SOLAR PANELS



- Install roof mounts.
- Place solar panels.
- Route cables and seal.



3. WIRING AND CHARGE CONTROLLER

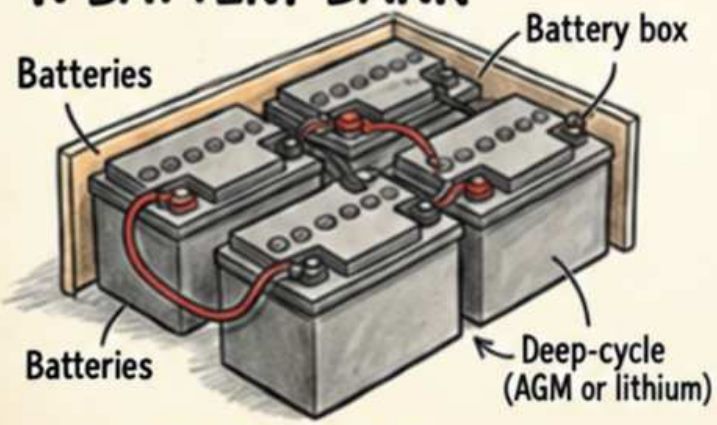


- Connect panel cables to the controller.
- Use fuses and disconnects.
- Manage the load.

¡IMPORTANT!

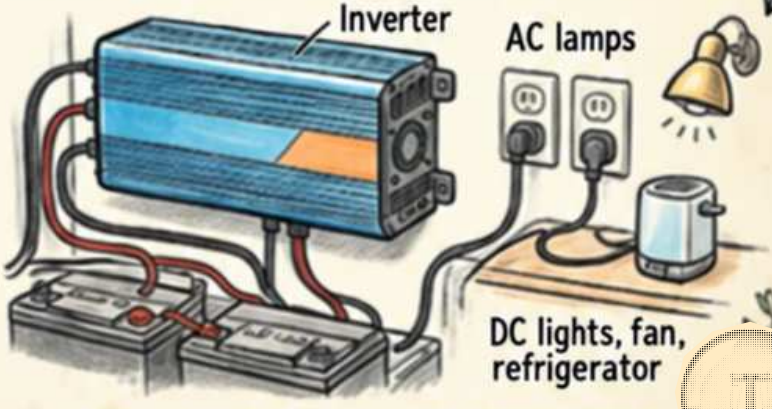
¡IMPORTANT!

4. BATTERY BANK



- Install auxiliary batteries.
- Connect in parallel.
- Secure all connections.

5. INVERTER AND AC/DC LOADS



- Connect the inverter (AC 220V/110V).
- Install AC and DC loads.
- Test the system!



CHIAPAS FROM THE ROAD: UNDERSTANDING EJIDOS AND AUTONOMY

As we continue adding miles across Mexico and prepare La K1500 for the enormous challenge of reaching Alaska in winter, some places force you to slow down—not only because of road conditions, but because the surroundings demand that you observe and learn. Chiapas is one of those places.



For many overlanders, Chiapas means jungle, turquoise waterfalls, and Maya ruins. But its roads reveal another reality: ropes across highways, endless topes—speed bumps—community fees, and signs announcing autonomous territories.
Understanding what we see is not about taking a political position. It is about understanding the place we are visiting. In its purest sense, that is travel.

The fabric of the land: What is an Ejido?

Land in Chiapas is often managed differently. This is where the ejido comes into play.

An ejido is a communal land-ownership system rooted in the Mexican Revolution. A forest or waterfall belongs to the community, not one person or company. Assemblies decide how land is used, who works it, and how tourism is managed.
For travelers, this explains the ‘community fee’ at many natural attractions. It is neither a scam nor an arbitrary toll; it funds access, local families, and conservation.

Zapatista Territory and Autonomy

In Los Altos de Chiapas and the Lacandon Jungle, signs announce: ‘You are in Zapatista territory in rebellion. Here the people rule and the government obeys.’
In 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) took up arms demanding rights, justice, democracy, and recognition for Mexico’s Indigenous peoples.
Over time, the movement shifted from armed conflict toward autonomy.





They created Caracoles—centres of autonomous regional government. Communities manage their education, health care, and justice independently from official Mexican government structures.
Passing through offers travelers a glimpse into a unique living social experiment. This is not a war zone, but deeply organized farming and Indigenous communities taking charge of their destiny.

Advice for travelers

Driving through Chiapas teaches valuable lessons:

Be patient with topes: There are hundreds. Many slow you down near families selling local fruit, coffee, and crafts.

Ropes across the road: Families sometimes stop traffic to offer products or request a contribution. A smile and 'No, thank you'—or buying mandarins—is usually enough.

Respect people's image: Never photograph people, especially children or local authorities, without permission.

Accept the local system: If a community charges to use a dirt road leading to a river, pay it gladly. It is their land, and we are guests.

Chiapas changes your perspective. It teaches that the world is diverse and societies organize themselves in countless ways. The next time you pass a sign announcing autonomous territory, roll down the window, breathe the jungle air, and appreciate witnessing Mexico's living history. Accepting community dynamics is cultural reciprocity. Seen through that lens, the journey becomes infinitely richer.



Traveler's Horoscope

Aries (Mar 21–Apr 19) Mars gives you extra road adrenaline. You want to devour the map and reach the next destination yesterday. The stars suggest some engine braking. This month's magic lies in unplanned stops. Check your maps and fluid levels; patience will save a headache in the middle of nowhere.

Taurus (Apr 20–May 20) Venus embraces your home on wheels, backpack, or tent. Honor comfort in nature. Buy fresh ingredients locally, cook a spectacular camp-stove dinner, and enjoy being exactly where you want to be. You will find the perfect campsite to recharge.

Gemini (May 21–Jun 20) Mercury rules your roads and synchronicities are everywhere. You are the road's social magnet. Encounters at gas stations, campgrounds, and borders may reveal a secret route or hidden waterfall that appears in no online guide.

Cancer (Jun 21–Jul 22) The Moon illuminates your sense of belonging. Home is not a postal code; it is the space you inhabit while moving. Nurture your refuge and companions. If alone, connect with the nomadic community. Hot tea while rain falls on your vehicle will soothe the soul.

Leo (Jul 23–Aug 22) The Sun shines on your hood. Share your journey through writing, photography, or campfire stories. Remember that adventure includes dust, mud, and exhaustion. Show the road proudly, imperfections and all.

Virgo (Aug 23–Sep 22) Your analytical mind planned every detail, but Uranus brings change. Put the GPS aside and allow yourself to get a little lost. A detour will challenge your plans but reveal the month's best view. Trust your preventive maintenance and intuition.

Libra (Sep 23–Oct 22) Do not turn the journey into an endless marathon. Balance movement and stillness. Seek beautiful sunsets, keep your small space organized, and protect your peace of mind. A balanced vehicle travels better, and a balanced mind enjoys the road twice as much.

Scorpio (Oct 23–Nov 21) Your nomadic sixth sense is sharp. Pluto gives you intuition for reading roads, cities, and border officials. If a place feels wrong, move on; if a hidden corner calls, stay. You will solve mechanical or logistical setbacks creatively.

Sagittarius (Nov 22–Dec 21) Jupiter opens the world's doors. The wind is at your back. Cross borders and change countries, languages, and currencies. Luck favors paperwork and the road. Embrace the unknown; the horizon is filled with promise.

Capricorn (Dec 22–Jan 19) Saturn rewards discipline. You master survival and resources. Your radar for spectacular boondocking is flawless. Stretching water, solar power, and your budget will extend your stay in remote wilderness.

Aquarius (Jan 20–Feb 18) The universe awakens your inventive side. If a vehicle breaks down or you face a technical challenge, your mind will devise a temporary repair with duct tape and wire. Build networks, join temporary caravans, and share your view with other nomads.

Pisces (Feb 19–Mar 20) Neptune immerses you in travel's mysticism. You absorb the energy of every forest, mountain, and desert. Keep your journal close because inspiration will flow. Just remember to check your tire pressure.



Subscribe to the magazine

LINKTR.EE/BITACORA_OFFROAD

Find the magazine and new stories here

See our content online

