



Myth or Fact

There are many myths around motorcaravans. Here we try to dispel some of them. “Motorcaravan” is the DVLA term for campervans and motorhomes. “Aires” are dedicated overnight stops for motorcaravans.

Myth: Motorcaravan owners are freeloaders:

Fact: Yes, we all like a freebie now and again. The CAMpRA survey conducted last year, however, showed that 96% of motorcaravan owners are happy to pay between £5-£10 to park overnight.

Myth: Motorcaravan owners bring all their food with them:

Fact: The fridges in motorcaravans are generally fairly small; they only have enough space for food for 1-2 days, so motorcaravan owners have to go shopping on a regular basis. Local butchers, bakers, and grocers all benefit from motorcaravan tourism, as do local pubs, cafes, restaurants, and bars, as we eat out often. In fact, UK motorcaravan owners spend in excess of £1bn each year in local economies whilst on their travels. Our survey shows 97% purchase food during their trips away.

Myth: Motorcaravan owners leave rubbish everywhere:

Fact: Many motorcaravan owners carry litter pickers and subscribe to the ethos of 'Leave No Trace'. We litter pick and tidy up after others – often cans, takeaway food wrappers etc left by locals and day trippers!

Myth: Motorcaravan owners need toilets, showers and electric hook ups:

Fact: Modern motorcaravans are fully self-contained; they have onboard toilets, showers, waste tanks, fresh water tanks, and electricity is supplied by solar panels and batteries. A modern motorcaravan can last 3-4 days without having to access facilities; all that is required is a safe place to park and sleep overnight, and the ability to empty waste tanks and fill with fresh water every 3-4 days.

Myth: Motorcaravans should be on caravan sites:

Fact: There are many reasons why caravan sites are not required by motorcaravans. Many sites only have grass pitches which can't take the weight of a motorcaravan. Many sites have a minimum stay policy (often 3-4 nights) – touring motorcaravan owners usually only stay in one place for 24-48 hours whilst they take advantage of local attractions, shops, bars, restaurants etc. Advance booking is often required and most sites are fully booked up to 12 months in advance. Motorcaravan owners prefer not to plan this far ahead. A modern motorcaravan is designed to tour as a self-contained unit. But the biggest reason is that the majority of sites are closed between October and Easter – yet 82% of motorcaravan owners tour all year round. We are not averse to caravan sites – we will book onto a site as required to use the waste and fresh water facilities; and many people will book onto a site for a holiday, but for the most part all we require is somewhere quiet and safe to park and sleep overnight.

Myth: Motorcaravan owners tip their toilet waste in inappropriate places:

Fact: Yes, there are unfortunately a few totally irresponsible motorcaravan owners. However the majority will always seek out proper disposal points, and if these aren't available, they will book onto a site every 3-4 days.

Myth: But we've seen toilet paper and human faeces which must have been dumped by motorcaravan owners:

Fact: Most motorcaravan owners use eco-friendly products in their toilets which break down solids. If you've seen toilet paper and human faeces, then these are more likely to have been left by day trippers or tent campers. After all, why would we go to the toilet in the bushes when we have toilets on board?

Myth: I've seen motorcaravans let their toilet waste flow out onto car parks and down drains:

Fact: This is more likely to be the waste water from showers and washing up (grey waste), rather than toilet waste. If you are not familiar with motorcaravans, you may not be aware of the difference. We do not condone this practice and the majority of motorcaravan owners will only dispose of grey waste in the correct place.

Myth: Motorcaravan owners go camping:

Fact: Touring Motorcaravans park for a max 48 hours, they do not set up camp. No activities take place outside the motorcaravan – no tables, chairs, awnings, bbqs etc. If we want to put out equipment, we should book onto a campsite.

Myth: If we allow motorcaravans to stop overnight, we'll be overrun by travellers:

Fact: There is absolutely no evidence to support this claim. In fact, the presence of motorcaravans is more likely to deter travellers – they don't want to mix with us. CAMpRA have testimonials from sites like Northumberland Water who have seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour where motorcaravans are allowed to stay overnight.

Myth: Car parks with height barriers are no good for motorcaravans:

Fact: Provided the height barrier can be raised to let us in, what's not to like? For example, to be able to park our motorcaravans on Park & Ride barriered car parks would enable us to use the facility to visit the town, have a meal, maybe visit a theatre, and return to the car park – knowing that our motorcaravan would still be there!

Myth: Aires take business away from local campsites:

Fact: Motorcaravan owners would use campsites if they provide dedicated facilities for them; there are 2,600 campsites in France with Aire type facilities for touring motorcaravans either just outside or within campsites. The UK now has six motorcaravan Aires which are attached to campsites. Unfortunately, though, most campsites still treat motorcaravans like a caravan.

It is like comparing a B&B with a 5-star hotel – they cater for completely different markets. An Aire is a short stay overnight stop – not a campsite.