



Why More Americans Are Embracing Tiny Homes

The living little trend continues to get bigger.

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The whole idea behind tiny living isn't new. As a matter of fact, one of the movement's early inspirations dates back to Henry David Thoreau's publication of his book *Walden* in 1854. However, it wasn't until the recession hit in 2008 that the tiny living movement really started becoming popular and gaining mainstream awareness.

The trend picked up for many reasons during the financial crisis, but one major cause sticks out – tiny homes are more affordable. Logic tells you that a small house won't cost as much, and neither will its repairs. Tiny living allows you to give up mortgage payments and housework to enjoy life instead.

Ryan Mitchell, tiny living expert from TheTinyLife.com, joined the movement himself based on the clear financial motivations of having a tiny house. He finished graduate school and was excelling in his career. And then one day, the owner of the company announced they were closing and everyone was out of a job.

“It was a wake-up call for me,” Mitchell said. “I was a smart guy with a master’s degree, working hard, getting good feedback from my bosses and even with that, I didn’t have job security. I realized something had to change.”

Mitchell took a look at his budget and he realized about half of his income was going to housing, including rent, insurance and upkeep. He realized that if he could eliminate that entire line item, that would be a big win. He looked around and considered different options like RVs and campers, and then he stumbled across tiny houses.

“I was really fascinated by the concept,” Mitchell said. “I latched onto it, ran with it and ended up building my own tiny house.”

By definition, a tiny house is less than 500 square feet. That means people simply can’t have a lot of belongings if this is the lifestyle they want to embrace.

“Our houses were designed with the true minimalist in mind,” said Michelle Tascione, environmental strategy manager at 84 Lumber, a company that makes four different tiny home models. “The individual, or individuals, that live in an [84 Lumber Tiny House](#) truly appreciate the lifestyle it gives them – the ability to travel with their home, a greener environmental footprint, financial freedom and a simpler life.”

Financial freedom is obviously a major benefit of tiny living, but traveling can be a perk, both with your tiny home and away from it. Tiny homes are built on wheels, allowing owners to essentially take their home anywhere they want, providing a room for the night’s stay instead of worrying about booking a hotel. On the flip side, some people choose to own a tiny home so that they have the ability to use money that others have tied up in their homes to be able to travel and explore.

“Whether they move for their job often or enjoy travelling, the mobility of a tiny home affords them that luxury while still being able to take their house and possessions with them,” said Tascione.

Walking away from a mortgage and all the major home expenses and then having the ability to travel are two major bonuses encouraging the trend of tiny living, but a third that Tascione points out is relatively simple, literally.

“Still others are embracing the minimalistic lifestyle,” she said. “Less space means less cleaning, less items to take care of and more time to spend on what matters to them.”

If you’re considering taking on the tiny living lifestyle but don’t know where to start, TheTinyLife.com is a good resource. That’s where Mitchell created the [Tiny House Building](#)

Checklist.

“Initially, it was just a way for me to catalog my ideas for what I wanted in my own tiny house, because I knew I had to save up and I knew that would be a long process,” said Mitchell. “And then, people started reading, and then a lot of people started reading, and it grew into what it is today.”

But if someone isn't up for the task to build their own home from scratch – which is quite an impressive feat – there are plenty of manufacturers out there making tiny homes.

“Each of our tiny house models tells a different story and speaks to a different customer,” said Tascione with [84 Lumber](#). “Our Roving is our simplest tiny house – it has reclaimed wood accents on the interior, cork flooring and footholds to climb into the loft, rather than a ladder. Our [Shonsie](#) features a cottage aesthetic, with bold colors and a sliding glass door to showcase beautiful views. The Degsy is our most contemporary model and is a single level. Lastly, our Countryside model is our largest at 203 square feet, offers a spacious sleeping loft, a unique bathroom vanity and a daybed on the first level.”

84 Lumber offers four built-out models, aimed to appeal to a broad audience; however, customers have an option where they can pick a shell of the tiny house so they can design the inside to their liking.

“This allows for customization,” she said. “Customers can really design their interior, using materials they choose, with the knowledge their house is structurally sound, according to our engineers and architects.”

Customization is a key factor in the build, with Mitchell noting his favorite part about his house is that it was built just for him. He says the doors are slightly wider than his shoulders and the countertops are higher than average to make it comfortable for him.

No matter if you build one on your own, buy one that's fully equipped or meet somewhere in the middle with handling your own interior design, tiny living provides for freedom and personalization to each owner's preferences. Tiny homes prove it really is the little things in life that bring happiness.