



# New Ways to Enjoy Car Trips

Don't look upon that auto as just something to get you someplace—it's your traveling bedroom, closet, kitchen, and marina

By STANLEY H. BRAMS

**N**O MATTER what vintage or model, your automobile can be much more than a way to get you from here to there on your next vacation trip. Each year finds more ingenious ways created to make the car a genuine utility—meaning that it helps you live better and easier as it takes you over the highway.

It transports your vacation clothes and sports equipment, of course. Beyond that it can function as your bedroom at night or as the basic component of your shelter tent. It can function, too, as a surprisingly versatile power outlet—for shaving, warming beverages, playing your favorite records—and for other uses as well.

Take packing, for example. One auto manufacturer has a rubber-mounted roof-top luggage rack with base and side rails of stainless steel. Practically all other makes can be similarly equipped to handle odd-size cargo or overflow.

If you need still more space, think about a little trailer to pull along. There are any number on the market, light and roomy enough to handle all the gear you could reasonably want.

One such trailer has a dual advantage: it is a 200-pound cargo carrier (with 25 cubic feet of capacity) and also the base for a large canvas shelter, sleeping four persons inside its 11 feet of length and 6 feet, 4 inches of width (price, around \$345).

In the past, it's been popular to tow your boat behind you, but now there are lightweight water craft which go right into a station wagon or onto the roof of other models. One craft packs into two canvas bags weighing about 40 pounds each and can be blown up into a raft-rowboat. Another example is an inflatable rubber canoe (about \$160), and a third is a sailboat of polystyrene, haulable

on a car-top carrier (about \$120). There are even plans for a homemade 12-foot plywood boat made in two sections that nest together for movement in a station wagon.

All kinds of practical devices are on the market to make your trip more convenient. Most electric-shaver manufacturers have devised conversion plugs which fit cigarette-lighter recesses, so Dad can get an earlier start by shaving as he travels.

There are similarly powered water heaters—sticklike heating elements that can be dipped into a small container of water so Baby's bottle can be brought slowly to the desired temperature or hot water provided for instant coffee. The lighter recess also serves to power spotlights that find welcome use when trouble arises at night or when a camp site is reached after dark.

You also can buy refrigerating units that fit the car—some of them powered by bottled gas found in sporting-goods and hardware stores.

**W**ANT TO SLEEP in the car? Rambler pioneered the idea of drop-back front seats which form a flat base long enough for any adult. Studebaker's Lark and some foreign cars offer the same facility.

If you want fresh air and insect protection, too, while you sleep, you may find that your car can be equipped with screens, some of fabric mesh, some of metal. These are available in various models by Chevrolet, Chrysler, Ford, Rambler, and other manufacturers.

Nervous about sleeping in your car? One woman pulls into open-all-night gas stations and obtains permission to sleep in the back parking area where she locks herself in her car, partially opens the windows, attaches net window screens, and closes

her eyes—knowing there's a measure of protection during the night plus a handy washroom.

She stops around noon when motels are being cleaned up, asks permission to pay for a shower and a clean towel, and says she has never been turned away. Generally, this costs her 25 cents—a small outlay indeed for lodging along the road!

Or you can sleep on the roof. There are some package units that mount on top of your car and extend out to one side, creating enough room to sleep four quite comfortably, five feet off the ground (about \$280). If you wish, you can curtain the support poles at the side and afford yourself dressing-room space.

**T**ODAY'S popular half-wagon, half-bus vehicles are the basis of increasing numbers of camping and travel outfits specifically designed for them—tables which snap into place against one wall inside and can be taken out and fitted with legs for use anywhere; couches with bases that are storage drawers; complete kitchens; and so on. In a word, these vehicles can be used for vacation jaunts almost as if they were full-fledged trailers.

Tents which are, in effect, "hinged" to the automobile are quite commonplace, too. Sizes and shapes are in variety to suit any taste; their one point of similarity is that they derive support from the car in which they are transported and sometimes use the car as one of their walls.

Thus you can create about as much comfort and convenience in your car as your wallet can afford. Simply decide what you'd like to have on your next trip, and chances are it's ready and waiting for you at your car dealer, the store down the road, or the handyman's do-it-yourself supply place.

By hitching a tent to their Corvair sports wagon, these outdoorsmen have set up an ideal camp site. Easily attached, tents such as the one shown come in a host of shapes and sizes.



For less rugged individuals, this "motor home" by Dodge combines an auto and trailer in a single luxurious unit.

