

Section 10: Types of Tiny Houses

A-Frame

An A-frame house is an architectural style with steeply-angled sides (roofline) that usually begin at or are close to the foundation line and meet at the top of the house in the shape of the letter A. An A-frame ceiling can be open to the top rafters.

Bus Conversion

A bus conversion is a commercial passenger bus that has been converted into an RV. Depending on the components that are added, such bus conversions are typically the largest motorhomes available.

Cabin

Any small wooden cottage, hut or shed can be called a cabin, especially if it's in a remote or wooded place. You might dream of living in a cabin deep in the forest, beside a lake or on the edge of a mountain.

Campers

Campers can be retrofitted for full-time living. You'll find all sorts of renovated vintage campers and custom-built new campers that have been built to operate off-grid. Campers are a great way to travel the country in a tiny home that is pulled behind your vehicle.

Caravan

A caravan is a structure that has been designed or adapted to be lived in and which is able to be moved, either by being towed or transported on a truck. Motorized caravans or converted coaches or vans are also considered to be caravans but tents are not.

Cob House

A tiny house built of clay, straw, and sand. If properly taken care of a cob house can stand for a lifetime. It's all about having the right roofing that won't allow too much moisture to get in.

Container Home

Container homes are homes made from the steel shipping containers that you see carrying goods everywhere on ships, trains, and trucks. Shipping containers are designed to carry valuable cargo through extremely dangerous weather and can be subjected to 100 miles an hour winds and 50 foot plus waves, making them the ideal building material for durable tiny homes.

Geodesic Dome

A geodesic dome is a hemispherical thin-shell structure with a lattice-shell. The triangular elements of the geodesic dome are structurally rigid and distribute the structural stress throughout the dome, making it able to withstand very heavy loads for their size.

Houseboat

A houseboat is a boat that has been designed or modified to be used primarily as a home. Some houseboats are not motorized, because they are usually moored to a dock, and kept stationary at a fixed location or tethered to land to provide utilities. However, there are houseboats that are capable of operation under their own power. Float house is a Canadian and American term that is used for a house on a float or raft.

Laneway House

A laneway house is a form of housing that is gaining in popularity on the west coast of Canada, especially in the Vancouver area. These tiny homes are typically built into pre-existing lots, usually in the backyard and opening onto the back lane. Laneway houses are most popular in Vancouver, while similar housing has been appearing in other dense Canadian cities.

Modular

Modular homes are a type of prefab home where the components of the house, known as modules, are created in sections in a factory and then transported to the site for construction and assembly. The modules can often have multiple configurations to include being stacked on top of each other, end to end or side-to-side, which allows for a variety of shapes and sizes.

Prefab

Prefabricated homes, also known as prefabs, refers to a broad range of structures that have been constructed using panels or pieces that were fabricated before they arrive on site. The panels or parts of prefab homes are usually manufactured in standard sizes and sections that will allow for easy shipment on the back of a trailer and allow for easy assembly. Prefab homes can be mass-produced which can make them a cost-effective home option, or they can be custom-built at a higher cost. Two types of prefab homes include modular tiny home designs and prefab tiny house kits.

RVs

If your tiny house is an RV or RVIA certified, you can look into RV camping lots, national or state parks, campgrounds, or other mobile home friendly locales.

Tiny House

The term tiny house is relative. Many people define tiny houses as anything that is under 400 square feet, while others assume 100 square feet per person living in the home. The small house movement has gained in popularity in recent years as a way to downsize and live more simply.

Tiny Houses on Wheels

Small structures built on wheels, which allows them to easily be moved to the perfect location. A good rule of thumb is to stick to as close to a 20 to a 26-foot trailer as possible if you plan to move your tiny house on wheels (THOW) often. If you need a larger home than those dimensions would accommodate, you might want to consider a park model, granny flat, or another form of accessory dwelling unit (ADU) over a THOW.

Treehouse

Treehouses today are no longer just for kids. There are treehouse builders who build safe, enduring, and captivating treehouse designs with all the comforts of home. You'll find treehouses across the country that are used for everything from full-time living, guest cottages, playhouses and more. Treehouses are highly site-specific and integrated with the layout of your trees and the surrounding environment.

Vardo/Gypsy Wagon

Vardos were traditionally horse-drawn and covered in ornate designs, with rich color schemes. Today vardos are made to be pulled by vehicles and rounded at the top which helps maximize its space. Vardo design is great to withstand strong winds. The traditional wagons were used by the British Romani people as their homes. Many gypsy vardo wagons possess a chimney. They are commonly thought of as being highly decorated, brightly painted, intricately carved, and even gilded.

Yurt

For thousands of years, people have found shelter in yurts. The first yurts appeared between 600 BC and AD 300 in Central Asia. Nomadic herders took refuge in the felt-covered tents on steppes, mountains and in the desert. Today you will find yurts used for a variety of small house living needs. You'll still find yurts used today by the nomadic people of Asia.