



Freecamping guide & instructions to use the campers

Thank you for choosing my campervan for your travel. In this little booklet I will share information and tips about using the camper and freecamping I've gathered over the years. The camping tips are mainly for Finland, but they mostly apply for Sweden and Norway too. Please read carefully and you will have a trouble free experience!

Instructions to use the camper

Driving:

The camper uses diesel for fuel. The cheapest fuel you can usually find at the cold stations (which do not have a shop/cafe). Usually the most expensive fuel is at the big ABC-stations on the side of the highway.

When starting the engine, remember to wait for the glow-light to disappear (it's for diesel pre-heating).

Do not drive with a big gear on upward slope, it will damage the transmission in the long run. Please change to smaller gear (4 or 3).

If you would hear a unusual sound (which continues) or a smell from the motor, pull over. So far there has not been any engine issues with my vans but they are however possible. In these situations call me, or the Falck-service number (you find the number in the sticker in the car).

In any other issues, such as a flat tire, locking yourself outside of the car, a empty battery, etc, call the same number. They will come and help you free of charge.

Service you may do by yourself: Changing a broken lightbulb, adding some engine oil or engine coolant. There is usually spare bulbs and the fluids in the car. If in doubt, call me or the same service number.

If anything breaks down, please let me know asap! Either with the car or something in the living space. The next client might be right the next day after you return the car, and I'd like to know in advance if I need to fix something.

Kitchen:

The camper has a basic kitchen. It's with gas powered stove. The gas is in a big (11kg or 5kg) bottle, which you usually don't need to worry about, but if it would run out of gas, you can replace it with a full bottle at nearly all gas stations and hardware stores. The price of the replace bottle will be refunded to you.

The fridge is set to 8 celsius and is powered by the solar panel and auxiliary battery. It's always powered and you don't need to worry about it. When returning the van, do not leave any meat or diary products in the fridge. You may leave dry products such as rice or pasta or tea/coffee.

The water supply is on a tank underneath the sink or at the back of the van. The water tank is either 35L or 65L and there is some 10L or 20L portable tanks too, which you can use to store water. You can get free and drinkable (all tap-water in Finland is good to drink, in fact it's some of the best water in the world) from gas stations, look for a glass cabinet outside of the gas stations that says Vesi / Ilma (water and air). They usually don't have a hose, so you need to fill the water tank by filling the portable tanks and then pouring into the big tank. You can find this water supply at most bigger gas stations, the ones which also have a shop/cafe.

Renting from Helsinki the water tank is full when picking up the car, and from Rovaniemi it's just whatever is left behind from earlier customer. In the winter the water tank will be empty when picking up so it won't freeze.

The gray water (waste water from the sink) goes either directly to the ground or to a small waste water tank which has a tap and a hose directly to the ground. The dishwashing liquid provided is made with 100% natural ingredients, so there is absolutely no harm to discharge the water straight to the ground.

Recycling/Trash:

Finland has some of the best recycling systems in the world, and I kindly ask you to recycle all of your trash. Recycling is an act against climate change. You can easily recycle paper, cardboard, plastic, metal and glass. In the cars you can find separate bins to sort your thrash.

You can find a recycling point on the yard of a major supermarket, such as Citymarket or Prisma. In smaller towns it might be located somewhere on the main street. You can google "Ekopiste" to find one. To find out which bin is for what: Paper = Paperi, Cardboard = Pahvi, Plastic = Muovi, Metal = Metallit, Glass = Lasi.

Biodegradable waste goes into a brown trashbin, but they are not so easy to find in public places. Mostly I dig a pit in a forest for my biodegradable waste, just make sure to make the hole deep enough and do not include a biodegradable trash bag (they do not compost so easily).

All drinks in plastic bottles, glass bottles and aluminium cans have a deposit system in Finland! So do not throw these away (or smash the aluminium cans) but instead take them back to any grocery store, there will be a machine where you'll return the bottles and get money in return. The deposits are 0,4€ for a 1.5L plastic bottle, 0,2€ for a 0.5L plastic bottle, 0,15€ for aluminium cans and 0,1€ for glass bottles.

Electric:

The camper has a solar panel and a auxiliary battery for electric devices. The battery charges from solar and the engine alternator when driving.

You can charge your phone or other USB-powered device from the two USB-ports provided. For a laptop or a camera charger you may use the inverter which turns the 12V voltage into 230V. It is pure-sine inverter so it's completely safe to use with a laptop or any other device. The maximum power is 150W, so do not use any power-hungry appliance such as a hairdryer, it won't work and will blow the fuse. Turn off the inverter when not in use. Keep a eye on the battery voltage level, if it goes below 11.5V you should not use the inverter or heater.

Toilet & Shower:

The campers from Helsinki are provided with a chemical toilet (such as Porta Potti), the ones from Rovaniemi not. There is water and the chemical in the upper tank, and the waste goes to the lower tank when flushing. The toilet is

filled with water and the chemical when picking up the van, but if you use it you may have to add more water and the chemical. A lot of the customers choose not to use the chemical toilet at all and will just find public toilets. For emptying the toilet, you can either find a free emptying spot at some gas stations (you can usually find them in the Park4night application), or you can go to a campsite. At the campsite you can either pay just for emptying the toilet or stay for a night and use all their facilities.

For showering there are a few options. If the weather permits, there is a "Solar Shower" provided with the van. You simply fill it with water, leave it in a sunny place for a few hours, and then you can have a warm outside shower. Please use products made with natural ingredients for shampoo and soap if doing this.

A good option is a swimming hall, they are everywhere in Finland, the bigger cities have many to choose from and even small towns usually have one. They cost between 4-7€ for adults, and for that you can go to swim, to a sauna, and have a decent hot shower. To find one, type "Uimahalli" in google. There are also hot showers at all campsites, you could spend one night there and also empty the chemical toilet and do some laundry.

Laundry:

If you are renting the car for a longer period, you might need to do some laundry at some point. There are not many self-service laundries in Finland, but you can find some in the bigger cities. You can google "24 Pesula" to find one. Another option is to go to a campsite, and just like I previously mentioned you can make most of your money by also showering there and emptying the chemical toilet.

Sleeping Location:

In nordic countries you can park the van anywhere (on public land of course), and sleep overnight. It's perfectly legal and safe to do so. I have spend about 500 nights in a camper over the last 8 years and all over Europe, and I have never visited a campsite. I have nothing against campsites but I do like having my own peace and not have the boundaries (and cost) of a campsite.

Here are my tips for finding a suitable location to spend the night:

-Near a beach. Finland is a land of thousand lakes, and you can swim in most of them. If there is a public beach, there is generally a big and peaceful parking area.

And you can take a swim! To find one, type "Uimaranta" to your google maps, or look for this roadside sign:



-In the forest. You can sometimes find great locations in the middle of nature when you turn on a smaller road.

-Park4Night application. This is a great application, users can upload locations with pictures and comments. There is different categories for free and paid parking, spots in the nature, and camping sites too. I've used this for at least 100 different locations to sleep. Highly recommended!

Winter/Off-season camping:

All the cars are insulated and come with a diesel-powered heater (Planar 2D), except for the gas-heating in the Mercedes. It's certainly possible to do winter-camping with these vans, I have actually slept comfortably at -25c in the white Hiace!

The Diesel heater works by taking diesel from the fuel tank (either from a separate tank or from the same tank as the engine), and blowing warm air the small diesel motor generates into the living space. On the Mercedes there is a gas-powered water circulating heater system, the van has radiators around the living space and the gas heats up the water running on the radiators. The heater fan (or water pump on Mercedes) is powered by the auxiliary battery, and it does need some power, so if you would like to stay in the same place for a longer period and not drive (driving charges the auxiliary battery too), the solar panel might not charge the auxiliary battery enough during the day.

In this case I would go to a campsite or to a parking place which has a power outlet, so you can connect the mains charger. It all depends on how much time you keep the heater powered and how sunny it is, on a clear spring day it shouldn't really be a problem. You can keep the heater on during the night when sleeping but do not leave the heater on when you leave the van.

NOTE! On the Mercedes there is two 11kg gas bottles, one connected and another as spare. There is one full bottle included with the rental and the other bottle has whatever is left from previous customer. During winter you probably need to replace the bottle at your own cost to a full one if you are using heating a lot. A bottle change costs between 20-25€.

If the weather gets really cold, it might be a problem with water freezing in the car while you are outside, so then you might need to turn the heater on and wait for a while before the water melts. The radiator-water on the Mercedes has anti-freeze mixed on it so it won't freeze.

Cleaning and return of the camper:

So it's time to return the camper. I hope you've had a great time!

Cleaning of the van is your responsibility. There isn't any additional cleaning provided and the next customer is usually right the next day after you have returned the van. Here are instructions for clean up and I hope you follow them:

1. Make sure to take all your belongings! I have found quite a bit of stuff left behind by customers, including headlamps, reading glasses, hygiene products and even a digital camera. Check all the drawers, cabinets, under the front seats. etc.
2. Clean the kitchen properly! You may leave dry food products in the van but empty the fridge and clean it with the cleaner spray and cloth. If you do have fresh products such as cheese which you can't take with you, you can ask if I would take it to my workshop :)
Clean the stove, tiles, kitchen top and sink with the cleaner spray. If there is some food crumbs around the kitchen, please use a vacuum cleaner.
3. If you have used the chemical toilet make sure to empty it and clean it properly. Like I said before, the next customer will get it in the condition you have left it.

4. Clean up the floor, all the table tops and walls/windows if needed. You can use a vacuum cleaner at some gas stations or at my workshop when returning. At Rovaniemi there isn't a vacuum cleaner available at the return so either find one at a gas station or clean everything without one.
5. On the outside you should at least clean the windows at a gas station. If the car is much dirtier from outside than when picking up you should go to a car wash.
6. Fill up the diesel JUST BEFORE you return the van. In Helsinki there is a gas station 1,5km away from my workshop and you will drive past it. If there is the additional fuel tank for heater you need to fill it also if you have used it.
7. In winter empty all the water tanks before returning so they won't freeze.

That's all folks. If you have any questions just text or call me.

Mikko / +358405233925