



TINY HOMES

In 2000, University of Iowa professor Jay Shafer wrote a newspaper article about his tiny home. It was just 96 square feet (9 sq m), about half the size of a one-car garage. Shafer said living simply at a low cost allowed more time for doing things he liked. He was not burdened by upkeep and mortgage payments.

Before the 1990s, few people lived in tiny homes. People became more interested after a book about living in small spaces came out in 1998. Then, Shafer's article started today's tiny-house movement in the United States. In 2018, a survey found that 53 percent of Americans would consider living in a home of 600 square feet (56 sq m) or less.

Tiny homes have several benefits. They are less expensive to buy and maintain than a traditional house. Traditional houses in the United States cost about \$375,000 on average. Cleaning and upkeep add extra cost. The average cost of a tiny home is \$20,000 to \$50,000. Monthly expenses, including parking, water, electricity, and Internet, total about \$700 per month.



Tiny homes do not have a lot of space inside for furniture or other objects.

Tiny-home owners enjoy life with fewer belongings in small spaces. They keep only what they need. They buy and use fewer goods. With fewer things to clean and repair, housework is done quickly. Homeowners have free time to do things they enjoy. They can spend more time outdoors and devote time to their community. They might do volunteer work or join a community garden.



Many tiny homes have a loft inside to create extra space.

Beyond these benefits, tiny homes have a smaller environmental footprint than traditional houses. Tiny-home owners produce less waste. Tiny homes use less land, water, and energy. Solar and wind energy cause little or no pollution. Tiny homes can be completely powered by solar panels, and at a much lower cost than powering a traditional house.

Most cities have rules about where and how homes can be built. Tiny homes don't follow many of these rules. However, some places have communities of tiny homes and encourage people to build them. Homes on wheels can avoid some local rules. Unlike houses on foundations, they are not considered traditional houses. People can place these tiny homes on land owned by someone else and easily move the home to a new place if needed.

Tiny-home living encourages people to build strong ties to their community. It gives them an opportunity to think about the importance of their belongings. Tiny homes provide economic freedom while helping the environment. They are a good housing choice for many Americans.

Do You Know?

Sizes of tiny homes range from about 65 to 1,000 square feet (6 to 93 sq m). The typical tiny house is between 100 and 400 square feet (9 and 37 sq m). Smaller homes are built on a trailer with wheels and can be towed to different places. Larger homes are built on a permanent foundation, like traditional houses.

House Size

Tiny home:
400 square feet (37 sq m)

Average U.S. house:
2600 square feet (241.5 sq m)

You could fit 6.5 tiny homes inside one average U.S. house!

House Cost

Tiny home: \$50,000

Average U.S. house: \$375,000

Who Wants to Live in a Tiny Home?

In the United States, 53% of adults say they would consider buying a tiny home.

Response	Percentage
yes, would buy	28%
might buy	25%
no	47%

Sources: US Census Bureau; NAHB