

Tiny Houses

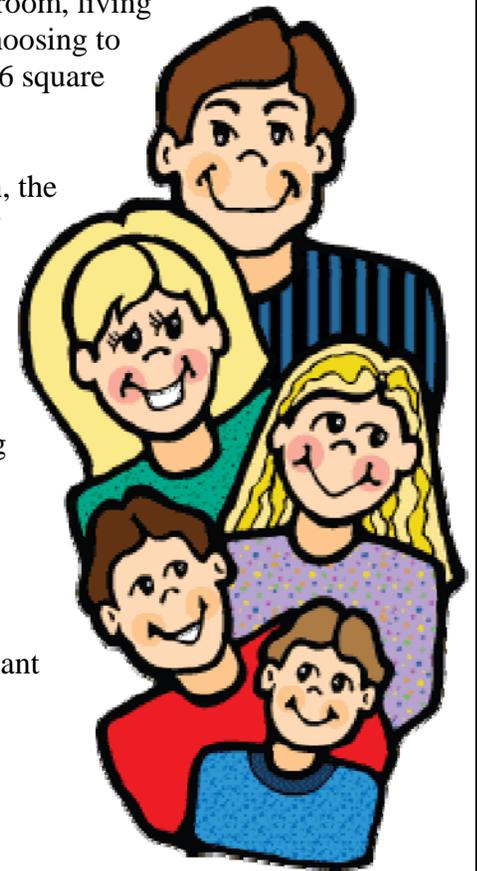
What if you could live anywhere in the world...without ever leaving home?

In a country where the average home size is 2400 square feet, some people are making a radical lifestyle change. Embracing the philosophy that “less is more”, these vanguard homeowners are scaling back on the stuff, and choosing to value activity over accumulation. How? By building and living in a “tiny house”!

A “tiny house” can vary in living space, but the average footprint is between just 160 and 200 square feet! Small enough to fit on the back of a trailer and light enough to be towed by a pickup truck, a tiny house can contain a kitchen, a bathroom, living space and sleeping area. And it’s not just for single people. Couples and even families with children are choosing to live the tiny house lifestyle. One family of four lives in a house with a footprint of just 192 square feet (336 square feet of interior space if you include the sleeping lofts).

Why do it? The conventional way to own a home is to get a loan from a bank called a mortgage. In French, the word mortgage means “death contract”. It takes most people thirty years of making large payments to pay off a house, and by the time they do, they’ve often paid twice as much as the original purchase price because of all the money they have paid to the bank in interest. But people that choose to live in tiny houses believe that there’s more to life than working at a job they may not even like to pay for a big, expensive house that, in reality, they don’t really need.

What exactly do people need? In the U.S. we are constantly bombarded with advertisements that are trying to convince us that we need all kinds of things: brand name clothes, a certain pair of shoes, this toy or that latest gadget. It’s hard for us to imagine that there are still places in the world where people live much simpler lives. People really only need shelter, food and water. A tiny house provides four walls and a roof, somewhere to sleep, a way to cook meals, clean running water, a place to wash, and a way to handle your waste. With these basic needs taken care of, without the financial burden of making payments on and maintaining a large home, tiny-home owners are free to work less and spend more time doing what they want to do.



Answer the questions below, quoting directly from the text to support your answers.

1. What is the average-sized home in the U.S.? _____

2. A “philosophy” is a way of thinking about the world. What philosophy do people that live in tiny houses share?

3. What is the average size of a tiny house? _____

4. How many square feet can a tiny house contain if it includes sleeping lofts? _____

5. If the word mortgage means “death contract” in French, why do you think that the contract to purchase a home from a bank is called a “mortgage”?

6. What are the basic human needs? _____

7. What do you think you might like about living in a tiny house? What do you think you might not like?

