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TINY BY DESIGN

BY LISA MILDON ([HTTP://COFFEEHOUSEWRITERS.COM/AUTHOR/LISA-MILDON/](http://coffeehousewriters.com/author/lisa-mildon/)) /  JULY 17, 2017 /  721 / 
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Decisions to make when choosing tiny living.

So, what is all the fuss about tiny houses? Just what does the Tiny House Movement mean? The true origins aren't fully known, but many point directly to Sarah Susanka's book "The Not So Big House (<http://www.notsobighouse.com/>)" as at least one catalyst of the current movement. A tiny home is defined as a home being 500 or less square feet of living space. Many people choose this type of tiny abode for multiple reasons. Be it for economics, ethical, minimalist lifestyle, or they want the ability to travel with their home, the motivations for choosing such an unusual way of life are as unique as the person choosing. For many millennials, this is the only way they can own their own home as the housing market in many cities is skyrocketing. What was once thought of as a fad has now become a full-blown movement into an affordable way of life.

Ok, so now what? You're intrigued, or maybe even convinced, that going tiny is a good decision. Where to go from here? With buying or building any home, many decisions have to be made to have a home that fits your needs. My husband and I were definitely interested in the tiny house movement but honestly had no idea if we could handle living in such a small space. We both figured a test was in order. The only place I knew of for staying in a tiny home was in Portland, OR, at the Tiny House Hotel (<https://tinyhousehotel.com/>). So, that summer we went on an epic road trip on an experiment for tiny living. Needless to say, we loved it and knew we had to move our ideas forward for the next leg of our tiny adventure; planning a tiny home design.

“ No matter what your reasons for going tiny, make educated choices in creating your perfect living space. ”

What does planning a tiny home entail? Most options to consider would be similar if you were looking into a traditional sized home. In this series, I'll be exploring many options and choices that go into designing or buying your own tiny house. No matter what your reasons for going tiny, make educated choices in creating your perfect living space.

Foundation or Mobile?

Perhaps the first choice, and definitely one of the most important, is whether to have your tiny home built on a foundation or on wheels. Foundation homes are exactly as it sounds: a home that is permanently built onto a foundation. You may ask, what are some of the pros and cons to building onto a foundation? Below are some of the items to take into consideration for a foundation build:

- | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger size.• Cannot be moved.• More flexible floorplan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Size limitations.• Can be moved easily.• Less flexible floorplans due to size limitations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximize outdoor space by having a permanent deck.• Building codes are more commonplace for foundations.• More cities are allowing tiny foundation homes.• Loft bedrooms can be avoided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outdoor decks will be more challenging in moving.• Zoning and coding for THOW's are still mostly unknown.• Cities are slower to adopt\accept THOW.• Many floorplans will only be able to have loft bedrooms. |

Foundation homes can be easily built to 300+ square feet without the worry of size limitations. With tiny homes on wheels (THOW), you will be limited to the maximum size that a trailer can be towed on the highway. For THOW's that don't require a commercial license, in most states, your maximum width is 8.5 feet x 40-65 feet long (including towing vehicle) x 13.5 feet high. There is a variance with tiny homes. A much larger model known as a park model is also mobile. These are usually wider and longer, but require a professional to move the home. So, unless you don't plan on moving much, a park model is a viable option. However, the cost for moving a park model can run \$1000 and up.

Related to the size is the weight of a THOW. With any trailer being towed on the road, you have to consider how much your vehicle can tow. Shorter trailers can average around 6,000 pounds empty, but factor in your personal belongings and the weight can rapidly zoom past 8,000 pounds. Most THOW owners will have a ¾ to

full ton truck to handle the hefty payload. Despite the size and weight limitations, having your home on wheels gives you the freedom to pick up and go wherever you fancy. Need a change of scenery? No problem. Just hook up and go.



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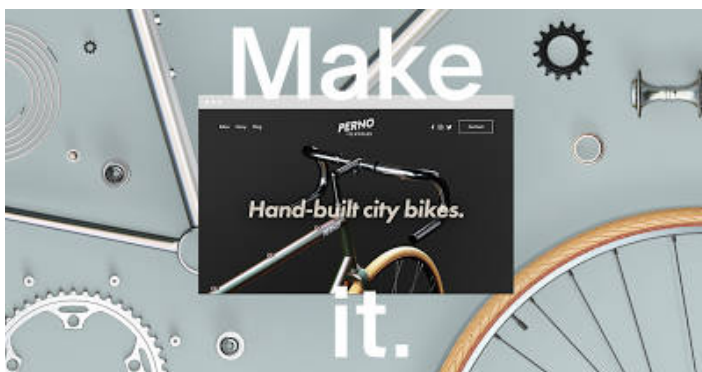
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For flexibility in design, foundation homes offer pretty much the same options as traditionally sized homes. Revisiting the size limitations of THOW's, your floorplan can only go so far as the road rules allow. This means many THOW's will most likely have a loft bedroom. While generally fine for most people, some may want to avoid having a bedroom loft due to cramped sleeping space or having to crawl around the space. Both types of homes will require some creativity and flexibility, however with THOW's you'll need to learn how to have items with multiple purposes to get the most use of space. An example of multi-purpose items would be a couch that has storage, makes into a bed, and could be used for stepping up into your loft.

If you enjoy outdoor living, both options have that kind of lifestyle in mind. For foundation homes, it is much easier to build a permanent deck to maximize your living space. With THOW's, you'll either need to be an excellent driver, (assuming you own your land), to deftly park your home next to a deck or get creative and have a deck attached to your home, but be able to fold up for road travel. With a detachable or collapsible deck, you will still need to be mindful of the additional weight if you plan on taking it with you.



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Perhaps, the least enjoyable factor to consider on the type of tiny home is building codes and zoning. As the movement gains a better foothold, more cities are reconsidering tiny homes as a new living option. This year in Kansas, after some hard work and deliberating, tiny foundation homes are being written into coding and zoning laws. While this doesn't include THOW's, this is a huge step for those wanting to go tiny. The hope is that once this becomes more widely accepted, THOW's and tiny foundation homes alike will become a legal option everywhere. Unfortunately for THOW's, there is less regulation out there allowing this kind of home, so potential homeowners need to be aware.

As you can see, picking the type of tiny home is crucial to your entire build. Once this decision is made, the rest of your options will seem so much easier. However, there is still much to discuss on all of your building/living options. Stay tuned for future installments about going tiny.

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Quirky and offbeat geek girl who loves the magic that words and stories bring. I'm an experienced technical writer and IT professional that is finally reaching for the stars by getting my creative writing degree. I've been an avid reader since an early age. I love to play PC games and obsessed with traveling. My husband and I have two adorable rat terriers and 2 kitties (all rescues).



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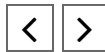
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