

Trailer Guide: Tips for Buying a Trailer



When we need to haul items back forth from one location to another, we usually rely on our personal vehicles to get the job done. But what happens when your car or truck isn't large enough to hold everything you need to load? That's where a **trailer** comes in, providing a safe means for getting large hauls where you need them to go. Whether you're looking for a small trailer to a **lawn mower** or need something large to carry boats, livestock or **ATVs**, Tractor Supply has abundant trailer options suitable For Life Out Here.

About Trailers and How to Shop for One

As stated before, trailers assist with hauling large items that won't fit into traditional vehicles. This can include anything, from ATVs to landscaping equipment to motorcycles. But before buying a trailer, you must think about many aspects. For starters, you must consider the types of items you want to haul now, as well as in the future. This determines the size and weight capacity of the trailer you need. When buying a trailer, you also want to find one with quality construction and safety features to ensure reliability.

Another essential consideration is knowing how much weight your vehicle can tow. While many SUV and truck models come with the components to add a **trailer hitch**, your vehicle itself may not be able to carry much weight. You should check your vehicle's owner's manual to determine its maximum weight limit. To find a compatible trailer, you want to subtract the weight of your trailer from your vehicle's maximum capacity – this gives you the most accurate number as to how much weight you can put in your trailer.

Finding a compatible trailer for your vehicle is important, especially when it comes to road safety and vehicle longevity. The right trailer allows for easy driving and maneuverability, even with the trailer attached. It also helps avoid challenges you may face with stopping or pulling trailers that are too large. To see if your car can handle towing applications, you should have it inspected at your local dealership, giving you added peace of mind and confidence.

Our Different Trailer Options

When it comes to finding a trailer, you may not know that there are a variety of styles and designs to choose from. But have no fear – you can identify the kind of trailer you need by evaluating the materials and items you need to haul.

Trailers come in two main types, with several subcategories within each:

General-Purpose Trailers

These trailers are designed to handle multiple functions for versatility and convenience. Whether you are a contractor or hobbyist, you can find general-purpose trailers to accomplish most tasks on your to-do list. You can choose from:

Utility Trailers

Utility trailers feature open-air designs, allowing for easy hauling of larger machinery, such as ATVs and lawn equipment. Our range of utility trailers include flat trailer constructions, as well as ones built with high walls to keep items inside the vehicle. Our models also include a **ramp** door so you can load and unload items with convenience in mind.

While many homeowners and commercial workers prefer these types of trailers for their affordability, they won't protect belongings from the elements. This means utility trailers are better for short traveling.

Enclosed Trailers

Different from utility trailers, **enclosed trailers** come with walls and a roof, offering a cargo box style. Because of the closed sides, these trailers provide a watertight seal, protecting from weather and keeping items safe in a closed-off space.

If you need added storage space, consider an enclosed trailer, which you can keep on your property for easy access. It also helps keep commercial spaces clean and organized. Enclosed trailers are typically made with aluminum materials, giving them lightweight convenience in towing applications. You also have the option to lock them up at the end of the day, delivering added security.

Task-Specific Trailers

While general-purpose trailers are suitable for basic hauling needs, you may require more specialized towing power. This is especially true if you plan on loading livestock or boats. Luckily, we offer a variety of other trailer types designed to accommodate specific functions, such as:

Livestock Trailers

Horses, cows and other livestock need safe, comfortable spaces to travel in – and having a reliable **livestock trailer** can help you do just that. These types offer enough room to house multiple horses or cows so you can drive short or long distances safely. Before buying a livestock trailer, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- How many animals do you need to travel with?
- How far are you traveling?
- How large are the animals?

This helps you determine the type of trailer you need. For example, bumper pull livestock options are ideal for short-distance, lightweight hauling, attaching to traditional trucks or vehicles easily. Use them to transport smaller animals, such as goats or sheep. For even smaller loads, such as **chickens** or pigs, consider a stock box trailer, which doesn't attach to your vehicle. Instead, it sits atop your truck bed for convenient loading and unloading.

If you plan to travel long distances with your animals, you want something that provides a comfortable and stable ride, such as options with pens, which give each animal their own space while they travel.

Dump Trailers

Dump trailers are designed to make construction and landscaping tasks simpler, giving you convenience in carrying and unloading materials, such as **rock**, gravel, **soil** and other types of debris. They are unique in that they feature a hydraulic lift mechanism, allowing for automatic bed raising and convenient unloading.

These trailers feature different hoist technologies, each made to cater to varying unloading tasks. The three common types of hoists include:

- **Single ram:** These use only one hoist to lift the bed, which is centered to the trailer bed to allow for easy pushing and lightweight dumping.
- **Dual ram:** These use two cylinders to lift trailer beds.
- **Scissor:** These come with a larger surface to lift uneven loads with ease, allowing them to stand up to heavy hauls.

Boat Trailers

Purchasing the right **boat trailer** is essential for not only traveling safely with your boat, but also extending its lifetime. You must find one that fits your boat's measurements properly – doing so can help avoid damage and prevent an issue from impacting performance. Finding a compatible trailer also makes loading and unloading boats into the water easier.

The kind of trailer you need depends on your boat's construction, with different models working better for fishing boats, **kayaks**, **canoes** or **paddleboards**. For instance, traditional boat designs with V-shaped or flat hulls pair well with bunk trailers. If you have rounded or V-shaped hulls, opt for a roller trailer, which features wheels so you can easily roll boats onto trailer setups.

Consider a float-on trailer for larger boats, built with guides to allow for convenient retrieval and launching right from the water. We also carry options that combine the power of both a roller and a bunk trailer, called a hybrid trailer. These are ideal for frequent launching and boats with irregularly shaped hulls.

Browsing Trailers to Find a Perfect Fit

Our trailers come in many different styles, weight capacities and materials. The right one for you depends on your vehicle's weight specifications and what you need to haul. Other considerations to make include:

Maximum Load Capacity

While vehicles have their own weight limits, trailers also have a maximum load capacity, measured by a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR). This is the most weight your trailer can handle. When choosing a trailer, you want one with a higher load capacity than what you expect to haul.

If you're looking to carry lightweight items, use trailers with a smaller maximum load capacity, which can be more affordable and easier to store than other options. But if you want to load tractors or multiple pieces of large equipment, you should opt for a larger trailer with two axles (called a tandem trailer), which carries a higher weight capacity.

When buying a trailer, you must also think about weight distribution, as a trailer's GVWR is calculated assuming you'll equally distribute weight across the trailer. However, that may not always be the case, and machinery may not spread evenly across your trailers, causing weight to build and put pressure on one area. In this case, you should find a custom trailer. You should also ensure the weight of your haul is compatible with your receiver and ball mount, preventing complications.

Trailer Construction

Buying a trailer is a large investment, meaning you want one made with durable, high-quality materials so it can hold up for years of use. **Aluminum** is a lightweight utility trailer material, making it easy for vehicles to haul. It also allows you to load more items onto your trailer without reaching the maximum weight capacity, as well as improves gas mileage. However, this trailer material may require more maintenance than other types.

Steel trailers are more affordable and durable than aluminum options, often handling loads better through long distances and stormy weather. But unlike aluminum, steel may eventually rust – meaning you should choose materials coated with durable finishes, such as **galvanized steel** or **aluminum**, to extend the longevity of your trailer. We also offer options with **rust/corrosion-resistant** and **powder-coated** finishes for added strength.

Another material you should consider is wood, which offers a high strength-to-weight ratio and the ability to handle rough terrains and large loads. Many people prefer this material for its affordability and easy replacement if trailer components become damaged. **Wooden floors** can also provide a nonslip surface, keeping items secure and livestock safe.

Trailer Size

The right size trailer for you depends on what you'll be hauling and how much you plan to load. For example, if you're looking to move smaller equipment, such as a **push mower** to your storage unit to put it away for the season, you only need a small **4' x 6'** trailer. However, larger machinery, such as **zero-turn mowers**, may need bigger trailer sizes, including **5' x 10'** or **7' x 12'** options.

We make shopping for trailers convenient with a multitude of sizes to choose from, with trailer bed widths ranging from **3-feet** to **7-feet** and lengths coming between **4-feet** and **15-feet**. We also carry larger trailer sizes, such as **6' x 14'** setups, to haul heavy-duty machinery and items with ease.

Trailer Features

Find trailers with unique features, each designed to make towing and loading easier. Our options include **ramps**, which allow for simple unloading, as well as **jacks**, which are designed to lift your trailer for convenient attachment to your vehicle. We also carry choices with **removable ramps**, giving you more space to haul goods. It's also important to look for **DOT-approved** trailers, as well as **highway-rated** constructions for legal and safe use on busy, speedy roadways.

Trailer Accessories You Need for Safe Towing

Whether this is your first trailer or you're an experienced tower, you may need other **accessories** to ensure safe, secure attachment to your vehicle, including:

- **Hitch ball:** This comes in a variety of sizes and attaches to ball mounts to keep couplers secure to trailers.
- **Ball mount:** This is a removable bracket designed to be level with the trailer to lock hitch balls to hitches.
- **Wiring adapter:** This helps to connect lights from your vehicle to trailer setups.
- **Trailer jack:** This helps lift or lower trailers, making it easy to attach to hitches and allowing for quick leveling.
- **Pin, clip and coupler locks:** These ensure secure attachment to different trailer components, and the coupler size must match the ball size of your trailer.
- **Ramps:** These allow for easy and safe loading and unloading, folding down and up into trailers for convenient access.
- **Safety chain:** This works as a backup attachment in case couplers and hitch balls separate, connecting from the tow vehicle to the trailer in a crisscross configuration.

In addition to these accessories, you should consider carrying a **spare tire** on-hand in case of road emergencies. This allows you to be prepared for anything that comes your way, and you can get back on the road with minimal disruptions. You must pay attention to the weight rating of your accessories and other equipment to find something compatible with your trailer setup.

Frequently Asked Questions About Trailers

How do I ensure my trailer is road-ready?

Before driving your trailer, you must ensure it is licensed and has the correct safety features, just like our cars. Trailers should have proper **lighting systems** installed, giving them appropriate visibility at night. We offer plug-in wire harness kits, making it easy to add the safety features you need to drive.

You must also comply with local, federal and state regulations for licensure and registration, allowing for safe road use. To register your trailer, you need your Manufacturer Certificate of Origin (MCO) and bill of sale. Once you hand these over to your local license bureau, they will give you your title, and your trailer is officially ready to hit the road. Each state varies in their requirements for licensure and registration, so be sure to become familiar with your area's qualifications before registering your trailer.

What's the safest way to load and unload my trailer?

When putting items onto your trailer, you should make sure most of the weight sits at the front of the axle. You also want to ensure that loads are centered on the trailer, preventing them from falling out and creating roadblocks for other drivers. Secure items down once you get them onto the trailer, checking to see if they're hanging from the sides or back and fixing them. You must remember to adhere to your vehicle's maximum weight limit when loading to prevent problems.

When unloading your trailer, you can do so in several ways. Use ramps with enclosed trailers or utility trailers to eliminate the need for heavy lifting. If you have a tilt bed, these automatically load and unload for you, allowing for easy and safe item retrieval. You can also remove rear or side ramp gates so you can walk onto your trailer.

How can I safely tow my trailer?

Before towing your trailer, you should make sure it's installed correctly. This ensures safe towing for all drivers on the road. Trailers will naturally ride at around 16-18 inches – meaning they may sit higher or lower than your car's bumper. In this case, you want a ball mount and trailer ball that

allows for simple up and down maneuvers, giving you level attachment to the bumper. You'll also need other accessories, such as a receiver tube, pin and clip, to add security.

If my trailer tire needs replacing, can I use a car tire?

You shouldn't use car tires for your trailer. This is because these types of wheels aren't compatible with towing applications. Passenger tires are made with less steel in their sidewalls, meaning they won't stand up to heavy loads. So, using traditional car tires means you'll have to deduct your trailer's GVWR to make them work. If using only one car tire, you should subtract 10% of your trailer's GVWR. If replacing all four tires, you'll have to take away 40% of your trailer's GVWR.

How do I know if my trailer requires a brake axle?

This depends on the state in which you live, as different states have varying regulations. All carry-on trailer types are legal throughout the U.S., with many rated for 2,990 pounds. However, if your trailer exceeds a 3,000-pound rating or more, you'll need a brake axle. Luckily, many carry-on tandem trailers already come standard with this feature.

One of my axles isn't straight – why is that?

Curved axles (also called cambered) come in a curved configuration different from traditional trailer setups. Cambered axles give trailers added strength and flexibility, moving and straightening to accommodate heavy loads. After removing your haul, the axle goes back to its curved configuration.

Tow Your Items Confidently with Trailers from Tractor Supply

We all need reliable ways to transport items safely – and our range of trailer options allow you to find what you need with ease. Alongside trailers, we offer a variety of accessories to deliver convenient maintenance, giving you the chance to make the most out of your investment. To learn more about the trailers and other supplies we offer, visit your [local Tractor Supply store](#) today or browse online.