

Van Conversion Build Guide

A detailed overview for DIY camper van projects - from van selection to your first shakedown trip.

1. Planning

Define how you will use the van: weekends, full-time, or mixed. That drives budget and layout.

Compare wheelbase, roof height, rust, and service access before buying.

Budget for van, materials, tools, insurance, and forgotten consumables.

2. Interior shell

Strip trim, treat rust, then insulate for condensation and noise - not just R-value.

Build a solid subfloor tied to factory anchor points.

Install wall panels on battens with wiring routes planned first.

3. Layout and furniture

Mock up with tape and cardboard before cutting plywood.

Choose bed style and galley location based on door clearance and storage.

Build bed platform and galley before finishing trim.

4. Electrical and water

Fuse every circuit. Size wire for load and length. Strap batteries securely.

Size solar from real daily watt-hours, not roof space alone.

Keep plumbing simple: fresh tank, pump, sink, grey water you can empty legally.

5. Finish and travel

Take a short shakedown trip. Fix rattles and layout annoyances early.

Check battery state each morning. Know where you can dump grey water.