

Why the Tiny House Movement is so Huge

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Could you imagine living in a 400 square foot home? Here's a little perspective; a basketball court is 94 feet long and 50 feet wide or 4700 square meters. That means you could fit 11.75 tiny houses on a basketball court which, honestly, sounds a little insane. And yet, the tiny house has captivated the imagination more than any other architectural idea in recent history. We look at why living small is so appealing.

What is a Tiny House?

The tiny house movement is both an architectural and social one where downsizing your home and simplifying your life are celebrated. Houses are called small houses if they are 1000-400 square feet and tiny houses if they're less than 400 square feet.

Tiny living isn't just for homes and many savvy city dwellers are opting for micro condos. Usually between 300-500 square feet, the micro condo allows for a streamlined lifestyle that is functional and affordable.

London, New York and Tokyo have been promoting the micro condo as a lifestyle choice for decades, but more metropolitan dwellers are starting to see the forward-thinking economic and environmental benefits of living in tiny town.

Keeping up with the Joneses

The house race that saw you pitted against the Joneses resulted in larger homes because, in the housing market, size really does matter. The size of the average home ballooned from 1,780 square feet in 1978 to 2,662 square feet in 2013. These monoliths gobble anywhere from a third to half of homeowner's salaries and add 15 years to their working life.

"As North Americans we should buy the biggest house we can afford, right? It's a status symbol. After all, you can't let the Joneses get ahead, can you? But what if you flipped the whole thing on its head? What if you stopped focusing on how much square footage you can get and started focusing on how good you can make the square footage you have? That's what the Tiny House has done," says proponent Scott Sidler.

Environmental Concerns

Many home owners are taking responsibility for the carbon footprint of their lives. Your home is the greatest blight on your carbon footprint and downsizing will make your life significantly more eco-friendly. Tiny houses and micro condos are about quality over quantity and there just isn't any space for junk or clutter. This forces families who live in small spaces to opt for quality products that last and negate the

'throw away' culture that fosters consumerism and waste.

Self Sufficiency

Tiny house enthusiasts point most frequently to their desire for independent living and self-sufficiency. With about 76% of people living from paycheque to paycheque, tiny house owners enjoy more financial freedom as tiny homes and micro condos are so much cheaper than conventional ones. Many tiny home owners like to participate in the building of their homes or utilize recycled materials during the construction process.

Free from rent payments, most tiny home owners look forward to working less, retiring earlier or having more disposable income. It's not just mortgage payments that are lower; property taxes, maintenance costs and heating costs all get the chop. Add the fact that consumerism is slashed by a lack of space and watch your costs plummet.

David Shephard, Tiny House enthusiast: "For me, the idea of living more sustainably is what drove me to building a tiny house. Cutting out the clutter, reducing my impact on the environment, and building something with my own two hands really appealed to me."

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