



The Ursa includes wooden shutters and a small outdoor deck | Photo source [Madeiguincho](#)

[Innovation](#) > [Architecture & Design](#) > [An off-the-grid house on wheels offers a life of sustainable simplicity](#)

AN OFF-THE-GRID HOUSE ON WHEELS OFFERS A LIFE OF SUSTAINABLE SIMPLICITY

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The tiny, portable home utilises solar and wind power, and can be towed without the need for a permit

Spotted: High living costs and a desire for simple living are driving the van life and tiny home movements. The latest designers offering a diminutive living option are Portuguese woodworking studio Madeiguincho, who have created an off-the-grid house on wheels called the Ursa.

The Ursa measures just seven metres (23 feet) in length with a width of 2.5 m (8.2 feet) – within the permit-free towing limit for public roads in Portugal. The portable house is built on a steel frame, and the exterior is finished with heat-treated timber. The house’s interior is finished with birch plywood, and includes a wood-burning stove. There is also a kitchen fitted with a small fridge, a two-burner stove and a sink.

The tiny home is further furnished with a shower, sink and composting toilet, as well as a loft-style sleeping area accessed by a fixed ladder. Power is delivered by a roof-based solar panel with battery storage. Finally, there is a rainwater capture and recycling system, and a three-stage reverse osmosis filter providing drinking water.

Madeiguincho’s [website](#) explains that the goal of the design firm is to, “develop the concept of living organisms.” They add that their mobile homes, “can collect rainwater and produce food, all powered by solar panels and wind turbines. This way, each tiny house becomes a fully sustainable mobile living organism.”

A recent survey suggests that up to 50 percent of Americans would consider living in a tiny home. With their advantages of affordability, efficiency and eco-friendliness, this is no surprise. We are seeing a growing number of innovations in tiny home living. These include a design with [raised net area](#) for extra space and a [tiny home village](#) for the homeless.

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Takeaway:

The idea of living in a tiny home is very appealing to those who are seeking a simpler, pared-back way of life. With its wood finish and integrated off-grid systems, it offers users the opportunity to live a life that is not only less-encumbered, but also more in harmony with nature. The solar electrics, combined with the rainwater recycling system, allow users to travel to areas with neither electricity nor water. Users can therefore get fully off-grid. In addition to being a comfortable living space, the Ursa is perfect for a variety of uses, including as a guest house or home office.