

## Tiny Living

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Tiny living—or the *idea* of tiny living—is still having a moment in the U.S.

Even where I live, far from the squeezed rental markets of the big coastal cities, we have a newly constructed building of microapartments. Curiously, the apartments are marketed to a demographic I didn't even know existed: young, single professionals who are apparently free of onerous student loans, able to store most of their possessions somewhere else, and who are uninterested in cooking. Although priced and described as “luxurious,” in this case “smart living” means making do with a kitchenette.

Like many people interested in simplifying, I'm drawn to examples of truly luxurious small spaces like [this New York City pied-à-terre](#), where cost, young children, and long-term storage are non-factors. Ordinary small living, like what we are doing as a family this summer, looks very different.

In a tiny home, “embarrassing, ordinary objects like the [laundry] hamper are empowered,” writes a tiny-apartment dweller from Boston ([What No One Ever Tells You About Tiny Homes](#)). There just isn't enough space to help differentiate items that are intentionally displayed from items that are simply visible, or between public space and private space. I think that's why I feel compelled to make the bed, take out the trash, and carefully edit toothbrushes, shampoo bottles, and other self-care items from the bathroom before anyone comes over. It helps me feel less exposed.

The disorder of normal living is also magnified many times over in a small living space. The compound effect of library books stacked on the dining/work table, a drying rack of wet swimsuits and towels in the living room, multiple pairs of shoes piled directly in front of the door, plus a nine-year-old's collection of projects and toys can very quickly feel like trying to squeeze a 16th person onto an elevator with a maximum capacity of 15. There's almost no margin for clutter.

“Even smells take up space,” notes the Boston writer. Forget cooking unless you can make peace with temporary odors. Accept that humidity from showering and cooking, and the smell of people sleeping, can accumulate unpleasantly. Don't wait: make room for an oscillating fan.

Our small living is short-term, and it comes with considerable financial and logistical benefits that make it more than worth occasional frustrations. But given the choice, there's no question I'd prefer to live a bit larger.