

## RINUS AND HELGA; USING SOLAR TO POWER A GLOBAL ADVENTURE

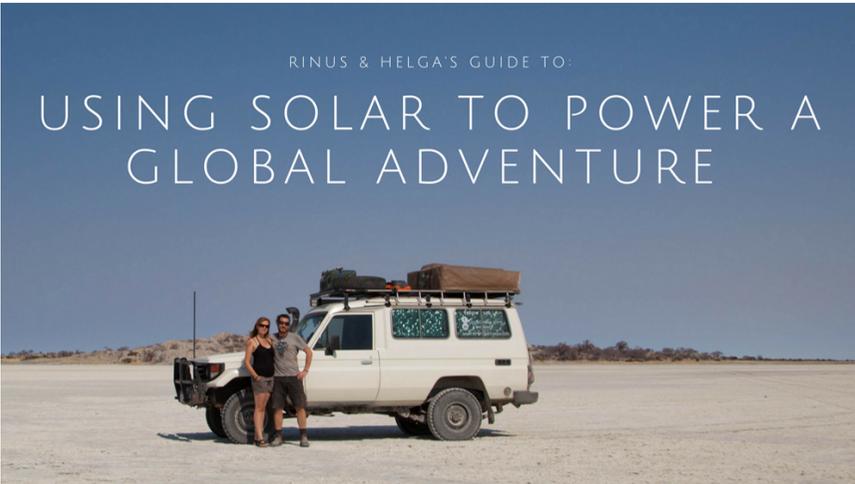
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Just under 3 years ago we left the Netherlands to discover the world. In 2014 I took a motorbike and crossed Europe and Asia before arriving in Australia. Then once we arrived in Australia, Helga and I changed my previous set up and traded my two wheels to four and bought a Toyota Landcruiser which we made ready to travel around Australia and make our way back to Europe, crossing through Africa.

In the last 1,060 something days on the road, we've been through a lot; crossed 70 borders, travelled through deserts, slept next to crocodiles, got involved in a couple of road accidents, got stuck, recovered, got stuck again, solved breakdowns, got chased by police, sweet-talked officers for hours but never paid a bribe, made lots of friends, slept in dodgy hotels, camped in tremendous winds, got chased away, got sick, broke a foot, had to flee from ticks as big as nuts, got attacked by Australian bull ants, mosquitos, buffalos, bees, sandflies, bats and elephants, got harassed by kids, pushed donkeys and cows off the road and did not wash for weeks.

But most of all we've learnt how to prepare and what to leave behind. You can read about our experience's with using portable solar panels below because you never know when they might come in handy.

### The difference solar can make

I still remember the old days going camping with my dad. Travelling with an old station wagon, the only thing we brought along was a canvas tent, sleeping bags and some pots and pans. Looking back at old photos those were the days I'll never forget. But they are also the days I would have loved to have captured better.

The Troopys has been our Home, safe-haven, the source of transportation, office, kitchen, resource centre, panic room, "de culture-difference chamber", storage and man cave all at the same time. I still envy the days going camping with my Dad and only bringing the things you need to survive, but now we're trying to make and build a living in our mobile home.

To do so we need power. We charge our phones, e-readers, iPads and laptops, but most of all our cameras, GoPro, flashlights and so many other things. We also run our 12v fridge which allows us to cook our favourite dishes when remote and ensures that the beers are always cold.

So, even though we would rather be lost in the woods than found in the city, we also need the sun to power our daily lives and to allow us to say "yes!" to new adventures.



A motto to live by; always say yes to new adventures!

### How do we use the power of the sun to power our adventure?

Although we get to meet very inspiring people on our travels who have been travelling for a long time, we hardly ever come across travellers who have been on the road for this long, living out of the same space, without taking breaks to reorganise.

We often get questions on how we are able to live this life, but it is not rocket science. We are far from being retired and never won the lottery, we made the choice to start on this adventure after finishing university. What we do is, write, take photos, collect stories, rely on favours, and use the internet and social media to get around.

However, we cannot do this without the help of the sun. The sun powers our auxiliary battery and our auxiliary battery powers our devices that help us through the day. It's a subconscious daily routine when you think about it.

### But what do you use?

The car is setup with an auxiliary battery which is located next to the starter battery. A heavy-duty alternator is powering the starter battery while a **12 volt 25 amp BCDC** In-vehicle Battery Charger is powering the auxiliary battery. While driving the **DC to DC battery charger** charges our auxiliary battery to 100%.

When stationary a **112W Amorphous cells solar blanket** takes over to maintain the charge. Our auxiliary battery is directly connected to numerous 12v sockets, a **700W Pure Sine Wave Inverter**, a 42 litre Engel fridge and LED light strips lighting up the interior and exterior while camping. We monitor our batteries via a **dual voltage gauge** with amps sensor that allows us to monitor the amount of current to or from the battery.

### Solar blanket

The **portable solar panel** is one of our most used tools. Weight is something you always have too much of on a trip like ours, and there is never enough space. That's why we wanted this all-round **solar blanket** that is quick to use, easy to setup while being strong and reliable.



Having space friendly and adaptable solar blanket makes all the difference

**Genuine Anderson connections** make it quick to connect in different settings and as long as there is a **solar regulator** connected in between it can be connected directly to the battery. It packs up into a small package for storage, but while in-use it unravels to become a blanket which covers the entire bonnet of the car. **Anderson cables** in different sizes are easy to put together and make it possible to put the blanket in the sun while our rig is placed in that nice shady spot next to the river.



Genuine Anderson connectors make setting up quick and easy

One thing that you must remember (And this happened to us more than once), is to make sure that the panel doesn't get taken and picked up by the wind. It's an easy mistake to make as the blankets themselves are so light!

When crossing Africa during the wet season and Europe in spring we found we could not always rely on direct sunlight. That's why we chose to use the amorphous cells blanket which gives you better results in cloudy and shady conditions.

Overall, we must admit that we are very impressed with it. You can't beat having an early breakfast or late sundown dinner with the peace of mind in knowing that your portable solar panels are sitting there doing its thing. It doesn't matter whether you are travelling for a living, just spending a weekend in the bush, going fishing for a couple of days, it's always good to know that you can rely on your vehicles 12v system.

Feel like going on an adventure? Join us for one of ours by checking out our website: <http://www.rinushartsuijker.com>

Categories: [Talking Solar](#)

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