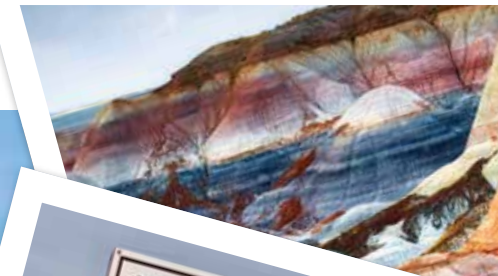


BUCKLE UP FOR A CLASSIC ROAD TRIP

WRITTEN BY HEIDI SIEFKAS

If you're in The States and looking to do some travel this summer, it's a great time to hit the open road. There are many classic cross-country drives; however, there is nothing quite like the historic Route 66. Debuted in 1926, Route 66 connects the Windy City to the City of Angels, crossing eight states and over two thousand and four hundred miles. It was constructed to be an alternate, more southern route to cross the country, making it the first all-weather highway. This famed route connects the east and west, the past and present. Start planning your trip today with these must-see highlights.





OPENING SPREAD: The Mother Road as it passes through the Mojave Desert, California. THESE PAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Gateway to the West, St. Louis, and its iconic arch. Majestic colors of the Petrified National Forest, Arizona. Get your Instagram-photo fix at Cadillac Ranch. Route 66 ends at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, California. Celebrate with a ride on the Santa Monica Pier Ferris Wheel.

Illinois & Missouri.

Starting in downtown Chicago at E. Jackson Boulevard, embark on a classic Route 66 journey with a selfie at the iconic road sign. Then, hit the road to Pontiac for a bit of history at the Route 66 Hall of Fame Museum. After refueling the gas tank and stopping for a bite at a local mom-and-pop roadside café, continue to Springfield to visit the capitol and the home of Abraham Lincoln. Traveling further west, the road crosses the mighty Mississippi River at Collinsville, Illinois to welcome all to St. Louis, the Gateway to the West. For an aerial view, ride to the top of the St. Louis Arch. But there is more to the Show-Me State than simply St. Louis. Enjoy the rolling hills of the Ozark Mountains with your GPS set for crossing from Joplin to the Missouri-Kansas state line.

Kansas & Oklahoma.

There are countless reminders of the past along Route 66, one of which is Galena, Kansas. In the late nineteenth century, lead sulfite was discovered there; thus, a mining town was born. The arrival of the highway was crucial to this mining network as well as local businesses such as roadside filling stations like Kan-o-Tex, which lent inspiration to the Disney-Pixar film, *Cars*. Next, you'll travel four hundred miles through Oklahoma, the Sooner State. To break up the drive, take full advantage of pit stops in the charming towns, steeped in nostalgia: quaint motels, drive-in movie theaters, brightly colored neon signs, and (many traveler's favorite) the Blue Whale of Catoosa.

Texas & New Mexico.

The journey through the Lone Star State becomes I-40, which cuts through the Texas Panhandle. Ironically, the largest state in the Lower 48 hosts the shortest stretch of the route on your journey. Some not-to-miss stops are Amarillo's Route 66 Historic District and Cadillac Ranch. When you cross into New Mexico, the adventure takes you to the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and passes through artsy Santa Fe and Albuquerque. This portion of the drive lives up to the state's motto: *the Land of Enchantment*.

Arizona & California.

If you have time to spare, make some nature-inspired stops in Arizona. The first is Petrified Forest National Park, which is home to the largest and most colorful concentration of petrified wood. The second is in the town of Williams. This pit stop and detour is to witness the splendor of the Grand Canyon via train or car. Thankfully, the natural masterpieces don't end in Arizona. California pulls out the stops with the Mojave National Preserve and a small side trip to Joshua Tree National Park. Both are great for hiking and stargazing. The rest of the journey to Los Angeles leaves the desert behind to welcome the Pacific Ocean and a grand finale at the popular Santa Monica Pier.

Route 66 is truly not about the individual destinations, but the collective experience. The Mother Road is a crucial reminder of simpler times and the freedom of the open road. It's time to get back to basics. Get your kicks on Route 66! ■

travel tips

What to See:

St. Louis Arch, Missouri
Blue Whale of Catoosa, Oklahoma
Cadillac Ranch, Texas
Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona
Santa Monica Pier Ferris Wheel, California

How to Schedule:

If you are a road warrior, you can do it in two weeks. If you can afford the time, take a month.

What to Pack for Remote Travel:

Auto cellphone charger
Offline GPS app (maps.me or other)
Paper road maps or atlas
Offline playlists

What to Pack for Any Road Trip:

Roadside assistance and first aid kits
Extra sunglasses
Toilet paper and hand sanitizer
Blanket and pillow
Cooler