MOON

USA STATE by STATE

The Best Things to Do in Every State for Your Travel Bucket List






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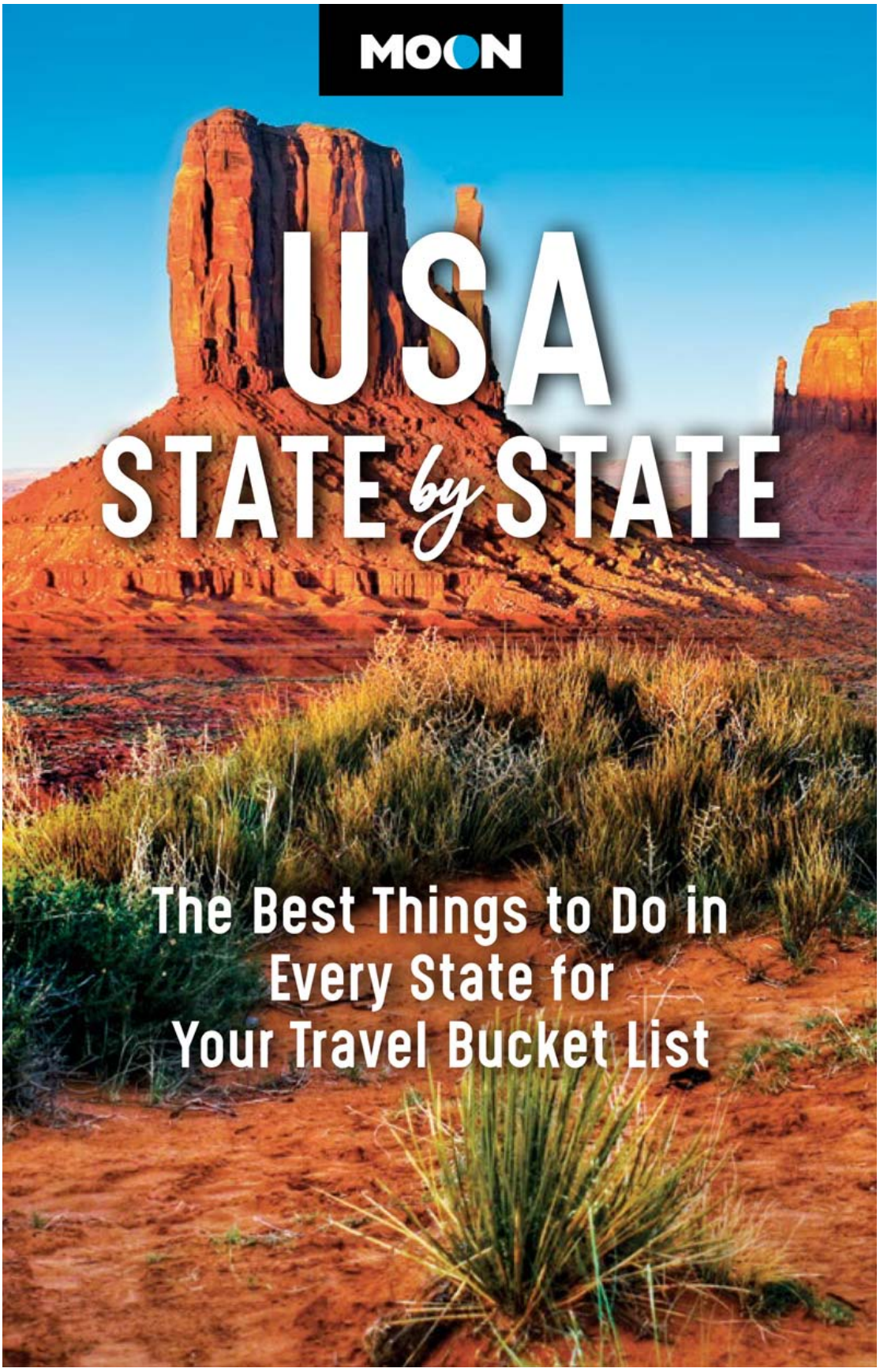
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How to use this ebook:

- Every chapter begins with a table of contents to help guide you through the content.
- Tap on blue headings or text to link to correlated content.
- Within content, tap on blue headings to go back to nearest table of contents.
- Double-tap on maps or images to zoom in.
- All entries in the Index and Map Index are linked to specific content for quick navigation.

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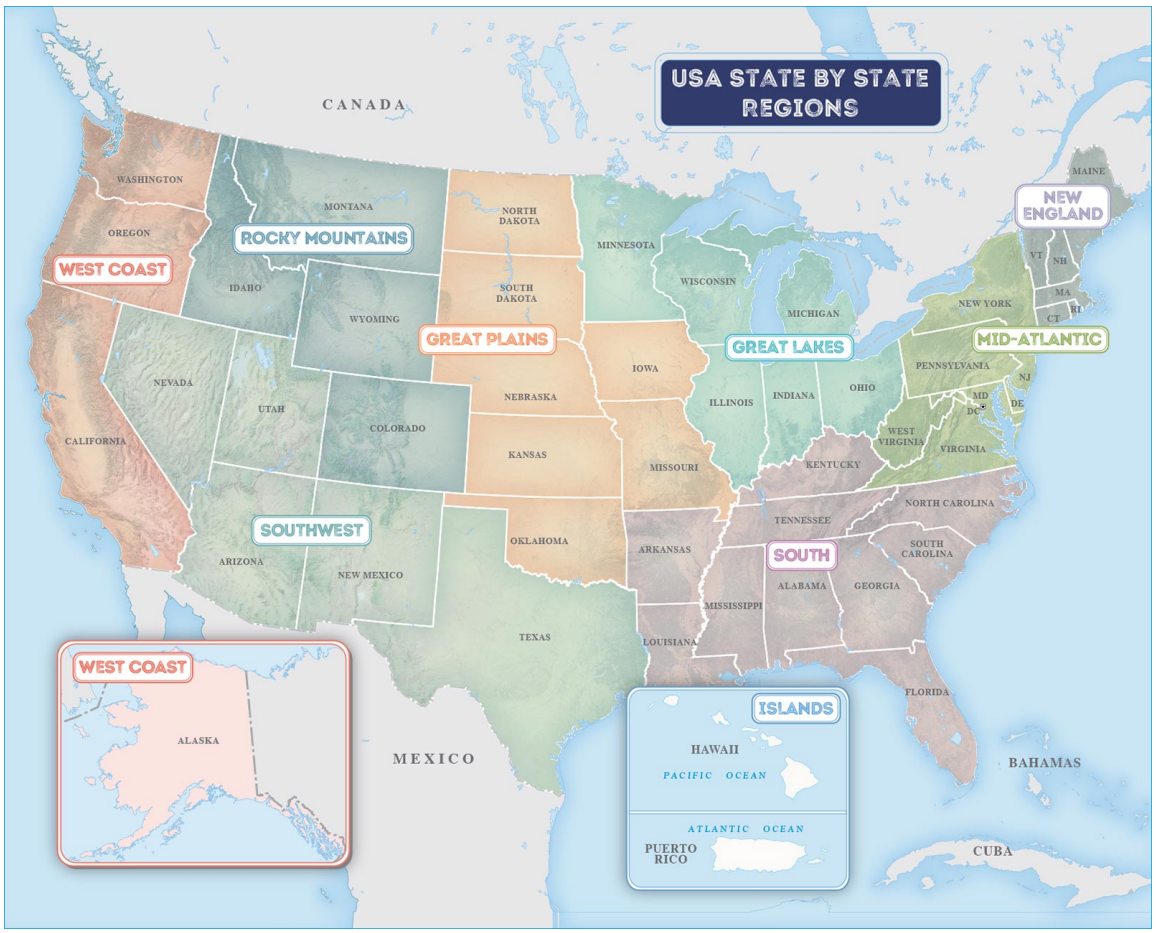
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Welcome to the United States, this vast land of ambition, diversity, and dreams. Covering 3.8 million sq mi (9.8 million sq km) and home to more than 340 million people, the United States has long been called an experiment: an experiment in democracy, an experiment in the idea that

ingenuity and hard work are the keys to success, an experiment in governing a far-reaching land and varied populace. Experiencing the United States on a journey through its best sights and activities is at once fun and full of complexity.

You'll find millions of acres of land protected for future generations—from the remote wilderness of the Gates of the Arctic to the wetlands of the Everglades. Its culture, embodied in its food, music, art, and festivals, draws from the influence of many cultures, of those who make this a nation of immigrants, of those who were enslaved, and of those who are indigenous to the land. You can taste this influence in pueblo cuisine, dance to it in New Orleans jazz, and see it in the quilts, jewelry, and handicrafts made by artisans across the country. And it's in getting to know the nation's heroes, from activists fighting to maintain fundamental rights to groundbreaking musicians, that it's possible to see the great potential of this country and its people.

Experiencing the best of the United States can inspire, change perspectives, transform—and hopefully encourage us all to keep contributing to making this country's great experiment a success.

TOP 10 *Experiences*



1 MARVELING AT ALASKA'S ACTIVE GLACIERS

Whether you're ice-climbing on Matanuska Glacier or watching glacial ice dropping into the sea, these remnants from another time in the earth's geologic history inspire awe.



2 MAKING A FOOD PILGRIMAGE TO NEW ORLEANS

Beignets, po'boys, gumbo, crawfish . . . if there's one city in the United States to travel to for the food, it's New Orleans.



3 SAVORING THE NEW FOOD CREATIONS AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR

State fairs are famous for serving any and all imaginable foods on a stick, but don’t miss trying food vendors’ latest creative innovations—they may become your next craving.



4 SNORKELING THE WARM, CLEAR WATERS OF MAUI

Colorful fish, the occasional ray, and elusive turtles inhabit the underwater world off Maui's shores.



5 EXPERIENCING THE CHICAGO SKYLINE

The indelible buildings of this “city of broad shoulders” can be admired from a Chicago Architecture Center boat tour, the public art-filled playground of Millennium Park, or the Skydeck of the second tallest building in the country.



6 TOURING MONUMENT VALLEY

Touring the tribal park with a Navajo guide will give you a deeper appreciation for the landscape of this sacred place and the stewards who care for the land.



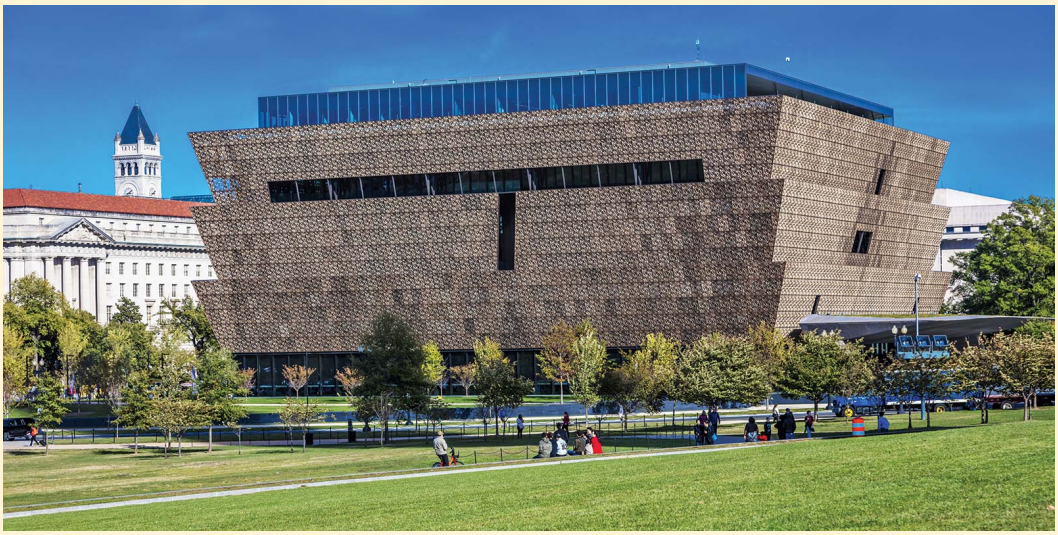
7 SEEING OLD FAITHFUL ERUPT

Yellowstone National Park's most famous geyser shoots up to 8,400 gallons (31,800 liters) of hot water at 90-minute intervals.



8 STEPPING BACK IN TIME AT A ROYAL RESIDENCE

The ‘Iolani Palace in Honolulu on O‘ahu was the home of Hawai‘i’s monarchy. Here you can learn about the island nation’s last ruler, Queen Lili‘uokalani, and get a glimpse of what royal life looked like in the late 19th century.



9 JOURNEYING THROUGH US HISTORY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

You can see and feel the story of the United States—the triumphs, progress, sorrows, and horrors—unfold at this absorbing museum in Washington DC.



10 DRIVING THE KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY IN THE FALL

New England is known for its riot of fall colors, and this twisting road through the White Mountains shows off some of the best.

Best NATURAL WONDERS

CRATER LAKE

Oregon

This sapphire-blue lake sits in the heart of a sunken volcano.

BIG SUR COAST

California

With rugged green hills tumbling over craggy cliffs overlooking the crashing waves of the Pacific, the Big Sur coastline is epic.



BIG SUR COAST, CALIFORNIA

ANTELOPE CANYON

Arizona

The light shining through the shafts of this slot canyon makes its red twists and twirls even more beautiful.

BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

South Dakota

Once at the bottom of an inland sea, the Badlands hold geologic history in their layers and folds, which turn pink and yellow at sunrise or sunset.



BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK, SOUTH DAKOTA

PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Michigan

Washed in shades of pink, red, and green, these famous bluffs are sculpted into caves, arches, and castle-like turrets.



PICTURED ROCKS, MICHIGAN

NIAGARA FALLS

New York

While not the tallest in the United States, the trio of cascades that make up Niagara Falls flow with a dramatic volume.

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

Kentucky

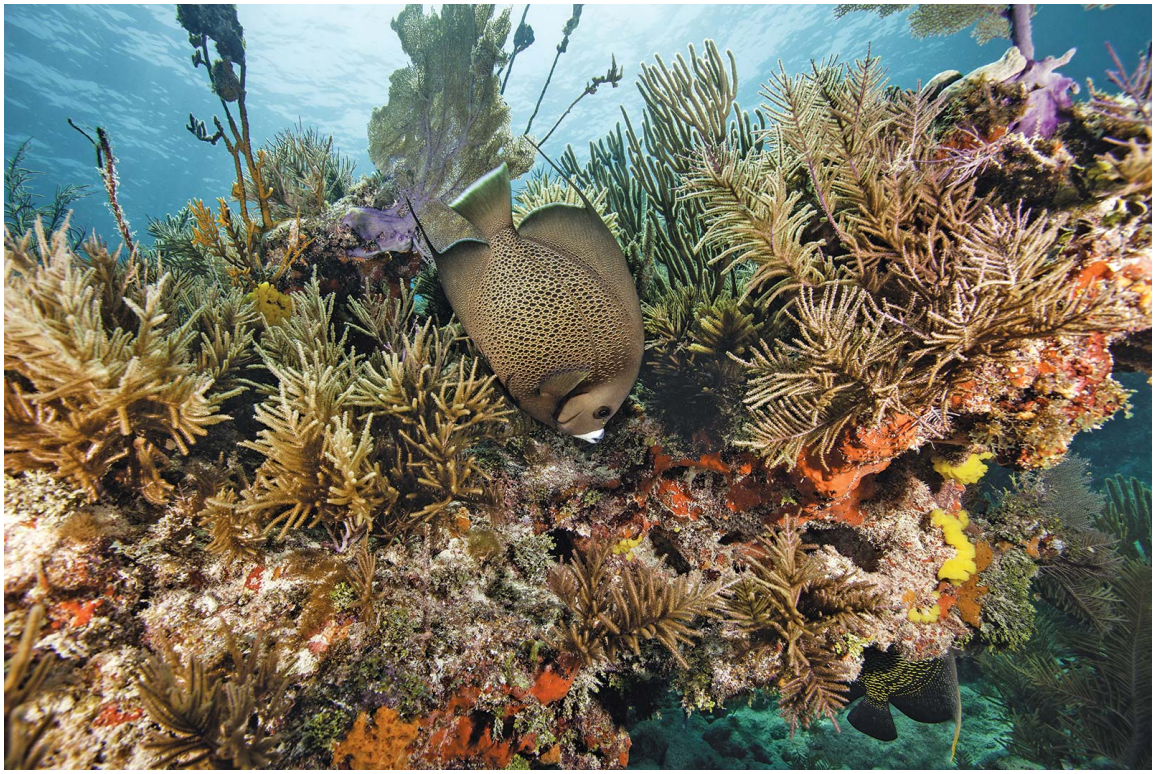
Mammoth Cave is the longest known cave system in the world.

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK

Florida

Diving in the waters around the Florida Keys is a major draw for water-sport enthusiasts. Here you can explore the continental United States' only

living coral reef.



JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK, FLORIDA

HAWAIʻI VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

Hawaiʻi

Marvel at hot lava fields, sulphur springs, and dramatic steam vents at the active Kilauea and Mauna Loa volcanoes.

BIOLUMINESCENT BAYS

Puerto Rico

In these bays—of which Puerto Rico has three of the five in the world—tiny organisms light up the water at night.

MUSIC ACROSS AMERICA

From West Coast hip-hop and rap to New Orleans jazz to Puerto Rican salsa and reggaeton, the United States is home to many musical genres, and music is arguably one of the country's best cultural contributions to the world. Here's a list of places to go for some of the country's best-known genres.

BLUES

If blues is your thing, then there are two must-go places in the South: **Memphis**, the birthplace of the blues, and the **Mississippi Delta**, where you can dive deep into the history of the blues and its seminal figures.

JAZZ AND ZYDECO

Best known for jazz, **New Orleans**—and its clubs and streets that host a wide range of genres—should be on any music lover's travel list. Even outside its most famous city, Louisiana heralds its musical traditions, such as zydeco in the **Acadiana** region.



JAZZ BAND PLAYING IN THE FRENCH QUARTER OF NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

COUNTRY AND BLUEGRASS

Nashville is where country music is made, and the honky-tonks on Broadway are where to go see it live. **Kentucky** is the birthplace of bluegrass music, with spots to hear it that range from front porches to concert halls.

INDIE ROCK AND JUST ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE

No list of music destinations would be complete without **Austin,** which is billed as the Live Music Capital of the World. Indie rock, reggae, punk, country, and other bands take the stage at the Texas capital's more than 250 venues.

SALSA

The party district Calle San Sebastián in **San Juan**, Puerto Rico, combines live salsa music with lots of dancing.

Best MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL CENTERS

ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER

Anchorage, Alaska

Immerse yourself in the traditional and contemporary art and food of Alaska's Native peoples.



ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER IN ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

HEARD MUSEUM

Phoenix, Arizona

The Heard Museum holds a large collection of artistic, ceremonial, and daily-life artifacts from both ancient history and modern Native American communities.

CHICKASAW CULTURAL CENTER

Sulphur, Oklahoma

Exhibits at this campus dedicated to Chickasaw history and culture include fine art and artifacts and a re-created village.

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Chicago, Illinois

This stunning selection of famous and familiar works includes such icons of US art as *American Gothic* and *Nighthawks*.



ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

Cleveland, Ohio

This “school of rock” holds a dizzying array of rock memorabilia for a complete immersion in musical history.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

Cooperstown, New York

This museum dedicated to the favorite national pastime is a place of homage for baseball fans everywhere.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

New York City, New York

Perhaps the most famous museum in the country, the Metropolitan Museum of Art houses one of the world’s largest and most diverse collections.

NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM AT THE LORRAINE MOTEL

Memphis, Tennessee

The pursuit of equality for all continues, and this unforgettable museum traces where we’ve been and what we’ve achieved.

POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi

Learn about the traditions of the island nations of Hawaiʻi, Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji, Aotearoa, and Samoa and partake in an authentic lūʻau.

Best BEACHES

HUNTINGTON BEACH

Huntington Beach, California

“Surf City USA” is known for its laid-back vibes and world-class surfing.

CITY BEACH

Coeur d’Alene, Idaho

This scenic beach along Coeur d’Alene Lake draws crowds for swimming and relaxing.

HOLLAND STATE PARK

Holland, Michigan

Weekends bring hundreds of sunbathers to this lovely and accessible beach on the Lake Michigan shore.

COAST GUARD BEACH

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Cape Cod draws beachgoers from New England and beyond, and Coast Guard Beach is one of the best on the peninsula.



COAST GUARD BEACH, CAPE COD, MASSACHUSETTS

LONG BEACH ISLAND

New Jersey

This barrier island hosts some of the Jersey Shore’s best surfing beaches.

CHESAPEAKE BEACH

Chesapeake Beach, Maryland

Relaxing at the beach, strolling the boardwalk, and playing at the water park make for a perfect day at Chesapeake Beach.

GULF SHORES PUBLIC BEACH

Gulf Shores, Alabama

The sugary sands at Gulf Shores make it one of the best beaches along the Gulf Coast.

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK

Big Pine Key, Florida

The three gorgeous beaches at this state park are great for lounging, and you can snorkel right off the shore.



BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK, FLORIDA

KAʻANAPALI BEACH

Maui, Hawaiʻi

It’s impossible to say which of Hawaii’s beaches is the most beautiful, but this one is definitely a contender.

PLAYA LUQUILLO

Puerto Rico

This crescent-shaped beach is a perfect spot to lie out under the palm trees.

WILDLIFE-WATCHING IN THE USA

The United States spans a number of ecosystems, resulting in much biodiversity. Here is a short list of fun, unique, awe-inspiring, or symbolic animals to watch for in your travels across the country.

ORCAS

In Alaska, **Prince William Sound** is the best place to see these distinctive black-and-white marine mammals. In the Lower 48, Washington's **San Juan Islands** are the summer home of about 70 orcas.



ORCAS IN THE SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASHINGTON

BALD EAGLES

You can see the country's national bird in **Alaska**, where thousands live throughout the state. Nevada's only nesting bald eagles are in **Lahontan State Recreation Area**, and several nesting pairs live in Ohio's **Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge**.

GRIZZLY BEARS

Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska is the best place to see these charismatic brown bears.

BISON

Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming is the best place to see the West's iconic animal.



BISON HERD IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, WYOMING

SANDHILL CRANES

The **Platte River** in central Nebraska sees 80 percent of the entire world's sandhill crane population during their annual seasonal migration.

MOOSE

Maine has the highest population of these gangly quadrupeds in the Lower 48 states. **Isle Royale National Park** in Michigan is also a great place to spot moose.

FIREFLIES

Associated with summer evenings, fireflies can be seen in the warm, humid parts of the country. Around mid- to late May, seeing these beetles becomes even more amazing as they light up synchronously during their mating season. Head to **Congaree National Park** in South Carolina and **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**, which spans North Carolina and Tennessee, to catch this phenomenon.

WILD HORSES AND PONIES

Wild horses are a popular attraction at some barrier islands in the southeastern United States, such as the **Outer Banks** in North Carolina and **Cumberland Island** in Georgia, while wild ponies can be seen on **Assateague Island** in Maryland.

AMERICAN ALLIGATORS

These fierce-looking reptiles live in wetland environments, so you'll almost surely see them in Florida's **Everglades National Park**. Other prime gator-spotting opportunities are also in the South, in places such as the **Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge** in Georgia or on a **Louisiana swamp tour**.

MANATEES

The **Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge** in Florida is one of the best places in the country—and the world—to see manatees.



MANATEE IN CRYSTAL RIVER, FLORIDA

Best SPOTS FOR SPORTS FANS

CACTUS LEAGUE SPRING TRAINING

Valley of the Sun, Arizona

Baseball fans flock to the Phoenix area to watch Major League Baseball teams prep.

ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Join in the fun at the world’s biggest hot-air balloon event.



ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA, NEW MEXICO

FRONTIER DAYS RODEO

Cheyenne, Wyoming

For over a week, Cheyenne is home to the biggest rodeo event in the state.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Dyersville, Iowa

Set foot on the field that starred in the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*.

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

Kansas City, Missouri

Learn about the contributions of African Americans and people of color to America's favorite pastime.



NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

LAMBEAU FIELD ATRIUM

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Tour the home of the Green Bay Packers, one of the few community-owned professional sports teams in the country.

INDY 500

Indianapolis, Indiana

Cheer along at the famed 500-mi (800-km) race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.



INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY IN INDIANA

BOSTON MARATHON

Boston, Massachusetts

The oldest marathon in the country is as much an event for the spectators as the runners.

KENTUCKY DERBY

Louisville, Kentucky

Every year since 1875, spectators have gathered at Churchill Downs to watch thoroughbreds speed around the racetrack.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

Knoxville, Tennessee

Celebrate the women who have made this sport great, and see the world's largest basketball.

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

Miami, Florida

Catch a match at Miami Freedom Park, home of Inter Miami CF.

SUPERLATIVE SPOTS

Here are a few of the biggest, tallest, and other superlatives within the United States.

- **BIGGEST CITY:** New York City, New York
- **TALLEST MOUNTAIN:** Denali, Alaska



DENALI NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA

- **LARGEST LAKE:** Lake Superior
- **TALLEST BUILDING:** One World Trade Center, New York
- **LONGEST RIVER:** Missouri River
- **OLDEST CITY:** St. Augustine, Florida
- **LOWEST POINT:** Badwater Basin, Death Valley, California



BADWATER BASIN, DEATH VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

- **LONGEST SINGLE-CABLE TRAM:** Sandia Peak Tramway, New Mexico
- **DEEPEST CANYON:** Hells Canyon, Oregon and Idaho
- **HIGHEST PAVED ROAD:** Mount Blue Sky Scenic and Historic Byway, Colorado

Best HISTORIC HOMES

BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

New Mexico

It’s possible to climb inside some of the cavates carved into Frijoles Canyon that served as homes for the Ancestral Puebloans who lived in what is now New Mexico.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Hill Country, Texas

This two-site park preserves the 36th president’s childhood home and the ranch that was his Texas White House.

HARRIET TUBMAN HOME

Auburn, New York

Tour the home where the famous Underground Railroad conductor lived after the Civil War.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Washington DC

Visit the home of the abolitionist, author, and diplomat in the historic Anacostia neighborhood up the hill from the nation’s capital.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, WASHINGTON DC

MAGGIE L. WALKER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Richmond, Virginia

This 28-room Victorian mansion was the home of the first Black woman in the United States to found a bank. It holds many of her belongings as she left them.

JOHNNY CASH BOYHOOD HOME

Dyess, Arkansas

See the home that the future Man in Black grew up in, set up to reflect the 1940s.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTH HOME

Atlanta, Georgia

Part of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, this home is where the civil rights leader came into the world.

IVY GREEN

West Tuscumbia, Alabama

Helen Keller's birth home still has the water pump where the future advocate for blind and deaf rights learned to spell out "water" from her teacher, Anne Sullivan.

EATING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE USA

Sampling the range and diversity of food in the United States could take a lifetime. Many books are dedicated solely to food in the United States, so this list is hardly comprehensive—it's just a starting point.

BARBECUE

There are many barbecue styles across the country, and we love them all.

- **TEXAS:** The focus of Texas barbecue is smoking the meat with the right kind of wood for the perfect amount of time, and purists of this form would never consider adding sauce.
- **KANSAS CITY:** This barbecue style features slowly smoked meat slathered in a tomato-based sauce.
- **MEMPHIS:** The barbecue in Memphis is known for being tangy and sweet.



MEMPHIS BARBECUE

- **NORTH CAROLINA:** Two styles vie for dominance in North Carolina. Eastern-style uses a thin vinegar and pepper sauce, while Lexington-style sports a thicker, sweeter, vinegar and pepper-based sauce.
- **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Although all variants of barbecue sauce can be found in the state, South Carolina's signature contribution is a hot, sweet mustard-based sauce.

BEEF SANDWICHES

The hamburger might be the food most associated with the United States, but across the country, there are varied preparations of beef served between bread.

- **RUNZA AND BIEROCK:** Nebraska and Kansas have different names for this spiced beef, cabbage, and onion sandwich.
- **ONION BURGER:** Oklahoma's variation on the burger adds thin pieces of grilled onion to the beef, which gives the patty a savory

crust.

- **PHILADELPHIA CHEESESTEAK:** Last but not least, Philly's style of beef sandwich uses slices or chunks of meat, rather than ground, with the signature layer of cheese.

BURRITOS AND TACOS

Several areas are known for Mexican food, whether authentic or with a regional spin.

- **SAN FRANCISCO:** The Mission burrito, essentially an incredibly large version of the tortilla-wrapped oblong dish, is a specialty in this Northern California city.
- **TUCSON AND NOGALES:** The cuisine styles of Northern Mexico, such as machaca, fill the burritos and tacos of southern Arizona.
- **CHICAGO:** The nation's third-largest city is home to the largest Mexican American population outside California and the Southwest, with the taquerias in the Pilsen neighborhood to show for it.

THREE SISTERS DISHES

Corn, beans, and squash are at the heart of Indigenous cuisine. These ingredients form the base for nourishing soups and stews found throughout the country.

- **NEW MEXICO:** Taste how the Three Sisters ingredients work together in New Mexico Pueblo cuisine.
- **MINNESOTA:** Head to Minneapolis to learn about traditional dishes and Indigenous food systems.

PIZZA

Just as there are barbecue rivalries, pizza is also a subject of much debate across the country.

- **CHICAGO:** Also called deep-dish, this style of pizza is thick. The mozzarella is packed on the dough and is topped with a layer of tomato, rather than the other way around.
- **NEW YORK CITY:** The big-as-your-head slice is ubiquitous, but for a sit-down meal, there are crispy-thin, coal-oven pies.

BEER

Beer can wash down any of the foods above, and craft brews in particular are only gaining in popularity. Here are a few hot spots for the beer enthusiast.

- **PORTLAND:** Known as Beervana, Oregon's biggest city is the epicenter of the country's craft brewing revival.
- **DENVER:** The capital of Colorado has 150 breweries and tap rooms in its metro area, and one of the founders of its first brewpub went on to become governor of the entire state of Colorado.
- **MILWAUKEE:** Big-time players like Miller and Pabst hail from this Wisconsin city, but craft brews are also part of the scene here.

BOURBON AND WHISKEY

Most of the world's bourbon comes from Kentucky, where corn, wheat, and rye are distilled with the state's famously clean limestone-filtered water. Across the state line in Tennessee, maple charcoal filtering is added to the mix, producing the smooth, smoky spirit.

- **KENTUCKY:** Follow the famed Bourbon Trail to some of the state's best craft distilleries, set among rolling hills and charming small towns.



KENTUCKY BOURBON

- **TENNESSEE:** South of Nashville, Tennessee's heartland is where you can sample whiskey from the country's oldest registered distillery.

Best for PHOTOS

The United States is full of photogenic spots. Some are iconic, others are whimsical, and still others are simply breathtaking. Here are 10 places where you'll want to have your camera ready.

CANNON BEACH

Oregon

The sea stacks at Cannon Beach are the most recognizable landmark along Oregon's Pacific Coast Highway.

MONUMENT VALLEY

Arizona

The rock formations of Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park are icons of the southwestern United States.

DELICATE ARCH

Utah

This natural stone arch stands in a magnificent setting atop gracefully curving slickrock in Arches National Park.

CADILLAC RANCH

Texas

Route 66 is full of photo ops, and this art installation featuring 10 Cadillacs tipped nose-first into the ground makes a memorable image.

MORMON ROW

Wyoming

These rustic buildings set against the Teton Mountains make for a dramatic photo.

ENCHANTED HIGHWAY

North Dakota

A clear blue sky is the perfect background for this series of whimsical sculptures.

GREAT RIVER ROAD

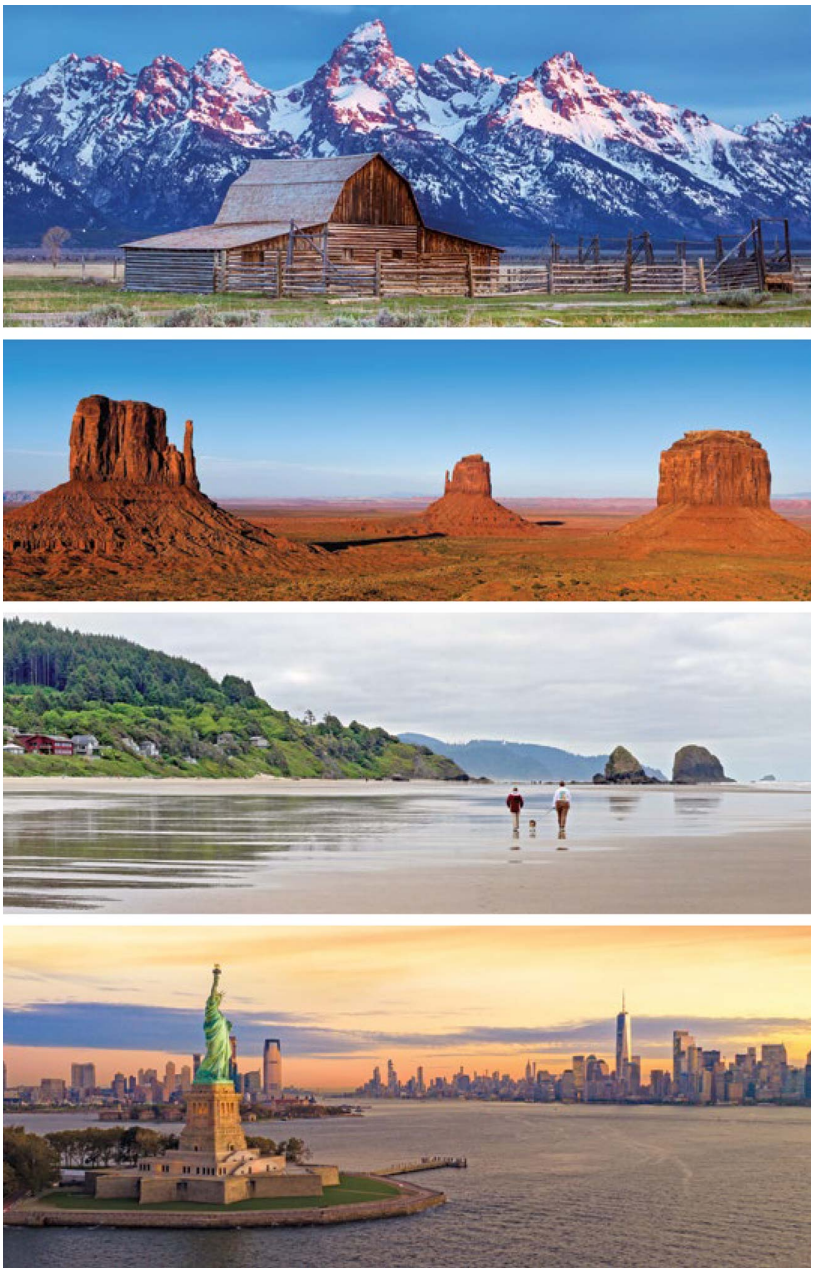
Wisconsin

The Great River Road follows the Mississippi River from Minnesota to Louisiana, but Wisconsin’s stretch, especially the portion north of La Crosse, is well known for its scenery.

STATUE OF LIBERTY

New York

This gift from France serves as a symbol of the United States and can be photographed from land or on a boat.



MORMON ROW, WYOMING MONUMENT VALLEY, ARIZONA CANNON BEACH, OREGON
STATUE OF LIBERTY, NEW YORK

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL

Washington DC

This powerful monument is striking at any time, but for a few weeks in the spring, cherry blossoms can pop into the frame.

RAINBOW ROW

South Carolina

These 13 pastel mansions in Charleston are among the most photographed in the country.

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WEST COAST

Alaska

Washington

Oregon

California

THE WEST COAST
State by State

ALASKA

Why Go: The pristine landscapes of the country's largest state hold glaciers, fjords, grizzly bears, bald eagles, and the tallest mountain in the United States.

WASHINGTON

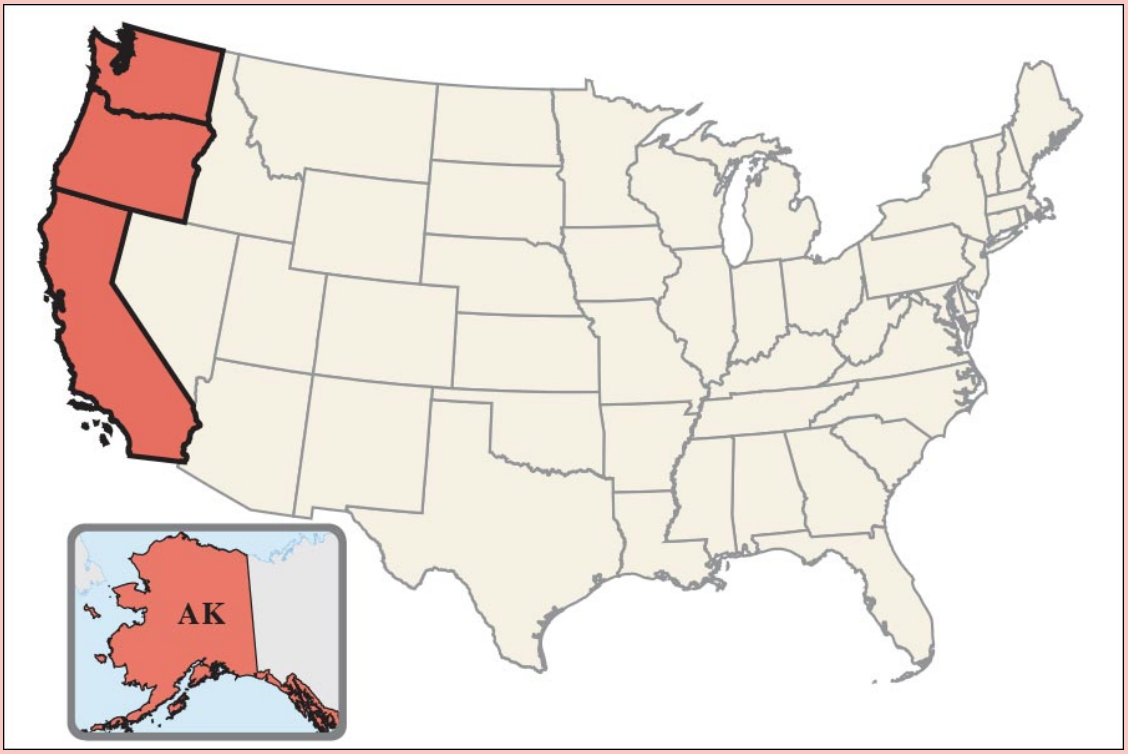
Why Go: The Evergreen State earns its nickname from its famous rainy weather—the Olympic Peninsula is the rainiest place in the United States—and the resulting lush greenery in the western side of the state.

OREGON

Why Go: Oregon's diverse landscapes encompass the low-key cool of Portland, the myriad waterfalls of the Columbia River Gorge, dry high deserts, and much more.

CALIFORNIA

Why Go: Southern California captures the imagination with its sunny beaches and nearly year-round beach weather, while heading north leads to dramatic coastal landscapes, massive granite rock formations, and the iconic Golden Gate Bridge.



West Coast ROAD TRIP

You can travel up the coast from **San Diego, California,** through **Portland, Oregon,** to **Seattle, Washington,** on a three-week journey that spans almost 2,000 mi (3,220 km). This road trip stokes the imagination like few other journeys. The highway is framed by golden sands and turquoise waters, bordered by emerald rain forests, and capped off with kaleidoscopic sunsets and indigo night skies.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

San Diego to Santa Barbara: 3 Days / 220 mi (355 km)

Before starting the drive, spend the morning in **San Diego,** then head north to the famous **Orange County beaches** along CA-1, arriving in Los Angeles at the end of the day. Spend a full day in **Los Angeles,** checking out **Griffith Park,** the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art,** or both. The next day, leave Los Angeles on CA-1, passing through **Santa Monica** and **Malibu** before merging with US 101 to reach **Santa Barbara.**

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara to San Francisco: 3 Days / 325 mi (525 km)

Wake up in Santa Barbara, and spend the morning strolling along the coastline path and exploring the beachside city. Head up the coast on US 101 to **San Luis Obispo** for the night. The next day, take CA-1 out of town and through a series of small coastal towns. North of Cambria, you'll get your first taste of the famous **Big Sur** coast. Head to **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park** for the classic view of **McWay Falls.** Spend the night in Big Sur. Finish the jaw-dropping Big Sur coast drive the next morning, spending the afternoon in **Carmel** and **Monterey.** From Monterey to **San Francisco,** CA-1 takes about three hours and US 101 takes about two hours.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

San Francisco to Crescent City: 4 days / 355 mi (570 km)

Spend a full day in **San Francisco,** making sure to ride a cable car and eat a Mission burrito. In the morning, drive out of the city on US 101, over the **Golden Gate Bridge,** then follow signs out to CA-1 and keep going north. Near Point Arena, head inland for some wine-tasting in the **Anderson Valley** and spend the night in nearby **Mendocino.** From there, spend two days wending your way up the northern California coast on US 101, making sure to visit a couple of parks in the **Redwood National and State Parks** complex. Spend your last night in California in the northern town of Crescent City.

OREGON

Crescent City to Astoria: 3 days / 415 mi (670 km)

From Crescent City, keep heading north on US 101 into Oregon, enjoying the most scenic stretch of the Oregon coast to **Gold Beach.** Overnight in **Yachats.** The next day, make a detour inland at Newport to reach **Portland** around midday. Spend the night and have a lazy morning hanging out in the city. Turn back toward the coast to see **Haystack Rock** at **Cannon Beach,** and end up in **Astoria** for the night.

WASHINGTON

Astoria to Seattle: 4 days / 430 mi (690 km)

Cross the Columbia River into Washington, winding along US 101, until you reach **Lake Quinault,** where you'll spend the night. Wind around **Olympic National Park** and visit the park's **Hoh Rain Forest, Lake Crescent,** and **Hurricane Ridge** before calling it a day in **Port Angeles.** In the morning, head out to Seattle, where you'll overnight and spend the next day. Be sure to see **Pike Place Market** and have a nice meal at one of the city's chef-driven restaurants.

DRIVING TO ALASKA

6-7 days

To make an epic trip even more epic, you could keep driving north to Alaska, which requires crossing an international border into Canada. Take one day for driving from Seattle to **Vancouver,** British Columbia (145 mi/235 km), and exploring. Then it's two days to drive from Vancouver to **Dawson Creek,** British Columbia (740 mi/1,190 km), your entry point to the **Alaska Highway.** The section of the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to **Whitehorse,** Yukon (870 mi/1,400 km), takes at least another two days. From Whitehorse, the most direct route to Alaska is to continue on the **Alaska Highway** (295 mi/475 km, 1 day) to the border, or you can take the **Klondike Highway** to **Dawson City,** Yukon (330 mi/545 km, 2 days), which links to **Tok,** Alaska (185 mi/300 km, 1 day) via the spectacular **Top of the World Highway.**

ALASKA

There is something about Alaska that has always stirred the imagination. From the first migrants who crossed the Bering land bridge during the ice ages to today's travelers escaping the madness of city life, Alaska draws people from the world over to see its wonders: dramatic mountains and immense glaciers, rivers thick with salmon, northern lights dancing across a velvety winter sky.

AREA: 665,384 sq mi / 1,723,337 sq km (1st)

POPULATION: 740,133 (48th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 3, 1959 (49th)

STATE CAPITAL: Juneau


ALASKA
CHUKCHI SEA
BEAUFORT SEA
RUSSIA
CANADA
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
YUKON
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Utqiagvik
Wainwright
Point Hope
Kivalina
Noatak
Kaktovik
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Cape Krusenstern Natl Mon
Noatak National Preserve
Anaktuvuk Pass
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Kobuk Valley National Park
Kotzebue
Kiana
Noorvik
Ambler
Shungnak
Selawik
Shishmaref
Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
Buckland
Brevig Mission
Teller
Monday
Sunday
Gambell
Savoonga
St. Lawrence Island
Nome
Koyuk
Elim
Nulato
Galena
Huslia
Fort Yukon
Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge
White Mountain Rec Area
Yukon-Charley Rivers Nat'l Preserve
Fairbanks
Fortymile Wild and Scenic River
Minto
Tanana
Nenana
Anderson
Salcha
Delta Junction
Deltana
Chicken
Dawson City
Tok
Healy
Denali
Denali National Park and Preserve
McGrath
Talkeetna
Glennallen
Copper Center
Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve
Willow
Palmer
Wasilla
Anchorage
Chugach State Park
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
Soldotna
Sterling
Cohoe
Seward
Kenai Fjords National Park
Homer
Kenai Peninsula
Valdez
Cordova
Chugach National Forest
Kayak Island
Prince William Sound
Gulf of Alaska
Whitehorse
Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve
Klondike Gold Rush Nat'l Hist Park
Skagway
Haines
Yakutat
Mendenhall Glacier
JUNEAU
Gustavus
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve
Hoonah
Admiralty Island
Angoon
Chichagof Island
Sitka
Petersburg
LeConte Glacier
Kruzof Island
Wrangell
Baranof Island
Kuiu Island
Thorne Bay
Craig
Ketchikan
Metlakatla
Hydaburg
Juneau Icefield
ST ELIAS MOUNTAINS
COAST MOUNTAINS
ALASKA RANGE
BROOKS RANGE
NORTH SLOPE
SEWARD PENINSULA
ALASKA PENINSULA
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
BERING STRAIT
BRISTOL BAY
Norton Sound
Kotzebue Sound
Kuskokwim Bay
Cook Inlet
Shelikof Strait
Port Moller
Unimak Pass
Date Line
Colville River
Smith Bay
Harrison Bay
Prudhoe Bay
Camden Bay
Mackenzie Bay
Porcupine River
Yukon River
Tanana River
Kuskokwim River
Nunivak Island
Hooper Bay
Scammon Bay
Chevak
Marshall
Mountain Village
St. Mary's
Russian Mission
Aniak
Newtok
Tununak
Nelson Island
Kasigluk
Tuluksak
Napakiak
Bethel
Tuntutuliak
Eek
Kipnuk
Kongiganak
Chefornak
Kwigillingok
Quinhagak
Togiak
New Stuyahok
Dillingham
Manokotak
Naknek
King Salmon
Katmai National Park and Preserve
Afognak Island
Port Lions
Kodiak
Kodiak Island
Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park
Aniakchak Nat'l Monument and Preserve
Chirikof Is
King Cove
Sand Point
Unga Is
Unimak Island
Akutan Island
Akutan
Unalaska
Unalakleet
Stuart Island
Stebbins
St. Michael
St Michael Island Nat'l Park
Emmonak
Alakanuk
Kotlik
Seldovia
Anchor Point
Happy Valley
Homer
Kayak Island
Xunaa Shuka Hit Clan House
Sitka National Historical Park
SOARING OVER DENALI NATIONAL PARK ON A FLIGHTSEEING PLANE
GETTING A GLIMPSE OF ALASKA'S CHARISMATIC BEARS
MARVELING AT ALASKA'S MASSIVE GLACIERS
WALRUS ISLANDS STATE GAME SANCTUARY
ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER
COLUMBIA GLACIER
THOMPSON PASS
RICHARDSON HIGHWAY
GLENN HIGHWAY
SEWARD HIGHWAY
TAYLOR HIGHWAY
TOP OF THE WORLD HIGHWAY
0 100 mi
0 100 km

ORIENTATION

The capital, **Juneau,** is located in the area known as the **Inside Passage.** In south-central Alaska, **Anchorage,** the **Kenai Peninsula,** and **Prince William Sound** edge up against the border with Canada.

North of **Anchorage** is the Matanuska-Susitna Valley (Mat-Su Valley), home to fast-growing Wasilla and Palmer. Alaska's most loved national park, **Denali National Park** is 100 air mi (161 air km) north of Anchorage. Extending south and west from Anchorage, the **Kenai Peninsula** is a recreational paradise, with fishing, hiking, rafting, sightseeing, and camping options galore.

WHEN TO GO

Alaska is primarily a **summer** destination, and the vast majority of its 2.7 million annual visitors travel **mid-May through mid-September,** with the peak in July and August. The advantages of summer travel are obvious: long days and warmer weather, not to mention the return of salmon and the emergence of bears and other wildlife. Because of Alaska's northern location, **spring** arrives late, and much of the state does not green up until mid-May. The road into Denali National Park is closed by snow until late May, and the landscape can be bleak before leaves emerge.

Fall comes early. Autumn colors (primarily yellows on the aspen, birch, and willows, with reds and oranges in alpine areas) typically peak in early September in Denali, and a week or two later in the Mat-Su Valley and Kenai Peninsula. Days shorten dramatically by October—en route to the December 21 winter solstice—but longer nights also make Alaska's famous northern lights visible. **Winter** visitors come to view them, and to watch such events as the Iditarod. Denali can be bitterly cold in winter, but Anchorage and points south are typically milder, especially by mid-February, as the days begin to lengthen.

TOP 3

1 SOARING OVER DENALI NATIONAL PARK ON A FLIGHTSEEING PLANE

Alaska's most loved national park, Denali National Park is 100 air mi (161 air km) north of Anchorage. The park's crowning jewel is 20,320-ft (6,194-m) **Mount Denali.** A narrow dirt road—open only to park tour buses—runs through the heart of Denali, providing opportunities to see **caribou, brown bears, moose, wolves,** and other wildlife, plus amazing **Alaska Range vistas.** Hop on a bus for a tour of the park: It's a five-hour round-trip on the **Tundra Wilderness Tour** or the **Denali Natural History Tour.**



FLIGHTSEEING, DENALI NATIONAL PARK

The quaint pedestrian-friendly town of **Talkeetna,** halfway between Anchorage and Denali, has historic buildings and fun shops, but is best known as a base for flightseeing trips to Denali, including exhilarating glacier landings.

Several charter companies provide service to Mount Denali from the Talkeetna Airport. **Talkeetna Air Taxi** (14212 E. 2nd St.; 907/733-2218 or 800/533-2219; www.talkeetnaair.com) is a favorite of climbers.

2 MARVELING AT ALASKA'S MASSIVE GLACIERS

According to estimates, Alaska is home to 100,000 glaciers. Only 616 of these have been named officially and are on the must-see list of many a visitor.

- **Mendenhall:** To get some of the best photos, head to the **Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center** (6000 Glacier Spur Rd., Juneau; 907/789-0097; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]) and the 0.1-mi (160-m) trail to **Photo Point.** Here you can admire (from a distance is safest) the famous Mendenhall Glacier **ice caves.**



GLACIER TREKKERS ON MENDENHALL GLACIER

- **LeConte:** One of the most active of the group, LeConte Glacier is also one of the most studied. You can easily book a tour to get a

closer look for yourself.

- **Columbia:** One of the fastest-moving glaciers in the world, Columbia glacier sheds 13 tons (11 metric tons) of ice daily. Tours leave from Valdez.

3 GETTING A GLIMPSE OF ALASKA'S CHARISMATIC BEARS

Bear-viewing is a booming business in Alaska, and visitors never forget their first sighting. The **brown bear,** also called **grizzly,** has become a symbol of true wilderness. Grizzlies and brown bears are the same species, but brown bears are larger, live along the coast, and have different food sources. **Black bears** are found in most forested parts of Alaska.

Polar bears are not found in south-central or interior Alaska; you'll need to visit the North Slope around Barrow or Kaktovik to see these amazing animals.

Most folks choose a package trip to areas where the bears have become somewhat habituated to the presence of humans—but there are more adventurous opportunities as well.

World-famous Brooks Camp in **Katmai National Park and Preserve** (907/246-3305; www.nps.gov/katm) is one of the few places where large numbers of visitors can see bears throughout the summer. Activity centers on the Brooks River and particularly Brooks Falls, where those legendary bear-with-jumping-salmon photos are taken. Air taxis in Anchorage, Homer, Kenai, and Soldotna all provide floatplane flights to Naknek Lake, just a short hike from the river.



BEARS AT KATMAI NATIONAL PARK

HIGHLIGHTS

ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER

8800 Heritage Center Dr., Anchorage; 907/330-8000; www.alaskanative.net

Learn about the state's Native peoples through exhibits, demonstrations, and cultural presentations.



ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE CENTER

Located on a 26-ac (10.5-ha) site facing the Chugach Mountains, the Alaska Native Heritage Center provides an excellent introduction to Native Alaskan culture in the state. The Welcome House has exhibits and artifacts from the five primary Native cultures in Alaska, along with a gift shop featuring quality Native art, a theater where you can watch cultural movies, a café, and a central space for concerts, dances, crafts, and Native games demonstrations. Outside, six traditional village structures have been re-created around a small pond, and Native Alaskan guides explain Alaska's various cultures. Free tours of the grounds are given three times daily.

KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

www.nps.gov/klgo

Alaska's gold rush changed everything. After the California stampede of 1849, the search moved north. In the 1880s and '90s, strikes in Alaska and

the Yukon followed one another in quick succession. In 1896, gold was discovered along the Klondike River in Yukon Territory, and by the end of 1897, perhaps 30,000 stampeders had reached the Klondike. Gold fever remained unabated, spreading across Alaska to Nome, Fairbanks, Kantishna, Hatcher Pass, and Hope.

Today, you can learn about the gold rush and its impact on Alaska at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway. Six blocks of downtown make up the historic district and keep the spirit of the 1890s alive. Here you can visit shops, the historic train depot, a cigar store, a restored homestead, and the town's longest operating saloon. To stretch your legs and delve deeper into the area's history, take a 4-mi (6.4-km) round-trip hike to the **Gold Rush Cemetery and Lower Reid Falls.** The National Historical Park is also the gateway to the **Chilkoot Trail,** a 33-mi (53-km) National Historic Trail made popular by the Klondike Gold Rush. The trail connects Dyea, Alaska, to British Columbia; the first 4 mi (6.4 km) on the US side make for a popular day hike.

SMALL TOWNS

The small towns of Alaska are nestled along scenic coastlines, lush forests, and remote meadows. Each town has a unique history and identity. Here are a few you should visit as you tour the state.

- **Petersburg** is a small island community founded by Norwegian fisherfolk. This small town with its seafaring way of life continues to thrive. Today, Petersburg draws visitors with its hiking trails, small town charm, whale-watching spots, and proximity to glacial wilderness.
- **Ketchikan** is the southern gateway to the Inside Passage. Also known as the Salmon Capital of the World, Ketchikan is a fishing-oriented town. The local Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian artisans keep Native traditions alive. You can see Native arts in totem parks around town as well as in Ketchikan's museums and galleries.



KETCHIKAN

- **Sitka** is the ancestral home of the Native Tlingit, with a high concentration of National Historic Places and Landmarks. In addition to a rich cultural heritage, Sitka is known for its salmon fishing, raptor center, and alpine hiking trails.
- **Homer** is a premier destination for fishing, sea kayaking, hiking, fat-tire biking, and bear-viewing flights, with notable lodges, fine restaurants, informative museums, and colorful art galleries, several of which can be found along the famous Homer Spit.
- **Talkeetna,** the quaint pedestrian-friendly town halfway between Anchorage and Denali, has historic buildings and fun shops, but is best known as a base for flightseeing trips to Denali, including exhilarating glacier landings.

Major CITIES

ANCHORAGE: Anchorage is home to nearly half the state's population, an international airport, and a multitude of cultural attractions.

JUNEAU: Alaska's capital is a thriving city. Once a former gold-mining town, Juneau frequently welcomes cruise ships into port during the summer.

FAIRBANKS: This thriving river city in the far north is one of the best places to learn about Native Arctic culture, view the northern lights, or experience midnight sun.

- **Nome** is a former miners' camp in the western part of the state along the Bering Sea. Today, the city thrives on fishing and tourism. Every March, professional dogsledders (along with thousands of spectators) arrive in Nome after traversing the thousand miles from Anchorage in the Iditarod race.

WHALE-WATCHING

The largest summer marine visitors to Alaska are the whales. Each spring **gray whales** are seen migrating north from along the coast off Seward; in the fall they return south. Also in the spring, **humpback whales** move north from Hawaii. The humpback is easily distinguished by its humplike dorsal fin, large flippers, and huge tail, which shows as it dives. These 50-ft-long (15-m-long) creatures often breach (jump) or beat the surface of the water with their tails, as if trying to send messages. Smaller (35-ft/11-m) **minke whales** are also common.

North of the small town of Petersburg is the best place to watch for humpback whales on a tour: **Frederick Sound** offers hungry humpbacks a spot to refuel on herring and krill on their long migration from Hawaii.

The **killer whale** (orca), which is not actually a whale but the largest of the dolphins (up to 26 ft/8 m long), travels in groups hunting fish and

marine mammals. Its 6-ft-high (1.8-m) triangular dorsal fin and its black-and-white piebald pattern make it easily identifiable.

Beluga whales can often be spotted along the Turnagain Arm off the Seward Highway between Anchorage and Seward.

FISHING

Alaska is best known for its salmon. You can take part in the fishing action throughout the state. For halibut, plan your trip February-December; salmon season is May-September. Here are some of the best spots to base yourself for a rewarding fishing trip:

- **Homer** is the halibut fishing capital of the world.
- **Valdez** is popular with anglers seeking halibut, lingcod, and salmon.
- **Petersburg** is one of the best spots for saltwater salmon and halibut.
- **Kenai River** is the state's best spot for freshwater fishing.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in Anchorage at the **Alaska Native Heritage Center** to brush up on the state's Indigenous roots. Take a stroll or bike along **Tony Knowles Coastal Trail** to work up your appetite for dinner in town.

DAY 2 It's a five-hour drive to Denali. Or, you can head to the **Alaska Railroad** depot and hop on the morning ***Denali Star*** train headed north to **Grande Denali Lodge.** Tomorrow, you'll explore the national park.

DAY 3 Tour **Denali National Park** by bus (advance reservations required), whose route will deliver spectacular views of Mount Denali and Wonder Lake, and wildlife along the way.

DAY 4 Enjoy the scenic drive or the return journey on the ***Denali Star*** back to Anchorage. Relax in Anchorage's town square before enjoying a seafood dinner.

DAY 5 Today you'll cross the Chugach Mountains on the drive to Seward on the **Seward Highway. Turnagain Pass** at 900 ft (274 m) is the high point on your drive and a fine place to stretch your legs and take in the splendor of this mountain-rimmed subalpine valley. Once in town, fuel up at a brew pub—tomorrow you'll visit Kenai Fjords.

DAY 6 Spend the day on the water on a boat tour of **Kenai Fjords National Park.** The tour will take you to the Northwestern Fjord or Aialik Bay, where you'll see calving glaciers, humpback whales, and seabirds. Spend the night in Seward.

DAY 7 Return to Anchorage along the scenic Seward Highway. Enjoy the views of the extraordinary **Turnagain Arm** and the small harbor towns off the highway.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

The best way to see some of Alaska's most beautiful scenery is on a road trip.

SEWARD HIGHWAY

AK-1 and AK-9

The 127-mi (204-km) Seward Highway—a National Scenic Byway—connects Anchorage with the town of Seward on the Kenai Peninsula.

Mileposts are numbered from the Seward end; subtract these numbers from 127 for the distance to Anchorage.

South from Anchorage, this busy highway hugs the shore of Turnagain Arm, passing pullouts where you can watch for wildlife, and a side road to the town of Girdwood. Near Portage (48 mi/77 km south of Anchorage), Seward Highway banks sharply to the west along Turnagain Arm before turning again southward as it enters the Kenai Peninsula and climbs continuously into the Kenai Mountains and over Turnagain Pass.

ALASKA'S NATIVE HERITAGE

Long before explorers settled in the territory that would become Alaska, Native peoples were stewards of the land. The Indigenous traditions of Athabascan, Inupiaq, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian are evident in the cultural scenes of many of the state's major towns and cities. The interior tribes historically subsisted on salmon and the interior's mammals, mostly caribou and moose. One of the best places to get an overview of Native culture is the **Alaska Native Heritage Center** in **Anchorage.**

When white explorers arrived in the 19th century, the **Athabascans** passed on their knowledge of the land plus essential skills like dogsledding. You can find Athabascan art today in beautifully embroidered clothing and beadwork.

In the north, the Inupiaq's knowledge of the harsh Arctic climate allowed towns like **Fairbanks** to establish and grow. When visiting Fairbanks, look for Native art festivals that feature traditional weaving and carving, or annual events like the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics in July.

North of **Ketchikan, Totem Bight State Historical Park** features totems carved by **Tlingit and Haida** artists.



TOTEM POLES

Much of the route is wilderness country within **Chugach National Forest,** but there are lodging and dining places at Summit Lake and the little town of Moose Pass. Ninety mi (145 km) south of Anchorage, the Seward Highway passes pretty Tern Lake, where the Sterling Highway splits off to Soldotna, Kenai, and Homer. Continuing south on the Seward Highway from Tern Lake, it's another 37 mi (60 km) to Seward.

The Seward Highway has passing lanes, wide shoulders, and a 65-mph (105-kph) speed limit much of the way, but take the time to enjoy the scenery. Always keep your headlights on and watch for moose. The drive can usually be done in 2.5 hours if you're in a hurry, but could easily be an all-day affair if you decide to check out funky Hope, raft down Sixmile Creek, or explore one of many excellent hikes along the way.

VALDEZ FROM FAIRBANKS OR ANCHORAGE

There are two six-hour scenic drives on the approach to Valdez. From Anchorage, take the **Glenn Highway** to the Richardson Highway. From Fairbanks, you'll follow the **Richardson Highway** all the way to Valdez. It's the final 26-mi (41-km) segment of the Richardson Highway that is the most spectacular. You'll traverse the **Thompson Pass** and marvel at the waterfalls of **Keystone Canyon.**

THE WONDERS OF ALASKAN WILDLIFE

Alaska's wildlife is a major draw for both visitors and residents. The state's vast stretches of wilderness contain abundant mammals, birds, and fish, including some of the largest and most magnificent animals in the world. Land mammals such as brown (grizzly) and black bears, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, wolves, and musk oxen are the main attractions, but the state also has incomparable populations of birds, including such favorites as bald eagles, puffins, loons, and sandhill cranes. Marine mammals include seals, Steller sea lions, and sea otters, along with beluga whales, orca (killer) whales, humpback whales, gray whales, and others.

MOOSE

The moose is the largest member of the deer family, and Alaska has the largest moose. A bull moose in his prime gets to be about 7 ft (2.1 m) tall and weighs up to 1,600 lb (726 kg), all from eating willow stems—about 30 lb (13.6 kg) per day. They also eat aspen and birch, but willow is the staple of choice. The antlers, which are bone, are shed and renewed every year. Bulls butt their heads together to vie for dominance. The cows have one or two calves in May who stay with their mother for a year; then she chases them away. **Anchorage** is one of the best spots for seeing moose in the wild.

WALRUSES

Walruses were central to Native peoples and early explorers braving the harsh climate of an Alaskan winter. Walrus tusks were an important element in intricate bone-carving arts. Today, walruses are severely impacted by the melting of sea ice, which they rely on as resting places. The best place to see walruses, sometimes thousands at a time, is **Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary** in the remote Bristol Bay.

CARIBOU

Caribou are found in treeless tundra across much of Alaska, but the largest herds—several hundred thousand animals—range across the Arctic. They are commonly seen from the park road in **Denali National Park** (particularly at mile 15 along the Savage River) and along the Denali Highway. Smaller populations are found on the Kenai Peninsula along the Kenai River near Kenai and Summit Creek Trail near Summit Lake.

EAGLES

As many eagles are found in Alaska as in the rest of the United States combined. **Bald eagles** are common sights along the coasts, but with their unmistakable white heads, 7-ft (2.1-m) wingspans, and dive-bombing, salmon-snatching performances, the thrill of watching them is not quickly lost.

TOP OF THE WORLD HIGHWAY

A seasonal drive in the eastern part of the state, the Top of the World Highway is a breathtaking 175-mi (282-km) route between Tok and **Dawson City** in Canada's Yukon. **Tok,** known as the sled-dog capital of Alaska, is a remote town that was once a construction outpost of the Alaska Highway—it's also a great spot to see the **northern lights.** On the five-hour drive, encounter the town of Chicken on your way through the **Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River Area.**



NORTHERN LIGHTS OVER ANCHORAGE

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK

1 Park Rd., Gustavus; 907/697-2230; www.nps.gov/glba

Formed by a receding glacier, this saltwater bay is a 65-mi-long (105-km) fjord speckled with huge chunks of ice. Today, Glacier Bay is a popular stop on Alaska cruises, offering visitors a glimpse of an actively retreating glacier. Most visitors arrive by boat or plane tour of the bay's **West Arm** from **Gustavus** or **Bartlett Cove.** On a tour, you'll see the **Grand Pacific and Margerie Glaciers,** along with sightings of wildlife and serene islands.

The Tlingit villages in the area were destroyed when the glacier rapidly advanced over 200 years ago. Today, you can visit the newly constructed

Xunaa Shuká Hít (Huna Ancestors' House), the first of its kind in Glacier Bay since the destruction of the Tlingit villages.

SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

103 Monastery St. (visitor center), Sitka; 907/747-0110; www.nps.gov/sitk

One of the best places to learn about Native culture in Alaska is the Sitka National Historical Park. On this small island, you can stroll along the **Totem Trails,** where several totem poles from the Tlingit and Haida people have been brought for conservation. Walking among the spruce and hemlock trees, you'll be following the footsteps of the Tlingit people who fought against invading traders from Russia on the island. Don't miss the **Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center,** where Native artisans teach visitors about their traditional crafts.

DOGSLED TOURS

Several companies offer wintertime dogsled tours, particularly near Willow, Talkeetna, Cantwell, and Healy. During the summer months, visitors can ride on wheeled sleds behind teams of dogs, providing a chance to get the feel of the real thing. These very popular rides—some led by Iditarod mushers—are offered in Seward, Wasilla, Willow, Cantwell, and Denali. In addition, summertime dogsled tours take place on glaciers near Seward, Girdwood, and Palmer. Tourists are flown up to the glacier by helicopter and given a chance to ride along as the dogs head across the ice and snow. It's a unique—but uniquely expensive—experience.



DOGS RUNNING IN THE IDITAROD

- **Turning Heads Kennel** (31722 Herman Leirer Rd.; 907/362-4354; www.turningheadskennel.com) is run by Iditarod mushers

Travis Beals and Sarah Stokey, who provide the dog teams on Godwin Glacier that are accessed on helicopter tours.

- **Seavey's IdidaRide Sled Dog Tours** (12820 Old Exit Glacier Rd.; 907/224-8607; www.ididaride.com) is run by veteran musher—and 2017 Iditarod winner—Mitch Seavey.
- **Seward Helicopters** (2210 Airport Rd.; 907/362-4354; www.sewardhelicopters.com; late May-early Sept.) has on-the-snow summertime dogsledding trips.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

One of the prime attractions for winter visitors to Alaska is the chance to see the aurora borealis—northern lights—in action. The best places are northern cities like Nome or Fairbanks, but Denali National Park and Talkeetna often see aurora activity, and when conditions are right, the sky lights up across the state. Time your visit between August and mid-April. Find a place looking north without city lights or a full moon. Auroras often occur between 11pm and 2am, but sometimes nothing appears when peak action was predicted, while at other times the sky erupts without warning with a burst of color and motion.

For professional photos you'll need a camera with high ISO capabilities and a tripod. Your photos will reveal more colors—especially reds and blues—than can be seen with the naked eye, but this is because photoreceptors in our eyes cannot differentiate colors in the dark. Nevertheless, gazing up at the night sky from a quiet, remote spot is an experience you won't forget.

IDITAROD

https://iditarod.com; Mar.

The most Alaskan of all Alaskan events is the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race from Anchorage to Nome. The “Last Great Race” is run each March, attracting 50 or more of the world’s best mushers, each with a team of up to 20 dogs. Today’s Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race has its origins in the winter of 1925 when a diphtheria epidemic broke out in Nome and the territorial governor hurriedly dispatched a package of life-saving antitoxin serum to halt the disease’s spread. Due to the freezing conditions, delivery by dog sled was the quickest option. A Herculean relay effort by 20 different mushers and their dogs brought the vaccine to Nome in just six days. They somehow managed to cover the 674 mi (1,085 km) in conditions that included whiteout blizzards, 80 mph (130 km/h) winds, and temperatures down to -64°F (-53°C). Today, the Iditarod continues to be one of the most strenuous events in the world, with below-0°F (-18°C) temperatures, fierce winds, and all the hazards that go with crossing the most remote parts of Alaska in winter.

A PLETHORA OF NATIONAL PARKS

Alaska takes great pride in preserving its natural spaces. With many national forests and national wildlife refuges across the state, Alaska also contains eight national parks. In addition to Denali National Park and Glacier Bay National Park, you can also visit:

- **Gates of the Arctic National Park** (www.nps.gov/gaar) is one of the world's largest protected parklands at 8.4 million ac (3.3 million ha). Visitors to this remote area enjoy a tranquility that comes without roads, trails, or permanent buildings.
- **Kobuk Valley National Park** (www.nps.gov/kova) encompasses the Kobuk River and the **Great Kobuk Sand Dunes.** The area is along the caribou migration route and is home to both grizzly and black bears.
- **Katmai National Park and Preserve** (www.nps.gov/katm) is worth a visit for its volcanic landscape, outstanding salmon fishing, and the opportunity to see brown bears up close.
- **Lake Clark National Park and Preserve** (www.nps.gov/lacl) is the ancestral home of the Dena'ina people. The lake, or Qizhjeh Vena, as it is known to the Dena'ina, is home to sockeye salmon. Come to hike, learn about Native heritage, and see brown bears.
- **Kenai Fjords National Park** (www.nps.gov/kefj) covers 607,805 ac (245,970 ha) of ice, rock, and rugged coastline on the southern end of the Kenai Peninsula. Many visitors come to ride the tour boats past teeming bird colonies or up to tidewater glaciers; many others hike to scenic Exit Glacier or up a steep path to the edge of Harding Icefield itself.
- **Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve** (www.nps.gov/wrst) is 13.2 million ac (5.3 million ha) of rugged

land covered in volcanoes and glaciers. Backcountry hikers come to trek through the country's largest national park and marvel at some of the highest peaks in the United States.

BEST FOOD

SEAFOOD

Alaska is renowned for seafood, and visitors to the state will find salmon, halibut, and crab on menus in every small town. Commercial fishing is Alaska's second-largest industry, and Alaska accounts for more than half of the nation's total seafood production. Here are some of the best spots to try:

- **Simon & Seaforts** (420 L St., Anchorage; 907/274-3502; www.simonandseaforts.com) has splendid views overlooking Turnagain Arm, plus dishes of Alaskan halibut, salmon, and black cod.
- **Fresh Catch Café** (4025 Homer Spit Rd., Homer; 907/756-3486; May-Sept.) serves halibut fish-and-chips, scallops, and king crab. This is a popular seasonal spot on the Homer Spit.
- **Alaska Salmon Bake in Pioneer Park** (2300 Airport Way, Pioneer Park, Fairbanks; 907/452-7274; www.akvisit.com; mid-May-mid-Sept.) is a great spot to enjoy a seafood feast.
- **Louie's Steak & Seafood** (Uptown Motel, 47 Spur View Dr., Kenai; 907/283-3660; www.louiessteakandseafood.com) is a surf-and-turf restaurant with rustic Alaskan decor.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Native crafts are alive and well in Alaska and make a great souvenir. At craft fairs, galleries, and museum gift shops, you'll find grass and baleen baskets, handcrafted dolls, dance fans, beadwork, jewelry, and masks. When buying Native Alaskan handicrafts from anyone other than the artist, always look for the **Silver Hand** logo that identifies the work as an authentic Native Alaskan piece. Reputable Anchorage places to purchase Native Alaskan pieces include the **Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Museum,** and **Alaska Native Medical Center Craft Shop.**

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport:** ANC; 5000 W. International Airport Rd.; 907/266-2526; https://dot.alaska.gov/anc
- **Fairbanks International Airport:** FAI; 6450 Airport Way; 907/474-2500; https://dot.alaska.gov/faiiap
- **Juneau International Airport:** JNU; 1873 Shell Simmons Dr.; 907/789-7821; https://juneau.org/airport

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Alaska Travel Advice:** www.alaska.org
- **The Milepost:** https://themilepost.com [URL inactive]

- **Alaska State Parks:** https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Anchorage Daily News:*** https://adn.com

WASHINGTON

Brimming with enchantment, Washington state is a true spectacle of nature, culture, and adventure. Picture this—snowy mountaintops puncturing the skyline, dense forests veiling hidden waterfalls, vast vineyards stretching under the clear skies, and rugged coastlines kissed by the Pacific, all interspersed with unique towns and cities.

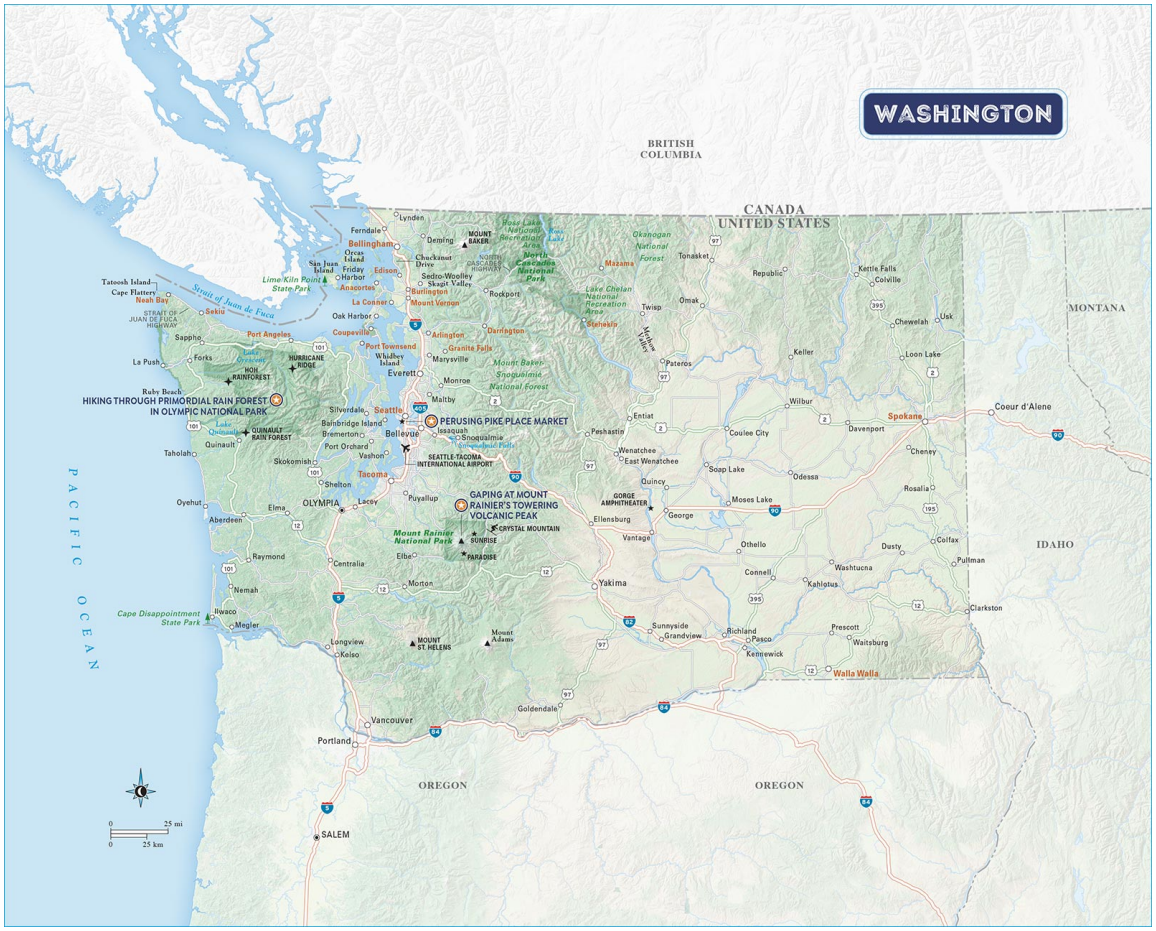
Yet beyond the city lights, Washington whispers an invitation to the great outdoors. Exchange the cityscape for a canvas of stars reflected in the tranquil waters of the Pacific coast. Swap city streets for trails winding through lush, moss-draped rain forests in Olympic National Park. And suddenly, the Emerald City feels like a world away.

AREA: 71,298 sq mi / 184,661 sq km (18th)

POPULATION: 7,958,180 (13th)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 11, 1889 (42nd)

STATE CAPITAL: Olympia


WASHINGTON
BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
MONTANA
IDAHO
OREGON
OREGON
PACIFIC OCEAN
HIKING THROUGH PRIMORDIAL RAIN FOREST IN OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK
PERUSING PIKE PLACE MARKET
GAPING AT MOUNT RAINIER'S TOWERING VOLCANIC PEAK
Lynden
Ferndale
Bellingham
Deming
MOUNT BAKER
Mount Baker National Recreation Area
Mount Baker Ski Area
Okanogan National Forest
Tonasket
Republic
Kettle Falls
Colville
Orcas Island
San Juan Island
Friday Harbor
Edison
Chuckanut Drive
North Cascades Highway
North Cascades National Park
Mazama
Tatoosh Island
Cape Flattery
Neah Bay
Lime Kiln Point State Park
Strait of Juan de Fuca
Sekiu
Skagit Valley
Burlington
Mount Vernon
Rockport
Lake Chelan National Recreation Area
Stehekin
Twisp
Omak
Chewelah
Usk
Oak Harbor
La Conner
Coupeville
Arlington
Darrington
Methow Valley
Port Angeles
Port Townsend
Granite Falls
Sappho
Forks
La Push
Lake Crescent
HURRICANE RIDGE
HOH RAINFOREST
Whidbey Island
Marysville
Everett
Monroe
Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
Pateros
Keller
Loon Lake
Ruby Beach
Maltby
Silverdale
Seattle
Issaquah
Snoqualmie
Snoqualmie Falls
Entiat
Wilbur
Spokane
Coeur d'Alene
Lake Quinault
QUINAULT RAIN FOREST
Quinault
Bainbridge Island
Bremerton
Bellevue
Port Orchard
Vashon
SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Peshastin
Coulee City
Davenport
Cheney
Taholah
Skokomish
Shelton
Tacoma
Wenatchee
East Wenatchee
Soap Lake
Odessa
Quincy
Rosalia
Oyehut
Aberdeen
Elma
OLYMPIA
Lacey
Puyallup
GORGE AMPHITHEATER
Moses Lake
George
Ellensburg
Vantage
Mount Rainier National Park
CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN
SUNRISE
PARADISE
Elbe
Othello
Dusty
Colfax
Pullman
Raymond
Centralia
Connell
Washtucna
Kahlotus
Nemah
Morton
Yakima
Clarkston
Cape Disappointment State Park
Ilwaco
Megler
Sunnyside
Grandview
Richland
Pasco
Prescott
Waitsburg
Kennewick
Walla Walla
Longview
Kelso
MOUNT ST. HELENS
Mount Adams
Goldendale
Vancouver
Portland
SALEM
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Seattle, distinguished by its skyline bearing the iconic Space Needle, is the state's coastal hub. Venture into the heart of wine country in the **Columbia Gorge,** where sprawling vineyards and boutique wineries offer a taste of Washington's finest vintages. Enjoy the coastal views of the Olympic Peninsula, home to **Olympic National Park** and the lush **Hoh Rain Forest.** Hike the rugged trails of **Mount Rainier National Park,** where alpine meadows burst with wildflowers in the summer and pristine snow blankets the terrain in winter. Delve into profound Indigenous cultures, take in the sweeping views from Hurricane Ridge, and seek majestic whales off the shores of the **San Juan Islands.**

WHEN TO GO

Spring in Washington brings a mix of mild temperatures and increased rainfall, particularly in the western part of the state. While it may rain sporadically throughout the day, sunny skies often appear later. Washington in the **summer** typically means sunshine across the state, with warm, pleasant weather and minimal rain. **Fall** in Washington is marked by cooler temperatures and the return of rainfall, especially in the western regions. The foliage in the Cascade Range and around Puget Sound turns vibrant hues of red, orange, and yellow, offering stunning scenic drives and hikes. Washington's **winters** are wet and mild on the western side, with frequent rain and occasional snow in lower elevations. The Cascade Range and Olympic Mountains receive significant snowfall, making them popular destinations for winter sports.

TOP 3

1 GAPING AT MOUNT RAINIER'S TOWERING VOLCANIC PEAK

360/569-2211; www.nps.gov/mora

The majestic 14,410-ft (4,392-m) active stratovolcano known as Mount Rainier stands tall and proud in Mount Rainier National Park,

one of the most popular tourist attractions in the state. Ancient forests cover the lower slopes, and subalpine meadows with wildflowers surround the icy volcano, making it a photographer's dream. On clear days in Seattle, magnificent Mount Rainier is an iconic part of the city's skyline. Parts of the mountain are open throughout the year, meaning visitors can explore this beauty in all seasons.



MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

With more than 260 mi (420 km) of trails, the park is a haven for hikers of all abilities, from those seeking strolls through colorful meadows to those after challenging routes over rough terrain. In addition, thousands of mountaineers attempt to summit Mount Rainier each year. The few campsites scattered throughout the park are perfect but fill up quickly. With stunning panoramic views and an extensive network of trails through alpine environments, the **Sunrise**

region of the park is the highest point reachable by vehicle. The **Paradise** area is ideal for hiking, especially on the Skyline Trail to witness the seasonal wildflowers that pop up.

2 PERUSING PIKE PLACE MARKET

Pike Pl. between Pike St. and Virginia St., Seattle; 206/682-7453; www.pikeplacemarket.org

Although the Space Needle may be the most iconic of Seattle's landmarks, the historic Pike Place Market is the heart of the city. Originally opened in 1907 as a meeting place for local farmers and customers, the market has expanded into a broad mix of shops, restaurants, and more.



PIKE PLACE MARKET

Sprawling over 9 ac (3.5 ha) in downtown Seattle, Pike Place Market encompasses multiple buildings and a labyrinth of over 500 stalls, shops, and eateries. This vibrant, bustling marketplace buzzes with neon signs, street performers, and everything from freshly caught seafood to bountiful local produce.

Many of Seattle's most recognizable landmarks are in Pike Place Market. The bronze sculpture of Rachel the Piggy Bank, a charming mascot and photo opportunity, welcomes guests as they enter the market. Coffee lovers eager to explore the origins of the global coffee giant flock to the **original Starbucks** store, which opened in 1971, just a few minutes away. The market's lower levels, the **"Down Under,"** are a labyrinth of unusual and eclectic stores selling anything from antiques to one-of-a-kind handmade items. **Post Alley,** which is close by, is well known for its lively ambience and the **Gum Wall,** an odd and multicolored mosaic of chewing gum that has evolved into an eccentric icon.

3 HIKING THROUGH PRIMORDIAL RAIN FOREST IN OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/olym

The ancient rain forests, rocky shores, and snowcapped mountains of Olympic National Park make it seem like you're in a storybook. The western section is home to the beautiful, moss-covered **Hoh Rain Forest,** and if you travel farther west to the wild Pacific coast, you'll find waves crashing against rocky shores and aquatic life abounding in tidal pools. The **Hoh Rain Forest** is one of the park's most famous attractions, known for its old-growth temperate rain forest. Hiking trails, including the popular **Hall of Mosses** (0.8 mi/1.2 km) and **Spruce Nature Trail** (1.2 mi/1.9 km), give visitors the chance to explore the lush greenery, with towering trees, mosses, and ferns that thrive in the heavy annual rainfall. **Kalaloch** has a rugged coastline and half a dozen beaches, including the picturesque Ruby Beach. Visitors love walking among the dramatic sea stacks and tidepools. It's a prime location for beachcombing, bird-watching, and camping by the ocean.

The **Quinault Rain Forest** is an impressive introduction to the park's magnificent rain forests, and **Lake Quinault** is its gateway. Among the things to do at this glacial lake are fishing, boating, and exploring the many hiking paths around the verdant, deep rain forest that is home to some of the biggest tree species on earth. The area is

co-managed by the Quinault Indian Nation and the National Park Service.



QUINAULT RAIN FOREST

HIGHLIGHTS

SPACE NEEDLE

400 Broad St., Seattle; 206/905-2100; www.spaceneedle.com

An iconic symbol of Seattle, the Space Needle features an observation deck and revolving lounge, providing incredible 360-degree views of the city and beyond. It has an outdoor section with glass benches to take “sky-high selfies.” This stunning landmark, standing at 605 ft (184 m), has been a symbol of the city since its construction in 1962 for the World’s Fair.



SPACE NEEDLE IN SEATTLE

When you get hungry, head to the **Atmos Cafe** ($4-10) for light snacks, coffee, beer, and wine. For those who are 21 and over, make a reservation at **The Loupe Lounge** (Sept.-Apr.), where you'll be treated to specially crafted cocktails and set Pacific Northwest-inspired food towers to choose from.

MUSEUM OF FLIGHT

9404 E. Marginal Way South, Seattle; 206/764-5700; www.museumofflight.org

Ever since William E. Boeing established the Boeing Company in 1916, Seattle has been known for its innovative contributions to the aeronautical industry. One of the world's best air and space museums, the Museum of Flight takes visitors on a comprehensive tour of aviation's past, from the dawn of flight through the earliest days of space travel.

Because there are over 175 aircraft and spacecraft on display, plan on spending plenty of time here (fortunately there's an on-site café). You can even climb aboard a space shuttle trainer that spent some time in outer space. The museum also hosts special events like Hops & Props, where guests dress up for a special night of craft beer tastings at the museum.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS

The San Juan Islands and North Puget Sound region are located in the northwest corner of Washington state. Nestled between Seattle to the south and Vancouver Island to the north, this area is easily accessible via ferries, yet its tranquil islands feel worlds away. While there are over 170 named islands in the San Juan Islands, only a handful are inhabitable. San Juan, Orcas, Lopez, and Shaw Islands are the only ones you can bring your car to, and are accessible by **Washington State Ferries** (https://wsdot.wa.gov) from Anacortes. Spend at least one night on each island you visit. Given the ferry time, spending several days on each island lets you fully appreciate everything it offers without rushing. Start on San Juan Island, visiting the **San Juan Historical Museum** and the **San Juan Island National Historical Park.** For further relaxation, head to **Lime Kiln Point State Park,** where you can spot orcas from the shore or walk along hiking trails. For a more adventurous escape, kayak around Orcas Island, discovering secret coves and abundant wildlife, or bike across Lopez Island and soak in the scenery at your own pace.

SNOQUALMIE FALLS

6501 Railroad Ave., Snoqualmie; 435/326-2563; www.snoqualmiefalls.com

Standing at 270 ft (82 m), Snoqualmie Falls has gained widespread recognition through its appearances in film and television, most notably in the series *Twin Peaks*, which showcased the falls' mesmerizing presence. It's also one of the few waterfalls you can visit without hiking in, making it popular for travelers of all ages.

In 1898, the world's first underground power plant was constructed at Snoqualmie Falls to provide electricity to nearby towns, contributing to the region's industrialization. Today an ADA-accessible viewing platform

allows for close-up views of the falls from the top, making it a popular spot for photography. To see the falls from a different perspective, take the 0.7-mi (1.1-km) path down to the base, where you can walk along the river and get even closer.

At the top is the **Salish Lodge & Spa** (425/888-2556; www.salishlodge.com; $246-500), which *Twin Peaks* fans will recognize as the Great Northern Hotel.

MOUNT ST. HELENS

Mount St. Helens is one of the most awe-inspiring sights in Washington; thousands of people visit every year to see this active volcano. Although it hasn't had a large explosion since 1980, the devastation the eruption left behind is clearly visible—as is occasional steam rising out of it.

Today Mount St. Helens offers a unique opportunity to see the aftermath and ongoing recovery from the 1980 eruption. The Johnston Ridge Observatory has before-and-after pictures of the mountain, and visitors can learn how the area has come back to life over the years. A variety of hiking trails lead all over the volcano, so hikers can get up close to the destruction zones. If you stop at only one visitor center during your trip, make it the **Johnston Ridge Observatory** (WA-504, Toutle; 360/274-2140; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]), located at the end of WA-504. The hour-long drive from I-5 gives you peeks of increasingly dramatic views of the volcano, leading to one of the closest vantage points you can get to without hiking. Just a few miles from the crater, on the observatory's deck, visitors are often found mesmerized by the striking vista of the volcanic aftermath.

HURRICANE RIDGE

Olympic National Park; 360/565-3130; www.nps.gov/olym

Hurricane Ridge is one of the most-visited spots in Olympic National Park, thanks to its stunning views and easy-access hikes. Situated just 17 mi (27 km) south of Port Angeles, the area is easily accessible by car, and the drive up to the ridge is scenic, winding through forests and offering views of the Olympic Mountains. On the way, stop at **Heart O' the Hills Entrance Station** to pay the entrance fee. Once at the ridge, visitors are greeted with

views of the park's rugged mountain terrain, green valleys, and, on clear days, a view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and even Canada. Before heading out, call 360/565-3131 to check road conditions.

LAKE CRESCENT

Olympic National Park; 360/565-3130; www.nps.gov/olym

Formed by glaciers, Lake Crescent is one of the deepest lakes in Washington and is famous for its crystal-clear waters and dazzling scenery. Many people come here for beautiful hikes, kayaking trips, and fishing. As if the lake's captivating beauty weren't enough, the historic Lake Crescent Lodge, a landmark resort building, has been welcoming guests since 1916 and is worth an overnight stay. The 1.8 mi (2.9 km) round-trip hike to **Marymere Falls** is one of the most popular trails in the park, as it's doable for most skill levels. The flat trail goes through a forest, over a bridge, and then up a small hill with waterfalls on the other side. The 3.4-mi (5.5-km) round-trip hike to **Mount Storm King** is challenging, but the views make everything worth it. As you stand on a rocky outcropping, you can see for miles down glistening Lake Crescent, and lush Barnes Creek Valley is spread out below you in an iconic vista. Both hikes start at the ranger station (360/928-3380).



KAYAKING ON LAKE CRESCENT

CAPE FLATTERY

The farthest northwestern point in the continental United States, Cape Flattery is defined by spectacular cliffs, sea caves, and abundant marine and bird life, not to mention spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Tatoosh Island. Natural forces have sculpted the terrain into something nearly otherworldly, giving the impression of being on the very edge of the world.

The cape is part of the Makah Reservation, and visitors are required to obtain a recreational use **permit** ($20/vehicle, valid for the calendar year) from the Makah Tribe, a measure that helps protect and maintain this

culturally and environmentally significant area. These permits are available for purchase at various locations in Neah Bay, including the Makah Cultural and Research Center. The path to Cape Flattery is a fairly easy 0.75-mi (1.2 km) trail, a combination of dirt paths and boardwalk that winds its way through the forest to a collection of lookout points.

STEHEKIN

Located at the far northern end of Lake Chelan, Stehekin is one of the most remote towns you can visit in the North Cascades, accessible only by boat, floatplane, or rigorous hiking trails. Its remoteness is part of its allure, as it's about 50 mi (80 km) from the bustling areas of Chelan. Late spring through mid-fall are ideal times to visit Stehekin to experience the full range of what it has. From exploring the many hiking trails to viewing a cascading waterfall, it's hard not to reconnect with nature when you're here. With no cell phone service, many visitors find the isolation refreshing—a rare chance to unplug and unwind. Visit **McKellar Cabin** and **Old Stehekin Schoolhouse** to learn about the area's past before setting off on a 15-minute hike to **Rainbow Falls** or a 5-mi (8-km) round-trip hike on the **Agnes Gorge Trail.** The **Lady of the Lake ferry** (509/682-4584; https://ladyofthelake.com) leaves from downtown Chelan and has several options, such as a leisurely 4.5-hour ride with multiple stops around the lake and an express ferry that takes 1.5-2.5 hours from Chelan to Stehekin.

GORGE AMPHITHEATRE

754 Silica Rd., George; 206/607-3440; www.gorgeamphitheatre.com [URL inactive]

Nothing signifies the arrival of summer more than attending a concert at the iconic Gorge Amphitheatre, an outdoor venue with the scenic backdrop of the Columbia River Gorge. With a capacity of 27,500, it hosts a variety of music artists throughout the season. Many attendees choose to stay at one of the Gorge's campsites to enjoy the warm weather and be close to the venue. The Gorge is about 45 minutes east of Ellensburg; take I-90 east for 34 mi (55 km), take exit 143, and follow Silica Road for 7 mi (11 km).

Major CITIES

SEATTLE: Any local will tell you, in Seattle life isn't just lived—it's savored. This city hums with life, stirring the senses with vibrant street art, the tantalizing aromas of Pike Place Market, the rhythmic strumming of street musicians, and, of course, the unparalleled taste of its famed coffee.

SPOKANE: Spokane is a bustling city in Eastern Washington and offers plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities. Enjoy concerts with a river view at the Gorge Amphitheatre, or follow the Spokane River Centennial Trail, a paved path ideal for biking and walking.

TACOMA: South of Seattle, Tacoma has a rich cultural heritage and a fascinating industrial background. The historic downtown is experiencing a renaissance thanks to the influx of new stores and restaurants.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Upon arriving from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, start with a visit to iconic **Pike Place Market** to sample fresh seafood and shop for unique handicrafts. Enjoy a scenic waterfront dinner in Belltown at **Aqua by El Gaucho,** followed by an evening ride on the **Seattle Great Wheel.**

DAY 2 Head to the **Space Needle** for some of the best views of the city. Take the elevator back down and walk next door to **Chihuly Garden and Glass** to admire the stunning glass sculptures. Spend the afternoon at the **Museum of Pop Culture,** exploring exhibits dedicated to music, science fiction, and pop culture. Head back to Pike Place for an Italian meal at **The Pink Door.**

DAY 3 Drive to **Mount Rainier National Park,** arriving at **Paradise** in the early afternoon after a 3.5-hour drive. Spend the afternoon hiking the **Skyline Trail** and stop at **Myrtle Falls** on the way back. In the evening, enjoy dinner at the **Paradise Inn Dining Room** (May-Sept.) and head to Ashford to stay the night.

DAY 4 Start your day with a quick breakfast at the **Ashford General Store** and embark on a scenic two-hour drive to the **Sunrise area,** following Stevens Canyon Road and WA-123. If you're up for a hike, make your way to the **Silver Falls trailhead** in the Ohanapecosh area, known for its beautiful waterfall. Continue north to Sunrise, making sure to stop at some of the many viewpoints along **Sunrise Park Road.** Once you arrive at Sunrise, visit the **Sunrise Visitor Center** to get information on any hikes you're interested in. **Sourdough Ridge Trail** has expansive views of the park's terrain, or hike to **Mount Fremont Lookout** to visit a historic fire lookout.

DAY 5 Today, you'll drive four hours to **Lake Quinault** in the southwestern part of **Olympic National Park.** To immerse yourself in the lush environment, drive the **Quinault Rain Forest Loop** or hike the **Quinault Loop Trail.** End your day with dinner at **The Salmon House** for baked salmon and a view of the lake.

DAY 6 Explore the tidepools and sea stacks on **Ruby Beach,** and continue 75 minutes to **Lake Crescent** in Olympic National Park. Spend the late afternoon strolling around the lake's perimeter or go for a hike. **Marymere Falls** is an easy hike that leads to a beautiful waterfall. From here, you'll drive 30 minutes to **Port Angeles.**

DAY 7 Start with visiting **Hurricane Ridge.** Drive up to this stunning vantage point to enjoy views of the mountains and valleys, and spend the afternoon hiking one of the many trails, such as **High Ridge.** It's a 90-minute drive to **Port Townsend,** where you can rest and refuel before hopping on a quick ferry ride (206/464-6400;

https://wsdot.wa.gov) to **Whidbey Island.** You'll spend the night in Coupeville.

DAY 8 Drive 45 minutes to Anacortes. Along the way, you'll cross the bridge at Deception Pass. It's a 75-minute ferry ride to San Juan Island, home to one of the best land-based whale-watching spots, in **Lime Kiln Point State Park,** also known as Whale Watch Park.

DAY 9 Enjoy a leisurely morning on the island before taking the ferry back to Anacortes. From here, it's about a 1.5-hour drive to Seattle.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA HIGHWAY

WA-112

WA-112, also known as the Strait of Juan de Fuca Highway, is a scenic drive that is a destination in its own right due to its stunning coastal views and access to natural attractions. Starting from US 101 near **Port Angeles,** the highway stretches approximately 61 mi (98 km) westward to **Neah Bay,** and the drive typically takes 1.5-2 hours, depending on stops and traffic.



STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA

This route is renowned for its breathtaking views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, with the water on one side and the lush forests of the Olympic Peninsula on the other. This drive takes you through beaches, dense forests, and small towns, and on clear days, you’re able to see across the water to Canada. There are numerous places to stop to explore the water or take pictures.

Parts of this drive are quite windy, and sections through the forest are largely unlit, so it’s best to do this drive during the day when there’s plenty of visibility.

WASHINGTON'S NATIVE HERITAGE

Look at a map of Washington and you'll see the impact of Native Americans—names such as Puyallup, Tacoma, and Seattle. However, just 92,000 Native Americans call Washington home today, or 1.2 percent of the state's population. There are 29 officially recognized tribes in Washington, each with a unique history, language, and cultural practices.

There are 29 reservations in the state, which are areas reserved for Indigenous peoples. Located in south-central Washington, the Yakama Nation Reservation is the largest at approximately 2,000 sq mi (5,200 sq km). Less than half of Native Americans live on reservations; the rest reside in urban and rural areas around Washington.

While in Seattle, visit the **Burke Museum** (4303 Memorial Way NE, Seattle; 206/543-7907; www.burkemuseum.org) to admire extensive collections and exhibits relating to natural history and Indigenous Northwest coastal civilizations.

CHUCKANUT DRIVE

WA-11 between Burlington and Bellingham

One of the most scenic drives in the state is Chuckanut Drive, also known as WA-11. This byway stretches 22 mi (35 km) between Burlington and Bellingham, passing through farmlands before winding north along the cliffs. It was initially a gravel road, created in 1896. It became part of the Pacific Highway from California to Canada before a larger road was built inland, making this an alternative route.

At milepost 10, you'll find **Oyster Dome,** a popular hiking spot leading to fabulous views of Samish Bay. Finish off your hike at nearby **Oyster Bar** (360/766-6185; www.theoysterbar.net), the famous family-owned shellfish farm offering a variety of seafood options and waterfront dining. Three mi

(4.8 km) onward, stop at **Larrabee State Park** (360/676-2093; https://parks.wa.gov), Washington's first state park, with hiking trails, 8,100 ft (2.5 km) of shoreline, tidepools, fishing lakes, and good bird-watching. At the end of Chuckanut Drive, **Bellingham** is worth spending the day exploring. It's home to Western Washington University and has a casual, laid-back vibe. It's also a haven for beer lovers, with almost 20 breweries in the area and growing each year.

NORTH CASCADES HIGHWAY

WA-20 between Burlington and Mazama

The North Cascades Highway, also known as WA-20 and the North Cascades Scenic Byway, is a scenic 140-mi (225-km) journey through one of the most visually stunning landscapes in the state. Starting in Sedro-Woolley in the west and concluding in Twisp in the east, this route has dramatic shifts in scenery. About 24 mi (39 km) from Sedro-Woolley, you'll pass through the town of Concrete. This quiet town is a popular jumping-off point for visiting nearby **Baker Lake,** popular for fishing, swimming, and hiking.



NORTH CASCADES HIGHWAY

Along the way, you'll see serene farmlands give way to breathtaking snowy mountains, dense woods, and raging glacial rivers. It's the only road that goes through North Cascades National Park, but many people come here for the drive alone as there are multiple photo ops to stop at along the twisting road.

The North Cascades Highway is closed between Ross Dam and Washington Pass November-April due to increased avalanche threats caused by heavy snowfall. Parts of the park are still open to tourists, but it's important to bring gear like chains and know how to drive in snow.

MOUNTAIN LOOP HIGHWAY

The Mountain Loop Highway is a beautiful 55-mi (89-km) scenic byway, where you'll pass through lush greenery, calming rivers, and see glimpses of towering mountains. This is easy enough to do as a day trip, perhaps also doing one of the many hikes found off the highway. Numerous campsites are also available, which is a big draw in the summer. While this technically

isn't a complete loop, many people start in Granite Falls, follow Mountain Loop Highway to its end at Darrington, and then continue onto WA-530 for 28 mi (45 km) to get back to I-5. Along the way, you can take a hike to **Granite Falls Fish Ladder,** where you can see salmon, such as Chinook, sockeye, and coho. On the way to Arlington, consider taking a tour at the **Outback Kangaroo Farm** (360/403-7474; www.theoutbackkangroofarm.com) to visit the many different animal species living on the farm, including kangaroos, wallabies, lemurs, peacocks, and Nigerian dwarf goats.

The loop is accessible late spring-fall; **Barlow Pass** is often snow-covered until late spring. The route has asphalt roads from Verlot to Barlow Pass and from Darrington to White Chuck River Road, with a 14-mi (23-km) one-lane gravel stretch in between. Wildlife like deer may cross the road, so caution is advised. Facilities such as gas stations are scarce; prepare accordingly.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Washington's plethora of outdoor activities is one of the state's biggest draws. During winter, skiers and snowboarders flock to the Cascade Mountains and destinations like Stevens Pass and **Crystal Mountain.** As soon as the weather warms up, these mountains become a utopia for hikers, bikers, and campers. Locations such as Westport and the San Juan Islands along the Pacific coast attract tourists who come for fishing, whale watching, and beachcombing. Water sports enthusiasts love the state's many rivers and lakes, like the Columbia River and Lake Washington, perfect for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

LIME KILN POINT STATE PARK

1567 West Side Rd., San Juan Island; 360/378-2044; https://parks.wa.gov; Discover Pass required for parking

Lime Kiln Point State Park is the best spot on the island to spot whales and porpoises from dry land, thanks to its location on the western side and proximity to the Haro Strait; you can even see across the water to Canada on a clear day. There's a sign that says when the most recent whale spotting was, and you can often talk to a staff member to see if they know where the whales might be headed next. While you're there, check out the lighthouse from 1919, and stop by the interpretive center May-September to learn about the history of lime mining.

CAPE DISAPPOINTMENT STATE PARK

244 Robert Gray Dr., Ilwaco; 360/642-3078; https://parks.wa.gov; Discover Pass required for parking

Cape Disappointment State Park is at the meeting point of the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean, making it home to both saltwater and freshwater ecosystems. In addition to two old lighthouses, the area encompasses verdant old-growth forests, excellent fishing sites, and a rough shoreline. The park is ideal for camping, fishing, boating, and exploring the shore. Many pathways allow visitors to hike through the park and discover its rich history and beautiful landscape. On the cliffs of Cape Disappointment State Park sits the **Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center** (360/642-3029), which links the intriguing marine and military feats of the Chinook tribe, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and other related stories. Attractive displays, authentic artifacts—including a first-order Fresnel lens—and an intriguing short film await you at the center. There are amazing views of the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia River from the covered observation deck. For more views, take the trail from the interpretive center parking lot to the **Cape Disappointment Lighthouse,** which is about a 1-mi (1.6-km) round-trip hike.

MOUNT BAKER AND HEATHER MEADOWS

Mount Baker is a prominent landmark in Washington state, rising to a height of 10,781 ft (3,286 m) and providing spectacular views across much of the Puget Sound area on a clear day. The mountain is a year-round mecca for adventurers, presenting world-class skiing and snowboarding in the

winter and extensive hiking paths with alpine lakes and lush forests in the summer. **Mount Baker Highway,** also known as WA-542, is a scenic route that starts in Bellingham and ends at Artist Point on Mount Baker. The drive passes through many small towns and has opportunities to pull over for hikes or waterfalls. While the road to the ski area remains open throughout the year, the area gets heavy winter snow, and chains are required November-March. In winter, **Heather Meadows Ski Area** is the best for beginners. Groomed slopes, moguls, and open bowls make up the varied terrain that caters to skiers and snowboarders of all abilities. During the summer, the area offers hikes that go past glistening alpine lakes to strenuous ascents rewarded by astonishing views.



ARTIST POINT, MOUNT BAKER HIGHWAY

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

SKAGIT VALLEY TULIP FESTIVAL

www.tulipfestival.org; Apr.

No other festival in the area is as popular as the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, when the tulip fields come to life in a vibrant sea of color for the month of April. Thousands of people from across the state flock to Skagit Valley to see the millions of tulips displayed across acres of fields, take stunning pictures, go on tractor rides, and attend lively festivals during this month.

Weekends are very crowded, so it's best to go first thing in the morning or on the weekdays if your schedule allows. Many fields have up-to-date websites, so you can check their cameras to see if the tulips are in full bloom yet. The tulip farms tend to stay open even when it's not tulip season, as they sell local produce, jam, ciders, and other products throughout the year.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

SEATTLE'S COFFEE SCENE

Since the founding of Starbucks at Pike Place Market in 1971, Seattle's been obsessed with coffee. Any local will tell you, however, that the small, independent coffee shops are the place to go for the best coffee. Not only does each one offer a unique experience, whether it's artful latte creations in Capitol Hill or expertly brewed single-origin pour-overs in Ballard, but most also sustainably source and locally roast their beans. They've also become gathering places; you'll find locals working out of their local café or meeting with friends to play cards while they enjoy a matcha latte.



COFFEE AND DOUGHNUT, SEATTLE

- **Storyville Coffee** (94 Pike St., Ste. 34; 206/780-5777; https://storyville.com): Dedicated to crafting the perfect cup, Storyville Coffee emphasizes high-quality beans and expert roasting to achieve rich, complex flavors. Plus it has one of the nicest views of the market and Puget Sound.
- **Zeitgeist Coffee** (171 S. Jackson St.; 206/583-0497; www.zeitgeistcoffee.com): With its artsy decor and robust coffee, Zeitgeist in Pioneer Square is a popular gathering spot for artists and locals.

- **Herkimer Coffee** (three locations; https://herkimercoffee.com): With each cup of coffee, you can taste the premium, artisanal coffee that has become famous for its careful sourcing and roasting.

WALLA WALLA WINERIES

With more than 120 wineries dotting its scenic terrain, the Walla Walla Valley has become a renowned wine region since its 1984 classification as an American Viticultural Area (AVA). Going wine-tasting in downtown Walla Walla is convenient because you can walk a few blocks around Main Street to several dozen wine shops without needing to drive anywhere. **Forgeron Cellars** (33 W. Birch St.; 509/522-9463; www.forgeroncellars.com) symbolizes the craftsmanship involved in winemaking, serving wines like cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc, among others. **Kontos Cellars** (10 N. 2nd Ave.; 509/204-2141; www.kontoscellars.com) is owned by a father-and-son team whose roots in Walla Walla go back six generations. Kontos Cellars focuses on crafting limited-production red wines. Their cabernet sauvignon and merlot are favorites, but they also serve whites and sparkling wines. Reservations are recommended.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Sea-Tac):** SEA; 17801 International Blvd., SeaTac; 800/544-1965 or 206/787-5388; www.portseattle.org/sea-tac

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Washington Tourism:** https://stateofwatourism.com

- **Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission:** https://parks.wa.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The Seattle Times:*** www.seattletimes.com
- ***Seattle Magazine:*** www.seattlemag.com
- ***Seattle Met:*** www.seattlemet.com

OREGON

Oregon is a state full of natural wonders and urban charms. On the Oregon coast, rocky coastline beckons with fresh seafood, sweeping vistas, raging winter storms, and laid-back summer outings. Across the state, otherworldly landscapes and national monuments invite visitors underground to gaze upon the so-called Marble Halls of Oregon, aboveground to view the colorful Painted Hills, and to the rim of the impossibly blue Crater Lake.

On the land of the Burns Paiute, Coos, Umpqua, Siuslaw, Coquille, Grand Ronde, Klamath, and Siletz tribes—and the Umatilla and Warm Springs Reservations—it's hard not to marvel at what makes Oregon, well, Oregon. Never-ending scenic beauty, the relentless attention to craft by passionate makers, farm-fresh cuisine, and outdoor recreation to keep weekend warriors busy for years.

AREA: 98,379 sq mi / 254,799 sq km (9th)

POPULATION: 4,272,371 (27th)

STATEHOOD DATE: February 14, 1859 (33rd)

STATE CAPITAL: Salem


OREGON
WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON
CALIFORNIA
NEVADA
IDAHO
PACIFIC OCEAN
Coast Range
ROAD-TRIPPING ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE
STRETCHING YOUR LEGS IN PORTLAND
GAZING OVER CRATER LAKE FROM RIM DRIVE
Fort Stevens State Park
Astoria
FORT CLATSOP NATIONAL MEMORIAL
Tillamook Head
Ecola State Park
HAYSTACK ROCK
Indian Beach
Cannon Beach
Oswald West State Park
Nehalem
Clatskanie
St. Helens
Nehalem Valley
Scappoose
Multnomah Falls
Wahkeena Falls
Bridal Veil Falls
Latourell Falls
Hood River
Mosier
The Dalles
Biggs
Arlington
Umatilla
Hermiston
Pendleton
Lexington
Heppner
La Grande
Wallowa
Hells Canyon National Recreation Area
Oxbow
Halfway
Cape Meares
Tillamook
Forest Park
Hillsboro
Beaverton
Troutdale
Tigard
Yamhill
Newberg
McMinnville
Hebo
Otis
Canby
Government Camp
Mount Hood
Mount Hood National Forest
Ainsworth State Park
Woodburn
Maupin
Condon
Fossil
Shaniko
Ukiah
John Day River
North Powder
Anthony Lakes
Granite
Sumpter
Baker City
Snake River
Dallas
Independence
Willamette Valley
SALEM
Silver Falls State Park
Sublimity
Siuslaw National Forest
Newport
Albany
Corvallis
Lebanon
Waldport
Yachats
Cape Perpetua
Halsey
Sweet Home
Junction City
Madras
Mitchell
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
Mount Vernon
John Day
Sisters
Prineville
Redmond
SEA LION CAVES
Florence
Springfield
Eugene
Bend
Mount Bachelor
Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area
Reedsport
Elkton
Oakridge
Lyons Prairie Reservoir
HIGH DESERT MUSEUM
La Pine
Vale
Ontario
Juntura
Riley
Burns
Crane
BOISE
Succor Creek State Natural Area
Lake Owyhee
Coos Bay
Roseburg
Bandon
Diamond Lake
Chemult
Wagontire
WIZARD ISLAND
Rim Village
Crater Lake National Park
WATCHMAN OVERLOOK
Summer Lake
Canyonville
Port Orford
Humbug Mountain State Park
Rogue River
Ophir
Trail
Fort Klamath
Frenchglen
SAMUEL H. BOARDMAN STATE SCENIC CORRIDOR
Gold Beach
Grants Pass
Central Point
Medford
Valley Falls
Pistol River
Natural Bridges Cove
Whalehead Island
Brookings
Cave Junction
Ashland
Klamath Falls
Dairy
Altamont
Oregon Caves National Monument
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

The city of **Portland,** bisected by the winding Willamette River, is home to myriad friendly yet chic neighborhoods. Just east of Portland, the craggy **Columbia River Gorge** is home to the **Historic Columbia River Highway** and the highest concentration of waterfalls in North America. To the south, **Mount Hood** is Oregon's tallest peak—and offers four seasons of outdoor recreation. Immediately south of Portland, the **Willamette Valley** is the agricultural heart of the state and home to the eclectic city of **Eugene. Astoria** sits just inland from where the Columbia River flows into the Pacific Ocean. In southern Oregon, you'll find **Ashland** and **Crater Lake.**

WHEN TO GO

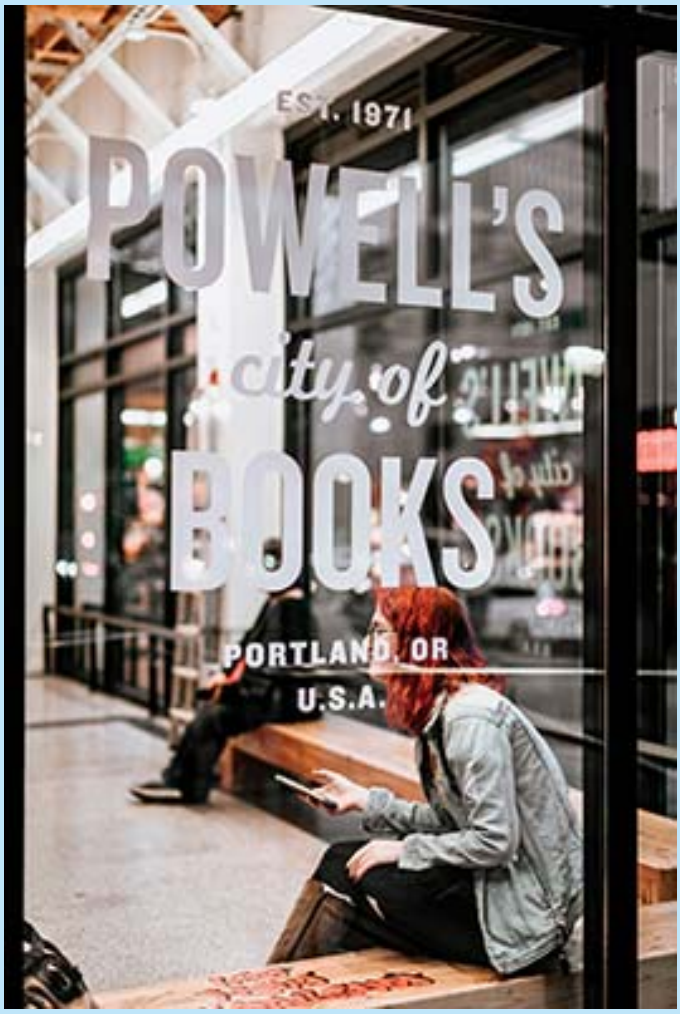
A **summer** visit typically means sunshine across the state, but **autumn** just might be the best time to visit Oregon with its cooler temperatures, dramatic **fall foliage,** and **harvest season** festivities. In **winter,** snow is rare in Western Oregon, though rain showers are frequent and near-freezing temperatures aren't unheard of. The season's first **wildflowers** appear in the Columbia River Gorge in April, and the area's **waterfalls** (fed by winter snowmelt) are at their thundering peak. **Wildfire season** can start as early as July and last into late September.

TOP 3

1 STRETCHING YOUR LEGS IN PORTLAND

Take in the city's celebrated culinary scene over brunch, spend the day at **Powell's City of Books,** and explore Portland's charming neighborhoods. Get your nature fix in the wooded hillsides of **Forest Park** or the sprawling **Washington Park.** If your visit aligns with cherry blossom season, be sure to visit the **Portland Japanese Garden.** A visit to the City of Roses wouldn't be complete without a stroll through the renowned **International Rose Test Garden**—followed up on the patio at some of the city's beloved craft breweries

or one of the city's many food cart pods along the likes of **Mississippi Avenue** or **Hawthorne Boulevard.**



POWELL'S CITY OF BOOKS

2 GAZING OVER CRATER LAKE FROM RIM DRIVE

541/594-3000; www.nps.gov/crla

Crater Lake is the centerpiece of Oregon's only national park. Drive the 33-mi (53-km) **Rim Drive** (July-Nov.), which encircles the lake. This highway is lined by 30 overlooks that afford views of both the lake and the surrounding Cascade Range around seemingly every turn. Allow 4-7 hours if stopping at viewpoints and enjoying an easy hike or two. Those with RVs should consider taking a **trolley tour**

(departing from Community House, Rim Village Dr.; 541/882-1896; https://craterlaketrolley.net).



CRATER LAKE

Heading clockwise from **Rim Village,** the first viewpoint you come to is **Discovery Point.** Continuing your loop, **Watchman Overlook,** on the west side of the park, affords seemingly top-down views of Wizard Island—and is an excellent place to watch the sunset; a viewpoint at **North Junction** affords awe-inspiring views of the lake; **Cloudcap Overlook** is the highest point in the park accessible to vehicles; **Phantom Ship Overlook** offers views of the rock formation it's named for, which rises from Crater Lake like a haunting vessel; and the **Sinnott Memorial Overlook** at **Rim Village** is a covered viewpoint that offers unimpeded lake views, interpretive panels, and a 3-D topographic map of the region. Note: Access to the lake via the Cleetwood Trail is closed until 2029 due to construction.

3 ROAD-TRIPPING ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

Just east of Portland, the Columbia River Gorge is an 80-mi (129-km) river canyon carved by the Pacific Northwest's mightiest river,

comprising craggy bluffs covered in Douglas fir, the highest concentration of waterfalls in North America, and crisscrossing trails. Driving the **Historic Columbia River Highway** (US 30) offers the most scenic view of the gorge, with plenty of spots to get out and hike or see wildflowers. Allow 45 minutes without stops starting from **Troutdale,** a 20-minute drive east of Portland at exit 16 on I-84, or **Corbett** (exit 22). You'll need a **Waterfall Corridor Timed Use Permit** (www.recreation.gov) from the end of May to the beginning of September to visit the stops along the Waterfall Corridor.



COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

One of your first, and most dramatic, viewpoints of the Columbia River Gorge is the **Portland Women's Forum State Scenic Viewpoint** (39210 Historic Columbia River Hwy.; 503/695-2261; https://stateparks.oregon.gov) at Chanticleer Point. Take in the grandeur of **Bridal Veil Falls** (between mileposts 28 and 29 on the Historic Columbia River Hwy.; 503/695-2261; https://stateparks.oregon.gov). Two trails leave from the eastern edge of the parking area and take about 30 minutes round-trip. Be sure to pull over at **Multnomah Falls** (53000 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy., exit 31; 541/308-1700; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]), one

of the tallest falls in Oregon and the most visited natural recreation site in the Pacific Northwest. Feel the mist from the viewing platform at its base, follow a short path up to **Benson Bridge,** or take a short, paved trail that switchbacks 2.4 mi (3.9 km) to the crest of the waterfall and back.

HIGHLIGHTS

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

1219 SW Park Ave., Portland; 503/226-2811; www.portlandartmuseum.org

The Portland Art Museum is the oldest art museum in the Pacific Northwest. The museum fills two buildings and four floors with an ever-changing lineup of works from around the world, some from its permanent collection and others via traveling exhibits. Of note is the museum's collection of Native American artworks, which comprises 3,500 objects including masks, baskets, and sculptures by artists representing roughly 200 cultural groups from throughout North America.

INTERNATIONAL ROSE TEST GARDEN

400 SW Kingston Ave., Portland

Portland is nicknamed the "City of Roses," and it's easy to see why after a stroll around the International Rose Test Garden. Late May-October, more than 10,000 rose bushes—representing more than 610 varieties—make the park pop with vibrant hues of red, pink, orange, and white. Ostensibly, the rose garden is a testing ground for new varieties, and 10-20 new varieties are still planted each year.



INTERNATIONAL ROSE TEST GARDEN

PORTLAND JAPANESE GARDEN

611 SW Kingston Ave., Portland; 503/223-1321; www.japanesegarden.com

The urban oasis that is the Portland Japanese Garden earns the acclaim with eight garden spaces (each reflecting various aspects of Japanese garden history and design), a tea house, bubbling streams, and views of Mount Hood. The garden is a year-round treat but is especially captivating during fall's colorful foliage displays and in spring during cherry blossom season.

LAN SU CHINESE GARDEN

239 NW Everett St., Portland; 503/228-8131; www.lansugarden.org

The gorgeous Lan Su Chinese Garden is the end result of a collaboration between Portland and Suzhou, its sister city in the Chinese province of Jiangsu—which is famous for its Ming dynasty gardens. Lan Su features beautiful botanical gardens, peaceful walkways, koi ponds, ornate

pavilions, and an on-site tea house. Taken together, it feels like a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of the city that surrounds it.

ASTORIA

History buffs and craft beer geeks love Astoria, the oldest European settlement west of the Rocky Mountains—and home to a handful of beloved breweries (most boasting gorgeous Columbia River views). Nearby **Fort Stevens State Park** can take a full day of exploration, so consider hitting one or two specific sites within the park if pressed for time. Visiting the **Astoria Column** (1 Coxcomb Dr.; 503/325-2963; www.astoriacolumn.org) and climbing its 164 winding steps is a classic Astoria experience. When Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery arrived at the Oregon coast, not far from modern-day Astoria, in December 1805, the group erected a winter camp called **Fort Clatsop** (92343 Fort Clatsop Rd.; 503/861-2471; www.nps.gov). The re-created site is now part of the larger Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, which spans the southern Washington coast and the northern Oregon coast.

Major CITIES

PORTLAND: Oregon's largest city is famously playful and progressive, welcoming dreamers, creatives, and makers who don't take themselves so seriously that they forget that life demands to be enjoyed—at a leisurely pace, preferably with an IPA in hand.

SALEM: Oregon's state capital sits in the heart of the Willamette Valley, surrounded on all sides by vineyards, farms, and outdoor recreation. Highlights include scenic parks along the Willamette River, a growing downtown that's home to creative eateries, and internationally inspired craft breweries and cider makers.

EUGENE: Home to the University of Oregon, Eugene sits near the southern edge of the Willamette Valley, where the McKenzie River flows out of the Cascade Range and into the Willamette River. Paved

walking and cycling paths line the Willamette River, and hiking trails can be found in and out of town.

CANNON BEACH AND HAYSTACK ROCK

There may be no more photographed site in all of Oregon than **Haystack Rock,** a 235-ft (72-m) basalt sea stack rising from the edge of the shore near downtown **Cannon Beach.** The rock was formed up to 17 million years ago by lava flows and is today designated as one of nine Oregon Marine Gardens along the Oregon coast.

Its protected status makes Haystack Rock a haven for wildlife. At low tide, visitors can walk right up to the rock and spot starfish, anemones, crabs, and other marine creatures in the tidepools at its base. At high tide, try to spot tufted puffins nesting on the rock (Apr.-July).

SEA LION CAVES

91560 US 101, Florence; 541/547-3111; www.sealioncaves.com

Since 1932, the roadside attraction Sea Lion Caves has offered access to the largest sea cave anywhere in the United States. Visitors can look for Steller sea lions lounging on rocky formations around the cave and then walk down to an elevator that descends to the sea cave itself; sea lions can largely be found in the cave throughout winter and spring, and during storms.



SEA LION CAVES

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

59800 US 97 S., Bend; 541/382-4754; https://highdesertmuseum.org

Learn about central Oregon's past and present at the High Desert Museum. Just a few miles south of Bend, the museum hosts permanent as well as rotating exhibits, covering natural and cultural topics as well as showcasing art that has taken inspiration from wildfires and the scenery of the West. A number of live animal displays, indoors and out, showcase regional species common to central Oregon. Regular events include a **natural history walk** where you can join a naturalist for a short walk around the museum grounds to learn about central Oregon's diverse habitats.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 From Portland, make the two-hour drive northwest via **US 26** and **US 101** to **Astoria.** Brush up on Lewis and Clark's famous journey at **Fort Clatsop.** Grab fried tuna out of a converted fishing boat for lunch at **Bowpicker Fish & Chips,** and walk it off with a stroll along the **Astoria Riverwalk.**

DAY 2 Head west on **US 30** and continue on **US 101** to the resort town of **Seaside.** Stroll the **Broadway Corridor** and the **Seaside Promenade.** Continue to **Cannon Beach** for sweeping coastline views from **Ecola State Park.** Cap off your night with a beach campfire at **Tolovana Beach State Recreation Site** while the sun sets behind **Haystack Rock**.

DAY 3 Just outside of town, hike through a coastal rain forest to **Cape Falcon** in **Oswald West State Park,** where you might spot migrating gray whales from a wide-open bluff. Next, tour **Tillamook Creamery** before you head back to **US 101** and continue south toward **Pacific City.**

DAY 4 Head south with a stop in **Lincoln City** to walk the beaches in town, looking for glass floats, or try glassblowing yourself at **Lincoln City Glass Center.** Have a relaxing lunch before continuing south to the **Whale Watching Center** in **Depoe Bay.** You'll finish the day in **Newport.**

DAY 5 Drive south to **Cape Perpetua Scenic Area.** Hike the paved **Captain Cook Trail,** where you'll see **Thor's Well,** a circular sinkhole in the rocky shoreline. Next, you'll come to the city of **Florence** at the northern edge of the **Oregon Dunes National Scenic Area;** gaze upon the ever-shifting sands or hike out onto the dunes

along the **John Dellenback Dunes Trail.** Tonight you'll stay in **Bandon.**

DAY 6 Enjoy a stroll around **Historic Old Town Bandon** before driving south through **Gold Beach.** Sample some of the Oregon coast's best brews at the cozy **Arch Rock Brewing Company.** Soon after, you'll enter the 12-mi-long (19-km) **Samuel H. Boardman State Scenic Corridor,** where a dozen or so pull-outs, viewpoints, and hiking trails showcase dramatic vistas of sea stacks, craggy rock formations, and other natural wonders. Tomorrow, you'll return to Portland via I-5.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

The entire Oregon coast along **US 101** is dedicated as a scenic byway, from Astoria in the north near Washington, and following 363 mi (584 km) down to Brookings near California.

SAMUEL H. BOARDMAN STATE SCENIC CORRIDOR

541/469-0224; https://stateparks.oregon.gov

There is no more beautiful stretch of coastline than the 12-mi-long (19-km-long) Samuel H. Boardman State Scenic Corridor. The scenic stretch of US 101 sits between Gold Beach and Brookings, passing myriad waysides, viewpoints, and more—all of which showcase a rugged stretch of coastline dotted with headlands, sea stacks, rock formations, gurgling creeks, and craggy bluffs that demand more than a little awe. You can drive the entire corridor in about 15 minutes, without stopping, but doing so deprives you of some of the best viewpoints anywhere along the Oregon coast.

Several parking areas along the corridor offer beach access and/or sweeping vistas; each is signed and on the west side of the highway. In winter and spring, keep an eye out for migrating gray whales just offshore.

The northernmost stop on the corridor is the **Arch Rock Picnic Area,** which offers a fine introduction to what the corridor is all about. Farther south, a short trail leads to a viewpoint that shows off the region's **Natural Bridges,** where you can peer at seven collapsed sea caves. Near the southern edge of the corridor sits the **Cape Ferrelo Viewpoint.** A 1-mi (1.6-km) loop trail ascends to the top of the headland; from there, views of the jagged coastline abound in every direction.

CASCADE LAKES SCENIC BYWAY

Forest Route 46

The Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway takes you into the heart of the mountain range, offering access to some of the region's most popular hiking trails. Awe-inspiring views appear around every corner of the **66-mi (106 km)** road that follows **SW Century Drive** southwest out of Bend. It heads south after Mt. Bachelor and dead-ends at OR-58. Allow 1.25 hours without stops, but give yourself a full day for exploration. The full Cascade Lakes Scenic Byway is generally **open late May-October** (after which it's gated past Mt. Bachelor), though snow may linger into July, Check https://tripcheck.com for the latest road conditions. For the best views, stop at **Mt. Bachelor** (13000 SW Century Dr.; 541/382-1709; www.mtbachelor.com). There's a **chairlift ride** up to the mountain resort's Pine Marten Lodge, where you can hike or enjoy snacks and the view.



MT. BACHELOR FROM THE CASCADE LAKES SCENIC BYWAY

SCENIC BYWAYS IN EASTERN OREGON

Eastern Oregon is road-trip country, and several routes in this region are scenic byways.

STEENS MOUNTAIN LOOP ROAD

The 59-mi (95-km) **Steens Mountain Loop Road** ascends the mountain's western flank to within a few feet of its impressive summit. The undeniable highlight along the southern portion of Steens Mountain Loop Road is a stop at **Riddle Brothers Ranch National Historic District** (Steens Mountain Loop Rd.; 541/573-4400; www.blm.gov). The well-preserved ranch belonged to three brothers who raised livestock in the area between the early 1900s and the late 1950s; today, visitors can walk around inside one of the buildings, stuffed with decades-old artifacts, and among some of the other surviving structures. Keep an eye out for a **herd of wild horses**—specifically Kiger mustangs, which are descendants of Spanish horses brought to North America in the 1600s.

THREE CAPES SCENIC LOOP

West of Tillamook, the Three Capes Scenic Loop (70 mi/113 km) is made up of three scenic headlands that afford wide-open vistas—along with an up-close look at the shortest lighthouse on the Oregon coast at Cape Meares, epic whale-watching spots, and a playful sand dune that's a thrill for kids of all ages. Allow one hour to drive from Tillamook to all three capes, or make a weekend of it. Your best bet for exploring all three capes is to head west from Tillamook to Oceanside via OR-131, make the quick drive north to Cape Meares, backtrack to Oceanside, and continue south to Cape Lookout and Cape Kiwanda.

MCKENZIE PASS-SANTIAM PASS SCENIC BYWAY

Starting in Sisters, the **McKenzie Pass-Santiam Pass Scenic Byway** crosses through ponderosa pine forests to open up and reveal an otherworldly landscape: Rugged lava flows, shaped by eruptions dating back millennia, cascade in seemingly every direction. The **82-mi (132-km) loop** comprises **OR-242** (June-Oct.), **OR-126,** and **US 20.** The scenic byway, truly one of the most dramatic in Oregon, can be driven in as little as three hours—but making time for scenic stops and captivating hikes enriches your experience. Nothing quite compares to the appropriately named **Clear Lake** (OR-126, 21 mi/34 km east of McKenzie Bridge; 541/822-3381; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]). As the name implies, it is one of the clearest lakes in the Cascade Range—and noted for a distinctive teal hue that positively glows on sunny days.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

MOUNT HOOD

The state's tallest peak—at nearly 11,250 ft (3,429 m)—is known as Wy'east to the area's original inhabitants—Molala, Kalapuyan, Chinookan Clackamas, Shinookan Wasco, and Northern Paiute peoples, as well as Sahaptin speakers. It's considered a sacred place, and it's easy to see why. Its dozen glaciers remain a defining feature, and its forests unfurl in every direction like a Christmas tree skirt. Just northeast of the town of Government Camp, **Timberline Lodge** (27500 E. Timberline Rd.; 503/272-3311; www.timberlinelodge.com) draws nearly two million visitors annually. In winter, Timberline Lodge is *the* ski resort destination on the mountain, catering to downhill skiers and snowboarders of all levels. In summer, its ski trails become mountain biking trails, and some hiking trails are accessible from the lodge, including the Pacific Crest Trail. At **Trillium Lake** (Trillium Lake Loop off US 26; 503/622-3191; www.fs.usda.gov

[URL inactive]), you'll find May-September recreation options in the shadow of what just may be the best views of Mount Hood anywhere in the region. In summer, you can paddle, float, swim, and fish on the lake or picnic and lounge on its shore. **Elk Meadows** is one of the best hikes on Mount Hood for wildflowers in July and August.

SILVER FALLS STATE PARK

26 mi (41 km) east of Salem, 22024 Silver Falls Hwy., Sublimity; 503/873-8681; https://stateparks.oregon.gov

Silver Falls State Park is nicknamed the "crown jewel" of the Oregon State Parks system, and it's easy to see why: The sprawling park at the eastern edge of the Willamette Valley sits in the midst of towering forests, hosts two scenic campgrounds, and features roughly three dozen miles of scenic trails for hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers. Even so, the park is synonymous with its Trail of Ten Falls, a popular 7.2-mi (11.6-km) loop trail that passes by (or behind) a whopping 10 waterfalls in the heart of a lush river canyon.

OSWALD WEST STATE PARK

along US 101, 6.5 mi (10.5 km) south of Cannon Beach; 800/551-6949; https://stateparks.oregon.gov

Oswald West State Park spans 4 mi (6.4 km) of rugged shoreline from north to south—and packs in some of the most celebrated sites anywhere on the Oregon coast. Towering forests of western red cedar, western hemlock, and Sitka spruce lead to bustling beaches, scenic headlands, and even secret waterfalls. The out-and-back **Cape Falcon** trail leads to the exposed viewpoint atop Cape Falcon; keep an eye out for migrating gray whales below in winter and spring. Views encompass Neahkahnie Mountain to the south, as well as Short Sand Beach and Smugglers Cove below. **Short Sand Beach** (along US 101, 10 mi/16 km south of Cannon Beach; 503/812-0650; https://stateparks.oregon.gov) sits within Smugglers Cove, protected from high winds and harsh weather by Cape Falcon to the north and Neahkahnie Mountain to the south. With relatively mild, consistent weather, the beach is popular with picnickers, surfers, boogie boarders, and nature enthusiasts.

Blumenthal Falls cascades onto the shore, over a rock wall, at the northern edge of the beach, and tidepools can be explored at low tide.

OREGON DUNES NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

885 US 101, Reedsport; 541/271-6000; www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw [URL inactive]

The Oregon Dunes tower up to 500 ft (150 m) above sea level in places and make up one of the largest stretches of coastal dunes anywhere in the world. The ever-shifting hillsides of sand surround (and are surrounded by) forests, lakes, bays, and more—creating a landscape unlike anywhere else on the Oregon coast. Popular activities include camping, hiking, riding off-highway vehicles, and even “surfing” the sand throughout the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. There are plenty of opportunities to hike the dunes, but the lauded **John Dellenback Trail** invites hikers to walk across the widest stretch of dunes anywhere on the Oregon coast.



OREGON DUNES NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

ROGUE RIVER

Gold Beach, which sits at the mouth of the Rogue River, is known for its close connection to the waterway; commercial fishing is a popular activity, and jet boat tours take visitors up the forested river gorge. For a fun look at the mighty river, take a jet boat tour through **Jerry's Rogue Jets** (29985 Harbor Way, Gold Beach; 541/247-4571; www.roguejets.com), which started as a mail-delivery service in 1895 and has expanded into a popular attraction.

OREGON CAVES NATIONAL MONUMENT

19000 Caves Hwy.; 541/592-2100; www.nps.gov/orca

Known as the “Marble Halls of Oregon,” Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve sits deep within the Siskiyou Mountains; its dark, subterranean passages, which can be explored on a variety of tours, enchant with hauntingly beautiful rock formations. Four tours are offered throughout the spring and summer, each showcasing a different side of the caves.

JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

32651 OR-19, Kimberly; 541/987-2333; www.nps.gov/joda

The John Day Fossil Beds National Monument collectively comprises three distinct units, each telling one chapter of a much larger geological story that dates back some 50 million years. Fossils, otherworldly rock formations, colorful hillsides, and other natural wonders show how different this slice of eastern Oregon once was. The **Painted Hills** (Burnt Ranch Rd./Bear Creek Rd., approx. 10 mi/16 km northwest of Mitchell; 541/987-2333; www.nps.gov/joda), easily the most popular of the national monument’s three units, began to take shape some 35 million years ago—when the now-arid region was a lush forest in the shadow of several volcanoes. Today, those spectacular mounds of red, yellow, tan, and black—always resplendent, but never more so than in spring, when wildflower blooms add a gratuitous pop of color to the surroundings—can be viewed from along Bear Creek Road, which heads north from OR-26 and into the heart of the monument.



JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

HELLS CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Oxbow; 509/758-0616; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

Believe it or not, Hells Canyon is the deepest river gorge in North America —deeper, yes, than the Grand Canyon—as it bisects the border between northeastern Oregon and western Idaho (and extends to the southeastern tip of Washington). The 10-mi-long (16-km) recreation portion of the canyon, managed by the US Forest Service as the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, was carved by the Snake River; today, its remote reaches are popular with outdoor enthusiasts.

Given the steepness of the canyon's rocky terrain, your best bet for appreciating its grandeur is to drive down to the Snake River, where you can gawk from dramatic viewpoints and get on the water with jet boat or rafting tours.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Powell's City of Books (1005 W. Burnside St., Portland; 503/228-4651; https://powells.com [URL inactive]) is an institution in Portland. The mammoth bookstore occupies an entire city block and claims to be the largest new and used bookstore in the world, with four floors hosting more than one million books. You could spend all day browsing the shelves, which nearly stretch to the ceiling in each of the bookstore's 10 rooms with offerings across every genre imaginable.

Oregon hosts more than 1,100 wineries growing pinot noir, chardonnay, and other varietals on nearly 1,500 vineyards. The **Willamette Valley** is renowned for producing pinot noir, pinot gris, and chardonnay grapes that are perfectly suited to the mild, drizzly climate. Take a wine-tasting tour and take home a couple of your favorite wines. Tasting fees typically run $40-95 and are usually waived if you purchase a certain number of bottles on your trip.

Tillamook Creamery (4165 US 101; 503/815-1300; www.tillamook.com), owned by about 110 local dairy farming families, invites visitors to enjoy grilled cheese sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, fried curds, and nearly two dozen flavors of ice cream at its spacious café. Learn about the creamery's history through several interpretive exhibits, and see how cheese is made from high above the factory floor.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

15 S. Pioneer St., Ashland; 800/219-8161; www.osfashland.org [URL inactive]; Mar.-Oct.

Ashland is synonymous with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which has been bringing theater to audiences since 1935; today, the festival is among the oldest, and best-known, regional repertory theater companies in the United States. Each season features up to eight productions, with a mix of beloved Shakespeare plays, classic works from legendary artists, and offerings by up-and-coming, contemporary playwrights; all performances take place in one of two indoor theaters—or the open-air Allen Elizabethan Theatre.

PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL

Portland; www.rosefestival.org; May-June

The surest sign of spring's arrival is the Portland Rose Festival, which, since 1907, has celebrated Portland with a variety of family events. The fun includes a carnival, multiple parades—including the **Grand Floral Parade,** featuring dozens of floats crafted with flowers—and Fleet Week, when visiting Navy ships dock on the Portland waterfront and offer tours.

OREGON COUNTRY FAIR

near Veneta on OR-126; 541/343-4298; www.oregoncountryfair.org; July

For more than 50 years, the counterculture has been embraced with open arms at the Oregon Country Fair. The three-day festival features a dozen or so performance stages (showcasing everything from regional bands to circus performers), hundreds of artisans, and myriad food vendors—with impromptu parades, drum circles, and art displays that keep festivalgoers entertained at all times. From Eugene, the 15-mi (24-km) drive to the fair takes about 30 minutes via westbound OR-126—but free shuttle service is available.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CUISINE

Pacific Northwest cuisine is defined by the exceptional quality of raw ingredients. Fresh fish and seafood are the cuisine's cornerstone, most notably salmon, Dungeness crab, and oysters. Small farms in the Willamette Valley produce vegetables and berries of superlative quality. Oregon is also one of the world's largest producers of nuts, and hazelnuts in particular find their way into many dishes. Foragers head deep into forests to find wild greens and mushrooms.

To feast on Pacific Northwest cuisine, check out these restaurants:

- **Higgins** (1239 SW Broadway, Portland; 503/222-9070; https://higginsportland.com) is a farm-to-table pioneer, serving risotto, pasture-raised meats, sustainably caught seafood, and other regional cuisine using local ingredients.
- **Celilo Restaurant and Bar** (16 Oak St., Hood River; 541/386-5710; www.celilorestaurant.com) has been at the forefront of the region's farm-to-table movement, serving a seasonal selection of upscale fare utilizing the bounty of the Pacific Northwest.
- **Local Ocean Seafoods** (213 SE Bay Blvd., Newport; 541/574-7959; www.localocean.net) sources most of its seafood from anglers working the Yaquina Bay docks just across the street. Popular dishes include flaky Dungeness crab cakes, pan-fried Yaquina Bay oysters, and fish-and-chips.

CRAFT BREWS

No trip to Portland—it's nicknamed "Beervana," after all—is complete without enjoying some of its many brewpubs:

- The tap list at **Von Ebert Brewing** (14021 NE Glisan St.; 503/87808708; www.vonebertbrewing.com) is well worth sampling—but, of note, the

brewery slings some of Portland's best-loved lagers and IPAs.

- **Little Beast Brewing** (3412 SE Division St.; 503/208-2723; www.littlebeastbrewing.com) stands out for its inventive lineup of mixed-culture beers, noted for their tart, fruity, and sour notes.
- The long-running **Hopworks Brewery** (2944 SE Powell Blvd.; 503/232-4677; www.hopworksbeer.com) stands out with palate-pleasing organic beers and a food menu focused on locally sourced fare and organic ingredients.

OREGON WINES

Dozens of tasting rooms line cozy communities throughout the northernmost corner of the Willamette Valley, and hundreds of vineyards and wineries cover the region's rolling hillsides, mountain ranges, and rugged ridgelines—all of which boast ideal growing conditions for pinot noir, chardonnay, and other popular wine grapes.

Among the vineyards are hazelnut orchards, berry patches, and other farms that provide fresh ingredients to award-winning restaurants for inventive, seasonal menus. In all, roughly 700 wineries sit scattered across Willamette Valley Wine Country, many of them sourcing grapes from the surrounding hillsides and hosting tasting rooms that showcase incredible countryside views.

If you plan to visit more than one or two wineries in a day and don't have a designated driver, consider hiring a tour company—of which there are more than two dozen in the Willamette Valley—to assist with driving, trip planning, and itinerary building; a directory of **tour operators** is available at www.willamettewines.com.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Portland International Airport:** PDX; 700 NE Airport Way; 503/460-4234; www.flypdx.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Travel Oregon:** www.traveloregon.com
- **Oregon State Parks:** www.oregonstateparks.org

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Oregonian:*** www.oregonlive.com

CALIFORNIA

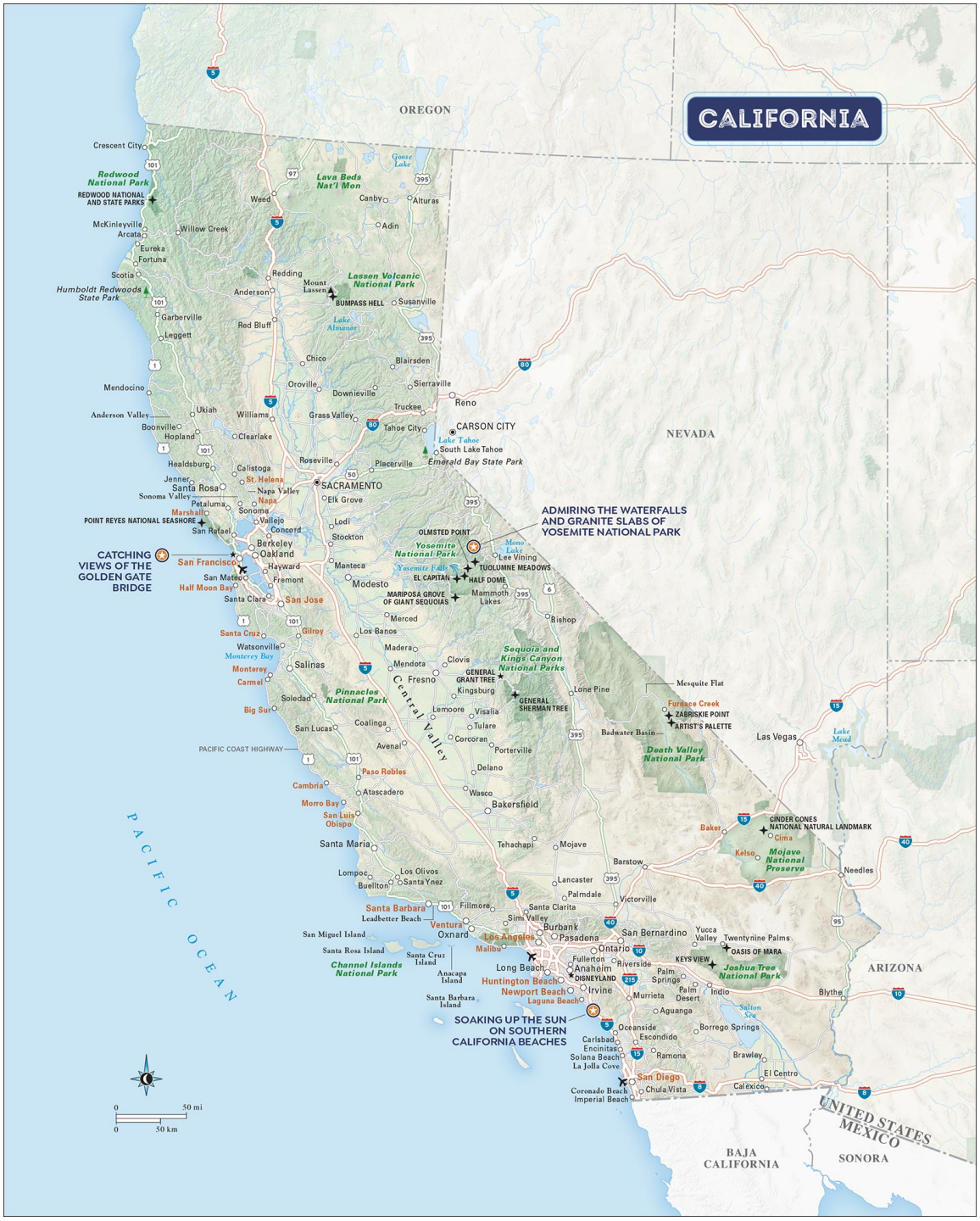
California is a state dominated by skyscraping redwood trees, forest-cloaked mountains, driftwood-decorated coasts, snow-frosted peaks, and world-class beaches. Here, adjectives like “largest,” “biggest,” “deepest,” “tallest,” and “highest” frequently precede beaches and bays and falls and forests. This is California at its wildest, its most elemental, its purest. From cosmopolitan San Francisco, roads wind north through the famous Wine Country, where the hillsides are braided with grapevines. Along the northern coast, the trees become taller and the crowds become smaller. Heading south, the interstate traverses the Central Valley, the state’s breadbasket, before emerging and winding through the major cities of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Diego. Wherever the road takes you, you’ll return home with tales of the wild, rugged land to the north, the bountiful valleys, and the sun-kissed south.

AREA: 163,695 sq mi / 423,967 sq km (3rd)

POPULATION: 39,431,263 (1st)

STATEHOOD DATE: September 9, 1850 (31st)

STATE CAPITAL: Sacramento


CALIFORNIA
OREGON
NEVADA
ARIZONA
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
BAJA CALIFORNIA
SONORA
PACIFIC OCEAN
Central Valley
PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY
Crescent City
Redwood National Park
REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS
Humboldt Redwoods State Park
McKinleyville
Arcata
Eureka
Fortuna
Scotia
Willow Creek
Weed
Lava Beds Nat'l Mon
Goose Lake
Canby
Alturas
Adin
Redding
Anderson
Mount Lassen
Lassen Volcanic National Park
BUMPASS HELL
Susanville
Lake Almanor
Red Bluff
Garberville
Leggett
Chico
Blairsden
Oroville
Downieville
Sierraville
Mendocino
Ukiah
Anderson Valley
Boonville
Hopland
Williams
Grass Valley
Truckee
Reno
Tahoe City
CARSON CITY
Lake Tahoe
South Lake Tahoe
Emerald Bay State Park
Clearlake
Healdsburg
Roseville
Placerville
Calistoga
St. Helena
Napa Valley
Napa
Jenner
Santa Rosa
Sonoma Valley
Petaluma
Sonoma
Marshall
POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE
Vallejo
Concord
San Rafael
Berkeley
Oakland
San Francisco
Hayward
San Mateo
Half Moon Bay
Fremont
Santa Clara
San Jose
SACRAMENTO
Elk Grove
Lodi
Stockton
Manteca
Modesto
Merced
Los Banos
Gilroy
Santa Cruz
Watsonville
Monterey Bay
Monterey
Carmel
Salinas
Soledad
Big Sur
San Lucas
Coalinga
Avenal
Paso Robles
Cambria
Morro Bay
San Luis Obispo
Atascadero
Santa Maria
Lompoc
Los Olivos
Buellton
Santa Ynez
Santa Barbara
Leadbetter Beach
Ventura
Oxnard
San Miguel Island
Santa Rosa Island
Santa Cruz Island
Channel Islands National Park
Anacapa Island
Santa Barbara Island
Los Angeles
Malibu
Long Beach
Huntington Beach
Newport Beach
Laguna Beach
Fullerton
Anaheim
DISNEYLAND
Irvine
Pasadena
Burbank
Santa Clarita
Simi Valley
Fillmore
Ontario
Riverside
San Bernardino
Yucca Valley
Twentynine Palms
OASIS OF MARA
KEYS VIEW
Joshua Tree National Park
Palm Springs
Palm Desert
Indio
Murrieta
Aguanga
Salton Sea
Blythe
Borrego Springs
Oceanside
Escondido
Carlsbad
Encinitas
Solana Beach
La Jolla Cove
Ramona
Brawley
El Centro
Calexico
San Diego
Coronado Beach
Imperial Beach
Chula Vista
Tehachapi
Mojave
Lancaster
Palmdale
Victorville
Barstow
Baker
CINDER CONES NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK
Cima
Kelso
Mojave National Preserve
Needles
Mesquite Flat
Furnace Creek
ZABRISKIE POINT
ARTIST'S PALETTE
Badwater Basin
Death Valley National Park
Las Vegas
Lake Mead
Lone Pine
Bishop
Mammoth Lakes
Mono Lake
Lee Vining
OLMSTED POINT
Yosemite National Park
Yosemite Falls
TUOLUMNE MEADOWS
HALF DOME
EL CAPITAN
MARIPOSA GROVE OF GIANT SEQUOIAS
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
GENERAL GRANT TREE
GENERAL SHERMAN TREE
Fresno
Clovis
Mendota
Kingsburg
Lemoore
Visalia
Tulare
Corcoran
Porterville
Delano
Wasco
Bakersfield
Pinnacles National Park
ADMIRING THE WATERFALLS AND GRANITE SLABS OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
CATCHING VIEWS OF THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE
SOAKING UP THE SUN ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BEACHES
0 50 mi
0 50 km

Major CITIES

LOS ANGELES: The United States' second-largest city, Los Angeles is a huge, incredibly diverse place impossible to categorize as any one thing. But if you had to? Creative. All the many voices, flavors, and perspectives come together to create a metropolis brimming with great food, music, fashion, comedy, and of course: movies.

SAN DIEGO: On a clear day, sailboats traverse the bay, scuba divers explore underwater canyons, golfers tee up, and bicyclists cruise from beach to beach. But for all its leisurely appeal, the country's eighth-largest city offers its share of urban pleasures as well, including a world-class theater scene, dozens of museums in architecturally rich Balboa Park, a world-famous zoo, and historic landmarks including the city's beautifully preserved 18th-century mission settlement in Old Town.

SAN FRANCISCO: Built by the riches of the California gold rush, the elegant yet gritty city of San Francisco has long been famous for its Victorian rowhouses, cable cars, countercultural art and music, steep hills, and iconic orange bridge. More recently, the city has taken the mantle of techie hub and foodie mecca. Through it all, some 24 million tourists visit the city each year to enjoy its great museums, world-class music, unique theater and comedy, and thriving nightlife.

ORIENTATION

California is divided into three regions: **Northern California,** home of the giant redwoods, the state capital of **Sacramento,** and the culture hub, **San Francisco;** the **Central Valley,** the agricultural heart of the state; and **Southern California,** where you'll experience the carefree, sun-drenched beach culture best known to the world. Moving inland from the dynamic coastline, **Lake Tahoe** and **Yosemite National Park** draw outdoor

enthusiasts year-round. In SoCal, you'll find thrills in **Los Angeles** and endless sunny days along **San Diego's beaches.** On the other side of the southern Sierra Nevada Mountain range, **Death Valley National Park,** the **Mojave Desert,** and **Joshua Tree National Park** beckon.

WHEN TO GO

Part of California's allure is in its relatively **mild weather year-round.** While the northern coast rarely hits 70°F (21°C) in the summertime and can be rainy and foggy, the farther south you go, the warmer and sunnier it gets. In the San Francisco Bay Area, temperatures reach into the 70s and even 80s F (21-31°C) in summer and fall. Be prepared for the chill of **fog** in the evenings; even the warmest summer days often end with fog spilling over the Golden Gate and into the city. From Santa Barbara south to San Diego, temperatures in the 80s F (27-32°C) are not unheard of even in January; **summer** temperatures can often hit the triple digits in inland Los Angeles. At higher elevations like Lake Tahoe and Mammoth, **winter** brings snow and the start of an epic ski season.

TOP 3

1 CATCHING VIEWS OF THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

US 101/CA-1 at Lincoln Blvd., San Francisco; 415/921-5858; www.goldengate.org

People come from the world over to gaze at the Golden Gate Bridge (US 101/CA-1 at Lincoln Blvd.; 415/921-5858; www.goldengate.org). A marvel of human engineering constructed between 1933 and 1937, the suspension bridge spans the narrow "gate" from which the Pacific Ocean enters the San Francisco Bay. **Walking or biking** the 1.7-mi (2.7-km) bridge is a popular way to experience it. On a clear day, the whole bay, Marin Headlands, and city skyline are visible. Pedestrians and wheelchair users are allowed on the **east sidewalk** (5am-9pm daily early Mar.-early Nov., 5am-6:30pm daily early Nov.-early Mar.). **Vista Point,** on the bridge's northern end, is a great perch for photos.



GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE FROM BAKER BEACH

If you're looking for great views or photo ops of the Golden Gate Bridge in the city, head to **Baker Beach, Presidio Tunnel Tops,** or **Lands End.**

2 ADMIRING THE WATERFALLS AND GRANITE SLABS OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/yose

Yosemite is a place of magic, wonder, natural beauty, and grace. Its majestic granite rocks, towering mountain peaks, impressive waterfalls, and giant sequoias make it a popular destination for everyone from solo adventurers and families seeking wilderness and solitude to rock climbers.



VERNAL FALL, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Yosemite Valley is the heart of the park, with a visitor center, theater, art galleries, a museum, and outdoor access to hikes ranging from easy to difficult. Considered one of the highest waterfalls in the world, **Yosemite Falls** is visible from the valley floor near Yosemite Lodge. The moderate-strenuous **Mist Trail** leads first to **Vernal Fall** (2.4 mi/3.9 km round-trip, 3 hours, moderate, limited summer access) over steep, slick granite—including more than 600 stairs. Your reward is the stellar view of the valley below. Continue from Vernal Fall another steep and strenuous 1.5-2 mi (2.4-3.2 km) of switchbacks to the top of **Nevada Fall** (5.4 mi/8.7 km round-trip, 5-6 hours, difficult) and return via the John Muir Trail. Note the Mist Trail is closed in winter.

Half Dome is Yosemite's most popular attraction, a gigantic rock with a sheer granite face at a peak elevation of 8,800 ft (2,682 m). Scaling Half Dome is such a demanding venture that you must be granted a permit to climb it; serious hikers can put their name in the lottery in March.

3 SOAKING UP THE SUN ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BEACHES

The sparkling sands of SoCal beaches and the refreshing blue ocean beyond them have become the spiritual home to millions of wanderers who've ventured west. From secluded, wealthy Malibu to the 70 mi (113 km) of coastline known to the world as San Diego, you're sure to find your perfect beach in SoCal.

LOS ANGELES

Santa Monica Beach embodies the city's history, scenic beauty, and active lifestyle with 3.5 mi (5.6 km) of wide, sandy beach, perfect for sunbathing, biking, or inline skating. Known as "The Strand," this well-traveled path connects Santa Monica Beach to Will Rogers State Beach to the north and Redondo Beach to the south. Lifeguards keep watch over surfers and swimmers. Beach volleyball is said to have been born in Santa Monica. The **Santa Monica Pier,** a landmark since 1909, is tough to miss: It's the giant pier sticking out from Santa Monica State Beach, topped by a roller coaster, merry-go-round, and Ferris wheel.



SANTA MONICA BEACH

For surfing, check out **Malibu Lagoon State Beach.** Malibu Creek runs into the ocean here, creating a unique wetlands ecosystem that's well worth exploring. There's also the ancillary **Surfrider Beach,** a pretty stretch of sugar-like sand known among surfers for the longer rides of its well-shaped point breaks. The favored spot among longboarders is **First Point,** which is known for long, even waves. Farther out, **Second Point** and **Third Point** are better for experienced shortboarders. Being closer to town, these waves get very crowded and competitive.

ORANGE COUNTY

Huntington Beach (Pacific Coast Hwy. from Beach Blvd. to Seapoint St., Huntington Beach; 714/536-1454; www.parks.ca.gov [URL inactive]), aka Surf City USA, with its youthful population of sun-worshippers, embraces SoCal beach and surf culture without inhibition. Most famous by far are the waves off **Huntington Beach Pier** (Main St. and CA-1, Huntington Beach), home to epic professional surf contests. The **Northside** of the pier pulls waves year-round, giving intermediate to advanced surfers left- and right-breaking options, including occasional barrels. The **Southside** opens to surfers in winter, yielding heavier waves with big, beautiful walls for savvier riders to carve up. Spectators on the pier get a stellar up-close view of riders on both sides. Beginners should head north to **Bolsa Chica State Beach** (17851 CA-1), one of the great places in the world to surf for the first time.

SAN DIEGO

For beach lovers, San Diego (pop. 1.4 million) proves the embodiment of an endless summer, with sparkling white-sand beaches, magnificent sunsets, and air mingling the scents of saltwater, surf wax, and sunscreen. **Coronado Beach** is a gorgeous, 1.75-mi (2.8-km) stretch of sand set against the backdrop of the legendary Hotel del Coronado, with Point Loma looming ahead and occasional aircraft carriers drifting by. A 3-mi (4.8-km) concrete boardwalk runs along **Mission Beach,** populated by beach cruisers,

skateboards, and bikini-clad sun seekers. The south end stays quiet relative to the north stretch of beach.

HIGHLIGHTS

ALCATRAZ

tours depart from Pier 33, San Francisco; 415/561-4900; www.nps.gov/alcatraz

Nicknamed "The Rock," Alcatraz was a military fortress turned maximum-security prison, and is today one of San Francisco's most popular attractions. The island became a prison in the 19th century while it still belonged to the military, which used it to house Civil War prisoners. The isolation of the island in the bay, as well as the frigid waters and strong currents, ensured that prisoners had little hope of escape, and would risk death even in the attempt. In 1934, the military handed over the island to the Department of Justice, which used it to house a new style of prisoner: Depression-era gangsters. Honored maximum-security guests included Al Capone, George "Machine Gun" Kelly, and Robert Stroud ("the Birdman of Alcatraz"). The prison closed in 1963. During the 1960s, American Indians occupied Alcatraz, seeking to end a government policy of termination of Indian tribes.

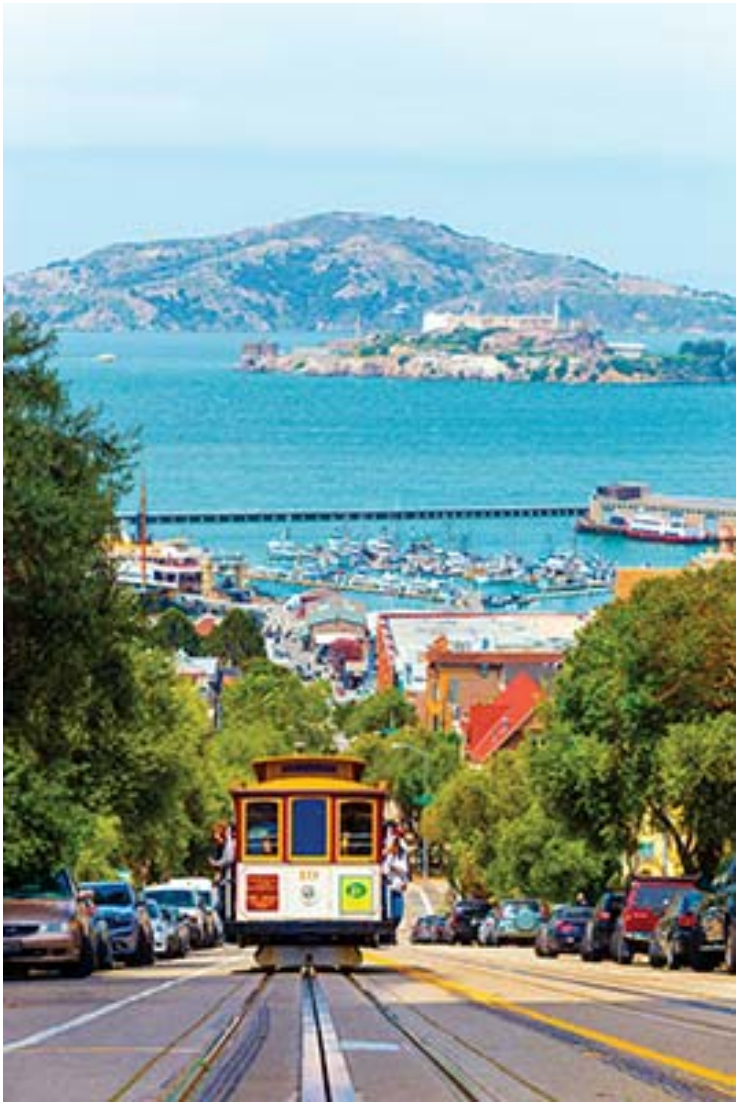
Today, many of the buildings are gone. The barracks from its prior existence as a military base, the cell house, lighthouse, and a handful of other buildings remain.

CABLE CARS

San Francisco; www.sfmta.com

Perhaps the most recognizable symbol of San Francisco is the cable car, originally conceived by Andrew Smith Hallidie as a safer alternative for traveling the steep, often slick hills of San Francisco. The cable cars ran as

regular mass transit from 1873 into the 1940s. Today, cable cars are a rolling national landmark.



CABLE CAR WITH ALCATRAZ IN THE BACKGROUND

Cable car routes can take you up Nob Hill from the Financial District, or from Union Square along Powell Street, through Chinatown, and out to Fisherman’s Wharf. Take a seat, or grab one of the exterior poles and hang on! Cable cars have open-air seating only, making for a chilly ride on foggy days.

Expect to wait an hour or more for a ride from any of the turnaround points on a weekend or holiday. But a ride on a cable car from Union Square down to the Wharf is more than worth the wait. The views from the

hills down to the bay inspire wonder even in lifetime residents. To learn a bit more, make a stop at the **Cable Car Museum** (1201 Mason St.; 415/474-1887; www.cablecarmuseum.org), the home and nerve center of the entire fleet. Here a sweet little museum depicts the life and times of the cable cars while an elevated platform overlooks the engines, winding wheels, and thick steel cable that keep the cars humming.

SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN

www.sanfranciscochinatown.com

Chinese migration to California began almost as soon as the news of easy gold in the mountain streams made it to East Asia. And despite rampant prejudice, Chinese people not only stayed, but persevered and eventually prospered. Many never made it to the goldfields, preferring instead to remain in bustling San Francisco to open shops and begin the business of commerce in their new home. They carved out a thriving community at the border of **Portsmouth Square,** then center of the young city, which became known as Chinatown. Along with much of San Francisco, the neighborhood was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Today visitors see the post-1906 visitor-friendly Chinatown that was built after the quake, particularly if they enter through the **Chinatown Gate** (Grant Ave. and Bush St.) at the edge of Union Square. In this historic neighborhood, beautiful Asian architecture mixes with more mundane blocky city buildings to create a unique skyline. Small alleyways wend between the touristy commercial corridors, creating an intimate atmosphere.

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

886 Cannery Row, Monterey; 831/648-4800;
www.montereybayaquarium.org

The Monterey Bay Aquarium displays a dazzling array of local sealife. First-class exhibits include the Kelp Forest, which mimics the environment just outside; the Open Sea exhibit, with its deepwater tank that's home to giant bluefin tuna and hammerhead sharks; and Wild About Otters, which gives an up-close view of rescued otters. Check the feeding schedules when you arrive, and show up in advance to get a good spot near the critters for

the show. In the summer, the crowds can be forbidding. Weekdays can be less crushing (though you'll run into school groups much of the year), and the off-season is always a better time to visit. Most exhibits at the aquarium are wheelchair-accessible.



MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

SANTA BARBARA

Santa Barbara (pop. 86,499) draws frequent comparisons to Mediterranean beach resorts, with a comparable climate, architecture, and epicurean lifestyle.

Though a small city, Santa Barbara offers sophisticated amenities, attracting artists and exhibitions of global interest to its cultural venues.

Santa Barbara's main drag radiates off of **State Street,** which runs in a straight line from the city center to the coast. Santa Barbara's most visited landmark, **Stearns Wharf** was built in 1872 to allow ships to offload

supplies for a burgeoning town with no natural harbor. Today, the large wharf is covered with ocean-view restaurants and souvenir shops. It also boasts impressive views of the beach, city, and sailboats embarking from adjacent Santa Barbara Harbor. The Spanish colony of Santa Barbara began April 21, 1782, on the site of **El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park.** Its whitewashed adobe structures originally formed a fortified rectangle, surrounding an open parade ground called the Plaza de Armas. Today, only two sections of the original presidio remain, preserved as a historic park in the center of downtown.

HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

Hollywood Blvd. from Gower to La Brea and Vine St. from Yucca to Sunset, Los Angeles; 323/469-8311; www.walkoffame.com [URL inactive]

Arguably the world's most famous sidewalk, the Hollywood Walk of Fame is a 1.3-mi (2.1-km) stretch commemorating the entertainment industry's favorite celebrities. Five-pointed terrazzo and brass stars are embedded into a charcoal background along Hollywood Boulevard and three blocks of Vine Street. Within each star, a circular, bronze emblem signifies the field in which the celebrity thrived: motion pictures, broadcast television, music or audio recording, broadcast radio, or live performance. More than 2,800 of Hollywood's famous names have been granted stars at a cost of $85,000 each. The most famous movie theater in the world literally made its mark with the handprints and footprints of silver-screen stars. Today, millions of tourists visit **TCL Chinese Theatre**—historically known as Grauman's Chinese Theatre—to ogle the 200 celebrity prints and autographs immortalized in concrete.



HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

GRIFFITH PARK

Los Feliz Blvd., Zoo Dr., or Griffith Park Blvd., Los Angeles; 323/644-2050; www.laparks.org/griffithpark [URL inactive]

The 4,210-ac (1,703-ha) Griffith Park is the largest municipal park in the country, with numerous opportunities for mingling with nature while enjoying some of the city's iconic sights. Note that the view has been impacted by the 2025 fires. The cosmos come alive at the **Griffith Observatory,** the park's most popular sight. Planetarium shows occur daily. The park has several fun activities for kids, including the small but entertaining **Los Angeles Zoo,** home to gorillas, chimpanzees, elephants, and rain forest exhibits with monkeys and orangutans.

THE GETTY CENTER

1200 Getty Center Drive., Los Angeles; 310/440-7300; www.getty.edu

High on a hilltop overlooking both Santa Monica and Beverly Hills, The Getty Center is a fortress of travertine- and aluminum-clad pavilions built to house the eclectic art collection of billionaire J. Paul Getty, which includes everything from Renaissance-era paintings to pop art.

The center opened in 1997, welcoming visitors by way of a three-car, cable-pulled hover-train funicular (a large parking garage is at the base of the hill). Steps lead up to the main entrance of the rotunda building, which links all five of the art pavilions. Richard Meier's striking design includes fountains, glass windows several stories high, and an open plan that permits intimate vistas of the city below. A separate west building includes a cafeteria and restaurant. Stairs from the terrace lead down to outdoor terraces and gardens designed by Robert Irwin. The gardens and the views are as inspiring as the art. On a clear day, you can see the city skyline all the way west to the Pacific.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles; 323/857-6000; www.lacma.org

The 20-ac (8-ha) Los Angeles County Museum of Art holds the city's most impressive collections—150,000 works spanning human history. Modern American artists in the collection include Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, and Robert Rauschenberg. The Art of the Americas includes 2,500 pre-Columbian objects, many excavated from burial chambers in Jalisco, Mexico. At the main level, the Ahmanson Building holds African art and modern works by greats like Picasso and Kandinsky.

DISNEYLAND

1313 S. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim; 714/781-4636;
https://disneyland.disney.go.com

The "Happiest Place on Earth" lures millions of visitors of all ages each year with promises of fun and fantasy. During high seasons, waves of humanity flow through Disneyland Resort, moving slowly from land to land and ride to ride. The park is more popular than ever, so these days both **advance ticket purchases** and **reservations are required** for the dates you want to visit.

BALBOA PARK

San Diego; www.balboapark.org

A sprawling 1,200-ac (486-ha) urban park with numerous open spaces, gardens, theaters, and the world-famous San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park is the cultural center of downtown. Many of the city's museums are found along Balboa Park's Prado, inside intricately detailed, Spanish colonial-revival buildings originally built for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. One of the top museums is the **San Diego Museum of Art,** with a collection numbering more than 32,000 objects, as much as 5,000 years old. The biggest family attraction in Balboa Park, **San Diego Zoo** showcases more than 12,000 rare and endangered animals from around the world, including polar bears, primates, elephants, and pandas.



BALBOA PARK

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Arrive in San Francisco and start the day with a **cable car** ride to **Fisherman's Wharf.** Stroll around the bayfront along the **Embarcadero** and enjoy a meal at the **Ferry Building.** Wander to **North Beach,** the birthplace of the Beat Generation. Spend some time at **Golden Gate Park,** where you'll find the **de Young Museum** and **California Academy of Sciences.** Enjoy excellent food and drink in the **Mission District.**

DAY 2 Rent a car to head to wine country. Start the drive on US 101 over San Francisco's iconic **Golden Gate Bridge** to the charming little city of **Sonoma.** Explore the historic buildings of **Sonoma State Historic Park** before having a farm-to-table lunch in town. Continue north on CA-12 to **Jack London State Historic Park,** where you can hike the trails of the property that was the author's home in the early 1900s. Finish up the day with dinner in Sonoma.

DAY 3 Get an early start to reach Yosemite National Park in the afternoon. Use the park shuttle to see **Half Dome, El Capitan,** and **Yosemite Falls.** Hike the 5.4-mi (8.7-km) round-trip **Mist Trail,** then refuel at **Degnan's Kitchen.** Spend the night under the stars at one of the park **campgrounds,** or enjoy a night indoors at **The Ahwahnee** hotel (make reservations well in advance).

DAY 4 Get an early start to drive to **Glacier Point** to take in the views before containing on to see the redwoods at the **Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.** From here, you'll drive nearly five hours south to Los Angeles.

DAY 5 Wait for rush hour traffic to die down with a leisurely morning appreciating the art collections and view at **The Getty**

Center. Then it's time for a classic L.A. drive up **Sunset Boulevard** into Hollywood. Wander the **Hollywood Walk of Fame.** Wind down with a stroll along the **Santa Monica Pier.**

DAY 6 Start the 2.5-hour drive south to San Diego by winding through beautiful North County beach towns before reaching **Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve,** one of the wildest stretches along the coastline north of **La Jolla.** Drop into **La Jolla Cove** for some kayaking or snorkeling, then grab some tacos before continuing on to **San Diego.**

DAY 7 Backtrack north on the **Pacific Coast Highway** to Santa Barbara. Stretch your legs while window-shopping on **State Street,** or go beach cruising along the scenic **Cabrillo Bike Path** before driving on to **San Luis Obispo,** where you'll spend the night.

DAY 8 Take your time following the **Pacific Coast Highway.** Along the way, enjoy the views near **Big Sur** or stop in **Monterey** to explore the aquarium before returning to San Francisco.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

CA-1 and US 101

You'll find the most colorful swath of open road in the United States along its western coast. In its entirety, the Pacific Coast Highway is 1,700 mi (2,740 km) long, framed by golden sands and turquoise waters, bordered by emerald rain forests and basalt rock formations, and capped off with kaleidoscopic sunsets and indigo night skies. California holds 790 mi (1,270 km) of the highway.



BIXBY BRIDGE, PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

The Pacific Coast Highway winds through a diversity of natural treasures. There are towering, ancient trees in **Redwood National Park,** museums and restaurants for days in **San Francisco,** spectacular coastline at **Big Sur,** and whales and dolphins breaching off the shores of **San Diego.**

Travel the entire coast through Oregon and Washington and encounter the rest of the trove. You'll end each day hungry for more.

TIOGA PASS ROAD

CA-120

Tioga Pass Road (CA-120, summer only) enters Yosemite National Park from the east at the Tioga Pass Entrance and offers 46 mi (62 km) of scenic views through the park's high country. Grassy, alpine **Tuolumne Meadows** is bracketed by **Pothole Dome** on its west end and **Lembert Dome** to the east. Both offer access to myriad trails, plus the opportunity to admire rock climbers. Continuing west on Tioga Road, stop to stroll along the sandy beach at **Tenaya Lake** while staring up toward **Clouds Rest.** In the spring,

view the wildflowers around **White Wolf** (turn north on a dirt road to get to the parking lot) and bring your camera to take in the vista at **Olmsted Point.** Tioga Road is a narrow and twisting two-lane road with no shoulders or guardrail. Use the pullouts along the road to take photos and admire the views; watch for stopped cars, pedestrians, and wildlife along the way. Note that the road is closed in winter (Nov.-May).

AVENUE OF THE GIANTS

CA-254, between Fortuna and Garberville

The most famous redwood drive in the state, the Avenue of the Giants runs parallel with US 101 and the Eel River, roughly between the towns of Fortuna and Garberville, through the Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Taking US 101 to bypass it should not even be a consideration. The massive trees rise like a canyon on either side of the road: It's basically 31 mi (50 km) of joy to behold. Walkable groves and campgrounds pop up the length of the avenue, as do small towns with assorted burl furniture shops and galleries, and other amenities.

The avenue's busiest time is July and August, when you can expect a bit of stop-and-go traffic. If crowds aren't your thing, try visiting in the spring or fall, or even braving the rains of winter to gain a more secluded redwood experience.

MOJAVE SCENIC DRIVE

I-15

This 90-minute scenic drive crosses through the **Mojave National Preserve** (between I-15 and I-40; 760/252-6100; www.nps.gov/moja). Along the way, you can hike and camp. Starting from Baker, follow the paved I-15 south to Kelbaker Road for 35 mi (56 km) to the town of Kelso. Along the way, admire the volcanic landscape as you pass through **Cinder Cones National Natural Landmark.** In town, take a break at the **Kelso Depot Visitor Center** (Kelbaker Rd., Kelso; 760/252-6100) on the site of the former railroad depot. You'll follow the Kelso-Cima Road to Cima to grab a snack. Stop at the turnoff to spot an abandoned mine that gave its name to

Morning Star Mine Road. Continue onto Ivanpah Road and Nipton Road back to I-15.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

1 Bear Valley Rd., Point Reyes Station; 415/464-5100; www.nps.gov/pore

Point Reyes boasts acres of unspoiled forest and beach country. Cool weather presides even in the summer, but the result is lustrous green foliage and spectacular scenery. Point Reyes National Seashore stretches for miles between Tomales Bay and the Pacific, north from Stinson Beach to the tip of the land at the end of the bay. Dedicated hikers can trek from the bay to the ocean, or from the beach to land's end. In the marshes and lagoons, a wide variety of birds—including three different species of pelicans—make their nests. Some 4,000 elephant seals visit these beaches throughout the year, while endangered Myrtle's silverspot butterflies can be found in the dunes and grasslands.



POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

Ranches and dairy farms still operate inside the park. These sustainable, generations-old family farms give added character and historical depth to Point Reyes. Another remnant of past times is the historic **Point Reyes Lighthouse,** which sits on the cliffs of the Point Reyes Headlands, a point of land that is supposed to be the windiest place on the West Coast and one of the foggiest spots in North America.

LAKE TAHOE

Sitting at an elevation of 6,220 ft (1,895 m) above sea level, Lake Tahoe is a haven for hikers, bikers, boaters, skiers, and snowboarders. Lake Tahoe has numerous recreation options accessible year-round. In winter (Dec.-Apr.), folks come to Tahoe for the snow. If you're only in Tahoe for a limited amount of time or it's your first time to the region, driving around the lake's 72-mi (116-km) circumference provides a lovely overview. The drive takes approximately **three hours** without stops if there's minimal traffic, but plan on at least 4-5 hours if you can. **Summer** is the best time to experience this

drive since a portion of CA-89 on the West Shore near Emerald Bay tends to close due to snow on the road in winter. Keep in mind that there is a lot of traffic congestion in summer. Start your counterclockwise journey in **Tahoe City** on the West Shore, a convenient entry point at **the Y** (the intersection of CA-28 and CA-89). The best views are from **Eagle Rock, Inspiration Point Vista,** and the **Heavenly Gondola.**

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

760/786-3200; www.nps.gov/deva

Death Valley may be as close as you'll ever get to visiting another planet. Its sculpted sand dunes, crusted salt flats, towering rocks, and polished marble canyons will make you consider your place in the universe. Set yourself up in the village of **Furnace Creek,** the main park hub, to enjoy Death Valley's most iconic sights. It's a short drive on CA-190 to spectacular views from **Zabriskie Point. Badwater Road** offers a scenic driving tour from **Artists Drive** to the **Devil's Golf Course** with its bizarre salt formations and **Badwater Basin**'s surreal salt flats, 282 ft (86 m) below sea level—the lowest point in North America. Don't forget to visit the **Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes** near Stovepipe Wells. These sculpted, windswept dunes sit perched on a slope of the valley floor and are the most popular dunes in the park. Should you visit in **spring** (Mar.-May), keep an eye out for rare blooms of spectacular desert wildflowers.



DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

CALIFORNIA'S NATIONAL PARKS

California has nine national parks—more than any other state. Yosemite, Joshua Tree, and Death Valley are the most visited in the state, but the other six are just as spectacular and have fewer crowds.

- **Redwood National and State Parks** (707/464-6101; www.nps.gov/redw): The lands of Redwood National and State Parks meander along the coast and include three state parks—Prairie Creek Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods. This complex of parkland encompasses most of California's northern redwood forests. The 2,000-ft-tall (610-m) **Redwood Creek Overlook** (Bald Hills Rd.) looks onto the redwood-covered hills of Redwood National Park with the Pacific Ocean in the distance. This is a great place to take in the wild majesty of the forests and watershed below.
- **Lassen Volcanic National Park** (530/595-4480; www.nps.gov/lavo): Lassen Volcanic National Park is home to an active volcano with a long-recorded history of eruptions (the last took place 1914-1917). The park road offers a wonderful drive past the stark slopes and jagged rocks, evidence of volcanic eruptions. **Lassen Peak** reaches 10,457 ft (3,187 m) into the sky. Even if you're not up to climbing the trail to the top, it's worth stopping at the trailhead parking lot to enjoy the view. The starting elevation for the summit trail is 8,500 ft (2,591 m), which means the Lassen Peak trailhead tends to be cool even in the heat of summer. You may need to break out a windbreaker or light sweater if you plan to explore at length. The best and most varied area of volcanic geothermal activity on Lassen is at a location called **Bumpass Hell** (7 mi/11.5 km from the southwest entrance). For travelers visiting the mud pots and fumaroles: Stay on the paths!

- **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks** (559/565-3341; www.nps.gov/seki): To see some of the world's tallest and oldest trees, visit Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, south of Yosemite. Highlights include the largest trees in the world: the **General Sherman Tree** in Sequoia, and Kings Canyon's **General Grant Tree,** the world's second largest.
- **Pinnacles National Park** (831/389-4486; www.nps.gov/pinn): Created with explosive geological force when a massive volcanic field was split in half by the San Andreas Fault, the distinctive stone landscape of Pinnacles National Park has been shaped by 23 million years of erosion. The park features striking rock pillars, looming, wind-smoothed walls, and narrow canyons—best viewed from the park's trails. Its top attractions are two talus caves: **Balconies Cave** and **Bear Gulch Cave.** The caves are formed under piles of huge boulders—so flashlights are a must!
- **Channel Islands National Park** (1901 Spinnaker Dr., Ventura; 805/658-5730; www.nps.gov/chis): Channel Islands National Park is made up of eight islands, though only five of those (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara) are within sight of the mainland. Since 1980 these areas have been federally protected. Long before they were tourist spots, they were ranch lands. And even longer before that, some 13,000 years ago, archaeological evidence suggests that they there were inhabited by Indigenous people. To access the islands by boat, there's only one approved concessionaire, departing from both Ventura and Oxnard as a day-trip or overnight passage. It offers transportation to five of the islands: Anacapa and Santa Cruz are about an hour each way by boat. The outer islands—Santa Rosa, Santa Barbara, and San Miguel—cost more to reach and take over two hours each way.

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

760/367-5500; www.nps.gov/jotr

Joshua Tree is wild, eroded, and fantastical. Its surreal rock formations were cooked up through millions of years to form hulking, toothy piles of granite. The namesake Joshua trees, with their jagged silhouettes, run rampant among the jumbled piles of boulders. This is the high desert—gorgeous in spring and fall, searing hot in summer, and cold enough in winter that snow sometimes dusts the agave. Dusty desert roads, jagged boulder piles, and spiky Joshua trees draw droves of **hikers, rock climbers,** and day-trippers to this otherworldly geologic landscape. Tour the **historic mines** and **ranches** of desert dreamers, wander amid strange cacti and colorful **wildflowers,** and take in the views from scenic peaks.

For impressive views, visit windswept **Keys View** (7 mi/11.5 km south of the Hidden Valley Campground), an observation point in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The paved observation point is also wheelchair-accessible. Be sure to stop by **Oasis of Mara** (CA-62 and Utah Trail), a 9,000-year-old palm oasis used as a settlement by the Serrano and Chemehuevi Indians into the 1900s.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Empire Polo Field, 81800 Ave. 51, Indio; 888/833-1031; www.coachella.com; usually Apr.

The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, known simply as "Coachella," is an annual music festival held every April on the Empire Polo Club fields in the Coachella Valley. With folk rock, power pop, hip-hop, and electronic music, the festival draws big names and huge numbers of fans. Tickets are highly competitive to get and have been known to sell out within hours of going on sale in January. The crowd skews youngish, but it can be a fun time for anyone due to the predictably excellent band lineup. They don't shy away from the "art" aspect of the festival either,

featuring a few choice Burning Man-level technology and sculpture installations. On-site camping is available. Outside the festival, local hotels as far as Palm Springs, 25 mi (40 km) away, book quickly. For transportation to and from the festival, prepaid and reserved shuttles are available at pickup points throughout the Coachella Valley and Palm Springs.

SAN FRANCISCO LGBT PRIDE CELEBRATION AND PARADE

Market St., San Francisco; 415/294-1844; www.sfpride.org; June

One of the year's biggest parties is the San Francisco LGBT Pride Parade and Celebration. On the last weekend in June, the streets around City Hall close to traffic for a massive block party, with multiple stages and performers. For the main parade, which takes place on Sunday, hundreds of thousands of people of all orientations take to the streets for this quintessentially San Franciscan party-cum-social justice movement. Numerous other events and festivities take place around the city leading up to the main march, including the Trans March on the preceding Friday and the San Francisco Dyke March—which typically begins at Dolores Park and ends in the Castro—the preceding Saturday.



SAN FRANCISCO LGBT PRIDE PARADE

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL

San Diego Convention Center, 111 W. Harbor Dr., San Diego; www.comic-con.org; July

Year after year, Comic-Con International is the biggest event at the downtown San Diego Convention Center. What began as a modest celebration of comic books has exploded into an entertainment juggernaut, drawing all manner of sci-fi fans, cosplayers, video-game buffs, and celebrities. More than 130,000 people descend on San Diego to attend 600 staged events and 1,500 exhibitor booths. Take note when Comic-Con takes place; it sells out far in advance, as do most of the hotels anywhere near downtown—and at triple their normal rates.

MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL

2004 Fairground Rd., Monterey; 831/373-3366; https://montereyjazz.org; Sept.

One of the biggest music festivals in California is the Monterey Jazz Festival. As the site of the longest-running jazz festival on earth (since 1958), Monterey attracts 500 artists from around the world to the fest's five stages. Past acts to grace the stage have included Herbie Hancock, Booker T. Jones, and The Roots.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

CALIFORNIA CUISINE

California cuisine has its roots in iconic restaurants like **The French Laundry** (6640 Washington St., Yountville; 707/944-2380; www.frenchlaundry.com [URL inactive]) and **Chez Panisse** (1517 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley; 510/548-5525; www.chezpanisse.com). To brush up on your own techniques and learn about local ingredients, take a class at the **Culinary Institute of America** (CIA, 500 1st St., Napa; 707/967-2500; www.ciachef.edu).

WINE

The **Napa and Sonoma Valleys**' beautiful grapevines are renowned worldwide for producing top-quality vintages and economical table wines. But foodies also know the area as a center for stellar cuisine.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Don't leave California without a bottle of **wine.** Most wineries will waive their tasting fee if you buy a bottle for yourself.

Celebrate the state's history and proximity to Mexico with a piece of **Mexican folk art.** You'll find crafts, jewelry, decorative wares, and Talavera tiles around Southern California, especially in San Diego.

Embrace California's counterculture with a visit to San Francisco's legendary **City Lights bookstore** (261 Columbus Ave.; 415/362-8193; www.citylights.com). Or, music lovers should peruse the massive selection at **Amoeba Records** (www.amoeba.com). There are locations in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Hollywood.

Embrace California's green lifestyle with **ecofriendly gifts.** Reusable water bottles, reusable straws, and tote bags are a good place to start.

The **Russian River Valley** wineries are more approachable and less crowded than their Napa counterparts. **Korbel Cellars** (13250 River Rd., Guerneville; 707/824-7000; www.korbel.com) is a great spot to taste California champagne-style sparkling wines.

South of San Francisco, vineyards sprawl across San Luis Obispo's **Edna Valley. Baileyana** (5828 Orcutt Rd.; 805/269-8200; www.baileyana.com) is a good place to start. Continuing south, **Santa Ynez Valley** has become one of the hottest wine regions in the state. Small towns like **Los Olivos, Buellton,** and **Solvang** offer a high concentration of tasting rooms where you can sample regional specialties like pinot noir and syrah.

California produces more than 100 types of grapes; here are a few of the most notable varietals and the best places to try them.

Chardonnay

Chardonnay is legendary in the Napa Valley, characterized by a buttery flavor and a smooth finish.

- **Grgich Hills Winery:** 1829 St. Helena Hwy., Rutherford; 707/963-2784; www.grgich.com

Pinot Noir

Pinot noir grapes prefer a cool coastal climate to produce their signature fruity and smoky tastes. California's Anderson Valley and Monterey regions are particularly well suited for pinot noir grapes.

- **Landmark Vineyards:** 6050 Westside Rd., Healdsburg; 707/433-6491; www.landmarkwine.com

Zinfandel

Deep red in color, zinfandel wines are full-bodied, often tasting of berry jam, which make them a great pairing for hearty meat dishes.

- **Clif Family Wines:** 709 Main St., St. Helena; 707/968-0625; www.cliffamily.com

Cabernet Sauvignon

Originally from the Bordeaux region, cabernet sauvignon is a French grape favored by Napa winegrowers. When sommeliers talk about wines flavored with cherry, leather, and tobacco, they're often referring to a cabernet sauvignon.

- **Stag's Leap Wine Cellars:** 5766 Silverado Tr., Napa; 707/261-6410; www.stagsleapwinecellars.com

MEXICAN FOOD

Much of the rich culture of San Francisco's **Mission District** stems from its Latin American heritage—an influx of Mexicans began arriving in the neighborhood in the 1940s, and Central and South Americans came in the 1980s. It seems that every local has a different go-to taqueria for Mission burritos, but two spots that often top lists are within a few blocks of each

other: **El Farolito** (2779 Mission St.; 415/824-7877) and James Beard-recognized **La Taqueria** (2889 Mission St.; 415/285-7117). El Farolito keeps later hours, and La Taqueria's burritos are notable for being rice-free.

Seafood and **tacos** rule in **San Diego,** so it stands to reason fish tacos are San Diego's signature street food. If you see a line at a food truck with Mariscos in the name, consider stopping. It's worth driving north from Mission Beach to the northern reaches of Pacific Beach for great examples of arguably the most important food on this coast—fish tacos. **Oscar's Mexican Seafood** (703 Turquoise St.; 858/488-6392; www.oscarsmexicanseafood.com) does them well from a beautiful hole-in-the-wall restaurant near the Tourmaline surf spot.



FISH TACOS

FRESH PRODUCE

California has a thriving agricultural economy. As you drive across the state, you'll see rolling hills covered in vineyards and flourishing farmlands producing a bounty of crops, especially strawberries and artichokes. The Central Valley town of **Gilroy,** near Monterey, is famous for its **garlic** and

the popular festival (https://gilroygarlicfestival.com; July) celebrating all things related to garlic. Throughout the state, you'll find great local farmers markets. Some of the best are the **Ferry Building** in San Francisco and the **Original Farmers Market** (6333 W. 3rd St.; https://farmersmarketla.com) in Los Angeles. In **San Luis Obispo** the weekly market is one of the largest farmers markets in California.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Los Angeles International Airport:** LAX; 1 World Way, Los Angeles; 855/463-5252; www.flylax.com
- **San Francisco International Airport:** SFO; 780 S. Airport Blvd., San Francisco; 800/435-9736; www.flysfo.com
- **San Diego International Airport:** SAN; 3225 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego; 619/400-2404; www.san.org

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit California:** www.visitcalifornia.com
- **California State Parks:** www.parks.ca.gov [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Los Angeles Times:*** www.latimes.com
- ***San Francisco Chronicle:*** www.sfchronicle.com

OceanofPDF.com

SOUTHWEST

Nevada

Arizona

Utah

New Mexico

Texas

THE SOUTHWEST
State by State

NEVADA

Why Go: Las Vegas attends to worldly pursuits, while ghost towns and the Extraterrestrial Highway offer the otherworldly.

ARIZONA

Why Go: The vistas associated with the West—mesas rising out of the desert, swirling red slot canyons, anthropomorphic saguaro cactus, and the mind-blowing Grand Canyon—are all here.

UTAH

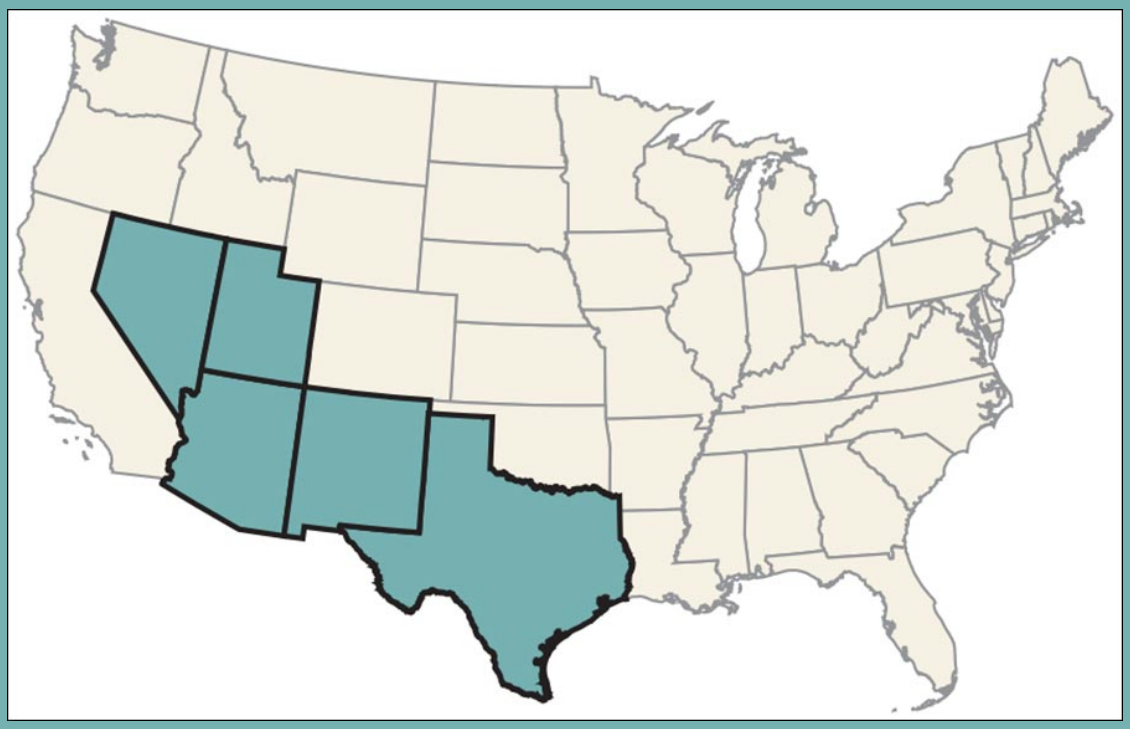
Why Go: Utah's five national parks showcase nature's architecture: sheer cliffs, fanciful rock formations, craggy spires, and graceful arches.

NEW MEXICO

Why Go: The distinctive Pueblo culture continues in the 19 pueblos located across the state, including the oldest continually inhabited communities in the United States, while dazzling white-sand deserts provide a setting for contemplative isolation.

TEXAS

Why Go: The country's second-largest state (in size and in population) encompasses everything from the longhorns of the Fort Worth Stockyards to the remote undulations of the Rio Grande's Big Bend, and from the Space Center in Houston to the artistic compound in Marfa, not to mention the barbecue, Tex-Mex, and global cuisine.



Southwest ROAD TRIP

You can see a huge swath of the southwest by driving in a loop of roughly 2,000 mi (3,200 km). This road trip ticks off many places on your US

bucket list: Utah's five national parks, Route 66, the Grand Canyon, and more. Consider getting an annual America the Beautiful National Parks Pass at your first park—it'll pay for itself on this trip.

UTAH

Utah's National Parks: 4 Days / 575 mi (925 km)

From Las Vegas, Utah's **Zion National Park** is about a three-hour drive without traffic. Explore iconic attractions like **Court of the Patriarchs** and the **Emerald Pools.** The next day, head to **Bryce Canyon National Park** (1.75 hours away) and see the hoodoos. Don't miss watching the sun go down from **Sunset Point.** On the third day, you'll hit your third national park, **Capital Reef.** Spend the day making the scenic 115-mi (185-km) trip from Bryce Canyon and doing the **scenic drive** within the park. Make the 2.5-hour drive to **Moab** to spend the night. In the morning, head to **Arches National Park,** then **Canyonlands,** or vice-versa (they are an hour apart), to get your fill of beautiful natural arches and other rock formations.

NEW MEXICO

Taos, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Route 66: 4-5 Days / 800 mi (1,290 km)

From Moab, detour into Arizona for a tour of **Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park,** 2.5 hours away. In the morning, drive out to the **Four Corners Monument** (2 hours) to step foot in New Mexico—and Utah and Arizona and Colorado. Then make the five-hour drive to **Taos.** Spend the rest of the day and next morning in the high-elevation town. Take one of the two scenic routes to **Santa Fe** (1.5-2 hours), and spend the night (or two—you've done a lot of driving, and Santa Fe is a great place to relax). Head an hour south to **Albuquerque** for a ride on the **Sandia Peak Tramway,** then start your journey on **Historic Route 66** with a two-hour drive out to **Gallup.**

ARIZONA

Route 66, Grand Canyon: 3 days / 440 mi (710 km)

From Gallup, drive I-40/Route 66 west into Arizona, stopping at **Petrified Forest National Park** after an hour or so. Make it an early night in **Flagstaff** (2 hours away) so you can set out early for the **Grand Canyon** the next day. Take in the views from the **Rim Trail** or descend into the canyon on the **Bright Angel Trail.** The next day, head out to **Ash Fork** (1.5 hours from Grand Canyon Village) for more Route 66: The longest remaining stretch of the road starts here. Take it west to **Kingman** (1.5 hours from Ash Fork), where you can spend the night in a neon-signed motor inn.

NEVADA

Hoover Dam, Las Vegas: 1 day / 110 mi (175 km)

From Kingman, head to **Hoover Dam** (1.5 hours), which straddles the Arizona-Nevada border. Take a tour to admire the engineering marvel and then set your sights on **Las Vegas,** where you'll arrive in an hour or so. Spend the rest of the day at the pool, in a spa, or at any of the thousands of diversions the city has to offer.

ADDING TEXAS

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Marfa, and Big Bend National Park: 3 days / 570-630 mi (920-1,015 km) one-way

Getting to Texas takes a lot of driving, often through very remote areas. Given that it's the largest state in the Lower 48, it could certainly justify its own trip. If you want to add Texas as part of this Southwest road trip, you could head down to **Big Bend National Park** over three days (one way) from Santa Fe or Albuquerque. On the first day, stop in Roswell and **Carlsbad Caverns National Park** on the New Mexico side—5-6 hours of driving, depending on where you start. On the second day, you'll hit **Guadalupe Mountains National Park,** which is just across the Texas border, then head south on TX-54, which is very scenic, and US 90 to **Marfa,** two hours away. On the third day, you'll make it to **Big Bend,** about two hours southeast of Marfa.

NEVADA

The Silver State is home to desert hot springs, ghost towns, ancient Indigenous sites, and “out-there” art. Here you’ll find retro hotels, neon-lit nightlife, expansive skies, and serene natural landscapes. The state was—and still is—known for silver, gold, and copper mining. As you tour its local markets and boutique shops, you’ll find treasures made from local turquoise, garnets, and opals. While the glitz and glamour of Las Vegas is one of the state’s main draws, Nevada has a wealth of outdoor adventure opportunities, from paddling Lake Tahoe to stargazing at Great Basin National Park. For art lovers, you’ll find something fun and creative around every corner, with many outdoor installations mingling with the state’s natural beauty. Whether you bask in the sun, tour a historic mine, or explore the state’s ties to extraterrestrial life, you’ll find endless adventures in Nevada.

AREA: 110,572 sq mi / 286,380 sq km (7th)

POPULATION: 3,267,467 (31st)

STATEHOOD DATE: October 31, 1864 (36th)

STATE CAPITAL: Carson City


NEVADA
OREGON
IDAHO
CALIFORNIA
UTAH
ARIZONA
ROYAL PEACOCK OPAL MINE
Orovada
Jarbidge
Henry
Winnemucca
Wells
Oasis
WESTERN FOLKLIFE CENTER
Elko
Spring Creek
Carlin
Lamoille
West Wendover
Black Rock Desert
Gerlach
Rye Patch Reservoir
Battle Mountain
Beowawe
Palisade
LAMOILLE CANYON SCENIC BYWAY
Ruby Mountains
Oreana
Lovelock
Toy
Pyramid Lake
Nixon
Fernley
Reno
Sparks
Lahontan State Recreation Area
Fallon
HIDDEN CAVE
GRIMES POINT
Silver Springs
Washoe City
MT. ROSE SKI TAHOE
DIAMOND PEAK
Virginia City
Dayton
Lahontan Reservoir
Carson Lake
Lake Tahoe
Glenbrook
CARSON CITY
Zephyr Cove
Stateline
Minden
Yerington
Schurz
SKIING DOWN POWDERED SLOPES IN TAHOE
Holbrook Junction
Walker Lake
Hawthorne
Luning
THE LONELIEST ROAD
Austin
Eureka
SPENCER HOT SPRINGS
Ely
Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Park
Wheeler Peak
Great Basin National Park
MARVELING AT 4,000-YEAR-OLD TREES IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK
Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park
Tonopah Historic Mining Park
Tonopah
Warm Springs
Cathedral Gorge State Park
Panaca
Goldfield
EXTRATERRESTRIAL HIGHWAY
LITTLE A'LE'INN
Hiko
Caliente
AREA 51
Groom Lake
Rhyolite
Beatty
Death Valley National Park
Amargosa Valley
Mesquite
Glendale
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
GETTING DAZZLED BY LAS VEGAS GLITZ
North Las Vegas
Lake Mead
Pahrump
Las Vegas
Blue Diamond
Henderson
HOOVER DAM
Boulder City
Searchlight
Lake Mohave
Laughlin
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Rising out of the desert like a high-tech oasis, **Las Vegas** is an adult playground of casinos, bars, celebrity chef-run restaurants, over-the-top shows, and plush hotels. Dig a little deeper to find fine food, a flourishing arts scene, and local hangouts in the shadows of the Strip. Heading north, the cool waters of Lake Tahoe beckon in the summer, while the slopes draw snow lovers in winter. In the west, nearly on the California state line, **Carson City,** the state's capital, mixes historical sights and a thriving brewery scene with outdoor adventure. Best known for its roots as a casino town, nearby **Reno** is the place to go for entertainment, public art, and relaxation. **Great Basin National Park** is located in the mountainous east pushing up from desert, best known for its ancient bristlecone pines and underground caves.

WHEN TO GO

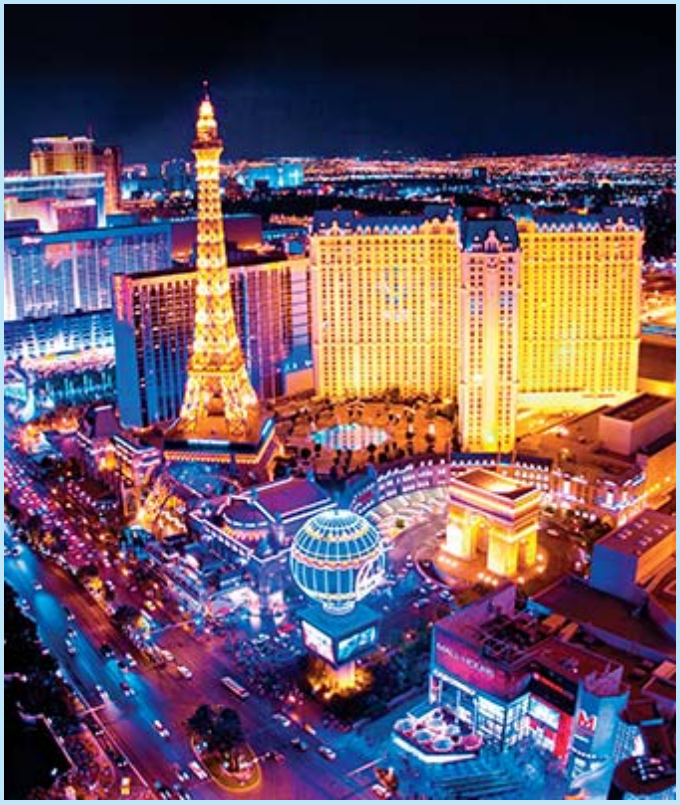
Spring, summer, and **early fall** are the best and the busiest seasons for a visit. During the high season, May-September, parks and attractions can be crowded with vacationing families and international tourists. Throughout the year, bring **layered clothing.** Expect **desert heat** in the summer in Las Vegas. Also be prepared for cooler temperatures: Nights, even in the summer, turn cool above 7,000 ft (2,134 m), as you'll find in the Sierra Nevada.

TOP 3

1 GETTING DAZZLED BY LAS VEGAS GLITZ

The **Las Vegas Strip** comprises 4.2 mi (6.8 km) of Las Vegas Boulevard South, which runs parallel to I-15. It stretches roughly from Mandalay Bay/Russell Road on its southern end, just past the iconic "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas" sign, to The STRAT/Saint Louis Boulevard on its northern end. Nearly all the megaresorts are worth walking through to get a sense of their inner worlds, but the

Bellagio and **Caesars Palace** are particularly atmospheric. Be sure to check out the **Bellagio Conservatory & Botanical Garden** (Bellagio, 3600 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702/693-7111; https://bellagio.mgmresorts.com) and stroll **The Forum Shops** (Caesars Palace, 3500 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 702/893-4800; www.caesars.com) at Caesars Palace amid Roman statuary and beneath a sky-painted ceiling. The **SkyPod Observation Deck Experience** (The STRAT, 2000 Las Vegas Blvd. S.; 800/998-6937; https://thestrat.com) can't be beat for sweeping views of the Strip and the sprawling desert and mountains beyond. The highest freestanding observation tower in the country—at 1,149 ft (350 m)—it offers unobstructed 360-degree Vegas views from two observation decks, one inside behind glass and one outside.



LAS VEGAS STRIP

Downtown Las Vegas is about 2 mi (3.2 km) north of the Strip from The STRAT down Las Vegas Boulevard, and of at least two minds: one glittering and futuristic (with a large helping of old-school Vegas) around the **Fremont Street Experience** (Fremont St.

between Main St. and Las Vegas Blvd.; 702/678-5600; www.vegasexperience.com), and the other creative, local, and bohemian in the **Arts District** (www.dtlvarts.com), around the intersection of Main Street and Charleston Boulevard south of Fremont Street.

2 SKIING DOWN POWDERED SLOPES IN TAHOE

High in the Sierra Nevada, Lake Tahoe and the surrounding mountains span the California-Nevada state line. The area's annual snowfall reaches 25 ft (7.6 m). Tahoe's ski season stretches from Thanksgiving to mid-April. For snow sports, check out these top destinations on the Nevada side: **Mt. Rose Ski Tahoe** (22222 Mt. Rose Hwy., New Washoe City; 775/849-0704 or 800/754-7673; www.skirose.com) and **Diamond Peak** (1210 Ski Way, Incline Village; 775/832-1177; www.diamondpeak.com). Cross-country skiers and snowshoers can enjoy miles of trails at Mt. Rose. There's even more fun to be had at snow-tubing sites around Stateline. Tahoe's recreation season doesn't stop when the weather warms. In the summer, the lake draws paddlers, swimmers, and parasailers. Hikers can explore the 165-mi (265-km) **Tahoe Rim Trail** (https://tahoerimtrail.org) from three trailheads on the Nevada side: Tahoe Meadows to Spooner Summit, Spooner Summit, and Kingsbury Grade.



MT. ROSE SKI TAHOE RESORT

3 MARVELING AT 4,000-YEAR-OLD TREES IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK

Baker; 775/234-7331; www.nps.gov/grba

With mountains pushing up from a huge desert, Great Basin National Park is an island amid a former shallow inland sea. Its vertical diversity plunges from high peaks to underground limestone caves. Near tree line, isolated bristlecones thrive in harsh conditions, winds twisting the pines into awkward shapes. They are the oldest species in the world, many surviving more than 4,000 years. In the ancient shallow seabed that once covered Great Basin, 400 million years of sediments from dead sea creatures solidified into limestone. It uplifted into mountains where water slowly percolated, dissolving the rock into large spaces. Since then, **Lehman Caves** formed decorations: shields, turnips, popcorn, soda straws, columns, draperies, and cave bacon. **Ranger-guided cave tours** (877/444-6777; www.recreation.gov) lead visitors down narrow passages to see the famous formations up close. For the best views, take a morning drive along **Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive** (12 mi/19 km, June-Oct.) to **Mather Overlook** and the short **Sky Island Forest Trail** (0.4 mi/0.6 km). To gaze at the oldest species on the planet is a humbling

experience. Hike the **Bristlecone Trail** (2.8 mi/4.5 km round-trip, 600 ft/183 m elevation gain, moderate, mid-June-mid-Oct.) to this grove of wind-gnarled ancients. Their dense wood from ultra-slow growth prevents many bugs and diseases, allowing them to live 3,000-5,000 years. From Wheeler Peak parking area at the Bristlecone Trailhead, climb to 10,390 ft (3,139 m).



BRISTLECONE PINE, GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK

HIGHLIGHTS

HOOVER DAM

Once the largest dam of its kind anywhere, Hoover Dam is still one of the nation's greatest engineering and construction feats and stands as a testament to the brawn and ambition of a people set on taming a wild river. The Southwest as we know it would not exist without this dam. During its construction, an epic human story played out, with thousands of workers

climbing the sheer rock walls of an overheated canyon in the middle of nowhere, holding back a river with concrete and will. Ninety-six workers died during the dam's construction, which took five years and 3.25 million cubic yards (2.4 million cubic m) of concrete to complete.



VIEW FROM HOOVER DAM

Not only is Hoover Dam an engineering accomplishment of the highest order, it's a rather stylish one at that. Heading northwest from Kingman along US 93, the walls of Black Canyon suddenly close in, and the huge concrete slab of the dam comes into view. You must drive over the dam to reach Nevada and the **parking garage** (8am-5:15pm daily; $10, cash only), passing along the way sculptor Oskar J. W. Hansen's soaring work *Winged Figures of the Republic*. The **Hoover Dam Visitor Center** (702/494-2517 or 866/730-9097; www.usbr.gov) has numerous exhibits on the building of the dam and the scientific and social justifications behind the enormous undertaking. It's worth taking a tour of dam or the power plant to learn more.

Major CITIES

LAS VEGAS: Las Vegas is unlike any other city in the Southwest. Here, everything is bigger than life: fantastical and nostalgic, hedonistic and hopeful, a mash-up of the past and the future, all playing out in a buzzed eternal present. Spread along the famous stretch of road known as the Strip are about half of the world's largest megaresorts—worlds unto themselves—containing the city's elaborate casinos and all other manner of entertainment, from celebrity-chef restaurants and high-caliber cabaret and circus shows to poolside parties and thumping nightclubs.

RENO: Close to the California state line, Reno is known for its casinos, spas, and access to the outdoors.

CARSON CITY: The state capital packs a punch with historical sights, a thriving food and brewery scene, and a historic natural hot spring.

GHOST TOWNS

Rhyolite (NV-374, 4 mi/6.4 km west of Beatty) once was home to 3,500-5,000 people. Today, it might be most famous for its **bottle house,** built by enterprising miner Tom Kelly out of a plentiful material on hand—beer and liquor bottles. It took over 50,000 bottles to make just one structure. The ghost town of **Gold Point** (NV-774, 66 mi/106 km north of Beatty) was a mining camp in the 1860s, but it didn't become a town until 1908. The town had the usual story of boom and bust, although it was never completely abandoned. In the early 1980s, two friends began buying up the mostly abandoned property and stabilizing the cabins and town buildings. Today, the result is a Wild West gem—gritty, isolated, and authentic, open to travelers with a fascination for these kinds of tucked-away pieces of history. You can visit the town as well as stay in one of the historical houses or miners cabins.

VIRGINIA CITY

Virginia City, 26 mi (42 km) southeast of Reno, was the state's mining hub in the 19th century. Largely thanks to the silver ore mined in the Comstock Lode vein, the city was—and continues to be—a colorful community. Today, you can go back in time, strolling the wooden sidewalks, swinging by the saloon, or touring a mine or gold mill. Tours of the **Chollar Mine** (615 S. F St.; 775/847-0155; www.chollarminetours.com) run year-round and showcase some of the equipment used to extract silver ore. Train lovers can hop aboard the **scenic train** (www.virginiatruckee.com) that runs between Virginia City and historic Gold Hill May-October. The short ride follows the original Comstock train route and showcases some of the best views of the state. During the rest of the year, you can hop on a themed train ride.

GRIMES POINT AND HIDDEN CAVE

A detour off the Loneliest Road, **Grimes Point Archaeological Area** (www.blm.gov) is home to ancient petroglyphs that offer a glimpse into the lives of the Indigenous tribes of Nevada. Follow a short interpretive trail to see these carvings on the boulders less than a mile from the picnic area. Another 1.5 mi (2.4 km) past the petroglyphs, you'll find **Hidden Cave.** Within this archaeological site you can see formations that are estimated to be over 21,000 years old. Cave tours are run by the Bureau of Land Management through the **Churchill County Museum** (1050 S. Maine St., Fallon; 775/423-3677; www.ccmuseum.org) in Fallon.

WARD CHARCOAL OVENS STATE HISTORIC PARK

775/289-1693; https://parks.nv.gov

The most noticeable features of this park, located south of Ely, are the six charcoal ovens shaped like beehives. Each oven is 30 ft (9 m) high and 27 ft (8 m) wide. These structures were used to process the silver ore mined in the area in the 19th century. Today, the park is popular with hikers and equestrians, as well as anglers seeking rainbow trout.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start by taking in the sights from Las Vegas's **SkyPod Observation Deck,** the country's highest freestanding observation tower. Walk off your buffet dinner with a stroll through the **Bellagio Conservatory & Botanical Garden.**

DAY 2 Hit the road, heading southeast to **Hoover Dam,** where you can take a tour of the power plant powered by the mighty Colorado River. Head back west to **Beatty,** stopping by the ghost town of **Rhyolite** to get a sense of Nevada's mining past.

DAY 3 It's 1.5 hours from Beatty to **Tonopah Historic Mining Park.** Here you can dig even deeper into the state's mining legacy with a walk down a mine tunnel. Historic Tonopah is a good place to stop for lunch before continuing 3.5 hours to the capital, **Carson City,** where you can enjoy the hot springs before dinner.

DAY 4 From Carson City, it's less than an hour drive west to catch a glimpse of **Lake Tahoe.** Take a short hike before turning back east along the **Loneliest Road** to **Grimes Point and Hidden Cave** on your way to **Spencer Hot Springs.**

DAY 5 Head east toward the Utah border for three hours to arrive in **Great Basin National Park.** Here you'll tour the limestone caves and get ready for a night of stargazing.

DAY 6 In the morning, take a drive on **Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive** to soak up the view from **Mather Overlook.** It's a 4.5-hour drive to **Valley of Fire State Park** (https://parks.nv.gov/parks/valley-

of-fire), where you can camp among red Aztec sandstone formations. Drive an hour back to Las Vegas the next morning.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

THE LONELIEST ROAD

US 50

US 50 runs from Baker to Dayton and earned its nickname as the “Loneliest Road in America” in a 1986 Life magazine article. Along the way, you’ll pass **Lahontan State Recreation Area** (16799 Lahontan Dam Rd., Fallon; 775/577-2226; https://parks.nv.gov), home of wild horses and bald eagles. You can pull over and explore ancient Indigenous sites like **Grimes Point** and **Hidden Cave.** Also en route is **Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park** (Austin; 775/427-9332; https://parks.nv.gov), a ghost town and the site of an ancient swamp that contained the country’s largest collection of ichthyosaur fossils. Once you’ve taken in the sights, continue on to Spencer Hot Springs to soak under the stars. Rejuvenated, you can continue on to **Great Basin National Park** or head to **Reno** via **NV-305** and **I-80.**



US 50, AKA THE LONELIEST ROAD

LAMOILLE CANYON SCENIC BYWAY

National Forest Road 660

This 12-mi (19-km) byway winds through Lamoille Canyon and the Ruby Mountains, the state's wettest range. Along the way, you'll take in views of waterfalls, bighorn sheep, and dramatic canyon features carved by glacial forces. The byway starts on NV-227 from **Elko** and runs to a turnaround, which is also a hiking trailhead. For hikes along the byway, check out the **Thomas Canyon Trail,** an easy 4-mi (6.4-km) out-and-back hike from Thomas Canyon Campground. If you haven't gotten enough views, continue on the 43-mi (69-km) **Ruby Crest National Scenic Trail** from the byway's turnaround point.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL HIGHWAY

NV-375

To experience the otherworldly sights of the state, hop in the car for this 100-mi (160-km) drive—who knows, you might encounter a spacecraft along the way. Make sure your gas tank is full; this route heads out to remote spots. Start your journey in Hiko at the **Alien Research Center** (100 Extraterrestrial Highway; 775/725-3750; www.alienresearchcenter.com), where you can get tips and merch related to all things extraterrestrial. South of Hiko, keep your eyes open for the junction of US 93 and NV-318. Here you'll find the official start of the highway and the **"Extraterrestrial Highway" road sign.** In 40 mi (64 km), you'll reach a turnoff that leads to the mysterious **Area 51,** home to the Air Force's top-secret testing site. Stop in the tiny town of Rachel and get an Alien Burger from **Little A'Le'Inn** (9631 Old Mill Rd., Rachel; 775/729-2515; https://littlealeinn.com).

BEST SOUVENIRS

The **black fire opal** is the official precious gem of Nevada. You can find souvenir gems in towns like **Winnemucca** or try your hand at mining one of your own at the **Royal Peacock Opal Mine** (10 Virgin Valley Rd., Denio; 775/941-0374; www.royalpeacock.com).

While you're cruising the Extraterrestrial Highway don't forget to pick up an **Area 51** themed mug or shirt.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CATHEDRAL GORGE STATE PARK

Panaca; 775/728-8101; https://parks.nv.gov

In southeastern Nevada, Cathedral Gorge State Park is best place to admire the dramatic spires formed from thousands of years of geologic activity. Volcanic explosions deposited layers of ash hundreds of feet thick that then eroded into cave-like formations and spires dotted with plants like yucca, juniper, and sage. At the park's visitor center, you can learn more about the landscape's ancient origins and the wildlife that thrives here today. The **Juniper Draw loop** is a 3-mi (4.8-km) trail that passes some of the park's highlights, like the Cathedral Caves and a shorter Nature Trail. To explore a slot canyon, plan to visit the **Moon Caves,** also known as the "Rabbit Hole". You'll crawl through narrow passageways until you reach a small enclosure surrounded by pillars. For the best photos, plan to stay until evening to catch the fading sun.

TONOPAH HISTORIC MINING PARK

110 Burro St., Tonopah; 775/482-9274; www.tonopahminingpark.com

Anyone interested in mining history should spend the day at Tonopah Historic Mining Park, where you can tour the once-active **Silver Top** and **Mizpah** mines. A highlight of the park is the **Burro Tunnel Underground Adventure,** which includes taking in the view of the mine tunnel from a suspended viewing cage. To get the full experience, sign up for the two-hour guided tour.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

BURNING MAN

Black Rock Desert; https://burningman.org; late Aug.-early Sept.

Held in the Black Rock Desert every year, Burning Man is part festival, part art installation, and part temporary city that pops up across 3,879 ac (1,569 ha). Some 80,000 people come together to partake in the festivities centered around the ideals of self-expression, inclusion, and self-reliance. Despite the sheer number of people and materials involved, the event is committed to the Leave No Trace principles. Throughout the event, you'll marvel at art installations, innovative costumes, nonstop entertainment, and of course, the culminating event of the burning of "the Man" effigy.



BURNING MAN

GREAT RENO BALLOON RACE

www.renoballoon.com; Sept.

This three-day race is the world’s biggest free hot-air ballooning event, featuring 100 balloons taking flight every year. Started in 1982, the race has grown—today, it draws more than 150,000 attendees annually.



GREAT RENO BALLOON RACE

NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

Elko; www.nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org; Jan.

An annual event run by **Western Folklife Center** (510 Railroad St., Elko; 775/738-7508; www.westernfolklife.org), this gathering celebrates all things related to Western poetry, plus music, dance, and the arts. You can also sign up for workshops that will teach you how to write your own poetry or start a hobby like leather working.

BEST FOOD

RETRO DINERS

The Silver State has countless diners that bring the state's history to life though classic dishes.

- **Gold ’n Silver Inn:** 790 W. 4th St., Reno; 775/323-2696; www.goldnsilverreno.com



GOLD ’N SILVER INN, RENO

- **Mel’s Diner:** 600 US 95., Beatty; 775/553-9003; cash only
- **Dinky Diner:** 323 Crook Ave., Goldfield; 775/277-9290

BASQUE FOOD

The Basque community began emigrating to Nevada’s gold towns in the 19th century. Originally from Spain, the Basque peoples lent their traditional sheepherding skills to the burgeoning mining towns. Today, the Basque legacy is most apparent in the many restaurants found across the state. Keep an eye out for hearty lamb dishes, french fries, and the signature cocktail, Picon punch.

- **Martin Hotel:** 94 W. Railroad St., Winnemucca; 775/623-3197; https://themartinhotel.com

- **Star Hotel:** 246 W. Silver St., Elko; 775/738-9925 or 775/753-8696; www.elkostarhotel.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Harry Reid International Airport:** LAS; 5757 Wayne Newton Blvd., Las Vegas; 702/261-5211; www.harryreidairport.com
- **Reno-Tahoe International Airport:** RNO; 2001 E. Plumb Ln., Reno; 775/328-6400; www.renoairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Nevada Commission on Tourism:** www.travelnevada.com
- **Nevada State Parks:** https://parks.nv.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Nevada Magazine:*** www.nevadamagazine.com
- ***Las Vegas Review Journal:*** www.reviewjournal.com
- ***Reno Gazette-Journal:*** www.rgj.com

ARIZONA

Arizona is hot, rugged, and beautiful. All of its institutions, its attractions, and even its mythologies were forged through hard experience, trial, and error. The state is on the ancestral lands of 22 Native tribes, and that land was built by the movement and explosion of the earth—canyons ripped open and mountains kicked up over millennia of shaking and oozing. This roiling has provided a wonderland of diversity, building—all at once—hot and verdant desert scrublands, cool evergreen mountain forests, dry sweeping grasslands, and red-rock, river-carved, fairy-tale canyons. In many a traveler's imagination, this place is the home to rattlesnakes, tumbleweeds, and vast tracts of arid wilderness. Luckily, Arizona still has all of these; there are still trackless spaces to explore. But the youngest state in the Lower 48 is also one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation. It is never boring here. There is always something, or someone, being created anew, changing, and blooming.

AREA: 113,990 sq mi / 295,232 sq km (6th)

POPULATION: 7,582,384 (14th)

STATEHOOD DATE: February 14, 1912 (48th)

STATE CAPITAL: Phoenix


ARIZONA
UTAH
COLORADO
NEVADA
NEW MEXICO
CALIFORNIA
BAJA CALIFORNIA
SONORA
MEXICO
UNITED STATES
TAKING A SCENIC DRIVE THROUGH MONUMENT VALLEY
LOOKING OUT OVER THE GRAND CANYON
EXPLORING RED ROCK COUNTRY
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Lake Powell
Antelope Canyon Navajo Tribal Park
Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park
Navajo Nat'l Monument
Grand Canyon National Park
North Rim
South Rim
Grand Canyon Village
Colorado
Hualapai Indian Reservation
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
Lake Mead
Lake Mohave
Lake Havasu
Havasu National Wildlife Refuge
Canyon de Chelly Nat'l Monument
Wupatki National Monument
Walnut Canyon National Monument
Slide Rock State Park
Petrified Forest National Park
Montezuma Castle National Monument
Prescott National Forest
Saguaro National Park (west)
Saguaro National Park (east)
Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
Sonoran Desert
Gulf of California
Valley of the Sun
Verde Valley
Apache Mountains
Tucson Mountains
Rincon Mountains
Rincon Peak
Mount Graham
Salt River Canyon
Colorado City
Littlefield
Fredonia
Page
Horseshoe Bend
Jacob Lake
Kayenta
Red Mesa
Teec Nos Pos
FOUR CORNERS MONUMENT
Rock Point
Round Rock
Many Farms
Chinle
Tuba City
Pinon
Cottonwood
GRAND CANYON WEST
Cameron
Old Oraibi
Second Mesa
Polacca
Keams Canyon
Ganado
Window Rock
Valle
Peach Springs
Truxton
Valentine
Hackberry
Seligman
Williams
Ash Fork
Flagstaff
Winslow
Holbrook
Chambers
Sanders
Bullhead City
Kingman
Sitgreaves Pass
Oatman
Topock
Sedona
Oak Creek Canyon
Jerome
Cottonwood
Camp Verde
Prescott
Lake Havasu City
Kirkland
Payson
Show Low
Springerville
Heber
Snowflake
Concho
Saint Johns
Alpine
Aguila
Wickenburg
Morristown
Hope
Quartzsite
Ehrenberg
Sun City
Glendale
Scottsdale
Fountain Hills
Paradise Valley
PHOENIX
Mesa
Tempe
Gilbert
Chandler
Florence Junction
Florence
CASA GRANDE RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT
Coolidge
Casa Grande
Maricopa
Gila Bend
Sentinel
Dateland
Blaisdell
Yuma
San Luis
Chuichu
Oracle Junction
Ajo
Why
Maish Vaya
Three Points
Tucson
Summit
Sahuarita
Green Valley
Benson
Willcox
Pearce
Tombstone
Sonoita
Sierra Vista
McNeal
Arivaca
Sasabe
Patagonia
Bisbee
Douglas
Nogales
Lukeville
Sells
Globe
Safford
TONTO NATIONAL MONUMENT
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

In n-orthern Arizona, the **Colorado River** curves through the **Grand Canyon,** while Route 66/I-40 cuts across the state a little south of there, with **Flagstaff** the largest city in that region. **Phoenix** sits in the south-central portion of the state, surrounded by towns like Scottsdale and Mesa that form the **Valley of the Sun. Tucson** is farther south, closer to the border with Mexico. Between Phoenix and Flagstaff are the **Verde Valley** and **Sedona. Hopi Tribal Lands** and the **Navajo Nation** are located on the high-desert northeastern plateaus.

WHEN TO GO

Spring, February-May, is high season for Arizona's lowland deserts, including Phoenix and Tucson. The weather is gorgeous, rarely warming past the 70s F (21-26°C). It's also the season for Cactus League spring training baseball games throughout March.

It typically stays triple-digit hot (over 38°C) on Arizona's deserts from **summer** deep into September; nonetheless, summer is the **busy tourist season** in the northern regions of the state that include the Grand Canyon, North-Central Arizona, and Indian Country. By November the weather cools off, and from December into February a kind of **winter** comes to the desert, drawing snowbirds from colder climates, crowding the areas around Tucson and the Valley of the Sun.

TOP 3

1 LOOKING OUT OVER THE GRAND CANYON

928/638-7888; www.nps.gov/grca

The Grand Canyon must simply be seen to be believed. Staring into the canyon brings up all kinds of existential questions; its brash vastness can't be taken in without conjuring some big ideas and questions about life and humanity. **Note:** Due to ongoing recovery

from fire damage, check the National Park website for trail conditions and availability of services.



NORTH RIM OF THE GRAND CANYON

For the single best way to see all of the South Rim, walk along the easy, accessible **Rim Trail,** past historical buildings, famous lodges —and the most breathtaking views in the world. Another must-do is a hike down the popular **Bright Angel Trail** to get a feeling of what it's like to be below the rim. The more adventurous can make reservations, obtain a permit, and enter the desert depths of the canyon by taking a hike, or even a **mule ride,** to the Colorado River or spending a weekend trekking rim to rim with an overnight at the famous **Phantom Ranch** (888/297-2757; www.grandcanyonlodges.com), deep in the canyon's inner gorge. The really brave can hire a guide and take a once-in-a-lifetime **rafting trip** down the great river, camping on its serene beaches.

Take a ride on the park's free **shuttle** along **Hermit Road** (7 mi/11.5 km) for views of the South Rim. The shuttle stops at nine viewpoints on the drive from **Grand Canyon Village** to Southwestern architect Mary Colter's **Hermits Rest.** And don't miss

a climb up to the deck of **Desert View Watchtower** on the edge of the canyon, an artful homage to smaller Ancestral Puebloan-built towers found in the Four Corners region.

Although the South Rim is the main stop for visitors to the Grand Canyon, there are other places to appreciate it. Located on the Hualapai Indian Reservation, **Grand Canyon West** (www.grandcanyonwest.com), with its glass-bottom platform, combines a thrilling view of the canyon with a visit to one of Arizona's most remote locales.

2 EXPLORING RED ROCK COUNTRY

One of the most beautiful and sought-after landscapes on earth, Red Rock Country's towering natural monuments were once a part of the Colorado Plateau. High concentrations of iron oxide, or rust, in the sediment layers stain the rock statues many shades of red. Many of the red-rock buttes, spires, and monuments around **Sedona** have been given names over the years. Some of the more famous rocks—**Chimney Rock, Coffee Pot Rock,** and **Snoopy Rock**—can be seen from the road at designated pull-offs, and most of them have relatively easy trails around them if you want to get closer.



SEDONA

Arguably the most beautiful drive in the state is the twisty, streamside drive north out of Sedona on AZ-89A through **Oak Creek Canyon** and back up to the plateau. You'll see towering red rocks topped with white caps and greenery peppered throughout. Stop for a hike or to splash around in the water at **Slide Rock State Park** (6871 N. AZ-89A; 928/282-3034; https://azstateparks.com), where you can try out an 80-ft (24-m) natural red-rock slide.

The landscape's famous rusty buttes, red slickrock, mystical slot canyons, and lush and shady creek sides reward the traveler who takes to the rocky **trails.** Many of the trails around Sedona are open to **hikers, equestrians,** and **mountain bikers.** Don't miss the **West Fork of Oak Creek Trail** (north of Sedona; 6.5 mi/10.4 km round-trip; 2-3 hours), where dark green evergreens mingle with red rocks and trickling water to create an exotic Southwestern Eden.

3 TAKING A SCENIC DRIVE THROUGH MONUMENT VALLEY

https://navajonationparks.org

The scenic drive 25 mi (40 km) north from **Kayenta** along **US 163** to **Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park** is almost as dramatic as the destination itself. About a third of the way along the paved route you'll see the aptly named **Owl Rock** to the west and the hulking, jagged **Agathla Peak** (also known as El Capitan) to the east, which tribal lore says marks the center of the world.



VALLEY DRIVE THROUGH MONUMENT VALLEY

The Navajo have not overdeveloped this sacred place, so the only way to see the park without a Navajo guide is to drive the 17-mi (27-km) unpaved **Valley Drive** with 11 pullouts for views of some of the more famous mesas, buttes, and spires. This is one of the most scenic, inspirational, and absolutely essential drives in the Southwest. Upon entering the park you'll get a map of the drive with the name of each "monument"—names like Wetherill Mesa, John Ford Point, and The Thumb. If you can, it's worth arriving about an hour or so before sundown to see sunset over the valley—you'll wonder how you got here, and you'll stay until the lights go out. Be prepared for dust along the dry dirt road. For more access to the Monument Valley's wondrous landscapes, hire a Navajo guide at the visitor center or ahead of your visit. The **Navajo Parks and Recreation Department** (www.navajonationparks.org) offers a list of reputable Navajo-owned guide companies.

HIGHLIGHTS

HEARD MUSEUM

2301 N. Central Ave., Phoenix; 602/252-8840; www.heard.org

It is possible for the observant visitor to the Heard Museum to come away with a rather deep knowledge of the cultures, religions, and histories of the state's Indigenous peoples. The museum has 12 galleries featuring the art, artifacts, and historical narratives of each of the state's tribes. The large display on the Hopi is particularly comprehensive and includes Barry Goldwater's katsina collection. It's not all static history, though. Several galleries feature contemporary art by Native Americans and others. Sculptures dot the grounds while artists demonstrate their methods to onlookers. If you're in the market for Native American art (or if you just like looking at it), especially that produced by Hopi and Navajo artists, don't miss the museum's store.



HEARD MUSEUM

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

2021 N. Kinney Rd., Tucson; 520/883-2702; www.desertmuseum.org

Easy trails wind through this beautiful 21-ac (8.5-ha) section of the preserve, passing exhibits of desert grasslands and mountain woodlands similar to those surrounding and growing on the Sonoran Desert's high mountain ranges. There's a desert garden exhibit, a cactus garden, and a butterfly and wildflower display. There are also displays on desert fish and a walk-in aviary that holds dozens of native birds.

SAN XAVIER DEL BAC

1950 W. San Xavier Rd., Tucson; 520/294-2624;
www.sanxaviermission.org

Founded in 1692 by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino and then built slowly over decades by others, the mission San Xavier del Bac sits pure white against the perpetually blue sky about 13 mi (21 km) south of Tucson on the Tohono O'odham's San Xavier Indian Reservation. It is considered by many to be the foremost example of Mission architecture remaining in the United States, blending elements of Mexican Baroque and Spanish-Islamic architecture. Few Arizona architectural landmarks have received as much worldwide attention as the impressive "White Dove of the Desert." Mass is still celebrated daily in the church, but non-Catholic visitors are encouraged and welcomed.

BISBEE

The most charming town in Cochise County began life in the 1880s as a copper mining camp. Eventually several billion pounds of the useful ore would be taken out of the ground here, and by 1910 Bisbee was said to be the biggest city between the Midwest and West Coast. But in the 1970s, with the mines long-closed, the town, with its labyrinthine staircases and cozy little bungalows built precariously on the slopes of the Mule Mountains, was nearly moribund when it was revived by hippies, artists, and artisans into what it is today. **Old Town Bisbee,** centered around Main Street and Brewery Gulch, is stuffed full of shops, galleries, restaurants,

historic landmarks, and some of the best old hotels in the West. Perhaps the most fun to be had in Bisbee comes from just walking around, climbing the scores of off-kilter steps, and exploring its back alleys and narrow streets.

Major CITIES

PHOENIX: Phoenix is the transportation, government, and cultural hub of the state. The city anchors a loose affiliation of cities and suburbs spreading to the wild northern Sonoran Desert known as the Valley of the Sun, one of the largest metro areas in the nation, boasting world-class hotels, restaurants, museums, theaters, sports, and shopping.

TUCSON: This characterful and historic city anchors a region of saguaro forests, sweeping grasslands, and quirky desert outposts. Tucsonans have tried to hold on to a semblance of the small, funky city character that once dominated the Old Pueblo, and the area serves as a reminder that this land was considered the northern end of Mexico not too long ago.

FLAGSTAFF: Flagstaff isn't the biggest of Arizona's cities, but it's a thriving tourism hub in northern Arizona and a gateway to the Grand Canyon.

HORSESHOE BEND

US 89, milepost 545

As you drive into Page from the south along US 89, look for milepost 545, where you can walk 0.75 mi (1.2 km) one-way to a viewpoint above the famous, much-photographed Horseshoe Bend, where the Colorado River curves like a horseshoe around a lonely pink butte far below. You'll likely know you're there by the crowds. In recent years this roadside lookout has become very popular. It's of course incredibly beautiful—the green river meanders in a tight curve around red rock—but it's also thrilling because there's very little between you and the river far, far below.



HORSESHOE BEND

FOUR CORNERS MONUMENT

About 80 mi (129 km) east on US 160 from Kayenta is the Four Corners Monument, where a concrete slab marks the only spot in the United States where four states meet.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Arrive at **Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport** in Phoenix and spend a few hours getting to know Phoenix, touring the **Heard Museum,** the **Phoenix Art Museum** (1625 N. Central Ave., Phoenix; 602/257-1880; www.phxart.org [URL inactive]), or the Frank Lloyd Wright house **Taliesin West** (12621 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd., Scottsdale; 480/860-2700; www.franklloydwright.org). Feast on **Mexican food** for dinner.

DAY 2 Drive two hours (116 mi/186 km) north to **Sedona.** Spend the day shopping, hiking, sightseeing, and exploring Sedona and the **Verde Valley.** Check out **Montezuma Castle National Monument,** about 26 mi (41 km) from town, or hike into red-rock country.

DAY 3 Eat breakfast in Sedona, and then head north on AZ-89A through scenic **Oak Creek Canyon.** Continue north to **Flagstaff,** about an hour's drive (30 mi/48 km) from Sedona. Check into one of the historic hotels downtown. Stroll and shop downtown before dinner.

DAY 4 Drive 1.75 hours (109 mi/174 km) to **Petrified Forest National Park,** where the slickrock remains of a swampy forest are now a parched land strewn with reminders of the earth's unfathomable age. Then take I-40 to US 191 north to **Chinle** on the Navajo Reservation, a distance of 98 mi (157 km), about 1.5 hours. Stay at the **Thunderbird Lodge** (928/674-5842; https://thunderbirdlodge.com) near **Canyon de Chelly.**

DAY 5 Spend the morning hiking into **Canyon de Chelly** and driving the scenic rim roads, or hire a Navajo guide and go deeper into the canyon. After lunch head to **Kayenta,** a distance of about 70 mi (112 km) or about one hour. Get a hotel room in Kayenta, drive through **Monument Valley** late in the afternoon, and watch the sun set. Monument Valley is 25 mi (40 km) from Kayenta, a drive that takes about half an hour.

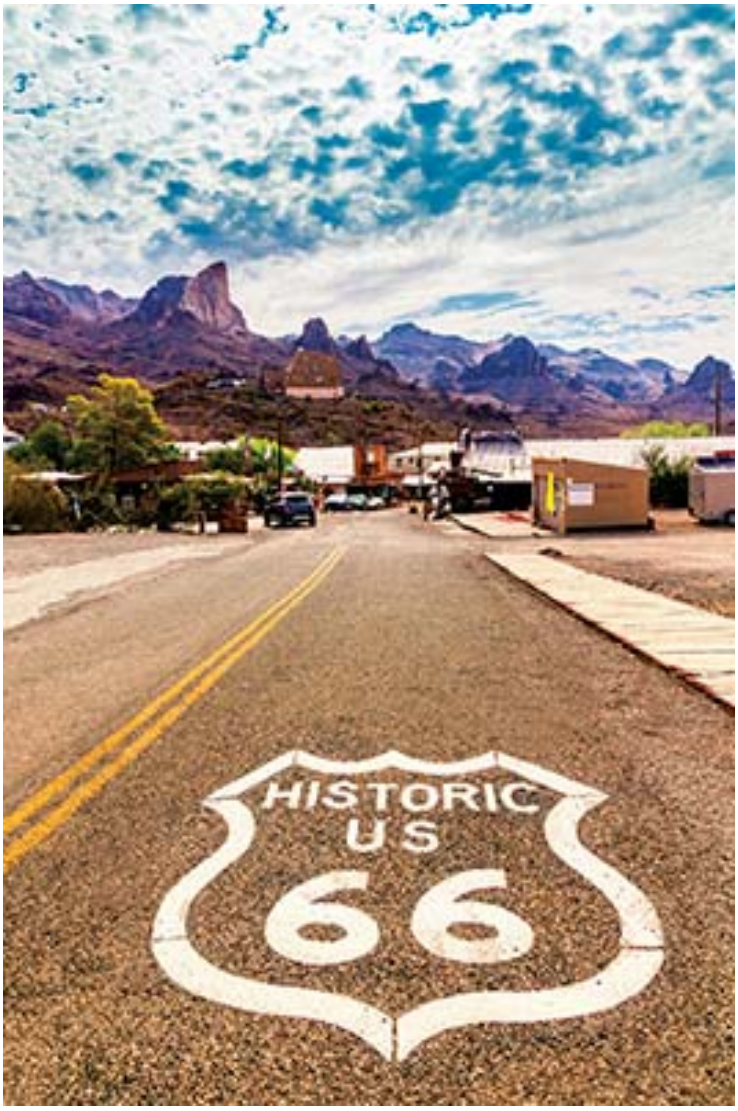
DAY 6 Eat breakfast in Kayenta and then drive two hours (130 mi/209 km) to **Grand Canyon National Park** and make your way to the east entrance. Check out the **Desert View** sights, then drive on into **Grand Canyon Village.** Spend the remainder of the day looking around the rim and staring into the majestic canyon, and spend the night here.

DAY 7 In the morning, hike down one of the **South Rim trails** for as far as you feel like going. If you're not a hiker, you can take a **mule ride** to the river and back. In the afternoon, make the 3.5-hour drive (225 mi/362 km) back to **Phoenix.** If you have more time to spare, you can head 1.75 hours (110 mi/177 km) south to **Saguaro National Park** and **Tucson.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

HISTORIC ROUTE 66

The longest remaining stretch of the original Route 66 runs through the dry grasslands, cholla forests, and barren rocky mountains of northwestern Arizona. You can drive a section of it between **Ash Fork** and **Kingman.**



HISTORIC ROUTE 66

From **Ash Fork,** which sits just off I-40, head west to the Colorado River, following the Route 66 signs. Or, you can start from **Topock,** near the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, and drive east, ending at Ash Fork. Either way, you'll pass through sleepy **Peach Springs,** capital of the Hualapai Indian Reservation, and the nearly abandoned **Truxton** and **Valentine,** a few buildings dating from the 1930s to the 1950s moldering along the road. You'll pass **Hackberry,** with its famous and much-photographed Hackberry General Store, and **Kingman,** with its neon-signed motels. Then, continue on to climb up over **Sitgreaves Pass** and down the other side of the mountain to **Oatman,** home of the wild burros of

Route 66, each descended from the beasts of burden that helped prospectors fight these desert hills more than a century ago.

US 60 TO THE SALT RIVER CANYON

Take a detour north on AZ-77 (which doubles as US 60 for this stretch) from the old mining town **Globe** along the edge of the **Apache Mountains** for about 40 mi (64 km) to spectacular **Salt River Canyon,** one of the more impressive roadside natural wonders in a state chock-full of them. Once used as a hideout by the Apache during the Indian wars, this 2,000-ft-deep (609-m) jagged desert gorge is where the Salt River runs free and wild. There's a parking area before the bridge where you can learn about the canyon and take pictures, and easy paved trails lead down to the flowing river. If you've got a 4WD vehicle, you can head off on a riverside Jeep trail and explore the canyon in more depth.

AZ-89A FROM PRESCOTT TO JEROME

The best way to start a tour of the ancient oasis of the **Verde Valley** is to drive up and over the mountain that watches over it from the west, 7,800-ft (2,377-m) **Mingus Mountain,** part of the Black Hills range and Prescott National Forest. Take **AZ-89A** from the mountain's base—either from the Verde Valley on the east side or Prescott Valley on the west—and slowly negotiate the switchbacks along the two-lane road, towered over by cliffs and overlooking deep, pine-swept draws. It's a scenic drive, one of the region's most stunning, usually taking about an hour to go the 30 mi (48 km) or so over the mountain, through the old mining metropolis of **Jerome** and down the other side. The drive is understandably popular with motorcycle enthusiasts and sports car pilots, so you might have to pull over and let some of them pass.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

PETRIFIED FOREST NATIONAL PARK

1 Park Rd., Petrified Forest; 928/524-6228; www.nps.gov/pefo

What once was a swampy forest frequented by ancient oversize reptiles is now Petrified Forest National Park, a blasted scrubland strewn with multicolored, quartz-wrapped logs some 225 million years old, each one possessing a smooth, multicolored splotch or swirl seemingly unique from the rest. You can walk among the logs on several easy, paved **trails** and view a small ruin and petroglyph-covered rocks. Then, while driving through the pastel-hued badlands of the **Painted Desert,** which, seen from a promontory along the park's 28-mi (45-km) scenic drive, will take your breath away, stop at the **Painted Desert Inn Museum.** The Pueblo Revival-style structure, originally a rustic, out-of-the-way hotel and taproom, was redesigned by Mary Colter, the great genius of Southwestern style and elegance. There's a gift shop and bookstore at the inn now, and you can walk through it and gaze at the evocative, mysterious murals, full of Hopi mythology and symbolism, painted by Fred Kabotie, the great Hopi artist whom Colter commissioned to decorate the inn's walls.

WINDOWS TO THE PAST

Arizona and the Southwest are home to many Native cultures who trace their roots back centuries. While much has changed since the original tribes built their impressive settlements, you can still visit several ancestral sites to learn more about the lives of the region's earliest inhabitants. Luckily, the ruins of the Hohokam, Ancestral Puebloans, Salado, Sinagua, and others are protected throughout the state by federal law. You could make a whole trip out of visiting these cultural sites.

THE HOHOKAM AND SALADO

Use Phoenix and the Valley of the Sun as your base as you discover ruins left behind by the Hohokam and Salado tribes.

- **S'edav Va'aki Museum** (4619 E. Washington St., Phoenix; 602/495-0900; www.phoenix.gov/sedav-vaaki): Discover how the Hohokam coaxed an empire out of the Salt River Valley here at the ruin and museum in the middle of the city, near the ruins of the canals the Hohokam built to irrigate the desert.
- **Tonto National Monument** (26260 N. AZ-188 Lot 2, Roosevelt; 928/467-2241; www.nps.gov/tont): Take the backcountry route called the **Apache Trail,** east of Phoenix, and witness a well-preserved cliff dwelling once inhabited by the Salado tribe rising above slopes crowded with saguaros.
- **Casa Grande Ruins National Monument** (1100 W. Ruins Dr., Coolidge; 520/723-3172; www.nps.gov/cagr): Located between Phoenix and Tucson, the huge molded-dirt apartment building called Casa Grande is the largest example of Hohokam architecture left.

THE SINAGUA

Use Sedona or Flagstaff as your base for visiting the awesome ruins of the Sinagua, who flourished in the Flagstaff and Verde Valley regions from around 500 to 1400 CE.

- **Wupatki National Monument** (25137 N. Wupatki Loop Rd., Flagstaff; 928/679-2365; www.nps.gov/wupa): Just north of Flagstaff, this monument preserves the ruins of several awesome red-sandstone great houses.
- **Montezuma Castle National Monument** (I-17 exit 289, Camp Verde; 928/567-3322; www.nps.gov/moca): This Verde Valley cliff dwelling features a cliff-wall castle molded out of limestone and is one of the best preserved in the Southwest.

THE ANCESTRAL PUEBLOANS

In addition to **Canyon de Chelly,** other abandoned cliff cities of the Ancestral Puebloans can be seen in the Navajo Nation.

- **Navajo National Monument** (AZ-564, Shonto; 928/672-2700; www.nps.gov/nava): While visiting Tsegi Canyon, you can spot the ruin called **Betatakin** from the rim, nestled in a rock alcove above a bottomland forest. You can also sign up for a 17-mi (27-km) round-trip hike below the rim of Tsegi Canyon to spend the night near the spectacularly preserved **Keet Seel** ruin hidden deep in the canyon (May-Sept.).

SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/sagu

The icon of arid America, the saguaro (pronounced sa-WAH-ro) is so supremely adapted to the arid environment, in which the rains come but twice a year, that it anchors an entire busy community of desert creatures, be they cactus wrens, coyotes, or screech owls. The split Saguaro National Park has a **western section** (2700 N. Kinney Rd., Tucson; 520/733-5158) at

the base of the Tucson Mountains and a larger **eastern section** (3693 S. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson; 520/733-5153) at the base of the Rincon Mountains. Together they protect about 91,300 ac (36,947 ha) of magnificent Sonoran Desert landscape, including large and crowded saguaro forests surrounded by a thick underbrush of ocotillo, prickly pear, cholla, mesquite, and paloverde.

The easiest way to see the eastern section of the park—the section to visit if you only have time for one—is to stroll, bike, or drive very slowly along the paved **Cactus Forest Drive,** an 8-mi (13-km) one-way road that begins at the Rincon Mountain District visitor center and winds up and across the flatland. The desert here is gorgeous, especially after a rainstorm or early in the morning during the bloom months.

GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

928/608-6200; www.nps.gov/glca

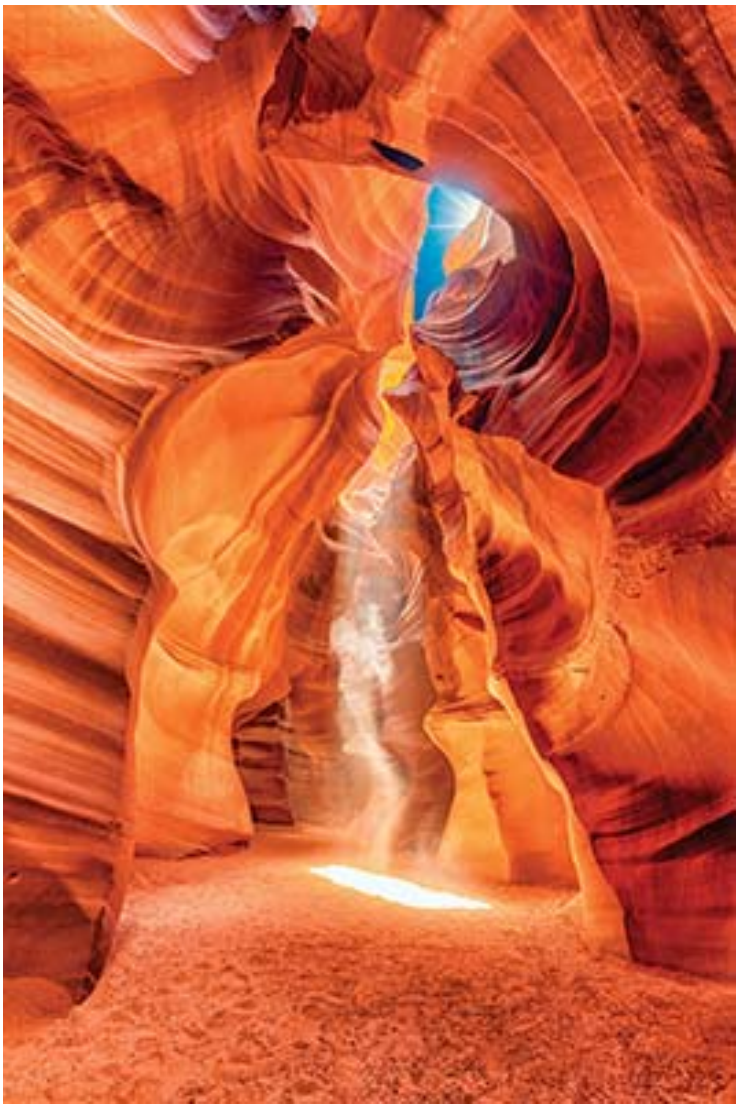
Sprawling over the Arizona-Utah border and some 1.25 million ac (505,857 ha), Glen Canyon National Recreation Area is a popular boating, fishing, and hiking area centered on **Lake Powell,** which has nearly 2,000 mi (3,218 km) of meandering desert shoreline. Its waters run through a red-rock maze of narrow side canyons, like canals around an ornate sandstone city, now abandoned. During the spring and summer months the lake is crowded with Jet Skiers, water-skiers, and houseboat residents.

ANTELOPE CANYON NAVAJO TRIBAL PARK

928/698-2808

A color-swirled, water-worn slot in a mesa on Navajoland, Antelope Canyon Navajo Tribal Park is a popular crevice of twisting and twirling slickrock. Exploring the canyon requires a **Navajo guide** (https://navajonationparks.org), but it's easy to find one. You pile into a big 4WD vehicle and ride several bumpy miles down a sandy wash to the slit in the rocks rising up out of the ground—the entrance to a **slot canyon** wonderland. It's an easy walk along a sandy bottomland, with the canyon walls rising 120 ft (37 m) and impossibly narrow in some stretches. The slot canyon's unique undulations and warm reds and pinks, especially in the

summer with the sun high in the sky and shining in laser-like shafts through small gashes high above, make it one of the most photographed in the canyonlands, if not the world.



ANTELOPE CANYON

CANYON DE CHELLY NATIONAL MONUMENT

928/674-5500; www.nps.gov/cach

The most visually impressive wind- and water-worn canyon in Arizona save for the one they call Grand, Canyon de Chelly (pronounced “de SHAY”; the name is a Spanish approximation of the Navajo word for canyon, tsegi), is a

labyrinth of eroded sandstone mesas, buttes, and spires, washed in pink and red and varnished with black and purple. The canyon's fertile bottomlands and safe, hidden alcoves have drawn people here for some 5,000 years. Ancestral Puebloans built several hanging villages against the red-rock cliffs, the remains of which are still slowly crumbling in their shady alcoves. The highlight here is seeing Ancestral Puebloan ruins up close at the **White House Ruin** via a slickrock hike along the White House Ruin Trail.



CANYON DE CHELLY

The federal monument comprises about 84,000 ac (33,993 ha) of the canyon; however, nearly all of the canyon is off-limits without a hired

Navajo guide (https://navajonationparks.org).

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

CACTUS LEAGUE SPRING TRAINING

late Feb.-Mar.

The Valley of the Sun's Cactus League offers baseball fans a unique opportunity to watch their favorite Major League Baseball teams prepare for the coming season in intimate and family-friendly ballparks scattered around greater Phoenix. Fifteen big-league teams play in the Cactus League:

- **Salt River Fields** (7555 N. Pima Rd., at Talking Stick Resort, Scottsdale; 480/270-5000): Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies
- **Hohokam Stadium** (1235 N. Center St., Mesa; 480/644-4451): Athletics
- **Sloan Park** (2330 W. Rio Salado Pkwy., Mesa; 480/668-0500): Chicago Cubs
- **Camelback Ranch Stadium** (10710 W. Camelback Rd., Phoenix; 623/302-5000): Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox
- **Goodyear Ballpark** (1933 S. Ballpark Way, Goodyear; 623/882-3120): Cleveland Guardians and Cincinnati Reds
- **Surprise Stadium** (15850 N. Bullard Ave., Surprise; 623/222-2222): Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers
- **American Family Fields of Phoenix** (3805 N. 53rd Ave., Phoenix; 623/245-5500): Milwaukee Brewers
- **Peoria Sports Complex** (16101 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria; 623/773-8700): San Diego Padres and Seattle Mariners
- **Tempe Diablo Stadium** (2200 W. Alameda Dr., Tempe; 480/350-5205): Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim

- **Scottsdale Stadium** (7408 E. Osborn Rd., Scottsdale; 480/312-2586): San Francisco Giants

Tickets for most of the teams are relatively abundant and affordable, and many of the ballparks offer package deals that include opportunities to take batting practice and work out with the team. Most of the teams' workouts are open to the public, and if you arrive about 30 minutes before the games, there are usually opportunities to get player autographs.

BEST SOUVENIRS

There are hundreds of Native American artists living in Arizona, and many sell their **Southwestern Indian arts and crafts** at markets and fairs held throughout the year in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff, and elsewhere. Silverwork, carvings, pottery, rugs, and paintings of the Hopi, Navajo, and others are among the pieces on display and for sale.

A particularly popular Native American piece is the Hopi **katsina doll,** carved out of cottonwood root. You'll find these at shops, galleries, and markets around the state.

In the Arizona borderlands these days it's difficult to find a boutique, gift shop, or gallery that doesn't sell **calavera** (skeletons doing human things) statues, paintings, T-shirts, and all manner of other consumer goods featuring the **Day of the Dead** aesthetic. Generally, these art objects re-create the spirit of the work of Posada, a late-19th-century and early-20th-century Mexican printmaker and illustrator whose broadsides and newspaper illustrations employed the calavera and Day of the Dead traditions in social commentary.

NAVAJO NATION FAIR

Window Rock; www.nnfair.org [URL inactive]; Sept.

The population of Window Rock swells every year in early September as the Navajo Nation Fair brings Navajos and others to one of the largest Native American cultural fairs anywhere. The weeklong event features a rodeo, horticulture contests, pageants (for babies, teens, and Miss Navajo), a parade, a midway and carnival, native foods, arts and crafts, drumming, dancing, and myriad other events. Don't count on getting a hotel room in town, or even in nearby Gallup, New Mexico, unless you book far ahead of the fair.

DAY OF THE DEAD

Nov.

The Day of the Dead, **El Día de los Muertos,** falls on November 2, but the celebrations begin on November 1 or even before that. The Day of the Dead reminds us that death and the dead have a profound influence on the living. Celebrations vary but generally they include feasts in graveyards with a dead relative's favorite dishes prepared and set aside. There are also parades and marches, candles and altars, sugar skulls, and sweet breads shaped like skulls and skeletons. In Tucson, the **All Souls Procession** (www.allsoulsprocession.org), held the first weekend in November, culminates in a colorful and rather spooky nighttime parade through the downtown streets, featuring ghouls, ghosts, skeletons, big-headed puppets, and lots of other walking works of art.

BEST FOOD

MEXICAN FOOD

In Arizona, Mexican food reigns supreme, and **Tucson** and **Nogales** are the best places in the state to eat it. In Tucson you'll find dozens of restaurants featuring a variety of regional Mexican foods, but the most prevalent is the style of northern Mexico, "El Norte."

A ranching frontier, northern Mexico (specifically the states of Sonora and Chihuahua) has a cuisine based on beef, beans, cheese, and chiles. You are more likely to find flour tortillas in northern Mexico, as the desert and semidesert land is harder on corn than on wheat. A popular ranchland delicacy is **machaca,** also called **carne seca**—dried, shredded beef that is available at nearly every restaurant as a filling for burritos and tacos or on its own. Many Tucson restaurants are famous for their **carne asada,** or grilled meat—thin strips of beef spiced and grilled and then stuffed in tacos or burritos or served on their own with rice and beans. Another popular northern dish is **menudo,** available around Tucson and Phoenix. It's a kind of soup made with tripe, hominy, and cow's foot that's said to cure hangovers—it is often offered only on the weekends.

Originating in Hermosillo, the capital of the Mexican border state of Sonora, the so-called **Sonoran hot dog** is a decadent variation of the great American street food. You can find them all over Tucson and Phoenix at restaurants and from vendors on street corners. The classic version is a grilled hot dog wrapped in bacon and couched in a fluffy Mexican-style bun (**bolillo**), then topped with beans, salsa, tomatoes, onions, creamy mayonnaise, and mustard.

NATIVE CUISINE

Head to either the Navajo or Hopi Reservation, and you can sample the Native cuisine, centered mainly around mutton and corn and a kind of Mexican-Native American amalgam called the **Navajo taco** (or Hopi taco)—a delicious hunk of fry bread piled high with meat and beans. Check out these restaurants to give the cuisine a try:



NAVAJO TACO

- One of the best restaurants on Navajoland, the **Blue Coffee Pot Restaurant** (0.25 mi/0.4 km east of US 160 and 163 junction, Kayenta; 928/697-3396) serves outstanding home-style Navajo, American, and Mexican food. The Navajo taco here is simply terrific, as are the beef ribs.
- **Painted Desert Diner** (Petrified Forest National Park; 928/524-3756) serves delicious Navajo tacos, burgers, and other road-food favorites in a cool Route 66 retro dining room.
- The independently operated **Turquoise Room** (303 E. 2nd St., Winslow; 928/289-2888; https://theturquoiseroom.com), in La Posada hotel, serves Southwestern- and Native American-inspired dishes. In a nod to the

Hopi people who live on the mesas just north of Winslow, offerings here include traditional Hopi staples.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport:** PHX; 3400 E. Sky Harbor Blvd., Phoenix; 602/273-3300; www.skyharbor.com
- **Tucson International Airport:** TUS; 7250 S. Tucson Blvd., Tucson; 520/573-8100; www.flytucson.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Arizona Office of Tourism:** www.visitarizona.com
- **Discover Navajo:** www.discovernavajo.com
- **Arizona State Parks Department:** https://azstateparks.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Arizona Republic:*** www.azcentral.com
- ***Tucson Daily Star:*** https://tucson.com

UTAH

Few places on earth combine such spectacular terrain and unusual history as is present in Utah. The state is on Shoshone, Ute, Goshute, Paiute, and Navajo land, and it hosts the majestic splendor of the Wasatch Range, the colorful canyonlands of the Colorado Plateau, and the remote deserts and arid mountain ranges of the Great Basin. This region beckoned as the "Promised Land" to members of the struggling Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1840s—a place where those faithful to the *Book of Mormon* could survive and prosper in a land of their own.

Today, this once insular state has put out the welcome mat, and its extravagant scenery and superlative recreational opportunities lure sightseers, mountain bikers, hikers, and skiers from around the world. Outside of a few large cities in the sprawling Wasatch Front metropolitan area, most of the state is utterly vacant—and dramatically beautiful. If you're intrigued by impressive canyons, remote and rugged mountain ranges, glistening salt flats, ancient rock art and cliff dwellings, fossilized dinosaur footprints, and old mining towns, Utah is the place for you.

AREA: 84,897 sq mi / 219,882 sq km (13th)

POPULATION: 3,503,613 (30th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 4, 1896 (45th)

STATE CAPITAL: Salt Lake City


UTAH
IDAHO
WYOMING
COLORADO
NEVADA
ARIZONA
Snowville
Garden City
Laketown
Logan
GOLDEN SPIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Brigham City
Woodruff
Huntsville
Wahsatch
Ogden
Great Salt Lake
Mountain Green
Farmington
Antelope Island State Park
Echo
Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area
Dutch John
BONNEVILLE SALT FLATS INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY
Wendover
Timpie
SALT LAKE CITY
Wanship
Uinta Mountains
Park City
Kamas
Bald Mountain Pass
Dinosaur National Monument
ROAMING DINOSAUR COUNTRY AT DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT
Great Salt Lake Desert
Kearns
Murray
West Jordan
Midvale
Draper
Big Cottonwood Canyon
Little Cottonwood Canyon
Heber
Vernal
Timpanogos Cave Nat'l Mon.
Lehi
American Fork
Lindon
Orem
Provo
Provo Canyon
Springville
Utah Lake
Spanish Fork
Payson
Duchesne
Ibapah
Eureka
Santaquin
Price
Green River
TOPAZ MUSEUM AND CAMP
Delta
Ephraim
Castle Dale
Gunnison
Holden
Green River
Meadow
Arches National Park
Delicate Arch
Sand Flats Recreation Area
Goblin Valley State Park
TAKING IN THE VIEWS AT ARCHES AND CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARKS
Moab
Sevier
Hanksville
Mesa Arch
Milford
Beaver
Loa
Torrey
Minersville
Kingston
Capitol Reef National Park
Canyonlands National Park
Boulder Mtn
Waterpocket Fold
HIKING AMONG THE HOODOOS AT BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK
Anasazi State Park Museum
Boulder
Newspaper Rock Historical Monument
Monticello
Panguitch
Escalante Canyons
Lower Calf Creek Falls
Escalante
Red Canyon
Natural Bridges Nat'l Monument
Beryl Junction
Cedar City
Cedar Breaks Nat'l Mon.
Bryce Canyon National Park
Sunset and Bryce Points
Escalante River
Blanding
Kodachrome Basin State Park
Bullfrog Marina
Halls Landing
Hovenweep Nat'l Monument
Zion National Park
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument
Kaiparowits Plateau
Lake Powell
Zion Canyon
ANGEL'S LANDING
GRAND STAIRCASE
Bluff
Virgin
Hurricane
Mount Carmel
Springdale
ZION-MOUNT CARMEL HWY
Kanab
Big Water
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Mexican Hat
FOUR CORNERS MONUMENT
St. George
Virgin River
Grand Canyon National Park
Lake Mead
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Salt Lake City, Park City, and the Wasatch Range are located in northern Utah, and southern Utah boasts the state's five **national parks** and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. In between is **Provo** in the central part of the state. The northeastern corner of Utah, with Wyoming to the north and Colorado to the east, is **dinosaur country.**

WHEN TO GO

Spring (Apr.-early June) and **fall** (Sept.-Oct.) are the most pleasant times to visit, but the same spring showers that make the desert country shine with wildflowers can also dampen trails and turn dirt roads to absolute muck. Arm yourself with insect repellent late spring-midsummer. Except in the mountains, **summer** heat can easily top 100°F (38°C) and rapidly drain your energy. Travel doesn't let up in **winter**—the ski areas here are some of the nation's best, and they are very easy to get to from Salt Lake City or Ogden.

TOP 3

1 TAKING IN THE VIEWS AT ARCHES AND CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARKS

Intricate mazes of canyons, delicate arches, and massive rock monoliths make southeastern Utah seem primordial at times and lunar at others. Two neighboring national parks—Arches and Canyonlands—preserve some of the most astounding of these landscapes. The postcard-perfect vistas of Delicate Arch in Arches and Mesa Arch in Canyonlands make for stunning pictures and lasting memories.



DELICATE ARCH, ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

In **Arches National Park** (435/719-2299; www.nps.gov/arch), paved roads and short hiking trails provide easy access to some of the over 2,000 natural stone arches in the park. If you're short on time, a drive from the visitor center to the **Windows Section** (22 mi/35 km round-trip) affords a look at some of the largest and most spectacular arches. For those who are able, the hike to the base of **Delicate Arch** (3 mi/4.8 km round-trip), which stands in a magnificent setting atop gracefully curving slickrock, is one of the park's highlights. The classic photo of Delicate Arch is taken late in the afternoon when the sandstone glows with golden hues.

The canyon country puts on its supreme performance in the vast **Canyonlands National Park** (2282 SW Resource Blvd., Moab; 435/719-2313; www.nps.gov/cany), which spreads across 527 sq mi (1,365 sq km). The park is divided into the Rivers District, formed by the Colorado and Green Rivers; the Island in the Sky District, the best choice for those short on time; the Maze District to the west; and the Needles District to the east. The small Horseshoe Canyon Unit, farther to the west, preserves a canyon on Barrier Creek, a tributary of the Green River, in which astounding petroglyphs and ancient rock

paintings are protected. Located in the Island in the Sky District, an easy trail (0.6 mi/1 km round-trip) leads to the dramatic **Mesa Arch** that rises on the rim of a sheer 800-ft (243-m) cliff.

2 HIKING AMONG THE HOODOOS AT BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK

435/834-5322; www.nps.gov/brca

In Bryce Canyon National Park, a geologic fairyland of rock spires rises beneath the high cliffs of the Paunsaugunt Plateau. Bryce Canyon isn't a canyon at all, but the largest of a series of massive amphitheaters cut into the Pink Cliffs. This intricate maze, eroded from a soft limestone, now glows with warm shades of reds, oranges, pinks, yellows, and creams. An 18-mi (29-km) **scenic drive** traces the length of the park and passes many overlooks and trailheads.



BRYCE CANYON

The spectacular **Pink Cliffs** contain the famous erosional features known as hoodoos. Variations in hardness of the rock layers result in these strange features, which seem almost alive. Water flows through cracks, wearing away softer rock around erosion-resistant caps. Finally, a cap becomes so undercut that the overhang allows water to drip down, leaving a "neck" of rock. Traces of iron and manganese provide the distinctive coloring. Bryce Canyon's pink and gold hoodoos are magnificent viewed from a distance, but you can also explore the pillars up close.

Bryce Point is a good spot for a huge panoramic view filled with hoodoos. To pack the most hoodoos into a short visit, hike the 1-mi

(1.6-km) section of the **Rim Trail** between **Sunrise and Sunset Points.** This area has the highest concentration of hoodoos and offers the most up-close and personal views, and the two points are spectacular at their namesake times of day. A short walk down either the **Queen's Garden Trail** (1.8 mi/2.9 km round-trip) or the **Navajo Loop Trail** (1.3 mi/2.1 km) from Sunset Point (or connect the two to form a loop) will bring you close to Bryce's hoodoos.

3 ROAMING DINOSAUR COUNTRY AT DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT

UT-149; 435/781-7700; www.nps.gov/dino

Utah is littered with dinosaur fossils and tracks. Straddling the Utah-Colorado border, Dinosaur National Monument owes its name and fame to one of the world's most productive sites for dinosaur bones. The quarry here was discovered in the early 1900s and has produced more specimens than any other site in North America. Most were left in the soil as they were found. At the monument's **Quarry Exhibit Hall,** approximately 1,500 bones of eight different dinosaur species cover a rock face a short drive from the **visitor center.** This is one of the few museums where visitors are actually allowed to touch the dinosaur bones.



DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT, QUARRY EXHIBIT HALL

Beyond the exhibit hall and visitor center, **Cub Creek Road** is a 10-mi (16-km) drive through the southwestern corner of the monument that goes past the quarry turnoff to a historic ranch, passing sites of Fremont rock art on the way. The scenic road offers wide vistas of the landscape that once was the stomping grounds of dinosaurs.

If you can't make it to the far eastern reaches of the state, the **Utah Museum of Natural History** (301 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City; 801/581-6927; https://nhmu.utah.edu) in Salt Lake City has great exhibits, including the skeleton of a recently discovered new dinosaur species.

HIGHLIGHTS

TEMPLE SQUARE

between North Temple St. and South Temple St., Salt Lake City; www.templesquare.com

Easily Salt Lake City's most famous attraction, Temple Square has a special meaning for Mormons. Brigham Young chose this site for Temple Square in July 1847, just four days after arriving in the valley. The tabernacle, visitor centers, museums, and a host of other buildings that play a role in Latter-Day Saints (LDS) church administration also line the streets around Temple Square. You're welcome to visit most of these buildings, which provide an excellent introduction to the LDS religion and Utah's early history. Enthusiastic **guides** offer several tours of Temple Square, which covers an entire block in the heart of the city. Points of interest, which you can also visit on your own, include the Seagull Monument, commemorating the seagulls that devoured the cricket plague in 1848, and a meridian marker (outside the walls at Main St. and South Temple St.) from which surveyors mapped out Utah.

Major CITIES

SALT LAKE CITY: Utah's state capital enjoys a physical setting of great visual drama, located between the Great Salt Lake to the northwest and the Wasatch Range to the east. It is also the seat of the Mormon faith, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

PROVO: Best known as the home of Brigham Young University (BYU), Provo is a good base for exploring the dramatic Wasatch peaks that rise directly behind it.

OGDEN: Located 35 mi (56 km) north of Salt Lake City, Ogden was one of the West's most important rail hubs at the beginning of the

20th century. Today, it serves as a major administrative, manufacturing, and livestock center for the intermountain West.

GOLDEN SPIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

32 mi (52 km) west of Brigham City; 435/471-2209; www.nps.gov/gosp

At 12:47pm on May 10, 1869, railroad tracks from the East Coast and the West Coast met for the first time. The joining of rails at this 4,905-ft-high (1,495-m) windswept pass in Utah's Promontory Mountains marked a new chapter in the growth of the United States. A transcontinental railroad at last linked both sides of the nation. The Golden Spike National Historic Site, authorized by Congress in 1965, re-creates this momentous episode of railroad history. The **Golden Spike Visitor Center** offers exhibits and programs that illustrate the difficulties of building the railroad and portrays the officials and workers who made it possible. Reenactments of the Golden Spike ceremony are held at 10:45am and 1:15pm on Saturdays and holidays between June 1 and Labor Day, at the same location where the original ceremony was held. In May, the annual **Last Spike Ceremony** reenacts the original celebration with great fanfare.

TOPAZ MUSEUM AND CAMP

11000 W. 4500 N., Delta

About 8,100 Japanese Americans—most of them US citizens—were brought from the West Coast to this desolate desert plain in central Utah in 1942 for relocation to an internment camp. Topaz sprang up in just a few months and included barracks, schools, churches, and other service buildings. Barbed wire and watchtowers with armed guards surrounded the small city, which was actually Utah's fifth-largest community for a time. All internees were released at war's end in 1945, and today, little more than the streets and piles of rubble remain. You can still walk or drive along the streets of the vast camp, which had 42 neatly laid-out blocks. A concrete memorial stands at the northwest corner of the site.

Even if you don't drive out to the camp, which is about 15 mi (24 km) west of the town of Delta, visit the excellent **Topaz Museum** (55 W. Main

St., Delta; 435/864-2514; www.topazmuseum.org). A couple of short films (including one taken by an interned man with a camera smuggled in to him by a camp official) set the stage for a tour of the artifacts and photos from the camp, reconstructed living quarters, and video displays.

NEWSPAPER ROCK HISTORICAL MONUMENT

UT-211, 30 mi (48 km) north of Monticello

Located just outside the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park, Newspaper Rock is the site of a profusion of petroglyphs depicting human figures, animals, birds, and abstract designs. These represent 1,500 years of human history during which archaic Native Americans as well as Ancestral Puebloan, Fremont, Paiute, Navajo, and Anglo travelers passed through Indian Creek Canyon. The patterns on the smooth sandstone rock face stand out clearly, thanks to a coating of dark desert varnish. A short nature trail introduces you to the area’s desert and riparian vegetation.



PETROGLYPHS AT NEWSPAPER ROCK HISTORICAL MONUMENT

NATURAL BRIDGES NATIONAL MONUMENT

end of UT-275, west of Blanding off UT-95; 435/692-1234 x 616; www.nps.gov/nabr

Natural Bridges preserves some of the finest examples of natural stone architecture in the southwest. Streams in White Canyon and its tributaries cut deep canyons, and then floodwaters sculpted the bridges by gouging tunnels between closely spaced loops in the meandering canyons. You can distinguish a natural bridge from an arch because the bridge spans a streambed and was initially carved out of the rock by flowing water. In the monument, these bridges illustrate three different stages of development, from the massive, relatively newly formed **Kachina Bridge** to the middle-age **Sipapu Bridge** to the delicate and fragile span of **Owachomo.** All three natural bridges will continue to widen and eventually collapse under their

own weight. **Bridge View Drive,** a 9-mi (14.5-km) scenic drive around the park, has overlooks of the picturesque bridges, Ancestral Puebloan ruins, and the twisting canyons. You can follow short trails down from the rim to the base of each bridge or hike through all three bridges on a 12-mi (19-km) trail loop.

HOVENWEEP NATIONAL MONUMENT

south of Blanding; 970/562-4283; www.nps.gov/hove

Hovenweep National Monument protects six groups of uninhabited villages of the Ancestral Puebloans, who built many impressive masonry buildings during the early to mid-1200s, near the end of their 1,600-year stay in the area. The sites are near the Colorado border southeast of Blanding. The Ute word hovenweep means "deserted valley," an appropriate name for the lonely high desert country left behind. The **Square Tower Ruins Unit,** where the **visitor center** is, has the greatest number of ruins and the most varied architecture. In fact, you can find all of the Hovenweep architectural styles here. Obtain a trail guide booklet of the area from the visitor center. You'll see towers (D-shaped, square, oval, and round), cliff dwellings, surface dwellings, storehouses, kivas, and rock art. Take care not to disturb the fragile ruins, which remain essentially unexcavated, awaiting the attention of future archaeologists.

ANASAZI STATE PARK MUSEUM

UT-12, 1 mi (1.6 km) north of Boulder; 435/335-7308; https://stateparks.utah.gov [URL inactive]

At the excellent Anasazi State Park Museum, indoor exhibits and an outdoor excavated village site and pueblo replica provide a look into the life of these ancient people. The Ancestral Puebloans stayed here for 50-75 years sometime between 1050 and 1200 CE. The village population peaked at about 200, with an estimated 40-50 dwellings. You can view pottery, ax heads, arrow points, and other tools found at the site in the museum, along with delicate items like sandals and basketry that came from more protected sites elsewhere. At the ruins behind the museum, you'll see a whole range

of Ancestral Puebloan building styles—a pit house, masonry walls, jacal walls (mud reinforced by sticks), and combinations of masonry and jacal.

Best ROAD TRIP

Utah's top sights form a ring within the state, making it easy to take a seven-day loop road trip that connects the state's most alluring attractions.

DAY 1 Arrive in **Salt Lake City.** Take in the Mormon historic sites at **Temple Square,** and wander through the historic neighborhoods along South Temple Street. Or spend the afternoon at **Antelope Island State Park,** which juts out into the **Great Salt Lake.**

DAY 2 Leave Salt Lake City, and head east on I-80 to **Park City,** Utah's top ski resort. Ride the Town Lift of the Park **City Mountain Resort** for a mountain hike, then wander along Main Street for window shopping and dinner. For real fun, head to **High West,** a distillery with good food and a Western vibe, before turning in for the night.

DAY 3 Today, you'll put quite a few miles on the car with this five-hour drive. Drive from Park City to **Provo** on US 189, through the very scenic **Provo Canyon.** Continue south on I-15 all the way to **Springdale,** just outside Zion National Park.

DAY 4 Two national parks in one day? No problem! Head into **Zion,** where you'll drop off the car and ride the park shuttle, hopping on and off to take short hikes in the mighty **Zion Canyon.** Stop for lunch at the **Zion Park Lodge,** then drive the beautiful **Zion-Mount Carmel Highway.** Head north on US 89 and turn onto UT-12 for **Bryce Canyon.** Check into the **Lodge at Bryce Canyon** (435/834-8700 or 877/386-4383; www.visitbrycecanyon.com), then hop on a

free shuttle along the parkway. Be sure to catch the sunset over the park's mysterious pink and orange hoodoos.

DAY 5 Get an early start leaving Bryce Canyon, going east along UT-12 to **Escalante.** Spend the rest of the morning hiking the easy, mostly level hike to **Lower Calf Creek Falls.** Up next is a scenic drive with cliffs, rock spires, and views along UT-12 and across **Capitol Reef National Park** on UT-24—**Moab** is your destination, which you'll reach in about five hours, if you don't stop. (But you'll want to stop.)

DAY 6 Moab is your jumping-off point for your last two Utah national parks. Start by driving 50 mi (80 km) south of town to **Newspaper Rock Historical Monument** to see amazing petroglyphs on smooth sandstone. Then, head back north, passing Moab, to reach the **Island in the Sky District of Canyonlands National Park,** where you can make the short hike to **Mesa Arch.** Before heading back to Moab, stop in **Arches National Park**—the late afternoon is the time to take the classic photo of **Delicate Arch.**

DAY 7 **Salt Lake City** is about a four-hour drive from Moab, so you could spend the morning trying out one of the area's mountain biking trails before heading back to the big city.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ALPINE LOOP SCENIC DRIVE

UT-92

From its start at the mouth of American Fork east of Highland, UT-92 climbs through a stunning canyon past **Timpanogos Cave National**

Monument (801/756-5239; www.nps.gov/tica). Stop for a cave tour if you have most of the day to make this drive. It then climbs to an 8,000-ft (2,438-m) summit with views of **Mount Timpanogos.** The road continues through a grove of aspen trees, passes **Sundance Resort** (8841 N. Alpine Loop Rd., Sundance; 800/892-1600; www.sundanceresort.com), and descends to **Provo Canyon** at the junction of US 189. This route takes 1-3 hours; booths at either end of the 20-mi (32-km) drive sell the required $6 admission ticket. Don't aim for a winter drive here; snow usually closes the road from late October until late May.

UT-12

This "All-American Road" from US 89 near Panguitch to UT-24 in Torrey (124 mi/200 km) packs in more parks, monuments, and geology than just about any other road in the country. Pass through red rock arches in **Red Canyon,** skirt the edge of **Bryce Canyon National Park,** get within easy striking range of the sand pipe rock pillars of **Kodachrome Basin State Park** (south of Cannonville; 435/679-8562; https://stateparks.utah.gov [URL inactive]), and continue east through the northern edge of **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument** across the **Hell's Backbone** bridge and the narrow Hogsback to **Boulder** and **Hell's Backbone Grill** (UT-12, Boulder; 435/335-7464; https://hellsbackbonegrill.com; mid-Mar.-Nov.), one of Utah's best restaurants. The road turns north to cross over **Boulder Mountain** and practically lands in the lap of **Capitol Reef National Park.** You'll pass cliffs, rock spires, petroglyphs, and views of the Grand Staircase and much of the Colorado Plateau. Driving straight through takes about four hours, but you could spend a week exploring all the stops along the road.

ZION-MOUNT CARMEL HIGHWAY

UT-9

Starting at the Zion National Park visitor center in **Zion Canyon,** this 25-mi (40-km) road climbs through a series of switchbacks, passes through a crazy long tunnel, and provides access to the canyons and high plateaus to the east. The drive is about two hours between Zion and Mount Carmel

Junction, the end point. Along the way, take the easy 1-mi (1.6-km) round-trip **Canyon Overlook** trail to peer down at the huge **Great Arch of Zion,** and stop to admire **Checkerboard Mesa,** a huge lump of hatch-marked sandstone right at the road's edge. Zion-Mount Carmel Highway is part of the route that links Zion to Bryce Canyon National Park—from Mount Carmel Junction, head north on US 89 to go the rest of the way.



ZION-MOUNT CARMEL HIGHWAY

NOTOM-BULLFROG ROAD

The views of the eastern edge of the **Waterpocket Fold** are a highlight of this fair-weather, partially paved road from the eastern edge of Capitol Reef (turn off from UT-24) to **Bullfrog Marina,** on **Lake Powell.** The 70-mi (113-km) drive is long and slow but beautiful; consider taking the whole day to hike into relatively uncrowded dry washes and slot canyons. From Bullfrog, take a ferry across the lake to **Halls Landing** and an easy route to **Natural Bridges National Monument,** or head back north on a paved road to Hanksville and **Goblin Valley State Park** and its rock formations that look like the faces of goblins.

MIRROR LAKE HIGHWAY

UT-150

Starting in **Kamas,** head up UT-150 into the forested **Uinta Mountains,** a rare east-west range, with near-mandatory stops at **Provo River Falls,** 10,715-ft (3,266-m) **Bald Mountain Pass,** and pretty **Mirror Lake.** The Utah-side portion of the drive ends at the Wyoming state line, 55 mi (89 km) away from Kamas, and takes 2-3 hours. A good supply of scenic viewpoints, hiking trails, and campgrounds makes it possible to extend your stay (though the road does close in winter!). Buy a $6 pass at the kiosk near the start of the drive.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

THE GREAT SALT LAKE

The Great Salt Lake is North America's largest saltwater lake and is the second-saltiest lake in the world. Only the Dead Sea has a higher salt content. Linked by a causeway to the mainland, **Antelope Island State Park,** near Ogden in northern Utah, is the best place to experience the lake. Its rocky slopes, rolling grasslands, marshes, sand dunes, and lake views instill a sense of remoteness and rugged beauty. Campsites are available, and park trails are open to hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. There's also a swimming area in the northwest corner of the island and a marina for sailboats and kayaks. Antelope Island is home to more than 700 bison, as well as deer, bighorn sheep, pronghorn, and other wildlife.

WASATCH RANGE SKI RESORTS

Immediately east of Salt Lake City, the Wasatch Range soars to over 11,000 ft (3,352 m). Its steep canyons and abundant snowfall make for legendary skiing. Near Salt Lake City, ski resorts are in three adjacent areas. **Big Cottonwood Canyon,** home to the **Solitude** (801/536-5786 or 385/282-

7155; https://solitudemountain.com) and **Brighton** (877/935-0221; www.brightonresort.com) ski and snowboard areas, is just southeast of the city; the next canyon south, **Little Cottonwood,** has **Snowbird** (801/933-2222 or 800/232-9542; www.snowbird.com) and **Alta** (801/359-1078; www.alta.com), two world-class resorts. When the snow melts, the hiking is every bit as great as the skiing and boarding, and many of the resorts have summer operations, with lift-assisted mountain biking being the most popular activity.



ALTA SKI RESORT

STARGAZING

Given its vast, remote stretches and concentrated urban populations, Utah is a great place to stargaze. In fact, all of its five national parks and many of its state parks have been designated as International Dark Sky Parks. Here are a few of the best places to watch the night sky:

- **Natural Bridges National Monument** (the first park designated as an International Dark Sky Park)
- **Cedar Breaks National Monument**
- **Hovenweep National Monument**
- **Bryce Canyon National Park**

About 45 minutes east of Salt Lake via I-80, **Park City** is home to two ski areas: **Deer Valley** (435/649-1000 or 800/424-3337; www.deervalley.com), the crème de la crème of Utah ski areas, and the **Park City Mountain Resort** (435/649-8111; www.parkcitymountain.com), which, with 7,300 skiable ac (2,954 ha), is the largest ski and snowboard resort in the United States.

FLAMING GORGE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

The **Flaming Gorge Dam** impounds the Green River just south of the Wyoming border, backing up a reservoir through 91 water miles (147 km) of gentle valleys and fiery red canyons. The rugged land displays spectacular scenery where the Green River cuts into the Uinta Mountains—cliffs rising as high as 1,500 ft (457 m), twisted rock formations, and sweeping panoramas. Although much of the lake is in Wyoming, most of the campgrounds and other visitor facilities, as well as the best scenery, are in Utah. The **Red Canyon Visitor Center** (1475 Red Canyon Rd., Dutch John; 435/889-3713; mid-May-mid-Oct.) has what may be Utah's best

picture window onto sheer cliffs dropping 1,360 ft (414 m) to the lake below. Nearby viewpoints, connected by a trail along the canyon rim, offer splendid panoramas up and down the canyon and to the lofty Uinta Mountains in the distance. The **Canyon Rim Trail** is a popular 4.6-mi (7.4-km) each way hike or mountain bike ride with trailheads at Red Canyon Visitor Center.

CEDAR BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

4730 S. UT-148, Brian Head; 435/986-7120; www.nps.gov/cebr

Cedar Breaks is much like Bryce Canyon, but it's on a different high plateau and lacks the crowds that flock to the national park. Here, on the west edge of the Markagunt Plateau, a giant amphitheater 2,500 ft (762 m) deep and more than 3 mi (4.8 km) across has been eroded into the stone. Ridges and pinnacles extend like buttresses from the steep cliffs. Traces of iron, manganese, and other minerals have tinted the normally white limestone a rainbow of warm hues. A 5-mi (8-km) **scenic drive** leads past four spectacular overlooks, each with a different perspective. **Spectra Point-Wasatch Rampart Trail** (3.8 mi/6.1 km) begins at the visitor center, then follows the rim along the south edge of the amphitheater to an overlook.

ZION NATIONAL PARK

1 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale; 435/772-3256; www.nps.gov/zion

Among the top five most-visited national parks, Zion is a magnificent place with stunning, soaring scenery. The first thing to catch your attention will be the sheer cliffs and great monoliths of **Zion Canyon** reaching high into the heavens. Energetic streams and other forces of erosion created this land of finely sculptured rock. **Zion Canyon Scenic Drive** winds along the canyon floor along the North Fork of the Virgin River past some of the most spectacular scenery in the park. (From March through Thanksgiving, a **shuttle bus** ferries visitors along this route.) Hiking trails branch off to lofty viewpoints and narrow side canyons. For a relatively easy hike, do the **Emerald Pool Trail** (3 mi/4.8 km round-trip) from the Grotto Picnic Area to the truly green pool, where towering cliffs rise above a white-sand beach.

The strenuous **West Rim Trail** to **Angel's Landing,** the famous sheer-walled monolith with a breathtaking panorama at the top, also starts at the Grotto Picnic Area (5.4 mi/8.7 km round-trip; permit required). For adventurous souls, hiking the eerie depths of the Virgin River **Narrows** in upper Zion Canyon is an experience of a lifetime.



THE NARROWS, ZION NATIONAL PARK

CAPITOL REEF NATIONAL PARK

52 W. Headquarters Dr., Torrey; 435/425-3791; www.nps.gov/care

Wonderfully sculpted rock layers in a rainbow of colors put on a fine show at Capitol Reef. About 70 million years ago, gigantic forces within the earth began to uplift, squeeze, and fold more than a dozen rock formations into the central feature of the park today—the **Waterpocket Fold,** so named for the many small pools of water trapped by the tilted strata. Erosion has since carved spires, graceful curves, canyons, and arches. You'll also see remnants of the area's long human history—petroglyphs and storage bins of the prehistoric Fremont people, a schoolhouse and other structures built by Mormon pioneers, and several small uranium mines from the 20th century.

A drive on **UT-24** passes through an impressive cross section of Capitol Reef cut by the Fremont River—be sure to stop at **Sunset Point,** where you can enjoy panoramic views of the Fremont River Gorge and the Capitol Reef Cliffs via an easy 0.4-mi (0.6-km) trail. You can see more of the park on the **Scenic Drive,** a narrow paved road (16 mi/26 km round-trip) that heads south from the visitor center. The drive passes beneath spectacular cliffs of the reef and enters **Grand Wash** and **Capitol Gorge Canyons.**

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

435/826-5466; www.blm.gov

Grand Staircase-Escalante contains a vast and wonderfully scenic collection of slickrock canyonlands and desert, prehistoric village sites, Old West ranch land, arid plateaus, and miles of back roads linking stone arches, mesas, and abstract rock formations. It is one of the largest public land groupings designated as a national monument in the Lower 48 states. Grand Staircase-Escalante includes three units. On the eastern third are the narrow wilderness canyons of the **Escalante River** and its tributaries, which make up the **Escalante Canyons** unit. In the center of the monument is a vast swath of arid rangeland and canyons of the **Kaiparowits Plateau.** The western third of the monument edges up against the Gray, White, and Pink Cliffs of the **Grand Staircase** unit.

Grand Staircase-Escalante preserves some of the best long-distance hiking trails in the Southwest, but it also has shorter trails for travelers who want to sample the wonderful slot canyons and backcountry without venturing too far afield. Hiking the **Escalante River Canyon** is recognized

worldwide as one of the great wilderness treks; most people devote 4-6 days to exploring these slickrock canyons. Hikers without a week to spare can sample the landscape along the **Dry Fork Coyote Gulch Trail** (about 8 mi/13 km round trip), which links two fascinating and beautifully constricted slot canyons. The trail at the stunning and accessible **Calf Creek Recreation Area** (UT-12 15 mi/24 km east of Escalante) leads through a magical landscape to 126-ft (38-m) **Lower Calf Creek Falls** (6 mi/10 km round-trip).

MOAB BIKE TRAILS

Moab has become the West's most noted mountain biking destination. The famed and challenging slickrock trails wind through astonishing desert landscapes. Beware: The most famous trails are not for beginners. The undulating slickrock of the well-known **Slickrock Bike Trail** in the **Sand Flats Recreation Area** just east of Moab challenges even the best mountain bike riders. This "trail" consists only of painted white lines, and the main loop is 10.5 mi (16.9 km) round-trip. Other trails are better matched to the skills of novices. The loops and spur trails of the **Moab Brand Trails** (7 mi/11.5 km north of town on US 191) form a trail system with several options that are especially good for beginners or riders who are new to slickrock. Try **Circle O** (no motor vehicles) for a good 3-mi (4.8-km) initiation to slickrock riding.



SLICKROCK BIKE TRAIL, MOAB

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

PIONEER DAY

June 24

Throughout Utah, the year’s biggest summer event is Pioneer Day on July 24, with parades and fireworks in almost every Utah community. It commemorates the day in 1847 when Brigham Young first saw the Salt Lake Valley and declared “This is the place.”

SPEED WEEK

Bonneville Salt Flats International Speedway; Aug.

A brilliant white layer of salt left behind by prehistoric Lake Bonneville covers more than 30,000 (12,140 ha) of the Great Salt Lake Desert. For much of the year, a shallow layer of water sits atop the salt flats. The hot sun usually dries out the flats enough for speed runs in summer and autumn. For six days in August, the Bonneville Salt Flats are the site of Speed Week, when vehicles come to “shoot the salt.” Vehicles of an amazing variety of styles—ranging from motorcycles to diesel trucks—and ages take off individually to set new records in their classes.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

HIGH WEST WHISKEY

Although Utah is known for restrictive liquor laws (until 2010, there was a “private club” requirement where you had to purchase a membership in order to have a drink in a bar), the state boasts a highly regarded whiskey distillery. Located just outside Park City, **High West Distillery** (27649 Old Lincoln Hwy., Wanship; 435/649-8300; www.highwest.com) offers tours of the facility with an optional tasting flight (fee charged). The affiliated **High West Saloon** (703 Park Ave., Park City; 435/649-8300; www.highwest.com) is one of the best bars in Park City.



TASTING FLIGHT AT HIGH WEST DISTILLERY

CROWN BURGERS

www.crown-burgers.com

In and around Salt Lake City, the local fast food purveyor Crown Burgers is the favorite for char-grilled burgers and good fries. For that special Utah touch, ask for **fry sauce** with your french fries—it's a local condiment that's remarkably like Thousand Island dressing without relish.

AGGIE ICE CREAM

750 N. 1200 E., Logan; 435/797-2109; https://aggieicecream.usu.edu

The Utah State University dairy department is justifiably proud of its milk, cheese, and ice cream. Get a double scoop at the shop in Logan.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Salt Lake City International Airport:** SLC; 776 N. Terminal Dr.; 801/575-2400; https://slcairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Utah Travel Council:** www.visitutah.com
- **Utah State Parks:** https://stateparks.utah.gov [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Salt Lake Tribune:*** www.sltrib.com

NEW MEXICO

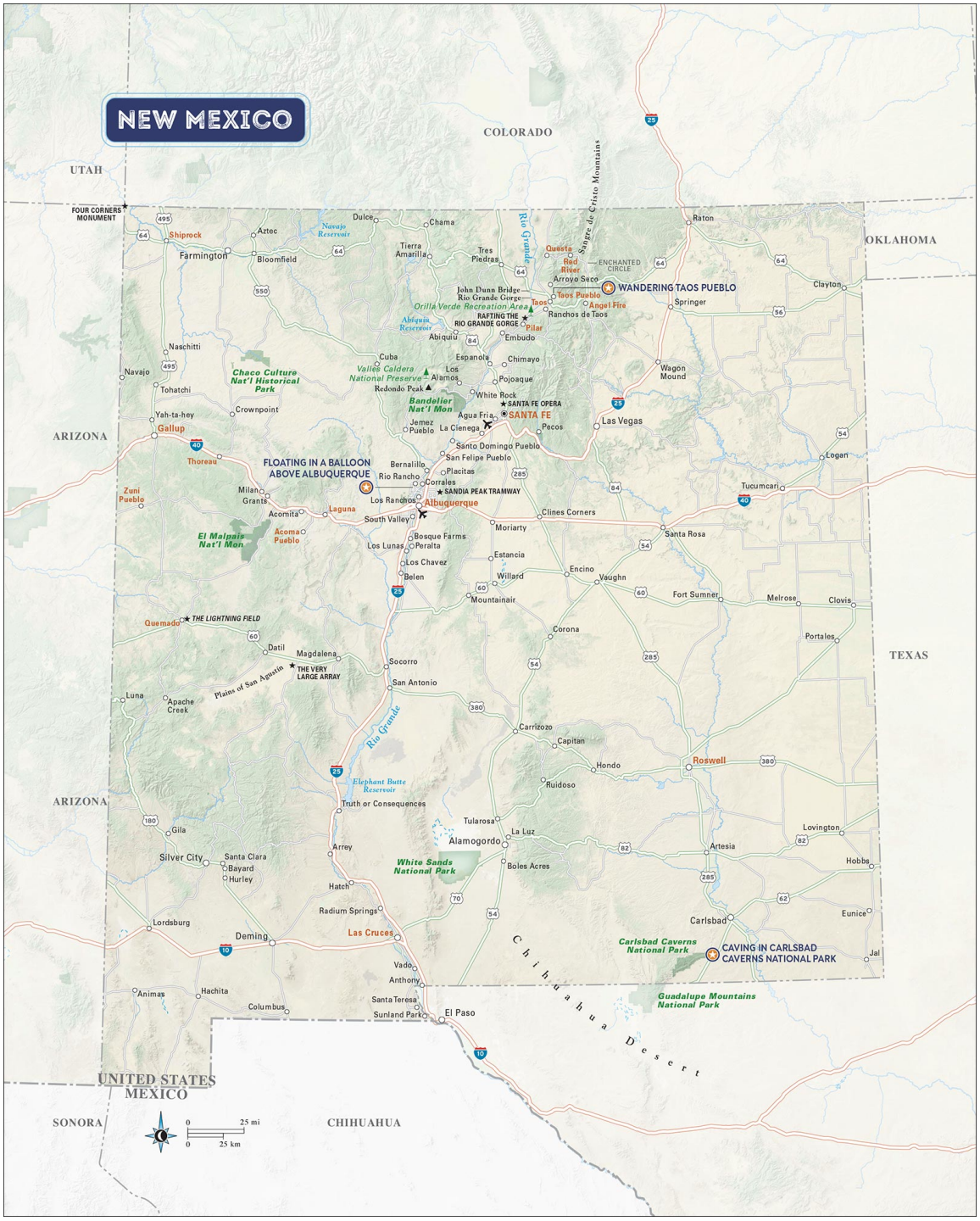
The Land of Enchantment, on Apache, Comanche, Pueblo, and Navajo land, entrances all the senses. Green chiles roast at farmers markets and fragrant piñon crackles in kiva fireplaces. Coyotes howl at night, and the deep boom of drums and jingle of bells resound at pueblo ceremonies. Then there are the austere mesas, sandstone canyons, and snowcapped mountain peaks, all below a turquoise sky—just like the locally crafted jewelry. New Mexico is a sort of alternate world. The state is home to some of the country's oldest settlements and to the world's first spaceport for tourists. Hike along mountainsides thick with yellow-leafed aspens or on surreal gypsum dunes, or bunk down under a buzzing neon motel sign along Route 66. At the end of the day, you can always pull yourself back into the present with a cold margarita and carne adovada with a kick—but there's no guarantee you'll shake off New Mexico's spell.

AREA: 121,590 sq mi / 314,916 sq km (5th)

POPULATION: 2,130,256 (36th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 6, 1912 (47th)

STATE CAPITAL: Santa Fe


NEW MEXICO
COLORADO
UTAH
ARIZONA
TEXAS
OKLAHOMA
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
SONORA
CHIHUAHUA
FOUR CORNERS MONUMENT
Shiprock
Farmington
Aztec
Bloomfield
Navajo Reservoir
Dulce
Chama
Tierra Amarilla
Tres Piedras
Rio Grande
Sangre de Cristo Mountains
Questa
Red River
ENCHANTED CIRCLE
Arroyo Seco
WANDERING TAOS PUEBLO
Taos Pueblo
Taos
Angel Fire
Ranchos de Taos
John Dunn Bridge
Rio Grande Gorge
Orilla Verde Recreation Area
RAFTING THE RIO GRANDE GORGE
Pilar
Abiquiu Reservoir
Abiquiu
Embudo
Raton
Clayton
Springer
Naschitti
Navajo
Tohatchi
Crownpoint
Chaco Culture Nat'l Historical Park
Yah-ta-hey
Gallup
Thoreau
Cuba
Valles Caldera National Preserve
Los Alamos
Redondo Peak
Espanola
Chimayo
Pojoaque
White Rock
Wagon Mound
Bandelier Nat'l Mon
Jemez Pueblo
Agua Fria
SANTA FE OPERA
SANTA FE
La Cienega
Pecos
Las Vegas
Santo Domingo Pueblo
San Felipe Pueblo
Logan
FLOATING IN A BALLOON ABOVE ALBUQUERQUE
Bernalillo
Placitas
Rio Rancho
Corrales
SANDIA PEAK TRAMWAY
Los Ranchos
Albuquerque
Zuni Pueblo
Milan
Grants
Acomita
Laguna
South Valley
Clines Corners
Tucumcari
Moriarty
Santa Rosa
El Malpais Nat'l Mon
Acoma Pueblo
Bosque Farms
Los Lunas
Peralta
Estancia
Los Chavez
Belen
Willard
Encino
Vaughn
Mountainair
Fort Sumner
Melrose
Clovis
Quemado
THE LIGHTNING FIELD
Datil
Magdalena
Socorro
THE VERY LARGE ARRAY
Plains of San Agustin
San Antonio
Corona
Portales
Luna
Apache Creek
Carrizozo
Capitan
Hondo
Roswell
Ruidoso
Rio Grande
Elephant Butte Reservoir
Truth or Consequences
Tularosa
La Luz
Alamogordo
Lovington
Artesia
Hobbs
Gila
Silver City
Santa Clara
Bayard
Hurley
Arrey
White Sands National Park
Boles Acres
Hatch
Radium Springs
Carlsbad
Eunice
Lordsburg
Deming
Las Cruces
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
CAVING IN CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK
Jal
Vado
Anthony
Chihuahua Desert
Animas
Hachita
Columbus
Santa Teresa
Sunland Park
El Paso
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and **Taos** sit along an invisible diagonal line pointing through north-central New Mexico, and **Route 66** goes through Albuquerque along a not-quite-straight line across the state. The **Navajo Nation** is located in the northeast. In the southwest is the mesmerizing Chihuahuan Desert, while the southeast holds the state's two **national parks.**

WHEN TO GO

Summer, June-September, is high season in northern New Mexico. It's also the only time to hike at higher elevations, as snow finally melts, but lower elevations are baking. Be prepared for a temperature drop from the 90s F (32-37°C) to the 60s F (15-21°C) after sunset. **Fall** is beautiful, with crisp temperatures and brilliant leaves in the mountains. **Winter** is busy (and pricey) in ski towns like Taos, but many sights have limited hours. Towns at lower elevations remain balmy, but be prepared for freezing temperatures even in southern desert areas. **Spring** is perhaps the harshest time, switching from snowfall and mud to dry, hot winds.

TOP 3

1 WANDERING TAOS PUEBLO

575/758-1028; www.taospueblo.com

Two clusters of multistory mud-brick buildings make up the core of this village, which claims, along with Acoma Pueblo, to be the oldest continually inhabited community in the United States. The current buildings, annually repaired and recoated with mud, were constructed as early as 1000 CE.



TAOS PUEBLO

About 150 people (out of the 1,900 or so total Taos reservation residents) live here year-round. These people, along with the town's designation as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site,** have kept the place remarkably as it was in the pre-Columbian era. The apartment-like homes, stacked upon each other and reached by wooden ladders, have no electricity or running water, though some use propane gas for heat and light.

You are free to explore, but be mindful not to intrude on private space, and stay clear of the ceremonial kiva areas on the east side of each complex. You're welcome to enter any of the craft shops and galleries that are open—a good opportunity to see inside the earthen structures and to buy some of distinctive **Taos pottery.**

2 FLOATING IN A BALLOON ABOVE ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque enjoys the world's most perfect weather for navigating hot-air balloons. A phenomenon called the **Albuquerque Box,** created by the steep mountains adjacent to the low river bottom, enables pilots to move at different speeds at different altitudes, and

even to backtrack, if necessary. Thanks to these ideal conditions, you can go up, up, and away in a balloon just about any day of the year. A trip is admittedly an investment (and you have to wake up well before dawn for sunrise trips), but there's no other ride quite like it. One of the longest established operations, **Rainbow Ryders** (505/823-1111; www.rainbowryders.com) offers hour-long tours, depending on wind conditions.

An experience to rival going up in one yourself is witnessing an early morning mass ascension of over 500 balloons at the **Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta** (Balloon Fiesta Park, Albuquerque; 505/821-1000; www.balloonfiesta.com). You can watch as the balloons glow against the dark sky, then lift silently into the air in a great wave. The fiesta is the city's biggest annual event and takes place over nine days in October at a dedicated park on the north side of town, west of I-25.



ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA

3 CAVING IN CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK

3225 National Parks Hwy., Carlsbad; 575/785-2232; www.nps.gov/cave

One of the country's most awesome natural wonders, Carlsbad Caverns is mesmerizing. You could easily spend days here, visiting ever more obscure underground worlds. Aboveground, the **Chihuahuan Desert** is especially scenic.



NATURAL ENTRANCE TRAIL AT CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK

The basic entrance ticket (reservations required) gives you access to two major parts of the cave: the **Natural Entrance Trail,** which descends about 750 ft (229 m) in the course of 1.25 mi (2 km), on a paved trail dense with switchbacks, and **The Big Room,** the largest cave in the Carlsbad complex. Lit in tasteful white lights like a natural cathedral, the Big Room soars up into the dark, and the trail is 1.25 mi (2 km) long.

In the summer months, allow an extra hour of waiting time at the **visitor center.** Probably the best time to go is in winter, because you'll have the whole place to yourself. Still, there are two reasons to consider a spring or summer visit: Hundreds of thousands of bats fly out every evening, and the 56°F (13°C) temperature underground is a relief.

HIGHLIGHTS

SANDIA PEAK TRAMWAY

30 Tramway Rd. NE, Albuquerque; 505/856-1532; www.sandiapeak.com

The longest single-cable tram in the Americas, the Sandia Peak Tramway whisks passengers 2.7 mi (4.3 km) and nearly 4,000 ft (1,219 m) up, along a continuous line of Swiss-made cables. The ride from Albuquerque's northeast foothills to the crest takes about 15 minutes; the view of the cityscape and beyond along the way can be breathtaking.

SANTA FE ART GALLERIES

Canyon Road is ground zero for Santa Fe's art market. The intersection of Paseo de Peralta and Canyon Road is the beginning of a 0.5-mi (0.8-km) strip that contains more than 80 galleries. In the summer the street is a solid mass of strolling art lovers—pro collectors and amateurs alike. It's especially thronged on Friday evenings in summer when most galleries have an open house or an exhibition opening. Here are a few spots to seek out.



CANYON ROAD IN SANTA FE

- **Nüart Gallery** (670 Canyon Rd.; 505/988-3888) showcases a variety of international artists with genres from figurative artwork to magical realism.
- Near Canyon Road, **Gerald Peters Gallery** (1011 Paseo de Peralta; 505/954-5700) and **Nedra Matteucci Galleries** (1075 Paseo de Peralta; 505/982-4631) are the biggies when it comes to Taos Society of Artists and other Western art.

BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

15 Entrance Rd., Los Alamos; 505/672-3861; www.nps.gov/band

One of New Mexico's most entrancing ancient sites, Bandelier National Monument comprises 33,000 ac (13,355 ha) of wilderness, including the remarkable Frijoles Canyon, lined with cavates—rooms carved by the Ancestral Puebloans that served as their homes—while the remnants of a massive settlement from the 16th century occupies the valley floor. It is these dwellings and the foundations of kivas, which were central to

Ancestral Puebloan society, that the park is most known for today. Several of the cavates are just a short walk from the **visitor center**—it's possible to climb inside some of them—and there's a network of much longer trails that wend deeper into the canyon, the mesa, and the backcountry.



BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

THE LIGHTNING FIELD

505/898-3335; www.lightningfield.org

Installed in 1977 by sculptor Walter de Maria, *The Lightning Field* is an elaborate work of land art: 400 stainless-steel poles stand in a grid measuring 1 mile by 1 kilometer. The light glints off the poles, and summer storms create a field of crackling, brilliant electricity across their pointed tips. Casual visitors are not allowed; you must make reservations for an overnight stay and leave your car in Quemado, a tiny town on US 60 in remote western New Mexico. This ranks as one of the state's most remarkable places to spend the night, not to mention one of the great places to meditate on New Mexico's phenomenal landscape.

ROSWELL

Launched into national notoriety in 1947 by an alleged UFO crash (and subsequent government cover-up) northwest of town, Roswell has become a pilgrimage site for true believers and kitsch seekers alike. The city seal sports an alien, the green streetlamps have eyes, and the McDonald's resembles a spaceship about to lift off. Most visitors make a beeline to the **International UFO Museum & Research Center** (114 N. Main St.; 575/625-9495; www.roswellufomuseum.com), where the events of July 1947 are dissected with obsessive care.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 You'll likely start in **Albuquerque,** where you'll make a beeline to **Mary & Tito's Café** for a great introduction to New Mexican cuisine. Learn about New Mexico's Native communities at the **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center** before driving 2.5 hours northeast to **Taos.**

DAY 2 Start the morning at awesome, ancient, and living **Taos Pueblo,** before taking the **Enchanted Circle** drive around **Wheeler Peak**, stopping for a hike near **Red River.** If it's spring or early summer, you can also raft or float the **Rio Grande Gorge.**

DAY 3 Backtrack southwest to Santa Fe, stopping at **Santa Fe Bite** en route for a green chile cheeseburger. In Santa Fe, browse the art galleries on **Canyon Road.** You have your pick of museums, such as the **Museum of Contemporary Native Arts,** or head out for a hike in nearby **Valles Caldera National Preserve,** about an hour from Santa Fe.

DAY 4 Today it's a four-hour drive south to **White Sands National Park.** Cruise the 16-mi (26-km) **Dunes Drive,** marveling at the

shimmering gypsum, stopping to hike some of the trails or for a ranger-led tour.

DAY 5 It's another long, but worthwhile, desert drive of 3.5 hours to **Carlsbad Caverns National Park.** Hike the **Natural Entrance Trail,** descending into the truly massive **Big Room.**

DAY 6 Drive the 4.5 hours northwest back to **Albuquerque** today, stopping in **Roswell** to visit the **International UFO Museum & Research Center.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

HISTORIC ROUTE 66

Though officially decommissioned, Route 66 (now traced by I-40) is still alive in New Mexico in the form of neon signs and cruising culture. Dedicated drivers can hop off the interstate and cruise a remote—sometimes winding—two-lane stretch of old Route 66, resurfacing at **Laguna** and then cruising parallel to I-40 almost to **Gallup.** Outside **Albuquerque,** take exit 126, heading south on NM-6. Then turn right (southwest) on old Route 66. This road eventually meets, then crosses I-40, winding a bit, settling in as the frontage road up to exit 47, west of **Thoreau.**

NATIVE NEW MEXICO TODAY

Visitors to New Mexico can learn about the culture that developed across the state before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century in pueblos and in excellent museums that hold some of the state's finest treasures.

- In Albuquerque, the **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center** (2401 12th St. NW; 505/843-7270; www.indianpueblo.org) should be your first stop, for its information on the 19 pueblo settlements in the state.
- West of Albuquerque, the dramatic **Acoma Pueblo** (I-40, exit 102, Acoma; 800/747-0181; www.acomaskycity.org), aptly known as Sky City due to its position atop a mesa, is accessible only by guided tour. At the base is an excellent cultural museum, which displays delicate white pottery painted with fine black lines.
- **Zuni Pueblo** (1239 NM-53, Zuni; 505/782-7238; www.zunitourism.com) is the only pueblo where you can stay overnight; it's also the source of beautiful jewelry. Take a walking tour of the mission church, with its resplendent kachina murals, and check out the **A:shíwi A:wan Museum** (2 E. Ojo Caliente Rd., Zuni; 505/782-4403; www.ashiwi-museum.org).
- In Santa Fe, stop by the **Museum of Contemporary Native Arts** (108 Cathedral Pl., Santa Fe; 505/983-8900; www.iaia.edu/mocna), the showcase for students, professors, and alumni of the prestigious **Institute of American Indian Arts.**
- Check out the state-run **Museum of Indian Arts & Culture** (710 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe; 505/476-1269; www.newmexicoculture.org). Exhibits offer a deep look into the lives of the Southwest's Indigenous heritage.

- The **Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian** (704 Camino Lejo, Santa Fe; 505/982-4636; https://wheelwright.org) in Santa Fe features traditional and contemporary works by Native artists. Tours are offered twice daily Thursday through Sunday.

ENCHANTED CIRCLE

The Enchanted Circle, the loop formed by **US 64, NM-38,** and **NM-522,** is named for its breathtaking views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, including **Wheeler Peak.** The main towns on the route—**Angel Fire** and **Red River**—are ski resorts. As the scenery is really the thing, you can drive the 84-mi (135-km) route in a short day, with time out for a quick hike around Red River or a detour along the **Wild Rivers Backcountry Byway.**



ENCHANTED CIRCLE

Driving counterclockwise around the loop gives you the arresting descent into the Taos Valley from **Questa**—not to be missed, if you can manage it. To do this, start by heading east out of **Taos** on Kit Carson Road,

which turns into US 64, winding along next to the Taos River. At Palo Flechado Pass, the road descends into the high Moreno Valley, a gorgeous green expanse in early spring and a vast tundra in winter.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

WHITE SANDS NATIONAL PARK

US 70 between Alamogordo and Las Cruces; 575/479-6124; www.nps.gov/whsa

At White Sands, 275 sq mi (712 sq km) of blinding, shimmery gypsum, the sand looks like no desert you've ever seen: your brain can't stop thinking snow and ice. In the summer, temperatures exceed 100°F (38°C), so you'll probably want to visit either early or late in the day—but there is also something undeniably overwhelming about this featureless landscape at high noon. A number of nature trails, including the 5-mi (8-km) round-trip **Alkali Flat Trail** into the **Heart of the Sands,** lead off the 16-mi-long (26-km) **Dunes Drive.** Stop in at the pleasant **visitor center** at the main gate for the schedule of ranger tours.

VALLES CALDERA NATIONAL PRESERVE

575/829-4100; www.nps.gov/vall

Spreading out for 88,900 ac (37,976 ha) to the north of NM-4, Valles Caldera National Preserve is a series of vast green valleys, rimmed by the edges of a volcano that collapsed into a massive bowl millennia ago. At the center is rounded Redondo Peak (11,260 ft/3,432 m). The surrounding meadows are home to herds of elk. To get oriented, drive in 2 mi (3.2 km) to the **Valle Grande Ranger Station,** where you can get a hiking map and the latest trail conditions. A full roster of guided activities is available in winter and summer, including group day hikes, elk sightseeing, and full-moon snowshoeing in winter.

RAFTING THE RIO GRANDE GORGE

The **Taos Box,** the 16-mi (26-km) stretch of the Rio Grande between the John Dunn Bridge and Pilar, provides the most exhilarating rafting in New Mexico, with Class II and Class IV rapids with ominous names like Boat Reamer and Screaming Left-Hand Turn. The river mellows out south of the Taos Box, then leads into a shorter Class III section called the **Racecourse**—the most popular run, usually done as a half-day trip. Beyond this, in the **Orilla Verde Recreation Area** around Pilar, the water is wide and flat, a place for a relaxing float in an inner tube. For guided trips, try **Los Rios River Runners** (575/776-8854; www.losriosriverrunners.com) or **Far Flung Adventures** (575/758-2628; www.farflung.com). Both offer excursions from Pilar. The best time of year to be on the river is late May-late June, when the water is high from mountain runoff.



RAFTING THE TAOS BOX ON THE RIO GRANDE RIVER

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The **Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta** in October is one of New Mexico's most famous events, but other celebrations and events happen throughout the year.

PUEBLO DANCES AND FEAST-DAY CELEBRATIONS

Visiting a pueblo for a ceremonial dance or feast-day celebration is one of the most memorable parts of a trip to New Mexico. A pueblo dance is a ceremony and a religious ritual, not a performance—visitors are guests, not part of an audience. Applause is not appropriate, nor is conversation during the dance. Queries about the meaning of the dances are generally not appreciated. Never walk in the dance area, and try not to block the view of pueblo residents. The kivas, as holy spaces, are always off-limits to outsiders. Photography is strictly forbidden at dances.

Major CITIES

ALBUQUERQUE: Founded three centuries ago, New Mexico's largest city is fun, down-to-earth, and affordable. It was named for a Spanish nobleman (hence its nickname, the Duke City).

LAS CRUCES: Located in southwest New Mexico, the state's second-largest city is a proud farm town where the influence of Mexico is strongly felt in a cross-border culture that's distinct from the Hispanic communities in the northern part of the state.

SANTA FE: Founded over 400 years ago as a remote Spanish outpost, state capital Santa Fe has a larger proportion of writers and artists than any other community in the United States.

Ceremonial dances take place throughout the year at pueblos around the state. **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center** (2401 12th St. NW, Albuquerque;

505/843-7270; www.indianpueblo.org) is a good resource to find out specific events and dates.

SANTA FE OPERA

301 Opera Dr., Santa Fe; 505/986-5900; www.santafeopera.org; July-Aug.

The Santa Fe Opera is not the night at the opera of Edith Wharton novels. Half the fun is arriving early to "tailgate" in the parking lot, which involves gourmet goodies and lots of champagne. The show itself features the country's best singers, who treat this as their "summer camp," as the season runs July-August and takes place in an elegant 2,000-plus-seat open amphitheater that is beautiful at sunset; pack blankets to ward off the chill later on.

BEST FOOD

NEW MEXICO CUISINE

The state cuisine is a distinctive culinary tradition that shouldn't be confused with Tex-Mex, Californian Mex, or south-of-the-border Mexican. The **New Mexico chile pepper** is the cuisine's distinguishing element. "Red or green?" is the official state question, the dilemma diners face when choosing either an earthy red-chile sauce (produced from chiles that have been left to ripen) or a chunky, vegetal green one (from chiles picked green). Hint: Choose "Christmas" if you can't decide.

- **Mary & Tito's Café** (2711 4th St. NW, Albuquerque; 505/344-6266) is an Albuquerque institution, named a James Beard American Classic in 2009.
- If you're in Santa Fe, don't miss out on a juicy **green-chile cheeseburger** at **Santa Fe Bite** (1616 St. Michael's Dr., Santa Fe; 505/428-0328; www.santafebitenm.com).

PUEBLO CUISINE

New Mexico is home to 19 pueblos, each with its own distinct history and traditions. Many dishes use the Three Sisters ingredients of corn, beans, and squash as the base. At the **Indian Pueblo Kitchen** (2401 12th St. NW, Albuquerque; https://indianpueblo.org/restaurant), diners can taste traditional dishes based on recipes that bring forward local ingredients. Don’t miss their famous pueblo-style bread pudding.

BEST SOUVENIRS

If you're serious about purchasing native-made art and jewelry, you may want to time your visit with the **Santa Fe Indian Market** (Santa Fe Plaza, Santa Fe; 505/983-5220; https://swaia.org), which takes place every August and showcases more than 1,000 artisans.

Lightly decorated but glimmering with mica from the clay of the area, **Taos Pueblo micaceous pottery** is also renowned for cooking tender beans. You can buy pots from the source in Taos Pueblo.

Once a month, a small Navajo community hosts the **Crownpoint Rug Auction** (Crownpoint Elementary School, Crownpoint; 505/362-8502; https://crownpointrugauction.com), which has been connecting buyers and sellers of **Navajo rugs** from all around the region since 1968. Even if you have no interest in buying, it's a great cultural experience, and an opportunity to see some beautiful work up close.

Around the state, Native chefs are incorporating Indigenous flavors to enhance classic food truck offerings. In Espanola, keep an eye out for **Manko** (www.facebook.com/MankoLLC), a Native American fusion food truck run by Ray Naranjo. Here you can order intriguing combinations of classic food truck fare with a twist, such as a cactus tempura turkey sandwich.

For a plant-based meal in Albuquerque, head to **Itality** (2500 12th St. NW, Unit 3, Ste. 2, Albuquerque; www.italitynm.com), which sources its produce from local Native farms.

One major element of American Indian cuisine is **fry bread,** a round of deep-fried dough served with honey or topped with ground meat, cheese, and lettuce. Try it at flea markets, such as the ones in **Albuquerque** (weekends at the fairgrounds) or **Shiprock** (daily, intersection of US 491 and US 64), or at **AshKii's Navajo Grill** (123 W. Broadway, Farmington; 505/326-3804).

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Albuquerque International Sunport:** ABQ; 2200 Sunport Blvd., Albuquerque; 505/244-7700; www.abqsunport.com
- **Santa Fe Municipal Airport:** SAF; 121 Aviation Dr., Santa Fe; 505/955-2900; https://flysantafe.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **New Mexico Tourism:** www.newmexico.org
- **New Mexico State Parks:** www.emnrd.nm.gov/spd

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Albuquerque Journal:*** www.abqjournal.com
- ***Santa Fe New Mexican:*** www.santafenewmexican.com
- ***Taos News:*** www.taosnews.com

TEXAS

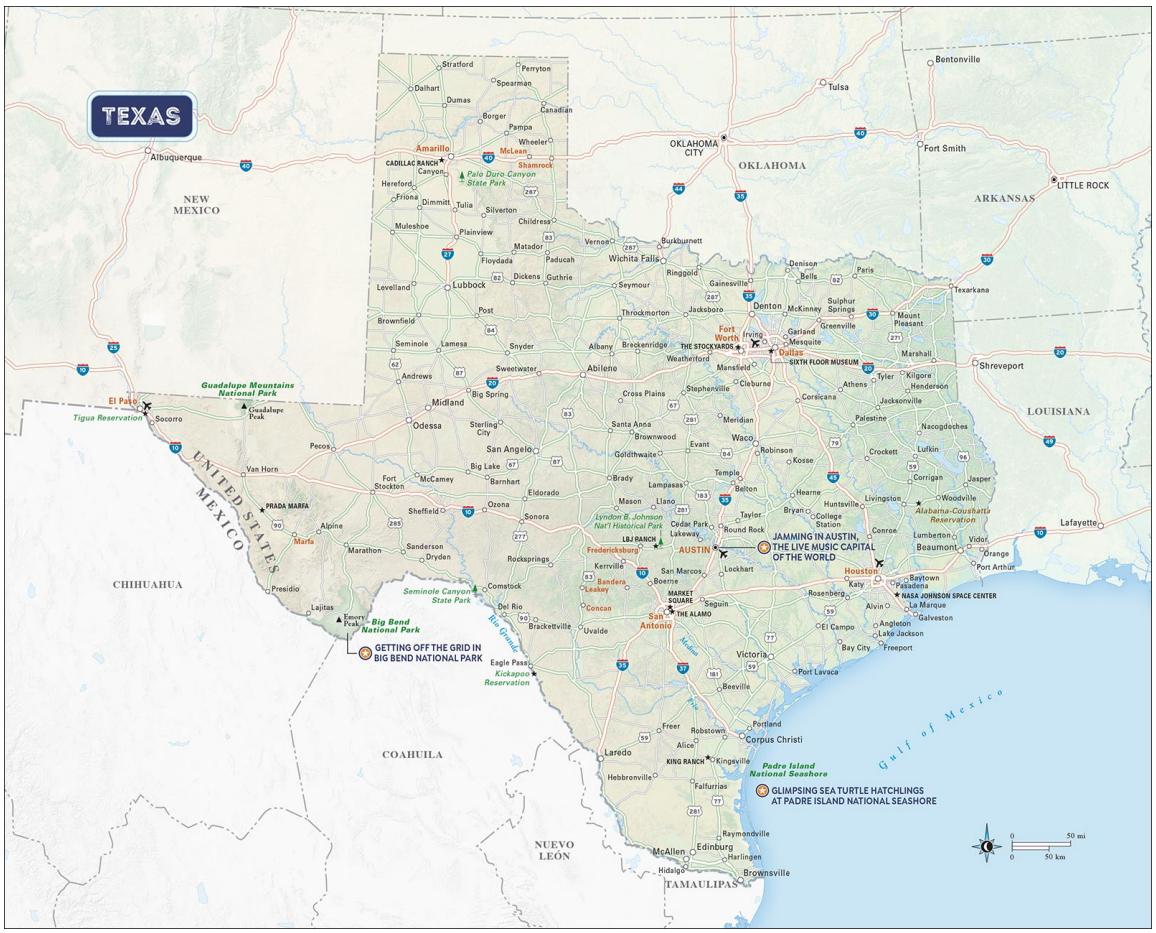
It’s no secret that Texas is massive. The mere mention of the state evokes big images: legendary cowboy culture, sprawling landscapes, and mouthwatering cuisine like barbecue and Tex-Mex. But no single image can capture the full story. Within its borders lies a world of contrasts—mountains, beaches, prairies, forests, and everything in between. Texas is not only geographically vast, but it is also the sixth most diverse state in the US, rich with culture and community. Spanning Apache, Bidai, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Comanche, Jumano, Karankawa, Kiowa, Kitsai, Tawakoni, Tonkawa, and Wichita lands, Texas draws visitors from around the US and the world. Fueled by pride and a fiercely independent spirit, the Lone Star state is a symbol of resilience and boundless possibilities. In Texas, you don’t have to choose—you can really have it all.

AREA: 268,596 sq mi / 695,662 sq km (2nd)

POPULATION: 31,290,831 (2nd)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 29, 1845 (28th)

STATE CAPITAL: Austin


TEXAS
Albuquerque
NEW MEXICO
Stratford
Perryton
Spearman
Dalhart
Dumas
Canadian
Borger
Pampa
Wheeler
Amarillo
McLean
Shamrock
CADILLAC RANCH
Canyon
Palo Duro Canyon State Park
Hereford
Friona
Dimmitt
Tulia
Silverton
Childress
Muleshoe
Plainview
Matador
Floydada
Paducah
Vernon
Burkburnett
Wichita Falls
Ringgold
Levelland
Lubbock
Dickens
Guthrie
Seymour
Gainesville
Denison
Bells
Paris
Texarkana
Brownfield
Post
Throckmorton
Jacksboro
Denton
McKinney
Sulphur Springs
Mount Pleasant
Fort Worth
Irving
Garland
Mesquite
Greenville
Dallas
THE STOCKYARDS
SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM
Marshall
Shreveport
Seminole
Lamesa
Snyder
Albany
Breckenridge
Weatherford
Mansfield
Cleburne
Tyler
Kilgore
Henderson
Andrews
Sweetwater
Abilene
Athens
Corsicana
Jacksonville
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
El Paso
Tigua Reservation
Socorro
Guadalupe Peak
Midland
Big Spring
Cross Plains
Stephenville
Palestine
Nacogdoches
LOUISIANA
Odessa
Sterling City
Santa Anna
Brownwood
Meridian
Evant
Waco
Robinson
Crockett
Lufkin
San Angelo
Goldthwaite
Kosse
Pecos
Van Horn
Big Lake
Brady
Temple
Corrigan
Jasper
Fort Stockton
McCamey
Barnhart
Eldorado
Lampasas
Belton
Hearne
Livingston
Woodville
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
PRADA MARFA
Sheffield
Ozona
Mason
Llano
Bryan
Huntsville
Alabama-Coushatta Reservation
Alpine
Sonora
Lyndon B. Johnson Nat'l Historical Park
Cedar Park
Taylor
College Station
Lafayette
Marfa
Marathon
Sanderson
Dryden
Rocksprings
LBJ RANCH
Fredericksburg
AUSTIN
Round Rock
Lakeway
JAMMING IN AUSTIN, THE LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD
Conroe
Lumberton
Vidor
Beaumont
Orange
Port Arthur
Kerrville
San Marcos
Lockhart
Houston
Baytown
Pasadena
Katy
Presidio
Comstock
Bandera
Leakey
Boerne
Seminole Canyon State Park
MARKET SQUARE
Rosenberg
NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER
La Marque
Alvin
Galveston
Lajitas
Del Rio
Seguin
Concan
THE ALAMO
San Antonio
El Campo
Angleton
Lake Jackson
Big Bend National Park
Rio Grande
Brackettville
Uvalde
Medina
Bay City
Freeport
CHIHUAHUA
GETTING OFF THE GRID IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
Eagle Pass
Kickapoo Reservation
Victoria
Port Lavaca
Beeville
Nueces
Gulf of Mexico
Freer
Robstown
Portland
Corpus Christi
Alice
Laredo
KING RANCH
Kingsville
Padre Island National Seashore
COAHUILA
Hebbronville
Falfurrias
GLIMPSING SEA TURTLE HATCHLINGS AT PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE
Raymondville
NUEVO LEÓN
McAllen
Edinburg
Harlingen
Hidalgo
Brownsville
TAMAULIPAS
0
50 mi
0
50 km
Bentonville
Tulsa
OKLAHOMA CITY
OKLAHOMA
Fort Smith
ARKANSAS
LITTLE ROCK

ORIENTATION

Titans of commerce, **Dallas** and **Fort Worth** dominate the north, creating the largest **metroplex** in Texas. Toward the heart of the state, **Austin** and the Hill Country enchant visitors. Heading east toward the piney forests, **Houston**'s southern influences are a huge part of this mega city's identity. Farther south, **San Antonio** brings Tejano heritage to the forefront. The **Gulf Coast** extends south from mighty **Galveston** through **Corpus Christi** and **South Padre Island.** Finally, rugged **West Texas** is represented well by **El Paso,** and **Amarillo** is along Route 66 in the northwestern **Panhandle.**

WHEN TO GO

West Texas is an arid climate with hot summers and generally mild winters but can have bouts of frigid, snowy weather resulting in brief road closures. Early **spring** can be windy. Spring is typically warm and pleasant, so expect large crowds around spring break at both Big Bend National Park and Padre Island National Seashore. Throughout the lower desert and, especially, along the Rio Grande, high temperatures can reach the 90s F (32-37°C) as early as April. **Summers** can be extremely hot across the entire state, with June-August often reaching highs at or above 100°F (38°C). **Fall** weather can be nice, but watch out for hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. **Winters** tend to be mild, but freezing temperatures, snow, and ice can occur, especially in the Panhandle. Houston, in East Texas, is often warmer than the rest of the state in winter.

TOP 3

1 JAMMING IN AUSTIN, THE LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Austin is home to one of the highest concentrations of live music venues in the country. From legendary performances by Willie Nelson to the iconic Austin City Limits stage, the city has long been a magnet for musicians and fans alike.



LIVE MUSIC ON 6TH STREET IN AUSTIN

Red River Street pulses with indie energy, while historic **6th Street** delivers nightly showcases of blues, rock, and country in packed bars and clubs. The city's diverse music scene extends into the **Warehouse District,** where upscale venues and lounges host everything from soul to electronic sets. **East Austin,** known for its eclectic vibe, offers intimate stages, backyard jams, and genre-bending performances. Anchored by major events like SXSW and ACL Fest, Austin's commitment to music is evident in venues as common as grocery stores and sidewalks.

- **Stubb's Bar-B-Q** (801 Red River, Austin; 737/465-1218; www.stubbsaustin.com) has its own outdoor amphitheater and hosts an eclectic list of national headlining acts, plus it has great barbecue!
- **Cheer Up Charlie's** (900 Red River St.; 512/431-2133) is a woman-owned, LGBTQ+-friendly spot where you can soak up the vibes and dance to your heart's content.

- **Moody Theater** (310 W. Willie Nelson Blvd.; 512/225-7999; www.acllive.com) is the home of Austin City Limits and prides itself on world-class audio and visual technology.
- **Antone's** (305 E. 5th St.; 512/814-0361; www.antonesnightclub.com) is thriving after 50 years in business. It's a true pillar in the community, known for local blues and rock performances.

2 GETTING OFF THE GRID IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/bibe

Big Bend National Park is one of only a few national parks with international boundaries. Where the Rio Grande carves a "big bend" between Texas and Mexico, the park rises into the Chisos Mountains above the Chihuahuan Desert. Along the bend, only kayaks and rafts can penetrate the deep, narrow canyons.



SANTA ELENA CANYON, BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

This land of the Chisos, Mescalero Apache, and Comanche has been home to Indigenous people for 10,000 years. In spring, the

seemingly barren desert bursts with blooming colors: pinks, reds, and yellows of small cacti and flaming orange ocotillo.

The self-guided **Fossil Discovery Exhibit** (Persimmon Gap Rd.; www.fossildiscoveryexhibit.com; RVs or trailers not recommended) hones in on dinosaurs that inhabited Big Bend 130 million years ago. Some of the 1,200 species of fossils unearthed here are on display. The accessible site contains large murals, tactile displays, dinosaur bones, a shaded picnic area, a fossil playground for kids, and a moderately challenging hike along a **geologic interpretive trail** (0.2 mi/0.3 km round-trip, 10 minutes).

Crossing the park's west region, **Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive** (30 mi/48 km one-way) tours the broad Chihuahuan Desert where it shifts into lava and volcanic rocks. Stop at the **Fins of Fire Exhibit** to see igneous dikes and at **Mule Ears Overlook** to spot the pair of striking peaks. Then, view the colorful volcanic ash of **Tuff Canyon** from a rim path to three overlooks. Continue west to the road terminus at **Santa Elena Canyon Overlook,** where the Rio Grande shoots free from the tall slot canyon.

Peak visitor season is winter (Nov.-Apr.) when the heat occasionally tops out around 85°F (29°C); the weather can plunge to freezing, but rarely with snow. The hot Chihuahuan Desert sees triple-digit temperatures in summer (May-Aug.). Hike early to finish by 10am as afternoons and evenings can be deadly. Late summer (Aug.-Sept.) produces flash flooding and thunderstorms.

3 GLIMPSING SEA TURTLE HATCHLINGS AT PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

20420 Park Road 22, Corpus Christi; 361/949-8068; www.nps.gov/pais

The five species of sea turtles that are found in the Gulf of Mexico have all been spotted at Padre Island National Seashore. Seeing a sea turtle is rare but it can happen, especially when the water is calm and clear. Juveniles live in the area year-round, often looking for food in the shallow water of the Laguna Madre on the south end of the park. In the summer, you may see an adult female waiting to come ashore and nest.



PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE SEA TURTLES

Sea turtles nest between **April and September** but sightings are extremely rare. If you do see a nesting sea turtle, view from a distance, taking care not to disturb her, and notify a park ranger immediately. Due to the low hatch rates of sea turtles, park officials move nests to a protected area and then release the hatchlings when the time is right. Public **hatchling releases** typically start in **late May** and continue until **July or early August.** Due to the unpredictable nature of hatchlings, releases are only announced one day in advance.

For more information on sea turtle activity at Padre Island, visit the park's website or the Padre Island National Seashore Facebook page. Between April and August, you can call the park's **Hatchling Hotline** (361/949-7163) for information on the current nesting season and any upcoming hatchling releases.

HIGHLIGHTS

SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

1601 E. NASA Pkwy., Houston; 281/244-2100; www.spacecenter.org

Houston's name is written in the stars as the official visitor center of NASA's **Johnson Space Center.** Established in 1961, the space center has made Houston a hub for NASA's American spaceflight program for the past six decades. Whether you're a space enthusiast or not, the center offers an unforgettable experience that celebrates the past, present, and future of America's space program.



SPACE CENTER HOUSTON

Visitors can explore the **Starship Gallery,** home to actual spacecraft and artifacts from Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions, including flown spacecraft and moon rocks. **Historic Mission Control** offers a behind-the-scenes look at where NASA managed historic flights like Apollo 11. Guests can also tour the **Space Vehicle Mockup Facility,** where astronauts train in life-sized models of the International Space Station. One of the most awe-inspiring exhibits is the **Saturn V** rocket, a marvel of engineering that once powered astronauts to the moon.

KING RANCH

2205 TX-141 W., Kingsville; 361/592-8055; www.king-ranch.com

King Ranch is one of the largest and most historic working ranches in the United States, spanning across nearly 825,000 ac (333,865 ha) of land. Richard King, former steamboat captain, co-founded King Ranch in 1853 and helped shape the future of South Texas and American ranching.

At the **King Ranch Visitor Center,** guests can embark on guided bus tours to explore the ranch's rich heritage; view its renowned Santa Gertrudis, American red, and Texas longhorn cattle; and observe other diverse wildlife. The **King Ranch Museum** (405 N. 6th St., Kingsville; 361/595-1881), located in downtown Kingsville, offers exhibits featuring historic ranching tools, vintage vehicles, and a special display on the ranch's quarter horse legacy.

Nearby, the **King Ranch Saddle Shop** (201 E. Kleberg Ave., Kingsville; 877/282-5777; www.krsaddleshop.com) resides in the historic John B. Ragland Mercantile Building. Visitors can browse high-quality leather goods, apparel, and ranch-inspired home goods, and even watch master crafters at work utilizing traditional techniques.

PRESIDENTIAL LEGACIES

Texas holds a unique place in presidential history, most notably through the legacies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. In Dallas, the **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza** (411 Elm St., Dallas; 214/747-6660; www.jfk.org) chronicles John F. Kennedy's life, presidency, and tragic assassination at the very site where it occurred, offering a powerful reflection on his enduring impact.

In Hill Country, Lyndon B. Johnson's roots run deep. The **Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park** (830/868-7128; www.nps.gov/lyjo) spans the Johnson City district and the **LBJ Ranch** (US 290, near Stonewall), where visitors can explore on a driving tour. Nearby, the **LBJ Presidential Library and Museum** (2313 Red River St., Austin; 512/721-0200) at UT Austin's campus provides a comprehensive look at his complex legacy.

Together, these sites offer a profound glimpse into the lives and legacies of two influential presidents who were shaped by the Lone Star State.

BROWSING SAN ANTONIO'S MARKET SQUARE

514 W. Commerce St., San Antonio; 210/207-8600; www.marketsquaresa.com

The historic Market Square in San Antonio, also known as El Mercado, is where the vibrant culture of the city comes alive. Just a few minutes from the famed River Walk, you can experience this bustling marketplace in the heart of the downtown yourself. Spanning three blocks, it is the largest Mexican market in the United States. There are over 100 locally owned shops and vendors offering Mexican crafts, clothing, and tasty cuisine. Enjoy performances by live bands and other community-centered events during your visit.

Major CITIES

HOUSTON: This sweeping metropolis is known for its diverse culture, world-class museums, and dining. As the fourth-largest city in the United States, it offers a perfect mix of urban sophistication and Southern charm.

SAN ANTONIO: San Antonio blends its rich history with modern growth. Home to the iconic Alamo and picturesque River Walk, its Latin heritage and festive spirit make it one of Texas's most vibrant cities.

DALLAS: As a dynamic hub of commerce and innovation, Dallas is a standout. With a skyline that reflects corporate strength, it's a city where Texan pride meets upscale living, arts, and a thriving sports scene.

In the farmers market area, explore **Santiago Mexican Imports** (210/223-2784), with a wide array of handcrafted pottery goods and folk art. **El Jumil: A Touch of Mexico** (210/225-5988) offers traditional Mexican clothing and accessories. For a bite to eat, you must stop by **Mi Tierra Café y Panadería** (218 Produce Row, San Antonio; 210/225-1262). Mi Tierra has a delicious pan dulce, sugar-dusted conchas, and delightful seasonal favorites on rotation. And if you'd like a souvenir, they also have a gift shop selling items from drinkware to rich coffee and Mexican candy.

THE ALAMO

300 Alamo Plaza, San Antonio; 210/225-1391; www.thealamo.org

This former Spanish mission was the site of the most famous battle (and defeat) of the Texas Revolution. While the Texans lost the battle, the resounding cry of “Remember the Alamo!” echoed throughout the final battle of revolution as Texas won its independence. The site is now a museum with exhibits on the battle and living historians demonstrating 1830s Texas life.



THE ALAMO

Often referred to as the “Shrine of Texas Liberty,” the #1 most-visited destination in the state of Texas asks visitors to refrain from taking photos inside the Alamo church as a show of reverence for the space and its history. The museum grounds also host the Long Barrack, the oldest building in the complex, and a beautiful courtyard shaded by Texan pecan trees.

MARFA

Marfa is a remote, West Texas desert town that has evolved into a renowned hub for contemporary art and culture. Among its standout spaces is **Ballroom Marfa** (108 E. San Antonio St., Marfa; www.ballroommarfa.org), a non-collecting contemporary art museum dedicated to presenting leading and cutting-edge artists working in the arts. Another notable spot just outside of town is **Prada Marfa** (37 mi/57 km west of Marfa on the south side of US 90), a permanent art installation that attracts visitors with its faux boutique storefront. Marfa's mystique as a blend of high art and small-town uniqueness draws travelers from across the world to its desert charm.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin your trip in **Houston,** where you can visit the **Space Center Houston** and eat your way around the world at one of the city's numerous **international restaurants.**

DAY 2 It's a 3.5-hour drive to your first stop: **King Ranch,** over 825,000 ac (333,865 ha) devoted to all things ranching, from longhorn cattle to antique farm equipment. Next, head an hour east to **Padre Island National Seashore.** Spend the night in nearby **Corpus Christi.**

DAY 3 The next day, drive west for about two hours to the cultural center of **San Antonio** and its historic **Market Square.** Fusion is no stranger to this South Texas city, and here you can enjoy the splendor of the state's best **Tex-Mex** dishes and Tejano culture.

DAY 4 Meander through the **Hill Country** and **Fredericksburg,** careful not to skip the Czech delicacies and delicious fudge. It's about a 1.5-hour drive east to **Austin** from there. Enjoy nightlife

venues in the live music capital of the world before getting a good night's rest.

DAY 5 You have a three-hour drive ahead of you until you reach **Fort Worth.** The **Fort Worth Stockyards** and rodeos are a definitive Texan experience. About an hour to the east, spend time exploring the museum district and art scene in **Dallas.** The **Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza** is worth a trip for history buffs interested in the life and legacy of President John F. Kennedy. Complete this epic road trip with a 3.5-hour drive back to Houston.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

HILL COUNTRY JOURNEY

This 50-mi (80-km) stretch along TX-16 and US 83 takes you through rolling hills and along dramatic river valleys to the west of San Antonio. Allow two hours to complete the route. Along the way, you'll pass through **Bandera,** the self-proclaimed Cowboy Capital of the World. Here you can visit the **Frontier Times Museum** (510 13th St.) or join a **horseback riding tour** of City Park (www.banderahistoricalrides.com). Continuing west on TX-16 and FM 337, you can admire the **Medina River** and the surrounding scenery. When you're ready to cool off, continue on to US 83, which runs along the **Frio River.** There are plenty of spots to swim and enjoy the afternoon. For dinner, head to town. **Leakey** is your best bet for good eats and a charming Hill Country cabin in which to spend the night.

ROUTE 66

Texas's Panhandle history is entwined with its status as an important cattle shipping hub as well as one of the most iconic symbols in American history. Allow yourself about two hours to drive 95 mi (153 km) of Route 66.

Eternal art from the likes of Buddy Holly and the Ant Farm Collective lives on at **Cadillac Ranch** near Amarillo (about 10 mi/16 km west of downtown, between exits 60 and 62, exit Arnot Rd. on the south side of I-40). There, you have the opportunity to grab plenty of photos of the 10 graffitied Cadillacs buried in the dirt.

Driving about an hour east, McLean is home to the **Texas Old Route 66** and **Devil's Rope Museums** (100 Kingsley St., McLean; 806/779-2225; www.barbwiremuseum.com). If you're looking for a history with a "sharp" twist, this barbed wire museum is for you. The Texas Old Route 66 museum also offers an interesting glimpse into past mementos, vintage artwork, and expert knowledge about the Mother Road's golden automobile age.

Finally, head farther east to Shamrock and visit the **U-Drop-Inn and Conoco Station** (111 US Route 66, Shamrock; 806/256-2501), a landmark that was essential for Route 66 travelers of the past.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK

11450 Park Rd. 5, Canyon; 806/488-2227; https://tpwd.texas.gov

Palo Duro is home of the second largest canyon in the country. Drive to the **visitor center** to view exhibits on the geology and history of the park, then talk to a ranger for up-to-date information. Don't miss the views at the CCC overlook by the visitor center. You can take a scenic drive along the **main loop road** through the park, taking your time to enjoy the views and historical markers along the way. About 4 mi (6.4 km) from the visitor center, the **Lighthouse Trail** (5.5 mi/9 km, moderate) takes you to the park's most popular viewpoint. Most of the trail is relatively flat and easy, but the ascent to the namesake Lighthouse rock formation is quite steep. From here, you'll have sweeping views of the canyon. Be sure to carry plenty of water while hiking through this desert landscape with no shade. After a hike and a scenic drive, you'll be ready to head to the campground for dinner and an evening of relaxing under the great Texas night sky.



PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

400 Pine Canyon, Salt Flat; 915/828-3251; www.nps.gov/gumo

This national park offers spectacular views of this unique mountain range formed from fossilized limestone reefs of the ancient Permian Sea. Through faulting, those limestone reefs rose into the Guadalupe Mountains, including the tallest mountain in Texas, Guadalupe Peak (8,751 ft/2,667 m). From Pine Springs RV Campground, the steep **Guadalupe Peak Trail** (8.4 mi/13.5 km round-trip, 6-8 hours, strenuous) piles on switchbacks for the 2,906-ft (886-m) ascent. Below the summit, many of the rocks contain small fossils, and you'll peer down on the top of El Capitan. An obelisk at the summit (installed by American Airlines before the area became a national park) pays tribute to the Butterfield Stage. The rocky, exposed trail demands balance (hiking poles are helpful) and sturdy boots for the foot-pummeling descent.



GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Approaching the park from the west or south, **El Capitan** (8,085 ft/2,464 m) is the most prominent peak in view. Its limestone vertical cliffs, reminiscent of a far more popular peak in Yosemite by the same name, mark the southern tip of the exposed fossil reef. See it best from US 62/180 south of Pine Springs Visitor Center between the two picnic areas outside the park. For up-close views, the **El Capitan Trail** (9.4 mi/14.4 km round-trip, 6-8 hours) arcs around the mountain below the cliffs.

SEMINOLE CANYON STATE PARK

434 Park Road 67, Comstock; 432/292-4464; https://tpwd.texas.gov

Seminole Canyon State Park in southwest Texas is renowned for its ancient rock art and archaeological significance. The park's centerpiece, **Fate Bell Shelter,** is one of the largest and most significant rock art shelters in the Lower Pecos region, featuring pictographs created by Indigenous people in ancient times. These images depict animals and shamanic figures using a rust-colored paint derived from animal oils and plant materials. Organizations like the **Shumla Archaeological Research & Education Center** (432/292-4848; www.shumla.org) are dedicated to preserving and studying the park's rich cultural heritage. Hike and bike the almost 10 mi (16 km) of park along Seminole Canyon's rim or the Rio Grande.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

STOCKYARDS CHAMPIONSHIP RODEO

Fort Worth; year-round; https://fortworthstockyards.com

The **Fort Worth Stockyards** offer an authentic taste of Texas's Western heritage. Cattle drives, cowboys, and country music are a part of daily life here. Built in 1908, the **Cowtown Coliseum** (121 E. Exchange Ave., Fort Worth; www.cowtowncoliseum.com) is one of the oldest indoor rodeo arenas and is still home to the Stockyard Championship Rodeo. If you can, catch **Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show,** featuring trick roping, riding, and other entertainment, or enjoy one of the Stockyards' daily **cattle drives** and be in awe of the majestic longhorns strutting the streets.

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

Austin; 512/467-7979; www.sxsw.com; Mar.

Austin sits at the center of global innovation and sound each March. South By Southwest is a one-of-a-kind convergence of music, film, technology, and culture. What once was a local musical festival quickly evolved into a major launchpad for creatives and innovators. From concerts and film premieres to keynote speeches and panels, SXSW captures the spirit that defines the city.

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

www.aclfest.com; Sept.-Oct.

Held annually in Zilker Park, Austin City Limits is one of the nation's premier music events. The festival features two weekends of incredible performances across music genres. Local favorites and marquee acts like Paul McCartney, Doja Cat, Metallica, Jay-Z, Sabrina Carpenter, David Byrne, and more make it easy to understand why it attracts around 450,000 people, year after year.

BEST SOUVENIRS

If you're looking for authentic cowboy attire to protect you from the blistering heat, Texas lacks none. Splurge on a pair of boots and a hat in West Texas, the home to some of the best leather craftspeople in the country.

Tony Lama Factory Stores (namely the outlet at 7156 Gateway Blvd E., El Paso; www.tonylama.com) is a must for a sturdy yet fashionable pair of boots. Thanks to its legacy in boot-making that began in 1911, you can't go wrong.

Visit any one of **Gomez Western Wear**'s (https://gomezwesternwear.com) locations for great western attire. They have authentic boots and hats that are cowboy-approved.

JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth marks the moment on June 19, 1865, when nearly 250,000 enslaved people in Galveston finally learned of their freedom—more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Today, the holiday is celebrated statewide with parades, festivals, and cultural showcases that honor African American history and resilience. From Fort Worth and Houston's vibrant music celebrations to reenactments in Galveston, Juneteenth remains a powerful symbol of freedom, rooted in Texas soil.



JUNETEENTH PARADE

BEST FOOD

BARBECUE

It’s no secret that Texans are serious about their barbecue. Pitmasters are regarded for their Texas Trinity—brisket, ribs, and sausage—around the globe. Barbecue is more of a lifestyle here: know that it takes patience and respect for the art to get it right. Regionally, there are many styles of barbecue, but you’d be remiss if you didn’t give it a shot in the Lone Star State.

- In Austin, **Terry Black’s BBQ** (1003 Barton Springs Rd., Austin; 512/394-5899; www.terryblacksbbq.com) is run by the namesake’s twin sons and their sister, who brought the family barbecue tradition to Austin and have since expanded across the state. Be sure to try the brisket, a

Central Texas specialty, and the beef ribs. Go early so you have plenty of time to savor the plethora of slow-cooked meat.

- The wait is well worth it at **Goldee's Barbecue** in Fort Worth (4645 Dick Price Rd., Fort Worth; www.goldeesbbq.com [URL inactive]). The mouthwatering brisket here is delicious on its own, but you can't go wrong with adding a dab of sweet, tangy barbecue sauce. While you're at it, try their Laotian style sausage, a special on the menu.
- Have your fill at **Kreuz Market** (619 N. Colorado St., Lockhart; 512/398-2361; www.kreuzmarket.com). Barbecue purists swear by this landmark eatery as one of the best in Texas. Kreuz Market has over a century-long legacy; be a part of history and go for one of their famed sausages.



CHILI CON CARNE

TEX-MEX

Tex-Mex is a flavorful symbol of Mexico's lasting influence on Texas. Blending Indigenous, Spanish, and Mexican traditions into bold, comforting dishes like sizzling fajitas, cheesy enchiladas, crispy tacos, and chili con carne, the spirit of multiple cultures comes alive in every bite. In San Antonio, go for the enchilada plate at **Rosario's ComidaMex & Bar** (722 S. St. Mary's St., San Antonio; 210/233-1806; https://rosariossa.com), served with Mexican rice and refried beans. Also in the city, head to **Henry's Puffy Tacos** (6030 Bandera Rd., San Antonio; 210/647-8339; www.henryspuffytacos.com), where they serve some of the best tacos in the city. Their shells are deep fried until "puffed" and topped with your choice of meat, lettuce, tomato, and cheddar cheese.

SOUTHERN

Texas is geographically centered in the South and isn't afraid to put its twist on classic Southern meals. Down-home cooking is prevalent in most Texas cities, but in East Texas, it is exceptionally so. If you're looking for comfort in a Southern-style dish, you'll have no problem finding that during your time in the pines.

- **Chicken-fried steak** is a tenderized and breaded cut of steak that is pan-fried and served with an abundance of silky cream gravy. Try it at **Texas Music City Grill & Smokehouse** in Tyler (5424 Old Jacksonville Hwy., Tyler; 903/509-4222).
- **Fried catfish** is a staple near the Gulf Coast. A fillet is marinated in buttermilk, dipped in a mixture of cornmeal and spices, and deep fried until golden. Go to **Happy's Fish House** (2202 E. 5th St., Tyler; 903/944-7921) for some of the best fried catfish in the state.
- Crisp **fried okra** is as Southern as it gets and is a real treat. Order it as an add-on to your meal at **Alma's Courthouse Whistle Stop** (318 N. Washington Ave., Livingston; 936/327-3222; www.almascourthousewhistlestop.com).

INTERNATIONAL FOOD IN HOUSTON

Houston, one of the largest and most diverse cities in the nation, is a beautiful mosaic of different cultures. As such, its international food scene is a worth a trip on its own. Here, you'll easily find Vietnamese, Chinese, and Pakistani cuisines perfectly situated among the likes of barbecue, Tex-Mex, and Cajun-Creole food.

- **Moon Rabbit** (605 W. 19th St., Houston; 713/684-3991; www.moonrabbithtx.com) serves delicious Vietnamese comfort food dishes in a cozy setting.
- Go to **Musaafer** (5115 Westheimer Rd., Ste. C-3500; 713/242-8087; www.musaaferhouston.com) for the eclectic space and authentic Indian cuisine.
- **Crawfish & Noodles** (11360 Bellaire Blvd. #990; 281/988-8098) is a highly rated spot known for their Viet-Cajun fusion dishes.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **George Bush Intercontinental Airport:** IAH; 2800 N. Terminal Rd., Houston; 218/230-3100; www.fly2houston.com
- **Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport:** DFW; 2400 Aviation Dr., DFW Airport; 972/973-3112; www.dfwairport.com
- **Austin-Bergstrom International Airport:** AUS; 3600 Presidential Blvd., Austin; 512/530-2242; www.austintexas.gov/airport
- **San Antonio International Airport:** SAT; 9800 Airport Blvd., San Antonio; 210/207-3433; www.flysanantonio.com
- **El Paso International Airport:** ELP; 6701 Convair Rd., El Paso; 915/212-0330; www.elpasointernationalairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Travel Texas:** www.traveltexas.com
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:** https://tpwd.texas.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Texas Monthly:*** www.texasmonthly.com
- ***The Dallas Morning News:*** www.dallasnews.com [URL inactive]
- ***Houston Chronicle:*** www.chron.com

OceanofPDF.com

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Idaho

Montana

Wyoming

Colorado

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS
State by State

IDAHO

Why Go: Outdoor recreation in the Sawtooth Mountains and elsewhere in the state is making Idaho a popular destination.

MONTANA

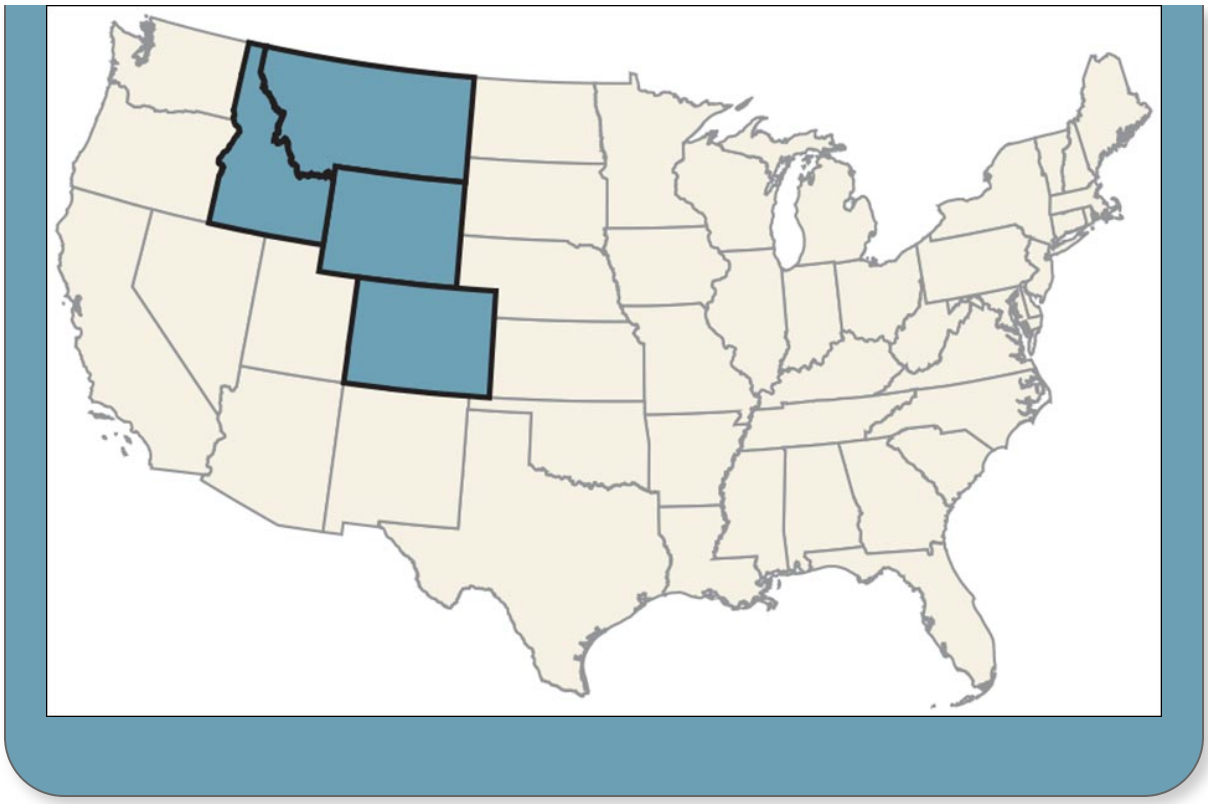
Why Go: Under Montana's big sky, you can have a Western dude ranch vacation, learn about Blackfeet culture, and hike to an actual glacier.

WYOMING

Why Go: Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks are two of the most spectacular in the national parks system.

COLORADO

Why Go: Get a combination of city (Denver) and mountains (the Rockies), along with a hint of the Southwest (Mesa Verde).



Rocky Mountains ROAD TRIP

In two weeks, you can string together the four national parks that highlight different parts of the Rocky Mountain region. This epic trip climbs roads carved into the sides of mountains, passes rushing waterfalls and spouting geysers, and stops for views of glaciers. Be sure to make reservations far in advance for in-park accommodations, like Jackson Lake Lodge and the Old Faithful Inn.

COLORADO

Denver and Rocky Mountains National Park: 2 Days / 110 mi (175 km)

Start with a city day in **Denver,** enjoying the shops, restaurants, and excellent craft brews. The next day, head out to **Estes Park** and the start of **Trail Ridge Road** in **Rocky Mountain National Park.** Spend the day winding through the park and stopping for hikes. Spend the night in **Grand Lake,** at the west end of the road.

WYOMING

Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks: 5 Days / 925 mi (1,500 km)

From Grand Lake, head into Wyoming, stopping in **Laramie** and ending up in **Casper.** Spend the next day getting from Casper to Moran, and get your first taste of **Grand Teton National Park** as you drive from Moran to **Jackson** for the night. Take a day to drive **Teton Park Road** from Jackson to Jackson Lake Lodge, stopping at pullouts to admire the views.

From Jackson Lake Lodge, drive to **Yellowstone National Park.** Hit West Thumb Geyser Basin on the way to **Old Faithful.** From Old Faithful, follow a reverse S through the park, stopping at **Grand Prismatic Spring** and **Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone,** passing through **Lamar Valley** to spot bison, and ending the day at **Mammoth Hot Springs.**

MONTANA

Glacier National Park: 3 days / 500 mi (805 km)

From Mammoth Hot Springs, power through a day-long drive to **St. Mary,** Montana, just outside **Glacier National Park.** Then have a minimal driving day to explore the **Many Glacier** area of the park, including a hike to Grinnell Glacier. Get up early the next morning to drive the epic **Going-to-the-Sun Road** through the park. You'll end the day in **Whitefish,** a resort town west of Glacier.

GETTING BACK TO DENVER

16 hours

The trip from Whitefish to Denver is about 1,000 mi (1,610 km) and takes a minimum of 15 hours. You can break it up over two days, spending the night in **Billings,** Montana. Or you can make more stops in cities and towns like **Butte,** Montana, and **Sheridan** and **Cheyenne** in Wyoming.

ADDING IDAHO

Coeur d’Alene, Boise, and Craters of the Moon: 6-7 days / 1,465-1,510 mi (2,360-2,430 km)

To add a swing through Idaho, head west from Whitefish to **Coeur d’Alene,** about four hours away. Stay a day at the lakeside getaway, then spend a day driving south to Boise, which takes about seven hours. Tool around **Boise** and the nearby **Snake River Valley** for a day. The next day, wake up early to head back east to **Jackson,** Wyoming, about six hours away, and you’ll want to stop midway to explore **Craters of the Moon National Monument.** From Jackson, you can make the eight-hour drive back to **Denver** in one day. Or, you can retrace your drive through Grand Teton National Park out to Casper, then back to Denver, over two days.

IDAHO

Idaho is often misunderstood. When this rugged northwestern state is not being confused with Iowa, it's usually the brunt of some bad potato joke. True, farmers here do grow more spuds than any other state in the country, but Idaho goes beyond russet potatoes. It's hard to fathom the varied landscapes of this beautiful state on Nimiipu (Nez Perce), Shoshone-Paiute, Shoshone-Bannock, Salish Kootenai (Flathead), and Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene) land. As you snowshoe across a frozen lake in the Sawtooths, you'll be reminded of the intense volcanic activity and major floods that helped to shape the land. The basalt-hemmed cliffs along the Snake River Canyon seem like a different planet than the cedar-ringed glacial lakes in the northern Panhandle. Juxtaposed with Idaho's remote wilderness are thriving urban areas. Boise, the state capital, has a surprisingly mellow vibe for a city with the fourth-largest metropolitan population in the Northwest. The people of Idaho are as varied as the land itself, yet their adoration for the remarkable landscape that surrounds them is the only common thread they need.

AREA: 83,569 sq mi / 216,442 sq km (14th)

POPULATION: 2,001,619 (38th)

STATEHOOD DATE: July 3, 1890 (43rd)

STATE CAPITAL: Boise


IDAHO
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON
OREGON
NEVADA
MONTANA
WYOMING
UTAH
Copeland
Bonners Ferry
Priest Lake State Park
Priest Lake
Coolin
Sandpoint
Priest River
Athol
Lake Pend Oreille
Coeur d'Alene
Spokane
TAKING A SUMMER GETAWAY TO COEUR D'ALENE
Coeur d'Alene Lake
LAKE COEUR D'ALENE SCENIC BYWAY
Harrison
Wallace
Mullan
Plummer
Missoula
HELENA
NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK VISITOR CENTER
Lewiston
Spalding
Greer
Clearwater River
EAST KAMIAH-HEART OF THE MONSTER
Craigmont
Kooskia
Grangeville
Butte
Bozeman
0 25 mi
0 25 km
Riggins
Salmon River
North Fork
Salmon
Hells Canyon National Recreation Area
New Meadows
Payette Lake
Ponderosa State Park
McCall
Middle Fork of the Salmon
Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness
Ellis
Leadore
Challis
Cascade
Humphrey
Smiths Ferry
Weiser
Stanley Lake
Stanley
Sawtooth Lake
Redfish Lake
GOING ON AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE IN THE SAWTOOTHS
Sawtooth Mountains
Banks
Lowman
Dubois
Ashton
Boise River
Horseshoe Bend
Sawtooth Wilderness
Galena Summit
Leslie
Sawtooth National Recreation Area
Smoky Mts
Boulder Mts
Mud Lake
Parma
Letha
Rigby
Driggs
Victor
Caldwell
Meridian
BOISE
Nampa
SUN VALLEY RESORT
Ketchum
Arco
Bellevue
Idaho Falls
MAP ROCK
Walter's Ferry
Snake River
Snake River Valley
SNAKE RIVER CANYON SCENIC BYWAY
Carey
FEELING OUT OF THIS WORLD AT CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT
Mountain Home
Craters of the Moon National Monument
Fort Hall Indian Reservation
Owyhee Mountains
Grand View
Hammett
Bliss
Shoshone
Pocatello
Bruneau Dunes State Park
Jerome
Shoshone Falls
McCammon
Soda Springs
Twin Falls
Burley
Geneva
Oakley
Rogerson
City of Rocks National Reserve
Almo
Preston

ORIENTATION

Boise, the capital city, is located in southwestern Idaho. Between Boise and the Oregon border lies the **Snake River Valley** wine country. The **Snake River** stretches across the wide southern part of the state. The largest potato farms are located in southeastern Idaho. **Sun Valley** and the **Sawtooths,** Idaho's central Rockies, sit in the middle of the state, east of Boise. The narrow **Panhandle** at the tip-top of Idaho is home to the state's largest lakes, including **Coeur d'Alene Lake.**

WHEN TO GO

Summer is peak season in most of the state, including Coeur d'Alene, the Sawtooths, and Island Park in southeast Idaho. **Wintertime** brings tons of snow to the mountains, making Idaho's mountain towns, like Sun Valley, McCall, and Kellogg, popular destinations for skiers and snowboarders. **Spring** and **fall** are also good times to visit the mountain resort towns for biking, fishing, and hiking.

TOP 3

1 FEELING OUT OF THIS WORLD AT CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT

1266 Craters Loop Rd., Arco; 208/527-1300; www.nps.gov/crmo

Craters of the Moon National Monument is an eerie, otherworldly landscape that has been pocked, cracked, contorted, and charred by lava flows and eruptions occurring at various times over thousands of years. Lava fields cover much of southeastern Idaho, but what makes this area unique is the concentration of different volcanic features. Craters of the Moon lies along the Great Rift, a 50-mi-long (80-km) perforation in the earth's crust along which eruptions have occurred as recently as about 110 BCE. Scientists say the area is due for another eruption any day now, sometime in the next 1,000 years.



CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT

Hop in the car to drive the 7-mi (11.5-km) **Loop Road** that travels south into the heart of the monument. Among the highlights: the **Devil's Orchard,** where a short, wheelchair-accessible interpretive trail loops through some bizarre formations; **Inferno Cone Viewpoint,** where you can hike up to the top of Inferno Cone for sweeping views across the lava flows and the Snake River Plain; the **Tree Molds** area, where a short hike leads to some prime examples of that phenomenon; and the **Cave Area,** where a trail leads to numerous lava tube "caves," most of which require a flashlight to explore. There's also a **visitor center** (208/527-1335), where exhibits and videos explain the geology, flora and fauna, and history of the area.

2 TAKING A SUMMER GETAWAY TO COEUR D'ALENE

Coeur d'Alene—French for "heart like an awl" and pronounced "COR duh-LANE"—ranks as one of Idaho's top summer resort towns. The city, which is centered near the scenic beach areas of the eponymous lake, teems with recreational activity during the warmer months, when droves of people show up for boating, swimming, and

a healthy dose of beachside relaxation at **City Beach.** One of the city's highlights, the beautiful **Tubbs Hill,** a 165-ac (67-ha) wooded preserve, juts out into the lake right next to **The Coeur d'Alene Resort** (115 S. 2nd St., Coeur d'Alene; 855/280-4398; www.cdaresort.com), arguably the grandest hotel in Idaho. Trails loop around the peninsula through groves of Douglas fir and century-old ponderosa pine. Some paths climb up the hill for panoramic views, while others drop down to hidden coves and beaches. At night, **Sherman Avenue** in town comes alive with a profusion of restaurants, bars, and ice-cream shops.



COEUR D'ALENE LAKE

To see more of the lake, take I-90 and go south on ID-97, which is the state's designated **Lake Coeur d'Alene Scenic Byway.** Keep your eyes peeled for ospreys; this area has the largest concentration

of them in the western United States. The route passes **Arrow Point,** a finger of land jutting into the lake; crosses the Coeur d'Alene River; and heads into the town of **Harrison,** a recreation hub on the southeast shore. At the junction with ID-3 south of Harrison, turn north (left) to drive up the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River past 10 lakes, until you get back to I-90.

3 GOING ON AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE IN THE SAWTOOTHS

Driving on ID-75 around the center of the state, you don't need a sign to tell you when you've entered the 756,000-ac (305,942-ha) Sawtooth National Recreation Area. The houses suddenly disappear, and the grandeur of the mountains and the tranquility of the wooded river valley return.

The national recreation area encompasses parts of four different mountain ranges. From the headquarters in the Wood River Valley, the Smoky Mountains are visible to the west, and the Boulder Mountains to the east. Across Galena Summit to the north, the famous Sawtooth Mountains dominate the western skyline with a string of jagged summits, while the eastern horizon is shaped by the inscrutable White Cloud Peaks. More than 40 summits stand over 10,000 ft (3,048 m).

Among these mountains are 300-plus alpine lakes, all suitable for **fishing,** some even big enough for **boating** and **sailing.** Gorgeous **Redfish Lake** is the largest and most popular, attracting crowds of swimmers and sunbathers in summer, and also home to several hiking trails. And four major Idaho rivers, namely the Salmon, South Fork Payette, Boise, and Big Wood, start within the boundaries.

Although the entire national recreation area is spectacular and wild, the centerpiece is the 217,000-ac (87,816-ha) **Sawtooth Wilderness,** an alpine realm closed to motor vehicles and even mountain bikes. **Hikers** and **horse-packers** here can enjoy some of the country's most magnificent scenery. Unlike most mountain ranges, the Sawtooths rise suddenly. They're not particularly tall, as far as peaks go (the tallest is just under 11,000 ft/3,353 m), but their steep relief and abundant granite walls and spires are a mountaineer's

paradise. **Birders** can watch for many of the 214 bird species found here either year-round or part-time.



PACKING HORSE IN THE SAWTOOTH WILDERNESS

HIGHLIGHTS

THE BASQUE BLOCK

600 block of Grove St., Boise

Basques began settling here in significant numbers in the late 1890s, and today, Boise's Basque culture is a colorful part of the city's identity. One highlight of this enclave is the **Basque Center** (601 W. Grove St., Boise; 208/342-9983; www.basquecenter.com), which serves as a center for Basque culture and a social center for older Basques who play cards and converse in their native tongue. It has a bar that is open to the public—a great spot to soak in the culture while enjoying a glass of rioja.



BASQUE CENTER

The **Basque Museum and Cultural Center** (611 Grove St., Boise; 208/343-2671; www.basquemuseum.eus) is two doors down, home to exhibits on musical instruments, crafts, and other items unique to the Basques. On the end of the block is **Bar Gernika** (202 S. Capitol Blvd., Boise; 208/344-2175; www.bargernika.com), one of Boise's classic pubs. It's a great place to get a taste of Basque cuisine and culture intertwined with a hip modern scene.

OLD IDAHO PENITENTIARY

2445 Old Penitentiary Rd., Boise; 208/334-2844

The Old Idaho Penitentiary is one of only four US territorial prisons still open to the public. It was built in 1870 and remained in use for more than a century. Among its famous tenants: Harry Orchard, convicted for the 1905 assassination of Governor Frank Steunenberg; and Lyda "Lady Bluebeard" Southard, convicted of killing her fourth husband for insurance money and suspected of doing away with the first three as well.

The Old Pen looks like something from another time—part Wild West military fortification, part medieval castle. You can tour this state historic site, which boasts a beautiful rose garden that juxtaposes the original prison gallows, where numerous unfortunate convicts were dispatched to their final resting places.

SUN VALLEY RESORT

1 Sun Valley Rd., Sun Valley; 208/622-4111 or 800/786-8259; www.sunvalley.com

The landmark accommodation of the Wood River Valley, Sun Valley Resort opened in 1936. Old-world elegance is the lodge's hallmark, and a patina of history graces these venerable halls. The ghost of Ernest Hemingway still haunts room 206, where the author holed up while working on *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*

Known as the country's first bona fide **ski resort,** this charming mountain getaway east of Boise has been a popular destination for powder fanatics since it opened. The resort is spread over two mountains, Bald and Dollar Mountains, and is home to 18 lifts and more than 120 runs for all abilities.

Amenities at the lodge include a year-round glass-enclosed heated pool, an indoor and an outdoor ice-skating rink, and four restaurants. The bowling alley, golf course, stables, tennis courts, and a trapshooting range are open to resort guests and nonguests alike.

SHOSHONE FALLS

East of the town of Twin Falls, Shoshone Falls has been called the "Niagara of the West." At nearly 1,000 ft (304 m) wide and 212 ft (64 m) high, the horseshoe-shaped waterfall is 22 ft (6.7 m) higher than Niagara. The falls

are often a mere trickle, since much of the water is diverted to the region's irrigation system; spring is usually the best time to see a torrent of water going over the big boulders. Fortunately, there's more to do if the falls aren't falling. Trails provide some nice hiking opportunities, and **Dierkes Lake** is a favorite haunt for fishing, swimming, paddling, and rock climbing.

WALLACE

Of all the towns in the Panhandle's Silver Valley, Wallace feels most like the quintessential mining town. In the small downtown, you'll find a multitude of well-preserved 19th-century buildings. As a matter of fact, the entire town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This colorful downtown corridor is packed with antique shops, old saloons, restaurants, and weird museums, making it a great place to get lost in time. Wallace is home to several museums that commemorate its history and industries, and you can take the **Sierra Silver Mine Tour** (509 Cedar St., Wallace; 208/752-5151; www.silverminetour.org) to explore a once-operating silver mine.

Major CITIES

BOISE: The fourth-largest city in the Northwest, behind Seattle, Portland, and Vancouver, is a hot spot in the region for entertainment, shopping, and dining, with kayaking, mountain biking, skiing, and hiking nearby in the Boise Foothills and Owyhee Canyonlands. The City of Trees is also home to the largest Basque population in the United States.

NAMPA: The suburb of Nampa has come a long way since its humble days as an Oregon Short Line rail stop—though it's still a busy railroad hub. Today, its downtown boasts a thriving historic neighborhood where you can nosh on inventive cuisine and shop for used books and antiques in the century-old Belle District.

IDAHO FALLS: Since Idaho Falls owes a great deal of its economy to the Idaho National Laboratory, the US Department of Energy's top

nuclear research facility, the eastern Idaho city is home to an interesting mix of farmers and nuclear scientists. It serves as a gateway to the state's wild backcountry, and you can't miss the town's large Mormon Temple.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Upon arrival in **Boise,** stretch your legs with a stroll or a bike ride along the **Boise River** before heading to the **Idaho State Capitol** (700 W. Jefferson St.) and **Basque Block** for a few local history lessons. After checking out the city, enjoy some wine and Basque pub fare before having a cocktail and calling it a night.

DAY 2 After breakfast in Boise, get in the car and drive 30 mi (48 km) west to the **Sunnyslope** area of Caldwell. This is the beating heart of Idaho's wine country, the **Snake River Valley,** where you will find about a dozen wineries with tasting rooms. Head back to Boise for dinner and to spend the night.

DAY 3 From Boise, head north along ID-55 for 2.5 hours until you reach **Ponderosa State Park.** Check into your reserved cabin and spend the rest of the day **hiking** and **biking** around the wooded park that juts out on a 1,000-ac (404-ha) peninsula into Payette Lake.

DAY 4 Get up early and drive one hour (48 mi/77 km) to **Riggins** for a day of **rafting** on the **Salmon River,** world-famous for its wild rapids. Expect to get a little wet along the way, but the river professionals who work this stretch of the river are good at keeping the rafts upright. Or you could book a trip on a **wooden dory** with **Wapiti River Guides.** After shooting the tube all day, head to a restaurant in Riggins for dinner (an elk burger, perhaps?) and a few microbrews.

DAY 5 After breakfast, travel north on US 95, until you come to the Clearwater River near Lewiston, about two hours and 110 mi (177 km) from Riggins. Here you'll find the interpretive center for the **Nez Perce National Historic Park**, an excellent spot for a picnic and to soak in some of Idaho's Native American history. Next, continue heading north on US 95 for two hours (113 mi/182 km) until you reach the shores of **Coeur d'Alene Lake,** where you'll be spending the night.

DAY 6 Spend the day in **Coeur d'Alene** frolicking in the lake and relaxing on a lawn chair at **City Beach.** Nearby, Sherman Avenue has a multitude of cool shops and art galleries to peruse, with a few strategically placed ice cream shops along the way. Watch the fiery sunset on **Tubbs Hill,** a nature preserve with scenic hiking trails next to Coeur d'Alene Resort. Your drive back to **Boise** the next day will take seven hours (380 mi/611 km).

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

SNAKE RIVER CANYON SCENIC BYWAY

The Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway winds its way through 70 mi (113 km) of bountiful agricultural land, ranging from near the Oregon border to Walter's Ferry in the Owyhee hinterlands. **Parma** is the western starting point for the byway. From this spot, the route meanders southeast along the Snake River on a series of well-marked rural roads, passing by family-run farms, fruit orchards, and vineyards. You'll go through the winery district of **Sunnyslope** before ascending onto a sagebrush-dotted bench that skirts the river canyon, where **Map Rock** near Walter's Ferry shows ancient petroglyphs. Up here, dormant cinder cones punctuate the landscape, and the deep-canyon rim—long ago carved out by the Bonneville Flood—offers dramatic views of the **Owyhee Mountains.** Besides cattle, bison, and

sheep, also expect to see abundant wildlife, like deer, coyotes, badgers, and red-tailed hawks, along this spectacular drive.

PONDEROSA PINE SCENIC BYWAY

ID-21

Spectacular mountain vistas and vast meadows awash in wildflowers combine to make this stretch of pavement, along ID-21 east of Boise to **Sawtooth** and **Stanley Lakes,** one of the most beautiful drives in Idaho. Several angler access roads branch off the highway and lead down to meandering Valley Creek, while other spur roads lead south off the highway to campgrounds at the foot of the Sawtooths.



PONDEROSA PINE SCENIC BYWAY

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BRUNEAU DUNES STATE PARK

27608 Sand Dunes Rd., Mountain Home; 208/366-7919; www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov [URL inactive]

One of the state's larger parks, Bruneau Dunes State Park encompasses some 4,800 ac (1,942 ha) of southwestern Idaho desert. Two enormous interconnecting sand dunes—the tallest nearly 500 ft (152 m) high—rise from the center of the park. Unlike most sand dunes, these don't shift much, thanks to prevailing winds that blow in opposite directions for roughly equal amounts of time. The pristine dunes are closed to motor vehicles, but you can hike right up to the top, where you'll find an interesting crater that the two dunes seem to spiral out of, along with great views across the Snake River Plain. Various hiking trails lead around the base of the dunes, past a couple of lakes that attract both wildlife and anglers. The park features two observatories, including one where the dome is used as a planetarium.

CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE

Almo; 208/824-5901; www.nps.gov/ciro

Castles of eroded granite, some over 600 ft (182 m) tall, create a mythic fairy-tale landscape at the out-of-the-way City of Rocks National Reserve, located in south-central Idaho near the Utah border. They also make this natural landmark one of the country's top **rock-climbing** destinations. Rock jocks have put up about 700 routes that range in difficulty. Among the most impressive rock formations at City of Rocks is **Twin Sisters,** on the west side of the preserve. The elder sister is composed of 2.5-billion-year-old granite, while the younger one was formed just 28 million years ago.



CITY OF ROCKS

The 14,500-ac (5,867-ha) preserve also lies at a major intersection of pioneer trails. Today the signatures of these California-bound settlers and miners can still be seen on the rocks, between the preserve and Almo. Another bit of history here concerns a famous heist. In 1878, bandits held up the Overland Stage near Almo. Supposedly they buried their loot somewhere out in the City of Rocks, but the granite towers remain silent as to its whereabouts.

PONDEROSA STATE PARK

1220 N. Davis St., McCall; 208/634-2164;
www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov [URL inactive]

Considered by many to be the crown jewel of Idaho's state park system, Ponderosa State Park occupies a 1,000-ac (404-ha) peninsula jutting into **Payette Lake,** 2 mi (3.2 km) northeast of downtown McCall. The peninsula was never logged in the early days, so the old-growth ponderosa pines (some up to 400 years old and 150 ft/45 m tall) are big and abundant.

Lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and grand fir tower over the park, and wildflowers brighten the meadows and forest floor. Besides conifer forest, marshes and arid sagebrush flats provide a habitat for a wide variety of species, including woodpeckers, muskrats, ducks, foxes, ospreys, and, in summer, big hungry mosquitoes. Summer visitors can **hike** or **bike** through the park, or head for the park's beaches to play in the waters of Payette Lake. In winter, the park becomes especially quiet and serene under a blanket of snow. Cross-country ski trails lead to views overlooking frosty Payette Lake and the mountains beyond.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

The Nez Perce homeland spans from eastern Oregon all the way across Idaho into Montana. The Nez Perce National Historic Park is a concept park made up of 38 separate historic sites in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Montana. Taken together, the sites tell the story of 11,000 years of Nez Perce culture, from their pre-Lewis and Clark days to the present. To visit them all entails a 400-mi (643-km) drive. Of the 38 sites, 29 are located in Idaho; here are a few to visit.

- **Visitor center** (39063 US 95, Lapwai; 208/843-7001; www.nps.gov/nepe): The park's visitor center near Lewiston, Idaho, is the nerve center of the collection of sites and contains exhibits on Nez Perce history.
- **Weis Rockshelter:** Located off US 95, about 8 mi (13 km) south of Cottonwood, this habitation site was used by Indigenous people for more than 8,000 years.
- **East Kamiah-Heart of the Monster** (US 12, mile marker 68): According to their legend, the Nez Perce people originated at the site. Before human beings inhabited the earth, a monster was devouring all the creatures in his path. The hero Iceye'ye (Coyote) kills the monster and cuts it into little pieces. Each piece became a different Native American tribe. Coyote then wrung the blood from the monster's heart, and the Nez Perce people sprang from the drops. What was left of the monster's heart is said to be a rock formation here.
- **Looking Glass's 1877 Campsite** (US 12, mile point 75.9): Looking Glass was a Nez Perce war chief who tried to remain neutral in the conflict between the US Army and the nontreaty Nez

Perce but was drawn in when the Army destroyed his village. This site is the location of a battle during the Nez Perce Flight of 1877.

HELLS CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

This 652,488-ac (264,052-ha) preserve straddles the Snake River in Idaho and Oregon. For some 71 wild and scenic miles (114 km), the Snake carves its way northward through Hells Canyon, the deepest river gorge in North America. A few roads lead down to it in places, but none dare run through it.

Below Hells Canyon Dam, the Snake River's raging rapids and placid pools make for a recreational haven for **rafters** and **jet boaters. Hikers** can follow trails along the water's edge, beneath towering walls of crumbling black basalt, or climb out of the canyon to explore the high country along its rim (most notably the **Seven Devils Mountains**). This range of high peaks has some of the state's most magnificent alpine scenery and offers great views of the canyon floor more than a vertical mile (1.6 km) below.

RIGGINS

Riggins is considered by many to be the best place for white water in Idaho. The **Salmon River** flows right through town on the last legs of its run down from Redfish Lake. The Little Salmon River joins it here, and the Salmon flows another 87 mi (140 km) through Lower Salmon Gorge to the Snake River. Several guide services offer float trips on either or both the main Salmon run above town and the Salmon River Gorge stretch downstream. Among the many are **Exodus Salmon River Rafting** (208/301-1999; www.exodusrafting.com) and **Wapiti River Guides** (208/628-3523; www.wapitiriverguides.com), which uses wooden dories on its trips.



RAFTING THE MIDDLE FORK OF THE SALMON RIVER

FRANK CHURCH-RIVER OF NO RETURN WILDERNESS

The various forks of the wild and scenic **Salmon River** vein the craggy, batholithic core of the state, which comprises a majority of central Idaho. The Salmon River is known for its world-class **white-water rafting.** Thrill seekers show up every summer for the never-ending churning rapids, which slice through some of the most beautiful high country in the United States. Find an outfitter around the town of **Salmon** through the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (www.ioga.org).

The **Middle Fork of the Salmon** is one of the world's greatest and most popular white-water trips, drawing rafters and kayakers from around the globe. From the put-in at Boundary Creek, northwest of Stanley, the river flows more than 100 wet and wild miles (160 km) through a wilderness little tarnished by human activity. Bighorn sheep, black bears, mountain goats, salmon and steelhead, bald eagles, and even wolves inhabit the area.

PRIEST LAKE

www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov [URL inactive]

Lakes don't get much more scenic than they do in Idaho's Panhandle, especially remote Priest Lake near the Canadian border. Snow-tipped peaks loom over this cedar-ringed lake (pocked out by widespread glaciers that once covered this part of North America) as it shines like a jewel down below. Two units of **Priest Lake State Park** are situated right on the shores, and there's a string of small islands with remote campgrounds. The lake is a favorite of **anglers,** who fish for lunker mackinaw in forest-shaded coves along the lake's edge. **Trails** through cool, dense forest lead between the lower and upper lakes to campgrounds reached only by boat or on foot. You won't be able to get the beauty of this place out of your head.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

IDAHO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

5657 Warm Springs Ave., Boise; 208/336-9221; https://idahoshakespeare.org; late May-Sept.

Boise's bard-based Idaho Shakespeare Festival troupe ranks among the city's shiniest cultural gems. Shakespeare's works and other dramatic delights come alive in an **outdoor amphitheater** along the river east of downtown. The festival grounds are a wonderful place to picnic before the show.

NATIONAL OLDTIME FIDDLERS' CONTEST AND FESTIVAL

2235 Paddock Ave., Weiser; 208/414-0255; www.fiddlecontest.org; June

Each year during the third full week of June, thousands of fiddle fans converge on this otherwise sleepy town in southwest Idaho for one of the most prestigious fiddle contests in the United States. The competition itself

is staged in the air-conditioned gymnasium at **Weiser High School** (W. 7th St. and Indianhead Rd., Weiser), but some of the best music at this event happens in the sprawling, makeshift campground behind the high school, aptly called Fiddle Town, where you will hear impromptu jamming day and night. Free live musical performances get scheduled throughout the week at the **City Park Bluegrass Village Stage** in downtown Weiser. More food vendors and hawkers of arts and crafts relating to bluegrass and old-timey fiddle music can be found at this venue.



NATIONAL OLDTIME FIDDLERS' CONTEST AND FESTIVAL

SHOSHONE-BANNOCK INDIAN FESTIVAL AND RODEO

Fort Hall Indian Reservation; www.sbtribes.com/festival; Aug.

The spectacular Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival and Rodeo draws Native Americans from all over the United States and Canada. Traditional Indian dancing takes center stage, and multitudes of dancers and drummers come attired in intricate dress and face paint. In addition, the event features

a rodeo, an arts and crafts show, and a softball tourney. It all takes place the second week of August at the Fort Hall rodeo grounds.

SNAKE RIVER STAMPEDE

Nampa; 208/466-8497; www.snakeriverstampede.com; July

This professional rodeo bucks into the Ford Idaho Center every year around the third week of July. The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association-sanctioned stampede is one of the country's top 25 rodeos, attracting some 500 world-champion pros competing in bareback and saddle bronc riding, bull riding, steer wrestling, individual and team roping, and barrel racing. The week kicks off with one of the West's largest horse parades and a buckaroo breakfast.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

Idaho is a meat-and-potatoes state. Cowboy cooking is dear to the heart of many Idahoans; Dutch-oven cookouts and grilled steaks are the prime offerings of many tourist resorts and excursion providers. Chefs in mountain resort towns make good use of hand-foraged foodstuffs such as morel mushrooms and huckleberries as well as farm-raised elk and trout.

SNAKE RIVER VALLEY WINES

The Snake River Valley west of Boise is an official American Viticultural Area, and the state now has more than 70 wineries.

In sheer size, the Snake River Valley AVA is one of the largest in the nation, an astonishing 5.27 million ac (2.1 million ha), about the size of New Jersey. The **Sunnyslope** area, south of downtown Caldwell, is the epicenter of the wine country. The Snake River Valley's high-desert terrain, with its long, hot days and cool nights, makes for exceptional fruit, resulting in fruit-forward wines with pronounced tannins and well-balanced acidity. Hearty Rhône varietals such as **syrah** and **viognier** thrive, but this area has a long-standing tradition of growing Bordeaux-style varietals like **cabernet**

sauvignon, merlot, and **cabernet franc. Riesling** and **chardonnay** grapes have also been grown in the Snake River Valley for more than 30 years.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Everyone knows Idaho is famous for its **potatoes.** You'll find potato fudge, potato hand lotion, and other potato products at gift shops around the state.

Native American crafts (primarily beadwork and leatherwork) are also widely available across the state. Visitors to the big **Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival and Rodeo,** at Fort Hall the second week in August, will be faced with an enormous array of craftworks.

The town of Preston, in the southeast corner of the state, is famous for being the filming location of independent hit film ***Napoleon Dynamite.*** Fans of the movie should head to **Olive + Jo** gift shop (34 S. State St., Preston; 818/635-6880), which sells *Napoleon Dynamite* paraphernalia.

IDAHO POTATO VODKA

The Gem State's prized potato crop gets turned into a multitude of products, like potato chips, french fries, instant mashed potatoes, potato soup, and even potato-based skin lotion. But did you know that potato vodka is also produced in Idaho? **Grand Teton Distillery** (1755 ID-33, Driggs; 208/354-7263; www.tetondistillery.com) uses local potatoes to produce **Grand Teton Vodka.** Over on the west side of the Snake River Plain, in the heart of Idaho's wine country at Sunnyslope, **Koenig Distillery** (20928 Grape Ln., Caldwell; 208/459-8971) makes exceptionally smooth potato vodka in ornate copper-pot stills. These vodkas can be purchased at Idaho state liquor stores and at liquor stores throughout the country.

MOREL MUSHROOMS

Soon after the snow melts away in Idaho's mountains, morels pop up on the forest floor. These coveted edible mushrooms are a tasty harbinger that summer is on its way. They have a deliciously nutty, creamy taste with a meaty texture. Morels grow in great numbers in the **McCall** area, about two hours north of Boise. It's permissible to forage for morels on Forest Service land, unless you're doing it for commercial purposes.

Most locals aren't willing to give up their prized morel spots, but they will generally offer you some advice at the pub, especially if you buy them a pint. If you don't feel like combing the forest on your hands and knees, just head to **Rupert's** (Hotel McCall, 1101 N. 3rd St., McCall; 208/634-8108; www.rupertsathotelmccall.com) or **The Narrows Steakhouse** (Shore Lodge, 501 W. Lake St., McCall; 208/630-0203), two restaurants in McCall that use morels in creative ways in the spring and summer months.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Boise Airport:** BOI; 3201 Airport Way, Boise; 208/383-3110; www.iflyboise.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Idaho State Travel Planner:** www.visitidaho.org
- **Idaho State Parks and Recreation:** www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Idaho Statesman:*** www.idahostatesman.com

MONTANA

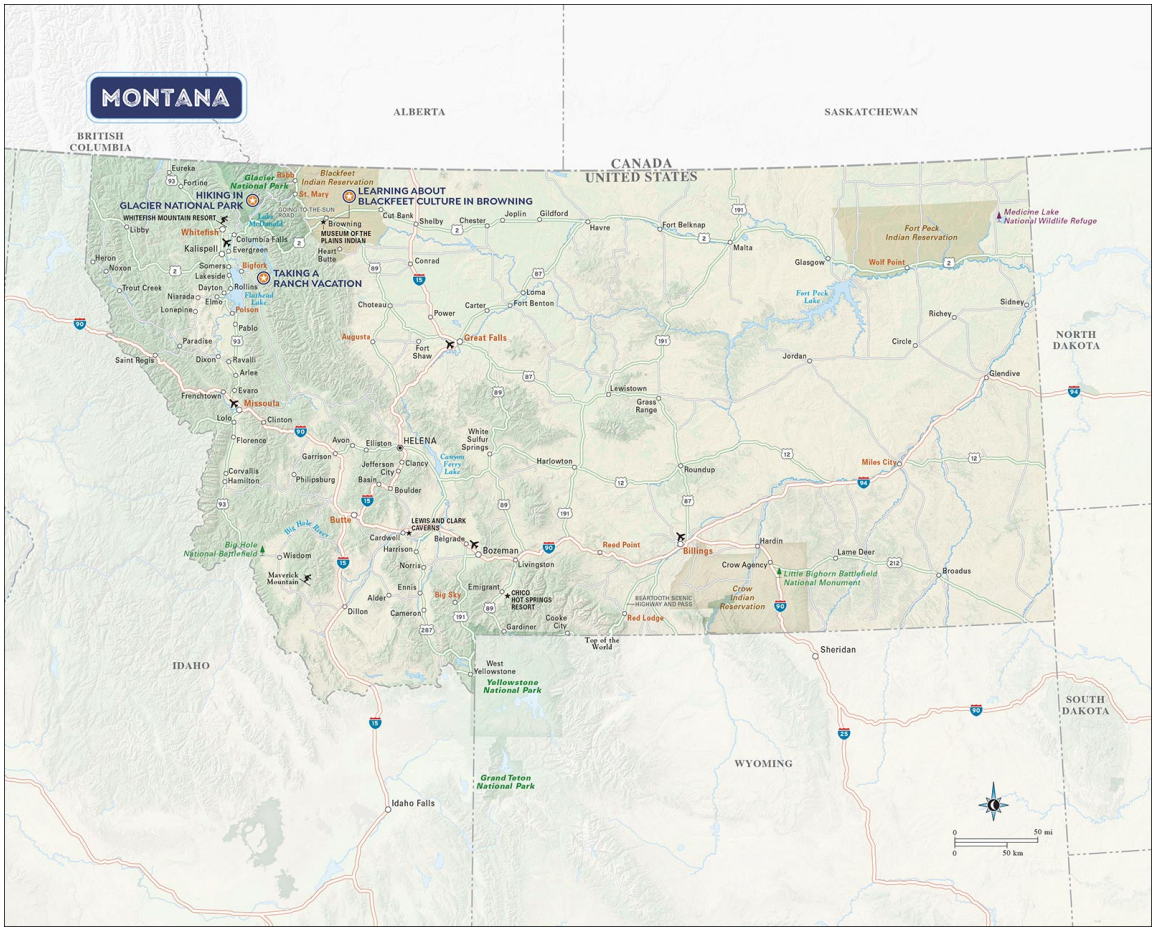
Montana is as vast as the big sky that blankets it, rich with natural resources —fertile soil, rivers, gold, forests, wind—and overflowing with beauty. The state is on Blackfeet, Crow, Confederated Salish, Kootenai, Assiniboine (or Nakoda), Gros Ventre, Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, Chippewa, and Cree land. The dramatic landscape has been carved over eons by water, wind, fire, and ice. Blue-ribbon trout streams, tumbling and falling, etch themselves ever deeper into green valleys. From Glacier National Park to the Little Bighorn, its sites are enchanting . . . and sometimes haunting. The populations are perpetually shifting too, bringing new ideas, new conflicts, and an evolving culture. Montana today is defined by the continuing growth in the western United States, but it's those little dots on the map that remind us of its almost magical timelessness. Ultimately, it's the forces of nature that make this state so captivating.

AREA: 147,040 sq mi / 380,831 sq km (4th)

POPULATION: 1,137,233 (43rd)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 8, 1889 (41st)

STATE CAPITAL: Helena


MONTANA
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
HIKING IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
LEARNING ABOUT BLACKFEET CULTURE IN BROWNING
TAKING A RANCH VACATION
Glacier National Park
Blackfeet Indian Reservation
WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT
GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD
MUSEUM OF THE PLAINS INDIAN
Fort Peck Indian Reservation
Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Wolf Point
Fort Peck Lake
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
WYOMING
IDAHO
Eureka
Fortine
Libby
Whitefish
Kalispell
Columbia Falls
Evergreen
Bigfork
Lakeside
Somers
Heron
Noxon
Trout Creek
Dayton
Rollins
Polson
Flathead Lake
Nisrada
Elmo
Lonepine
Pablo
Paradise
Saint Regis
Dixon
Ravalli
Arlee
Evaro
Frenchtown
Missoula
Lolo
Clinton
Florence
Corvallis
Hamilton
Garrison
Avon
Elliston
HELENA
White Sulfur Springs
Canyon Ferry Lake
Jefferson City
Clancy
Basin
Boulder
Philipsburg
Butte
Big Hole National Battlefield
Big Hole River
Wisdom
Maverick Mountain
Cardwell
Belgrade
LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS
Harrison
Norris
Bozeman
Livingston
Ennis
Alder
Big Sky
Emigrant
CHICO HOT SPRINGS RESORT
Dillon
Cameron
Gardiner
Cooke City
BEARTOOTH SCENIC HIGHWAY AND PASS
Red Lodge
Top of the World
West Yellowstone
Yellowstone National Park
Grand Teton National Park
Idaho Falls
Shelby
Chester
Joplin
Gildford
Havre
Fort Belknap
Malta
Glasgow
Cut Bank
Browning
Heart Butte
Conrad
Choteau
Power
Carter
Fort Benton
Loma
Augusta
Great Falls
Fort Shaw
Harlowton
Lewistown
Grass Range
Roundup
Reed Point
Billings
Hardin
Crow Agency
Crow Indian Reservation
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument
Lame Deer
Broadus
Miles City
Jordan
Circle
Richey
Sidney
Glendive
Sheridan
0 50 mi
0 50 km

ORIENTATION

Glacier National Park is tucked into northwestern Montana, right at the border with Canada. It's surrounded by the **Flathead Valley** to the west and vast plains and soaring peaks of the **Rocky Mountain Front** to the east. Farther east is **Billings,** Montana's largest city, and four of the state's seven Native American reservations. **Missoula, Helena,** and **Butte** form a sort of triangle in the central-southwestern part of the state, while **Bozeman** leads into the towns that serve as gateways to **Yellowstone**—three of Yellowstone's entrances are located in Montana, but the bulk of the park is just over the state border in Wyoming.

WHEN TO GO

Summer is a great time to visit Montana, when the front- and backcountry roads are at their busiest and easiest to drive. Be sure to make advance reservations, particularly for hotels and campgrounds, during this season. Winter brings lower rates for accommodations and more available rooms, except around ski areas, but **winter road travel** can be challenging because of the inevitable storms and possible closures. The **spring** and **fall** shoulder seasons can be a delightful time to travel. **Glacier National Park** is heavenly and much less crowded in autumn, but keep in mind that winter comes very early at high elevations.

TOP 3

1 HIKING IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

64 Grinnell Dr., West Glacier; 406/888-7800; www.nps.gov/glac

Known as the "Crown of the Continent," Glacier National Park is an amalgam of stunning landscapes that, for many visitors, defines the entire state. There are still 25 "active" glaciers (of at least 25 ac/10.1 ha in area each) to be found within the park, along with countless waterfalls and hundreds of crystalline lakes.

The park is a hiker's paradise, with more than 734 mi (1,181 km) of trails throughout the park. Certainly among the best-loved trails is the breathtakingly scenic **Highline Trail.** Leaving from Logan Pass at the summit of Going-to-the-Sun Road, the high-altitude trail to Granite Park Chalet is 14.9 mi (24 km) round-trip, out and back. Another popular and scenic hike from Logan Pass is along **Hidden Lake Overlook Trail.** It's a 2.7-mi (4.3-km) round-trip hike that offers views of the striking Clements Mountain, the Garden Wall, and Mount Oberlin, and on clear days, Sperry Glacier in the distance. To hike to an actual glacier, opt for the trail to **Grinnell Glacier** (5.5 mi/8.9 km one-way with a 1,600-ft/488-m elevation gain). It starts at **Many Glacier Hotel** (855/753-4522; www.glaciernationalparklodges.com) and climbs above impossibly blue alpine lakes and within sight of the aptly named Salamander Glacier.



HIDDEN LAKE OVERLOOK TRAIL

Hiking isn't the only way to enjoy Glacier National Park's stunning scenery. The park also offers excellent **bicycling, boating, fishing, cross-country skiing,** and more.

2 LEARNING ABOUT BLACKFEET CULTURE IN BROWNING

www.blackfeetnation.com

Browning serves as the agency headquarters for the **Blackfeet Indian Reservation,** home to Montana's largest tribe. The setting is spectacular, at the eastern edge of Glacier National Park, and the town offers an exceptional opportunity to learn about and experience Blackfeet culture. There are a number of annual events open to visitors, the biggest being the **North American Indian Days** (406/338-7521), a powwow held every July.

To learn more about the reservation and its history, don't miss the **Blackfeet Cultural History Tours** (www.blackfeetculturecamp.com), led by Blackfeet tribe member, historian, and well-known artist Darrell Norman. The same organization runs the **Lodge Pole Gallery and Tipi Village** (US 89, 2 mi/3.2 km west of Browning; www.blackfeetculturecamp.com), where guests can camp in traditional Blackfeet tepees. Another highlight is the **Museum of the Plains Indian** (19 Museum Loop, Browning; 406/338-2230; www.doi.gov), which exhibits the arts and crafts of the Northern Plains Indians.



LODGE POLE GALLERY AND TIPI VILLAGE

3 TAKING A RANCH VACATION

Southwest Montana is a natural destination for ranch vacations, with an age-old ranching history, wide-open spaces, and spectacular mountain scenery. The challenge is choosing among the dozens of welcoming ranches in the region.



HORSES AT A MONTANA RANCH

Options range from **working ranches,** where you'll immerse yourself in ranch life and cowboy style, helping with daily chores like rounding up cattle; **dude ranches,** where you can more casually play rancher for a week; and **ranch resorts,** where you'll find some serious luxury with a little bit of Western flavor tossed in for good measure. Some ranches offer other activities, too, such as sightseeing day trips. Accommodations can range from lodge rooms to individual cabins, and amenities vary dramatically, from no cell service or TV to full-on luxury accommodations.

To pick your perfect ranch vacation, check out the **Montana Dude Ranchers' Association** (888/284-4133; www.montanadra.com). Here are a couple of standouts:

- **Averill's Flathead Lake Lodge** (150 Flathead Lodge Rd., Bigfork; 406/837-4391; www.flatheadlakelodge.com) is a historic family ranch set right on the water. From sailing to horseback riding, fly-fishing to mountain biking, this ranch is exceptional.
- Set on 10,000 ac (4,047 ha) of mountains and forests, **Mountain Sky Guest Ranch** (480 Big Creek Rd., Emigrant; 406/333-4911;

www.mountainsky.com) offers impeccable service, gourmet dining, charming log cabins, and fantastic activity possibilities, including endless alpine trails for horseback riding and hiking, swimming, and even a spa.

HIGHLIGHTS

CAROUSEL FOR MISSOULA

101 Carousel Dr., Missoula; 406/549-8382; www.carouselformissoula.com

Aside from being a beautiful hand-carved carousel, one of the first built in the United States since the Great Depression, what makes the Carousel for Missoula so sweet is the way in which it came to be. Local cabinetmaker Chuck Kaparich vowed to the city of Missoula in 1991 that if they would "give it a home and promise no one will ever take it apart," he would build a carousel by hand. For four years, he carved ponies, taught others to carve, and worked to restore and piece together the more than 16,000 pieces of an antique carousel frame he had purchased. The town raised funds and collectively contributed more than 100,000 volunteer hours. In May 1995 the carousel opened with 38 ponies, 3 replacement ponies, 2 chariots, 14 gargoyles, and the largest band organ in continuous use in the United States.

BIG HOLE NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

16425 MT-43 W., 10 mi (16 km) west of Wisdom; 406/689-3155; www.nps.gov/biho

Among the most moving historic sites in the state, the Big Hole National Battlefield is an important stop for visitors interested in the state's Native American history and, more specifically, the flight of the Nez Perce. The site is haunted by the ghosts of the battle on August 9, 1877, between Chief Joseph's band of Nez Perce and the US Army. Often referred to as the "nontreaty Nez Perce," they were fleeing the Army and their own homeland in Wallowa Valley in Oregon, rather than be sent to a reservation, as ordered

by the US government. The battlefield is as serene and beautiful today as it is stirring. The National Park Service has done an extraordinary job of presenting information about the Nez Perce War and this battle in particular. Because so little has changed in this region—from the actual landscape to the overall view—visitors can easily imagine the events that gave this spot its bloody legacy.



BIG HOLE NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

MUSEUM OF THE ROCKIES

600 W. Kagy Blvd., Bozeman; 406/994-2251;
www.museumoftherockies.org

Best known for its paleontology exhibit curated by dinosaur guru John R. "Jack" Horner, Museum of the Rockies is a fantastic resource for the entire state. The museum tackles 500 million years of history—no small feat—with permanent exhibits that reflect Native American culture and 19th- to 20th-century regional history; there's also an outdoor living history farm (open only in summer), a planetarium, and, of course, the dinosaurs.

GRIZZLY AND WOLF DISCOVERY CENTER

201 S. Canyon St., West Yellowstone; 406/646-7001 or 800/257-2570; www.grizzlydiscoveryctr.org

If you have your heart set on seeing a grizzly or a wolf in Yellowstone National Park in adjacent Wyoming, get it out of the way before you even go into the park. The Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center is a nonprofit organization that acts something like an orphanage, giving homes to problem, injured, or abandoned animals that have nowhere else to go. Although there is something melancholy about watching these incredible beasts confined to any sort of enclosure, particularly on the perimeter of a chunk of wilderness as massive as Yellowstone, there is also something remarkable about seeing them close enough to count their whiskers. Watching a wolf pack interact from a comfy bench behind floor-to-ceiling windows in the warming hut is a worthwhile way to spend an afternoon. The naturalists on staff are excellent at engaging with visitors of all ages and have plenty to teach everyone.

Major CITIES

BILLINGS: The hub for much of eastern Montana, Billings is a center for industry, including oil refineries and stockyards, and attracts visitors from around the state for practical and entertainment purposes. The rimrocks around the city offer a great network of hiking and biking trails, and Billings's lively food and drink culture will sate any appetite.

MISSOULA: Given its location at the hub of five river valleys and about halfway between Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, Missoula has long been an important trade center and a natural stopping point for visitors to the region. Missoula is also home to the University of Montana, which keeps the city young, vibrant, and relatively liberal.

GREAT FALLS: With the falls long since dammed to create power —Great Falls is known as the "Electric City" for all its dams and

power plants—the city has worked to capitalize on the beauty of the Missouri River. But it's still a rough-and-tumble Montana town, with cowboy culture, military culture, and a little bit of an edge.

LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

4201 Giant Springs Rd., Great Falls; 406/453-6248; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

Beautifully built into a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center provides visitors with a hands-on interpretation of the explorers' cross-country journey. With a two-story diorama of the portage at the Missouri River's five great falls, impressive videos by Ken Burns and others, and ranger-led programs, the center does an excellent job of portraying the importance of Native Americans to the journey, along with a comprehensive natural history exhibit. There is also a nice outdoor component to the center with a network of self-guided trails, one of which leads you to the nearby **Giant Springs Heritage State Park.**

SOAKING IN HOT SPRINGS

Thanks to geothermal and hydrothermal activity, most of Montana's hot springs can be enjoyed year-round. Options range from middle-of-nowhere holes in the ground to well-known natural features and developed pools in resort-like settings. Here are a few to seek out:

- **Boulder Hot Springs** (31 Hot Springs Rd., Boulder; 406/225-4339; www.boulderhotsprings.com): Set in the middle of nowhere about halfway between Helena and Butte, Boulder Hot Springs has both indoor and outdoor pools of varying temperatures and mineral content. The on-site hotel offers simple rooms and great food.
- **Chico Hot Springs Resort** (163 Chico Rd., Pray; 406/333-4933; www.chicohotsprings.com): Just up the road from Yellowstone, Chico

Hot Springs Resort is a classic, known for its wonderful outdoor pools, cozy accommodations, fabulous dining room, and lively tavern.

- **Boiling River** (3 mi/4.8 km south of Yellowstone North Entrance): This river—which is not, in fact, boiling—is a small stretch of the Gardner River where thermally heated water from nearby Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone flows into the icy waters of the river. The snowcapped peaks and great plumes of steam coming off the water make winter an especially unforgettable time to visit.



BOILING RIVER

LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

65 mi (105 km) southeast of Billings, 16 mi (26 km) southeast of Hardin, 1 mi (1.6 km) east of I-90 on US 212; 406/924-9167; www.nps.gov/libi

This historic site is a moving tribute to one of the last armed battles in which Native Americans fought to preserve their land and way of life. It’s a

desolate, somber, and terribly meaningful place, commemorating a tragic battle with no true victors, only bloodshed marking the end of an era. The actual monument on **Last Stand Hill** is on a paved trail within walking distance of the visitor center. The granite memorial on Last Stand Hill was built in July 1881, and in 1890 marble markers replaced stakes that stood where each soldier had fallen. Starting in 1999, red granite markers were placed to honor the Native Americans who died in the battle, including Cheyenne warriors Lame White Man and Noisy Walking, and Lakota warriors Long Road and Dog's Back Bone. Another monument was dedicated in 2003 to honor the Native Americans who fought and died in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

MEDICINE LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

223 North Shore Rd., Medicine Lake; 406/789-2305; www.fws.gov

The Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge is a wetland oasis in a sea of prairie. Established in 1935, the area provides a much-used breeding and stopover habitat for an enormous range of migratory birds, including ducks, geese, swans, cranes, white pelicans, and grebes. It is a startlingly beautiful place on a breezy afternoon when the grasses sway in watery waves or on a stormy night when lightning flashes across the sky, illuminating clouds that are 15 shades of blue, pink, and purple—or any time, really; it's just that beautiful. And like so much of eastern Montana, it is not what you might expect to see in a state known for its mountains.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Arrive in **Missoula;** check out the shops on **Higgins Avenue** and the hip **Missoula Art Museum** (335 N. Pattee St.; 406/728-0447; www.missoulaartmuseum.org), and walk along the lovely riverfront trails. Next, head north toward glacier country and the east shore of **Flathead Lake** to the waterfront village of **Bigfork.** Stop along the way to gorge yourself on seasonal **Flathead cherries** or just to stretch your legs and dip your toes in the lake.

DAY 2 Try **kayaking** on the lake with the **Flathead Raft Company,** or rent your own craft at **Bigfork Outdoor Rentals.** Then head north to **Whitefish:** Consider a hike or bike ride at **Whitefish Mountain Resort,** perhaps hiking the **Danny On Trail,** just 3.8 mi (6.1 km) one-way to the summit, and then taking a **gondola** ride down. Settle in early for the night.

DAY 3 Get up early and have a hearty breakfast before heading into **Glacier National Park.** Stop at **Lake McDonald** to soak in the majestic beauty, and prepare yourself for the vistas still ahead on **Going-to-the-Sun Road.** Stop at Logan Pass for the views and a hike—the **Hidden Lake Overlook Trail** is a stunner. Continue east out of the park through **St. Mary** and **Babb,** before heading back into the phenomenal **Many Glacier** region of the park to camp or stay at the historic **Many Glacier Hotel** (855/733-4522; www.glaciernationalparklodges.com).

DAY 4 Spend the day adventuring around Many Glacier. The hike to **Grinnell Glacier** is a classic. Afterward, make the 1-hour drive to the **Lodgepole Gallery and Tipi Village,** where you'll spend the night in a traditional Blackfeet tipi.

DAY 5 Be sure to view the Native American art at Lodgepole Gallery, and take a half-day **Blackfeet Cultural History Tour.** Then, head south to **Boulder Hot Springs,** 3.5 hours away, for a relaxing night at a hot springs spa.

DAY 6 In the morning, drive out to **Lewis and Clark Caverns** for a tour of the limestone cave the explorers missed on their journey. Turn west toward **Butte** for lunch, where you can try one of their specialties, Cornish pasties. In the afternoon, drive out to **Big Hole National Battlefield,** the site of the ambush by the US Army on a

Nez Perce group resisting relocation to a reservation. From there, it's a two-hour drive back to **Missoula.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD

Glacier National Park; www.nps.gov/glac

Open seasonally (late Jun.-mid-Oct., depending on weather), the famed Going-to-the-Sun Road is a marvel of modern engineering. Spanning 50 mi (80 km) from West Glacier to St. Mary, the road snakes up and around mountains that include its namesake, **Going-to-the-Sun Mountain,** giving viewers some of the most dramatic vistas in the country. The road, which crosses the **Continental Divide,** climbs more than 3,000 ft (914 m) with only a single switchback, known as **The Loop.** Going-to-the-Sun is an architectural accomplishment as well: All of the bridges, retaining walls, and guardrails are built of native materials, so the road blends seamlessly into its majestic alpine setting. In addition to being an experience all on its own, Going-to-the-Sun is also the primary access road to Glacier National Park and the only way to get to some of the park's best-known highlights: the visitor center at **Logan Pass,** the **Highline Trail, Lake McDonald,** and an array of hiking trails. Check **road status** on the park website.



GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD

BEARTOOTH SCENIC HIGHWAY AND PASS

Considered one of the most beautiful roadways in the country, the Beartooth Scenic Highway begins in **Red Lodge,** climbs and twists its way west through 60-million-year-old mountains, and ends 65 mi (105 km) later in **Cooke City** at the Northeast Entrance to **Yellowstone National Park.** This drive lasts about three hours without stops. The scenic road has numerous switchbacks and steep grades that, once you're driving on it, clearly demonstrate why it is closed during winter. As you ascend, you come upon magnificent vistas of the Beartooth Plateau, Glacier Lake, and the canyons forged by the Clarks Fork River. After about 30 mi (48 km), you reach the mountain summit at 10,947 ft (3,337 m). Here you will encounter the aptly named **Top of the World** rest area, which provides the only services on the route. Keep an eye out for a herd of mountain goats that frequents the area.



VIEW FROM THE BEARTOOTH SCENIC HIGHWAY

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

FLATHEAD LAKE

The largest freshwater lake in the western United States, Flathead Lake has endless recreational opportunities, including hiking, boating, and unbeatable swimming. Go on a kayaking trip with the **Flathead Raft Company** (50362 US 93 N., Polson; 406/883-5838; www.flatheadraftco.com), or rent your own craft at **Bigfork Outdoor Rentals** (110 Swan River Rd., Bigfork; 406/837-2498; www.bigforkoutdoorrentals.com). The area around the lake has a vacation culture all its own, with luxe lodges and sprawling lakeside manses. The

busiest town is **Polson,** on the south side of the lake; arguably the most beautiful is **Bigfork** at the lake's northeast corner.

SKIING IN WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT

1015 Glades Dr., Whitefish; 406/862-2900; www.skiwhitefish.com

When it comes to skiing in Montana, it doesn't get much better than skiing at the Whitefish Mountain Resort, which offers 111 trails, 11 lifts, 2,353 ft (717 m) of vertical drop, and a 2.52-mi (4-km) run. When the snow conditions are just right, the trees all across the top of the mountain look like enormous snow monsters. It's magical—or terrifying, depending upon your point of view. This is a big mountain, with serious skiing and family fun at its best. The mountain stays open year-round for hiking, mountain biking, zip-line tours, and an alpine slide, among other activities. In addition to offering regular daytime lift hours, it's also one of the few mountains in Montana that offer lighted night skiing.



WHITEFISH MOUNTAIN RESORT

SKIING 0N MAVERICK MOUNTAIN

1600 Maverick Mountain Rd., Polaris; 406/834-3454; www.skimaverick.com

A well-kept secret, Maverick Mountain boasts 24 trails, 255 skiable ac (103 ha), and just over 2,000 ft (610 m) of vertical drop. There are two lifts, one of which is a rope tow, and a nice breakdown of beginner (30 percent), intermediate (40 percent), and expert runs (30 percent). The area receives an average of 78 in (198 cm) of the white stuff annually. An antidote to ski areas like Aspen and Sun Valley, the real charm of Maverick is its total lack of pretense: Skiing at Maverick is a little bit like skiing somewhere small but fantastic in about 1968, with no lift lines and wide-open skiing. It is as family-friendly as a ski hill gets, and the terrain is excellent.

FISHING THE BIG HOLE

South of Butte, the Big Hole is a region defined by fishing and hunting. For generations, the land and rivers here have provided pristine habitat for an abundance of wildlife and terrific access for anglers and hunters. The 155-mi-long (250-km) **Big Hole River** is spectacularly beautiful and offers a diversity of terrain, from its origin high in the Bitterroot Range through the wide flats of the Big Hole Valley. It is known for early-season salmonfly hatches and then a golden stone hatch in late June and early July. It is also one of the few rivers where an angler can catch all five species of trout.

LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERNS

25 Lewis and Clark Caverns Rd., 17 mi (27 km) east of Whitehall off MT-2; 406/287-3541; https://fwp.mt.gov

Among the sights Lewis and Clark missed on their travels through the region is the Lewis and Clark Caverns, a phenomenal limestone cave several hundred yards above the Jefferson River on which the explorers traveled. The caverns, filled with several rooms and lined with stalactites, stalagmites, columns, and helictites, are among the largest in the Northwest and were Montana's first state park. The temperature in these colorful caverns stays at around 50°F (10°C) year-round, making them the perfect

spot to escape the rare blisteringly hot days in southwest Montana. The caves can only be accessed May to September on a tour. The classic tour is a two-hour guided hike that takes you roughly 2 mi (3.2 km) up to and down from the caverns.

BIG SKY

In the shadow of Lone Peak, tucked in the winding and rugged beauty of Gallatin Canyon, the resort town of Big Sky actually has three resorts, **Big Sky Resort** (50 Big Sky Resort Rd.; 800/548-4468; https://bigskyresort.com), **Moonlight Basin** (66 Mountain Loop Rd.; 800/506-6650; www.moonlightbasin.com), and the entirely private Yellowstone Club. The town and resorts are clearly geographically blessed with mountains for skiing, hiking, climbing, and biking; rivers for fishing and floating; and trails aplenty for horses, hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking. The area can also be used as a launching point for **Yellowstone National Park** (51 mi/82 km south).

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

CROW FAIR

powwow grounds in Crow Agency; 406/970-5379; www.crow-nsn.gov; Aug.

Crow Fair is an annual powwow held on the Crow Indian Reservation the third week in August to celebrate the past, present, and future of the Crow people. The event is one of the best times to visit the reservation; it’s called the Tepee Capital of the World for the more than 1,000 tepees that are erected at the site. Considered the largest outdoor powwow in the world, Crow Fair is a major event not only for the Crow but also for Native Americans across North America, who come to participate in the competitive dancing and drumming and the rodeo.



CROW INDIAN RESERVATION

LITTLE BIG HORN DAYS

Hardin; 406/665-1672; June

Little Big Horn Days entails four days of celebrations close to the June 25 anniversary of the famous battle—some festive, others sober—commemorating the region's history and, in particular, its proximity to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The festivities include a book fair and a historical dance—the 1876 Grand Ball—as well as arts and crafts sales, a symposium, and a parade, all culminating in the dramatic and well-attended **Battle of the Little Bighorn Reenactment** (E. Frontage Rd. between Crow Agency and Garryowen, Hardin; www.littlebighornreenactment.com). The

reenactment requires more than 200 actors and is performed from the Indian perspective in a script written by historian Joe Medicine Crow.

RED ANTS PANTS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Jackson Ln., 3 mi (4.8 km) northeast of White Sulphur Springs; 406/209-8135; www.redantspantsmusicfestival.com; July

Red Ants Pants Music Festival is held in late July. It's a family-friendly, three-day weekend of music, food, and camping for those who don't mind the dust. Past headliners have included Dwight Yoakum, Shooter Jennings, Lucinda Williams, Lyle Lovett, and the Wailing Jennies. There's a kids' tent, a beer garden, hayrides, great food vendors, and room to dance. This is a wholesome place to listen to great music.

GREAT MONTANA SHEEP DRIVE

Reed Point; 406/322-4505; www.stillwatercountychamber.com; Labor Day weekend

It's not exactly Pamplona's Running of the Bulls, but Reed Point's Great Montana Sheep Drive, also known as "Running of the Sheep," is a Montana classic. On the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, roughly 600 sheep make their way down Main Street of this small central Montana town, sandwiched between thousands of spectators and dozens of food vendors. The annual event also includes a mutton cook-off, a parade, a car show, a street dance, a kids' carnival and petting zoo, local crafts sales, and a variety of entertainment.

SMALL-TOWN RODEOS

With more than 100 annual events on the calendar between May and November, it's hard to drive through Montana without running into rodeo action somewhere. Some of the best rodeos are the smaller ones, often called "ranch rodeos," that feature real cowboys and cowgirls from area ranches competing against each other in real-life ranch activities. Many rodeos offer events for kids, such as greased-pig contests or wild-sheep riding.

BEST SOUVENIRS

You'll find plenty of excellent **antiques** shopping in Montana—in addition to small businesses that are antiques themselves, founded in the days of the Wild West and still owned by the same families today. The southwest Montana city of **Butte** has plenty of antiques shops in its historic uptown.

You'll find **Native American crafts, art,** and other items, including beads, face paint, animal hides, dance bells, and even Crow and Sioux tepees. Stop by any small-town **gallery** to peruse and buy art by local Montana artists.

- **Miles City Bucking Horse Sale** (third full weekend in May): Since 1951, the country's best bucking stock—and the most ambitious cowboys—have been showcased at this world-famous event in the eastern Montana town of Miles City. The party atmosphere follows the crowds from the rodeo into town and every bar throughout the long weekend for concerts, street dances, and a good old small-town parade. For horses, bulls, and riders, this is the place to get noticed.
- **Augusta American Legion Rodeo and Parade** (last Sun. in June): Held in the hamlet of Augusta, at the edge of the spectacular Rocky Mountain Front, this is the largest one-day rodeo and one of the oldest in the state. The town throws its biggest party of the year with rodeo action, a barbecue, a street dance, and even an art show.
- **Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede** (second weekend in July): Montana's oldest rodeo, on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, is a three-day event that includes professional rodeo, daily parades and a carnival, the famous wild horse race, street dances, and a kids' stick-horse rodeo.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

FLATHEAD CHERRIES

Picking fresh, sweet Flathead cherries, or just eating them, is an idyllic way to spend an afternoon in Montana. Several orchards dot the east side of Flathead Lake between Polson and Bigfork, so don't be shy about stopping at roadside stands to do a little taste-testing. The primary harvest is late July-mid-August. The average season lasts just 7-10 days. Try **Bowman Cherry Orchards** (19944 East Shore Rd./MT-35, 10 mi/16 km south of Bigfork at mile marker 21.5 on the east shore of Flathead; 406/982-3246), a family-owned business since 1921 that grows a variety of cherries.

HUCKLEBERRIES

You'll see this small fruit covering the landscape of Glacier National Park in summer, and you'll find it served up in an infinite number of dishes throughout the state—pastries, cakes, pancakes, cocktails, milk shakes, pies, and on and on. **Huckleberry Days Art Festival** (Depot Park, Whitefish; 406/862-3501; www.whitefishchamber.org), held over three days in mid-August, celebrates the juicy purple berry with music, entertainment, an art fair, and lots of family fun.



MONTANA HUCKLEBERRIES

PASTIES

For a unique Montana meal, try traditional Cornish meat pies, called pasties (PASS-tees), long favored for their hearty taste and convenience by Montana miners. You can get yours filled with everything from eggs, cheese, onions, and potatoes to beef tenderloin and mushrooms. It's a specialty in Butte. Try one at **Doe Brothers Restaurant** (120 E. Broadway, Philipsburg; 406/859-6676) in the hidden-gem town of Philipsburg.

MONTANA WINES

Since 1984, when Tom Campbell Jr. and his father first started experimenting with growing grapes along the shores of Flathead Lake, in prime Montana cherry territory, several other wineries have sprouted up across the state, primarily in the western region. Though many vintners buy grapes from out of state, there are several growers among them, including a

few that opt for unconventional but delicious base fruits like cherries, huckleberries, chokecherries, apples, pears, currants, and rhubarb.

- **Ten Spoon Vineyard + Winery** (4175 Rattlesnake Dr., Missoula; 406/549-8703; https://tenspoon.com) creates award-winning cherry wines made with organic cherries. Stop by the tasting room, which offers live entertainment year-round.
- **D. Berardinis Winery** (200 Main St., Polson; www.dberardiniswinery.com) features a wide variety of fruit wines such as elderberry, golden raspberry, apricot, and strawberry-rhubarb. Tastings are offered seasonally.
- **Tongue River Winery** (99 Morning Star Ln., Miles City; 406/853-1028; www.tongueriverwinery.com) is the only winery in southeastern Montana. It offers an expansive list of award-winning wines, and tours of both the vineyard and winery can be arranged.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport:** BZN; 850 Gallatin Field Rd., Belgrade; 406/388-8321; www.bozemanairport.com
- **Billings Logan International Airport:** BIL; 1901 Terminal Cir., Billings; 406/247-8609; www.flybillings.com
- **Missoula International Airport:** MSO; 5225 Broadway St., Missoula; 406/728-4381; www.flymissoula.com
- **Glacier Park International Airport:** FCA; 4170 US 2, Kalispell; 406/257-5994; www.iflyglacier.com
- **Great Falls International Airport:** GTF; 2800 Terminal Dr., Great Falls; 406/727-3404; www.flygtf.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Montana Office of Tourism:** www.visitmt.com
- **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:** https://fwp.mt.gov

MAGAZINES

- ***Big Sky Journal:*** www.bigskyjournal.com
- ***Montana Quarterly:*** www.themontanaquarterly.com.

WYOMING

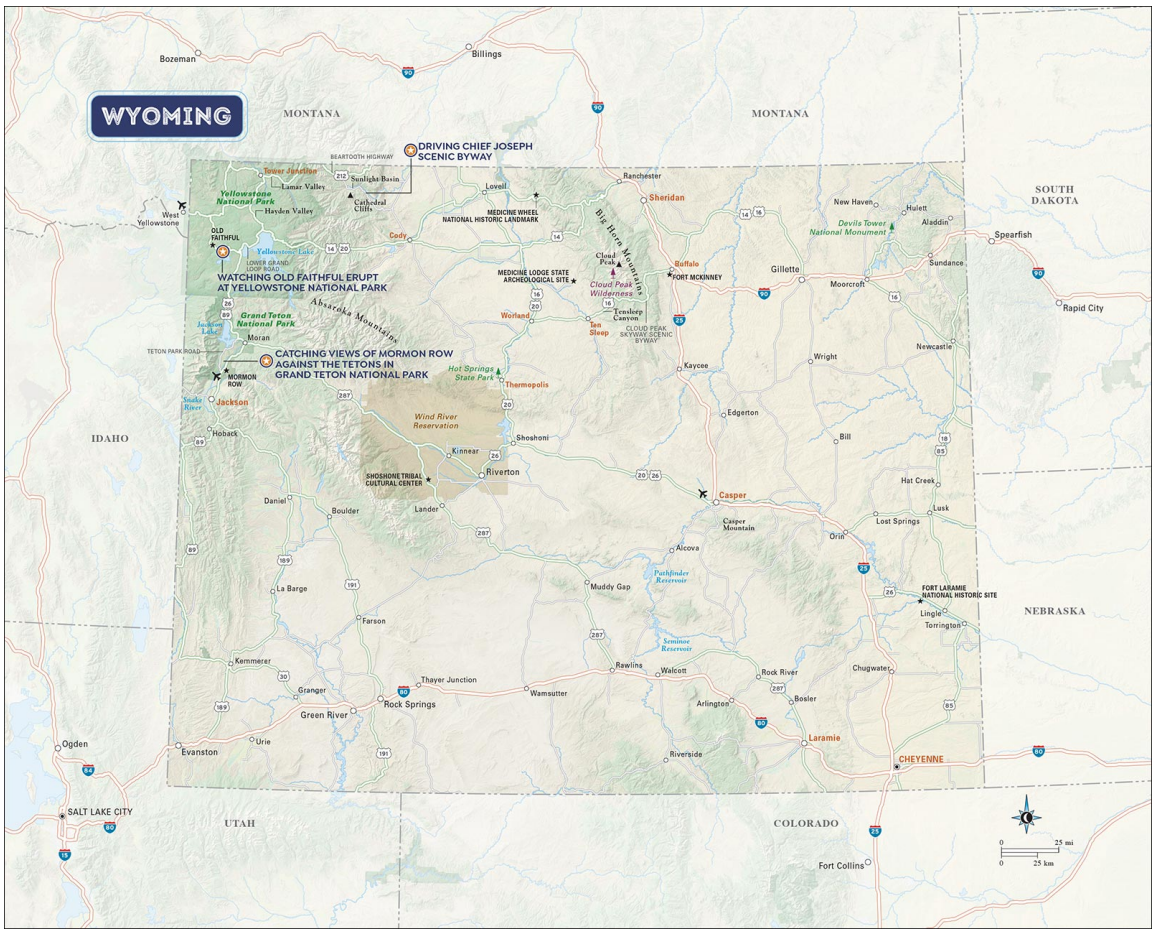
Embodied by the bucking bronco on its license plates, Wyoming is a child's Western fantasy come to life, with rodeos aplenty and dude ranches where even city slickers can try their hand at riding and roping. But what strikes people most about Wyoming is its authenticity. The harsh climate and isolation that make Wyoming the least populated state in the union result in an uncommon grace in its residents. There is glitz here too, in places like Jackson Hole and Cody, but it doesn't distract from the essence of Wyoming. Those towns are but a flash of silver, the shiny buckle on a well-worn belt. On Crow, Cheyenne, Eastern Shoshone, Arapaho, Lakota, and Ute land, the state's landscapes—from soaring mountains and narrow valleys to sweeping plains—were carved over eons by water, wind, fire, and ice. The culture was also shaped by conflict: between those who were from here and those who were not; those who valued the land itself and those who sought its riches. Its distinct histories—both natural and cultural—are evident everywhere, not just tucked away in dusty museums, as the state continues to redefine itself.

AREA: 97,813 sq mi / 253,335 sq km (10th)

POPULATION: 587,618 (50th)

STATEHOOD DATE: July 10, 1890 (44th)

STATE CAPITAL: Cheyenne


WYOMING
MONTANA
MONTANA
SOUTH DAKOTA
NEBRASKA
COLORADO
UTAH
IDAHO
Bozeman
Billings
DRIVING CHIEF JOSEPH SCENIC BYWAY
BEARTOOTH HIGHWAY
Tower Junction
Sunlight Basin
Lamar Valley
Yellowstone National Park
Hayden Valley
Cathedral Cliffs
West Yellowstone
OLD FAITHFUL
Yellowstone Lake
LOWER GRAND LOOP ROAD
WATCHING OLD FAITHFUL ERUPT AT YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
Lovell
MEDICINE WHEEL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
Cody
Ranchester
Sheridan
Big Horn Mountains
Cloud Peak
Cloud Peak Wilderness
MEDICINE LODGE STATE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE
Buffalo
FORT MCKINNEY
Gillette
New Haven
Hulett
Aladdin
Devils Tower National Monument
Spearfish
Sundance
Moorcroft
Rapid City
Tensleep Canyon
CLOUD PEAK SKYWAY SCENIC BYWAY
Ten Sleep
Worland
Absaroka Mountains
Grand Teton National Park
Jackson Lake
Moran
TETON PARK ROAD
CATCHING VIEWS OF MORMON ROW AGAINST THE TETONS IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK
MORMON ROW
Jackson
Snake River
Hot Springs State Park
Thermopolis
Wind River Reservation
Shoshoni
Kinnear
Riverton
SHOSHONE TRIBAL CULTURAL CENTER
Hoback
Daniel
Boulder
Lander
Kaycee
Wright
Newcastle
Edgerton
Bill
Hat Creek
Lusk
Lost Springs
Orin
Casper
Casper Mountain
Alcova
Pathfinder Reservoir
Muddy Gap
La Barge
Farson
Seminoe Reservoir
FORT LARAMIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Lingle
Torrington
Kemmerer
Granger
Green River
Rock Springs
Thayer Junction
Wamsutter
Rawlins
Walcott
Rock River
Chugwater
Arlington
Bosler
Laramie
CHEYENNE
Riverside
Ogden
Evanston
Urie
SALT LAKE CITY
Fort Collins
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Wyoming's two biggest attractions, **Yellowstone** and **Grand Teton National Parks,** are tucked in its northwestern corner. **Jackson Hole,** the valley entirely surrounded by mountains immediately to the south of Grand Teton, is anchored by the town of **Jackson,** gateway to the area and the national park. The capital, **Cheyenne,** is at the opposite end of the state, in the southeastern corner, near the Colorado border. **Cody** and **Sheridan** are in the northern part of the state, with the **Bighorn Mountains** in between. In the northeast corner is **Devils Tower National Monument.**

WHEN TO GO

Summer is the easiest and busiest time to travel the roads, both front- and backcountry. Thoughtful planning and advance reservations, particularly for hotels and campgrounds, are essential. Rates for accommodations are generally lower and rooms more available when snow is on the ground, except around ski areas, but **winter** road travel can be challenging because of the inevitable storms and possible closures.

The **shoulder seasons** can be a delightful time to travel. The national parks are heavenly and much less crowded in **autumn,** but keep in mind that winter comes very early at high elevations. There are also little-known ways to enjoy the parks by bicycle in the **spring,** before they open to cars. Opening and closing times for the parks can vary by year, so make sure to check with the parks before travel.

TOP 3

1 WATCHING OLD FAITHFUL ERUPT AT YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

307/344-7381; www.nps.gov/yell

If you can see just one thing in Yellowstone National Park, make it this world-famous geyser. When Old Faithful erupts, it shoots up to

8,400 gallons (31,800 liters) of hot water as high as 185 ft (56 m). It's one of the most regular geysers in the park, erupting on average every 90 minutes for 1.5-5 minutes. Though often crowded, the Old Faithful complex brings together so many of the phenomena—both natural and human-made—that make Yellowstone special: the landmark geyser and the incredible assortment of geothermal features surrounding it, the wildlife, the grand old park architecture of the **Old Faithful Inn,** and even the mass of people from around the world who come to witness the famous geyser.



OLD FAITHFUL

Beyond Old Faithful, Yellowstone's geothermal features draw visitors throughout the park. Here are some of the other highlights:

- The travertine formations at **Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces** look like an enormous cream-colored confection.
- **Grand Prismatic Spring** is the largest hot spring in Yellowstone and the third largest in the world. Fiery arms of orange, gold, and brown thermophiles radiate in a full circle from the yellow-rimmed, blue hot pool.

- On the western edge of Yellowstone Lake is the eerie **West Thumb Geyser Basin,** a collection of hot springs, geysers, mud pots, and fumaroles. The striking turquoise and emerald **Abyss Pool** here may be one of the deepest in the park.

2 DRIVING CHIEF JOSEPH SCENIC BYWAY

WY-296

Linking **Cody** with the Northeast Entrance to **Yellowstone National Park** is the seasonally open 47-mi (76-km) Chief Joseph Scenic Byway. It is a winding and at times hair-raising drive that cuts through mountainous country, providing views of spectacular waterfalls and mountain vistas of the **Absarokas, Cathedral Cliffs,** the mouth of **Sunlight Basin,** and occasionally a glimpse of **wildlife.** Interpretive signs along the way tell the story of the 1877 flight of the **Nez Perce** from the US Army under the leadership of Chief Joseph, for whom the highway is named. For adventurers, the highway gives unparalleled access to some incredible hiking trails.



STATUE ALONG THE CHIEF JOSEPH SCENIC BYWAY

3 CATCHING VIEWS OF MORMON ROW AGAINST THE TETONS IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

Moose; 307/739-3399; www.nps.gov/grte

In Grand Teton National Park, sawtooth spires claw the sky in one of the youngest mountain ranges in the Rockies. Towering thousands of feet culminating in the Grand Teton itself, these peaks command attention from almost every location in the park. **Mormon Row,** a cluster of buildings from an 1890s Mormon ranch settlement, is set against the spectacular backdrop of the Teton Mountains. This view is iconic and makes for an impressive image, even for amateur photographers. You'll find other top views in the park at:



MORMON ROW

- **Signal Mountain:** Its position as the lone peak above the valley of Jackson Hole makes for big views of islands in Jackson Lake and the Teton Mountains.
- **Teton Park Road:** From Jackson Lake Junction in the north to Moose in the south, the Teton Park Road (open May-Oct.), called

the Inside Road by locals, gives up-close views of the Teton Mountains.

- **Mural Room at Jackson Lake Lodge:** Dining in the Mural Room is an experience for the panoramic views of the Tetons outside and the murals depicting western Native American and Wyoming trapper life inside.

The beautiful surroundings also make Grand Teton a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Top hiking trails include the **Taggart Lake-Bradley Lake Loop** and **Hidden Falls Trail.** Boating on **Jenny Lake** is a quiet, idyllic experience, and paddlers can find fun cubbyholes to explore on **Jackson Lake.** In winter, some roads in the national park close to vehicles and become cross-country ski and snowshoe routes.

HIGHLIGHTS

BISON IN YELLOWSTONE

307/344-7381; www.nps.gov/yell

Yellowstone is the only place in the continental United States where bison have existed since prehistoric times. Two herds fluctuating from 3,000 to 6,000 bison roam within the borders of Yellowstone National Park, a far cry from the millions that once lived throughout central North America from Canada to Mexico. Bison can commonly be seen almost any time of the year in Yellowstone, often causing traffic jams as they stand on the road.

The Lamar Valley and Hayden Valley are prime places to see bison in Yellowstone. Immense herds feed along the Lamar River, which flows through the sagebrush **Lamar Valley,** accessed from Northeast Entrance Road. Similarly, thundering herds of bison occupy **Hayden Valley;** driving on Lower Grand Loop Road through the valley during the bison rut and migration in late summer is one of the most scenic experiences in the park.

Major CITIES

CHEYENNE: Wyoming's capital and most populous city is synonymous with its legendary Frontier Days rodeo. Located near the Colorado border at the intersection of I-80 and I-25, Cheyenne has been an important crossroads since it first sprang up as a settlement in 1867 in advance of the Union Pacific Railroad's arrival.

CASPER: This sprawling onetime frontier town is experiencing a renaissance as a hub for outdoor adventure. Make Casper your home base for fishing on the North Platte River and recreational activities in the nearby Laramie Mountains, Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests, and Casper Mountain.

LARAMIE: Located in southeastern Wyoming, Laramie is a charming combination of sophisticated university town and Old West frontier town—all with immediate proximity to the natural rocky playground that envelops the city.

Bison aren't the only wildlife to be seen in Yellowstone. Park guides often refer to the Lamar Valley as "America's Serengeti," where you can see pronghorn, bighorn sheep, elk, bears, coyotes, and wolves. In fall, listen for bighorn sheep butting horns or elk bugling as displays of dominance. In addition, Hayden Valley is also home to moose, raptors, grizzly bears, trumpeter swans, and hordes of Canada geese.

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

720 Sheridan Ave., Cody; 307/587-4771; www.centerofthewest.org

The West's version of the Smithsonian, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is a collection of five extraordinary museums plus a research library. The **Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave** celebrates the private and public life of town father W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. The **Whitney Western Art Museum** reflects the diverse history of art of the American West from the early 19th century to today. The **Plains Indian Museum** examines the

culture and history of the Arapaho, Crow, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Sioux, Shoshone, and others through a collection of Native American art and artifacts. The **Cody Firearms Museum** is home to the world's largest assemblage of American arms. The **Draper Natural History Museum** offers exhibits that interpret the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from human and natural science perspectives. Finally, the **McCracken Research Library** is an extraordinary resource for studies of the American West. This complex is indeed the grande dame of Western history and art.

HOT SPRINGS STATE PARK

51 US 20 N., Thermopolis; 307/864-2176; https://wyoparks.wyo.gov

The entire town of **Thermopolis** is built around natural hot springs, and Hot Springs State Park is a wonderful place to enjoy them. Originally part of the Wind River Indian Reservation, the area was sold to the US government in 1896 with the stipulation from Shoshone chief Washakie that the waters would always be freely available so that anyone could benefit from their healing properties. Today, the **State Bath House** offers the only free thermal pools in the park. Commercial facilities inside the park include **Hellie's Tepee Spa** (144 Tepee St., Thermopolis; 307/864-9250; www.tepeepools.com).



HOT SPRINGS STATE PARK

MEDICINE WHEEL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Bighorn National Forest

High in the Bighorns on a narrow ridge is this mysterious, Stonehenge-esque feature thought to be between a few hundred and more than 3,000 years old. Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark is an 82-ft-wide (25-m) stone circle with 28 interior spokes connecting the exterior with an interior circular mound. Made of limestone slabs and boulders, the Medicine Wheel is a mysterious landmark that has spiritual but unexplained significance to many Native American groups. The solstice alignments on the monument are accurate even today. There are tepee rings around the site and worn travois trails to the site, suggesting heavy usage. Stone markers in the shape of arrows point to a number of nearby medicine wheels, including those in Meeteetse and Steamboat Mountain in southwest Wyoming near Rock Springs.



MEDICINE WHEEL NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

WIND RIVER RESERVATION

The Wind River Reservation sits on 2.2 million ac (890,308 ha) and is home to more than 8,600 Northern Arapaho (www.northernarapaho.com) and 3,900 Eastern Shoshone (www.easternshoshone.org) tribal members. It surrounds the city of Riverton, with the towns of Lander, Shoshoni, and Thermopolis close to its borders. Although the reservation struggles with poverty and unemployment, it is also home to an incredibly rich history, important traditions, and pristine wilderness.

A drive through the reservation affords visitors magnificent views of Wyoming's undeveloped natural beauty and the majestic Wind River Mountains. In Fort Washakie, you'll find the **Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center** (90 Ethete Rd., Fort Washakie; 307/332-3177) and the gravesites of the two most prominent Shoshone, **Chief Washakie** (it was his hometown) and Lewis and Clark's fearless guide **Sacajawea.** The biggest draw to the reservation is the **powwows** held June-September by both the Shoshone and Arapaho.

WYOMING TERRITORIAL PRISON STATE HISTORIC SITE

975 Snowy Range Rd., Laramie; 307/745-6161; https://wyoparks.wyo.gov

Built in 1872 to deal with the ruffians in lawless Laramie, the Wyoming Territorial Prison was restored in 1989 and made into a 197-ac (80-ha) State Historic Site. The prison was in use 1872-1903; Butch Cassidy was among the most famous residents. The historic site is home to an entirely re-created frontier town; there are buildings in various stages of restoration, including the broom factory where many of the prisoners worked on a variety of different jobs, as well as authentic pioneer cabins, a schoolhouse, and agricultural buildings where kids can stick their arms into a simulated (and gooey!) cow's belly. Still, the prison is the main attraction. There are often volunteers throughout the property, dressed as late 19th-century prisoners, who answer questions and tell fascinating stories.

FORT LARAMIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

965 Gray Rocks Rd., Fort Laramie; 307/837-2221; www.nps.gov/fola

An indelible part of Wyoming's history, Fort Laramie sits at the confluence of the Laramie and North Platte Rivers. It was a major trading center, a military garrison, and the site where the infamous Treaty of 1868 between the US government and the Plains Indians was signed. People from all walks of life, including Native Americans, trappers, missionaries, and homesteaders, passed through the fort during its more than 50 years of existence. Today there are 22 original structures on the 833 ac (337 ha) of this National Historic Site. While at the fort, visit the cavalry barracks, which give a clear sense of the cramped living quarters of the soldiers, and Old Bedlam, initially the fort headquarters and later used as officers' quarters.



FORT LARAMIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Fly into **Casper,** and if you want to get a hike in before your drive, head to Casper Mountain. Otherwise, drive two hours out to **Thermopolis** (133 mi/214 km) and its **Hot Springs State Park.** Have a soak either in the free **State Bath House** or one of the commercial properties in the park.

DAY 2 In the morning, head to **Cody** (85 mi/137 km), 1.25 hours away, for a stop at the **Buffalo Bill Center of the West.** Then take the **Chief Joseph Scenic Byway** and the **Beartooth Highway** two hours to the Northeast Entrance of **Yellowstone National Park** (75 mi/120 km). It's another hour to **Tower Junction** and the classic **Roosevelt Lodge Cabins** (307/344-7311;

www.yellowstonenationalparklodges.com), where you can spend the night if you have reservations.

DAY 3 A sunrise drive through the famed **Lamar Valley** offers amazing opportunities to spot wildlife, including bison, wolves, and bears. Then turn south to the **Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone** for its rushing waterfalls. If you have time, loop around to **Mammoth Hot Springs Terraces,** where you can amble around the colorful geothermal features.

DAY 4 Make it another early morning to get to **Old Faithful** to try to beat the crowds. After marveling at its eruption, head down to **West Thumb Geyser Basin,** an incredible selection of geothermal features on **Yellowstone Lake.** From there, continue south one hour to **Grand Teton National Park.** Stop for views at **Signal Mountain** (46 mi/74 km), then take **Teton Park Road** another hour to Moose (20 mi/32 km) for the iconic photo of **Mormon Row** against the Tetons. Head to nearby **Jackson** for the night.

DAY 5 White-water enthusiasts will have no shortage of options on the **Snake River** near Jackson. While you're in the area, make sure to take the fabulous **gondola** at **Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.**

DAY 6 After breakfast, head north back through Grand Teton National Park. Stop at **Jenny Lake** for a hike on the **Hidden Falls Trail** or a boat ride. Leave the park through the Moran Entrance and drive four hours back toward **Casper** (250 mi/400 km), passing through the **Wind River Reservation.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

LOWER GRAND LOOP ROAD

If you only do one drive in Yellowstone, make it Lower Grand Loop Road (96 mi/154 km round-trip; four hours round-trip without stops). This route links **Old Faithful, Grand Prismatic Spring,** and **West Thumb Geyser Basin** and takes in loads of wildlife-watching, plus **Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone,** a colorful swath of sheer cliffs with dramatic waterfalls cut by the **Yellowstone River.**

CLOUD PEAK SKYWAY SCENIC BYWAY

US 16

Traveling from **Buffalo** on US 16 over the southern portion of the **Bighorn Mountains** toward **Ten Sleep** and **Worland,** the 47-mi (76-km) paved Cloud Peak Skyway Scenic Byway offers breathtaking scenery of the **Cloud Peak Wilderness** and the only view of **Cloud Peak** itself, the highest mountain in the Bighorns. This remarkable stretch of road is the southernmost route across the Bighorns. The summit is at 9,666 ft (2,946 m), and the road also winds through the spectacular **Tensleep Canyon.** Multiple turnouts are along the way for travelers to stretch their legs and enjoy the view; the road also passes **Fort McKinney** and runs just 20 mi (32 km) south of **Medicine Lodge State Archaeological Site,** known for its ancient petroglyphs, pictographs, and idyllic campgrounds. There is also ample access to hiking trails in the Bighorn National Forest.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Wyoming's two spectacular national parks, **Yellowstone** and **Grand Teton,** are the top recreational spots in the state, with hundreds of miles of hiking

trails, boating and paddling, and cross-country skiing.

SNAKE RIVER

One of the greatest attractions for summertime visitors to Jackson is rafting the Snake River. There are close to two dozen rafting companies to choose from in the area, offering options from a tranquil day float through Grand Teton National Park or white-water adventure a little farther south in the canyon. **Barker-Ewing** (307/733-1800; www.barker-ewing.com) is a family-operated business that has been running small trips for more than 60 years.

SKIING IN JACKSON

Jackson's reputation among the West's premier ski towns is not hard to explain.

Snow King Mountain (402 E. Snow King Ave., Jackson; 307/201-5464; www.snowkingmountain.com) soars skyward just six blocks from Town Square. The area boasts 1,571 ft (479 m) of vertical drop over 400 ac (162 ha), a zip line, and the ever-popular Snow Tubing Park.

The ski area at **Jackson Hole Mountain Resort** (Teton Village; 307/733-2292 or 888/333-7766; www.jacksonhole.com) is in fact two mountains, Apres Vous and Rendezvous, which together offer skiers 2,500 skiable ac (1,012 ha), a vertical drop of 4,139 ft (1,262 m), and open access to more than 3,000 ac (1,214 ha) of backcountry terrain. This is the mountain to ski and be seen. The **aerial tram** (307/733-2292), known as Big Red or the Red Heli, takes hikers, bikers, paragliders, backcountry skiers, and the like up to the summit of Rendezvous Peak.



JACKSON HOLE MOUNTAIN RESORT

Although you need to go through Idaho to get there, **Grand Targhee Resort** (3300 Ski Hill Rd., Alta; 307/353-2300; www.grandtarghee.com) is a destination in itself. The skiing in winter is out of this world, with huge dumps of powder and expansive terrain.

DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Rising 1,267 ft (386 m) above the Belle Fourche River, Devils Tower is an iconic rocky sentinel that was formed some 50-60 million years ago and has fascinated people for generations. The country's first national monument, Devils Tower is both a sacred site to many Native Americans and a climbing mecca for rock hounds from around the globe. The two groups have managed a hard-won, if somewhat delicate, respect for each other through a voluntary climbing closure in June every year, the month traditionally known for the greatest number of Native American ceremonies.

The entire tower offers more than 200 climbing routes with varying technical difficulties, with **Durrance Route** being the most common. For

nonclimbers, there are some 9 mi (14.5 km) of hiking trails that circle the tower and wind through the nearby forests and meadows.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

FRONTIER DAYS

www.cfdrodeo.com; July

The biggest event in Cheyenne—and the biggest in Wyoming—is Frontier Days, an affair that has been defining Wyoming's capital city since 1897. This 10-day event, spanning two weekends, draws more than 250,000 people who show up to attend events that include parades, major rock and country music concerts, free pancake breakfasts, a carnival, dances, and nine days of PRCA rodeo. This event has clearly earned its nickname, "the daddy of 'em all."

SMALL-TOWN RODEOS

It's hard to drive through Wyoming without running into rodeo action somewhere. Stop. Buy a ticket. The bleachers are fine. These small-town rodeos offer a unique window into life here. Sitting on a sun-baked wooden bench, cold beer in one hand and a bag of popcorn in the other, is the best first date in small towns. Locals wear their Sunday best, and no one seems to mind the dust.

- **Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous** (weekend after Father's Day): From tailgate parties and a Western dance to a pancake breakfast and parade, the small-town rodeo in Thermopolis ushers in the pro rodeo circuit for the Bighorn Basin with plenty of action and family fun.
- **Cody Stampede Rodeo** (July 1-4): With all the showmanship one would expect from a town named after Buffalo Bill Cody, this professional rodeo lets the town shine with all the classic events, including bareback riding, roping, steer wrestling, barrel racing, and saddle bronc and bull

riding. The rest of the summer, visitors can get a true sense of small-town rodeo at the **Cody Nite Rodeo.**

- **Ten Sleep Fourth of July Rodeo** (two days over Fourth of July): With a rodeo history that dates back to 1908 and includes some of the biggest names in the sport, Ten Sleep boasts rodeo action throughout the summer. Special events at the annual Fourth of July shindig include a Pony Express Ride from nearby Hyattville, a Main Street parade, an old-fashioned rodeo, fireworks, and a sometimes-bloody wild horse race.
- **Sheridan WYO Rodeo** (usually the second week in July): This is the biggest week of the year for Sheridan. Festivities include a golf tournament, art show, rodeo royalty pageant, carnival, Indian relay races, parade, and street dance on top of four nights of pro rodeo action.

WIND RIVER RESERVATION POWWOWS

The biggest draw to the Wind River Reservation, located near Lander and home to Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone, is the powwows held throughout the summer season. These large cultural celebrations usually take place over a three-day weekend and include dancing, singing, parades, and traditional games. The largest Shoshone powwow is the **Eastern Shoshone Indian Days Powwow and Rodeo** (307/332-3532), an all-Indian rodeo usually held on a weekend in late June. The event hosts more than 700 dancers and 15 professional drumming groups. The largest Arapaho powwow is the **Ethete Celebration** (307/332-6120) in late July.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Get decked out in **Western duds,** including cowboy boots, hats, buckles, ropes, saddles, and other accessories. Bring home a taste of the state with made-in-Wyoming smoked elk and bison jerky or summer sausage, barbecue sauces, jams, spices, and other **local specialties.**

Shop for **jewelry** handmade in the state out of local rocks and gemstones, including vintage Native American pieces.

BEST FOOD

BEEF, BISON, AND WILD GAME

One thing is certain: This is meat-and-potatoes country, which can be great for those craving a good steak, as you can find one in almost every town. Locally raised beef can be found on the menus of many restaurants, and bison is becoming increasingly popular as well. If you haven't had it, it's highly recommended, and beef lovers will generally enjoy bison. A good bison burger or tenderloin is hard to beat, but if you are asked how you like it cooked, never ask for anything more than medium. Wild-game dishes, mostly elk and venison, are also found at finer establishments, with pheasant and other regional game occasionally on the menu. If you enjoy trying new fare, this can be an exciting option.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Jackson Hole Airport:** JAC; 1250 E. Airport Rd., Jackson; 307/733-7682; www.jacksonholeairport.com

- **Casper/Natrona County International Airport:** CPR; 8500 Airport Pkwy., Casper; 406/646-7631; www.iflycasper.com
- **Yellowstone Airport:** WYS; 721 Airport Rd., West Yellowstone; 406/646-7631; www.yellowstoneairport.org [URL inactive]

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Wyoming Travel and Tourism:** www.travelwyoming.com
- **Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites, and Trails:** https://wyoparks.wyo.gov

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Casper Star-Tribune:*** https://trib.com
- ***Wyoming Tribune Eagle:*** www.wyomingnews.com

COLORADO

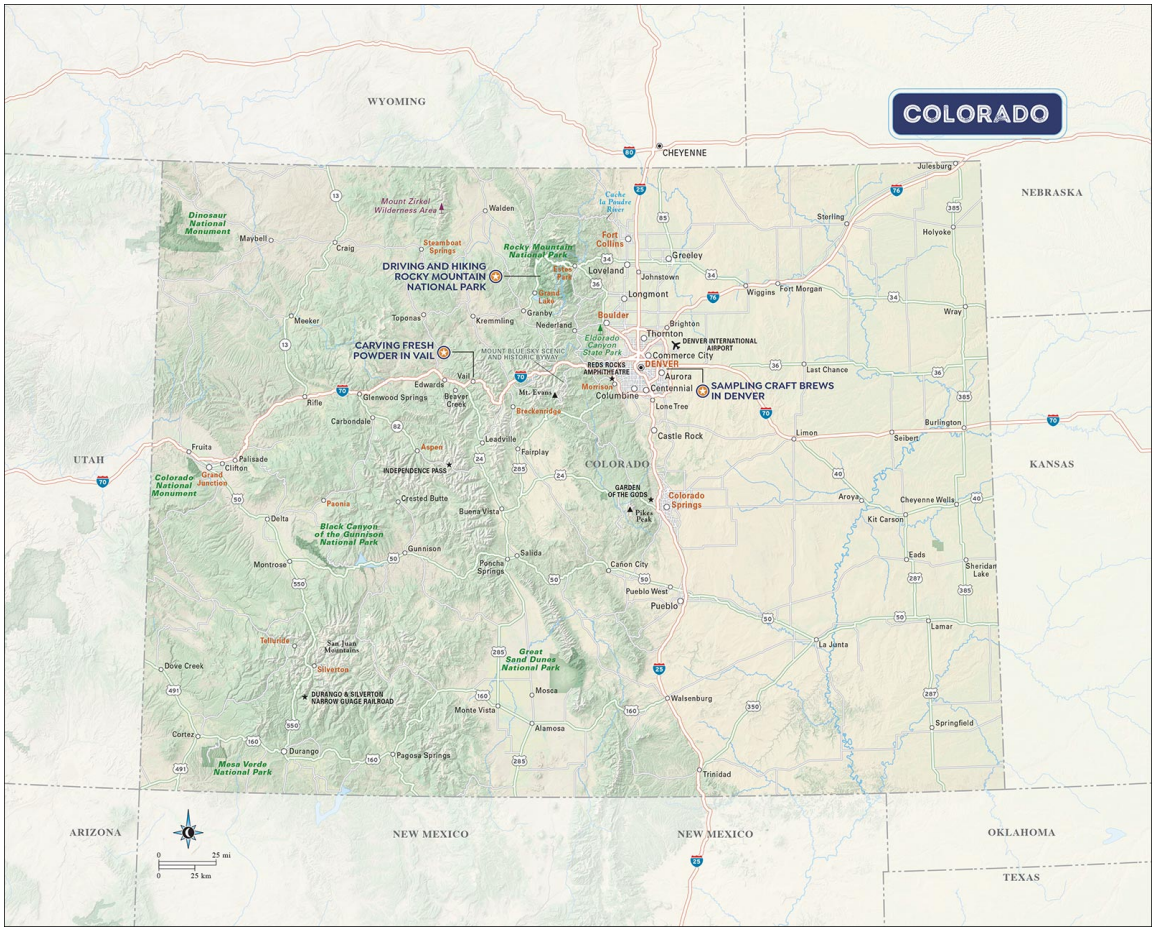
Colorado is an environment for exploration and adventure. The state is on the traditional lands of the Pueblo, Ute, Navajo, Cheyenne, Shoshone, and Arapaho peoples. The Rocky Mountains are much more than a backdrop; they are the pulse that sets the rhythm of life, dictating a relaxed pace and weekend escapes, creating famously variable weather, and underpinning much of the economy. In Colorado, you can relax in unspoiled nature and its primeval rhythms. Gaze at forever views of craggy, snowcapped peaks. Get goose bumps listening to the bugling of a bull elk drift through the crisp morning air. You'll want to actively experience Colorado's knee-deep powder, plunge down its frothing white-water rapids, and soak away in steaming hot springs. Delve into its unparalleled history—from the ancients who constructed Mesa Verde's pueblos to the hardy souls who pioneered its creaking ghost towns. At the end of each adventure-filled day, savor the fresh flavors at a farm-to-table restaurant, sample some of the state's sudsy microbrews, and then slumber in a luxurious lodge or camp beneath a dark sky teeming with brilliant stars.

AREA: 104,094 sq mi / 269,601 sq km (8th)

POPULATION: 5,957,493 (21st)

STATEHOOD DATE: August 1, 1876 (38th)

STATE CAPITAL: Denver


COLORADO
WYOMING
NEBRASKA
KANSAS
UTAH
ARIZONA
NEW MEXICO
OKLAHOMA
TEXAS
CHEYENNE
Julesburg
Sterling
Holyoke
Wray
Fort Morgan
Wiggins
Greeley
Loveland
Johnstown
Longmont
Fort Collins
Cache la Poudre River
Mount Zirkel Wilderness Area
Walden
Dinosaur National Monument
Maybell
Craig
Steamboat Springs
Rocky Mountain National Park
Estes Park
Grand Lake
DRIVING AND HIKING ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
Meeker
Toponas
Kremmling
Granby
Nederland
Boulder
Brighton
Thornton
Eldorado Canyon State Park
DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Commerce City
CARVING FRESH POWDER IN VAIL
MOUNT BLUE SKY SCENIC AND HISTORIC BYWAY
Vail
Edwards
Rifle
Glenwood Springs
Beaver Creek
Mt. Evans
DENVER
REDS ROCKS AMPHITHEATRE
Morrison
Aurora
Centennial
Columbine
Lone Tree
Last Chance
SAMPLING CRAFT BREWS IN DENVER
Breckenridge
Carbondale
Castle Rock
Limon
Seibert
Burlington
Leadville
Fairplay
Aspen
INDEPENDENCE PASS
Fruita
Palisade
Clifton
Grand Junction
Colorado National Monument
GARDEN OF THE GODS
Pikes Peak
Colorado Springs
Aroya
Cheyenne Wells
Kit Carson
Crested Butte
Buena Vista
Paonia
Delta
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Gunnison
Salida
Poncha Springs
Montrose
Cañon City
Pueblo West
Pueblo
Eads
Sheridan Lake
Lamar
La Junta
Telluride
San Juan Mountains
Silverton
Dove Creek
Great Sand Dunes National Park
Mosca
Monte Vista
DURANGO & SILVERTON NARROW GUAGE RAILROAD
Walsenburg
Springfield
Alamosa
Cortez
Durango
Pagosa Springs
Mesa Verde National Park
Trinidad
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

The **Rocky Mountains** stand as a veritable north-south wall on much of the western side of the state, with Rocky Mountain National Park toward the northern end and ski towns like **Vail** and **Aspen** near the center. Southeast of Rocky Mountain National Park, **Denver** is situated slightly north of the center of the state, with **Fort Collins** almost due north and **Colorado Springs** almost due south. East of this string of cities, the state resembles the Great Plains, and to the west of the Rockies, the state looks more like the Southwest, with **Dinosaur National Monument** spilling into Utah and **Mesa Verde National Park** tucked near the Four Corners.

WHEN TO GO

Colorado is a year-round destination with seasonal activities that typically influence the best times to visit. The majority of guests arrive either during **ski season,** which runs from Thanksgiving through early April, or during the **summer. Spring** is also a wonderful time to visit, with warm, sunny days—though the weather is notoriously fickle. **Autumn,** when the mountains are carpeted with golden aspen trees, is also a beautiful season in Colorado.

TOP 3

1 DRIVING AND HIKING ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

970/586-1206; www.nps.gov/romo

This 265,807-ac (107,568-ha) park guards a dramatic and wild landscape that is by far Colorado's best-known and most popular attraction. Bustling **Estes Park** serves as the gateway to the park's east side, which is open year-round and home to most of the park's iconic attractions. In town, don't miss **The Stanley Hotel** (333 Wonderview Ave., Estes Park; 970/577-4040; www.stanleyhotel.com), famous as the inspiration for Stephen King's

horror tale ***The Shining.*** The quieter west side of the park is just north of the gateway town of **Grand Lake.**

Linking Estes Park and Grand Lake is 48-mi (77-km) **Trail Ridge Road** (US 34, May-mid-Oct.), the country's highest continuous paved road, with great views all along the route. From east to west, great viewpoints include **Hidden Valley,** where you can often spot chipmunks; **Many Parks Curve,** the highest point to which the eastern side of Trail Ridge is plowed in winter; and **Rainbow Curve,** where you can see the flat Great Plains stretching far to the east. Farther west along the road, you can learn more about the tundra at the **Tundra Communities Trail,** an easy half-hour walk from the **Rock Cut.** Two mi (3.2 km) west of the road's highest point, which is unmarked, the **Alpine Visitor Center** awaits. Continuing west on Trail Ridge Road, you cross the **Continental Divide** at 10,759-ft (3,279-m) **Milner Pass**.



RAINBOW CURVE

Hiking—whether a quick leg-stretcher or a long butt-kicker—is the best way to experience the park. See the glistening, turquoise-blue beauty of **Bear Lake** by strolling the undulating, 0.7-mi-long

(1.2-km) walking path around it. Keep an eye out for the dramatic line of rocky cliffs known as **Lumpy Ridge,** a well-known destination for hiking and technical rock climbing, as no roads cross the ridge. For a great first summit hike, try **Deer Mountain** (3.1 mi/5 km one-way), a straightforward trail on the park's east side.

2 CARVING FRESH POWDER IN VAIL

970/754-0005; www.vail.com

Colorado's ski resorts are synonymous with plentiful powder, long runs, extended seasons, and expansive resorts. The state's largest ski area, Vail Mountain, boasts 278 trails on more than 5,300 ac (2,145 ha) of varied terrain and an average of 354 in (899 cm), or 29.5 ft (9 m), of snow per year. Highlights of the mountain are the legendary **Back Bowls,** seven wide-open, ungroomed basins with stunning views on the back of Vail Mountain. Covering nearly 3,000 ac (1,214 ha), the Back Bowls are great places for experienced skiers, many of whom challenge themselves by trying to ski all seven in a single day.



SKIING IN VAIL

Off the slopes, the **town of Vail,** built as the mountain's base village in the mid 1960s, perpetuates the resort's reputation for glitz and glamour, with exclusive clubs, luxury amenities, fine art galleries, and scores of award-winning restaurants. In **summer,** Vail and the surrounding Central Rockies are a paradise for warm weather recreation, from hiking and cycling to golf, rafting, and sailing.

3 SAMPLING CRAFT BREWS IN DENVER

Colorado is one of the nation's hottest spots for craft brews. With 400 breweries and taprooms, it's hard to go anywhere in Denver without finding the perfect spot for a pint of craft beer. Denver's bars and brewpubs are clustered in several hot spots, especially the neighborhoods of downtown, River North Art District (RiNo), Five Points, Highland, Berkeley, and Sunnyside. Here are some of the best spots in the city to kick back with a brew.



CRAFT BEER IN DENVER

- **Wynkoop Brewing Company** (1634 18th St.; 303/297-2700; www.wynkoop.com) was Colorado's first brewpub. It was started in the 1980s by four guys, including John Hickenlooper, who later

went on to become Denver's mayor, the governor of Colorado, and a US senator. They built a brewery and a couple of bars in an old mercantile building in what at the time was a much sketchier Lower Downtown (LoDo). Today, Wynkoop is one of the state's largest breweries and still known for its innovative brews.

- **Great Divide Brewing Company** (2201 Arapahoe St.; 303/867-4836; https://greatdivide.com) has been brewing beer since 1994. Enjoy a brew on the patio or take a tour at their downtown brewery and taproom location.
- **TRVE** (227 Broadway #101; 303/351-1021; www.trvebrewing.com) is a heavy-metal themed brewpub serving up creative brews.

Outside Denver, **Fort Collins,** which was dry until 1969, has 20 breweries, including the industry-leading **New Belgium Brewing** (www.newbelgium.com) and **Odell Brewing Company** (www.odellbrewing.com). Colorado Springs, Boulder, Breckenridge, and Aspen also offer excellent brewpubs and craft breweries.

HIGHLIGHTS

RED ROCKS AMPHITHEATRE

18300 W. Alameda Pkwy., Morrison; 720/865-2494; www.redrocksonline.com

Red Rocks Park hosts the famous Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Colorado's iconic outdoor concert venue that regularly attracts top music stars from around the world. The nearly 900-ac (364-ha) park has a **visitor center** with displays about the venue's musical history and the amazing geologic events that created this remarkable amphitheater. You can see the fossilized fragments of a 40-ft-long (12-m) sea serpent and flying reptiles, view dinosaur tracks, and get up-close looks at the amphitheater's two main rock

slabs, Ship Rock and Creation Rock, which are both about 300 ft (91 m) tall.



RED ROCKS AMPHITHEATRE

DINOSAUR RIDGE

16831 W. Alameda Pkwy., Morrison; 303/697-3466; www.dinoridge.org

Atop the first ridge of the foothills west of Denver, Dinosaur Ridge is one of the world's most famous fossil localities. Some of the best-known giants were first discovered here, including the bus-size, armored stegosaurus, the Colorado state fossil; the huge carnivorous allosaurus; and the long-necked, plant-eating apatosaurus (formerly called brontosaurus), which at 33-38 tons (29-34 metric tons) was one of the largest land animals that ever lived.

The highlight of any visit is walking the paved **Dinosaur Ridge Trail** (1.5 mi/2.4 km one way) between the two visitor centers. From the west-side Discovery Center, interpretive signs point out many interesting natural features, such as the **Dinosaur Bone Quarry,** where a jumble of dark-brown dinosaur bones are encased in a block of buff-colored sandstone, and

the **Jurassic Time Bronto Bulges,** an impressive set of tracks left by a 30-ton (27-metric-ton), long-necked dinosaur.

BOULDER

Bohemian Boulder, home of the **University of Colorado** and several federal research labs, thrives on its reputation as the brainiest, fittest, and foodiest city in the state. Its eye-popping backdrop of pointed rock fins and snowcapped summits attracts a liberal, affluent, and environmentally conscious crowd of people who enthusiastically embrace all the town has to offer—organic food at the local farmers market, farm-to-table restaurants, Buddhist meditation centers, distinguished lectures, and a vibrant performing arts scene.

Boulder's social hub is the **Pearl Street Mall** (Pearl St. between 11th St. and 15th St.; www.boulderdowntown.com). You'll find visitors and locals wandering the four brick-paved pedestrian blocks, browsing bookstores, and popping into art galleries. Another Boulder highlight is the historic complex of the **Colorado Chautauqua,** a National Historic Landmark where the nonprofit **Colorado Chautauqua Association** (303/442-3282; www.chautauqua.com) offers artistic performances, scholarly lectures, and films. On the complex's western edge is the jewel of Boulder's extensive open-space system, gorgeous **Chautauqua Park** (900 Baseline Rd.; 303/413-7200; https://bouldercolorado.gov/parks-rec/chautauqua-park), where grassy meadows dotted with spring wildflowers rise to meet the serrated Flatirons.

Biggest CITIES

DENVER: The Mile High City is Colorado's lively cosmopolitan core, home to colorful art galleries, bustling bars, and neighborhood eateries. Above it all, to the west, is what truly sets Denver apart: the stunning backdrop of jagged, snow-covered peaks.

COLORADO SPRINGS: The Springs, as Colorado's second-largest city is often called, is a rapidly growing metropolis. Located at the base of Pikes Peak, the city has a wealth of attractions, including the

rocky fins of the Garden of the Gods, the US Olympic Training Center, and the mineral waters in artsy Manitou Springs.

FORT COLLINS: Artsy Fort Collins is an active college town, home to Colorado State University. Its charming Old Town Square hops with microbreweries and art deco buildings housing trendy boutiques, cafés, and confectioneries.

TELLURIDE

Nestled in the bottom of a glacial valley so steep that it's called a box canyon, the town of Telluride is stunningly beautiful and offers exceptional year-round recreation. Once a relaxed hippie hangout far off the beaten path, the town has turned into an increasingly expensive festival and skiing destination for the rich and famous. The town is considered one of the most important locations associated with American mining history and is designated a National Historic Landmark District; to learn more, visit the **Telluride Historical Museum** (201 W. Gregory Ave.; 970/728-3344; www.telluridemuseum.org). The region is also well known for intermediate to advanced downhill skiing at the **Telluride Ski Resort** (565 Mountain Village Blvd.; 800/778-8581; www.tellurideskiresort.com). Telluride also has more than a dozen festivals during the summer, including the **Telluride Bluegrass Festival.**

DURANGO & SILVERTON NARROW GAUGE RAILROAD

479 Main Ave., Durango; 970/247/2733; www.durangotrain.com

If you visit Colorado's southwestern corner, try to set aside a day for an unforgettable trip on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. The train follows the historic 45-mi-long (72-km), 3-ft-wide (0.9-m) track originally laid along the sparkling Animas River in 1882. The track connected the railroad hub of Durango with the rich mines in Silverton, a picturesque Victorian mining town in the heart of the rugged **San Juan Mountains.**

From the painstakingly restored depot on the south side of Durango's bustling downtown, the coal-fired steam locomotive pulls a series of vintage railroad cars through a roadless wilderness of soaring peaks and steep river valleys. After 3.5 hours of chugging through some of the San Juans' incredible scenery, the train reaches tiny **Silverton,** where (on most trips) you have a couple of hours to stretch your legs, grab a bite to eat, and explore the quaint shops along the main street before reboarding for the return trip. The round-trip journey takes about nine hours, so it's a full-day adventure.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Denver,** where you can stroll through the **Denver Botanic Gardens** (1007 York St., Denver; 720/865-3500; www.botanicgardens.org) or shop in bustling **Larimer Square** (www.larimersquare.com), the city's oldest block, before enjoying a cold craft beer and a farm-to-table dinner.

DAY 2 Head to **Rocky Mountain National Park,** 1.5-2 hours away, and choose an east-side hike to get a taste of the scenery. Then drive the winding hairpins along **Trail Ridge Road,** one of Colorado's most spectacular drives, to make your way to the town of Grand Lake, where you'll spend the night.

DAY 3 Head two hours northwest to Colorado's cowboy corner, anchored by the ranching-turned-recreation town of **Steamboat Springs.** Spend the afternoon hiking or horseback riding through the **Mount Zirkel Wilderness area** or zip-lining near Rabbit Ears Pass.

DAY 4 Drive 3.75 hours to the sandstone towers and hidden crannies of **Colorado National Monument.** View the fossil treasures at the **Dinosaur Journey Museum** (550 Jurassic Ct., Fruita; 970/242-0971) before spending the night in or near **Grand Junction.**

DAY 5 Up next, **Telluride** is 2.5 hours away. Enjoy a leisurely lunch in the historic downtown and soak up the scenery by riding the free, year-round gondola up to the mountain village or hiking to beautiful Bridal Veil Falls.

DAY 6 To get to **Mesa Verde National Park,** it's a two-hour drive through the stunning San Juan Mountains. Arrive early at the visitor center to snag tickets to Balcony House or Cliff Palace, then head to Chapin Mesa to tour the archaeological museum and drive the scenic Mesa Top Loop Road.

DAY 7 It's a seven-hour drive back to **Denver** via US 160 and US 285.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

MOUNT BLUE SKY SCENIC AND HISTORIC BYWAY

CO-5; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

One of the highlights of any summer visit to the Denver foothills is driving or biking the Mount Blue Sky Scenic and Historic Byway, the highest paved road in North America. From its start at about 7,500 ft (2,286 m) elevation near Idaho Springs, this "road to the sky" climbs more than 7,000 vertical ft (2,133 m) in just 28 mi (45 km), passing large stands of aspen, dense evergreen forest, and treeless, windblown tundra bursting with wildflowers.

Highlights along the road include beautiful **Echo Lake; Mount Goliath Natural Area,** home to beautiful bristlecone pines that range 700-1,600 years old; glistening **Summit Lake Park,** the byway's most accessible alpine lake; and the summit of **Mount Blue Sky,** where you'll find some of the best views in the state.

INDEPENDENCE PASS

One of the highest passes in the state and the highest paved crossing of the Continental Divide is 12,095-ft-high (3,686-m) Independence Pass (Memorial Day-Oct.). With its snaking switchbacks, narrow pavement, and slow-moving vehicles, Independence Pass is an adventure to drive (or cycle), but the spectacular scenery is well worth the effort.

Begin your drive in **Aspen,** and as the road climbs, you'll pass a number of campgrounds and trailheads before arriving at **the Grottos,** a popular picnic area where you can take a short walk to look down on an **ice cave,** a photogenic slot canyon whose shady interior harbors ice long into summer.

Next, you'll arrive at the ghost town of **Independence,** where you can stroll past more than a dozen wooden buildings constructed by miners trying to eke out a living in the harsh environment at almost 10,900 ft (3,322 m). From Independence, it's another 4 mi (6.4 km) up the impressively steep and winding road to the pass, where you can easily pull over to snap photos and enjoy close-up views of the hardy alpine tundra and fantastic 360-degree vistas of the Sawatch and Elk mountain ranges.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CACHE LA POUDRE RIVER

Fort Collins

This river is best known for having Colorado's only Wild and Scenic River designation for its unspoiled beauty and abundant recreation. The sparkling stream is a favorite fishing spot for trout and a destination for white-water rafting and kayaking. The Cache La Poudre has a good variety of runs, ranging from intermediate (Class III) to expert (Class V) rapids.

SKI RESORTS

Beyond **Vail,** Colorado boasts other top skiing and snowboarding destinations. **Breckenridge Ski Resort** (1599 Ski Hill Rd.; 970/453-5000; www.breckenridge.com) has 2,908 skiable ac (1,177 ha) and up to 3,398 ft (1,035 m) of vertical drop. With a high base area at 9,600 ft (2,926 m) elevation and peaks topping out at nearly 13,000 ft (3,962 m), "Breckenfridge," as it's sometimes jokingly called, is typically colder and often windier than other Colorado ski areas. Another top area, **Aspen** has four ski resorts, all owned and operated by the **Aspen Skiing Company** (800/525-6200 or 970/923-1227; www.aspensnowmass.com). The towns themselves have charming, walkable streets lined with shops and restaurants. Colorado's ski areas don't lose their appeal in the summer, when the mountains become hiking and biking spots.



BRECKENRIDGE SKI RESORT

MOUNT ZIRKEL WILDERNESS AREA

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest; 307/745-2700; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

Tucked into the heart of Routt National Forest in the northwest area of Colorado are 159,935 untrammeled ac (64,723 ha) of azure alpine lakes, lofty snowcapped peaks, and pristine pine and spruce woodlands. The Mount Zirkel Wilderness Area straddles the Continental Divide and encompasses some of Colorado's highest and most rugged country, with 15 peaks exceeding 12,000 ft (3,657 m) in elevation, as well as 70 alpine lakes. More than 150 mi (241 km) of trails lace through this remote and rugged landscape. A standout hike is the **Gilpin Lake Trail** (5.7 mi/9.1 km one way), a gorgeous hike through dense conifer forest to the cobalt-blue lake.

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT

435/781-7700; www.nps.gov/dino

Dinosaur National Monument is a long drive from anywhere, stretching over portions of both Utah and Colorado, and this isolation, along with its diverse scenery and amazing fossil display, is a huge part of its appeal. The famous **Quarry Exhibit Hall** is located on the Utah side of the border, about a 30-minute drive from tiny Dinosaur, Colorado's westernmost town. The larger and quieter Colorado side of the monument features **Echo Park,** the gorgeous valley where the Green and Yampa Rivers meet, one of the top spots in the state for thrilling white-water rafting. Not far to the south, the peaceful **Canyon Pintado** preserves dozens of pictograph sites, where you can gaze at handprints, painted animals, and masonry walls made by people of the Fremont culture 2,000 years ago.

COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Fruita; 970/858-2800; www.nps.gov/colm

Colorado National Monument is a 20,500-ac (8,296-ha) wonderland of quintessential Western high-desert scenery. Here, Mother Nature has chipped away at the relatively soft rock, carving 11 deep canyons through the colorful sandstone. Bike, hike, or drive through this pristine wilderness

of twisting canyons, sloping slickrock, and sandstone towers looming above piñon- and juniper-dotted slopes.

BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

CO-347; 970/641-2337; www.nps.gov/blca

Carved by the powerful Gunnison River, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison is so deep and sheer that its walls are higher than Chicago's Willis Tower, and its inner gorge so narrow that it receives only minutes of sunlight each day. These deep shadows, plus the rocks' dark hue, gave rise to its unusual name. The main recreational activities at this quiet, uncrowded national park are hiking on one of the park's nine trails (or, in winter, cross-country skiing on the four South Rim trails) and cycling along the rim roads.



BLACK CANYON OF THE GUNNISON NATIONAL PARK

MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

US 160; 970/529-4465; www.nps.gov/meve

Beautiful Mesa Verde National Park protects nearly 5,000 archaeological sites spread across a large and beautiful mesa. The park's main draw is its remarkable cliff dwellings. The most spectacular of these are Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Long House, which can only be visited on ranger-guided tours. Sadly, Spruce Tree House, the park's best-preserved dwelling, remains closed due to danger from rock falls.

After living on the mesa top for nearly 600 years, the Ancestral Puebloans began building pueblos beneath the area's impressive overhanging cliffs. The largest of these structures is **Cliff Palace** (tours mid-May-Oct.), with more than 150 rooms and 23 circular kivas, distinctive pits likely used for performing cultural rituals. With just 38 rooms, nearby **Balcony House** (tours mid-May-Oct.) is an intermediate-size complex, where villagers used hand- and footholds carved into the sandstone in addition to tall, wooden ladders to access their mesa-top gardens; this tour involves climbing up ladders and staircases and through a tunnel.

Long House is the park's second-largest cliff dwelling. (Purchase tickets for the two-hour tour in advance of driving out here.) Archaeologists believe that 150-175 people once lived beneath the shadow of its 300-ft-long (91-m) alcove. Of special note is a well-preserved, triangular tower rising four stories from floor-to-ceiling at the western end of the alcove.

GARDEN OF THE GODS

1805 N. 30th St., Colorado Springs; 719/634-6666; www.gardenofgods.com

Garden of the Gods is a more than 1,300-ac (526.1-ha) park with rows of radically tilted, 300-ft-high (91-m) red and white rock fins that form a stunning foreground for Pikes Peak's dramatic slopes and lofty summit. Explore these fins via horseback, hiking, climbing, or taking a gorgeous scenic drive.

PIKES PEAK

www.pikespeak.us.com or www.pikes-peak.com [URL inactive]

Pikes Peak is a magnificent mountain that soars 8,000 ft (2,438 m) above the Great Plains. Unlike most of Colorado's Front Range peaks, Pikes has no shroud of foothills to obscure it. Today, more than 2.4 million people ascend Pikes Peak each year, making it the most-ascended mountain in the United States.

GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

11999 CO-150, Mosca; 719/378-6395; www.nps.gov/grsa

Along the eastern edge of Colorado's San Luis Valley is a vast, high-elevation basin almost as large as the state of New Jersey. The Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve hosts a remarkable dune field with mounds of sand up to 750 ft (228 m) high—the tallest dunes in North America. No trails cross the ever-shifting dune field, but visitors can explore via **sandboard** or **sand sled,** equipment specifically made for sliding down sand.



GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK

BEST SOUVENIRS

You'll find apparel shops around the state where you can get decked out in **Western wear.** Think snap-button shirts, boots, buckles, belts, and more. **Rockmount Ranchwear** (1626 Wazee St., Denver; 800/776-2566; www.rockmount.com) is a third-generation family business that sells all the apparel you'll need, or, if you're in Steamboat Springs, check out fifth-generation family business **F. M. Light & Sons** (830 Lincoln Ave., Steamboat Springs; 970/879-1822; http://fmlight.com).

Crocs shoes have become an international sensation. The company was founded by three friends from Boulder. Head to **The Pedestrian Shops** (1425 Pearl St., Boulder; 303/449-5260; www.crocs.com [URL inactive]) to pick up a pair of your own.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NATIONAL WESTERN STOCK SHOW

Denver; www.nationalwestern.com; Jan.

One of the world's largest stock shows features livestock, horse, and trade shows, plus a professional rodeo.

HOT AIR BALLOON RODEO

Bald Eagle Lake, 35565 S. US 40, Steamboat Springs; mid-July

The long-standing Hot Air Balloon Rodeo is a colorful mix of hot-air balloon launches and unique balloon rodeo events.

TELLURIDE BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

Telluride; www.bluegrass.com; mid-June

The biggest and best-known event in Telluride is the Telluride Bluegrass Festival, encompassing four days of musical festivities and concerts by big names like Sam Bush, Mumford & Sons, and the Counting Crows.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Denver is a football town, and people across the state tend to wear orange and blue whenever the **Denver Broncos** (www.denverbroncos.com) play. Denver has six other professional sports teams, including the **Colorado Rockies** (www.mlb.com/rockies) baseball team. Opening day for the Rockies is celebrated by the painting of a purple stripe down the center of Blake Street near Coors Field.

BEST FOOD

The state's variety of microclimates, abundant sunshine, fertile soil, and a commitment to sustainable farming practices create a uniquely Colorado cuisine. Specialties include juicy Western Slope peaches, Southwestern green chiles, the state's famous trout, and grass-fed beef, bison, and lamb. Summer **farmers markets** in Boulder, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, and Denver are ideal places to shop for local produce and handmade products.



FARMERS MARKET IN DENVER

FARM-TO-TABLE

Colorado is a growing center for the farm-to-table movement, which is based on the concept of cooking with locally grown and sourced foods and beverages as much as possible. In the Gunnison River's beautiful North Fork Valley, the tiny town of **Paonia** has the greatest concentration of sustainable organic growers and is a center of fresh farm-to-table food and drink, including the fabulous **Root & Vine Market** (40823 CO-133, Paonia; 970/527-3236; https://rootandvinemarket.com). In downtown Denver, a delicious farm-to-table option is **The Kitchen Denver** (1560 Wazee St., Denver; 303/623-3127; https://thekitchen.com).

WILDERNESS RESTAURANTS

Colorado's several wilderness restaurants combine a love of outdoor recreation with great food. Accessible only on foot, skis, or sleigh, these quintessential experiences handsomely reward the extra effort to get there.

A couple of standouts include **Starlight Dinners by Sleigh** (www.breckstables.com), which seasonally offers a meal by sleigh in Breckenridge, and **Beano's Cabin** (www.beanoscabinbeavercreek.com), a cozy hut at Beaver Creek that's only accessible on horseback or via a shuttle.

WESTERN CUISINE

To try Western cuisine—think buffalo meat—head to **The Fort** (19192 CO-8, Morrison; 303/697-4771; http://thefort.com), one of the state's most unique dining experiences. The restaurant specializes in the food and drink of the early West, including dishes that the early pioneers, Spanish traders, and native tribes ate. The restaurant's signature dishes are meat—buffalo, quail, elk, and choice cuts of Colorado-raised beef. The Fort also serves authentic cocktails whose recipes date back to the 1840s.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Denver International Airport:** DEN; 8500 Peña Blvd., Denver; 720/730-4359; www.flydenver.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURIST INFORMATION

- **Colorado Tourism:** www.colorado.com
- **Colorado Parks & Wildlife:** https://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks
- **Colorado Ski Country USA:** www.coloradoski.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Denver Post:*** www.denverpost.com

OceanofPDF.com

GREAT PLAINS

North Dakota

South Dakota

Nebraska

Kansas

Oklahoma

Iowa

Missouri

THE GREAT PLAINS
State by State

NORTH DAKOTA

Why Go: Wide-open spaces make a perfect setting for roadside art against a big blue sky.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Why Go: The Black Hills and the Badlands have beauty and views for miles.

NEBRASKA

Why Go: Come find out what the sandhill cranes, who flock here in spring and fall, seem to know: Nebraska has great ways to relax and some beautiful natural areas.

KANSAS

Why Go: The natural wonders of Kansas include a park of preserved tallgrass prairie and outcroppings that were once at the bottom of a vast inland sea.

OKLAHOMA

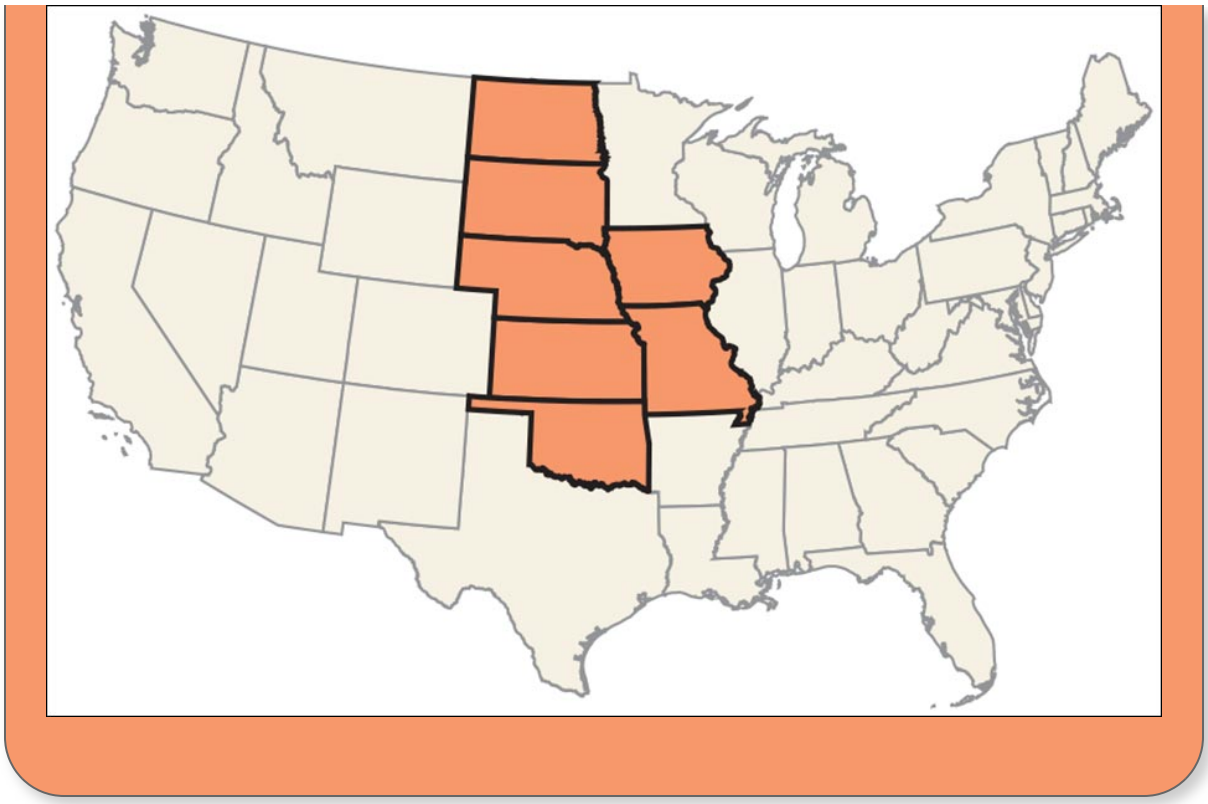
Why Go: Oklahoma has the largest population of Indigenous people in the country, and a wide range of sights present the history and culture of the 39 tribal nations in the state.

IOWA

Why Go: Unique geography, ancient animal-shaped mounds, and a dynamic capital city that hosts a signature state fair make Iowa a destination for everyone, not just presidential hopefuls.

MISSOURI

Why Go: Kansas City's barbecue is reason enough, but St. Louis also has a great musical legacy.



Great Plains ROAD TRIP

The Great Plains are vast, so seeing them involves a lot of driving, often with few services between stops. The big openness of the landscape can itself be an attraction. This road trip takes nearly two full weeks to visit five states and involves some driving on unpaved roads.

MISSOURI

Kansas City to Springfield: 1 day / 165 mi (265 km)

Start in Kansas City. Head to the **Negro Leagues Baseball Museum,** and have some of the famous **barbecue** before driving south three hours to **Springfield,** the birthplace of Route 66, for the night.

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Route 66: 3 days / 505 mi (815 km)

From Springfield, drive **Route 66** through Carthage, Joplin, a few miles in Kansas, and into Oklahoma. When you get to **Tulsa** (about a three-hour drive from Springfield), spend the rest of the day visiting the **Greenwood Cultural Center** and touring the art deco buildings downtown. In the morning, take a day trip on the **Cherokee Hills Byway,** returning to Tulsa at the end of the day. The next morning, head to Sulphur to visit the **Chickasaw Cultural Center.** Afterward, drive north to **Oklahoma City** for the night.

KANSAS

Tallgrass Prairie, Wichita, and Western Kansas: 3 days / 785 mi (1,265 km)

From Oklahoma City, make the 3.5-hour drive north to **Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.** After walking around the grasslands that once covered the Great Plains, head to **Wichita,** 1.5 hours away, for the night. In the morning, check out Wichita's murals before pointing your car to **Dodge City,** the old western town, to spend the night. From Dodge City, it's a two-hour drive to the amazing rock formations in **Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park** and **Monument Rocks Natural Area.** Afterward, head north three hours to spend the night in **North Platte,** Nebraska.

NEBRASKA

North Platte: 2 days / 290 mi (465 km)

Relax in North Platte for a day, making sure you've scheduled a tanking trip down the river. The next day, make the four-hour trip east to **Omaha.** Along the way, you can stretch your legs in **Fort Kearny State Park** and explore the city of **Lincoln.**

IOWA

Loess Hills, Des Moines, and Effigy Mounds: 2 days / 435 mi (700 km)

From Omaha, Iowa is just across the Missouri River. Get a view of the unique geography of the **Loess Hills** at Hitchcock Nature Center before heading to **Des Moines,** two hours away. Be sure to see the **Pappajohn**

Sculpture Park while you're in the Iowa capital. In the morning, make the 3.5-hour drive east to see the animal-shaped prehistoric mounds at **Effigy Mounds National Monument.** Spend the night in **Dubuque.**

MISSOURI

St. Louis and back to Kansas City: 2 days / 585 mi (940 km)

Spend one day making the five-hour drive from Dubuque to **St. Louis.** Spend part of the next day seeing the sights in St. Louis before driving four hours west back to Kansas City.

ADDING NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA

Badlands and Theodore Roosevelt National Parks: 4-5 days / 1,305-1,340 mi (2,100-2,155 km)

To add the Dakotas to the trip, you could head north from North Platte, Nebraska, to South Dakota's **Badlands National Park,** about four hours away. Spend the night in **Wall,** and then drive 4.5 hours up to **Medora,** North Dakota, which is just outside **Theodore Roosevelt National Park.** From Medora, it's about a 10-11-hour drive to Omaha. You could break up the drive by spending a night in **Fargo** (4.5 hours east of Medora and six hours north of Omaha).

NORTH DAKOTA

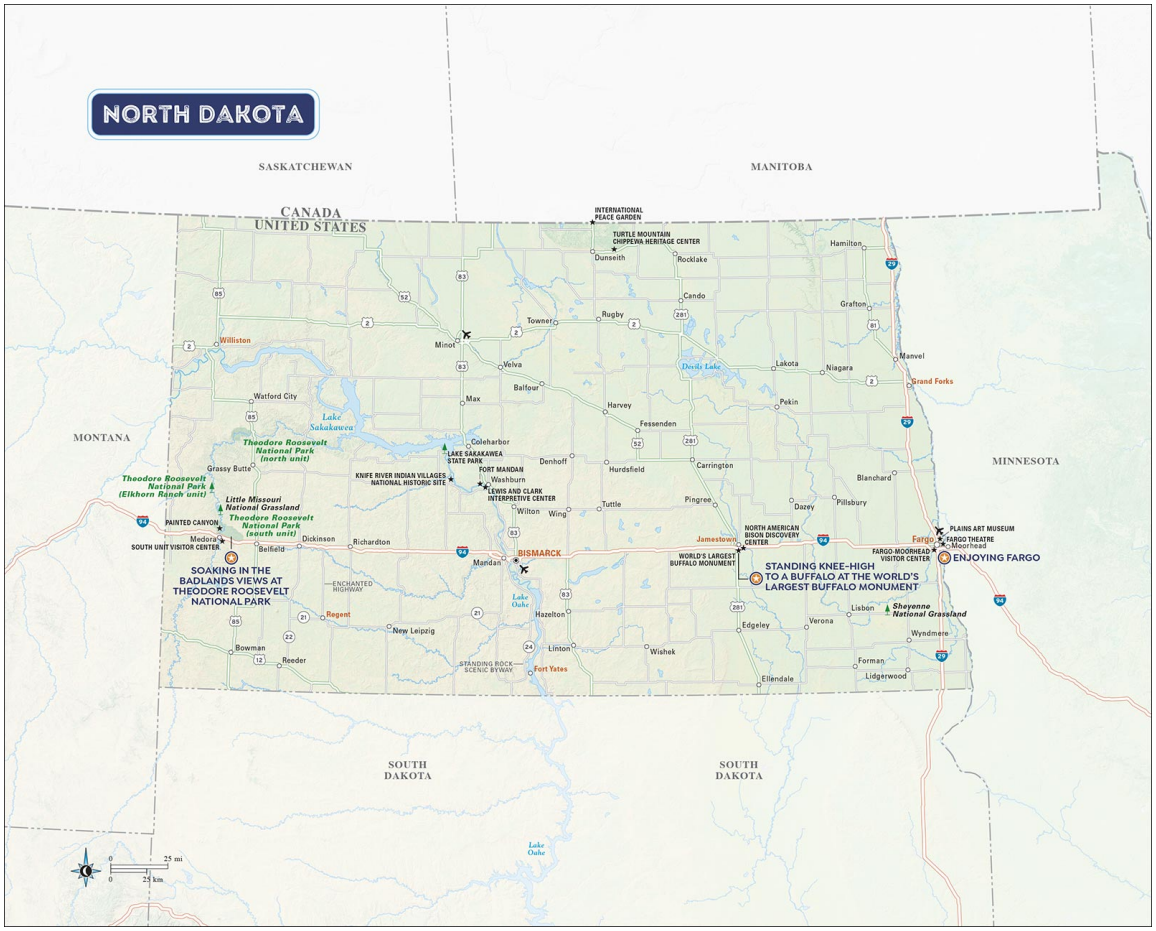
Although it’s at the northern border of the Lower 48 states, North Dakota sits near the geographic center of North America, on Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara; Yankonai; Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota; Chippewa; Cree; and Metis land. At certain spots in the state, with the plains stretching in all directions, it can feel like you’re in the middle of an endless land. With its open spaces and low population density, North Dakota offers a range of adventures that may be under the national radar, but they delight those who experience them. One-of-a-kind roadside attractions, beautiful badlands, and rolling prairies all await under the big sky of the Peace Garden State.

AREA: 70,698 sq mi / 183,107 sq km (19th)

POPULATION: 796,586 (47th)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 2, 1889 (39th)

STATE CAPITAL: Bismarck


NORTH DAKOTA
SASKATCHEWAN
MANITOBA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
MONTANA
MINNESOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDEN
TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA HERITAGE CENTER
Dunseith
Rocklake
Hamilton
Cando
Grafton
Towner
Rugby
Minot
Williston
Devils Lake
Lakota
Niagara
Manvel
Grand Forks
Volva
Balfour
Max
Watford City
Harvey
Pekin
Fessenden
Lake Sakakawea
Theodore Roosevelt National Park (north unit)
Coleharbor
LAKE SAKAKAWEA STATE PARK
FORT MANDAN
Denhoff
Hurdsfield
Carrington
Blanchard
Grassy Butte
Theodore Roosevelt National Park (Elkhorn Ranch unit)
KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Washburn
LEWIS AND CLARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER
Little Missouri National Grassland
Wilton
Wing
Tuttle
Pingree
Dazey
Pillsbury
PAINTED CANYON
Theodore Roosevelt National Park (south unit)
Medora
SOUTH UNIT VISITOR CENTER
Belfield
Dickinson
Richardton
BISMARCK
Mandan
Jamestown
NORTH AMERICAN BISON DISCOVERY CENTER
WORLD'S LARGEST BUFFALO MONUMENT
Fargo
PLAINS ART MUSEUM
FARGO THEATRE
Moorhead
FARGO-MOORHEAD VISITOR CENTER
ENJOYING FARGO
SOAKING IN THE BADLANDS VIEWS AT THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK
ENCHANTED HIGHWAY
STANDING KNEE-HIGH TO A BUFFALO AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST BUFFALO MONUMENT
Lake Oahe
Regent
Hazelton
Lisbon
Sheyenne National Grassland
Edgeley
Verona
New Leipzig
Wyndmere
Bowman
Linton
Wishek
Reeder
STANDING ROCK SCENIC BYWAY
Fort Yates
Forman
Lidgerwood
Ellendale
Lake Oahe
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Bismarck is located near the center of the state, on I-94, North Dakota's main east-west corridor. Many attractions are in the western part of the state, including **Theodore Roosevelt National Park.** The first and third biggest cities, **Fargo** and **Grand Forks,** sit on North Dakota's eastern border with Minnesota.

WHEN TO GO

North Dakota is perhaps most associated with harsh **winters,** which can be bitingly cold and windy. **Spring** is a transition period with changeable weather. **Summer** (May-Sept.), when temperatures warm up to the high 70s F (25-26°C) or hotter, is the best season to visit, though sudden thunderstorms can bring downpours. **Fall** is also a pleasant time with lingering warm temperatures, though nights can get very chilly.

TOP 3

1 SOAKING IN THE BADLANDS VIEWS AT THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK

315 2nd Ave., Medora; 701/623-4466; www.nps.gov/thro

Grasslands and badlands collide around the Little Missouri River in this Great Plains national park. Of the three noncontiguous units that make up Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the **South Unit** is the most visited and easily accessible. The **Painted Canyon,** a colorful canyon full of badland erosion, is the centerpiece of the South Unit. At Painted Canyon Visitor Center (exit 32 off US 10/I-94), a paved wheelchair-accessible sidewalk arcs around the rim for panoramic views of the canyon. For an extended tour of the badlands, take the paved **South Unit Scenic Drive,** a 48-mi (77-km) out-and-back road that starts at the **South Unit Visitor Center** (201 E. River Rd. N., Medora). It passes Skyline Vista, with views of the Little Missouri

River, and several prairie dog towns before it ends at **Badlands Overlook.**



PAINTED CANYON

The two other units are the **North Unit,** which is 70 mi (113 km) north of the South Unit and features a scenic drive with several overlooks, and the **Elkhorn Ranch Unit,** which sits between the North and South Units and requires a high-clearance vehicle. The entire national park sits within the **Little Missouri National Grassland,** the largest grassland in the country.

2 ENJOYING FARGO (WITH OR WITHOUT A WOOD CHIPPER)

If you've ever seen the movie *Fargo*, there's no forgetting the wood chipper scene. Although the movie wasn't filmed in the town it made famous (or even really set there), Fargo's **visitor center** (2001 44th St. S., Fargo; 701/282-3653; www.fargomoorhead.org) is the proud location of the original machine used in the movie.

Beyond the movie, Fargo is the more prominent side of the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, which has the largest population

between Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Spokane, Washington. (Moorhead is the Minnesota town just across the Red River, which forms the state boundary.) The North Dakota city has an appealing downtown, anchored by the historic 1926 **Fargo Theatre** (314 Broadway, Fargo; 701/239-8385; https://fargotheatre.org), which today is a movie theater and event space. Also located downtown in a 1904 warehouse, the **Plains Art Museum** (704 1st Ave. N., Fargo; 701/551-6100; https://plainsart.org) is North Dakota's biggest art museum. It has previously hosted works by Andy Warhol and Dale Chihuly, as well as traditional and contemporary Native American artists.



FARGO THEATRE

3 STANDING KNEE-HIGH TO A BUFFALO AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST BUFFALO MONUMENT

404 17th St. SE, Jamestown

Nothing says “road trip” like stopping at a random, giant rendering of . . . anything, really, and this 26-ft-tall (8-m) concrete sculpture of the West’s iconic animal is classic roadside Americana. Named *Dakota Thunder,* the sculpture is located in Jamestown, a town on the I-94 corridor between Bismarck and Fargo that has dedicated itself to celebrating bison. The main activity here is gazing upon and taking photos of and with the World’s Largest Buffalo. (Of course, you should never stand this close to actual bison, which may not be 26 ft/8 m tall but are still plenty large and can do serious bodily injury.) You can also wander next door to the small **North American Bison Discovery Center** (500 17th St. SE, Jamestown; 701/252-8648; www.buffalomuseum.com), where displays include a taxidermic rare white bison. There’s also a live herd of bison, viewable from the back of the museum.



DAKOTA THUNDER, THE WORLD’S LARGEST BUFFALO, DESIGNED BY ELMER PETERSEN

HIGHLIGHTS

KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

564 County Rd. 37, Stanton; 701/745-3300; www.nps.gov/knri

A reconstructed earthen lodge is the centerpiece of this park that re-creates the villages of the Hidatsa and Mandan people. Also on the site is a museum with artifacts from villages that were located in the area. Trails connect village sites and also lead to views of the Missouri River.



KNIFE RIVER INDIAN VILLAGES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

LEWIS AND CLARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER

2576 8th St. SW, Washburn; 701/462-8435; www.parkrec.nd.gov/lewis-clark-interpretive-center

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail follows the route of the expedition charged with surveying the lands west of the Mississippi River

to the Pacific Ocean, much of which ostensibly became United States territory through the Louisiana Purchase. The trail stretches across the United States from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Astoria, Oregon, and is dotted with numerous interpretive centers that contain exhibits on the journey, the Indigenous cultures inhabiting the lands being explored, and the explorers' activities in the area. This center in Washburn is located near **Fort Mandan State Historic Site,** a re-creation of the spot where the expedition spent the winter of 1804-1805.

TURTLE MOUNTAIN CHIPPEWA HERITAGE CENTER

3959 SkyDancer Way NE, Belcourt; 701/244-5530; www.chippewaheritage.com [URL inactive]

Major CITIES

FARGO: Paired with Minnesota's Moorhead across the state line to form the Fargo-Moorhead metro area, North Dakota's largest city is perhaps most recognizable as the name of a memorable movie directed by Joel and Ethan Coen. Laid-back Fargo embraces that legacy: The visitor center displays the most memorable prop used in the movie.

BISMARCK: Like its sibling in South Dakota, North Dakota's state capital sits on the banks of the Missouri River. Its location in the center-west of the state puts it within reach of many attractions.

GRAND FORKS: Like Fargo, the state's third-largest city shares a metro area with Minnesota across the Red River. It's also the home of the **University of North Dakota,** the state's largest university.

Learn more about the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa at this museum, located within the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Displays include

leatherwork, jewelry, tools, carvings, and other art and artifacts that convey and preserve the history, culture, and language of the community.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDEN

10939 US 281, Dunseith; 701/263-4390; https://peacegarden.com

Look at a North Dakota license plate, and you'll notice the state's moniker, "Peace Garden State," in the lower left corner. The nickname comes from this 2,400-ac (971-ha) park that straddles the US-Canada border. The main attraction is the colorful formal gardens that boast more than 80,000 plants with various monuments to peace, such as the 9/11 Memorial Site, erected around them. Visitors need to pass through customs and border control on the way out of the garden, so bring a passport or driver's license and birth certificate.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start by spending the day in **Fargo,** North Dakota's biggest city, making sure to stroll the **downtown** area and visit the **Plains Art Museum.**

DAY 2 Prepare for a day of roadside attractions. Take I-94 west for 1.5 hours to Jamestown, home of the **World's Largest Buffalo Monument.** Peek into the **North American Bison Discovery Center** before hopping back into the car for another 1.5 hours to **Bismarck.** Have lunch in the capital city, and then head out west on I-94 for 1.5 hours again, keeping an eye out for exit 72. Spend the rest of the afternoon driving the **Enchanted Highway** to see its whimsical oversize sculptures. Afterward, head to **Dickinson,** the biggest town near Theodore Roosevelt National Park, for the night.

DAY 3 Start your exploration of **Theodore Roosevelt National Park** at **Painted Canyon,** then head to Medora for the **South Unit**

Scenic Drive. Then, head up to the scenic drive in the **North Unit.** Spend the night back in Dickinson.

DAY 4 In the morning, drive to **Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site** to learn more about the Indigenous cultures who lived there. Spend the early afternoon at nearby **Lake Sakakawea State Park,** on a trail, on the water, or just relaxing. Stay overnight nearby or back in Bismarck. Head back to Fargo in the morning.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ENCHANTED HIGHWAY

I-94, exit 72 to Regent

The open expanses of North Dakota's back roads and seemingly endless blue sky are an ideal canvas for larger-than-life roadside sculptures, and the Enchanted Highway, the brainchild of Gary Greff, takes full advantage with seven whimsical artworks spread over 32 mi (51 km), starting off I-94 near Gladstone and ending in the town of Regent, where there is a small gift shop. From north to south, the pieces are *Geese in Flight*, *Deer Crossing*, *Grasshoppers in the Field*, *Fisherman's Dream*, *Pheasants on the Prairie*, *Teddy Roosevelt Rides Again*, and *Tin Family.*



TEDDY ROOSEVELT RIDES AGAIN, ENCHANTED HIGHWAY

STANDING ROCK SCENIC BYWAY

ND-1806 and ND-24, Standing Rock Sioux Nation; www.standingrock.org

Starting at the Cannonball River and extending to the South Dakota border, this 34-mi-long (55-km) portion of the byway traces the Missouri River through the Standing Rock Sioux Nation. This land came into the spotlight in 2016 for the protests against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. In between views of this important waterway are a number of sights related to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The **Prairie Knights Casino and Lodge** (7932 ND-24, Fort Yates; 800/425-8277; https://prairieknights.com) is owned by the tribe, and its grounds feature a marina and scenic nature trails. Outside the nation's agency office in Fort Yates, the **Standing Rock Monument** (Standing Rock Ave., Fort Yates) preserves a sacred stone said to be a woman and child. Nearby is the **original burial site of Sitting Bull,** the Hunkpapa Lakota leader who defeated General George Custer.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

LAKE SAKAKAWEA

720 Park Ave., Pick City; 701/487-3315; www.parkrec.nd.gov/lake-sakakawea-state-park

Created by the construction of Garrison Dam on the Missouri River, this lake named for the Shoshone woman who guided the Lewis and Clark Expedition is the largest lake in North Dakota. A playground for fishing, water sports, and hiking, the state park on the south shore also features summer cabins for camping. Lake Sakakawea is also the western end of the **North Country National Scenic Trail** (the eastern end is in Crown Point, New York).



LAKE SAKAKAWEA

DEVILS LAKE

www.devilslakend.com

Devils Lake is the largest natural lake in North Dakota. The lake and the town of the same name serve as a summer getaway for water sports, fishing, and other outdoor activities. The unique environment of wetlands and grasslands around the lake draws a number of bird species, and it's also on a migration route in the fall, making it a great spot for bird-watching.

SHEYENNE NATIONAL GRASSLAND

www.fs.usda.gov/dpg [URL inactive]

Part of the Dakota Prairie Grasslands, this park preserves the only national grassland in the tallgrass prairie region of the United States. Recreational opportunities here include hiking, biking, camping, and wildlife-watching. A section of the **North Country National Scenic Trail**—a multistate hiking trail that starts in Crown Point, New York, and ends at North Dakota's Lake Sakakawea—passes through the grasslands, and walking a portion of it is a great way to appreciate the natural features of the park.

BEST SOUVENIRS

North Dakota Mill (www.ndmill.com) is the only state-owned mill in the United States. Pick up a bag of flour or pancake mix for a unique souvenir.

Much in North Dakota is named for Theodore Roosevelt, who built two ranches in the Dakota Territory near Medora. Although the famed bear incident took place in Colorado, the **Theodore Roosevelt teddy bear** is a common item in North Dakota souvenir shops.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NORTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR

Minot; https://ndstatefair.com; July

With concerts, contests, a carnival, rodeo and motocross events, and of course fair food, North Dakota's state fair takes place over the course of nine days in late July.

BEST FOOD

CHOKECHERRIES AND JUNEBERRIES

A tart berry in the same family as the blueberry, the chokecherry is North Dakota's state fruit, thanks to a petition drive by sixth graders from the town of **Williston** in 2007. You'll find the berry served as jams, jellies, and syrups around the state, and Williston celebrates its accomplishment with an annual **Chokecherry Festival** in August.



CHOKECHERRIES

Juneberries are also similar to blueberries but are less fickle about growing conditions and sweeter than chokecherries. Find them in jams and jellies, as well as pies and cobblers. Juneberry pie is a specialty at **Lund's Landing Restaurant** (11350 ND-1804, Ray; 701/568-3474; www.lundslanding.com) on the north side of Lake Sakakawea.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Fargo-Hector International Airport:** FAR; 2801 32nd Ave. NW, Fargo; 701/241-8168; https://fargoairport.com
- **Bismarck Municipal Airport:** BIS; 2301 University Dr., Bismarck; 701/355-1800; www.bismarckairport.com

- **Minot International Airport:** MOT; 305 Airport Rd., Minot; 701/857-4724; www.motairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **North Dakota Tourism:** www.ndtourism.com
- **North Dakota Parks and Recreation:** www.parkrec.nd.gov

SOUTH DAKOTA

On the land of the Oceti Sakowin, whom French fur trappers and traders called the Sioux, South Dakota has a rugged beauty that has persisted through wars, gold and mining booms, droughts, and even a plague of grasshoppers. Today, much of the state is still rural—30 percent of the population lives in the two biggest cities, Sioux Falls and Rapid City—and entwined with agriculture, ranching, and tourism. The Black Hills are frequently referred to as an “Island in the Plains,” and the description is an apt one. The vast Great Plains cover much of the state, while the Black Hills and the Badlands, tucked in the southwest corner, occupy an outsized place in the popular imagination of South Dakota. A scenic drive through Custer State Park, a viewpoint in the Badlands, and a bridge over the Missouri River all give a different perspective on the South Dakota landscape—and afford opportunities to appreciate its enduring appeal.

AREA: 77,116 sq mi / 199,729 sq km (17th)

POPULATION: 924,669 (46th)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 2, 1889 (40th)

STATE CAPITAL: Pierre


SOUTH DAKOTA
BISMARCK
NORTH DAKOTA
NORTH DAKOTA
MONTANA
MINNESOTA
IOWA
NEBRASKA
WYOMING
Lake Oahe
Lemmon
McIntosh
McLaughlin
Britton
Lake City
Buffalo
Reva
Selby
Aberdeen
Groton
Ipswich
Webster
Summit
Milbank
Mellette
Conde
Castle Rock
Mud Butte
Faith
Cheyenne River Native American Reservation
Agar
Redfield
Doland
Watertown
Clear Lake
Newell
Belle Fourche
Howes
Spearfish
Bear Butte State Park
SPEARFISH CANYON SCENIC BYWAY
Deadwood
Sturgis
Lead
PIERRE
Blunt
Highmore
Miller
Wolsey
Huron
De Smet
Arlington
Brookings
Stephan
Rapid City
WALL DRUG
Wall
BADLANDS LOOP RD
Midland
Kadoka
Murdo
Gann Valley
Forestburg
Howard
Winfred
Madison
Hill City
Black Elk Peak
MOUNT RUSHMORE
IRON MOUNTAIN RD
CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL
Custer
Custer State Park
Jewel Cave National Monument
Pringle
Wind Cave National Park
Hot Springs
MAMMOTH SITE
Edgemont
Oelrichs
Buffalo Gap National Grassland
Oglala
WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL
Martin
Pine Ridge
Pine Ridge Native American Reservation
WATCHING THE CHANGING COLORS OF BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK
Badlands National Park
FINDING VAST VIEWS AND BIG SKIES AT CUSTER STATE PARK
BROWSING NATIVE AMERICAN ART AT THE HERITAGE CENTER AT MAȟPÍYA LÚTA
Reliance
Chamberlain
Oacoma
Plankinton
Mitchell
Sioux Falls
White River
Academy
Platte
Mission
Winner
Colome
Lake Francis Case
Burke
Armour
Olivet
Lake Andes
Tripp
Beresford
Pickstown
HISTORIC MERIDIAN BRIDGE
MISSOURI NATIONAL RECREATION RIVER
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

The hub of tourism in the state is in its southwestern corner, where **Mount Rushmore** is etched into the **Black Hills.** The **Missouri River** runs through the middle of the state, dividing it neatly into eastern and western halves. In between the Black Hills and the Missouri River lie the otherworldly **Badlands.** The state capital of **Pierre** sits on the banks of the Missouri, at the center of the state. South Dakota's biggest city, **Sioux Falls,** is at the far eastern side of the state, near the border with Iowa and Minnesota.

WHEN TO GO

High season for tourism is generally between **Memorial Day** and **Labor Day,** although during the **late spring** and **early fall,** most attractions are open and there is still plenty to do. National monuments and national parks (including Mount Rushmore) are open year-round; however, **winter** is the slowest time, when hours of operation are reduced and fewer programs are offered.

The Great Plains have the reputation for harsh winters with frequent blizzards and scorching **summers,** and that also applies to the Badlands. However, weather in the Black Hills is much less dramatic. The hills are semi-arid, and they see an average of 275 days of sunshine per year.

TOP 3

1 WATCHING THE CHANGING COLORS OF BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

605/433-5361; www.nps.gov/badl

The Badlands are a place of otherworldly beauty. In daylight, the twisted spires and pinnacles look gray and faded, but at early light or at dusk, pale yellow, deep burgundy, and light pinks emerge. Though the dusty gray guise gives the landscape a barren appearance, the Badlands are filled with life, hosting bison, pronghorn, bighorn

sheep, deer, fox, coyotes, prairie dogs, burrowing owls, and other prairie animals.



SUNRISE IN BADLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Located in the North Unit, the **Badlands Loop Road** is the only paved road through the national park. It is a 23-mi (37-km) road that runs between the **Pinnacles Entrance** in the north to the **Ben Reifel Visitor Center** (25216 Ben Reifel Rd., SD-240; 605/433-5361), the park's main visitor center, in the southeast. The drive takes about an hour and winds between the ridges of the **Badlands Wall,** literally a wall of spires and pinnacles that was once the northern bank of the White River. Several scenic turnouts along the road provide dramatic vistas of the Badlands and **Buffalo Gap National Grassland,** which borders the park. From the north, heading to the southeast, be sure to stop at the **Pinnacles Overlook** and the **Ancient Hunters Overlook.** The easy **Door Trail** (0.25 mi/0.4 km one-way; 30 minutes), which starts at the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, travels to a "door" in the

Badlands Wall to give great views of the grasslands and the outer wall of the Badlands.

The **White River Visitor Center** (Hwy. 27, Pine Ridge; 605/455-2878) is located in the **South Unit,** or Stronghold District, within the Pine Ridge Reservation. It is a remote location that serves people interested in Pine Ridge and serious backcountry camping and hiking.

2 BROWSING NATIVE AMERICAN ART AT THE HERITAGE CENTER AT MAȞPÍYA LÚTA

100 Mission Dr., Pine Ridge; 605/867-5491; www.redcloudschool.org

The Pine Ridge Reservation in the southwest corner of South Dakota is home to the Oglala Sioux Nation. One of the largest reservations in the United States, it encompasses 3,500 sq mi (9,065 sq km) of land, including the South Unit of the Badlands. Life for the Oglala Sioux (Lakota) has not been easy. Forced to move onto reservation land at the end of the Indian Wars of 1876, stripped of their lands and livelihood, their language, and, in many cases, their culture, the Lakota people still have a long road of healing ahead of them. Today, the people of Pine Ridge work to share their culture with the world outside the reservation boundaries.

Visit the Red Cloud Indian School and learn about the history and culture of the Lakota. The Red Cloud School started its affiliation with the Pine Ridge Reservation as the Jesuit Holy Rosary Mission—Chief Red Cloud, one of the great Lakota chiefs and one of the signers of the original Fort Laramie Treaty, chose the Jesuits to provide Native American children with the education they would need to survive in both the outside and tribal worlds. On the school grounds, the **Heritage Center at Maȟpíya Lúta** is housed in the old mission building where children were taught. The tribal arts collection focuses on artifacts reflecting Oglala culture and history. Every summer, June-August, the Heritage Center hosts the **Red Cloud Indian Art Show,** which brings together the work of artists from Indigenous tribes across the United States and Canada. The **gift shop** adjacent to the museum sells the works of local Lakota artists.

Just to the left of the Heritage Center building, you will see a path that heads up a small hill and ends at the **cemetery.** It is in this cemetery that Chief Red Cloud lies buried. Also be sure to visit the **Holy Rosary Church** on the school property. The building contains beautiful Lakota-designed stained-glass windows.

Nearby, on a dusty hilltop overlooking the grassy plains of the Pine Ridge Reservation, the **Wounded Knee Memorial** is a small fenced-in cemetery, within which a tall stone stands as quiet testimony, covered with the names of some of the many Lakota who were killed by the US cavalry at the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. It sits at the junction of BIA 27 and BIA 28 just south of the community of Porcupine.



WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL

3 FINDING VAST VIEWS AND BIG SKIES AT CUSTER STATE PARK

13329 US 16A; 605/394-2693; www.custerstatepark.com

Encompassing 71,000 ac (28,732 ha), Custer State Park is one of the largest state parks in the United States, and there's no better place for scenic beauty, wildlife viewing, and outdoor activity. In the southernmost areas of the park, the landscape is all soft rolling hills,

with fields of prairie grasses and small stands of ponderosa pine scattered throughout. Bison, pronghorn, deer, and prairie dog populations are common sights. Traveling north, the elevation rises, and the rolling low hills turn into craggy peaks with steep canyon walls and sheer granite outcroppings. Four in-park lodges (reservations 888/875-0001; www.custerresorts.com) allow leisurely exploration.

The best drive in the park—and perhaps the entire state—is the **Needles Highway** (SD-87, closed in winter) from south to north. Begin at the junction of US 16A and SD-87. The 14-mi (23-km) road slowly climbs in elevation as it winds through narrow tunnels and weaves its way past towering granite spires, which are the needles for which the road is named, and ponderosa pine forests. Several turnouts along the way allow viewing some spectacular formations: **Cathedral Spires** is a collection of massive granite towers, and the **Needle's Eye** is a narrow spire over 30 ft (9 m) tall with a 3-ft-wide (0.9-m) slit at the top.

The Needles Highway ends at **Sylvan Lake,** the most northern and western spur of the park. It is a small lake but the prettiest in the park, with wonderful views of the surrounding granite formations and an easy 1-mi (1.6-km) walking trail that meanders around the water. The hike to **Black Elk Peak** from the Sylvan Lake trailhead (trail 9) is one of the best in the park. Moderate in difficulty, it is a 7-mi (11.5-km) round-trip walk that provides spectacular views from the highest point in South Dakota.

HIGHLIGHTS

THE JOURNEY MUSEUM AND LEARNING CENTER

222 New York St., Rapid City; 605/394-6923; www.journeymuseum.org

The Journey Museum and Learning Center is a great resource for visitors interested in the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of South

Dakota's Black Hills. Collections include a museum of geology, with exhibits provided by the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology; an archaeology research center that explores the lives of Black Hills inhabitants from ice-age hunters through 19th-century miners; a paleontology display outlining the dinosaur history of the area; and a Native American museum that provides visitors with an introduction to the culture and artworks of the various Sioux tribes that live in the region. Both traditional and contemporary art are on display, and a pioneer museum is dedicated to exploring the lives of mountain men, military expeditions, and miners.

MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

13000 SD-244, Keystone; 605/574-2523; www.nps.gov/moru

Located in the Black Hills of South Dakota, Mount Rushmore is a mark of the country's expansion. Started in 1927 and completed in 1941, these faces of four presidents—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt—were carved into the hard granite mountain, and the monument is controversial for its presence on land that the Lakota people consider sacred.



MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL

As you enter the park, a flag-lined pedestrian walkway, called the **Avenue of the Flags,** forms a colorful frame for the presidential faces straight ahead. Fifty-six flags are on display, one for each state, district, commonwealth, and territory of the United States. The Avenue of Flags terminates at the **Grand View Terrace,** one of the most popular locations in the park for photographs. Other highlights include the **Presidential Trail,** a pleasant 0.6-mi (0.9-km) loop that starts from the Grand View Terrace and brings visitors to the closest viewing points for the monument, and the **Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota Heritage Village,** where volunteer interpreters give talks about the traditional lifestyle and customs of Indigenous people before the arrival of Europeans.

CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL

12151 Avenue of the Chiefs, Crazy Horse; 605/673-4681; www.crazyhorsememorial.org

Started in 1948, the Crazy Horse Memorial is the only ongoing mountain carving in the world; when completed, the carving—envisioned as Crazy Horse on horseback, pointing to the Black Hills, his homeland—will be 641 ft long by 563 ft high (195 by 171 m). There is no estimated finish date on the memorial. The face, 87 ft (27 m) high, is virtually complete, and much work has been accomplished on the horse's head.

In addition to the mountain carving, the grounds of the Crazy Horse Memorial include the **Welcome Center;** the **Indian Museum of North America,** which is filled with Native American artwork and artifacts; and the **Native American Educational and Cultural Center,** where visitors are encouraged to participate in Lakota games and listen to staff and Native American vendors discuss Lakota history and culture.

Major CITIES

SIOUX FALLS: With more than twice the population of South Dakota's next-largest city, Sioux Falls is located on the southeastern edge of South Dakota. See the city's namesake Falls of the Big Sioux River at Falls Park, within walking distance of downtown.

RAPID CITY: The state's second most populous city serves as a gateway and base for Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

11149 US 16; 605/673-8300; www.nps.gov/jeca

Named for the glittering calcite crystals that line the walls, Jewel Cave National Monument is one of the prettiest caves in South Dakota and the fifth-longest cave in the world. Currently measuring 220 mi (354 km) in length of mapped passageways, Jewel Cave is honeycombed under just 4 sq mi (10 sq km) of land. The largest room in the cave is over 570 ft (173 m) long, 180 ft (54 m) at its widest, and 30 ft (9 m) tall. In addition to the sparkling calcite crystals that gave the cave its name, it also features popcorn (small round clusters of calcium carbonate that look like popcorn),

stalactites, and stalagmites. Popular cave tours take you below the surface; arrive at the visitor center before late morning to get a spot. Advance reservations are available for some tours.



JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

MAMMOTH SITE

1800 US 18; Hot Springs; 605/745-6017; www.mammothsite.org

The first mammoth tusk discovered at the fascinating Mammoth Site was overturned by accident. Early in 1974, a bulldozer, working to level out the hill for a planned real estate development, exposed the item. Since then, the

skeletal remains of 61 mammoths have been found and are displayed where they were uncovered. In addition to the mammoths, 87 other species of animals and plants, along with several unidentified insects dating back 26,000 years to the Pleistocene era, have been archived. A guided tour of the **Sink Hole and Dig Site** includes a 30-minute walk of the bone bed. After the tour is complete, visitors are free to wander the site as long as they please and to explore the **Ice Age Exhibit Hall** adjacent to the dig site. The hall features replicas of many of the animals found at the dig, a mammoth bone hut, and a collection of some of the oldest North American arrowheads. Skeletons of now-extinct carnivores are on display, including the short-faced bear and the American lion.

DEADWOOD

www.cityofdeadwood.com

Gold was first discovered in the Black Hills in the city of Custer in 1874. As prospectors flocked to the region, claims were paying off all over the hills, but the richest claims and longest-running mines were to be found in Deadwood and its sister city of Lead, just 3 mi (4.8 km) away. Life was wild in all the gold camps, but Deadwood managed to attract the most colorful characters, including James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok and Calamity Jane, both of whom are interred in the town’s **Mount Moriah Cemetery.**



DEADWOOD

To this day, Deadwood remains one of the edgiest and most dynamic towns in South Dakota's Black Hills. Deadwood Gulch is a fairly narrow canyon, and most of the town is squeezed in along just a few main streets. The historic district of the town looks much as it did after 1879, when it was rebuilt in the wake of a destructive fire. You can learn more about Deadwood's history at the **Adams Museum** (www.deadwoodhistory.com) or venture into an old gold mine at the **Broken Boot Gold Mine** (www.brokenbootgoldmine.com). To immerse yourself in Old West ambience, head to **Saloon No. 10** (www.saloon10.com), which is at once a museum, restaurant, bar, and gambling hall. It also holds reenactments of Wild Bill Hickok's death several times a day.

WALL DRUG

510 Main St., Wall; 605/279-2175; www.walldrug.com

Famous for its signs advertising free ice water, Wall Drug is the ultimate roadside attraction. Occupying over 76,000 sq ft (7,060 sq m), Wall Drug

sells all the tourist paraphernalia your heart could desire, and the backyard is home to unlimited photo opportunities, including a giant jackalope saddled up and ready to ride and a roaring, smoke-spewing T. rex. Inside, the complex is divided into several small shops. A fine art gallery sells paintings, art prints, pottery, and bronze sculptures, and there is a great little bookstore with a fine collection of regional books. Look for Western clothing, leather goods, a rock shop, camping supplies, a jewelry store, a doughnut shop, an espresso bar, and a restaurant. And, there is a drugstore. Coffee is still five cents (though better coffee is available for a bit more), and ice water is still free.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start out in **Rapid City,** head east on I-90, and take exit 110 at the town of Wall and the famous **Wall Drug.** Then drive south to the main entrance of **Badlands National Park.** Meander the **Badlands Loop Road,** take in the views, and stop at the **Ben Reifel Visitor Center** at the southern end of the park. Stretch your legs along the easy **Door Trail.** Spend the night back in Rapid City.

DAY 2 The next morning, drive down to **Wind Cave** to see another national park, this time underground. After taking a cave tour and exploring the trails above ground, head up to **Custer State Park** and check in at one of the lodges (make reservations ahead of time). Drive the **Wildlife Loop** around dusk for the best wildlife-watching.

DAY 3 Keep exploring Custer State Park. Drive the **Needles Highway** to **Sylvan Lake** and tackle the hike up to **Black Elk Peak,** the highest point in South Dakota. Afterward, stop by the **Crazy Horse Memorial.** In the evening, experience a chuckwagon dinner, a South Dakota classic, at **Blue Bell Lodge.**

DAY 4 Leave Custer State Park and head out to **Mount Rushmore** on **Iron Mountain Road,** the best way to approach the monument.

Watch out for the view of the presidents' faces framed by the three tunnels along the way. Explore the monument, take a short hike, and learn about Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota culture at the **Heritage Village.** From there, make the 1.5-hour drive to **Deadwood** for an escape to the Wild West.

DAY 5 After breakfast, head to **Lead,** 3 mi (4.8 km) away, where you can get onto US 14A, otherwise known as the **Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway.** Stop at the **76 Trail** for a hike up to the top of the rim of Spearfish Canyon. Stop in **Spearfish** at the other end of the byway for a bite to eat, then make the one-hour drive back to **Rapid City.** Be sure to stop by **Prairie Edge Trading Company and Galleries** to browse the various arts and crafts by local artists.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

In addition to the **Needles Highway,** other routes showcase the state's scenery.

IRON MOUNTAIN ROAD

US 16A

Iron Mountain Road (17 mi/27 km) connects Custer State Park to Mount Rushmore, and with three tunnels that frame the presidential faces as you drive through them, this drive makes for the most dramatic approach to the monument. Head south on SD-79 and take a right on SD-40, just past Hermosa. About 13 mi (21 km) in, take a left on Playhouse Road. Four mi (6.4 km) later, take a right and head north on Iron Mountain Road. Wind through the hills, and enjoy the gorgeous views, the pigtail bridges, and the narrow tunnels on the way to Mount Rushmore.

WILDLIFE LOOP

Custer State Park

On the north side of Custer State Park, the Wildlife Loop (18 mi/29 km) begins just east of the **State Game Lodge** off US 16A. The southwestern entrance to the loop is off SD-87, just about 1 mi (0.6 km) south of the **Blue Bell Lodge** area. It doesn't matter which end of the loop you start from, but what does matter is the time of day. Wildlife is most active and visible early in the morning or near dusk. Pronghorn, bison, white-tailed deer, mule deer, and prairie dogs are common along the route. On lucky occasions, the elusive elk herd will make an appearance. The park's small herd of burros is usually found somewhere along the way, too. Turnouts along the route allow for photographs and wildlife-viewing. Expect "traffic jams" when bison herds decide to cross the road. For your safety and theirs, keep your distance from the animals.

SPEARFISH CANYON SCENIC BYWAY

US 14A

Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway is a state and national forest scenic byway that winds for 19 mi (31 km) along Spearfish Creek between the communities of **Spearfish** and **Lead.** All the views are straight up the canyon walls to heights of over 1,000 ft (304 m), but don't forget to keep an eye on the road, as many bicyclists and hikers may be riding or walking along the shoulders. There are several beautiful hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails along the byway. The **76 Trail** (across the road from Spearfish Canyon Lodge; 1.5 mi/2.4 km round-trip, 1.5-2 hours) is the only formal hiking trail to climb to the top of the rim of Spearfish Canyon. The trail is short, but it rises nearly 1,000 ft (304 m) from start to finish. The panoramic view from the ridge at the top of the canyon makes the effort well worthwhile. Be careful and attentive while hiking, as many spots are slippery with pine needles and loose soil.



BURROS IN CUSTER STATE PARK

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

26611 US 385; 605/745-4600; www.nps.gov/wica

On the surface, Wind Cave National Park, at more than 33,000 ac (13,354 ha), boasts over 30 mi (48 km) of hiking trails. The mixed-grass prairie ecosystem supports abundant wildlife, including bison, mule deer, white-tailed deer, prairie dogs, pronghorn, wild turkeys, and elk. It is a place where east meets west, where the Great Plains prairie meets the ponderosa pine forest. It's a wonderful area to watch the not infrequent summer thunderstorms cross the plains.

Below the surface, under just 1 sq mi (2.5 sq km) of the park, lie over 165 mi (265 km) of explored cave passages. Wind Cave is the third-longest cave in the United States and the sixth-longest cave in the world. Unlike other well-known caves, Wind Cave is not filled with stalactites and stalagmites but rather is famous for its boxwork, an unusual type of

speleothem (cave formation) that is made of thin slices of calcite projecting from the cave walls and intersecting with each other in a honeycomb-like fashion. The pattern looks like a collection of diamond and rectangular boxes protruding from the walls and ceilings.

BEST SOUVENIRS

No visit to Wall is complete without a piece of **Wall Drug memorabilia,** like a magnet, bumper sticker, or mug.

Prairie Edge Trading Company and Galleries (606 Main St., Rapid City; 605/342-3086 or 800/541-2388; www.prairieedge.com) presents the best in traditional and contemporary Native American art, as well as work by local and regional artists who are not native to the land. It is not to be missed. From drums to dresses and artifacts to jewelry, beadwork, glassware, pottery, quilts, fine art, clothing, art supplies, and unique gift items, this store has it all.

BEAR BUTTE STATE PARK

20250 SD-79, Sturgis; 605/347-5240; https://gfp.sd.gov

Located about 8 mi (13 km) northeast of Sturgis off SD-79, this butte is Mato Paha or "Bear Mountain," a place of prayer for the Lakota people. Hiking, boating, and horseback riding are available in the surrounding state park, but be respectful to the land and the people who hold it sacred. The **Centennial Trail** (trail 89) is a 111-mi (178-km) trail that starts in the prairies just south of Bear Butte and leads down to **Wind Cave National Park** in the south.

MISSOURI NATIONAL RECREATIONAL RIVER

508 E. 2nd St., Yankton; 605/665-0209; www.nps.gov/mnrr

In the southeastern corner of South Dakota, the Missouri River forms the state border with Nebraska. Two natural stretches of North America's longest river are preserved as national parkland, separated by **Lewis and Clark Lake.** The **59-Mile District** is located southeast from Yankton and includes the **Historic Meridian Bridge** that crosses from South Dakota to Nebraska. The **39-Mile District** is to the west of Lewis and Clark Lake.

Both stretches have access points for paddlers. There are also more than 40 mi (64 km) of trails in and around the city of Yankton, including along the riverfront.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

STURGIS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Sturgis; www.sturgismotorcyclerally.com; Aug.

The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally is the biggest event in South Dakota, doubling the population of the state for the first full week of August (the first Saturday of the month and the subsequent week). There are races and poker runs and daily rides into the hills. Every motorcycle manufacturer in the world is there, from the smallest custom bike creator to Harley-Davidson. At night, there are world-class concerts.

OGLALA NATION WACIPI RODEO AND FAIR

Powwow Grounds, Pine Ridge Reservation; 605/455-2685; Aug.

The Oglala Nation Wacipi Rodeo and Fair is held the first weekend in August and includes powwows and the rodeo. The powwow is a community celebration and dance competition. Be sure to be on time for the grand entry, which is the opening ceremony for the powwow. It is a swirl of color and movement as contestants from each dance category enter the powwow grounds. The dances are performed to drums, and the dancers are judged on their poise, footwork, demeanor, and showmanship. The powwow is held outside, and chairs are not provided, so bring something to sit on.



OGLALA NATION WACIPI RODEO AND FAIR

LAURA INGALLS WILDER PAGEANT

De Smet; www.desmetpageant.org; July

Fans of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books will remember De Smet as the *Little Town on the Prairie* where Almanzo Wilder courted Laura. Since 1971, the town has celebrated its connection to Wilder with an annual outdoor performance of a story from one of her books.



LAURA INGALLS WILDER INTERPRETATION CENTER

BEST FOOD

CHUCKWAGON DINNERS

A decidedly Western phenomenon, the chuckwagon dinner and show generally features music, corny jokes, and food served as diners walk through a line, plates in hand. Traditional chuckwagon food includes sliced barbecue beef or baked chicken with potatoes, beans, and biscuits and honey. In Custer State Park, chuckwagon dinners and hayrides are offered nightly at **Blue Bell Lodge** (25453 SD-87; 605/255-4531 or 800/875-0001; www.custerresorts.com).

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Rapid City Regional Airport:** RAP; 4550 Terminal Rd., Rapid City; 605/394-4195; www.rapairport.com
- **Sioux Falls Regional Airport:** FSD, 2801 N. Jaycee Ln., Sioux Falls; 605/336-0762; www.sfairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **South Dakota Department of Tourism:** www.travelsd.com
- **South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks:** https://gfp.sd.gov

MAGAZINES

- ***South Dakota Magazine:*** www.southdakotamagazine.com

NEBRASKA

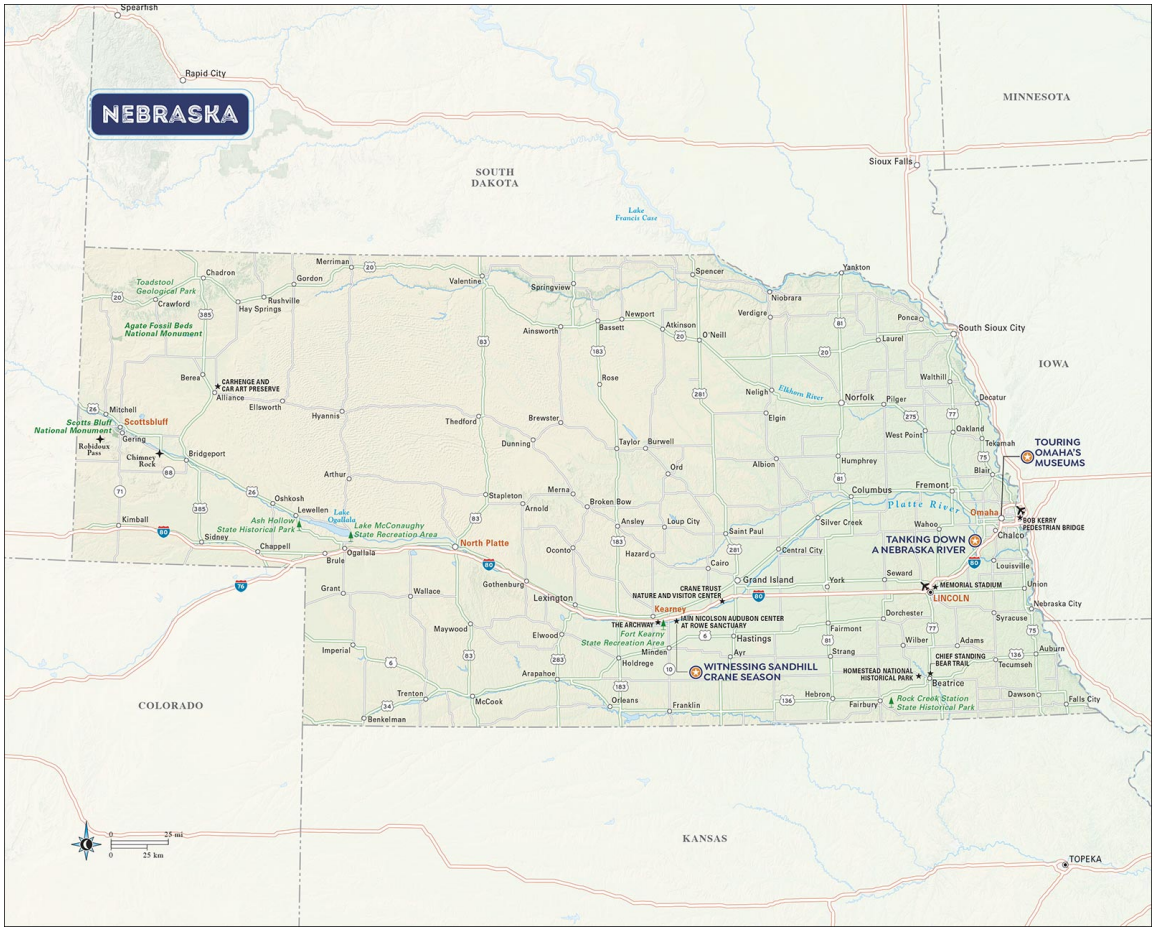
The wide, slow Platte River defines much of Nebraska, with its main artery of I-80 following it through a good portion of the state. This land of the Pawnee, Cheyenne, Oglala, Oceti Sakowin, Oohenumpa, Jiwere, Yankton, Santee Sioux, Ponca, Winnebago, and Omaha people provided water and grass for westward settlers in the 1800s, with many homesteaders calling it their own. Today, vibrant cities have added to the natural landscapes that have always made Nebraska a beautiful place to visit. Omaha offers many cultural institutions and a lively restaurant and nightlife scene, while Lincoln is a lively and multicultural college town. But as the sandhill cranes that flock here every spring seem to know, the natural setting—with more miles of river than any other state and parks preserving rock formations and natural history—makes Nebraska a special place. It won't take visitors long to see why the state's unofficial motto is "The Good Life."

AREA: 77,348 sq mi / 200,330 sq km (16th)

POPULATION: 2,005,465 (37th)

STATEHOOD DATE: March 1, 1867 (37th)

STATE CAPITAL: Lincoln


NEBRASKA
Spearfish
Rapid City
MINNESOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
Sioux Falls
Lake Francis Case
Yankton
Spencer
Niobrara
Verdigre
Ponca
South Sioux City
Laurel
IOWA
Merriman
Chadron
Gordon
Valentine
Springview
Newport
Bassett
Atkinson
O Neill
Ainsworth
Toadstool Geological Park
Crawford
Rushville
Hay Springs
Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
Berea
CARHENGE AND CAR ART PRESERVE
Alliance
Ellsworth
Hyannis
Rose
Neligh
Elkhorn River
Norfolk
Pilger
Walthill
Decatur
Mitchell
Scottsbluff
Scotts Bluff National Monument
Gering
Robidoux Pass
Chimney Rock
Bridgeport
Thedford
Brewster
Dunning
Taylor
Burwell
Elgin
West Point
Oakland
Tekamah
Blair
TOURING OMAHA'S MUSEUMS
Arthur
Ord
Albion
Humphrey
Columbus
Fremont
Oshkosh
Lewellen
Lake Ogallala
Ash Hollow State Historical Park
Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area
Stapleton
Merna
Arnold
Broken Bow
Ansley
Loup City
Platte River
Omaha
BOB KERRY PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
Kimball
Sidney
Chappell
Ogallala
North Platte
Oconto
Hazard
Saint Paul
Silver Creek
Wahoo
Chalco
TANKING DOWN A NEBRASKA RIVER
Brule
Cairo
Central City
Louisville
Grant
Wallace
Gothenburg
Lexington
Grand Island
York
Seward
MEMORIAL STADIUM
LINCOLN
Union
Nebraska City
CRANE TRUST NATURE AND VISITOR CENTER
Kearney
THE ARCHWAY
JOHN NICOLSON AUDUBON CENTER AT ROWE SANCTUARY
Fort Kearny State Recreation Area
Dorchester
Syracuse
Maywood
Elwood
Hastings
Fairmont
Wilber
Adams
Auburn
Imperial
Minden
Ayr
Strang
CHIEF STANDING BEAR TRAIL
Tecumseh
Holdrege
WITNESSING SANDHILL CRANE SEASON
HOMESTEAD NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
Beatrice
Arapahoe
Trenton
McCook
Orleans
Franklin
Hebron
Fairbury
Rock Creek Station State Historical Park
Dawson
Falls City
Benkelman
COLORADO
KANSAS
TOPEKA
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Nebraska's two biggest cities are located in the eastern part of the state: **Omaha** sits on the Missouri River, which forms the state boundary with Iowa, and **Lincoln** is an hour southwest. The main road corridor of **I-80** crosses the vast plains, following the Platte River through much of the state.

WHEN TO GO

Nebraska, like most of the Great Plains, has extreme climates: It's cold in **winter,** averaging 35°F (2°C) and prone to blizzards, and humid and hot in the high season of **summer,** with an average temperature of 85°F (29°C). **Spring** and **fall** are likely to have comfortable temperatures, but you'll always run the risk of an early or late snowstorm. Summers see big thunderstorms—a memorable sight across the expansive prairie—and occasional tornados. Bird-watchers will want to come in spring, when **sandhill cranes** stop in Nebraska during their annual migration.

TOP 3

1 WITNESSING SANDHILL CRANE SEASON

The seasonal migration of sandhill cranes along the banks of the Platte River is one of the most popular sights in Nebraska, attracting bird and wildlife lovers from all over the world. Up to 736,00 cranes flock here each year, and the 80-mi (130-km) section of the **Platte River** around **Kearney** in central Nebraska sees 80 percent of the entire world's sandhill crane population.



SANDHILL CRANES

Every spring and fall, the birds migrate from Canada to Mexico and back, using the Platte River as a major resting point. Spring (late Feb.-early Apr.) is the biggest event, as the cranes stop for weeks at a time to feed before pushing on; mid-March is the prime season. In fall (mid-Oct.-late Nov.) they stop for only a night or two. Morning and evening, you can catch them flocking together, and some days you'll see thousands of them flying, sheets of white specks in the sky.

Take a tour with the **Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rowe Sanctuary** (44450 Elm Island Rd., Gibbon; 308/468-5282; https://rowe.audubon.org), which is located on a beautiful stretch of the Platte River and has some nice walking trails to explore, or the **Crane Trust Nature and Visitor Center** (9325 S. Alda Rd., Wood River; 308/382-1820; https://cranetrust.org), which also hosts virtual tours.

Check out the cranes on your own by heading to the northeastern corner of **Fort Kearny State Recreation Area.** The bridge over the Platte River makes a perfect spot to spy the cranes. If you time it correctly for the early morning or evening, you'll be able to watch

them take off from their night's rest, or fly right over you and gracefully land in the water.

2 TOURING OMAHA'S MUSEUMS

Among Omaha's many attractions, its museums rank near the top. The **Durham Museum** (801 S. 10th St.; 402/444-5071; https://durhammuseum.org) showcases the history of the region in Union Station, a gorgeous art deco former railway station that alone is worth a visit. The **Great Plains Black History Museum** (2221 N. 24th St.; 402/932-7077; https://gpblackhistorymuseum.org) is dedicated to the history of Black Americans in the region. The **Joslyn Art Museum** (2200 Dodge St.; 402/342-3300; www.joslyn.org) is a fine arts museum with wide holdings spanning from Greek pottery to modern and contemporary art, and an excellent collection of American art.



THE DURHAM MUSEUM

Although not strictly a museum per se, Omaha's **Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium** (3701 S. 10th St.; 402/733-8400; www.omahazoo.com) also offers chances to learn, with exhibits showcasing the ecosystems of the world, most notably the world's largest indoor desert. The headquarters and main visitor center for the **Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail** (601 Riverfront Dr.; 402/661-1804; www.nps.gov/lecl), which winds through the Great Plains and is ubiquitous in the region's tourism, is also located in

Omaha, right next to the Missouri River that the expedition followed. If you need to stretch your legs after visiting all these museums, try strolling across the **Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge** next to the visitor center or getting a bite to eat at the **Old Market** (1100 Howard St.; https://oldmarket.com), a historic entertainment district near the Durham Museum.

3 TANKING DOWN A NEBRASKA RIVER

The unique Nebraska activity of tanking is floating down a river with your friends and family in a giant stock feed tank. Yes, that's right: Sitting inside a circular buoyant livestock watering tank, with benches for seating and room in the middle for a cooler, has become a favorite local way to float alongside the plains. Each tank holds 3-8 people, and you get a paddle to help with steering. This affords a slow, calm ride, great for all ages. Nebraska has plenty of places to float. Here are a few of the various companies around the state.



FLOATING DOWN A NEBRASKA RIVER

- **Dusty Trails** (2617 N. Buffalo Bill Ave., North Platte; 308/530-0048; www.dustytrails.biz) arranges trips on the North Platte River.
- **Tank n' Tube River Rides** (4647 N. 230th St., Elkhorn; https://tankntube.com) offers trips along the Elkhorn River.
- In north-central Nebraska, **Calamus Outfitters** (83720 Valleyview Ave., Burwell; 307/346-4697; www.calamusoutfitters.com) runs trips on the Calamus River.

HIGHLIGHTS

HISTORIC HAYMARKET DISTRICT

Lincoln; https://lincolnhaymarket.org

Like Omaha's Old Market, the Historic Haymarket District is where history is given new lease in the form of restaurants, shops, nightlife, and galleries. The district is named for the original market square that sprang up here in 1867 to sell wagons, tools, and hay to local farmers. Spend an afternoon or evening strolling the repurposed warehouses for great dining and shopping options. The district's center is at **Bill Harris Iron Horse Park** (7th St. and P St.), where visitors can see a three-dimensional brick mural of a locomotive train chugging along; it rises up from the brick wall like a relief, creating the illusion that the train is emerging from the wall. The depicted train is from 1870, the first into Lincoln on Independence Day. The small brick-laid park also has an 1890s water tower, now a fountain, and actual trains in back—see a restored Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) steam engine beside the old Burlington Northern Railroad depot.



HISTORIC HAYMARKET DISTRICT

MUSEUM OF AMERICAN SPEED

599 Oakcreek Dr., Lincoln; 402/323-3166;
www.museumofamericanspeed.com

Dedicated to all things racing, this museum is for car lovers. See galleries dedicated to racecars old and new, engines, historic figures in racing, and even toy cars in this 150,000-sq-ft (13,935-sq-m) space.

Major CITIES

OMAHA: Located on the banks of the Missouri River, Nebraska's largest city boasts a vibrant downtown and riverfront area, a world-class zoo, and a diverse array of museums.

LINCOLN: Nebraska's capital is the home of the University of Nebraska and a multicultural population, drawn by its reputation as a refugee-friendly city.

HOMESTEAD NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

8523 W. N-E4, Beatrice; 402/223-3514; www.nps.gov/home

This park is dedicated to the history of homesteading, which, spurred by the Homestead Act of 1862, drew many from the US East Coast to head west—including newly arrived immigrants, women, and formerly enslaved people. In offering "free" land, the act had far-reaching consequences for the nation, changing the face of the country. People such as George Washington Carver, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Nebraska's beloved author Willa Cather were all homesteaders. The act remained in effect until 1976—the last claim was filed in 1974 in Alaska.

The park is spread out over 210 ac (85 ha), encompassing prairie grass and woodlands. Start at the **Homestead Heritage Center,** which has exhibits on the impacts of homesteading. The uniquely shaped building is meant to look like a plow cutting through the thick sod, and it points west across the prairie, offering visitors beautiful views of the restored tallgrass ecosystem out of its big glass windows. Don't skip the thoughtful and award-winning film *Land of Dreams—Homesteading America,* which gives voice to Native American nations who were displaced by the act and discusses the continuing reverberations.

ROCK CREEK STATION STATE HISTORICAL PARK

57426 710th Rd., Fairbury; 402/729-5777;
www.outdoornebraska.gov/rockcreekstation [URL inactive]

Built in 1857, this barn and cabin served as a **Pony Express station** during the 18 months the service ran in 1860-1861. These old buildings likely would've fallen into the past if it weren't for a shootout that occurred here in the spring of 1861 between the owner, David McCanles, and one James Butler Hickok, who soon became known as "Wild Bill" Hickok. The event left McCanles dead and spurred Hickok's career as a legendary gunfighter

—though the fight may not have been fair, as McCanles was likely unarmed.



ROCK CREEK STATION STATE HISTORICAL PARK

Today the site is the Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, where you can see reconstructed buildings that include the Pony Express station, a barn, a bunkhouse, and a few cabins. Get a map for a self-guided tour from the **visitor center,** then hike your way up the hill to wander past the buildings and some covered wagons, and along ruts from wagons plying the Oregon Trail.

CARHENGE

NE-87; 308/762-5400; www.carhenge.com

Out in remote western Nebraska, a circle of cars rises high in the sky like a surrealistic Paleolithic monument. This is Carhenge, 39 vehicles placed in the exact dimensions of the original Stonehenge in southern England. This remote site was dreamed up by Jim Reinders, who was inspired by Stonehenge while living in England. It’s a strange experience to wander

around the gray cars on the prairie, but around 80,000 visitors come each year. Nearby, the **Car Art Preserve** outdoor gallery holds additional car sculptures, like a Conestoga wagon and a spawning salmon. The **Pit Stop Gift Shop** offers plenty of postcards and other souvenirs.

ASH HOLLOW STATE HISTORICAL PARK

4265 US 26, Lewellen; 308/778/7708;
www.outdoornebraska.gov/ashhollow [URL inactive]

This park is split into two sections. At the **Windlass Hill** site, you'll find a sod house (a common shelter used by homesteaders built from the main material available in the area, sod), a giant metal wagon with informational kiosks, and a paved trail that takes you up the hill to see ruts. The 0.5-mi (0.8-km) loop takes 30 minutes to hike and offers excellent views of the hilly terrain that wagons conquered on their way down into the valley—deep ruts and gorges are visible along the trail, and a stone monument at the top marks where the **Oregon Trail** passes.

The rest of the Ash Hollow site is 2.5 mi (4 km) north of Windlass Hill on US 26. Turn right into the gate to find the **visitor center** at the top of the hill. From the center, a short walk takes you to a prehistoric cave and archaeological dig site; the "cave" is more of a rocky overhang but is worth a visit to see the dig site and prehistoric tools displayed there, proof of early Americans from over 10,000 years ago.

CHIMNEY ROCK

1.5 mi south of NE-92, near Bayard

The spire of Chimney Rock, at a height of more than 300 ft (92 m) from its base, stands tall over the prairie. A remnant of volcanic ash and clay left from ancient floods and weathering, it's the most mentioned landmark of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails, capturing the imagination of pioneers traveling west year after year and recorded in hundreds of diaries. For westward travelers during the days of US expansion, the rock and the spring at its base offered a nice spot to camp, and emigrants made sure to mark their names here. Today, you can only see Chimney Rock from a distance; in order to preserve it, there is no access or trail to it. Road-

trippers can easily identify it from the highway, but for a better look go to the **Chimney Rock Visitor Center** (9822 County Rd. 75; www.nps.gov), which has telescopes pointed right at the rock.

AGATE FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

301 River Rd., Harrison; 308/665-4113; www.nps.gov/agfo

One of the most remote national park sites is in the Panhandle of eastern Nebraska. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument is small but packs a big punch for those interested in fossils, prehistoric mammals, or big prairie views. This site, encompassing massive deathbeds of prehistoric creatures, was a rich land for fossil hunters of the 1880s, when the study of paleontology was booming. Many of the larger fossil specimens are now preserved at institutions such as Harvard University and the Smithsonian. A small but excellent museum is at the national monument, and two interpretive trails allow you to see fossils in situ and enjoy beautiful views.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Spend the day exploring **Omaha's** downtown and riverfront and popping into one or two of its excellent museums. Have a meal at the **Old Market** district before turning in for the night.

DAY 2 Nebraska's next biggest city, **Lincoln,** is an hour away. Explore the **Historic Haymarket District,** then drive an hour south of town to the **Homestead National Monument of America** to learn about the country's complicated history with the land. Then hike nearby along the wagon ruts at **Rock Creek Station State Historical Park.** From here, wind through Nebraska farmland on rural highways for about 2.5 hours to reach **Kearney,** where you'll spend the night.

DAY 3 If it's spring, get up early to see the sandhill cranes at **Fort Kearny State Recreation Area,** which is a good place to stroll any

time of year. Otherwise, head 1.5 hours away to **North Platte** to spend a few lazy hours tanking down the **North Platte River.** Stay overnight in North Platte.

DAY 4 Continue west on I-80 to US 26 to **Ash Hollow State Historical Park,** where you can check out deep wagon ruts on **Windlass Hill.** From there, head to the only-in-Nebraska roadside attraction, **Carhenge.** Afterward, make your way back to I-80 so you don't miss viewing the iconic Oregon Trail landmark **Chimney Rock.** From there, head to **Scottsbluff** for the evening, making sure to try a runza, Nebraska's signature sandwich, at **Gering Bakery.**

DAY 5 In the morning, drive to **Scotts Bluff National Monument** to hike on the actual Oregon Trail. Later, drive one hour north to see **Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.** Spend another night in Scottsbluff or start heading east back to **Omaha,** a seven-hour drive.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ROBIDOUX PASS

Until Mitchell Pass opened in 1851, westward settlers used Robidoux Pass to get through the hills around what's now Scotts Bluff National Monument. Robidoux's route was named for a Frenchman who opened a trading post along the way; many emigrant diaries mention the post and the blacksmith services offered there. It's a beautiful scenic drive; you'll leave the plains and enter the foothills, with grassy bluffs flecked by pine trees surrounding you.

Starting at **Scotts Bluff National Monument,** head toward Gering on K Road, the Old Oregon Trail. In 1 mi (1.6 km), turn right onto Five Rocks Road. Follow this road, which becomes County Road 21 and then NE-71, for 2.5 mi (4 km). Turn right onto Carter Canyon Road, continuing away

from town and into the hills for 8 mi (13 km)—you'll see the former trading post on your right. The last 2 mi (3.2 km) of the route are on dirt roads, which can get muddy and treacherous after a rainstorm, so use caution. The drive takes about 20 minutes one-way.



SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CHIEF STANDING BEAR TRAIL

577 Perkins St. (trailhead), Beatrice

Chief Standing Bear Trail is a rails-to-trails line that runs 22 mi (37 km) south of Beatrice to the Nebraska-Kansas state line, where it connects to the Blue River Rail Trail, which runs another 12 mi (19 km) south to Marysville, Kansas. Leaving Beatrice, the trail is a well-maintained path

that rolls over farmland, under the shade of trees, over bridges, and through prairie grasses. A rest area with picnic shelters, water, and restrooms is located at Holmesville, about 7 mi (11.5 km) down the trail. While there aren't any bike rental options in Beatrice, you can easily walk or run the trail.

The trail is named for Chief Standing Bear of the Ponca Tribe, which owns it today. In 1877 the US Cavalry evicted the Ponca people from their home in northern Nebraska near the Niobrara River. They were forced to walk 200 mi (320 km) to a reservation in Oklahoma, only to find unsuitable conditions when they arrived. One-third of the group died within 18 months from sickness, cold, and poor nutrition. Historical signs and interpretive panels are posted along the trail, allowing visitors to dig deeper into the history of Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca Tribe.

FORT KEARNY STATE RECREATION AREA

1020 V Rd., Kearney; 308/865-5305;
https://outdoornebraska.gov/fortkearnysra [URL inactive]

Adjoining the Fort Kearny State Historical Park and jointly administered, Fort Kearny State Recreation Area offers a bevy of outdoor recreation options. It has seven artificial groundwater lakes with sandy shores. Find swimming and a sandy beach at **Lake 7,** which has restrooms and a picnic shelter. The Fort Kearny hiker-biker trail begins here and heads north over the **Platte River** for 1.8 mi (2.8 km). It follows an old portion of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad. A nice destination from here is **The Archway,** which spans I-80, about 10 mi (16 km) away. The recreation area is also popular for viewing sandhill cranes during the spring migration season; the cranes spend the night on the shallow Platte River.

LAKE MCCONAUGHY STATE RECREATION AREA

1475 NE-61 N., Ogallala; 308/284-8800;
www.outdoornebraska.gov/lakemcconaughy [URL inactive]

You may not think of white-sand beaches when you think of Nebraska, but the state's largest reservoir, Lake McConaughy—called "Big Mac"—has miles of them. At 22 mi (35 km) long and 4 mi (6.4 km) wide, the lake

stretches across 30,000 surface ac (12,140 ha) with over 100 mi (160 km) of shoreline. Fish grow to trophy sizes, with many state records won on these shores. Just east and adjacent to Lake McConaughy is **Lake Ogallala,** a smaller recreational area with about 5 mi (8 km) of shoreline and great fishing. The **visitor center** has exhibits on the Platte River, the local watershed, and Kingsley Dam. Public restrooms, fishing licenses, and camping information are here as well.



KITEBOARDING LAKE MCCONAUGHY

SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT

190276 Old Oregon Trail, Gering; 308/436-9700; www.nps.gov/scbl

Settlers traveling west encountered Scotts Bluff after making it through the flat valley around the North Platte River, forcing them to find a route through the rocky formations. Early travelers found one via Robidoux Pass, a few miles south, but by the 1850s pioneers created an easier road through Mitchell Pass. Scotts Bluff National Monument encompasses Scotts Bluff and South Bluff, bisected by **Mitchell Pass.** The road through the monument takes you through Mitchell Pass, following the path of the

Oregon Trail. This is a fantastic place to enjoy some history, hikes, and great views.

Just outside the **visitor center** are wagons that look ready to roll away to Oregon—these restored beauties are on the old Oregon Trail itself. From here you can take a short 1-mi (1.6-km) round-trip walk that takes about 30 minutes. Once the paved path transitions to dirt, you're hiking on the actual Oregon Trail. There are big swales where the roadbed can be seen. Wagons would travel single file through the bluffs at this point, where it was called Mitchell Pass. Soon you'll be back on asphalt, and the old trail will be marked by wooden posts.

TOADSTOOL GEOLOGICAL PARK

FS Road 902 near Crawford; 308/432-0300

This remote park in the northwest corner of Nebraska has unique geological features. Among these badlands are wrinkled rock formations with caps like mushrooms that give the park its name. Three trails ranging in length 1-5 mi (1.6-8 km) round-trip allow appreciation of these natural sculptures of clay and sandstone. There's also a primitive campground but no water.



TOADSTOOL GEOLOGICAL PARK

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NEBRASKALAND DAYS

Wild West Arena, North Platte; 308/532-7939; www.nebraskalanddays.com; June

The state's biggest celebration, NEBRASKAland Days is held during the third week of June for several nights of rodeo fun, live country music featuring top performers, and parades. The **Buffalo Bill Rodeo** is the main event; started in 1882 by the man himself, it's the oldest spectator rodeo in the country.

CORNHUSKERS FOOTBALL

Memorial Stadium, 1 Memorial Stadium Dr., Lincoln; www.huskers.com; Sept.-Nov.

Each fall, the city of Lincoln turns red in support of Cornhuskers Football. The University of Nebraska's football team hosts a series of home games each year that turn Memorial Stadium into the state's third-largest city with more than 85,000 attendees—all, inevitably, wearing red. Every game is usually sold out; check for tickets a month or two ahead of time.

BEST SOUVENIRS

In Nebraska, souvenir shopping is often less about what you buy and more about where you buy them.

From its Western-style facade and boardwalk to the Nebraska T-shirts and souvenirs for sale, **Stagecoach** (310 3rd Ave., Kearney; 308/234-3313; https://stagecoachgifts.biz) is deliciously kitschy. Find a fantastic selection of jewelry handcrafted by Native American artists with beautiful and complicated inlaid patterns. Look for the unique Sonoran Gold turquoise, which has a deep-green color with gold accents.

Grain Bin Antique Town (10641 S. Old Hwy. 83, North Platte; 308/539-7401; www.grainbinantiquetown.com [URL inactive]) has 20 repurposed circular grain bins and one giant red barn, all holding unknown antique treasures. Each bin is roughly themed so you know where to look for teacups or vintage signs, while the barn has high-quality vintage crystal, furniture, and stone crockery.

BEST FOOD

Steak and barbecue are common in Nebraska, as they are in the West and Great Plains, but the state lays claim to a sandwich all its own.

RUNZA

A beloved sandwich that only Nebraskans have heard of, the runza is a legacy of German-Russian immigrants in the 18th century. It's a hoagie-shaped sandwich roll made of fluffy yeast dough and filled with spiced beef, cabbage, and onions. In Kansas it's known as a bierock and comes in a bun shape rather than the longer runza.

Today, the sandwich owes its popularity to a Lincoln-based fast-food chain, also called **Runza** (in fact, the company trademarked the name). The chain, perhaps the only one to popularize cabbage, makes their sandwiches fresh every day from bread baked in-store, seasoned beef, and freshly chopped kraut. For a different version, try the **Gering Bakery** (1446 10th St., Gering; 308/436-5500), on the west side of the state, where it goes by the name "cabbage burger."

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Eppley Airfield:** OMA; 4501 Abbott Dr., Omaha; 402/661-8000; www.flyomaha.com
- **Lincoln Airport:** LNK; 2400 W. Adams St., Lincoln; 402/458-2480; www.lincolnairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Nebraska:** www.visitnebraska.com
- **Nebraska Game and Parks:** https://outdoornebraska.gov [URL inactive]

MAGAZINES

- **NebraskaLife:** www.nebraskalife.com

KANSAS

On the land of a number of Indigenous nations, including the Pawnee, Osage, Kansa, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Shawnee, Iowa Tribe, Sac and Fox Nation, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Wichita, Kansas sits at the heart of the heartland, with the halfway point between New York and San Francisco in Kinsley, Kansas. Broken treaties, an adamantly free state stance, and a landmark civil rights case are all part of the history of this state. Today, Kansas encompasses tallgrass prairie, landforms of an ancient seabed, wetlands, and vibrant cities. Its gentle plains invite closer examination, and you may be surprised at what you see: a fossil embedded in a rock formation, a mural painted in a doorway, a field bursting with sunflowers.

AREA: 82,278 sq mi / 213,100 sq km (15th)

POPULATION: 2,970,606 (34th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 29, 1861 (34th)

STATE CAPITAL: Topeka


KANSAS
NEBRASKA
IOWA
COLORADO
MISSOURI
OKLAHOMA
TEXAS
LINCOLN
Omaha
Tulsa
PAWNEE INDIAN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC SITE
REMEMBERING THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
OZ MUSEUM
WANDERING THROUGH PRAIRIELAND AT TALLGRASS PRAIRIE NATIONAL PRESERVE
TAKING A TOUR OF WICHITA'S MURALS
MONUMENT ROCKS
DOROTHY'S HOUSE
Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park
Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area
Quivira National Wildlife Refuge
Mushroom Rock State Park
Kanopolis State Park
Maxwell Wildlife Refuge
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve
Arkansas River
FLINT HILLS
FLINT HILLS SCENIC BYWAY
TOPEKA
Kansas City
Overland Park
Lawrence
Leavenworth
Lansing
Wichita
Dodge City
Garden City
Hays
Salina
Hutchinson
Newton
Emporia
Council Grove
Manhattan
Junction City
Abilene
Marysville
Belleville
Concordia
Atchison
Horton
Oberlin
Norton
Phillipsburg
Colby
Goodland
Oakley
Hill City
Stockton
Osborne
Plainville
WaKeeney
Russell Springs
Sharon Springs
Scott City
Leoti
Tribune
Ness City
Great Bend
McPherson
Lakin
Syracuse
Kinsley
Jetmore
Sanford
Pratt
Midway
Augusta
Winfield
Arkansas City
Coffeyville
Sedan
Moline
Parsons
Pittsburg
Oswego
Coldwater
Medicine Lodge
Harper
Meade
Hugoton
Liberal
Sublette
Minneola
Ulysses
Johnson City
Madison
Yates Center
Cassoday
Matfield Green
Cottonwood Falls
Herington
Ottawa
Olathe
Gardner
Oskaloosa
Saint Marys
Wamego
Randolph
Holton
Nortonville
Netawaka
Fairview
Glasco
Minneapolis
Luray
Beloit
Downs
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

The main metro areas of Kansas—Wichita, **Kansas City,** and **Topeka**—are all in the eastern part of the state. **Dodge City** and the Niobrara chalk outcroppings at **Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park** are located in rural and arid western Kansas.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring-early fall is the most popular season to travel in Kansas, avoiding the state's brutal winters, when temperatures can get below 12°F (-11°C).

TOP 3

1 REMEMBERING THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AT *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION* NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE

1515 SE Monroe St., Topeka; 785/354-4273; www.nps.gov/brvb

Topeka witnessed a watershed moment in US history when the landmark case to end legal segregation was decided in 1954. Both the plaintiffs and the school systems involved in the decision were from Topeka, and the case eventually made its way to the US Supreme Court. You can visit the *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historical Site, located in the old Monroe Elementary School, the once-segregated school that the plaintiff, student Linda Brown, attended. Visitors will find galleries and exhibits in the old classrooms that examine the court decision, the Civil Rights Movement, and the history of segregation and education. The kindergarten room reflects its 1954 segregated appearance, and a 30-minute video plays in the old auditorium.



BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE

2 TAKING A TOUR OF WICHITA'S MURALS

www.visitwichita.com

Wichita boasts more than 100 murals and public art installations throughout the city. Most are concentrated in the 3-mi-long (4.8-km) **Douglas Design District** (E. Douglas Ave. between Washington and Oliver St.), where you can find art deco-y ***Strength through the Spirit of Growth*** (E. Douglas Ave. and Washington St.); a mural that depicts **Gene Simmons, Frankenstein, and Joey Ramone** (E. Douglas Ave. and S. Laura St.); and a colorful rendition of a ***Welcome to Wichita*** postcard (E. Douglas Ave. between N. Hillside and N. Rutan St.). Beyond the Douglas Design District, the **Beachner Grain Elevator Mural** (519 E. 20th St. N.) holds records for its size and showcases the city's diversity. **Visit Wichita** maintains an online map of the city's murals so you can design your own self-guided mural tour.

3 WANDERING THROUGH PRAIRIELAND AT TALLGRASS PRAIRIE NATIONAL PRESERVE

2480B KS-177, Strong City; 620/273-8494; www.nps.gov/tapr

Tallgrass once covered large swaths of North America, but with much of the land used for farming, now only a small fraction remains. See this delicate ecosystem in the Kansas Flint Hills at the nearly 11,000-ac (4,451-ha) Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, located between Wichita and Topeka. Trails dedicated to walking and hiking (no bikes, horses, or motorized vehicles) weave through the remaining tallgrass prairieland, where the stalks typically grow 3-5 ft (0.9-1.5 m) by September and October. Keep your eye out for bison, who wander freely in the park's **Windmill Pasture** on the **Scenic Overlook Trail** (6.4 mi/10.2 km round-trip). Historic ranch buildings can be viewed on a self-guided tour. The visitor center contains exhibits where you can learn more about the tallgrass prairie. The 1-mi (1.6-km) accessible **Bottomland Nature Trail** (trailhead on Rte. 227, 2 mi/3.2 km south of the visitor center) is a good introduction to the park with interpretive signs posted along the path.



TALLGRASS PRAIRIE NATIONAL PRESERVE

HIGHLIGHTS

MASSACHUSETTS STREET

Lawrence

Abolitionists from Massachusetts founded the city of Lawrence, and the name of its main downtown street attests to that beginning. While many visitors may be drawn to cheer on the University of Kansas Jayhawks, the stretch of Mass Street from US 40 to 14th Street, with its shops, restaurants, and bars, is the best place to get a feel of the city.



MASSACHUSETTS STREET, LAWRENCE

PAWNEE INDIAN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC SITE

480 Pawnee Trail; 785/361-2255

The only museum of its kind in Kansas or Nebraska, Pawnee Indian Museum State Historic Site offers a glimpse into day-to-day Pawnee life. In the 19th century, the Pawnee people lived throughout Kansas and Nebraska in villages of dome-shaped earth lodges. In 1875, the Pawnee people ceded their territory in Kansas and Nebraska to the United States, which moved them to reservations in Oklahoma. Today the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized government and numbers over 3,200 people who take great pride in their ancestral heritage of rich myths and religious rites, supporting yearly dances and intertribal meetings.



PAWNEE INDIAN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC SITE

Located in northern Kansas, this site preserves a rare example of an earth lodge from the Kitkahaki band of the Pawnee, who lived in the area. Visitors can step inside the excavated lodge—the museum was built directly over the excavation site, allowing artifacts to be left where they were found. Other items on display include Pawnee star charts, a robe made of bison, and the special not-to-be-photographed Sacred Bundle, which contains ceremonial items wrapped in bison hide, that was passed down through families and donated by a member of the Pawnee Nation. Outside, a nature trail guides you past depressions in the earth where other lodges were located in the village.

Major CITIES

WICHITA: The Arkansas River flows through Wichita, with the Little and Big Arkansas converging in Midtown, where the town's famous ***Keeper of the Plains*** statue stands. The biggest city in

Kansas blends history with food, entertainment, and a healthy mural scene.

KANSAS CITY: The confusing thing about Kansas City, Kansas, is that it shares a name with the much bigger city across the river in Missouri. Nonetheless, it's the third-biggest city in Kansas (after neighboring Overland Park in the same metro area), with sights like the **Kansas Speedway** and **Quindaro Townsite,** which was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

TOPEKA: Once part of the rolling tallgrass prairie that supported herds of bison, the Kansas capital was known for its free-state stance against enslavement in the years leading up to the Civil War, while later its board of education was the defendant in the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* case that resulted in the ruling that segregation was illegal. This history is showcased in its museums, while the beautiful parks offer visitors a green look at today's Kansas.

KINSLEY

Also known as Midway USA, Kinsley sits equidistant (1,561 mi/2,512 km, to be exact) from New York City and San Francisco. Here, you're smack-dab in the middle of the country! A big sign—perfect for a photo—indicates this fact on the grounds of the **Edwards County Historical Society Museum** (US 50/US 56; 620/659-2420; www.edwardscountymuseum.com).

DODGE CITY

This frontier town in southwest Kansas—the "Dodge" of the adage "get out of Dodge"—was once home to notorious gunfights, cattle drives, and Wyatt Earp. Known as "Hell on the Plains" during its 1800s heyday, Dodge City is now a law-abiding place. You can't see the original Boot Hill Cemetery, where gunslingers were said to be buried, having "died with their boots on"—there's a distillery there now—but you can spend a fun hour or two at **Boot Hill Museum** (500 W. Wyatt Earp Blvd., Dodge City; 620/227-8188; www.boothill.org). It's a re-created Old West town with interactive

displays, artifacts, live shows, staged gunfights, building replicas, and a nice souvenir shop.

SUNFLOWERS

One of the state's nicknames is the Sunflower State, and taking photos surrounded by blooming sunflowers has become a popular Kansas activity, albeit one that can only be done within a short window of time in late summer. Blooms last about 10-14 days, roughly around the two weeks before and after Labor Day. Located between Kansas City and Topeka, **Grinter's Sunflower Farm** (24154 Stillwell Rd., Lawrence) is the most well-known sunflower field, to the point of causing major traffic over Labor Day weekend. Western Kansas—Sherman County, in particular—is actually the top sunflower-producing region of the state, though it's a quite a distance from the main population centers in the state.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

"We're not in Kansas anymore" is the oft-repeated line from the classic film *The Wizard of Oz.* Given that Dorothy and Toto blew away to Oz from a farm in Kansas, it's no surprise that there are Oz-themed sights in the state. For a collection of memorabilia related not only to the film, but also to the L. Frank Baum book and other renditions of the story, such as *The Wiz*, head to the **OZ Museum** (511 Road to Oz Hwy., Wamego; 866/458-8686; https://ozmuseum.com), located about an hour outside Topeka. In the town of Liberal, near the Oklahoma border, a self-styled **Dorothy's House** (567 E. Cedar St., Liberal; www.dorothyshouse.com) is a lookalike of Dorothy's Kansas home, and the neighboring **Land of Oz** sets scenes from the movie along a painted yellow brick road.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Wichita** and spend the day exploring the city, making sure to check out the murals in the **Douglas Design District.**

DAY 2 Drive northeast out of the city to **KS-177** at Cassoday. Drive through the **Flint Hills,** and walk a trail in the **Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.** Afterward, head up to **Council Grove**—if you're hungry, stop by **Hays House** (112 W. Main St.; 620/767-5911; www.hayshouse.com), the oldest restaurant west of the Mississippi. **Topeka** is your destination at the end of the day.

DAY 3 Split your time today between the capital city and neighboring **Lawrence,** the home of the University of Kansas. Make

stops at the ***Brown v. Board of Education*** **National Historical Site** and **G's Frozen Custard** in Topeka, and **Mass Street** in Lawrence.

DAY 4 This is a driving day. From Topeka, head west to **Dodge City,** a 4.5-hour drive. Just before you reach Dodge City, stop in **Kinsley** to mark the fact that you're halfway between New York and San Francisco.

DAY 5 From Dodge City, drive out two hours to **Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park** and **Monument Rocks,** two sets of scenic and fascinating chalk outcroppings in the middle of the plains. Spend the night in **Garden City.**

DAY 6 Head east toward **Wichita,** a four-hour drive from Garden City. Birders and nature lovers will want to detour to **Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area** or **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge** (or both) before going back to the city.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

FLINT HILLS SCENIC BYWAY

KS-177

This 47-mi (76-km) stretch of KS-177 traverses the beautiful Flint Hills, named for the flint that's eroded from the bedrock near the earth's surface. Starting in **Council Grove,** a former frontier stop where travelers made final repairs on their covered wagons before continuing west on the Santa Fe Trail, the drive south passes the **Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve** and small ranching towns like **Cottonwood Falls** and **Matfield Green** before reaching **Cassoday,** the southern end of the scenic byway.

WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE SCENIC BYWAY

This drive northwest of Wichita weaves through small country roads to join **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge** (www.fws.gov/refuge/quivira) and **Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area** (204 NE 60 Rd., Great Bend; 620/793-7730; www.ksoutdoors.com), two major wetlands for migratory birds, such as sandhill and whooping cranes.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

MAXWELL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2565 Pueblo Rd., Canton; 620/6547230; https://maxwellwildliferefuge.com

From November to March, the state's largest herd of free-roaming bison calls this refuge home. In addition to bison, wildlife enthusiasts can spot elk and many species of birds. The best way to see the bison is on a 45-minute **guided tour** on a covered tram. The tour gives visitors a deeper look into the natural and human history of the area. The refuge is an hour's drive north of Wichita.

KANOPOLIS STATE PARK

200 Horsethief Rd., Marquette; 785/546-2565; https://ksoutdoors.com

Set on the northeast shore of Kanopolis Reservoir, the first state park in Kansas offers nearly 30 mi (48 km) of trails through canyons and prairieland. The nearby **Mushroom Rock State Park,** under the same management, features a formation shaped like its eponymous fungus.



MUSHROOM ROCK STATE PARK

LITTLE JERUSALEM BADLANDS STATE PARK

off US 83 between Oakley and Scott City; 620/872-2061; https://ksoutdoors.com

Located in western Kansas, about a four-hour drive from Wichita, Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park features outcroppings of Niobrara chalk in fantastic formations, which are remnants from an ancient inland sea that once covered this area—and much of North America. Impressive from afar, the formations also contain fossils of sea creatures, which are visible in some places. Do not take any that you see—fossil collecting is prohibited, as is climbing on the rocks, in order to preserve this precious natural area. Two hiking trails (0.5-3 mi/0.8-4.8 km) leading to scenic overlooks start from the parking area. Off-trail guided tours are available and require advance reservations. Stay the night in **Oakley,** about 28 mi (45 km) north (30 minutes), or **Garden City,** 65 mi (105 km) south (1 hour).

MONUMENT ROCKS NATURAL AREA

US 83, 28 mi (45 km) south of Oakley

Near Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park, across US 83, a group of chalk outcroppings can be seen at Monument Rocks Natural Area, where you would be forgiven for thinking that you've been transported to Dover in southern England or Étretat on the Normandy coast of France. These Chalk Pyramids, another name for Monument Rocks, stand up to 70 ft (21 m) tall. Although designated as a National Natural Landmark, Monument Rocks is on private property, and reaching the area requires driving on unpaved roads, which may become impassable when muddy. Visitors are allowed during the day only and must heed the posted rules—such as prohibitions on climbing the rocks, camping, and collecting fossils. In this remote part of the state, the closest accommodations and services are in the town of **Oakley,** 28 mi (45 km) north (30 minutes), or the larger **Garden City** 65 mi (105 km) to the south (1 hour).

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

AMERICAN ROYAL WORLD SERIES OF BARBECUE

Kansas City; www.americanroyal.com/bbq; Nov.

Kansas City, Missouri, may get a big share of the attention around Kansas City barbecue, but it's Kansas City, Kansas, that hosts an epic barbecue competition. Held in the fall at the **Kansas Speedway** (400 Speedway Blvd.; www.kansasspeedway.com), the American Royal World Series of Barbecue draws contestants from all over the country in a celebration of this smoke-filled culinary art form.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Topeka is an antiques lover's paradise, with dozens of stores offering hidden treasures. Here are a few good spots: **Washburn View Antique Mall** (1507 SW 21st St.; 785/233-3733; www.washburnviewantiquemall.com [URL inactive]); **Topeka Vendors Market** (528 SE Adams St.; 785/251-0944; https://topekavendorsmarket.com); and **Wheatland Antique Mall** (2905 SW 29th St., Ste. A; 785/272-4222).

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS SPORTS

Lawrence; https://kuathletics.com

The sports teams at the University of Kansas, known as the Jayhawks, are a huge draw for the college town of Lawrence. Fans crowd the city whenever there's a home game during the fall football season. Basketball is also big. Plan ahead if you want to see a game.

BEST FOOD

BROWN BREAD FROZEN CUSTARD

Brown Bread frozen custard at **G's Frozen Custard** (1301 SW 6th Ave., Topeka; 785/234-3480; https://gsfrozencustard.com) is a local Topeka tradition that harks back to the Victorian era. While you're there, the other homemade flavors are delicious, too.

BIEROCKS

The Kansas cousin to Nebraska's runza, the bierock is a sandwich filled with savory meats served on a bun. Try one at **M & M Bierock** (2065 E.

Central St., Wichita; 316/262-6263).



BIEROCKS

PIZZA HUT

The first location of the nationwide Pizza Hut chain (www.pizzahut.com) was located in Wichita. That building is now a **museum** (Bluff and Kellogg; www.wichita.edu/museums/pizzahutmuseum) on the Wichita State University campus. Although you can't get Pizza Hut pizza at the museum, there are several locations in Wichita, including at the campus student center.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport:** ICT; 2277 Eisenhower Airport Pkwy., Wichita; 316/946-4700; www.flywichita.com
- **Kansas City International Airport:** MCI; 1 Kansas City Blvd., Kansas City, MO; 816/243-3000; www.flykc.com [URL inactive]

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Kansas Tourism:** www.travelks.com
- **Kansas Wildlife, Parks & Tourism:** https://ksoutdoors.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Wichita Eagle:*** www.kansas.com

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma is famous for its rolling plains, impressive oil and agriculture industries, and, of course, the onion burger. From 1830 to 1887, the US government began a series of forced migrations that took Indigenous people off their traditional lands and onto the Trail of Tears to walk to the “Indian Territory”—what eventually became the state of Oklahoma. During this period, 67 tribes were relocated to Oklahoma; today, 39 nations are within Oklahoma’s borders. In 1887, the federal government passed the Dawes Act, opening up 90 million ac (36 million ha) of land to white settlement.

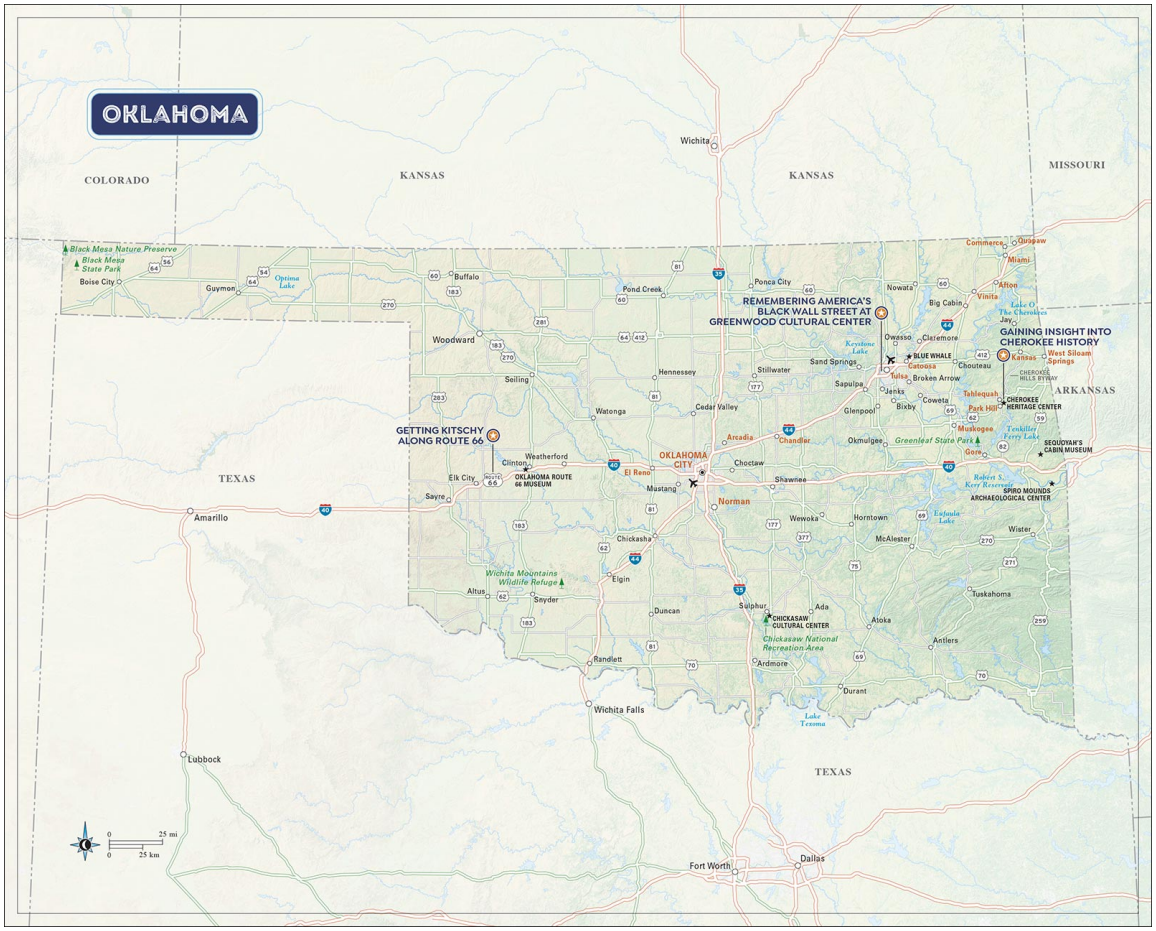
Route 66 was a major route from the Dust Bowl for those fleeing poverty during the Great Depression. History can be seen throughout the state, in museums and cultural centers and along the state’s preserved sections of Route 66. And history continues to be made here. In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that almost half of the state was within a Native American reservation—in a different trajectory from what had taken place for much of US history, the court upheld treaties that promised lands to the Five Tribes, which are the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole people.

AREA: 69,899 sq mi / 181,037 sq km (20th)

POPULATION: 4,095,393 (28th)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 16, 1907 (46th)

STATE CAPITAL: Oklahoma City


OKLAHOMA
COLORADO
KANSAS
KANSAS
MISSOURI
TEXAS
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
Wichita
Black Mesa Nature Preserve
Black Mesa State Park
Boise City
Guymon
Optima Lake
Buffalo
Woodward
Seiling
Pond Creek
Hennessey
Watonga
Cedar Valley
Stillwater
Ponca City
REMEMBERING AMERICA'S BLACK WALL STREET AT GREENWOOD CULTURAL CENTER
GETTING KITSCHY ALONG ROUTE 66
Weatherford
Clinton
Elk City
OKLAHOMA ROUTE 66 MUSEUM
Sayre
Amarillo
El Reno
OKLAHOMA CITY
Mustang
Arcadia
Chandler
Choctaw
Shawnee
Norman
Okmulgee
Greenleaf State Park
Nowata
Big Cabin
Vinita
Afton
Commerce
Miami
Grand Lake O The Cherokees
Jay
GAINING INSIGHT INTO CHEROKEE HISTORY
Kansas
West Siloam Springs
Owasso
Claremore
Keystone Lake
Sand Springs
BLUE WHALE
Catoosa
Tulsa
Chouteau
Broken Arrow
Sapulpa
Jenks
Bixby
Coweta
Glenpool
Tahlequah
Park Hill
CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER
CHEROKEE HILLS BYWAY
Muskogee
Tenkiller Ferry Lake
Gore
SEQUOYAH'S CABIN MUSEUM
Robert S. Kerr Reservoir
SPIRO MOUNDS ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER
Eufaula Lake
Wewoka
Horntown
McAlester
Wister
Chickasha
Elgin
Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge
Altus
Snyder
Duncan
Sulphur
Ada
CHICKASAW CULTURAL CENTER
Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Atoka
Tuskahoma
Antlers
Randlett
Ardmore
Durant
Wichita Falls
Lake Texoma
Lubbock
Fort Worth
Dallas
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Oklahoma City is located near the center of the state, near the transition between the more forested eastern part of the state and the drier prairie in the west. **Tulsa** is in eastern Oklahoma, and the sights related to Indigenous history and culture are concentrated in the eastern part of the state, where the **Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Choctaw, Seminole, Chickasaw,** and **Osage Nations** are located.

WHEN TO GO

Oklahoma weather can be intense and unpredictable; in November, Oklahoma can be colder and windier than Chicago. Ice storms are also a concern in the **winter. Late spring** to **early summer** and **early autumn** are generally the best times to visit Oklahoma, as the weather is usually temperate. Avoid **late summer,** when the weather can get hot and oppressively muggy.

TOP 3

1 GAINING INSIGHT INTO CHEROKEE HISTORY AT THE CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER

21192 S. Keeler Dr., Park Hill; 918/456-6007; www.cherokeeheritage.org

At the Cherokee Heritage Center, two re-created villages show Cherokee life at different historical periods. The centerpiece is **Diligwa,** a reproduction of an early 18th-century Cherokee village, where guides describe the traditions and daily lives of the Cherokee people from that time. **Adams Corner Rural Village** illustrates life in the 1890s with dwellings, such as a log cabin, and town buildings, including a general store and a church. Inside the **Trail of Tears Exhibit,** six galleries trace the history of the forced removal of the Cherokee people from Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama in the 1830s. In addition to these interpretive exhibits, the center holds an

archive of Cherokee historical documents and artifacts, and the Cherokee Family Research Center, where people with Cherokee ancestry can research their genealogy.



CHEROKEE HERITAGE CENTER

2 REMEMBERING AMERICA'S BLACK WALL STREET AT GREENWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

322 N. Greenwood Ave., Tulsa; 918/596-1020; www.greenwoodculturalcenter.com [URL inactive]

Booker T. Washington referred to Tulsa's **Greenwood District** as America's "Black Wall Street." The 35-block area was once a vibrant community with the wealthiest Black neighborhoods in the South. Not only was it a hotbed of jazz and blues in the 1920s, but it also housed as many as 300 Black-owned businesses, from theaters and restaurants to hotels and law offices.



LIST OF BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES OF TULSA'S GREENWOOD DISTRICT

The Greenwood District was thrust in the national spotlight in June 1921, when one of the nation's worst acts of racial violence broke out. The **Tulsa Race Riot** was instigated by a rumor that a Black man had assaulted a white woman. No one knew what really happened, but as the story spread through the town, an angry white mob gathered and set the Greenwood District on fire. After 18 hours of rioting, looting, and mayhem, hundreds died as Black Wall Street burned to the ground. An estimated 10,000 Black people were left homeless, and nearly all of the wealth and success of the Greenwood District was gone.

The Greenwood Cultural Center has an important collection of memorabilia and photos of the area before, during, and after the riot. Although most of the Greenwood District was burned to the ground, the Black community of Tulsa persevered and opened thriving businesses, many located just down the street from the cultural center.

3 GETTING KITSCHY ALONG ROUTE 66

Oklahoma has more drivable miles of Route 66 than any other state. The original alignment of Route 66 entered the state at the Kansas border and continued through Quapaw, Commerce, and Miami, a stretch of Route 66 primarily labeled US 69. At Afton, the road becomes US 60/69 into Vinita, then is mostly labeled Route 66 into Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and beyond. Running between **Miami** and **Afton,** the 1922 **Sidewalk Highway** is one of the oldest still drivable roadbeds on Route 66. In **Catoosa,** you can check out an oddball roadside attraction, the **Blue Whale** (2680 N. SR-66, Catoosa; www.travelok.com). Spend a few hours in **Tulsa** soaking up the **art deco architecture.** In **Arcadia,** you can browse the selection of 600 sodas at **Pop's** (660 SR-66, Arcadia; 405/927-7677; www.pops66.com) and see an honest-to-goodness **Round Barn** (107 SR-66, Arcadia; 405/396-0824; www.arcadiaroundbarn.org). One of the most popular Route 66 museums along the entire Chicago-to-Santa Monica drive is the **Oklahoma Route 66 Museum** (2229 W. Gary Blvd., Clinton; 580/323-7866; www.route66.org).



BLUE WHALE, CATOOSA

HIGHLIGHTS

SPIRO MOUNDS ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER

18154 1st St., Spiro; 918/962-2062; www.okhistory.org

Located along the Arkansas River in eastern Oklahoma, this mound site covered ancient villages of the Indigenous Caddoan Mississippian culture. Though looted by white residents in the 1930s, the mounds still contained one of the most important troves of ancient Indigenous artifacts in the United States, which illuminated the trading activity among the Mississippians that extended far beyond what is now Oklahoma. The museum displays artifacts found at the site, and interpretive trails around the center tell more of the Spiro story.

SEQUOYAH'S CABIN MUSEUM

470288 OK-101, Sallisaw; 877/779-6977

A blacksmith by trade, Sequoyah was the creator of the system for writing Cherokee, assigning a symbol for each sound in the language. Born in Tennessee, he came to eastern Oklahoma and built this single-room log cabin in 1829, where he lived for about 15 years. Today, the cabin is preserved in an enclosure, and you can see the dwelling and other related displays.

Major CITIES

OKLAHOMA CITY: Developed as a result of the Land Rush after the Dawes Act of 1887, the state capital, often shortened to OKC, boasts pedestrian-friendly streets, public art, bike lanes, a canal and waterfront area, as well as some of the most authentic Vietnamese food in the country.

TULSA: A small frontier settlement turned oil boomtown, Tulsa is home to one of the largest concentrations of art deco structures in the United States.

NORMAN: Oklahoma's third-largest city is home of the University of Oklahoma.

WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

1720 W. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore; 918/341-0719; www.willrogers.com

Most people know Will Rogers (1879-1935) as a movie star, but he was also a writer, speaker, philosopher, and comedian. His father was a Cherokee senator and judge who helped write the Oklahoma constitution, and his mother descended from a Cherokee chief. This museum delves into his early years and explores his legacy as a newspaper columnist and radio, film, and vaudeville star.



WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

TULSA ART DECO MUSEUM

501 S. Boston Ave., Tulsa; 918/804-2669; www.tulsaartdecomuseum.com

This small but informative museum about the design and era of art deco holds a collection of artifacts such as jewelry, advertising artwork, silverware, and clothing. The museum is located in the lobby of the gorgeous Philcade Building, located in downtown Tulsa, which offers up one of the most extensive collections of art deco architecture in the United States. After visiting the museum, embark on a self-guided art deco tour of the city—a few places to see include the Philtower building, Tulsa Club, Atlas Life building, Oklahoma Natural Gas Building, and the Boston Avenue Methodist Church. For a list of nearly 40 art deco buildings throughout Tulsa, visit the **Tulsa Preservation Commission** (www.tulsapreservationcommission.org). The **Tulsa Historical Society**

(2445 S. Peoria Ave.; 918/712-9484; www.tulsahistory.org) provides art deco walking tours.

GILCREASE MUSEUM

1400 N. Gilcrease Museum Rd., Tulsa; 888/655-2278; www.gilcrease.utulsa.edu

The Gilcrease Museum reopened in 2026 in a remodeled space that houses its impressive collection of over 350,000 pieces of paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures by 400 artists from past and present. The museum also has an unparalleled collection of American Indian artifacts, historical manuscripts, and art. Don't miss the expansive gardens on the museum grounds.

OKLAHOMA HISTORY CENTER

800 Nazih Zuhdi Dr., Oklahoma City; 405/522-0765; www.okhistory.org/historycenter

A Smithsonian affiliate, this 215,000-sq-ft (19,974-sq-m), 18-ac (7.3-ha) site explores everything from aviation, transportation, and commerce to heritage and geology. There are five state-of-the-art permanent galleries, an outdoor oil-field exhibit with drilling derricks, and more than 200 interactive exhibits that not only educate but also entertain.

OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

620 N. Harvey Ave., Oklahoma City; 405/235-3313; https://memorialmuseum.com

In 1995, a terrorist bombing at Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh catapulted Oklahoma City into tragic infamy. About 800 people were injured, and 149 men and women and 19 children were killed. The Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum honors those who lost their lives in the attack. With interactive exhibits and powerful oral histories, videos, and bomb-damaged artifacts, the museum walks you

through the day of the attack, and the days, weeks, and years following, to help you understand how this event forever shaped the city. The memorial park contains a survivor tree and a field filled with 168 chairs engraved with the name of each person who died.



OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

CHICKASAW CULTURAL CENTER

867 Cooper Memorial Dr., Sulphur; 580/622-7130; www.chickasawculturalcenter.com

This extensive facility recounts the history and cultural traditions of the Chickasaw people through permanent and temporary exhibits of fine art and artifacts, a re-creation of a traditional village, and interpretive programs. In addition to the indoor displays, the 184-ac (74-ha) grounds feature gardens, sculptures, and an elevated viewing platform that looks over the traditional village.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in **Oklahoma City.** Get a sense of the state at the **Oklahoma History Center,** then visit the **Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.** Be sure to have a meal at a Vietnamese restaurant—Oklahoma City has some of the best **Vietnamese food** in the country.

DAY 2 Today, you'll get a taste of the Mother Road. Head out east on **Route 66,** but don't be in a hurry. Right outside OKC, stop in **Arcadia** for two classic Route 66 stops: Pop's and the Round Barn. When you hit **Chandler,** you can pick up some Mother Road memorabilia. **Tulsa** is your destination for the night.

DAY 3 Spend the day in Tulsa, which is full of history. Don't miss the **Greenwood Cultural Center,** which tells the story of the prosperous Black neighborhood burned down in the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. Then, check out the **art deco landmarks** around downtown Tulsa. Spend another night in Tulsa.

DAY 4 On the way out of Tulsa, squeeze in another Route 66 sight by stopping in Catoosa, home of the **Blue Whale.** Then, head west to the town of **Kansas** to pick up the **Cherokee Hills Byway.** Wend your way to **Park Hill** to visit the **Cherokee Heritage Center.** Afterward, keep heading south along the byway until you reach the end in **Gore.** If you have reservations to stay at one of the WPA-built cabins in **Greenleaf State Park,** head there from Gore, or go up to **Muskogee** to spend the night.

DAY 5 From Greenleaf State Park or Muskogee, it's nearly a three-hour drive to the **Chickasaw Cultural Center.** Give yourself time to see the art and exhibits and also stroll the grounds. Afterward, head to the nearby **Chickasaw National Recreation Area** for a short hike

or even a swim. From there, make the 1.5-hour drive back to **Oklahoma City** to complete the loop. If you haven't had an onion burger yet, make the 30-minute jaunt west from OKC to **El Reno** for this classic Oklahoma food.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

CHEROKEE HILLS BYWAY

Starting in the town of **West Siloam Springs** on the Arkansas border and ending in **Gore,** this 84-mi (135-km) route winds through the Ozark foothills in eastern Oklahoma, tracing the history of the Cherokee people along the way. From West Siloam Springs, take **US 59** to the town of **Kansas,** where the route turns south on **OK-10,** following the **Illinois River.** At the junction with **US 62,** turn west, which brings you to the Cherokee Nation capital of **Tahlequah** and nearby Park Hill, where the **Cherokee Heritage Center** and other significant Cherokee Nation sights are located. From Park Hill, keep traveling south on US 62, then southeast on **OK-82** and **OK-100,** passing **Tenkiller Ferry Lake,** to the town of Gore. From Tahlequah to Gore, the byway intersects with the **Trail of Tears National Historic Trail** (www.nps.gov/trte), which preserves the route of the forcible removal of the Cherokee people from Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama to Oklahoma.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

GREENLEAF STATE PARK

12022 Greenleaf Rd., Braggs; 918/487-5622; www.travelok.com

The eponymous lake is the centerpiece of this state park, but it's the 16 WPA-built cabins that make Greenleaf stand out. Up to four guests can stay in most of these original stone cabins that resulted from the massive federal employment program in the 1930s—one of the cabins only sleeps two, while another can accommodate eight. Minimum stays may be required during peak season.

CHICKASAW NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

901 W. 1st St., Sulphur; 580/622-7234; www.nps.gov/chic

Situated around Lake of the Arbuckles, Veterans Lake, and Travertine Creek, this park has campgrounds and more than 20 mi (32 km) of hiking trails, along which you may see wildlife like bison and armadillos, but the most popular activities involve the water. Travertine Creek is often crowded on warm weekends with swimmers, waders, and people just enjoying the scenery. The recreation area includes the grounds that were once designated as Platt National Park, which protected the springs around Travertine and Rock Creeks.



CHICKASAW NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE

32 Refuge Headquarters, Indiahoma; 580/429-3222; www.fws.gov

Established in 1901 with almost 60,000 ac (24,281 ha) of wilderness, the refuge is home to more than 275 bird species alone, including bald eagles and whooping cranes. In 1907, 15 bison were brought here from the New York Zoological Park; today, there are 650. There are also about 700 elk and 300 longhorns. You can hike, rock climb, bike, fish, and camp throughout this wild and rugged landscape.



WICHITA MOUNTAINS WILDLIFE REFUGE

BEST SOUVENIRS

INDIGENOUS ART AND GIFTS

In addition to the **Cherokee Heritage Center** and the **Chickasaw Cultural Center,** the museums of other Native American nations have gift shops with items made by Indigenous artists and craftspeople: **Seminole Nation Museum** (524 S. Wewoka Ave., Wewoka; 405/257-5580; www.seminolenationmuseum.org), **Five Civilized Tribes Museum** (1101 Honor Heights Dr., Muskogee; 918/683-1701; www.fivetribes.org), **Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Capitol Museum** (163665 N. 4355 Rd., Tuskahoma; 918/569-4465; https://choctawcountry.com).

ROUTE 66 MEMORABILIA

The gift shop at the **Route 66 Interpretive Center** (400 E. 1st St., Chandler; 405/258-1300; www.route66interpretivecenter.org) sells plenty of Route 66-themed gifts as well as the handiwork of local artisans.

Also in Chandler, **McJerry's Route 66 Gallery** (306 Manvel Ave.; 405/240-7659; www.mcjerry66.com) houses artist and painter Jerry McClanahan's paintings, postcards, and prints, which capture special moments from his travels along Route 66. You can even commission him to record your own road-trip experience on canvas.

BLACK MESA STATE PARK AND NATURE PRESERVE

County Rd. 325, Kenton; 580/665-8396; www.travelok.com

At 4,973 ft (1,516 m) tall, Black Mesa, so named for the dark lava rock that covers it, is the highest point in Oklahoma. Located in the remote western Panhandle, the park is divided into two noncontiguous sections: the state park, which is centered around Lake Carl Etting, and the preserve, which is

about 15 mi (24 km) northwest. Black Mesa is in the preserve, and the highest point is accessible via an 8.8-mi (14.1-km) round-trip hike along an exposed trail that can get very hot in the summer.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

RED EARTH FESTIVAL

Oklahoma City; 405/427-5228; www.redearth.org; Mar.

Held in OKC's Grand Casino, this annual festival brings together more than 100 Indigenous tribes from across the United States. The art show exhibits Indigenous artists' work, such as baskets, pottery, and paintings, much of which can be purchased. The highlight of the festival is the Dance Showcase, an elite competition featuring dancers from various tribes.

WEWOKA SORGHUM FESTIVAL

Wewoka; www.sorghumfestivalok.org; Oct.

Since 1976, this annual festival has celebrated sorghum, a plant that's used as a sweetener, and all its forms. A parade, food vendors, and interpretive demonstrations take place all over downtown Wewoka, with the **Seminole Nation Museum** (524 S. Wewoka Ave., Wewoka; 405/257-5580; www.seminolenationmuseum.org) being the main center of activity.

BEST FOOD

ONION BURGER

For a truly authentic Oklahoma gastronomical experience, try an onion burger. The onion burger was born out of economic necessity during the Great Depression. Since meat was scarce at that time, cooks grilled thin ribbons of onion, then added them to ground beef to bolster the size of the

patty. As the onions caramelized, they formed a savory crust on the patty. Thus, the cost-saving measure boosted the flavor and texture of the burger. Try them at **Sid's Diner** (300 S. Choctaw Ave., El Reno; 405/262-7757; www.sidsdinerelreno.com), with its red and black booths and historic pictures lining the walls.

VIETNAMESE FOOD IN OKLAHOMA CITY

In the 1970s, Vietnamese immigrants flocked to Oklahoma City, and today there are a number of authentic restaurants, mostly located around 23rd Street and Classen Boulevard. Try **Lido Restaurant** (2518 N. Military Ave.; 405/521-1902; www.lidorestaurantokc.com), which blends Vietnamese, Chinese, and colonial French dishes, or **Pho Lien Hoa** (901 NW 23rd St.; 405/521-8087; www.pholienhoa.net), with the best pho in the state.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Will Rogers World Airport:** OKC; 7100 Terminal Dr., Oklahoma City; 405/316-3200; www.flyokc.com
- **Tulsa International Airport:** TUL; 7777 Airport Dr., Tulsa; 918/838-5000; https://flytulsa.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department:** www.travelok.com
- **Oklahoma State Parks:** www.travelok.com/state-parks

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The Oklahoman:*** www.oklahoman.com
- ***Oklahoma Today:*** www.oklahomatoday.com

IOWA

On land of the Oceti Sakowin, Iowa, Sauk, Meskwaki, Kickapoo, Jiwere, and Yankton people, Iowa exerts a pull on the entire United States from its location in the middle of the country. The politically minded explain this influence as a result of the Iowa caucuses, which kick off the presidential nominating contests every four years. The interests of Iowans, the rationale goes, are of outsized concern to politicians who want their support in the caucuses, where a win could give a candidate the needed boost toward the nomination. That may be why corn prices and soybean exports, two of Iowa's top agricultural products, are hot policy topics. Iowa shows up as the setting for quotidian life as well. From the *American Gothic* house to the Field of Dreams to the bridges of Madison County, Iowa has served as the backdrop of Americana. Perhaps it's the country's vision of itself as rolling green valleys, wide tracts of farmland, blazing fall foliage, and wholesome family fun that makes Iowa seem like the everystate. But that's not to say that you don't have to visit Iowa to know it—there are definitely corners that will fascinate and surprise.

AREA: 56,273 sq mi / 145,746 sq km (26th)

POPULATION: 3,241,488 (32nd)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 28, 1846 (29th)

STATE CAPITAL: Des Moines


IOWA
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
SOUTH DAKOTA
NEBRASKA
ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
KANSAS
Sioux Falls
Rock Rapids
Milford
Sanborn
Spencer
Emmetsburg
Algona
Wesley
Garner
Manly
Osage
Mason City
Floyd
Calmar
New Albin
Decorah
Waukon
Yellow River State Forest
Harpers Ferry
Effigy Mounds National Monument
PONDERING EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT
Madison
Postville
Pikes Peak State Park
New Hampton
West Union
Garnavillo
Maurice
Calumet
Sioux Rapids
Westfield
Cherokee
Pocahontas
Humboldt
Goldfield
Hampton
Allison
Oelwein
Strawberry Point
Luxemburg
Backbone State Park
WALKING ONTO THE FIELD OF DREAMS
Dubuque
FIELD OF DREAMS
Dyersville
Independence
Waterloo
Cedar Falls
Parkersburg
Storm Lake
Sioux City
Holstein
Early
Pomeroy
Fort Dodge
Grundy Center
Rockwell City
Ida Grove
Sloan
Onawa
Carroll
Denison
Boone
Marshalltown
Traer
Vinton
Urbana
Monticello
Cascade
Bellevue
Green Island
Marion
Cedar Rapids
Preparation Canyon State Park
Dunlap
LOESS HILLS SCENIC BYWAY
HIGH TRESTLE TRAIL BRIDGE
Madrid
Woodward
Slater
Sheldahl
Ankeny
Saylorville Lake
SAVORING THE FOOD CREATIONS AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR
Urbandale
Altoona
Newton
Coralville Lake
Coralville
Iowa City
Clinton
Logan
Loveland
Adel
Clive
DES MOINES
Monroe
Lake Red Rock
Pella
Montezuma
New Sharon
Kalona
Davenport
Muscatine
Avoca
HITCHCOCK NATURE CENTER
Anita
Bevington
Indianola
Knoxville
Oskaloosa
Webster
Washington
Omaha
Oakland
Council Bluffs
Massena
BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY
Brighton
Olds
Pacific Junction
Emerson
Corning
Afton
Thayer
Osceola
Lucas
Chariton
Albia
Ottumwa
Fairfield
Rathbun Lake
AMERICAN GOTHIC HOUSE & VISITOR CENTER
LINCOLN
Percival
Clarinda
Bedford
Mount Ayr
Decatur City
Humeston
Centerville
Bloomfield
Donnellson
Burlington
Fort Madison
Keokuk
Hamburg
0 25 mi
0 25 km

Major CITIES

DES MOINES: Iowa's state capital and largest city not only harbors a local paper working with one of the best political pollsters, but also has a noted contemporary art museum and a fast-growing population.

CEDAR RAPIDS: The state's second-largest city prides itself on its livability, offering its residents the worldly trappings of a metropolitan area without the crowds and traffic.

ORIENTATION

Des Moines, the state capital, sits a little south of the center of the state, while **Cedar Rapids** is located in eastern Iowa. **Dubuque, Effigy Mounds National Monument,** and the **Driftless Area** are all in the far east of the state, along the Mississippi River. The **Loess Hills** sit in the western Iowa, near the Missouri River, which forms the state's western border.

WHEN TO GO

Iowa has cold, freezing temperatures in **winter** and hot, muggy, rainy **summers. Spring** weather varies with milder temperatures, but also thunderstorms. The state is arguably at its best in **fall,** when the foliage turns bright colors and the weather is warm but less humid.

TOP 3

1 PONDERING EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

151 IA76, Harpers Ferry; 563/873-3491, ext. 123; www.nps.gov/efmo

One of the largest known concentrations of mounds in the country, Effigy Mounds National Monument protects more than 200 prehistoric mound sites set along the Mississippi River in eastern Iowa. In addition to conical burial mounds as seen at other sites, some of the mounds at this site are shaped like animals; bear- and bird-shaped mounds are most prevalent. Their meaning and use are not entirely known, but these formations are sacred to the 20 Indigenous tribes culturally associated with Effigy Mounds and should be viewed with care.

The park encompassing the mounds is split into a North Unit and a South Unit, and the visitor center is located in the North Unit. Trails lead to the different mound groups. The **Little Bear** and **Great Bear Mounds** are the closest to the visitor center and can be viewed along a 2-mi (3.2-km) trail. In the South Unit, parking is available at a day-use area, and from there, viewing the **Marching Bear Group** requires a 4-mi (6.4-km) hike. Trails also lead to overlooks with views of the Mississippi River.



MARCHING BEAR GROUP MOUNDS

2 SAVORING THE FOOD CREATIONS AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR

3000 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines; 800/545-3247; www.iowastatefair.org; Aug.

Nothing says summer like a state fair, and the Iowa State Fair is the quintessential state fair. With more than one million attendees each year, the 10-day, mid-August affair is one of the biggest, most famous events of its kind, especially in the run-up to an election, when politicians try to win some supporters in the state that has long hosted the first contest of the presidential nominating season. Like other state fairs, Iowa's features carnival rides, a parade, evening concerts with headliner acts at the Grandstand, and various livestock and amateur cooking contests.

But overshadowing everything is the food. For the practical, multitasking eaters, there is a vast array of **items served on a stick,** from the salad on a stick to deep-fried bacon pecan pie on a stick. For the daring eaters, there are the new creations that imaginative food entrepreneurs try out at the fair—variations on **poutine,** such as decadently sweet or spicy versions, and variations on **funnel cake** have been popular entries. And then there are the perennial favorites, like **deep-fried cheese curds** and the granddaddy of fair foods on a stick, the classic **corn dog.**



FUNNEL CAKE

3 WALKING ONTO THE FIELD OF DREAMS

28995 Lansing Rd., Dyersville; 563/875-8404; www.fieldofdreamsmoviesite.com

You may remember the line from the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*: "Hey Dad, you wanna have a catch?" It's hard for a passionate baseball fan not to tear up when hearing that line. You can relive the emotion of that moment, and the joy of a simple catch, by visiting the actual Field of Dreams, which was constructed on two farms specifically for the movie. The field really is set amid nothing but Iowa farmland—meaning lots of corn. You can walk the green on your own, but the better option is to schedule a tour, which includes the family farmhouse that's set to look like a late-1980s residence.



FIELD OF DREAMS

If you're visiting with a group, you can rent out the field to play a ball game. You can also rent out the farmhouse for overnight stays.

HIGHLIGHTS

PAPPAJOHN SCULPTURE PARK

1330 Grand Ave., Des Moines; 515/237/1386; www.desmoinesartcenter.org

This park in downtown Des Moines is the setting for more than 30 contemporary art sculptures, including works by Louise Bourgeois, Ugo Rondinone, Yoshitomo Nara, and others. It's part of the **Des Moines Art Center** (4700 Grand Ave.; 515/277-4405; www.desmoinesartcenter.org), which is an excellent modern and contemporary art museum located 2.5 mi (4 km) west of the park on Grand Avenue.



PAPPAJOHN SCULPTURE PARK; SCULPTURE BY MARK DI SUVERO

BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY

https://exploremadisoncounty.com/covered_bridges

The 1995 Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep movie *The Bridges of Madison County* put a spotlight on this bucolic county southwest of Des Moines, where there are six covered bridges still standing. It's possible to visit all six, although only three—Imes Bridge, Cutler-Donahoe Bridge, and Cedar Bridge—can be reached by mostly paved roads. The others—Holliwell Bridge, Hogback Bridge, and Roseman Bridge—require driving on 2-4.3 mi (3.2-7 km) of unpaved roads, depending on the bridge and the direction of your approach. Cedar Bridge, reopened in 2019 after a fire, is the only bridge that can be driven through; the others can be entered on foot. Pick up a map of the bridges at the **Winterset Welcome Center** (73 Jefferson St., Winterset; 515/462-1185; https://exploremadisoncounty.com).

AMERICAN GOTHIC HOUSE & VISITOR CENTER

300 American Gothic St., Eldon; 641/652-3352;
https://americangothichouse.org

The house in the background of Grant Wood's iconic painting, *American Gothic*, still stands in a small community in southeastern Iowa. The exterior is accessible year-round (closed Mon.-Tues.). An adjacent visitor center has a small exhibit about the house and the painting. The most popular activity here is taking a photo in the style of the couple depicted in the painting, and the visitor center has a selection of costumes and props—including pitchforks, of course—available to borrow.



AMERICAN GOTHIC HOUSE

NATIONAL MISSISSIPPI RIVER MUSEUM

350 E. 3rd St., Port of Dubuque; 563/557-9545; www.rivermuseum.com

Although the Mississippi River, which forms Iowa's eastern boundary, isn't the longest river in the United States (that's the Missouri River, which is the state's western boundary), it has a defining place in the country's imagination. This museum explores the role of the river and other waterways through various displays, including a section devoted to the Indigenous peoples living along the river, an aquarium with species from the Gulf of Mexico, and an actual dredge boat. Afterward, stop by the **Fenelon Place Elevator Company** (512 Fenelon Pl., Dubuque; www.fenelonplaceelevator.com), about five minutes away by car, to ride what's billed as "the world's shortest, steepest scenic railway."

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in the capital city of **Des Moines,** and get in a bit of contemporary art at the **Des Moines Art Center** and its nearby Pappajohn Sculpture Park. After lunch, hop in the car for the 3.5-hour drive east to **Dubuque.** On the way, stop in Dyersville to see the **Field of Dreams.**

DAY 2 From Dubuque, head an hour north, mostly along the Mississippi River, to **Pikes Peak State Park,** where you can take short walk to see a waterfall and a prehistoric mound. Then go a few miles north to **Effigy Mounds National Monument,** where you can see more clusters of mounds over the two units of the park. From there, drive up to **Harpers Ferry** to start the first half of the **Driftless Area Scenic Byway** to **Decorah,** an hour away.

DAY 3 From Decorah, finish the rest of the Driftless Area Scenic Byway, admiring the geography on the way to **New Albin** and back down to Harpers Ferry. From there, make a detour to **Yellow River**

State Forest, which has some of the best views in the area, before heading back to Des Moines.

DAY 4 If you have an extra day, do a day trip out to see the **bridges of Madison County,** southwest of Des Moines, or go for a bike ride on the **High Trestle Trail,** north of the city.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY

Intersecting at points with the Great River Road, which follows the Mississippi River through multiple states, the Driftless Area Scenic Byway winds through the northeastern corner of Iowa, which, unlike other parts of the state, was not subject to glacial movement, or drift. This left a scenic, rolling landscape still dotted with bluffs and hills, forests and streams. The 144-mi (160-km) drive has a couple options for routes. The most extensive route starts in **Postville** and makes a wide S-shape through the region, hitting the Mississippi River at **Harpers Ferry,** turning west toward **Waukon** and **Decorah,** then heading back east toward the Mississippi. At **New Albin,** near the Minnesota state line, the route turns south, back toward Harpers Ferry. Some of the best views are just outside Harpers Ferry, at **Yellow River State Forest** (729 State Forest Rd.). A map of the route, marked with sections that travel unpaved roads and many points of interest, is available at www.traveliowa.com/trails/driftless-area-scenic-byway/3.



VIEW FROM THE DRIFTLESS AREA SCENIC BYWAY

LOESS HILLS SCENIC BYWAY

www.visitloesshills.org

Wind-blown silt is called loess, and the Loess Hills in western Iowa are the world's highest accumulation of it outside the Yellow River Valley in China. This 220-mi (354-km) drive, designated a National Scenic Byway, offers views of this unique natural feature as it tracks a north-south route—from **Westfield** in the north through **Sioux City** and **Council Bluffs** to **Hamburg** in the south—along roads and highways east of I-25. Parks and preserves with trails and camping, like **Hitchcock Nature Center** and **Preparation Canyon State Park,** are located along and a short distance off the route.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

HIGH TRESTLE TRAIL

www.inhf.org

This 25-mi (40-km) rails-to-trails bike path is a flat, paved ride connecting the towns of Ankeny, Slater, Sheldahl, Madrid, and Woodward. The highlight of the route is the **High Trestle Trail Bridge** over the Des Moines river west of Madrid, which shows its magic upon walking or biking through it. The angular steel forms over the bridge don’t look dramatic from afar, but they become a visual spiral when you’re on the bridge itself.



HIGH TRESTLE TRAIL BRIDGE

PIKES PEAK STATE PARK

32264 Pikes Peak Rd., McGregor; 563/873-2341; www.iowadnr.gov

Not to be confused with the Pikes Peak in Colorado, this state park is one of the best in Iowa. Set along the Mississippi River south of Effigy Mounds National Monument, this park also contains a mound, viewable along the 0.5-mi (0.8-km) boardwalk that also leads to Bridal Veil Falls. Other hikes among the 11 mi (18 km) of trails bring you to scenic overlooks with wide views of the river and the surrounding area.



PIKES PEAK STATE PARK

BACKBONE STATE PARK

1347 129th St., Dundee; 563/924-2527; www.iowadnr.gov

Named for the high ridge within its bounds, Backbone is Iowa's oldest state park and offers a range of activities from hiking, biking, and rock climbing to water-based recreation on Backbone Lake and cross-country skiing in the winter.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The **Iowa State Fair** is the biggest event in Iowa.

TULIP TIME

Pella; www.visitpella.com; May

This three-day festival celebrates the southeastern Iowa town of Pella's Dutch roots. There are various festivities like a parade and performances, but the focal point is the blooming tulips that are planted around town. The main plots are in Central Park (720 Franklin St.) and Scholte House Gardens (728 Washington St.).

BEST FOOD

Although 99 percent of the **corn** produced in Iowa isn't of the sweet variety we eat off the cob, it seems wrong to visit the state and not sample its signature agricultural product, especially in the summer. Like its other Great Plains neighbors, the state also has a form of spiced ground beef sandwich, this one popularized by the **Maid-Rite** (https://maid-rite.com) chain of diners, with 14 locations around Iowa.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Des Moines International Airport:** DSM; 5800 Fleur Dr., Des Moines; 515/256-5050; www.flydsm.com [URL inactive]
- **Eastern Iowa Airport:** CID; 2121 Arthur Collins Pkwy. SW, Cedar Rapids; 319/362-8336; https://flycid.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Travel Iowa:** www.traveliowa.com

- **Iowa State Parks:** www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Des Moines Register:*** www.desmoinesregister.com

MISSOURI

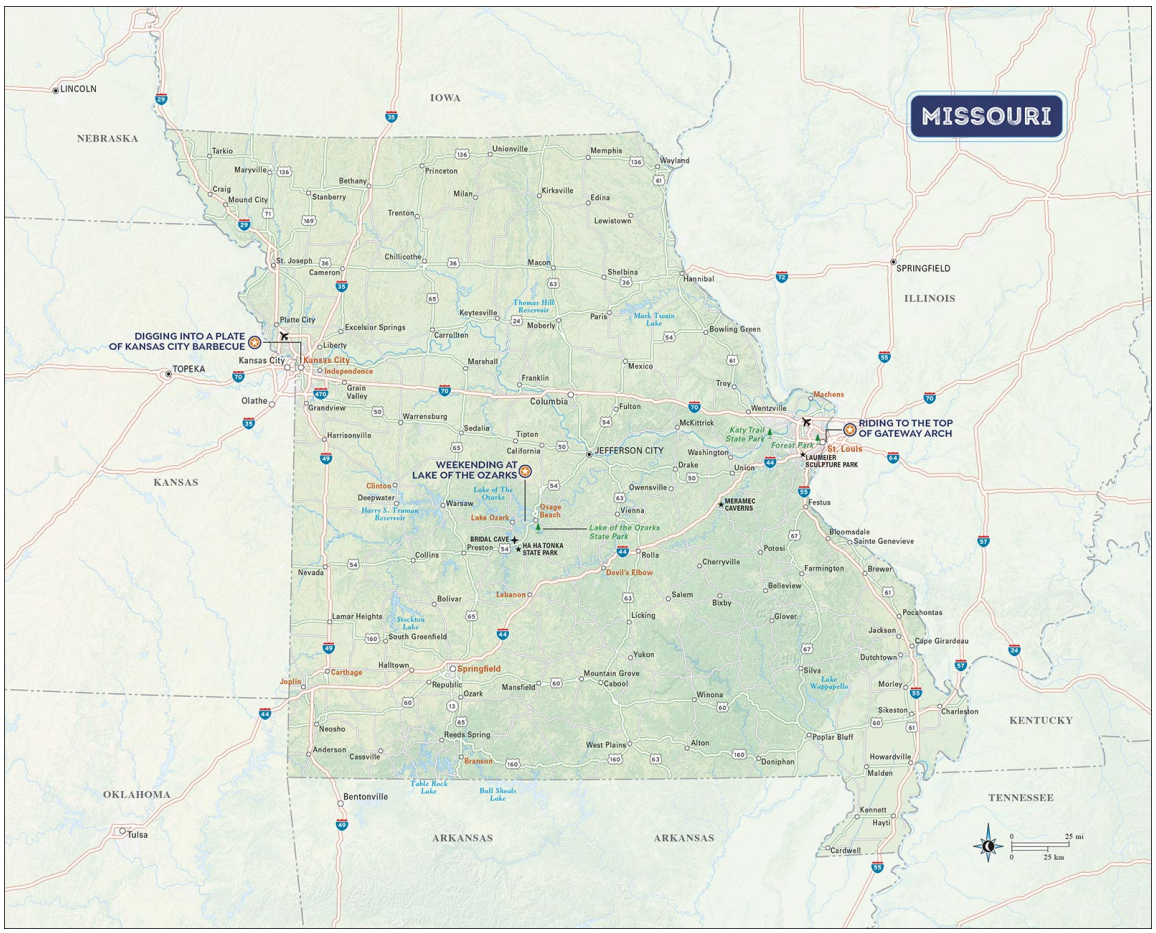
Missouri is home to the Osage, Otoe-Missouria, Illini, Ioway, and Quapaw people. Many other tribes called this land home before their forcible removement in the 1830s. A number of important pathways, routes, and trails have roots in the state: Osage migratory paths, a patchwork of rutted back roads, farm-to-market routes, and Route 66. Lewis and Clark started their explorations of the Louisiana Purchase lands from St. Louis, Gateway to the West. By 1830 the frontier had moved farther west, to towns like Independence, Missouri—the official start of the Oregon Trail, which launched emigrants from all over the nation out toward the West Coast. Even with all these routes traveling through Missouri, there are many reasons to stop for a while, whether it's the sights and flavors of the two biggest cities, Kansas City and St. Louis, the relaxation of Lake of the Ozarks, or the rollicking fun of Branson. Missouri may be known for its Gateway to the West, but it's also the Show-Me State—the origins of that nickname may be hazy, but finding out what the state has to show is half the fun.

AREA: 69,707 sq mi / 180,540 sq km (21st)

POPULATION: 6,245,466 (19th)

STATEHOOD DATE: August 10, 1821 (24th)

STATE CAPITAL: Jefferson City


MISSOURI
IOWA
NEBRASKA
KANSAS
OKLAHOMA
ARKANSAS
ILLINOIS
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
LINCOLN
TOPEKA
Tulsa
SPRINGFIELD
DIGGING INTO A PLATE OF KANSAS CITY BARBECUE
WEEKENDING AT LAKE OF THE OZARKS
RIDING TO THE TOP OF GATEWAY ARCH
Kansas City
Independence
JEFFERSON CITY
St. Louis
Machens
Springfield
Carthage
Joplin
Lebanon
Rolla
Columbia
Sedalia
Warrensburg
Harrisonville
Olathe
Grandview
Grain Valley
Liberty
Platte City
Excelsior Springs
Cameron
St. Joseph
Chillicothe
Trenton
Princeton
Bethany
Stanberry
Craig
Mound City
Maryville
Tarkio
Unionville
Memphis
Wayland
Kirksville
Edina
Lewistown
Milan
Macon
Shelbina
Hannibal
Paris
Moberly
Keytesville
Carrollton
Marshall
Mexico
Bowling Green
Troy
Wentzville
McKittrick
Fulton
Jefferson City
California
Tipton
Owensville
Warsaw
Vienna
Drake
Washington
Union
Festus
Meramec Caverns
Cherryville
Potosi
Farmington
Bloomsdale
Sainte Genevieve
Brewer
Belleview
Glover
Pocahontas
Jackson
Cape Girardeau
Dutchtown
Silva
Morley
Sikeston
Charleston
Poplar Bluff
Howardville
Malden
Kennett
Hayti
Cardwell
Doniphan
Alton
West Plains
Winona
Mountain Grove
Caboool
Mansfield
Ozark
Republic
Halltown
Yukon
Licking
Salem
Bixby
Bolivar
Nevada
Collins
Preston
Bridal Cave
Ha Ha Tonka State Park
Devil's Elbow
Lake Ozark
Osage Beach
Lake of the Ozarks State Park
Lake of the Ozarks
Deepwater
Clinton
Harry S. Truman Reservoir
Lamar Heights
South Greenfield
Stockton Lake
Neosho
Anderson
Cassville
Reeds Spring
Branson
Bentonville
Table Rock Lake
Bull Shoals Lake
Lake Wappapello
Thomas Hill Reservoir
Mark Twain Lake
Katy Trail State Park
Forest Park
Laumeier Sculpture Park
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Missouri's two biggest cities, Kansas City and St. Louis, sit at opposite ends of the state. **Kansas City** is in the far west, on the Kansas state line, while **St. Louis** is in the far east, on the Illinois state line. The capital, **Jefferson City,** is west of St. Louis in central Missouri. The summer destination **Lake of the Ozarks** is in the middle of the state, and entertainment destination **Branson** is located in the southwest part of the state, near the Arkansas border.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring-early fall is the most popular season to travel in Missouri, avoiding the brutal **winters,** when temperatures can sink to 26°F (-3°C). **Summers** can be hot and muggy.

TOP 3

1 DIGGING INTO A PLATE OF KANSAS CITY BARBECUE

Kansas City's rich barbecue tradition harks back to the first outdoor pits of Henry Perry, "The Father of Kansas City Barbecue," in the early 1900s. The burnt ends, made from the end points of brisket slabs, are a crusty, fatty, juicy vehicle for sauce. Burnt ends are served as a main dish, side dish, in sandwiches, and sometimes as a topping. Kansas City barbecue traditionally calls for slowly smoked meat (beef, pork, chicken, even fish) slathered in a tomato-based sauce. Usually sweet as well as spicy, Kansas City barbecue sauce typically features a well-balanced flavor profile, though each restaurant has its own secret recipe. Over 100 places in the Kansas City area serve barbecue. Here are a couple of the best places in town.



KANSAS CITY-STYLE BRISKET

- **Arthur Bryant's Barbeque** (1727 Brooklyn Ave.; 816/231-1123; www.arthurbryantsbbq.com) is the legacy of one of the most popular pit masters in history. Try the secret recipe sauce (original or rich and spicy) slathered over any number of slow-roasted meats.
- **Gates** (3205 Main St., Kansas City; 816/753-0828; https://gatesbbq.com), a sometime rival of Arthur Bryant's, serves up all the meats—brisket, ribs, chicken, sausage, mutton, etc.—as entrées and offers a mixed plate for variety.

2 RIDING TO THE TOP OF GATEWAY ARCH

11 N. 4th St., St. Louis; 314/655-1600; www.gatewayarch.com and www.nps.gov/jeff

Gateway Arch National Park is a historical landmark in an urban setting. The 630-ft (192-m) silver arch on the west bank of the Mississippi River commemorates one of the main routes for westward expansion during the 19th century. From Missouri, Lewis

and Clark launched their Corps of Discovery upriver. The park, formerly known as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, is also a memorial to Thomas Jefferson, who initiated the Corps of Discovery.



GATEWAY ARCH

The only way to go up into the Arch is via the **Arch Tram** (877/982-1410; www.gatewayarch.com). Futuristic five-person pods —not for the claustrophobic—zoom you to the top of the Gateway Arch in four minutes, where views of the city through the small windows can stretch as far as 30 mi (48 km) on a clear day. The trams are a popular attraction, and tickets sell out quickly.

To access the tram, walk through the **Museum at the Gateway Arch.** The museum contains six large exhibit rooms that look at St. Louis and the role it played in the United States' westward push. Some exhibits examine the problematic aspects of the concept of Manifest Destiny, the expansionist belief, popular in the 19th century. Viewpoints from the perspective of Native Americans and free and enslaved African Americans, as well as Mexico, which also had a large historical stake in the West, are represented.

The park grounds also include the **Old Courthouse,** where in 1846 husband-and-wife Dred and Harriet Scott filed petitions for their freedom. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, which infamously ruled that the Scotts and, by extension all African Americans, were not citizens, and had no rights or privileges.

3 WEEKENDING AT LAKE OF THE OZARKS

The reasons for going to Lake of the Ozarks are varied, but the fact is that people flock there in droves. The body of water itself—one of the largest artificially constructed lakes in the nation—is great for boaters and water-skiers. (Swimmers, on the other hand, should be advised that this isn't exactly the cleanest place around.) The glittering lake and hilly topography make the region a truly lovely place, particularly once you get away from the bars and tchotchke shops of the main tourist drag, **Bagnell Dam Boulevard** in Lake Ozark, which turns into **Osage Beach Parkway** in Osage Beach.



LAKE OF THE OZARKS

At 17,626 ac (7,132 ha), the beautiful **Lake of the Ozarks State Park** (403 MO-134, Brumley; 573/348-2694; www.mostateparks.com [URL inactive]) is the largest state park in

Missouri. This is a great place to escape the lake's bars and resorts. Hikers and bicyclists can take advantage of the park's 13 trails, which wind along 85 mi (136 km) of shoreline and through old-growth hickory forests. The park's two public beaches are prime spots for fishing, swimming, and boating.

Another popular sight, **Bridal Cave** (526 Bridal Cave Rd., Camdenton; 573/346-2676; www.bridalcave.com) is full of veil-like stalactites and contains many onyx formations. It was once the site of Osage Indian marriage ceremonies and remains a popular wedding location. Nearby to the south, at **Ha Ha Tonka State Park** (1491 MOD, Camdenton; 573/346-2986; https://mostateparks.com [URL inactive]), you can see the stone ruins of an early-20th-century castle overlooking the lake.

HIGHLIGHTS

ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWERY

1200 Lynch St., St. Louis; 314/577-2626; www.budweisertours.com

Even though today Anheuser-Busch Brewery is a behemoth corporation (notably as the maker of Budweiser), when it opened in 1852, it was a small-batch brewery. It was the first company to bottle and market pasteurized beer, and to transport it in refrigerated railroad cars across the country. The St. Louis location is the original and offers several tours and tasting options. The classic tour takes visitors to the Clydesdale stables and demonstrates the entire seven-step brewing process. You could also just grab a pint from the on-site Biergarten.

BLUEBERRY HILL

6504 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis; 314/727-4444; https://blueberryhill.com

Legendary concert venue Blueberry Hill opened in 1972 with a jukebox spinning cool tunes and soon built a stage for live music acts. The father of

rock-and-roll, Chuck Berry himself, performed here regularly in the 1990s, and these days, several nights a week, the venue still hosts top performers on multiple stages. Outside, the **St. Louis Walk of Fame** (6504 Delmar Blvd.; 314/727-7827; www.stlouiswalkoffame.org) has over 150 brass stars dedicated to famous city folks including Maya Angelou, Miles Davis, Scott Joplin, and Harry Caray. Also look for the bronze sculpture of **Chuck Berry** (6613 Delmar Blvd.) with his guitar.



BLUEBERRY HILL

Major CITIES

KANSAS CITY: The biggest city in the state is diverse and metropolitan—rooted in Midwestern hospitality, and known far and wide for its barbecue.

ST. LOUIS: The Gateway to the West, as the city is known, was once a jumping-off point for traders and fur trappers heading west. In

addition to that history, St. Louis is also known for live music and claims Chuck Berry and Miles Davis as hometown legends.

SPRINGFIELD: Located in southwestern Missouri, Springfield is known as the birthplace of Route 66 and, appropriately, has a few kitschy attractions, like the World's Largest Fork and Fantastic Caverns, a tram ride through a cave.

CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE

Chain of Rocks Rd. near Schillinger Rd., St. Louis; 314/436-7009

This steel truss bridge stands 60 ft (18 m) above the Mississippi River and sports an unusual bend in the middle. It's named after a 17-mi (27-km) granite rocky outcrop that formed treacherous rapids in the river and caused huge problems for boaters. The bridge was originally designed to be straight, but boaters protested because the placement of the bridge was going to make river travel even more difficult. The only solution was to incorporate a bend in the middle of the bridge. The designer assured officials that the turn wouldn't be a problem, but it caused endless bottlenecks. As cars got longer and bigger, and the interstate systems called for wider roads, a new Chain of Rocks Bridge opened less than 2,000 ft (610 m) upstream in 1967, and the bent bridge closed in 1968. It sat abandoned until a nonprofit organization converted it into a bicycle and pedestrian bridge in 1999, which is how it's still used today. Spared from the wrecking ball, this is one of the best-preserved remnants of large-scale bridge construction from the 1920s.



CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE

MERAMEC CAVERNS

1135 Hwy. W, Sullivan; 573/468-2283; www.americascave.com

Under the verdant rolling hills of Missouri lie networks of deep caverns. In fact, Missouri is home to more than 6,000 surveyed caves. One of the most popular is Meramec Caverns, a 4.6-mi (7.4-km) system of caverns, rumored to have been used as a hideout by outlaw Jesse James. Discovered in 1720 and developed during the Civil War (when the natural saltpeter was mined for manufacturing gunpowder), the limestone cave drips with stalactites and stalagmites in astonishing natural colors. Though not huge in terms of size, the caves, which can be visited on guided tours, are some of the most sculpturally delicate in the country. The interior temperature of Meramec Caverns is a constant chilly 58°F (14°C); bring a jacket and wear sturdy shoes.

ARABIA STEAMBOAT MUSEUM

400 Grand Blvd., Kansas City; 816/471-1856; www.1856.com

This museum houses the rescued cargo from a steamboat that went down in the Missouri River in 1856. Not only is the story of the group of men who located and excavated the boat a fascinating modern treasure hunt—it was found underground in the middle of a farmer's field, due to the changing course of the river—but also the cargo unearthed is the biggest single collection of pre-Civil War items ever discovered. The ship was supplying the frontier, and the *Arabia's* cargo included everything a new town might need: boots, fine china, blacksmith tools, hats, awls, jewelry, buttons, weapons, and more. Self-guided tours allow you to explore the display rooms freely.

THREE TRAILS

The hometown of President Harry S. Truman, **Independence** was the jumping-off point for three historic trails. Each followed the same route out of town and split off at later points.

- **Santa Fe Trail (1821-1880):** The original trail west, the Santa Fe Trail was a commercial venture, busy with merchant traffic. It headed from Missouri across the Southwest to Santa Fe, where merchants could meet up with others who came north from Mexico. Traffic transporting goods went in both directions on the trail.
- **Oregon Trail (1843-1869):** The Oregon Trail was the main route that led thousands of emigrants from Missouri to Oregon City, 2,000 mi (3,200 km) west. Unlike the Santa Fe Trail and earlier routes used by trappers and explorers, the Oregon Trail was mostly used by families: men, women, and children who uprooted their lives to move west in hopes of a better life.
- **California Trail (1841-1869):** The California Trail stretches a little farther than the Oregon Trail, at about 3,000 mi (4,800 km). After gold was discovered in the state in 1848, miners rushed the trail over the next year to strike it rich. Known as the 49ers, they stayed on the path with their Oregon-bound cohorts until eastern Idaho, where they dipped southwest into Nevada to cross the Sierra Nevada mountain range into California.

The **SantaCaliGon Days Festival** (Independence Square; www.santacaligon.com) attracts over 300,000 people each year during Labor Day weekend in early September to celebrate the beginning of these three trails.

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM

1616 E. 18th St., Kansas City; 816/221-1920; www.nlbm.com

The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum tells the story of organized baseball played by African Americans and other people of color who were denied the opportunity to play in Major League Baseball for decades. Take a self-guided tour and find artifacts like a Kansas City Monarchs jersey worn by star hitter Newt Allen and a glove worn by the leagues' greatest ambassador, Buck O'Neil, during his days managing the Kansas City Monarchs, plus a pretty remarkable non-baseball piece: iconic pitcher Satchel Paige's original gravestone. Located in Kansas City's 18th and Vine district—also known as the Historic Jazz district, a community where Black culture has thrived—the museum shares its building with the **American Jazz Museum** (1616 E. 18th St.; 816/474-8463; www.americanjazzmuseum.org), which displays items like a saxophone played in 1953 by Charlie Parker.

BRANSON

The town of Branson, in southwest Missouri, is Las Vegas in the Ozarks, complete with its own Strip—the **Highway 76 Strip,** that is. This 5-mi (8-km) stretch of MO-76, also known as 76 Country Boulevard, is lined with more than 30 neon-lit theaters that stage live shows. Going for more than 50 years, one of the original shows is the **Presleys' Country Jubilee** (2920 W. 76 Country Blvd., Branson; 417/334-4874; www.presleys.com), featuring a family of performers (who are distantly related to The King). **Dolly Parton's Stampede** (1525 W. 76 Country Blvd., Branson; 417/336-3000; https://dpstampede.com) brings horses into the mix with a riding show. For a different experience, the **Titanic Museum Attraction** (3235 76 Country Blvd., Branson; 800/381-7670 or 417/334-9500; https://titanicbranson.com) re-creates the doomed ship for self-guided tours. Off the Strip, the **Silver Dollar City** (399 Silver Dollar City Pkwy., Branson; 417/336-7100; www.silverdollarcity.com) theme park is one of Missouri's top attractions.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Kansas City,** and spend the day at one of its fascinating museums. Be sure to try Kansas City's famous **barbecue** for at least one of your meals.

DAY 2 Make the 3.5-hour drive east across the state to **St. Louis.** Stretch your legs with a walk across **Chain of Rocks Bridge.** In the evening, head to **Blueberry Hill,** the legendary music club—check out the **Walk of Fame** on your way in.

DAY 3 Make your way to **Lake of the Ozarks** on this day, three hours west of St. Louis. It's a pretty drive, if you take the route going on I-44 west to MO-68 to US 63 then along MO-42, which is also known as West 5th Street. End up in **Osage Beach,** in the heart of Lake of the Ozarks.

DAY 4 Spend the day doing what people do at Lake of the Ozarks —take out a boat, hike in the state park, or sightsee at **Bridal Cave** or **Ha Ha Tonka State Park.**

DAY 5 In the morning, make the one-hour drive southeast to **Devil's Elbow** for a jaunt on **Route 66.** Admire the scenery, and stop in **Springfield** for lunch. From here, you can make the 2.5-hour drive back to **Kansas City.** Or, you can complete Missouri's stretch of Route 66 by going all the way west to **Joplin,** another 1.5 hours, and return to Kansas City from there (about 2.5 hours north).

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ROUTE 66

The more than 300-mi (482-km) stretch of Route 66 (I-44) through Missouri gives you a glimpse of Ozark country—tree-covered hills that gently rise and dip, and lush valleys that spread before you. Starting in **St. Louis,** the route heads west across the state, exiting into Kansas just past **Joplin.** Along the way, stop in **Laumeier Sculpture Park** (12580 Rott Rd., Sappington; 314/615-5278; www.laumeiersculpturepark.org) just outside St. Louis for its 60 large-scale outdoor sculptures, and admire the view between **Devil's Elbow** and **Lebanon,** where there are dramatic 200-ft (61-m) rock bluffs, deep and verdant valleys, and rivers snaking through limestone rock. When you hit **Springfield,** you'll be in the official birthplace of Route 66. The drive from there to **Carthage** is especially scenic with its hilly contours and leafy trees. **Joplin,** where Bonnie and Clyde went on a robbery spree and killed two police officers, is the last city in Missouri before hitting the Kansas state line.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

FOREST PARK

5595 Grand Dr., St. Louis; 314/367-7275; www.forestparkforever.org

Stretching 500 green ac (202 ha) larger than New York's Central Park, Forest Park is one of the largest urban parks in the United States—and one of the prettiest. Running and walking trails circle sparkling ponds, pass under leafy trees, and wind past grassy meadows. At around 1,300 ac (526 ha), the park has an entire ecosystem of forests, lakes, and streams, as well as plenty of room to house five cultural centers: **St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis Science Center, St. Louis Zoo, The Muny,** and the **Missouri**

History Museum. Whatever you do in Forest Park, don't miss the **Jewel Box** (Wells and McKinley Dr.; 314/531-0080). This art deco greenhouse boasts 55-ft (17-m) glass walls and 17 ac (7 ha) of tropical trees, brightly colored flowers, and exotic plants, plus a fountain and water feature.

KATY TRAIL STATE PARK

Machens to Clinton; 573/449-7402; https://mostateparks.com [URL inactive]

The centerpiece of this park is the 240-mi (386-km) recreational trail that it's named after. Built on the bed of a former railroad track and one of the longest of its kind in the nation, the Katy Trail hugs the Missouri River and leads hikers and cyclists through some of the state's most beautiful rural corners. The trail's outstanding website (www.bikekatytrail.com) offers downloadable maps, trail FAQs, and links to several Katy Trail trip-planning services.



CYCLISTS ON THE KATY TRAIL

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

KANSAS CITY PRIDEFEST

Kansas City; https://kcpride.org; last weekend in May

Situated in the conservative Midwest, Kansas City is a hot spot of LGBTQ+ pride year-round, but the biggest celebration is Kansas City PrideFest, named by *The Advocate* as one of the top 10 festivals in the nation. The family-friendly event offers a weekend full of fun at Berkley Riverfront Park, with performances by national headliners, drag queens, and men's choruses.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Kansas City ranks as one of the best in the Midwest for spectator sports, and fans are passionate—the football stadium is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the loudest in the world! The **Kansas City Royals** baseball team plays at "The K," or **Kauffman Stadium** (1 Royal Way; 800/676-9257; www.mlb.com/royals; Mar.-Sept.). Possibly the biggest game in town is found at **Arrowhead Stadium** (1 Arrowhead Dr.; 816/920-9300; Sept.-Jan.), home to NFL football's **Kansas City Chiefs.** Don't miss out on the ultimate fan experience—tailgating. It's a cultural experience unto itself, with thousands of fans cooking food, playing music, and partying before the game.

BEST FOOD

Of course, there's Kansas City barbecue, but that's not the only culinary specialty in the state.

CONCRETE

To non-Missourians, it's custard. To locals, it's called a concrete. Concretes are ice-cream custard treats so thick and dense they have the consistency of concrete. Order one at **Ted Drewes** (6726 Chippewa, St. Louis; 314/481-2652; www.teddrewes.com), a local institution.

CASHEW CHICKEN

In Springfield, David Leong's cashew chicken took the city by storm in the 1970s. Leong came to the United States from China in 1940, and he opened Leong's Tea House in 1963. Once he saw how much the locals worshipped fried chicken, he modified the already-established cashew chicken dish from a stir-fried version to a deep-fried remix. He slathered it with oyster sauce and sprinkled it with green onions. It was a hit. Although the original Leong's Tea House closed in 1997, **Leong's Asian Diner** (1540 W. Republic Rd., Springfield; 417/887-7500) still serves that famous dish. You can also find Springfield-style cashew chicken throughout the city.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Kansas City International Airport:** MCI; 1 Kansas City Blvd., Kansas City; 816/243-3000; www.flykc.com [URL inactive]
- **St. Louis Lambert International Airport:** STL; 10701 Lambert International, St. Louis; 314/890-1333; www.flystl.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Missouri:** www.visitmo.com
- **Missouri State Parks:** https://mostateparks.com [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***St. Louis Post-Dispatch:*** www.stltoday.com
- ***Kansas City Star:*** www.kansascity.com
- ***Missouri Life:*** https://missourilife.com

OceanofPDF.com

GREAT LAKES

Minnesota

Wisconsin

Illinois

Indiana

Michigan

Ohio

THE GREAT LAKES
State by State

MINNESOTA

Why Go: The beautiful landscapes in Minnesota encompass boreal forests, tallgrass prairie, and thousands of lakes.

WISCONSIN

Why Go: Shaped by glaciers, Wisconsin is dotted with lakes and lined with rivers that beckon paddlers and hikers alike.

ILLINOIS

Why Go: The diverse metropolis of Chicago, with its skyscrapers, jazz and blues, and museums, is the center of gravity in the region.

INDIANA

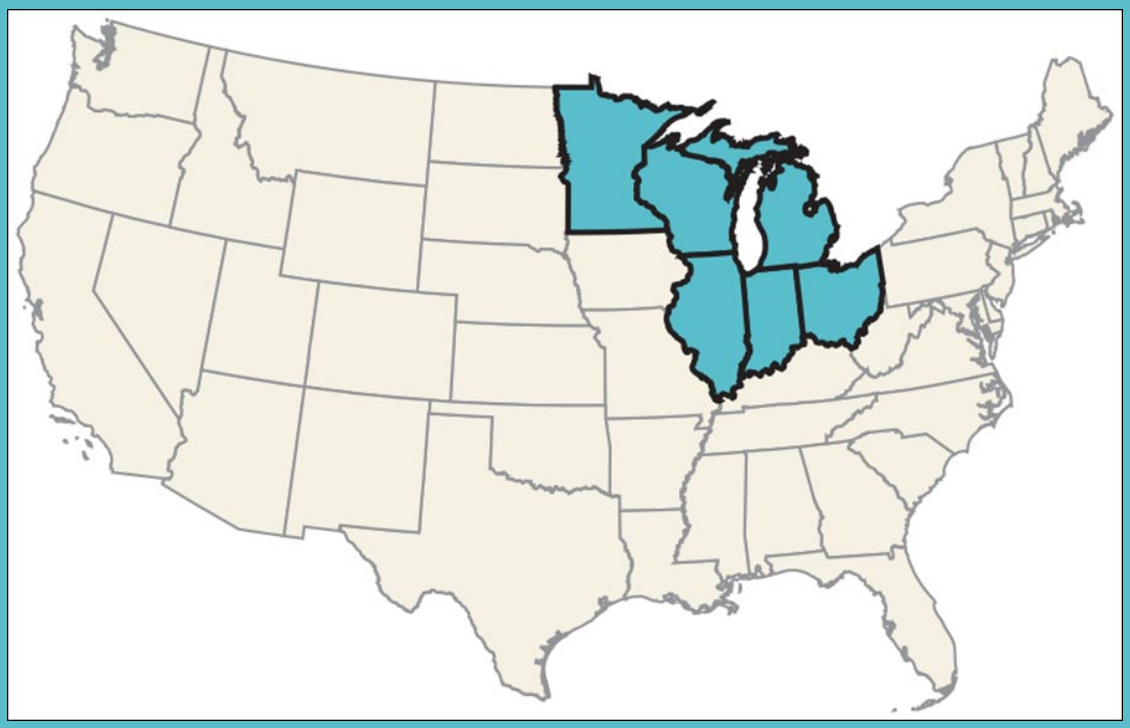
Why Go: Picturesque small towns, sand dunes, and a slice of creamy Hoosier pie are some of Indiana's highlights.

MICHIGAN

Why Go: Michigan may be the best place to appreciate the grandeur of the Great Lakes, being surrounded by four of them.

OHIO

Why Go: Ohio combines its trio of major cities that all start with C with the rolling landscapes of the Appalachian foothills.



Great Lakes ROAD TRIP

This road trip takes in four Great Lakes in eight days. If you have more time, add Minnesota or linger longer at one of these stops. You could easily

spend twice the time on this trip with all the vibrant cities and beautiful natural landscapes you'll encounter.

ILLINOIS

Chicago: 1 day

Start in Chicago, spending the day among its great buildings, admiring the vastness of **Lake Michigan,** and going out for live jazz or blues in the evening.

INDIANA

Indiana Dunes National Park: 1 day / 250 mi (400 km)

From Chicago, make the hour-long drive to **Indiana Dunes National Park,** where you can climb over mounds of sand in a windy, lunar landscape. Afterward, point east into Ohio, where you'll end up in **Toledo** (three hours away) for the night.

OHIO

Toledo and Kelleys Island or Cedar Point: 1 day / 75 mi (120 km)

From Toledo, make a day trip to **Kelleys Island,** one of Ohio's four **Lake Erie** islands, hopping on a ferry at Marblehead, an hour away. Or, head to Cedar Point, also about an hour, to experience the best amusement park in the country.

MICHIGAN

Detroit, Mackinac Island, and Pictured Rocks: 3 days / 650 mi (1,050 km)

Head up to **Detroit** (one hour from Toledo), and dedicate the rest of the day to cruising Motor City and learning about its Black history and culture. The next day, make the four-hour drive up to **St. Ignace,** where you'll hop on a ferry to **Mackinac Island,** a car-free island in **Lake Huron.** The next day, drive two hours from St. Ignace to **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore,** on the north side of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Take a cruise on **Lake**

Superior to fully appreciate this natural wonder. Afterward, head south to Wisconsin's Green Bay, 3.5 hours away.

WISCONSIN

Green Bay, Door County, and Milwaukee: 2 days / 340 mi (550 km)

Set out from Green Bay for a day in magnificent **Door County,** a peninsula jutting into Lake Michigan. Visit one or more of the state parks, and spend the night in **Fish Creek.** In the morning, make the three-hour drive to **Milwaukee** and relax with a beer when you get there. It's a 1.5-hour drive from Milwaukee to Chicago, to complete the loop.

ADDING MINNESOTA

Duluth, North Shore, and Minneapolis: 4 days / 730 mi (1,175 km)

To add Minnesota to the trip, you could spend a day making the 5.5-hour drive from Pictured Rocks to **Duluth.** From Duluth, take one day to explore the North Shore of **Lake Superior.** It's 2.5 hours from Duluth to **Minneapolis,** where you can spend another day. From Minneapolis to Green Bay is about four hours.

MINNESOTA

From skyscrapers to sod houses, from timeless steamboat towns on the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers to Wobegonic farm country in the west, and from Minneapolis's world-class arts scene to a record-setting ball of twine, even seasoned travelers are likely to be impressed with Minnesota. Today, the state borders include seven Anishinaabe reservations and four distinct Dakota communities.

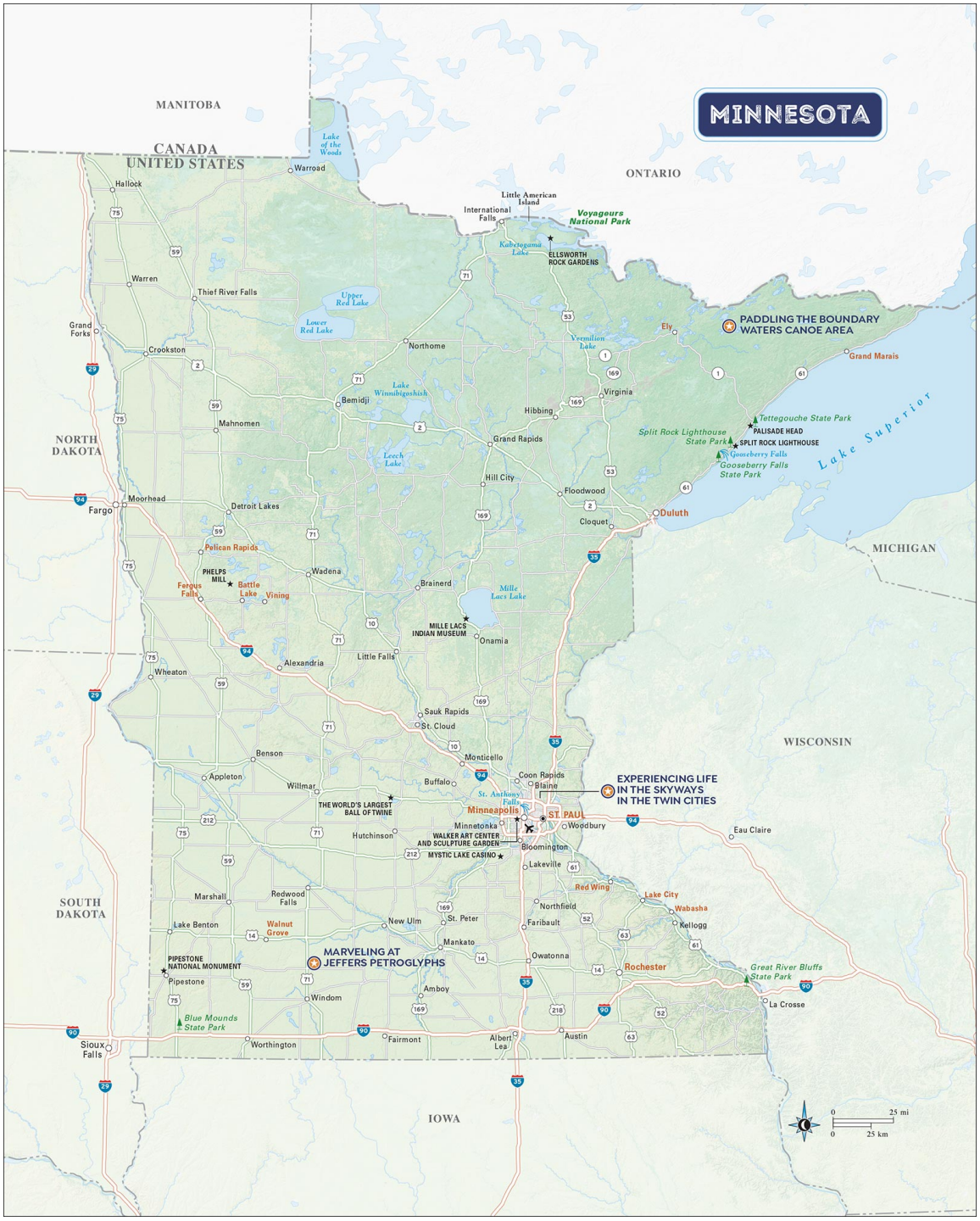
The one thing just about everyone does know about Minnesota is that this is some beautiful country. The boreal forests of the northeast fade into the tallgrass prairie of the southwest, and in between are the lakes—far more than the sloganned 10,000. To the east, the rocky Lake Superior shore, lined with cliffs and waterfalls, is as lovely a coast as you'll ever see. In the south, towering bluffs reach high above the Mississippi River, largely unchanged since Mark Twain and Henry David Thoreau rode by in steamboats. Don't be surprised if, after your visit, you just can't bring yourself to leave: Every year thousands of people arrive as visitors and return as residents.

AREA: 86,936 sq mi / 225,163 sq km (12th)

POPULATION: 5,793,151 (22nd)

STATEHOOD DATE: May 11, 1858 (32nd)

STATE CAPITAL: St. Paul


MINNESOTA
MANITOBA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
ONTARIO
Lake of the Woods
Warroad
Hallock
Little American Island
International Falls
Voyageurs National Park
Kabetogama Lake
ELLSWORTH ROCK GARDENS
Warren
Thief River Falls
Upper Red Lake
Lower Red Lake
Grand Forks
Crookston
Northome
Ely
PADDLING THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA
Vermilion Lake
Grand Marais
Lake Winnibigoshish
Bemidji
Virginia
Hibbing
Mahnomen
Tettegouche State Park
PALISADE HEAD
SPLIT ROCK LIGHTHOUSE
Split Rock Lighthouse State Park
Grand Rapids
Gooseberry Falls
Gooseberry Falls State Park
Lake Superior
NORTH DAKOTA
Leech Lake
Hill City
Floodwood
Moorhead
Fargo
Detroit Lakes
Duluth
Cloquet
Pelican Rapids
MICHIGAN
PHELPS MILL
Fergus Falls
Battle Lake
Vining
Wadena
Brainerd
Mille Lacs Lake
MILLE LACS INDIAN MUSEUM
Onamia
Little Falls
Alexandria
Wheaton
Sauk Rapids
St. Cloud
WISCONSIN
Benson
Monticello
Appleton
Willmar
Buffalo
Coon Rapids
Blaine
EXPERIENCING LIFE IN THE SKYWAYS IN THE TWIN CITIES
St. Anthony Falls
THE WORLD'S LARGEST BALL OF TWINE
Minneapolis
ST. PAUL
Minnetonka
Woodbury
Eau Claire
Hutchinson
WALKER ART CENTER AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
Bloomington
MYSTIC LAKE CASINO
Lakeville
Red Wing
Lake City
SOUTH DAKOTA
Marshall
Redwood Falls
Northfield
Wabasha
Walnut Grove
New Ulm
St. Peter
Faribault
Kellogg
Lake Benton
Mankato
MARVELING AT JEFFERS PETROGLYPHS
Owatonna
Rochester
Great River Bluffs State Park
PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT
Pipestone
Windom
Amboy
La Crosse
Blue Mounds State Park
Sioux Falls
Worthington
Fairmont
Albert Lea
Austin
IOWA
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Minnesota's Twin Cities, **Minneapolis** and **St. Paul,** anchor the southeast part of the state. To the north, **Boundary Waters Canoe Area** edges up against the Canadian border. **Duluth** is the gateway to the **North Shore** of Lake Superior, one of the Great Lakes.

WHEN TO GO

Minnesota's glorious **summers,** with long, lingering evenings and temperatures in the mid-80s F (28-31°C), are the most popular with tourists, but visitors shouldn't write off **winter,** when locals make the most of the snow with outdoor activities and even festivals. **Spring** comes in like a lion and races through like a cheetah, lasting as little as a couple of weeks—if you can even be sure just when it begins. Few visitors come at this time, but a profusion of wildflowers and the cheapest lodging of the year are bonuses for those who do. **Fall**—with mild, sunny, dry weather, beautiful foliage, and off-season discounts—is the **best time** to visit.

TOP 3

1 PADDLING THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA

Ely; www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

With 1 million ac (405,000 ha) and nearly 1,200 lakes, the Superior National Forest's **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness** is an unrivaled dreamscape for outdoor lovers. Stretching 150 mi (241 km) along the Canadian border, the area is full of streams and portages that connect the myriad lakes. A major draw is the promise of unlimited canoe travel, and not surprisingly 99 percent of visitors journey on the water; however, the wilderness surrounds some of Minnesota's best hiking trails too. During winter, a number of **cross-country skiing** trails cross through the area. Check out the **Ely Chamber of Commerce** (www.ely.org) for a list of local outfitters that rent paddling and camping equipment.



CANOEING IN THE BOUNDARY WATERS

2 MARVELING AT JEFFERS PETROGLYPHS

507/628-5591; www.jefferspetroglyphs.com

The 160-ac (65-ha) **Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site** (open May-Oct.) protects over 5,000 ancient petroglyphs. Many of the buffalo, deer, elk, turtles, thunderbirds, humans, weapons, and other similar subjects were cut by Native Americans in the exposed shelf of bedrock as far back as 7,000 years ago. Others, it appears, are as recent as the 1750s. The glyphs likely served a ceremonial purpose, and this remains sacred ground for many tribes—religious ceremonies are still held here on occasion. The shapes are most dramatic during the long shadows of early morning and late evening. Even if there weren't a single carving this would be a worthwhile trip; the small islands of pink quartzite surrounded by the sea of prairie make this one of the most beautiful spots in Minnesota.



JEFFERS PETROGLYPHS

3 EXPERIENCING LIFE IN THE SKYWAYS IN THE TWIN CITIES

Most of downtown Minneapolis is linked by a 10-mi (16-km) elevated indoor skyway system that will keep you warm in the winter and dry when it rains. There is no shortage of parking ramps downtown, though street parking can be hard to come by. This all-weather pedestrian skyway was built in the 1950s, then the first of its kind in the nation. Today, the shimmering skyline carries 200,000 pedestrians daily. In St. Paul, a 5-mi (8-km) elevated indoor skyway system weaves across much of the area, connecting hotels, restaurants, theaters, and the like.



SKYWAY IN DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

HIGHLIGHTS

LOCAL THEATER IN THE TWIN CITIES

Minneapolitans love their theater. Outside of New York, no other American city has more live theater tickets sold per capita than Minneapolis.

- **Guthrie Theater** (818 S. 2nd St.; 612/377-2224; www.guthrietheater.org): Famed New York City-based director Sir Tyrone Guthrie founded the Guthrie Theater in 1963 to promote the level of creative development that Broadway theaters no longer could. It soon grew into a Tony Award-winning organization known far and wide for its innovative presentations of both classic and contemporary plays.



GUTHRIE THEATER

- **Mixed Blood Theatre** (1501 4th St. S., Minneapolis; 612/338-6131; www.mixedblood.com): The multicultural Mixed Blood Theatre has a reputation for breaking the rules. They stage their often cutting-edge work in a converted firehouse.
- **Penumbra Theatre** (270 Kent St. N., St. Paul; 651/224-3180; www.penumbratheatre.org): The award-winning Penumbra Theatre Company is one of the nation's oldest and most respected African American theater companies. Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson got his start here.

PALISADE HEAD

MN-61, mile marker 57

Arguably the most beautiful site in the state, Palisade Head's ruddy cliff climbs 350 ft (90 m) straight out of Lake Superior. A slim road at mile marker 57 snakes to the top, where you can walk along as much of the rim

as your fear lets you—needless to say, be careful. Even severe acrophobes should make the trip just to take in the wonderful scenery in the distance. Shovel Point, another rhyolite lava headland, crawls out of the lake to the north, and Wisconsin's Apostle Islands are visible on the horizon. Palisade Head is a part of Tettegouche State Park, the main entrance of which is just 1.5 mi (2.4 km) away.

SPLIT ROCK LIGHTHOUSE STATE PARK

3755 Split Rock Lighthouse Rd., Two Harbors; 218/595-7625; www.dnr.state.mn.us [URL inactive]

On November 28, 1905, a great gale whipped Lake Superior into such a rage that almost 30 ships were wrecked within 12 mi (19 km) of the Split Rock River. In response, the **Split Rock Lighthouse** was built atop this magnificent 130-ft (40-m) cliff; it began operations in 1910. Its 370,000-candlepower beacon steered ships away from the treacherous shore for 59 years before onboard navigational equipment made it obsolete. The Minnesota Historical Society offers guided tours of the restored facility. Exhibits in the visitor center discuss the lives of the families who lived here, how the light station was built, and other North Shore topics.

MILLE LACS INDIAN MUSEUM

43411 Oodena Dr., Onamia; 320/532-3632; www.mnhs.org/millelacs

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe tell their own story at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, a project of the Minnesota Historical Society. The museum traces their history and displays let you learn about their fantastic beadwork, the significance of what you'll see at a powwow, and modern sovereignty issues. The heart of the center is the Four Seasons Room, where life-sized dioramas show what life was like here 200 years ago. Cooking, craft demonstrations, and other cultural programs are held daily during the regular season and occasionally at other times of the year. You can shop for authentic Native American crafts at the restored 1930s **Trading Post** next door.

MINNESOTA'S INDIGENOUS POPULATION

Since the time the first Europeans came in search of furs, the Native Americans residing in Minnesota have been almost exclusively the **Dakota** and **Anishinaabe** (aka Chippewa or Ojibwe). The current distribution of reservations, Dakota south of the Minnesota River and Anishinaabe to the north, generally reflects the balance of power that was achieved between them by the time Europeans began to appropriate their lands. The Dakota have four communities, while the Anishinaabe, by far the larger of the two, have seven reservations.

When Europeans first arrived in the state, the Mississippian cultures had largely faded away, though their modern descendants, the **Dakota** (aka Sioux), were spread across the center of Minnesota and occupied the majority of the state. Other Mississippian progeny, the **Iowa** and **Oto** tribes, remained in the far south. The **Cree** controlled the far north, and the **Assiniboine,** descendants of but enemies with the Dakota, inhabited the northwest corner. Some **Omaha** and **Cheyenne** might have been in the southwest corner and far west-central regions respectively, though we may never know for sure.

The **Anishinaabe,** Minnesota's other major historic Indian culture, were centered around Sault Ste. Marie in Upper Michigan when the French came up the Great Lakes. Beginning in the 1640s most fled west, eventually settling in northern Wisconsin and forcing some Dakota villages to pick up and move west in the process. Eventually, the Anishinaabe moved into northern Minnesota to occupy the most fertile lands.

Major CITIES

MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL: With four internationally known art museums, three Tony Award-winning theaters, and a full slate of festivals year-round, Minneapolis is one of the country's most cultured cities, while quiet St. Paul, where the primary attractions are its historic buildings, is one of its most stately. Together the pair makes an easily navigable and satisfying urban destination.

ROCHESTER: Geographically speaking, Rochester is the heart of the region, so you can use it as a hub for making multiple day trips.

DULUTH: The northeast corner has more than its fair share of Minnesota's best and most beautiful, starting with the port city of Duluth.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST BALL OF TWINE

Everyone should make the trip to tiny Darwin (pop. 348), just over an hour from Minneapolis, to experience the extraordinary, one-of-a-kind genius of Francis A. Johnson, who gave the tiny village its one claim to fame: the world's largest ball of twine made by just one man. This ball, which can be viewed 24/7, is 11 ft (3.4 m) tall, 12 ft, 9 in wide (3.8 m), and weighs nearly 9 tons (8.1 metric tons)—it used to weigh 11 tons (10 metric tons), but all the water has finally evaporated out. He rolled his first strand of baler twine in March of 1950 and didn't stop until 1979.

Though he will always be known as the man who rolled the twine ball, Johnson was also an obsessive whittler and collector. A few of the tens of thousands of functional wooden pliers he carved are now on display in the adjacent **Darwin Twine Ball Museum** (two blocks south of US 12; 320/693-7544; www.darwintwineball.com), along with a handful of historical Darwin photos and artifacts. The whole town celebrates **Twine Ball Days** on the second Saturday in August.

THE WALKER ART CENTER AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

725 Vineland Pl., Minneapolis; 612/375-7600; www.walkerart.org

The Walker Art Center began in 1879 when lumber baron Thomas Barlow Walker's art collection outgrew his house. He added a new wing to his mansion and opened the Midwest's first public art gallery. It has now grown into one of the world's most lauded modern art centers. Best known for its major exhibitions of cutting-edge 20th-century art, the Walker is a multifaceted center, and the performing arts do not take a backseat to visual arts—there are always music, dance, film, and similar events going on.

Across the street from the Walker is one of the largest urban sculpture gardens in the country. Best known for the iconic ***Spoonbridge and Cherry,*** the 11-ac (4.5-ha) landscaped grounds of the **Minneapolis Sculpture Garden** contain over 40 mostly massive sculptures.

WALNUT GROVE

Walnut Grove was settled and grew like just about every other small prairie town in southwestern Minnesota and would be as unremarkable as the rest of them if it weren't for one former resident. Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the *Little House* series of books that inspired the TV show *Little House on the Prairie*, arrived as a seven-year-old girl and lived here for about five years (1874-1876 and 1877-1879). The Ingalls family alternated living out on the farm and in town, where Charles Ingalls worked various jobs. The settlement quickly grew into a proper village, and Walnut Grove was incorporated in 1879. Laura described life here in her book *On the Banks of Plum Creek.* Although her books, written while she was in her 60s and 70s, are fictional and were never meant to be historical records, many of the episodes she describes really did happen or are based loosely on real events. The real story of Laura and her family, both in Walnut Grove and elsewhere, is told at the **Laura Ingalls Wilder Home & Museum** (330 8th St., Walnut Grove; 507/859-2358; https://lauraingallswilderhome.com). The collection includes many family photos and mementos, such as Laura's sewing basket and quilt, plus displays about several of the real people she mentioned in the Plum Creek book.

PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT

36 Reservation Ave., Pipestone; 507/825-5464; www.nps.gov/pipe

For many Native Americans the Pipestone National Monument is a sacred place. Quarrying of pipestone, so named because it is carved primarily into ceremonial pipe bowls (peace pipe is a common misnomer), is believed to have begun here in the late 16th century. Though there are other sources of pipestone, the catlinite found here exists nowhere else in the world. The finished pipes from these quarries were so highly revered that tribes across most of North America traded for them. The **visitor center** not only explains the entire process of making a pipe, but also from April to October you can watch local Dakota artists carving them. The finished products, along with other Native crafts, are for sale in the gift shop.



PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT

Although the stone is the main focus, there is much more to see. The 0.75-mi (1.2-km) **Circle Trail** leads along a beautiful ridge of quartzite with a waterfall and many interesting rock formations. Much of the site is covered by virgin tallgrass prairie, and signs along the trail point out many

of the plants as well as some of the uses the Dakota had for them. On your way in or out of the park take a look at the **Three Maidens,** six large granite boulders, originally part of one enormous rock, named in honor of two (who said names have to be logical?) legendary women who live inside them. The Dakota leave offerings of food and tobacco here for the guardian spirits of the quarry.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in Minneapolis, strolling along the Mississippi riverfront and the historical milling district. Along the way, you'll pass the 49-ft (15-m) St. Anthony Falls. Follow up with cutting-edge 20th-century art at the **Walker Art Center** before enjoying dinner and some **live music.**

DAY 2 Spend the day in the state capital, St. Paul. Start with a walk along **Summit Avenue**, the longest stretch of Victorian homes in the nation. Next, head to the **Minnesota State Capitol** to see the world's largest unsupported marble dome. When you've worked up an appetite, head out in search of the best Hmong food at **HmongTown Marketplace.**

DAY 3 After breakfast, drive 2.5 hours (150 mi/241 km) north to **Duluth.** Explore the city's maritime museums and stop and watch the ships pass under the **Aerial Lift Bridge.**

DAY 4 Today, you'll pass eight state parks on your way north on **MN-61** along the North Shore of **Lake Superior.** Stretch your legs at **Gooseberry Falls,** the most visited state park. For the best lake views, visit **Tettegouche,** where you can glimpse sea caves and the cliff face of **Palisade Head.** You'll spend the night in **Grand Marais,** a charming spot known for its art and good eats.

DAY 5 Next up is **Ely,** two hours (107 mi/172 km) from Grand Marais, where you'll prepare to explore the spectacular **Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.** Spend the day on the water—or stay longer on a canoe and camping trip—and enjoy one of the most beautiful spots in North America. The Twin Cities are about a four-hour (245-mi/394-km) drive away.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

OTTER TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY

Otter Tail County is home to 1,000 lakes plus plenty of small towns, historic sites, and natural areas worth a visit and some excellent places to spend the night. Even more appealing than the sights themselves is driving between them. All of the following, except artsy New York Mills, lie along the Otter Trail Scenic Byway, a circular 150-mi (241-km) marked route along country roads. Get an early start and you can cover it all in a day, but that would be seriously rushing things. Better to take your time and enjoy the ride.

The first stop along the byway, if traveling clockwise from Fergus Falls, is the impressive **Phelps Mill** (29024 County Hwy. 45, Underwood; 218/826-6159). Not only is it a beautiful sight from the outside, but the original equipment is still in place, and you can walk through all four levels to learn how the process, advanced for its day, worked.



PHELPS MILL

GREAT RIVER ROAD

US 61

A trip down this 116-mi (187-km) stretch of the Great River Road offers glimpses into the natural and human history along the Mississippi River. Start on US 61 heading toward **Red Wing.** The road meets the river at **Lake City,** and from this point on you'll have unrivaled scenery. There is ample opportunity to turn inland and climb the mountain-like terrain for glorious valley views. Though you are never far from one of the historic river towns, the floodplain and impossibly steep hills thwart development, allowing moments where you can imagine yourself deep in a lost wilderness. Wildlife, best enjoyed from a canoe in the river's backwaters, but quite often seen from behind the wheel, abounds all year long. Each fall waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors follow the valley south to warmer wintering grounds. For bald eagles the river *is* their winter residence—well over a thousand of them fish in the open waters along Minnesota. Without

stops, allow two hours. You'll want to add extra time for sightseeing and shopping in **Red Wing, Wabasha,** and **Winona,** three towns that hug the Mississippi River as it travels south, and soak up the scenic vistas from **John A. Latsch** and **Great River Bluffs State Park.**

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

360 US 11 E., International Falls; 218/283-6600; www.nps.gov/voya

Befitting of the Land of 10,000 Lakes, Voyageurs National Park is dominated and defined by water. The park is centered on four large lakes—Rainy, Kabetogama (cab-eh-TOH-ga-ma), Namakan, and Sand Point—and water covers nearly 40 percent of its 218,000 ac (88,221 ha). Except for those leading up to the four entry points, there are no roads in the park. To witness the hundreds of lopsided islands and slender bays or explore the rugged 75,000-ac (30,351-ha) Kabetogama Peninsula at the heart of the park, you'll have to travel by boat.



KABETOGAMA LAKE, VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

Gold fever struck Rainy Lake in July of 1893 when prospector George Davis hit pay dirt on **Little American Island.** You'll learn the whole story of the Rainy Lake Gold Rush along the short wheelchair-accessible trail, which takes you past a mine shaft, tailings piles, and other mining equipment. **Ellsworth Rock Gardens** on the north shore of Kabetogama Lake features 62 terraced flower beds and over 200 geometric and animal-themed sculptures assembled out of the local granite. This singular spot makes an ideal picnic ground.

GRAND ROUNDS NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

Minneapolis

The Grand Rounds (612/230-6400) is an urban byway like no other. The signed route runs right through downtown Minneapolis's St. Anthony Falls historic district and briefly passes the industrial northeast, but most of the 51-mi (82-km) route follows the city's rivers and lakes—including the Mississippi River and the urban wilderness of **Theodore Wirth Regional Park** (1301 Theodore Wirth Pkwy.)—along forest-lined boulevards. Pick up a map and information about recreational opportunities along the trail at

the Longfellow House in Minnehaha Park, or let the many informational kiosks guide you.

Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (612/230-6400) is best seen on two wheels, and there are separate paths for bicyclists along most of the 51-mi route. The 13.3-mi (21.4-km) Chain of Lakes segment (known to cyclists as the **Four Lakes Loop**) centered on Lake Calhoun is rightfully popular.

ICE SKATING

In Minnesota, skating is part of daily life. You'll find rinks of all sizes wherever you go in the state. Bring your own skates and enjoy the ice. At some rinks, there's a designated spot for hockey, separate from that for figure skating. Make sure to give the hockey players plenty of room. You might also see locals playing broomball. The sport is similar to hockey, but is notably played without pads.



ICE SKATING

GOOSEBERRY FALLS STATE PARK

3206 MN-61 E., Two Harbors; 218/595-7100; www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks [URL inactive]

With your first glimpse of Gooseberry Falls you'll quickly understand why this is Minnesota's most popular state park. (So popular, you should plan to arrive very early on summer weekends if you want to find parking.) The swift Gooseberry River shoots around a narrow bend, drops over Upper Falls into a rocky gorge, blankets the 100-ft-wide (30-m) rock wall forming Middle Falls, and plunges over the split Lower Falls before calmly marching on to Lake Superior. Though nearly 782,000 people gaze upon these scenes each year—the whole 90-ft (27-m) drop sits just a short stroll down a wheelchair-accessible trail—a relatively small number of them venture through the rest of the 1,700-ac (688-ha) park.

Two excellent hiking trails follow the river down to Lake Superior. The **River View Trail** starts below the falls and climbs up a ridge with a superb view of Lower and Middle Falls before hitting lovely Agate Beach. The **Gitchi-Gami Trail** (www.gitchigamitrail.com) follows the much higher ridge across the river, looking down upon the river's mouth from above; it's rather noisy when circling back by the highway, so consider retracing your steps here. Both trails have a few climbs, but steps make them pretty easy overall. Heading upstream, the 3.1-mi (5-km) **Fifth Falls Trail** (part of the North Shore's **Superior Hiking Trail**) hugs the river as it climbs to its namesake cascade and returns on the opposite shore. In total, 20 mi (32 km) of trail, most of them open to mountain bikes, wind through the park's hills. Come winter most of the trails are groomed for cross-country skiing, while the Gitchi-Gami and Fifth Falls trails are available for winter hiking. The campground has 69 well-spaced nonelectric sites, and there is also a kayak site on Lake Superior.

BLUE MOUNDS STATE PARK

1410 161st St., Luverne; 507/283-6050; www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks [URL inactive]

Although it receives far fewer visitors than most of Minnesota's state parks and can't offer the deep wilderness of the state's largest, in many ways Blue

Mounds State Park is one of the best. The namesake mound at the heart of the park, which appeared blue to the earliest settlers passing by in the distance, is a massive outcrop of Sioux quartzite bedrock rising gradually from the west and ending in a spectacular 1.5-mi-long (2.4-km) cliff. This ridge, nearly 100 ft (30 m) tall in many places, is one of the best rock-climbing sites in the state; all climbers must get a free permit from the park office. The mound and most of the 1,153-ac (466-ha) park is topped by original tallgrass prairie that, although degraded by livestock grazing, was never plowed, thanks to the shallow, rocky soil. Bison graze on the prairie once again as they did through the early 19th century: The only difference is that this herd of nearly 100 remains inside a 530-ac (214-ha) enclosure. Though the bison are behind a fence, they do remain wild, so never walk right up to them since they can break through the mesh as if it were a paper bag—and they sometimes do.

The hiking here is arguably the best in southwest Minnesota, and all 20 mi (32 km) of trail crossing the prairie are beautiful. Bird-watchers seeking western species could have a field day along these trails.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

POWWOWS AND WACIPI

Powwows, or wacipi as they are known in the Dakota language, are held throughout the year, often in summer around major holidays like Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day. Check to see if an event near you is open to the public. A wacipi gathering typically features dancing, a drum circle, and the grand entry of the community's veterans. Here are few events that take place every year.

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (www.shakopeedakota.org) hosts one of the largest wacipi, which takes place in late August north of the Mystic Lake Casino.

There is a Memorial Day Powwow at the **Mille Lacs Indian Museum** (Onamia; www.mnhs.org/millelacs).

Mahkato Wacipi (Mankato; www.mahkatowacipi.org) hosts an event in September.

BEST SOUVENIRS

The last thing you would expect to find in little **Kellogg** (pop. 469) is one of the world's greatest **toy stores,** but there it is. **LARK** (63604 170th Ave., Kellogg; 507/767-3387; www.larktoys.com) stands for Lost Arts Revival by Kreofsky, and the family-run enterprise, which now attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, began in 1983 when Donn and Sarah Kreofsky began making wooden toys in their garage. Word spread and soon they were stocking FAO Schwarz and 2,500 other retailers. Burned out by the big-business side of things, they decided to open their own toy store. The store sells everything from board games to chemistry sets to Russian nesting dolls to wind-up toys, plus, of course, the handmade wooden toys that started it all.

Native American arts like beadwork and silver jewelry can be found throughout the state but are the least Minnesotan. For a truly local souvenir, keep an eye out for **pipestone carvings.** You might also see birch bark baskets and toys.

Stop by a gift shop or craft fair featuring **Scandinavian folk arts** to find treasures like rosemaling, an elegant style of decorative painting.

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

State Fairgrounds, 1265 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul; 651/288-4400; www.mnstatefair.org; late Aug.-early Sept.

The Minnesota State Fair has everything other state agricultural fairs have—livestock shows, a carnival midway, washed-up rock stars on the grandstand, car races, and food on sticks—only a lot more of it than most; the 322-ac (130-ha) fairgrounds are one of the nation's largest.

ST. PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

Rice Park, St. Paul; 651/223-4700; www.wintercarnival.com; Jan.

The 10-day festival, commencing the last Friday in January, features ice- and snow-carving competitions, parades, broomball tournaments, and softball on ice. Indoor activities include bonspiels (curling matches), art exhibits, concerts, and a grand ball. Though the carnival is famous for its ice castles, they are built only occasionally. Another unique aspect is the reenacting of the festival's silly legend. Boreas (the King of Snows) battles Vulcanus Rex (the King of Fire) and his minions until spring ceremoniously triumphs over winter.

BEST FOOD

While any blue-blooded Minnesotan regards the hot dish (local vernacular for a casserole) as a gourmet meal, Midwestern cuisine should not be dismissed out of hand. Featured prominently are locally grown ingredients such as cranberries, raspberries, morel mushrooms, pumpkin, wild rice, fresh fish, and wild game such as venison and elk—sounds pretty good, right? Many of the poshest restaurants specialize in imaginative uses of these ingredients, using them in various ethnic recipes and creating new takes on American classics, but even some small-town greasy spoons feature them.

Walleye, the most prevalent Minnesota specialty (though it almost always come from Canada), is usually served batter-fried, and menus will often have multiple variations of it.

SCANDINAVIAN CUISINE

Though you won't find it on too many menus, the state's most distinctive cuisine is Scandinavian. Swedish meatballs are well known throughout the country, but it's the three L's—**lutefisk, lefse,** and **lingonberries**—that most intrigue visitors. These and other Scandinavian staples are largely reserved for church and lodge suppers and family get-togethers, but you'll find them on the occasional restaurant menu.

Lefse comes in many varieties, but the most common combines potato (occasionally rice), flour, butter, and salt. The mix is rolled flat and baked on a griddle, producing a bread that resembles a thick tortilla. Traditionally, lefse was wrapped around meat or fish, but today it is mostly eaten on the side with butter and a sprinkling of sugar, brown sugar, or cinnamon, or with a spread of jam. Lingonberries are similar to cranberries, and are sometimes called mountain cranberries. A much greater culinary adventure is **lutefisk**—dried North Atlantic cod reconstituted in water for three days, soaked in lye for another three, and then put back into water for up to a week. Traditionally Norwegians top it with butter and Swedes with a cream sauce, while a mustard sauce helps many non-fans get it down year after year. Minnesotans consume several tons of it annually, mostly between October and December.

A few churches also host communal **lapskaus** (a traditional Norwegian beef stew) dinners, which might include a side course of sing-along. If you want to sample some of this ethnic cuisine, you can always pick some up at Scandinavian gift shops and many grocery stores. Microwaveable lutefisk dinners are a new option.

INDIGENOUS CUISINE

Known as Mni Sota Makoce in the Dakota language, the state of Minnesota is home to a rich tradition of Indigenous cuisine. One of the best places to try traditional dishes prepared by a majority-Native staff is **Owamni** (420 S. 1st St., Minneapolis; https://owamni.com). This James Beard award-winning restaurant was founded by the Sioux Chef, Sean Sherman, of the Oglala Lakota. The nonprofit that operates the restaurant, North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems, also runs the **Indigenous Food Lab** (920 E. Lake St., Minneapolis; https://natifs.org/indigenous-food-lab), which features a restaurant and marketplace. Here you'll find dishes incorporating ingredients such as sweet corn, beans, hominy, wild rice, squash, bison, trout, and more.

HMONG FOOD

The Twin Cities' Hmong community is largest in the world outside of Asia. **Hmong Village** (1001 Johnson Pkwy., St. Paul; 651/771-7886;

https://hmongvillagemn.com) is the best place to get an introduction to Hmong food and wares in St. Paul. For even more food and shopping, visit the 200 stalls at **Hmong-Town Marketplace** (217 Como Ave., St. Paul; 651/487-3700; www.hmongtownmarketplace.com). Specialties include barbecue, bubble teas, fried noodles, and meat salads called laab. The food is authentic and delicious, with spicy sauces and toppings often served on the side.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport:** MSP; Terminal 1 4300 Glumack Dr., St. Paul; Terminal 2 7150 Humphrey Dr., St. Paul; 612/726-5555; www.mspairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Explore Minnesota Tourism:** www.exploreminnesota.com
- **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:** www.dnr.state.mn.us [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Minneapolis Star Tribune:*** www.startribune.com
- ***Minnesota Monthly:*** www.minnesotamonthly.com

WISCONSIN

For generations, bumper stickers proclaimed “Escape to Wisconsin.” The Department of Tourism later shelved this for other PR slogans, but the people were so opposed that the state resurrected it. It’s succinctly Wisconsin: a retreat, a sojourn, a mental breather—a genuine escape. On the land of the Ojibwa, Menominee, Potawatomi, Stockbridge-Munsee, Oneida, Ho-Chunk, Illinois, Fox, Sauk, Miami, Kickapoo, Satee, Ottawa, and Mascouten people, Wisconsin is generally content to remain in the middle on most things—except such important issues as livability quotients, at which it tends to excel. It’s also the Midwest’s overall most popular travel destination, boasting the planet’s most diverse glacial topography, amazing cataracts, and an immense North Woods region. Even onetime University of Wisconsin Badger John Muir had it figured out in the 19th century when he proclaimed, “Oh, that glorious Wisconsin wilderness!” That still holds true today for the hordes coming into the state pulling boats, bikes, kayaks, and canoes, all for that chance of bucolic splendor.

AREA: 65,496 sq mi / 169,635 sq km (23rd)

POPULATION: 5,960,975 (20th)

STATEHOOD DATE: May 29, 1848 (30th)

STATE CAPITAL: Madison


WISCONSIN
GETTING OUT ON THE WATER
Apostle Islands
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Bayfield
Duluth
Superior
Ashland
Bad River Indian Reservation
Lake Superior
Lake Superior
CANADA
UNITED STATES
ONTARIO
MICHIGAN
MINNESOTA
Lake Chippewa
Trego
Eagle River
Pembine
Monico
Laona
Bradley
Cameron
Ladysmith
Turtle Lake
Cornell
Medford
Peshtigo River
Wild River
Horseshoe Island
Peninsula State Park
Fish Creek
Marinette
CANA ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE
RIDGES SANCTUARY
Door County
Cave Point County Park
Whitefish Dunes State Park
Potawatomi State Park
ST. PAUL
Hudson
Minneapolis
Menomonie
Chippewa Falls
Eau Claire
Wausau
ELLSWORTH COOPERATIVE CREAMERY
Prescott
Marshfield
Stevens Point
Suamico
ROOTING FOR THE GREEN BAY PACKERS
Green Bay
Bellevue
De Pere
Stockholm
Pepin
Wisconsin Rapids
Plover
Waupaca
Hartman Creek State Park
Appleton
Menasha
Two Rivers
Manitowoc
Oshkosh
EAA AIRVENTURE MUSEUM
Lake Winnebago
HENNING'S WISCONSIN CHEESE
SAYING "CHEESE" IN AMERICA'S DAIRYLAND
Michigan
MICHIGAN
Trempealeau
Onalaska
West Salem
La Crosse
Fond du Lac
CHEESE COUNTER AND DAIRY HERITAGE CENTER
Sheboygan
Westby
Wisconsin Dells
STAND ROCK
Waupun
Genoa
Portage
Beaver Dam
West Bend
Port Washington
Baraboo
CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM
Devil's Lake State Park
GREAT RIVER ROAD
Readstown
Ferryville
Watertown
Lake Mendota
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
SPRECHER BREWERY
Milwaukee
Wisconsin River
TALIESIN
THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK
MADISON
MILWAUKEE MITCHELL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Prairie du Chien
Wyalusing State Park
Fennimore
Waukesha
West Allis
South Milwaukee
Fort Atkinson
Lake Koshkonong
Green County
Elkhorn
Racine
Kenosha
Cassville
Platteville
Janesville
Monroe
Beloit
Geneva Lake
Dickeyville
IOWA
ILLINOIS
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

The largest city of **Milwaukee** sits against **Lake Michigan** in southeastern Wisconsin, while due west is **Madison,** the state capital. **Door County,** the peninsula stretching into Lake Michigan with **Green Bay** at its base, is north of Milwaukee, while the **Wisconsin Dells** lie northwest of Madison. The **Mississippi River** flows along the western border until it enters Minnesota, where the **St. Croix River** takes over as the state line.

WHEN TO GO

Wisconsin is a four-season destination with something for everyone in any season. High season is **summer,** between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Another peak season is **fall,** from late September through late October, when throngs arrive to witness autumn's splendorous colors. **Winter** in general sees fewer visitors except for snowmobilers and skiers. Few people come in March and early April, as these months are gray, muddy, and windy.

TOP 3

1 GETTING OUT ON THE WATER

Wisconsin, cartographically, can appear to be splattered with blue paint. With more than 15,000 lakes and 84,000 mi (135,184 km) of rivers and streams, Wisconsin is a water lover's paradise.

- If you only have time for one water adventure, make it canoeing the **Lower Wisconsin State Riverway,** west of Madison, in the Driftless Region. It's among the longest unimpeded stretches of river in the Midwest. For a more underrated canoe trail, the **Turtle-Flambeau Flowage** is rightfully called Wisconsin's version of the Boundary Waters.
- Kayakers will never forget an experience at the otherworldly sea caves of **Apostle Islands National Lakeshore,** where Wisconsin

runs up against Lake Superior. The sea caves of **Cave Point County Park** in Door County also draw flocks of visitors.

- White-water rafting is sublime in northeastern Wisconsin along the National Wild and Scenic **Wolf River** and the slightly more sedate **Peshtigo River.**
- From picturesque Bayfield on Wisconsin's northern cap, take a sunset cruise to see the **Apostle Islands** or cruise out Green Bay onto Lake Michigan to see **Death's Door** (along with a good number of eye-catching lighthouses along the way).



KAYAKING THE APOSTLE ISLANDS SEA CAVES

2 SAYING "CHEESE" IN AMERICA'S DAIRYLAND

Wisconsin produces more than 600 varieties and more than one-fourth of the nation's cheese, leading in cheddar, colby, brick, muenster, limburger, and many Italian varieties. Here are some of the best dairy attractions in the Badger State.



LIMBURGER CHEESE

- **Green County,** south of Madison, is home to a number of operations and the only limburger cheese maker in the country. And try the limburger and onion sandwich at **Baumgartner Cheese Store and Tavern** (1023 16th Ave., Monroe; 608/325-6157) in Monroe, the county seat.
- Northwest of Sheboygan in tiny Kiel is **Henning's Wisconsin Cheese** (20201 Point Creek Rd., Kiel; 920/894-3032; www.henningscheese.com), possibly the last US cheese maker to create enormous wheels of cheese (up to 12,000 lb/5,442 kg!).
- From Kiel, head south 13 mi (21 km) to Plymouth for its wondrous **Cheese Counter and Dairy Heritage Center** (133 E. Mill St.; 920/892-2012; https://cheesecapitaloftheworld.com). This little town is responsible for producing, storing, or shipping a significant percentage of US cheese, and this place tells you about it.

- Officially declared Wisconsin's "Cheese Curd Capital," **Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery** (232 N. Wallace St., Ellsworth; 715/273-4311; www.ellsworthcheese.com) along the Great River Road is a main contributor to the town's production of 180,000 lb (81,647 kg) of fresh curds daily.

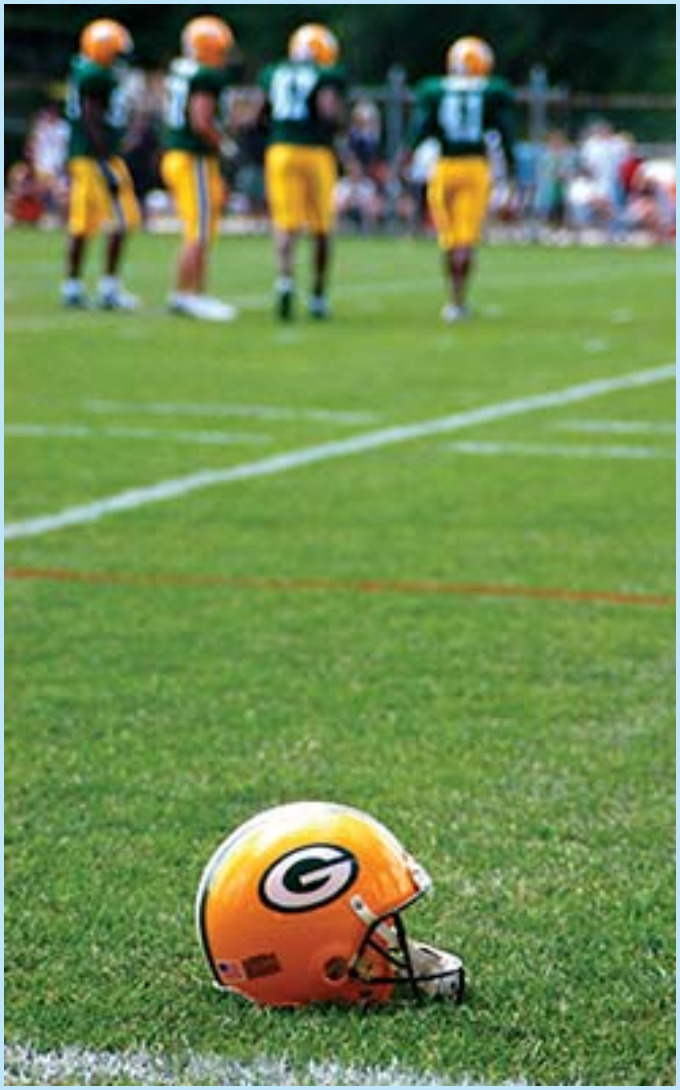
3 ROOTING FOR THE GREEN BAY PACKERS

920/569-7500; www.packers.com

The only community-owned team in the NFL is the Green Bay Packers. If there are any awards for professional sports fandoms, the Green Bay Packers football team and its beloved legions win hands-down. But you don't need to bleed green and gold to get swept up in the Green Bay Packers fandom.

Don't miss a tour of renovated but still classic **Lambeau Field** (1265 Lombardi Way, Green Bay); perhaps no stadium mixes tradition with modernity more than this national treasure. Myriad tours exist, and the more expensive the tour, the more things you see. Visitors can explore the press box, the visiting team's locker room, the skyboxes, and even the field itself. If nothing else, check out the stadium from the outside. The number-one Packer destination is the Lambeau Field Atrium—its restaurants and shops are open to the public almost every day of the year—which is home to the **Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame** (920/569-7512).

People often crowd the free practices during the Packers' late-summer **training camp,** held at the practice facility along Oneida Street across from Lambeau Field and the Ray Nitschke Field. Sometimes practices are held indoors in the team's state-of-the-art Hutson Practice Facility. Practices begin in mid-July and run until preseason games begin in late August. The **Packer Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony,** in August, is a huge deal to Packers fans.



GREEN BAY PACKERS TRAINING CAMP

It’s virtually impossible to get face-value tickets to regular season Packers games; preseason games are another matter. Check www.packers.com for ticket information.

HIGHLIGHTS

FOLLOWING FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

The famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright, a native Badger, melded the natural world into his architecture. In 1938, *Time* magazine called him "the greatest architect of the twentieth century." In 2019, two of his Wisconsin works—Taliesin in Spring Green and a private home in Madison—were added to UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. Here are some highlights.

- Wright's Madison masterwork, the **Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center** (1 John Nolen Dr., Madison; 608/261-4000; www.mononaterrace.com), has a view so sublime that even his detractors will be in awe. Also in Madison, the privately owned **Herbert and Katherine Jacobs House** (441 Toepfer Ave., Madison) was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2019.
- In the Wisconsin Dells, you can sleep in one of the only Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings available for rent—the **Seth Peterson Cottage** (877/466-2358; www.sethpeterson.org).
- Along the Wisconsin River is the pilgrimage to Spring Green, home to **Taliesin,** Wright's home and studio and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Have lunch at the Riverview Terrace Restaurant in the **Frank Lloyd Wright Visitor Center** (5607 County Rd. C, Spring Green; 608/588-7900; www.taliesinpreservation.org or www.wrightinwisconsin.org), the only Wright-designed eatery anywhere. Driving through the area, you'll see "Wright-inspired" everything.

The state also has the **Frank Lloyd Wright Trail** (https://wrightinwisconsin.org) marked along I-94 from Racine in southeastern Wisconsin to Richland Center in south-central Wisconsin. The brown signs will lead you to highlights of his work.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON MUSEUM

400 W. Canal St., Milwaukee; 877/436-8738

Harley-Davidson has created hog heaven in the 130,000-sq-ft (12,100-sq-m) Harley-Davidson Museum. This $85 million project features an interactive museum and exhibits on the history, culture, and lifestyle engendered by the company and its devoted riders. Rooms are full of vintage vehicles; not surprisingly, Elvis's bike probably gets the most attention.

THE DELLS

These lovely rock formations, oddballs with names such as Devil's Elbow, Fat Man's Misery, Witches Gulch, and Cold Water Canyon, make for one of the nicest boat tours in the state. They can be found along 15 mi (24 km) of upper and lower dells, and everywhere you see craggy palisades and soft-hued sandstone. The trademark of the Wisconsin Dells is **Stand Rock,** a mushroom-shaped sandstone protuberance made famous in 19th-century first-of-its-kind stop-action photography.

Major CITIES

MILWAUKEE: The low-key residents are proud of their cultural, educational, and architectural gems along Milwaukee's fabulous lakefront. And don't forget the names that made Milwaukee famous: the gargantuan Miller Brewing and Harley-Davidson.

MADISON: The Mad City, also known as Madtown, is a vibrant city among a quartet of jewel-like lakes. It's home to the Wisconsin State Capitol and the University of Wisconsin. But most residents are nature lovers; you'll find native state flora at the UW's Arboretum and the Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

GREEN BAY: This city on the edge of its namesake Lake Michigan bay is best known for its beloved Green Bay Packers football team. It's also home to some notable museums and an amusement park.

To see the Dells, hop onboard a tour with the **Original Wisconsin Ducks** (608/254-8751; www.wisconsinducktours.com), where you'll ride in green-and-white, 14,000-lb (6,350-kg) amphibious World War II landing craft. They slowly roar along the main drag of the Dells, picking up passengers for a one-hour, 8-mi (13-km) trip that includes jaunts through restored prairie lands and access to wilderness trails. **Dells Boat Tours** (608/254-8555; www.dellsboats.com) uses modern cabin cruisers and offers separate Upper Dells tours; this is the only boat tour that offers a stop at the Dells trademark Stand Rock.



WISCONSIN DELLS BOAT TOUR

CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

500 Water St., Baraboo; 608/356-8341; www.circusworldbaraboo.org [URL inactive]

The site of the Circus World Museum was the original headquarters of the Ringling Brothers circus, in an attractive setting along the Baraboo River. Summer is the best time to visit, when the 64-ac (26-ha) grounds are open and the three-ring circus and sideshows reappear. Under the big top is a dazzling, frenetic, fun mélange of jugglers, aerialists, clowns, bands, magic, circus nuts and bolts, steam-driven calliope concerts, and animal shows. Another hall has memorabilia and displays from long-gone US circuses and an exhaustive historical rundown of the Ringlings. Also in the hall is the world's most complete collection of circus vehicles (260 and counting) and circus posters (9,000 and counting). It is so comprehensive that Disney designers consulted here for the 2019 movie *Dumbo.*

EAA AIRVENTURE MUSEUM

3000 Poberezny Rd., Oshkosh; 920/426-4818; www.airventuremuseum.org

Wisconsin has officially decreed the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture Museum a state treasure. In one of the largest museums of its kind in the world, more than 200 airplanes of every possible type are displayed—aerobatic planes, home-built, racers, and more. Four theaters, numerous display galleries, and tons of multimedia exhibits make this well worth the admission price. The newest and most popular is an interactive F-22 simulator. Be there when flights are offered in old-timey planes, complete with the leather hat, goggles, and wind-blown hair. The museum owes much of its popularity to the 700,000 or so visitors who converge on Oshkosh each summer for the annual **air show.**



EAA AIRVENTURE MUSEUM

THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

WI-23, south of Spring Green; 608/935-3639; www.thehouseontherock.com

Back in the 1940s, Alex Jordan stumbled over a 60-ft (18-m) candle-like outcropping in the Wyoming Valley. Intending to construct a weekend retreat and artists haven, Jordan somehow wrestled the original structure into completion atop the chimney. Today, the original house sits atop the rock, plus several other mind-blowing rooms and add-ons, all stuffed with the detritus that Jordan accumulated through a lifetime. Included are the Largest Carousel (20,000 lights and 269 handcrafted wooden animals, not one of which is a horse), the Organ Room (with three of the world's largest), and more. The best is the loopy Infinity Room, a glassed-in room that spikes 218 ft (66 m) over the valley floor.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 After arriving in Milwaukee, spending time on the **lakefront** is a must. Tour **Miller Brewing** or the **Harley-Davidson Museum** (400 W. Canal St.; 414/287-2789; www.harley-davidson.com) and step into the unparalleled **Milwaukee Public Museum** (800 W. Wells St.; 414/278-2728; www.mpm.edu). Stay overnight downtown in the historic **Pfister** or at **Brewhouse Inn and Suites** in the renovated **Pabst Brewery** just northwest of downtown.

DAY 2 Drive 1.75 hours (80 mi/128 km) to **Madison** to tour an architectural gem: Frank Lloyd Wright's **Monona Terrace.** Stroll the pedestrian-friendly State Street area to the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** campus.

DAY 3 One hour away, see the real **Dells** of the Wisconsin River (56 mi/90 km from Madison) on a World War II-era duck boat tour. If you've had your fill of water, **Devil's Lake State Park** down the road offers superb hiking, and, next door, fetching **Baraboo** is small-town quaint and has a grand circus museum, replete with outdoor shows.

DAY 4 Continue your outdoor adventure with a 3.5-hour trip from the Dells to **Door County;** base yourself in **Fish Creek** (200 mi/321 km). Must-sees are hiking or kayaking at **Whitefish Dunes State Park** or **The Ridges Sanctuary,** and visiting the nation's densest county concentration of lighthouses.

DAY 5 Your return drive to **Milwaukee** will take three hours (177 mi/285 km).

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

THE GREAT RIVER ROAD

This famed route stretches from the source of the Mississippi River in Lake Itasca, Minnesota, and parallels the Mississippi all the way to New Orleans. Wisconsin's mileage is road-trip eye candy. This includes the best-known stretch, the 85 mi (136 km) north from La Crosse; the southern half seems at times to be absolutely untouched.



GREAT RIVER ROAD

If you're coming from the Indianhead region, you'll start in **Prescott,** 35 minutes southeast of Minneapolis. Drive slowly and find some art, antiques, or coffee in the tiny town of **Stockholm,** and visit Laura Ingalls Wilder's birthplace in **Pepin** before dining at everyone else's favorite pit stop, **Trempealeau,** famous for its anachronistic hotel-restaurant. In **La Crosse,** get a snapshot of the sunset from Granddad Bluff and spend the night.

WISCONSIN'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Wisconsin is home to six sovereign Native American nations on 11 reservations, not all of which are demarcated by boundaries. In addition to the six nations, Wisconsin is on the land of the Illinois, Fox, Sauk, Miami, Kickapoo, Satee, Ottawa, and Mascouten people. The total Native American population is around 40,000, or 1 percent of the population. The **Great Lakes Intertribal Council** (www.glitc.org) is a good resource for information.

The largest Indigenous group is the **Ojibwa,** also rendered historically as Chippewa and now Ojibway, Ojibwe, and Ojibwa. Wisconsin has six Ojibwa communities. The Ojibwa inhabited the northern woodlands of the upper Great Lakes, especially along Lakes Huron and Superior. The **Bad River** group today lives on a more than 124,000-ac (50,181-ha) reservation along Lake Superior in Ashland County. It's one of the largest reservations in the state and is famed for its wild rice beds on the Kakagon Sloughs.

Wisconsin is also home to the Algonquian **Menominee,** who have been in Wisconsin longer than any other people; the Forest County **Potawatomi,** also **Algonquians**; Wisconsin's only Mohicans, the **Stockbridge-Munsee** people; the **Oneida,** who belonged to the Iroquois Five Nations Confederacy; and the Winnebago Nation, which reverted to its original name, **Ho Chunk.**

Heading toward Iowa, do some barge fishing in **Genoa,** or at least visit its fascinating fish hatchery, before picking up some snacks at Ferryville Cheese in **Ferryville.** Next stop is **Prairie du Chien** and its historically perfect Villa Louis, an examination of early Wisconsin. Picnic with some of that cheese high above the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers at **Wyalusing State Park** before heading south to **Cassville,** keeping an eye out for eagles. After arriving, you can take an awesome ferry across the Mississippi.

RUSTIC ROAD-TRIPPING

Travel media writers have consistently voted Wisconsin one of the United States' greatest road-touring states, in part because many rural roads, originally farm-to-market routes, seem to have changed little in a century and a half.

Wisconsin's Department of Transportation (www.wisconsindot.gov [URL inactive]) has highlighted 126 of the state's best back-roads trips with its **Rustic Roads designation.** Every Rustic Road in the state is guaranteed to offer an amazing palette of colors **mid-September to late October.**

- Heading for east-central waters? From Waupaca, go southwest on WI-22 to the Yankee village of Rural, possibly the state's quaintest original. From here, **Rustic Roads 23 and 24** (3 mi/4.8 km each) form a V shape around Hartman Creek State Park and take you three times over the Crystal River atop stone bridges, then past a spring-fed trout stream.
- In northeastern Wisconsin, the Peshtigo River Parkway **(Rustic Road 32)** cannot be beat for river beauty and waterfalls. To get here, head to little Pembine at the junction of US 141 and US 8. Head west on US 8 approximately 9 mi (14.5 km) to signs leading you south. This is a big one, 37 mi (59 km) long, but you'll have plenty of places to stop and rest at state and county parks.
- In southwestern Wisconsin, **Rustic Road 54** starts in Jackson County. It runs 12.3 mi (19.8 km) along North Settlement Road between **WI-54** and **I-94** through the tranquil **Black River State Forest** (https://dnr.wisconsin.gov). As you drive north through the forest's eastern zone, you'll admire hardwood pines, patches of peat moss, and waterways full of birds.

BAYFIELD TO SUPERIOR

WI-13

Here's where the windshield vistas become worthy of Ansel Adams—the modest Bayfield County mosaic of orchards, multihued patches of crops, enormous rolls of hay, dilapidated one-eyed shotgun shacks weathering by

the side of the road, even an abandoned truck rusting in the cattails. WI-13 from Bayfield hugs the coastline, coming out almost as far west as Superior—about 80 mi (128 km) and totally worth the effort. These parts were settled predominantly by Finnish and other Scandinavian immigrants pushing west out of Michigan's Upper Peninsula around the middle of the 19th century. They would eventually spread through the ore docks and shipyards of Superior and into the mines of the Mesabi and Vermilion Iron Ranges in Minnesota. A number of their homesteads can still be seen poking through the weeds along the route.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

DOOR COUNTY

www.doorcounty.com

Door County is often called the "Cape Cod of the Midwest," or "California of the North," although in spots the area seems just as much like chilled, stony Norwegian fjords. Bays in all the colors of an artist's palette are surrounded by variegated shoreline: 300 mi/483 km (more than any other US county) of alternately rocky beaches, craggy bluffs, blossom-choked orchards, bucolic heath, and meadows. A great touring base is the town of **Fish Creek,** the "soul of Door County," home to historic buildings and a local winery.

One of the stars of the show here is picturesque and popular **Peninsula State Park** (920/868-6256; https://dnr.wisconsin.gov). More than 20 mi (32 km) of hiking trails lace the park and the shores of the bays, and there are 22 mi (35 km) of road and off-road bike trails. The most popular is the **Sunset Trail,** which is open to pedestrians, wheelchair traffic, and bikes. And you won't forget a kayak or canoe trip to **Horseshoe Island.**

Other highlights here include **Potawatomi State Park** (920/746-2890; https://dnr.wisconsin.gov), where you can hike the first mile of Wisconsin's epic 1,200-mi (1,931-km) Ice Age Trail, and **Whitefish Dunes State Park** (920/823-2400; https://dnr.wisconsin.gov) and **Cave Point County Park**

(920/743-5511; www.doorcounty.com), where you can hike to the beach, check out dunes and wildlife, and visit Cave Point's eponymous caves. Visit the beloved **Ridges Sanctuary** (Ridges Rd.; 920/839-2802; www.ridgessanctuary.org), a must for birders and wildlife lovers, which leads to the grand, brilliantly white **Cana Island Lighthouse.**

GENEVA LAKE

Geneva Lake, one of the larger lakes in southern Wisconsin, is a tranquil resort area. One can't help but love its loopy mix of restored Victorian and low-key resort structures, natural splendor, and, most of all, its accessibility to the public. The 26-mi-long (41-km) **footpath** that circles the lake via linked ancient Native American trails is one of the loveliest lakeside strolls anywhere.



PADDLE WHEELER ON GENEVA LAKE

The easiest and most popular way to experience the lake is on a tour in either a replica Mississippi paddle wheeler or lake steamer. You can also get out on the water on a ski boat or sailboat; the Geneva Lake region has more

marinas than you can imagine. And for a more unique activity? Lake Geneva residents still get their mail delivered by boat, just as in the 1930s, and visitors can also hop on the mail boat, the ***Walworth II*** (Riviera Docks; 262/248-6206 or 800/558-5911; www.cruiselakegeneva.com), to come along for the ride.

DEVIL'S LAKE STATE PARK

S5965 Park Rd., Baraboo; 608/356-8301; https://dnr.wisconsin.gov

The diamond-hard, 1.5-billion-year-old quartzite bluffs of the Baraboo Range tower above a primeval icy lake. At Wisconsin's most visited state park, the lake reflects the earthy rainbow colors of the rises—steel gray and blood red—and mixes them with its own obsidian for dramatic results.

The hiking here cannot be beat; nearly 30 mi (48 km) encompass both the east and west bluffs. On the east bluff, the best trails are the **Grottos Trail** and the **Potholes Trail.** Many of these trails are used in winter for **cross-country skiing,** and 4 mi (6.4 km) are also available for **mountain biking.** The hard quartzite bluffs of the park are ready-made for excellent **rock climbing,** and you can even plumb the depths of Devil's Lake with a **scuba-diving** outfitter.

SNOWMOBILING

Snowmobiling is a big deal here. In some communities, snowmobiling accounts for more business than fishing. In total, the state maintains 25,000 mi (40,000 km) of interconnected trails, so well linked that you can travel on them continuously from Kenosha in southeastern Wisconsin all the way to Lake Superior in the northwest. Nearly half of the 42 state recreation trails permit snowmobiling, as do 15 state parks and forests, and the national forests are wide open.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOWMOBILE DERBY

Eagle River; 715/479-4424; www.derbycomplex.com; Jan.

Every January, throngs of aficionados of Wisconsin's de facto pastime—snowmobiling—descend on Eagle River for a weekend of cacophonic, boisterous revelry, an Indy 500 of supercharged sleds. Held at the "Best Little Racetrack in the World," it's the most important snowmobile championship race in the world, with 500 racers in 20 classes. Getting a pit-side seat is truly a dramatic experience.

The Thursday-night qualifier has become a smash hit with the crowds, as have vintage racing and the fact that fans can pay to roar around the track. The weekend sees dozens of manufacturers, tour operators, and sponsors bringing in state-of-the-art equipment for demonstrations and some hands-on opportunities.

SUMMERFEST

Milwaukee; www.summerfest.com; June

Summerfest is the granddaddy of all Midwestern festivals and the largest music festival in the world (says *Guinness World Records*). For nine days in late June and early July, top national musical acts as well as unknown college-radio mainstays perform on innumerable stages along the lakefront, drawing millions of music lovers and partiers.

OSHKOSH FLY-IN

Oshkosh; www.airventure.org; July/Aug.

The gathering known as the **EAA AirVenture Oshkosh,** often referred to as the Oshkosh Fly-In or Air Show, is a legendary jaw-dropping display of airplanes that draws hundreds of thousands of people from around the world. It's a spectacle. The skies are filled with planes and pilots with an

appetite for aviation the way it used to be done—strictly by the seat of the pants. Handmade and antique aircraft are the highlights, but lots of contemporary military aircraft are also on show. Thrilling air shows go on nonstop. In all, more than 10,000 aircraft and nearly 700,000 people are on hand.



OSHKOSH FLY-IN

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

Wisconsin’s best cooking is a thoughtful mélange of ethnicities, stemming from the diverse populace and prairie-cooking fare that reflects a heritage of living off the land. Midwest regional cuisine is a blend of originally wild food such as cranberries, wild rice, pumpkins, blueberries, whitefish livers, catfish cheeks, and morel mushrooms incorporated into standard old-country recipes. Added to the mix are game animals such as deer, pheasant, and goose.

FRIDAY FISH FRIES

Cuisine experience number one in Wisconsin is a Friday-night fish fry. On the menu is deep-fried perch or one of the other species variants—haddock, walleye pike, or cod. Fish fries are generally set up as smorgasbords, where the fish is served with slathered-on homemade tartar sauce and a relish tray or salad bar. Sometimes you'll find platefuls of chicken, too.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Hmong crafts can be found at craft fairs and farmers markets throughout the state. Keep an eye out for story cloths, which recount narratives visually, and exquisite decorative paj ntaub, a 2,000-year-old hybrid of needlework and appliqué, usually featuring geometric designs and often animals. Some quilts and wall hangings require more than 100 hours of work.

Pick up some famous Wisconsin **cheese** as a souvenir—the requisite items are cheddar cheese foam-wedge hats and cheese-and-bratwurst gift packs. Or bring home some Door County **cherries** in the form of jam, pie filling, or other cherry-themed souvenirs.

- For an only-in-Wisconsin fish-fry experience, the **American Serbian Hall** (5101 W. Oklahoma Ave., Milwaukee; 414/545-6030; https://serbhall.net) serves 2,500 people at a drive-through with a line down the street.
- For an overall experience, try the fish fry on offer at the **Beer Hall** at Lakefront Brewery (1872 N. Commerce St., Milwaukee; 414/372-8800; www.lakefrontbrewery.com) with live polka music and real-deal potato pancakes. The brewery, which offers tours, is also the best all-around experience in Wisconsin for beer lovers.

DOOR COUNTY CHERRIES

Wisconsin's cherry trees blossom in May, and harvest season runs from mid-July to mid-August. Strolling through an orchard to pick your own cherries is a top Door County experience—the fragrance of the place is equally astonishing. Here are a couple of places to get you started.



DOOR COUNTY CHERRIES

- **Lautenbach's Orchard Country Winery & Market** (9197 WI-42 S., Fish Creek; 920/868-3479; www.orchardcountry.com) is a winery with award-winning county fruit wines, pick-your-own fruits, sleigh rides, and more. They hold a summer cherry festival at the end of July.
- At **Seaquist Orchards Farm Market** (11482 WI-42, Sister Bay; 920/854-4199; open June-Oct.), you can explore the farm to take in all of the cherry trees. They also sell cherry pies as well as cherry jams, pie filling, salsa, vinaigrette, and more.

MILWAUKEE BEER

Milwaukee earned the nickname Brew City (or Brew Town) in the 1980s, but its brewing traditions stretch back over 180 years. Even the major league baseball team is named the Brewers, after all! Here's where to go to experience the city's beer culture.

- Industry leviathan **Miller Brewing** (4251 W. State St., Milwaukee; 414/931-2337; www.millerbrewerytour.com) is the mega brewer that most people associate with Milwaukee today. Its enormous city-state-

size complex showcases original 19th-century beer caves through up-to-the-minute brewing technology.

- The former offices and interiors of the original Pabst Brewery have been rejuvenated into the **Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery** (917 W. Juneau Ave., Milwaukee; 414/223-4709; http://bestplacemilwaukee.com [URL inactive]).
- **Sprecher Brewery** (701 W. Glendale Ave., Glendale; 414/964-2739; www.sprecherbrewery.com) is known for being a leader of Milwaukee's craft-brewing renaissance beginning in the 1980s.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport:** MKE; 5300 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee; 414/747-5300; www.mitchellairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Travel Wisconsin:** www.travelwisconsin.com
- **Wisconsin Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (WACVB):** https://destinationswisconsin.com
- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources:** https://dnr.wisconsin.gov

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:*** www.jsonline.com
- ***Star Tribune:*** www.startribune.com

ILLINOIS

Many who come to Illinois envision images of Al Capone's Chicago and Michael Jordan's United Center, a place where winds whip off the lakeshore and beyond the city stretch endless corn and soybean fields. And of course they've heard about Abe Lincoln.

But dig deeper and you'll often find yourself saying, "Wow, I didn't know Illinois had this." Illinois is on Chickasaw, Dakota, Ho-Chunk, Illini, Miami, and Shawnee land. It's home to a federally recognized tribe, the remains of pre-Columbian civilizations, cypress swamps, lush forests, and river canyons. There's beauty in the sun setting over a cornfield, or a red-winged blackbird among the waving big bluestem grass.

So ride to the top of a Chicago skyscraper and take in the view, head downstairs to the photography exhibits at the Art Institute, jam to up-and-comers and household names at music festivals and at jazz and blues clubs. But don't forget there's more than corn and soybeans outside the big city. Roll down the car window, slow down, and rumble down Route 66—you're bound to be surprised.

AREA: 57,914 sq mi / 149,995 sq km (25th)

POPULATION: 12,710,158 (6th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 3, 1818 (21st)

STATE CAPITAL: Springfield


ILLINOIS
MADISON
WISCONSIN
Lake Michigan
MICHIGAN
IOWA
INDIANA
INDIANA
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
MISSOURI
JEFFERSON CITY
INDIANAPOLIS
Galena
ULYSSES S. GRANT HOME HISTORIC SITE
Mississippi Palisades State Park
Machesney Park
Rockford
Freeport
Belvidere
Crystal Lake
Waukegan
North Chicago
Highland Park
Wilmette
Evanston
Grant Park and Millennium Park
LAKEFRONT PATH
ADMIRING THE CHICAGO SKYLINE
Arlington Heights
Elgin
Oak Park
Chicago
Hyde Park
Gary
Mount Carroll
Morrison
Dixon
Sterling
Aurora
Naperville
Route 66 Park
Joliet
JOLIET AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM'S ROUTE 66 EXPERIENCE
Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor
East Moline
Rock Island
La Moille
Starved Rock
Peru
Ottawa
Morris
Starved Rock State Park
Viola
Kewanee
Senachwine Lake
Streator
Bradley
Kankakee
Dwight
Magnolia
Galesburg
Monmouth
Upper Peoria Lake
Pontiac
Forrest
Peoria
Roseville
Farmington
East Peoria
Washington
Chenoa
Canton
Pekin
Morton
Normal
Bloomington
Gibson City
Paxton
Macomb
Rantoul
Rushville
Lincoln
Clinton
Champaign
Urbana
Danville
Beardstown
Petersburg
Mount Pulaski
Virginia
Quincy
Mount Sterling
Decatur
Jacksonville
New Salem
SPRINGFIELD
Chatham
LOOKING FOR ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Tuscola
Chrisman
Taylorville
Lake Shelbyville
Mattoon
Charleston
Pana
Carrollton
Carlinville
Raymond
Medora
Taylor Springs
Effingham
Père Marquette State Park
Alton
Wood River
Vandalia
CLIMBING THE CAHOKIA MOUNDS
Carlyle Lake
Troy
Collinsville
St. Louis
East St. Louis
Fallon
Sandoval
Flora
Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
Waterloo
Nashville
Mount Vernon
Albion
Red Bud
Rend Lake
Pinckneyville
Norris City
Murphysboro
Herrin
Carbondale
Marion
Harrisburg
Giant City State Park
Garden of the Gods Wilderness
Anna
Vienna
Cave-in-Rock State Park
Cache River State Natural Area
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Chicago is located on the shores of Lake Michigan, and its suburbs, which include **Oak Park,** cover the northeastern corner of the state. The rest of the state is fairly rural, with farmland covering about 75 percent of the land. **Springfield,** land of Abraham Lincoln, is in the middle of the state between Chicago and St. Louis, Missouri. The **Mississippi River** forms Illinois's western border.

WHEN TO GO

The best time to visit Illinois is **mid-spring to mid-fall.** Things don't shut down November-March, but the landscape becomes, quite frankly, dull. The **festival season** kicks in around June and continues through the fall. If you're sensitive to humidity, stick to the northern part of the state in July and August and leave the south to the spring or fall. You can visit Chicago anytime; the city never shuts down, and **December** is magical, dazzled in white lights and outdoor markets.

TOP 3

1 ADMIRING THE CHICAGO SKYLINE

As you approach Chicago, the Loop rises before you, the birthplace of the skyscraper, where steel and glass pierce the clouds. After the devastating Chicago Fire of 1871, architects such as Daniel Burnham, Louis Sullivan, Jens Jensen, and Frank Lloyd Wright helped the city rebuild in grand style.



CHICAGO SKYLINE

Landmarks from the early days include the **Rookery** (181 ft/55 m; 209 S. LaSalle St.), built in 1888 and later renovated inside by Frank Lloyd Wright, and the art deco **Chicago Board of Trade** (605 ft/184 m; 141 W. Jackson Blvd.), built in 1930. The **John Hancock Building** (1,127 ft/343 m; 875 N. Michigan Ave.) was built in 1969, and not long after, another tower would change the Chicago skyline. The **Willis Tower** (1,451 ft/442 m not including antennae; 233 S. Wacker Dr.), still stubbornly referred to by its former name, the Sears Tower, by locals, was built in the early 1970s, and held its claim to fame as the tallest building in the United States until the completion of New York City's One World Trade Center in 2014.

The Hancock Building's **360 Chicago Observation Deck** (https://360chicago.com) and the Willis Tower's **Skydeck** (https://theskydeck.com) are excellent ways to see the city's concrete jungle from above. Boat tours on the Chicago River given by the **Chicago Architecture Center** (111 E. Wacker Dr.; 312/922-3432; www.architecture.org) are an absolute must; they also offer bus and walking tours as well as rotating exhibits on architecture. Other great vantage points to see the skyline include driving **Lakeshore Drive,** walking or biking the **Lakefront Trail,** or taking newer urban

pathways like the **606** (www.the606.org) or the **Chicago Riverwalk** (www.chicagoriverwalk.us).

2 LOOKING FOR ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln lived in Illinois from 1831 to 1861. **Springfield** is where he matured as a politician and orator. The **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** (426 S. 7th St.; 217/492-42141; www.nps.gov/liho) is best place to start your visit; you'll listen to a guide share a little background on Lincoln's life and activities in Springfield, and in the historic district that surrounds it, you can amble down the street on plank sidewalks just like Abe used to do.



LINCOLN HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Nearby, the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum** (212 N. 6th St.; 217/558-8844; https://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov) encompasses several city blocks and contains exhibits that chronicle Lincoln's life and politics, and the state of the nation while he was president. And as far as tombs and monuments go, the **Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site** (Oak Ridge Cemetery, 1500 Monument Ave.) is pretty magnificent. The

rest of this fun, friendly town is dotted with other Lincoln sites, including the **Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices State Historic Site** (6th and Adams St.; 217/785-7289) and the **First Presbyterian Church** (321 S. 7th St.; 217/528-4311; www.first-pres-church.org), where the Lincolns had a pew reserved.

3 CLIMBING THE CAHOKIA MOUNDS

Collinsville Rd. and Ramey St., Collinsville; 618/346-5160; www.cahokiamounds.org

Even if it's a hot summer day, tough it out and climb to the top of **Monks Mound,** a 100-ft-tall (31-m) earthen mound east of the Mississippi River. The area is called Cahokia after an Illinois Indian tribe that lived in the same region in the 1600s, but we don't know the real name of the 10,000-20,000 people who lived here about 700-1400 CE, when it was a bustling city that stretched 3,840 ac (1,555 ha). Originally there were about 120 mounds of various sizes, built with dirt dug from nearby pits; today 70 mounds have been documented in the 2,200-ac (890-ha) park. You can easily spend several hours here, starting at the **interpretive center,** walking the grounds, climbing Monks Mound, and checking out **Woodhenge,** a calendar made of wooden posts. Researchers believe Cahokia was a trade center; no one is quite sure what happened to the city after about 1200 or 1400 CE, but many believe the city may have deteriorated or been abandoned.



CAHOKIA MOUNDS

You can still find cornfields in this fertile area, but the residential and commercial districts directly surrounding the mounds are not exactly picturesque. Nevertheless, this is one of the rarest finds in North America, a State and National Historic Landmark as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and well worth a visit.

HIGHLIGHTS

HYDE PARK

Chicago

On the city's south side, the historic neighborhood of Hyde Park is home to the Victorian and Collegiate Gothic **University of Chicago** campus and several sites relating to the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition. The **Museum of Science and Industry** (57th and Lake Shore Dr.; 773/684-

1414; www.msichicago.org), for example, offers hands-on exhibits including the Aurora 7 Mercury spacecraft and a German U-505 submarine. Hyde Park is also home to a few sites that are great introductions to Chicago's rich Black history.

The **DuSable Museum of African-American History** (740 E. 56th Pl.; 773/947-0600; www.dusablemuseum.org), founded in 1961, was the nation's first permanent independent museum dedicated to the history and culture of African Americans. It features exhibits on Harold Washington, the city's first Black mayor; the Tuskegee Airmen; and the Civil Rights Movement. Black-owned businesses line major thoroughfares like 53rd Street; just to the north, historic Kenwood is an upper-class Black neighborhood, and until recently was home to President Barack Obama. The neighborhood is full of sights related to the first Black president, who was a professor of law at the University of Chicago before turning to politics. A local greasy spoon cafeteria, **Valois** (1518 E 53rd St.; www.valoisrestaurant.com), proudly displays a list of Obama's favorites. In 2026, the **Obama Presidential Center** (www.obama.org/presidential-center) opened its campus, which includes a museum and library, in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

OAK PARK

The Chicago suburb of Oak Park, a picturesque old town lined with mature trees, boasts the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed homes, plus sites related to Ernest Hemingway, who was born here in 1905. Let's start with Papa Hemingway, adored by Oak Park residents. The **Ernest Hemingway Birthplace** (339 N. Oak Park Ave.; 708/848-3071; www.hemingwaybirthplace.com) is decorated with period furniture, toys and family pieces, lots of photos and letters, and various editions of Hemingway's books.



ERNEST HEMINGWAY BIRTHPLACE

Major CITIES

CHICAGO: The Windy City is home to iconic skyscrapers, the Cubbies, world-class museums and architecture, and deep-dish pizza, and that's only scratching the surface.

JOLIET: A working people's town, Joliet is home to a few nostalgic Route 66 sights and was formerly an important outpost for the steel and stone industries.

SPRINGFIELD: Justly proud of its connection to Abraham Lincoln, the Illinois state capital has a historic feel to it, with brick-lined streets and restored Victorian architecture.

About five blocks from Hemingway's birthplace is the **Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio** (951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park; 708/848-1976; www.flwright.org), where Wright crafted his trademark Prairie-style architecture. After arriving in Chicago seeking employment in 1887, Wright built and settled in this house with his family in 1889. Visitors have a couple different tour options, including guided interior tours to see the family's home and architecture studio, and self-guided audio exterior tours. More than 20 Wright-designed homes can be found in the surrounding area.



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HOME AND STUDIO

GALENA

Galena, in northwestern Illinois, is perhaps the state's most picturesque town, with white church steeples visible among tall oak trees, a Main Street lined with historic and beautifully preserved brick buildings, and the hills above the Galena River dotted with steamboat captains' Italianate mansions (that have been turned into bed-and-breakfasts). Galena can thank two

industries for its growth in the early to mid-1800s: river travel and lead mining. Today it's a popular weekend destination. May through October, visitors can tour the **Ulysses S. Grant Home State Historic Site** (500 Bouthillier St.; 815/777-3310; www.granthome.com), where the Grants lived before the future president went off to fight in the Civil War.

Potters, painters, weavers, and other artists have shops in and around Main Street, selling landscape paintings, jewelry, ceramics, and more; check out the **Old Market House Square,** on the 100 block of Commerce Street.

CHICAGO SPORTS

Even if sports aren't your thing, a trip to see the **Cubs** (800/843-2827; www.mlb.com/cubs) play at **Wrigley Field** (1060 W. Addison St.), aka the Friendly Confines, or watch the **Bulls** (www.nba.com/bulls) or **Blackhawks** (www.chicagoblackhawks.com) play at the **United Center** (1901 W. Madison St.; 312/455-4000), is one of the best ways to understand what makes Chicago tick. The **Bears** (312/559-1212; www.chicagobears.com) play at **Soldier Field** (1410 Special Olympics Dr.) in the shadow of the Loop's skyscrapers, and farther south the **White Sox** (312/674-1000; www.mlb.com/whitesox) play at **Rate Field** (333 W. 35th St.) and engage in a healthy rivalry with the other baseball team to the north.

LIVE MUSIC

Chicago was one of the main destinations of the 20th-century Great Migration of African Americans from south to north, and Black Americans brought southern blues with them, beginning a long legacy of roots music in the city. Chicago is still home to many of the best blues clubs in the country. Top choices include **Kingston Mines** (2548 N. Halsted St.; 773/477-4646; www.kingstonmines.com) or **Buddy Guy's Legends** (700 S. Wabash Ave.; 312/427-1190; www.buddyguy.com). The intimate **Green Mill** (4802 N. Broadway; 312/878-5552; www.greenmilljazz.com) is a great spot for late-night jazz music.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin your trip in **Chicago,** where you'll admire paintings and sculptures at the **Art Institute of Chicago** and get lost in other great museums downtown, such as the **Field Museum** or **Shedd Aquarium.** Take in an architectural boat tour or wander through **Millennium Park** and the **lakefront,** followed by a live blues or jazz show.

DAY 2 Spend the morning visiting the historic museums of **Hyde Park,** followed by a trip to **Oak Park** and its many sites related to Hemingway and Frank Lloyd Wright. Be sure to grab iconic Chicago-style pizza or hot dogs for dinner.

DAY 3 Drive just under three hours west on US 20 from Chicago toward the former mining town of **Galena,** where you can browse charming art galleries and visit the **Ulysses S. Grant Home Historic Site.**

DAY 4 Head south along the Great River Road, with views of the mighty Mississippi accompanying you on the way. Drop in for a quick hike at **Mississippi Palisades State Park** after 40 minutes, before high-tailing it the rest of the way to **Springfield,** another 3.5 hours on I-74. Grab a horseshoe sandwich to refuel after all that driving.

DAY 5 Spend the morning following in the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln at the **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** and **Presidential Library and Museum,** followed by a 1.5-hour drive on I-55 south to the majestic **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site,** returning to your hotel in Springfield for the night.

DAY 6 Having sampled much of what Illinois has to offer, make the three-hour drive northwest via I-55 and I-39 back to Chicago, stopping en route for another hike in **Starved Rock State Park.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

With seemingly endless wide-open spaces, Illinois is definitely a road trip-friendly state.

LAKE MICHIGAN CIRCLE TOUR

www.lakemichigancircletour.com

The Circle Tour loops all the way around the Great Lake, and the Illinois section passes several breathtaking sights and landmarks. Much of it follows Chicago's famous **Lake Shore Drive,** with views of the Chicago skyline, the Loop's museums and parks, and Navy Pier. Farther north, you'll turn onto **Sheridan Road,** with its elite mansions and well-manicured lawns.

ROUTE 66

www.illinoisroute66.org

The mother of all two-lane highways begins at Chicago's lakefront and winds down southwest toward St. Louis, mostly along I-55. The historic route is dotted with all manner of quirky, nostalgic roadside attractions, from the **Joliet Area Historical Museum's Route 66 Experience** (204 Ottawa St.; 815/723-5201; www.jolietmuseum.org) and **Route 66 Park** (920 N. Broadway St., Joliet) to drive-ins like the **Crazy Dog Drive-In** (2935 S. 6th St., Springfield; 217/698-0066).

ILLINOIS'S BEST BEACHES

This isn't Santa Monica, but Chicago has plenty of beaches along the Lake Michigan shoreline. If you're not here in summer or lounging isn't your thing, a walk, jog, or cycle along the 18-mi (29-km) **Lakefront Path** will give you a good sense of how integral the lake is to life in the city.

- On Chicago's far north side, the family-friendly **Montrose Beach** has sandy beaches, picnic areas, soccer fields, a bathhouse, nature trail, and fishing pier.
- That blue-and-white ocean liner on **North Avenue Beach** is actually a beach house where you can change into your swimsuit, buy ice-cream cones, rent volleyballs, or talk to the lifeguards.
- Less than a mile (1.6 km) south is the upscale **Oak Street Beach,** a popular stretch of sand near the fancy Gold Coast neighborhood.

GREAT RIVER ROAD

www.greatriverroad-illinois.org [URL inactive]

The great Mississippi River gives the western side of Illinois its distinctive shape, and played an indelible role in its history. On **IL-84,** the Great River Road, south of Galena, the landscape becomes more dramatic the closer you get to the Mississippi. Parks like the **Mississippi Palisades State Park** (16327 IL-84, Savanna; 815/273-2731; https://dnr.illinois.gov) and **Père Marquette State Park** (Hwy. 100, Grafton; 618/786-3323; https://dnr.illinois.gov) allow you to get closer to the bluffs and shores of this mighty river.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

GRANT PARK AND MILLENNIUM PARK

Chicago

East of Chicago's downtown, which is known as the Loop, green spaces and amazing museums line the harbors and piers of the lakefront. Massive Grant Park, known as the city's front yard, is the site of concerts, festivals, impromptu soccer games, picnics, and the iconic beaux-arts style **Buckingham Fountain.** It melds with newer **Millennium Park** (www.millenniumpark.org), with the Frank Gehry-designed **Jay Pritzker Pavilion,** gardens, fountains, and sculptures, including the famous stainless steel ***Cloud Gate,*** better known as **"the bean."** Chicago's famous skyline can be viewed from both Grant and Millennium Parks. In between and around, you'll find some of the city's best museums, including the **Field Museum** (1400 S. Lake Shore Dr.; 312/922-9410; www.fieldmuseum.org), **Adler Planetarium** (1300 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.; 312/922-7827; www.adlerplanetarium.org), **Shedd Aquarium** (1200 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.; 312/939-2438; www.sheddaquarium.org), and **Art Institute of Chicago** (111 S. Michigan Ave.; 312/443-3600; www.artic.edu).



CLOUD GATE, AKA “THE BEAN,” IN MILLENNIUM PARK

STARVED ROCK STATE PARK

IL-178, Utica; 815/667-4726; https://dnr.illinois.gov

On the south side of the Illinois River near the town of Utica stands a 125-ft-tall (38-m) sandstone bluff, after which Starved Rock State Park is named. It is the scene of a tragic event in local Native American history. The story goes that after the leader of an Ottawa Indian tribe, Pontiac, was killed in 1769 by a member of another tribe, the Illiniwek, a war broke out between the two tribes. Allies of the Ottawa Indians, the Potawatomi reportedly drove a group of Illiniwek Indians to the bluff, where the Illiniwek stayed until they died of starvation.



STARVED ROCK STATE PARK

Today, hiking is the thing to do at Starved Rock State Park. All in all there are about 13 mi (21 km) of trails, ranging in length from the 0.3-mi (0.5-km) **Starved Rock Trail** to the 4.7-mi (7.5-km) **Illinois Canyon Trail.**

THE PARKS OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

The southern tip of Illinois escaped the glaciers' advances, and as a result the land is rugged and gorgeous.

- **Giant City State Park:** This popular 4,052-ac (1,640-ha) park south of Carbondale is loaded with outdoor adventure possibilities, such as climbing or rappelling off sandstone bluffs, hiking through ravines, and horseback riding through hardwood forests and prairie.
- **Cache River State Natural Area** (930 Sunflower Ln., Belknap; 618/995-2411; https://dnr.illinois.gov): Visitors can explore this 18,047-ac (7,303-ha) nature preserve by walking on a floating boardwalk over cypress swamps or canoeing along a quiet river.
- **Garden of the Gods Wilderness** (www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive] or www.shawneeforest.com/garden-of-the-gods): Millions of years of wind and rain have eroded the land to create startling rock formations that can be visited on foot or on horseback.
- **Cave-in-Rock State Park** (1 New State Park Rd., Cave-in-Rock; 618/289-4325; https://dnr.illinois.gov): A 19th-century hideout for thieves, the cave within this state park right on the Ohio River is now a tourist-friendly destination with walking trails and picnic tables.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Chicago hosts some of the country's most popular music festivals, including **Lollapalooza** (late July/early Aug.; www.lollapalooza.com), a multiday event featuring some of the world's top music acts. Located in Grant Park, festivalgoers can spend all day watching their favorite artists and grabbing delicious bites from the various Chow Town clusters of food trucks. Check the website for the official aftershow schedule of events.

PUMPKIN FESTIVAL AND PUNKIN' CHUNKIN'

Morton; 309/263-2491; www.mortonpumpkinfestival.org; Sept.-Oct.

Illinois's famously fertile soil means tons of delicious produce, from corn to peaches, but in one crop the Land of Lincoln reigns supreme: pumpkins. Morton, Illinois, calls itself the Pumpkin Capital of the World because 85 percent of the world's pumpkins are processed here; at its early September Pumpkin Festival, participants see how far they can shoot pumpkins using slingshot-type contraptions. You'll find various other ways to celebrate the orange gourd throughout Illinois, including **The Great Pumpkin Patch** (Springfield Rd., west of County Rd. 1800E, southwest of Arthur; 217/543-2394; www.the200acres.com).

BEST FOOD

Illinois likes its pizza thick and its meat topped with fries and cheese, so take a break from counting calories and don't forget napkins.

CHICAGO-STYLE PIZZA

Chicago-style pizza is a thick, cheesy pie in which the top layer is chunky tomato sauce, not mozzarella (the cheese is packed on top of the dough).

Early purveyors of this dish, **Pizzeria Uno** (29 E. Ohio St.; 312/321-1000) and **Pizzeria Due** (619 N. Wabash Ave.; 312/943-2400), in the tourist-driven River North neighborhood, still serve up good pies.



CHICAGO-STYLE PIZZA

BEST SOUVENIRS

Enjoy a snack direct from the miles and miles of cornfields growing around the state. You'll find **popcorn** for sale in Chicago storefronts or roadside stands.

Visit **Galena** for **arts and crafts.** The picturesque river town is home to many of Illinois's best artists and craftspeople.

CHICAGO-STYLE HOT DOGS

Chicago-style hot dogs are all-beef wieners topped with green relish, chopped onions, sliced tomatoes, serrano peppers, yellow mustard, and celery salt in a poppy-seed bun. Head to classic joints **Superdawg** (6363 N. Milwaukee Ave.; 773/763-0660) and **The Wiener's Circle** (2622 N. Clark St.; 773/477-7444), or stop for a dog anywhere you see the Vienna Beef sign.

MEXICAN FOOD

Chicago is home to the largest Mexican-American population outside of the southwestern United States, and the taquerias, carnicerias, and panaderias are appropriately top-notch. Head straight to the **Pilsen neighborhood,** southwest of the Loop, to get your taco fix.

HORSESHOE SANDWICH

The horseshoe sandwich is open-faced, layered with toast, meat (hamburger, ham steak, turkey, or corned beef), french fries, and melted cheese, often found in and around Springfield. Try **D'Arcy's Pint** (661 W. Stanford Ave., Springfield; 217/492-8800; www.darcyspintonline.com).

BURGOO AND BARBECUE

With its rolling green hills and southern drawl, southern Illinois may remind you of Kentucky in more ways than one. This also applies to the food: Burgoo, a meat stew cooked over an open flame, and barbecue can be found throughout the region. The famous local favorite is **17th Street BBQ** (32 N. 17th St., Murphysboro; 618/684-3722; https://17bbq.com).

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **O'Hare International Airport:** ORD; 10000 W. O'Hare Ave., Chicago; 800/832-6352; www.flychicago.com/ohare
- **Midway International Airport:** MDW; 5700 S. Cicero Ave., Chicago; 733/838/0600; www.flychicago.com/midway

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Illinois Bureau of Tourism:** www.enjoyillinois.com
- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources:** https://dnr.illinois.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Chicago Tribune:*** www.chicagotribune.com
- ***Chicago Sun-Times:*** https://chicago.suntimes.com
- ***Chicago:*** www.chicagomag.com

INDIANA

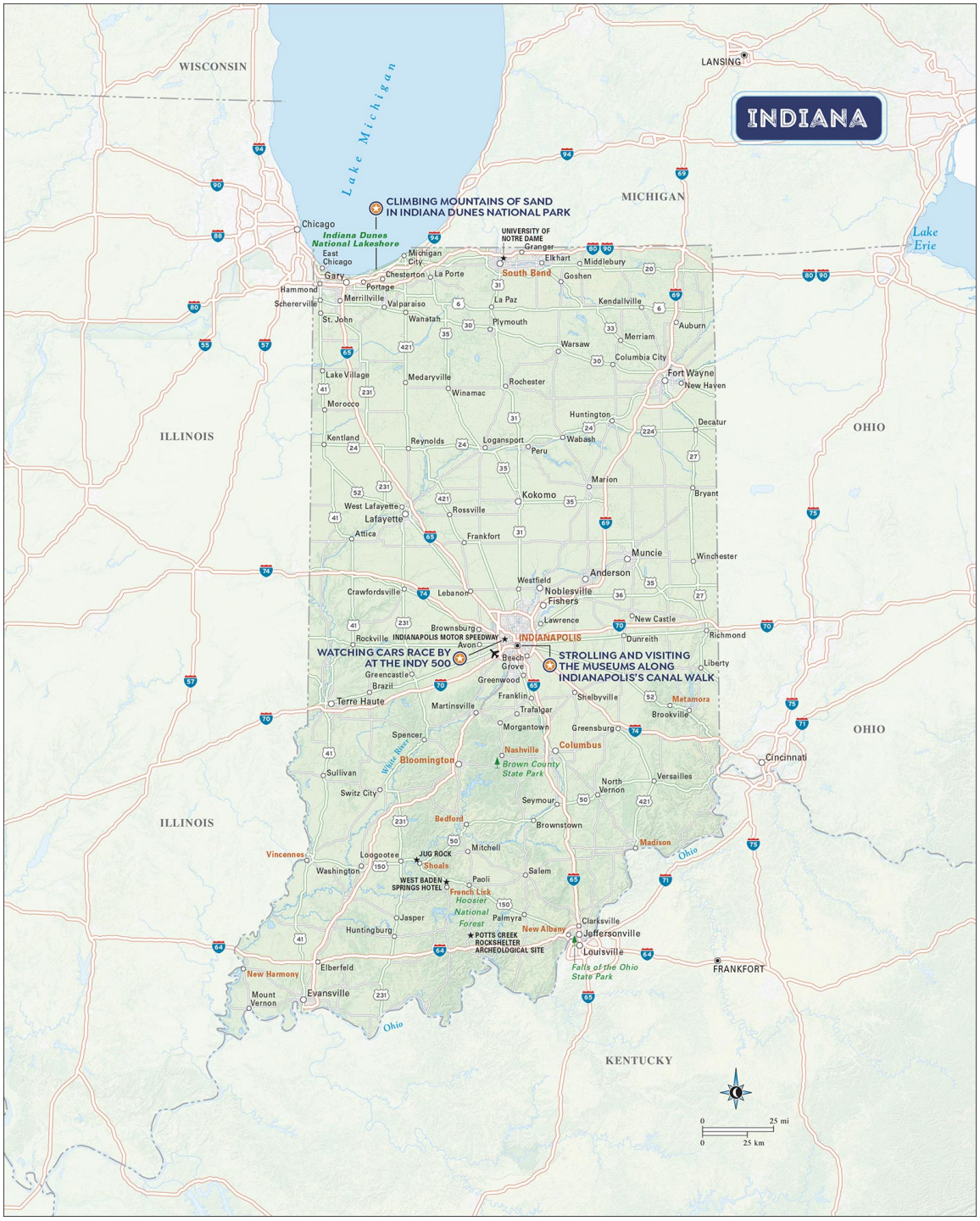
Indiana's motto, "The Crossroads of America," seems fitting for a state that many people think of as a place to drive through without stopping. But there's plenty in the Hoosier State to make you get out of your car and want to learn more. On Illini, Miami, and Shawnee land, Indiana is a state where, the more time you spend in it, the more you realize it's not just a flat expanse of corn and soybean fields (though the state does produce a lot of corn and soybeans). It's the majestic Indiana Dunes hugging Lake Michigan to the north and the forested hills and lowlands rolling to the Ohio River to the south. It's the growing city of Indianapolis, regularly named one of the best places to live in the Midwest, and picturesque, historic small towns. It's home to pioneering innovators who visualized utopian societies and modern architectural marvels. So don't just cross through: Find yourself a slice of Hoosier pie and stay awhile.

AREA: 36,420 sq mi / 94,326 sq km (38th)

POPULATION: 6,924,295 (17th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 11, 1816 (19th)

STATE CAPITAL: Indianapolis


INDIANA
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
OHIO
ILLINOIS
KENTUCKY
Lake Michigan
Lake Erie
LANSING
FRANKFORT
CLIMBING MOUNTAINS OF SAND IN INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
WATCHING CARS RACE BY AT THE INDY 500
INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY
INDIANAPOLIS
STROLLING AND VISITING THE MUSEUMS ALONG INDIANAPOLIS'S CANAL WALK
JUG ROCK
WEST BADEN SPRINGS HOTEL
POTTS CREEK ROCKSHELTER ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE
Brown County State Park
Hoosier National Forest
Falls of the Ohio State Park
White River
Ohio
Chicago
East Chicago
Gary
Hammond
Schererville
Michigan City
Chesterton
La Porte
Portage
Merrillville
Valparaiso
St. John
Wanatah
La Paz
Plymouth
Granger
Elkhart
Middlebury
South Bend
Goshen
Kendallville
Auburn
Merriam
Warsaw
Columbia City
Fort Wayne
New Haven
Lake Village
Medaryville
Winamac
Rochester
Morocco
Huntington
Decatur
Kentland
Reynolds
Logansport
Wabash
Peru
Marion
Bryant
Kokomo
West Lafayette
Lafayette
Rossville
Attica
Frankfort
Muncie
Winchester
Anderson
Westfield
Noblesville
Fishers
Crawfordsville
Lebanon
Lawrence
New Castle
Brownsburg
Rockville
Avon
Dunreith
Richmond
Liberty
Beech Grove
Greenwood
Greencastle
Brazil
Terre Haute
Martinsville
Franklin
Shelbyville
Metamora
Trafalgar
Brookville
Morgantown
Greensburg
Spencer
Nashville
Columbus
Bloomington
Cincinnati
Sullivan
Switz City
Seymour
North Vernon
Versailles
Bedford
Brownstown
Madison
Mitchell
Vincennes
Loogootee
Washington
Shoals
Salem
Paoli
French Lick
Jasper
Palmyra
Clarksville
Jeffersonville
New Albany
Huntingburg
Louisville
Elberfeld
New Harmony
Mount Vernon
Evansville
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

The capital city of **Indianapolis** is located right in the middle of the state, with the university town of **Bloomington** to its southwest. **South Bend,** where Notre Dame is located, is almost due north of Indianapolis near the Michigan state line, while **Indiana Dunes National Park** is in the northwest corner of the state, which briefly borders on Lake Michigan.

WHEN TO GO

Indiana is subject to the typical Midwestern weather extremes: a hot, humid **summer** and a frigidly cold **winter.** The Indianapolis 500, which takes place in late May, is the kickoff to the summer festival season, the busiest time in the state. The **spring** is more temperate and a great time to visit Indiana, as is **autumn,** when the bounties of the state's rich farmland are being harvested and the trees turn pretty shades of red, orange, and yellow.

TOP 3

1 CLIMBING MOUNTAINS OF SAND IN INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/indu

Covering 15,000 ac (6,070 ha) along the southern shores of Lake Michigan, the Indiana Dunes became the United States' 61st national park in 2019. This 15-mi (24-km) stretch of coastline is a glimpse into the region's glacial past: As the glaciers that once covered this part of the Midwest began to retreat northward some 20,000 years ago, the shoreline of Lake Michigan was formed, and wind has been carrying sand here ever since. The dunes are still very much "living," with the most active, **Mount Baldy** (120 ft/36 m), moving as much as 20 ft (6 m) a year. In areas called "blowouts," layers of sand have eroded away, revealing "skeleton forests" of dead trees buried long ago. See this windy, lunar landscape up close on a hike, like the 1.5-mi (2.4-km) **3 Dune Challenge** (taking in the park's highest dunes—

Mount Holden, Mount Jackson, and Mount Tom—topping off at 192 ft/58 m) or the 3.4-mi (5.4-km) **West Beach 3-Loop Trail.**



INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK

The sight of these massive, ever-shifting dunes is mesmerizing, but that's not all the park has to offer: It's also full of protected wetlands, marshes, and groves of rare trees, habitats for almost 250 bird species, making this one of the most biodiverse national parks in the United States. Start at the **Indiana Dunes Visitor Center** (1215 IN-49, Porter; 219/395-1882; www.nps.gov/indu) to learn more about this landscape and plan your visit.

2 STROLLING AND VISITING THE MUSEUMS ALONG INDIANAPOLIS'S CANAL WALK

The fact that Indianapolis has a canal at all is something of an accident. Originally, the Indiana Central Canal was meant to extend some 300 mi (483 km) through the state, part of a massive 19th-century infrastructure plan that eventually bankrupted the state, after only 8 mi (13 km) of the canal had been completed. Those 8 mi (13 km) played an outsized role in Indianapolis history, though, bringing workers to the city and providing a power source for purification plants and pumping stations. Today, the 3-mi (4.8-km) **Canal Walk** is a great place to stroll, cycle, rollerblade, or even rent a kayak, all in view of the Indianapolis skyline.

This vibrant pedestrian haven also provides access to public art, great restaurants, and some of the capital's best museums. The **Indiana State Museum** (650 W. Washington St.; 317/232-1637; www.indianamuseum.com) is beloved by kids and history buffs, covering Indiana from prehistoric times to the present, from geology and dinosaur fossils to famous Hoosiers and local artists. Nearby, the **Eiteljorg Museum** (500 W. Washington St.; 317/636-9378; www.eiteljorg.org) was founded by businessman Harrison Eiteljorg in 1989 to "inspire an appreciation and understanding of the art, history, and cultures of the American West and the Indigenous peoples of North America"; it's the only museum of its kind in the Midwest. Spending an afternoon people-watching, popping into museums, and grabbing a riverside drink is a great way to get to know this growing city with a small-town feel.



INDIANA STATE MUSEUM AND THE CANAL WALK

3 WATCHING CARS RACE BY AT THE INDY 500

For some people, the word “Indianapolis” brings only one thing to mind: the Indianapolis 500, the annual 500-mi (800-km) race in which 33 cars zoom 200 times around a 2.5-mi (4-km) track, reaching speeds of over 200 mph (320 kph). Since the inaugural race held in 1911, this event has grown to be the most highly attended single-day sporting event in the world, with the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway** (4790 W. 16th St.; www.indianapolismotorspeedway.com) seating more than 250,000. Beloved race day traditions include the singing of “Back Home Again in Indiana” and the winner celebrating with a bottle of milk.



INDIANAPOLIS 500

Excitement for the big race starts building up in May, with practice races being held in preparation for the main event, which takes place on Memorial Day weekend. If you're not in town at this festive time of year, you can always visit the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum** (4750 W. 16th St., Indianapolis; 317/492-6700; https://imsmuseum.org), which includes the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame as well as general exhibits on automotive history, and even the option to add a lap around the famous Brickyard track to your tour.

HIGHLIGHTS

MAIN STREETS

Dotting the lush farmland of the countryside, Indiana is home to many picturesque small towns, whose well-preserved main streets will make you

feel like you're stepping into the past.

- **Madison** boasts one of the country's largest national historic districts, as well as a burgeoning small-town food scene.
- For a tiny town, **Nashville** has an incredible arts scene, the legacy of an art colony formed here in the early 20th century.
- Though not technically a main street, the small town of **Metamora** is home to the Whitewater Canal Historic Site, which provides a view into a 19th-century canal town, a place for people traveling by boat to find food and lodging.

NEW HARMONY

In 1814, a group of separatists from the German Lutheran Church came from Pennsylvania to found their "Neu Harmonie," where over the next 10 years—while waiting for Christ to come—they built over 180 buildings (many of which are still standing) and a thriving economy, producing textiles, rope barrels, and large quantities of whiskey and beer, among other products. One of the most fascinating remnants of the Harmonists is the **New Harmony Labyrinth** (309 North St.), with only one path to the center. In 1825, Robert Owen, an industrialist, and William Maclure, known as the founder of American geology, bought the town from the Harmonists and sought to establish a utopia of their own. Their utopian vision of equal education and social status for all never came to fruition, but over a century later, Jane Blaffer Owen (wife of a descendant of Robert Owen) renewed the idea of utopia in New Harmony, commissioning beautiful modern architecture, including the **Roofless Church** (420 North St.; 812/682-3050; www.robertleeblafferfoundation.org).

Major CITIES

INDIANAPOLIS: Indiana's capital is growing and surprisingly cosmopolitan, with a great museum and dining scene.

BLOOMINGTON: Home to Indiana University, this beautiful college town has enough athletics and culture to keep students, townies, and visitors busy.

SOUTH BEND: South Bend is northern Indiana's unofficial hub and the home of the University of Notre Dame and the famous Fighting Irish.

COLUMBUS

This once unremarkable town has become a mecca for lovers of modernist architecture, all thanks to the inspiration of one man. J. Irwin Miller headed the Columbus-based Cummins Engine Co. in the mid-20th century and envisioned his town filled with buildings designed by the greatest architects of the time: I. M. Pei, Kevin Roche, Cesar Pelli, and more. His plan succeeded, so much so that the American Institute of Architects ranked Columbus sixth among cities in the United States for architectural innovation and design. Tour the **Miller House** (506 5th St.; 812/378-2622), designed by Eero Saarinen, for a glimpse into one of Columbus's most treasured buildings, or visit the town's **website** (https://columbus.in.us) for a full list of tour options.

WEST BADEN SPRINGS HOTEL

8538 W. Baden Ave., Baden Springs; 888/936-9360; www.frenchlick.com

A grand, turn-of-the-19th-century hotel inspired by the spa resorts of Europe is still one of the best places in Indiana to go for rest and relaxation. The preponderance of mineral springs in the area has made it a popular health resort since the mid-19th century, but it was in the early 20th century, after a fire burned down existing buildings, that the resort really came into its own as a luxury spa destination. The owner at the time, Lee Wiley Sinclair, worked with an architect to design a magnificent, nearly 200-ft (60-m) dome that is now the hotel's center atrium. Though the Great Depression forced the hotel to close, careful restoration efforts beginning in the 1990s allowed it to reopen in 2007. Today, the West Baden Springs

Hotel is a unique getaway for a spa treatment, round of golf, or even just a tour of the impressive Queen Anne architecture.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in the northwest corner of the state at the **Indiana Dunes National Park.** (If you've flown into Chicago Midway, it's about an hour drive to the park.) Once you've hiked, bird-watched, and dune-climbed to your heart's delight, stop by **3 Floyds Brewpub** for a well-deserved craft beer. Make the 2.5-hour drive southeast to capital city **Indianapolis** for the night.

DAY 2 In Indy, stroll the **Canal Walk,** spend a few hours in the **Eiteljorg Museum** (devoted to Indigenous Americans), and make a reservation at the famous **St. Elmo Steak House.**

DAY 3 Before leaving the capital, make a pilgrimage to the **Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum,** not far from where the spectacle that is the Indy 500 takes place every year. Then drive 50 minutes south to **Columbus** to take in a world-class collection of midcentury modern architecture.

DAY 4 Drive west through **Brown County State Park,** Indiana's largest state park and a great place for a hike. Stop in small town **Nashville** (not to be confused with its famous Tennessee cousin to the south) to check out a few art galleries, then spend the rest of the day in **Bloomington,** exploring **Indiana University**'s beautiful campus.

DAY 5 Heading south, be sure to drive on scenic **State Road 450,** with views of the White River and a notable geological stop at the 60-ft-tall (18-m) **Jug Rock** formation. You'll end up at beautiful,

historic **West Baden Springs Hotel,** where you can relax with a spa treatment or round of golf.

DAY 6 After a relaxed morning at your hotel, grab lunch at **German Café** in nearby French Lick: Be sure to try a famous pork tenderloin sandwich. You'll drive south through **Hoosier National Forest** to **Falls of the Ohio State Park,** which features exposed Devonian fossil beds. From here, it's two hours back to Indianapolis or 4.5 hours back to Chicago.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

INDIANA HISTORIC PATHWAY—NORTH SPUR

This 26-mi (42-km) route on US 50 between **Bedford** and **Shoals** snakes along the northern side of the **White River,** with views of the water that might just tempt you to stop and go for a swim, if the weather's warm enough. In Shoals, don't miss **Jug Rock** (722 Albright Ln., Shoals; 317/232-4052; http://jug-rock-nature.edan.io [URL inactive]), the biggest free-standing table rock formation east of the Mississippi River. It's a 60-ft-tall (18-m) stone pillar with a massive boulder perched improbably on top of it. About midway through, you'll see a picturesque, red-walled **covered bridge,** near the town of Williams.

INDIANA'S HISTORIC PATHWAYS—SOUTH SPUR

US 150; www.indianashistoricpathways.org

This scenic 135-mi (217-km) drive, mostly on US 150, starts in **Vincennes,** a charming small town, then cuts through southern Indiana and **Hoosier National Forest** (www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier [URL inactive]). You'll pass the **Potts Creek Rockshelter Archeological Site,** where evidence of Paleo-Indian camps has been found, and **New Albany,** with a historic downtown

and specialty shops and boutiques to browse. You'll end up on the banks of the **Ohio River,** on the doorstep of **Louisville,** Kentucky.



VINCENNES

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BROWN COUNTY STATE PARK

1801 IN-46 E., Nashville; www.in.gov [URL inactive]

One of the most spectacular places in the state to visit in the fall, with some 20 mi (32 km) of tree-lined roads and scenic overlooks of fiery autumn forest, Brown County State Park is often referred to as Indiana's version of the Great Smoky Mountains. Far enough south that the glaciers never reached it, the land here is characterized by rolling slopes, gullies, and ridges. A playground for outdoor enthusiasts in Bloomington, the largest

nearby city, this is Indiana's largest state park, with 18 mi (29 km) of hiking trails, 30 mi (48 km) of mountain bike trails, two artificial lakes for fishing and swimming, and a nature center.



BROWN COUNTY STATE PARK

FALLS OF THE OHIO STATE PARK

201 W. Riverside Dr., Clarksville; 812/280-9970; www.fallsoftheohio.org

This 165-ac (67-ha) park on the shores of the Ohio River, across from Louisville, Kentucky, boasts more than just water and skyline views: Over millennia, the river has eroded the limestone to reveal a massive, 390-million-year-old fossil bed, a treasure trove of ancient sea creatures that can be explored on foot. An excellent interpretive center provides background

on the history of the park, both ancient and modern. In addition to fossil-viewing, people come here to hike, fish, bird-watch, and picnic.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Hoosiers love their **popcorn,** producing more of it than any other state besides Nebraska. A tin of gourmet popcorn from a local company like **Pop Around the Clock** (www.poparoundtheclock.net) or **Concannon's** (https://concannons-bakery-cafe.res-menu.com) makes a great souvenir.

Wayne County has put together two interlocking loop trails they call **Indiana's Antique Alley** (www.visitrichmond.org [URL inactive]) to help you find the perfect vintage treasure during your time in the Hoosier State.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

In addition to the Indy 500, a few other sporting events draw crowds each year, to two of the most famous schools in the state: **Indiana University-Bloomington** and the **University of Notre Dame.** If you can't make it to IU's big bike race or to see the Fighting Irish during football season, try taking a tour of the campuses, both of which are replete with green spaces and 19th-century buildings, and regularly voted among the most beautiful college campuses in the country.

LITTLE 500

https://iusf.indiana.edu/little500; Apr.

A tradition at Indiana University-Bloomington for more than 70 years, the Little 500 (familiarly known as the Little 5) is a bike race modeled off that big car race that takes place in Indianapolis each year. This is a relay race for teams of four, many of them coming from some of IU's many fraternities (or sororities for the women's race, which has been taking place

since 1988). The cyclists take turns riding 200 times around a 0.25-mi (0.4-km) track for the men's race and 100 times for the women's race, typically in the third week of April at the **Bill Armstrong Stadium** (1606 N. Fee Ln., Bloomington; 866/487-7678) on IU's campus. Billed as "The World's Greatest College Weekend," it's typically attended by 25,000 fans.

NOTRE DAME FOOTBALL

Football is a big deal in South Bend, Indiana, adjacent to the University of Notre Dame, home of the Fighting Irish. Faithful supporters like to roll out the statistics: the fourth-highest winning percentage in NCAA Division I football history, nine national championships, most players drafted in to the NFL . . . the list goes on. Since their first game, played in 1887, Notre Dame has built a truly legendary football program, one with rabid fans across the country ready to chew you out if you even mention the University of Michigan or the University of Southern California, two of their biggest rivals.

The avid fan base can make it hard to get tickets, but there are plenty of ways to enjoy a game day weekend: visit the **Guglielmino Athletics Complex,** or "the Gug," the team's primary practice facilities; tour the **Notre Dame Stadium** (2010 Moose Krause Cir., Notre Dame; 574/631-5036; https://nd.edu), attend a pep rally or a marching band performance, or tailgate on one of the campus parking lots.

BEST FOOD

Indiana food is humble and hearty, best washed down with a bottle of **3 Floyds Zombie Dust Pale Ale** (9750 Indiana Pkwy., Munster; 219/238-6815; www.3floyds.com) or **Triple XXX Root Beer** (2 N. Salisbury, West Lafayette; 765/743-5373; www.triplexxxfamilyrestaurant.com), the last remaining outpost of a chain that once had 100 roadside stations throughout the country.

It's rare that it's easy to name a state's most famous restaurant, but in Indiana it just might be possible: Indianapolis's **St. Elmo Steak House** (127

Illinois St.; 317/635-0636; www.stelmos.com), known for its legendary shrimp cocktail, is about as famous as it gets.

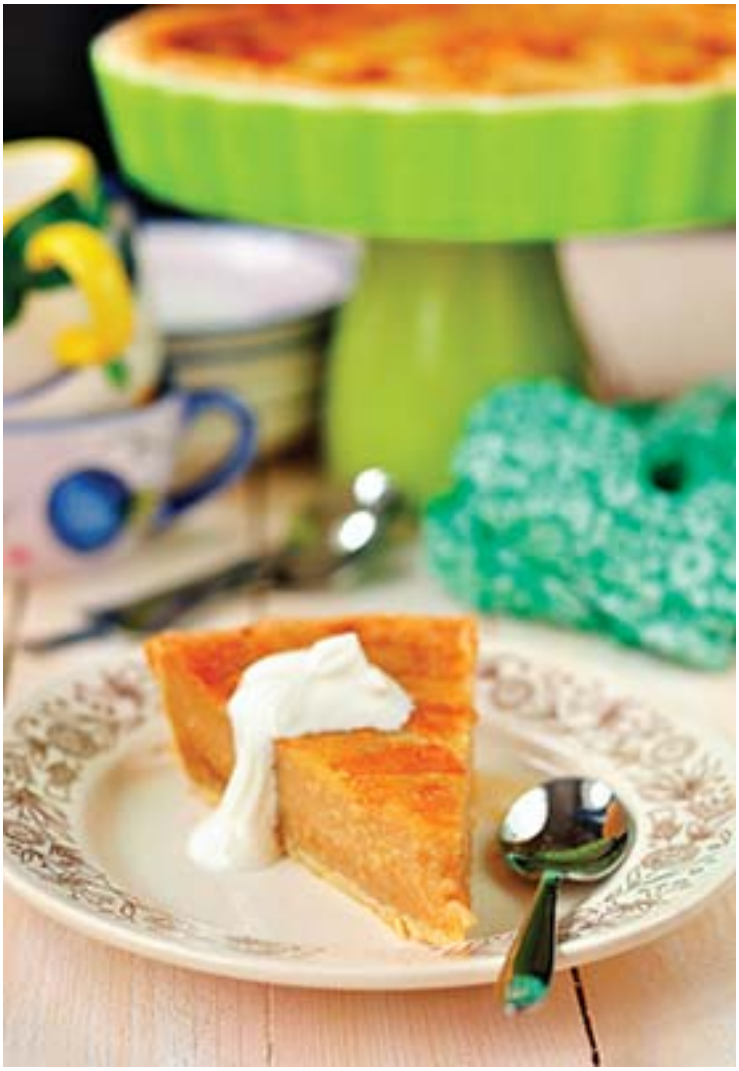
BREADED PORK TENDERLOIN SANDWICH

Indiana's quintessential sandwich is a flat, lean cut of pork, breaded, fried, and stuck between two buns. It seems like almost every restaurant has a version of this sandwich on the menu, but here are a few of the best places to try it.

- **Steer-In:** 5130 E. 10th St., Indianapolis; 317/356-0996; www.steerin.net
- **Nick's Kitchen:** 506 N. Jefferson St., Huntington; 260/356-6618; www.nicksdowntown.com [URL inactive]
- **German Café:** 452 S. Maple St., French Lick; 812/936-1111; www.germancafefrenchlick.com

HOOSIER PIE

Also known as sugar cream pie, the official Indiana State Pie has humble roots in Amish and Shaker communities, who whipped up this creamy, satisfying dessert made of nothing much more than sugar, butter, and cream when no other ingredients were available.



HOOSIER PIE

- **Mrs. Wick's Pies:** 100 N. Cherry St., Winter; 765/584-7437; www.wickspies.com
- **Das Dutchman Essenhaus:** 240 US 20, Middlebury; 574/825-9471; www.essenhaus.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Indianapolis International Airport:** IND; 800 Col. H. Weir Cook Memorial Dr., Indianapolis; 317/487-9594; www.ind.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Indiana:** www.visitindiana.com
- **Indiana State Parks:** www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Indianapolis Star:*** www.indystar.com

MICHIGAN

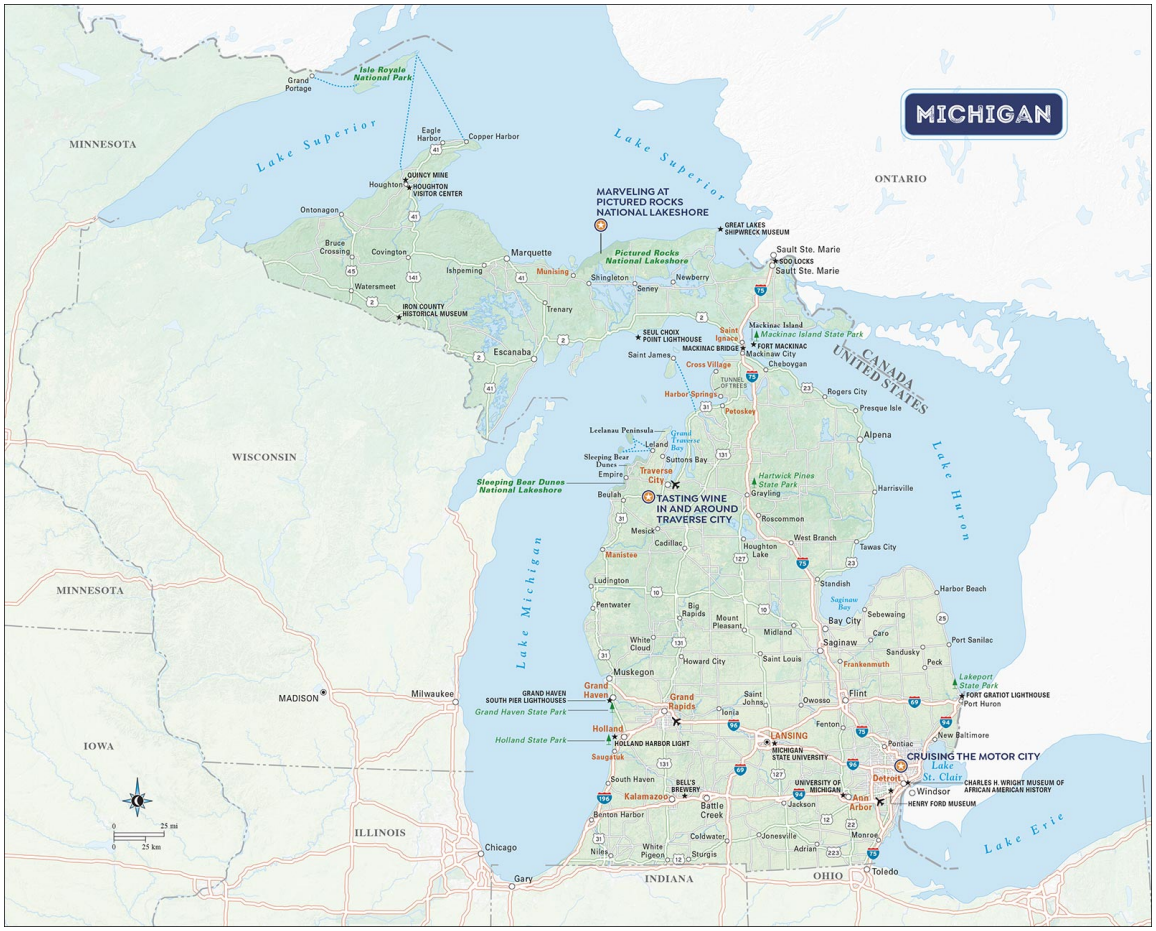
The name “Michigan” comes from the Algonquian Indian word for “big lake”—fittingly, since it’s surrounded by four of the five Great Lakes, bodies of water so massive that scientists classify them as inland seas. Beyond the constancy of these majestic shorelines, the Great Lakes State offers a great deal of diversity. The mitten-shaped Lower Peninsula boasts a wealth of rural areas, nostalgic villages, resort towns, bevies of art galleries, wineries and breweries, and urban centers like Detroit, the comeback city with the highest African American population in the country. North of the Mackinac Bridge is the Upper Peninsula and its uncrowded forests, beaches, mountains, and waterfalls. Michigan is on Odawa/Ottawa, Kickapoo, Menominee, Miami, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Sauk land. The four seasons in all their splendor make themselves known throughout the landscape: Most tourists visit in spring and summer, yet the snowy winters have grown popular too, for adventures like riding snowmobiles through glistening forests. Autumn invites drives along winding country roads, flanked by apple orchards and crimson maple trees.

AREA: 96,714 sq mi / 250,487 sq km (11th)

POPULATION: 10,140,459 (10th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 26, 1837 (26th)

STATE CAPITAL: Lansing


MICHIGAN
MARVELING AT PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE
TASTING WINE IN AND AROUND TRAVERSE CITY
CRUISING THE MOTOR CITY
Isle Royale National Park
Grand Portage
Eagle Harbor
Copper Harbor
QUINCY MINE
Houghton
HOUGHTON VISITOR CENTER
Ontonagon
Bruce Crossing
Covington
Marquette
Ishpeming
Watersmeet
IRON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Munising
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
Shingleton
Newberry
Seney
Trenary
Escanaba
GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECK MUSEUM
Sault Ste. Marie
SOO LOCKS
Sault Ste. Marie
SEUL CHOIX POINT LIGHTHOUSE
Saint Ignace
Mackinac Island
Mackinac Island State Park
FORT MACKINAC
MACKINAC BRIDGE
Mackinaw City
Saint James
Cross Village
Cheboygan
TUNNEL OF TREES
Harbor Springs
Petoskey
Rogers City
Presque Isle
Alpena
Leelanau Peninsula
Grand Traverse Bay
Leland
Suttons Bay
Sleeping Bear Dunes
Empire
Traverse City
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
Beulah
Hartwick Pines State Park
Grayling
Harrisville
Roscommon
Mesick
Cadillac
West Branch
Houghton Lake
Tawas City
Manistee
Ludington
Pentwater
Standish
Harbor Beach
Saginaw Bay
Big Rapids
Mount Pleasant
Midland
Bay City
Sebewaing
Caro
Saginaw
Port Sanilac
White Cloud
Howard City
Saint Louis
Sandusky
Peck
Frankenmuth
Muskegon
Grand Haven
GRAND HAVEN SOUTH PIER LIGHTHOUSES
Grand Haven State Park
Grand Rapids
Saint Johns
Ionia
Owosso
Flint
Lakeport State Park
FORT GRATIOT LIGHTHOUSE
Port Huron
Holland
Holland State Park
HOLLAND HARBOR LIGHT
Saugatuk
LANSING
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Fenton
Pontiac
New Baltimore
Lake St. Clair
Detroit
Windsor
CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
HENRY FORD MUSEUM
South Haven
BELL'S BREWERY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Ann Arbor
Kalamazoo
Battle Creek
Jackson
Benton Harbor
Coldwater
Jonesville
Adrian
Monroe
Niles
White Pigeon
Sturgis
Toledo
Chicago
Gary
Milwaukee
MADISON
MINNESOTA
WISCONSIN
IOWA
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OHIO
ONTARIO
CANADA
UNITED STATES
Lake Superior
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Erie
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

On the mitten that is Michigan's Lower Peninsula, **Detroit** and neighboring **Ann Arbor** sit at the base of the thumb in the southeast of the state. **Traverse City** is in the opposite corner, near the pinky (if this mitten also had a pinky) that is the **Leelanau Peninsula,** in the northwest. The **Mackinac Bridge** connects the tip of the Lower Peninsula to Michigan's **Upper Peninsula** (the UP), which is the strip of land extending out from Wisconsin between Lakes Michigan and Huron to the south and Lake Superior to the north. **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore** is on the Lake Superior side of the UP.

WHEN TO GO

The most popular time to visit Michigan is **summer** (June-Aug.), when people flock here for beaches and festivals, but **autumn** (Sept.-Oct.) may be the best time to visit, when days are cool and fall colors are outstanding. **Winter** usually descends in December in the Upper Peninsula and in January in the Lower Peninsula, and can linger through March. Peak snow is usually in January and February. **Spring** emerges in southern Michigan in early May, working its way northward and bringing moderate temperatures and blossoming trees.

TOP 3

1 CRUISING THE MOTOR CITY

Evidence of the Detroit auto industry's rise (and fall) is visible everywhere you look, from its broad boulevards in a spoke and hub layout to facilitate vehicle traffic, to grand, art deco skyscrapers like the **Fisher Building** (3011 W. Grand Blvd.), financed by the sale of Fisher Body Works to General Motors. The remains of **Fisher Body Plant 21,** in disuse since 1984, can be seen a five-minute drive to the east (6051 Hastings St.). In between, the **Ford Piquette Avenue Plant** (461 Piquette Ave.; 313/827-8759;

www.fordpiquetteplant.org), Ford's first purpose-built factory and the birthplace of the Model T, is open for visits and tours.

Perhaps the best place to learn about auto history is the **Henry Ford Museum** (20900 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn; 313/982-6001; www.thehenryford.org), in the suburb of Dearborn, a 20-minute drive southwest of downtown. It's an impressive and enormous colonial-style museum housing one vast collection after another, including an encyclopedic assemblage of historic American autos.



HENRY FORD MUSEUM

Though today most of Detroit's auto industry has moved to the suburbs, some of its more modern incarnations include the soaring and fortress-like **GM Renaissance Center** (aka GMRenCen, 100 Renaissance Center; 313/567-3126), opened in 1977 and proposed by Henry Ford II in the hopes of drawing suburbanites and catalyzing development downtown (it didn't work); and, perhaps improbably, the old **Michigan Central Train Depot** (2001 15th St.), a beautiful beaux-arts station that hasn't seen a train since 1988.

2 TASTING WINE IN AND AROUND TRAVERSE CITY

In recent years, Michigan has gained a reputation for crafting award-winning wines. The winter months' lake-effect snow protects the vines and extends the growing season for up to a month.

The area surrounding Traverse City is the epicenter of Michigan wineries, where you'll find the greatest density of established wineries, vineyards, and tasting rooms. The **Old Mission Peninsula Trail** (www.ompwinetrail.com) follows the strip of land that pierces the waters north from Traverse City. Across the West Arm of Grand Traverse Bay is the **Leelanau Peninsula Trail** (www.lpwines.com), along which ragged lands of hills, lakes, and scribbled shoreline provide surprisingly conducive climates for growing wine grapes. Altogether, the peninsulas now boast more than 30 wineries; here are just a few of the highlights. Most are open for tastings and wine shopping seven days a week, with no appointments necessary.



VINEYARD ON THE OLD MISSION PENINSULA

- **Chateau Grand Traverse** (12239 Center Rd., Traverse City; 231/938-6120; www.cgtwines.com): This pioneer in bringing

European viniferous wines to the Midwest has a spacious tasting room offering understated elegance.

- **Bowers Harbor Vineyards** (2896 Bowers Harbor Rd., Traverse City; 231/223-7615; www.bowersharbor.com): At this small, friendly, family-run winery, dogs are welcome on the patio.
- **Mawby Vineyards** (4519 S. Elm Valley Rd., Suttons Bay; 231/271-3522; https://mawby.wine): One of the region's smallest wineries, Mawby has a big reputation, especially for its sparkling whites.

3 MARVELING AT PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

906/387-3700; www.nps.gov/piro

Lake Superior takes center stage at the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, which is just 5.8 mi (9.3 km) wide by more than 40 mi (64 km) long, located along the magnificent lake. The National Park Service property on the north side of the Upper Peninsula derives its name from the sandstone bluffs that rise 200 ft (61 m) directly from the water's surface. The bluffs are washed in shades of pink, red, and green due to the mineral-rich water that seeps from the rock and sculpts them into caves, arches, and castle-like turrets, including **Miners Castle,** a 200-ft-tall rock formation.



MINERS CASTLE, PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

You'll also find lakes, forest trails, waterfalls, a lighthouse, and other historic attractions, but the optimal way to experience the grandeur of this shoreline is from a boat. May through October, **Pictured Rocks Cruises** (100 City Park Dr., Munising; https://picturedrocks.com) has three exciting cruise options: the classic daytime cruise, the sunset cruise, and the Spray Falls cruise, which offers an up-close view of the **Spray Falls**—a 70-ft (21-m) drop of cascading water flowing into the lake.

Sea kayakers consider this one of the finest paddles on all the Great Lakes. That said, the importance of safety cannot be overemphasized: Only experienced paddlers should venture out on their own, and only in a closed cockpit after scrupulously monitoring weather conditions. **Pictured Rocks Kayaking** (906/387-5500; www.picturedrockskayaking.com) offers guided paddling trips.

HIGHLIGHTS

MACKINAC BRIDGE

Linking Lakes Huron and Michigan, the Straits of Mackinac (MAK-i-naw) have been a crossroads of the Great Lakes for hundreds of years. The 5-mi-long (8-km) drive across the Mackinac Bridge from the Lower to the Upper Peninsula can feel like a journey between two disparate countries. Although there are several ways to reach the UP, most travelers utilize the "Mighty Mac" bridge, the only vehicular link. Opened in 1957, it's the third-longest suspension bridge in North America. On the UP side, make a quick stop at lovely **Bridge View Park,** where you can snap pictures of this modern engineering marvel. You've now crossed through the gateway to the enormous, sparsely populated Upper Peninsula, with its rushing rivers, thunderous cascades, dramatic cliffs, deserted beaches, and vast tracts of forested terrain.

MACKINAC ISLAND

On Mackinac Island, the Victorian era has been beautifully preserved, from the exquisite 1887 **Grand Hotel** (286 Grand Ave.; 906/847-3331 or 800/334-7263; www.grandhotel.com) to the clopping of the horse-drawn carriages down the car-free streets. A full 80 percent of the island is protected by **Mackinac Island State Park** (906/847-3328; www.mackinacparks.com), encompassing whitewashed **Fort Mackinac** (May-Oct.), struggled over by the British and Americans for nearly 40 years and worth a visit for the views over the charming downtown, marina, and Lake Huron. Getting to this wonderful place to retreat from the outside world is easy: **Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry** (231/436-5023, 906/643-9440, or 800/828-6157; www.sheplersferry.com) can shuttle you across the Straits of Mackinac in less than 20 minutes from both Mackinaw City (in the Lower Peninsula) and St. Ignace (in the UP).



MACKINAC ISLAND

MINING HISTORY

In the Upper Peninsula, many town names highlight mining: Copper Harbor, Ironwood, Iron Mountain, and Mineral Hills. For the UP, the economic heyday was the latter half of the 19th century, known as the Copper Rush, which yielded an astonishing 10 times the mineral wealth of California's better-known gold rush. Thousands of eager immigrants flocked to the area, resulting in the creation of cities virtually overnight. Following a decline in the 20th century, only remnants of this mineral-rich past remain—enormous mansions, abandoned mines, ghost towns, and occasional cave-ins beneath homes and streets.

In the town of Hancock, in the middle of the rugged Keweenaw Peninsula, the mammoth shaft house of the **Quincy Mine** (49750 US 41,

Hancock; 906/482-3101; www.quincymine.com) dominates the skyline. The Quincy Mine was once among the world's richest copper mines, and a few of its buildings still stand. A glass-enclosed tram descends a few thousand feet (about 900 m) into shafts that stretched more than 1.8 mi (2.9 km) deep—an amazing 92 levels—and 2 mi (3.2 km) wide. At the rambling, funky, homegrown **Iron County Historical Museum** (100 Brady Ave., off M-189, Caspian; 906/265-2617; www.ironcountyhistoricalmuseum.org), on the site of the productive Caspian iron mine, you'll find an eclectic blend of local history, including a mechanized iron mine and train model.

Major CITIES

DETROIT: Now is a great time to visit the Motor City, increasingly also called the "Renaissance City." It's a tenacious town, Michigan's largest, known for its Motown music as well as its resiliency, always managing to reinvent itself through mind-crushing lows and soaring highs.

GRAND RAPIDS: The state's second-largest city, once a cornerstone of the furniture industry and childhood home of President Gerald R. Ford, is today a thriving showcase for the arts, local history, and business, especially craft beer.

ANN ARBOR: Home of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor has a unique blend of big-city energy and college-town friendliness.

LANSING: Michigan's capital boasts a beautifully restored capitol building, excellent museums, and a full plate of university events thanks to Michigan State University, based in neighboring East Lansing.

A vestige of mining history that's still fresh and warm is the **pasty** (PASS-tee), a hand pie filled with meat and vegetables. The rush to the copper mines brought English immigrants, who favored the pasty because it's simple, portable, and filling. Later, Finnish immigrants adopted the dish

very much as their own, and today you'll see dozens of pasty shops as you drive around the UP.

SHIPWRECKS AND LIGHTHOUSES

A staple bar ballad in Michigan, especially the farther north you go, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald" by Gordon Lightfoot refers to the real-life 1975 wreck of a 729-ft (222-m) lake carrier, lost off Whitefish Point, the very tip of the UP, in the notorious November gales of Lake Superior. The lasting popularity of this song is a tribute to the importance of the shipping and fishing industries to Michigan's economy, and the heroism, endurance, and ingenuity of the people that work in them.

The dangerous waters off Whitefish Point are known as the "Graveyard of the Great Lakes"; to commemorate the many ships that failed to round this point of safety, the **Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum** (18335 Whitefish Point Rd., Paradise; 888/492-3747; www.shipwreckmuseum.com; May-Oct.) traces the history of Great Lakes commerce and the disasters that sometimes accompanied it. In safer waters to the southeast, the **Soo Locks** of Sault Ste. Marie are an engineering marvel allowing the passage of massive freighters between the Great Lakes; it's easy to spend an hour watching the ships as they pass through the locks with just inches to spare.

Iconic parts of the Michigan landscapes that are just as important to its shipping industry are the 129 picturesque lighthouses dotting the shoreline. A tour of some of the most noteworthy lighthouses is a great way to explore the state's magnificent coast.

BLACK HISTORY AND CULTURE IN DETROIT

Detroit's population is 76.8 percent Black, making it the most African American of major US cities—and Black history and culture here are correspondingly rich. Much of Detroit's African American population immigrated north during the 20th century's Great Migration, for the promise of higher-paying jobs and less restrictive racial mores. Much of that promise remains unfulfilled. The exceptional **Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History** (315 E. Warren Ave.; 313/494-5800; www.thewright.org), one of the world's largest institutions dedicated to the African American experience, tells this story, from the Underground Railroad to the unrest and activism of the 1960s to icons such as Aretha Franklin and Joe Lewis.

As quintessential to the Motor City as automobiles, the Motown sound is one of Detroit's gifts to the world. The **Motown Museum** (2648 W. Grand Blvd.; 313/875-2264; www.motownmuseum.org), known across the country as Hitsville USA, preserves the original Studio A, where Berry Gordy Jr.'s production gave us priceless recordings from The Supremes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, the Jackson 5, and more.

While in Detroit, be sure to patronize its excellent **Black-owned businesses,** including **Source Booksellers** (4240 Cass Ave. #105; 313/832-1155; www.sourcebooksellers.com), as well as eateries like **Detroit Vegan Soul** (19614 Grand River Ave.; 313/727-1973; www.detroitvegansoul.com). **Baker's Keyboard Lounge** (20510 Livernois Ave.; 313/345-6300; www.theofficialbakerskeyboardlounge.com [URL inactive]) is the world's oldest continuously operating jazz club, and you'll often hear live blues spilling from **Bert's Market Place** (2727 Russell St.; 313/567-2030; https://bertsentertainmentcomplex.squarespace.com) near lively Eastern Market.

- The vibrant red **Holland Harbor Lighthouse,** erected in 1907, is known as “Big Red” by residents of its historically Dutch town in southwest Michigan.



HOLLAND HARBOR LIGHT

- Thirty minutes up the Lake Michigan coast, the **Grand Haven South Pier Lighthouses** are also vivid red. Built in 1875 and 1905, they are still operational.
- On a peninsula jutting south from the UP into Lake Michigan, the **Seul Choix Point Lighthouse** (905S Seul Choix Point Rd.; 906/283-3183; www.greatlakelighthouse.com) is an outstanding restored 1895 lighthouse and museum.
- On the knuckle of Michigan’s “thumb,” where Lake Huron drains into the St. Clair River, the **Fort Gratiot Lighthouse** (810/989-6960) stands 86 ft (26 m) tall and is the state’s oldest.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Spend the day cruising **Detroit,** learning about its automotive and cultural history at institutions like the **Henry Ford Museum** and the **Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.**

DAY 2 From the Motor City, a 3.5-hour drive west on I-96 will have you sipping **craft beer** in thriving downtown **Grand Rapids,** with stops in between at the **cafés** and **art galleries** of **Ann Arbor,** and **Kalamazoo,** with its own lively craft beer scene.

DAY 3 Today's drive time totals three hours. Start by heading 40 minutes southwest on I-196 to **Saugatuck,** known for its concentration of art galleries. Begin a scenic drive north on US 31, along Lake Michigan's eastern coast, passing **lighthouses** and gorgeous **beaches** along the way in cities like **Holland** and **Grand Haven.** You'll end up in bustling **Traverse City.**

DAY 4 In the morning, head 40 minutes west on M-72 to **Sleeping Bear Dunes,** aiming to get there early to have them all to yourself. Then, you're in for a treat driving the **M-22** around the **Leelanau Peninsula;** be sure to stop at one of the area's excellent **wineries** en route. Rounding Grand Traverse Bay, you'll head farther north on US 31, passing charming lakeside towns like **Petoskey** and driving the **Tunnel of Trees** before finally making it to the **Mackinac Bridge,** a drive of just over 3.5 hours in total. It's a long day of travel, but it will be worth it if you make it to the bridge in time to drive over it at sunset; bed down in **St. Ignace,** just on the other side of the bridge, for the next few nights.

DAY 5 It's a two-hour drive to beautiful **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore** via US 2, where you can spend much of the day **hiking**

and **kayaking.** Back in St. Ignace, take a late afternoon ferry to **Mackinac Island** for dinner and charming, car-free strolling.

DAY 6 From St. Ignace, it's a more than a four-hour drive south back to **Detroit** on I-75. Luckily, you'll have beautiful memories to keep you company and a stop in **Hartwick Pines State Park,** covered in majestic old growth forest, to stretch your legs.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

From idyllic rural countryside to a coast that is by turns rugged and sandy white to thick, old-growth forest, Michigan is full of beautiful places to drive, especially when **fall foliage** is at its peak. For full color, the second week of September in the UP and the second week of October in the Lower Peninsula are usually the best times.

TUNNEL OF TREES

M-119 from Harbor Springs to Cross Village

The coastal stretch of M-119 is considered one of the prettiest drives in the country. The narrow lane twists and turns as it follows Lake Michigan from atop a high bluff. Yet it's the trees that take top billing, arching overhead to form a sun-dappled tunnel. The effect is spectacular on autumn afternoons, when the fiery oranges and bronzes glow in the angled sunlight like hot coals.

THE M-22

The touted M-22 turns north off US 31 just north of **Manistee** and runs along the coast from there all the way around the **Leelanau Peninsula,** passing close to the **Sleeping Bear Dunes** and ending in **Traverse City,** a 116-mi (186-km) stretch of highway. You'll pass inland lakes, rivers, dunes,

rolling hills dotted with orchards and vineyards, and quaint towns, all in view of Lake Michigan.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Many of Michigan's parks and recreation areas require a state Recreation Passport (www.michigan.gov/dnr), available for purchase at the park entrance. Residents can purchase annual passes with their registration renewal through the Secretary of State.

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

Glaciers and a millennium of wind and water sculpted Sleeping Bear Dunes, rimming the east coast of the Leelanau Peninsula (the pinky of the Lower Peninsula's "mitten") with a crust of sand and gravel. Claiming center stage are the perched dunes: immense pyramids of sand spiking up from the edge of Lake Michigan and climbing at seemingly impossible angles to the sky. Sleeping Bear measures close to 450 ft (137 m), making it the world's largest freshwater dune.

It sounds cliché, but words really can't describe the Sleeping Bear Dunes. They can be a sunny, friendly playground for squealing children tumbling down the 284-ft (86-m) **Dune Climb** (6748 S. Dune Hwy., Glen Arbor) or lunar and desolate like a bleak desert on a January day. They can be pale and white-hot at noon, then glow in pinks like white wine at sunset.

The **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore** (9922 Front St., Empire; 231/326-4700; www.nps.gov/slbe), established in 1970, encompasses nearly 72,000 ac (29,000 ha), including 35 mi (56 km) of Lake Michigan shoreline. One of the best hikes to get you close to these unforgettable dunes is the **Pyramid Point trail,** a hilly 2.6-mi (4.2-km) loop that leads to the park's northernmost point, with a high lookout over Lake Michigan and Sleeping Bear Bay. To reach the trailhead, take M-122 3.7 mi (5.9 km) east of Glen Arbor to Port Oneida Road.

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

906/482-0986; www.nps.gov/isro

Isolated in the vast waters of Lake Superior, Isle Royale is perhaps the model of what a national park is supposed to be—wild, rugged, and remote. One of the least visited of the national parks, the protected archipelago annually receives the equivalent of a weekend's worth of visitors to Yellowstone. This presents some unique opportunities to protect the wilderness, allowing the National Park Service to enforce rules more effectively and preserve the backcountry solitude.



BULL MOOSE IN ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

Those who make the trek by boat or seaplane to Isle Royale come primarily to **hike** the 165 mi (265 km) of trails, **fish** the 32 inland lakes, and

paddle the saw-toothed shoreline. Try the 4.2-mi (6.8-km) Scoville Point loop hike or the 20-mi (32-km) round-trip trek from Rock Harbor to Lookout Louise. Five Fingers is a great kayaking option; it’s a collection of fjord-like harbors and rocky promontories on the east end of the island. **Wildlife viewing** is also popular, especially for spotting moose, which swam to the island from Ontario; eastern timber wolves later followed across on pack ice.

BEST BEACHES

Bordering four Great Lakes, Michigan is blessed with the most freshwater shoreline in the country. Fortunately, a high percentage of that coastline is pristine, sandy beach. Michigan's spectacular national lakeshores, **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore** and **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore,** both boast wonderful beaches. Here are some other top choices.

- **Belle Isle Beach** (844/235-5375): This strip of sand on Belle Isle, Detroit's urban sanctuary in the middle of the Detroit River, is small but notable for its proximity to the city, and it's the place to be on a hot summer day. When you've had enough sunbathing, visit the park's other attractions, including a conservatory, aquarium, and lighthouse.
- **Holland State Park** (2215 Ottawa Beach Rd.; 616/399-9390): One of Michigan's loveliest and most accessible beaches, Holland State Park attracts sunbathers by the hundreds on weekends.
- **Grand Haven State Park** (1001 Harbor Ave.; 616/847-1309): Connected to downtown Grand Haven by a popular boardwalk, this sandy beach boasts great views of the park's lighthouses and Lake Michigan.
- **Lakeport State Park** (7605 Lakeshore Rd.; 810/327-6224): Located on the more peaceful Lake Huron shore of Michigan, this park offers a classic beach experience close to the urban centers in the southeast of the state, and it's not far from Fort Gratiot Lighthouse.

You can access Isle Royale by seaplane, ferry, or personal boat. Rustic campsites, requiring a free camping permit, are available on a first-come, first-served basis. The park is closed November to April 15. For more

information, visit the **Houghton Visitor Center** (800 E. Lakeshore Dr.; 906/482-0984).

HARTWICK PINES STATE PARK

4216 State Park Dr., Grayling; 989/348-7068

The majestic white pine may be the state tree, but few virgin stands remain today. One of the last can be seen in this state park, one of the largest in the state, where trees that have been here since before the Revolutionary War reach as high as 10 stories. The logging company charged with felling the trees in the mid-1890s was forced to suspend operations due to economic problems. In 1927, the trees and the surrounding 9,300 ac (3,800 ha) were purchased from the lumber company and donated to the state for a park.

Long a popular stop for vacationers heading north, the state park has a superb **visitor center,** a walkway accessible to wheelchairs and strollers, and an extensive **logging museum.** But the 49-ac (19-ha) virgin tract of white and red pines is the main attraction. Hiking and biking opportunities include 21 mi (34 km) of easy **trails** open to mountain bikes in summer and cross-country skiers in winter.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Though hockey is popular in many parts of the state and Detroit has its share of beleaguered sports fans, it's really college football that rules the roost, more specifically a rivalry between the **University of Michigan** and **Michigan State University.**

The U of M Wolverines play out of **Michigan Stadium** (Stadium Blvd. and S. Main St., Ann Arbor) in Ann Arbor; known as the "Big House," it's the largest stadium in the Western Hemisphere, seating 107,601 fans. The MSU Spartans play at **Spartan Stadium** (325 W. Shaw Ln.) in East Lansing. The teams meet once a year to vie for the Paul Bunyan Trophy,

and at the time of writing, the record stands at 73 Wolverine wins, 38 Spartan wins, and 5 ties.

The annual games are hot-ticket events, sure to be an exciting day in Lansing or Ann Arbor, regardless of where the game is being played, as is any game day during football season (usually Oct.-Dec.). Between students and season ticket holders, **tickets** can be hard to come by, but check with https://mgoblue.com or https://msuspartans.com for more details. Finding a spot in a **local bar** can be just as much fun, and after the game, you'll have plenty of breweries, shops, and sights to visit in either town.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

INTERNATIONAL EATS

Surprising to some, Michigan is home to a wide variety of immigrant populations, both historic and relatively recent. This means a wonderful diversity of cuisines can be found in the state; here are a few of the most delicious.

- **Polish in Hamtramck:** This small city surrounded by Detroit emerged as a Polish community after World War I. Try **Polonia Restaurant** (2934 Yemans St.; 313/873-8432; www.polonia-restaurant.net).
- **Middle Eastern in Dearborn:** Dearborn, 20 minutes southwest of Detroit, is home to the largest population of Arabic-speaking people in the United States. Try **Al Ameer** (12710 W. Warren Ave.; 313/582-8185; https://alameerrestaurant.com).
- **German in Frankenmuth:** Touristy Frankenmuth, in Michigan's thumb, is all about preserving its Bavarian heritage, perhaps nowhere more so than **Zehnder's of Frankenmuth** (730 S. Main St.; 877/582-0961; www.zehnders.com), famous for its family-style chicken dinners.

GREAT LAKES FISH

Because Michigan is blessed to be surrounded by four of the Great Lakes, fresh lake fish can be found throughout the state, from **whitefish** to **lake trout.** Local fish is available at restaurants from fish shacks to fine dining establishments. Here are some places to seek it out.

- On the Leelanau Peninsula, visit **Carlson's Fishery** (205 W. River, Leland; 231/256-9801; www.carlsonsfish.com) for a taste of an old-school fisherman's shack.
- In the UP, **Fitzgerald's Restaurant** (5033 Front St., Eagle Harbor; 906/337-0666; www.fitzgeralds-mi.com) offers upscale dining, including fresh fish, overlooking Lake Superior.

CRAFT BEER

In a country that's craft beer-crazy, Michigan, with its seemingly endless access to freshwater and a notable history in the beer industry, has long been at the forefront. **Bell's Brewery** (8938 Krum Ave., Comstock; 269/382-2338; www.bellsbeer.com [URL inactive]) outside Kalamazoo, for one, is regularly named one of the best in the United States. No matter where you are in Michigan, a brewery is almost never far away, and a pint of craft ale is a common end to myriad activities, whether you're sightseeing, beachgoing, or skiing.

Many Michigan towns and cities have pub crawls or ale trails to guide drinkers through their brewery offerings; here are some of the best places to drink craft beer in the state.

- Not far from perennial award winner Bell's, **Kalamazoo** is home to the one-of-a-kind **Beer Exchange** (211 E. Water St.; 269/532-1188; https://kalamazoobeerexchange.com), where a rotating lineup of local brews are priced according to the principles of supply and demand. The city's **"Give a Craft" Beer Trail** (www.discoverkalamazoo.com) helps visitors discover its 14 breweries.
- **Grand Rapids** has styled itself Beer City USA, and its **Beer City Ale Trail** (www.experiencegr.com) boasts more than 40 breweries.

Founders Brewing Co. (235 Cesar E. Chavez Ave. SW; 616/776-1195; https://foundersbrewing.com) is a favorite.

BEST SOUVENIRS

PETOSKEY STONES

Michigan's state stone isn't really a stone at all, but a piece of fossilized coral more than 350 million years old. You can find Petoskey stones at gift shops in the northwestern part of the Lower Peninsula, polished up and often turned into jewelry.

LOCAL ART

Many towns in Michigan are known for their concentration of galleries and boutiques, selling handmade items ranging from sculptures for your garden to fine art. A few notable places to shop are **Ann Arbor** (www.mainstreetannarbor.org) and **Saugatuck** (www.saugatuck.com [URL inactive]).

FARM-STAND PRODUCE

Though much of Michigan is fairly industrialized, it's also a very agrarian state: You're likely to encounter dozens of farm stands lining local highways if you're doing any amount of driving in the state in summer. If you do, stop. Michigan is rightfully known for its **cherries,** most grown around Traverse City; **apples** and apple products, available for picking at orchards around the state; **maple syrup** from northern Michigan; and, of course, **wine.**

- **Traverse City** has also become quite an oasis for beer lovers. The **Traverse City Ale Trail** (www.tcbrewbus.com) is a fun way to experience eight different microbreweries in the area. **Right Brain Brewery** (225 E. 16th St.; 231/944-1239; www.rightbrainbrewery.com) was recently named one of the top five local breweries in the nation.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Detroit Metropolitan-Wayne County Airport:** DTW; I-94 and Merriman Rd., Detroit; 734/247-7678; www.metroairport.com
- **Gerald R. Ford International:** GRR; 5500 44th St. SE, Grand Rapids; 616/233-6000; www.grr.org
- **Cherry Capital:** TVC; 727 Fly Don't Dr., Traverse City; 231/947-2250; www.tvcairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Pure Michigan Department of Tourism:** www.michigan.org
- **Michigan Department of Natural Resources:** www.michigan.gov/dnr

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The Detroit News:*** www.detroitnews.com
- ***The Detroit Free Press:*** www.freep.com
- ***Michigan Blue Magazine:*** www.mibluemag.com
- ***Experience Michigan:*** http://experiencemichiganmag.com

OHIO

There’s no one way to define Ohio. Technically part of the Midwest, Ohio is on Erie, Kickapoo, and Shawnee land. The Buckeye State’s northeastern environs echo the industrial centers of New England, Cincinnati is just a river away from the South, and much of the state’s rugged southeast is the entryway into Appalachia. Ohio’s official tourism slogan is once again “The Heart of It All,” which accurately if not inspirationally told motorists where they’d arrived: the state where the country’s cultures smash into each other. This mosaic of American temperament has produced some the country’s greatest figures, including seven presidents, as well as astronauts, athletes, and inventors. You can find two top-shelf amusement parks, great museums, and the cosmopolitan offerings of the Three C’s: Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. Holmes County is the center of the second largest Amish settlement in the world, the dense Appalachian foothills to the southeast conceal a world of cliffs, rock formations, and adventure sports, and Lake Erie’s shoreline can either be a quiet retreat or a party. You’ll be hard-pressed to find such a variety of things to do in a comparable amount of space.

AREA: 44,826 sq mi / 116,098 sq km (34th)

POPULATION: 11,883,304 (7th)

STATEHOOD DATE: March 1, 1803 (17th)

STATE CAPITAL: Columbus


OHIO
MICHIGAN
ONTARIO
CANADA
UNITED STATES
Lake Erie
Erie
Conneaut
Ashtabula
Isle St. George
Kelleys Island
Kelleys Island State Park
Middle Bass Island
Put-in-Bay
South Bass Is.
EXPLORING THE LAKE ERIE ISLANDS
Toledo
Maumee
Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge
Port Clinton
CEDAR POINT
Sandusky
Lorain
Avon Lake
Bay Village
Cleveland
Mentor
Chardon
Orwell
Parma
Parkman
Brandywine Falls
Streetsboro
Warren
HIKING AND BIKING CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK
Cuyahoga Valley National Park
Ritchie Ledges
Ravenna
Akron
Medina
Norton
Youngstown
LANTERMAN'S MILL
Napoleon
Bowling Green
Defiance
Cecil
Fremont
Norwalk
Fostoria
Tiffin
Attica
Findlay
Ottawa
Van Wert
Lima
Patterson
Bucyrus
Upper Sandusky
Ashland
Wooster
Mansfield
Massillon
North Canton
Canton
Alliance
Salem
PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME
PENNSYLVANIA
Loudonville
AMISH COUNTRY BYWAY
Millersburg
Berlin
Walnut Creek
SLOWING DOWN IN AMISH COUNTRY
East Liverpool
Carrollton
New Philadelphia
Uhrichsville
Steubenville
Pittsburgh
Cadiz
Coshocton
Utica
Newark
Cambridge
Zanesville
JOHN AND ANNIE GLENN MUSEUM
Woodsfield
Malta
Marietta
ARMSTRONG AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
Celina
New Hampshire
Kenton
Marion
Mount Gilead
Mount Vernon
Bellefontaine
North Star
Delaware
Marysville
Piqua
Urbana
Greenville
Plain City
COLUMBUS
Springfield
Vandalia
Fairborn
Grove City
Dayton
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Eaton
Xenia
Kettering
Lancaster
Circleville
Hocking Hills State Park
OLD MAN'S CAVE
Cedar Falls
Ash Cave
JOHN GLENN ASTRONOMY PARK
Middletown
Waynesville
Hamilton
Lebanon
Wilmington
Fairfield
Chillicothe
Athens
McArthur
Montgomery
Cincinnati
Covington
Fayetteville
Hillsboro
Piketon
Jackson
Macon
Russellville
West Union
Portsmouth
INDIANAPOLIS
INDIANA
KENTUCKY
FRANKFORT
WEST VIRGINIA
CHARLESTON
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Cleveland is located on the shores of **Lake Erie,** which forms much of Ohio's northern border, as is **Toledo** farther west, at the border with Michigan. In between, **Cedar Point** sits on a spit of land jutting into the lake. The other two of the Three C's of Ohio's cities make a diagonal southwest of Cleveland, with **Columbus** in central Ohio and **Cincinnati** in the southwestern corner, right on the border with Kentucky. **Holmes County,** home of the Amish, lies between Cleveland and Columbus, while the **Cuyahoga River** twists and turns southeast out of Cleveland.

WHEN TO GO

Summer is high season for Ohio's amusement parks, beaches, campgrounds, and events. This time of year is hot and humid. Try to visit in June before the real heat arrives, or after mid-August after schools reopen. **Fall** is a secondary high season: Football is in full swing, peak foliage is mid- to late October, and temperatures are comfortable.

Winters in Ohio are cold and varying degrees of snowy. The snow belt east of Cleveland can see upward of 100 in (250 cm) of lake-effect snow every season. In **spring,** the weather can stubbornly oscillate between winter's last throes and warm fronts.

TOP 3

1 EXPLORING THE LAKE ERIE ISLANDS

There are four primary inhabited islands in Lake Erie that belong to Ohio. The two most visited are **South Bass Island** and **Kelleys Island,** with **Middle Bass Island** and **Isle St. George** quieter and less accessible.



KELLEYS ISLAND

The most popular destination is South Bass Island, known to most as **Put-in-Bay,** which is the name of the town on the north end of the island. The town is notable for its summer party scene, but there are quiet corners, with bed-and-breakfasts, wineries, and the commanding presence of **Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial** (93 Delaware Ave.) lending some respectability.

Kelleys Island is an altogether quieter experience than Put-in-Bay. **Kelleys Island State Park** (920 Division St., Kelleys Island; 419/746-2546; https://ohiodnr.gov) is home to a small beach and the island's most famous sight: a set of glacial grooves carved by retreating glaciers.

2 SLOWING DOWN IN AMISH COUNTRY

Holmes County

Tucked in a pocket of low hills, Amish Country beckons 4 million tourists a year with hearty country dinners, made-from-scratch baked

goods, and quality homemade crafts. Rivaled only by Lancaster, Pennsylvania, **Holmes County** is the center of one of the largest concentrations of Amish in the world—nearly 50 percent of the county's population considers themselves Amish, and a roughly equal number speak Pennsylvania Dutch at home. The region offers innumerable accommodations to make sure you take your time—the land's tranquility is lost on a whirlwind tour. Many of the region's shops and restaurants fall along the 160-mi (257-km) **Amish Country Byway,** which meanders its way around Holmes County for bucolic country views.



HOLMES COUNTY

The towns of **Millersburg, Berlin,** and **Walnut Creek** are the main hubs for tourists, and where you'll find the majority of attractions.

Many visitors come here to browse an endless supply of shops and markets for renowned Amish goods, from antiques to quilts. Try **Starlight Antique and Gifts** (66 W. Jackson St., Millersburg; 330/674-5111; www.starlightantiques.com) and **Helping Hands**

Quilt Shop (4818 W. Main St., Berlin; 330/893-2233; www.helpinghandsquilts.com).

People come here just for the region's bakeries; there's something for everyone to enjoy at **Hershberger's Farm and Bakery** (5452 OH-557, Millersburg; 330/674-6096). Cheese is one of the most popular items to shop for in Amish Country, with cheese makers in the region offering free tours and samples—try **Walnut Creek Cheese** (2641 OH-39, Walnut Creek; 330/852-2888; www.walnutcreekcheese.com).

3 HIKING AND BIKING CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

440/717-3890; www.nps.gov/cuva

In the 1960s, with the Cuyahoga River on fire upstream and urban sprawl encroaching on the land between Cleveland and Akron, locals sought to preserve the rural valley and the history within—most notably the remnants of the Ohio and Erie Canal, in use 1827-1913. In 1974, President Ford signed into existence the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, which was upgraded to a national park in 2000. What you get is a markedly different experience from most national parks, with small towns and farms intermittently scattered throughout. There are also miniature gorges, leafy woodland trails, waterfalls, and rock features all within an easy drive from Cleveland, Akron, and Canton. Combined, it's an altogether pleasing mix of wilderness, history and culture, and a recreational paradise with ample options to hike and bike, including treks to **Brandywine Falls,** the crumbling cliffs of the **Ritchie Ledges,** and the **Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail** (www.ohioanderiecanalway.com).



BRANDYWINE FALLS

HIGHLIGHTS

SPACE AND AVIATION HISTORY

With Orville and Wilbur Wright, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong all hailing from the Buckeye State, sites belonging to and inspired by these and other historic figures are sprinkled across the state.

- Long before flight was possible, Ohioans observed the stars through the 19th-century **Cincinnati Observatory** (3489 Observatory Pl., Cincinnati; 513/321-5186; www.cincinnatiobservatory.org), home to one of the world's oldest working telescopes.



CINCINNATI OBSERVATORY

- **Dayton** is the epicenter of Ohio's aviation history, preserving sites relevant to Orville and Wilbur Wright and the birth of flight within the five-part **Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park.**
- The massive **National Museum of the United States Air Force** (1100 Spaatz St., Wright-Patterson AFB; 937/255-3286; www.nationalmuseum.af.mil) chronicles the history of flight through the lens of armed conflict and science, featuring hundreds of fighter jets, space capsules, and presidential airplanes.
- North of Dayton is the **Armstrong Air and Space Museum** (500 Apollo Dr., Wapakoneta; 419/738-8811; www.armstrongmuseum.org), devoted to Apollo 11 astronaut and native son Neil Armstrong.

Major CITIES

Together, the Three C's—Cleveland, the Gilded Age cultural powerhouse; Columbus, the polished, fashionable capital; and Cincinnati, the old-world river town—boast monumental museums and architecture, and tantalize with exciting food.

CLEVELAND: This former industrial powerhouse is undergoing a renaissance, with landmark museums and a necklace of greenspaces surrounding it. Arguably Cleveland's trendiest neighborhood, Ohio City shines as a model of Cleveland's resurgence, with a 21st-century building boom accommodating new breweries, restaurants, and cultural amenities.

COLUMBUS: Ohio's capital and largest city boasts a lineup of distinct urban neighborhoods, top-rated museums and cultural institutions, a burgeoning beer and restaurant scene, and one famous football program. The largest privately funded historic district in the United States, 233-ac (94-ha) German Village is the city's preeminent historic neighborhood and the home of many of its favorite restaurants.

CINCINNATI: Founded in 1788, Cincinnati was the first true American boomtown. The impact of steamboats of German and Irish immigrants can still be seen in the city's distinctive architecture and unique culture, and at 362 ac (146 ha), the Over-the-Rhine area is one of the largest historic districts in the United States.

- The **John and Annie Glenn Museum** (72 W. Main St., New Concord; 800/752-2602; https://johnandannieglennmuseum.org) celebrates John Glenn's achievements within the walls of John's boyhood home outside Cambridge. About 1.5 hours south is the **John Glenn Astronomy Park,** a designated dark sky park.

ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

1100 Rock and Roll Blvd., Cleveland; 216/781-7625; www.rockhall.com

I. M. Pei's postmodern, geometric Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is perhaps the most iconic building in Cleveland. Opened in 1995, the museum is much larger than it looks, with a significant portion underground. Start your tour by heading down the escalator to the permanent gallery, where a sensory feast awaits visitors with music, videos of live performances, costumes, memorabilia, and instruments from the biggest names in popular music. The gallery tells the story of rock-and-roll's evolution, starting by recognizing early influencers in blues, gospel, country, and folk and moving through every decade to the present. The actual **Hall of Fame Gallery** is on level 3, with an exhibit on the year's inductees and the Power of Rock Experience, a 15-minute compilation of some of the induction ceremony's musical highlights. Elsewhere in the museum, try your hand at playing some classics, brand your own band logo, and shop in the massive gift shop. The All Access Café, a bit on the expensive side, has snacks, pizza, coffee, and alcohol with nice views of the harbor and city from the airy atrium.



ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

MUSEUM MANIA

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame often appropriately takes center stage, but Ohio is home to a number of other excellent museums, often overlooked.

THE ARTS

With over 66,500 pieces of art, the **Cleveland Museum of Art** (11150 East Blvd., Cleveland; 216/421-7350; www.clevelandart.org) is one of the largest and finest art museums in the United States. The **Butler Institute of American Art** (524 Wick Ave., Youngstown; 330/743-1107; http://butlerart.com) was the first museum dedicated to American art and the best excuse to venture to Youngstown. The **Toledo Museum of Art** (2445 Monroe St., Toledo; 419/255-8000; www.toledomuseum.org), with more than 30,000 pieces of art, may have you asking "This is in Toledo?" And finally, there's 470 ac (190 ha) of scenic woods, hills, and over 70 outdoor sculptures at **Pyramid Hill Sculpture Park and Museum** (1763 Hamilton Cleves Rd., Hamilton; 513/868-8336; www.pyramidhill.org).

UNIQUE HISTORY

In Canton, the extravagant **Pro Football Hall of Fame** (2121 George Halas Dr. NW, Canton; 330/456-8207; www.profootballhof.com) highlights the National Football League's best players as well as its history and development. And in Cincinnati, the **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center** (50 E. Freedom Way, Cincinnati; 513/333-7500; https://freedomcenter.org) lays out in detail the evil of enslavement and the Underground Railroad that rose to challenge the system.

CEDAR POINT

1 Cedar Point Dr., Sandusky; 419/627-2350; www.cedarpoint.com

Consistently named the best amusement park in the world, Cedar Point is a glistening metropolis of roller coaster hills on Lake Erie. It is America's most visited seasonal amusement park and the second-oldest in North America, having opened its doors as a lakeside resort in 1870. This massive 364-ac (147-ha) park is home to 19 roller coasters, and each new addition seems to break a new record for height, twists, and screams. Standouts include **Millennium Force,** which broke the records for the tallest and fastest roller coaster when it opened in 2000, and the **Top Thrill 2,** which launches riders to 120 mph (195 kph) in less than four seconds. There are nearly 70 rides in total as well as live shows and a nightly laser show display.

If you can pull yourself away from the rides, there's a mile-long (1.6-km) sand **beach** on the eastern edge of the peninsula that is open to ticketholders and guests of any of Cedar Point's accommodations. Included in admission are the 18 ac (7.3 ha) of attractions at **Cedar Point Shores Waterpark,** including various enclosed and open-air slides and a 500,000-gallon (1.9 million liters) wave pool.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in the heart of the state, **Columbus,** where you can walk through the picturesque **German Village neighborhood** and sample the craft beer scene.

DAY 2 Under two hours' drive northeast of Ohio's biggest city, you'll find yourself in the heart of **Amish Country,** where you'll have your pick of bakeries, artisan crafts, locally made cheese, and peaceful bed-and-breakfasts.

DAY 3 From here, make your way two hours north to **Cleveland,** and you can choose your own adventure en route, whether it's a stop

at the **Pro Football Hall of Fame** or a hike in **Cuyahoga Valley National Park.** In the city, make a pilgrimage to the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** or the **Cleveland Museum of Art,** followed by a beer at **Great Lakes Brewing Company** in the vibrant **Ohio City** neighborhood.

DAY 4 Drive just an hour west to get your heart rate up on one of more than 60 rides at **Cedar Point.** Afterward, choose a **Lake Erie** island to spend the night on: Either keep the party going with an overnight stay in rowdy **Put-in-Bay,** or choose **Kelleys Island** for more peace and quiet.

DAY 5 It's a longer drive today, four hours south to **Cincinnati,** with a stop in **Dayton,** where you can grab a craft beer or explore some of the area's **aviation history.** In Cincinnati, wander the **Over-the-Rhine** neighborhood and be sure to try some Cincinnati chili.

DAY 6 Drive 2.5 hours east to hike Ohio's favorite outdoor destination, **Hocking Hills.** From here, it's only an hour drive north back to Columbus.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

14000 W. OH-2, Oak Harbor; 419/898-0014; www.fws.gov/refuge/ottawa

A veritable safari for bird lovers, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge's network of lands harbors 8,000 ac (3,237 ha) of wetlands, coastal grasslands, and woods frequented by flocks of migrating waterfowl, colorful songbirds, and several nesting pairs of bald eagles. Start at the large

visitor center, where helpful rangers can tell you what to see and where to find them, then head out to hike atop the 10 mi (16 km) of trails, including those along dikes that help control the water levels. While there's something to see in any season, spring is the busiest time of year as migratory birds stop on the lakeshore for a rest before continuing south.



TRUMPETER SWANS, OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

HOCKING HILLS STATE PARK

19852 OH-664; 740/385-6842; https://ohiodnr.gov

Arguably Ohio's favorite state park, Hocking Hills preserves unusual rock formations, cliffs, caves, waterfalls, and thickly forested land that epitomizes the dense foothills of Appalachian Ohio. The dominant formation is the recess cave, large cliff overhangs that are hundreds of feet long, especially **Ash Cave** (OH-56, Logan), accessible by a short, 0.25-mi (0.4-m) trail that leads to the bottom of the stunning site, which also features a trickling waterfall depending on recent rainfall. A 0.5-mi (0.8-km) trail travels alongside the rim, from which hikers can pick up the

Buckeye Trail to **Cedar Falls** 2.3 mi (3.7 km) away and on to **Old Man's Cave** (19988 OH-664, Logan), another 2 mi (3.2 km).

FALL FOLIAGE

In mid- to late October, when autumn colors are at their peak, consider any of these locations for optimum fall foliage.

- **Lanterman's Mill** (1001 Canfield Rd., Youngstown) is a popular photo destination during peak autumn foliage.
- Sun shining through the autumn trees outside **Hocking Hills State Park's** Ash Cave in Bloomingville makes for a magical setting.
- Waterfalls and foliage combine for splendid views at **Cuyahoga Valley National Park.**

BEST SOUVENIRS

Cheese, jellies, and other delights from **Amish Country** make for good souvenirs. The Amish are also renowned for their quality furniture.

Cheapest, most Ohioan souvenir you could buy? A can of **Skyline chili** at the supermarket.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

FOOTBALL

The **Ohio State Buckeyes** (https://ohiostatebuckeyes.com) football program is one of the most successful in the country, made even more legendary by the massive **Ohio Stadium** (411 Woody Hayes Dr., Columbus; 800/462-8257). Columbus lacks a National Football League team, though you would hardly notice; the city treats its Buckeyes, for better or worse, like its home team. The Buckeyes serve as a rallying point for the entire state; in some ways, the campus is the beating heart of Ohio.



OHIO STADIUM

Attending a game at Ohio Stadium is a bucket list item for many football fans, Buckeye or not. If you manage to grab tickets to a game, make sure to arrive early enough to watch the beloved **Ohio State University Marching Band,** known as "The Best Damn Band in the Land" (or TBDBITL), in their traditional pregame performances. Be in your seat in the stadium at least 20 minutes before game time to watch the band march into the stadium for their pregame show including the "Script Ohio" march.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

In the Buckeye State, bakers have concocted a popular peanut butter and chocolate confectionary that resembles a buckeye nut. The **buckeye dessert** is delectable. The **buckeye nut** is poisonous.

CRAFT BEER

Breweries, walking tours, and the world's first craft beer hotel: Ohio has everything craft beer lovers need.

- In Dayton, taste beer history at **Carillon Brewing Company** (1000 Carillon Blvd., Dayton; 937/910-0722; www.carillonbrewingco.org), which brews using 19th-century recipes and techniques.

- Scottish company **BrewDog** (96 Gender Rd., Canal Winter; 614/908-3051; www.brewdog.com) chose Columbus for its US operations; its facility in suburb Canal Winter sports a pub, a Craft Beer Museum, and the 32-room **DogHouse,** a craft beer hotel with taps in every guest room. In the city's burgeoning, respected beer scene, **Land Grant Brewing Company** (424 W. Town St., Columbus; 614/427-3946; https://landgrantbrewing.com) and **Seventh Son Brewing Co**. (1101 N. 4th St., Columbus; 614/421-2337; www.seventhsonbrewing.com) top most lists.
- The big name in Cleveland is **Great Lakes Brewing Company** (2516 Market Ave., Cleveland; 216/771-4404; www.greatlakesbrewing.com), located in the Ohio City neighborhood, the epicenter of brewing in Cleveland and home to half a dozen breweries.

GOETTA AND CINCINNATI CHILI

Cincinnati features not one, but two regional specialties that are worth a try.



CINCINNATI CHILI

To stretch their meat supply for the week, Cincinnati's 19th-century German immigrants added oats and onions to their pork, seasoned it with rosemary, thyme, or whatever else they had in their cupboard, and came up with **goetta** (pronounced GET-uh). Typically served for breakfast, goetta may also be found on sandwiches or topping a pizza.

More widely known is **Cincinnati chili,** developed by Greek immigrants in the 1920s looking to expand their restaurant menus; the recipe includes an unusual array of ingredients including cinnamon and even chocolate, and is primarily eaten on spaghetti.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Cleveland Hopkins International Airport:** CLE; 5300 Riverside Dr., Cleveland; 216/265-6000; www.clevelandairport.com

- **John Glenn Columbus International Airport:** CMH; 4600 International Gateway, Columbus; 614/239-4000; https://flycolumbus.com
- **Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport:** CVG; 3087 Terminal Dr., Hebron, KY; 859/767-3151; www.cvgairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **TourismOhio:** https://ohio.org
- **Ohio Department of Natural Resources:** https://ohiodnr.gov

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Plain Dealer:*** www.cleveland.com
- ***Cincinnati Enquirer:*** www.cincinnati.com
- ***Columbus Dispatch:*** www.dispatch.com

OceanofPDF.com

NEW ENGLAND

Maine

New Hampshire

Vermont

Massachusetts

Rhode Island

Connecticut

NEW ENGLAND
State by State

MAINE

Why Go: Acadia National Park, lobster, and lighthouses sum up the Maine experience, and even just one of those would be worth the trip.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Why Go: The White Mountains, on many a hiker's bucket list, offer scenery for days.

VERMONT

Why Go: Farm-fresh treats, from cheese to apples, are only some of the bucolic pleasures of the Green Mountain State.

MASSACHUSETTS

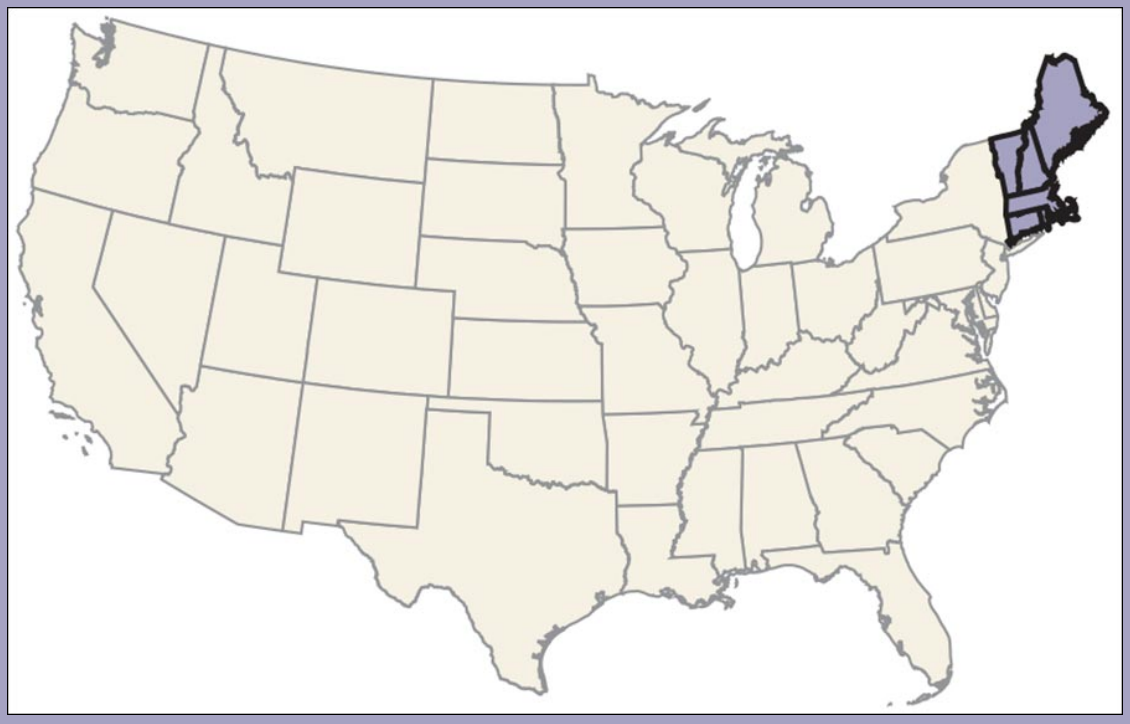
Why Go: With history and culture galore, Boston is the nexus for the state—and all of New England—while beaches have their day on Cape Cod.

RHODE ISLAND

Why Go: Providence's art scene and Newport's mansions steal the show, but the beaches of South County and Rhode Island's fun food items should also make the list.

CONNECTICUT

Why Go: This little state is home to a variety of cultural attractions, from Yale University's museums and New England's foremost Native American research institute to the homes of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Philip Johnson Glass House.



New England ROAD TRIP

This road trip makes a loop through four states in about 10 days. With more time, you can add Connecticut and Rhode Island and check all the New England states off your list.

MAINE

Boston to Acadia National Park: 3 days / 290 mi (465 km)

From Boston, make a beeline to **Portland,** an easy, two-hour drive up the interstate. Spend the next day winding your way to **Mount Desert Island,** the main area of **Acadia National Park,** a four-hour drive if you take the coastal route. (**Bar Harbor** is the main town in the area.) The following day will be dedicated to exploring the park, starting with sunrise on **Cadillac Mountain.**

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Acadia National Park to the White Mountains: 2 days / 270 mi (435 km)

From Bar Harbor, the route to New Hampshire's **White Mountains** crosses the dark deep forests of inland Maine. You'll end up in **North Conway,** a little town with a scenic railway, in 4-5 hours. The next day, **Mount Washington,** the highest peak in the White Mountains, is your target an hour north. Make your way to the top, whether on foot, by twisty road, or by cog railway. Spend the night back in North Conway or Conway.

VERMONT

Conway to Grafton: 1 day / 185 mi (300 km)

Take the **Kancamagus Highway** (NH-112) from Conway for a scenic drive through the New Hampshire mountains on your way west to Vermont. Cheese-taste in **Plymouth,** then head to the pretty village of **Grafton** for the night.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Berkshires and Boston: 3+ days / 215 mi (345 km)

After Grafton, spend a day in the gentle hills of the Berkshires in western Massachusetts. Stop in at the **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA)** in North Adams, then continue south to **Edith Wharton's home** and spend the night in **Lenox.** The next day, make the 2.5-hour drive back to **Boston.** Spend at least a day visiting your pick of Boston's many sights. If you want to head out to **Cape Cod,** it's about two hours to reach Provincetown from Boston.

MORE NEW ENGLAND

Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Cape Cod: 2-4 days / 265 mi (425 km)

To see all the New England states, head south from Lenox through Connecticut's **Litchfield Hills** down to **New Haven,** about a 2.5-hour drive. Explore the Yale Campus and try the local specialty, apizza. After spending the night in New Haven, make your way two hours east to **Newport,** Rhode Island, where a beautiful cliff walk and Gilded Age mansions await. From Newport, it's about 1.5 hours back to Boston, depending on traffic. Or you could head out to **Cape Cod** (2-3 hours) before heading back to Boston.

MAINE

Set on the traditional lands of the Abenaki, Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot people, Maine is an extraordinarily special place, where the air is clear, the water is pure, and the traditional traits of honesty, thrift, and ruggedness remain refreshingly appealing. From the glacier-scoured beaches of the southern coast, around spruce-studded islands and Acadia's granite shores, to the craggy cliffs Down East, Maine's coastline follows a zigzagging route that would measure about 3,500 mi (5,633 km) if you stretched it taut. Each peninsula has its own character, as does each island, each city, and each village. Maine's inland is just as exciting, with 6,000 lakes and ponds, nearly 32,000 mi (51,499 km) of rivers, and 17 million ac (6.8 million ha) of timberlands for hiking and mountain biking, skiing and snowmobiling, paddling and fishing. This is where intrepid Appalachian Trail hikers finish at the summit of Katahdin, Maine's tallest peak. And then there's the food. Lobster, of course, is king, but don't overlook luscious wild blueberries, sweet Maine maple syrup, and delicious farmstead cheeses.

AREA: 35,380 sq mi / 91,633 sq km (39th)

POPULATION: 1,405,012 (42nd)

STATEHOOD DATE: March 15, 1820 (23rd)

STATE CAPITAL: Augusta


MAINE
CANADA
UNITED STATES
QUEBEC
NEW BRUNSWICK
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
Atlantic Ocean
Fort Kent
Allagash Wilderness Waterway
Caribou
Fort Fairfield
Presque Isle
Ashland
Chamberlain Lake
Smyrna Mills
Houlton
Baxter State Park
Patten
Chesuncook Lake
Katahdin
Sherman
Rockwood
Moose R.
LAZY TOM BOG
Kokadjo
Millinocket
Jackman
ATTEAN VIEW
Macwahoc
Moosehead Lake
Greenville
Appalachian Trail
Moxie Falls
THE FORKS
Lincoln
Milo
Howland
Abbott
Dover-Foxcroft
Stratton
SUGARLOAF
Bingham
Bigelow Range
Rangeley
Wesley
Eastport
Height of Land
Bangor
Aurora
WEST QUODDY HEAD LIGHT
Madison
Grafton Notch State Park
Skowhegan
Machias
Farmington
ARTIST'S COVERED BRIDGE
Bucksport
Hancock
Milbridge
Waterville
Ellsworth
Steuben
Peru
Newry
Belfast
Bar Harbor
Schoodic Peninsula
Trenton
Bethel
Mount Desert Island
Cadillac Mountain
Acadia National Park
AUGUSTA
Penobscot Bay
Bernard
OLD CONWAY HOMESTEAD AND CRAMER MUSEUM
Camden
VENTURING INTO ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
Lewiston
Auburn
Rockland
Fryeburg
Isle au Haut
Cushing
Bridgton
Lisbon
Wiscasset
FEASTING ON LOBSTER
SHAKER MUSEUM AND SABBATHDAY LAKE SHAKER COMMUNITY
Brunswick
Bath
Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge
Boothbay Harbor
Freeport
North Windham
L. L. BEAN
Yarmouth
Monhegan Island
Westbrook
Peaks Island
Portland
Cape Elizabeth
SPOTTING LIGHTHOUSES
Sanford
Kennebunk
Kennebunkport
Ogunquit
Cape Neddick
York Harbor
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Maine's 3,478 mi (5,597 km) of coastline stretches diagonally from the New Hampshire border in the southwest to the Canadian border in the northeast. **Portland** sits on the southern part of the coast, and although many travelers might think of **Acadia National Park** as the end of the road, there's still about 100 mi (160 km) from there to the Canadian border. **Bangor** is the biggest city near the national park, while the state capital, **Augusta,** sits on the highway between Portland and Bangor. **Baxter State Park,** with its legendary **Katahdin,** and **Moosehead Lake** are in the northern wilds of the state, while the **Carrabassett Valley** and **Rangeley Lakes** are in western Maine.

WHEN TO GO

Late May to mid-October is prime season, with **July** and **August,** the warmest months, being the busiest. Expect peak-season rates, congested roads, and difficulty getting reservations. Late June and late August tend to be a bit quieter.

September to mid-October is arguably the best time to travel in Maine. Days are warm and mostly dry, nights are cool, fog is rare, the bugs are gone, and the crowds are few. Foliage is turning by early October, usually reaching its peak by mid-month.

In **winter,** especially inland, skiing, snowshoeing, and ice skating replace hiking, biking, and boating. On the coast, choices in lodging, dining, and activities are fewer, but rates are generally far lower.

TOP 3

1 VENTURING INTO ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

www.nps.gov/acad

Rather like an octopus, or perhaps an amoeba, Acadia National Park extends its reach here and there on **Mount Desert Island,** the most

popular area of the park; the **Schoodic Peninsula** on the mainland; and the remote **Isle au Haut.** The first national park east of the Mississippi River and the only national park in the northeastern United States, it was created from donated parcels that were slowly fused into its present-day size of more than 47,000 ac (19,020 ha).



SCHOODIC PENINSULA

Within the boundaries of this splendid space are mountains, lakes, ponds, trails, fabulous vistas, and several campgrounds. Each year more than 4 million visitors bike, hike, and drive into and through the park. Yet even at the height of summer, when the whole world seems to have arrived, it's possible to find peaceful niches and less-trodden paths.

Mount Desert Island's highlights include 27-mi (43-km) **Park Loop Road,** a scenic drive that takes in most of the park's big-ticket sites, with plenty of trailheads and vistas along the way, and the **Carriage Roads,** a 45-mi (72-km) car-free road system that sees see hikers, bikers, baby strollers, wheelchairs, and even horse-drawn carriages. Acadia is a great place to get into the water, too, with swimming at **Sand Beach** and **Echo Lake,** and **canoeing and**

kayaking on the park's many ponds and waterways. Watching the sunrise from the summit of **Cadillac Mountain** is another must-do.

2 FEASTING ON LOBSTER

No Maine visit is complete without a "lobsta dinnah" at a lobster wharf, a rough-and-tumble operation within sight and scent of the ocean. If you spot a place with "Restaurant" in its name, keep going. You want to eat outside, at a picnic table, with a knockout view of boats, islands, and the sea. "Dinners" are served from noonish until around sunset. Dress casually so you can tackle the lobster without messing up your clothes. If you want beer or wine, call ahead and ask if the place serves it; you may need to bring your own. Lobster devotees cart picnic baskets with hors d'oeuvres, salads, and baguettes—even candles and champagne.

Here are some favorite lobster shacks (open seasonally May-Oct.) to get you started:

- **The Lobster Shack** (222 Two Lights Rd., Cape Elizabeth; 207/799-1677; www.lobstershacktwolights.com [URL inactive]): Ocean views, crashing surf, and a lighthouse have enticed lobster lovers to this location south of Portland since the 1920s.



LOBSTER DINNER FROM THE LOBSTER SHACK

- **Harraseeket Lunch and Lobster Company** (36 Main St., Town Wharf, South Freeport; lunch counter 207/865-4888, lobster pound 207/865-3535; www.harraseeketlunchandlobster.com): Take a break from L. L. Bean and head to this unfussy spot on the working harbor.
- **Thurston's Lobster Pound** (9 Thurston Rd., Bernard; 207/244-7600; www.thurstonforlobster.com): The two-story dining area tops a wharf above Bass Harbor.

3 SPOTTING LIGHTHOUSES

Some 65 beacons salt Maine's coastline from Kittery to Calais, and most can be viewed on the mainland or on a themed excursion cruise.

One of the state's most iconic lighthouses is **Portland Head Light** (1000 Shore Rd., Cape Elizabeth; 207/799-2661; www.portlandheadlight.com), located in Fort Williams Park, just 4 mi (6.4 km) from downtown Portland in Cape Elizabeth. The light was commissioned by President George Washington and first lit in

1791. There's no access to the 80-ft (24-m) automated light tower, but the restored keeper's house has a **museum** filled with local history and lighthouse memorabilia.



PORTLAND HEAD LIGHT

On the southern coast in York is the distinctive 1879 lighthouse familiarly known as **Nubble Lighthouse** or "the Nubble." There's no access to the lighthouse's island, but a **welcome center** (Nubble Rd., York Beach; 207/363-1040; www.nubblelight.org) provides the perfect viewpoint. One of the icons of the Maine coast, **Pemaquid Point Lighthouse** (www.lighthousefoundation.org) stands sentinel over some of the state's nastiest shoreline—rocks and surf that can reduce any wooden boat to kindling. Maine's only red-and-white-striped lighthouse, **West Quoddy Head Light,** is located in Quoddy Head State Park. Views from the lighthouse grounds, the easternmost point of the United States, are fabulous, and whale sightings are common in summer.

HIGHLIGHTS

OGUNQUIT

Located on Maine's southern coast, Ogunquit has been a holiday destination since the Indigenous residents named it "beautiful place by the sea." What's the appeal? An unparalleled, unspoiled **beach,** a dozen art galleries, and the respected **Ogunquit Museum of American Art** (543 Shore Rd., Ogunquit; 207/646-4909; www.ogunquitmuseum.org), which boasts a 3,000-piece permanent art collection and incredible views.



SUMMER AT OGUNQUIT BEACH

No visit to Ogunquit is complete without a leisurely stroll along the **Marginal Way,** a 1.25-mi-long (2-km) paved footpath edging the ocean. En route are tidepools, intriguing rock formations, crashing surf, pocket beaches, and benches for absorbing the views. The route leads to **Perkins Cove,** a working lobster-fishing harbor where several old shacks have been reincarnated as boutiques and restaurants. Photographers here go crazy shooting the quaint inlet spanned by a little pedestrian drawbridge.

Major CITIES

PORTLAND: Brine-scented air, cackling gulls, lobster boats, and fishing trawlers give notice that this is a seafaring town, but it's also Maine's cultural center. Portland is rich in museums and performing-arts centers, and it earns national kudos as a culinary destination.

LEWISTON: The state's second-largest city, home to Bates College (a private liberal arts school), is a magnet for visiting performers, artists, and lecturers. You'll also find rich Franco-American culture here, as the city has historically been home to Québécois and Acadian French immigrants.

BANGOR: This city features fine Victorian, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Greek Revival architecture. As you stroll alongside Kenduskeag Stream, duck into shops and restaurants, or catch some live music, you might even run into legendary horror author Stephen King, who calls Bangor home for part of the year.

VICTORIA MANSION

109 Danforth St., Portland; 207/772-4841; https://victoriamansion.org

The jaws of first-time visitors drop when they enter the Italianate Victoria Mansion, also called the Morse-Libby House. Built by Maine-born entrepreneur Ruggles Sylvester Morse in the late 1850s, it's widely considered the most magnificently ornamented dwelling of its period remaining in the country. The National Historic Landmark is rife with Victoriana: carved marble fireplaces, elaborate porcelain and paneling, a freestanding mahogany staircase, gilded glass chandeliers, and a restored 6- by 25-ft (1.8- by 7.6-m) stained glass skylight. It retains more than 90 percent of its original interior, including almost all of Giuseppe Guidicini's unbelievable trompe l'oeil wall paintings. It's even more spectacular during the holidays, with yards of roping, festooned trees, and carolers.

L. L. BEAN

95 Main St./US 1, Freeport; 207/865-4761 or 800/341-4341; www.llbean.com

Established as a hunting and fishing supply shop, this giant sports outfitter now sells everything from kids' clothing to cookware on its ever-expanding downtown campus, with separate Hunting & Fishing (flagship); Bike, Boat & Ski; and Home stores. There's also the outlet store—a great source for deals on equipment and clothing—in the Village Square Shops across Main Street. The Bean reputation rests on a savvy staff, high quality, an admirable environmental consciousness, and a liberal return policy.

MONHEGAN ISLAND

Ten or so miles (16 km) from the mainland lies a unique island community with gritty lobstermen, close-knit families, a longstanding summertime artists' colony, no cars, astonishingly beautiful scenery, and some of the best bird-watching on the Eastern Seaboard. Until the 1980s, the island had only radiophones and generator power; with the arrival of electricity and real phones, the pace has quickened a bit—but not much.

On the island, be sure to visit the **Monhegan Lighthouse** and the **Monhegan Historical and Cultural Museum** (207/596-7003; www.monheganmuseum.org) in the former keeper's house and adjacent buildings. Exhibits blend artwork by American icons such as Rockwell Kent and James Fitzgerald with historical photos and artifacts downstairs and an emphasis on flora, fauna, and the environment upstairs.

ABBE MUSEUM

26 Mount Desert St., Bar Harbor; 207/288-3519; www.abbemuseum.org

The fabulous, Smithsonian-affiliated Abbe Museum is a superb introduction to prehistoric, historic, and contemporary Native American tools, crafts, and other cultural artifacts, with an emphasis on Maine's Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot people. In creating the core exhibit, *People of the First Light*, museum staff worked with 23 Wabanaki curatorial consultants and four Native artists, among others. The **museum's original**

site (2.5 mi/4 km south of Bar Harbor at Sieur de Monts Spring), listed in the National Register of Historic Places, holds more displays; adjacent is the **Wild Gardens of Acadia,** which has more than 400 plant species native to Mount Desert Island.

ASTICOU AZALEA GARDEN AND THUYA GARDEN

Northeast Harbor; 207/276-3727; www.gardenpreserve.org; May-Nov.

One of Maine's best spring showcases is the Asticou Azalea Garden, a 2.3-ac (0.9-ha) pocket where about 70 varieties of azaleas, rhododendrons, and laurels—many from the classic Reef Point garden of famed landscape designer Beatrix Farrand—burst into bloom. Serenity is the key here, with a Japanese sand garden that's mesmerizing in any season, stone lanterns, granite outcrops, pink-gravel paths, and a tranquil pond. Behind a carved wooden gate on a forested hillside not far from Asticou lies Thuya Garden, designed as a semiformal English herbaceous garden, inspired by Beatrix Farrand and interpreted for coastal Maine. Special features of Thuya Garden are perennial borders and sculpted shrubbery. On a misty summer day, when few visitors appear, the colors are brilliant.

SHAKER MUSEUM AND SABBATHDAY LAKE SHAKER COMMUNITY

707 Shaker Rd., New Gloucester; 207/926-4597; https://maineshakers.com

MOOSE-SPOTTING

Everyone loves Maine's bulbous-nosed and top-heavy state animal, *Alces alces americana*. Maine's wildlife department estimates that the state is home to more than 75,000 moose, most in the North Woods, the highest population in the Lower 48 states. Moose are vegetarians, preferring new shoots and twigs in aquatic settings, so the best places to see them are wetlands and ponds fringed with grass and shrubs. These spots are likely to be buggy, so slather yourself with insect repellent. Try one of the following hot spots to get a glimpse:

- **Baxter State Park:** Sandy Stream, Stump Pond, or Tote Road
- **Lazy Tom Bog:** Off Lily Bay Road, about 19 mi (31 km) north of Greenville
- **ME-6/15:** Between Greenville Junction and Rockwood, on the west side of Moosehead Lake

Only two Shakers remain in Sabbathday Lake Shaker Community, the world's last inhabited Shaker community. The members of the United Society of Shakers, an 18th-century religious sect, maintain a living-history museum, craft workshops, a store, and other activities. Guided tours of the community are offered, and the Shakers also welcome the public to their 10am Sunday Meeting worship.

THE ARTIST'S COVERED BRIDGE

Sunday River, Newry

Often called the Artist's Covered Bridge because so many artists have committed it to canvas, this 1872 wooden structure is one of Maine's nine covered bridges and stands alongside a quiet country road north of the Sunday River Ski Resort. It's located 5.7 mi (9.1 km) northwest of Bethel

off US 2 in the western part of the state; the bridge is well signposted, just beyond a small cemetery.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin your trip in **Portland.** Visit the **Portland Head Light,** a Cape Elizabeth landmark and Maine's oldest lighthouse, perched on the cliffs of the more than 90-ac (38-ha) Fort Williams Park. Spend a few hours in the **Portland Museum of Art** (7 Congress Sq., Portland; 207/775-6148; www.portlandmuseum.org). Make a pilgrimage north to giant sports retailer and outfitter **L. L. Bean,** hub of the hubbub in Freeport's outlet bonanza. End the day with a sunset cruise on **Casco Bay.**

DAY 2 Take a day trip to **Monhegan Island** from Port Clyde. This car-free, carefree gem, about 10 mi (16 km) off the coast, is laced with hiking trails and has earned renown as the Artists' Island. After returning to Point Clyde, continue up the coast to **Mount Desert Island** (100 mi/160 km; 2.5 hours) and spend the night so you'll be ready for the next day's outdoor adventure.

DAY 3 In **Acadia National Park,** welcome the day by watching the sunrise from the summit of **Cadillac Mountain.** Afterward, before the crowds arrive, drive the **Park Loop Road,** which covers many of Acadia's highlights. Immerse yourself in the park by going hiking, bicycling, or sea kayaking, or take a carriage ride.

DAY 4 Depart Mount Desert Island and head inland to **Greenville** and **Moosehead Lake** (160 mi/257 km; 3 hours). This is a good place to spot moose—if you don't have a reservation for a **moose safari** (Northwoods Outfitters; www.maineoutfitter.com), head north to **Lazy Tom Bog,** where your moose sighting chances are good just before sunset (be sure to bring bug spray).

DAY 5 Depart Greenville and drive to **The Forks** via the **Moosehead Scenic Byway** and **Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway,** perhaps taking a break to stretch your legs on the easy hike into **Moxie Falls.** (Add a day here if you want to go **white-water rafting** on the Kennebec River.) Continue the scenic drive to **Rangeley** (120 mi/193 km; 2.5 hours).

DAY 6 After a morning hiking, paddling, or fishing, head south on Route 17 over **Height of Land** and the dazzling views. Detour off the main road in **Newry** to see the **Artist's Covered Bridge.** Snake southward through the White Mountain foothills, perhaps exploring the **Shaker Museum** along the way. From the museum, it's a one-hour drive back to **Portland.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

All of the scenic drives below feature beautiful **fall foliage.** Don't tell too many people, but Maine gets fewer leaf peepers than other New England states, so roads are less congested, and lodging and dining reservations are easier to score. (You can also access foliage info at www.mainefoliage.com.)

MOOSEHEAD AND THE KENNEBEC RIVER

Leaf peepers who make it as far north as **Greenville** are amply rewarded. Loop from Greenville over to the **Kennebec River** and back on ME-6 to **Jackman,** US 201 south to **Bingham,** and ME-16 east to **Abbott,** and then ME-6 north to return to Greenville. You'll parallel the shorelines of **Moosehead Lake** and the **Moose River** on the **Moosehead Lake Scenic Byway** before arriving in **Rockwood. As you head south, the views along the Old Canada Road Scenic Byway** are spectacular. Dip into the **Attean View** rest area for vistas extending toward Canada. Need to stretch your legs? Consider the relatively easy hike to **Moxie Falls.** From here to

Bingham, US 201 can be truly spectacular as it snakes along the Kennebec River.

BETHEL AND RANGELEY

Combine New England's trees with lakes and mountains and you have the best of nature's palette. From Bethel, take **ME-26** north to Errol, New Hampshire, then **ME-16** north to **Rangeley.** Return via **ME-17** south to **US 2** west. Heading north, you'll cut through **Grafton Notch State Park** on the **Grafton Notch Scenic Byway;** the rest of the drive is speckled with mountains, lakes, and streams. Returning south from Rangeley, the **Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway** passes over **Height of Land,** providing dazzling views. The entire route is through prime **moose country,** so keep alert.

ACADIA AND DOWN EAST

To the magic foliage mix, add the ocean and top it off with wild blueberry barrens, which turn crimson in foliage season. From **Hancock,** mosey inland on **ME-182** along the **Blackwoods Scenic Byway** to Cherryfield. Then head south **on US 1A** to **Milbridge,** continuing south on **US 1.** In **Steuben,** dip down Pigeon Hill Road to the Petit Manan section of the **Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge** before continuing south on US 1 to **ME-186,** which loops around the **Schoodic Peninsula** via the **Schoodic Scenic Byway.**



SCENIC ROAD THROUGH ACADIA

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BAXTER STATE PARK

Millinocket; https://baxterstatepark.org

This fantastic recreational wilderness has 40 peaks, more than 220 mi (354 km) of trails, and more than 50 named ponds. One rough unpaved road (limited to 20 mph) circles the park. No gasoline, drinking water, or food is available, but the rewards are worth it: rare alpine flowers, unique rock formations, pristine ponds, waterfalls, wildlife sightings (especially moose), dramatic vistas, and, in late September, spectacular fall foliage. The **hiking** here is incomparable.

Katahdin

Mile-high Katahdin, northern terminus of the **Appalachian Trail,** is the Holy Grail for most Baxter State Park hikers—and certainly for Appalachian Trail through-hikers, who have walked more than 2,190 mi (3,524 km) from Springer Mountain, Georgia, to get here. Thousands of hikers scale the mountain annually via several different routes. Katahdin's other top experience is a traverse of the aptly named **Knife Edge,** a treacherous 1.1-mi-long (1.7-km) granite spine (minimum width 3 ft/0.9 m) between Baxter and Pamola Peaks. For a more family-friendly hike in the park, try **Roaring Brook Nature Trail.**

CASCO BAY

When Portland city folks want to escape, they often hop a ferry for one of the islands of Casco Bay or head to one of the suburban preserves or beaches. With all the islands scattered through the bay, it's a **sea-kayaking** hotbed; the best place to start is out on **Peaks Island, about** 15 minutes offshore via the **Casco Bay Lines ferry** (207/774-7871; www.cascobaylines.com). You can also book a **lobstering cruise,** where you'll learn lots of lobster lore and maybe even catch your own dinner, and take a **boat excursion** where you can watch for lighthouses, seals, or whales. A real highlight is a tour of Casco Bay and its islands via a Casco Bay Lines **Mailboat Run,** during which you'll ride alongside mail, groceries, and island residents.

WINDJAMMING IN PENOBSCOT BAY

In 1936, **Camden** became the home of the "cruise schooner" (sometimes called "dude schooner") trade when captain Frank Swift restored a creaky wooden vessel and offered sailing vacations to paying passengers. Now, more than a dozen sail Penobscot Bay's waters. **Rockland** wrested the Windjammer Capital title from Camden in the mid-1990s and has since held onto it.



SCHOONER ON PENOBSCOT BAY

Named for their ability to “jam” into the wind when they carried freight up and down the New England coast, windjammers trigger images of the Great Age of Sail. These windjammers head out for 3-11 days late May to mid-October, tucking into coves and harbors around Penobscot Bay and its islands. They set their itineraries by the wind, propelled by stiff breezes to Buck’s Harbor, North Haven, and Deer Isle. Everything’s totally informal and geared for relaxing. The **Maine Windjammer Association** (800/807-9463; www.mainewindjammerfleet.com) is a one-stop resource for vessel and schedule information.

KENNEBEC RIVER

The focus of white-water rafting in this region is the **East Branch of the Kennebec River,** a 12-mi (19-km) run from the Harris Station hydroelectric dam, below Indian Pond, to The Forks. Appropriately named, **The Forks** stands at the confluence of the Kennebec and Dead Rivers. Although neither looks particularly menacing from the US 201 bridge, both draw

legions of white-water rafters and kayakers for the Class III-IV rapids on the dam-controlled waters.

CARRABASSETT VALLEY

The Carrabassett River winds its way through the smashingly scenic Carrabassett Valley in western Maine. On both sides of the valley, the **Longfellow** and **Bigelow Ranges** boast 10 of Maine's 14 4,000-footers (1,219 m)—a paradise for **hiking. Mountain biking** is an excellent way to explore the area's mountains, streams, and forests: An ever-increasing network of world-class mountain-biking trails spans more than 80 mi (129 km) here, with loop options for all abilities.

SUGARLOAF

Carrabassett; 207/237-2000 or 800/843-5623; www.sugarloaf.com

The king of Maine's alpine resorts, Sugarloaf is a four-season destination resort with alpine skiing and snowboarding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and ice skating in winter, plus golf, hiking, mountain biking, and zip-lining during warmer months. A total of 176 named trails and glades on 1,360 ac (550 ha), served by 13 lifts including detachable high-speed quads, ribbon the mountain's 2,820 vertical ft (859 m). A compact base village has a hotel, an inn, and gazillions of condos as well as restaurants, a chapel, a few shops, and a base lodge housing a snow school and rental operations. The separate **Outdoor Center,** linked via shuttle and trails, houses cross-country skiing and mountain-biking operations and has an ice-skating rink.

ALLAGASH WILDERNESS WATERWAY

In 1966, Maine established a 92-mi (148-km) stretch of the Allagash River as the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, a northward-flowing collection of lakes, ponds, and streams starting at Telos Lake and ending at West Twin Brook, about 6 mi (10 km) before the Allagash meets the St. John River. Also recognized as a National Wild and Scenic River, the waterway's habitats shelter rare plants, 30 or so mammal species, and more than 120

bird species. **Canoeing** season usually runs from late May (after "ice-out") to early October.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

MOXIE FESTIVAL

Lisbon; www.moxiefestival.com; mid-July

The Moxie Festival, a certifiably eccentric annual celebration of the obscure soft drink Moxie, invented in 1884 and still not consigned to the dustbin of history, occurs in downtown Lisbon.

MAINE LOBSTER FESTIVAL

Rockland; www.mainelobsterfestival.com; late July-Aug.

August's Maine Lobster Festival is a five-day lobster extravaganza with live entertainment, the Maine Lobster Festival Delegate competition, a lobster-crate race, crafts booths, boat rides, a parade, lobster dinners, and massive crowds. Hotels are full for miles in either direction.

FRYEBURG FAIR

Fryeburg; www.fryeburgfair.com [URL inactive]; late Sept.-Oct.

Maine's largest agricultural fair is held the first week of October, sometimes including a few days in September, and has been an annual event since 1851. A parade, a carnival, craft demonstrations and exhibits, harness racing, pig scrambles, children's activities, ox pulling, and live entertainment are all here, as are plenty of food booths (it's sometimes called the "Fried-burg" Fair). More than 225,000 attendees turn out for eight days of festivities, so expect traffic congestion. The fair runs Sunday-Sunday, and the busiest day is Saturday. Spectacular fall foliage and mountain scenery just add to the appeal.

BEST FOOD

Everyone knows Maine is the place for lobster, but there are quite a few other foods that you should sample before you leave. In addition to those listed below, other must-try Maine favorites are **Moxie,** a carbonated beverage; **whoopie pies,** the state's official snack; and, especially in Down East Maine, **periwinkles,** a sea snail familiarly called wrinkles, and **smelts,** a small fish.

BEANHOLE BEAN SUPPERS

A real live legacy of colonial times, beanhole bean suppers are generally a Saturday-night feast requiring plenty of preparation from its hosts and centered around beans baked in a hole in the ground. The supper also includes hot dogs, coleslaw, relishes, home-baked breads, and homemade desserts, and are typically alcohol-free. Check local newspapers for beanhole supper listings, but here are some annual favorites:

- **Broad Cove Church,** Cushing, mid-July
- **Patten Lumbermen's Museum,** Patten, second Saturday in August
- **Maine Forestry Museum Festival Days,** Rangeley, July

FIDDLEHEADS

For a few weeks in May, right around Mother's Day, a wonderful delicacy starts sprouting along Maine's woodland streams: fiddleheads, the still-furled tops of the ostrich fern *(Matteuccia struthiopteris)*, which taste vaguely like asparagus. Don't go fiddleheading unless you're with a pro, though; the lookalikes are best left to the woods critters. If you find them on a restaurant menu, indulge.

MAPLE SYRUP

We owe thanks to Native Americans for introducing us to maple syrup, one of Maine's major agricultural exports. The syrup comes in four different colors/flavors (from light amber to extra-dark amber), and inspectors strictly monitor syrup quality. The best syrup comes from the sugar or rock maple, *Acer saccharum.* On **Maine Maple Sunday** (usually the fourth Sunday in March), several dozen syrup producers open their rustic sugarhouses to the public for "sugaring-off" parties—to celebrate the sap harvest and share the final phase in the production process. **Old Conway Homestead and Cramer Museum** (Conway Rd., Camden; 207/236-2257; www.camdenrockporthistoricalsociety.org) opens its 1820 maple sugarhouse for demonstrations on Maine Maple Sunday.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Bring a taste of Maine home with you. You'll find **maple syrup,** as well as maple-flavored candies and other maple products, at local shops around the state. And don't forget about the blueberries—be sure to grab some **blueberry jam,** blueberry syrup, or a blueberry-flavored baking mix.

Perusing the flagship **L. L. Bean** in Freeport for outdoor clothing and gear is a Maine must.

Deer Isle is home to the renowned **Haystack Mountain School of Crafts,** so super-talented artists and artisans lurk in every corner of the island. To purchase an authentic craft for yourself, look for galleries tucked away on back roads, or try to catch an end-of-session auction at the school.

BLUEBERRIES

The best place for Maine maple syrup is atop pancakes made with Maine wild blueberries. Much smaller than the cultivated versions, wild blueberries are also raked, not picked. Although most of the Down East barren barons harvest their crops for the lucrative wholesale market, a few growers let you pick your own blueberries in mid-August. Contact the **Wild Blueberry Commission** (207/581-1475; www.wildblueberries.maine.edu) or the state **Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources** (207/287-3491; www.getrealmaine.com) for locations, recipes, and other wild-blueberry information, or log on to the website of the **Wild Blueberry Association of North America** (207/570-3535; www.wildblueberries.com).

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Portland International Jetport:** PWM; 1001 Westbrook St., Portland; 207/874-8877; https://portlandjetport.org
- **Bangor International Airport:** BGR; 287 Godfrey Blvd., Bangor; www.flybangor.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Maine Office of Tourism:** www.visitmaine.com
- **Maine Tourism Association:** www.mainetourism.com
- **Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands:** www.maine.gov/dacf/parks

MAGAZINES

- ***Maine Magazine:*** www.themainemag.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

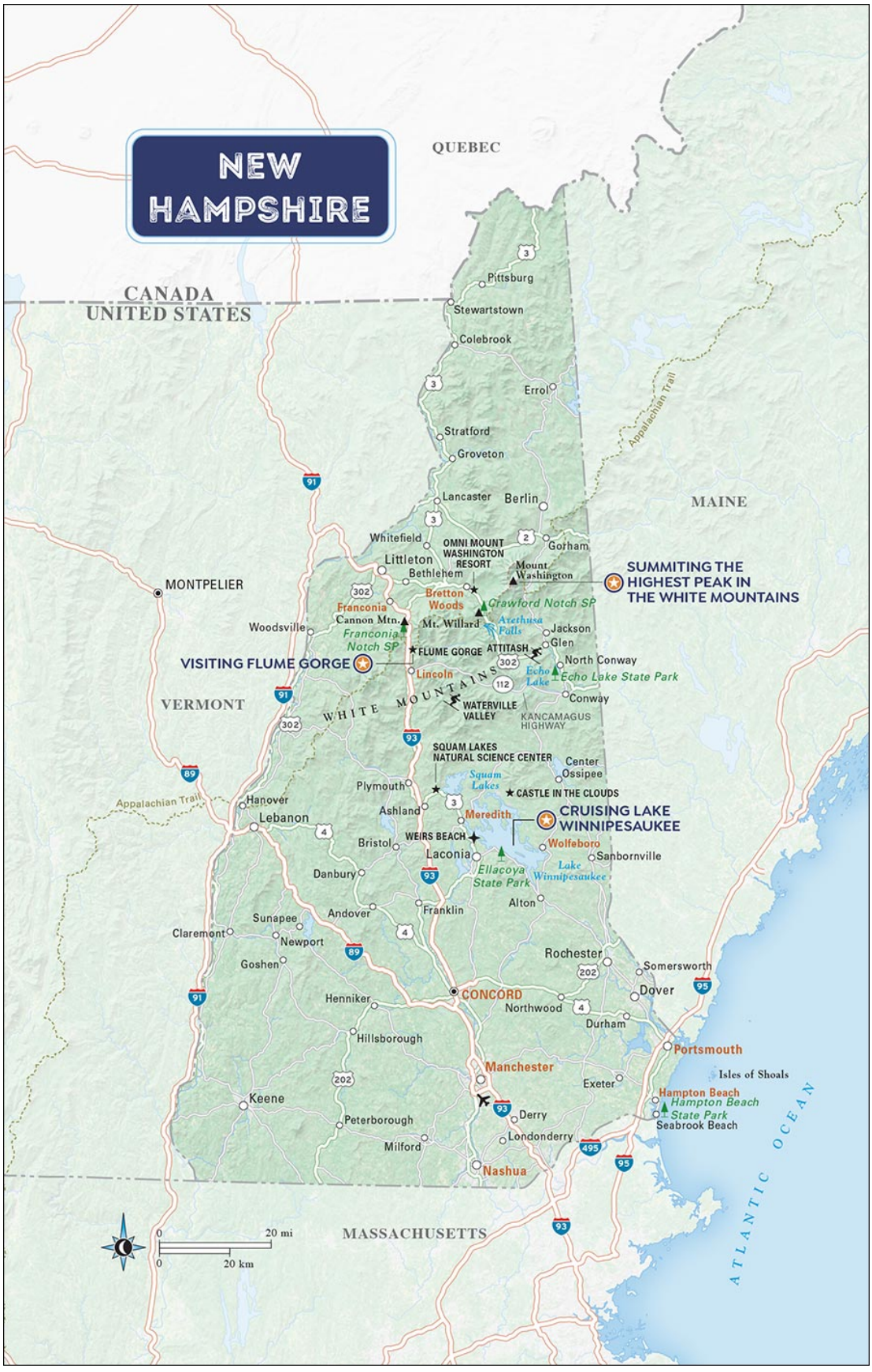
Politically, this state on the land of the Pennacook and Wabanaki people might be best known for its fierce culture of independence, but it's the state's natural attractions that capture the traveler's imagination. The White Mountains, where bare rocky peaks emerge from the forest, form the rugged heart of New Hampshire. The Presidential Range sets the stage for Mount Washington, the tallest mountain in New England. A highlight of the 2,190-mi (3,524-km) Appalachian Trail, the White Mountains are New England's top wilderness destination. Venture out of the mountains, and the landscape turns into a rolling forest, broken by some of New Hampshire's endless lakes—the state claims nearly 1,000. Ranging from thumbprint ponds to vast bodies of water, they're pure nostalgia, lined with ice cream shops, lakeside cottages, penny arcades, and old-fashioned bandstands. The state even has a tiny sliver—just 18 mi (29 km)—of coastline that shouldn't be overlooked.

AREA: 9,349 sq mi / 24,214 sq km (46th)

POPULATION: 1,409,032 (41st)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 21, 1788 (9th)

STATE CAPITAL: Concord


NEW HAMPSHIRE
QUEBEC
CANADA
UNITED STATES
MAINE
VERMONT
MASSACHUSETTS
ATLANTIC OCEAN
MONTPELIER
Pittsburg
Stewartstown
Colebrook
Errol
Stratford
Groveton
Lancaster
Berlin
Whitefield
Littleton
Bethlehem
Gorham
OMNI MOUNT WASHINGTON RESORT
Mount Washington
SUMMITING THE HIGHEST PEAK IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS
Bretton Woods
Crawford Notch SP
Franconia
Cannon Mtn.
Mt. Willard
Arethusa Falls
Jackson
Glen
Woodsville
Franconia Notch SP
FLUME GORGE
ATTITASH
North Conway
VISITING FLUME GORGE
Lincoln
Echo Lake
Echo Lake State Park
WHITE MOUNTAINS
WATERVILLE VALLEY
KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY
Conway
SQUAM LAKES NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER
Center Ossipee
Squam Lakes
Plymouth
CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS
Hanover
Lebanon
Ashland
Meredith
CRUISING LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE
WEIRS BEACH
Wolfeboro
Bristol
Laconia
Sanbornville
Lake Winnipesaukee
Ellacoya State Park
Danbury
Alton
Franklin
Andover
Sunapee
Claremont
Newport
Goshen
Rochester
Somersworth
Dover
CONCORD
Northwood
Durham
Henniker
Hillsborough
Portsmouth
Isles of Shoals
Manchester
Exeter
Hampton Beach
Hampton Beach State Park
Seabrook Beach
Keene
Derry
Peterborough
Londonderry
Milford
Nashua
Appalachian Trail
0 20 mi
0 20 km

ORIENTATION

The White Mountains, within White Mountain National Forest, sit in northern New Hampshire, encompassing the **Presidential** and **Franconia Ranges. Lake Winnipesaukee** lies to the south of White Mountain National Forest. The state's three biggest cities are concentrated in southern New Hampshire, with **Concord** the farthest north, **Nashua** in the south near the border with Massachusetts, and **Manchester** in between. East of Manchester, the state stretches to the Atlantic, reaching it with its 18-mi (29-km) coastline.

WHEN TO GO

When schools let out in late June for **summer,** New Hampshire's high season begins. Everyone heads to the beach—or the mountains—and prices spike around the region. **Autumn** brings cooler temperatures and one of New England's starring attractions: fall color. This season is a favorite for many, with warm, sunny days that alternate with crisp nights, and fall brings a host of fleeting pleasures: picking apples at local orchards, evenings cool enough for a crackling campfire, and outings fueled by cinnamon-scented cider doughnuts.

Winter weather begins in earnest at the end of December. Up north, New Hampshire can enter a deep freeze for weeks at a time, but for lovers of skiing, skating, and gorgeously frozen scenery, these winter months are a bonanza. March brings **spring** in fits and starts. Blooming lilacs scent the air, and in the forest a profusion of wildflowers appears.

TOP 3

1 SUMMITING THE HIGHEST PEAK IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

New Hampshire's White Mountains are home to alpine peaks that tower over wooded valleys, mountain rivers, and a lifetime of hiking trails. The Presidential Range, a series of bare peaks pushing high above the tree line, is the heart of White Mountain National Forest, a

rugged spine that culminates in **Mount Washington,** the highest summit in the White Mountains and northeastern United States.



COG RAILWAY UP MOUNT WASHINGTON

The most iconic hike in the White Mountains is the **Tuckerman Ravine Trail,** a 4.2-mi (6.8-km) route to the summit of Mount Washington. Once you reach the top, you'll be rewarded with views across three states as you explore the summit's wind-whipped ridges. The mountaintop is also home to the **Mount Washington Observatory Weather Discovery Center,** where you can learn about the mountain's wild weather and the rare alpine plants that grow way up here. The oldest surviving building on the summit is the **Tip Top House,** a rustic stone lodge built in 1853, which became the office for a mountain newspaper 1888-1915.

On the opposite side of the mountain, two other trails ascend Mount Washington: the 4.4-mi (7-km) **Ammonoosuc Ravine Trail,** which has gorgeous views as it works its way up the southwest face, and the 3.7-mi (5.9-km) **Jewell Trail,** another stunner on clear days. You can also make it to the top via a ride on the **Mount Washington Cog Railway** (Base Station Rd., off US 302, Mount Washington;

800/922-8825; www.thecog.com), the world's first mountain-climbing train, or in a car on the **Mount Washington Auto Road.**

2 CRUISING LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE

Four-season, water-bound activities are everywhere you look around Winnipesaukee, the largest lake in New Hampshire. Known universally to residents as Lake Winni, the lake is a full 72 sq mi (186 sq km) of spring-fed water, with upward of 200 mi (321 km) of shoreline. Come summer, tourists descend on the lake from all over New England.



LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE

The villages surrounding the lake offer something for everyone: If you're looking for kitschy fun, the boardwalks of **Weirs Beach** have more than their fair share of waterslides, public beaches, arcades, and a great drive-in theater. Meanwhile, spots like **Meredith** and **Wolfeboro** offer quieter pleasures like antiquing, searching out galleries, and simply enjoying the scenery.

One of the best ways to get out on the water is a **cruise** on the **M/S *Mount Washington,*** a rebuilt 1888 vessel that re-creates the era

of old paddlewheel steamships. You can also zip around on a **Jet Ski,** rent a **pontoon boat,** or take to the lake in a **canoe, kayak,** or **sailboat.** And, of course, there's the beach. **Weirs Beach** is the most popular, and quieter **Ellacoya State Park** has a long, sandy stretch with views of the mountains.

3 VISITING FLUME GORGE

Flume Gorge was formed before the last ice age, when a fin of basalt was forced into the vertically fractured granite; the basalt weathered away more quickly than the surrounding granite, leaving a winding slot in its place. Narrow, wooden walkways lead through this natural chasm, and high Conway granite walls shelter covered bridges, mossy walls, and waterfalls, including the spectacular 45-ft-high (14-m) **Avalanche Falls.** Open seasonally, a family-friendly 2-mi (3.2-km) trail leads through the gorge, with a few places to duck off the path and explore, such as the **Wolf's Den,** a narrow, one-way route that involves squeezing yourself through cracks in the rock and crawling on hands and knees. It's cool between the rock walls, and you'll see birch trees worm out of stony cracks.



AVALANCHE FALLS

Don’t miss the **visitor center** (852 US 3, Lincoln; 603/745-8391; www.nhstateparks.org) and its display case full of old-timey Flume Gorge postcards that 19th-century vacationers sent to their friends back home.

HIGHLIGHTS

STRAWBERY BANKE MUSEUM

14 Hancock St., Portsmouth; 603/433-1100; www.strawberybanke.org

A cluster of 32 historic homes makes the open-air Strawbery Banke Museum among the best destinations in New England for exploring the daily lives of early colonial people. In the summer you’re invited to wander around, poke into houses, talk to costumed interpreters, and generally just explore colonial history for yourself. The homes are “inhabited” by enthusiastic docents, some costumed, who work to bring each place to life.

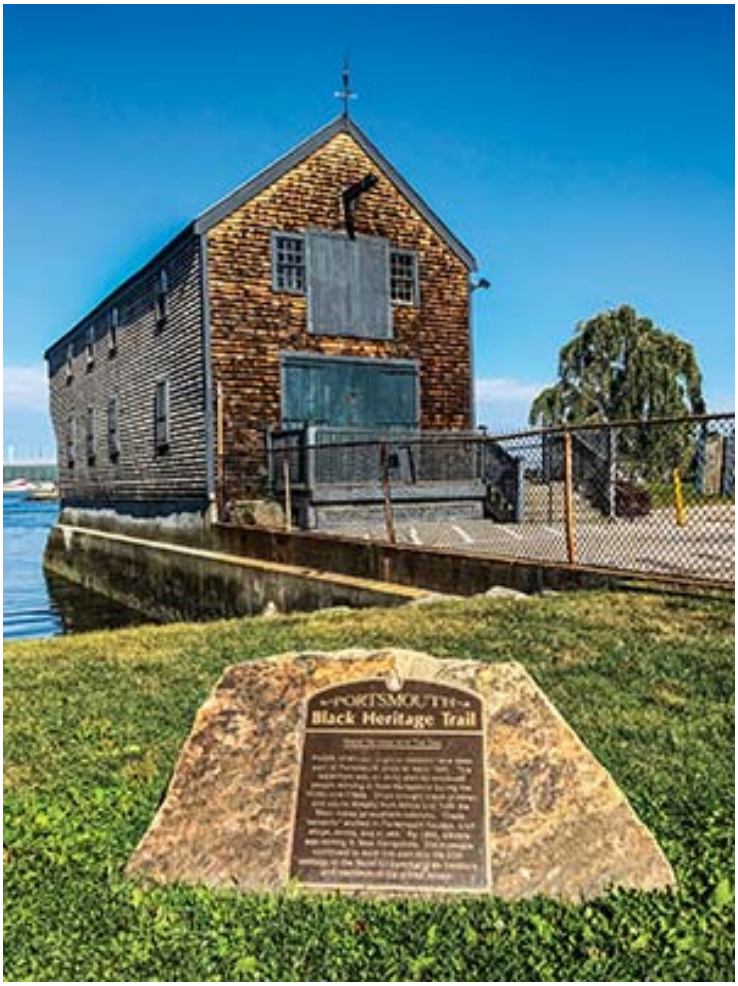
Among the museum’s many highlights is the **Wheelwright House,** once home to an 18th-century ship captain active in the East Indies trade. His simple Georgian home is filled with furniture and ceramics from the period. Another must-see is the **Daniel Webster House,** which includes exhibits from the time that the great 19th-century statesman spent in Portsmouth in the early part of his career. Stop by the **Jones Center,** which displays the findings from archaeological work on the neighborhood.

BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL NEW HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth; www.blackheritagetrailnh.org

In recent years, Portsmouth has worked to acknowledge the history of enslaved people who lived and worked in the city through colonial times and beyond. Focusing on their stories, the Black Heritage Trail visits taverns, homes, and two burial grounds, including the moving **Portsmouth African Burying Ground** (Chestnut St. between Court St. and State St., Portsmouth; 603/610-7226; www.africanburyinggroundnh.org [URL

inactive]), which was rediscovered in 2003. The site is now inscribed with words from the 1799 Freedom Petition that a group of enslaved Africans submitted to the New Hampshire legislature, an eloquent document requesting that “we may regain our liberty and be rank’d in the class of free agents, and that the name of SLAVE be no more in a land gloriously contending for the sweets of freedom.”



BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL

ISLES OF SHOALS

A haven for fishermen, pirates, artists, and Unitarians, the nine rocky islands scattered off Portsmouth Harbor are thick with legend. This was a colonial-era escape from the Puritan strictures of the mainland, a prime spot for buried pirate treasure, and, they say, where Blackbeard honeymooned

with his final bride. The 19th-century poet Celia Thaxter was raised in the Isles of Shoals, and later wrote of the islands that “there is a strange charm about them, an indescribable influence in their atmosphere, hardly to be explained, but universally acknowledged.”

But the islands’ most famous event is of the true crime genre—in 1873 two sisters were brutally murdered by an axe-wielding itinerant fisherman on the island of Smuttynose. A third woman managed to elude the killer and bring him to justice, but the story continues to haunt the area, inspiring florid books and movies ever since. Take a cruise that **tours** the islands to learn about all of the mist-enshrouded legends, from the 1614 arrival of Captain John Smith to a lineup of local ghosts.

CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS

455 Old Mountain Rd., Moultonborough; 603/476-5900; www.castleintheclouds.org

Thirty minutes outside of Wolfeboro, Castle in the Clouds is a spectacular Arts and Crafts mansion set high on a hilltop with views of the entire Lakes Region. It’s the former home of a shoe mogul, whose original estate once covered 6,300 ac (2,549 ha), stretching from the mountains to the edge of the lake. The view itself is worth the trip to the house, but the interior is beautifully restored, with decor and furnishings based on images of the original house or on written descriptions. The surrounding grounds feature 30 mi (48 km) of hiking trails, too.



CASTLE IN THE CLOUDS

Major CITIES

MANCHESTER: In New Hampshire's largest city, you'll find a bustling downtown, plenty of dining and shopping options, the respected Currier Museum of Art, the historic Palace Theater, and two homes designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. Lake Massabesic and McIntyre Ski Area offer outdoor recreation right in the heart of town.

NASHUA: Located at the intersection of the Nashua and Merrimack Rivers, Nashua is home to historic architecture and great dining options. Mine Falls Park right in the center of town offers walking paths and waterways for boating and fishing.

CONCORD: The state's capital, rich in history, is home to a state house that dates back to 1819 and a quintessential New England

Main Street. Nearby trails and the Merrimack River mean that outdoor recreation is always within reach.

OMNI MOUNT WASHINGTON RESORT

310 Mount Washington Hotel Rd., Bretton Woods; 603/278-1000 or 800/843-6664; www.mountwashingtonresort.com

Of the dozens of grand hotels that dotted the White Mountains at the turn of the 20th century, the 1902 Omni Mount Washington Resort is the most perfectly preserved, and discovering the gorgeous historical touches throughout the building could easily occupy a rainy afternoon. A gracious veranda runs the length of the rambling hotel, with comfortable chairs that look straight out on Mount Washington. Even if you're not staying here, stopping by for a drink on the deck—or an utterly charming high tea in the Princess Room—is a wonderful experience, and a gracious counterbalance to the White Mountains' rugged scenery.

CONWAY SCENIC RAILROAD

38 Norcross Circle, North Conway; 603/356-5251; www.conwayscenic.com

During the heyday of 19th-century travel to the White Mountains, rail lines threaded around the range, with spurs to each of the grand hotels in the area. Most of the tracks are quiet, but the Conway Scenic Railroad sends vintage passenger trains from the charming 1874 train station in North Conway Village. For rolling terrain and the finest views, opt for the five-hour round-trip on the **Notch Train** to Crawford Notch. Trips on the **Valley Train** range about 1-1.75 hours, linking North Conway with Conway or Bartlett. Some trips include lunch or dinner.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Arrive in **Manchester,** New Hampshire's largest city and the location of its largest airport. In town, take a few hours to explore the **Currier Museum of Art** (150 Ash St.; 603/669-6144; https://currier.org), whose large collections include works by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Georgia O'Keeffe. Drive 45 minutes to Portsmouth (44 mi/70 km), where you'll be spending the night.

DAY 2 In **Portsmouth,** get a taste of history at the **Strawbery Banke Museum,** a neighborhood of historic homes that brings colonial-era America to life. For even more history, follow the **Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire.** In the afternoon, take a cruise the **Isles of Shoals,** where pirates, dreamers, and outcasts once made their escape. Oysters for dinner at **Row 34** is a must.

DAY 3 Head over to **Hampton Beach** (16 mi/26 km; 20 minutes) for fun in the sun. Lounge on the sand, visit the arcades, and play a round of mini golf. Feast on boardwalk favorites like fried clams and fried dough. Return to your accommodation in Portsmouth for the night.

DAY 4 Drive one hour (50 mi/80 km) to **Wolfeboro,** your base for **Lake Winnipesaukee** and the Lakes Region. Take a **cruise** of Lake Winni and relax in the sand at **Ellacoya State Park.** For views of the entire Lakes Region, drive 30 minutes to the spectacular **Castle in the Clouds** mansion.

DAY 5 Up next: an adventure in the White Mountains. Drive 1.75 hours (70 mi/112 km) to **Bretton Woods,** your base to summit the iconic **Mount Washington.** Hike up to the summit via the **Tuckerman Ravine Trail,** a full-day outing. Alternatively, sit back and take the **Mount Washington Cog Railway** up to the top. Back at

the base of the mountain, visit the **Omni Mount Washington Resort.** Even if you're not staying at this grand historical hotel, stop for a drink on the deck or high tea in the Princess Room.

DAY 6 The next day, drive 25 minutes to **Franconia** (19 mi/31 km), your base for outdoor activities in the **Franconia Range.** If you have the time—and the stamina—hike the seven-hour, 8.9-mi (14.3-km) **Franconia Ridge Loop,** the region's ultimate hike. There are several easier trails here, too. Whatever you do, don't miss a walk among the dramatic waterfalls and covered bridges of **Flume Gorge.**

DAY 7 Finish your road trip by driving 1.5 hours back to **Manchester** (96 mi/154 km). Along the way, you'll pass through **Concord,** the state capital.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

MOUNT WASHINGTON AUTO ROAD

NH-16, Pinkham Notch; 603/466-3988; https://mt-washington.com

You'll see the bumper stickers as soon as you start driving around New England: "This Car Climbed Mount Washington." And you'll earn breathtaking views with every turn of the Mount Washington Auto Road. The 7.6-mi (12-km) trip goes by at a snail's pace, taking about 30 minutes on the way up, and up to 40 minutes on the way down. Guided van tours are available for drivers and passengers who are unnerved by heights.

KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY

NH-112

Between Conway and Lincoln, 35 mi (56 km) of tightly inscribed switchbacks, swooping valleys, and perfect mountain views make the Kancamagus Highway among the most iconic drives in New England. NH-112, affectionately known as “the Kanc,” rolls through the heart of White Mountain National Forest, following the twists and curves of the Swift River and climbing to almost 3,000 ft (914 m). Kancamagus Pass offers fabulous views, especially when autumn turns the surrounding forest into a riot of color.



KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY

There are plenty of places to stop along the way on the Kancamagus Highway—look for clusters of cars along the side of the road, which often signals a favorite local swimming spot—including a series of scenic overlooks, hiking trails, and historic sites. One worthy stop, where you can peer into daily life in 19th-century New Hampshire, is 12.7 mi (20.4 km) in at the **Russell-Colbath House,** where docents are happy to share the mysterious story of Thomas Colbath’s years-long disappearance and possible reappearance. Keep winding up to the **Kancamagus Pass,** which at 2,855 ft (870 m) is the highest point on the road, and then you’ll find the **Otter Rock Rest Area** at 26 mi (41 km), with restrooms and a short trail to another lovely swimming area in the Swift River.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

HAMPTON BEACH

Fried clams, penny arcades, sunburns, and mini golf—Hampton Beach is a rowdy and ramshackle beach town with the volume cranked to 11. Go for the people-watching or just dive into the honky-tonk fun, drifting up and down the main drag alongside a crowd of slow-cruising teenagers checking out each other's tans. And when you've got enough sun, hit the arcades for some skee-ball, pinball, and vintage video games, then get your fortune told by a beachfront psychic.

Miles of sandy beach are the starring attraction at **Hampton Beach State Park** (Ocean Blvd., Hampton; 603/227-8722; www.nhstateparks.org), and on sunny days, the waterfront fills with families.

FALL FOLIAGE

New Hampshire, like its other New England neighbors, puts on a colorful display during fall foliage season, typically mid-September to mid-October. These are the best leaf-peeping destinations in the state:

- Kancamagus Highway
- Mount Washington
- Flume Gorge

For in-depth and up-to-date foliage reports, visit www.visitnh.gov/plan-your-trip/fall/peak-foliage-map.

SQUAM LAKES

Beyond the bustle of Lake Winnipesaukee, the forest closes in around a scattershot of ponds, lakes, and potholes—New Hampshire has almost 1,000 lakes altogether. Of these, Squam Lakes are among the most appealing. Morning breaks with the eerie loon call, or with the shushing rhythm of canoe paddles. There's not much to the town itself—a stamp-sized post office and a general store hold down the main crossroads—but that's just the idea. It's a place to pack a picnic lunch, maybe pick up some bait, and then spend the day exploring the shoreline.



VIEW OF SQUAM LAKES FROM WEST RATTLESNAKE MOUNTAIN

To get out on the water, you can rent **canoes, kayaks,** and **paddleboards;** several backcountry and island campsites are amazing for overnight canoe trips. The most popular hike in the area is the 2-mi (3.2-km) round-trip to the summit of **West Rattlesnake Mountain,** which leads through a forest of red oaks and red pines, then breaks from the trees for gorgeous views of Squam Lakes from a rocky summit. For a longer day on the trail, the **Squam Range Traverse** is a classic, 12.2-mi (19.6-km) point-to-point that summits the seven named peaks in the Squam Range.

CRAWFORD NOTCH STATE PARK

Crawford Notch State Park, in the White Mountains, is home to the highest single-drop waterfall in New Hampshire, **Arethusa Falls.** The falls' musical name is said to be taken from a poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley about a Greek nymph who was transformed into a flowing spring. Reach the Arethusa Falls on a 3-mi (4.8-km) round-trip hike along Bemis Brook, or extend your hike into a 4.3-mi (6.9-km) loop by returning via **Frankenstein**

Cliff Trail, which has lovely views of the valley. Another favorite trail is the 3.2-mi (5.1-km) round-trip hike up **Mount Willard,** which earns fabulous views of Crawford Notch.

THE FRANCONIA RANGE

A north-south ridgeline running from **Mount Lafayette** to Mount Flume, the Franconia Range is second only to the Presidential Range among New Hampshire's peaks. Following the valley (and highway) between the Kinsman Range and the Franconia Range, the beautiful **Franconia Notch State Park** has a bit of everything—including beaches, a campground, lots of hiking, and kid-friendly trails. This was the home of New Hampshire's most recognizable landmark, the "Old Man of the Mountain," but the series of granite ledges came tumbling down in 2003, despite elaborate efforts to hold the stony face together.

SKIING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

With plentiful mountains, New Hampshire offers a wealth of skiing options. Here are a few of the best.

- **Bretton Woods Mountain Resort** (99 Ski Area Rd., Bretton Woods; 603/278-3320; www.brettonwoods.com): New Hampshire's biggest ski area is Bretton Woods Mountain Resort, which looks out at the southern edge of Mount Washington, with 102 trails, from beginner to expert, and 10 lifts on 464 ac (187 ha) of terrain.
- **Attitash** (US 302, Bartlett; www.attitash.com): With a prime location in the White Mountains, Attitash is one of the most popular ski resorts in New Hampshire. The resort has 68 trails and 8 lifts spread across two mountains, Attitash and Bear Peak.
- **Waterville Valley** (1 Ski Area Rd., Waterville Valley; 800/468-2553; www.waterville.com): Waterville Valley Resort considers itself the "gateway to the White Mountains." With 62 trails across 265 skiable ac (107 ha), skiers and snowboarders of all levels can catch fresh powder here.

Get your bearings from the top of **Cannon Mountain,** a bare granite dome—on a clear day, views stretch to four states and Canada. Reach the summit via the aerial tramway, or hike up along the 3.8-mi (6.1-km) round-trip **Kinsman Ridge Trail.** Set just at the base of Cannon Mountain, **Echo Lake Beach** is sandy and scenic, with a lifeguard on duty during the day; it's possible to rent canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats here. For walking and biking, the **Franconia Notch State Park Recreation Path** is an 8.8-mi (14.1-km) pedestrian trail that slopes gently downhill from the base of Cannon Mountain to the Flume Gorge. For the ultimate Franconia hike, plan for at least six hours on the 8.6-mi (13.8-km) **Franconia Ridge Loop,**

a rugged New Hampshire classic that goes up and over three peaks: **Little Haystack Mountain, Mount Lincoln,** and **Mount Lafayette.**

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

LACONIA MOTORCYCLE WEEK

Laconia; www.laconiamcweek.com; mid-June

Packing the city with bikes, Laconia Motorcycle Week claims the title of World's Oldest Motorcycle Rally, with origins in a 1916 "Gypsy Tour" that landed on the shores of Lake Winnipesaukee. Those Gypsy Tours were organized to "create a more favorable opinion of the motorcycle and motorcycle rider," and after more than 100 years, the rally may be working—it's been said that the tradition of flashing bare breasts at or from a motorcycle has died down of late.

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL

Exeter; 603/772-2622; www.independencemuseum.org; mid-July

"George Washington" addresses the crowds at the annual American Independence Festival, which takes place on the grounds of the American Independence Museum and is held in mid-July to celebrate the date that the Declaration of Independence was first read in Exeter, on July 16, 1776. Costumed interpreters also circulate through the event, which features helicopter rides, fireworks, music, craft vendors, and local, specially brewed beers like American Independence Ale from Redhook Brewery.

BEST SOUVENIRS

If you make the drive up the Mount Washington Auto Route, be sure to grab a **bumper sticker** to commemorate your feat. You'll see "This Car Climbed Mount Washington" stickers around the state.

After a visit to the Strawbery Banke Museum, stop by the museum store, **Pickwick's at the Banke,** where you'll find vintage-style gifts.

The classic Hampton Beach souvenir is a pile of saltwater taffy and caramel corn from **The Candy Corner** (197 Ocean Blvd., Hampton; 603/926-1740), which also does a brisk trade in fudge of all varieties.

FROST DAY

Frost Place, Franconia; 603/823-5510; www.frostplace.org; early July

By governor's decree, each year in early July, Frost Place, the home of poet Robert Frost between 1915 and 1920, holds Frost Day, with poetry readings by the poet-in-residence and musical performances at the farmstead.

BEST FOOD

New Hampshire doesn't disappoint when to comes to well-known New England dishes: You'll find lobster, clams, and other seafood near the coast, plus chowder and maple syrup all around the state.

APPLES

New England is known for its apples, and New Hampshire is no exception. If you're visiting in autumn, head to an orchard where you can pick your

own. A good choice is **Applecrest Farm** (133 Exeter Rd., Hampton Falls; 603/926-3721; www.applecrest.com), located 10 minutes from Hampton Beach, the state's oldest and largest apple farm. And don't forget to sip some **cider** and snack on an **apple cider doughnut** or two.

OYSTERS

A visit to the coast would be incomplete without a seafood feast, specifically oysters. The place to try them is **Row 34** (5 Portwalk Pl., Portsmouth; 603/319-5011; www.row34nh.com [URL inactive]), a shrine to the raw bar, and some of the oysters come from the restaurant's own farm. It's fascinating to try a lineup of oysters from neighboring farms, as the bivalves vary dramatically.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Manchester-Boston Regional Airport:** MHT; 1 Airport Rd., Manchester; 603/624-6539; www.flymanchester.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development:** www.visitnh.gov
- **New Hampshire State Parks:** www.nhstateparks.org

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***New Hampshire Union Leader:*** www.unionleader.com
- ***New Hampshire Magazine:*** www.nhmagazine.com

VERMONT

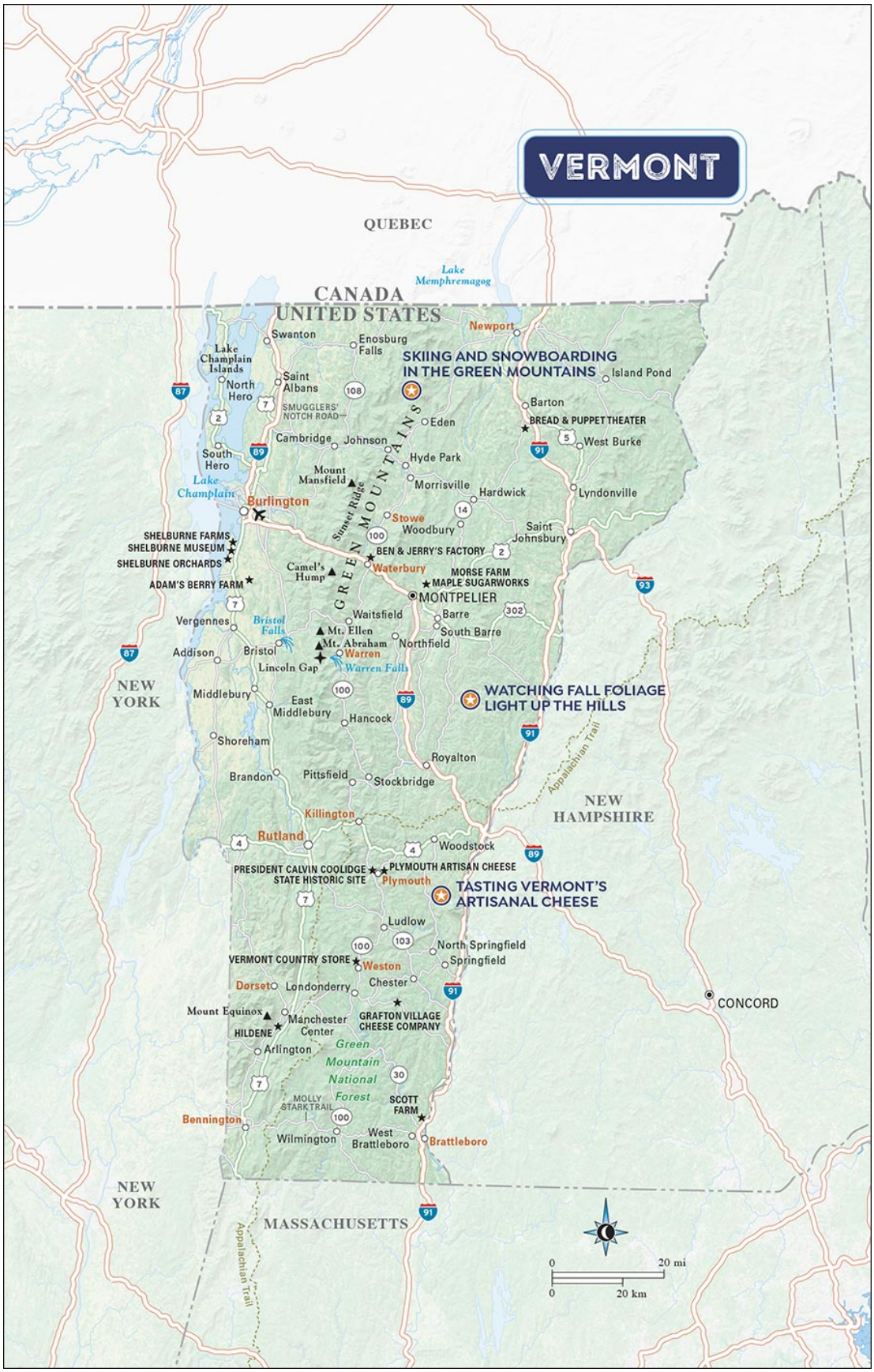
Vermont is a blissfully rural state at the edge of densely populated New England. The state is on Abenaki land, and life here is wrapped around the seasons, recalling another era: Locals spend summer days in swimming holes, turn out for autumn's colorful display, then keep wintertime bright with sledding and pond skating. The rolling Green Mountains are dotted with sugar shacks and ski slopes. In the Northeast Kingdom, generations-old dairy families partner with young cheese makers. Maple syrup producers collect sap on horse-drawn sleds, gathering it into state-of-the-art sugarhouses powered by the sun. Vermont's intriguing blend of innovation and tradition means that visitors can weave between old and new as they explore.

AREA: 9,616 sq mi / 24,906 sq km (45th)

POPULATION: 648,493 (49th)

STATEHOOD DATE: March 4, 1791 (14th)

STATE CAPITAL: Montpelier


VERMONT
QUEBEC
Lake Memphremagog
CANADA
UNITED STATES
Newport
Swanton
Enosburg Falls
Lake Champlain Islands
SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING IN THE GREEN MOUNTAINS
Island Pond
Saint Albans
North Hero
SMUGGLERS' NOTCH ROAD
Barton
BREAD & PUPPET THEATER
Eden
Cambridge
Johnson
West Burke
South Hero
Hyde Park
Mount Mansfield
Lake Champlain
Morrisville
Hardwick
Lyndonville
Burlington
Sunset Ridge
GREEN MOUNTAINS
Stowe
Woodbury
Saint Johnsbury
SHELBURNE FARMS
SHELBURNE MUSEUM
SHELBURNE ORCHARDS
BEN & JERRY'S FACTORY
Camel's Hump
Waterbury
MORSE FARM MAPLE SUGARWORKS
ADAM'S BERRY FARM
MONTPELIER
Vergennes
Bristol Falls
Waitsfield
Barre
Mt. Ellen
South Barre
Addison
Bristol
Mt. Abraham
Northfield
Lincoln Gap
Warren
Warren Falls
NEW YORK
Middlebury
WATCHING FALL FOLIAGE LIGHT UP THE HILLS
East Middlebury
Hancock
Shoreham
Royalton
Brandon
Pittsfield
Stockbridge
Appalachian Trail
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Killington
Rutland
Woodstock
PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE STATE HISTORIC SITE
PLYMOUTH ARTISAN CHEESE
Plymouth
TASTING VERMONT'S ARTISANAL CHEESE
Ludlow
North Springfield
VERMONT COUNTRY STORE
Weston
Springfield
Dorset
Londonderry
Chester
CONCORD
Mount Equinox
Manchester Center
GRAFTON VILLAGE CHEESE COMPANY
HILDENE
Arlington
Green Mountain National Forest
MOLLY STARK TRAIL
SCOTT FARM
Bennington
Wilmington
West Brattleboro
Brattleboro
NEW YORK
MASSACHUSETTS
Appalachian Trail
0
20 mi
0
20 km

ORIENTATION

The Green Mountains form a lengthwise ridge through the center of the state, and are themselves split into a northern portion, where **Montpelier** is the smallest state capital in the country and **Mount Mansfield** towers over the ski town of **Stowe,** and a southern portion with the vacation towns of **Manchester** and **Brattleboro.** In the northwest corner is the sparkling **Lake Champlain,** shared with New York State and with **Burlington** as its hub, and the wild and rural **Northeast Kingdom** in, well, the northeast.

WHEN TO GO

If you don't mind the cold, Vermont is paradise in **winter.** This is the time to explore the Green Mountains on everything from skis to sleds and horse-drawn sleighs. **Spring** is "mud season," when outdoor adventures and back-road driving can be a challenge. But there's one sweet reason to come to Vermont this time of year: maple syrup.

In **summer,** sunny weather turns mountainsides lush and green, and the hills are traced with endless hiking and biking trails. **Autumn** is spectacular. The **fall foliage** is most dramatic in late September through October and leaf peepers arrive in droves.

TOP 3

1 WATCHING FALL FOLIAGE LIGHT UP THE HILLS

Autumn is Vermont's star season, when nights turn cool and the hillsides explode into a riot of color. The transformation follows the weather and begins in the north—and at higher altitudes—and moves downslope and downstate. Red- and orange-hued trees are around every bend this time of year, but the following scenic drives are two of the most spectacular ways to watch the show.



FALL FOLIAGE IN STOWE

MOLLY STARK TRAIL

The scenic Molly Stark Trail (VT-9) connects artsy **Brattleboro** and historical **Bennington** (one hour), rising up and over a mountain pass with long views of the **Green Mountain National Forest.**

VT-100

The ultimate autumn road trip, this road follows the spine of the Green Mountains the whole length of the state. Start at the intersection with VT-9, and wind through **Plymouth, Warren, Stowe,** and **Newport** for a gorgeous five-hour drive that cuts through the **Mad River Valley.**

2 SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING IN THE GREEN MOUNTAINS

Snowy Vermont shines in winter. All that powder turns the state into the perfect playground, whether that means skiing the moguls or taking in the silence on a cross-country jaunt.

- Tumbling down the slopes of **Mount Mansfield**—that's Vermont's highest peak—**Stowe** (5781 Mountain Rd./VT-108, Stowe; 802/253-3000; www.stowe.com) is the state's most glamorous place to hop a gondola. Tons of terrain mean that even on crowded days there's a place to ski and ride, and the adjacent village has one of Vermont's hottest post-slope scenes.
- **Killington** (4763 Killington Rd., Killington; 800/621-6867; www.killington.com) is a behemoth—with six peaks to choose from, the resort has something for everyone, including double diamonds, twisting glades, and family-friendly cruisers. This southern heavyweight also attracts Vermont's most devoted party scene, which fills nightclubs all week long.



KILLINGTON SKI RESORT

- For a somewhat less crowded experience, many skiers head north to **Sugarbush** (102 Forrest Dr., Warren; 802/583-6300; www.sugarbush.com), which is second only to Killington in the number and variety of trails; it boasts a large amount of natural snowfall thanks to the storms that come in from Lake Champlain.

3 TASTING VERMONT'S ARTISANAL CHEESE

It's only fitting that a place speckled with dairy cows should have cheese makers to match, and Vermont's got more of them per capita than any other state. Cheddar has marquee appeal, but local artisans are producing everything from richly veined blues to creamy chèvres, and racking up international awards that have put Green Mountain cheese on the world stage. To try the state's best wedges all in one place, go to the annual mid-August **Vermont Cheesemakers Festival** (www.vtcheesefest.com), held at **Shelburne Farms.** It's also possible to visit individual cheese makers. The Vermont Cheese Council maintains a **Cheese Trail map** (www.vtcheese.com) of the cheese makers that welcome visitors. Here are a couple places to start your cheese tour.

GRAFTON VILLAGE CHEESE COMPANY

56 Townshend Rd., Grafton; 802/843-1062; www.graftonvillagecheese.com

At this factory and tasting room, you can graze samples at the retail store and peek through a viewing window at the cheese makers' gleaming stainless-steel vats. While you're there, don't miss the firm, earthy **Shepsog,** a blended sheep's and cow's milk cheese that's cave aged for seven months.



GRAFTON VILLAGE CHEESE COMPANY

PLYMOUTH ARTISAN CHEESE

106 Messer Hill Rd., Plymouth Notch; 802/672-3650; https://plymouthcheese.com

Located in a particularly pretty valley off VT-100, Plymouth Artisan Cheese has been operating continuously since John Coolidge (father to President Calvin Coolidge) founded it in 1890. Their distinctive granular curd cheeses are made with raw cow's milk, which you can learn about and sample in the on-site museum and store. Try the **Plymouth Original** or the sharp **Plymouth Hunter,** both cheddar cheeses.

HIGHLIGHTS

HILDENE

1005 Hildene Rd., Manchester; 802/362-1788; www.hildene.org

Among those who once made Manchester their summer home was Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, who entertained guests at Hildene, a Georgian Revival mansion with grounds overlooking the Battenkill River. The house is an intriguing glimpse of domestic life in Lincoln's time. It has a working Aeolian pipe organ that was installed in 1908 and still plays songs daily. The president's signature stovepipe hat retains its shine in an exhibit that illustrates the elder Lincoln's political life. There are also 12 mi (19 km) of walking trails looping through the property and a working farm on the estate whose goats produce milk for a sharp aged cheese.

PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE STATE HISTORIC SITE

3780 VT-100A, Plymouth; 802/672-3773;
https://historicsites.vermont.gov/calvin-coolidge

One of the best presidential historic sites in the country, the President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site is situated on the grounds of the 30th president's boyhood home, a sprawling collection of houses, barns, and factories in a mountain-ringed valley. The exhibits inside give a rare intimate look into the upbringing of the president known as "Silent Cal" for his lack of emotion. The family parlor preserves the spot where Coolidge was sworn into office—by his father, a notary public. Even in 1924, when Calvin Coolidge ran for re-election, the homestead swearing-in must have seemed like a scene from a simple, earlier time.

SHELBURNE MUSEUM

6000 Shelburne Rd., Shelburne; 802/985-3346; www.shelburnemuseum.org

The Shelburne Museum is less a museum than a city-state founded by a hoarder with exquisite taste. Its 39 buildings are full of extraordinary art and historical gewgaws, not to mention a Lake Champlain steamship and its own covered bridge. This is the work of art collector Electra Havemeyer Webb, who relocated buildings from across the country to display her collection, opening the museum in 1947. The buildings are as intriguing as their contents, and include a 19th-century jailhouse, a Methodist meeting house, and a beautifully restored round barn, one of just two dozen built in Vermont.



STEAMSHIP AT THE SHELBURNE MUSEUM

Major CITIES

BURLINGTON: This lakefront community boasts forested trails, organic farms, and rocky coastlines within the city limits, and on snowbound winter mornings you can spot cross-country skis lined up

outside coffee shops. It's a dynamic college town and culinary hot spot that's home to many academics and artisans.

RUTLAND: A 19th-century world leader in marble production, this working-class town has been down and out for generations. But there is a threadbare charm to the once resplendent downtown, which is now home to a growing collection of tempting cafés and art galleries.

BENNINGTON: At the foot of the Green Mountains, this quiet, working-class town is best-known for the 1777 Battle of Bennington, a rebel victory that increased support for American independence during the Revolutionary War.

WORKING FARMS IN THE CHAMPLAIN VALLEY

Though agriculture no longer dominates the Vermont economy as it once did, farming and agricultural life remain at the core of the state's identity. On summer weekends, families pick fruit at their local berry farms, dinners are held in barns and fields, and fall harvest feels like a statewide celebration. The farms range from elegant historic properties to down-home orchards.

Shelburne Farms

1611 Harbor Rd., Shelburne; 802/985-8686; www.shelburnefarms.org

Shelburne Farms is a nonprofit that works for sustainability in the food system. Sights change with the season: Spring means maple sugaring and lambing—stopping by the farm to snuggle baby lambs is a yearly pilgrimage—and you can bundle up for horse-drawn sleigh rides in the winter. The on-site cheese-making operation is active year-round, and the welcome center is stocked with samples.

Shelburne Orchards

216 Orchard Rd., Shelburne; 802/985-2753; www.shelburneorchards.com

Shelburne Orchards is lined with undulating rows of trees that produce over a dozen varieties of apples, and it's a marvelous experience to visit in season (September-October), when the air is heavy with the scent of ripe

fruit. The house-made cider doughnuts are delightful in a crust of cinnamon sugar, and the charismatic owner distills remarkably good apple brandy from his pressed apples.

Adam's Berry Farm

985 Bingham Brook Rd., Charlotte; 802/578-9093; www.adamsberryfarm.com

Adam's Berry Farm brings crowds of families for pick-your-own organic blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries on a beautiful property in Charlotte. After you've stained your fingers blue (or red), head to the farm stand to pick up popsicles made with their own fruit as well as quince paste, jams, and sorbets. The farm is open May-October.

BEN & JERRY'S FACTORY

1281 Waterbury-Stowe Rd., Waterbury; 802/337-1201; www.benjerry.com

This flagship factory offers a tour with an ice cream sample at the end, but many may just want to get a scoop at the ice cream shop outside, which features the entire flavor collection. And you don't have to join a tour to visit the Ben & Jerry's "Flavor Graveyard." Here, more than 30 tombstones are marked with flavors that didn't make it, including the ill-fated Sugar Plum, a plum ice cream with caramel swirl that was the worst-selling flavor in B&J history. Purchasing tickets for the tour ahead of time is strongly encouraged.

BREAD & PUPPET THEATER

753 Heights Rd., Glover; 802/525-3031; www.breadandpuppet.org

Bread & Puppet Theater is a barn-cum-museum and the home of a performing puppet troupe. With its mission that art should be accessible to the masses, B&P began more than 60 years ago with counterculture hand- and rod-puppet performances. The troupe virtually invented a new art form, pioneering the construction of larger-than-life papier-mâché puppets of gods and goddesses and other figures that now regularly spice up the atmosphere at left-of-center political protests around the world. The

museum is filled with 10-ft-tall (3-m) characters from past plays, along with photographs and descriptions of the political context of the times. The troupe still performs on its original farm stage in Glover throughout the summer, and the rollicking shows are a classic Vermont experience.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Brattleboro.** Spend the day exploring Brattleboro's quirky **Main Street,** before taking a scenic drive to Grafton to try some Vermont cheese at **Grafton Village Cheese Company.**

DAY 2 Travel one hour to **Weston** (40 mi/64 km) to take in the kitschy charm of the **Vermont Country Store.** After lunch, continue 35 minutes north along scenic VT-100 to **Plymouth** (22 mi/35 km), where you'll find the **President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site** and some excellent cheese. Take the scenic **VT-100** one hour north to end up in the picturesque Mad River Valley town of **Warren** (51 mi/82 km), where **ski slopes** or **swimming holes** await, depending on the season.

DAY 3 Head 30 minutes north along VT-100 to **Waterbury** (20 mi/32 km), home of the **Ben & Jerry's factory.** After tasting ice cream, drive 30 minutes west along I-89 to the lakeside college town of **Burlington** (28 mi/45 km). Head to the **Waterfront Park,** where you can take a spin on the bike path or go paddling on Lake Champlain.

DAY 4 Meander south down US 7 to drive up the **Mount Equinox Skyline Drive** for a beautiful view of the Green Mountains. Then, head south down US 7 to **Bennington** (40 minutes) and enjoy this quiet historical town. Finally, head back to Brattleboro, one hour along the **Molly Stark Trail** (40 mi/64 km), to finish your loop.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

SMUGGLERS' NOTCH ROAD

VT-108

VT-108 is an incredibly twisty, curving road that's hemmed in by high cliffs, granite boulders, and trees that turn bright gold in the fall. It winds through **Smugglers' Notch,** the mountain pass that separates **Stowe** from Smugglers' Notch Resort (30 minutes) and so named for the legend that it was used to bring contraband from Canada during the years of Prohibition. Oversize vehicles should stay away, and all drivers should approach this road with great care, as hikers, rock climbers, and cyclists are often hidden behind the sharp corners.



FALL FOLIAGE IN SMUGGLERS' NOTCH

MOUNT EQUINOX SKYLINE DRIVE

off US 7A; 802/362-1114; www.equinoxmountain.com

This winding toll road, open late May through late October, climbs to the 3,848-ft (1,172-m) summit of Mount Equinox for an unparalleled view of the surrounding peaks and occasional sightings of eagles and peregrine falcons. At the top of the mountain is the **Saint Bruno Viewing Center,** which tells the story of the nearby Carthusian Monastery, the only one of its kind in North America. A 0.5-mi (0.8-km) hiking trail starts at the viewing center and winds around the mountaintop.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

LAKE CHAMPLAIN

Lake Champlain is New England's grandest lake, with a meandering shoreline that offers expansive views of the mountains that line its flanks. The whalebones and shipwrecks beneath the lake's surface are clues to its former lives as an inland sea, trading hub, and site of fierce naval battles during the Revolutionary War. **Burlington** is the hub of the area, with a pedestrian-friendly Waterfront Park that's a great place to ride a bike, put in for a paddle, or watch the sun set over the Adirondacks.

On sunny summer days the lakefront fills with a cheerful flotilla of kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards, as locals and tourists alike head for the water. Paddling is a wonderful way to explore the ins and outs of the shoreline. For some swimming, head to sandy **North Beach** (60 Institute Rd., Burlington; 802/862-0123) or **Oakledge Park** (Flynn Ave., Burlington; 802/864-0123).

The northern end of the lake is home to the **Lake Champlain Islands,** which feel entirely separate from the rest of the state—if not the world. There's water on every end, along with farms, storm-weathered homes, and residents who lift their hands in a lazy wave as they pass on back roads. Given that the islands are home to more shoreline than anywhere else in

Vermont, kayaks and canoes are perfect for nosing around the many crannies and nooks, and in warm weather you can take a stand-up paddleboard for a spin. For a great swimming beach on the islands, you can't beat the sand at **Knight Point State Park** (44 Knight Point Rd., North Hero; 802/372-8389; https://vtstateparks.com).

THE LONG TRAIL

The oldest long-distance hiking trail in the United States, the 272-mi (437-km) Long Trail follows the spine of the Green Mountains from Massachusetts to Canada, rising over some of Vermont's most beloved summits along the way. Vermont's highest peak, Mount Mansfield, is on the Long Trail, and even if you're not planning an end-to-end trek, it's a great place to start exploring alpine Vermont. Here are some hiking high points of Vermont's Long Trail:



SHELTER ON THE LONG TRAIL

- **Mount Mansfield:** At 4,395 ft (1,339 m), this is the tippy top of the Green Mountains, and on the Long Trail, it's just a 4.7-mi (7.7-km) round-trip to the peak. There's more than one way to the top, and one favorite hike follows the lovely, bare **Sunset Ridge.**
- **Camel's Hump:** This distinctive silhouette has become a symbol of the state. An 18.7-mi (30-km) section of the Long Trail traverses the summit, and it's a stout day of hiking—there are plenty of shorter alternatives, including the 7.4-mi (11.9-km) round-trip via the **Monroe Trail.**

- **Mount Abraham:** The Long Trail climbs the 4,006-ft (1,221-m) Mount Abraham on the 2.9-mi (4.7-km) trail from **Lincoln Gap,** and the exposed rock that leads to the top is a favorite stretch of trail for many climbers. Access to the trailhead is closed October to May. To tick off two of Vermont's "4,000 footers" (1,219 m) on a single stretch of Long Trail, continue from Mount Abraham to **Mount Ellen,** an additional 3.7 mi (5.9 km) from summit to summit.

SWIMMING HOLES

Summer in Vermont can bring some hot, sticky days. When that happens, skip the air-conditioning and head for one of the state's many rivers, which stay blissfully cool no matter the weather. You should, however, avoid visiting during spring mud season. Searching out swimming holes is a passion for many locals, and there are endless "secret" places to swim that don't appear on any maps. These are some of the most beloved places to swim in the state.

- **Warren Falls** (Warren): A series of cascades drop into pools deep enough for a (cautious) dive—this is among the most beautiful swimming holes in Vermont, and it can get crowded on hot summer days.
- **Dorset Quarry** (VT-30 at Kelly Rd., Dorset): At this flooded, disused marble quarry, there's plenty of room to stretch out in the sun or find a cozy patch of shade. The daring line up to jump from the quarry's highest point.
- **Bristol Falls** (Lincoln Rd., Bristol): A mix of shallow and deep pools is interspersed with sections of fast-flowing river, but the star attraction of this spot is the 15-ft (4.5-m) waterfall that drops into a churning pothole.

KINGDOM TRAILS NETWORK

Kingdom Trails Association, 478 VT-114, East Burke; 802/626-0737; www.kingdomtrails.org

This is the best riding in Vermont, where carriage paths, railroad rights-of-way, and forest trails have been stitched together into a cyclist's wonderland. The **Tap and Die** trail is a rolling hoot as riders whip over quick ascents and swerve through curves lined with high berms. **Sidewinder** is a flowy classic, and one of the Northeast's most exhilarating rides. There are trails for every ability, and the mountain bike enthusiasts that staff the visitor center can tell you where to start and what to avoid.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

VERMONT BREWERS FESTIVAL

Burlington; www.vtbrewfest.com; July

Don't miss the Vermont Brewers Festival, when a who's who of local and regional brewers set up shop right in Burlington's Waterfront Park. If you'd like to attend, check the website well in advance of your trip, as tickets often sell out the day they go on sale (usually in May).

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

Vermonters are passionate about food, and recent years have seen an explosion of interest in farm-to-table dining, farmers markets, and everything local and sustainably produced.

MAPLE SYRUP

Vermont bottles millions of gallons of maple syrup each year—accounting for more than half of the output of the entire country. It's a remarkable process that depends on precise weather conditions and sugar makers who tend to their trees all year.



MAPLE CREEMEE

BEST SOUVENIRS

Vermont **maple syrup** is a must. Pick up a jug of the sweet stuff, or grab some maple cream, maple kettle corn, or even spirits distilled from maple.

To find the perfect souvenir, head to the original restored **Vermont Country Store** (657 Main St.; 802/824-3184; www.vermontcountrystore.com) in Weston. Browsing this old-fashioned store can be a transporting experience; penny candy, pickles, and sundry doodads are stocked alongside flannel nightgowns and quilts.

In Vermont, you are never far from a sugarhouse, but one of the best is **Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks** (1168 County Rd., Montpelier; 802/223-2740; www.morsefarm.com). On the edge of Montpelier, this spot is a virtual museum of the industry, with old photographs and a movie theater that shows a film of the sugaring process. A cavernous gift shop sells maple kettle corn and that most Vermonter of treats, maple creemees (soft-serve maple ice cream cones).

HEIRLOOM APPLES

Although Vermont farmers sell a range of heirloom produce, from tomatoes to zucchini, the state's blockbuster heirlooms are the hundreds of varieties of **apples** that are grown here, from tiny lady apples to the knobbed russet, whose lumpy exterior hides wonderfully crisp flesh. Apples don't get better than at **Scott Farm** (707 Kipling Rd., Dummerston; 802/490-2865 or 802/579-1720; www.scottfarmvermont.com), where they grow 130 kinds of apples with intriguing names such as Lamb Abbey Pearmain and Zabergau Reinette.

CRAFT BEER

The Green Mountain State is experiencing a golden age of brewing, with craft beers that have garnered national acclaim.

- **Long Trail Brewing Company** (5520 US 4, Bridgewater Corners; 802/672-5011; www.longtrail.com): Those only familiar with the ubiquitous **Long Trail Ale** may be surprised by the wealth of beers on tap at this Bridgewater Corners brewpub.
- **Citizen Cider** (316 Pine St., Burlington; 802/448-3278; www.citizencider.com): In the heart of Burlington, this cidery has been giving beer a run for its money. Try the **Full Nelson,** which is dry hopped with Nelson Sauvin hops.
- **The Alchemist** (100 Cottage Club Rd., Stowe; 802/253-6708; www.alchemistbeer.com [URL inactive]): This Stowe-based brewery is known for its hop-heavy canned beer **Heady Topper,** which is consistently rated a fan favorite.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport:** BTV; 1200 Airport Dr., South Burlington; 802/863-2874; www.btv.aero

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Vermont State Parks:** https://vtstateparks.com
- **Vermont Vacation:** www.vermontvacation.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Burlington Free Press:*** www.burlingtonfreepress.com

MASSACHUSETTS

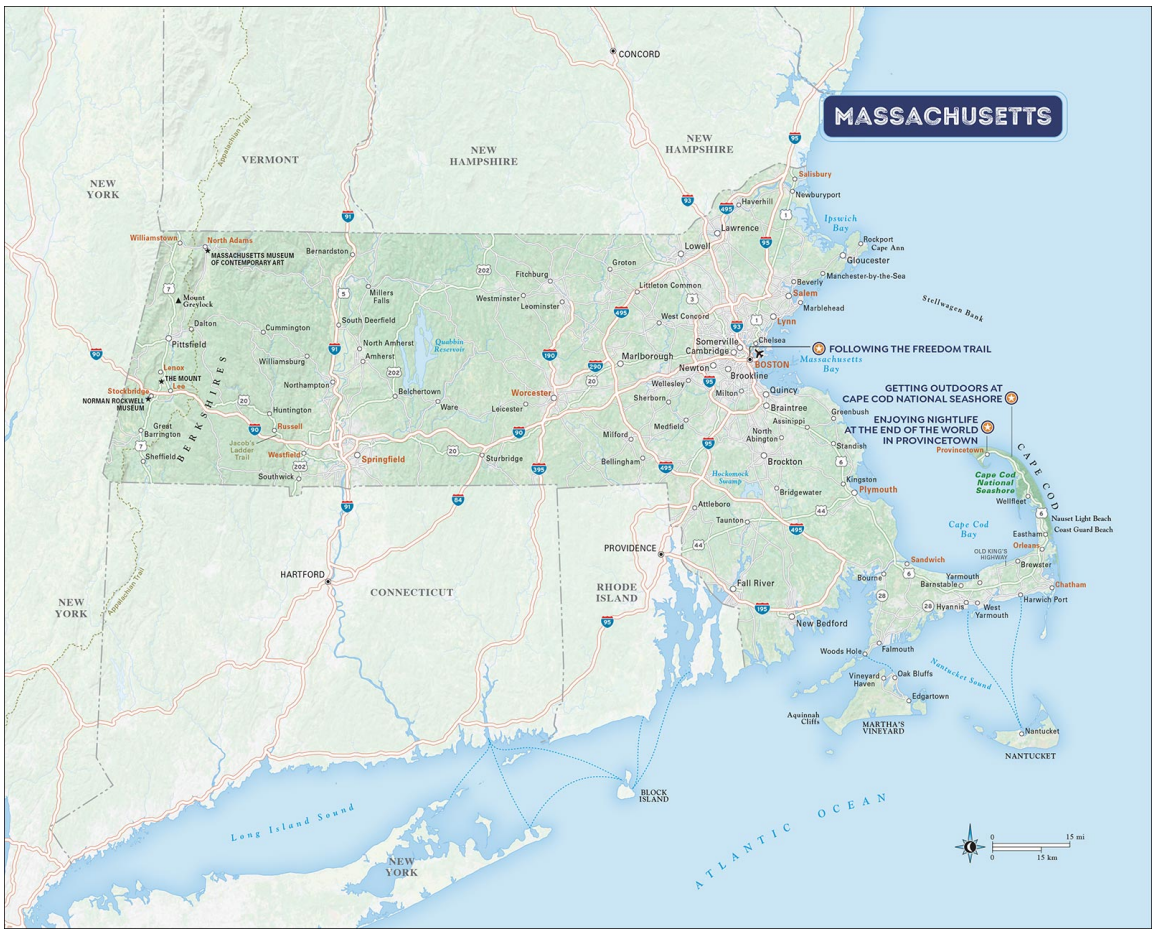
On Massachusett, Nipmuc, Pennacook, Wampanoag, and Nauset land, Massachusetts is a contradiction and a confluence of the past and the present. In Boston, skyscrapers and modern architecture tower over—yet don't overshadow—Victorian brownstones, colonial graveyards, crooked streets, and gracious squares. Just over an hour from downtown Boston, Cape Cod unfurls into the ocean, a ragged hook of sand, bogs, and crashing waves. Cape Cod's blend of old, new, and wild offers the opportunity to weave between worlds. Inland, the Berkshires offer an unexpected mix of quaint villages and grand mansions, and one of New England's most vibrant arts communities. Today, a new generation of creatives is bringing youthful energy to unexpected places in Massachusetts. Artists, musicians, and chefs are reinventing New England traditions for the 21st century. This thrilling blend of fresh takes and old ways is a standing invitation to explore.

AREA: 10,554 sq mi / 27,336 sq km (44th)

POPULATION: 7,136,171 (16th)

STATEHOOD DATE: February 6, 1788 (6th)

STATE CAPITAL: Boston


MASSACHUSETTS
CONCORD
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW YORK
Appalachian Trail
Williamstown
North Adams
MASSACHUSETTS MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
Bernardston
Mount Greylock
Dalton
Cummington
Pittsfield
Williamsburg
Lenox
THE MOUNT
Lee
Stockbridge
NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM
Northampton
Huntington
Great Barrington
Sheffield
Jacob's Ladder Trail
Russell
Westfield
Springfield
Southwick
BERKSHIRES
Millers Falls
South Deerfield
North Amherst
Amherst
Quabbin Reservoir
Belchertown
Ware
Leicester
Worcester
Sturbridge
Fitchburg
Westminster
Leominster
Groton
Littleton Common
West Concord
Lowell
Lawrence
Haverhill
Salisbury
Newburyport
Ipswich Bay
Rockport
Cape Ann
Gloucester
Manchester-by-the-Sea
Beverly
Salem
Marblehead
Stellwagen Bank
Lynn
Chelsea
Somerville
Cambridge
BOSTON
FOLLOWING THE FREEDOM TRAIL
Massachusetts Bay
Marlborough
Newton
Brookline
Wellesley
Milton
Quincy
Braintree
Sherborn
Medfield
Milford
Bellingham
Hockomock Swamp
Brockton
North Abington
Assinippi
Greenbush
Standish
GETTING OUTDOORS AT CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE
ENJOYING NIGHTLIFE AT THE END OF THE WORLD IN PROVINCETOWN
Provincetown
CAPE COD
Cape Cod National Seashore
Wellfleet
Nauset Light Beach
Coast Guard Beach
Eastham
Orleans
OLD KING'S HIGHWAY
Brewster
Chatham
Harwich Port
Kingston
Plymouth
Bridgewater
Attleboro
Taunton
Cape Cod Bay
Sandwich
Bourne
Yarmouth
Barnstable
Hyannis
West Yarmouth
PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND
Fall River
New Bedford
Woods Hole
Falmouth
Vineyard Haven
Oak Bluffs
Edgartown
Nantucket Sound
Aquinnah Cliffs
MARTHA'S VINEYARD
NANTUCKET
HARTFORD
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK
Appalachian Trail
BLOCK ISLAND
Long Island Sound
NEW YORK
ATLANTIC OCEAN
0
15 mi
0
15 km

ORIENTATION

Boston sits in the crevice in the middle of Massachusetts's Atlantic coastline, and **Cape Cod** is the hook of land curving out into the ocean from the southern part of the state. The islands of **Martha's Vineyard** and **Nantucket** sit off the Cape to the south. The **Berkshires,** with **Mount Greylock** and the **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art,** are in western Massachusetts.

WHEN TO GO

Like all of New England, Massachusetts experiences all four seasons, offering reasons to visit in each one. **Summer**—especially after schools let out in June—is high season, when you can visit seasonal seafood shacks at the edge of the water and catch Red Sox games with the crowd at Fenway Park. In **autumn,** the temperature cools off, but visitors still flock here for fall foliage displays.

Winter is chilly, and Massachusetts usually experiences a few big snowstorms. Bring plenty of clothes and you'll be warm and cozy while skating on Boston Common or rolling through the hills on a horse-drawn sleigh. **Spring** means wildflowers.

TOP 3

1 FOLLOWING THE FREEDOM TRAIL

www.thefreedomtrail.org

A red line on the sidewalk through historic Boston connects 16 sites related to the American Revolution on a 2.5-mi (4-km) walking trail ideal for getting your bearings in the city. Make your way from **Boston Common** to a series of churches, graveyards, and other early landmarks in downtown, then continue through the Italian American neighborhood of the **North End** to visit **Paul Revere's House** (19 North Sq.; 617/523-2338; www.paulreverehouse.org) and the **Old**

North Church (193 Salem St.; 617/858-8231; www.oldnorth.com), where Revere hung signal lights for Revolutionary commanders.



FREEDOM TRAIL

The trail then crosses the Charles River via the stunning Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge to the **Charlestown Navy Yard** and the **Bunker Hill Monument** (43 Monument Sq., Charlestown; 617/438-4034; www.nps.gov), where climbing 294 steep steps earns you panoramic views of the city from the top of a 221-ft (67-m) obelisk that has commemorated the first major battle of the Revolution since 1843.

You can set out and walk the line yourself, or take a guided tour with the **Freedom Trail Foundation** (Boston Common Visitor Information Center, 139 Tremont St., Boston; 617/357-8300;

www.thefreedomtrail.org) or the **National Park Service** (www.nps.gov/bost).

2 GETTING OUTDOORS AT CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

www.nps.gov/caco

The Cape Cod National Seashore is an utterly beautiful swath of coastline, with the longest unbroken beaches in New England. Coastal dunes are speckled with blushing wild roses, and historic lighthouses stand proudly at the edge of the sea. Shores and salt marshes are an important destination for migratory birds traveling the Atlantic coast, and the water teems with harbor seals, grey seals, whales, sea turtles, and even the occasional great white shark (contrary to Hollywood films, shark attacks are vanishingly rare).



BEACH ON CAPE COD

In addition to the intertidal zones, dunes, and seagrass beds that most visitors see, there are also grasslands, heathlands, woodlands, forests, kettle ponds, salt marshes, and freshwater marshes. The area features several walking trails where you can experience all this biodiversity up close; the **Nauset Marsh Trail** and **Fort Hill Trail**

are good options. To explore on two wheels, the paved, mostly flat **Cape Cod Rail Trail** follows 25 mi (40 km) of former railroad track between South Dennis and Wellfleet, passing ponds, forests, and short spurs to reach the coast.

Of course, the real highlight here is the ocean. With a broad swath of sand backed by eroding cliffs, **Coast Guard Beach** is a strong contender for the best beach in New England. **Nauset Light Beach,** at the foot of its namesake lighthouse, is another good pick.

3 ENJOYING NIGHTLIFE AT THE END OF THE WORLD IN PROVINCETOWN

By the late 19th century, this village at "the end of the world" had become a destination for painters, playwrights, and novelists—think Eugene O'Neill, Jack Kerouac, Norman Mailer, and Jackson Pollock—who were drawn to the spot's scenic isolation. Full of creative spirit and spontaneity, P-town is also one of America's most popular LGBTQ+ vacation spots, and has been for decades. On any summer Saturday evening, **Commercial Street** is a bustling mix of vacationing families, drag show touts, wedding processions, and revelers kicking off parties that will still be going strong at sunrise.



PROVINCETOWN CARNIVAL GODS AND GODDESS PARADE

The drag scene is a classic P-town experience. You don't need to look for a drag show in Provincetown—watch for flamboyantly dressed performers careening down Commercial Street on foot, bicycle, and moped. Shows range from classic song and dance numbers to raunchy humor with big hair, big smiles, and outsized personalities. To get started, check out **Crown & Anchor** (247 Commercial St.; 508/487-1430; www.onlyatthecrown.com) or **Post Office Café & Cabaret** (303 Commercial St.; 508/487-0008; www.postofficecafe.net). Drag queen residencies come and go; if

there are performers you'd like to see, it's worth looking up where their show is now.

HIGHLIGHTS

FANEUIL HALL

Congress St., Boston; 617/523-1300; www.nps.gov

Peter Faneuil built this landmark building for two purposes: The ground floor would serve as a public food market, and the upstairs meeting hall would be a "marketplace of ideas." When Faneuil Hall was built in 1742, the most pressing issues were taxation on goods by the British government, and it became the main meeting space for protests and discussions by the Sons of Liberty—earning it the nickname the "Cradle of Liberty." It was later expanded and became the main venue for talks by William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and other antislavery activists.

Downstairs, the market stalls still exist, but most are now the venue for souvenirs and other made-in-Boston goods. The adjacent Faneuil Hall Marketplace (www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com) adds more indoor and outdoor shopping and dining opportunities. Just behind Faneuil Hall is **Quincy Market** (4 S. Market St.; 617/523-1300), where farmers and butchers began selling their wares in 1826. Produce vendors have given way to food stalls, restaurants, and shops, making this a convenient place to grab a snack along the Freedom Trail.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

700 Boylston St., Boston; 617/536-5400; www.bpl.org

One of the country's first municipal public libraries, the Boston Public Library fills two city blocks, dividing its treasures into two buildings. While the library's collection is vast, its art and architecture make it destination-worthy as well; the exterior has classical proportions and is covered with names of great thinkers through the ages. One of the best-kept secrets of the

city is the library's central courtyard, an Italianate plaza that wraps around a central fountain (high tea at the courtyard restaurant is a special treat). The hushed, studious heart of the original 1895 building is the Bates Reading Room, a 200-ft-long (60-m) hall with a barrel-vaulted ceiling, high arched windows, and long tables lined with dimly lit green lamps.



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY COURTYARD

BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL

Boston; www.maah.org

The Black Heritage Trail traces the separate journey to freedom of African Americans, nearly 100 years after the events of the first Freedom Trail. Plaques at historic houses en route detail the lives of abolitionists and orators who lived on the back side of Beacon Hill, where Boston's more than 1,000 free African Americans lived and worked by the turn of the 19th century.

The trail begins at the **Robert Gould Shaw and Massachusetts 54th Regiment Memorial,** which depicts the commander of the Massachusetts

54th Regiment, the first all-black volunteer regiment to fight during the Civil War, marching out of Boston with his troops in March 1863. Follow the trail to the end to visit the **African Meeting House,** once headquarters of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Considered the "Black Faneuil Hall," the church now houses the **Museum of African American History** (46 Joy St.; 617/725-0022; https://maah.org), which has exhibits and films dedicated to the story of Boston's abolitionists.

The trail is also part of the **Boston African American National Historic Site** (617/742-5415; www.nps.gov/boaf), and the National Park Service runs free guided tours along the route.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

465 Huntington Ave., Boston; 617/267-9300; www.mfa.org

The MFA, as it's known, is particularly noted for its French Impressionist works, but it also has outstanding Asian and Egyptian collections, as well as many celebrated early American paintings and artifacts. The Museum of Fine Arts began its life as the painting collection of the Boston Athenaeum, the private library on Beacon Hill. The museum has taken some gambles to bring a new generation of viewers into the galleries, staging artistic exhibitions of guitars and race cars alongside showstopping special exhibits featuring masterpieces by Monet, Van Gogh, and Gauguin.

Major CITIES

BOSTON: The hub of New England is both modern and connected to its history—Revolutionary-era graveyards line busy streets, actors in 18th-century costume walk the Freedom Trail, and immigrant communities erupt with civic pride at festivals and parades.

WORCESTER: Pronounced WUH-stah, the state's second-largest city is home to a diverse population, several colleges, and a notable dining and art scene.

SPRINGFIELD: With a history in both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, Springfield is known as the "City of Firsts"—it was home to

the country's first armory, the first American-made car, and the birthplace of basketball.

SALEM

With a grim history of deadly witch trials, Salem's tragedy has lingered through the centuries—a story of mass hysteria that's only underscored by the city's prim facade. To explore the town's dramatic history, visit the simple **Salem Witch Trials Memorial** (Liberty St.; www.salem.org), which displays the names of the victims on stone benches next to the central burying ground. There's also the **Salem Witch Museum** (Washington Sq. N.; 978/744-1692; www.salemwitchmuseum.com), whose basic displays lay the groundwork for the events of 1692-1693.

Salem might still be "Witch City," but it was also an important trading port, sending ships laden with salted codfish across the globe. These days, Salem is a bedroom community of Boston, and clusters of shops, cafés, and historic streets make the city an appealing place to explore.

PLYMOUTH

Even as the Pilgrims landed in the "New World" they looked back toward the old one, naming their first settlement for the English port they left behind. For some, their arrival represents the dreams of the independent Puritans who risked everything for a new life, while others see the start of an era that brought tragedy to Native Americans and enslaved Africans.

The glacial erratic boulder that's known to every schoolchild, **Plymouth Rock** (79 Water St.) is located here and inscribed simply with "1620." For a vivid glimpse of the Pilgrims' daily lives, and at the lives of the Wampanoag people who helped them survive the harsh coastal winter, head to **Plimoth Patuxet Museums** (137 Warren Ave.; 508/746-1622; www.plimoth.org), a working replica of a Wampanoag village and their settlement. The **1627 Village** is the centerpiece of the site, and visitors can walk around to see the homes and hear stories from the costumed "pilgrims." At the **Patuxet Homesite,** the staff are Indigenous people, whether Wampanoag or from another group, who help inform visitors about

Wampanoag history and culture. There's also a wonderful replica of the *Mayflower*—it's dubbed Mayflower II.

To learn more about the history here, head to the **Mayflower Society House and Library** (18 Winslow St.; 508/746-3188; www.themayflowersociety.org), a mansion built by Edward Winslow, a *Mayflower* passenger. The small museum is filled with fascinating artifacts from the time, but the house alone is worth a stop, complete with period furnishings and artwork.

FIELD GUIDE TO THE BOSTON ACCENT

Listen closely on any inbound flight or train to Boston, and you're likely to hear a curious phrase from one of your fellow passengers: "park the car on Harvard yard." The sentence, sometimes called the **"Harvard Accent Test,"** isn't really a set of instructions on where to leave your vehicle. It's often used as a litmus test for the authenticity of one's Boston accent, or your ability to fake one. Pronounced properly, it comes out something like this: *pahk the cah on Hahvahd Yahd*.

According to historical linguists, the Boston accent has its roots in the language patterns of early British and Irish colonists. Notoriously hard to replicate, the Boston accent has diminished somewhat in recent decades, but you might hear it in a downtown bar.

While Bostonians lampoon many actors' attempts to imitate their distinctive accents, a few movies make the grade. Aficionados point to Michael Keaton's accent in *Spotlight* as well as Matt Damon's Southie accent in *Good Will Hunting* as prime examples. And for any visitors traveling with their own vehicle, it might be worth nothing that parking is *not* allowed on the Harvard Yard, a grassy stretch of the campus that's safely enclosed by fences.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD

On this wonderfully scenic island, quaint villages and tourist traps are interspersed with coastal dunes, pale beaches, and farmland. The Wampanoag tribe has a stronger presence here than elsewhere in the Cape and islands, and families of Vineyard sailors, farmers, and fishers still maintain deep roots.

A can't-miss sight on the island is the **Aquinnah Cliffs.** Striped with wild layers of ochre clay, green sand, and glittering quartz, the dramatic cliffs have drawn mainland tourists for centuries. The walkway to the cliff

overlook is lined with shops and information booths maintained by the Wampanoag, and is a great place to learn more about their history and culture.

MASSACHUSETTS MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

1040 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams; 413/662-2111; www.massmoca.org

Built on the sprawling campus of Sprague Electric, the size of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art is stunning. Composed of 26 redbrick former factory buildings and connected by an interlocking network of bridges, walkways, and courtyards, it has vast gallery spaces that allow for artwork of an unusually epic scale—from enormous installations to expansive performance art. The scale of the museum also affords more inclusiveness than many institutions, and MASS MoCA has a lack of pretension and takes an infectious delight in the creative process: Small, unexpected touches abound, like the sidewalk cracks that employees fill in with gleaming gold paint.

THE MOUNT

2 Plunkett St., Lenox; 413/551-5100; www.edithwharton.org

Edith Wharton's incisive, prolific writing is among the best in American literature, but she once contended that she was "a better landscape gardener than novelist." Judge for yourself at The Mount, the gorgeously restored estate she designed from the ground up. With the exception of the library, most of the author's personal belongings and furniture are long gone, but Wharton's taste for symmetry, balance, and allusion are everywhere. And while visiting the house takes just an hour or so, the expansive grounds are an inviting place to linger—in the cool sunken garden, by a blossom-fringed fountain, or on the trails that pass through the woods and along neat lines of *Tilia* trees. On weekends in July and August, there are informal jazz sessions on the outdoor terrace, and professional actors perform readings of Wharton's writing on Wednesdays in the summer.

NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

9 MA-183, Stockbridge; 413/298-4100; www.nrm.org

Norman Rockwell charmingly depicted kids at soda fountains and quirky small-town characters, but images that resonate after a visit to the Norman Rockwell Museum also include six-year-old Ruby Bridges being escorted to school in 1960 and the iconic Four Freedoms. Don't miss the lower level, which displays all of Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers and shows a short film that includes real-life photos of his models, many of whom were his Stockbridge neighbors. The museum's pastoral 36-ac (14.5-ha) site includes the artist's well-preserved barn studio. High-profile changing exhibitions include works by the likes of Warhol and Wyeth.



NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in **Boston,** the center of the action in Massachusetts. Walk the **Freedom Trail** to see historical sights, stopping for lunch and an Italian ice in the **North End.** For even more culture, head to the **Museum of Fine Arts.** Have a seafood feast for dinner and spend the night here.

DAY 2 Squeeze in a few more Boston sights today. Stroll through **Boston Common** and adjacent **Boston Public Gardens,** maybe hopping on one of the **swan boats** on the lagoon, and grab lunch from bustling **Quincy Market.** Now it's time to hop in the car. Drive three hours (150 mi/241 km) to **Williamstown** and spend the night at **Clover Hill Farm & Country Inn** (249 Adams Rd., Williamstown; 413/458-3376; https://cloverhillfarm.net) for an authentic farm experience in the **Berkshires.**

DAY 3 To experience beautiful Berkshires scenery, there's no better way than a hike up **Mount Greylock.** There are many trails in the area, or you can simply drive to the summit. And a visit to the nearby **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art** is a must. Return to Williamstown for dinner and a good night's sleep.

DAY 4 Dive 45 minutes (30 mi/48 km) south to **Lenox,** where you can soak up some glamorous Gilded Age atmosphere. Don't miss a tour of **The Mount,** Edith Wharton's country home, and browse the boutiques on Lenox's main street. Afterward, drive 10 minutes south to nostalgic **Stockbridge** to visit the **Norman Rockwell Museum.** Spend the night back at your hotel in Lenox.

DAY 5 It's a long drive back to the coast—3.5 hours (200 mi/321 km) to **Chatham,** a good base to enjoy **Cape Cod.** Explore this old-fashioned town and its lighthouse, or just head to the beach. Seafood

for dinner—think oysters, fried clams, and creamy clam chowder—is a must.

DAY 6 You can spend the whole day just relaxing on the beach before driving 1.5 hours (90 mi/144 km) back to Boston. Or, for even more fun, head to **Provincetown,** one hour from Chatham (35 mi/56 km) on Cape Cod's very tip. Here you'll find plenty of beaches and excellent **whale-watching** trips, but P-town's real showstopper is its LGBTQ+ nightlife scene. Catch a **drag show** before crashing for the night.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

OLD KING'S HIGHWAY

MA-6A

For a route that blends American history with Cape Cod's coastal scenery, take a drive along Old King's Highway, aka Route 6A, a National Scenic Byway lined with cranberry bogs and antiques stores. Starting in **Sandwich, MA-6A** follows the bay side of the Cape until it reaches the town of **Orleans** (1 hour; 30 mi/48 km). You can keep driving all the way until the end of the cape in **Provincetown,** though 6A merges with busier US 6 along the way. Worthy stops along the drive include antique shops in Sandwich, Barnstable's **Old Jail,** which dates back to 1690, and the **Captain's Mile,** a stretch of historic captains' houses in Yarmouth.

ESSEX COASTAL SCENIC BYWAY

To experience Massachusetts's scenic north coast, the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway follows 90 mi (144 km) from **Lynn** to **Salisbury.** The route passes through 14 North Shore towns, including an especially scenic drive along

Cape Ann. Along the way, you'll pass plenty of historic architecture and opportunities for recreation—hiking trails and beaches are just off the road.

JACOB'S LADDER TRAIL

US 20

This National Scenic Byway, dubbed "the first of the great mountain crossovers," takes you through the southern Berkshire foothills. US 20 starts in **Lee,** near Stockbridge, and ends in the towns of **Russell** and **Westfield** (50 minutes; 35 mi/56 km). The small towns, beautiful nature, and unspoiled rural atmosphere along the way offer a scenic alternative to the busy Massachusetts Turnpike.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BOSTON COMMON AND BOSTON PUBLIC GARDEN

139 Tremont St. and 4 Charles St.; Boston

The Common feels like the city's collective backyard, with space for throwing Frisbees, spreading out picnics, and playing in the grass. Several monuments within the park are attractions in and of themselves: The **Brewer Fountain** is stunning, and you'll also find the **Robert Gould Shaw and Massachusetts 54th Regiment Memorial** here. The **Frog Pond** is an ice-skating rink in winter and a shallow fountain in summer, when it fills with kids cooling off. A bandstand is used as the site for summer concerts, political rallies, and **Shakespeare on the Common** (www.commshakes.org).

In contrast to Boston Common's open, parklike feel, the Boston Public Garden, right next door, is an intimate outdoor space, full of leafy trees and flower beds. The centerpiece is a lagoon, which is crossed by a fairy-tale bridge and surrounded by willow trees trailing their branch tips in the water. Tracing lazy circles in the lagoon are Boston's famous **swan boats**

(617/522-1966; www.swanboats.com), a flotilla of six large paddleboats with the graceful white birds at the stern, often seen mid-April through September.

WHALE-WATCHING TOURS

Just north of Cape Cod's Land's End is a shallow, sandy rise in the ocean floor called Stellwagen Bank, where a nutrient-rich upwelling and a US National Marine Sanctuary attract a diverse population of dolphins, sea turtles, and whales. April-October, whales migrate to this coast to feed on schooling fish, and a dozen tour operators offer trips into the sanctuary to spot humpback, finback, minke, sei, and pilot whales. A good pick is the **Dolphin Fleet** (MacMillan Pier, Provincetown; 800/826-9300; www.whalewatch.com), which departs many times a day during the season from downtown Provincetown, with onboard naturalists helping to identify any fins and flukes you spot.

MOUNT GREYLOCK

Rockwell Rd., Lanesborough; 413/499-4262; www.mass.gov

The 3,491-ft (1,064-m) summit of Mount Greylock, the highest peak in Massachusetts, is both accessible and wild, and it and the surrounding peaks are favorites for overnight hikes or leisurely afternoon drives. Several trails lead up into the mountains from both **North Adams** and **Williamstown:** Trace some of Henry David Thoreau's 1844 hike to the peak on a challenging 14.9-mi (23.9-km) loop from North Adams—follow **Bellows Pipe Trail** to the **Appalachian Trail** (AT), and return via the AT and **Bernard Farm Trail.** Or try the slightly easier, 6.2-mi (10-km) round-trip **summit hike** from the Mount Greylock Campground.

If all that sounds a bit strained, you can take a scenic, winding road straight to the top of Mount Greylock, where there's a snack bar and visitor center with information on short hikes and nature activities.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

RED SOX GAMES AT FENWAY PARK

4 Jersey St., Boston; 617/226-6666; www.redsox.com

Fenway has long been one of the most electric places to catch the national pastime. First opened in 1912, Fenway has a soul that none of the more modern parks can match. For the uninitiated, the geography of the park—with its Green Monster, Pesky's Pole, and Ted Williams's seat—can seem a little arcane, but you can get your bearings with a tour led by one of the Fenway faithful. As good as those tours may be, however, nothing quite beats taking a seat in the bleachers, grabbing a Sam Adams, and waiting for the first crack of the bat.



FENWAY PARK

BEST SOUVENIRS

To bring the energy of the American Revolution home with you, gift shops along the **Freedom Trail** sell prints of America's founding documents, merch to celebrate the founding fathers, and more.

For a visit to Fenway Park, a **Red Sox baseball cap** is a must. Alternatively, pick up a jersey to represent one of Boston's other great sports teams—the Celtics, Patriots, or Bruins—or grab some apparel from one of the city's many **universities** (Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, Northeastern . . . the list goes on).

OTHER SPECTATOR SPORTS

Fans of all sports will find a great team to root for in Boston. The city hosts the **Boston Celtics** in the NBA, the **New England Patriots** in the NFL, the **Boston Bruins** in the NHL, and the **New England Revolution** in MLS. Women's football and hockey teams who call Boston home include the **Boston Renegades** and the **Boston Fleet.**

BOSTON MARATHON

Boston; www.baa.org; Apr.

Runners come from around the world to compete in the Boston Marathon, the oldest (and some say toughest) marathon in the United States, usually held in April on Patriots' Day. Spectators start lining the route to cheer along Beacon and Boylston Streets, all the way to Copley Square, where the finish line is painted in the street.

TANGLEWOOD MUSIC FESTIVAL

297 West St., Lenox; 413/637-1600; www.bso.org; summer

During summer, the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO)—along with a suite of other performers—brings world-class music to Tanglewood, a sprawling venue named for a collection of stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne, who spent a summer writing on the property. The Tanglewood season runs late June-August, and popular shows often sell out within days of their first availability in January, as do rooms in town. Music, however sublime, is only part of the experience. Elegant picnics at Tanglewood have been a tradition since the BSO performed here in the late 1930s. Show up several hours early to stretch the picnic into an all-afternoon affair.

BEST FOOD

BOSTON BAKED BEANS

Not for nothing is Boston nicknamed Beantown. This dish—made of dried beans baked slowly with salt pork and molasses—was a staple in colonial times and remains a favorite today.

CLAMS AND CLAM CHOWDER

Generally divided into types—hard shell or soft shell—clams are a true New England delicacy. Soft shells, or **steamers,** are usually eaten either steamed or fried. (If the clams are steamed, diners pull them from the shell, remove and discard the neck casing, and dip them in broth and drawn butter before eating.)

Hard shell clams are served differently: The smallest ones, known as **littlenecks** and **cherrystones,** are most frequently served raw with horseradish and cocktail sauce, while the largest hard shells are chopped up and used in chowders and stuffings.

Dating back to the 18th century, New England clam chowder is by far the most popular of the region's creamy fish stews. Most restaurants have their own recipes, using a bit more potatoes here, a different ratio of bacon to cream there (but not tomatoes—that is what distinguishes Manhattan clam chowder and is therefore heresy in New England). Sampling and finding your favorite is the real fun.

BOSTON'S NORTH END CUISINE

Everyone from tour guides to locals will tell you the same thing about this historic neighborhood: "It's just like being in Italy!" The truth is, though, there's something essentially Bostonian about the Italian American North End—the home of the Celtics basketball team as well as numerous pastry shops, old-fashioned grocers, and classic red-sauce joints. It's a fascinating place to eat, drink, and explore with cannoli in hand. Top places to try include:

- **Regina Pizzeria** (11½ Thatcher St.; 617/227-0765; www.reginapizzeria.com): There's always a line out the door at this Neapolitan pizza place known for its crust.
- **Neptune Oyster** (63 Salem St.; 617/742-3474; www.neptuneoyster.com): This island of contemporary style in old-school North End has the best lobster rolls in town.
- **Mike's Pastry** (300 Hanover St.; 617/742-3050; www.mikespastry.com) and nearby **Modern Pastry** (257 Hanover St.; 617/523-3783; www.modernpastry.com) are locked in a fierce rivalry for Boston's best cannoli.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Boston-Logan International Airport:** BOS; 1 Harborside Dr., East Boston; 617/428-2800; www.massport.com/logan-airport

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Massachusetts:** www.visitma.com

- **Massachusetts State Parks:** www.mass.gov

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Boston Globe:*** www.bostonglobe.com

RHODE ISLAND

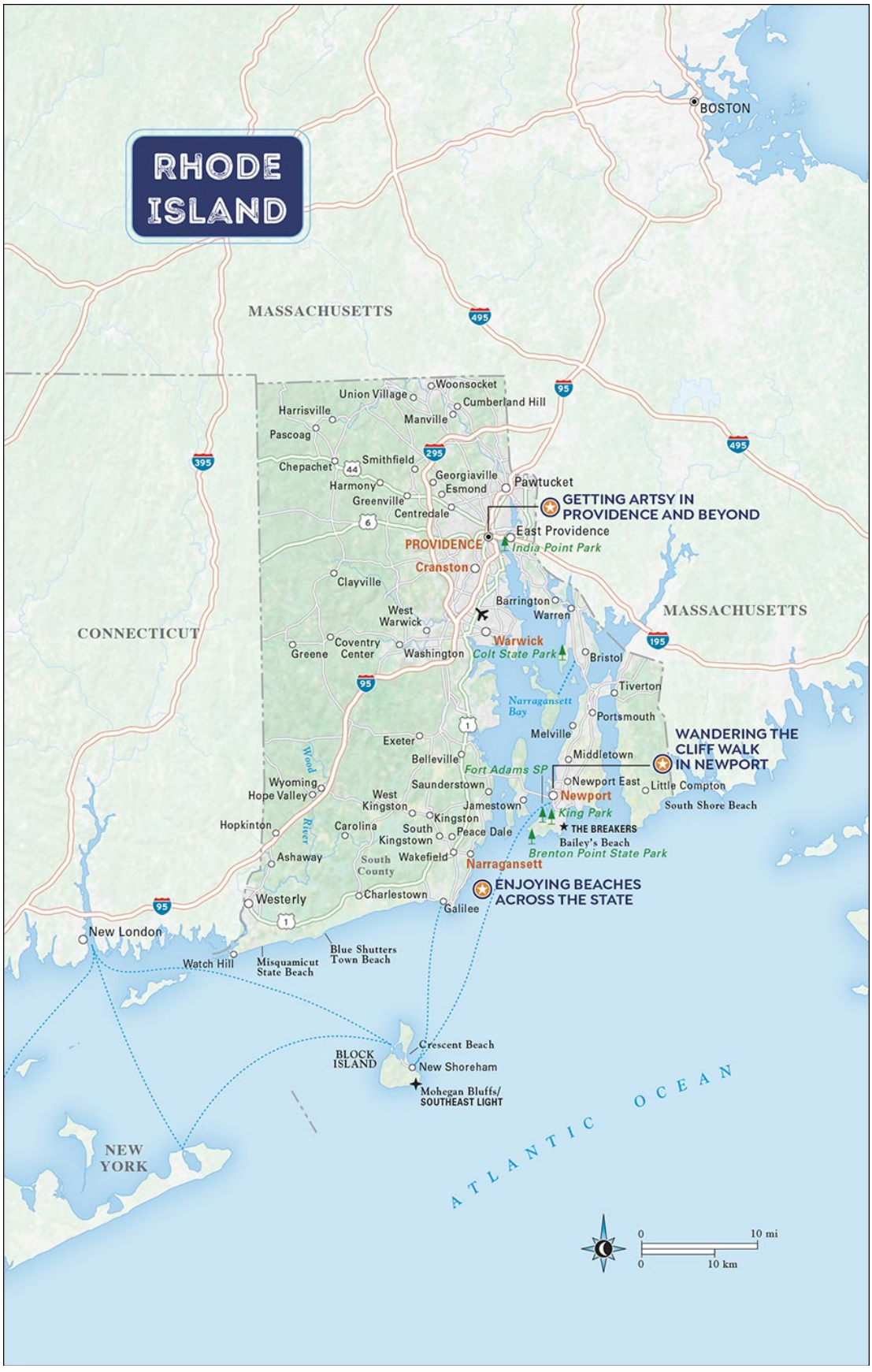
Nothing’s far from anywhere in this tiny state, but there’s a lot to explore in Little Rhody, whose coastline wraps around deep bays, islands, and inlets before taking a long, straight run at the edge of the Atlantic. Barrier beaches draw summer crowds for surfing and sun, then turn beautifully vacant in the cooler months, perfect for spotting the migratory birds that flock to the coast. Founded by the theologian Roger Williams—who was kicked out of Massachusetts when his free thinking annoyed the Puritans—Rhode Island later became New England’s most prominent trafficker in African slaves, a trade that flourished after the first abolition law was passed in the colonies. Those contradictions between an independent identity, religious tolerance, inequality, and the legacy of enslavement have shaped the state’s history and landscape, from rundown mill towns to moneyed enclaves.

AREA: 1,545 sq mi / 4,001 sq km (50th)

POPULATION: 1,112,308 (44th)

STATEHOOD DATE: May 29, 1790 (13th)

STATE CAPITAL: Providence


RHODE ISLAND
BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Woonsocket
Union Village
Cumberland Hill
Harrisville
Manville
Pascoag
Chepachet
Smithfield
Georgiaville
Harmony
Esmond
Pawtucket
Greenville
Centredale
GETTING ARTSY IN PROVIDENCE AND BEYOND
East Providence
PROVIDENCE
India Point Park
Cranston
Clayville
Barrington
Warren
West Warwick
Coventry
Greene
Center
Washington
Warwick
Colt State Park
Bristol
Tiverton
Narragansett Bay
Portsmouth
Melville
Exeter
Belleville
Middletown
WANDERING THE CLIFF WALK IN NEWPORT
Fort Adams SP
Wyoming
Hope Valley
Saunderstown
Newport East
Little Compton
Newport
West Kingston
Jamestown
South Shore Beach
King Park
Hopkinton
Carolina
Kingston
South Kingstown
Peace Dale
THE BREAKERS
Bailey's Beach
Brenton Point State Park
Ashaway
South County
Wakefield
Narragansett
ENJOYING BEACHES ACROSS THE STATE
Westerly
Charlestown
Galilee
New London
Watch Hill
Misquamicut State Beach
Blue Shutters Town Beach
BLOCK ISLAND
Crescent Beach
New Shoreham
Mohegan Bluffs/ SOUTHEAST LIGHT
Wood River
0
10 mi
0
10 km

ORIENTATION

First things first—Rhode Island is not an island. Many of the state's most important destinations are at the edge of the water, however, overwhelmingly clustered around Narragansett Bay, which extends to the outlet of the Providence River. **Newport** *is* on an island, the long isle of Aquidneck, linked to the mainland by a series of bridges. Long overlooked by travelers, the capital city of **Providence** has cutting-edge art galleries alongside gorgeous historic architecture, while Newport's Gilded Age mansions are fascinating temples to 19th-century gilt and gaud.

WHEN TO GO

Dramatic seasonal changes transform New England—but there's no bad time to visit. March brings **spring** in fits and starts. Blooming lilacs scent the air, and in the forest, a profusion of wildflowers appears. When schools let out in late June, the region's high season begins. **Autumn** brings cooler temperatures and one of New England's starring attractions: fall color. The displays of bright leaves start to pick up at the end of September, with northernmost destinations reaching "peak foliage" in the middle of October. **Winter** weather begins in earnest at the end of December, but temperatures usually hover in the 30s and 40s F (-1 to 9°F). To get the best of all worlds, come in **shoulder season** (May and September).

TOP 3

1 WANDERING THE CLIFF WALK IN NEWPORT

www.discovernewport.org

Get the best views in town from the narrow path that threads between Newport's most elegant homes and the rocky edge of the Atlantic Ocean. The Cliff Walk winds 3.5 mi (5.6 km) from **Easton's Beach,** also known as First Beach, to (private) Bailey's Beach at **Bellevue Avenue.** The finest stretch of scenery starts at the **40 Steps,** an engraved granite staircase at the end of Narragansett Avenue.

Heading north, the path is smooth and well-constructed for 0.5 mi (0.8 km) and passes behind The Breakers, Rosecliff, and Marble House. After Ruggles Avenue, the going gets a bit harder, and a sturdy pair of walking shoes is required.



THE 40 STEPS ON THE NEWPORT CLIFF WALK

2 GETTING ARTSY IN PROVIDENCE AND BEYOND

Providence is the heart of the state's art scene. You're sure to find something intriguing in the city's many galleries and studios.

PROVIDENCE

Browse art by ancient Egyptians and midcentury modern designers at the extraordinary **Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art** (20 N. Main St., Providence; 401/454-6500; https://risdmuseum.org). The breadth of the collection is remarkable in itself. A highlight is the enormous holdings of costumes and textiles, with the earliest clothing items dating back to 1500 BCE, and articles from historic Japan, the European Renaissance, and Native American groups. In the summer, don't miss **WaterFire** (https://waterfire.org), a series of fire sculptures that light up on six Saturday nights May-November.

Starting at sunset, music is piped in on giant speakers, street performers and food stalls are set up on the riverbanks, and the city becomes one big open-air carnival, made romantic by the smell of smoke and the sight and sound of crackling flames.



RISD MUSEUM

BEYOND PROVIDENCE

Housed in one of Newport's great mansions, the **National Museum of American Illustration** (492 Bellevue Ave., Newport; 401/851-8949; https://americanillustration.org) is the first museum in the country devoted to illustration art. The collection includes work by N. C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish, and Norman Rockwell, the most iconic names from the golden age of American illustration, which stretched from the post-Civil War era to the 1950s. Don't leave the museum without exploring the grounds of Vernon Court; a romantic rose garden, terraces, and a sunken garden are beautifully maintained in the neoclassical style.

3 ENJOYING BEACHES ACROSS THE STATE

No visit to Rhode Island is complete without a day at the beach. With over 400 mi (644 km) of shoreline, the state offers many public and

private beaches.

Along Westerly's stretch between a lagoon and the sea, **Misquamicut State Beach** is a summery vacation town that's popular with families. Head to **Charlestown and Blue Shutters Town Beaches** for a little more peace and quiet.



MISQUAMICUT STATE BEACH

Paddle into the waves at **Narragansett Town Beach** or bring your binocs to **Napatree Hill**—the barrier beaches of the southern coast have something for everyone. These days it's all beach and is considered the best surfing destination in South County, with gentle, beginner-friendly waves and board rental places that pull up to the edge of the water. If you fancy an evening bonfire, **South Shore Beach** in Little Compton is the only beach where you can do so. During the day, the waves are perfect for surfing.

HIGHLIGHTS

ROGER WILLIAMS PARK AND ZOO

1000 Elmwood Ave., Providence; 401/785-3510; www.rwpzoo.org

Several miles outside of Providence, the historic Roger Williams Park & Zoo was one of the first in the United States and remains among the best in New England. Highlights include a miniature Nubian goat, red pandas, wildebeests, cotton-top tamarins, and a Linne's two-toed sloth.



ROGER WILLIAMS PARK

Surrounding the zoo is a 435-ac (176-ha) park that's free to access, with a series of paths that wind around manicured gardens, ponds, and pavilions. The park is especially lovely in the fall, when the trees and Japanese Garden are brightly lit by colorful leaves. Don't miss the **Museum of Natural History** (401/680-7221; www.providenceri.gov/museum), which is located on the grounds.

Major CITIES

PROVIDENCE: Once overlooked and grimy, Providence is now among the most interesting cities in New England. Two landmark colleges draw creative students from around the world, and graduates that stay on inject a vibrancy visible in the thriving art scene, cafés, and up-and-coming neighborhoods.

WARWICK AND CRANSTON: Located south of Providence, these two dense suburbs are gateways to Narragansett Bay. Visit for the historic neighborhoods and beach access.

NEWPORT: During the late 19th century's Gilded Age, Newport was the place to be. Today, you can visit some of the mansions where the city's elites lived in splendor.

NEWPORT'S MANSIONS

When Newport was *the* place to spend the summer season, the wealthiest families in the United States piled their money into ostentatious "cottages"—sprawling mansions whose gilt, gaud, and grandeur are truly something to behold. It's easy to while away a few afternoons exploring dozens of rooms packed with art from around the world and manicured grounds designed by some of the most famous American architects. The houses are packed with art brought back from European travels, and many are designed to resemble the French and Italian palaces that Americans encountered during their time abroad.

The Elms

367 Bellevue Ave.; 401/847-1000; www.newportmansions.org

A favorite among mansion aficionados is The Elms, one of the most elegant of the Newport homes. French-inspired architecture and furnishings are set amid Classical Revival gardens that feature grand old trees and some surprising statuary—don't miss the imaginative bronze of a tiger attacking an alligator.



THE ELMS

The Breakers

44 Ochre Point Ave.; 401/847-1000; www.newportmansions.org

With time for just one mansion, however, The Breakers is Newport's showstopper. Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt II built the Italianate behemoth to resemble an open-air palazzo, and downy clouds arc above the central Great Hall. The house was created by Richard Morris Hunt, founder of the first American architectural school, and he wove the story of the Vanderbilt fortune into his design, with marble railcars and dozens of stylized acorns and oak leaves.

Rosecliff

548 Bellevue Ave.; 401/847-1000; www.newportmansions.org

Taking inspiration from the Grand Trianon of the palace of Versailles, Rosecliff features the largest ballroom found in Newport. Film aficionados might recognize its interiors from the 1974 film *The Great Gatsby*. Nevada silver heiress Theresa Fair Oelrichs commissioned Stanford White to

remodel the original house in 1899. In its heyday, French-inspired Rosecliff entertained Newport's elites, and even the magician Harry Houdini.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Get a taste of Providence's art scene at the **Rhode Island School of Design Museum.** Have lunch in town before setting off to **Roger Williams Park,** just a 6-mi (10-km) drive. Return to downtown for dinner and a stroll—If your visit coincides with **WaterFire** (May-Nov.), walk along the river to see the cauldron bonfires.

DAY 2 Newport is just 34 mi (55 km) away. Start your visit with the grand tour along **Ocean Drive.** Stretch your legs along Bellevue Avenue, taking in the historical homes like **The Breakers** that were at the heart of the town's Gilded Age. For dinner, head north to **Newport Vineyards** to sample farm-to-table dining and some of Rhode Island's best vintages.

DAY 3 For a day at the beach, head an hour out to South County. **Misquamicut** is great for sunbathers, while **Narragansett Town Beach** is a favorite among surfers. Tonight, you'll stay over on beautiful **Block Island.** It's a short ferry ride from South County.

DAY 4 Enjoy the day on Block Island cycling **The Greenway** to get a full sense of the island's history. From Old Harbor it's a short stroll to **Crescent Beach,** where you can spend the afternoon before heading back to Provincetown.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

OCEAN DRIVE

www.discovernewport.org

Spend a perfect Newport afternoon along the scenic, 10-mi (16-km) **Ocean Drive.** Start on **Thames Street** heading south from downtown. While Ocean Drive follows various roads, it's clearly **signposted** at every turn.

Keep watch for fainting goats, llamas, and sheep as you pass the **Swiss Village Farm** on Harrison Avenue; the farm is only open one day each year. Duck off the main road onto Fort Adams Drive for a side trip through historic **Fort Adams State Park** (401/847-2400; https://fortadams.org), then continue south along Harrison Avenue to Ridge Road. Stop for a drink on **The Lawn Terrace at Castle Hill Inn** (590 Ocean Dr.; 401/849-3800; www.castlehillinn.com), one of the most elegant stretches of grass in Newport. After your break at the inn, continue on to **Brenton Point State Park** (Ocean Ave.; 401/847-2400; www.riparks.com [URL inactive]), which wraps all the way around the point where Narragansett Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean. This is the best **kite-flying** spot around, so bring your own or pick one up at the park's small shop, then grab a **Del's Lemonade** from one of the trucks that prowl the parking lot. For an interesting glimpse of a once-grand Newport mansion, peek through the fence at **The Bells,** now an atmospheric ruin on the park's grounds. You'll eventually loop up by way of Bellevue Avenue.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BLOCK ISLAND

An isle of wild roses and coastal cliffs, Block Island (www.blockislandinfo.com) offers a glimpse of the New England coast as it

once was. The protected area has become a pilgrimage place for bird-watchers, who travel to the island each fall to spot some of the migratory birds that stop on their long flight south. More than 28 mi (45 km) of trails crisscross the island landscape, a marvelous network called **The Green-way.** Bicycles are just about perfect for exploring Block Island, and you'll find a handful of places to rent some wheels as soon as you step off the ferry. For the full experience, set out on the 16-mi (26-km) **Block Island Bicycle Tour** (www.blockislandinfo.com/plan-your-visit/maps/bike-tour-map), a route that loops past all the island's sights, including both of the island's lighthouses, the Mohegan Bluffs, and lots of sandy beaches, with scannable QR codes and little historical tidbits at a series of 12 stops. A short walk north from Old Harbor, **Crescent Beach** (Water St.) stretches 2.5 mi (4 km) in a wide, sweeping curve of gorgeous yellow sand, making it a favorite for day-trippers. Don't miss **Southeast Light,** the 1873 lighthouse that was relocated to Mohegan Bluffs on Block Island's south side in 1993.



BEACH ON BLOCK ISLAND

EAST BAY BIKE PATH

Running 14.5 mi (23 km) from Providence to Bristol, the **East Bay Bike Path** (www.dot.ri.gov) makes a great day trip out of the city, and it's almost entirely flat. Hop on at the northern terminus of the trail at **India Point Park** (India St., Providence), then ride south across a series of inlets and coves on your way along the curving shore of Narragansett Bay. If you only want to ride one way, put your bike on the #60 RIPTA bus from Providence to Roger Williams University in Bristol, a couple of easy miles from the terminus in Bristol at **Independence Park.**

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY IN RHODE ISLAND

The land that is now Rhode Island was occupied by a handful of Algonquin. In southern New England, tribes such as **Wampanoags, Narragansetts,** and **Pequots** grew corn, beans, squash, tobacco, and other crops to supplement hunting and fishing. Most extraordinary is the way the groups cultivated the forest itself, burning wide swaths to get rid of the undergrowth and allow park-like land that was ideal for hunting game and harvesting berries.

When the Salem minister named Roger Williams was banished to the area in 1636, he and his followers settled on Narragansett Bay and founded the city of Providence. The Narragansett people and Williams established friendly relations. Around the same time, settlers formed the cities of Portsmouth and Newport. Tensions came to a head during **King Philip's War**—between Philip of the Wampanoag and the white settlers. The war drew together many of the Native American tribes in New England in a last-gasp attempt to push back English expansion.

Despite several victories during the yearlong campaign, the Native Americans were defeated by their lack of supplies and the English force of arms. By the time peace was signed in 1676, Philip and more than 3,000 Native Americans had been killed, with many more sold into enslavement. After the war, many area tribes were permanently relocated to Rhode Island's South County, near the town of Charlestown, effectively spelling an end to autonomous Native American presence in southern New England in all but the far western frontier of Massachusetts.

WOOD RIVER

Get out on the water on Wood River in the southwest of the state. Paddlers will enjoy a trip of 9 mi (14.5 km), passing picturesque woodland as well as some rapids. For a shorter introduction to the Wood River ecosystem, start at the put-in on Hope Valley Road Landing and travel the easy 7.5-mi (12-km) course to Alton Dam.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

ANNUAL CAPE VERDEAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

India Point Park, Providence; 401/222-4133; July

One of the largest communities of Cape Verdeans can be found in Rhode Island. Originally from Cape Verde Islands off the west coast of Africa, members of the Rhode Island community gather every year to celebrate their heritage through food, music, dance, and the arts.

NEWPORT FOLK AND JAZZ FESTIVALS

Fort Adams State Park, Newport; www.newportjazz.org; July

For two weekends each summer, generally the last weekend of July and the first weekend in August, Newport fills to the brim with music lovers, drawn to two of the country's most important—and historic—festivals. **Newport Jazz Festival** is the original, a three-day extravaganza that always includes some of the genre's biggest names. Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, and Ella Fitzgerald produced recordings of their Newport performances.



NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL

CHARLESTOWN SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Charlestown; 401/364-3878; www.charlestownseafoodfestival.com; July/August

One of Rhode Island's biggest events, the Charlestown Seafood Festival is three days of all things seafood. Here you can listen to live music while sampling everything from raw oysters to lobster rolls. There are dozens of vendors to choose from! It's a full lineup complete with a car show, craft market, kids' activities, and a fireworks show on the last night of the festival.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

As you travel through the Ocean State you'll encounter some quintessentially Rhode Island dishes.

QUAHOGS

Hard-shelled clams are called quahogs (pronounced KOH-hogs) in the Ocean State, and there are dozens of ways to prepare the briny bivalves. In Galilee, try your hand at "quahogging" at **Point Judith Salt Pond** or **Ninigret Pond** in Charlestown. Out-of-state visitors must get a shellfishing license to harvest quahogs.

For **stuffies,** the chopped clam meat is mixed with bread and spices, then baked in the shell. Some versions are spiced up with chourico sausage, a reminder of Rhode Island's Portuguese heritage. Kingstown's **Matunuck Oyster Bar** (629 Succotash Rd., Wakefield; 401/783-4202; www.rhodyoysters.com) has some of the best stuffies in the state.

COFFEE MILK

Rhode Island's state drink is the unassuming **coffee milk,** a sweet blend of cold milk and coffee syrup that's available everywhere (the two major labels are almost identical, but each claims passionate partisans). You'll find coffee milk at any good diner throughout the state.

CABINETS

Order a "milk shake" and you'll get sweetened milk; the frosty, blended ice cream drink you had in mind is called a **cabinet.** For a truly local experience, order a coffee cabinet with Autocrat coffee syrup. **Gray's Ice Cream** (16 East Rd., Tiverton; 401/624-4500; www.graysicecream.com) offers cabinets with a wide range of locally made flavors.

BEST SOUVENIRS

The Ocean State's climate is ideal for growing wine grapes. Touring the state, you'll come across historic vineyards producing everything from Riesling to pinot noir. Basing yourself in Newport, you can spend the day sipping wine on a picnic blanket overlooking the lovely properties of several wineries. Take home a bottle or two to enjoy at home. **Newport Vineyards** (909 E. Main Rd., Middleton; 401/848-5161; https://newportvineyards.com/winery [URL inactive]), a short drive from town, offers tastings, bottle purchases, and a full kitchen serving farm-fresh meals.

You'll find no shortage of T-shirts and magnets at the souvenir shops in the state's major towns. For something more unique, stop by the **Newport Mansions Store** (424 Bellevue Ave.; 401/846/9710; https://newportstyle.net), which stocks local sundries like Rhode Island salt, culinary seasonings, plus handcrafted soaps and candles. There is also a collection of books specific to Newport cottages' history and design.

HOT WIENERS

Muster up the gumption to ask for a "hot wiener all the way," and your sausage will arrive in a steamed bun topped with beef sauce, chopped onions, and a bump of celery salt. Try one with a side of coffee milk at the Providence location of **Olneyville New York System Restaurant** (18 Plainfield St., Providence; 401/621-9500; www.olneyvillenewyorksystem.com) . . . just don't call it a hot dog.

DEL'S

This brand of local, frozen lemonade slush is sold throughout the state. Just look for the yellow and green Del's umbrellas to find your way to a cup of

this icy goodness. To visit the original 1948 stand, stop by **1260 Oaklawn Avenue** in Cranston.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Rhode Island T. F. Green International Airport:** PVD; 2000 Post Rd., Warwick; 401/691-2000; https://flyri.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **State of Rhode Island Tourism:** www.visitrhodeisland.com
- **State of Rhode Island Division of Parks and Recreation:** www.riparks.com [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Providence Journal:*** www.providencejournal.com
- ***Rhode Island Monthly:*** www.rimonthly.com

CONNECTICUT

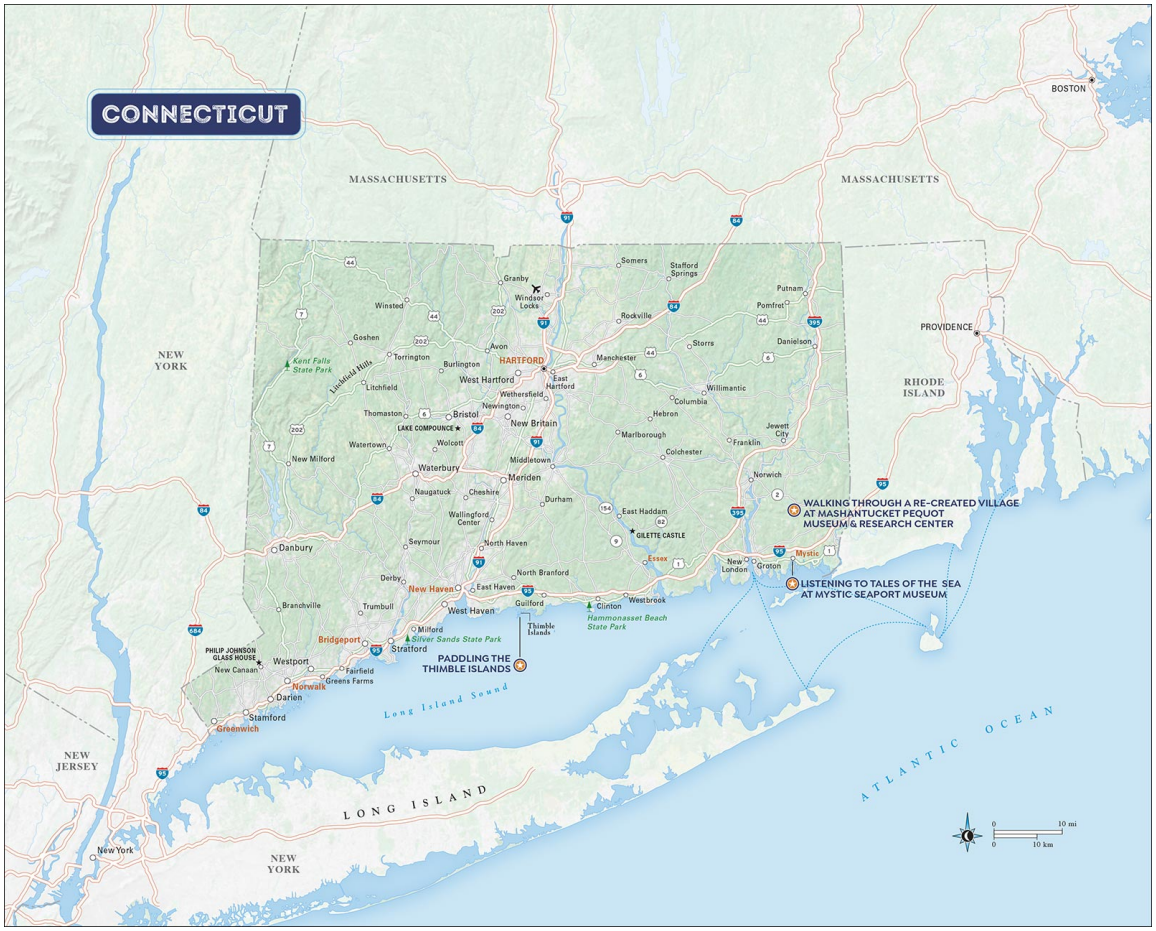
Connecticut, the “land of steady habits,” is full of surprises. Drive the state’s scenic coastal road and you’ll find dreamy beaches, old-fashioned fishing villages, and an archipelago of tiny islands scattered across Long Island Sound. On the land of the Nipmunks, Sequin, Matabesec, and Pequot-Mohegan groups, Connecticut embodies great contrasts, and nowhere is that more apparent than in the eastern part of the state, which is home to big cities, rural farm country, and the state’s largest tourist attractions: Mystic Seaport and a pair of behemoth casinos. East of the Connecticut River, the state looks more toward New England than New York, and much of the land here is—or was—devoted to farming. The remnants of stone walls and foundations are still visible through the trees in land that has been slowly reclaimed by forest.

AREA: 5,543 sq mi / 14,357 sq km (48th)

POPULATION: 3,675,069 (29th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 9, 1788 (5th)

STATE CAPITAL: Hartford


CONNECTICUT
MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS
BOSTON
PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND
NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY
NEW YORK
LONG ISLAND
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Long Island Sound
HARTFORD
New Britain
Waterbury
New Haven
Bridgeport
Stamford
Norwalk
Danbury
Meriden
Middletown
Torrington
Litchfield
Winsted
Granby
Windsor Locks
Somers
Stafford Springs
Putnam
Pomfret
Rockville
Storrs
Danielson
Manchester
Willimantic
Columbia
Hebron
Marlborough
Colchester
Franklin
Jewett City
Norwich
Avon
Burlington
West Hartford
East Hartford
Wethersfield
Newington
Bristol
Thomaston
Watertown
Wolcott
New Milford
Goshen
Kent Falls State Park
Lichfield Hills
Naugatuck
Cheshire
Durham
Wallingford Center
Seymour
North Haven
Derby
North Branford
East Haven
Branchville
Trumbull
West Haven
Guilford
Clinton
Westbrook
Hammonasset Beach State Park
Milford
Silver Sands State Park
Thimble Islands
Westport
Fairfield
Greens Farms
New Canaan
Darien
Greenwich
East Haddam
Essex
New London
Groton
Mystic
LAKE COMPOUNCE
PHILIP JOHNSON GLASS HOUSE
PADDLING THE THIMBLE ISLANDS
GILLETTE CASTLE
WALKING THROUGH A RE-CREATED VILLAGE AT MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT MUSEUM & RESEARCH CENTER
LISTENING TO TALES OF THE SEA AT MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM
0 10 mi
0 10 km

ORIENTATION

Connecticut's coast sits along Long Island Sound. **Mystic** is located on the eastern coast, near the border with Rhode Island, while **New Haven** sits a little west of center. **New Canaan** is even farther west and a bit inland. **Hartford** sits in the center of the state, and the **Litchfield Hills** are tucked into the state's northwestern corner.

WHEN TO GO

New England experiences all four seasons, but there's no bad time to visit Connecticut. **Summer** is high season, when everyone heads to the beach to cool off. **Fall** brings dazzling colors as the leaves change. **Winter** weather begins at the end of December, when Connecticut might get a few snowstorms. **Spring** brings wildflowers, though the weather stays fitful until well into May.

TOP 3

1 PADDLING THE THIMBLE ISLANDS

The scattered archipelago off the coast of Branford is named after the thimbleberry, a cousin to the raspberry that grows wild on the islands. They could just as well be named for their diminutive size, however; in addition to 25 populated islands, literally hundreds of pink granite outcroppings poke their peaks out of the waves. The islands are home to a variety of critters, including a winter population of seals—and a summer influx of rich people from New York, who have built elaborate mansions, tiny cottages, and even little gazebos on the rocks.



THIMBLE ISLANDS

In addition to being unlike anything else on the New England coast, the islands have spawned dozens of legends, such as an enduring myth that the pirate Captain Kidd buried treasure on so-called Money Island. Keep your eyes peeled for pirate gold as you explore the tiny islets that speckle Long Island Sound.

The best way to take in the islands is at sea level, from the vantage of your very own sea kayak. April-October, **Branford River Paddlesports** (50 Maple St., Branford; 203/980-8451; www.branfordriverpaddlesports.com) leads kayak and paddleboard expeditions to the Thimbles. Or sign up for a 45-minute narrated tour on *Island Time* or the *Sea Mist*, operating under the name **Thimble Island Cruise** (Thimble Island Rd., Stony Creek; 203/488-8905; http://thimbleislandcruise.com).

2 LISTENING TO TALES OF THE SEA AT MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM

75 Greenmanville Ave., Mystic; 860/572-0711; www.mysticseaport.org [URL inactive]

Situated less than 1 mi (1.6 km) upriver from downtown Mystic, the Mystic Seaport Museum has more than 500 vessels in a miniature

city that is a careful reproduction of a bustling 19th-century seaport. The most engaging attractions, however, are the village folk and old salts who regale visitors with tales of the sea, and the *Charles W. Morgan*, America's last surviving whale ship, launched in New Bedford in 1841. Interpreters detail how the tryworks rendered all that whale blubber, and also lead parties in hoisting sails, complete with authentic sea shanties. There are plenty of interactive experiences for kids, a boat-themed play area, a cooperage, and much more, with frequent demonstrations of old-fashioned sailor skills.



THE CHARLES W. MORGAN AT THE MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM

3 WALKING THROUGH A RE-CREATED VILLAGE AT MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT MUSEUM & RESEARCH CENTER

110 Pequot Tr., Mashantucket; 860/396-6910; www.pequotmuseum.org

The foremost Native American research institute in New England is also a fascinating museum. A highlight of the visitor experience is walking through a re-created village where visitors can learn how the Pequot people built their homes, hunted, and cared for their sick. The

museum doesn't mince words as it recounts the decimation of Native American tribes through warfare and disease. With a collection of some 150,000 books, the center's primary mission is researching, collecting, and preserving Native American artifacts from southern New England.

HIGHLIGHTS

THE GLASS HOUSE

199 Elm St. (visitor center), New Canaan; 203/594-9884; www.theglasshouse.org

The sleepy, leafy, New York City suburb of New Canaan seems an unlikely vanguard for modernist architecture, but this is where the renowned architect Philip Johnson built his groundbreaking Glass House in 1949. Tours, which take in the house (during open season Apr.-Dec.), landscape design, and the sculpture and art sprinkled throughout the property, depart from the visitor center in downtown New Canaan.



THE GLASS HOUSE

Also featuring sublime glass architecture, **Grace Farms** (365 Lukes Wood Rd., New Canaan; 203/920-1702; www.gracefarms.org) has five buildings that are connected by an undulating covered walkway that rolls down the fall line of the hillside. Set on 80 ac (32 ha) and used by nonprofit organizations, this relaxing space is especially beautiful in the autumn.

YALE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

New Haven; www.yale.edu

Founded in 1701, Yale was the third college in the United States, and quickly established a rivalry with its northern neighbor Harvard, founding a tradition of one-upmanship that's alive and well. Many of Yale's buildings are done in a striking Gothic style, making a tour of the campus a genuine visual treat. Tours start at the **Yale University Visitor Center** (149 Elm St., New Haven; 203/432-2300; https://visitorcenter.yale.edu) and include visits

to several of Yale's libraries, including the rare-book library, which holds a copy of the Gutenberg Bible.



YALE UNIVERSITY

Major CITIES

BRIDGEPORT: Located on the Long Island Sound coastline, Bridgeport is notable for having circus man P. T. Barnum as its mayor 1875-1876. Once an industrial center, Bridgeport fell on hard times in the mid-20th century in the wake of deindustrialization but is now making redevelopment efforts.

NEW HAVEN: One of the country's oldest cities and home to Yale University, this sprawling city is a blend of historic architecture, picturesque town greens, and some rough areas.

HARTFORD: The capital, sitting proudly in the middle of the state surrounded by a spiderweb of interstate highways, has a long history —the city was settled just after Boston and spent 200 years as a

flourishing port city. Since then, however, Hartford has seen a long decline and rising crime.

Yale also has several other outstanding museums. The **Yale Center for British Art** (1080 Chapel St., New Haven; 203/432-2800; https://britishart.yale.edu) is particularly worth singling out for its comprehensive collection of British art. The **Yale University Art Gallery** (1111 Chapel St., New Haven; 203/432-0600; https://artgallery.yale.edu) holds works from all over the world, as well as several fine canvases by American modernist Edward Hopper. Other highlights on campus include the **Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments** (15 Hillhouse Ave., New Haven; 203/432-0822; https://music.yale.edu/collection) and the **Peabody Museum of Natural History** (170 Whitney Ave., New Haven; 203/432-8987; https://peabody.yale.edu), which features famous dinosaur skeletons.

LAKE COMPOUNCE

186 Enterprise Dr., Bristol; 860/583-3300; www.lakecompounce.com

Open May-December, Lake Compounce is the oldest continuously operating amusement park in the United States. With a wooden roller coaster and a triple-launch steel coaster, the park attracts families with older kids, but little ones can try the Dino Expedition and Flying Elephants. The adjoining water park has wave pools, waterslides, and a family rafting adventure.

MARK TWAIN HOUSE & MUSEUM

351 Farmington Ave., Hartford; 860/247-0998; www.marktwainhouse.org

Samuel Langhorne Clemens—the writer who became known to the world as Mark Twain—is more often associated with the wide, muddy flow of the Mississippi River than urban Connecticut. But many of his masterpieces, including *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, were penned in this Victorian Gothic manse, now the Mark Twain House & Museum, just outside of downtown Hartford. Twain lived here for

17 years, and while he was here, he formed the nucleus of a literary group that included Harriet Beecher Stowe, Booker T. Washington, and other giants of the Gilded Age.

Inside, docents give tours of the house, including the billiards room where Twain did most of his writing; the elaborate Middle Eastern-inspired decor by Louis Comfort Tiffany; and Twain's telephone, one of the first installed in a private residence.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE CENTER

77 Forest St., Hartford; 860/522-9258; www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org

Harriet Beecher Stowe lived in this Victorian "cottage" right next door to the Mark Twain House for 23 years. Through objects, photographs, and interactive media, docents tell the story of the author and the lasting impact of her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Exhibits explore the author's passion for social justice, emancipation, and women's rights.

GILLETTE CASTLE

67 River Rd., East Haddam; 860/526-2336; www.ct.gov

The former residence of William Gillette, an American stage and silent film actor from the late 19th-early 20th centuries, resembles a stone medieval fortress. Highlights inside the 24-room mansion, built 1914-1919, include 47 unique doors with intricate puzzle-like locks, built-in couches, and carved-wood light switches. There is also a secret passageway and a secret room. The castle is located on a 184-ac (74-ha) park, which includes hiking trails and picnic spots.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in **Hartford;** Connecticut's capital is located just 20 minutes (15 mi/24 km) south of the airport. Literature lovers can visit the **Mark Twain House & Museum** and adjacent **Harriet**

Beecher Stowe Center. Afterward, travel one hour to the historic shipbuilding center of Mystic (54 mi/86 km) for two nights.

DAY 2 For this day, the **Mystic Seaport Museum** and **Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center** are absolute musts. Grab a slice at **Mystic Pizza** (56 W. Main St., Mystic; 860/536-3700), made famous by the 1988 film of the same name starring Julia Roberts.

DAY 3 Follow the coast one hour (55 mi/88 km) to **New Haven.** In the morning, take a tour of the **Yale University** campus; make sure to stop by the **Yale University Art Gallery.** In the afternoon, get out on the water for some paddling among the nearby **Thimble Islands,** or spread a towel out on the beach at **Silver Sands State Park.** Make sure to try the New Haven specialty, **apizza,** before spending the night.

DAY 4 Head one hour southwest to see **The Glass House** (40 mi/64 km from New Haven), then 1.5 hours north to **Kent Falls State Park** (55 mi/88 km), where you can hike to Connecticut's only covered bridges and the state's highest waterfall. To finish your loop, drive 1.5 hours east (50 mi/80 km) back to **Hartford.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ALONG THE COAST

Visitors flock to Connecticut's coastal towns for colonial architecture, antiques stores, and restaurants serving freshly caught seafood with local flair. Beaches and clam shacks are big summer draws here, and the coast's sandy edges fill with umbrellas through the warm months. This part of Connecticut is also dreamy in autumn, when the gently changing colors

make a picturesque contrast with the flanking ocean. Starting in Greenwich, the "Gateway to New England" near the New York border, the 100-mi (160-km) drive east along I-95 to Mystic, near the Rhode Island border (or vice versa), takes 1.5-2 hours—without stops, of course.

Greenwich, your starting point, is known for mansions built on rolling lawns, high-end stores, and restaurants. Up next is **Norwalk,** where you'll find boutiques and cafés in the redeveloped and trendy South Norwalk neighborhood. Stop at **Silver Sands State Park** for the beach and **New Haven** for some culture at Yale University. Another worthy stop is the village of **Essex** and its quintessential New England vibe. Finally, you'll reach **Mystic,** with its excellent museums and maritime atmosphere.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

SILVER SANDS STATE PARK

1 Silver Sands Pkwy., Milford; 203/735-4311; www.ct.gov

Located west of New Haven, the 297 ac (120 ha) of beach, dunes, restored salt marsh, open areas, and woods of Silver Sands State Park includes the 14-ac (5.6-ha) Charles Island, which is connected to the park by a sandbar that's submerged during high tide. Take time to wander the expansive salt marshes and dunes, but the beach is the real draw here, with gorgeous sand that invites lazy days by the water. Legend has it that Captain Kidd buried his treasure on this island, which is closed May-September to protect egrets and other bird rookeries. There are facilities, such as a concession stand, restrooms, and a parking lot, and lifeguards are on duty.



SILVER SANDS STATE PARK

KENT FALLS STATE PARK

US 7; www.ct.gov

Kent Falls State Park in the Litchfield Hills is the home of the state's highest waterfall, a 250-ft (76-m) cascade reached by an easy 0.8-mi (1.3-km) roundtrip trail with a few steep sections. It passes through a covered bridge that was built in 1974 for foot traffic only.



KENT FALLS STATE PARK

HAMMONASSET BEACH STATE PARK

1288 Boston Post Rd. (US 1), Madison; 203/245-2785; www.ct.gov

Hammonasset Beach State Park features some of Connecticut's best coastline. There are more than 2 mi (3.2 km) of beach, perfect for laying a towel out and swimming in the waves. There are also wetlands and woodlands, and plenty of opportunities for biking, kayaking, fishing, and bird-watching. Amenities include a boardwalk, restrooms, and boat launches.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC BOAT RENDEZVOUS

Mystic; https://thisismystic.com; July

A parade of antique and classic vessels sets off from Mystic Seaport during the Antique and Classic Boat Rendezvous; the boats can be seen at the seaport that weekend.

MATCHES AT GREENWICH POLO CLUB

1 Hurlingham Dr., Greenwich; 203/561-1639; www.greenwichpoloclub.com; June-Sept.

If you're visiting Greenwich on a Sunday afternoon from June to September, try to catch a polo match at the Greenwich Polo Club, a spectacular site for high-goal polo. Bring your own picnic, purchase snacks from food vendors, or buy a VIP ticket for reserved space and other amenities.

BEST FOOD

Traditional New England fare revolves around the seafood of the area's coast but pays homage to the cooking methods of its British origins—the likes of boiled lobsters, baked stuffed shrimp, fried cod, and steamed clams. Other foodstuffs native to the region also play a big part in the regional cuisine—cranberry sauce, maple syrup, corn bread, and baked beans, for starters.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Get into the Bulldog spirit with some Yale swag. The **Yale Bookstore** sells sweatshirts, hats, and more.

Celebrate Connecticut's literary heroes with one of their **books.** Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Booker T. Washington are the stars of Hartford. Gertrude Chandler Warner, author of the popular children's book series *The Boxcar Children,* had her childhood home in Putnam, in northeastern Connecticut, while Madeleine L'Engle, author of *A Wrinkle In Time,* grew up in Litchfield Hills, west of Hartford.

A spot-on representative of a classic Connecticut **preppy clothing** retailer, **Island Pursuit** (23 W. Main St., Mystic; 860/245-5097; www.islandpursuit.com) sells items like brightly patterned shift dresses and ingenious waterproof espadrilles.

NEW HAVEN APIZZA

Neapolitan, New York style, Chicago style . . . in the oozy, blistered geography of pizza, New Haven's oddball flatbreads are unique and beloved. Strictly speaking, New Haven makes apizza, pronounced "ah-BEETS," and if you could sequence the apizza genome, it would point straight back to Naples—a century ago, the New Haven neighborhood of Wooster Square was known as Little Naples for the high concentration of immigrants who traced their roots to the city that invented pizza, and that's still where you'll find the city's top slices.

What makes it apizza? A classic New Haven pie is tossed by hand, stretched thin, then baked in a searing hot coal-fired oven. Order it plain and it comes topped with crushed tomatoes, olive oil, a dusting of pecorino cheese, and a bit of oregano—add some **mootz** to layer the pie with bubbling mozzarella.

The granddaddy of New Haven pizza is **Frank Pepe's Pizzeria Napoletana** (157 Wooster St., New Haven; 203/865-5762; www.pepespizzeria.com), where pies come crisp and sooty at the edges, with gorgeously toasted fillings in between. Fervent partisans of New Haven pizza assert that Frank Pepe's invented **white clam pizza,** topped with fresh clams. Neck-and-neck for the best in the city is **Sally's Apizza** (237 Wooster St., New Haven; 203/624-5271; www.sallysapizza.com), where the tomato pie wins extra acclaim.

Something to drink with that pizza? Opt for a **Foxon Park** soda—it's been made in East Haven since 1922, with a long list of throwback flavors, including white birch, iron brew—a Scottish cross between cream soda and root beer—and gassosa, an Italian-style lemon-lime soda.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Bradley International Airport:** BDL; Schoephoester Rd., Windsor Locks; 860/292-2000; www.bradleyairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Connecticut Tourism:** www.ctvisit.com
- **Connecticut State Parks and Forests:** https://ctparks.com

MAGAZINES

- ***Connecticut Magazine:*** www.connecticutmag.com

OceanofPDF.com

MID-ATLANTIC

New York

New Jersey

Pennsylvania

West Virginia

Delaware

Maryland

Washington DC

Virginia

THE MID-ATLANTIC
State by State

NEW YORK

Why Go: If the pulsing energy of New York City isn't for you, the Empire State also encompasses the pastoral Hudson Valley and the thundering Niagara Falls.

NEW JERSEY

Why Go: The eclectic Garden State has kitsch, glitz, and Victorian architecture along the Jersey Shore, its very own mythical creature lurking in the Pinelands, and, yes, gardens.

PENNSYLVANIA

Why Go: See where the foundations of the US government were drafted and the art of Andy Warhol in his birthplace.

WEST VIRGINIA

Why Go: River gorges and small towns show that the Mountain State has much to offer.

DELAWARE

Why Go: The influence of one family looms large in the second-smallest state.

MARYLAND

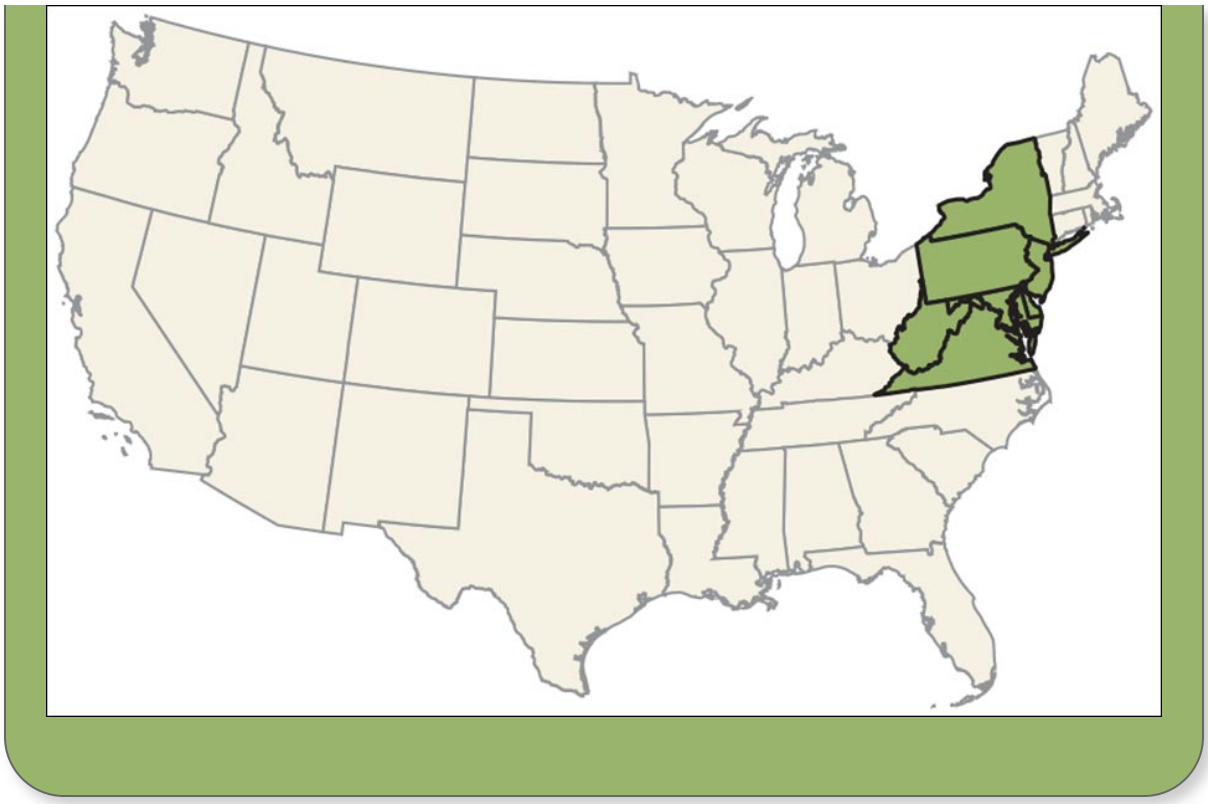
Why Go: The Chesapeake Bay infuses many of Maryland's sights with a maritime feel and is the source of its most famous food, Old Bay-seasoned crab.

WASHINGTON DC

Why Go: The excellent—and free—museums are reason enough to visit the nation's capital, but everyone should see the buildings and landmarks dedicated to democracy at least once.

VIRGINIA

Why Go: History permeates Virginia, from preserved colonial towns, presidential plantations, and Civil War battlefields to civil rights monuments and the birthplace of country music.



Mid-Atlantic ROAD TRIP

This two-week route combines the coast with the major cities in the Mid-Atlantic. Given the large populations all along this corridor, traffic can be congested, so try to avoid driving during the busiest times. This trip starts with the cities but could easily be done in the opposite direction.

NEW YORK

New York City: 2 days

Start with two days in New York City. On one day, combine the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** with **Central Park,** capped off with a **Broadway** show. On the second day, go out to the **Statue of Liberty** and take a walk over the **Brooklyn Bridge.** Be sure to have some pastrami at **Katz's Deli.**

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia: 1 day / 100 mi (160 km)

You could drive from New York to Philadelphia, or you could take the train from Penn Station down to the City of Brotherly Love. When you arrive, walk around **Independence Hall** and have a Philly cheesesteak at **Jim's Steak** to avoid the Pat's versus Geno's rivalry.

MARYLAND

Baltimore: 1 day / 135 mi (220 km)

If you took the train to Philadelphia, pick up a rental car. Before leaving Pennsylvania, drive out to **Valley Forge** for a little break from all the cities. From there, drive two hours southwest to Maryland's largest city, **Baltimore,** where you'll explore the Inner Harbor, making sure to walk the waterfront promenade.

WASHINGTON DC

2 days / 40 mi (65 km)

Get an early start out of Baltimore for the hour drive to DC. Over two days, divide your time between one or two of the excellent **Smithsonian** museums, the memorials of **National Mall,** and a walk around the **U Street** neighborhood. Be sure to have some **Ethiopian food** along the way.

VIRGINIA

Richmond, Virginia Beach, and Chincoteague: 3 days / 325 mi (525 km)

From DC, **Richmond** is about two hours south. Spend the rest of that day exploring Virginia's capital city. On the second day, your beach time starts. Head two hours east of Richmond to **Virginia Beach,** where the boardwalk, beach, and oceanfront hotels await. The next day, head north two hours to **Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge** for a dose of nature.

MARYLAND AND DELAWARE COAST

Ocean City and Lewes: 2 days / 90 mi (145 km)

From Chincoteague, drive north into Maryland—**Ocean City** is about 1.5 hours away. After another beach-and-boardwalk day there, head north again to the Delaware beach town of **Lewes** (one hour) with its quaint historic downtown.

NEW JERSEY

Cape May and the Jersey Shore: 1-2 days / 185 mi (300 km)

From Lewes, take the 1.5-hour ferry ride over Delaware Bay to New Jersey's **Cape May.** If you still want more beach time, you have many towns to choose from all along the **Jersey Shore,** especially if you're headed back up to New York City. Otherwise, head west two hours back to Philadelphia. Either way, be sure to stop in Margate to see **Lucy the Elephant.**

ADDING WEST VIRGINIA

Harpers Ferry: 1 day / 135 mi (220 km)

To get to all the Mid-Atlantic states, you could make a detour to **Harpers Ferry** between Baltimore and Washington DC. The historic town is about 1.5 hours away from either city.

NEW YORK

Even those who have never strolled the streets of the Big Apple can instantly conjure its magic, having long been fed stories of the city through movies, novels, plays, and melodies. But it's only a small part of what New York is. New York is on Abenaki, Cayuga, Erie, Laurentian, Mohawk, Mohican, Mohegan, Delaware, Oneida, Onondaga, Poospatuck, Shinnecock, Tonawanda, Tuscarora, Unkechaug, and Seneca land. Along the state's labyrinth of scenic highways, you'll see a breathtaking landscape of rivers, lakes, and mountains. The sublime falls of Niagara and the high peaks of the Adirondacks wait amid the semi-wilderness. There are pockets of arts and culture in the Finger Lakes, culinary excellence in the Hudson Valley, and historic locations, from Harriet Tubman's house to the rural communities of the Catskills.

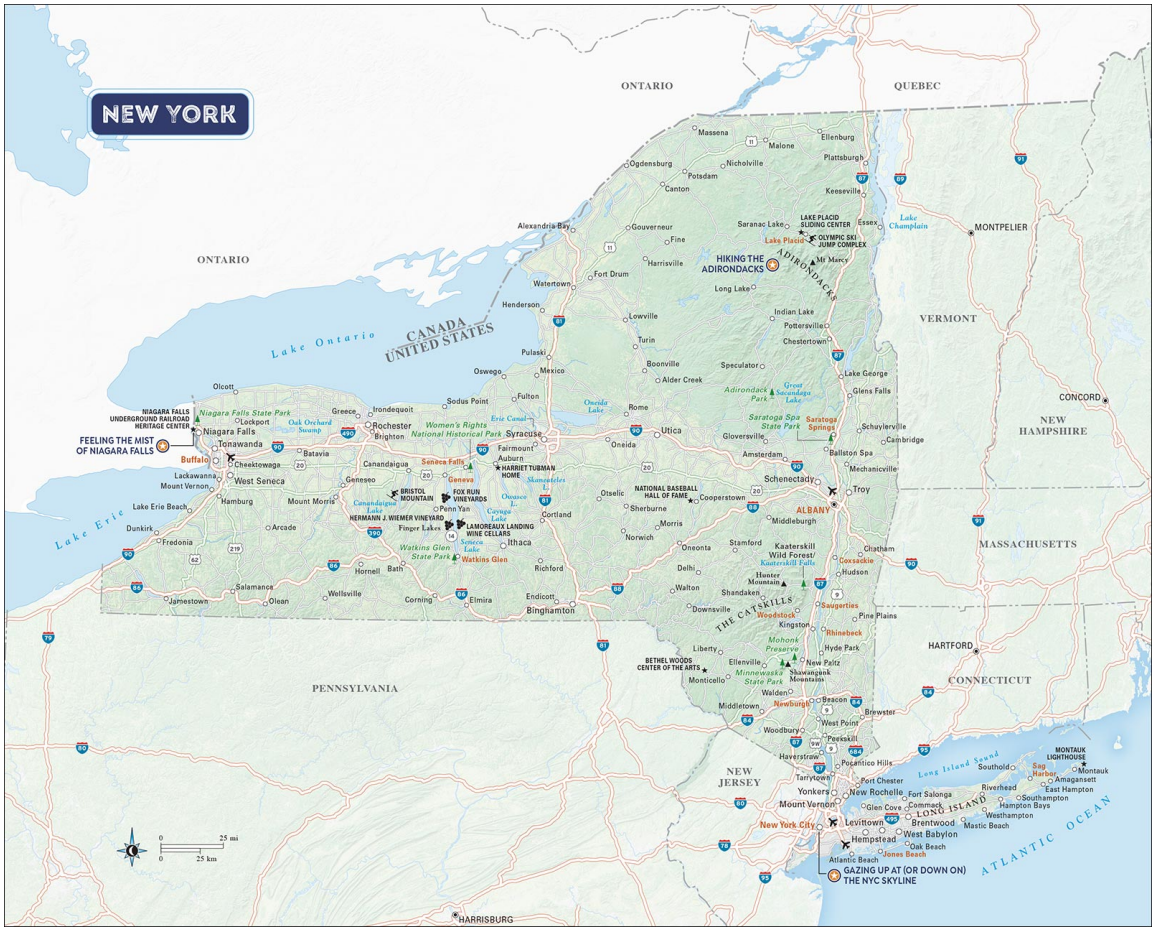
All of these destinations are facets of New York, gems in the Empire State's crown.

AREA: 54,555 sq mi / 141,297 sq km (27th)

POPULATION: 19,867,248 (4th)

STATEHOOD DATE: July 26, 1788 (11th)

STATE CAPITAL: Albany


NEW YORK
ONTARIO
QUEBEC
ONTARIO
CANADA
UNITED STATES
Lake Ontario
Lake Erie
PENNSYLVANIA
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
MONTPELIER
CONCORD
HARTFORD
ALBANY
New York City
HARRISBURG
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Long Island Sound
LONG ISLAND
THE CATSKILLS
ADIRONDACKS
Lake Champlain
Lake Placid
LAKE PLACID SLIDING CENTER
OLYMPIC SKI JUMP COMPLEX
HIKING THE ADIRONDACKS
FEELING THE MIST OF NIAGARA FALLS
NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE CENTER
Niagara Falls State Park
Oak Orchard Swamp
Women's Rights National Historical Park
Erie Canal
Oneida Lake
Adirondack Park
Great Sacandaga Lake
Saratoga Spa State Park
Saratoga Springs
Finger Lakes
Watkins Glen State Park
Seneca Lake
Cayuga Lake
Canandaigua Lake
Skaneateles L.
Otsego L.
Kaaterskill Falls
Mohonk Preserve
Minnewaska State Park
Shawangunk Mountains
Hunter Mountain
Woodstock
Rhinebeck
Newburgh
Jones Beach
Long Island Sound
Sag Harbor
MONTAUK LIGHTHOUSE
BRISTOL MOUNTAIN
FOX RUN VINEYARDS
HERMANN J. WIEMER VINEYARD
LAMOREAUX LANDING WINE CELLARS
HARRIET TUBMAN HOME
NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME
BETHEL WOODS CENTER OF THE ARTS
GAZING UP AT (OR DOWN ON) THE NYC SKYLINE
Niagara Falls
Buffalo
Rochester
Syracuse
Utica
Schenectady
Troy
Albany
Binghamton
Elmira
Corning
Ithaca
Watkins Glen
Geneva
Seneca Falls
Auburn
Fairmount
Oswego
Mexico
Pulaski
Watertown
Fort Drum
Massena
Ogdensburg
Potsdam
Canton
Plattsburgh
Ellenburg
Malone
Keeseville
Essex
Saranac Lake
Lake Placid
Alexandria Bay
Gouverneur
Fine
Harrisville
Long Lake
Indian Lake
Lowville
Henderson
Turin
Boonville
Alder Creek
Speculator
Lake George
Glens Falls
Schuylerville
Cambridge
Ballston Spa
Mechanicville
Amsterdam
Gloversville
Johnstown
Rome
Oneida
Utica
Sherburne
Norwich
Oneonta
Cooperstown
Otselic
Cortland
Morris
Middleburgh
Stamford
Kaaterskill Wild Forest
Catskill
Coxsackie
Hudson
Chatham
Delhi
Walton
Shandaken
Hunter Mountain
Saugerties
Pine Plains
Kingston
Woodstock
Liberty
Monticello
Ellenville
New Paltz
Hyde Park
Beacon
Newburgh
Brewster
Middletown
Woodbury
Peekskill
West Point
Haverstraw
Tarrytown
Pocantico Hills
Port Chester
Yonkers
New Rochelle
Mount Vernon
Fort Salonga
Glen Cove
Commack
Riverhead
Southold
Southampton
Hampton Bays
East Hampton
Amagansett
Montauk
Westhampton
Mastic Beach
Brentwood
Levittown
West Babylon
Hempstead
Oak Beach
Atlantic Beach
Jones Beach
Olcott
Lockport
Irondequoit
Greece
Sodus Point
Fulton
Lackawanna
Mount Vernon
West Seneca
Lake Erie Beach
Hamburg
Mount Morris
Dunkirk
Arcade
Fredonia
Batavia
Cheektowaga
Canandaigua
Genesee
Penn Yan
Finger Lakes
Hornell
Bath
Salamanca
Jamestown
Olean
Wellsville
Endicott
Richford
Owego
Elmira
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

New York City sits in the crook of the arm of New York State that hits the Atlantic coast. The ribbon of land east of the city is **Long Island,** and the **Hudson Valley** is north of the city, along the river of the same name. To the west of the Hudson Valley rise the **Catskills.** North of the Hudson Valley is **Albany,** the state capital, and **Saratoga Springs,** and even farther north sprawl the **Adirondack Mountains.** The **Finger Lakes** are located in western New York, and **Buffalo** sits even farther west, on the shores of Lake Erie, and serves as the gateway to **Niagara Falls,** about 20 mi (32 km) north.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring, early summer, and **early fall** are the best times to visit much of New York. Temperatures generally hover in the 70s F (21-26°C), and you're more likely to wake up to one of the state's precious cloudless days. **Midsummer** tends to be hot and humid; **winters** are overcast, wet, and cold.

TOP 3

1 GAZING UP AT (OR DOWN ON) THE NYC SKYLINE

When you're gazing at the New York City skyline from atop the **Empire State Building** (20 W. 34th St.; 212/736-3100; www.esbnyc.com) or the **One World Observatory** (117 West St.; 212/602-4000; www.oneworldobservatory.com) on top of One World Trade Center, New York City feels like the center of the known universe. But you don't have to be on top of a dazzling skyscraper to enjoy the spectacle. Enjoy stellar skyline views from a cruise to and from Liberty or Ellis Island or a stroll across the Brooklyn Bridge.



NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE

A gift from the people of France, the **Statue of Liberty** (www.nps.gov/stli) has become an indelible symbol of freedom and the United States. Across the water, **Ellis Island** (www.nps.gov/elis) was once the nation's primary immigration checkpoint, and its main building has been completely restored into an interesting museum displaying photos and artifacts from the island's past. **Statue City Cruises** (877/523-9849; www.cityexperiences.com) is the official provider of transportation to Liberty and Ellis Islands. Ferries depart several times an hour from Battery Park and once or twice an hour from Liberty State Park in New Jersey—the ride alone is worth the trip, with glittering lower Manhattan rising up from the river before you.

Brooklyn Bridge, linking Brooklyn and Manhattan, is a triumph of human ingenuity: its 1,595-ft (486-m) span was the longest in the world when it was completed in 1883, and the towers anchoring it were taller than any other structure in North America. Its elevated walkway, shared by pedestrians and cyclists, offers excellent views of the New York skyline.

2 HIKING THE ADIRONDACKS

Adirondack Park (518/897-1200; www.visitadirondacks.com) is the East's greatest wilderness, a 6-million-ac (2.4 million-ha) refuge with an unusual mixture of public and private lands. Summer vacationers flock to its vast forests, gleaming lakes and ponds, and rushing rivers and streams, as well as the **46 High Peaks** (most over 4,000 ft/1,219 m high).



HIKING IN THE ADIRONDACKS

Mount Marcy, elevation 5,344 ft (1,628 m), is the highest mountain in the Adirondacks, and the one that draws the most hikers each year. **Adirondak Loj** (1002 Adirondak Loj Rd., Lake Placid; 518/523-3441; www.adk.org), 8 mi (13 km) south of the town of Lake Placid, is the starting point of many trails that ascend into the park, and the site of a first-rate information center, staffed by the nonprofit **Adirondack Mountain Club** (ADK; 4833 Cascade Rd., Lake Placid; 518/837-5047; www.adk.org), which can help you choose the hike that's right for you.

If you're short on time, a visit to the **Wild Center** (45 Museum Dr., Tupper Lake; 518/359-7800; www.wildcenter.org) will give you

a sense of the area's natural wonders, with a highly interactive museum and 115 ac (46 ha) for visitors to wander.

3 FEELING THE MIST OF NIAGARA FALLS

The falls . . . ah, the falls. Despite the tourists, hoopla, and clichés, the falls are a sight to be seen. Stand in front of that white wall of water and your breath will catch. Guaranteed.

Located along the Niagara River between the United States and Canada, Niagara Falls are actually three falls: **American Falls** and **Bridal Veil Falls** on the New York side, and **Horseshoe Falls** on the Ontario side. The falls and their accompanying attractions, including an interactive **visitor center** (716/278-1794), are located in **Niagara Falls State Park** (off Robert Moses Pkwy.; 716/278-1794; www.niagarafallsstatepark.com), America's oldest state park, established in 1885. People come from all over the world to stroll through the park, enjoy the gardens, and, of course, see the falls. ***Maid of the Mist*** (716/284-8897; www.maidofthemist.com; closed Jan.-May due to ice) and **Cave of the Winds** (716/278-1794) tours operate from the park; for visitors who don't want to get quite so close to the watery action, excellent views of the falls can be had from the park's **observation deck.**



AMERICAN FALLS AT NIAGARA FALLS

HIGHLIGHTS

TIMES SQUARE

7th Ave. and 42nd St., New York City; www.timessquarenyc.org

With its crowds, chaos, and iconic larger-than-life billboards, Times Square radiates New York's energy and electricity, magnified exponentially. Named after *The New York Times*, which opened its former offices at 43rd Street and Broadway in 1904, Times Square is usually packed no matter the season, although the crush of people hits a fever pitch in summer. Despite being avoided (and possibly despised) by locals, it is a place that everyone should see at least once.

BROADWAY AND PERFORMING ARTS IN NEW YORK CITY

Attending a Broadway show is a quintessential New York experience. There's nothing quite like hurrying down the neon-splashed streets of Times Square along with thousands of other theatergoers. Discount tickets to same-day performances are sold at three **TKTS** booths (www.tdf.org) in the city. But the Big Apple has so many more entertainment options to offer, from opera and classical music at the **Lincoln Center for Performing Arts** (between 62nd St. and 65th St., and between Columbus Ave. and Amsterdam Ave.; 212/875-5456; www.lincolncenter.org) to an excellent jazz scene; the oldest and arguably best jazz club in the city is **Village Vanguard** (178 7th Ave. S. at 11th St.; 212/255-4037; www.villagevanguard.com).



LINCOLN CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

LONG ISLAND

Long Island stretches east from New York City; remarkably, given its proximity, much of the island is still farmland, dunes, and beach. The most spectacular shores are along the southern coast, where white sands and dunes stretch out for an incredible, all-but-unbroken 118 mi (190 km). Just 40 mi (64 km) from Midtown Manhattan, **Jones Beach** (1 Ocean Pkwy., Wantagh; 516/785-1600; www.parks.ny.gov) is Long Island's most famous and most accessible stretch of sand. West of Jones Beach are several smaller beaches, including **Long Beach** and **Lido Beach,** that are often less crowded and fun to explore.

Continuing east along Long Island, **the Hamptons** are known as New York City's playground, and everyone flocks here during the summer. A highlight is **Sag Harbor,** once a bustling, bawdy commercial town, and some of that lively atmosphere lingers, with shops and restaurants, 19th-century homes, huge old trees, and the weather-beaten 1,000-ft (305-m) **Long Wharf.** At the island's easternmost point—windswept, barren, and wild—the still-operating **Montauk Lighthouse** (2000 Montauk Hwy., Montauk; 631/668-2544; www.montauklighthouse.com) is the oldest in New York State, commissioned by George Washington in 1792.

SARATOGA SPRINGS

For most of the year, Saratoga Springs is a charming Victorian town known for its first-rate arts scene, grand romantic architecture, sophisticated shops, and restaurants. Come summer, though, the town turns itself upside down with buyers and sellers of dreams—all for the love of horses.

The **Saratoga Race Course** (267 Union Ave., Saratoga Springs; 518/584-6200; www.nyra.com/saratoga), which hosted its first race in 1863, is the country's oldest organized sporting venue, and it has long represented the very best of what racing has to offer. Every mid-July through early September, the course has a race every day. The meet's highlight is the **Travers Stakes,** held later in the summer.

Major CITIES

NEW YORK CITY: New York is larger than life, a city of myth and legend. It's the country's center of commerce, and its cultural heart. Manhattan is the New York you've come to know through movies, but it is only one of the city's five boroughs, the other four being Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island.

BUFFALO: Maybe best known for its buffalo wings, after decades of economic decline this formerly industrial steel town is undergoing an artistic and entrepreneurial comeback. It's also the main US gateway to Niagara Falls.

ALBANY: The oldest city in New York and one of the oldest in the nation, Albany's main business is government; it's notorious for political wheeling and dealing.

Saratoga is slower but no less interesting once the horses are back in their stables. Arts thrive at the **Saratoga Performing Arts Center** (108 Ave. of the Pines; 518/584-9330; www.spac.org) and **Yaddo** (312 Union Ave.; 518/584-0746; www.yaddo.org), a renowned artists' retreat. The town also boasts **Saratoga Spa State Park** (off S. Broadway, just south of downtown; 518/584-2535; www.parks.ny.gov), spreading out over 2,200 pristine ac (890 ha) of towering green-black pine trees and half a dozen mineral springs where visitors relax in bubbling golden-brown waters.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

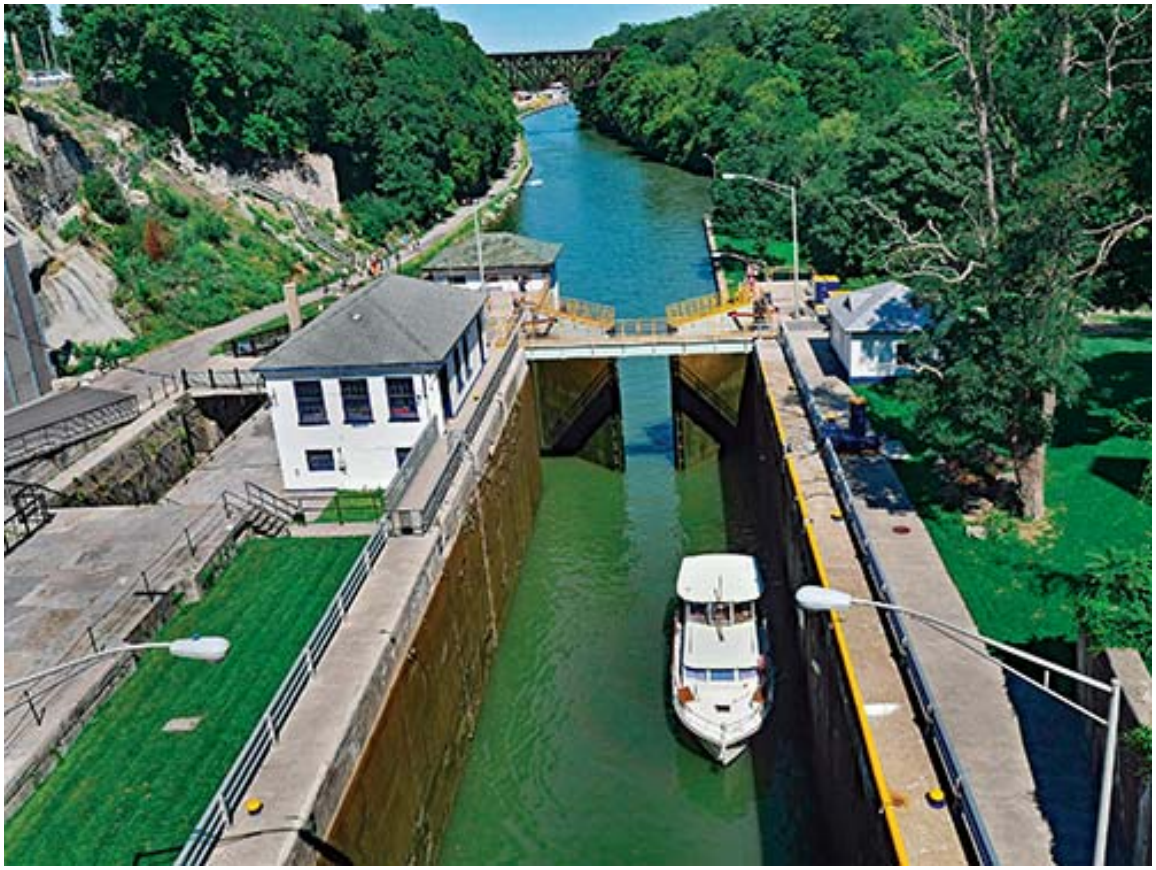
25 Maine St., Cooperstown; 607/547-7200; www.baseballhall.org

This museum was established in 1939 as an homage to America's favorite pastime. It's loaded with state-of-the-art displays covering every aspect of the sport, from famous ballparks and women's baseball to the World Series, Negro League, and baseball in the Caribbean. Jackie Robinson's warm-up

jacket, Hank Aaron's locker, Willie Mays's glove, and Yogi Berra's catcher's mitt are among the memorabilia on display.

THE ERIE CANAL

In addition to Niagara Falls, New York's other famous watery landmark is the Erie Canal: Facilitating trade and transport, it made New York City America's busiest port and transformed the state—almost every major city in New York falls along the route established by the Erie Canal. Made all but obsolete by the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the canal can still be enjoyed by visitors. Rent a boat and cruise with **Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises** (210 Market St., Lockport; 716/433-6155; www.lockportlocks.com) or **Erie Canal Adventures** (315/986-3011; www.eriecanaladventures.com); hike part of the 360-mi-long (579-km) multiuse **Erie Canalway Trail** (www.eriecanalway.org); or visit Buffalo's revitalized **Canalside District** (www.buffalowaterfront.com), buzzing with festivals, concerts, recreation, and a naval and military park.



THE ERIE CANAL

ART, INDOORS AND OUT

You can easily lose yourself in the well-known wonders of New York City's art scene, but there are plenty of amazing arts institutions outside the city, too.

NEW YORK CITY

- The **Museum of Modern Art** (11 W. 53rd St. between 5th Ave. and 6th Ave.; 212/708-9400; www.moma.org) holds the largest collection of modern art in the world, including over 200,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and photographs.
- One of the world's greatest museums, the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** (1000 5th Ave.; 212/535-7710; www.metmuseum.org) spreads out over about 2.2 million sq ft (205,000 sq m), holding more than 490,000 works of art.

UPSTATE

- **Dia: Beacon** (3 Beekman St., Beacon; 845/440-0100; www.diabeacon.org) is a huge contemporary art museum just 30 minutes away from **Storm King Art Center** (Old Pleasant Hill Rd., off NY-32 a few miles south of Vails Gate; 845/534-3115; www.stormking.org), a 500-ac (202-ha) setting for world-famous sculptures, open May to December.
- The **Hyde Collection** (161 Warren St., Glens Falls; 518/792-1761; www.hydecollection.org) is a robust collection of masterworks by the likes of Cézanne, Rembrandt, Picasso, and Van Gogh.
- The **Corning Museum of Glass** (1 Museum Way, Corning; 607/937-5371; www.cmog.org) has the largest collection of glass in the world.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 In Manhattan, start your day early with a visit to the **Statue of Liberty** and **Ellis Island.** Grab a pastrami sandwich at the granddaddy of New York delicatessens, **Katz's,** followed by a visit to the **One World Observatory** atop **One World Trade Center** before braving the bustle of **Times Square** to take in a **Broadway** show.

DAY 2 Grab a bagel at **Barney Greengrass,** then join legions of New Yorkers on a morning walk through **Central Park** before stepping into the **Metropolitan Museum of Art.** Head 40 minutes north out of the city for a special dinner at **Blue Hill at Stone Barns.**

DAY 3 Continuing north along the Hudson, make stops to get your art fix at **Storm King Art Center** and **Dia: Beacon,** an hour's drive total. After another 45-minute drive, take a hike in the **Mohonk Preserve** before heading an hour west to the artsy town of **Woodstock** and catching a performance at the **Bethel Woods Center for the Arts** if the timing's right.

DAY 4 Today, make a 2.5-hour beeline north to **Saratoga Springs,** where you can visit the famed racecourse and spa park, and maybe even see a show at the **Saratoga Performing Arts Center.**

DAY 5 You're heading to the **Adirondacks** today, a two-hour drive. Climb **Mount Marcy** if you're up to the challenge, or take on one of the shorter hikes from **Adirondak Loj** or the innovative **Wild Center.** To fuel up, stop at **ADK Food Hub** (320 Park St., Tupper Lake; 518/359-5112; www.adkfoodhub.com).

DAY 6 Get an early start for your return trip back southward, to the Catskills. Budget about four hours to get to **Kaaterskill Wild Forest,** where you can stretch your legs with an hour-long hike to

Kaaterskill Falls. Head back toward the river to **Saugerties** to enjoy its restaurants and shops. Spend the night in Saugerties or power through the last two hours back to **Manhattan.**

With More Time: Although the drive from New York City to **Niagara Falls** takes 6-7 hours (similar by train), the flight to **Buffalo,** the main gateway to the falls, is 1.5 hours. Take a couple of days in western New York to see the falls, take an iconic cruise on the ***Maid of the Mist,*** and do a day trip or overnighter out to the **Finger Lakes** (two hours by car), where you can visit the **Harriet Tubman Home** in Auburn and the **Women's Rights National Historical Park** in Seneca Falls, as well as taste some of the region's wines.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

New York is full of magnificent beauty, and one of the best ways to see it is by driving its many scenic highways and byways. They're pretty any time of year, but between late September and late October, they are spectacular, when fall foliage sets the backdrops ablaze with flame-colored leaves.

FINGER LAKES DRIVE AROUND SENECA LAKE

If you like your views reflected in water and punctuated with occasional stops for wine tastings, then this drive will tick all the boxes. It's short but impressive and ideal for a time-crunched traveler (35 mi/56 km; 45-60 minutes). Start in **Geneva,** at the northern end of Seneca Lake, and drive south on NY-14 to **Watkins Glen,** the southern end of Seneca Lake, tracing a path along the western side of the lake the entire way. Be sure to pull into the parking lot for **Watkins Glen State Park.**

BEST OF THE CATSKILLS

NT-23A

It’s not the length of the drive; it’s what there is to see along the way that matters when it comes to fall foliage. Plus, the short time in the car (9 mi/14.5 km; 30 minutes) means you’ve got more time to explore each of the end points on this itinerary. Start in the **Kaaterskill Wild Forest** and hike toward the **Kaaterskill Falls,** which has a 260-ft (79-m) drop. Once you’ve had your fill of hiking, hop back in the car and drive north to **Hunter Mountain,** where you can board the **Scenic Skyride,** a gondola that will slowly drift you up to a height of 4,040 ft (1,231 m).

FOLLOWING THE FIGHT FOR RIGHTS

New York State is an activism hub and a cradle for movements that changed the nation, from suffrage to gay marriage.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her abolitionist husband Henry Stanton moved to **Seneca Falls** from Boston in 1847. Often home alone, caring for her children, Stanton felt isolated and overwhelmed by housework. In July 1848, Stanton shared her discontent with four friends, who decided to convene a discussion on the status of women. About 300 people—men and women—showed up to the **Seneca Falls Convention.** During the meeting, the group's Declaration of Sentiments called for greater rights for women. Today, at the **Women's Rights National Historical Park,** you can visit **Wesleyan Chapel** (126 Fall St., Seneca Falls), where the historic convention took place, and the **house** where Stanton lived (32 Washington St., Seneca Falls). Start your visit at the **visitor center** (136 Fall St., Seneca Falls; 315/568-0024; www.nps.gov/wori).

ABOLITION

The area of New York around Niagara Falls was a primary waypoint (and last stop, in most cases) on the Underground Railroad. Opened in 2018, the **Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center** (825 Depot Ave. W., Niagara Falls; 716/300-8477; www.niagarafallsundergroundrailroad.org) is a vital addition to the region. It's located in an 1863 US Customs House which, while not a stop on the Railroad itself, was located right next to the former International Suspension Bridge, which many freedom-seekers crossed.

About 2.5 hours to the east, the **Harriet Tubman Home** (180 South St., Auburn; 315/252-2081; www.harriettubmanhome.com) is where the "Moses of her people" settled after the Civil War. After

escaping enslavement in 1849, Tubman risked 13 trips south to rescue more than 70 enslaved people. A visit to the Tubman property begins in the visitor center with interpretive panels that follow the timeline of Tubman's life, followed by a tour of the clapboard house where she tended to the elderly.

GAY RIGHTS

New York City's **Greenwich Village** and **West Village** were once hotbeds of radical and artistic activity, antiwar rallies, and the Civil Rights Movement. In 1969, the Stonewall Riots marked the beginning of the national gay rights movement. In **Christopher Park,** at Christopher Street and 7th Avenue South, a statue commemorates the riots, which took place across the street at Stonewall Inn on June 27, 1969. The original Stonewall was at 51 Christopher Street and is now gone; the bar called **Stonewall** at 53 Christopher is a namesake and, as of 2016, a State and National Historic Landmark.

HUDSON VALLEY

US 9W

Hugging the Hudson River's western shoreline, US 9W makes for a beautiful fall foliage drive, as it passes through long stretches of hardwood forest between **Newburgh** and **Coxsackie.** Begin the day's drive at the **Bear Mountain Bridge** and make your way north, stopping for lunch and antiques shopping in **Saugerties.** Allow about three hours of driving time to reach downtown **Albany.**



BEAR MOUNTAIN AND THE HUDSON RIVER

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CENTRAL PARK

between 5th Ave. and 8th Ave., 59th St. and 110th St., New York City; 212/310-6600; www.centralparknyc.org

Between the Upper East and the Upper West Sides lies that most glorious of New York spaces: Central Park. Without this vast, rolling green estate—the lungs of the city—life in New York would probably become unbearable. Walking through it is like walking through a carnival site. You'll see New Yorkers running, biking, or inline skating; oblivious lovers; stroller-pushing nannies; students lounging with textbooks; cashmere-clad matrons;

professional dog-walkers; and musicians playing everything from concertos to rap.

An excellent way to tour the park is by bike. Several vendors can be found on the west side of 59th Street; if you're keen to try a **Citi Bike** (www.citibikenyc.com), the city's bike share program, there are several docking stations on the park's periphery. Among landmarks to seek out are the **Central Park Zoo** (830 5th Ave.; 212/439-6500; www.centralparkzoo.com), the 1908 **Carousel** (mid-park at 64th St.), and, just north of the 72nd Street Transverse, **Bethesda Terrace, The Lake,** and **Loeb Boathouse,** which you'll probably recognize from the movies. During the summer, the **Gottesman Pool** (110th St. at Lenox Ave.; www.nyc.gov/parks) offers a welcome respite from the New York heat.

MOHONK PRESERVE

847/255-0919; www.mohonkpreserve.org

Two hours north of New York City in the Shawangunk Mountains, the Mohonk Preserve is ideal for outdoor adventure, with more than 70 mi (113 km) of trails and carriage roads crisscrossing the preserve and a tilted ridge of translucent quartz that's popular with rock climbers. One of the highlights of this area is **Mohonk Mountain House** (1000 Mountain Rest Rd., New Paltz; 855/883-3798; www.mohonk.com), an enormous castle-like structure on the edge of a deep-blue glacial lake. The last of the magnificent resort hotels that once lined the Hudson, Mohonk is an ultra-romantic place, with grounds offering lovely scenic hikes, natural cave spelunking, impressive gardens, mountain biking, and crystal-clear lake swimming. The use of the grounds is fee-based.



MOHONK PRESERVE

Nearby, **Minnewaska State Park** (5281 US 44/NY-55, Kerhonkson; 845/255-0752; www.parks.ny.gov), is filled with panoramic views, hiking trails, waterfalls, and lakes.

WATKINS GLEN STATE PARK

1009 N. Franklin St. (off NY-14), Watkins Glen; 607/535-4511; https://parks.ny.gov

Created some 12,000 years ago during the last ice age is a wild and raggedy gorge flanked by high cliffs and strange, sculpted rock formations. **Glen Creek**—which drops some 700 ft (213 m) in nearly 2 mi (3.2 km) over rapids, cascades, and 19 waterfalls—rushes through its center. Alongside the gorge runs the 1.5-mi (2.4-km) **Gorge Trail,** made up of 832 stone steps, stone paths, and numerous bridges. The trail leads past tunnels, caves, and a natural stone bridge, all carved out of the sedimentary rock by Glen Creek. The park closes seasonally November to May.



WATKINS GLEN STATE PARK

SKI AREAS

In winter, upstate New York transforms into a wonderland for skiers and snowboarders: the **Olympic Ski Jump Complex** (5486 Cascade Rd., Lake Placid; 518/523-2202; www.whiteface.com) and **Lake Placid Sliding Center** (518/523-1655) are places to see how the pros do it, but other popular places to get your adrenaline pumping include **Hunter Mountain Ski Area** (off NY-23A, Hunter; 518/263-4223; www.huntermtn.com) in the Catskills and **Bristol Mountain Winter Resorts** (5662 NY-64, Canandaigua; 585/375-6000; www.bristolmountain.com) near the Finger Lakes. **Gore Mountain** (793 Peaceful Valley Rd., North Creek; 518/251-2411; https://goremountain.com) is a favorite among skiers in the Adirondacks.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

CHRISTMAS IN ROCKEFELLER CENTER

45 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City; 212/588-8601; www.rockefellercenter.com; Nov.-Jan.

Thanks to the myriad images of bundled-up ice skaters gliding under an enormous, festively decorated tree, Rockefeller Center has become synonymous with Christmas in the city. The famous Christmas tree arrives at the center in mid-November, with a **tree lighting** event taking place in early December, and stays up until just after New Year's. The skating rink is usually open October through April.



ICE SKATING AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER

BETHEL WOODS CONCERT SERIES

The legendary 1969 **Woodstock Music Festival** actually took place in Bethel, 60 mi (97 km) away: The concert organizers wanted to hold the events closer to home, but Woodstock had no open space large enough, and last-minute ordinances imposed by nervous officials prevented the concert from taking place as originally planned. Today, the famed arts colony of Woodstock is still a picturesque and unusual spot, and the **Bethel Woods Center of the Arts** (200 Hurd Rd., Bethel; 845/583-2000; www.bethelwoodscenter.org), built on the festival site, attracts an ambitious lineup of performers ranging from the New York Philharmonic to ballet troupes, jazz greats, and pop music stars.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

New York State has a full complement of professional sports teams, most in New York City, with a few in Buffalo, such as the NFL's **Buffalo Bills** (www.buffalobills.com). However, it's seeing the **New York Yankees** (Yankee Stadium, 1 E. 161st St., Bronx; www.mlb.com/yankees) that appears on many sports fans' bucket lists.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

You could take a trip to New York just to eat, and many people do.

ONLY IN NYC

There's a list of foods that are practically synonymous with New York City, from bagels to pizza. Here are a few of the best places to eat them.

- **Bagels:** The competition for the city's best bagel is highly contested, but a few contenders are **Russ & Daughters** (179 E. Houston St., New York City; 212/475-4880; www.russanddaughters.com), **Barney Greengrass** (541 Amsterdam Ave., New York City; 212/724-4707;

www.barneygreengrass.com), and **Ess-a-Bagel** (831 3rd Ave., New York City; 212/980-1010; www.ess-a-bagel.com).

- **Pastrami:** The place for a delicious and smoky pastrami sandwich is almost inarguably **Katz's Delicatessen** (205 E. Houston St., New York City; 212/254-2246; www.katzsdelicatessen.com).
- **Food trucks:** From classics like the **Halal Guys** (53rd St. and 6th Ave.; https://thehalalguys.com) to the village of carts that pops up at Brooklyn's **Smorgasburg** (www.smorgasburg.com), New York is fully in the age of the food truck.
- **Hot dogs: Gray's Papaya** (2090 Broadway, New York City; 212/799-0243; www.grayspapayanyc.com) sells New York-style hot dogs: snappy, grilled, and eaten standing up. Gray's long-standing competitor, **Papaya King** (206B E. 86th St.; 646/823-0879), should also be on your list of NYC hot dog spots.
- **Pizza:** When it comes to NYC pizza, there are a few kinds: the big-as-your-head dollar slice, available on virtually every street corner in the city, and traditional crispy-thin coal-oven pies. **John's** (278 Bleecker St.; 212/243-1680; www.johnsbrickovenpizza.com) and **Patsy's Pizzeria** (2287 1st Ave.; 212/534-9783) serve some of the best of the latter.

FARM-TO-TABLE

Many of us may think of the Midwest as the breadbasket of the United States, but New York State is an agricultural hot spot, too, with farms, dairies, and orchards generating exceptional products for consumption, both locally and beyond. Read on for some favorite farm-to-table experiences.

- **Culinary Institute of America** (1946 Campus Dr., Hyde Park; 845/452-9600; www.ciachef.edu): The nation's most prestigious cooking school is open for tours and has several first-rate student-staffed restaurants on its grounds.
- **Friend of a Farmer** (77 Irving Pl., Gramercy Park; 212/477-2188; www.friendofafarmer.com): Set in the heart of NYC, this family-owned

restaurant has been promoting local producers since 1986.

- **Blue Hill at Stone Barns** (630 Bedford Rd., Tarrytown; 914/366-9600; www.bluehillfarm.com): There are plenty of farm-to-table restaurants in the Hudson Valley, but none is more (justifiably) popular than Blue Hill at Stone Barns.
- **New York Kitchen** (800 S. Main St., Canandaigua; 585/394-7070; www.nykitchen.com): At New York Kitchen, you can take cooking classes that feature the grown and raised bounty of the Finger Lakes region.

BUFFALO WINGS

Buffalo chicken wings got their name from the western New York city where they were invented. Try these morsels flavored with the signature spicy, sticky, orange sauce, served with celery sticks and blue cheese dressing, at their birthplace: **Anchor Bar** (1047 Main St., Buffalo; 716/886-8920; https://anchorbar.com).

FINGER LAKES WINE

The hills of the Finger Lakes, covered with vineyards, glow pale green in spring, brilliant green in summer, and red-brown-purple in fall. Called the Napa Valley of the East, the Finger Lakes region currently boasts more than 100 wineries (www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com). Stop by some of these standouts:

- **Fox Run Vineyards:** 670 NY-14, Penn Yan; 315/536-4616; www.foxrunvineyards.com
- **Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard:** 3962 NY-14, Dundee; 607/243-7971; www.wiemer.com
- **Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars:** 9224 NY-414, Lodi; 607/582-6011; www.lamoreauxwine.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **La Guardia Airport:** LGA; Elmhurst, Queens; 718/533-3400; www.laguardiaairport.com
- **John F. Kennedy International Airport:** JFK; Jamaica, Queens; 718/244-4444; www.jfkairport.com
- **Albany International Airport:** ALB; 737 Albany Shaker Rd., Albany; 518/242-2200; www.albanyairport.com
- **Buffalo Niagara International Airport:** BUF; 4200 Genesee St., Buffalo; 716/630-6000; www.buffaloairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **New York State Division of Tourism:** www.iloveny.com
- **New York State Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation:** https://parks.ny.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The New York Times:*** www.nytimes.com
- ***The Wall Street Journal:*** www.wsj.com
- ***The New Yorker:*** www.newyorker.com
- ***Time Out New York:*** www.timeout.com/newyork

NEW JERSEY

To the uninitiated, New Jersey is often known only as the butt of a joke comparing it to neighboring New York or Pennsylvania, but this understanding of the Garden State doesn't even scratch the surface. Get to know this relatively compact state long enough to get past its brashness and defensiveness, and you'll find extraordinary diversity. There are the famous, rowdy boardwalks of the Jersey Shore, yes, but also quiet coastal towns with pristine beaches. On Munsee, Unalachtigo, and Unami (collectively known as the Lenape) land, New Jersey offers stimulating urban enclaves like Newark and Trenton, but also rural escapes great for hiking, canoeing, and cross-country skiing. You'll find history around every corner, including the high ideals behind Liberty State Park and iconic figures from Edison to Springsteen. So don't disregard New Jersey: Come and see this beautiful, engaging state for yourself.

AREA: 8,723 sq mi / 22, 591 sq km (47th)

POPULATION: 9,500,851 (11th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 18, 1787 (3rd)

STATE CAPITAL: Trenton


NEW JERSEY
Lake Marcia
NEW YORK
High Point State Park
Sussex
Delaware Water Gap National Rec Area
Appalachian Trail
Hamburg
Lafayette
Newfoundland
Wanaque
Franklin Lakes
Andover
Kinnelon
Ridgewood
Westwood
Paterson
Hackensack
Clifton
Passaic
Dover
Long Valley
Chester
Morristown
THOMAS EDISON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
Madison
Union City
Washington
TOURING THE GARDEN STATE'S BEST GARDENS
Newark
Hoboken
Jersey City
Phillipsburg
Elizabeth
Liberty State Park
NEW YORK
Bayonne
Westfield
Readington Township
Plainfield
Iselin
MEDITATING ON US HISTORY AT LIBERTY STATE PARK
Somerville
Frenchtown
Flemington
New Brunswick
Perth Amboy
SANDY HOOK LIGHTHOUSE
Keyport
PENNSYLVANIA
Old Bridge
Highlands
Rumson
Lambertville
Princeton
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Red Bank
Monmouth Beach
Long Branch
Washington Crossing State Park
Freehold
Eatontown
Hamilton
Asbury Park
TRENTON
Belmar
Lakewood
JERSEY SHORE
Point Pleasant
Mantoloking
Pinelands National Reserve
Browns Mills
Toms River
AUNT CHARLOTTE'S CANDIES
Philadelphia
Seaside Heights
Camden
Haddonfield
PINELANDS
Beachwood
Marlton
Brendan T. Byrne State Forest
BEACH-HOPPING ON THE JERSEY SHORE
Bellmawr
Lindenwold
Wharton State Forest
Wilmington
Ocean Acres
Glassboro
Williamstown
Bass River State Forest
Surf City
Hammonton
Pennsville
BATSTO
Ship Bottom
Long Beach Island
Beach Haven
Vineland
Bridgeton
WHEATON ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER
Millville
Pleasantville
Brigantine
Atlantic City
Somers Point
Ventnor City
Margate
LUCY THE ELEPHANT
Corbin City
Ocean City
DOVER
Delaware Bay
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Rio Grande
North Wildwood
North Cape May
Wildwood
DELAWARE
Cape May
Lewes
0
15 mi
0
15 km

ORIENTATION

Newark, Jersey City, and the other cities subject to the gravitational pull of New York City sit in the northeastern corner of the state. The **Jersey Shore** lines the eastern coast, the part of the state that hits the Atlantic Ocean, from Sandy Hook and its lighthouse in the north, through **Asbury Park, Long Beach Island,** and **Atlantic City,** down to **Wildwood** and **Cape May** at the far south end. The capital **Trenton** is inland in central New Jersey, separated from Pennsylvania by the Delaware River, and **Princeton** is nearby to the northeast. The sprawling **Pinelands** are located in the area between the Jersey Shore and the Delaware River.

WHEN TO GO

New Jersey can be visited year-round, but **summer** is by far the busiest time, when the beaches and boardwalks of the Shore fill up with visitors. **Shoulder seasons** (May-Jun. and Sept.-Oct.), when many attractions are still open, can be a less hectic time to visit. **Winter** is the best for snow sports lovers, and in **autumn** trees put on a show of fall foliage.

TOP 3

1 BEACH-HOPPING ON THE JERSEY SHORE

Sure, you can find the Jersey Shore of reality TV fame, but with 130 mi (209 km) of coastline, New Jersey's Atlantic shoreline offers so much more. If you like . . .

- **Pristine beaches:** The 1.3-mi-long (2-km) beach at **Belmar** is always bustling and one of the best on the Shore.
- **Surfing:** On **Long Beach Island,** you'll find waves for beginners as well as experts, and even a beach dedicated to surfers only.
- **Lighthouses:** The 1764 **Sandy Hook Lighthouse** is the oldest operating in the United States.

- **Architecture:** Lovers of Victorian architecture will adore **Cape May,** while **Wildwood** boasts a rare collection of midcentury buildings.
- **Music:** Known as the place where Bruce Springsteen got his start, **Asbury Park** is still the place to go for a Jersey Shore concert.
- **Boardwalks: Ocean City**'s boardwalk is a perfect mix of lively and relaxed, with enough rides and fried food to entertain you for hours.



OCEAN CITY BOARDWALK

- **Kitschy fun: Margate** is home to **Lucy the Elephant** (9200 Atlantic Ave.; 609/823-6473; https://lucytheelephant.org), a giant elephant statue built in 1881 as a sort of advertisement for the city. Tours inside the structure feature a chance to climb up to a viewing platform on Lucy's back.
- **Nightlife:** For dancing till dawn or trying your luck at blackjack, **Atlantic City** just can't be beat.

2 MEDITATING ON US HISTORY AT LIBERTY STATE PARK

Jersey City; www.libertystatepark.com

Though the Statue of Liberty is technically in New York, one of the best places to view it is from Jersey City's more than 1,200-ac (485-ha) Liberty State Park. Two-mi (3.2-km) waterfront **Liberty Walk** gives a unique profile view of Lady Liberty, as well as sweeping vistas of Manhattan across the Hudson River and great spots to picnic or throw a Frisbee around.



LIBERTY STATE PARK

Many people walk through Liberty State Park en route to the bridge to **Ellis Island,** where around 40 percent of Americans can trace their ancestry. The **Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration** (212/363-3200; www.statueofliberty.org) honors the stories of the immigrants who came through this gateway to the United States; visitors can see the original baggage room, ticket office, and a dormitory.

3 TOURING THE GARDEN STATE'S BEST GARDENS

Even if the origin of the Garden State moniker is obscure, New Jersey does have some beautiful gardens.

- Calling **Branch Brook Park** (Newark; 973/268-2300; www.branchbrookpark.org) Newark's Central Park is apt, since it was designed by the same landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. The best time to visit is in April, during the Cherry Blossom Festival.



BRANCH BROOK PARK

- Beautiful, almost 3,000-ac (1,214-ha) **Duke Farms** (US 206 S., Somerville; 908/722-3700; www.dukefarms.org) is replete with greenhouses, tree-lined walkways, sculptures, and fountains.
- The inventive **Grounds for Sculpture** (80 Sculptors Way, Hamilton; 609/586-0616; www.groundsforsculpture.org) was the idea of art collector and Johnson & Johnson heir J. Steward Johnson Jr., with over 200 artworks and 42 landscaped ac (17 ha).

HIGHLIGHTS

NEWARK MUSEUM OF ART

49 Washington St., Newark; 973/596-6550; www.newarkmuseum.org

The Newark Museum of Art is a highlight of any trip to the state, with exhibits devoted to fires, brewing, Tibetan art, and more. The museum is especially lively on most Thursday nights, when it stays open later for a usually more adult crowd who sip wine in the galleries.



NEWARK MUSEUM OF ART

THOMAS EDISON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Main St. and Lakeside Ave., West Orange; www.nps.gov/edis

At the Thomas Edison National Historical Park, you can visit the preserved structures where technologies such as the phonograph, sound recording, movies, and batteries were developed and invented. Edison's Queen Anne-style home, Glenmont, was built in 1882 but later filled with all the bells and whistles technological development had to offer, from central heat and flushing toilets to electrical wiring.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Princeton; www.princeton.edu

This Ivy League campus is almost like a museum. The Princeton University Art Museum (McCormick Hall; 609/258-3788; https://artmuseum.princeton.edu) is a gem, with pieces by Monet and Warhol.

OLD BARRACKS MUSEUM

Barrack St., Trenton; 609/396-1776; www.barracks.org

This Trenton museum preserves barracks that are the last of their kind, surviving from the French and Indian War.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your Jersey journey in Jersey City's **Liberty State Park** for a view of the Statue of Liberty. From there, it's possible to walk over to the **Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration,** the gateway to the United States for many immigrants. For lunch, grab delicious Indian food in **Journal Square.** In nearby Newark, visit the **Newark Museum,** followed by a delicious Portuguese dinner in the **Ironbound District.**

DAY 2 Begin the day at the **Thomas Edison National Historical Park,** followed by a drive to **Duke Farms** in Somerset County. In the

late afternoon, you should arrive in **Frenchtown,** a quaint place to spend the night and do some shopping.

DAY 3 Today you'll drive down scenic **NJ-29** to **Lambertville,** another great place to browse art and antiques. Be sure to take a walk or bike ride on the **D&R Canal Towpath,** along a 19th-century canal, or for earlier history, stop by **Washington Crossing State Park.** You'll finish your day in state capital **Trenton,** where you can see the 18th-century **New Jersey State House** (State St.; 609/847-3150; www.njstatehousetours.org), the second-oldest in the country, and eat some Italian food in the **Chambersburg** neighborhood.

DAY 4 Spend today in the massive tract of forest that is the **Pinelands,** either hiking a portion of the **Batona Trail** or biking the **Pine Barrens River Ramble,** or **canoeing,** depending on your outdoor recreation preference.

DAY 5 The last two days of your road trip will be devoted to the **Jersey Shore.** Start in picturesque **Cape May** and wind your way north on **Ocean Drive,** stopping in the coastal towns that pique your interest—**Wildwood, Ocean City,** and finally, **Atlantic City,** where you'll have your pick of great **nightlife.**

DAY 6 Continuing north, stop in **Co-op Seafood Market** for lunch, then hit the beach in **Belmar** and wander **Asbury Park** for some Jersey music history. Make the trip all the way to **Sandy Hook Lighthouse** at the Shore's tip at before returning to the Newark area.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

OCEAN DRIVE

Scenic Ocean Drive runs much of the length of the Jersey Shore, from rowdy **Atlantic City** to the lovely Victorians of **Cape May** in the south. Actually a series of local roads, the 50-mi (80-km) route is still easy to follow by keeping the Atlantic on one side, though speed limits and congestion can be somewhat inhibiting, especially in the summer. But the views are worth it: You'll pass picturesque Shore towns, marshes with waving, tall green grass, and postcard-perfect beaches. Though the road only takes about two hours to drive without traffic, consider breaking it up into a multiday trip, making stops at the best of the Shore on the way, from retro **Wildwood** to quaint, family-friendly **Ocean City.**

NJ-29

This pretty route in western New Jersey follows along the Delaware River and Pennsylvania border, passing some of the state's most attractive river towns—**Lambertville** and **Frenchtown** are particularly charming, with art galleries, antiques shops, restaurants, and 19th-century architecture. The route starts at **Washington Crossing State Park** (355 Washington Crossing-Pennington Rd., Titusville; 609/737-0623; www.state.nj.us), where General George Washington crossed the Delaware with over 2,000 troops in December 1776. At several points along NJ-29, you can stop to walk or bike on the **D&R Canal Towpath,** following along its namesake canal, which reached its heyday in the 1860s and '70s.

Major CITIES

NEWARK: Many people only experience Newark on the way to and from the airport, but New Jersey's largest city has so much more to offer, from museums to excellent international food.

JERSEY CITY: Jersey City has great restaurants, skyline views, and green space to tempt even the snobbiest New Yorker to cross the Hudson.

TRENTON: With unique colonial history and wonderful Italian eateries, New Jersey's capital draws more than just politicians.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

HIGH POINT STATE PARK

1480 NJ-23, Sussex; 973/875-4800; www.state.nj.us

Home to New Jersey's highest elevation (1,803 ft/550 m), High Point State Park is known as the state's best cross-country skiing destination at **High Point Cross Country Ski Center** (1480 NJ-23, Sussex; 973/702-1222; www.xcskihighpoint.com), but it's a great place to visit year-round. There are more than 50 mi (80 km) of multiuse trails for hiking and mountain biking, including a scenic stretch of the **Appalachian Trail.** Twenty-ac (8-ha) **Lake Marcia** is open for swimming and fishing for trout, bass, and catfish in the summer.



HIGH POINT STATE PARK

THE PINELANDS

www.nj.gov/pinelands

Also sometimes called the Pine Barrens, the 1.1-million-ac (445,154-ha) **Pinelands National Reserve** is the East Coast's largest tract of forest, covering about 20 percent of New Jersey's total land area. Pitch pine, Atlantic white cedar, scrub oak, cranberry bogs, and blueberry bushels make a great habitat for rare tree frogs, orchids, and carnivorous plants. It's also supposedly home to the legendary Jersey Devil, a two-legged creature often described as having a goat-like head and bat-like wings, which has purportedly terrorized the area since the 18th century.

Eight state parks and forests are located within the Pinelands; among them, **Wharton State Forest** is the largest. The Pinelands are also full of cultural attractions, such as "forgotten towns" abandoned after the decline of the bog-iron and glass-making industries. Located in Wharton State Forest, the restored, 19th-century **Batsto Village** (31 Batsto Rd.,

Hammonton; 609/561-0024; www.batstovillage.org) shows the way these places looked in their heyday.

For outdoor recreation, there's the 50-mi (80-km) **Batona Trail** for hikers. This trail traverses Bass River, Wharton, and Brendan T. Byrne State Forests. For cyclists, the 43-mi (69-km) **Pine Barrens River Ramble** starts at Batsto and passes by cranberry bogs and flowing rivers. Where the Barrens really shine is canoeing, and guided trips are available through **Pinelands Adventures** (1005 Atsion Rd., Shamong; 609/268-0189; www.pinelandsadventures.org).



BATONA TRAIL, WHARTON STATE FOREST

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

LAMBERTVILLE SHAD FEST

www.lambertvillechamber.com; Apr.

Charming Lambertville, known as a great place to shop for art and antiques, celebrates the restoration of the Delaware River with its annual Shad Festival during the last week of April. The humble shad, a river herring, was an important food source for New Jerseyans throughout the state's history, so its return to the revived Delaware from the Atlantic to breed in the 1980s was major cause for celebration. You can definitely try shad if you're here during the festival—locals say it's best smoked—but this festival is about more than fish, with artists coming from across the region to show their work in booths and live music providing the soundtrack.

SUSSEX COUNTY FAIR

37 Plains Rd., Augusta; 973/948-5500; https://sussexcountyfairgrounds.org; Aug.

With 10 days packed full with entertainment, the Sussex County Fair offers something for everyone—from carnival rides to the long-running horse show. Fairgoers can spend days at the Sussex County Fairgrounds exploring the agricultural demos, listening to live music, and snacking on a seemingly endless variety of fair food. The fair donates funds to local nonprofits to support the community's initiatives around food equity, scholarship, and economic self-sufficiency.

BEST FOOD

New Jersey may be best known for its so-bad-it's-good **boardwalk food**—pizza, funnel cake, gyros, ice cream, cotton candy, and fudge—but that's certainly not all it has to offer. (Still, one **deep-fried Oreo** while walking along the beach may be hard to resist.)

SEAFOOD

Not surprisingly, seafood along the Shore is excellent, especially crab cakes, flounder, and shellfish. You'll notice many towns and businesses named for clams and oysters. Visit Point Pleasant Beach's **Co-op Seafood**

& Market (57 Channel Dr.; 732/899-1872) for fresh fish straight from the boats or **Dock's Oyster House** (2405 Atlantic Ave.; 609/345-0092; www.docksoysterhouse.com) in Atlantic City, family-owned for more than a century.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Some of the best places in the Garden State to buy **antiques** are quaint river towns **Lambertville** and **Frenchtown.**

New Jersey offers a few iconic candies that make great souvenirs. **Saltwater taffy** is ubiquitous on the Shore, but **Aunt Charlotte's Candies** (5 W. Maple Ave., Merchantville; 856/662-0058; www.auntcharlottescandy.com), with its upstairs chocolate factory, is one in a million.

The glass industry once ruled South Jersey, and you can still buy beautiful glass art in quaint towns like **Haddonfield** or at the **Wheaton Arts & Cultural Center** (1000 Village Dr., Millville; 856/825-6800; www.wheatonarts.org) today.

INTERNATIONAL EATS

Italians are the state's largest ethnic group, making Italian food intrinsic to New Jersey culture, but a growing international population means you can find excellent examples of many cuisines, from Indian to Spanish to Brazilian and Portuguese.

Italian

Trenton's Chambersburg District, also known as its Little Italy, is full of classic Italian eateries. Pretty **Hoboken,** its streets lined with brownstones, is known for being Frank Sinatra's birthplace, with old-school Italian restaurants to live up to that reputation.

Portuguese, Spanish, and Brazilian

Newark's Ironbound District is home to the largest Portuguese population in the country, along with many people of Spanish and Brazilian descent. It's a great place to find Spanish dishes like mariscada, the quintessential

Brazilian all-you-can-eat meat fest, and typical, hearty Portuguese stews and chicken piri-piri.

Indian

Journal Square in **Jersey City** is known as Little India, with dozens of Indian markets and eateries lining Newark Avenue.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Newark Liberty International Airport:** EWR; 888/397-4636; www.newarkairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **New Jersey Office of Travel and Tourism:** www.visitnj.org
- **New Jersey State Parks:** www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Star-Ledger:*** www.nj.com/starledger
- ***Weird N.J.:*** www.weirdnj.com
- ***New Jersey Monthly:*** www.njmonthly.com

PENNSYLVANIA

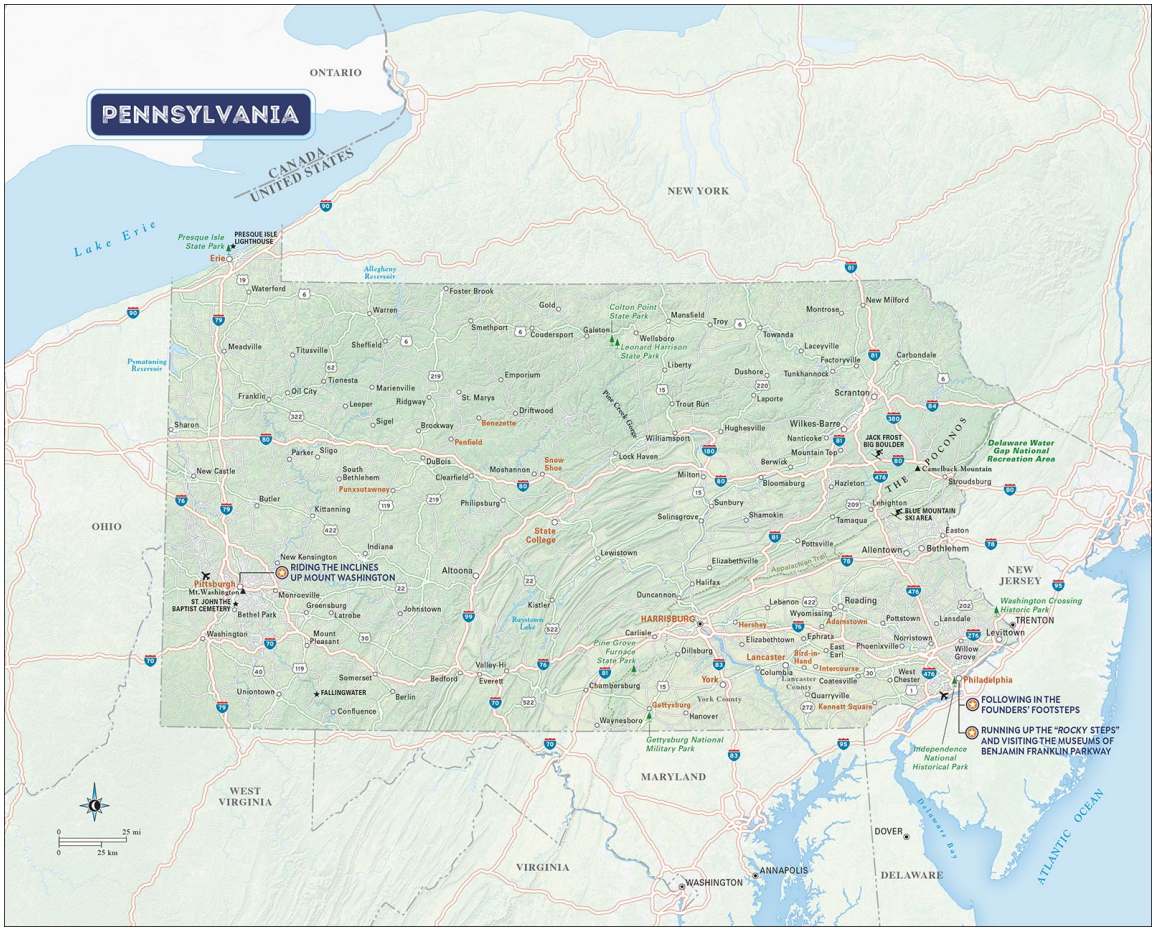
The state that goes by “PA” is a magnet for history buffs, art enthusiasts, and nature lovers. On the land of the Lenape, Nanticoke, Susquehannock, and the Shawnee peoples, this is where the nation’s founders came up with “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” It’s where four score and seven years later, President Abraham Lincoln delivered the timeless speech that began: “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation.” Pennsylvania is where Andy Warhol first touched a drawing pencil and where Andrew Wyeth painted his whole life. Pennsylvania is a study in the art of the comeback. Pittsburgh, described by one 19th-century writer as “hell with the lid off,” has since topped Forbes.com’s list of the country’s most livable cities. In the Lehigh Valley, a cultural center and casino resort have risen on the site of a shuttered steel works. Forests depleted by logging have regrown. Abandoned railroad lines have morphed into multiuse trails. For visitors, too, Pennsylvania is a place of renewal.

AREA: 46,054 sq mi / 119,280 sq km (33rd)

POPULATION: 13,078,751 (5th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 12, 1787 (2nd)

STATE CAPITAL: Harrisburg


PENNSYLVANIA
ONTARIO
CANADA
UNITED STATES
NEW YORK
Lake Erie
Presque Isle State Park
PRESQUE ISLE LIGHTHOUSE
Erie
Allegheny Reservoir
Pymatuning Reservoir
Colton Point State Park
Leonard Harrison State Park
Pine Creek Gorge
Snow Shoe
Penfield
Benezette
Punxsutawney
State College
Raystown Lake
Pine Grove Furnace State Park
Gettysburg National Military Park
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
JACK FROST BIG BOULDER
BLUE MOUNTAIN SKI AREA
THE POCONOS
Camelback Mountain
Appalachian Trail
Washington Crossing Historic Park
Bird-in-Hand
Intercourse
Kennett Square
Independence National Historical Park
RIDING THE INCLINES UP MOUNT WASHINGTON
FOLLOWING IN THE FOUNDERS' FOOTSTEPS
RUNNING UP THE "ROCKY STEPS" AND VISITING THE MUSEUMS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CEMETERY
FALLINGWATER
HARRISBURG
Hershey
Lancaster
York
Gettysburg
Philadelphia
TRENTON
Levittown
Bethlehem
Allentown
Reading
Scranton
Wilkes-Barre
Pittsburgh
Altoona
Johnstown
Erie
NEW JERSEY
MARYLAND
WEST VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
DELAWARE
OHIO
DOVER
ANNAPOLIS
WASHINGTON
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Delaware Bay
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Pennsylvania is a wide expanse of mostly wilderness and farmlands flanked by two cosmopolitan cities. In the southeast corner: **Philadelphia,** the nation's birthplace. In the southwest corner: **Pittsburgh,** the manufacturing powerhouse turned cultural hub. The places in between jockey for distinction: The Sweetest Place on Earth (Hershey), the Factory Tour Capital of the World (York County), Antiques Capital USA (Adamstown), and a borough made famous by a groundhog (Punxsutawney), to name a few.

WHEN TO GO

Pennsylvania experiences all four seasons and the state has plenty to offer year-round. **Summer** is the season to take advantage of Pennsylvania's lakes. It's not called Pennsylvania, as in "Penn's woods," for nothing. This is a tree-blanketed state, which makes **fall** a fabulous time to visit. **Winter:** Love it or hate it, the season of snow and ice brings snow sports opportunities. In early February, head to Punxsutawney to join the Groundhog Day hubbub.

TOP 3

1 FOLLOWING IN THE FOUNDERS' FOOTSTEPS

215/965-2305; www.nps.gov/inde

Start at **Independence National Historical Park** in Philadelphia, where on July 4, 1776, representatives of the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence. Purchase a timed ticket to **Independence Hall** from www.recreation.gov; guided tours start at the Independence Visitor Center (599 Market St., Philadelphia; 800/537-7676; www.phlvisitorcenter.com). Make your way to the **Liberty Bell** (Market St. between 5th St. and 6th St., Philadelphia); if there's still time before your Independence Hall tour, take a constitutional through the **Rose Garden and Magnolia Garden** or

Franklin Square. Pay your respects to the Revolutionary War's fallen at the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,** pop by the **Betsy Ross House** (239 Arch St., Philadelphia; 215/629-4026; www.historicphiladelphia.org), or add on **Washington Crossing Historic Park** (PA-32, between PA-532 and Aquetong Rd.; 215/493-4076; www.washingtoncrossingpark.org). This park, just 40 minutes north, commemorates the site from which General George Washington and his men crossed the Delaware River on Christmas night 1776.



LIBERTY BELL

2 RUNNING UP THE "*ROCKY* STEPS" AND VISITING THE MUSEUMS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY

Inspired by the Champs-Élysées in Paris, Benjamin Franklin Parkway starts near City Hall and terminates at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** (2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia; 215/763-8100; www.philamuseum.org), one of the preeminent cultural institutions in the country. Trees, sculptures, and flags representing some 109 nations line the grand boulevard. The parkway is a cultural mecca. In addition to the art museum, it's home to the

Academy of Natural Sciences (1900 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia; 215/299-1000; www.ansp.org), the nation's oldest natural history museum; a splendid science museum, **The Franklin Institute** (222 N. 20th St., Philadelphia; 215/448-1200; www.fi.edu); the **Rodin Museum** (2151 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia; 215/763-8100; www.rodinmuseum.org), which holds the largest collection of Auguste Rodin sculptures outside Paris; and the **Barnes Foundation** (2025 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy., Philadelphia; 215/278-7000; www.barnesfoundation.org), renowned for its extensive holdings of works by the likes of Picasso, Matisse, Cézanne, and Renoir.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARKWAY

Not everyone has the stamina to sprint up the steps à la Rocky, but almost every first-time visitor has a photo moment at the top. A bronze statue of the movie character, commissioned by Stallone for a scene in *Rocky III*, can be found near the base of the so-called **Rocky steps.**

3 RIDING THE INCLINES UP MOUNT WASHINGTON

Three 19th-century funiculars, or inclines, remain in Pennsylvania, and two of those climb Mount Washington. (The third is in Johnstown, east of Pittsburgh.) They've been around for so long that

you might think twice about boarding the cable cars. The views more than compensate for the fear factor.

The **Monongahela Incline** (8 Grandview Ave., Pittsburgh; 412/442-2000; www.portauthority.org) is the oldest cable car operation and the steepest incline in the country. The incline began operating in 1870. Its cars, which were replaced in the 1980s, ply two parallel tracks at about 6 mph (10 kph). The creaks and groans of the machinery recall a wooden roller coaster. Rest easy; there's no plunge after the "Mon Incline" summits. The lower station is a short walk from the Smithfield Street Bridge and across the street from Station Square, where you can park for a modest fee.

The **Duquesne Incline** (lower station 1197 W. Carson St., Pittsburgh; 412/381-1665; www.duquesneincline.org), 1 mi (1.6 km) west, opened in 1877 and enjoyed great popularity until the advent of the automobile. In the late 20th century, much-needed repairs were made to make the incline the attraction it is today. There's free parking across the street from the lower station, between West Carson Street and the Ohio River. Follow the pedestrian bridge that crosses West Carson to reach the station. You'll board one of two original Victorian cable cars and gain 400 ft (122 m) of elevation in less than three minutes. At the upper station, you'll find a free museum, gift shop, and observation deck with binocular telescopes.



DUQUESNE INCLINE

HIGHLIGHTS

LONGWOOD GARDENS

1001 Longwood Rd., Kennett Square; 610/388-1000;
www.longwoodgardens.org

Longwood Gardens is one of Pennsylvania's most exquisite spots, the sort of place people come back to again and again. It's unusual among horticultural showplaces in the Northeast in that it's open 365 days a year.

In fact, Longwood is busiest not in spring or summer but from Thanksgiving through early January, when fountains dance to holiday music and ice dancers perform under the stars. Its more than 1,100 ac (445 ha) of gardens, woodlands, and meadows were shaped by many hands, but the greatest credit is due to Pierre S. du Pont (1870-1954), whose French-born great-grandfather founded the DuPont chemical company. Longwood's **Italian Water Garden** was inspired by a garden near Florence. But where the original had only a few fountains, the Longwood version boasts 18 pools and basins, and 600 jets.

Major CITIES

PHILADELPHIA: The state's largest city is rich in historic and cultural attractions. Known for cheesesteaks and rabid sports fans, the City of Brotherly Love has reached new heights of hipness in recent years, with galleries and eateries sprouting in the unlikeliest places.

PITTSBURGH: Once known as the Smoky City, the Burgh has risen from the ashes to become a cultural hotbed. It boasts North America's largest single-artist museum and the state's largest history museum, not to mention the NFL's winningest football team.

ERIE: Pennsylvania's northwest corner shines in the summer months, when Lake Erie's natural harbor teems with pleasure boats and the sandy beaches of Presque Isle are open for business.

Budget at least an hour to take in the 20-plus outdoor gardens, including the otherworldly **Topiary Garden** and the 600-ft-long (183-m) **Flower Garden Walk,** whose beds are replanted with more than 125,000 spring bulbs every October. You'll need at least two hours for the **Longwood Conservatory,** which houses everything from cacti to a colossal pipe organ.

GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

717/334-1124; www.nps.gov/gett

Gettysburg earned its place in the history books in 1863, when it was the setting for the Civil War's bloodiest battle and President Abraham Lincoln's most famous speech. The four-year Civil War was fought on many battlegrounds, but none is as hallowed as Gettysburg's. Established in 1895, Gettysburg National Military Park was the first historic site owned by the US government. The 6,000-ac (2,400-ha) park is not only one of the nation's most popular historical attractions but also one of the world's most extraordinary sculpture gardens. It's dotted with more than 1,300 monuments, markers, and memorials. Many Gettysburg tours are led by members of the **Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides** (717/337-1709; www.gettysburgtourguides.org), who have spent years if not decades studying the Battle of Gettysburg. Guides are available on a first-come, first-served basis at the **Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center** (1195 Baltimore Pike/PA-97, Gettysburg; 717/338-1243; www.gettysburgfoundation.org). Don't miss the film at the visitor center; admission includes access to the on-site **Gettysburg Museum of the American Civil War,** which explores the causes and consequences of the deadliest war in American history. The **Soldiers' National Cemetery,** where President Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address, is a short walk from the visitor center.



GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH COUNTRY

Lancaster County

With its **Germanic heritage,** fabled cuisine (pass the shoofly pie), and unmatched concentration of **Amish,** this region ranks as Pennsylvania's most unique. Plain & Fancy Farm, the Amish Farm and House, and the **Mennonite Information Center** (2215 Millstream Rd., Lancaster; 717/299-0954; https://mennonitelife.org) are great places to acquaint yourself with the ways of the Amish. Keep in mind that the Amish take offense to being photographed, so resist the temptation to aim your camera at the farmer working the fields with mule-drawn equipment.



LANCASTER COUNTY

Plain & Fancy Farm (3121 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bird-in-Hand; 717/768-4400; www.plainandfancyfarm.com) offers an excellent orientation to the Amish way of life. Plain & Fancy Farm's main attraction is its restaurant, famous for its family-style meals. The **Amish Farm and House** (2395 Covered Bridge Dr., Lancaster; 717/394-6185; www.amishfarmandhouse.com) bills itself as the first tourist attraction in Lancaster County and the first Amish attraction in the United States. On a guided tour, you'll learn about the Amish religion, manner of dress, and farm industries. **Central Market** (23 N. Market St., Lancaster; 717/735-6890; www.centralmarketlancaster.com) is the oldest continually operated farmers market in the country. Open Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, Central Market is one-stop shopping for everything from hand-stitched Amish quilts to foie gras. There's even a stall devoted to horseradish.

The town of **Strasburg,** some 9 mi (14.5 km) southwest of downtown Lancaster, bills itself as "the real Lancaster County." Keep in mind that the Amish and their "plain" cousins don't do business on Sundays. See to it that

you eat at a restaurant serving Pennsylvania Dutch fare, preferably one that offers family-style dining.

FALLINGWATER

1491 Mill Run Rd., Mill Run; 724/329-8501; www.fallingwater.org

Fallingwater is Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural masterpiece. Wright designed the house in 1935 for the Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh, owners of the now-defunct Kaufmann's department store chain. The Kaufmanns wanted a vacation home with a view of a favorite waterfall. Wright decided to cantilever the house over the 30-ft (9-m) falls. The result is breathtaking—a visual and aural feast. Concrete terraces and a glass-walled living room project over the water, which provides a constant soundtrack. Fallingwater made such a splash that the architect was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1938. Wright, who was believed by many to be retired or dead, never wanted for work again. His last major project was Manhattan's Guggenheim Museum, which opened six months after his death in 1959. The Kaufmanns used Fallingwater until 1963, when Edgar Kaufmann Jr. entrusted it to the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Their artworks and furnishings, many of which were designed by Wright, still fill the house.

THE ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM

117 Sandusky St., Pittsburgh; 412/237-8300; www.warhol.org

Andy Warhol was born and buried in Pittsburgh, which might have remained a little-known fact were it not for the Andy Warhol Museum. This museum is the largest North American museum dedicated to a single artist, with 900 paintings and 2,000 drawings, along with sculptures, prints, photographs, films, videos, books, and even wallpaper designed by Warhol. In the early 1960s, the artist shot to fame as a pop artist with paintings of consumer products such as Campbell's Soup and celebrities including Marilyn Monroe. He is buried at **St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cemetery** in the Pittsburgh suburb of Bethel Park. Admirers still leave soup cans and other offerings at the gravesite.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin in the nation's birthplace: **Philadelphia.** Pick up a timed tour ticket to **Independence Hall** at the Independence Visitor Center before heading to the **Liberty Bell.** After your tour, take a constitutional through the **Rose Garden** and **Magnolia Garden** or **Franklin Square.** Next, try a Supreme Court robe on for size at the **National Constitution Center.** Come sundown, head to the neon-lit, Cheez Whiz-stained intersection of 9th Street and Passyunk Avenue in South Philly, home to **rival cheesesteak restaurants** Pat's King of Steaks and Geno's Steaks.

DAY 2 Sprint up the so-called **Rocky steps** and get lost in the period rooms of the **Philadelphia Museum of Art.** Then take a stroll along the picturesque Benjamin Franklin Parkway and pick a museum: the **Barnes Foundation, Rodin Museum, Franklin Institute** science museum, or **Academy of Natural Sciences.** Finally, treat your culturally enriched self to a show on the **Avenue of the Arts** and a cocktail at **The Ritz-Carlton**.

DAY 3 Drive 1.5 hours west on US 30 to stop for lunch at **Plain & Fancy Farm,** where you can learn all about Amish life and eat your weight in Pennsylvania Dutch-style foods. Continue 1.5 hours west on US 30 to **Gettysburg,** site of the Civil War's bloodiest battle. For dinner, indulge in colonial-style chow at the **Dobbin House Tavern.**

DAY 4 Today's destination is the **Laurel Highlands,** three hours west of Gettysburg and home to Frank Lloyd Wright's **Fallingwater.** On your way to the architectural masterpiece, pay your respects to victims of the 9/11 attacks at the **Flight 93 National Memorial.** From here, it's a 90-minute drive to **Pittsburgh**.

DAY 5 Start your day in Pittsburgh with a visit to the **Andy Warhol Museum,** then head to the **Mattress Factory** for more jaw-dropping art or the **National Aviary** for something to tweet about. Make your way to **Station Square** and dine at the Grand Concourse before ascending Mount Washington via the **Monongahela Incline.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

ELK SCENIC DRIVE

The capital of elk country is the PA-555 village of **Benezette.** Elk can often be found near town (and occasionally in town). **Elk Scenic Drive** is a 127-mi (204-mi) route peppered with 23 sites of interest to nature lovers, including the viewing areas near Benezette. It winds through three state forests and three state game lands, starting and ending at points on I-80. From the west, leave I-80 at Penfield exit 111 at PA-153. From the east, take Snow Shoe exit 147 at PA-144. Look for distinctive signage.

All but a few of the sites require diverging from the main route. The journey can take a few hours or a few days, depending on your level of interest in sites such as **Kettle Creek State Park,** with its 167-ac (108-ha) stocked trout lake. It's not unusual for animals to amble across roads, so drive carefully. Be especially alert when you see an "elk crossing" sign. The **Elk Country Visitor Center** (950 Winslow Hill Rd., Benezette; 814/787-5167; www.experienceelkcountry.com), just north of town is a good place to start an elk-spotting adventure.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

301 Peninsula Dr., Erie; 814/833-7424; www.dcnr.pa.gov/stateparks

Just 7 mi (11.5 km) long, the spit jutting into Lake Erie boasts sandy beaches, a 19th-century lighthouse, and a remarkable diversity of plant and animal life. This National Natural Landmark is unlike any other place in Pennsylvania. Stop at the **Tom Ridge Environmental Center** (301 Peninsula Dr., Erie; 814/833-7424; www.pa.gov) to learn about Presque Isle's history and ecosystems and grab a map of the 3,200-ac (1,295-ha) park. Be sure to make time to visit a beach: Presque Isle beachgoers see nothing but water and sky when they gaze northward. It's almost like being at the ocean. The **Mill Road Beaches,** a group of adjacent beaches with shaded picnic areas, are your best bet for a quiet experience. There's no better way to take in Presque Isle than by biking the **Karl Boyes Multi-purpose National Recreation Trail,** which makes a 13.5-mi (21.7-km) circuit of the park. Maritime history buffs can retrace the steps of lighthouse keepers on the 1.25-mi (2-km) **Sidewalk Trail**, which ends at the **Presque Isle Lighthouse.** The easy **North Pier Trail** (0.7 mi/1.1-km one way) follows the shoreline from Beach 11 to North Pier, a popular fishing spot and home to the **North Pier Light.**

PINE CREEK GORGE

Often referred to as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania, Pine Creek Gorge starts near the US 6 village of Ansonia and continues south for 47 mi (76.6 km). Most visitors take in its majesty from one of two state parks near its northern end, where the canyon is about 800 ft (244 m) deep: On the west rim of the gorge, there's **Colton Point State Park.** On the east, there's **Leonard Harrison State Park,** which offers superior views and facilities. The best hike is the 62-mi (100-km) **Pine Creek Rail Trail,** featuring dramatic outcrops, gushing waterfalls, and diverse flora. The gently graded

gravel path starts at Wellsboro Junction, a defunct railway junction at US 6 and PA-287. Stop at the **Tioga County Visitors Center** (2053 PA-660, Wellsboro; 570/724-0635; www.visittiogapa.com) or the state park office at the entrance to **Leonard Harrison** (4797 PA-660, Wellsboro; 570/724-3061; www.visitpaparks.com) for park information.



PINE CREEK GORGE

THE POCONOS

Less than two hours by car from New York City and Philadelphia, the highlands of northeast Pennsylvania have provided respite from the rigors of urban life since the early 1800s. With six major ski areas, the Pocono Mountains are now Pennsylvania's number one destination for snow sports. Here are the best ski spots:

- **Blue Mountain Ski Area:** 1660 Blue Mountain Dr., Palmerton; 610/826-7700; www.skibluemt.com
- **Camelback Mountain:** 301 Resort Dr., Tannersville; 570/629-1661; www.camelbackresort.com

- **Jack Frost Big Boulder:** 434 Jack Frost Mountain Rd., White Haven; 570/443-8425; www.jfbb.com

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

EASTERN PA HOMESTEAD FESTIVAL

Kutztown Fairgrounds, 450 Wentz St., Kutztown; https://easternpahomesteadfestival.com

Continuing the tradition of the Kutztown Folk Festival, said to be the oldest continuously operated folklife festival in the country, the Eastern PA Homestead Festival takes place in July. It's a four-day celebration of all things homesteading—from square dancing to canning demos.

CAMBRIA COUNTY FAIR

883 N. Julian St., Ebensburg; 814/472-7491; www.cambriacofair.com

The Cambria County Fair is a weeklong celebration of the rural life, complete with livestock exhibits, amusement rides, tractor and truck pulls, square dancing, and the crowning of a fair queen. Celebrations begin the Sunday before Labor Day. Cambria County is the second largest producer of potatoes in Pennsylvania, which is cause for another annual celebration, **PotatoFest** (downtown Ebensburg; 814/472-8780; www.potatofest.com [URL inactive]; last Sat. in Sept.). Food vendors serve up potato soup, homemade potato chips, sweet potato fries, potato pancakes, potato pizza, and even potato candy.

POCONOS FOOD FESTIVALS

Pocono Food Truck Festival (Shawnee Mountain Ski Area, 401 Hollow Rd., East Stroudsburg; 570/421-7231; www.shawneemt.com) in October is a two-day event full of good eats and entertainment for the whole family. For skiers looking to prepare for the winter season, there's a ski shop sale during the festival.

On the grounds of **Country Junction—World's Largest General Store** (US 209, Lehighton; 610/377-5050; www.countryjunction.com), you'll find events throughout the year, from **Pickle Weekend** and **Peach Weekend** in August to the **Great Pocono Pumpkin Festival** in October.

BEST FOOD

PHILADELPHIA CHEESESTEAK

You're never far from a great cheesesteak in Philly. They're served in every neighborhood, at diners and in bars, out of food trucks and storefront windows, and even in restaurants serving upscale twists on the classic sandwich. In Philly, there just isn't one type. Some like the roll toasted and crispy, while others prefer it soft and chewy. Some like the meat diced as thinly as possible, while others prefer slightly larger slices or even small chunks. The one indisputable fact is that cheesesteaks are just not the same anywhere else. Here are few places to try in Philly:

- **Jim's Steaks:** 400 South St.; 215/928-1911; www.jimssteaks.com
- **Pat's King of Steaks:** 1237 E. Passyunk Ave.; 215/468-1546; www.patskingofsteaks.com
- **Geno's Steaks:** 1219 S. 9th St.; 215/389-0659; www.genosteaks.com



GENO'S STEAKS

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FARE

If you're new to Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine, you should know a few things. Around here, **chicken pot pie** isn't a pie at all. It's a stew with square-cut egg noodles. A **whoopie pie** isn't a pie either. Think of it as a dessert burger: creamy icing pressed between two bun-shaped cakes. Chocolate cake with white icing is most common, but you'll also encounter variations such as pumpkin cake with cream cheese icing. The annual **Whoopie Pie Festival** (Hershey Farm Restaurant & Inn, PA-896, Strasburg; 717/687-8635; www.whoopiepiefestival.com; early Sept.; free) features more than 400 varieties.

Pennsylvania Dutch country's most iconic dessert, the **shoofly pie,** is, in fact, a pie with a crumb topping. But it's nothing like the fruit or cream pies

served at diners throughout the country. Packed with molasses and brown sugar, the joltingly sweet treat comes in “wet bottom” and “dry bottom” varieties. A wet-bottomed shoofly pie is more gooey and molasses-y than its dry-bottomed cousin. Other regional specialties include egg noodles with browned butter, **chow-chow** (a pickled vegetable relish), **scrapple** (a breakfast food made with pork scraps), and **schnitz un knepp** (a dish consisting of dried apples, dumplings, and ham). Here are some Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants:

BEST SOUVENIRS

Quilt shops are more common than stoplights in the Amish countryside of Lancaster County. Most sell a variety of handicrafts. Many are home-based businesses, allowing shoppers a glimpse into the everyday lives of locals.

Just about all quilt shops are closed on Sunday, with the exception of the **Quilt Shop at Miller's** (2811 Lincoln Hwy. E., Ronks; 717/687-8439; www.quiltshopatmillers.com). Intercourse, the village along PA340 (Old Philadelphia Pike), is home to **The Old Country Store** (717/768-7101; www.theoldcountrystore.com; open Mon.-Sat.), stocked with thousands of items made by local craftspeople, most of them Amish or Mennonite.

- **Shady Maple Smorgasbord:** 129 Toddy Dr., East Earl; 717/354-8222; www.shady-maple.com/smorgasbord
- **Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant & Smorgasbord:** 2760 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bird-in-Hand; 717/768-1500; www.bird-in-hand.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Philadelphia International Airport:** PHL; 8500 Essington Ave., Philadelphia; 215/937-6937; www.phl.org
- **Pittsburgh International Airport:** PIT; 1000 Airport Blvd., Pittsburgh; 412/472-3525; www.flypittsburgh.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Pennsylvania Tourism Office:** www.visitpa.com
- **Pennsylvania State Parks:** www.dcnr.pa.gov/StateParks

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Philadelphia Inquirer:*** www.inquirer.com
- ***Pennsylvania Magazine:*** www.pa-mag.com

WEST VIRGINIA

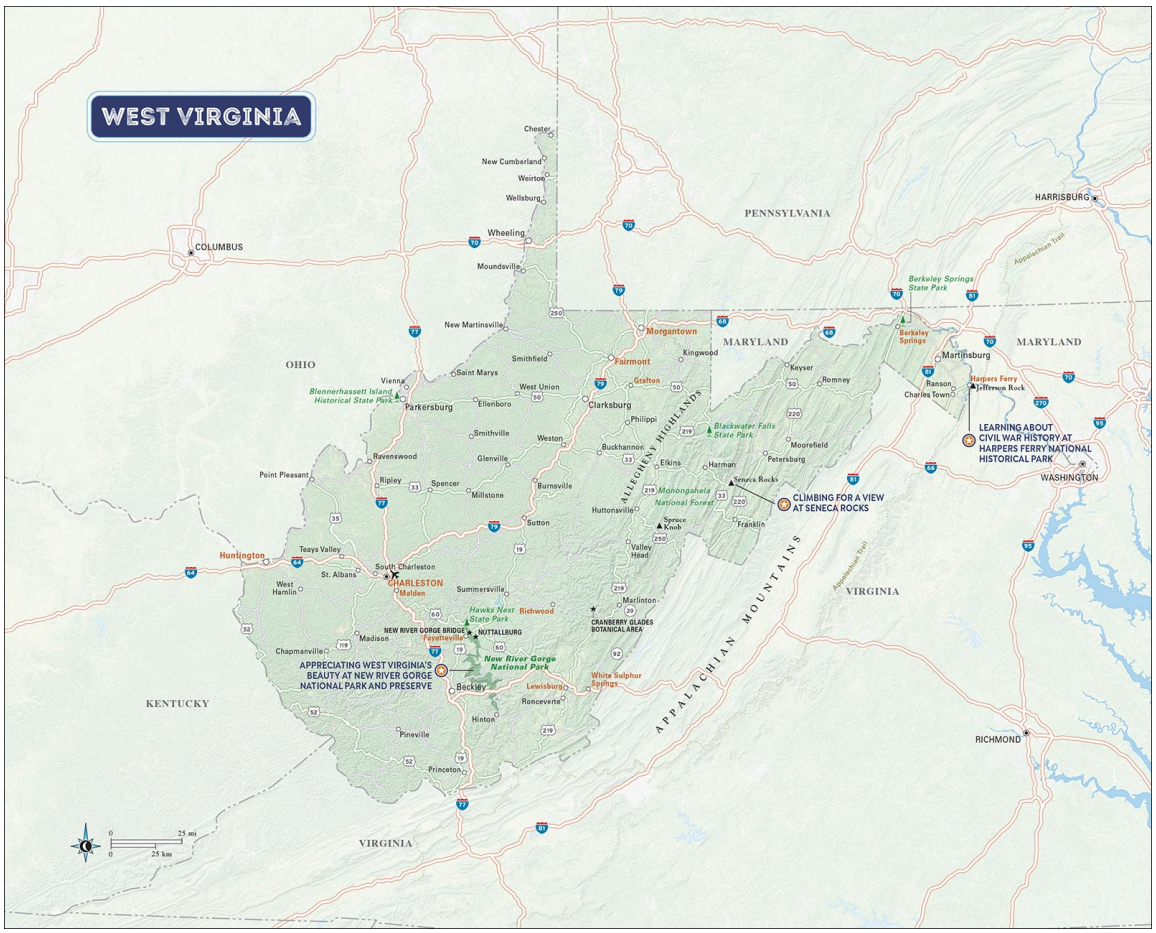
“Almost Heaven” is the moniker chosen for this mountainous state by its tourism board. With deep river gorges and canyons and the Allegheny Mountains along its eastern flank, the state (on the land of the Massawomeck, Osage, Moneton, Cherokee, Delaware, Mingo, and Shawnee people) and its natural beauty have a claim on that lofty title. Although West Virginia’s fortunes have long seemed inextricably linked to coal, with mine shafts dug into the ground and mountaintops flattened in search of the fossil fuel, travel and tourism have created a different source of revenue with incentives to preserve the forests, rivers, and peaks that draw people from nearby cities and beyond to hike, paddle, BASE jump, rock climb, and more. Designated in 2020, New River Gorge is one of the country’s newest national parks, protecting an area that was once dotted with company mining towns. Add in towns and cities perfect for weekend getaways, and you’ll start to see that you may want to stay awhile—something West Virginians have always known.

AREA: 24,230 sq mi / 62,756 sq km (41st)

POPULATION: 1,769,979 (39th)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 20, 1863 (35th)

STATE CAPITAL: Charleston


WEST VIRGINIA
Chester
New Cumberland
Weirton
Wellsburg
Wheeling
COLUMBUS
Moundsville
PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
Appalachian Trail
Berkeley Springs State Park
New Martinsville
Morgantown
Kingwood
MARYLAND
Berkeley Springs
Martinsburg
MARYLAND
OHIO
Smithfield
Fairmont
Grafton
Keyser
Romney
Saint Marys
Vienna
Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park
West Union
Parkersburg
Ellenboro
Clarksburg
Ranson
Charles Town
Harpers Ferry
Jefferson Rock
Philippi
Blackwater Falls State Park
Smithville
Weston
Moorefield
Ravenswood
Glenville
Buckhannon
Elkins
Harman
Petersburg
LEARNING ABOUT CIVIL WAR HISTORY AT HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
Point Pleasant
Ripley
Spencer
Millstone
Burnsville
Seneca Rocks
WASHINGTON
ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS
Mohongahela National Forest
CLIMBING FOR A VIEW AT SENECA ROCKS
Huttonsville
Spruce Knob
Franklin
Sutton
Valley Head
Huntington
Teays Valley
St. Albans
South Charleston
CHARLESTON
Malden
West Hamlin
Summersville
Marlinton
Hawks Nest State Park
Richwood
CRANBERRY GLADES BOTANICAL AREA
NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE
Fayetteville
NUTTALLBURG
Madison
Chapmanville
APPRECIATING WEST VIRGINIA'S BEAUTY AT NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
New River Gorge National Park
Beckley
Lewisburg
White Sulphur Springs
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
Appalachian Trail
VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
Ronceverte
Hinton
Pineville
Princeton
RICHMOND
0
25 mi
0
25 km
VIRGINIA

ORIENTATION

The state capital, **Charleston,** is located a little west of the center of the state, with **New River Gorge National Park and Preserve** to its southeast. Part of the Appalachians, the Allegheny Mountains, where **Monongahela National Forest** is located, cover much of eastern West Virginia. Historic **Harpers Ferry** sits at the tip of the sliver of West Virginia that's wedged between Virginia and Maryland and is closer to the nation's capital than the state capital.

WHEN TO GO

Late **spring** (May-June) and **fall** (Sept.-Oct.) are usually the best times to explore West Virginia. The weather is most pleasant, and during the latter, the fall foliage is spectacular. **Summer** is the prime tourist season, but there is humidity to contend with. **Winter** is a slow season, with seasonal closures at some attractions and businesses and cessation of maintenance on mountain roads.

TOP 3

1 APPRECIATING WEST VIRGINIA'S BEAUTY AT NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

Named a national park in 2020, New River Gorge National Park and Preserve contains the deepest and longest river-carved gorge in the Appalachian Mountains. The arch bridge over the river, the **New River Gorge Bridge** (US 19), is the top attraction in the park, with its 3,030-ft (920-m) length spanning 876 ft (267 m) above the river. Views of this engineering marvel can be had from the **Canyon Rim Visitor Center** (162 Visitor Center Rd., Lansing; 304/574-2115; www.nps.gov/neri) and the upper overlook along the short (0.1-mi/160-m) accessible **Canyon Rim Boardwalk,** which also has a lower overlook that involves 178 stairs to reach. For a longer distance view, hike the 1.6-mi (2.6-km) **Long Point Trail,** and to see

the bridge from below, drive **Fayette Station Road** from the Canyon Rim Visitor Center down through the gorge to the town of **Fayetteville,** a 40-minute trip. Guided white-water rafting trips are a popular activity on the New River, with gentler rapids (Class I-III) in the Upper Gorge and more difficult rapids (Class III-V) in the Lower Gorge.



NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE

Don’t miss the park’s sights that have cultural significance to the state. Coal was and continues to be an important industry in West Virginia, and the New River and the surrounding area was a hub of mining at the turn of the 20th century. **Nuttallburg,** deep in the gorge, was one of the mining towns that was abandoned after the industry declined, but some of its structures still remain. Nuttallburg can be accessed via a 10-mi (16-km) drive (including 4 mi/6.4 km on unpaved road) from the visitor center. The drive also highlights the heritage of Black Americans in the area, who came to work in the mines and the railroads that supported them, with informational placards posted along the road where the segregated living facilities stood.

2 LEARNING ABOUT CIVIL WAR HISTORY AT HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Harpers Ferry; 304/535-6029; www.nps.gov/hafe

The town of Harpers Ferry is best known for the 1859 raid of the **Harpers Ferry National Armory,** which mass-produced military arms for the United States, by abolitionist John Brown as part of an unsuccessful attempt to start a revolt of enslaved people. The park is technically located in three states—West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland—but the main sights are located in the Lower Town of Harpers Ferry. Visitors can see 50 historic buildings in the Shenandoah Street, High Street, and Potomac Street areas.



HARPERS FERRY

The armory site became the location of the **Harpers Ferry Train Station** in 1889 and remains as such today. **John Brown's Fort** (which was the armory's guardhouse) is the only surviving building from the Civil War. It was moved several times and now sits approximately 150 ft (46 m) east of its original location (the original site is now covered by the railroad). Another landmark is **White Hall Tavern** on Potomac Street. The tavern was owned by Frederick Roeder, the first civilian casualty of the Civil War in Harpers Ferry.

Another historic building in the park is **Stipes' Boarding House** (Shenandoah St.), where Cornelia Stipes took in boarders during the Civil War.

Visitors can get a view of the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers by hiking up to the spot visited by Thomas Jefferson on October 25, 1783, now called **Jefferson Rock.** From the historic buildings, make your way to High Street and the stone steps that lead up to St. Peter's Church. The steps continue past the church and turn into a steep 5-minute climb. The view is spectacular, and you will find out why Jefferson said it was "worth a voyage across the Atlantic."

3 CLIMBING FOR A VIEW AT SENECA ROCKS

US 33 at WV-55, Seneca Rocks

Located within **Monongahela National Forest,** these dramatic 900-ft (274-m) Tuscarora quartzite rock formations are a popular rock-climbing destination, with some 375 routes of a range of difficulties (5.0-5.12). Climbers have the advantage here since they can scale up to the summit for a sweeping view of eastern West Virginia. Guide services lead guided climbs up the rocks as well.



VIEW FROM SENECA ROCKS

Hikers can get up to a wooden observation deck on the steep **Seneca Rocks Hiking Trail** (2.6 mi/4.2 km round-trip), which climbs 700 ft (213 m) in elevation. The trail starts at the **Seneca Rocks Discovery Center,** which is a good place to see the rocks themselves as well as get information about the area. Adjacent to the center is the **Sites Homestead,** which is surrounded by gardens featuring 19th-century plants. Interpretive events highlighting period arts and crafts, such as quilting or fiddling, are held here on Saturdays in the summer.

HIGHLIGHTS

BLENNERHASSETT ISLAND HISTORICAL STATE PARK

137 Juliana St., Parkersburg; 304/420-4800; https://wvstateparks.com

This unique park is located on an island in the middle of the Ohio River, and via self-guided walking tours and carriage rides, it offers insight into local history. The island is only accessible by riding on a sternwheeler, which departs from **Point Park** (2nd St.) in Parkersburg.



BLENNERHASSETT ISLAND HISTORICAL STATE PARK FERRY

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY VISITOR CENTER

799 Washington St., Harpers Ferry; 304/535-6331;
www.appalachiantrail.org

Harpers Ferry is one of the only West Virginia towns that the **Appalachian Trail (AT)** passes through in its 4-mi (6.4-km) run through the state. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy Headquarters is just a 0.25 mi (0.4 km) off the trail, and although it's not technically the midpoint of the Georgia-to-Maine hike, it serves as the symbolic halfway mark for many. The center is home to an enormous raised-relief map of the entire Appalachian Trail. It is one-of-a-kind and more than 10 ft (3 m) long. In addition, pictures of more than 18,000 Appalachian Trail thru-hikers and section-hikers who have passed through the town since 1979 are kept in photo albums in the headquarters building. There are also maps, books, and other merchandise for sale, and staff can answer all types of questions regarding the AT.

Major CITIES

CHARLESTON: Featuring a gilded dome, the Cass Gilbert-designed capitol building sets the stage for the state capital's historic downtown area, lined with restaurants and shops set in brick buildings.

HUNTINGTON: Located in western West Virginia just across the Ohio River from Ohio and a few miles east of the Kentucky state line, this former steamboat port has a lively downtown riverfront area centered around Pullman Square.

MORGANTOWN: Home to West Virginia University, Morgantown is located in northern West Virginia, south of the Pennsylvania border, on the banks of the Mon (Monongahela) River.

BERKELEY SPRINGS STATE PARK

2 S. Washington St., Berkeley Springs; 304/258-2711; https://wvstateparks.com

The warm natural spring waters flowing in this state park have drawn visitors here since the birth of the United States, and even prior, with bathers that included George Washington. Today visitors to this patch of northern West Virginia near the Maryland border can see a re-creation of Washington's tub and partake of the waters and other spa services at the Main Bathhouse. The surrounding town of Berkeley Springs takes water quite seriously, hosting a water-tasting festival every year.

THE GREENBRIER

101 W. Main St., White Sulphur Springs; www.greenbrier.com

First opened in 1778, this historic resort in southeast West Virginia has hosted US presidents, politicians, professional sports figures, and others who came for the natural spring waters, luxury accommodations, and well-appointed grounds. During the Civil War, it was used by both Union and Confederate forces, and during World War II, diplomats from Axis nations were sequestered here in advance of being sent back to their home countries. Today, the property sprawls over 11,000 ac (4,450 ha) with 582 rooms in its gleaming white main building, four golf courses, a casino, and a spa with the mineral-rich waters that were the Greenbrier's original draw.

MOTHER'S DAY

Grafton, a tiny town in northern West Virginia, is the birthplace of Mother's Day, first celebrated here in 1908. This claim to fame is commemorated in the **International Mother's Day Shrine** (11 E. Main St.; 304/265-1589) in an old church.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in **Charleston.** Spend the morning browsing **Capitol Market,** and then head out of town on the **Midland Trail.** When you reach US 19, take it to New River Gorge National Park. Stop at the **Canyon Rim Visitor Center** for views of the **New River Gorge Bridge** and do a short hike. Take **Fayette Station Road** for a view of the bridge from below. End up in **Fayetteville,** where you'll spend the night.

DAY 2 Explore more of **New River Gorge National Park** in the morning, and then take US 19 north to pick up the Midland Trail again. Near the end of the scenic byway, you'll reach the small town of **Lewisburg,** where you'll spend the night.

DAY 3 Get an early start into the mountains, heading to the dramatic **Seneca Rocks.** You can admire it from the base, or work up a sweat hiking up to the observation deck. Not far away is the state's highest point, **Spruce Knob.** Afterward, drive 1.5 hours north to reach **Blackwater Falls State Park,** your last destination for the day. Check out the falls before turning in at the lodge or a cabin (reserve ahead of time).

DAY 4 From Blackwater Falls, drive to **Harpers Ferry,** 2.5 hours away. (You can't help but cross state boundaries on the way, as it's located on a thin arm of land between Maryland and Pennsylvania.) Wander the historic town and get a bite to eat. From there, drive an hour to **Berkeley Springs,** a town known for its mineral waters. Soak in the park's baths and spend the night in town.

DAY 5 Make the 4.5-hour drive back to **Charleston.** On the way, stop at the **Country Club Bakery** in Fairmont for a pepperoni roll, a West Virginia original.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

MIDLAND TRAIL

US 60; 800/642-9292; https://nsbfoundation.com

Starting in the state capital, **Charleston,** this National Scenic Byway winds 117 mi (188 km) through central and southeast West Virginia. It passes through small towns and natural areas, including **Malden,** the hometown of Booker T. Washington; **Hawks Nest State Park** (49 Hawks Nest Park Rd., Ansted; 304/658-5212; https://wvstateparks.com), with an aerial tramway descending into its deep canyon; and **Lewisburg,** a small town that draws weekenders. The route ends in the Greenbrier Valley, at **White Sulphur Springs,** home of the historic Greenbrier resort.

HIGHLAND SCENIC HIGHWAY

This 43-mi (69-km) drive through **Monongahela National Forest** and **Allegheny Highlands** starts in **Richwood,** the purported Ramp (aka wild spring onions) Capital of the World. It follows WV-39/55 east, and then turns onto WV-150 near the **Cranberry Glades Botanical Area,** where you can stop to see bogs and their unique flora, such as carnivorous plants. The

scenic highway ends when WV-150 meets US 219. Avoid driving this route between November and April, when the roads are not maintained.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

SPRUCE KNOB

Monongahela National Forest

Located in Monongahela National Forest, near Seneca Rocks, this 4,863-ft (1,482-m) peak is the highest point in the state. There is an observation tower and parking lot at the top, and there are hiking trails and two campgrounds in the area.



SPRUCE KNOB

BLACKWATER FALLS STATE PARK

1584 Blackwater Lodge Rd., Davis; 304/259-5216; https://wvstateparks.com

Voted Best State Park several times by *WV Living* magazine, Blackwater Falls State Park offers hiking, biking, camping, and paddling, but its best attraction might be the 0.25-mi (0.4-km) winter sled run and the Magic Carpet conveyer belt that takes sledders to the top of the run. There are several overlooks to see the falls themselves—the easiest is the on the 0.25-mi (0.4-km) Gentle Trail, but those able to climb down and back up 200 stairs can get to the main viewing platform on the Boardwalk Trail.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BATHTUB CELEBRATION

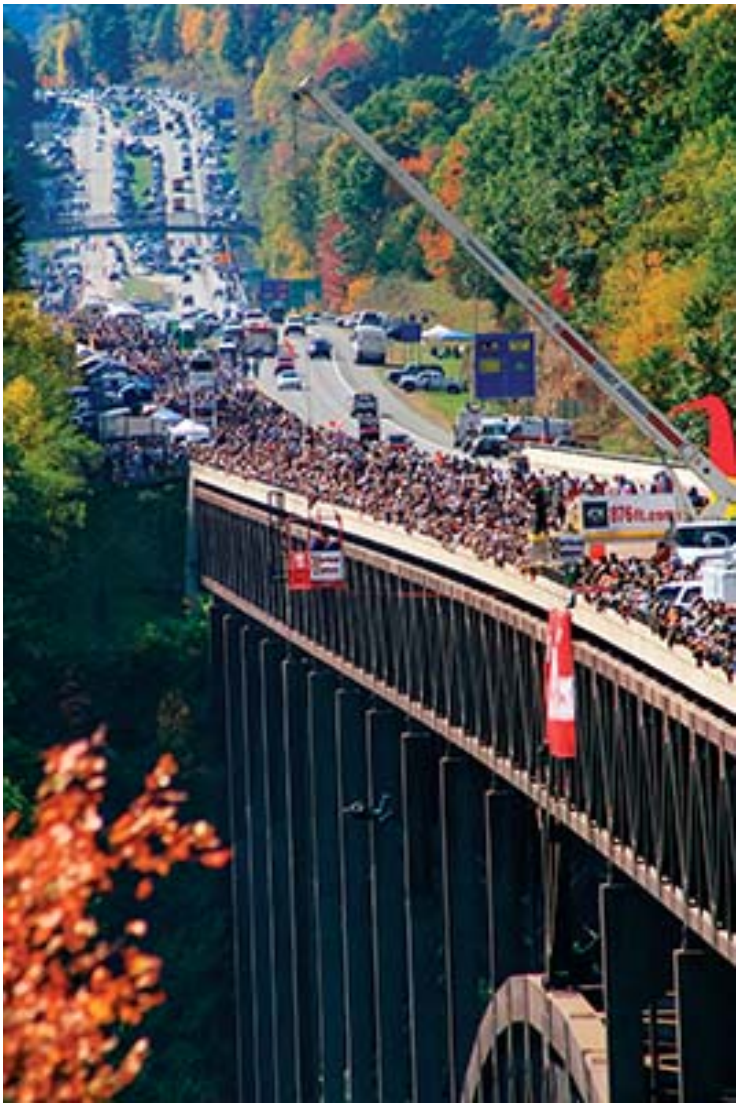
Berkeley Springs State Park; https://berkeleysprings.com; Mar.

This one-of-a-kind festival in March celebrates the outdoor tub said to have been used by George Washington during his visits to what is now Berkeley Springs State Park. The whole town of Berkeley Springs devotes itself to discounted items, themed foods, and other specials over the three days of this festival.

BRIDGE DAY

New River Gorge Bridge, US 19; https://officialbridgeday.com; Oct.

Every third Saturday in October since 1980, some sort of event involving daredevils jumping onto or from the New River Gorge Bridge has taken place. Today, the main event is watching BASE jumpers leaping off the bridge, but other activities, many of which involve registering beforehand, include a Bridge Walk along the catwalk, zip-lining from the catwalk, a 5K run starting on the bridge, and a tasting event featuring local restaurants.



BRIDGE DAY

BEST FOOD

PEPPERONI ROLLS

A pepperoni sausage (sliced or whole) baked into a white-bread bun is the basis for this West Virginia food, created as an easy-to-eat lunch for coal miners. The inventor, Giuseppe Argiro, was a coal miner himself until he opened **Country Club Bakery** (1211 Country Club Rd., Fairmont;

304/363-5690; www.countryclubbakery.net), which is still in business in northern West Virginia. If you can’t make it to the bakery, you can order online and have a dozen (or three) shipped to you within the United States.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Find items made in West Virginia at **WV Marketplace** inside Charleston's **Capitol Market** (800 Smith St., Charleston; https://capitolmarket.net), which also hosts an outdoor farmers market with an all-West Virginia vendor lineup.

GOLDEN DELICIOUS APPLES

The golden delicious apple, which originated in West Virginia, became the state fruit in 1905, and they taste the best here, of course. Find them in all manner of baked goods, or just bite into one in the way nature intended.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **West Virginia International Yeager Airport:** CRW; 100 Airport Rd., Charleston; 304/344-8033; https://flycrw.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **West Virginia Tourism:** https://wvtourism.com
- **West Virginia State Parks and Forests:** https://wvstateparks.com

MAGAZINES

- ***WV Living:*** https://wvliving.com

DELAWARE

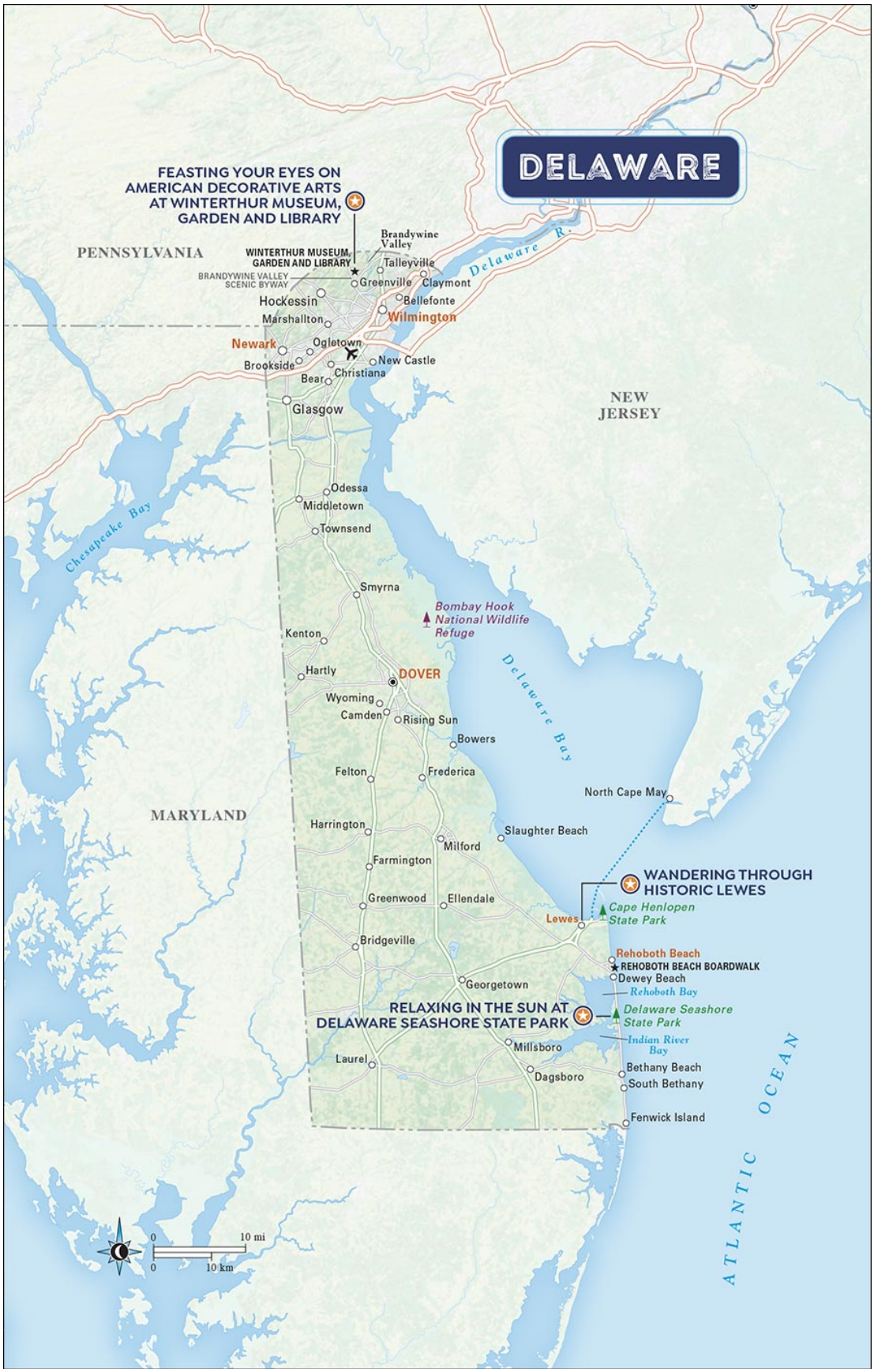
Delaware, on Nanticoke and Lenni-Lenape land, was the first state to ratify the US Constitution, and thereby became the first state in the Union. In 2021, the first US president from Delaware, Joseph R. Biden Jr., was inaugurated. (Yes, it's true that Biden was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, but he served as a US senator from Delaware for 36 years and is affiliated with the state politically.) Between those two historic events, the state struggled with divisions over enslavement—its location below the Mason-Dixon line meant that enslavement was allowed in Delaware, but many of its citizens supported abolition—saw the rise of the du Pont family and eponymous company in wealth and industry, and established itself as a corporation-friendly state, where the majority of Fortune 500 companies are incorporated. Travelers can see this history throughout Delaware, from the redbrick buildings of the state capital, Dover, to the lavish properties built by generations of du Ponts. But Delaware is also a beach getaway, with its stretch of Atlantic coast leading toward Maryland.

AREA: 2,489 sq mi / 6,446 sq km (49th)

POPULATION: 1,051,917 (45th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 7, 1787 (1st)

STATE CAPITAL: Dover


DELAWARE
FEASTING YOUR EYES ON AMERICAN DECORATIVE ARTS AT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN AND LIBRARY
PENNSYLVANIA
WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN AND LIBRARY
BRANDYWINE VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY
Brandywine Valley
Talleyville
Greenville
Claymont
Delaware R.
Hockessin
Bellefonte
Wilmington
Marshallton
Newark
Ogletown
Brookside
New Castle
Christiana
Bear
Glasgow
NEW JERSEY
Odessa
Middletown
Townsend
Chesapeake Bay
Smyrna
Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge
Kenton
Hartly
DOVER
Delaware Bay
Wyoming
Camden
Rising Sun
Bowers
Felton
Frederica
North Cape May
MARYLAND
Harrington
Slaughter Beach
Milford
Farmington
WANDERING THROUGH HISTORIC LEWES
Greenwood
Ellendale
Cape Henlopen State Park
Lewes
Bridgeville
Rehoboth Beach
REHOBOTH BEACH BOARDWALK
Dewey Beach
Georgetown
Rehoboth Bay
RELAXING IN THE SUN AT DELAWARE SEASHORE STATE PARK
Delaware Seashore State Park
Indian River Bay
Millsboro
Laurel
Dagsboro
Bethany Beach
South Bethany
Fenwick Island
ATLANTIC OCEAN
0
10 mi
0
10 km

ORIENTATION

Delaware shares the Delmarva Peninsula with Maryland and a semicircular northern boundary with Pennsylvania. The Delaware River, Delaware Bay, and Atlantic Ocean form its eastern border. **Wilmington** sits in the northern part of the state with the **Brandywine Valley** spreading north from the city. **Dover** is located near the center of the state, with **Atlantic beaches** lining the southeastern coast.

WHEN TO GO

Summer is the **high season,** especially if your plans involve some beach time. **Late spring** (May and June) and **fall** (Sept. and Oct.) are good seasons to visit Delaware, with cooler temperatures. Some businesses, especially at the beach, close or have shorter hours for the **winter** season.

TOP 3

1 RELAXING IN THE SUN AT DELAWARE SEASHORE STATE PARK

DE-1 between Bethany Beach and Dewey Beach; 302/227-2800; www.destateparks.com

Located between Rehoboth Beach and Bethany Beach, Delaware Seashore State Park covers a thin strip of land between the Atlantic and Rehoboth Bay. The primary attraction in the park is the beach itself—a 6-mi-long (10-km-long) beach lover's paradise—where visitors can swim and relax along the shore. There are modern bathhouses with showers and changing rooms, and lifeguards are on duty during the day in summer. There are also snack vendors and beach equipment rentals such as chairs, rafts, and umbrellas. Fishing is popular in the park and can be done in the surf in designated locations or from the banks of the Indian River Inlet. There is also a special-access pier for the elderly or people with disabilities.



DELAWARE SEASHORE STATE PARK

2 WANDERING THROUGH HISTORIC LEWES

The town of Lewes is on the Harbor of Refuge, just a short distance from the Atlantic. Its historic downtown is one of the prettiest spots on the mid-Atlantic coast, with historic homes (some dating back to the 17th century), a friendly atmosphere, and tidy, well-kept streets. The town's main thoroughfare, 2nd Street, offers wonderful dining and shopping with a cozy, friendly feel.



HISTORIC LEWES

Shipcarpenter Square (www.shipcarpentersquare.com), bounded by 3rd and 4th Streets and Burton and Park Streets, is a community of delicately and accurately preserved and restored 18th- and 19th-century homes in the historic district. The homes in Shipcarpenter Square are mostly colonial farmhouses built in the late 1700s-late 1800s in other parts of Sussex County and moved to the site in the early 1980s. Other relocated buildings include three barns, a schoolhouse, an inn, a log home, a lifesaving station, a lighthouse, a market, and two Victorian houses.

3 FEASTING YOUR EYES ON AMERICAN DECORATIVE ARTS AT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN AND LIBRARY

5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur; 302/888-4600; www.winterthur.org

This estate of the du Pont family (of gunpowder company-turned-chemical company fame) is home to a vast collection of Americana and a splendid naturalistic garden. E. I. du Pont, the founder of DuPont, which made his family one of the wealthiest in America, purchased the land that would become Winterthur (pronounced

“WIN-ter-tour”) in the 1810s. But it wasn’t until his great-grandson Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969) got his hands on the property a century later that it evolved into the extraordinary estate it is today.



CHINESE PAVILION AT THE WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN AND LIBRARY

Henry doubled the size of the existing mansion and filled the rooms with his burgeoning collection of American decorative arts. By the time the mansion opened as a museum in 1951, he had created 175 period rooms. First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy was so wowed during a 1961 visit that she invited Henry to head the committee overseeing the restoration of the White House. General admission includes an introductory tour of the mansion, admittance to galleries displaying highlights from Winterthur’s collection of more than 85,000 objects made or used in America from 1640 to 1860, and free rein of the Winterthur Garden.

HIGHLIGHTS

DELAWARE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUMS

504 N. Market St., Wilmington; 302/655-0637; https://dehistory.org

Two museums of the Delaware Historical Society shed light on the history of the state. The **Delaware History Museum** tells the story of the state through permanent and temporary exhibits around themes such as immigration, agriculture, and industry. A site on the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, the **Jane and Littleton Mitchell Center for African American Heritage** focuses on the Black experience in Delaware, including the state's role in the era of enslavement (Delaware was below the Mason-Dixon line, and therefore, not a free state) and the Civil Rights Movement.

NEMOURS ESTATE

1600 Rockland Rd., Wilmington; 302/651-6912; www.nemoursestate.org

Another great-grandson of DuPont founder E. I. du Pont, Alfred I. du Pont (1864-1935) built Nemours to please his second wife, a Francophile who also happened to be his cousin. The spectacular Louis XVI-style mansion and gardens, which are one of the finest examples of a formal French garden outside France, are modeled after those at Versailles's Petit Trianon.



NEMOURS ESTATE

REHOBOTH BEACH BOARDWALK

Rehoboth Beach lies at the north end of Delaware's Atlantic beaches. Its mile-long (1.6-km) boardwalk offers all the action you could want at the beach, including terrific views of the ocean, french fries, T-shirt shops, games, candy stores, and entertainment. The boardwalk is wide and clean and stretches from Penn Street at the south end to Virginia Avenue at the north end.

Major CITIES

WILMINGTON: Set on the banks of the Delaware River with the Christina River and Brandywine Creek running through it, Wilmington is Delaware's largest city and the city of incorporation for half of all Fortune 500 companies.

DOVER: With its redbrick museums and government buildings, the state capital has an air of history to it. It's also home to Dover International Speedway, a NASCAR track.

NEWARK: Not to be confused with the city in New Jersey, Newark, Delaware, is the home of the University of Delaware.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in Wilmington, visiting **Delaware Historical Society** museums in the morning. In the afternoon, hop in the car for a drive through the **Brandywine Valley.** Even if you don't stop at the extravagant **Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library,** the landscape is worth the short jaunt.

DAY 2 Today, you're headed to the beach—the Atlantic coast is about 1.5 hours south of Wilmington. On the way, stop at **Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge** for some bird-watching. Check into your accommodations in **Rehoboth Beach,** and then hit Rehoboth's **beach** and its **boardwalk** in the afternoon—pick up some beach food to snack on while you lounge.

DAY 3 Head to **Lewes,** just 8 mi (13 km) north, to stroll its cute historic downtown. Get in some more beach time or a hike at **Cape Henlopen State Park** before heading back up to Wilmington.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

BRANDYWINE VALLEY SCENIC BYWAY

This short drive through the Brandywine Valley showcases the area that fueled the DuPont gunpowder company (today a chemical company) and the wealth of the du Pont family. As it winds its way from southeastern Pennsylvania to the northern Delaware city of Wilmington, Brandywine Creek crosses what geologists refer to as a fall line. In layman's terms, it takes a nosedive. That nosedive made the Brandywine Valley attractive to water-powered industries—flour mills, cotton mills, and the like—in days of yore. In 1802 a French immigrant by the name of Éleuthère Irénée (E. I.) du Pont began construction of a gunpowder works along the creek, often referred to as the Brandywine River. It wasn't long before his company was the nation's largest gunpowder producer, and the du Ponts grew wildly wealthy. The Brandywine Valley's present popularity as a tourist destination has much to do with their wealth, and this drive leads to one of the signature du Pont mansions, **Winterthur.** From **Wilmington,** take DE-52 (Kennett Pike) northwest out of the city and, after a couple of miles, get onto DE-100 (Montchanin Rd.). It's about 5 mi (8 km) to the Pennsylvania state line, but you'll reach Winterthur before you get there. If you're not stopping at the estate, make a left on either Center Meeting Road or Twaddell Mill Road to take DE-52 (Kennett Pike) 7.3 mi (11.7 km) back to Wilmington.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BOMBAY HOOK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

2591 Whitehall Neck Rd., Smyrna; 302/653-9345; www.fws.gov

Located on the coast of Delaware Bay, Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge is a tidal salt marsh that attracts a wide variety of birdlife, including migrating waterfowl, shorebirds lured by newly laid horseshoe crab eggs, black-necked stilts, herons, ibis, yellow warblers, and more. Open to cars, bikes, and pedestrians, the 12-mi (19-km) Wildlife Drive weaves through a small portion of the protected area in the northeast corner.



BOMBAY HOOK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

REHOBOTH BEACH

This beautiful strand of white sandy beach on the Atlantic is the attraction that made the town of the same name become known as the Nation’s Summer Capital, since so many visitors come from Washington DC each year.



REHOBOTH BEACH

CAPE HENLOPEN STATE PARK

15099 Cape Henlopen Dr., Lewes; 302/645-8983; www.destateparks.com

This state park covers 6 mi (10 km) of shoreline at the mouth of Delaware Bay where it meets the Atlantic. A military base was established at the cape in 1941, and bunkers were hidden among the dunes for protection. Observation towers built of cement, which are still standing, were also put in place along the shore to search for enemy ships. Today, the park provides many acres of seaside habitat and two swimming beaches. Features include a nature center, hiking, fishing, a picnic pavilion, fishing pier, and camping in the park.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NANTICOKE INDIAN POWWOW

Nanticoke Indian Museum, 26673 John J. Williams Hwy., Millsboro; 302/945-3400; www.nanticokeindians.org; June

This annual two-day event hosted by the Nanticoke Indian Tribe in Millsboro features traditional dance and music. The powwow starts with the Grand Entry of dancers, who represent the joining of the tribes and the transfer of cultural knowledge between generations. Native artisans from Delaware and beyond demonstrate their crafts, from pottery and painting to weaving and jewelry.

BRANDYWINE FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

1001 N. Park Dr., Wilmington; www.brandywinearts.com; Sept.

The Brandywine Festival of the Arts is a long-running event centered on all things artistic. Every year, thousands of visitors fill Wilmington's Brandywine Park for two days of browsing and entertainment. In addition to over 200 artist exhibits, there's live music and food trucks. Featured artists work with almost every medium you can think of, including glass, wood, and reclaimed metal.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

SEAFOOD

As with many seaside locales, the food in Delaware tends toward the marine. A good place to try it is **Off the Hook** (769 Garfield Pkwy., Bethany Beach; 302/829-1424; www.offthehookbethany.com), which prides itself on supporting local farmers and anglers.

CLASSIC BEACH FOOD IN REHOBOTH BEACH

Beach days are made for snacking, and Rehoboth Beach offers a nice array of goodies.

- **Fisher's Popcorn** (48 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach; 302/227-2691; www.fishers-popcorn.com) is a staple on Maryland and Delaware beaches. You can buy the addicting little morsels by the bucket (0.5-6.5 gallons/2-25 liters). Please note: It is easy to eat this until you feel sick. Stopping is hard to do. You've been warned.
- Local icon **Thrasher's French Fries** (26 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach; 302/227-7366) serves up buckets of fresh fries from the walk-up window on the boardwalk. Even die-hard ketchup lovers will want to try them with salt and vinegar.



THRASHER'S FRENCH FRIES, REHOBOTH BEACH

- **Uncle David's Ice Cream** (237 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach; 302/493-6001; www.uncledavidsicecream.com) serves ice cream from

Hopkins Farm Creamery of Lewes, Delaware. Each purchase is scooped and served by individuals with Down syndrome. The organization that runs the shop also hosts an annual fundraiser in October, the **Boardwalk Buddy Walk,** that supports the local community of individuals with Down syndrome.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Wilmington Airport:** ILG; 151 N. Dupont Hwy., New Castle; 855/359-4545; https://flyilg.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Delaware:** www.visitdelaware.com
- **Delaware State Parks:** www.destateparks.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The News Journal:*** www.delawareonline.com

MARYLAND

On Lenape, Nanticoke, Powhatan, Shawnee, Susquehannock, Tutelo, Piscataway, Accohannock, and Saponi land, Maryland has long been both witness and participant in the nation's most historic moments. Tread the hallowed ground at Antietam, the bloodiest single-day battle of the Civil War, or see where abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass lived and worked. But there's also always something new to discover. Don't overlook the port city of Baltimore, whose Inner Harbor offers a slew of appealing sights. The state capital, Annapolis, boasts an enchanting historic district, trendy boutiques and taverns, a busy harbor, and the US Naval Academy—not to mention an endless supply of blue crabs, oysters, and other delectable seafood. Not far from these thriving metropolitan areas, you'll find quaint fishing villages, sleepy mountain towns, Chesapeake Bay, and an abundance of natural beauty.

AREA: 12,406 sq mi / 32,131 sq km (42nd)

POPULATION: 6,263,220 (18th)

STATEHOOD DATE: April 28, 1788 (7th)

STATE CAPITAL: Annapolis


MARYLAND
PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
PENNSYLVANIA
TRENTON
NEW JERSEY
SPRUCE FOREST ARTISAN VILLAGE
Friendsville
Frostburg
Cumberland
WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD
Savage River State Forest
Oakland
Hancock
Hagerstown
CAMP DAVID
Emmitsburg
Taneytown
Catoctin Mountain Park
Hatfway
Westminster
Hampstead
Elkton
Bel Air
Havre de Grace
Aberdeen
Boonsboro
ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
ANTIETAM NATIONAL CEMETERY
Libertytown
Reisterstown
Cockeysville
Towson
Frederick
Eldersburg
Cunningham Falls State Park
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CIVIL WAR MEDICINE
Baltimore
Essex
Brunswick
Point of Rocks
Ellicott City
Dundalk
Breezy Point Beach
Chestertown
DOVER
Germantown
Columbia
Glen Burnie
Gaithersburg
Rockville
Rock Hall
Centreville
WEST VIRGINIA
Silver Spring
Bethesda
Carderock Recreation Area
WASHINGTON
Arlington
Bowie
ANNAPOLIS
SAILING AROUND HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS
Ridgely
DELAWARE
Alexandria
Clinton
Saint Michaels
Easton
Accokeek
Chesapeake Beach
Trappe
Federalsburg
HARRIET TUBMAN MUSEUM & EDUCATIONAL CENTER
Hurlock
Waldorf
Prince Frederick
Cambridge
LEARNING ABOUT THE LEGACY OF HARRIET TUBMAN
La Plata
Hughesville
Saint Leonard
HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD VISITOR CENTER
Ocean Pines
Ocean City Beach
Calvert Cliffs State Park
California
HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY
Salisbury
Ocean City
Lexington Park
ASSATEAGUE ISLAND VISITOR CENTER
Princess Anne
Snow Hill
Assateague Island
Scotland
Pocomoke City
SPOTTING WILD PONIES ON ASSATEAGUE ISLAND
Ewell
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
Potomac River
Chesapeake Bay
Atlantic Ocean
RICHMOND
0
20 mi
0
20 km

ORIENTATION

Baltimore sits on the northwestern end of **Chesapeake Bay,** the body of water that pierces into eastern Maryland and divides the **Eastern Shore** from the rest of the state. **Frederick** and **Antietam** lie to the west of Baltimore, while **western Maryland** is even farther west, past the crimp in the state where the Potomac River, which forms its southern boundary, veers north.

WHEN TO GO

Late **spring** (May-June) and **fall** (Sept.-Oct.) are usually the best times to explore Maryland. The weather is most pleasant, and there are fewer tourists. Although **summer** is the prime tourist season, unless your plans involve some beach time or a stay in a mountain retreat, the humidity can be a bit overwhelming. If your focus is on historical sites and museums, the **winter** months (with the exception of the holiday season) can mean lighter crowds, though some sites may be closed or have shorter hours.

TOP 3

1 SAILING AROUND HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS

The **Chesapeake Bay** is the largest estuary in the country. The bay is approximately 200 mi (321 km) long, starting at the mouth of the Susquehanna River on the northern end and the Atlantic Ocean on the southern end. Maryland's capital city of Annapolis is a picturesque and historic seaport on the Chesapeake Bay, widely known as the Sailing Capital of the World. The most popular neighborhood for visitors is the historic downtown, where the scenic waterfront and **City Dock** (Dock St.) feature locally owned shops, boutiques, souvenir stands, and waterfront restaurants.



CHESAPEAKE BAY

Heading northwest away from the dock, the **Maryland State House** (100 State Circle; 410/260-6400; www.msa.maryland.gov) is the oldest legislative house in the country that has been in continual use. Downtown you'll also find **St. John's College** (60 College Ave.; 410/263-2371; www.sjc.edu), on 32 scenic ac (13 ha) adorned with stately brick buildings, tree-lined paths, and sprawling lawns; **St. Anne's Episcopal Church** (1 Church Circle; 410/267-9333; www.stannes-annapolis.org), the first church in Annapolis; and **Hammond-Harwood House** (19 Maryland Ave.; 410/263-4683; www.hammondharwoodhouse.org), the best historic home to visit if you only have time for one.

Directly northeast of downtown, guided walking tours of the more than 300-ac (121-ha) **US Naval Academy** (121 Blake Rd.; 410/293-1000; www.usna.edu) provide a close-up look at the imposing marble buildings and monuments on campus, and cover topics such as history, architecture, traditions, and life as a midshipman. If you want to get out on the water yourself, two-hour sailing cruises can be booked on two beautiful 74-ft (22-m) wooden schooners through

Schooner Woodwind Annapolis Sailing Cruises (410/263-7837; www.schoonerwoodwind.com).

2 LEARNING ABOUT THE LEGACY OF HARRIET TUBMAN

Born in Dorchester County, Maryland, as Araminta Ross, Harriet Tubman was an abolitionist who put her life on the line to rescue approximately 70 individuals from enslavement to start new lives in the north. On her 13 trips back to Maryland along the Underground Railroad, Tubman followed a network of waterways and trails to avoid detection. Today, these routes are preserved as part of the **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** (https://harriettubmanbyway.org).



BUCKTOWN GENERAL STORE ON THE HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

The **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument and National Historical Park** (4068 Golden Hill Rd., Church Creek; 410/221-2290; www.nps.gov/hatu) serves as the gateway to the scenic byway. Stop here to learn about the stories of the people who made the escape to freedom possible and plan your visit to other significant sites along the byway.

In **Cambridge,** only a few miles from Tubman's childhood home, take a **guided tour** of historic downtown. Led by Linda Harris of the Harriet Tubman Organization, tours start at the **Harriet Tubman Museum & Educational Center** (424 Race St., Cambridge; 410/228-0401; www.harriettubmanmuseumcenter.org) and last 1.5 hours.

3 SPOTTING WILD PONIES ON ASSATEAGUE ISLAND

Assateague Island National Seashore (www.nps.gov/asis) is a quiet place to calm your spirits, view wildlife, kayak, swim, fish, and bike, with a beautiful 37-mi (59-km) beach, dunes, wetlands, and marsh. Protected as a natural environment, the island is a stopover for migrating shorebirds; more than 345 bird species can be viewed here during the year, including piping plovers, great egrets, and northern harriers.



WILD PONIES ON ASSATEAGUE ISLAND

Assateague Island is also known for its wild ponies. It is widely believed that the ponies originally were brought to the island by 17th-century mainlanders hoping to avoid taxes on livestock. The famous **Wild Pony Swim** (www.chincoteaguechamber.com) takes place each

year in late July, when the herd is taken for a swim from Assateague Island across the channel to Chincoteague Island in Virginia.

Other mammals in Assateague include rodents as small as the meadow jumping mouse, along with red foxes, river otters, and deer. Several species of whales feed off the island's shore, along with bottlenose dolphins. The **Assateague Island Visitor Center** (Maryland District of Assateague Island, on the southern side of MD-611; 410/641-1441) offers a film on the wild ponies and other exhibits.

HIGHLIGHTS

BALTIMORE'S INNER HARBOR

Most of the beauty shots of Baltimore are taken downtown and at the Inner Harbor, along the center of activity in this port city. The historic Inner Harbor benefited greatly from rejuvenation and became home to many attractions, museums, restaurants, upscale hotels, and a beautiful **waterfront promenade.**

The **National Aquarium** (501 E. Pratt St., Baltimore; 410/576-3800; www.aqua.org) is perhaps the most treasured sight in the Inner Harbor. Opened in 1981, it is now home to 20,000 animals, representing more than 660 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals in expertly designed habitats.

The **Historic Ships** (Pier 1, 301 E. Pratt St., Baltimore; 410/539-1797; www.historicships.org) in the Inner Harbor form one of the most impressive military ship collections in the world. Visitors can see not only four ships and the **Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse** (Pier 5), but also 50,000 photographs, documents, and items that relate to them. Highlights include the **USS *Constellation*** (Pier 1), the last all-sail ship built by the US Navy, and the **USS *Torsk*** (Pier 3), one of just 10 Tench Class submarines to serve in World War II.

Major CITIES

BALTIMORE: A major port city since the 1700s, hardworking Charm City boasts world-class museums, fine dining, fierce spirit, and authenticity.

FREDERICK: Founded by German settlers in 1745, Frederick was an important crossroads during the Civil War, and today offers a lovely collection of shops, galleries, restaurants, and antiques stores.

ANNAPOLIS: Maryland's quaint and historic state capital has a vibrant waterfront with many shops and restaurants, and is home to the US Naval Academy.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS-ISAAC MYERS MARITIME PARK

1417 Thames St., Baltimore; 410/685-0295; https://livingclassrooms.org

The Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park is a national heritage site/museum dedicated to African American maritime history. The site encompasses 5,000 sq ft (464 sq m) of gallery space and features interactive exhibits, maps, photos, and artifacts that share the history of the African American community and how it influenced Baltimore in the 1800s. A series of exhibits chronicle the lives of Frederick Douglass and Isaac Myers. Douglass, who had been born enslaved, became a leader in the abolitionist movement and a successful statesman and orator. He lived and worked on the docks in Baltimore. Myers was a mason and labor leader who created a first-of-its-kind union for African American caulkers just after the Civil War.

For more on the contributions of African Americans in Maryland throughout the state's history, visit the **Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture** (830 E. Pratt St., Baltimore; 443/263-1800; https://lewismuseum.org). The museum includes galleries, a genealogy center, recording studio, theater, café, and gift shop.

FORT MCHENRY NATIONAL MONUMENT AND HISTORIC SHRINE

2400 E. Fort Ave., Baltimore; 410/962-4290; www.nps.gov/fomc

The Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine is a 42-ac (17-ha) national park that houses Fort McHenry, known as the inspiration for "The Star-Spangled Banner." Francis Scott Key wrote the words to the anthem during the War of 1812, when he was held on a truce ship during the British attack on Baltimore. Key watched as the battle went on, and at "dawn's early light" on September 14, 1814, he could see the huge 30- by 42-ft (9- by 12-m) US flag still flying above Fort McHenry as a symbol that Baltimore had not surrendered.



FORT MCHENRY NATIONAL MONUMENT AND HISTORIC SHRINE

You can also visit the **Star-Spangled Banner Flag House** (844 E. Pratt St., Baltimore; 410/837-1793; www.flaghouse.org), the home of Mary Young Pickersgill, the woman who made the enormous and famous flag that flew over Fort McHenry.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CIVIL WAR MEDICINE

48 E. Patrick St., Frederick; 301/695-1864; www.civilwarmed.org

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine is tucked away on Patrick Street in the historic area of Frederick, Maryland. This interesting little museum started as a private collection. Exhibits cover many little-known facts about medicine and disease during the war (such as two-thirds of the 620,000 soldiers who died during the war succumbed to disease, not wounds, and doctors at the time had no knowledge of antiseptic practices or germ theory). It even explains the process used to embalm dead soldiers on the battlefield so they could be transported home.

ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

5831 Dunker Church Rd., Sharpsburg; 301/432-5124; www.nps.gov/anti

Antietam National Battlefield encompasses more than 3,200 ac (1,295 ha) in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. On September 17, 1862, the Battle of Antietam was fought here. It was the first Civil War battle held on Union ground and was also the bloodiest single-day battle ever to take place in US history, with approximately 23,000 casualties. The day ended in a draw, but the Union Army denied the Confederates any advancement into Northern territory. This tactical victory spurred Abraham Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation.

Near the battlefield is the **Antietam National Cemetery** (E. Main St., Sharpsburg; www.nps.gov/anti). After the battle, soldiers who died during the fight were buried by the hundreds in shallow graves extending miles in all directions. After the war, an effort was made to relocate the bodies to proper cemeteries, and the Antietam National Cemetery was formed.

OCEAN CITY

Ocean City, stretching for 10 mi (16 km) along the Atlantic Ocean between Delaware and the Ocean City Inlet, offers enough stimulation to keep kids of all ages entertained for days. The 3-mi (4.8-km) wooden **boardwalk** is packed with shopping, restaurants, games, and amusements and is open all year. Seemingly every inch of real estate is claimed along the strip, a major

East Coast destination for people who enjoy the beach, company, and entertainment.

Ocean City Beach is the main focus of Ocean City. It's wide and sandy, with brightly colored umbrellas lined up like soldiers. Outside of the beach and boardwalk, visit quirky attractions like the **Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum** (813 S. Atlantic Ave.; 410/289-4991; www.ocmuseum.org), amusement park **Trimper's Rides** (700 S. Atlantic Ave.; 410/289-8617; www.trimpersrides.com), and **Jolly Roger at the Pier** (401 S. Atlantic Ave.; 410/289-3031; www.jollyrogerpieroc.com).

WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD

13 Canal St., Cumberland; 301/759-4400; www.wmsr.com

Many historic railroad milestones occurred in the Cumberland area, including the use of the first iron rail made in the United States and the production of unique steam engines by the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad. This fun 3.5-hour, 32-mi (51-km) round-trip excursion from downtown Cumberland to nearby Frostburg is made by diesel locomotive on tracks that used to belong to the Western Maryland Railway. It's an entertaining and educational ride through a scenic Appalachian landscape. The train passes through the Narrows, a cut in the mountains that was considered at one time to be the gateway to the West.



WESTERN MARYLAND SCENIC RAILROAD

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in Baltimore and spend the day learning more about Maryland's history at sites including **Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park** and **Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.** Finish the day walking the waterfront promenade of the **Inner Harbor.**

DAY 2 Make the 1.5-hour drive west to **Antietam National Battlefield,** the site of the bloodiest single-day battle in US history. The serene, rolling landscape invites quiet reflection. Afterward, head into nearby **Frederick,** where you can learn more Civil War history at the **National Museum of Civil War Medicine.** The town's historic district is a popular destination for antique hunters. Spend the night in Frederick.

DAY 3 For a taste of DC without going into DC, head to Maryland's Capital Region, an hour away. With an early start, you can hike a section of the popular **Billy Goat Trail** along the Potomac. Keep heading east for another hour to reach **Chesapeake Beach,** a great place to try **blue crab.** Finish the day in **Annapolis,** another 45-minute drive north. Squeeze in a stroll of the downtown **City Dock** or a **cruise** around the bay before turning in for the evening.

DAY 4 In the morning, see some more Annapolis sights, such as the **Maryland State House,** the oldest continuously used legislative house in the country. Then drive 2.25 hours east to **Assateague Island,** where if you're lucky, you can spot wild ponies. After enjoying the seashore, head up to **Ocean City** for its boardwalk, beach, and theme parks.

DAY 5 Head back across to the Eastern Shore to **Cambridge,** where you can start an exploration of the **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway** at the **Harriet Tubman Museum & Educational Center.** Make your way to some of the byway's 30-odd sights before heading across the bay toward Annapolis and back to Baltimore.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

https://harriettubmanbyway.org

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway is a scenic, self-guided driving route with more than 30 sites related to Harriet Tubman, the freedom fighter and former enslaved person who was known for leading

many people to freedom through the Underground Railroad, and other African Americans seeking freedom in the 1800s. Among the stops, which start in Dorchester County where Tubman was born and head north through the Eastern Shore into Delaware and Pennsylvania, is the **Harriet Tubman Museum & Educational Center** (424 Race St., Cambridge; 410/228-0401; www.visitdorchester.org). This small museum is dedicated to telling stories of Tubman's life and features exhibits on her work. Another stop is the **Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center** (4068 Golden Hill Rd., Church Creek; 410/221-2290; www.nps.gov/hatu), 11 mi (18 km) south of the museum. Run jointly by the National Park Service and the Maryland State Park Service, the visitor center showcases exhibits about Tubman and provides information about surrounding attractions.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK

14274 William Houck Dr., Thurmont; 301/271-7574; https://dnr.maryland.gov

Located north of Frederick, this wonderful, 6,000-ac (2,428-ha) park sits on Catoctin Mountain and offers swimming, hiking, a 43-ac (17-ha) lake, fishing, canoeing, and a remarkable 78-ft (23-m) waterfall. The park is made up of two primary areas. The Manor Area off US 15 (3 mi/4.8 km south of Thurmont) includes an aviary, camping, and the historic **Catoctin Iron Furnace,** where iron was made for more than 100 years. The second section, the William Houck Area, is 3 mi (4.8 km) west of Thurmont on MD-77 and encompasses the lake, falls, and a camping area.



CUNNINGHAM FALLS STATE PARK

Adjacent to Cunningham Falls State Park is a unit of the National Park Service called **Catoctin Mountain Park** (6602 Foxville Rd., Thurmont; 301/663-9388), best known as the site of the presidential retreat **Camp David.**

THE BILLY GOAT TRAIL

Hikers of all abilities can enjoy the popular Billy Goat Trail, running between the **C&O Canal** and the **Potomac River** in Maryland's Montgomery County near Great Falls. The trail is 4.7 mi (7.5 km) long and has three sections. The three sections of the trail are not contiguous but are connected by the C&O Canal Towpath. The Billy Goat Trail is marked with light-blue blazes.

The northern section, **Section A** (1.7 mi/2.7 km) is the most heavily traveled; pets are not allowed. Accessible from the **Great Falls Tavern Visitor Center** (11710 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac; 301/767-3714), Section A runs through rocky terrain on **Bear Island.** A steep climb along a cliff face bordering the Potomac River in Mather Gorge requires scrambling in parts.

Section B (1.4 mi/2.2 km) is less strenuous and has only one short segment where scrambling is required. **Section C** (1.6 mi/2.6 km) is the easiest, with no scrambling. Sections B and C can be accessed from **Carderock Recreation Area** (off Clara Barton Pkwy., Carderock). Leashed dogs are allowed on these two sections. Check the park website (www.nps.gov/choh/planyourvisit/billy-goat-trail.htm) for current trail conditions before setting out.

SAVAGE RIVER STATE FOREST

127 Headquarters Ln., Grantsville; 301/895-5759; https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests

The Savage River State Forest encompasses more than 54,000 ac (21,853 ha). The forest is part of the Appalachian Plateau, the western section of the Appalachian Mountains, and offers the 350-ac (142-ha) Savage River Reservoir, a boat launch, 78 mi (126 km) of multiuse trails (hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, etc.), picnicking, and a shooting range.

CALVERT CLIFFS STATE PARK

10540 H. G. Trueman Rd., Lusby; 443/975-4360; www.dnr.state.md.us

This day-use park is right on the Chesapeake Bay and offers a sandy beach, playground, fishing, marshland, and 13 mi (21 km) of hiking trails. The main attraction in this park, however, is fossil hunting along the beach. At the end of the **Red Trail** (1.8 mi/2.9 km from the parking lot), the open beach area gives rise to the dramatic Calvert Cliffs. More than 600 species of fossils have been identified in the cliff area, dating back 10 to 20 million years, including oyster shells from the Miocene era and shark's teeth.

CHESAPEAKE BEACH

The crown jewel of a charming coastal community of the same name, this beautiful Chesapeake Bay beach and nearby **Breezy Point Beach** often top lists of the best beaches in the state. Amenities include swimming areas, bathhouses, picnic areas, playgrounds, and historic fishing piers.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Perhaps Maryland's biggest event is the **summer season,** when colorful umbrellas decorate the beaches and old-fashioned amusement parks and boardwalks fill up with holidaymakers. Assateague Island's **Wild Pony Swim** is another summer highlight.

PREAKNESS STAKES

5201 Park Heights Ave., Baltimore; 410/542-9400; www.preakness.com [URL inactive]; May

The second leg of the famed Triple Crown horse races, the Preakness Stakes, is held on the third Saturday in May at **Pimlico Race Course,** northwest of Hampden in Baltimore. The historic racecourse is the second-oldest in the country, having opened in 1870. With more than a 150-year history, the Preakness Stakes are a big deal in Baltimore and in horse racing

overall. The racecourse is due to reopen in 2027; check the website for the location of races taking place during construction.

BEST SOUVENIRS

The town of **Frederick** is a popular spot for a day trip hunting **antiques.**

In western Maryland, **Spruce Forest Artisan Village** (177 Casselman Rd., Grantsville; 301/895-3332; www.spruceforest.org) is a dozen log-and-frame cabins housing artist studios that sell items such as carvings, stained glass, handloom weaving products, baskets, teddy bears, and pottery.

BEST FOOD

Crabs are so ubiquitous in Maryland that they even have their own special seasoning to go with them. Outside of fruits from the sea, you should definitely pick up some **boardwalk favorites** like french fries and other fried treats, and look for **National Bohemian,** or "Natty Boh," Baltimore's lager of choice, with an iconic, one-eyed, mustachioed mascot.

CRAB

From steamed, to crab cakes, to crab dip, to crab soup, this crustacean—the blue crab, to be specific—is everywhere in Maryland. **Old Bay Seasoning,** developed in Baltimore, is one of the more common ways to spice the crustacean. Some of the best places to try it include:



STEAMED BLUE CRABS

- **Abner's Crab House:** 3748 Harbor Rd., Chesapeake Beach; 410/257-3689; www.abnerscrabhouse.net
- **Nick's Fish House:** 2600 Insulator Dr., Baltimore; 410/347-4123; www.nicksfishhouse.com
- **Cantler's Riverside Inn:** 458 Forest Beach Rd., Annapolis; 410/757-1311; www.cantlers.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport:** BWI; 7050 Friendship Rd.; 410/859-7683; www.bwiairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Maryland Office of Tourism:** www.visitmaryland.org
- **Maryland Department of Natural Resources:** https://dnr.maryland.gov

NEWSPAPERS

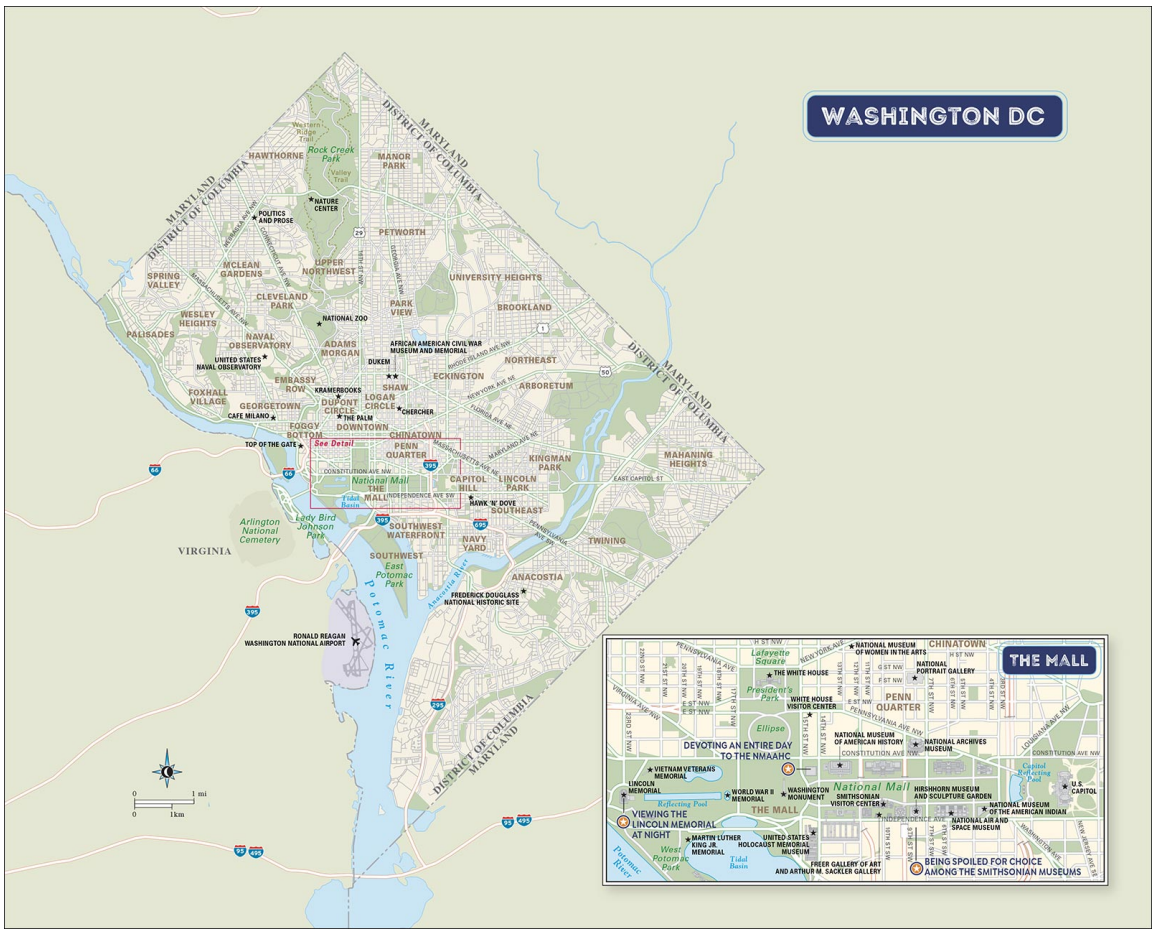
- ***Washington Post:*** www.washingtonpost.com
- ***Baltimore Sun:*** www.baltimoresun.com

WASHINGTON DC

Washington DC is the nation’s capital, home to grand monuments and the seat of government. Founded in 1790 as a distinct district from territory formerly part of Maryland and Virginia, the city was built on a grid centered on the Capitol building. Capitol Hill, downtown, and the area around the White House were among the first established neighborhoods. The District was once majority Black, but that’s changed since the 1970s due to gentrification and economic shifts. Still, longtime Black residents retain the joy and spirit of “Chocolate City.” Today, DC is a must-see, drawing visitors from around the country and the world looking to experience the complex mix of history and the unfolding of current events.

AREA: 68 sq mi / 176 sq km

POPULATION: 702,250


WASHINGTON DC
MARYLAND
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
VIRGINIA
Rock Creek Park
Potomac River
Anacostia River
Arlington National Cemetery
Lady Bird Johnson Park
East Potomac Park
Tidal Basin
National Mall
See Detail
HAWTHORNE
MANOR PARK
PETWORTH
NATURE CENTER
POLITICS AND PROSE
MCLEAN GARDENS
UPPER NORTHWEST
SPRING VALLEY
CLEVELAND PARK
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS
PARK VIEW
BROOKLAND
NATIONAL ZOO
WESLEY HEIGHTS
PALISADES
NAVAL OBSERVATORY
UNITED STATES NAVAL OBSERVATORY
ADAMS MORGAN
AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MUSEUM AND MEMORIAL
DUKEM
NORTHEAST
ECKINGTON
ARBORETUM
EMBASSY ROW
KRAMERBOOKS
SHAW
FOXHALL VILLAGE
GEORGETOWN
CAFE MILANO
DUPONT CIRCLE
LOGAN CIRCLE
CHERCHER
THE PALM
FOGGY BOTTOM
DOWNTOWN
CHINATOWN
TOP OF THE GATE
PENN QUARTER
KINGMAN PARK
MAHANING HEIGHTS
CAPITOL HILL
LINCOLN PARK
EAST CAPITOL ST
THE MALL
INDEPENDENCE AVE SW
HAWK 'N' DOVE
SOUTHEAST
SOUTHWEST WATERFRONT
NAVY YARD
TWINING
SOUTHWEST
ANACOSTIA
FREDERICK DOUGLASS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
RONALD REAGAN WASHINGTON NATIONAL AIRPORT
CONSTITUTION AVE NW
PENNSYLVANIA AVE
MASSACHUSETTS AVE NW
MARYLAND AVE NE
NEW YORK AVE NE
FLORIDA AVE NW
ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PKWY
CONNECTICUT AVE NW
WISCONSIN AVE NW
GEORGIA AVE NW
0 1 mi
0 1km
THE MALL
Lafayette Square
THE WHITE HOUSE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY
President's Park
WHITE HOUSE VISITOR CENTER
PENN QUARTER
Ellipse
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY
NATIONAL ARCHIVES MUSEUM
DEVOTING AN ENTIRE DAY TO THE NMAAHC
VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL
LINCOLN MEMORIAL
WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL
WASHINGTON MONUMENT
HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN
SMITHSONIAN VISITOR CENTER
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
U.S. CAPITOL
Reflecting Pool
VIEWING THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AT NIGHT
NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL
UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
BEING SPOILED FOR CHOICE AMONG THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS

ORIENTATION

DC comprises a logical grid of streets and avenues that connect its distinct neighborhoods. The US Capitol is the center point where “The District” divides into four unequally sized quadrants. Visitors typically spend the majority of their time in the northwest quadrant, home to the White House, many of the Smithsonian museums, Howard University, tony Dupont Circle, and more.

From the Capitol, the **National Mall** stretches a little over 2 mi (3.2 km) west to the Lincoln Memorial, containing a high concentration of attractions, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Directly north of the National Mall, **Downtown and Penn Quarter** is where the White House and National Portrait Gallery are located. **Dupont Circle** is northwest of downtown. Directly east of the Mall is the **Capitol Hill and Atlas District,** home to the Capitol building and the Supreme Court.

North of downtown is **U Street and Shaw,** the historically Black area that’s home to Howard University, a historically Black university, along with nightlife venues. **Anacostia,** in southwest Washington, is home to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site and the city’s greatest concentration of Black-owned businesses.

WHEN TO GO

March through Labor Day is considered **high season,** when the **National Cherry Blossom Festival** signals the arrival of spring. Throughout the summer, tourists enjoy the sights despite the hot, humid conditions. By fall, the city starts to quiet, and by winter, everyone has hunkered down against the snow.

TOP 3

1 DEVOTING AN ENTIRE DAY TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

1400 Constitution Ave. NW; 844/750-3012; https://nmaahc.si.edu

Museum? Yes. But the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is so much more than that. The museum's five floors of exhibit space hold about 3,000 objects and feature 12 exhibitions with several award-winning interactive kiosks and videos. The **Neighborhood Record Store** in the Musical Crossroads gallery is a communal space to share the love of music and musical periods. Browse through record covers and play with a digital touch screen to cycle through songs, artists, themes, regions, and periods. The building itself, designed by David Adjaye and lead architect Phil Freelon, is stunning: an architectural tour de force whose facade is inspired by the three-tiered corona crown from the Yoruba culture of West Africa. Patterned exterior panels allow light through their openings, and the corona glows at night with the grandeur befitting its prominence on the National Mall. By calling forth the roots of Black culture—Africa herself—a visit here is a journey home, to where it all began. Visitors are urged to start their tours on the bottom-floor history galleries, which start with the story of Black enslavement, and work their way up to the (very fun) culture galleries on the fourth floor. A good strategy is to explore the concourse-level galleries, then break for lunch at **Sweet Home Café** and end the day with the third- and fourth-floor galleries. The museum is a stop on the official US Civil Rights Trail.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

2 BEING SPOILED FOR CHOICE AMONG THE SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS

DC hosts a total of 17 museums, galleries, and a zoo collectively known as the Smithsonian Institution, including the NMAAHC. All are free to enter, though some require timed ticketed entry, and are open every day except Christmas Day. Strolling the National Mall, you'll encounter the **National Air and Space Museum** (600 Independence Ave. SW; 202/633-2214; https://airandspace.si.edu), home to the world's largest collection of air and spacecraft. At the **National Museum of American History** (1300 Constitution Ave. NW; 202/633-1000; https://americanhistory.si.edu), you can lay eyes on the American flag that was the inspiration behind "The Star-Spangled Banner." To learn about the nation's first inhabitants, visit the **National Museum of the American Indian** (4th St. SW and Independence Ave. SW; 202/633-6644;

https://americanindian.si.edu), and don't forget to stop by its **Mitsitam Native Foods Café** for lunch.

Art lovers should focus their attention on the **National Museum of Asian Art,** which includes the connected **Freer Gallery of Art** and **Arthur M. Sackler Gallery** (1050 Independence Ave. SW; 202/633-1000; https://asia.si.edu). These two galleries hold one of the world's most diverse collections of Asian art. When you're ready to take in some contemporary art, stop by the **Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden** (7th St. SW and Independence Ave. SW; 202/633-1000; https://hirshhorn.si.edu); the 1.3-ac (0.5-ha) Sculpture Garden is a particularly nice spot to rest and reflect.

Downtown, you'll find the **National Portrait Gallery** (8th St. NW and G St. NW; 202/633-7970; https://npg.si.edu) and the **American Art Museum** (https://americanart.si.edu). The gallery and museum should be visited together to take in the full breadth of art on display, from New Deal era art to the portrait of former First Lady Michelle Obama.



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

If you want to learn more about the Smithsonian and its museums, visit the **Castle,** which houses the **Smithsonian Visitor Center** (1000 Jefferson Dr. SW; www.si.edu). The Castle started a renovation in 2023 that is expected to last about five years.

3 VIEWING THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AT NIGHT

2 Lincoln Memorial Circle NW; 202/426-6841; www.nps.gov/linc

DC is full of iconic neoclassical buildings, but one in particular is most spectacular at night. The Lincoln Memorial sits on the west end of the Mall facing the **Reflecting Pool** and the Washington Monument beyond. Within the memorial, you can stand before the 19-ft (5.8-m) sculpture of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president. The monument's 36 columns represent the 36 states that were part of the Union in 1865 (the year Lincoln was assassinated) and are lit dramatically at night. Be sure to step inside to view the murals on the north and south walls located above the memorial's inscriptions. Painted by Jules Guerin, these murals illustrate the principles of emancipation and unity. The memorial continues to evolve: In 2003, an inscription was added to the 18th step from the top landing to commemorate the spot where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963.



LINCOLN MEMORIAL

HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL MALL

www.nps.gov/nama

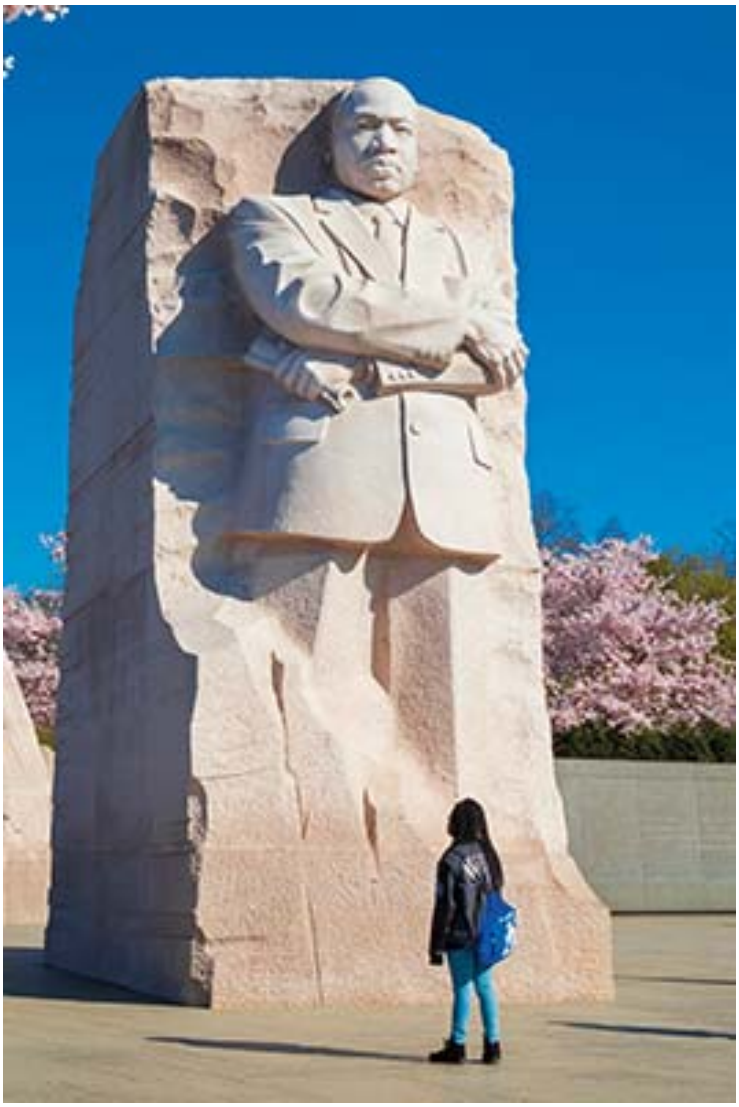
Known as “America’s lawn,” the National Mall runs from the US Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial. The Mall is home to the Smithsonian museums and also serves as a stage for events like Independence Day, protests, festivals, and presidential inaugurations. Don’t miss these sights along the Mall:



NATIONAL MALL

- The 555-ft (169-m) **Washington Monument** (15th St. NW and Madison Dr. NW; 202/426-6841; www.nps.gov/wamo) is the world's tallest obelisk. You can take in the view from the observation deck with a timed ticket.
- To the east of the Reflecting Pool, the **World War II Memorial** (1750 Independence Ave. SW; 202/426-6841; www.nps.gov/wwii) pays homage to the 16 million Americans who served during World War II and the more than 400,000 who lost their lives.
- The black granite walls carved with 58,395 names make up the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial** (5 Henry Bacon Dr. NW; 202/426-6841; www.nps.gov/vive). Each name commemorates someone killed or missing in action during the conflict (1955-1975).
- The Mall's newest memorial, the **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial** (1964 Independence Ave. SW; 202/426-6841; www.nps.gov/mlkm)

honors the legacy of the civil rights leader. Built in 2011, the memorial is the only one of its kind along the Mall to honor an African American.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL

THE WHITE HOUSE

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW; 202/456-7041; www.whitehouse.gov

The official residence of the US president, the White House was first known as the “President’s House” when construction began in the 1790s. Its first residents were John Adams and his wife. Today, there are 132 rooms spread across six levels. If you want to visit public areas of the White

House, you'll need to make a request through your congressperson (online or by phone) up to three months and no less than a week before your requested date. Free self-guided tours are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

1250 New York Ave. NW; 202/783-5000; www.nmwa.org

The National Museum of Women in the Arts is the world's only major museum dedicated to women artists. The collection features the work of more than 1,000 female artists, including Frida Kahlo, Louise Bourgeois, Amy Sherald, and more.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

100 Raoul Wallenberg Pl. SW; 202/488-0400; www.ushmm.org

The museum's permanent exhibit (recommended for visitors ages 11 and up) chronicles the events 1933-1945, including the rise of the Nazi Party, the process of ghettoization, the mass murders of the killing fields and concentration camps, and the aftermath. Additional exhibits examine America's role during the war years and take a deep look into more recent events like the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MUSEUM

701 Constitution Ave. NW; 202/357-5000; https://visit.archives.gov

The National Archives live at the heart of the National Mall, in a grand, temple-style Greek Revival building featuring 72 Corinthian columns. In the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom, a sacred space befitting its role of showcasing the country's most important documents, the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Bill of Rights are on display. The original Emancipation Proclamation is also part of the permanent collection. While entry is free, it's a good idea to get advance tickets on the archive's website for a timed entry reservation, especially during peak season (Mar.-Sept.).

US CAPITOL

US Capitol Visitor Center, 1st St. SE and E. Capitol St. NE; 202/226-8000; www.visitthecapitol.gov

The US Capitol is where presidents are inaugurated, State of the Union speeches are given, and the US Congress makes laws. When the American people feel like our legislators are getting it wrong, the Capitol is also where activists organize rallies and protests to let 'em know. Free, guided tours of the **Capitol Visitor Center** include a visit to the Crypt, the Rotunda, and National Statuary Hall. Advance reservations are encouraged.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

1411 W St. SE; 202/426-5961; www.nps.gov/frdo

Born enslaved in 1818, Frederick Douglass escaped bondage and became a leading abolitionist, suffragist, orator, author, and diplomat who sowed the

seeds of what would become the modern Civil Rights Movement. Today, his home at Cedar Hill in the Anacostia neighborhood welcomes visitors to tour the rooms. You'll see the parlors, the library, and the wooden rolltop desk where Douglass wrote speeches and his autobiography. You must visit the house on a free 30-minute guided tour (three times a week; reservations recommended). While you're here, take in the views from the hill overlooking DC.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Best DC WEEKEND

DAY 1 Start your visit to DC by standing where Dr. King stood at the **Lincoln Memorial** when he delivered his enduring "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963. Continue on to the **National Portrait Gallery** and the **American Art Museum** to take your fill of some of the nation's best art. When you've worked up an appetite,

take the Metro to **U Street** to try a local favorite like **Ben's Chili Bowl.**

DAY 2 Spend the early morning strolling the west end of the **National Mall** while the weather is cooler. You'll pass the **Washington Monument,** the **World War II Memorial,** and the **Vietnam Veterans Memorial.** After lunch, spend some time at the **Holocaust Memorial Museum** or, if you've gotten advance tickets, the **National Archives Museum.** For dinner, head to **Little Ethiopia** (around 9th St. and U St. NW).

DAY 3 Today is dedicated to visiting the **National Museum of African American History and Culture.** You'll want to make reservations in advance, particularly during high season. After admiring the exterior, tour the **concourse-level galleries,** which start with the story of Black enslavement. Break for lunch at **Sweet Home Café,** which showcases African American foodways, before spending rest of your day exploring the **third- and fourth-floor galleries,** which cover topics from sports to music to dance and language. Tonight, you'll dine out and return to the **Lincoln Memorial** to see admire the monument and reflecting pool at night.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD WALKS

U STREET

Home to jazz clubs, civil rights organizations, and institutions, U Street was such a hub of Black cultural and social activity that it came to be known as Black Broadway. Today, it continues to thrive to the beat of go-go music, banged out on buckets by local residents. Just off of U Street, on the corner of Vermont Avenue, stop at the **African American Civil War Memorial.** This memorial statue by African American sculptor Ed Hamilton is dedicated to more than 200,000 Black soldiers and sailors who fought in the

Civil War and helped free more than four million enslaved Black people. Across the street is the **African American Civil War Museum** (1925 Vermont Ave. NW; 202/667-2667; www.afroamcivilwar.org). Opened in 1999 to rectify the erasure and depresencing of Black soldiers and sailors in the narrative of the nation's armed forces, the museum's exhibits reveal the unbreakable pride felt by African Americans in the country that they built. Continue on to **The Howard Theatre** (620 T St. NW; 202/495-1347; www.thehowardtheatre.com), the legendary theater that has hosted Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, The Supremes, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye, and more. Wrap up your tour of the neighborhood at **Ben's Chili Bowl** (1213 U St. NW; 202/667-0909; www.benschilibowl.com), a beloved historic spot known for the must-try regional delicacy known as the "half-smoke"—it's bigger than a hot dog, spicier and coarser, and delicious.



BEN'S CHILI BOWL U STREET

EMBASSY ROW

Massachusetts Ave. NW from Scott Circle northwest to the United States Naval Observatory

DC is home to more than 175 embassies, with many located along the stretch of Massachusetts Avenue NW between 18th and 35th Streets. Strolling along Embassy Row, you'll pass the impressive embassies of Italy, India, Greece, Japan, and more. If your visit aligns with the annual **Passport DC** event (https://eventsdc.com/passportdc) in May, you'll find many embassies are open to the public for tours, open houses, and cultural events.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

WEST POTOMAC PARK

National Mall from about 17th St. NW west to the Lincoln Memorial and south to the Tidal Basin

This serene park runs between the Washington Monument and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. In addition to the JFK Hockey Fields, recreation opportunities abound at the Tidal Basin, an artificial 107-ac (43-ha) pool built to maintain the flow of water through the Washington Channel along the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Take a 2.1-mi (3.4-km) walk around the basin, or get out on the water on **paddleboats** (1501 Maine Ave. SW; 202/479-2426; www.tidalbasinpaddleboats.com; Mar.-Oct.).



WEST POTOMAC PARK

ROCK CREEK PARK

Northwest of the city, this 1,754-ac (710-ha) park is a great place to escape into nature. Start your exploration at the **Nature Center** (5200 Glover Rd. NW; 202/895-6070; www.nps.gov/rocr), which houses the visitor center, where you can pick up information on the park's hiking trails. The **Western Ridge Trail** runs 5.5 mi (8.9 km) along the west side of the park, and the **Valley Trail** winds 7 mi (11.5 km) along Rock Creek on the park's eastern edge. Horseback riding is a popular activity, with lessons and guided rides offered through the **Rock Creek Park Horse Center** (5100 Glover Road NW; 202/362-0117; https://rockcreekhorsecenter.com).



ROCK CREEK PARK

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

citywide; 877/442-5666; www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org; mid-Mar.-mid-Apr.

Gifted to the city in 1912 from Japan, the more than 3,000 cherry trees along the Tidal Basin are now the focal point of this annual four-week festival. In addition to viewing the trees themselves, the highlights of the festival include a parade, fireworks, special exhibits, and a sake event. The festival's website features bloom status updates and a live webcam to help you plan your visit around the peak bloom times.



CHERRY TREES ALONG THE TIDAL BASIN

INDEPENDENCE DAY

National Mall; https://washington.org; July 4

Every year thousands of visitors flock to the nation's capital to take part in the festivities of Independence Day. The **parade** (Constitution Ave. NW between 7th St. NW and 17th St. NW; www.july4thparade.com) kicks off the celebrations at 11:45am on July 4. It's a feast for the senses with live music, elaborate floats, and jubilant crowds lining the avenues. Don't miss **A Capitol Fourth** (US Capitol West Lawn; www.pbs.org/a-capitol-fourth), the free concert on the West Lawn of the US Capitol that leads up to the **fireworks display** (National Mall; www.pbs.org/a-capitol-fourth). To get the best viewing spot, plan to arrive at the West Lawn when the concert gates open at 3pm. From here, you'll have a great view of the fireworks, which can also be seen from any vantage point that includes the Washington Monument.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

ETHIOPIAN FOOD

Fleeing civil war in the 1970s and 1980s, thousands of Ethiopians made their new homes in Washington DC, now the largest Ethiopian community outside of Africa. You'll find the highest concentration of Ethiopian businesses in the Adams Morgan and Shaw neighborhoods. To sample Ethiopian cuisine, head to DC's Little Ethiopia (around 9th St. and U St. NW). Doro wat (a spicy chicken stew) and tibs (sautéed beef or lamb) are common dishes. Try them here:

- **Dukem Ethiopian Restaurant:** 1114-1118 U St. NW; 202/667-8735; www.dukemrestaurant.com
- **Chercher:** 1334 9th St. NW #B; 202/299-9703; www.chercherrestaurant.com

THE POWER LUNCH AND HAPPY HOUR

If you're out and about during lunchtime and happy hours in DC, you'll catch glimpses of the city's VIPs getting business done over a meal or drinks. To observe the nuances of the power lunch while enjoying your own leisurely meal, swing by these establishments often favored by those in the know.

- **The Palm** (1225 19th St. NW; 202/293-9091; www.thepalm.com) in Dupont Circle is a favorite among lobbyists and reporters to meet VIPs.
- **Hawk 'N' Dove** (329 Pennsylvania Ave. SE; 202/547-0030; www.hawkndovebardc.com) is the place to go to sip a drink and rub shoulders with political staffers and locals alike.
- **Cafe Milano** (3251 Prospect St.; 202/333-6183; www.cafemilano.com), in Georgetown, often sees notable figures from The Hill stopping by for dinner.

- The **Top of the Gate** (2650 Virginia Ave. NW; 202/322-6455; www.thewatergatehotel.com) offers impressive views of DC; grab a drink and you can say you've stood upon the infamous Watergate Hotel. Come for happy hour and catch the sun setting over the Potomac River.

BEST SOUVENIRS

DC specializes in politically themed souvenirs. The **White House Visitor Center** gift shop is particularly well stocked with memorabilia. For the bibliophile, the best places to stock up on political books are **Kramerbooks** (1517 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202/387-1400; www.kramers.com) in Dupont Circle and **Politics and Prose** (5015 Connecticut Ave. NW; 202/364-1919; www.politics-prose.com) in Upper Northwest.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

There are no airports in Washington DC, but two airports in Virginia and one in Maryland serve the nation's capital.

- **Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport:** DCA; 2401 Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Access Rd., Arlington, Virginia; 703/417-2664; www.flyreagan.com
- **Washington Dulles International Airport:** IAD; 1 Saarinen Cir., Dulles, Virginia; 703/572-2700; www.flydulles.com
- **Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport:** BWI; 7050 Friendship Rd., Baltimore, Maryland; 410/859-7111; www.bwiairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Destination DC:** www.washington.org

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The Washington Post:*** www.washingtonpost.com
- ***Washington City Paper:*** www.washingtoncitypaper.com
- ***Washingtonian:*** www.washingtonian.com

VIRGINIA

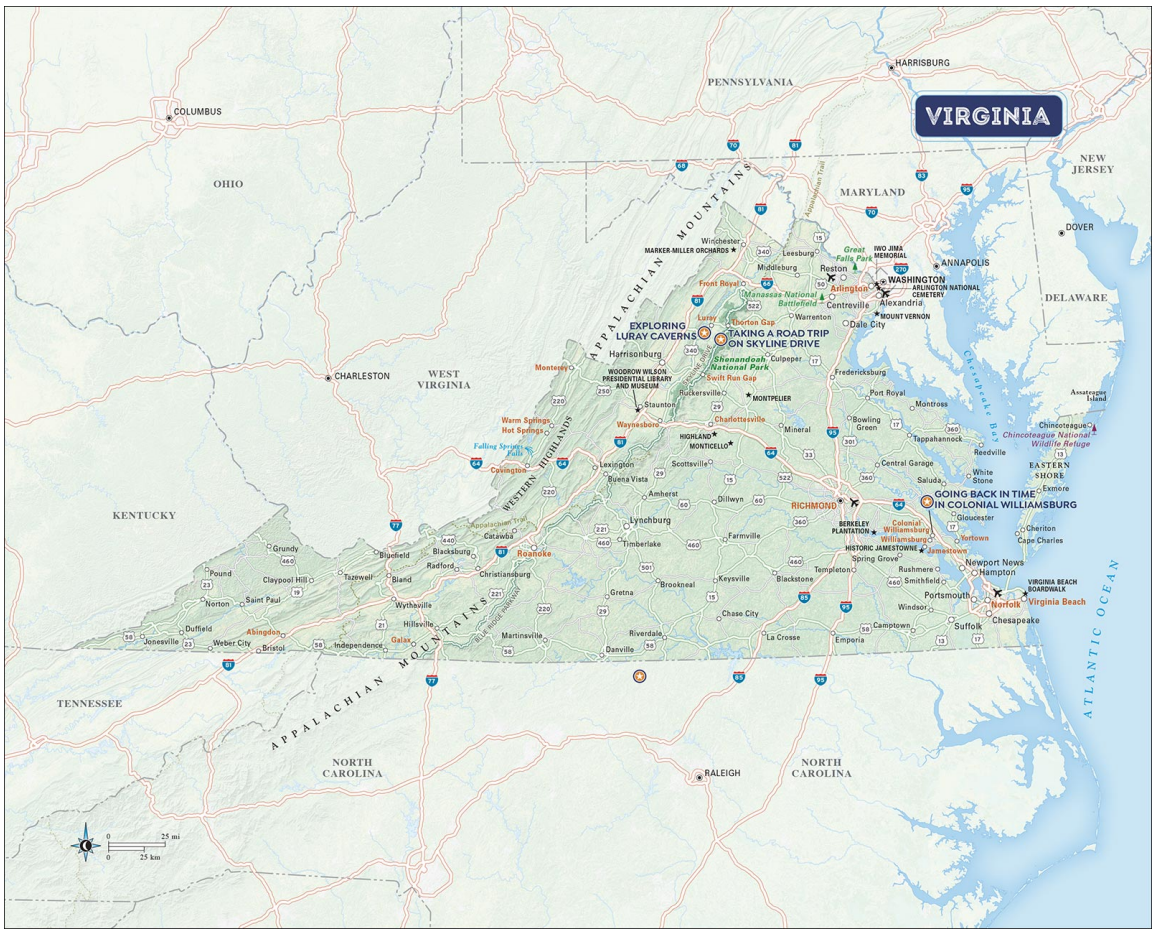
Virginia embodies history like few other states in the Union. From the Iroquoian, Siouan, and Algonquian-speaking Indigenous tribes upon whose land Virginia rests, to the first permanent English settlement in the New World at Jamestown, to the tragedy and heroism of the Civil War, the Old Dominion has witnessed many of the major events that shaped this country. Most of the buildings, battlefields, and artifacts involved are now preserved in a host of parks, museums, and historic homes. Virginia not only connects the storied past and thriving present—it's also a bridge between the mountains and the sea. Shenandoah is home to one of the most scenic roads in the country. Virginia Beach is one of the East Coast's premier resort destinations, with a bustling boardwalk and a bevy of great seafood restaurants. Detached from the rest of the state, the Eastern Shore is a time-warped land of unspoiled marshes, fishing towns, and the famous ponies of Chincoteague. Virginia offers the best of the many worlds it bridges—and then some.

AREA: 42,775 sq mi / 110,787 sq km (35th)

POPULATION: 8,811,195 (12th)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 25, 1788 (10th)

STATE CAPITAL: Richmond


VIRGINIA
PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG
COLUMBUS
OHIO
NEW JERSEY
MARYLAND
DOVER
ANNAPOLIS
DELAWARE
WASHINGTON
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MOUNT VERNON
Arlington
Alexandria
Centreville
Reston
Great Falls Park
IWO JIMA MEMORIAL
Middleburg
Leesburg
Winchester
MARKER-MILLER ORCHARDS
Front Royal
Manassas National Battlefield
Warrenton
Dale City
Luray
Luray Caverns
Thorton Gap
EXPLORING LURAY CAVERNS
TAKING A ROAD TRIP ON SKYLINE DRIVE
Shenandoah National Park
Swift Run Gap
Culpeper
Fredericksburg
Port Royal
Montross
Harrisonburg
Monterey
WOODROW WILSON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM
Staunton
Ruckersville
MONTPELIER
Charlottesville
Waynesboro
Warm Springs
Hot Springs
Falling Spring Falls
Covington
HIGHLAND
MONTICELLO
Mineral
Bowling Green
Tappahannock
Reedville
Chincoteague
Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge
Assateague Island
Chesapeake Bay
EASTERN SHORE
Exmore
Saluda
White Stone
Central Garage
Scottsville
Buena Vista
Lexington
Amherst
Dillwyn
RICHMOND
BERKELEY PLANTATION
Colonial Williamsburg
HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE
Jamestown
Yorktown
GOING BACK IN TIME IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG
Gloucester
Cheriton
Cape Charles
Spring Grove
Templeton
Rushmere
Smithfield
Newport News
Hampton
VIRGINIA BEACH BOARDWALK
Virginia Beach
Norfolk
Portsmouth
Windsor
Suffolk
Chesapeake
Camptown
Emporia
La Crosse
Chase City
Blackstone
Keysville
Brookneal
Gretna
Farmville
Lynchburg
Timberlake
Roanoke
Catawba
Blacksburg
Radford
Christiansburg
Blacksburg
Bluefield
Grundy
Pound
Claypool Hill
Tazewell
Bland
Norton
Saint Paul
Wytheville
Hillsville
Martinsville
Danville
Riverdale
Abingdon
Galax
Duffield
Jonesville
Weber City
Bristol
Independence
Blue Ridge Parkway
Appalachian Trail
Appalachian Trail
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
WEST VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
RALEIGH
ATLANTIC OCEAN
WESTERN HIGHLANDS
CHARLESTON
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Although a separate entity from the state of Virginia, **Washington DC** exerts a pull over northern Virginia, where **Arlington,** Alexandria, and the DC suburbs are located. Inland, to the west, is the Shenandoah Valley and the spectacular **Shenandoah National Park. Richmond** lies nearly due south of DC, about halfway between **Charlottesville** to the northwest and **Virginia Beach** to the southeast on the Atlantic coast. The **Blue Ridge Parkway** weaves its 217-mi (349-km) way south and west from the end of Shenandoah's **Skyline Drive** to hit the North Carolina state line in the western arm of the state.

WHEN TO GO

Late spring (May-June) and **fall** (Sept.-Oct.) are usually the **best times** to explore Virginia. The weather is most pleasant, and there are fewer tourists to compete with. The fall foliage in the state is some of the most spectacular in the country—a drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains in October can lead to some of the most stunning scenery in the East. **Summer** is the **prime tourist season,** but unless your plans involve some beach time or a stay in a mountain retreat, the humidity can be a bit overwhelming. If your focus is on historical sites and museums, the **winter** months (with the exception of the holiday season) can mean **short or no wait times** for popular attractions. Just be prepared for some sites to be closed or to have shorter hours.

TOP 3

1 GOING BACK IN TIME IN COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

888/965-7254; www.colonialwilliamsburg.com [URL inactive]

Colonial Williamsburg is the largest living museum in the country, and it is truly a historical marvel. The museum encompasses the restored 18th-century colonial Virginia capital city, which was the center of politics in Virginia for 80 years. As you explore the historic

streets, dine in taverns serving authentic colonial-style food, and peruse shops featuring original trades, you'll also interact with the staff, who are dressed in period clothing. Visitors are considered "Residents of the City," and conversations between staff members and the public are always in character.



COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

Highlights of the site include **Duke of Gloucester Street,** which President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the "most historic avenue in all of America"; **Market Square,** the center of activity where residents would purchase goods and socialize; and the impressive **Governor's Palace.** Another interesting spot is the **Magazine,** well known for its role in the **Gunpowder Incident** of April 21, 1775, which occurred in the earliest days of the Revolutionary War.

Many craftspeople, some of whom have spent years learning the trade, create colonial-era crafts in dozens of shops throughout Colonial Williamsburg. Visitors can watch **blacksmiths** and **armorers** shape tools, weapons, and hardware out of iron and steel or visit the **wigmaker** to learn the importance of 18th-century wigmakers and barbers.

2 TAKING A ROAD TRIP ON SKYLINE DRIVE

Shenandoah National Park; 540/999-3500; www.nps.gov/shen

This stunning route runs along the mountain ridges of **Shenandoah National Park.** It's one of the most beautiful stretches of road in the East and is the most popular attraction in the national park. The 105-mi (168-km) road takes travelers from vista to vista along a stunning north-south byway, the only public road through the park.



SKYLINE DRIVE

Access to Skyline Drive is from four entry points: from Front Royal at the northern terminus (near I-66 and US 340), at Thornton Gap (US 211), at Swift Run Gap (US 33), and near Waynesboro at Rockfish Gap at I-64 and US 250 (at the southern terminus). Skyline Drive ends where the **Blue Ridge Parkway** begins. It takes approximately three hours to drive the entire road.

The most popular time to visit Skyline Drive is during the **fall.** Virginia is known for having one of the most spectacular leaf displays in the country, and this route showcases the best of the best. **Wildflowers** and other stunning blooms keep the area colorful throughout the warmer months. There are 75 overlooks along the

route, from which you'll be able to see the beautiful Shenandoah Valley to the west and the Piedmont to the east. You'll also find popular **hiking** trails along the road.

3 EXPLORING LURAY CAVERNS

970 US 211 W., GPS 101 Cave Hill Rd., Luray; 540/743-6551; www.luraycaverns.com

There are many cavern attractions in the Blue Ridge Mountains, but the cream of the crop is Luray Caverns. This incredible natural wonder has been awing visitors since it was first discovered in 1878. Upon entering the caverns, you are transported into a subterranean world of mystery that took more than 4 million centuries to create. A series of paved walkways guide visitors through massive cavern "rooms" filled with natural stalagmites, stalactites, and, when the two join, columns or pillars. Some of the chambers have ceilings that are 10 stories high. There are many attractions along the paved route in the caverns, and one of the most famous is the **Stalacpipe Organ,** considered the world's largest musical instrument—it's made up of stalactites covering 3.5 ac (1.4 ha). Tickets for tours of the cave include entry to the **Car & Caravan Museum, Shenandoah Heritage Village,** and **Toy Town Junction,** all located on the grounds.



LURAY CAVERNS

HIGHLIGHTS

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

1 Memorial Ave., Arlington; 877/907-8585; www.arlingtoncemetery.mil [URL inactive]

This is, without a doubt, the most famous cemetery in the United States. It occupies a sprawling 639-ac (259-ha) site where more than 400,000 soldiers from every US military conflict are buried. The uniform white tombstones form an orderly quilt across the rolling green fields and are meticulously maintained. Called “Our Nation’s Most Sacred Shrine,” as the resting place for many generations of our nation’s heroes, the cemetery grows daily: On average, more than two dozen funerals are held each weekday. In 1948, a group of women formed the Arlington Ladies, a volunteer group whose

members attend services for all veterans and ensure that no member of the armed forces is ever buried alone.

Several key sights within Arlington National Cemetery are well worth a visit. The best known is the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,** which houses the remains of unidentified American soldiers from World Wars I and II and the Korean War. Another popular sight is the **Military Women's Memorial,** which honors American servicewomen. A short walk uphill from the Women's Memorial is the eternal flame and burial site of **John F. Kennedy,** one of the most-visited graves in the cemetery.

Major CITIES

VIRGINIA BEACH: Virginia Beach is the state's premier beach destination. It is a thriving, year-round city with more than 453,000 full-time residents—and an influx of more than 14 million visitors annually. The center of activity is the 3-mi-long (4.8-km) boardwalk, and you'll find a variety of attractions, events, parks, and wildlife refuges in the area.

NORFOLK: A longtime navy town and home to the largest naval base in the world, Norfolk has undergone a rebirth in recent history that is most evident in the delightful restaurants and shops in the trendy Ghent village, located just northwest of downtown, not far from the Elizabeth River. The city also boasts numerous universities, museums, and a host of other attractions including festivals and shopping.

ARLINGTON: Densely populated Arlington, located across the Potomac River west of Washington DC, is known for its national landmarks, military memorials, and trendy restaurants and shopping areas.

IWO JIMA MEMORIAL

Arlington Ridge, Arlington; 703/289-2500; www.nps.gov/gwmp

The Iwo Jima Memorial, also called the **US Marine Corps War Memorial,** stands to honor those Marines who died in defense of the United States. This awe-inspiring memorial is a 32-ft-tall (9.7-m) granite and bronze sculpture created in the likeness of a Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph depicting the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima (a small island off the coast of Japan) in March 1945, near the end of World War II. The sculpture illustrates the US flag being raised by five Marines and a Navy hospital corpsman. The detail in the memorial is stunning, and its enormous size (a total of 78 ft/24 m with the base) adds to its inspirational appeal.



IWO JIMA MEMORIAL, ARLINGTON

MANASSAS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

6511 Sudley Rd., Manassas; 703/361-1339; www.nps.gov/mana

Manassas National Battlefield Park is a great place for die-hard historians and tourists alike. This historic battlefield preserves the site of two well-known Civil War battles: the First Battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861), which

was the first major land battle in the war; and the Second Battle of Bull Run (Aug. 28-30, 1862), which was the biggest simultaneous mass assault of the Civil War and signaled the height of the Confederate army's power.



MANASSAS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

The park encompasses more than 3,000 ac (1,214 ha) of meadows, woods, and streams. When visiting the battlefield, you can see the site where the battles took place and learn about the history via exhibits and artifacts, including uniforms, weapons, and field gear. Other attractions in the park include the **Stone Bridge,** which the Union army retreated across after both battles; **Battery Heights,** where Confederate batteries fired on the attacking Union troops at the Brawner Farm; **Matthews Hill,** the site of the opening phase of the first battle; and **Groveton,** the remains of a Civil War-era village.

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

1368 Colonial Pkwy., Jamestown; 757/856-1250; www.historicjamestowne.org

Step back in time at Historic Jamestowne, which occupies the site of the original Jamestown settlement on the banks of the James River. Historic Jamestowne is divided into Old Towne, the original settlement site, and New Towne, the part of the area that was developed after 1620. Highlights in Old Towne include the original Memorial Church tower, a burial ground (many of the first colonists died here), and a reconstructed sample of a "mud-and-stud" cottage. New Towne features replicas of homes from the time.

PRESIDENTIAL HOMES

Virginia has more claims to US presidents than any other state: Of the American presidents, eight were born in Virginia, all before the Civil War, and seven owned or have a connection to a Virginia plantation that relied on the labor of enslaved people. Debate about these presidents' legacies continues, and the plantation sights, after years of glossing over the role of enslavement in their histories, are incorporating the stories of enslaved people into their narrative.

Mount Vernon (3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mt. Vernon; 703/780-2000; www.mountvernon.org [URL inactive]), George Washington's plantation house, is the most popular historic estate in the country. The estate, which highlights the first president's life and times, features the mansion and its meticulously restored interior, plus nearly 500 ac (202 ha) of land where you'll find 20 original structures and Washington's tomb. In addition to the Washington-centric exhibit, the *Lives Bound Together* exhibit focuses on the workers enslaved by Washington.

Monticello (1050 Monticello Loop, Charlottesville; 434/984-9880; www.monticello.org) is a plantation that was the home of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States. The home, with its recognizable brick facade adorned by columns and a dramatic octagonal dome, sits on 3,000 ac (1,214 ha) for public visitation. Visitors can take a tour of the first floor of the beautiful mansion. In 2018, the plantation

opened the *Life of Sally Hemings* exhibit, which describes the life of the enslaved woman who bore four children fathered by Jefferson.

The other presidential homes in Virginia include:

- **Montpelier** (11350 Constitution Highway; www.montpelier.org), home to James Madison and his wife Dolley
- **Highland** (2050 James Monroe Parkway; https://highland.org), a working farm in Charlottesville that was home to James Monroe, the fifth president
- The **Berkeley Plantation** (12602 Harrison Landing Rd.; https://berkeleyplantation.com), birthplace of William Henry Harrison and famous for being the site of the first official Thanksgiving.
- The **Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum** (20 N Coalter St.; www.woodrowwilson.org) is located in the manse where he was born during his father's tenure as the Presbyterian minister of Staunton.

BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER OF VIRGINIA

122 W. Leigh St., Richmond; 804/780-9093; www.blackhistorymuseum.org

Housed in the old Leigh Street Armory in the heart of the **Jackson Ward** neighborhood of Richmond, this museum takes visitors on a journey from emancipation, reconstruction, and Jim Crow to desegregation, resistance, and the civil rights era, including the story of local heroes the Richmond 34, Virginia Union University students who staged a sit-in in 1960. This two-floor museum contains permanent exhibitions on the first floor and temporary exhibitions on the second floor. Throughout, artifacts, photos, videos, and interactive displays enhance the experience.

MAGGIE L. WALKER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

3125 E. Broad St., Richmond; 804/226-5041; www.nps.gov/mawa

Maggie L. Walker holds the honor of being the first Black woman in the United States to found a bank, St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, in 1903. Walker's rise was remarkable. Her mother was born enslaved, and her biological father was an Irish immigrant (and a Confederate soldier and hospital clerk). She also published a newspaper, *St. Luke Herald*, and used her voice to urge her community to buy Black.

Walker moved into this Jackson Ward row house with her family in 1905. The home had nine rooms when Walker moved in but was expanded into a 28-room Victorian mansion over time. More than 90 percent of Walker's things, including books, a porcelain bidet, and a baby grand piano, are still found inside as she left them. While Walker was alive, she welcomed Black thought leaders here, including W. E. B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, and Mary McLeod Bethune. Poets Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen hung out in the kitchen around the same table and chairs you'll see on a tour of the site today.

VIRGINIA BEACH BOARDWALK

between 2nd St. and 40th St., Virginia Beach

No trip to Virginia Beach is complete without a stroll along the 28-ft-wide (8.5-m) boardwalk that runs parallel to the ocean for 3 mi (4.8 km) on one of the longest recreational beach areas in the world. The boardwalk is perfect for getting some exercise with a view and is adorned with benches, grassy areas, play areas, amusement parks, arcades, hotels, restaurants, shops, and other entertainment. There is also a large fishing pier at 15th Street.



VIRGINIA BEACH BOARDWALK

BIRTHPLACE OF COUNTRY MUSIC MUSEUM

101 Country Music Way, Bristol; 276/285-3831;
www.birthplaceofcountrymusic.org [URL inactive]

By the mid-1920s, a genre of music variously called “old Southern tunes,” “hill-country tunes,” and “hillbilly music” was gaining popularity. Beginning in 1926, record companies began to organize “field sessions” so artists could be recorded without having to make an expensive trip to New York. The sessions that took place in Bristol, on the Tennessee-Virginia border, in July and August 1927 proved that country music—as it eventually came to be called—both sounded good and could be a commercial success.

It is this story along with many more that is told at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, with archival material and interactive displays documenting some of the artists discovered through the Bristol Sessions, including the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. In the town of Bristol

itself, you can tour the pleasant row of charming shops that line **State Street** and take pictures in front of the ***Country Music Mural.***

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 From Dulles, drive one hour west to **Front Royal,** the gateway to **Shenandoah National Park.** Enter the park on the famed **Skyline Drive.** Spend the rest of the day meandering down the northern section of Skyline Drive to **Luray.** Be sure to stop along the way for a short hike and to take in the sights along this stunning section of road. Spend the night in Luray.

DAY 2 Start your day by touring the incredible **Luray Caverns.** Then, take the two-hour scenic route along the southern portion of Skyline Drive. At the end, take I-64 east to scenic **Charlottesville.** Visit **Monticello,** Thomas Jefferson's home, then pick a restaurant on the hip downtown mall in Charlottesville for dinner.

DAY 3 Make the three-hour drive to **Virginia Beach** early so you can enjoy a day on the Atlantic. Be sure to walk the famous **boardwalk** and enjoy fresh seafood before spending the night in a hotel right on the Atlantic Ocean.

DAY 4 Drive one hour northwest to **Colonial Williamsburg.** Lose yourself in US history by dedicating the day to exploring this unique living museum. Visit the **historic buildings,** shop in the authentic **colonial shops,** talk to the costumed interpreters, and have a refreshment in a colonial **tavern.**

DAY 5 In the morning, drive an hour northwest to the capital city of **Richmond.** Spend the day learning about the city's Black history in the **Jackson Ward** neighborhood.

DAY 6 On your final day, drive north about two hours to **Arlington.** Visit the **cemetery** and the **Iwo Jima Memorial.** Depending on your flight schedule, head back to Dulles or spend the night in Arlington.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

www.blueridgeparkway.org

The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of the most popular units of the national park system. The parkway is 469 mi (754 km) long and connects Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee with Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. The parkway was designed during the Great Depression, and its creators took advantage of the beautiful terrain and followed the natural contours of the ridgeline. Gorgeous scenery is the key ingredient to this outstanding park, and visitors can enjoy overlooks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, countless vistas, beautiful old meadows, and picturesque farmland.

A 217-mi (349-km) stretch of the Blue Ridge Parkway is in Virginia, with the prettiest part being the 114 mi (183 km) between **Waynesboro** and **Roanoke.** This section follows the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains. If it's beautiful mountain scenery you seek, then a ride down the Blue Ridge Parkway is a must—especially during the fall. The National Park Service site (www.nps.gov/blri) has the most up-to-date information about road conditions and closures.

COLONIAL PARKWAY

The "Historic Triangle," as it is known, consists of **Williamsburg, Jamestown,** and **Yorktown.** These three historic towns are just minutes apart and are the sites of some of our country's most important Revolutionary War history. The Colonial Parkway, a scenic, 23-mi-long

(37-km) three-lane road, connects the points of the Historic Triangle. Millions of travelers drive the road between Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown each year. The parkway is maintained by the National Park Service and was designed to unify the three culturally distinct sites while preserving the scenery and wildlife along the way.

VIRGINIA'S WESTERN HIGHLANDS

US 220

The western reaches of the state toward the West Virginia border include Highland County, Bath County, and parts of Augusta and Allegheny Counties. The Allegheny Mountains spill into West Virginia, and the area is split by river valleys. This region is scenic and sparsely populated. US 220 from **Monterey** to **Covington** (55 mi/88 km) is a particularly scenic 75-minute drive. You'll pass through iconic mountain towns such as Warm Springs and Hot Springs, the location of the famed **Omni Homestead Resort,** and by **Falling Spring Falls,** an 80-ft (24-m) cascade.



FALLING SPRING FALLS

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

540/999-3500; www.nps.gov/shen

Shenandoah National Park is a popular escape for good reason: It offers superb outdoor recreation, stunning mountain scenery, the lovely Shenandoah River, and famous Skyline Drive. The park stretches 105 mi

(168 km) from north to south and has four primary entrances: from Front Royal (via I-66 and US 340), at Thornton Gap (via US 211), at Swift Run Gap (via US 33), and at Rockfish Gap (via I-64 and US 250).



SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

Shenandoah National Park is a prime location for **hiking.** There are more than 500 mi (800 km) of trails here, mostly through lush forests. The most popular hike—and most challenging and dangerous—is **Old Rag Mountain,** where you'll be rewarded for your efforts with beautiful summit views. The park is also a great place to view **wildlife.** Some of the resident animals include coyotes, black bears, bald eagles, and the timber rattlesnake.

CHINCOTEAGUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

8231 Beach Rd., Chincoteague Island; 757/336-6122; www.fws.gov/refuge/chincoteague

The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is a 14,000-ac (5,665-ha) refuge consisting of beach, dunes, marsh, and maritime forest on the Virginia end of **Assateague Island.** It was established in 1943, and the area is a thriving habitat for many species of waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and wading birds. The popular herd of **wild ponies** that Chincoteague is known for also lives in the refuge.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Bring a piece of Colonial Williamsburg home with a visit to the **Williamsburg Craft House,** which sells pewter and ceramic gifts, jewelry, and folk art.

Three mi (4.8 km) south of Mount Vernon, stop by **George Washington's Distillery and Gristmill** to pick up whiskey, flour, and cornmeal. The facilities are still functioning today as they did in the 18th century and produce authentic products.

You can also buy glassware made in the **Glasshouse at Historic Jamestowne,** where artisans create glass products as glassblowers did back in the early 1600s.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

NORFOLK HARBORFEST

Norfolk; www.festevents.org; June

One of Norfolk's most popular events, the Norfolk Harborfest, is held annually for several days at the beginning of June and attracts more than 100,000 people. This large festival covers more than 3 mi (4.8 km) on the Norfolk waterfront and offers visitors sailboat parades, tall ships, an impressive fireworks display, and seemingly endless entertainment.



NORFOLK HARBORFEST

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL

Abingdon; www.vahighlandsfestival.org; July-Aug.

The town of Abingdon hosts one of the top 100 annual tourist events in the country: the Virginia Highlands Festival. This 10-day event held in late July and early August showcases music, art, crafts, and writing indigenous to the Appalachians. The festival began in 1949 and started as a weeklong festival geared toward Appalachian arts and crafts and evolved into 10 days of festivities in a variety of venues. A large antiques market is also featured at the festival, and there is wine-tasting, gardening instruction, and even a hot-air-balloon rally.

ANNUAL OLD FIDDLERS' CONVENTION

Galax; Aug.

Early August marks a very special time in the southern Virginia town of Galax. This town near the North Carolina border is the home of the largest old-time bluegrass fiddlers' convention in the country, which has been a main event in town since 1935. Hundreds of people from all over the country come with their instruments to compete for prize money totaling more than $20,000. Thousands more fans converge on the town to witness the contest and to hear up-and-coming bluegrass musicians.

BEST FOOD

Virginia's colonial past, agricultural history, and proximity to water are all evident in the local cuisine. Many parts of southern and western Virginia embrace the culture of the southern United States. It is there you can find authentic Southern cuisine and Virginia-specific food such as Virginia ham (country ham produced in Virginia), Brunswick stew, and peanut soup. Additionally, although seafood is not unique to Virginia, it has certainly found a special place here, since it is harvested regionally.

PEANUT SOUP

Peanuts, which were a popular plantation crop, have remained a staple in the Old Dominion. Try this signature dish at **The King's Arms Tavern** (416 E. Duke of Gloucester St., Williamsburg; 855/240-3278; www.colonialwilliamsburg.org) in Colonial Williamsburg or **The Red Fox Inn and Tavern** (2 E. Washington St., Middleburg; 540/687-6301; www.redfox.com).

OYSTERS

Oyster lovers flock to the Chesapeake Bay region. For many years, this delectable yet peculiar-looking creature flourished in the bay and was one of the most valuable commercial fishing commodities. Get your fix at **AW Shucks Raw Bar & Grill** (2200 Colonial Ave., Norfolk; 757/664-9117; www.awshucksrawbar.com).

COUNTRY HAM

In the 17th century, Virginia settlers learned how to smoke meat from the Indigenous residents. To this day, Virginia country ham has an international reputation. Pick up a ham—and other tasty treats—at **Meats of Virginia Butcher Shop & Deli** (11381 Rolfe Hwy., Elberon; 757/294-3688; https://meatsofvirginia.com).



COUNTRY HAM

APPLES

As one of the nation's top six producers of apples, Virginia makes sure to save room for dessert. In winter, the state's top apple-packaging location at the northern tip of the Shenandoah Valley, is often called The Apple Capital of the World. Stop at **Marker-Miller Orchards** (3035 Cedar Creek Grade, Winter; 540/662-1391; www.markermillerorchards.com), a "pick-your-own" orchard that opens when the season starts in September.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport:** DCA; 2401 Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport Access Rd., Arlington; 703/910-8114; www.flyreagan.com
- **Washington Dulles International Airport:** IAD; 1 Saarinen Cir., Dulles; 703/572-2700; www.flydulles.com
- **Richmond International Airport:** RIC; 1 Richard E. Byrd Terminal Dr., Richmond; 804/226-3000; www.flyrichmond.com
- **Norfolk International Airport:** ORF; 2200 Norview Ave., Norfolk; 757/857-3351; www.norfolkairport.com [URL inactive]

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Virginia Is for Lovers:** www.virginia.org
- **Virginia State Parks:** www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks

MAGAZINES

- ***Virginia Living:*** www.virginialiving.com

OceanofPDF.com

SOUTH

Kentucky

Tennessee

Arkansas

Louisiana

North Carolina

South Carolina

Georgia

Alabama

Mississippi

Florida

THE SOUTH
State by State

KENTUCKY
Why Go: Bourbon, horses, and Mammoth Cave National Park are big draws in Kentucky.

TENNESSEE
Why Go: The music cities of Nashville and Memphis also have important sights connected to the Civil Rights Movement.

ARKANSAS
Why Go: Where else can you dig for diamonds in a state park?

LOUISIANA
Why Go: Jazz permeates the streets of New Orleans, and there are more food specialties than you can eat on one trip.

NORTH CAROLINA
Why Go: Two great outdoors destinations—The Outer Banks and Great Smoky Mountains National Park—bookend the state, with lots of barbecue in between.

SOUTH CAROLINA
Why Go: History-filled Charleston anchors a coast dotted with captivating natural wetland environments.

GEORGIA
Why Go: The archetypal images of the South—hanging Spanish moss, sculpture-filled cemeteries, and dark-water swamps—plus the dynamic city of Atlanta can all be found in Georgia.

ALABAMA

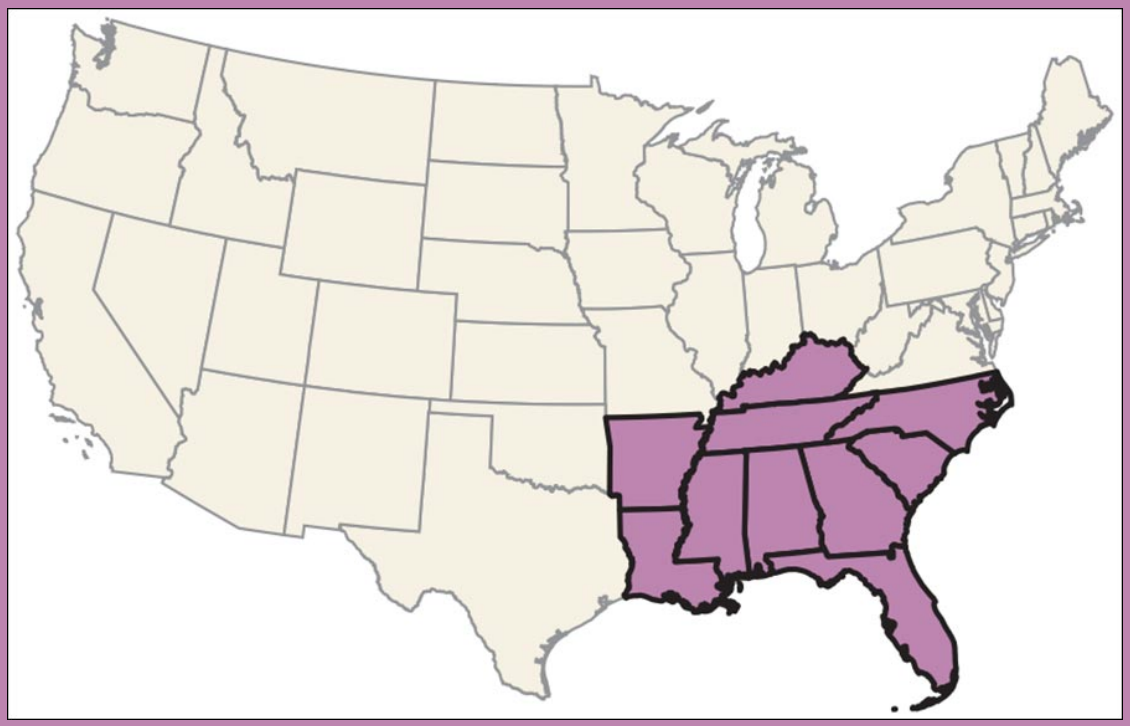
Why Go: With sights like the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the Edmund Pettus Bridge, civil rights history is front and center in Alabama.

MISSISSIPPI

Why Go: Travel through time on the Natchez Trace Parkway, and revel in the blues in the Mississippi Delta.

FLORIDA

Why Go: Unique doesn't even begin to describe this state that encompasses miles of beautiful beaches, three national parks, rivers with manatees, and wetlands with alligators.



South ROAD TRIP

With 10 states, the South is an immense area. This road trip covers 6 of them over 21 days, with options to include all 10. It goes through mountains and along beaches, with plenty of music and history along the way.

NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh to Great Smoky Mountains National Park: 3 days / 430 mi (690 km)

Starting in **Raleigh,** drive three hours to **Blowing Rock,** where you'll see a geologic curiosity and spend the night. Take the next day to weave along the **Blue Ridge Parkway** to **Asheville.** In the morning, finish the Blue Ridge Parkway at **Cherokee,** right outside **Great Smoky Mountains National Park.**

TENNESSEE

Nashville and Memphis: 5 days / 475 mi (765 km)

Drive **Newfound Gap Road** through Great Smoky Mountains into Tennessee, taking the time to stop at viewpoints and do a hike. Stay the night in **Gatlinburg** or **Pigeon Forge.** The next day, drive out to **Nashville** (3.5-4 hours), where you'll spend two nights. From Nashville, make the three-hour drive to **Memphis,** where you'll also spend two nights.

MISSISSIPPI

The Blues Trail and Jackson: 2 days / 255 mi (410 km)

Memphis is a great jumping-off point for the **Mississippi Blues Trail.** Take US 61 south to **Clarksdale,** stopping in **Tunica** on the way. In the morning, hit a couple more Blues Trail towns, **Cleveland** and **Leland,** on your way to **Jackson.**

ALABAMA

Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery: 3 days / 380 mi (610 km)

Spend the morning in Jackson, then drive 3.5 hours to **Birmingham.** The next day, visit your choice of Birmingham civil rights sights. In the morning, head south two hours to **Selma,** where you can walk across the historic Edmund Pettus Bridge. From Selma, drive to the state capital of **Montgomery,** where you'll spend the night.

GEORGIA

Atlanta: 1 day / 160 mi (355 km)

From Montgomery, drive 2.5 hours to **Atlanta.** Spend the rest of the day exploring the Georgia capital.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Congaree and Charleston: 3 days / 335 mi (540 km)

After a morning in Atlanta, drive three hours to the South Carolina capital of **Columbia.** The next morning, visit the nearby **Congaree National Park,** and after walking under the world's tallest forest canopy, make the two-hour drive to **Charleston.** Spend a day enjoying the coastal city.

NORTH CAROLINA COAST

Wilmington to the Outer Banks: 4 days / 615 mi (990 km)

From Charleston, make the 3.5-hour drive to **Wilmington,** on the southern North Carolina coast. The next day, drive up to Cedar Island; make sure to time the three-hour drive so you make your ferry (reserve ahead) to **Ocracoke Island,** where you'll stay the night. From Ocracoke, spend the day driving north along NC-12 up to **Nags Head.** The next day, make the three-hour drive back to Raleigh.

ADDING KENTUCKY

Mammoth Cave and Bowling Green: 2 days / 315 mi (510 km)

Instead of going straight to Nashville from Great Smoky Mountains National Park, head to **Mammoth Cave,** which is 3.5 hours away in southern Kentucky. Spend the night in **Bowling Green,** home of the Corvette, before heading an hour south to Nashville.

ADDING ARKANSAS

Little Rock and Hot Springs National Park: 2 days / 395 mi (635 km)

Little Rock is two hours west of Memphis, and **Hot Springs National Park** is one hour west of Little Rock. To get to the Blues Trail towns from Little Rock is about 2.5 hours.

ADDING LOUISIANA

New Orleans: 3+ days / 535 mi (860 km) or 395 mi (635 km)

From Jackson, **New Orleans** is three hours south. You'll want to spend at least a day there before making the five-hour drive to Birmingham. Or you could head to Gulf Shores, Alabama, for some beach time before picking up the route again in Montgomery.

ADDING FLORIDA

St. Augustine and South: 2+ days / 490 mi (790 km)

From Charleston, **St. Augustine** in northern Florida is a five hour drive, with Savannah, Georgia, another lovely coastal city, along the way. From St. Augustine, **Fort Pierce,** north of West Palm Beach, is another 5.5 hours.

KENTUCKY

To put Kentucky into words is hard, because Kentucky is more than a collection of places. It's more than thoroughbred horses grazing on rich limestone-fed land in the rolling hills around Lexington. It's more than the bustling downtown streets of Louisville, where new enterprise lives in historic buildings. It's more than weathered tobacco barns, bourbon distilleries, record-length caves, and bluegrass festivals. Kentucky is a feeling, like sunshine in the winter or rain on a warm spring day.

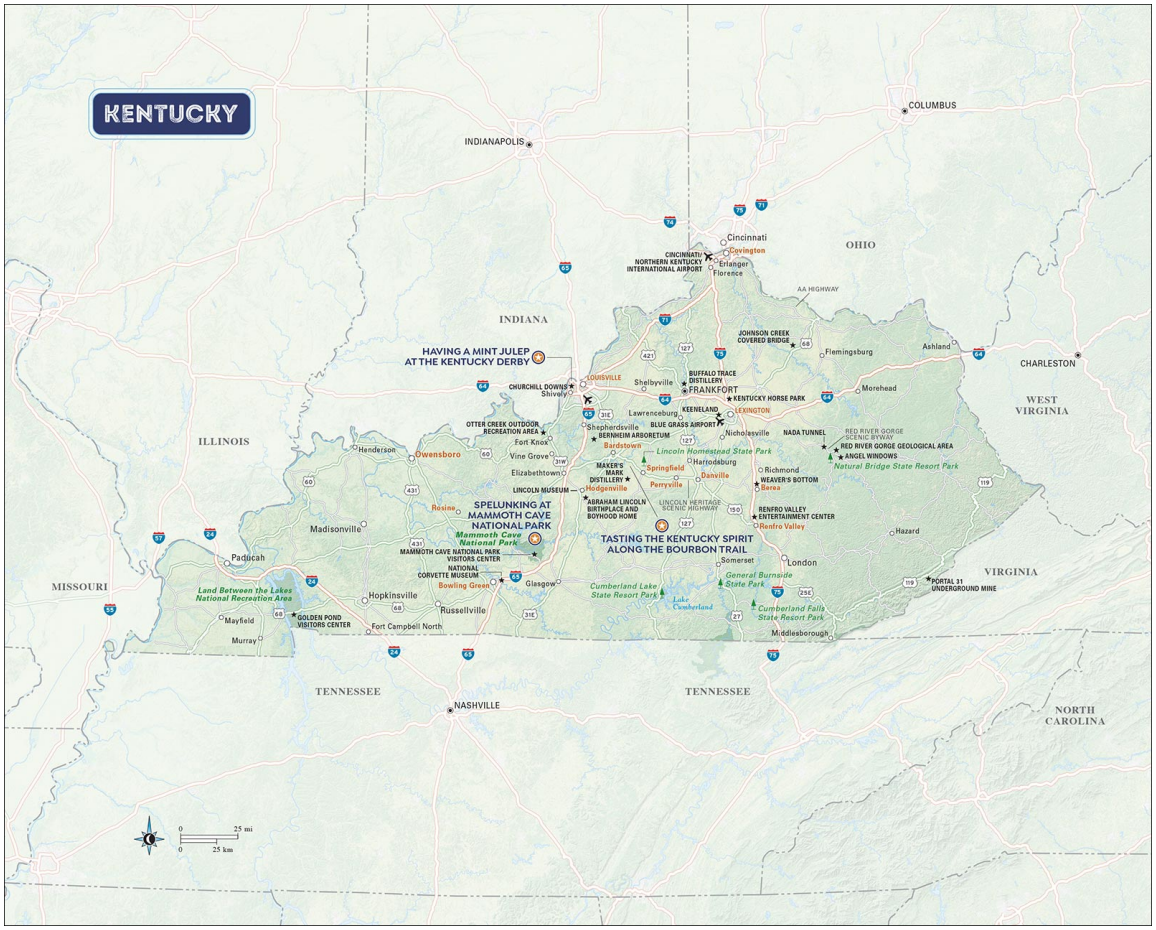
Kentucky is on Shawnee, Cherokee, and Chickasaw land. It is a place of warm hospitality, where people treat neighbors like family and are never too busy to sit on the porch for a glass of sweet tea and some gossip. But to assume that Kentucky is all country roads and simple pleasures would be wrong. The state has big urban areas, with innovative art galleries, award-winning restaurants, top-ranked hospitals, and first-rate universities. The birthplace of bluegrass music and home to the first integrated college in the south, Kentucky is at once traditional and progressive.

AREA: 40,408 sq mi / 104,656 sq km (37th)

POPULATION: 4,588,372 (26th)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 1, 1792 (15th)

STATE CAPITAL: Frankfort


KENTUCKY
COLUMBUS
INDIANAPOLIS
Cincinnati
OHIO
CINCINNATI NORTHERN KENTUCKY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Covington
Erlanger
Florence
AA HIGHWAY
INDIANA
HAVING A MINT JULEP AT THE KENTUCKY DERBY
JOHNSON CREEK COVERED BRIDGE
Flemingsburg
Ashland
CHARLESTON
WEST VIRGINIA
LOUISVILLE
CHURCHILL DOWNS
Shively
Shelbyville
BUFFALO TRACE DISTILLERY
FRANKFORT
KENTUCKY HORSE PARK
Morehead
KEENELAND
LEXINGTON
Lawrenceburg
BLUE GRASS AIRPORT
Shepherdsville
Nicholasville
NADA TUNNEL
RED RIVER GORGE SCENIC BYWAY
RED RIVER GORGE GEOLOGICAL AREA
ANGEL WINDOWS
Natural Bridge State Resort Park
OTTER CREEK OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA
Fort Knox
BERNHEIM ARBORETUM
Bardstown
Lincoln Homestead State Park
ILLINOIS
Henderson
Owensboro
Vine Grove
Elizabethtown
Harrodsburg
Springfield
Danville
Richmond
MAKER'S MARK DISTILLERY
Hodgenville
Perryville
WEAVER'S BOTTOM
Berea
LINCOLN MUSEUM
ABRAHAM LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE AND BOYHOOD HOME
LINCOLN HERITAGE SCENIC HIGHWAY
RENFRO VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER
Renfro Valley
Rosine
SPELUNKING AT MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK
Mammoth Cave National Park
MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK VISITORS CENTER
Madisonville
TASTING THE KENTUCKY SPIRIT ALONG THE BOURBON TRAIL
Hazard
Paducah
NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM
Bowling Green
Somerset
London
General Burnside State Park
VIRGINIA
MISSOURI
Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area
Glasgow
Cumberland Lake State Resort Park
Lake Cumberland
PORTAL 31 UNDERGROUND MINE
Hopkinsville
Russellville
Cumberland Falls State Resort Park
Mayfield
GOLDEN POND VISITORS CENTER
Fort Campbell North
Middlesborough
Murray
TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE
NASHVILLE
NORTH CAROLINA
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Louisville is located in the north-central part of the state, right on the Kentucky-Indiana state line. To the east is **Lexington,** which is surrounded by horse country, and the **Bourbon Trail** distilleries. The state capital, **Frankfort,** lies between Louisville and Lexington. **Mammoth Cave National Park** and **Bowling Green** are in south-central Kentucky. **Appalachia** is in eastern Kentucky, while the **Land Between the Lakes** is in western Kentucky.

WHEN TO GO

The most popular time to visit Kentucky is **May-October.** The **Kentucky Derby** is held on the first Saturday in May. It's a celebratory and fun time to visit, although you'll have to deal with soaring hotel and flight prices as well as crowds in Louisville and surrounding areas. For those who don't mind heat and humidity, **summer** is the peak season for travel. However, many people declare **fall** their favorite season in Kentucky, when temperatures are mild, the trees burst into color, and crowds are down. **Winter** is a quiet time in Kentucky, when some parks and small-town attractions may be closed or have limited hours.

TOP 3

1 HAVING A MINT JULEP AT THE KENTUCKY DERBY

Churchill Downs, 700 Central Ave., Louisville;
www.kentuckyderby.com

The Kentucky Derby might be known as the most exciting two minutes in sports, but to Louisville, the Derby lasts far longer than two minutes. Thanks to the **Kentucky Derby Festival,** Derby excitement lasts for a full two weeks, with events like **Thunder Over Louisville,** the largest annual fireworks display in the world; the **Great Steamboat Race;** and the **Pegasus Parade** leading up to the big race on the first Saturday in May. By Friday, locals, who often

spend Derby Day itself at parties rather than at the track, flock to Churchill Downs for the running of the **Kentucky Oaks,** a premier race for fillies.



MINT JULEP

The grand finale, of course, is the Kentucky Derby, run every year since 1875 at Churchill Downs, making it the longest-running sporting event in the United States. The actual **Run for the Roses** is the 10th race of the day, with the traditional singing of “My Old Kentucky Home” and the call to the post taking place around 6pm. In the grandstands, women wear extravagant hats, men wear seersucker suits, and everyone enjoys at least one mint julep.

Tickets for the Kentucky Oaks and Kentucky Derby are available at the gate. Reserved seats (www.churchilldowns.com) are the most difficult to come by. A few thousand tickets are released for public

sale online in December or January. Aside from the Oaks and Derby, most events are free to spectators with a Derby pin. Pins can be purchased at the entrance to all events, as well as at local grocery stores, drugstores, and other retailers.

If you can't make it to the Derby, experiencing it on the 360-degree high-definition screen at the **Kentucky Derby Museum** (704 Central Ave.; 502/637-7097; www.derbymuseum.org) is the next best thing. Interactive exhibits and authentic artifacts allow you to get a taste of Derby Day and learn what it takes to create a champion thoroughbred. Your admission ticket also allows you to take a guided walking tour of **Churchill Downs** (502/636-4400; www.churchilldowns.com).

2 SPELUNKING AT MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

1 Visitor Center Pkwy., Mammoth Cave; 270/758-2180; www.nps.gov/maca

Kentucky's one national park is home to the most extensive cave system in the world. With more than 400 mi (645 km) of mapped passageways and perhaps hundreds of miles of undiscovered routes, Mammoth Cave is so big that no known cave in the world is even half as long as Mammoth. Evidence indicates that humans explored Mammoth Cave 5,000 years ago, although it wasn't until 1798 that the cave was "rediscovered." Established as a national park in 1941, Mammoth Cave was a tourist attraction as early as 1816, making it the second-oldest tourist site in the United States (behind Niagara Falls).



MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK

To explore the cave, sign up for one of the many **tours** offered each day. Tours range in distance from 0.25 mi (0.4 km) to 4 mi (6.4 km) and in time from one to four hours; introductory and general tours give an overview of the cave, its history, and its formation. Tours can be reserved by phone (877/444-6777) or online (www.recreation.gov), and reservations are highly recommended in the summer.

Above ground, more than 60 mi (97 km) of trails are open to hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders. Trail maps are available at the **visitor center.**

3 TASTING THE KENTUCKY SPIRIT ALONG THE BOURBON TRAIL

In 1999, the Kentucky Distillers Association decided to turn one of the state's most distinct industries into what is now one of its biggest tourist attractions, creating an official Bourbon Trail (https://kybourbontrail.com). **Bardstown,** the towns of **Loretto, Lebanon,** and **Lawrenceburg,** and state capital **Frankfort** make up the heart of bourbon country, a region of small towns and rolling countryside. Bourbon fanatics will want to go beyond the official trail to visit other major distilleries as well as craft distilleries, but

here are a few highlights. All distillery tours end with a bourbon tasting.

- The **Willett Distillery** (1869 Loretto Rd., Bardstown; 502/501-9699; www.kentuckybourbonwhiskey.com), with wood ceilings and rough-hewn stone walls, is among the most handsome around and offers a nice range of bourbons to taste.
- Set on a village-like campus, **Maker's Mark Distillery** (3350 Burks Spring Rd., Loretto; 270/865-2099; www.makersmark.com) wins the award for most picturesque distillery.



ORIGINAL COPPER STILLS AT MAKER'S MARK DISTILLERY

- Authorized to produce "medicinal" liquor during Prohibition, **Buffalo Trace Distillery** (113 Great Buffalo Trace, Frankfort; 502/696-5926; www.buffalotracedistillery.com) owns the title of the oldest continually operating distillery in America.

HIGHLIGHTS

HORSE COUNTRY

Keeneland (4201 Versailles Rd., Lexington; 859/254-3412; www.keeneland.com) is the state's (and maybe the world's) most beautiful racetrack, with lush, meticulously landscaped grounds and stone buildings. The live racing season is short, restricted to **April** and **October,** making every race day, especially those on weekends, feel like an event. If you find yourself in Lexington outside of racing season, you can make your way to the track to watch morning workouts. It's an intimate look at horse racing, and the park-like grounds look stunning in the early morning light. Most workouts end by 10am.

Around Lexington is where you'll find endless rolling hills of bluegrass, immense fields marked by wooden fences, and foals dancing in the morning sunlight. A combined working horse farm, equine competition facility, and horse-based theme park of sorts, the **Kentucky Horse Park** (4089 Iron Works Pkwy., Lexington; 859/259-4257; www.kyhorsepark.com) is the best place to get up close and personal with horses. A visit to the park is easily an all-day affair: Start with a horse-drawn trolley tour, then catch the Hall of Champions presentation, which introduces renowned horses to visitors.



HORSES GRAZING ON KENTUCKY'S GREEN HILLS

Tours of the region are available with **Blue Grass Tours** (www.bluegrasstours.com), **Horse Farm Tours Inc.** (859/268-2906; www.horsefarmtours.com), **Thoroughbred Heritage Horse Farm Tours** (800/979-3370; www.seethechampions.com), or **Unique Horse Farm Tours** (800/259-4225; www.kyhorsepark.com).

BEREA

Lots of towns have art galleries. What makes Berea unique is the fact that a huge portion of the artwork being sold in Berea is made right here in Berea. The backbone of Berea's status as the Folk Arts and Crafts Capital of Kentucky is the studio artist program, in which working artists operate combined studio galleries, not only selling their work to the public, but also sharing with them their creative process. Square purple signs bearing a four-hand design designate studio artists' galleries, where you can watch artists blow glass, weave, woodwork, throw pots, and more. The majority of studio artists are located in Old Town (Broadway), but a few are in College

Square. Because Berea is so easy to walk, you can just wander the two districts, keeping an eye out for the studio artist signs. You can also pick up the *Berea Working Artists Studio Map* or the *Map to Art in Berea* brochure from the **Old Town Welcome Center** (201 N. Broadway; 800/598-5263; www.berea.com). Although it feels unfair to single out artists, as they all are truly exceptional, here are a couple of highlights:

- In College Square, visit **Warren May** (110 Center St.; 859/986-9293; www.warrenamay.com), a woodworker who creates beautiful pieces of furniture but is most known for his Appalachian dulcimers.
- To learn about the process of weaving on a variety of looms, visit Mary Colmer at **Weaver's Bottom** (140 N. Broadway; 859/986-8661) in Old Town. Mary's husband Neil, who was a hand weaver for 50 years, retired and handed her the reins in 2018. The shop still turns out bed covers, blankets, rugs, shawls, and more in all kinds of colors and patterns.

Major CITIES

LOUISVILLE: Pronounced "LUH-vul" if you want to sound like a local, the biggest city in Kentucky is a fascinating mix of Southern hospitality, Midwestern modesty, and Northern sensibility. In addition to hosting the Kentucky Derby, Louisville is the birthplace of Muhammad Ali and the Louisville Slugger baseball bat.

LEXINGTON: Kentucky's second most populous city is a Southern-style metropolis, surrounded by the horse farms that make Lexington the center of the equine universe.

BOWLING GREEN: A college town that has grown into a city with the third largest population in the state, Bowling Green takes great pride in being the only place in the world where Corvettes are made.

PORTAL 31 UNDERGROUND MINE

KY-160, Lynch; 606/848-1530; https://portal31.org

If you visit Appalachia, you will, at least once, end up behind a coal truck on a road that doesn't have a place to pass. This is coal country, where generations of men have spent their lives toiling in mines. Between 1917 and 1963, more than 120 million tons (108 million metric tons) of bituminous coal were mined from Portal 31, an underground drift mine owned by US Steel. Portal 31 has reopened for tours, offering visitors a fascinating look at life inside a coal mine. Participants on the 35-minute tour board a mine car for a jostling ride into the mine and through its history. Through animatronic displays featuring miners at work, you'll hear about the people who came to Lynch to work in the mines (33 different nationalities!), the process of mining and the safety measures taken, the unionization of the mine, the importance of the mines during World Wars I and II, and the evolution of the technology used in mining. The mine is rather dark and may be a bit scary for young children, but it's a must for all others.

BOWLING GREEN CORVETTE ASSEMBLY PLANT

600 Corvette Dr., Bowling Green; 270/745-8019; www.bowlinggreenassemblyplant.com [URL inactive]

The Bowling Green Corvette Assembly Plant is the one and only place in the world where Corvettes, America's sports car, are produced. The factory tour, which lasts a minimum of one hour and can last as long as two, allows participants to watch multiple steps of production, from the kitting out of the interiors to the final testing process as the cars are driven off the line.

Nearby, the **National Corvette Museum** (350 Corvette Dr., Bowling Green; 270/781-7973; www.corvettemuseum.com [URL inactive]) is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to one specific model of car. Well-designed exhibits place the car into context in American history, discuss its role in performance sports, and celebrate the Corvette lifestyle.



NATIONAL CORVETTE MUSEUM

BLUEGRASS MUSIC

As the birthplace of bluegrass, Kentucky prides itself on its musical heritage and works hard to preserve the old-time music that has inspired generations. From front porches to concert halls, there are many places throughout the state where you can hear music. Here are a few favorites.

- No place has better preserved the tradition of country, bluegrass, and gospel music than **Renfro Valley Entertainment Center** (US 25, Renfro Valley; 800/765-7464; www.renfrovalley.com). Here, the jamming still takes place in a barn, and performers address the audience as if it's made up of old friends.
- The **Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum** (311 W. 2nd St., Owensboro; 270/926-7891; www.bluegrassmuseum.org), in western Kentucky, celebrates the tradition of bluegrass music, which got its start in this region before becoming popular around the globe. Artifacts, such as outfits worn by Bill Monroe, the father of bluegrass, and instruments that belonged to the Blue Grass Boys, trace the history of bluegrass.

- Every Friday night, a handful of bluegrass bands take to the stage at the **Rosine Barn Jamboree** (8205 US 62E, Rosine; 270/274-5552). The feature entertainment starts at 7pm and rolls on into the night. The jamboree is literally held in a weathered old barn, plain except for a painted sign and a bronze plaque honoring Bill Monroe, who made one of his last appearances here.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start out in **Louisville,** where you can take a tour of **Churchill Downs** and visit some of the distilleries in town.

DAY 2 Head about 45 minutes south on I-65 and KY-245 toward **Bardstown,** where you can base yourself in the heart of the official **Bourbon Trail.** You'll have your pick of distilleries to visit.

DAY 3 Make your way east to **Lexington,** an hour east on scenic KY-9002. You're in prime horse country now; catch the races at **Keeneland** if you're lucky enough to be visiting during the spring or fall meets, and pay a visit to some of the area's famous equine residents at the **Kentucky Horse Park.**

DAY 4 You'll find yourself heading into picturesque **Appalachia** on your 45-minute drive south to **Berea** on I-75. Spend the day visiting the town's many **folk art galleries,** and catch a bluegrass show at **Renfro Valley** in the evening.

DAY 5 From Berea, it's over an hour's drive south through forested mountains to **Cumberland Falls State Resort Park.** If the timing isn't right to see the famous "moonbow," no matter; there are plenty of trails around the falls to keep you occupied. After hiking, make the 2.5-hour drive west to **Bowling Green,** where you'll stay the night.

DAY 6 In Bowling Green, start the morning with a tour of the **National Corvette Museum,** pride of Kentucky's third-largest town. Head about 35 minutes north on I-65 to **Mammoth Cave National Park,** where you can spend the afternoon on the cave tour of your choice. You can camp or stay in the hotel here for the night, or head another 1.5 hours north on I-65 back to **Louisville,** completing your tour of Kentucky's highlights.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

LINCOLN HERITAGE SCENIC HIGHWAY

US 31E and US 150

Abraham Lincoln was born in a tiny cabin in the knobs of central Kentucky. This driving tour, which takes you on US 31E and US 150, begins in **Hodgenville,** where you can visit the **Abraham Lincoln Birthplace and Boyhood Home** (www.nps.gov/abli) and the **Lincoln Museum** (www.lincolnmuseum-ky.org). You'll then pass through **Bardstown,** the center of Kentucky's Bourbon Trail. The highway continues to **Springfield,** home of **Lincoln Homestead State Park; Perryville,** site of Kentucky's biggest Civil War battle; and **Danville,** where Kentucky statehood was negotiated.

FALL FOLIAGE

Fall in Kentucky is a sensory experience, marked by crisp and cool mornings, pumpkin-flavored everything, the smell of bonfires, and, perhaps above all else, the colors of the changing leaves. Together, these beautiful trees—the bright reds and oranges of sugar maples; the plum purple of ash; the yellow of poplars, birches, and willows; and the dark red of dogwoods, redwoods, and sassafras—paint the landscape. Although one's mind naturally goes to the mountains when it's leaf-peeping time, every region of the state has wonderful sites for taking in the colors of fall.

- Within Louisville, head to the **Olmsted Parks.** If you're willing to go a bit farther afield, hike through the colorful forests of **Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area.**
- **Bernheim Arboretum** (www.bernheim.org), in Clermont along the Bourbon Trail, is a prime choice for fall beauty, especially if you venture out onto the Canopy Tree Walk.
- For an in-city escape in Lexington, take a stroll through the **University of Kentucky Arboretum,** where color abounds.
- **Land Between the Lakes** is a kaleidoscope of color in fall.

RED RIVER GORGE SCENIC BYWAY

KY-77

For downright beauty, nothing beats the Red River Gorge Scenic Byway (KY-77). This 46-mi (74-km) drive through Appalachia, while short, can easily fill an entire day. You'll pass through the very cool **Nada Tunnel** as you enter **Red River Gorge Geological Area,** and then you'll spend most of your day pulled over at hiking trailheads and viewpoints. Make sure your hiking shoes are in the trunk, because you'll want to visit **Sky Bridge** and

Angel Windows, which are accessible by a short walk. You may also want to paddle Red River or take the sky lift at **Natural Bridge State Resort Park.**

COVERED BRIDGES

Adding to Kentucky's idyllic scenery of fields and barns are 13 covered bridges, 8 of which are concentrated in northern Kentucky, particularly around Fleming County, northwest of Lexington. The majority of these bridges have long since been closed to traffic, but a few let you cross either by car or on foot, and all pose prettily for photos, transporting those who stop and take notice back to a different era. Eight of the region's bridges can be seen in a looping day's drive, in the order below. This entire loop totals 217 mi (349 km), and it will take 5-5.5 hours to drive the whole circuit, not counting time spent at each bridge. It's certainly a full day's trip, but it's a very scenic route and a lovely way to explore the rural areas of this region. Start in Covington and drive east on AA Highway (KY-9) to reach the first bridge.

- **Walcott Covered Bridge:** N 38° 43.992 W 084° 05.868
- **Dover Covered Bridge:** N 38° 45.018 W 083° 52.719
- **Valley Pike Covered Bridge:** N 38° 40.470 W 083° 52.320
- **Cabin Creek Covered Bridge:** N 38° 36.574 W 083° 37.277
- **Goddard White Covered Bridge:** N 38° 21.738 W 083° 36.930
- **Ringo's Mill Covered Bridge:** N 38° 16.110 W 083° 36.624
- **Grange City Covered Bridge:** N 38° 15.294 W 083° 39.192



GRANGE CITY COVERED BRIDGE

- **Johnson Creek Covered Bridge:** N 38° 28.950 W 083° 58.722

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

NATURAL BRIDGE STATE RESORT PARK

2135 Natural Bridge Rd., Slade; 606/663-2214; https://parks.ky.gov

More than 20 mi (32 km) of trails wind through the forested acres of Natural Bridge State Resort Park in eastern Kentucky. The 0.75-mi (1.2-km) **Original Trail** climbs to the top of Natural Bridge, a 65-ft-high (20-m) natural sandstone arch that spans 78 ft (24 m). The arch can also be reached by a sky lift. Multiple other trails, many of them short and family-friendly,

lead to other natural formations, such as Balanced Rock, Battleship Rock, Henson's Arch, and Whittleton Arch.

CUMBERLAND FALLS STATE RESORT PARK

7351 KY-90, Corbin; 606/528-4121; https://parks.ky.gov

Ever seen a moonbow? If not, then you need to get yourself to Cumberland Falls State Resort Park in southern Kentucky during a full moon. On clear full-moon nights and the two nights before and after, the light from the moon creates a rainbow over Cumberland Falls, a 125-ft-wide (38-m) waterfall that drops 60 ft (18 m). If you can't make it for the moonbow, the waterfall is beautiful year-round, arched over by rainbows in the mist on sunny days, framed by colorful trees in the fall, and magical in the snow and ice of winter. Hiking at the park is particularly excellent, with more than 17 mi (27 km) of trails tracing through the surrounding forests and down to the falls.



CUMBERLAND FALLS STATE RESORT PARK

LAKE CUMBERLAND

Lake Cumberland is houseboat heaven. At 101 mi (162 km) long, it is a long, narrow lake with many creeks and coves shooting off in all directions. These coves invite houseboats to tie up and establish camp. People throw out rafts and go for a float or a swim, and then return to the houseboat to take a ride down the slide or jump in the hot tub.

Two state parks and multiple private resorts and marinas line the shores of Lake Cumberland, offering options to rent boats and providing places to sleep on land. The lake has two main activity areas. The **Jamestown** area, which is on the northwest section of the lake, is home to **Cumberland Lake State Resort Park** (5465 State Park Rd., Jamestown; 270/343-3111; https://parks.ky.gov) and many of the most popular marinas. The **Burnside** area, at the far eastern end of the lake and close to the city of Somerset, is where you'll find the quieter **General Burnside State Park** (8801 S. US 27, Burnside; 606/561-4104; https://parks.ky.gov) and a handful of other marinas.

LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

www.lbl.org [URL inactive]

The thousands of acres of land at this national recreation area in western Kentucky welcome hiking, biking, camping, and other outdoor pursuits. Boat ramps are located up and down Land Between the Lakes, providing access to both Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley. You must bring your own boat, as there are no marinas or rental facilities for motorboats in the area. The **Golden Pond Visitors Center** (100 Van Morgan Dr., Golden Pond; 270/924-2000) can provide permits for backcountry camping and arm you with maps, as can welcome stations, which are located at both the north and south ends of the park. There are no gas stations in the recreation area, so you should fill your tank before entering.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Bourbon is perhaps the most iconic taste of Kentucky you can bring home with you.

Grab a fanciful **derby hat** at the gift shops at Keeneland or Churchill Downs. The authentic **folk art** made in the studios of Berea is another one-of-a-kind Kentucky keepsake.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

The Kentucky Derby Festival is Kentucky's most famous event, but there plenty of other festivals to spark a visit.

KENTUCKY BOURBON FESTIVAL

Bardstown; 800/638-4877; www.kybourbonfestival.com; mid-Sept.

Bardstown, the Bourbon Capital of the World, hosts this six-day festival, an absolute must for lovers of America's native spirit. Highlights of the festival include the Great Kentucky Bourbon Tasting and Gala and the Kentucky Bourbon All-Star Sampler. Each of these events allows participants to meet with master distillers and taste the best bourbons being made.

BLUEGRASS FESTIVALS

Kentucky has more than its share of bluegrass festivals across the state, including the **Festival of the Bluegrass** (Lexington; www.festivalofthebluegrass.com; early June) and **Vine Grove Bluegrass Music Festival** (Vine Grove; 270/877-5636; www.vinegrovebluegrass.com; Sept.).

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

College basketball's March Madness can be bigger than Christmas here, where the passion ignited by Kentucky's two teams is palpable. Lexington's **University of Kentucky Wildcats** men's basketball team (www.ukathletics.com [URL inactive]), which has won multiple national titles, plays inside **Rupp Arena** (430 W. Vine St., Lexington; www.rupparena.com). In mid-October, **Midnight Madness,** the first day that the NCAA allows formal basketball practice to be held, marks the beginning of what fans consider to be the best time of the year.

The **University of Louisville Cardinals** (502/852-5732; www.uoflsports.com [URL inactive]) are Louisville's men's basketball team, playing their home games at the 22,000-seat **KFC Yum! Center** (S. 2nd St. and W. Main St.). The basketball rivalry with the cross-state Kentucky Wildcats is rabid.

BEST FOOD

FRIED CHICKEN AND SOUTHERN HOME COOKING

Southern home cooking is probably the most popular style of food in the state. KFC doesn't have a stranglehold on fried chicken around here. It's found on many menus, along with country ham, fried catfish, pork chops, fried green tomatoes, okra, soup beans, and cornbread. Try it at these favorites:



FRIED CHICKEN

- **Kurtz Restaurant:** 418 E. Stephen Foster Ave., Bardstown; 502/348-8964; www.kurtzrestaurant.com
- **Beaumont Inn Dining Room:** 638 Beaumont Inn Dr., Harrodsburg; 859/734-3381; www.beaumontinn.com

BARBECUE

Barbecue is another Kentucky specialty, with Owensboro and western Kentucky being the focal point and mutton being the meat of choice. Burgoo, a barbecue-style stew of meats and vegetables, is a uniquely Kentucky contribution to barbecue.

- **Moonlite Bar-B-Q:** 2840 W. Parrish Ave., Owensboro; 270/684-8143; www.moonlite.com
- **Old Hickory Bar-B-Q:** 338 Washington Ave., Owensboro; 270/926-9000; www.oldhickorybar-b-q.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport:** CVG; 3087 Terminal Dr., Hebron; www.cvgairport.com
- **Louisville International Airport:** SDF; 600 Terminal Dr., Louisville; www.flylouisville.com
- **Blue Grass Airport:** LEX; 4000 Terminal Dr., Lexington; www.bluegrassairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Kentucky Department of Tourism:** 800/225-8747; www.kentuckytourism.com
- **Kentucky State Parks:** https://parks.ky.gov

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Courier-Journal:*** Louisville; www.courierjournal.com
- ***Lexington Herald-Leader*:** www.kentucky.com
- ***Kentucky Monthly:*** www.kentuckymonthly.com
- ***Louisville Magazine:*** www.loumag.com [URL inactive]

TENNESSEE

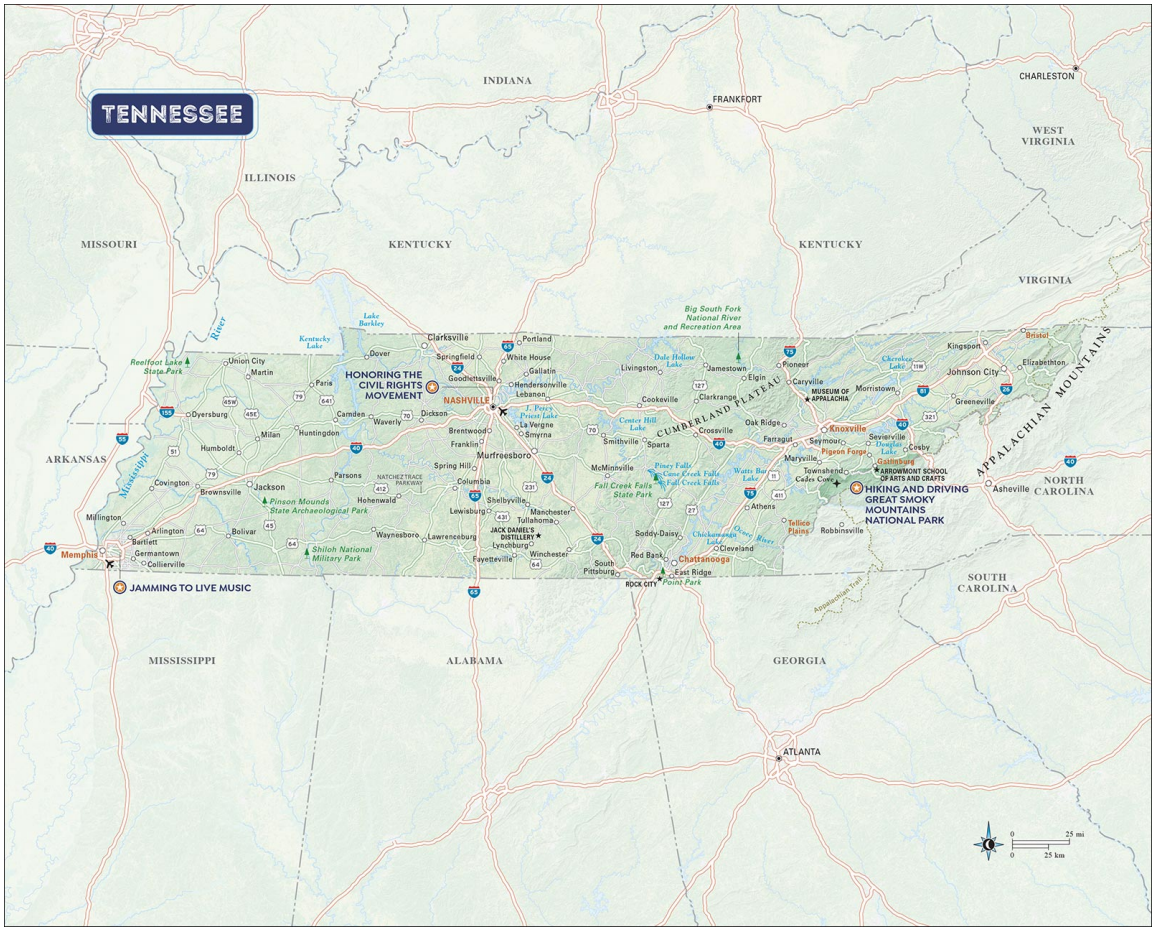
Tennessee offers a suggestion for every season, every mood, and every personality. It’s the cradle of country music and the birthplace of the blues. On the ancestral lands of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee, Seneca, Shawnee, and Yuchi lands, the state has produced Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, and history-making statesmen. Creativity of all kinds fosters an entrepreneurial energy that results in funky, offbeat music clubs, quirky boutiques, and one-of-a-kind roadside eateries. Introduce yourself to bluegrass and the Nashville Sound, to Appalachian crafts and Black heritage quilts, to meat-and-three, hot chicken, and barbecue. You will soon become well acquainted with (and enamored of) them all. No matter what brings you here, Southern hospitality ensures that you’ll feel at home minutes after your arrival.

AREA: 42,144 sq mi / 109,152 sq km (36th)

POPULATION: 7,227,750 (15th)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 1, 1796 (16th)

STATE CAPITAL: Nashville


TENNESSEE
INDIANA
FRANKFORT
CHARLESTON
WEST VIRGINIA
ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
KENTUCKY
VIRGINIA
ARKANSAS
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
ATLANTA
HONORING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
NASHVILLE
JAMMING TO LIVE MUSIC
Memphis
HIKING AND DRIVING GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK
Knoxville
Chattanooga
CUMBERLAND PLATEAU
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
Clarksville
Springfield
White House
Portland
Gallatin
Goodlettsville
Hendersonville
Lebanon
Dover
Union City
Martin
Paris
Dyersburg
Camden
Waverly
Dickson
Brentwood
Franklin
La Vergne
Smyrna
Murfreesboro
Spring Hill
Columbia
Shelbyville
Lewisburg
Manchester
Tullahoma
Winchester
Fayetteville
Lynchburg
Humboldt
Milan
Huntingdon
Jackson
Brownsville
Covington
Parsons
Hohenwald
Millington
Arlington
Bartlett
Germantown
Collierville
Bolivar
Waynesboro
Lawrenceburg
Pinson Mounds State Archaeological Park
Shiloh National Military Park
Reelfoot Lake State Park
Kentucky Lake
Lake Barkley
Mississippi River
Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area
Dale Hollow Lake
Center Hill Lake
J. Percy Priest Lake
Livingston
Jamestown
Elgin
Pioneer
Caryville
Cookeville
Clarkrange
Crossville
Oak Ridge
Ferragut
Smithville
Sparta
McMinnville
Fall Creek Falls State Park
Piney Falls
Cane Creek Falls
Watts Bar Lake
Athens
Tellico Plains
Robbinsville
Cleveland
Red Bank
Soddy-Daisy
Chickamauga Lake
Ocoee River
East Ridge
Point Park
South Pittsburg
Lookout Mountain
Appalachian Trail
Cherokee Lake
Morristown
Greeneville
Kingsport
Johnson City
Elizabethton
Bristol
Sevierville
Seymour
Maryville
Townsend
Cades Cove
Pigeon Forge
Gatlinburg
Douglas Lake
Cosby
Asheville
MUSEUM OF APPALACHIA
ARROWMONT SCHOOL OF ARTS AND CRAFTS
JACK DANIEL'S DISTILLERY
NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

From tip to tip, the Volunteer State stretches 432 mi (695 km). That would be eight hours on the interstate highway! Get off the interstate and explore the towns and roadside stands in between the better-known cities. **Memphis** is an urban center with fine dining, riverside parks, and a thriving visual arts scene. **Nashville** is the epicenter of country music. It is the place where thousands of musicians and songwriters come to make it, and the city's nightlife is all the richer for it. One of Tennessee's most picturesque wilderness areas is the **Great Smoky Mountains.** It is the vistas that first draw you in: the soft-edged peaks enveloped by wispy white "smoke," touched by brilliant red and orange at sunset, and crowned by crisp white snow in winter.

WHEN TO GO

Summer can be peak travel season for Tennessee. This is the season of hot weather and crowds at many popular sites, and it's also when some of the biggest music festivals and events are going on. **Spring** and **fall** are the best times to visit Tennessee. During spring, the weather is mild, flora is in bloom, and you can enjoy springtime festivals. (Mar.-May is tornado season, however, so it's important to pay attention to weather alerts.) During the fall, the trees change color and temperatures drop. The fall is a busy time in the Smokies, however, as "leaf peepers" come to see the foliage. Visitors in **winter** may encounter cold weather and snow.

TOP 3

1 HIKING AND DRIVING GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Gatlinburg; 865/436-1200; www.nps.gov/grsm

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the single most popular national park in the United States, and for good reason. The park's iconic vistas of blue-green mountains topped by the namesake smoky

mists are awesome, yet somehow comforting. Most visitors to the Smokies enter from Gatlinburg and make a beeline down Newfound Gap Road. **Newfound Gap Road** travels 33 mi (53 km) from Sugarlands Visitor Center to Oconaluftee in North Carolina, climbing some 3,000 ft (900 m) through ecosystems including cove hardwood, pine-oak, and northern hardwood forests. **Cades Cove** is one of the most popular sites in the national park and a favorite place for exploring by car. Traffic along the one-way 11-mi (18-km) loop road proceeds slowly, and there are frequent opportunities to stop and explore on foot. Set out early in the day to have it more to yourself.



CADES COVE

In total the Smokies have a whopping nearly 850 mi (1,370 km) of hiking trails! Try **Grotto Falls** (2.6 mi/4.2 km round-trip; 2-3 hours; moderate), a popular and relatively easy hike. After reaching the falls via the Trillium Gap Trail, you'll be able to walk behind them in the namesake grotto.

Autumn is the park's greatest season. The fall foliage draws thousands of people. Check the weather forecast before you pack.

Temperatures in the park, and particularly at the high elevations, can be as much as 30°F (17°C) colder than those in the surrounding area.

2 HONORING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Tennessee is home to 15 stops—and counting—along the **US Civil Rights Trail** (https://civilrightstrail.com), the national trail that helps travelers better understand the history of the Civil Rights Movement.

At the top of your list should be a visit to the **National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel** (450 Mulberry St., Memphis; 901/521-9699; www.civilrightsmuseum.org). Built on the Lorraine Motel site, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, the museum makes a thorough examination of the US Civil Rights Movement, from enslavement to the present day. The main branch of the **Nashville Public Library** (615 Church St.; 615/862-5800; https://library.nashville.org) houses the **Civil Rights Room** as well as a powerful exhibit on the Civil Rights Movement and the events that took place in Nashville in the 1950s and 1960s.



NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM AT THE LORRAINE MOTEL

3 JAMMING TO LIVE MUSIC IN MEMPHIS AND NASHVILLE

Tennessee may be more famous for its music than for anything else. Blues music was born on Beale Street; the Grand Ole Opry popularized old-time mountain music; and the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Nashville introduced Black spirituals to the world.

Delve into the history and character of Memphis music on **Beale Street,** home of the blues. From the 1880s until the 1960s, Beale Street was the epicenter of Black life for the entire Mid-South region. Today, the street is a laid-back place to stroll, buy souvenirs, and eat. At night, Beale Street is a strip of nightclubs and restaurants, and the best place in the state to catch live blues seven nights a week. Standouts include **B. B. King's Blues Club** (143 Beale St., Memphis; 901/524-5464; www.bbkings.com) and **Blues City Café** (138 Beale St., Memphis; 901/526-3637; www.bluescitycafe.com).



BLUES CITY CAFÉ

Nashville is the city where performers and songwriters come to make it in the music business. Start in Music Valley at the **Opry** (600 Opry Mills Dr., Nashville; 615/871-6779; www.opry.com), with performances of its weekly radio country music showcase at least twice a week. The historic **Ryman Auditorium** (116 Rep. John Lewis Way N., Nashville; 615/889-3060; https://ryman.com) remains one of the best places in the United States to hear live music. Don't miss the honky-tonks that line **Broadway;** try **The Bluebird Café** (4104 Hillsboro Pk., Nashville; 615/383-1461; https://bluebirdcafe.com) or **The Station Inn** (402 12th Ave. S., Nashville; 615/255-3307; www.stationinn.com).

HIGHLIGHTS

GRACELAND

3717 Elvis Presley Blvd., Memphis; 901/332-3322; www.graceland.com

The King's most famous home, Graceland is a massive complex housing a career museum, automobile collection, and several other exhibits featuring everything from fashion to Elvis's army gear. Choose one of the tours that include the mansion; that's the part of the complex that features information and artifacts you can't find anywhere else. It's a quick drive south from downtown on Elvis Presley Boulevard.



GRACELAND

SHILOH NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

1055 Pittsburg Landing Rd., Shiloh; 731/689-5696; www.nps.gov/shil

Shiloh today is a landscape of alternating open fields and wooded forest, populated by hundreds of monuments to Civil War soldiers who fought and died at Shiloh on April 6-7, 1862.

Major CITIES

NASHVILLE: Museums, historic sites, and the unique Tennessee State Capitol recall the city's history, while expansive parks invite recreation in this leafy city. Historic Black colleges, fine arts, and excellent dining connect the city to its roots while also nodding to its future.

MEMPHIS: Memphis may owe its physical existence to the mighty Mississippi, but it is music that gives this city its soul. The blues were born in Memphis, and they still call Memphis home in nightclubs on Beale Street and juke joints around the city.

KNOXVILLE: Like better-known Memphis and Nashville, Knoxville is emerging as a center for live music and the arts.

Sights within the park include the peach orchard, now being regrown; the "bloody pond," where injured men crawled for water and, in some cases, to die; and the Hornet's Nest, the site of some of the most furious fighting. The **Shiloh National Cemetery** is next to the visitor center. Two-thirds of the 3,584 bodies interred here are unidentified. Most are Union soldiers killed at Shiloh, but there are others from nearby battles, the Spanish-American War, both world wars, and the Revolutionary War. The Confederate dead were buried in five trenches around the battlefield and remain there today.

Nearly 800 years before the Civil War, the riverbank near present-day Shiloh was home to people of the mound-building Mississippian culture. The **Shiloh Indian Mounds** that they left behind sit along the west bluff of the riverbank and are one of the largest mound groups in the country.

JACK DANIEL DISTILLERY

133 Lynchburg Hwy. (TN-55), Lynchburg; 931/759-6457; www.jackdaniels.com

Thousands of whiskey drinkers make the pilgrimage every year to Jack Daniel Distillery to see how Jack Daniel's is made. And what they find is that, aside from the use of electricity, computers, and the sheer scale of the operation, things have not changed too much since 1866, when Jack Daniel had the foresight to register his distillery with the federal government, making this the oldest registered distillery in the United States. Book tours online in advance to ensure you have a space.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME

700 Hall of Fame Dr., Knoxville; 865/633-9000; www.wbhof.com

Spend the day at the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville. Here you'll learn about the legacies of female players and coaches who shaped the way the game is played today. You can even test out different uniforms, balls, and baskets from different decades to get a feel for how the sport has evolved. Don't miss the museum's hall of fame and the 30-ft-tall (9-m) basketball, the world's largest, on the roof.

APPALACHIAN CULTURE

Museum of Appalachia (2819 Andersonville Hwy., Clinton; 865/494-7680; www.museumofappalachia.org) is one of a kind. Its 65 ac (26 ha) contain more of the history of this region than any other place in Tennessee. The collection includes more than 250,000 artifacts, and more than 100,000 people visit annually. The museum started as a collection from one man's garage.

Near Gatlinburg, Arrowmont is known for its contemporary arts-and-crafts education. Adults from around the country come to **Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts** (556 Parkway; 865/436-5860; www.arrowmont.org) for residential programs in clay, paper, metals, fiber, glass, enamels, weaving, and more. If you're short on time, make a visit to **Arrowmont Galleries.**

DOLLYWOOD

2700 Dollywood Parks Blvd., Pigeon Forge; 800/365-5996; www.dollywood.com

Owned and operated by Sevier County native Dolly Parton, the Dollywood theme park combines excellent rides with family-friendly entertainment. Mountain craft demonstrations keep Dolly's childhood alive. The park's wooden roller coaster, the Thunderhead, is thrilling and fun, and the Blazing Fury takes you through an 1880s frontier town engulfed in flames. If roller coasters aren't your thing, the county fair has Ferris wheels and

other classic amusements. Or, take the Dollywood Express on a 5-mi (8-km) railroad journey through the foothills of the Smokies.

Dollywood also offers live music on various stages, showcasing bluegrass, country, gospel, and oldies. Most shows are free with your admission to Dollywood. As if this weren't enough, Dollywood puts on several major events each year, when special entertainment is offered.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Memphis,** touring the **National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel,** enjoying great **barbecue,** and, at night, visiting the **blues joints** lining **Beale Street.**

DAY 2 Wake up early today to make two very different kinds of pilgrimages: First, drive 10 minutes south on I-69 to **Graceland,** former home of the King, Elvis Presley. From here, it's a two-hour drive east on US 72 and TN-57 to **Shiloh National Military Park,** site of one of the most remembered battles of the Civil War.

DAY 3 Continue east on US 64 toward **Chattanooga,** a four-hour drive, with one important stop midway at **Jack Daniel's Distillery.** In Chattanooga, head up to **Lookout Mountain** in time for sunset.

DAY 4 Today make a beeline to **Smoky Mountains National Park.** It's a three-hour drive north via I-75 to **Cades Cove,** which you should visit first to beat the crowds, followed by a nearby **hike.** Spend the night in **Knoxville,** 1.5 hours away on East Lamar Alexander Parkway.

DAY 5 For the last big stop of the trip, head to **Nashville,** three hours west on I-40. But first, make a worthy stop 20 minutes north of Knoxville at the **Museum of Appalachia.** When you arrive in Music City, be sure to spend an hour or two at the **Civil Rights Room at**

the Nashville Public Library, followed by a night out on the town at the **honky-tonks** of lower Broadway.

DAY 6 You'll likely wake up late after your night on the town; fuel up with biscuits at **Biscuit Love** or **Loveless Café,** followed by a tour of the **Grand Ole Opry.** It's a three-hour drive to get back to Memphis.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

There's a scenic drive for each season in Tennessee; fuel up the car and take the winding road on some of the best routes.

NATCHEZ TRACE: TENNESSEE

The Natchez Trace Parkway is a historic two-lane, 444-mi (715-km) blacktop scenic drive that runs from Nashville and journeys south through the Tennessee and Mississippi countryside, eventually terminating in Natchez, Mississippi (or vice versa). The first people to travel what is now considered the Natchez Trace were probably Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez people, who made the first footpaths through the region. The parkway, which is a designated bike route, is closed to commercial traffic, and the speed limit is strictly enforced, making it popular for biking as well. Milepost 438, 15 mi (24 km) northeast of Franklin, is one of the first stops along the Natchez Trace—and one of the best. The **Double Arch Bridge** is a feat of engineering and design. Be sure to stop at the historic **Gordon House and Ferry Site** at milepost 407.7.

CHEROHALA SKYWAY

NC-165

Completed in 1996, this two-lane highway passes through the highest peaks of the southern Unaka Mountains. The 43-mi (69-km) road, which begins in Tellico Plains, climbs to more than 5,300 ft (1,600 m) at its highest level and provides stunning scenic views. It follows the Tellico River for several miles at the beginning before starting its serious ascent. The road terminates in Robbinsville, North Carolina; about one-third of the road is in Tennessee. It will take you about 1.5 hours to drive nonstop from one end of the skyway to the other. Although the road is well maintained and easy to drive, plan to take it slow. Sights and stops along the way include **Tellico Ranger Station** (250 Ranger Station Rd., Tellico Plains; 423/253-8400), a source of information about the forest, the area, and the drive. The station is located in a New Deal-era CCC building. **Bald River Falls,** a 90-ft (27-m) waterfall, is off the skyway along Forest Service Road 210.

After you pass the ranger station, the road begins to climb. Overlooks on the Tennessee side include **Turkey Creek, Lake View,** and **Brushy Ridge.** There are picnic tables at Turkey Creek and Brushy Ridge. All overlooks are wheelchair accessible.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

The purple mountain majesties of the Smokies tend to steal the show in Tennessee, but don’t overlook the state’s other great parks, which offer beauty and recreational variety—often without the crowds.

GETTING OUT ON THE WATER

The Volunteer State has some of the best paddling in the country. Here are some of the best places in the state to swim, kayak, boat, raft, and float.

- **Reelfoot Lake State Park:** A few hours north of Memphis, Reelfoot Lake is a flooded forest, eerie looking and peaceful. With some 15,000 ac (6,070 ha) of water, the lake is a dream for boaters and anglers.
- **Ocoee River:** The 4 mi (6.4 km) between the Ocoee 2 diversion dam and the Ocoee 2 powerhouse are where the white-water rafting fun happens between June and September.
- **Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area:** This is a land bejeweled with a wild river—the center for white-water sports, including canoeing, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and rafting.

PINSON MOUNDS STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

460 Ozier Rd., Pinson; 731/988-5614; https://tnstateparks.com [URL inactive]

One of the largest complexes of mounds ever built by Woodland Indians is found 10 mi (16 km) south of Jackson. **Pinson Mounds,** now a state park, is a group of at least 15 mounds believed to have been built beginning around 100 CE. Joel Pinson came upon the mounds in 1820 when he was part of a surveying team that was mapping new territory bought from the Chickasaw in 1818. Early archaeological digs were carried out in the late 1800s, but it was not until 1961 that the first major investigation of the site was completed. Despite continuing archaeological study on the site, many mysteries remain. Among them is the significance of the design and

arrangement of the mounds and why the mound builders abandoned the site around 500 CE. Some scientists believe that the mounds were arranged as markers for the summer and winter solstices.

Visitors to Pinson Mounds begin within a mound replica, which houses a museum and bookstore. The mounds themselves are spread out along 6 mi (10 km) of hiking trails that meander through the archaeological park. The views at sunset are spectacular.

FALL CREEK FALLS STATE PARK

2009 Village Camp Rd., Spencer; 423/881-5298; https://tnstateparks.com [URL inactive]

Tennessee's largest and most-visited state park, Fall Creek Falls State Park is a prime area for outdoor recreation on the Cumberland Plateau. The park derives its name from its largest waterfall and chief attraction, but there are three other falls within the park. In addition, Fall Creek Lake offers fishing and boating, and the Cane Creek Gorge offers dramatic vistas and bluffs. Start at the **Fall Creek Falls overlook** and then drive to the nature center, where you can see two more waterfalls, **Cane Creek Falls** and **Cane Creek Cascade,** and walk across a swinging bridge. At 256 ft (78 m), Fall Creek Falls is one of the tallest waterfalls east of the Rocky Mountains.

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN

Lookout Mountain is part of the **Cumberland Plateau.** The mountain ridge extends 75 mi (121 km) through Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, but the northernmost tip, which overlooks Chattanooga, is its most famous part. No journey to Chattanooga is complete without taking a drive up the mountain to enjoy exceptional views and some of the most iconic of Tennessee attractions. **Point Park** (110 Point Park Rd., Lookout Mountain; 423/821-7786; www.nps.gov/chch) offers the best views from Lookout Mountain. One of the mountain's more famous attractions, which actually lies in Georgia, may well be **Rock City** (1400 Patten Rd., Lookout Mountain, GA; 800/854-0675; www.seerockcity.com). A remarkable yet hokey rock garden offers exceptional views, including one that encompasses seven states. Also in the area, **Ruby Falls** (1720 S. Scenic Hwy.; 423/821-2544;

www.rubyfalls.com) is an underground waterfall deep within Lookout Mountain.

SYNCHRONOUS FIREFLIES IN THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

One of the Great Smoky Mountains' most amazing gifts is the annual presence of synchronous fireflies. These insects are one of only a few species in the United States that coordinate the flashing of their greenish-yellow light together. This natural light show takes place each **June,** and because it is so popular, the park opens a **lottery** to get one of the coveted spots to see them. Visit the park website (www.nps.gov/grsm) each April to try to get one. If you're lucky enough to get a spot, you'll be able to take a shuttle on a predetermined evening into the Elkmont area to watch the show. Bring a flashlight with a red light (which causes minimal disturbance to the fireflies), a blanket or a chair, and your patience. You'll do a lot of waiting as the sun sets. It's best to enjoy the moment and not try to take photos.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

BONNAROO MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

1560 New Bushy Branch Rd., Manchester; www.bonnaroo.com; June

Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival started out in 2002 as a jam band music festival, but this summertime mega event has become a destination for all types of music fans. Bonnaroo takes place over four days in June on a rural farm in Manchester. Around 80,000 people come each year.

ELVIS WEEK

3717 Elvis Presley Blvd., Memphis; 901/332-3322; www.graceland.com/elvisweek; Aug.

The annual candlelight vigil at Graceland on August 15, the anniversary of Elvis's death, has grown into a whole week of Elvis-centric activities throughout Memphis. More than 30,000 people visit Graceland during Elvis Week, and during the vigil his most adoring fans walk solemnly up the Graceland drive to pay their respects at his grave. Special concerts, tribute shows, and movies are shown during the week as the city celebrates its most famous son even more than usual.

NATIONAL CORNBREAD FESTIVAL

221 S. Cedar Ave., South Pittsburg; www.nationalcornbread.com

If there is one thing Southerners know, it is cornbread. They have strong opinions on what makes for a good cornbread and how to prepare it, and they descend on South Pittsburg at the end of April each year to share these thoughts at the National Cornbread Festival.

TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE NATIONAL CELEBRATION

1110 Evans St., Shelbyville; 931/684-5915; www.twhnc.com; Aug./Sept.

The premier event in Shelbyville is the annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, which takes place in late summer for 11 days, ending on the Saturday before Labor Day. This is the event that determines the best of the high-stepping walking horses, and it is an exciting time to be a horse fan. The national celebration routinely attracts 250,000 people over 11 nights.

BEST FOOD

Food is the way Southerners stay connected to their history, show their love, and spend their free time. You can get a good sense of Tennessee by tasting these staples.

BEST SOUVENIRS

The **folk art** and other **handicrafts** made by Appalachian artisans are some of the most precious objects you can take home with you from Tennessee.

Distinct from Kentucky bourbon, a bottle of **Tennessee whiskey** makes a fun souvenir.

Grab an Elvis figurine or a record from the band you just saw at the Ryman, or go whole-hog and invest in cowboy boots from **Robert's Western World** (416B Broadway, Nashville; 615/244-9552; https://robertswesternworld.com).

BARBECUE

Tangy, juicy, and just a little sweet, Memphis barbecue at places like the **Rendezvous** (52 S. 2nd St., Memphis; 901/523-2746; www.hogsfly.com) is the stuff of west Tennessee dreams. On the other side of the state try **Ridgewood Barbecue** (900 Elizabethton Hwy., Old 19E, Bluff City; 423/538-7543) in Bluff City; there's no pork shoulder or brisket here—it's all about the ham.

HOT CHICKEN

Deep-fried chicken is a Southern favorite, but hot chicken, served pan-fried and spicy, is the Nashville way. At **Prince's Hot Chicken Shack** (5814 Nolensville Pike., Nashville; www.princeshotchicken.com), your eyes will water because the pan-fried chicken is so spicy, but also because it is so good.

BISCUITS

Made with baking soda or baking powder instead of yeast, the biscuit is a Southern staple that has stood the test of time. **Biscuit Love** (316 11th Ave. S., Nashville; 615/490-9584; https://biscuitlove.com) and **Loveless Café** (8400 TN-100, Nashville; 615/646-9700; www.lovelesscafe.com) in Nashville serve some of the state's best-known biscuits, and **J.C. Holdway** (501 Union Ave., Knoxville; 865/312-9050; www.jcholdway.com) serves biscuits with pork belly in a James Beard Award-winning setting.

MEAT-AND-THREES

At its most basic, a meat-and-three is a cafeteria-style restaurant where you choose one meat and three "vegetables" (mac and cheese can be a vegetable here). More so, the meat-and-three is an affordable tradition, and one of the places you're likely to see folks from all walks of life eating together.

The menu at **Big Al's Deli** (1828 4th Ave. N., Nashville; 615/594-5974; www.bigalsdeliandcatering.com) changes daily. Founded in 1918, **Zarzour's Café** (1627 Rossville Ave., Chattanooga; 423/266-0424) shows how immigrants to Tennessee adapted Southern tastes with their own experiences. You'll see everyone who is anyone in Music City—doctors, chefs, travelers, students—in line at the time-loved cafeteria **Swett's** (2725 Clifton Ave., Nashville; 615/329-4418).

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Nashville International Airport:** BNA; 1 Terminal Dr., Nashville; 615/275-1675; https://flynashville.com
- **Memphis International Airport:** MEM; 2491 Winter Rd., Memphis; 901/922-8000; https://flymemphis.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Tennessee Department of Tourism:** www.tnvacation.com
- **Tennessee State Parks:** https://tnstateparks.com [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Tennessean:*** www.tennessean.com

ARKANSAS

Arkansas is a land of natural beauty. On the lands of the Caddo, Cherokee, Osage, Quapaw, and Tunica tribes, the state is best known by outdoor enthusiasts for the Buffalo National River; by history buffs for Hot Springs National Park; and by foodies for its own unique style of barbecue. Notable Arkansans include Johnny Cash, whose boyhood home is open to visitors in Historic Dyess Colony, and Bill Clinton, the 42nd president, whose legacy is preserved in the presidential library in Little Rock. In the densely forested Ozarks, folk music continues its long tradition in charming towns like Mountain View, the Folk Music Capital of the World.

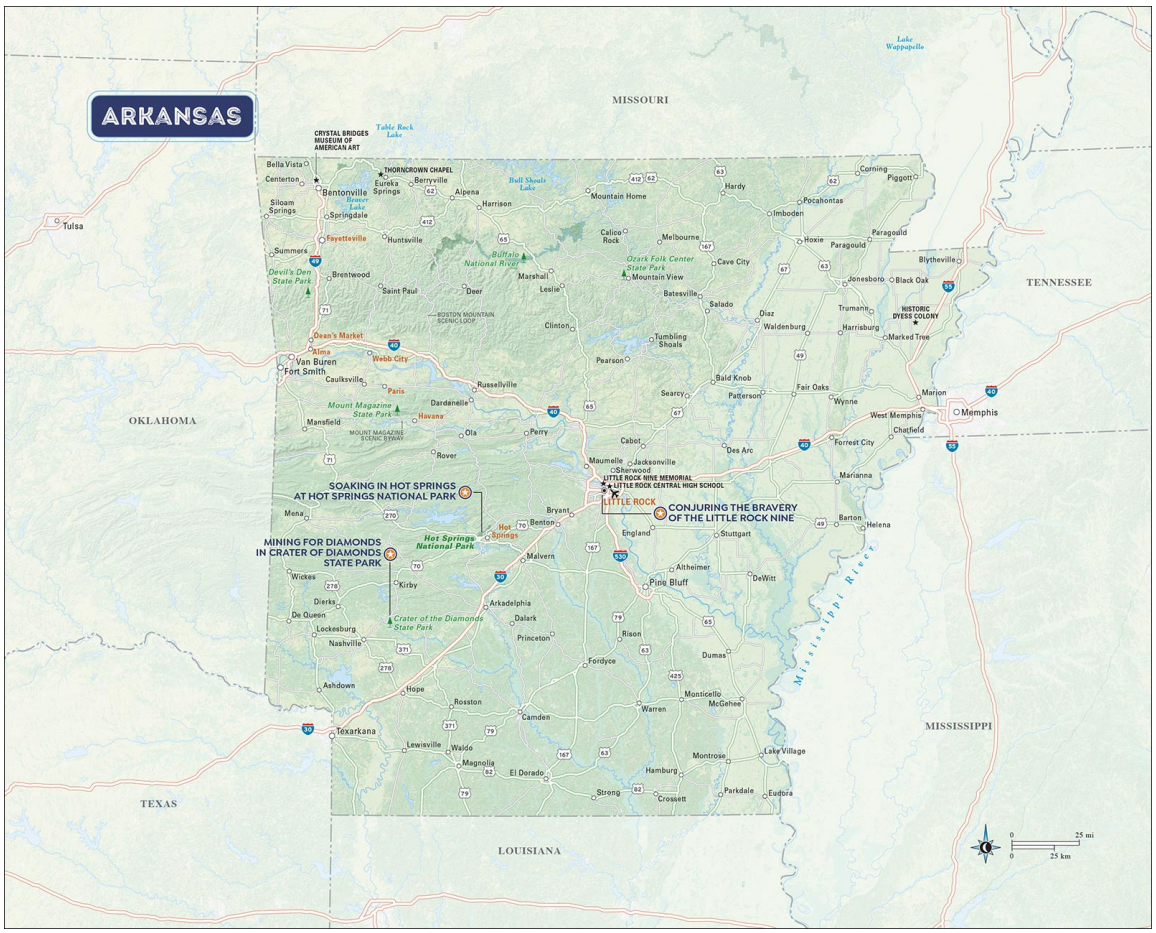
The Natural State offers year-round recreation, from hiking and rock climbing to paddling and fishing. Come for the outdoors; stay for the state's rich cultural offerings and unique local flavors.

AREA: 53,179 sq mi / 137,732 sq km (29th)

POPULATION: 3,088,354 (33rd)

STATEHOOD DATE: June 15, 1836 (25th)

STATE CAPITAL: Little Rock


ARKANSAS
MISSOURI
TENNESSEE
MISSISSIPPI
LOUISIANA
TEXAS
OKLAHOMA
Tulsa
Lake Wappapello
Table Rock Lake
Bull Shoals Lake
Beaver Lake
Buffalo National River
Ozark Folk Center State Park
Devil's Den State Park
Mount Magazine State Park
Hot Springs National Park
Crater of the Diamonds State Park
Mississippi River
CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
THORNCROWN CHAPEL
BOSTON MOUNTAIN SCENIC LOOP
MOUNT MAGAZINE SCENIC BYWAY
HISTORIC DYESS COLONY
LITTLE ROCK NINE MEMORIAL
LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
SOAKING IN HOT SPRINGS AT HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK
CONJURING THE BRAVERY OF THE LITTLE ROCK NINE
MINING FOR DIAMONDS IN CRATER OF DIAMONDS STATE PARK
Bella Vista
Centerton
Bentonville
Eureka Springs
Berryville
Alpena
Harrison
Siloam Springs
Springdale
Fayetteville
Huntsville
Summers
Brentwood
Saint Paul
Deer
Marshall
Leslie
Clinton
Dean's Market
Alma
Van Buren
Fort Smith
Webb City
Caulksville
Paris
Dardanelle
Russellville
Mansfield
Havana
Ola
Perry
Rover
Mena
Hot Springs
Bryant
Benton
Malvern
Wickes
Kirby
Pine Bluff
Altheimer
DeWitt
Dierks
De Queen
Arkadelphia
Dalark
Princeton
Lockesburg
Nashville
Rison
Dumas
Fordyce
Ashdown
Hope
Rosston
Camden
Monticello
McGehee
Warren
Texarkana
Lewisville
Waldo
Magnolia
El Dorado
Hamburg
Montrose
Lake Village
Strong
Crossett
Parkdale
Eudora
Mountain Home
Calico Rock
Melbourne
Cave City
Mountain View
Batesville
Salado
Calico Rock
Hardy
Pocahontas
Imboden
Hoxie
Paragould
Corning
Piggott
Blytheville
Jonesboro
Black Oak
Trumann
Harrisburg
Marked Tree
Diaz
Waldenburg
Tumbling Shoals
Pearson
Bald Knob
Searcy
Patterson
Fair Oaks
Wynne
Marion
West Memphis
Memphis
Chatfield
Forrest City
Des Arc
Cabot
Maumelle
Jacksonville
Sherwood
LITTLE ROCK
Marianna
Barton
Helena
England
Stuttgart
Altheimer
DeWitt
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Located in the center of the state, **Little Rock** is invitingly walkable and includes many opportunities to interface with the state's civil rights story. To the west, Arkansas's Ouachita Mountains are home to the 5,500-ac (2,225-ha) **Hot Springs National Park,** where sulfur-free thermal water pours from geothermal springs. Farther southwest, **Crater of the Diamonds State Park** is one of the only places in the world where the public can search for real diamonds in the very crater where they were made.

WHEN TO GO

With its humid subtropical climate, the weather in Arkansas is typically mild compared to the rest of the region. **Spring** and **fall** are pleasant times to visit, while conditions in **summer** are hot and humid. **Winter** can see below-freezing temperatures. Throughout the year, be prepared for sudden changes in weather; thunderstorms and tornados are typical following extreme weather events occurring to the south in the Gulf States.

TOP 3

1 CONJURING THE BRAVERY OF THE LITTLE ROCK NINE AT LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

2120 W. Daisy L. Gatson Bates Dr., Little Rock; 501/516-5212; www.nps.gov/chsc

In Little Rock, the fall of 1957 was tremendously pivotal, with dramatic events unfolding on a near daily basis in the month of September as nine tenacious students tried repeatedly to integrate all-white Little Rock Central High School and were blocked, repeatedly, by the segregationist governor. With the help of federal troops, the students at last made it through the school doors.



LITTLE ROCK CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

The high school that was famously integrated by the Little Rock Nine in 1957 is still a functioning high school today, but it also works overtime as part of a National Historic Site that includes a combination museum/visitor center (the next block over from the high school) and the Magnolia Mobil Gas Station (across the street from Central), where the national press called in reports about the integration crisis in 1957. The site is also an official part of the US Civil Rights Trail.

Walking tours of the site (1-2 hours; free), led by knowledgeable National Park Service rangers, will engage your senses as you follow the footsteps of the Little Rock Nine students.

2 SOAKING IN HOT SPRINGS AT HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

501/620-6715; www.nps.gov/hosp

About 700,000 gallons (2.6 million liters) of thermal water is collected per day on Hot Springs Mountain by the National Park Service. Because Hot Springs Mountain has no volcanic component,

the water from the geothermal springs has no sulfur, and therefore no taste and no smell. This is great drinking water—whether you believe it has therapeutic powers or not. Your first order of business when you get to the park is to head to one of the taps. There are several on Central Avenue, Whittington Avenue, and Fountain Street. Hydrated, use your muscles on a short hike. Try the **Hot Springs Mountain Trail**—a 1.7-mi (2.7-km) loop that winds its way by the observation tower—or **Whittington Trail**—a 1.2-mi (1.9-km), fully accessible flat trail. Head to Bathhouse Row, where you can try either **Buckstaff** (www.buckstaffbaths.com) or **Quapaw** (https://quapawbaths.com), the two historic bathhouses still open for soaking in these waters. Stop in the **Fordyce Bathhouse Row Visitor Center,** an old bathhouse turned into a museum with all the historical artifacts you can imagine. The **Superior Bathhouse Brewery** (329 Central Ave.; 501/624-2337; www.superiorbathhouse.com) uses the thermal waters in its beers. Located inside one of the shuttered bathhouses, Superior is also the first craft brewery in a national park.



QUAPAW BATHS & SPA

3 MINING FOR DIAMONDS IN CRATER OF DIAMONDS STATE PARK

209 State Park Rd., Murfreesboro; 870/285-3113; www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/crater-diamonds-state-park

Get ready to get your hands dirty at the Crater of Diamonds State Park, the only diamond-producing mine in the country. Here, you can bring your own shovel (or rent equipment from the park) and spend the day searching for gems in the park's 37.5 ac (15 ha) of volcanic soil. If you're lucky, you'll find a diamond—these come in white, brown, and yellow varieties. You might find other stones like agate, amethyst, or jasper. Since its founding as a state park in 1972, over 75,000 diamonds have been found. In the park, "finders, keepers" is the rule, so you get to take home any treasures you find.



SEARCHING FOR GEMSTONES AT CRATER OF DIAMONDS STATE PARK

HIGHLIGHTS

WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

1200 President Clinton Ave., Little Rock; 501/370-8000; www.clintonlibrary.gov

Arkansas is one of just a handful of states with a presidential library, and this one features native Bill Clinton, who lived in Little Rock for 16 years while he was governor and attorney general of the state. Housed in a modernist, LEED-certified building, the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum includes exhibits, artifacts, and archives from Clinton's terms as president. Exhibits include full-scale replicas of President Clinton's Oval Office and Cabinet Room and an oversize timeline of the Clinton administration. Oh, and Bill and First Lady Hillary have a private residence here, but nope—you can't go in there.



WILLIAM J. CLINTON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Elected president in 1992, Clinton spoke on a frequency understood by Southern African Americans based on years of living, liaising, and governing here. Toni Morrison once called him "our first Black president," in a nod to the scrutiny under which he often found himself. (In 2020, he brought it on himself with a critique of Stokely Carmichael and the Black Power movement at John Lewis's funeral.)

On the second floor of the museum, African Americans can find their places in this presidential narrative. Here, a permanent exhibit on the Little Rock Nine includes a display of their Congressional Gold Medals awarded by Clinton in 1999 during a special White House ceremony. This medal is considered the highest civilian honor given by Congress: George Washington was the first recipient. The Little Rock Nine donated theirs to the library. Video segments include a September 24, 1957, TV address by President Eisenhower, and footage of the ceremony where the Little Rock Nine received their medals decades later.

Major CITIES

LITTLE ROCK: The state capital, Little Rock played a key role in the fight for civil rights. Today, the city is known for its cuisine, public art, and craft breweries. Little Rock is also known as the city where cheese dip was invented in 1935 and where the World Cheese Dip Festival is held annually.

FAYETTEVILLE: The second most populous city in the state, Fayetteville is rated one of the best places to live in the United States. Home to the University of Arkansas, this city in the northwest of the state is the place to be for first-class dining and entertainment.

This is a stop on the official US Civil Rights Trail.

ESSE PURSE MUSEUM

1510 Main St., Little Rock; 501/916-9022; www.essepursemuseum.com

This museum dedicated to purses is one of only two in the world. Through its permanent collection and temporary exhibits, you'll learn about the history of the purse as a functional object and its role in fashion and identity. You can even treat yourself to a handmade souvenir at the museum's shop, which specializes in, yes, purses.

THORNCROWN CHAPEL

12968 US 62 W., Eureka Springs; 479/346-0245; https://thorncrown.com

This chapel in the woods was constructed in 1980 by architect E. Fay Jones, an apprentice of Frank Lloyd Wright. The award-winning structure is 48 ft (15 m) tall with 425 windows and over 6,000 sq ft (557 sq m) of glass. Millions of visitors have come to marvel at the chapel—it's also a popular wedding venue. If the engineering of the chapel isn't impressive enough, the calming verdant area around the chapel is reason to visit.

CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

600 Museum Way, Bentonville; 479/418-5700; https://crystalbridges.org

At the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, you'll enjoy centuries of art and culture from Indigenous traditions to modern installations. Be sure to make time to explore the museum's grounds, 134 ac (54 ha) of beautiful Ozark forest. Several short, easy trails will lead you through sculpture gardens, to a natural spring, and into native plant gardens. You can also visit a grotto on the grounds showcasing some of the world's clearest quartz crystals.

HISTORIC DYESS COLONY AND JOHNNY CASH BOYHOOD HOME

110 Center Dr., Dyess; 870/764-2274; https://dyesscash.astate.edu [URL inactive]

Created in 1934 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the Historic Dyess Colony was a community built to encourage local economic recovery from the Great Depression. Families moved to Dyess for a chance

at a better life, working the land, growing soybeans and cotton, and living in a community with a movie theater, library, store, and newspaper. Johnny Cash lived here from the age of three until he graduated from high school. As he became musical royalty, he remembered his hardscrabble roots in Dyess, and often sang about and spoke up for those living in poverty.



JOHNNY CASH BOYHOOD HOME

The **boyhood home** of the country music star has been restored to the 1930s and 1940s period, with input from Cash's siblings. Inside the small home, you can see how the Cash family lived in close quarters. Artifacts include a piano adorned with sheet music and family photos, a pantry filled with canned goods, and period furniture. Don't skip the **Dyess museum** exhibits and films, even if your primary interest is Johnny Cash.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Follow in the footsteps of segregationist protesters, national media, law enforcement, and, most of all, the Little Rock Nine

students themselves on a one- to two-hour walking tour of **Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.** Head over to the community cornerstone that is **K. Hall & Sons Produce** (1900 Wright Ave., Little Rock; 501/372-1513), where you can enjoy comfort food classics like catfish and pork chop sandwiches. Then head over to the **William J. Clinton Presidential Library and Museum.**

DAY 2 Pack a picnic lunch and drive two hours southwest (110 mi/177 km) from Little Rock to **Crater of the Diamonds State Park.** Spend a few hours mining for precious gems—you get to take home any that you find. Next, drive 75 minutes (60 mi/97 km) to **Hot Springs.** For the next two nights, home is at **The Arlington Resort Hotel & Spa** (239 Central Ave., Hot Springs; 501/623-7771; www.arlingtonhotel.com), which features two different spas, a bar, and restaurants.

DAY 3 Spend the day hiking and soaking in **Hot Springs National Park,** returning to the Arlington for dinner.

DAY 4 From Hot Springs, drive three hours to **Dean's Market** (140 mi/225 km). Here you'll connect with US 71, a former stagecoach route, now part of the **Boston Mountains Scenic Loop.** Enjoy spectacular vista views as you climb through the Ozark Mountains. Spend the night in **Fayetteville.**

DAY 5 **Fayetteville** is the starting point of the other half of the scenic loop. I-49 will take you south back to Dean's Market (40 mi/64 km; 45 minutes). En route, **Devil's Den State Park** will be on your right. Spend the afternoon hiking, biking, or paddling before returning to Little Rock, a two-hour drive (150 mi/241 km) from Dean's Market.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

MOUNT MAGAZINE SCENIC BYWAY

AR-309

Follow AR-309 from Havana and you'll get spectacular views from the state's highest peak, Mount Magazine (2,753 ft/839 m). Spend some time at the top, where you'll find a lodge, restaurant, and cabins—all part of **Mount Magazine State Park** (www.arkansasstateparks.com). From the peak, follow the byway down to the town of Paris to where the route ends in Webb City. The byway is 45 mi (72 km) long, with plenty of spots to stop and admire stretches of rolling farmland.



MOUNT MAGAZINE STATE PARK OVERLOOK

BOSTON MOUNTAINS SCENIC LOOP

The 80-mi (128-km) Boston Mountains Scenic Loop is made up of two byways: US 71 and I-49, both of which offer breathtaking views as you drive through the highest part of the Ozarks. Starting from **Dean's Market** near Alma, follow **US 71** to **Fayetteville,** 42 mi (67 km) from Dean's Market. Spend some time enjoying the city's thriving food and entertainment scene. When you're ready to continue on, follow **I-49** south. You'll pass **Devil's Den State Park,** a prime spot for hiking or biking, on the return to Dean's Market.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

www.nps.gov/buff

Paddlers will delight in the wide stretches of river flanked by limestone bluffs. The Buffalo National River has not been dammed; instead it flows freely for over 135 mi (217 km). The Upper, Middle, and Lower District paddling areas offer a range of opportunities, from paddling along the river's calm banks to white-water kayaking. The area is also popular for hiking and is a designated **International Dark Sky Park.** During the summer, you can learn more about the night sky and how humans impact the quality of dark sky conditions by attending a ranger-led program.



BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

DEVIL'S DEN STATE PARK

www.arkansasstateparks.com

This unique site in Lee Creek Valley became a state park in the 1930s. The structures you'll see around the park were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) using native building materials. Today, these structures are one of the most intact CCC sites in the country. Hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding are popular activities. Should you want to stay the night among the trees, there are cabins, camper cabins, and tent sites available.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

OZARK MOUNTAIN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Eureka Springs; www.ozarkmountainmusicfestival.com; Jan.

For four days in the winter, Eureka Springs hosts a one-of-a-kind outdoor music festival celebrating folk, bluegrass, and more. The festival, fondly known as **OzMoMu,** brings you up close to the music with chances to sing and dance right along with the performers. In addition to the performances, you can take part in activities like ice-skating, whiskey tasting, yoga and mimosas, hatchet throwing, and more.



OZARK MOUNTAIN MUSIC FESTIVAL

BEST FOOD

CHEESE DIP

Little Rock is known as the birthplace of cheese dip. Since its invention in 1935, cheese dip has spread across the state. Most commonly, cheese dip is a combination of cheeses with or without additions such as veggies, meat, and spices. It's best eaten with tortilla chips.

Mexico Chiquito (11406 W. Markham St., Little Rock; 501/217-0647; www.mexicochiquitotogo.com) and its founder, Blackie Donnelly, are credited with the invention of cheese dip. You can still order cheese dip at this location in Little Rock as a side or on nachos. Also in Little Rock, **Dizzy's Gypsy Bistro** (200 River Market Ave. #150, Little Rock; 501/375-3500; www.dizzyslr.com) is the place to try the award-winning La Petit Roche cheese dip. Every October, Little Rock hosts the **World Cheese Dip Festival** (Dickey-Stephens Park, 400 W. Broadway St., Little Rock; www.cheesedip.net). Returning attendees know to pack along an empty muffin tin to best handle the cheese dip samples.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Bring home a little piece of northern Arkansas from **Ozark Folk Center State Park** (1032 Park Ave., Mountain View; 870/269-3851; www.arkansasstateparks.com). At the park's **Craft Village,** you'll learn about traditional crafts like broom making, wood carving, quilting, and soap making. The artisans who preserve these skills at the village offer their wares in their individual workshops, where you'll find everything from herb plantings to homespun yarn.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport:** LIT; 1 Airport Rd., Little Rock; 501/372-3439; www.clintonairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Arkansas Tourism Department:** www.arkansas.com
- **Arkansas State Parks:** www.arkansasstateparks.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Pine Bluff Commercial:*** www.pbcommercial.com [URL inactive]
- ***Arkansas Times:*** www.arktimes.com

LOUISIANA

Louisiana offers a slew of diversions, such as touring breweries, visiting state parks, biking, fishing, and exploring antebellum plantation homes. On the lands of the federally recognized tribes of the Chitimacha, the Coushatta, the Jena Band of Choctaw, and the Tunica-Biloxi, Louisiana has a rich culture that draws on Native, French, Spanish, West Indian, and African heritage. Today, you can soak up the state's history, natural wonders, and delicious culinary offerings on a trip through its major cities and beyond.

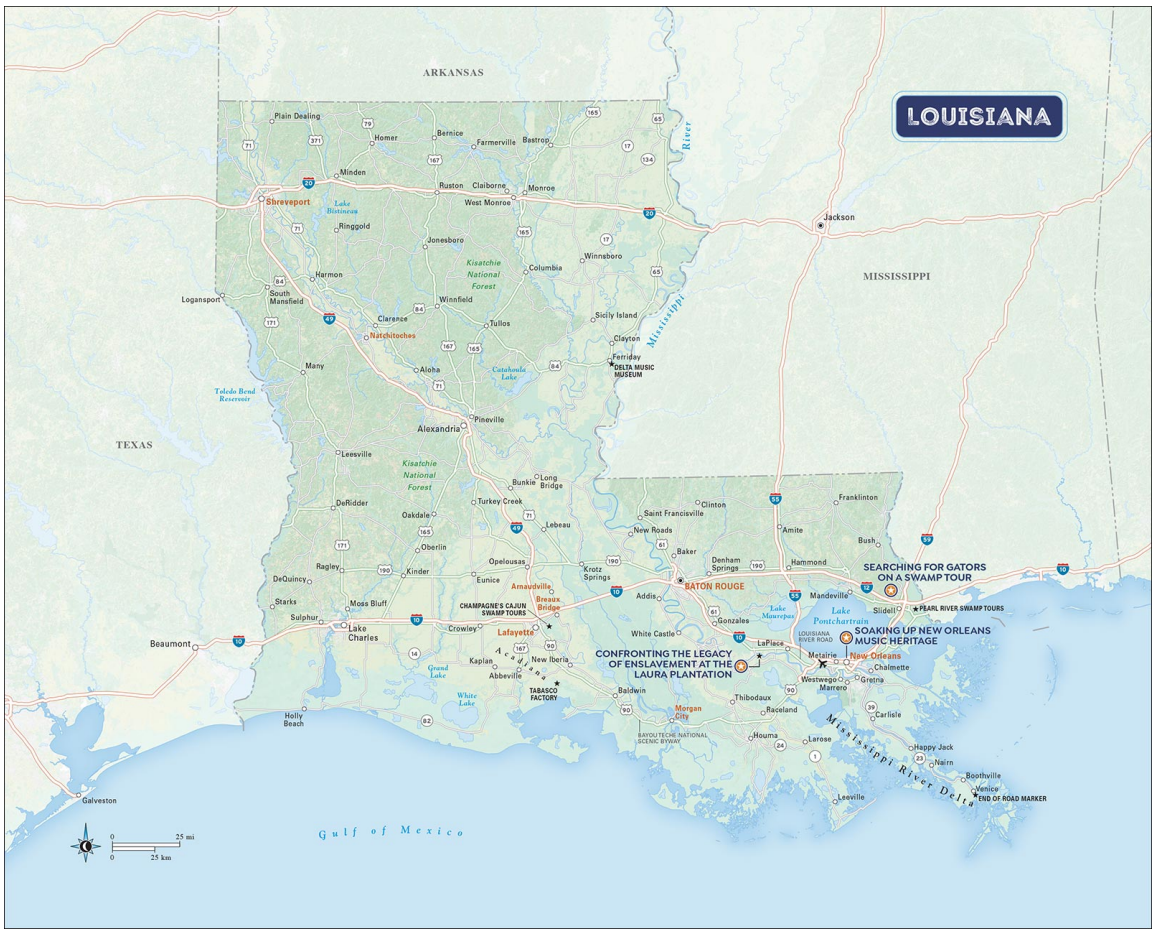
In Baton Rouge, the state capital, you can explore several museums and landmarks, including the present and former state capitol buildings. In Cajun Country, take a swamp tour, learn about Acadian culture, and stroll through well-preserved historic districts. No visit to the state is complete without a stopover in New Orleans, a city that's hard to forget.

AREA: 52,378 sq mi / 134,659 sq km (31st)

POPULATION: 4,597,740 (25th)

STATEHOOD DATE: April 30, 1812 (18th)

STATE CAPITAL: Baton Rouge


LOUISIANA
ARKANSAS
TEXAS
MISSISSIPPI
Gulf of Mexico
Mississippi River
Red River
Shreveport
Lake Bistineau
Minden
Plain Dealing
Homer
Bernice
Farmerville
Bastrop
Ruston
Claiborne
Monroe
West Monroe
Ringgold
Jonesboro
Winnsboro
Columbia
Kisatchie National Forest
Harmon
South Mansfield
Logansport
Winnfield
Clarence
Natchitoches
Tullos
Sicily Island
Clayton
Ferriday
DELTA MUSIC MUSEUM
Many
Toledo Bend Reservoir
Aloha
Catahoula Lake
Pineville
Alexandria
Leesville
Kisatchie National Forest
Long Bridge
Bunkie
Turkey Creek
DeRidder
Oakdale
Lebeau
Oberlin
Opelousas
Ragley
Kinder
Eunice
DeQuincy
Starks
Moss Bluff
Sulphur
Lake Charles
Beaumont
Amaudville
Breaux Bridge
CHAMPAGNE'S CAJUN SWAMP TOURS
Crowley
Lafayette
Grand Lake
Kaplan
Abbeville
New Iberia
Acadiana
TABASCO FACTORY
White Lake
Holly Beach
Galveston
Saint Francisville
Clinton
New Roads
Baker
Denham Springs
Addis
BATON ROUGE
Krotz Springs
Gonzales
White Castle
LaPlace
CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF ENSLAVEMENT AT THE LAURA PLANTATION
Lake Maurepas
Lake Pontchartrain
LOUISIANA RIVER ROAD
SOAKING UP NEW ORLEANS MUSIC HERITAGE
Metairie
New Orleans
Chalmette
Gretna
Westwego
Marrero
Franklinton
Amite
Bush
Hammond
Mandeville
Slidell
SEARCHING FOR GATORS ON A SWAMP TOUR
PEARL RIVER SWAMP TOURS
Jackson
Baldwin
Thibodaux
Raceland
Morgan City
BAYOU TECHE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY
Houma
Larose
Carlisle
Happy Jack
Nairn
Boothville
Venice
END OF ROAD MARKER
Leeville
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Nestled between the brackish Lake Pontchartrain and the serpentine Mississippi River, **New Orleans** has been home to pirates and soldiers, plantation owners and voodoo queens. Today, their legacy is palpable in the city's Cajun-Creole cuisine and lively jazz, its Southern manners and dark history. To the northwest, the state's capital, **Baton Rouge,** makes a great base for exploring the entire length of Louisiana's Great River Road. Beyond Baton Rouge, Louisiana's **Cajun Country** is one of the most visited and most intriguing parts of the state.

WHEN TO GO

Although Louisiana is a year-round destination, **summer** is the least crowded time to visit, except during major festival events like the **Essence Festival** and **Southern Decadence.** Temperatures are fairly high June-September, with an average high of about 91°F (33°C), when hurricane season is at its peak. While **fall** is more comfortable, **winter** and **spring** constitute the high season, particularly in New Orleans, where annual events such as **Mardi Gras,** the **French Quarter Festival,** and the **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** draw in crowds.

TOP 3

1 SOAKING UP NEW ORLEANS MUSIC HERITAGE

New Orleans's biggest artistic claim to fame is indeed its music. This city is one of the world's most dynamic live-music scenes. Jazz was invented here, a conglomeration of mostly African-American traditions that has rural counterparts elsewhere in southern Louisiana in the form of zydeco and Cajun music. New Orleanians are loyal, knowledgeable, and excited about music, and performers appreciate the enthusiasm, relishing the chance to play a club that's small enough to encourage a close connection between the musicians and the fans. It takes almost no planning and very little effort to find a

place to catch a jamming live show in New Orleans, even on a Monday or Tuesday night. Just check the listings in the *Gambit* or *The Times-Picayune,* or simply stroll through the French Quarter or Faubourg Marigny.

Since 1961, **Preservation Hall** (726 St. Peter St.; 504/522-2841; www.preservationhall.com) has been one of the city's top places to hear true New Orleans jazz. Nearby **Bourbon Street** is alive with parties all night long. An even higher concentration of live music events can be found on **Frenchmen Street** in the Faubourg Marigny. In this hotbed of live music, **The Spotted Cat Music Club** (623 Frenchmen St.; 504/943-3887; www.spottedcatmusicclub.com) is your best bet for an assortment of jazz, from old-time tunes to modern improvisation. For an introduction to Cajun and zydeco, check out **Mulate's** (201 Julia St.; 504/522-1492 or 800/854-9149; www.mulates.com), which features live bands, plenty of dancing space, and a menu filled with Louisiana favorites.



BOURBON STREET

2 SEARCHING FOR GATORS ON A SWAMP TOUR

Spend a few hours out on Louisiana's iconic waterways soaking in the state's natural beauty, history, and diverse flora and fauna. On a swamp tour, you'll glide through moss-draped cypress trees, spotting egrets, pelicans, and maybe even an alligator. As with many attractions in southern Louisiana, the best seasons are spring and fall, but no matter when you opt for a swamp tour, be sure to call ahead for reservations and precise directions.



SWAMP TOUR

In the heart of Cajun Country, **Champagne's Cajun Swamp Tours** (1151 Rookery Rd., Breaux Bridge; 337/230-4068; https://champagnesswamptours.com) takes passengers out daily in relatively quiet 20-ft (6-m) aluminum crawfish skiffs. The narrated 1.5-hour tour leaves from the banks of Lake Martin and passes through a dramatic flooded cypress and tupelo forest, as well as one of the state's largest nesting areas of wading birds.

To explore the relatively untouched Honey Island Swamp in a midsize boat, you can hitch a ride with **Pearl River Swamp Tours** (55050 US 90, Slidell; 985/649-4200 or 866/597-9267;

www.pearlriverswamptours.com), which provides two-hour tours led by Coast Guard-certified guides who are all native to the area and experts on the swamp ecosystem and history.

3 CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF ENSLAVEMENT AT THE LAURA PLANTATION

2247 LA-18, Vacherie; 225/265-7690 or 888/799-7690; www.lauraplantation.com

You can embark on one of the most unusual plantation-tour experiences in the country at the Laura Plantation, which differs from most of the others along River Road in a couple of ways. First, it has a fascinating legacy, as its cabins for enslaved people were where the folktales known as *Br'er Rabbit* were recorded in the late 1870s. But maybe the most interesting thing about a visit to Laura is that tour guides base their one-hour talk on the memoirs—which total about 5,000 pages—of the four generations of women who oversaw the compound's inner workings; it's a condensation of the fascinating lives of the Creole women who ran the plantation, along with intimate and telling details about their children and extended family, and the people they enslaved. The tour of Laura offers a provocative and colorful look into the high and low points of Creole life in the early 19th century. Its discussion of the lives of the enslaved and the day-to-day, firsthand observations of the plantation's occupants make it stand out among plantation tours in the region.

HIGHLIGHTS

NEW ORLEANS CEMETERY TOURS

People come to the city to visit the many voodoo shops and cemeteries or take a haunted walking tour of the French Quarter. Arguably the oldest and most famous of New Orleans's "cities of the dead," **St. Louis Cemetery No. 1** (Basin St. and St. Louis St.; 504/777-3027) was established in 1789,

following the Great Fire of 1788, and set outside what was then the city border. Since New Orleans sits below sea level and has a high-water table, bodies were buried aboveground, as earlier attempts to bury the dead underground had resulted in caskets floating to the surface during floods.

Major CITIES

NEW ORLEANS: Come to the Crescent City for exceptional cuisine, spirited music, and boisterous festivals.

BATON ROUGE: Sprawling in virtually every direction with charming residential neighborhoods, Baton Rouge is home to several of Louisiana's most engaging attractions.

SHREVEPORT: Northwest of Baton Rouge, Shreveport is the third-largest city in Louisiana, known for its museums and riverboat casinos.

The only way to visit the cemetery is on an organized **tour** (https://cemeterytourneworleans.com), which focuses on local ghosts, cemeteries, voodoo legends, vampire lore, stories of piracy, and much more.

OLD STATE CAPITOL

100 North Blvd., Baton Rouge; https://louisianaoldstatecapitol.org

Once the seat of the state government, the Old State Capitol was constructed between 1847 and 1852; it's one of the state's few prominent examples of large-scale Gothic architecture. Inside, you'll find a vast and wonderfully presented collection of interactive and multimedia exhibits on a wide variety of topics, including the history of Baton Rouge and the legacy of controversial governor Huey P. Long. There's also a governors' portrait gallery, plus rotating exhibits. It's the sort of museum that's enjoyable for kids as well as adults, and the breadth of documents, artifacts, and collectibles displayed here is impressive.

NATCHITOCHES

Between Lafayette and Shreveport lies the state's oldest permanent settlement. Pronounced "NACK-a-tish," the former French outpost is now a historic town where you can visit a tranquil garden and nature preserve or take a guided tour of the historical district by carriage. Just south of town, the **Oakland Plantation** (4386 LA494; 318/352-0383; www.nps.gov) preserves the legacy of the enslaved who made the plantation profitable. This National Historic Landmark is part of the **Cane River Creole National Historical Park** and is open for self-guided tours through the main house and outbuildings.



FRONT STREET IN NATCHITOCHES

Natchitoches is known for meat pies; in fact, there's a whole festival devoted to the dish in September. **Lasyone's Meat Pie Restaurant** (622 2nd St.; 318/353-3353; http://lasyones.com) is the best spot in town to sample this regional specialty.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your day in New Orleans in the French Quarter with café au lait and sugar-covered beignets at the world-famous **Café Du Monde,** part of the historic **French Market.** Stroll through picturesque **Jackson Square** and the quaint boutiques and verdant balconies of Chartres Street. At night, don your finest attire for a quintessential French Creole dinner on Bourbon Street before heading to the world-famous **Preservation Hall** for a short jazz concert.

DAY 2 Take a walk along the Mississippi riverfront and explore the varied marine exhibits inside the **Audubon Aquarium** and the **Audubon Insectarium.** Enjoy a river cruise aboard the ***Creole Queen,*** an authentic paddle wheeler, followed by a sumptuous meal of contemporary Creole cuisine at **Ralph's on the Park.**

DAY 3 Take a day trip to Honey Island for a swamp tour. Back in New Orleans, catch a **Canal Street streetcar** ride to verdant **City Park,** a beloved 1,300-ac (526-ha) sanctuary, before heading to dinner and drinks in the French Quarter.

DAY 4 Venture out to **Acadiana** along the **Bayou Teche National Scenic Byway.** On the way, stop for a tour of the **Acadian Cultural Center** in **Lafayette.** Spend the night in town after a dinner of Cajun cuisine accompanied by live music.

DAY 5 From Lafayette, it's a one-hour drive to Baton Rouge, where you'll spend the day touring the **Louisiana State Capitol** and the city's museums. Enjoy regional specialties at **Jasmines on the Bayou** before exploring the city's nightlife.

DAY 6 After breakfast in town, drive an hour southeast to the **Laura Plantation,** where you'll learn about Creole life in the early 19th century. Return to **New Orleans** and cap off the trip with an evening of live music.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

For information about all kinds of road trips through the state, check out **Louisiana Byways** (https://byways.louisianatravel.com).

BAYOU TECHE NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

Covering 183 mi (294 km), the Bayou Teche National Scenic Byway meanders through the southern part of the state hugging the Bayou Teche. It begins where I-10 and US 90 meet and can be completed in a day or two with stops along the way. The bayou passes through **Breaux Bridge** (where you should stop to enjoy crawfish), **New Iberia,** and the **Chitimacha Indian reservation** (which is known for its basket-weaving traditions). Along the way, you can stop to tour the historic districts of Breaux Bridge and New Iberia, visit **Avery Island** (which is not actually an island), or get out of the car and kayak or canoe along the **Bayou Teche National Paddle Trail.**

When you've worked up an appetite, stop and savor the region's specialties. Here are a few highlights: **LeJeune's Bakery** (1510 Main St., Jeanerette; 337/276-5690) is a fifth-generation bakery famous for French bread and ginger cakes. **Billy's Boudin & Cracklins** (24467 US 190, Krotz Springs; 337/566-2318; www.billysboudin.com [URL inactive]) is a must for the Cajun sausage (boudin) and fried pork skins (cracklins). For live music, stop by **La Poussiere** (1215 Grand Point Hwy., Breaux Bridge; 337/332-1721; https://lapoussiere.com), a Cajun dancehall serving up good times since 1955.

LOUISIANA RIVER ROAD

In southern Louisiana, the Great River Road actually refers to a series of byways running over 770 mi (1,240 km) along both sides of the Mississippi River, from New Orleans through the rural plantation country northwest of the city, then on to Baton Rouge and up to charming St. Francisville, the quintessential antebellum Southern town. Along the route, you'll pass **Delta Music Museum** (218 Louisiana Ave., Ferriday; 318/757-4297; www.deltamusicmuseum.com). Part of the Mississippi Blues Trail, the museum is a must-see for anyone interested in blues, gospel, and country music. Should you continue to the southernmost end of the road, you'll reach the **End of Road Marker** in Venice, Louisiana.



ZYDECO MUSIC

If you know where to look, you're likely to find several worthy eateries along the Great River Road, between New Orleans and St. Francisville. Visit **Grapevine Café & Gallery** (211 Railroad Ave., Donaldsonville; 225/473-8463; https://grapevine.cafe), a delightful restaurant housed within a 1920s art deco-style building in Donaldsonville's historical district.

Award-winning Cajun and Creole cuisine is served in a cozy dining room filled with local artwork. Crawfish pie is a specialty here. If you have room for dessert, consider the white-chocolate bread pudding or lemon ice-box pie.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

NEW ORLEANS'S GREEN SPACES

Given the compact nature of New Orleans, many outdoors-lovers are surprised by the prevalence of bike shops, verdant parks, restful plazas, and gardens.

City Park

1 Palm Dr.; 504/482-4888; www.neworleanscitypark.org

Encompassing 1,300 ac (526 ha) of lawns, lagoons, and moss-covered oak trees, City Park has long been a preferred spot for rest and recreation, especially for the nearby communities of Mid-City, Lakeview, and Gentilly. Families are drawn here to feed the ducks, stroll across picturesque bridges, and ride bikes along the winding roads. Outdoor enthusiasts can take advantage of the on-site golf course or the 11 mi (18 km) of lagoons ideal for fishing, canoeing, and pedal-boating.

Audubon Park

6500 Magazine St.; 504/861-2537;
https://audubonnatureinstitute.org/audubon-park

One of New Orleanians' favorite places for strolling is verdant Audubon Park, a 340-ac (138-ha) property that occupies the former estate of Etienne de Boré, the city's first mayor, and extends from St. Charles Avenue to the Mississippi River. Besides encompassing Audubon Zoo, this beloved park features a pleasant lagoon, moss-draped live oak trees, and lush lawns with picnic areas.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

With a reputation for revelry, the Big Easy offers a cornucopia of festivals worth planning a trip around.

MARDI GRAS

New Orleans; www.mardigrasneworleans.com; Feb. or Mar.

Few festivals exemplify the joyous spirit of New Orleans more than Mardi Gras (MAHR-dee grah), a French term meaning “Fat Tuesday.” If you’re a fan of colorful, exciting festivals, there’s no better time to visit New Orleans than during Mardi Gras season, which usually falls in February or early March and lasts 2-3 weeks prior to Lent (from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday). Festivities include everything from colorful street masks and costumes to gala balls and events. But Mardi Gras’s most famous events are the free public parades sponsored by krewes and featuring colorful floats, marching bands, motorcycle squads, dancers, entertainers, and, sometimes, a royal court (the king, queen, maids, and dukes of a krewe). Participants often toss beaded necklaces, stuffed animals, commemorative doubloons, and other trinkets to spectators lining the route. For most krewes, each year brings a new theme, usually with a historical, mythical, or topical bent. Some of the most worthwhile parades include the krewes of Endymion, Bacchus, Orpheus, Zulu, and Rex.



MARDI GRAS

JAZZ FEST

Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots, 1751 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans; 504/410-4100; www.nojazzfest.com; Apr. and May

New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival (also known as Jazz Fest) is held on two long weekends in late April and early May at Mid-City's Fair Grounds Race Course. This event features music workshops, artisanal and culinary demonstrations, powwow performances, arts-and-crafts vendors, an unbelievable array of food stalls, and numerous stages that buzz with jazz, blues, zydeco, rock, gospel, and folk musicians.

FRENCH QUARTER FESTIVAL

504/522-5730; https://frenchquarterfest.org; Apr.

Begun in 1984 to support local musicians, the four-day French Quarter Fest, which typically occurs in early or mid-April, has since evolved into Louisiana's largest free music event. The 22 outdoor stages—from the Old US Mint to Jackson Square to Woldenberg Riverfront Park—host local and regional jazz, gospel, funk, zydeco, classical, bluegrass, folk, and blues acts. Besides live music, you'll find plenty of food for sale, including jambalaya, boiled crawfish, and sno-balls.

ESSENCE FEST

www.essence.com/festival; July

In early July, visitors typically descend upon New Orleans for the annual Essence Festival, a four-day celebration of African American music and culture. Besides DJ parties at the Sugar Mill, the main events of this much-anticipated festival consist of concerts and comedy shows at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome and empowerment presentations at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Headliners have included Usher, Mary J. Blige, and Erykah Badu.

SOUTHERN DECADENCE

www.southerndecadence.com; Sept.

Every Labor Day weekend, the French Quarter and the Faubourg Marigny are flooded with eager participants and onlookers of Southern Decadence, an annual Mardi Gras-like festival that's been celebrating the city's gay lifestyle, music, and culture since 1972. Held at various gay-friendly venues, from Rawhide 2010 to Bourbon Pub & Parade, the multiday event includes dance and pool parties, beefcake contests, singles' mixers, drag shows, and a leather-gear block party. It's one of the wildest and most popular LGBTQ+ celebrations in the country.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

FOOD SPECIALTIES

Foodies will fare well in New Orleans, where the most popular dishes derive from Cajun, Creole, and Southern recipes. In addition to the items here, New Orleans is also known for its oysters and fabulous desserts.

- **Beignets:** A beignet (ben-YAY) consists of fried doughnut batter sprinkled with powdered sugar. This pastry was popularized by **Café Du Monde** (800 Decatur St., New Orleans; 504/587-0833; https://shop.cafedumonde.com) in the French Market, where it's served with café au lait (KAFF-ay oh LAY) made from coffee (usually with chicory) and steamed milk.



NEW ORLEANS-STYLE BEIGNETS

- **Po’boys:** The quintessential New Orleans sandwich, made on French bread with fillings like roast beef or fried shrimp. Be sure to order it “dressed” (with lettuce, tomato, mayo, etc.). Though lots of restaurants make delicious po’boys, many locals prefer **Mahony’s Po-Boys & Seafood** (3454 Magazine St., New Orleans; 504/766-6679; www.mahonyspoboys.com) in the Uptown area or **Parkway Bakery & Tavern** (538 Hagan Ave., New Orleans; 504/482-3047; www.parkwaypoorboys.com) in Mid-City.
- **Gumbo:** A thick filé soup begun with a roux (ROO; a slowly cooked mixture of butter or water and flour); filled with ingredients like chicken, andouille, okra, and shrimp; and usually served with rice. Two perennial favorites are the French-Creole seafood gumbo served at **Galatoire’s Restaurant** (209 Bourbon St., New Orleans; 504/525-2021; www.galatoires.com) and the rich, hearty version found at **Dooky Chase’s Restaurant** (2301 Orleans Ave., New Orleans; 504/821-0535).
- **Jambalaya:** Jambalaya (juhm-buh-LAHY-uh) is a Cajun or Creole rice dish containing tomatoes, spices, and meats such as chicken, andouille, and seafood. Try **Mother’s Restaurant** (401 Poydras St., New Orleans; 504/523-9656; www.mothersrestaurant.net) for a traditional, mildly spicy version.
- **Crawfish étouffée:** A dark, buttery roux of crawfish and seasoned vegetables, usually poured over rice. Shrimp étouffée (ay-too-FAY) is a popular alternative.
- **Muffuletta:** A round, oversized sandwich with ham, salami, mortadella, provolone, and olive salad. Tasty versions of the muffuletta (muff-uh-LET-uh) are available at **Cochon** (930 Tchoupitoulas St., New Orleans; 504/588-2123; www.cochonrestaurant.com).

BEST SOUVENIRS

Hot sauce is served throughout the state; if you're a fan, visit the **Tabasco Factory** (32 Wisteria Rd., Avery Island; 337/373-6129; www.tabasco.com) and take home a bottle—or two.

For **beer** lovers, a must-try is **Abita Brewing Company** (21084 LA36, Covington; 985/893-3143; www.abita.com). Stop by to sample everything from rich brews to the pleasantly light and bubbly ales. After an informative brewery tour, stop by the gift shop.

- **Sazerac:** The **Sazerac Bar** (The Roosevelt New Orleans, 130 Roosevelt Way, New Orleans; 504/648-1200; www.therooseveltneworleans.com) in New Orleans is perhaps the most famous hotel lounge in the city. Named for the noted cocktail—a concoction of rye whiskey, Pernod, sugar, lemon oil, and the local Peychaud's bitters—the bar was once a favored haunt of Governor Huey P. Long, the infamous "Kingfish" of Louisiana.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport:** MSY; 1 Terminal Dr., Kenner; 504/303-7500; https://flymsy.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Louisiana Office of Tourism:** www.explorelouisiana.com
- **Louisiana State Parks:** www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***The Times-Picayune* and *New Orleans Advocate:*** www.nola.com
- ***The Louisiana Weekly:*** www.louisianaweekly.com
- ***64 Parishes:*** https://64parishes.org

NORTH CAROLINA

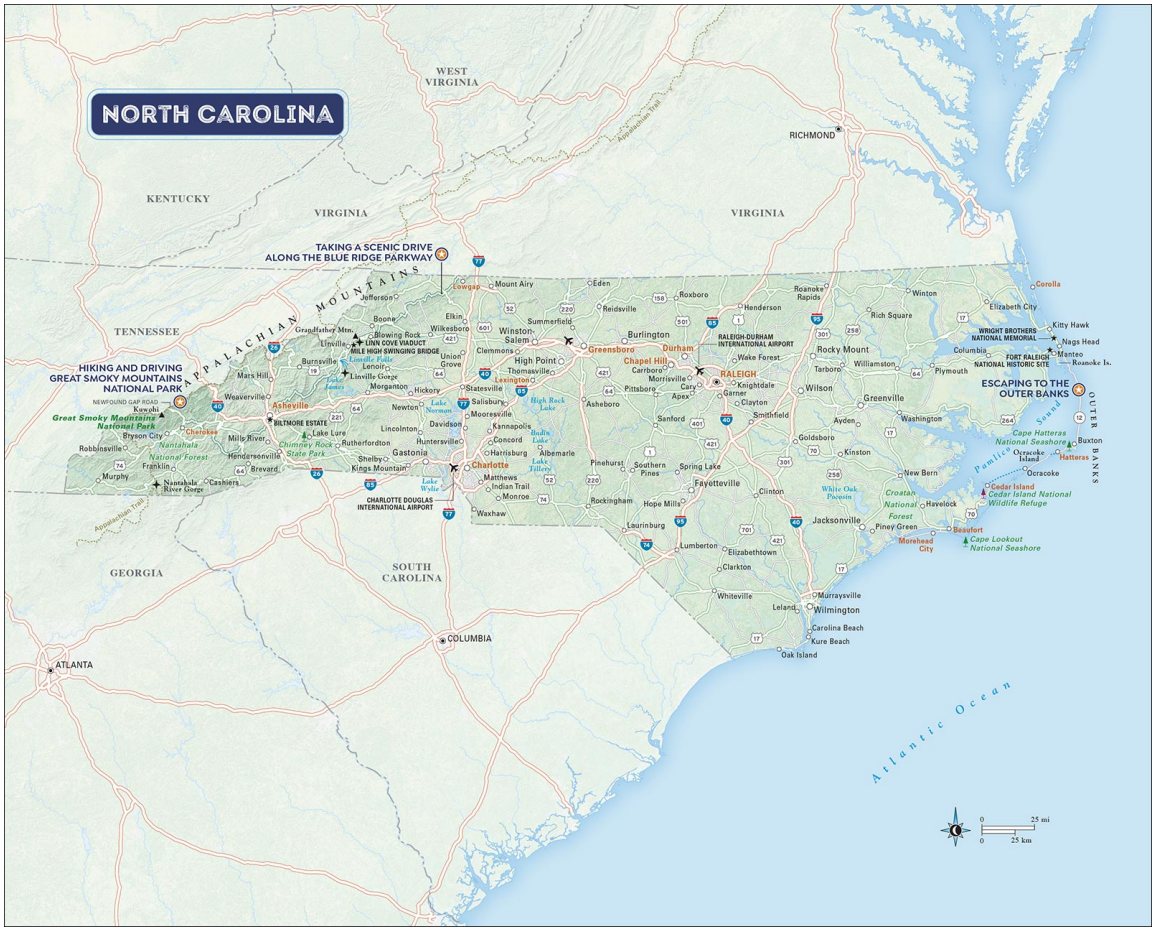
Stay here long enough, and North Carolina—on the land of many Indigenous peoples, including the Coharie, Cherokee, Haliwa-Saponi, Sappony, Lumbee, Meherrin, Waccamaw-Siouan, Saponi, and Tuscarora—will start to color everything you see. Somewhere between a sip of sweet tea and a bite of barbecue sandwich, you'll see blue everywhere. The sky, more often than not, is Tarheel Blue. The Atlantic Ocean: turquoise near shore but growing to a deeper sapphire as it approaches the horizon, a line invisible in the evenings when the sky and sea seem as one. On maps, blue veins of rivers and creeks draw the unseen contours of the land. And west, where the mountains rise high and rugged, you can see their crenellations grow blue with distance. The state may be surrounded by blue, but the palette changes depending on where you go. White sands cover the shore, and winter's snowy cap tops the tallest mountains. Half a hundred shades of autumn jewel the mountainsides and half a hundred more burst out in spring's wildflower bloom. There's a map of the state waiting for you to fill it in with your colored pencils; all you need to bring is a sense of adventure.

AREA: 53,819 sq mi / 139,391 sq km (28th)

POPULATION: 11,046,024 (9th)

STATEHOOD DATE: November 21, 1789 (12th)

STATE CAPITAL: Raleigh


NORTH CAROLINA
WEST VIRGINIA
KENTUCKY
VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
TENNESSEE
GEORGIA
SOUTH CAROLINA
ATLANTA
COLUMBIA
TAKING A SCENIC DRIVE ALONG THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
HIKING AND DRIVING GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK
ESCAPING TO THE OUTER BANKS
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS
Appalachian Trail
Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Nantahala National Forest
Pamlico Sound
OUTER BANKS
Atlantic Ocean
Lowgap
Mount Airy
Eden
Roxboro
Henderson
Roanoke Rapids
Winton
Corolla
Elizabeth City
Kitty Hawk
Nags Head
Roanoke Is.
Jefferson
Boone
Elkin
Reidsville
Summerfield
Rich Square
Grandfather Mtn.
Blowing Rock
Linville
LINN COVE VIADUCT
MILE HIGH SWINGING BRIDGE
Linville Falls
Linville Gorge
Burnsville
Lenoir
Mars Hill
Weaverville
Asheville
Wilkesboro
Winston-Salem
Clemmons
Union Grove
High Point
Thomasville
Lexington
Greensboro
Burlington
Durham
Chapel Hill
Carrboro
Morrisville
RALEIGH-DURHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
RALEIGH
Cary
Apex
Wake Forest
Knightdale
Garner
Clayton
Rocky Mount
Tarboro
Williamston
Wilson
Greenville
Columbia
Plymouth
WRIGHT BROTHERS NATIONAL MEMORIAL
FORT RALEIGH NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
Manteo
Roanoke Is.
Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Ocracoke Island
Ocracoke
Hatteras
Buxton
Cedar Island
Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge
Croatan National Forest
Havelock
Beaufort
Morehead City
Cape Lookout National Seashore
Jacksonville
Piney Green
White Oak Pocosin
New Bern
Kinston
Ayden
Goldsboro
Washington
Smithfield
Sanford
Pittsboro
Asheboro
Statesville
Salisbury
Lake Norman
High Rock Lake
Hickory
Newton
Morganton
Lincolnton
Davidson
Kannapolis
Concord
Harrisburg
Albemarle
Badin Lake
Lake Tillery
Moorsville
Huntersville
Gastonia
Shelby
Kings Mountain
Charlotte
Matthews
Indian Trail
Monroe
Waxhaw
Pinehurst
Southern Pines
Spring Lake
Fayetteville
Clinton
Rockingham
Hope Mills
Laurinburg
Lumberton
Elizabethtown
Clarkton
Whiteville
Murrayville
Leland
Wilmington
Carolina Beach
Kure Beach
Oak Island
Lake Wylie
CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Rutherfordton
Chimney Rock State Park
Lake Lure
BILTMORE ESTATE
NEWFOUND GAP ROAD
Kuwahi
Cherokee
Bryson City
Robbinsville
Murphy
Franklin
Nantahala River Gorge
Cashiers
Hendersonville
Mills River
Brevard
Tryon Peaks
Lake Norman
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

The ribbon of shore that is the **Outer Banks** lines the northeast coast of North Carolina. The coast continues beyond the Banks, with **Wilmington** anchoring the southern coast. "The Triangle" comprising university towns **Raleigh, Durham,** and **Chapel Hill** is just east of the center of the state, where **Greensboro** is located. **Charlotte** is in the middle of southern North Carolina, while **Asheville** is to the west, about an hour away from **Great Smoky Mountains National Park,** which sits on the western border with Tennessee.

WHEN TO GO

Summer is the high season: Beaches are jam-packed, traffic is slow in the mountains, and across the state you'll find festivals and events. Heat and humidity can be brutal, and the cooler mountains and coast draw the most visitors for this reason. **Spring** brings nice weather, but some regional events are so large that entire cities or corners of the state may be booked.

Fall foliage in autumn accounts for the mountains' second high season, running from late September through early November. Water along the coast stays swimmably warm past Halloween most years. **Winter** is milder here than in many parts of the country, but many businesses along the coast and in the mountains, where temperatures are much colder and snow falls a few times a year, reduce their hours or close entirely.

TOP 3

1 HIKING AND DRIVING GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

865/436-1200; www.nps.gov/grsm

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park straddles the North Carolina/Tennessee state line, and the slightly larger North Carolina side of the park is wilder and less developed than the Tennessee side.

The Smokies are the land of the Cherokee people, who have roots here going back centuries, and today the park draws more than 13 million visitors annually. It's easy to see why: These mountains are laced with trails, rivers, and waterfalls, and populated with diverse wildlife—from rare salamanders to huge elk.

The best way to explore the park is on foot: It is home to nearly 850 mi (1,370 km) of hiking trails, ranging from easy walks around major attractions to strenuous wilderness paths suited to experienced backpackers. A section of the **Appalachian Trail** goes through the park, tracing the state border. Top hikes on the North Carolina side of the park include **Andrews Bald** at **Kuwohi,** the highest peak in the Smokies, and **Mount Cammerer Trail,** which bounces over the NC/TN line a number of times and has some of the best views in the park.

Another great way to explore the park is via a scenic drive. **Newfound Gap Road** traverses the park from Cherokee, North Carolina, to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. When driving it, be sure to stop at a scenic overlook that has a hiking trail (more than half of them do).



VIEW FROM NEWFOUND GAP ROAD

2 TAKING A SCENIC DRIVE ALONG THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Running more than 450 mi (725 km) between Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the mother of all scenic roads. It covers more than 200 mi (320 km) in North Carolina, from **Lowgap** at the state line to **Cherokee** in the Smokies. In North Carolina, the mountains take center stage. The peak of **Grandfather Mountain** looms high over the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the spectacular **Linn Cove Viaduct** seems to float off its mountainside.



OVERLOOK AT GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN

Between Asheville and Cherokee is the highest and most crooked part of the drive. **Asheville** is home to the lauded **Biltmore Estate** and some of the best restaurants in the South. **Cherokee,** where the Blue Ridge Parkway ends, is the ancestral home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation.

You can travel along the parkway from the North Carolina line to **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** in one day, but two days will allow you to enjoy the countless sights along the way. Traffic on the parkway is always slow—the maximum speed limit never

exceeds 45 mph—and can be congested in summer and during leaf season.

3 ESCAPING TO THE OUTER BANKS

From the Virginia border in the north to Ocracoke Island in the south, the 120 mi (195 km) of the Outer Banks act as barrier islands, protecting the mainland, marshlands, and towns of the Inner Banks from a storm's brunt. In summer, visitors come from all over to enjoy the beaches and numerous warm-weather festivals. This is where you'll also find stretches of untamed shore, wild horses, and iconic lighthouses.

A highlight of the region is **Cape Hatteras National Seashore,** which stretches into the Atlantic and brushes the warm waters of the Gulf Stream. **Hatteras** draws surfers, anglers, divers, bird-watchers, and beach-loving vacationers by the thousands. You'll want to climb **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse,** with its black-and-white spiral exterior, and pay a visit to **Ocracoke Island,** which was a favorite haunt of the pirate Blackbeard.



CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE

In the Lower Outer Banks, **Cape Lookout National Seashore** is 56 mi (90 km) of beach stretched out across four barrier islands, a one-stop shop for all this region has to offer. **Wild horses** roam the beaches and dunes, **dolphins** frequent both the ocean and sound sides of the islands, and it's a great place for **bird-watching.** Don't miss the black-and-white diamond-spangled **Cape Lookout Lighthouse,** one of the most iconic symbols of North Carolina, which has stood watch here since 1859.

For a scenic drive, **NC-12** traces the Outer Banks from the mainland onto the barrier islands and all the way up to the Virginia border. Take the ferry (reservations required) at **Cedar Island** on the mainland across to **Ocracoke;** another ferry takes you to the village of **Hatteras** at the southern end of Hatteras Island, part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. From there, keep heading north on the highway until you reach **Corolla,** where the paved highway ends.

HIGHLIGHTS

CHEROKEE

Cherokee is the seat of government of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee, who have lived in the Great Smoky Mountains for centuries. Today, their traditional arts and crafts, government, and cultural heritage are very much alive.

As you drive around, take a look at the road signs: Below each English road name is that same name in Cherokee, a beautiful script created by Sequoyah, a 19th-century Cherokee silversmith. This language, once nearly extinct, is being taught to the community's youth now, and there is a Cherokee language immersion school on the Qualla Boundary, a large tract of land owned and governed by the Cherokee people.

Museum of the Cherokee People

589 Tsali Blvd., Cherokee; 828/497-3481; https://motcp.org

This well-regarded modern museum is a locus of community culture. In the exhibits that trace the long history of the Cherokee people, you may notice the realistic mannequins. Local community members volunteered to be models for these mannequins, allowing casts to be made of their faces and bodies so that the figures would not reflect an outsider's notion of what Indigenous people should look like. The museum traces their history from the Paleo-Indian people of the Pleistocene, when the ancestral Cherokee were hunter-gatherers, through the ancient days of Cherokee civilization and into contact with European settlers.



AUTUMN LANDSCAPE IN NORTH CAROLINA

Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual

645 Tsali Blvd., Cherokee; 828/497-3103; https://quallaartsandcrafts.com

Ancient craft traditions still thrive among Cherokee artists in western North Carolina. At the Qualla Mutual, a community arts co-op where local artists sell their work, visitors can learn about and purchase the work of today's masters. The gallery's high standards and the community's thousands of years of artistry make for a collection of very special pottery, baskets,

masks, and other traditional art. The double-woven baskets are especially beautiful, as are the carvings of the masks representing each of the seven clans of the Cherokee people (the Bird, Deer, Longhair, Blue, Wolf, Paint, and Wild Potato).

Oconaluftee Indian Village

688 Drama Rd., Cherokee; 828/497-2111; https://visitcherokeenc.com

Oconaluftee Indian Village is a re-created Cherokee village tucked into the hills above the town. Here, you'll see how the tribe lived in the 18th century. Tour guides in period costumes lead groups on walking lectures with stops at stations where you can see Cherokee cultural, artistic, and daily-life activities performed as authentically as possible. From cooking demos to flint knapping (for arrowheads and spear points) to wood carving and clay work, you'll get a look at how the Cherokee lived centuries ago. The highlight of the tour is the ritual dance demonstration showing a half dozen dances and explaining their cultural significance.

Major CITIES

CHARLOTTE: A Southern city at heart, Charlotte is also one of the most diverse cities in the Southeast, home to immigrants from Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and India. In addition to five major sports teams and a booming NASCAR scene, you'll find amazing city parks, outstanding art museums, and first-class dining.

RALEIGH, DURHAM, AND CHAPEL HILL: This tri-city area is called "The Triangle," which originally referred to the three major universities here, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Duke University in Durham, and North Carolina State University at Raleigh. In addition to these three universities, there are more than a dozen other institutions of higher education, including several historically Black colleges and universities, resulting in booming biotech, pharmaceutical, and high-tech industries, and deep roots in the arts.

GREENSBORO: Greensboro is the home of several universities, including the University of North Carolina Greensboro and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&T), and as befits a college town, you'll find a lively arts and music scene and a creative, engaged population. The city also played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

BILTMORE ESTATE

1 Lodge St., Asheville; 800/411-3812; www.biltmore.com

The architectural crown jewel of Asheville, the Biltmore Estate, was built in the late 1800s for George Vanderbilt, grandson of Gilded Age robber baron Cornelius Vanderbilt. He engaged celebrity architect Richard Morris Hunt to build the home and hired esteemed Frederick Law Olmsted, creator of New York City's Central Park, to design the landscape for the grounds.



BILTMORE ESTATE

Asheville's most popular attraction is not only an awe-inspiring mansion—the square footage is more than 4 ac (1.6 ha), and there are 65 fireplaces and more than 250 rooms—but the grounds are also home to a collection of great little restaurants, shops, and a popular winery, all in a beautiful riverside setting.

THE BLOWING ROCK

US 321 S.; 828/295-7111; www.theblowingrock.com

The Blowing Rock is a strange rock outcropping purported by Ripley's Believe It or Not to be the only place in the world where snow falls upward. Indeed, light objects thrown off Blowing Rock—not allowed, by the way, to prevent the valley from filling up with litter—do tend to come floating back up. The nearby town of the same name has a pleasant downtown, as well as food and accommodations in proximity of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER AND MUSEUM

134 S. Elm St., Greensboro; 336/274-9199 or 800/748-7116; www.sitinmovement.org

This museum occupies the former F. W. Woolworth's building where four students now known as the Greensboro Four staged a trailblazing sit-in in February 1960. When students David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. (Jibreel Khazan), and Joe McNeil took their seats on these red-topped stools and refused to move—instead of standing at the end of the counter and waiting for their orders, which would be consumed elsewhere, as African Americans were permitted to do—history was made. The original full-scale lunch counter is still here, and screens along the counter's back wall show reenactments of the day the sit-in took place.

Other exhibits relating to the Greensboro Four include a replica of a room in Scott Hall Dormitory, where the four students lived on the campus of North Carolina Agriculture & Technical State University. The museum's signature exhibition, called The Battlegrounds, delves further into the lived experience of segregation.

WRIGHT BROTHERS NATIONAL MEMORIAL

milepost 7.5, US 158, 1000 N. Croatan Hwy., Kill Devil Hills; 252/473-2111; www.nps.gov/wrbr

In 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright changed the world in just 12 seconds. Their first flight was short, but it was the culmination of four years of failed designs, tests, and travels between their Dayton, Ohio, home and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where they tested their gliders on Kill Devil Hill, then the tallest dune on the Outer Banks. The feat is honored at the Wright Brothers National Memorial, where replica gliders, artifacts from the original flight, and tools the Wright brothers used are on display. In the adjacent field a wooden runner and stone markers show their runway, takeoff point, and the spots where their first four flights landed. Climb nearby Kill Devil Hill to see the 60-ft (18-m) monument honoring their achievement. At the foot of the hill, a life-size bronze sculpture of the *Wright Flyer* seconds after liftoff lets you get a sense of the excitement of the moment.

FORT RALEIGH NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

1401 National Park Dr., Manteo; 252/473-2111; www.nps.gov/fora

In the 1580s, the first white residents of North Carolina's Outer Banks moved in and established Fort Raleigh. Shortly thereafter, the community vanished, earning the name many now know them by: the Lost Colony of Roanoke. Fort Raleigh National Historic Site on **Roanoke Island** marks the last known location of the Lost Colony, and sections of the earthworks associated with the settlers' original 1580s fort remain and have been preserved. Archaeologists still conduct digs here, and as you explore the site, you'll learn about the missing colonists as well as the freedmen's colony—a colony of freed and displaced enslaved people established on the island during the Civil War.

Where the settlers went and why is unknown to this day, but it's explored in the outdoor drama ***The Lost Colony,*** performed at the **Waterside Theatre** in the park (1409 National Park Dr., Manteo; 252/473-6000; https://thelostcolony.org). In the park you'll also find **Elizabethan Gardens** (1411 National Park Dr., Manteo; 252/473-3234;

https://elizabethangardens.org), a permanent memorial to the settlers of Roanoke Island that features the types of gardens and plants that would have been common in the colonists' native England in the 16th century.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your North Carolina adventure in **Raleigh,** the state capital, which is home to a number of excellent museums. Be sure to get your first taste of North Carolina barbecue at **Clyde Cooper's Barbecue.**

DAY 2 Travel west on I-40 to **Greensboro** to see one of the most important sites in civil rights history: the Woolworth's lunch counter where a peaceful sit-in ignited the Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina. **The International Civil Rights Center and Museum** is housed in the former F. W. Woolworth building where the protest took place.

DAY 3 From Greensboro, make your way to **Lowgap** (about 1.5 hours), where the Blue Ridge Parkway starts in North Carolina. Spend the day driving the parkway to **Asheville.** Slow your pace past **Grandfather Mountain** and across the precariously perched **Linn Cove Viaduct.**

DAY 4 In Asheville, head directly to the **Biltmore Estate.** Tour the **Biltmore Winery** and watch the **blacksmith** at Antler Hill Village make music with the anvil. Spend the evening enjoying the fruits of a growing array of chefs and brewers.

DAY 5 Complete your Blue Ridge Parkway road trip at **Great Smoky Mountains National Park,** one hour away from Asheville. You're as likely to see a bear as a deer as you drive the park's stunning **scenic roads,** and you'll also pass a number of trailheads.

The trails around **Kuwohi**—the highest point in the Smokies—are popular. Beat a retreat back to **Cherokee,** outside the park, and rest up.

DAY 6 Start making your way back east. Break up the drive with a night in **Charlotte,** home of the **NASCAR Hall of Fame** (400 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Charlotte; 704/654-4400; www.nascarhall.com).

DAY 7 Head back to **Raleigh,** 2.5 hours away from Charlotte. If you want to get some beach time, add a day or two for an out-and-back to the **Outer Banks,** which are a three-hour drive east from Raleigh.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

The **Blue Ridge Parkway** and the Outer Banks' **NC-12** highway are two of North Carolina's best scenic drives.

DOWN EAST ON US 70

US 70 runs almost the entire length of North Carolina, from Asheville to Core Sound. The farthest-east section, a dogleg through Craven, Jones, and Carteret Counties, gives you a taste of life Down East. Drive southeast through the **Croatan National Forest,** then east through seafood central—**Morehead City.** When you cross the bridge into the colonial port of **Beaufort,** leave US 70 to explore historic downtown Beaufort, where you'll find attractions and 18th-century architecture. From Beaufort, US 70 winds up along **Core Sound** through fishing communities and marshes full of herons and egrets. Just past Stacy, you can either backtrack on US 70 or proceed to the **Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge** at the end of the peninsula and catch the Ocracoke Ferry at Cedar Island.

This drive is just over 70 mi (112 km) and can be done in about 1.5 hours with no stops—but, of course, the point is to dawdle and enjoy the scenery and small towns. It's an attractive drive any time of year, but old coastal cities like Beaufort are most gorgeous in spring when the azaleas are in bloom.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

US NATIONAL WHITEWATER CENTER

5000 Whitewater Center Pkwy., Charlotte; 704/391-3900; https://whitewater.org

The US National Whitewater Center features "the world's only multichannel recirculating white-water river"—that is, a complex of artificial rapids—designed for training athletes at the Olympic level. Visitors can try white-water rafting, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and white-water kayaking. The center's 1,300 ac (526 ha) also feature mountain biking trails, a climbing center, concession area (with beer), and an area for bands to perform.

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

About 8 mi (13 km) east of Wilmington is one of the nicest beaches on the Carolina coast: Wrightsville Beach. Wide and easily accessible, it is one of the most visitor- and family-friendly beaches you'll find. Wrightsville benefits from proximity of the Gulf Stream; here the warm ocean current sweeping up the Atlantic seaboard lies only 30-40 mi (48-64 km) offshore, which means warmer waters that are colored more like the Caribbean. A number of lodging and rental choices along the beach make it an easy place to stay, and numerous public beach access points (www.towb.org), some of which are disabled-accessible and some with showers or restrooms, line Lumina Avenue.



WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN

US 221, 2 mi (3.2 km) north of Linville; 828/733-4337; www.grandfather.com

Grandfather Mountain, at a lofty 5,964 ft (1,817 m), is a United Nations-designated biosphere reserve. The main attraction is the summit and the **Mile High Swinging Bridge.** It is indeed more than a mile (1.6 km) high, and it swings a little in the breeze—but it should be called the "Singing Bridge" because of the somewhat unnerving sound of the constant wind moving through the steel cables holding it in place. The view from Grandfather Mountain is stunning, and the peak is easily accessible via the scenic road that traces the skyward mile.



MILE HIGH SWINGING BRIDGE, GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN

Aside from the view, many come to Grandfather Mountain for the **hiking.** There are a few short hikes along the drive to the top and more hikes that will test your stamina and mettle as you climb to the true summit of Grandfather Mountain. The **wildlife habitats** are also popular, where you'll find large enclosures that provide a place for white-tailed deer, eagles, river otters, black bears, and cougars to live.

LINVILLE GORGE AND FALLS

Often called the Grand Canyon of the East, Linville Gorge is located near Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) milepost 316 in a nearly 12,000-ac (4,900-ha) federally designated Wilderness Area. It's genuine wilderness, and some of the hollers in this preserve are so remote that they still shelter virgin forests —a rarity even in these wild mountains. Linville Falls (BRP milepost 316) is one of the most photographed places in North Carolina, a spectacular series of cataracts that fall crashing into the gorge. It can be seen from several short trails that depart from the **Linville Falls Visitors Center** (BRP

milepost 317; 828/765-1045). Linville Gorge has some great climbing spots, including Table Rock, parts of which are popular with beginning climbers, and other parts which should only be attempted by experts. Other extremely strenuous options are the Hawksbill cliff face and Sitting Bear rock pillar.

CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK

665 Main St., Chimney Rock, milepost 384.7 via US 74A E.; 828/625-9611; www.chimneyrockpark.com

Chimney Rock State Park is among the many geological beauties you'll find along the Blue Ridge Parkway corridor. The 315-ft (96-m) tower of stone that is Chimney Rock stands on the side of the mountain. To get to the top of the chimney, you can take a 26-story elevator ride or hike the **Outcroppings Trail,** a 0.25-mi (0.4-km) trail nicknamed "The Ultimate Stairmaster." No matter how you get there, the view is spectacular. There are additional dizzying views to take in and mountain-hugging trails to hike in the park, and you'll also find rock climbers tackling bouldering, top-rope, and multipitch climbs.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

LOCAL MUSIC FESTIVALS

In September, Raleigh is filled with music as the **Hopscotch Music Festival** (various venues; https://hopscotchmusicfest.com; early Sept.) delivers a genre-rich lineup of artists, and the **Wide Open Bluegrass Festival** (various venues; https://raleighwideopen.com; Oct.) brings hundreds of banjo pickers into the state capital.



WIDE OPEN BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

In the northern Blue Ridge you'll find a few great fiddlers conventions, including the **Bluegrass and Old-Time Fiddlers Convention** (691 W. Lebanon St., Mount Airy; 336/755-2362; www.mountairyfiddlersconvention.com; first full weekend in June).

In Wilkesboro, what began as a small folk festival in 1988 has grown into **MerleFest** (www.merlefest.org; late Apr.), one of the premier roots-music events in the country. It draws thousands of visitors every year for many of the top-name performers in folk, country, and bluegrass music.

FULL FRAME DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL

Durham; 919/687-4100; www.fullframefest.org; Apr.

In April, Durham hosts the Full Frame Documentary Festival, identified by *The New York Times* as the premier documentary film festival in the country before it was even in its 10th year. Venues around downtown host screenings, workshops, panels, and soirees where documentary fans and aspiring filmmakers can mingle with the glitterati of the genre.

LEXINGTON BARBECUE FESTIVAL

Lexington; www.thebarbecuefestival.com; Oct.

October is officially Barbecue Month in Davidson County, and late in the month every year, up to 200,000 people descend on Lexington for the Barbecue Festival. Lexington Barbecue, Speedy's BBQ, and a host of other local restaurants provide the eats, while concerts, contests, and children's activities fill the city. It's your chance to sample the full array of Carolina 'cue in one place. Considering that more than 15,000 pounds of barbecue are served each day, there's plenty of each style to go around.

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

BARBECUE

In North Carolina, barbecue can be a divisive topic, yet it always brings people back together. There are two primary styles within the state and hundreds of regional and family recipe variations on seasonings, sauce, and sides, but let's keep it simple and say that in North Carolina, barbecue is either Eastern-style or Lexington-style.

Eastern-style barbecue uses whole hogs that, once cooked over oak wood coals (sometimes as long as overnight) are chopped or pulled apart, seasoned with a dash or splash of thin sauce made from vinegar and peppers, then served on sandwiches and platters. You'll find the highest concentration of Eastern-style 'cue restaurants east of I-95. **Lexington-style** barbecue uses shoulders and butts, cooks them over a hickory-dominant blend of woods, and is chopped coarsely before being served on platters and sandwiches. The sauce builds off the vinegar and pepper from the east and adds something thick and sweet—sometimes tomato paste, other times brown sugar, and still other times molasses—to give it body. Throughout the state, you'll hear friendly (or borderline heated) discussions on the merits of each style and how sides like slaw, hush puppies, or potato salad should be prepared.

Here are some places where you can try it for yourself.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Be sure to pick up **handmade wares** made by the craftspeople of the Appalachian Mountains. You'll find beautiful textiles, pottery, jewelry, furniture, dolls, and more at **Southern Highland Craft Guild** stores (828/523-4110; www.southernhighlandguild.org), or stop by the gallery at the **Penland School of Crafts** (67 Doras Trail, Bakersville; 828/765-2359; www.penland.org), a folk arts instruction center of international renown.

The tiny town of **Seagrove** is home to a generations-old tradition of folk **pottery.** Start at the **North Carolina Pottery Center** (233 East Ave., Seagrove; 336/873-8430; www.ncpotterycenter.org), then move on to the 100-plus studios tucked along lovely country roads.

Featured in a memorable scene in the 2006 movie *Junebug*, **Replacements Ltd.** in Greensboro (1089 Knox Rd., off I-85 exit 132; 800/737-5223; www.replacements.com) is an incredible place to shop as well as simply to gawk. Replacements is five football fields of retail and behind-the-scenes space dedicated to an impressive collection of tableware and flatware. If you want to replace your great-grandmother's 1865 baby spoon that you accidentally mangled in the garbage disposal, Replacements is at your service.

- **Skylight Inn** (4618 S. Lee St., Ayden; 252/746-4113; www.skylightinnbbq.com), one of the oldest and most lauded barbecue joints in the state, uses the whole hog all the time. Dishes are served with dense fried cornbread and slaw.
- **Clyde Cooper's Barbeque** (327 S. Wilmington St., Raleigh; 919/832-7614; www.clydecoopersbbq.com) is a Raleigh institution that has been serving Eastern-style barbecue since the 1930s. They're always busy—which is a good thing.

- **Lexington Barbecue** (100 Smokehouse Ln., Lexington; 10 US 29/70 S.; 336/249-9814; www.lexbbq.com) is the pinnacle of Lexington-style barbecue. Order a plate of coarse chopped brown—the crispy, barky bit on the outside of the meat—and you'll be hooked.
- **Stamey's Old Fashioned Barbecue** (2206 W. Gate City Blvd., Greensboro; 336/299-9888; www.stameys.com) is family-run, and they've been running for a long time, so you know their barbecue game is strong. Traditional, rootsy, and delicious, Lexington-style Stamey's is a must.

CRAFT BREWS

You can't go far without passing a brewery in North Carolina. There are nearly two dozen breweries in **Wilmington,** and they've racked up accolades, awards, and stellar write-ups, putting the city on the map as one of North Carolina's great beer destinations. Stop by **Flying Machine Brewing Company** (3130 Randall Pkwy., Wilmington; 910/769-8173; www.flyingmachine.com) to get started.

In the **High Country** corner of the state, the breweries tend to be smaller, which means styles and flavors that really reflect local palates and, for the bold, allows for more experimentation. While you're here, **Fonta Flora Brewery** (317 N. Green St., Morganton; 828/475-7501; www.fontaflora.com) is a good spot to try.

Asheville is regarded as the epicenter of North Carolina's beer and culinary scenes, and it's well deserved. Once named "Beer City USA" and perpetually at the top of any beer geek's list of cities to visit, Asheville's brewery scene is exemplary in terms of variety, innovation, and sheer volume. When you're in town you'll have no problem finding a brewery to visit, but you could start with **Burial Beer Co.** (40 Collier Ave., Asheville; 828/475-2739; www.burialbeer.com) or **Green Man Brewery** (23 Buxton Ave., Asheville; 828/989-7453; www.greenmanbrewery.com).

BOILED PEANUTS

Few snacks are more viscerally craved by locals, and more revolting to non-Southerners, than boiled peanuts. The recipe is simple: Green peanuts are boiled in their shells in bulk in water as salty as the chef deems necessary. Once they're soft and slimy, the peanuts are dumped into a strainer and are ready to eat. All you need to make them is a big kettle and a fire, so boiled peanuts are often made and sold in small bags at roadside stands, primarily in the Lowcountry and coastal plain, but increasingly in the mountains as well. Often these roadside stands are themselves folk art, with handmade signs reading "Boilt P-Nuts Here," with a collection of carvings or sculptures for sale in the bed of a truck nearby.



BOILED PEANUTS

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Charlotte Douglas International Airport:** CLT; 5501 Josh Birmingham Pkwy., Charlotte; 704/359-4013; www.cltairport.com
- **Raleigh-Durham International Airport:** RDU; 2400 W. Terminal Blvd., Morrisville; 919/840-2123; www.rdu.com
- **Piedmont Triad International Airport:** GSO; 1000 Ted Johnson Pkwy., Greensboro; 336/665-5600; www.flyfrompti.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit North Carolina:** www.visitnc.com
- **North Carolina State Parks:** www.ncparks.gov

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Charlotte Observer:*** www.charlotteobserver.com
- ***Raleigh News & Observer:*** www.newsobserver.com

OceanofPDF.com

SOUTH CAROLINA

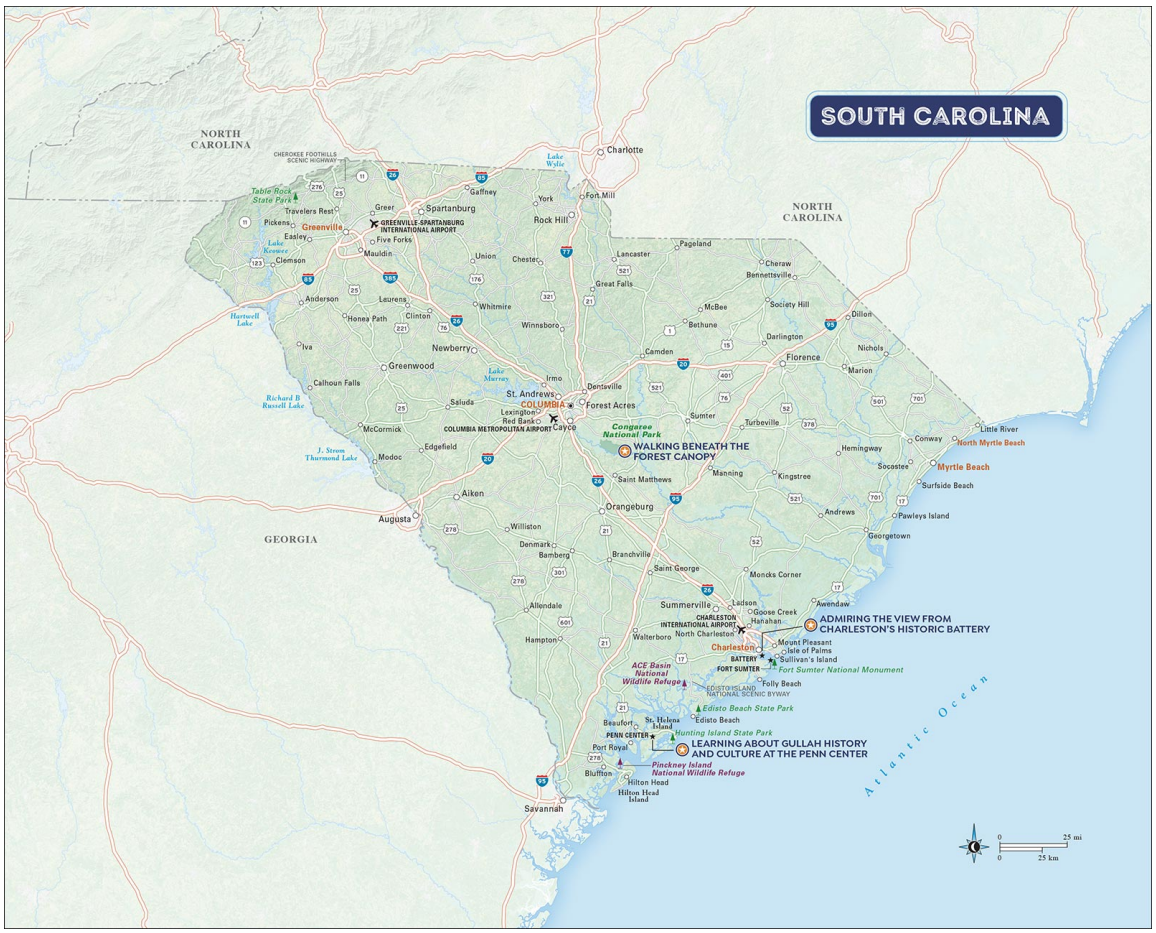
From historic coastal towns to dramatic mountain views, the Palmetto State draws visitors with its rich history, Indigenous traditions, culinary innovations, and varied landscape. Stretching from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the north to the Atlantic Ocean, South Carolina was one of the original 13 colonies. The state sits on the lands of the federally recognized Catawba tribe. Here you'll find delectable destinations like Charleston and the spectacular South Carolina Lowcountry, which is part of the largest contiguous salt marsh in the world. Kayakers are at home paddling in the blackwater of the ACE Basin while beachgoers are amazed at the underrated quality of the area's serene strands. It's not just the fabled Southern hospitality that you'll find here; it's a joie de vivre born of great weather and natural beauty. Folks down here love a good story, a good conversation, and a good laugh. It's the people that make a visit here truly memorable.

AREA: 32,020 sq mi / 82,933 sq km (40th)

POPULATION: 5,478,831 (23rd)

STATEHOOD DATE: May 23, 1788 (8th)

STATE CAPITAL: Columbia


SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
GEORGIA
NORTH CAROLINA
CHEROKEE FOOTHILLS SCENIC HIGHWAY
Table Rock State Park
Lake Keowee
Hartwell Lake
Richard B Russell Lake
J. Strom Thurmond Lake
Lake Wylie
Lake Murray
Congaree National Park
ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge
Edisto Beach State Park
Hunting Island State Park
Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge
Fort Sumter National Monument
EDISTO ISLAND NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY
Atlantic Ocean
Charlotte
Fort Mill
Gaffney
York
Rock Hill
Spartanburg
Greer
Travelers Rest
Greenville
Pickens
Easley
Five Forks
Mauldin
Clemson
Union
Chester
Lancaster
Pageland
Cheraw
Bennettsville
Great Falls
McBee
Society Hill
Dillon
Bethune
Darlington
Florence
Nichols
Marion
Little River
North Myrtle Beach
Conway
Hemingway
Socastee
Myrtle Beach
Surfside Beach
Pawleys Island
Georgetown
Andrews
Kingstree
Manning
Turbeville
Sumter
Camden
Dentsville
Forest Acres
Irmo
St. Andrews
COLUMBIA
Lexington
Red Bank
Cayce
COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN AIRPORT
Saluda
McCormick
Edgefield
Modoc
Greenwood
Newberry
Iva
Calhoun Falls
Anderson
Laurens
Clinton
Honea Path
Whitmire
Winnsboro
Saint Matthews
Orangeburg
Aiken
Augusta
Williston
Denmark
Bamberg
Branchville
Saint George
Moncks Corner
Summerville
Ladson
Goose Creek
Awendaw
Hanahan
CHARLESTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
North Charleston
Walterboro
Hampton
Allendale
Mount Pleasant
Isle of Palms
Sullivan's Island
Charleston
BATTERY
FORT SUMTER
Folly Beach
Edisto Beach
St. Helena Island
Beaufort
PENN CENTER
Port Royal
Bluffton
Hilton Head Island
Savannah
GREENVILLE-SPARTANBURG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
WALKING BENEATH THE FOREST CANOPY
ADMIRING THE VIEW FROM CHARLESTON'S HISTORIC BATTERY
LEARNING ABOUT GULLAH HISTORY AND CULTURE AT THE PENN CENTER
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Along the Atlantic coast, **Charleston** is a charming town with a compact, winding downtown. The **Lowcountry**'s mossy, laid-back pace belies its former status as the heart of American plantation culture and the original cradle of secession. Here you'll find the quiet towns of **Hilton Head** and **Myrtle Beach.** Heading inland, **Columbia,** the state capital, resides in the **Midlands** region. The state's northwestern corner sidles up to the **Blue Ridge Mountains.**

WHEN TO GO

You should try to experience this area at its peak of natural beauty during the magical period from **mid-March** to **mid-May.** Not surprisingly, lodging is the most expensive and most difficult to secure at that time. Average high temperatures range from the 70s F (21-26°C) in March (when there can be sudden cold snaps) to 80s and low 90s F (27-34°C) in May and June.

Activity here slows down noticeably in **July** and **August.** Average high temperatures will flirt with the 90s F (32-37°C) many if not most days, with lows in the mid-70s F (23-25°C).

In the middle of **November,** when the tourist crush significantly subsides, not only are the days delightful and the nights crisp (but not frigid), but also you can get a room at a good price. Average high temperatures hover in the high 70s F (25-26°C), with lows rarely dipping into the 40s F (4-9°C). However, do be aware that early autumn is also the peak of **hurricane season.** Check tropical weather forecasts as far in advance as you can.

TOP 3

1 ADMIRING THE VIEW FROM CHARLESTON'S HISTORIC BATTERY

S. Battery St. and Murray Blvd., Charleston; 843/724-7321

For many, the **Battery** is the most iconic Charleston spot, drenched in history and boasting dramatic views. South is the Cooper River, with views of Fort Sumter, Castle Pinckney, and Sullivan's Island; north is the old carrier USS *Yorktown*, moored at Mount Pleasant; and landward is the adjoining peaceful **White Point Gardens,** the sumptuous mansions of the Battery. Once the bustling (and sometimes seedy) heart of Charleston's maritime activity, the Battery was where "the gentleman pirate" Stede Bonnet and 21 of his men were hanged in 1718. The area got its name for hosting cannons during the War of 1812, with the current distinctive seawall structure built in the 1850s. Contrary to popular belief, no guns fired on Fort Sumter from here, as they would have been out of range. However, many inoperable cannons, mortars, and piles of shot still reside here, much to the delight of kids.



THE BATTERY

2 LEARNING ABOUT GULLAH HISTORY AND CULTURE AT THE PENN CENTER

16 Penn Center Circle W., St. Helena Island; 843/838-7105; www.penncenter.com

St. Helena Island is most famous for the Penn Center, the spiritual home of Gullah culture and history. In 1865, the site became the South's first school created to educate Black youth. The Penn Center is part of the National Park Service-administered **Reconstruction Era National Historic Park.**



PENN CENTER

The 65-ac (26-ha) campus includes the **historic Darrah Hall** schoolhouse. The hall was at the heart of the Penn Center's mission to educate emancipated Black children during and after the Civil War. Most visitors spend their time at the welcome center, museum, schoolhouse, and bookshop, housed in the **York W. Bailey Museum.** The campus is also a relaxing place to walk or even have a picnic.

If you drive past the Penn Center a few hundred yards, you'll see ancient tabby ruins on the left side of the road. This is the **Chapel of Ease,** the remnant of a 1740 church destroyed by a forest fire in the late 1800s. Across the street from the Penn Center campus is **Brick Baptist Church.** The church was built by enslaved people in 1855 and is the oldest church on St. Helena Island.

3 WALKING BENEATH THE FOREST CANOPY AT CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

100 National Park Rd., Hopkins; 803/776-4396; www.nps.gov/cong

About two hours away from Charleston, near the state capital in Columbia, Congaree National Park contains ancient stands of old-growth cypress, one of the few such forests left in the world. It is, quite simply, wonderful.



CYPRESS FOREST IN CONGAREE NATIONAL PARK

Embark on a system of elevated boardwalks and trails, 25 mi (40 km) in total, through a good portion of Congaree's 26,000 ac (10,500 ha). A self-guided tour brochure explains the fascinating aspects of this unique environment. You'll see cypresses towering over 100 ft (30 m) into the air. At ground level you'll see hundreds of cypress "knees," parts of the trees' root systems that jut aboveground. You'll see unbelievably massive loblolly pines—a larger, immeasurably grander species than the sad slash pine tree farms that took over much of the South with the arrival of paper plants in the 1930s.

A particularly rare treat at Congaree are the yearly displays of the indigenous **synchronous fireflies.** They light things up for about two

weeks from mid-May to mid-June in an amazing display. The only catch is, to keep the habitat intact, only a limited number of visitors can be in the park to observe the firefly fireworks. For just this event, tickets are required, gained through a lottery system and application fee.

HIGHLIGHTS

RAINBOW ROW

79-107 E. Bay St., between Tradd St. and Elliot St., Charleston

One of the most photographed sights in the United States, Rainbow Row is 13 pastel-colored mansions facing the Cooper River. The bright, historically accurate colors are one of the vestiges of Charleston's Caribbean heritage, a legacy of the English settlers from the colony of Barbados who were among the city's first citizens. The homes are unusually old for this fire-, hurricane-, and earthquake-ravaged city, with most dating from 1730 to 1750. These houses were originally right on the Cooper River, their lower stories serving as storefronts on the wharf. The street was created later on top of landfill, or "made land" as it's called locally.

FORT SUMTER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Charleston Harbor; 843/883-3123; www.nps.gov/fosu

This is the place that brought about the beginning of the Civil War, a Troy for modern times. Though many historians insist the war would have happened regardless of President Lincoln's decision to keep Fort Sumter in federal hands, the stated casus belli was Major Robert Anderson's refusal to surrender the fort when requested to do so in the early morning hours of April 12, 1861. A few hours later came the first shot of the war, fired from Fort Johnson by Confederate captain George James. That 10-in (25-cm) mortar shell, a signal for the general bombardment to begin, exploded above Fort Sumter. The first return shot from Fort Sumter was fired by none

other than Captain Abner Doubleday, the man once credited as the father of baseball.



FORT SUMTER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Today the battered but still-standing Fort Sumter remains astride the entrance to Charleston Harbor on an artificial 70,000-ton (63,500-metric-ton) sandbar, being part of the Third System of fortifications ordered after the War of 1812. You can only visit by boats run by the approved concessionaire, **Fort Sumter Tours** (843/722-2628; www.fortsumtertours.com), which leads two-hour tours from Patriot's Point or Liberty Square.

Major CITIES

CHARLESTON: One of America's oldest cities and an early national center of arts and culture, Charleston's legendary taste for the high life is matched by its forward-thinking outlook. The

birthplace of the Civil War is not just a city of museums resting on its historic laurels. Situated on a hallowed spit of land known as "the peninsula," the Holy City is now a vibrant, creative hub of the New South.

COLUMBIA: South Carolina's state capital is home to the South Carolina State Museum and the University of South Carolina. From here, it's a 30-minute drive to Congaree National Park.

GREENVILLE: Outdoor lovers flock to Greenville for its proximity to natural wonders. The quickly growing city is also home to a thriving arts and culture scene.

OCEAN DRIVE BEACH

North Myrtle Beach

A two-hour drive up the coast from Charleston, Myrtle Beach is one of the state's top destinations for golf and relaxation. Ocean Drive, in North Myrtle Beach, draws music fans and beach lovers alike. The "OD" is the birthplace of **Carolina shag,** a partner dance paired with beach music founded in the 1940s that is popular to this day. The best places to experience Carolina shag are **Duck's** (229 Main St., North Myrtle Beach; 843/249-3858; https://ducksdanceclub.com), **Fat Harold's** (212 Main St., North Myrtle Beach; 843/249-5779; www.fatharolds.com), and the **OD Pavilion** (91 S. Ocean Blvd., North Myrtle Beach; 843/280-0715; Apr.-Oct.).



MYRTLE BEACH

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE MUSEUM

301 Gervais St., Columbia; 803/898-4921; www.scmuseum.org

For a deep dive into the Palmetto State's art, culture, and natural history, plan to spend the day at the South Carolina State Museum. The permanent collection features exhibits on the state's Indigenous cultures, plus extensive coverage of its natural history—from the dinosaurs to the features that define the state's current habitats. You can also learn about advancements in industry, transportation, and space exploration.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start your trip in **Beaufort,** walking around the beautifully preserved historic district. Cross the bridge to St. Helena Island and

visit historic **Penn Center** before enjoying dinner and drinks on **Bay Street.**

DAY 2 Spend the morning exploring the **Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge,** before driving one hour to Charleston. Plan on visiting one of Charleston's great house museums, such as the **Aiken-Rhett House.** Have a hearty Southern-style lunch, and then take a trip to **Fort Sumter National Monument.** After dinner, take a stroll or carriage ride through the French Quarter to close the evening.

DAY 3 Spend a leisurely afternoon shopping on **King Street** and at **Old City Market.** Take a sunset stroll around **The Battery** and admire **Rainbow Row** before diving right into a great meal at one of the city's fine restaurants.

DAY 4 Drive two hours northwest to South Carolina's capital, **Columbia.** Downtown, focus your time learning about the state's history and culture at the **South Carolina State Museum.**

DAY 5 Start early to drive 30 minutes from Columbia to **Congaree National Park.** You'll feel like you've stepped back in time wandering through its old-growth forest and primordial cypress swamp. It's about 2.5 hours back to Beaufort.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

CHEROKEE FOOTHILLS SCENIC HIGHWAY

SC-11

The 112-mi (180-km) byway winds through the hills of Piedmont into the Blue Ridge Mountains with spectacular views along its length. At minimum, allow four hours to complete the drive—you'll want to take your time and stop at the waterfalls and towns along the way. **Table Rock** is one of the highest points in the state, and is a highlight of the drive. The highway passes two **historic bridges** on the approach to Campobello through foothills dotted with peach and apple orchards: The only remaining covered bridge in the state is located in Campbell. You'll also pass **Poinsett Bridge,** the state's oldest bridge.

EDISTO ISLAND NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

SC-174

One of the last truly unspoiled places in the Lowcountry, Edisto Island has been highly regarded as a getaway spot since the Edisto people first started coming here for shellfish. In fact, locals here swear that the island was settled by English-speaking colonists even before Charleston was settled in 1670. The Edisto Island National Scenic Byway runs 17 mi (27 km) across the island. Starting at **ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge,** the byway weaves through marshes and fields to **Edisto Beach State Park.** The 1.5-mi-long (2.4-km) beach park is a great place for hiking and biking trails along its 4 mi (6.4 km) of trails—many of which are ADA-accessible.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

HUNTING ISLAND STATE PARK

2555 Sea Island Pkwy., Hunting Island; 843/838-2011; https://southcarolinaparks.com/hunting-island [URL inactive]

Rumored to be a hideaway for Blackbeard himself, the aptly named Hunting Island was indeed for many years a notable hunting preserve, and its abundance of wildlife remains to this day. The island is one of the East

Coast's best birding spots and also hosts dolphins, loggerheads, alligators, and deer. A true family-friendly outdoor adventure spot, Hunting Island State Park has something for everyone. Yet it still retains a certain sense of lush wildness—so much so that it doubled as Vietnam in the movie *Forrest Gump*. At the north end, past the campground, is the island's main landmark, the historic **Hunting Island Lighthouse,** which dates from 1875. Although the lighthouse ceased operations in 1933, a rotating light—not strong enough to serve as an actual navigational aid—is turned on at night.

ACE BASIN

Occupying much of the area between Beaufort and Charleston, the ACE Basin—the acronym signifies its role as the collective estuary of the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto Rivers—is one of the most enriching natural experiences the country has to offer. The ACE Basin's three core rivers, the Edisto being the largest, are the framework for a matrix of waterways crisscrossing its approximately 350,000 ac (141,640 ha) of saltwater marsh. While the ACE Basin can in no way be called "pristine," it's a testament to the power of nature that after 6,000 years of human presence and often intense cultivation, the basin manages to retain much of its untamed feel.



EGRET IN ACE BASIN

EDISTO BEACH STATE PARK

8377 State Cabin Rd., Edisto Island; 843/869-2156; https://southcarolinaparks.com/edisto-beach [URL inactive]

Edisto Beach State Park is one of the world's foremost destinations for shell collectors. Largely because of fresh loads of silt from the adjacent ACE Basin, there are always new specimens, many of them fossils, washing ashore. The park stretches across 1.5 mi (2.4 km) of beach and features the state's longest system of fully accessible hiking and biking trails, including one leading to the 4,000-year-old **Spanish Mount Shell Midden,** now much eroded from past millennia and in danger of completely falling into the nearby river. The particularly well-done interpretive center has plenty of interesting exhibits about the nature and history of the park as well as the surrounding ACE Basin.



EDISTO BEACH STATE PARK

PINCKNEY ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

843/784-2468; www.fws.gov/refuge/pinckney_island

Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge is the only part of a small refuge that's open to the public. Two-thirds of the former rice plantation is salt marsh and tidal creeks, making it a perfect microcosm for the Lowcountry as a whole, as well as a great place to kayak or canoe. Some of the state's richest birding opportunities abound here.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA

Charleston; 843/579-3100; www.spoletousa.org; Memorial Day-mid-June

Indisputably Charleston's single biggest and most important event, Spoleto Festival USA has come a long way since it was a sparkle in the eye of the late composer Gian Carlo Menotti in the 1970s. Though Spoleto long ago broke ties with its founder, his vision remains indelibly stamped on the event from start to finish. There's plenty of music, to be sure, in genres that include orchestral, opera, jazz, and avant-garde, but you'll find something in every other performing art, such as dance, drama, and spoken word, in traditions from Western to African to Southeast Asian. For 17 days from Memorial Day weekend through early June, Charleston hops and hums nearly 24 hours a day to the energy of this vibrant, cutting-edge (yet accessible) artistic celebration.

As if all the hubbub around Spoleto didn't give you enough to do, there's also **Piccolo Spoleto** (843/724-7305; www.piccolospoleto.com), literally "little Spoleto," running concurrently. The intent of Piccolo Spoleto—begun just a couple of years after the larger festival came to town—is to give local and regional performers a time to shine, sharing some of that larger spotlight on the national and international performers at the main event. Of particular interest to visiting families will be Piccolo's children's events, a good counter to some of the decidedly more adult fare at Spoleto USA.



PICCOLO SPOLETO

GULLAH FESTIVAL OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Beaufort; 843/525-0628; www.theoriginalgullahfestival.org [URL inactive]; Memorial Day weekend

Running since 1986, the Gullah Festival of South Carolina celebrates Gullah history and culture on Memorial Day weekend in May at various locations throughout town, mostly focusing on Waterfront Park.

BEST FOOD

SEAFOOD

South Carolina's seafood is a must-try. Here are some highlights you shouldn't miss.

- **Shrimp and grits:** Enjoy this classic entrée at **Poogan's Porch** (72 Queen St., Charleston; 843/829-4332; www.poogansporch.com) and **Slightly North of Broad** (192 E. Bay St., Charleston; 843/723-3424; www.snobcharleston.com), both in Charleston.

- **Lowcountry boil:** Near Beaufort it's called Frogmore stew after the township (now named St. Helena) just over the river. Closer to Savannah it's simply called Lowcountry boil. Supposedly the first pot of this delectable, hearty concoction was made by Richard Gay of the **Gay Fish Company** (1948 Sea Island Pkwy., St. Helena Island; 843/838-2763; www.gayfishcompanyinc.com). As with any vernacular dish, dozens of local and family variants abound. The key ingredient that makes Lowcountry boil/Frogmore stew what it is—a well-blended mélange with a character all its own, rather than just a bunch of stuff thrown together in a pot of boiling water—is some type of crab-boil seasoning. You'll find Zatarain's seasoning suggested on a lot of websites, but Old Bay is far more common in the eponymous Lowcountry where the dish originated.
- **May River oysters:** May River at Bluffton provides top-quality oysters. Between September and May, you can buy them fresh at **Bluffton Oyster Company** (63 Wharf St., Bluffton; 843/757-4010; www.blufftonoyster.com).

BARBECUE

You'll find all types of **barbecue sauce:** vinegar and pepper, light tomato, heavy tomato, and the South Carolina classic—hot, sweet mustard-based sauce, a nod to the state's German heritage. Don't forget about side dishes like pork-based **hash, cracklins** (fried pork skin), **white bread,** and **sweet tea.**

Here are some of the best barbecue spots:

- At **Henry's Smokehouse** (240 Wade Hampton Blvd., Greenville; 864/232-7774; www.henryssmokehouse.com), make sure to get sauce on the side.

BEST SOUVENIRS

A stretch of US 17 in Mount Pleasant north of Charleston has been dubbed the Sweetgrass Basket Makers Highway in honor of the many wooden stalls along its length hosting local African American artisans selling their homemade **sweetgrass baskets,** a centuries-old tradition with African roots. **City Market** (Meeting St. and Market St.; 843/973-0920) in Charleston is a good place to start. If you must have one of the handcrafted sweetgrass baskets, try out your haggling skills—the prices have wiggle room built in.

- **McCabe's Bar-B-Que** (480 N. Brooks St., Manning; 803/435-2833) is best known for their vinegar and pepper sauce.
- **Dukes Barbecue** (949 Robertson Blvd., Walterboro; 843/549-1446) is the best place to try a variety of sauces.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Charleston International Airport:** CHS; 5500 International Blvd., Charleston; 843/767-7000; www.iflychs.com
- **Columbia Metropolitan Airport:** CAE; 3250 Airport Blvd., West Columbia; 803/822-5000; https://flycae.com
- **Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport:** GSP; 2000 GSP Dr., Greer; 864/877-7426; www.gspairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Discover South Carolina:** https://discoversouthcarolina.com
- **South Carolina State Parks:** www.southcarolinaparks.com [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The State:*** www.thestate.com

GEORGIA

Georgia retains a timeless mystique evocative of an era before the coming of the Europeans, even before humankind itself. Situated on the lands of the Muscogee and Cherokee Nations, Georgia is best known for its music traditions, rich civil rights history, delicious peaches, and much more.

Often called the Golden Isles because of the play of the afternoon sun on the vistas of marsh grass, its other nickname, the Debatable Land, is a nod to its centuries-long role as a constantly shifting battleground of European powers.

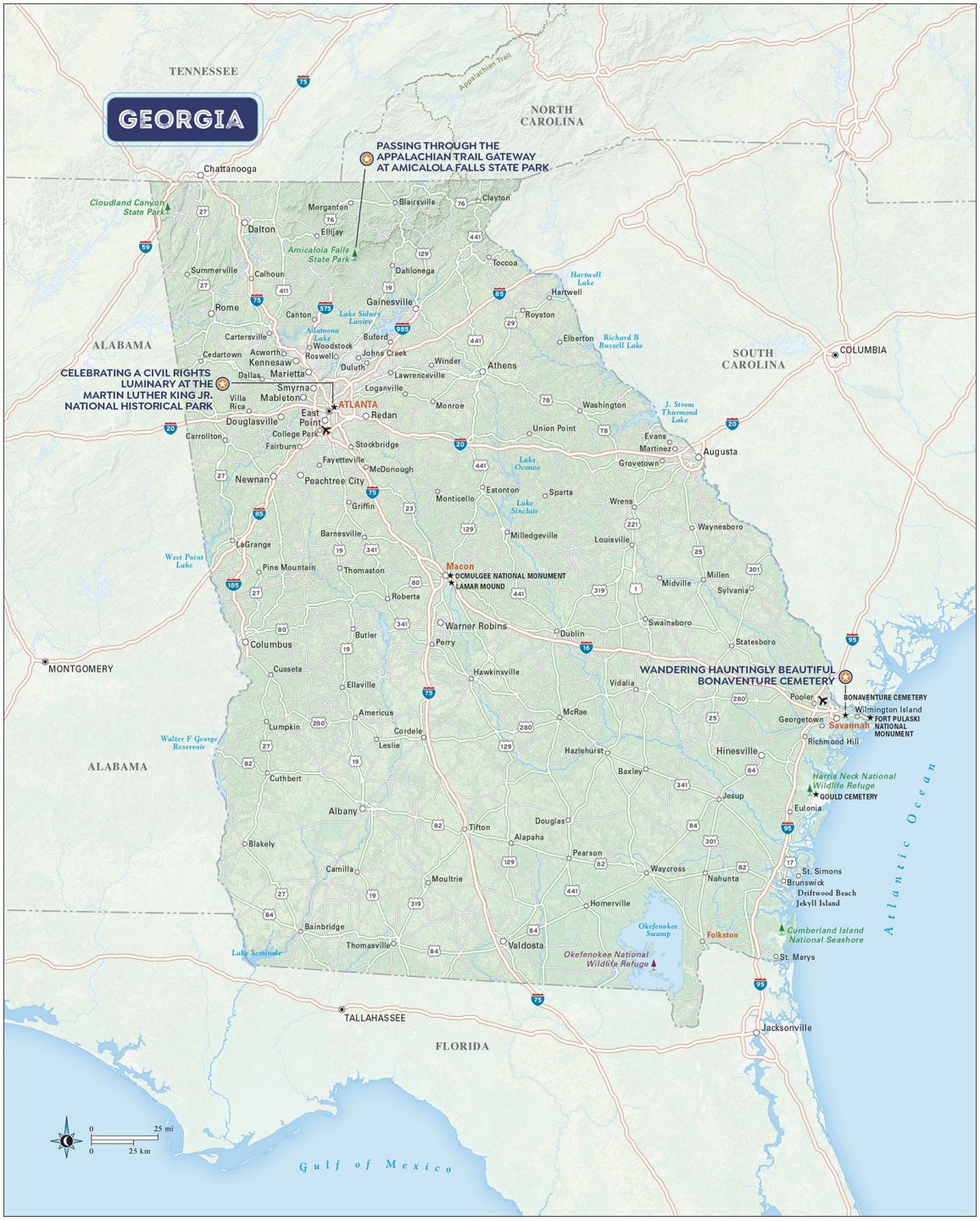
On the map it looks relatively short, but Georgia's coastline is the longest contiguous salt marsh environment in the world—a third of the country's remaining salt marsh. Abundant with wildlife, vibrant with exotic, earthy aromas constantly refreshed by a steady, salty sea breeze, it's a place with no real match anywhere else.

AREA: 59,425 sq mi / 153,910 sq km (24th)

POPULATION: 11,180,878 (8th)

STATEHOOD DATE: January 2, 1788 (4th)

STATE CAPITAL: Atlanta


GEORGIA
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
ALABAMA
FLORIDA
PASSING THROUGH THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL GATEWAY AT AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK
CELEBRATING A CIVIL RIGHTS LUMINARY AT THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
WANDERING HAUNTINGLY BEAUTIFUL BONAVENTURE CEMETERY
Appalachian Trail
Chattanooga
Cloudland Canyon State Park
Dalton
Amicalola Falls State Park
Morganton
Blairsville
Clayton
Toccoa
Dahlonega
Summerville
Calhoun
Rome
Canton
Gainesville
Lake Sidney Lanier
Hartwell Lake
Hartwell
Royston
Elberton
Richard B Russell Lake
Athens
Winder
Lawrenceville
Duluth
Johns Creek
Roswell
Woodstock
Buford
Allatoona Lake
Acworth
Kennesaw
Cedartown
Cartersville
Dallas
Marietta
Smyrna
Villa Rica
Mableton
Loganville
ATLANTA
East Point
Redan
Douglasville
College Park
Fairburn
Carrollton
Stockbridge
Fayetteville
McDonough
Newnan
Peachtree City
Griffin
Monroe
Washington
Union Point
Evans
Martinez
Augusta
Grovetown
COLUMBIA
J. Strom Thurmond Lake
Lake Oconee
Eatonton
Monticello
Sparta
Wrens
Lake Sinclair
Waynesboro
Louisville
Milledgeville
Barnesville
LaGrange
West Point Lake
Pine Mountain
Thomaston
Macon
OCMULGEE NATIONAL MONUMENT
LAMAR MOUND
Midville
Millen
Sylvania
Roberta
Warner Robins
Dublin
Swainsboro
Statesboro
Butler
Perry
Columbus
MONTGOMERY
Cusseta
Ellaville
Hawkinsville
Vidalia
Pooler
BONAVENTURE CEMETERY
Wilmington Island
FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT
Georgetown
Savannah
Richmond Hill
Hinesville
Americus
McRae
Lumpkin
Cordele
Leslie
Walter F George Reservoir
Hazlehurst
Baxley
Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge
GOULD CEMETERY
Jesup
Eulonia
Cuthbert
Albany
Tifton
Douglas
Alapaha
Blakely
Pearson
Waycross
Nahunta
St. Simons
Brunswick
Driftwood Beach
Jekyll Island
Camilla
Moultrie
Homerville
Okefenokee Swamp
Folkston
Cumberland Island National Seashore
Bainbridge
Thomasville
Valdosta
Lake Seminole
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
St. Marys
TALLAHASSEE
Jacksonville
Atlantic Ocean
Gulf of Mexico
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Set in the north-central portion of the state, **Atlanta,** the capital, is a vibrant, progressive Southern city and Black mecca, home to several historically Black colleges and universities. Along the coast, cosmopolitan **Savannah**'s quirky hedonism permeates any visit. Whether you're meandering through the downtown squares or enjoying the sea breeze and a cocktail out on **Tybee Island,** a sense of fun imbues all parts of life here.

The beautiful broad **beaches** of Georgia are almost all situated on barrier islands, long islands parallel to the shoreline and separated from the mainland by a sheltered body of water. Georgia's Golden Isles are home to one-third of the East Coast's salt marsh, and their natural beauty is a major draw.

WHEN TO GO

Spring and **fall,** when the weather is mild, are the best times to visit. In **summer,** the average high for July, the region's hottest month, in Savannah is about 92°F (33°C). Heat aside, there's no doubt that one of the most difficult things for visitors to adjust to is the humidity. The average annual humidity in Savannah is about 55 percent in the afternoons and a whopping 85 percent in the mornings. The most humid months are August and September. **Winters** here are pretty mild; the coldest month is January.

TOP 3

1 CELEBRATING A CIVIL RIGHTS LUMINARY AT THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

450 Auburn Ave. NE, Atlanta; 404/331-1401; www.nps.gov/malu

The National Park Service manages several sites as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park and Preservation District, including King's birth home, Fire Station No. 6, and the original Ebenezer Baptist Church, where King first preached and where his

funeral was held, just down the street. Both the church and King's birth home, as well as the larger historical park, are stops on the US Civil Rights Trail. Start at the **visitor center** (450 Auburn Ave. NE; tel. 404/331-5190, ext. 5046) to get information on how to tour the site, secure a ticket to tour King's birth home, and see a short film about Dr. King and Civil Rights Movement exhibits.



TOMB OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND CORETTA SCOTT KING

The **International Civil Rights Walk of Fame** also begins here at 450 Auburn Avenue NE and continues on to the **National Center for Civil and Human Rights** (100 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd.). The walk consists of more than 100 stars commemorating civil rights luminaries, from Rosa Parks to Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, King's right-hand man.

2 WANDERING HAUNTINGLY BEAUTIFUL BONAVENTURE CEMETERY

330 Bonaventure Rd., Savannah; 912/651-6843; www.bonaventurehistorical.org

On the banks of the Wilmington River just east of town lies one of Savannah's most distinctive sights, Bonaventure Cemetery. While its pedigree as Savannah's premier public cemetery goes back to the mid-19th century, it was used as a burial site as early as 1794. In the years since, this achingly poignant vista of live oaks and azaleas has been the final resting place of such local and national luminaries as Johnny Mercer, writer Conrad Aiken, American Revolution leader Noble Jones, and, of course, the Trosdal plot, former home of the *Bird Girl* statue made famous after the publication of John Berendt's novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (the original was moved to the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences after tourists flocked to the cemetery to see it).



BONAVENTURE CEMETERY

The self-guided tour starts at the small visitor center at the entrance. By all means, do the tourist thing and pay your respects at Capitol Records co-founder Johnny Mercer's final resting place, and go visit beautiful little "Gracie" in Section E, Lot 99. Or, do as the locals do: Bring a picnic lunch and a blanket and set yourself beside

the breezy banks of the Wilmington River, taking in all the lazy beauty and evocative bygone history surrounding you.

3 PASSING THROUGH THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL GATEWAY AT AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK

418 Amicalola Falls State Park Rd., Dawsonville; 706/265-8888; https://amicalolafallslodge.com

Named after the 729-ft (222-m) waterfall, Amicalola Falls State Park and Lodge is nestled in the **Chattahoochee National Forest** in the mountains in the north of the state. The park is home to the **Appalachian Trail Gateway.** The gateway marks the starting point of the Approach Trail leading 8 mi (13 km) to the southern end of the Appalachian Trail.



AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK

You can hike to the park's namesake falls, one of the highest cascading waterfalls east of the Mississippi, on a 2-mi (3.2-km) loop featuring a series of grated metal steps. Along the way, you'll pass the Reflection Pool and several impressive viewpoints. Extend your

visit by staying at the park's luxurious lodge or spending the night at the campground.

HIGHLIGHTS

GEORGIA AQUARIUM

225 Baker St. NW, Atlanta; 404/581-4000; www.georgiaaquarium.org

A leader in conservation and marine research, the Georgia Aquarium preserves and promotes the diverse environment thriving off the Georgia coast. Visitors can learn about the creatures who call the state's waters home. Dolphin and sea lion presentations are entertaining and informative for the whole family. For the more adventurous, the aquarium offers swimming and diving programs. You could spend all day at the aquarium being mesmerized by jellyfish and rays or watching playful penguins and sea otters. When you've worked up an appetite, the **Coastline Café** serves family-friendly classics.

Major CITIES

ATLANTA: Atlanta's status as a hub for creative, entrepreneurial people—especially African Americans—is a manifestation of what the movement was about. Known as the LGBTQ+ capital of the South, it is generally considered an inclusive city where anyone can find their place. You'll feel this in the multicultural lines of people waiting patiently for a meal. At museums, when visitors come together to learn about the segregated South, hopefully they come out on the other side connected by a shared experience.

SAVANNAH: Independent and walkable, Savannah's centerpiece is its intriguing historic district. The spirit of independence continues to run through the city with a growing hipster culture.

MACON: Situated in the middle of the state, Macon is a thriving hub of arts and entertainment. Its proximity to the Ocmulgee River makes it a go-to destination for outdoor enthusiasts

FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

23 Montgomery St., Savannah; 912/233-0636; https://firstafricanbc.com

The premier historical attraction on Franklin Square is the First African Baptist Church, the oldest Black congregation in North America, dating from 1773. The church also hosted the first African American Sunday school, begun in 1826. The church's founding pastor, George Leile, was the first Black Baptist in Georgia and perhaps the first Black missionary in the country. The present building dates from 1859 and was constructed almost entirely by members of the congregation, some of whom redirected savings intended to purchase their freedom toward the building of the church. A gathering place for those about to start the harrowing journey on the Underground Railroad, First African Baptist still bears the scars of that turbulent time. In the floor of the fellowship hall—where many civil rights meetings were held, because it was safer for white citizens to go there instead of Black activists going outside the church—you'll see breathing holes, drilled for use by escaped enslaved people who were hidden in a cramped crawlspace.



FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

OWENS-THOMAS HOUSE

124 Abercorn St., Savannah; 912/233-9743; www.telfair.org/visit/owens-thomas

Oglethorpe Square's main claim to fame, the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters, lies on the northeast corner. Widely known as the finest example of Regency architecture in the United States, the house was designed by brilliant young English architect William Jay. One of the first professionally trained architects in the United States, Jay was only 24 when he designed the home for cotton merchant Richard Richardson, who lost the house in the depression of 1820 (all that remains of Richardson's tenure are three marble-top tables).

Tours begin in the carriage house area adjacent to the gift shop. The tour, which brings a focus to urban enslavement, delves into the lives and

experiences of the dozen or so enslaved people who worked here at any given time.

FORT PULASKI NATIONAL MONUMENT

101 Fort Pulaski Rd.; 912/786-5787; www.nps.gov/fopu

Fort Pulaski National Monument is a delight for any history buff. Enter the inside of the fort and take in just how big it is—after retaking the fort, Union forces regularly played baseball on the huge, grassy parade ground. Take a walk around the perimeter, underneath the ramparts. This is where the soldiers lived and worked, and is where Confederate prisoners of war were held after the fort's surrender. Cannon firings happen most Saturdays.

Ascend the steep corkscrew staircase up to the ramparts themselves and take in the jaw-dropping view of the lush marsh, with the Savannah River and Tybee Island spreading out in the distance. Save some time and energy for the extensive palmetto-lined nature trail through the sandy upland of Cockspur Island, on which the fort is located. There are informative markers, a picnic area, and, as a bonus, a coastal defense facility from the Spanish-American War, Battery Hambright.

JEKYLL ISLAND

www.jekyllisland.com

Once the playground of the world's richest people, Jekyll then became a dedicated vacation area for Georgians of modest means, by order of the state legislature. A living link to one of the most glamorous eras of American history, the **Jekyll Island Historic District** is also one of the largest ongoing restoration projects in the southeastern United States. A visit to this 240-ac (402-ha) riverfront area and its 34 historic structures is like stepping back in time to the Gilded Age, with croquet grounds, manicured gardens, and even ferryboats with names like the *Rockefeller* and the *J. P. Morgan.* The pedestrian-friendly historic district essentially comprises the buildings and grounds of the old **Jekyll Island Club Resort,** not only a full-service resort complex but a sort of living-history exhibit chronicling that time when Jekyll was a gathering place for the world's richest and most influential people.



DRIFTWOOD BEACH, JEKYLL ISLAND

Also on the island is the **Georgia Sea Turtle Center** (214 Stable Rd.; 912/635-4444; www.jekyllisland.com), which features interactive exhibits on these important marine creatures, for whom Jekyll Island is a major nesting ground.

OCMULGEE MOUNDS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

1207 Emery Hwy.; 478/752-8257; www.nps.gov/ocmu

The site of this fascinating National Historic Park has been inhabited for 12,000 years. The first peoples arrived in the Paleo-Indian Period and lived in the area as hunter-gathers. As far back as 900 CE, the native peoples of the Ocmulgee region began building the mounds that you can see today. The mounds were excavated in the 1930s as part of a federal works program employing over 800 individuals during the Great Depression. The dig unearthed an impressive 2.5 million artifacts such as arrowheads,

jewelry, and stone tools that helped shed light on the site's long history. Today, the park is a popular spot for hiking and picnicking. The **visitor center** includes a museum housing artifacts—some from 10,000 BCE. In the summer, the park hosts the annual **Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration,** a weekend celebrating the culture of the Southeastern Native Americans.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Start in **Atlanta,** where you'll tour Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth home and historic **Ebenezer Baptist Church,** part of the **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park.** Spend the afternoon learning about the state's coastal riches at the **Georgia Aquarium.**

DAY 2 On the drive 250 mi (402 km) east to Savannah, stop at **Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park.** Here you can learn about the first peoples to live in the Ocmulgee region. Savannah's **River Street** is a great place to unwind and people-watch before heading to dinner.

DAY 3 Spend the day in Savannah learning about the city's role in the **Underground Railroad** at sites like the **First African Baptist Church.** The **Owens-Thomas House** gives a good introduction of the experiences of the enslaved people who lived there.

DAY 4 On your way out to **Tybee Island,** stop for a walk through the amazing **Bonaventure Cemetery**—about 15 minutes outside downtown. A half-hour drive takes you to scenic and historically important **Fort Pulaski National Monument.** Scoot on another 10 minutes into Tybee and climb to the top of the lighthouse at the **Tybee Island Light Station and Museum** before dinner.

DAY 5 Take a scenic drive 95 mi (152 km) along the **Coastal Highway,** US 17, south to **Jekyll Island.** The peaceful island is perfect for an afternoon bike ride. Tonight you'll step back in time to the island's heyday of the early 1900s at the **Jekyll Island Club Resort** (371 Riverview Dr., Jekyll Island; 888/445-3179; www.jekyllclub.com).

DAY 6 Drive an hour south to **St. Marys,** the gateway to **Cumberland Island National Seashore.** Stroll the historic fishing town before hopping on the 45-minute ferry ride to the island. With more than 17 mi (27 km) of gorgeous beach, there's no shortage of scenery. Keep an eye out for the island's herd of wild horses. You'll stay in St. Marys for the night.

DAY 7 It's a short drive to **Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge,** where you'll spend the morning on the water on a boat tour. In the afternoon, take a short hike to admire the refuge's wetlands and prairies. Grab dinner at **Folkston,** where you'll stay for the night before driving the nearly five hours back to Atlanta in the morning.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

COASTAL HIGHWAY US 17

Fans of retro Americana and roadside kitsch will find a treasure trove of down-home sites along the old Coastal Highway, now known as US 17. Before the arrival of the interstate highway system, US 17 was by far the most traveled route in the region. While now just a shadow of its former self, it is still a vital roadway and contains a lot of interesting, little-known history. Beginning just north of Charleston, South Carolina, and ending at Brunswick, Georgia, this is a fun road trip you could easily accomplish in a day, just checking out the sights along the way. A stretch of US 17 in Mount

Pleasant north of Charleston has been dubbed the **Sweetgrass Basket Makers Highway** in honor of the many wooden stalls along its length hosting local African American artisans selling their homemade sweetgrass baskets, a centuries-old tradition with African roots. About 15 minutes south of Midway, on the side of the road near South Newport, is the minuscule and charming **Memory Park Christ Chapel,** aka the Smallest Church in America. The current structure was rebuilt after arson sadly destroyed the original in 2015. After 179 mi (288 km) from Charleston, you'll reach Brunswick. A cast-iron pot in Mary Ross Waterfront Park in downtown Brunswick is allegedly the container in which the first batch of Brunswick stew was cooked up.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CLOUDLAND CANYON STATE PARK

122 Cloudland Canyon Park Rd., Rising Fawn; 706/657-4050; https://gastateparks.org/CloudlandCanyon [URL inactive]

This spectacular park in the Cumberland Plateau offers views of waterfalls, canyons, and caves. For the adventurous, guided tours of **Sitton Cave** are available in the early summer and fall. Your guide will equip you with cave gear before taking you down a stream passage to admire the unique underground formations. Touring a natural cave is a unique experience that involves crawling and stream-wading; there are no trails or handrails. If you'd prefer stay above ground, you can hike, bike, or ride horses along the park's extensive network of trails. The 5-mi (8-km) **West Rim Trail** is a popular preview of the park's most impressive features, including panoramic views of Cloudland Canyon. The short **Waterfalls Trail** features a stair-step trail to two of the park's canyons. In the 2-mi (3.2-km) round-trip hike you'll visit Cherokee and Hemlock Falls.



CLOUDLAND CANYON STATE PARK

HARRIS NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

5000 Wildlife Dr. NW, Townsend; 843/784-2468;
www.fws.gov/refuge/harris_neck

Literally a stone's throw from the Smallest Church in America is the turnoff onto the 7-mi (11.5-km) Harris Neck Road leading east to the Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge. This is one of the single best sites in the South to view wading birds and waterfowl in their natural habitat. Nearly 3,000 ac (1,214 ha) of nationally protected refuge, Harris Neck gets thousands of visitors a year coming to experience its mix of marsh, woods, and grassland ecosystems and for its nearly matchless bird-watching. Most visitors use the 4-mi (6.4-km) "wildlife drive" to travel through the refuge, stopping occasionally for hiking or bird-watching.



HARRIS NECK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Kayaks and canoes can put in at the public boat ramp on the Barbour River. Near the landing is the **Gould Cemetery,** an old African American cemetery that is publicly accessible.

OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

4155 Suwannee Canal Rd., Folkston; 912/496-7836; www.fws.gov/okefenokee

Just a short drive off I-95, the massive and endlessly fascinating Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is one of the lesser-visited national public lands. Nevertheless, the Okefenokee remains one of the most intriguing natural areas on the planet. Native Americans used the swamp as a hunting ground and gave us its current name, which means “land of the

trembling earth," a reference to the floating peat islands, called "houses," that dominate the landscape.



OKEFENOKEE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Today, you can take a boat tour of the swamp—or rent a canoe or kayak to set off on your own. A network of trails leads through the refuge's wetlands and prairies, which teem with birdlife during the migration season.

CUMBERLAND ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

912/882-4336, ferry reservations 877/860-6787; www.nps.gov/cuis

Contrary to popular opinion, Cumberland Island's famous wild horses are not direct descendants of the first horses brought to the island by Spanish and English settlers, although feral horses have certainly ranged the island for most of recorded history. The current population of about 150 is descended from horses brought to the island by the Carnegie family in the 1920s. The National Park Service leaves the herd virtually untended and unsupervised.

Gorgeous and evocative though these magnificent animals are, they have a big appetite for vegetation and frankly are not the best thing for this

sensitive barrier island ecosystem. But their beauty and visceral impact on the visitor is undeniable, which means the horses are likely to stay as long as nature will have them. They often congregate to graze around the 1884 Dungeness Ruins, intended as the Thomas Carnegie family's winter home, and indeed any open space. Over the years they've made trails through the forest and sand dunes, and can often be seen cavorting on the windy beach in the late afternoon and early evening.

BRUNSWICK STEW

Virginians insist that the distinctive Southern dish known as Brunswick stew was named for Brunswick County, Virginia, in 1828, where a political rally featured stew made from squirrel meat. But all real Southern foodies know the dish is named for Brunswick, Georgia. You can find the famous pot in which the first batch was cooked on F Street near Mary Ross Waterfront Park in Brunswick.

What we now know as Brunswick stew is based on an old colonial recipe, adapted from Native Americans, that relied on the meat of small game—originally squirrel or rabbit but nowadays mostly chicken or pork—along with vegetables like corn, onions, and okra simmered over an open fire. Today, this tangy, thick, tomato-based delight is a typical accompaniment to barbecue throughout the Lowcountry and the Georgia coast, as well as a freestanding entrée on its own. Here are some great spots to give it a try.

- **Marshside Grill** (1200 Glynn Ave., Brunswick; 912/342-7981; www.marshsidegrill.com)
- **Shane's Rib Shack** (315 Village at Glynn Place, Brunswick; 912/264-4227; www.shanesribshack.com)
- **Southern Soul Barbecue** (2020 Demere Rd., St. Simons; 912/638-7685; www.southernsoulbbq.com)

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Atlanta; 404/526-8900; www.thekingcenter.org; Jan.

Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park is a bevy of activity in January during Dr. King's birthday month, when thousands of visitors come from all over the world to engage with his ideas and philosophies while celebrating his life. An annual march and rally on King's federal holiday evoke King's beloved community. The march takes place around 1:30pm, shortly after the commemorative service at the **Ebenezer Baptist Church Horizon Sanctuary** (101 Jackson St. NE). The atmosphere of the march is lively and energetic—it's Dr. King's birthday, after all.

GEORGIA APPLE FESTIVAL

Ellijay; www.georgiaapplefestival.org; Oct.

Since 1971, the Georgia Apple Festival has drawn apple lovers from all over the state. Held over a weekend in October, the festival features over 300 vendors, live music, and a craft market. Don't miss the festival's parade and the town's Apple Arts Festival in downtown Ellijay before heading over to the festival fairgrounds. Many vendors only accept cash; plan ahead.



BRUNSWICK STEW

BEST FOOD AND DRINK

SAVANNAH'S "TO-GO" COCKTAILS

Arguably the single most civilized trait of Savannah, and certainly one of the things that most sets it apart, is the glorious old tradition of the "to-go cup." True to its history of hard partying and general open-mindedness, Savannah, like New Orleans, legally allows you to walk the streets downtown with an open container of your favorite adult beverage. The quick and easy guideline is to keep your Styrofoam or plastic to-go cups north of Jones Street.

Every downtown watering hole has stacks of cups at the bar for patrons to use. You can either ask the bartender for a to-go cup—aka a "go cup"—or just reach out and grab one yourself. Don't be shy; it's the Savannah way.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport:** ATL; 6000 North Terminal Pkwy., Atlanta; 800/897-1910; www.atl.com
- **Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport:** SAV; 400 Airways Ave., Savannah; 912/964-0514; www.savannahairport.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Explore Georgia:** www.exploregeorgia.org
- **Georgia State Parks:** https://gastateparks.org [URL inactive]

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Atlanta Journal-Constitution:*** www.ajc.com

ALABAMA

Alabama is perhaps best known for its role in the Civil Rights Movement, and a visit to the state is a chance to walk in the footsteps of heroes. In Selma, you can walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge toward Montgomery—just as John Lewis did when he was advocating for voting rights. Montgomery offers the opportunity to visit the church where Martin Luther King Jr. accepted his first pastorship at the age of 25. Birmingham remembers Rosa Parks and others in its Civil Rights Institute, drawing connections from the Civil Rights Movement to other movements around the world.

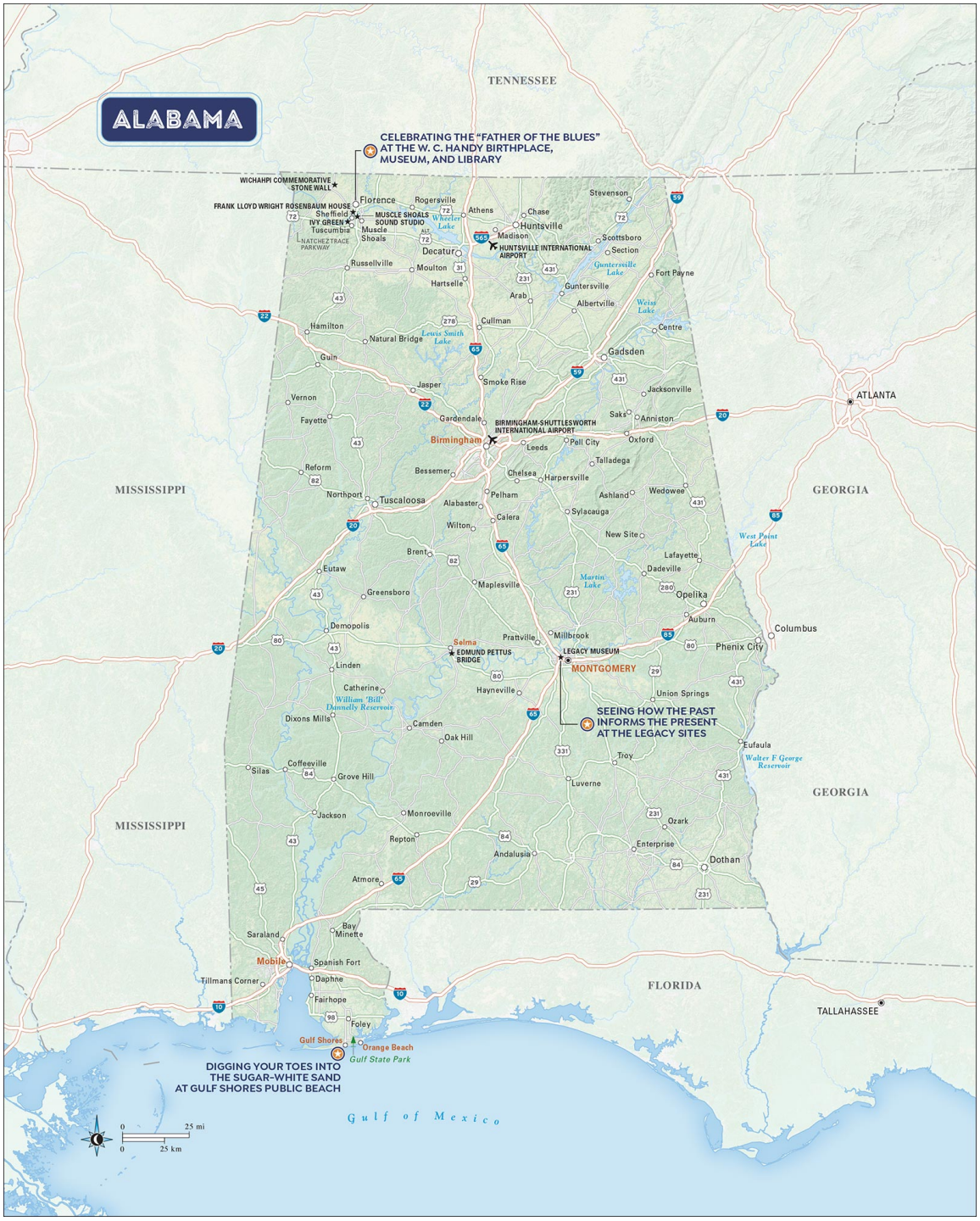
Alabama is on Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Muscogee (Creek) land. Often overlooked, this sun-baked Southern state offers much beyond its civil rights legacy, too, from white-sand beaches and world-class fishing on the Gulf Shores to some surprising cultural finds in the Shoals region, including an impressive piece of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture, a pair of sights that pay homage to the state's musical history, and a monument commemorating the Trail of Tears.

AREA: 52,420 sq mi / 135,767 sq km (30th)

POPULATION: 5,157,699 (24th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 14, 1819 (22nd)

STATE CAPITAL: Montgomery


ALABAMA
CELEBRATING THE "FATHER OF THE BLUES" AT THE W. C. HANDY BIRTHPLACE, MUSEUM, AND LIBRARY
WICHAHPI COMMEMORATIVE STONE WALL
FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ROSENBAUM HOUSE
MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND STUDIO
IVY GREEN
NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY
HUNTSVILLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
BIRMINGHAM-SHUTTLESWORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE
LEGACY MUSEUM
SEEING HOW THE PAST INFORMS THE PRESENT AT THE LEGACY SITES
DIGGING YOUR TOES INTO THE SUGAR-WHITE SAND AT GULF SHORES PUBLIC BEACH
Gulf State Park
Florence
Rogersville
Athens
Chase
Huntsville
Stevenson
Madison
Scottsboro
Section
Fort Payne
Decatur
Russellville
Moulton
Hartselle
Guntersville
Albertville
Arab
Centre
Cullman
Hamilton
Natural Bridge
Gadsden
Guin
Smoke Rise
Jasper
Jacksonville
Vernon
Fayette
Gardendale
Saks
Anniston
Birmingham
Pell City
Oxford
Leeds
Talladega
Reform
Bessemer
Chelsea
Harpersville
Northport
Tuscaloosa
Alabaster
Pelham
Ashland
Wedowee
Sylacauga
Calera
Wilton
New Site
Brent
Lafayette
Eutaw
Dadeville
Maplesville
Greensboro
Opelika
Auburn
Demopolis
Prattville
Millbrook
Columbus
Phenix City
Selma
Linden
MONTGOMERY
Catherine
Haynesville
Union Springs
Dixons Mills
Camden
Oak Hill
Eufaula
Troy
Coffeeville
Silas
Grove Hill
Luverne
Jackson
Monroeville
Ozark
Repton
Enterprise
Andalusia
Dothan
Atmore
Saraland
Bay Minette
Mobile
Spanish Fort
Tillmans Corner
Daphne
Fairhope
Foley
Gulf Shores
Orange Beach
Gulf of Mexico
TENNESSEE
MISSISSIPPI
GEORGIA
FLORIDA
ATLANTA
TALLAHASSEE
Wheeler Lake
Guntersville Lake
Weiss Lake
Lewis Smith Lake
William 'Bill' Dannelly Reservoir
Martin Lake
West Point Lake
Walter F George Reservoir
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Birmingham is located near the center of Alabama, with **Montgomery** and **Selma** about 1.5 hours south and **Huntsville,** a large city with the University of Alabama-Huntsville, about 1.5 hours to the north. The **Natchez Trace Parkway** grazes the state's northwestern corner.

Tucked between Mississippi to the west, Georgia to the east, Tennessee to the north, and Florida to the south, Alabama does have a slice of shoreline, too: The southwestern corner of the state lies directly on the Gulf of Mexico. This is where **Mobile** is located, along with the popular vacation destinations of **Gulf Shores** and **Orange Beach.**

WHEN TO GO

Fall, which tends to be dry and mild, is generally a good time to visit Alabama. **Summers** are among the hottest in the country, with average temperatures above 90°F (32°C). Tropical storm season lasts November through May, with most tornadoes taking place in **spring** (Mar.-Apr.). **Winter** is relatively mild, though average night temperatures can dip below freezing, particularly in the northeastern part of the state.

TOP 3

1 SEEING HOW THE PAST INFORMS THE PRESENT AT THE LEGACY SITES

400 N. Court St., Montgomery; 334/386-9100; https://museumandmemorial.eji.org

Opened in 2018, the **Legacy Museum,** with the theme From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, draws a critical and irrefutable through-line from Black enslavement to contemporary policies that continue to oppress. Inside, exhibits unfurl like a timeline, leading visitors chronologically through periods of US history. You'll see holograms of enslaved Black people held in pens, soil samples from

cities where people were lynched, and a wall of Jim Crow signs reminding us of how the color line was reinforced in daily movements and interactions.

After you've explored the museum, head to the haunting **National Memorial for Peace and Justice** (417 Caroline St., Montgomery; 334/386-9100; https://legacysites.eji.org)—the nation's first-ever memorial to the victims of lynching—located about 1 mi (1.6 km) away from the museum on 6 ac (2.4 ha) that overlook the city. Taken together, the museum and memorial are a heavy but worthwhile experience. You will be transformed.



RISE UP AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE BY ARTIST HANK WILLIS

2 CELEBRATING THE "FATHER OF THE BLUES" AT THE W. C. HANDY BIRTHPLACE, MUSEUM, AND LIBRARY

620 W. College St., Florence; 256/275-3128; www.wchandymuseum.org

The modest cabin that was musician W. C. Handy's birthplace in 1873 is now the site of this museum, which houses considerable

memorabilia from the man who created St. Louis Blues, Beale Street Blues, and Memphis Blues. The African American composer had a significant impact not just on blues, but on the music that eventually would become rock 'n' roll. Knowledgeable tour guides impart a lot of information about Handy's role in modern music. Artifacts include Handy's piano and lots of sheet music.



W. C. HANDY BIRTHPLACE, MUSEUM, AND LIBRARY

3 DIGGING YOUR TOES INTO THE SUGAR-WHITE SAND AT GULF SHORES PUBLIC BEACH

100 Gulf Shores Pkwy., Gulf Shores; 251/968-2040; www.gulfshoresal.gov

The stretch of coast from **Orange Beach** to **Gulf Shores** contains 32 mi (51 km) of beautiful shoreline. The region is a natural extension of the Florida Gulf Coast in both geography and culture, and the

beaches here are just as beautiful and sugar white. Gulf Shores Public Beach is the most popular beach in the area. To find huge crowds of beachgoers, just drive to the end of AL-59. There are volleyball courts, plenty of bars and restaurants, three open-air pavilions, and restrooms with showers. Lifeguards are on duty during summer, making this an excellent choice for families for swimming, surfing, or boogie-boarding.



GULF SHORES PUBLIC BEACH

A sprawling, laid-back beach bar and restaurant, **The Hangout** (101 E. Beach Blvd., Gulf Shores; 251/948-3030; www.thehangout.com) is impossible to miss and features live music most nights in summer. Once the band starts up, the place draws a heavy-drinking college crowd, but before then it's an excellent choice for families—kids love playing in the large sand pit.

HIGHLIGHTS

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

520 16th St. N., Birmingham; 205/328-9696; www.bcri.org

Opened in 1992, this institute is the centerpiece of the Birmingham Civil Rights Historic District. Through photos, video, and narratives, visitors meet courageous Black residents who galvanized Birmingham's Black community—including children—to embrace nonviolent direct-action tactics. The museum also covers civil rights events outside Birmingham, including the Montgomery bus boycott.



BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE

The institute is separated into themed galleries. **Barriers** covers social norms before the Civil Rights Movement kicked off, when segregation seeped into every corner of life and affected everything from water fountains to barbershops, while **Movement** showcases the Montgomery bus boycott sparked by Rosa Parks. You'll also see original steel bars from the

jail cell from which King wrote “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” The bars stand in a moodily lit room that is motion-activated to play King’s reading of the famous letter.

The **Human Rights** gallery links the US Civil Rights Movement to the larger quest for equality and access globally. In **Resource,** you can listen to an oral history collection, including voices of foot soldiers who marched in the 1963 Children’s Crusade.

16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

1530 6th Ave. N., Birmingham; 205/251-9402; www.16thstreetbaptist.org

A longtime gathering center for African American Birmingham residents, 16th Street Baptist Church was the site of mass meetings and rallies during the Civil Rights Movement. The church was also the site of tragedy on September 15, 1963, when a Ku Klux Klan bombing killed four young girls who were preparing for a day of youth-focused activities in the basement bathroom.

Travelers can visit the church, which was designed by Black architect Wallace Rayfield, on tours led by church members, many of whom have a connection to the movement: Some can even provide firsthand experiences of the day of the bombing and surrounding events. The centerpiece of the church is the **Wales Window,** presented to the church by the people of Wales in memory of the bombing in 1963. The window features a crucified man resembling a Black Christ—a bold statement that continues to show parishioners that they are the image of God. The figure’s right hand pushes away hatred and justice while the left offers forgiveness. A rainbow above his head represents the covenant between God and His people.

DEXTER AVENUE KING MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

454 Dexter Ave., Montgomery; 334/263-3970;
www.dexterkingmemorial.org

In 1954, at the age of 25, Martin Luther King Jr. became minister of the church that’s now known as Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist in

Montgomery. This was King's first pastorate, and it's where he was launched into the limelight. Montgomery bus boycott organizing activity occurred in the church basement, where King had an office.

The church is home to a thriving congregation today, but visitors are welcome to partake in a tour to learn about its history, and to walk where King walked and see where he preached. See King's basement office and his high-backed pulpit chair in the upstairs sanctuary, which is awash with sunlight beaming through colored window panes. The **Dexter Parsonage Museum** (303 S. Jackson St.; 334/261-3270; www.dexterkingmemorial.org), where the King family lived, is also open to visitors, and is frozen in time, with King family mementos throughout.

Major CITIES

BIRMINGHAM: The state's most populous city, Birmingham was the site of an intense, multifaceted campaign against segregation in 1963. Visitors today can learn about the city's role in the Civil Rights Movement by visiting museums, memorials, and churches.

MONTGOMERY: Alabama's capital city was the site of a famous bus boycott during the Civil Rights Movement. Like Birmingham, it's home to a number of sites where visitors can learn about this pivotal moment in national history.

MOBILE: The port city of Mobile, known for seafood and French architecture, is situated on Alabama's Gulf Coast, about 1.5 hours northwest of Gulf Shores

EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

Selma

The Edmund Pettus Bridge stretches across the Alabama River, designating the entrance into the city of Selma. When voting rights activists attempted to cross the bridge to leave Selma in a march to Montgomery in 1965, violence ensued. Today, the bridge is an enduring symbol of the Civil

Rights Movement and a site for the annual commemorative march that takes place every March.



EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

Ironically, the bridge, a powerful symbol for voting rights, is named for a Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan leader. Some have argued the bridge should be renamed for the late civil rights leader and longtime US Representative John Lewis, a key player in the marches; others surmise that a landmark representing Black triumph over white supremacy suits the Pettus legacy well.

For many, the bridge with the controversial name will always be a site of pilgrimage and purpose. It should take about 10-15 minutes to walk across the 0.25-mi (0.4-km) bridge and back.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ROSENBAUM HOUSE

601 Riverview Dr., Florence; 256/718-5050; https://wrightinalabama.com

Rosenbaum House, the only Frank Lloyd Wright building in the state of Alabama, is an example of Wright's utilitarian Usonian-style architecture, and perhaps one of its best examples. The L-shaped red brick house was designed to be affordable and functional and was built for Mildred and

Stanley Rosenbaum and their family. It is one of the few Wright homes with an addition designed by Wright himself (the Rosenbaums had four boys who needed a little more room to roam than the original design afforded). Mildred donated the house to the city of Florence in 1999, and some of her weavings are on display inside. The house has a strong connection to the outdoors, where the large lot blends with the house through the tall glass windows.

IVY GREEN

300 N. Commons St., West Tuscumbia; 256/383-4066; www.helenkellerbirthplace.org

Ivy Green is the birthplace and historic home of **Helen Keller,** the brilliant woman who would become a leader for education and rights for the blind and deaf. The clapboard house has been left mostly how it was in Keller's time, and tours are available for the home and grounds. One of the highlights of the 640-ac (258-ha) property is the well pump where "Miracle Worker" Anne Sullivan taught the young Keller to spell out "water" with hand symbols, connecting those symbols to a concrete meaning. By the end of that day, Keller, who had been largely unable to communicate, knew 30 words. Six months later she knew the alphabet and 625 words.

While the building itself is interesting, it is the stories told here of Sullivan and Keller's friendship and hard work that are compelling for kids and adults alike. *The Miracle Worker* is performed here each summer as part of the annual Helen Keller Festival.

MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND STUDIO

3614 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield; 256/978-5151; https://muscleshoalssoundstudio.org

Muscle Shoals Sound Studio (also known by its address, **3614 Jackson Highway**) may look familiar: It's appeared on the cover of a Cher album named after the famous address. Between 1969 and 1978, this was the place musicians including Bob Seger, Paul Simon, and the Rolling Stones came to record. After closing, it fell into disrepair. After the *Muscle Shoals* documentary, music executives and producers Dr. Dre and Jimmy Iovine

from Beats Electronics decided to make a sizable philanthropic gift toward its restoration. Muscle Shoals Sound Studio reopened in 2017, fully restored to its 1969 glory down to its retro plaid couches. Musicians such as The Black Keys have come to record here since.

In addition to nabbing the requisite selfie in front of the famous sign, you should take a **tour of the studios.** In addition to viewing memorabilia, you'll hear stories about the music history made here—for instance about the rift between Rick Hall and The Swampers that led them to leave FAME Studios and create this one.

WICHAHPI COMMEMORATIVE STONE WALL

Natchez Trace milepost 341.8

One of the country's most compelling landmarks, this 1-mi-long (1.6-km) wall is a monument to builder Tom Hendrix's great-great grandmother, Te-lah-nay, and her journey on the Trail of Tears. Each stone, hand-placed by Hendrix (or visitors) beginning in 1988, symbolizes a single step Te-lah-nay took. Today the wall includes stones from more than 120 different countries.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin in **Montgomery,** Alabama's state capital, where Martin Luther King Jr. helmed his first church, **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church.** Tour the church to learn about its history, along with **Dexter Parsonage Museum,** where the King family lived.

DAY 2 Spend the morning visiting Montgomery's **Legacy Museum** and the **National Memorial for Peace and Justice,** the nation's first memorial to the victims of lynching. In the afternoon, start the one-hour drive to Selma (50 mi/80 km). As you approach the town, you'll cross the **Edmund Pettus Bridge,** where peaceful

voting rights demonstrators met violence at the hands of law enforcement on what came to be known as Bloody Sunday.

DAY 3 From Selma, drive two hours (90 mi/145 km) to Birmingham. Learn about the Birmingham Campaign, a local civil rights initiative, at the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.** Then go across the street to **Kelly Ingram Park,** a site where some of the most critical events took place.

DAY 4 Spend a second day in Birmingham touring **16th Street Baptist Church** and finding something good to eat in the **Historic 4th Avenue Business District.**

DAY 5 From Birmingham, it's about a two-hour drive to The Shoals region, sometimes called the Quad Cities: Tuscumbia, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, and Florence. Swing by **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio** for a photo op, then spend the afternoon touring the **W. C. Handy Birthplace, Museum, and Library** in Florence. The **Frank Lloyd Wright Rosenbaum House** is also here in Florence, and **Ivy Green,** Helen Keller's birth home, is located nearby.

DAY 6 From Florence, it's a 20-minute drive to **Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall.** Built to commemorate one woman's journey on the Trail of Tears, it's quite a moving landmark. From there, driving back to Montgomery takes about 3.5 hours.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

NATCHEZ TRACE: ALABAMA

The Natchez Trace runs through just a small corner of Alabama, only 33 mi (53 km) of the parkway's total 444 mi (231 km). This section of the Trace, while short, was essential for General Andrew Jackson's soldiers to travel south during the Battle of New Orleans. Long before, Native Americans used this route as a thoroughfare for traversing the region.



NATCHEZ TRACE

There are just eight stops on this section of the Trace, but they are some of its most powerful and most scenic. Among them is a moving monument to the Trail of Tears, the **Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall,** which is the first stop while heading south on the Trace after crossing the Alabama-Tennessee state line (milepost 341.8). Other stops include the sites of

several former inns that sheltered soldiers, Native Americans, and other travelers.

The Trace's short hikes and overlooks and wooded oases offer a shady respite to what can be hot summer temperatures in Alabama. Wildflowers bloom in spring and early summer, and leaves change to oranges and reds in fall.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

GULF STATE PARK

www.alapark.com/parks/gulf-state-park

The biggest draw of Alabama's Gulf Coast—apart from the miles of sugar-white beaches—is the abundant freshwater and saltwater spring-fed lakes that dot the coast for fishing. Most are found within the 6,150 ac (2,488 ha) of Gulf State Park, which also features rare maritime forest, coastal beaches, and vital dune habitat. The park is around 900-ac (364-ha) **Lake Shelby,** and as you drive along the coast, you will discover large stretches of beach and preserved dune habitat. The park also offers the best camping in the Gulf Shores and Orange Beach area.



LAKE SHELBY

Located within the park, **Gulf State Park Pier** (20800 E. Beach Blvd.; 251/967-3474; www.alapark.com), the largest pier on the Gulf Coast, extends more than 1,500 ft (457 m) into emerald waters and is the best place in the area to reel in Spanish mackerel, bluegill, and more. Even if you don't fish, you can still walk the length of the pier and enjoy the view. The wide beach around the pier is just as popular, with plenty of room to spread out and enjoy the sand and surf with the family. The break on both sides of the pier pilings is popular with surfers and boogie boarders, while the rest of the beach is excellent for swimming.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

SELMA BRIDGE CROSSING JUBILEE

Selma; 334/526-2626; www.selmajubilee.com; Mar.

Every year, the tiny population of Selma (around 17,000) swells with people from around the globe returning to reenact the Sunday, March 7, 1965, attempted crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge known as Bloody Sunday. This annual event is billed as the largest civil rights commemoration in the world.



SELMA BRIDGE CROSSING JUBILEE

This weekend-long event is staged in venues throughout Selma. Activities include talks, film screenings, and inductions into the Hall of Resistance, which honors those who fought (and those who continue to fight) for social justice. The big day, however, is Sunday, when the bridge walk reenactment takes place. For the march's 50th anniversary in 2015, 40,000 people, including President Barack Obama, Congressman John Lewis, and activist Amelia Boynton Robinson, participated.

NATIONAL SHRIMP FESTIVAL

101 Gulf Shores Pkwy., Gulf Shores; www.myshrimpfest.com; Oct.

This annual event is one of the Gulf's biggest celebration of all things related to shrimp—from tacos to gumbo to the best shrimp cocktail sauces. Plan to spend the day visiting numerous food vendors, watching the Best of the Fest Competition, and enjoying live music. There's also a sand sculpture contest on the beach. Kids as young as 5 years old can enter the competition and receive professional tips from representatives of Sand Castle University.

BEST FOOD

SOUL FOOD

Alabama cuisine is heavily influenced by the state's African American population, with dishes such as pulled pork, black-eyed peas, and sweet potato pie taking center stage. Soul food, Southern food, American food—whatever you call it, it's all served with a smile and a good feeling that reaches all the way down into your belly. Some of the state's long-standing soul-food restaurants played a role in the Civil Rights Movement by feeding activists or serving as meeting places. Eating at them today is a powerful way to honor that connection.

In Birmingham's **Historic 4th Avenue Business District,** businesses serve up the best soul food traditions and more, with dishes ranging from baked chicken to bean pie. During the Civil Rights Movement, **Nelson Brothers Café** (312 17th St. N., Birmingham; 205/254-9098) served foot soldiers based on what they could afford to pay; today the café is a go-to for pork chops, rice and gravy, and sweet potato pie.

Lannie's BBQ Spot (2115 Minter Ave., Selma; 334/874-4478), in operation since 1944, is notable for its role in feeding foot soldiers in the Selma voting rights movement. The pulled pork sandwiches here just might change your life: They're topped with cracklins, so you get a crunch in every moist, juicy bite.

During segregation, **Brenda's Bar-B-Que Pit** (1457 Mobile Rd., Montgomery; 334/262-9349) was a safe haven for secret NAACP meetings. Now, the pit is a member of the Alabama Barbecue Hall of Fame. They're

big on plates here, so try a pig ear plate, or a pork rib, fish, or chicken plate. It's all good.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Huntsville International Airport:** HSV; 1000 Glenn Hearn Blvd. SW, Huntsville; 256/772-9395; www.flyhuntsville.com
- **Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport:** BHM; 5900 Messer Airport Hwy., Birmingham; 205/595-0533; www.flybirmingham.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Alabama Tourism Department:** https://alabama.travel
- **Alabama State Parks:** www.alapark.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Birmingham News:*** www.al.com/birmingham
- ***Mobile Press-Register:*** www.al.com/mobile
- ***The Huntsville Times:*** www.al.com/huntsville

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi has been supporting human settlements since 13,000 BCE. The fertile land along the Mississippi River is home to the Choctaw and Chickasaw people. The land gave birth to a culture of farming, and eventually, the towns and cities we can see today. Evidence of the first peoples can still be found at historical mounds, sites that reveal just how important the river was to the state's earliest communities. Established as the Mississippi Territory in 1798, the state has a complicated history. From the rise of cotton to the forced removal of its Native population and the murder of Emmett Till, events that occurred within the state's borders have changed the course of history. Today, visitors tour the state to visit Civil War sites, pay homage to civil rights activists, and immerse themselves in the blues and country music traditions that shaped American music. Come admire the rolling green hills, the diverse wetlands, cypress-fringed byways, and the wide, powerful river.

AREA: 48,432 sq mi / 125,438 sq km (32nd)

POPULATION: 2,943,045 (35th)

STATEHOOD DATE: December 10, 1817 (20th)

STATE CAPITAL: Jackson


MISSISSIPPI
TENNESSEE
ARKANSAS
LOUISIANA
ALABAMA
ALABAMA
Memphis
Southaven
Olive Branch
Lynchburg
Horn Lake
Hernando
Robinsonville
Tunica
Senatobia
Holly Springs
Ripley
Booneville
Corinth
Iuka
BEAR CREEK MOUND AND VILLAGE SITE
Tishomingo State Park
PHARR MOUNDS
New Albany
Baldwyn
Saltillo
NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY HEADQUARTERS AND VISITOR CENTER
Fulton
Tupelo
CHICKASAW VILLAGE SITE
Pontotoc
Tupelo National Battlefield
Verona
SEEING WHERE IT ALL BEGAN AT ELVIS PRESLEY'S BIRTHPLACE
Oxford
Sardis Lake
Batesville
Clarksdale
Enid Lake
Water Valley
IMAGINING LIFE 2,000 YEARS AGO AT BYNUM MOUNDS
Houston
BYNUM MOUNDS
Okolona
Amory
Tutwiler
JOURNEYING INTO THE BLUES ON THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL
Grenada Lake
Grenada
Aberdeen
Cleveland
Ruleville
NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY
West Point
Columbus
New Hope
Greenwood
Winona
Indianola
Greenville
Leland
Starkville
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY
Ackerman
GREAT RIVER ROAD
Hollandale
Louisville
Macon
Durant
Kosciusko
Anguilla
Yazoo City
Pearl River
Philadelphia
Onward
Carthage
Canton
Ross R Barnett Reservoir
Madison
WALLER CRAFT CENTER
Vicksburg National Military Park
Clinton
Ridgeland
Morton
Forest
Meridian
Vicksburg
JACKSON
Brandon
Newton
JACKSON-MEDGAR WILEY EVERS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Byram
Richland
Florence
Crystal Springs
Mendenhall
Port Gibson
Magee
Hazlehurst
Fayette
Laurel
Collins
Waynesboro
Brookhaven
Ellisville
Natchez
Bude
Petal
Hattiesburg
McComb
Columbia
Woodville
Wiggins
Lucedale
Poplarville
Mississippi River
Picayune
Vancleave
Nicholson
GULFPORT-BILOXI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
D'Iberville
Ocean Springs
Escatawpa
Moss Point
Pascagoula
Gulfport
Biloxi
Gulf Islands National Seashore
Pass Christian
Bay Saint Louis
Waveland
Ship Island
BATON ROUGE
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

Mississippi's **Delta** lies in the northwest of the state. The rich soil gradually gives way to the highlands to the east and the wooded areas of the south. To the north stretches the great prairie lands, once the home of cotton plantations. The southeast corner of the state stretches all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, dotted with the coastal towns of **Gulfport** and **Biloxi. Jackson,** the state capital, and **Vicksburg** are centrally located. To the south, where the Mississippi River acts as the border with Louisiana, **Natchez** marks the start of the **Natchez Trace Parkway.**

WHEN TO GO

Plan to visit Mississippi in the **spring** when the temperature is moderate and the oppressive summer heat has yet to touch down. June through October is **hurricane season** along the Gulf Coast. To see fall colors, come in **autumn** and tour the Natchez Trace Parkway. For a quiet vacation, consider visiting in **winter,** the low season, when the temperatures are mild.

TOP 3

1 JOURNEYING INTO THE BLUES ON THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES TRAIL

www.msbluestrail.org

There are nearly 200 sites included as part of the **Mississippi Blues Trail.** Visiting all of them is a considerable undertaking, but diehard blues fans will want to give the pilgrimage a go. These are the must-see stops:

- The **Gateway to the Blues Museum** (13625 US 61 N., Tunica; 662/363-3800; www.tunicatravel.com) is a great place to start. Here, you'll learn about the history of the blues and how the geography contributed to the genre. There's even an exhibition

where you can record your own blues song (which will be emailed to you).

- Created in 1979, Clarksdale's **Delta Blues Museum** (1 Blues Alley Ln., Clarksdale; 662/627-6820; www.deltabluesmuseum.org) is the state's oldest music museum. Also in town, **Red's Blues Club** (398 Sunflower Ave., Clarksdale; 662/627-3166) offers live blues by some of the best local musicians in a no-frills, cash-only bar. The entrance is the door to your right as you approach the building.
- The spectacular **Grammy Museum Mississippi** (800 W. Sunflower Rd., Cleveland; 662/441-0100; www.grammymuseumms.org) is the institution's first outside Los Angeles. This says a lot about how seriously the music establishment takes preserving the blues and educating people about the role the Mississippi Delta had in American music.



GRAMMY MUSEUM MISSISSIPPI

- The impressive **B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center** (400 2nd St., Indianola; 662/887-9539; https://bbkingmuseum.org) chronicles the legend's rise to fame. In addition to showing his importance as a musician, it also lets his personality shine through.
- The **Highway 61 Blues Museum** (307 N. Broad St., Leland; 662/686-7646; www.highway61blues.com) is a labor of love, jam-packed with blues artifacts and info compiled by local enthusiasts.

2 IMAGINING LIFE 2,000 YEARS AGO AT BYNUM MOUNDS

Natchez Trace Parkway milepost 232.4; www.nps.gov/places/bynum-mounds.htm

Driving the Natchez Trace Parkway is a highlight for any visit to Mississippi. As you take in the rolling hills, be sure to make time to

pull over at the Bynum Mounds. These 5- to 14-ft (1.5- to 4.3-m) mounds were created by Indigenous people during the Middle Woodland period, which stretched from 100 BCE to 100 CE. The ceremonial mounds reveal much about the early settlements in the area. When several of the mounds were excavated in the 1940s, the artifacts that were uncovered included shells from the Gulf Coast, stone tools and projectile points, pottery, and other traded objects known to have originated in other parts of the region. Today, the Chickasaw continue to visit the sacred site and honor the traditions of the builders. You can visit the mounds on a short, accessible path and learn more at the interpretive shelter.



BYNUM MOUNDS

There are other mound sites to be visited on your drive down the Trace. When visiting the mounds, stay on the paved trails and be respectful of these sacred sites. When you set off from Natchez, follow the road for just over 10 mi (16 km) to **Emerald Mound,** a site dating from the Mississippian period (1200-1600 CE). Down the road from the Bynum Mounds at milepost 286.7, stop and see the **Pharr Mounds**, one of the largest mounds constructed during the Middle Woodland period. At milepost 308.8, just before the Alabama

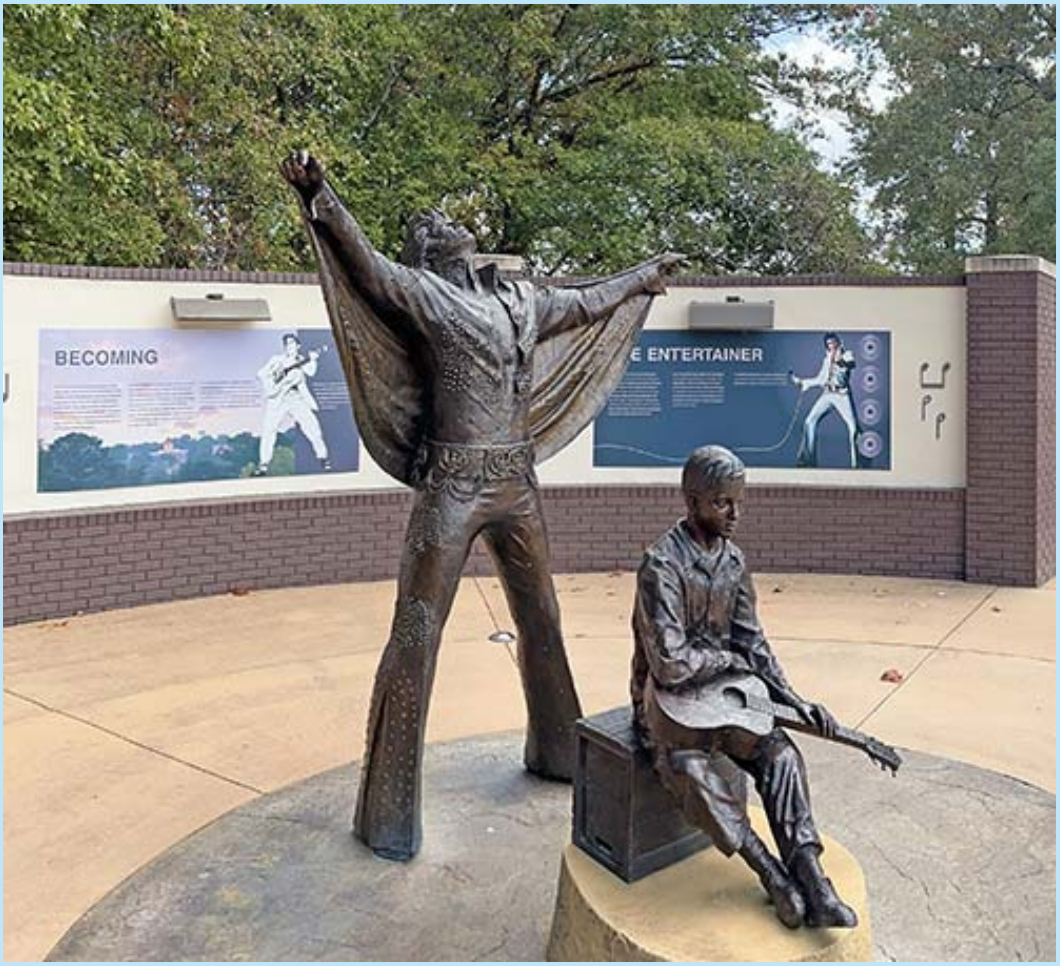
border, you can see the **Bear Creek Mound and Village Site.** This mound's flat top once housed a ceremonial structure, anchoring the spiritual center of the town that thrived on the bounty of the nearby Bear Creek.

3 SEEING WHERE IT ALL BEGAN AT ELVIS PRESLEY'S BIRTHPLACE

306 Elvis Presley Dr., Tupelo; 662/841-1215; https://elvispresleybirthplace.com

Rock 'n' roll is just one more of Mississippi's claims to fame, pioneered by Tupelo native Elvis Presley. Music fans can visit the two-room house where The King was born. Your visit starts at a museum that details the life of the Presley family. In addition to the house, be sure to visit the church where Elvis became familiar with Southern gospel.

For the complete experience, get tickets for all three attractions (the museum, home, and church). The grounds are free to stroll. You'll find tranquil gardens, a reflecting pool, and many walking trails. In the park, fans can take pictures with the life-size statue of teenage Elvis. Another sculpture not to miss is located on the Tupelo Overlook. The sculpture, known as *Becoming*, is actually two statues: one of Elvis as a boy and one of The King he would become.



BECOMING BY SCULPTOR MICHIEL VANDERSOMMEN

HIGHLIGHTS

CHICKASAW VILLAGE SITE

Natchez Trace Parkway milepost 261.8, Tupelo; www.nps.gov

Outside of Tupelo, in a natural prairie, lies the site of a Chickasaw village and fort. The foundations of the defensive structures are marked with modern installations. The Chickasaw tribe lived in the northern part of the state until the mid-19th century, when they were relocated to Oklahoma.

Visiting the site, you can learn about the Chickasaw way of life and the tribe's relationship with French and British settlers. After a day of driving the Trace, the trails around the village are a great place to stretch your legs and take in the scenery. The short nature loop trail is an introduction to the native flora and its uses in Chickasaw life. A longer trail connects with the Natchez Trace National Scenic Trail, a network of 60 mi (97 km) of trail roughly paralleling the parkway.



CHICKASAW VILLAGE SITE

TWO MISSISSIPPI MUSEUMS

222 North St., Jackson; 601/576-6800; https://2mm.mdah.ms.gov

The big draw for Jackson is Two Mississippi Museums, the shared name of both the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum** and the **Museum of Mississippi History,** which covers state history dating back to its Indigenous inhabitants. The museums are housed in the same modernist structure with a shared lobby and courtyard. The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum honors the state's role "as ground zero in the US Civil Rights Movement" with interactive and sensory experiences that illustrate African American courage and resistance to the white racial hierarchy from 1865 to 1970.

Major CITIES

JACKSON: The state capital, Jackson has a rich history of civil rights activism and a consistently top-notch food scene. Spend the day soaking up the history and top off the day at one of the many locally owned eateries in town.

GULFPORT: Mississippi's second largest city, Gulfport is a hot spot for water recreation. Enjoy a day out on the Gulf waters, followed by an exploration of the city's harbor-front dining and entertainment offerings.

BILOXI: This laid-back Gulf Coast town is known for its white-sand beaches, thriving entertainment district, and the eclectic murals that dot the historic storefronts.

The Museum of Mississippi History provides a broad view of the state's background. This museum does justice by Mississippi's Native American citizens through a rich telling of Indigenous history and customs, and offering translations into Choctaw and Chickasaw languages. The exhibits were created with expertise from Native populations who still call the state home.

MEDGAR AND MYRLIE EVERS HOME NATIONAL MONUMENT

2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Dr., Jackson; 601/345-7211

Mississippi native and the first-ever state field secretary for the NAACP, Evers worked hard to register Black voters, among his other civil rights work. He was assassinated in his driveway in 1963. Today, you can visit his family home, which, frozen in time, displays loving touches of family life. Peek through the living room window and you'll see the spot across the way where his assassin—who escaped conviction until 1994—lay in wait. The home is now a National Historic Monument and a stop on the US Civil Rights Trail.

THE WALLER CRAFT CENTER

950 Rice Rd., Ridgeland; 601/856-7546; https://mscrafts.org

Immerse yourself in the artistry of handmade goods at the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi, housed in the William "Bill" Waller Craft Center just off of the Natchez Trace Parkway. The center's galleries feature everything from intricate quilts and baskets to metal sculptures. There are many opportunities to try your hand at a craft through the center's extensive list of classes and workshops. Classes focus on skills related to crafting stained glass, mosaics, ceramics, weaving, and more. The center also offers workshops and craft camps for kids. Don't miss out on the gallery's shop, which features pieces created by local artists.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin your trip to the Magnolia State in Jackson. Spend the morning getting to know the natural and social history of the state at the **Two Mississippi Museums.** Pay homage to the legacy of civil rights activist **Medgar Evers** at the national monument situated at his family home.

DAY 2 Today you'll cover more than 200 mi (320 km) along the **Natchez Trace Parkway** (allow four hours driving, not including stops). Head northeast from Jackson, stopping first at the **Waller Craft Center,** where you can pick up souvenirs made by local artists. Take a lunch break in the hometown of Mississippi State University, **Starkville.** Continue on to the **Bynum Mounds,** where you'll learn about the Indigenous communities that lived in the area over 2,000 years ago. Tonight, you'll stay in **Tupelo.**

DAY 3 Start your **Elvis**-themed day at the singer's birthplace home before heading two hours west to Clarksdale. Picking up the **Mississippi Blues Trail,** head to the **Delta Blues Museum,** the

state's oldest music museum. Cap off the day with a drink and live music set at **Red's Blues Club.**

DAY 4 From Clarksdale, head south to Cleveland to explore the showstopping **Grammy Museum Mississippi.** For lunch, pick up Delta tacos at **Airport Grocery**. Continuing on the Blues Trail, drive to **Indianola's B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center.** Tonight, you'll stay in **Greenville.**

DAY 5 Follow the **Great River Road** south on your way back to Jackson. You'll want to stop in **Vicksburg** to tour the Civil War battlefield and stop for lunch. From Vicksburg, it's 45 mi (72 km) east to Jackson.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

The Natchez Trace Parkway is a historic two-lane, 444-mi (715-km) blacktop scenic drive that runs from Natchez and journeys north through the Mississippi and Tennessee countryside, eventually terminating in Nashville, Tennessee. The parkway, which is a designated bike route, is closed to commercial traffic, and the speed limit is strictly enforced, making it popular for biking as well. The first people to travel what is now considered the Natchez Trace were probably Choctaw and Chickasaw people, who made the first footpaths through the region. Today the parkway follows the general path of the old, sunken, unpaved Natchez Trace. Driving the route, you'll pass through **Jackson** and have the chance to stop at multiple Indigenous **mound sites** as well as the **Tupelo National Battlefield** (2005 Main St., Tupelo; www.nps.gov/tupe). The **Natchez Trace Parkway Headquarters and Visitor Center** (2680 Natchez Trace Pkwy., Tupelo; 800/305-7417 or 662/680-4027; www.nps.gov/natr) at milepost 266, north of Tupelo, is a great resource for planning your trip along the Trace.



LOG CABIN ALONG NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY

LITERARY LEGENDS

Some of the country's best-known writers have called Mississippi home.

- Clarksdale was home to the playwright Tennessee Williams when his grandfather was the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church. You can make an appointment to visit their home, now the **Tennessee Williams Rectory Museum** (106 Sharkey Ave., Clarksdale; 646/465-1578; https://tennesseewilliamsrectorymuseum.com), and walk by the church next door.
- **William Faulkner,** the Nobel laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, was a Mississippi native who settled down in a pre-Civil War home called Rowan Oak. Today, **Rowan Oak** (916 Old Taylor Rd., Oxford; 662/234-3284; www.rowanoak.com) and its surrounding grounds have been converted into a museum, gallery, and park.
- The **Eudora Welty House and Garden** (1119 Pinehurst St., Jackson; 601/353-7762; https://welty.mdah.ms.gov) offers an in-depth look at the life and times of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author. In addition to the beautiful home, visitors can tour the botanical garden, designed by the author's mother in the 1920s.

GREAT RIVER ROAD

Stretching for almost 3,000 mi (4,800 km) across 10 states, the **Great River Road** runs alongside the Mississippi River as it winds its way from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. **US 61** and **MS-1** are part of the Mississippi segment of the Great River Road. Following the Great River Road from the north, you'll enter the Magnolia State at **Robinsonville,**

passing **Natchez, Vicksburg,** and sections of the **Blues Highway** before crossing into Louisiana at **Woodville.**

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

TISHOMINGO STATE PARK

105 County Road 90, Tishomingo; 662/438-6914; www.mdwfp.com

Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachians, this park is accessible via the Natchez Trace Parkway. Named for a Chickasaw leader, Chief Tishomingo, the park is home to fascinating rock formations unique to this part of the state. Rock climbing (with a permit and your own gear) is a highlight. Hiking is also a popular activity in the park—don't miss the **Swinging Bridge** that straddles Bear Creek. Anglers should head to **Haynes Lake** (permit required) and **Bear Creek.** Water enthusiasts can sign up for seasonal guided canoe float trips along the creek's forested banks and sections of Class I rapids.



SWINGING BRIDGE IN TISHOMINGO STATE PARK

NATCHEZ TRACE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

Natchez Trace Parkway; www.nps.gov/natt/planyourvisit/hiking.htm

Running parallel to the Natchez Trace Parkway, the scenic trail offers 60 mi (97 km) of hiking and horseback riding routes. On the Mississippi section of the trail, the **Blackland Prairie segment** follows 6 mi (10 km) around Tupelo. Starting just north of Jackson, the **Yockanookany section** runs for 16 mi (26 km) through forests, pastures, and a reservoir. To get a sense of the historical Trace, hike the 3 mi (4.8 km) that make up the **Potkopinu section** near Fayette. This section is one of the best examples of the original "sunken" trail that gave shape to the parkway route.

GULF ISLANDS NATIONAL SEASHORE

www.nps.gov/guis

Made up of a stretch of barrier islands off the Mississippi and Florida coasts, the Gulf Islands National Seashore offers beautiful beaches, historical sites, and thriving marshlands. While most of the islands require access by private boat, Davis Bayou Area and Ship Island are accessible by car or ferry, respectively. On the mainland, **Davis Bayou Area** is a great spot to hike, fish, and paddle. Located near Ocean Springs, it's a short drive on the I-10 or US 90. Take the ferry to **Ship Island,** a barrier island with a white-sand swimming beach and a historic fort. It's just a short ferry ride from **Gulfport** (Jones Park, 1022 23rd Ave.) to a perfect day at the beach.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK

University of Mississippi, Oxford; www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com; Apr.

Hosted by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, this three-day celebration of the written word takes place on campus in spring.

TUPELO ELVIS FESTIVAL

Tupelo; https://tupeloelvisfestival.com; June

For four days in June, downtown Tupelo pays homage to all things Elvis with music, art, food, and a themed 5k run.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Fall football season brings together students and fans when the teams of the **University of Mississippi** (Oxford; https://olemisssports.com), aka Ole Miss, and **Mississippi State University** (Starkville; https://hailstate.com) play at home. Be sure to book your accommodations well ahead of time during the season.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Cowbells are the good luck charm of the Mississippi State football team, the Bulldogs. Fans ring MSU-branded cowbells to encourage the home team. Some say the tradition started as a proud claim to the university's founding as an agricultural college. You can buy your very own cowbell at shops, bars, and gas stations throughout Starkville.

BEST FOOD

DELTA TAMALES

Don't miss out on these delicious snacks as you tour the Delta region. Smaller than the tamales found south of the border, Delta tamales are spicy and simmered, not steamed, and served in the simmering liquid. Masa is often used, though you may find variations made with corn meal. Popular fillings include pork, beef, and turkey. Here are some spots to try one:

- **Ground Zero Blues Club:** 387 Delta Ave., Clarksdale; 662/621-9009; www.groundzerobluesclub.com
- **Airport Grocery:** 3608 US 61, Cleveland; 662/843-4817; www.airportgrocerycleveland.com
- **Doe's Eat Place:** 502 Nelson St., Greenville; 662/334-3315; www.doeseatplace.com

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Jackson-Medgar Wiley Evers International Airport:** JAN; 100 International Dr., Jackson; 601/939-5691; https://jmaa.com
- **Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport:** GPT; 14035 Airport Rd., Gulfport; 228/863-5951; www.flygpt.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Visit Mississippi:** https://visitmississippi.org
- **Mississippi State Parks:** www.mdwfp.com/parks-destinations

NEWSPAPERS

- ***The Clarion Ledger:*** www.clarionledger.com

FLORIDA

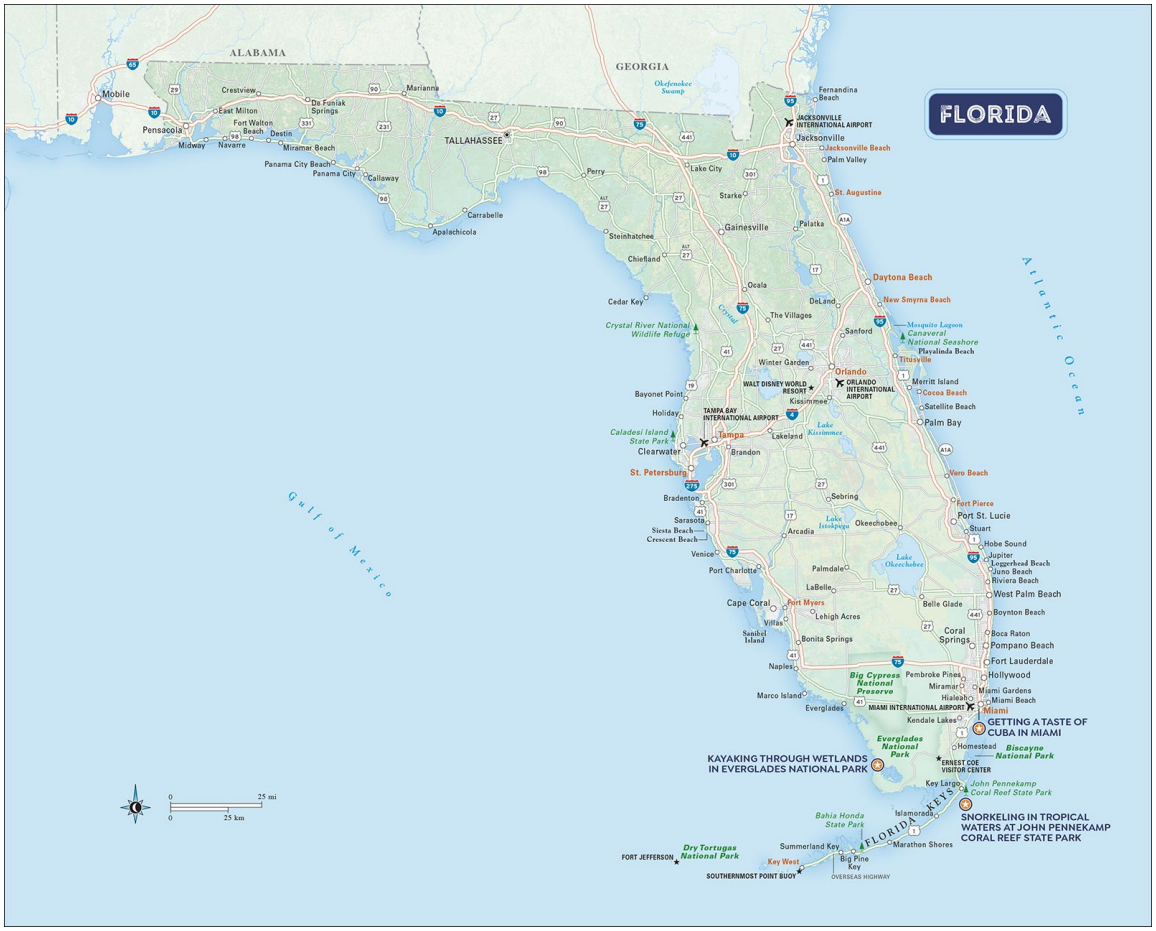
In the Sunshine State, sandals, shorts, and sunglasses are the local attire. Home to the Miccosukee, Poarch Creeks, and Seminole tribes, Florida offers sandy beaches and tropical bungalows, plus the draw of larger cities such as Miami, Tampa, Naples, and Key West. Of course, the best place to be is out on the water. From the white-sand beaches to dive sites down deep in the dark blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico, Florida is a water lover's paradise. Boogie board or surf in the emerald waves and build sandcastles in the sugar-white sand at the beach. Collect fresh scallops and kayak with manatees in the spring-fed waterways. Explore the maze of mangrove islands in Everglades National Park. Sail a yacht or go deep-sea fishing for red snapper, grouper, and mahimahi off the coast. Come experience the life so many have come to love: a life with sand between your toes, sunshine and water all around you.

AREA: 65,758 sq mi / 170,312 sq km (22nd)

POPULATION: 23,372,215 (3rd)

STATEHOOD DATE: March 3, 1845 (27th)

STATE CAPITAL: Tallahassee


FLORIDA
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
Okefenokee Swamp
Atlantic Ocean
Gulf of Mexico
Mobile
Pensacola
Crestview
Marianna
Da Funiak Springs
East Milton
Fort Walton Beach
Destin
Midway
Navarre
Miramar Beach
Panama City Beach
Panama City
Callaway
TALLAHASSEE
Perry
Carrabelle
Apalachicola
Steinhatchee
Chiefland
Cedar Key
Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge
Lake City
Starke
Gainesville
Ocala
The Villages
Fernandina Beach
JACKSONVILLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Jacksonville
Jacksonville Beach
Palm Valley
St. Augustine
Palatka
Daytona Beach
New Smyrna Beach
DeLand
Sanford
Mosquito Lagoon
Canaveral National Seashore
Playalinda Beach
Titusville
Winter Garden
Orlando
WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT
ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Kissimmee
Merritt Island
Cocoa Beach
Satellite Beach
Palm Bay
Bayonet Point
Holiday
TAMPA BAY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Caladesi Island State Park
Clearwater
Tampa
Lakeland
Lake Kissimmee
Brandon
St. Petersburg
Vero Beach
Bradenton
Sebring
Fort Pierce
Port St. Lucie
Stuart
Sarasota
Siesta Beach
Crescent Beach
Lake Istokpoga
Okeechobee
Arcadia
Hobe Sound
Jupiter
Juno Beach
Riviera Beach
Venice
Port Charlotte
Palmdale
Lake Okeechobee
LaBelle
West Palm Beach
Cape Coral
Fort Myers
Belle Glade
Boynton Beach
Villas
Lehigh Acres
Sanibel Island
Bonita Springs
Coral Springs
Boca Raton
Pompano Beach
Naples
Fort Lauderdale
Big Cypress National Preserve
Pembroke Pines
Hollywood
Miramar
Marco Island
Everglades
Hialeah
Miami Gardens
Miami Beach
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
Miami
Kendale Lakes
GETTING A TASTE OF CUBA IN MIAMI
Everglades National Park
Homestead
Biscayne National Park
KAYAKING THROUGH WETLANDS IN EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK
ERNEST COE VISITOR CENTER
Key Largo
John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park
SNORKELING IN TROPICAL WATERS AT JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK
Islamorada
FLORIDA KEYS
Bahia Honda State Park
Marathon Shores
Summerland Key
Big Pine Key
OVERSEAS HIGHWAY
Dry Tortugas National Park
FORT JEFFERSON
Key West
SOUTHERNMOST POINT BUOY
0 25 mi
0 25 km

ORIENTATION

Located in the southeasternmost corner of the United States, Florida is flanked by the Gulf of Mexico to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The state capital, **Tallahassee,** lies to the north along the Panhandle. Moving south, major cities like **Tampa, Orlando, Miami,** and **Key West** dot the peninsula. The Gulf Coast on Florida's western side is well known for its beaches, resorts, and golf courses. At the southern end of the peninsula, you'll find the Keys, Everglades National Park, and some of the best diving spots in the country.

WHEN TO GO

Florida is a year-round destination, but each broad geographical area along the peninsula has its own peak season, off-season, and in-the-know in-between times. In general, Thanksgiving to Easter is the peak visitor time.

Spring and **fall** are comfortable in the southern regions and along the Gulf Coast, while **winter** is much warmer than in the northern United States. During **spring break** (Mar.-Apr.), the beaches are packed with college students. **Summer** is the least crowded time to visit; temperatures are fairly high from June to September, when the Atlantic hurricane season is at its peak.

On the **Panhandle,** which has colder winters and more moderate summers than elsewhere in the state, it's busiest during summer.

TOP 3

1 SNORKELING IN TROPICAL WATERS AT JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK

102601 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo; 305/451-6300; https://pennekamppark.com [URL inactive], www.floridastateparks.org

In the ocean waters east of Key Largo is **Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary,** a 220-mi-long (354-km) coral reef ecosystem that stretches from the southern end of Key Biscayne to the Dry Tortugas—the only living coral reef system in the continental United States and the third-largest coral reef system in the world. If you're new to snorkeling and scuba diving, head first to John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Here you can take diving instruction, earn PADI Open Water certification, and participate in snorkeling trips or scuba-diving tours amid the vibrant coral reefs a few miles offshore. You'll encounter amazing sealife like parrotfish, yellow cherubfish, brain and staghorn coral, spotted spiny lobster, and sea hermit crabs, plus formations such as **Grecian Rocks** and **Key Largo Dry Rocks,** which contains elkhorn coral, and the ever-popular, often-photographed **Christ of the Abyss** statue (also known as Christ of the Deep). A visit to this reef is a real treat for underwater explorers.



JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK

2 KAYAKING THROUGH WETLANDS IN EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

40001 State Rd. 9336, Homestead; 305/242-7700; www.nps.gov/ever

With sawgrass marshes, cypress swamps, and mangrove forests, the Everglades provide ideal spots for paddlers, especially those who enjoy observing or photographing wild animals in their element. You can rent **canoes** and **kayaks** through Everglades National Park at the Guy Bradley Visitor Center in Flamingo, where well-equipped, well-prepared paddlers can explore a labyrinth of water and mangroves in the **Ten Thousand Islands** area. No matter where you go in Everglades National Park, you're bound to see an array of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, alligators, crocodiles, turtles, snakes, herons, and egrets (as well as mosquitoes, unfortunately). If you're lucky, you might even spy an endangered creature like the Florida panther or West Indian manatee.



EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

The most adventurous paddlers should consider traversing the **Wilderness Waterway,** a 99-mi (159-km) canoe trail (allow eight

days) that winds from the Flamingo Visitor Center to Everglades City at the northwest entrance of the national park.

3 GETTING A TASTE OF CUBA IN MIAMI

SW 8th St., Miami

The **Little Havana** neighborhood is composed predominantly of Cuban Americans and Cuban exiles, which means you'll find plenty of authentic delicacies, from cafecito (Cuban coffee without milk) and cortadito (Cuban coffee with steamed milk) to cubanos, the flattened, grilled sandwiches made with sliced ham, slow-roasted pork, Swiss cheese, and pickles, popularized by Cuban immigrants who settled in Miami in the early 1900s.

To experience the unique vibe of this community, simply stroll along the major streets, such as **Calle Ocho** and **Cuban Memorial Boulevard.** From fried plantains and mojitos at **El Cristo Restaurant** (1543 SW 8th St.; 305/643-9992; www.elcristorestaurant.com) to pastries and old-school atmosphere at **Arahis Bakery** (745 SW 8th St.; 305/854-8000), you're sure to enjoy your time in Little Havana.



CUBANO SANDWICH

HIGHLIGHTS

SOUTH BEACH'S ART DECO ARCHITECTURE

Miami

Surely the most famous portion of the island of Miami Beach is the southern part, known as South Beach, where you'll encounter one of the most celebrated architectural districts in southern Florida. Officially listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Miami Beach Architectural District, the colorful **Art Deco Historic District** features an incredible collection of art deco-style buildings, roughly bounded by Alton Road, Dade Boulevard, the Atlantic Ocean, and 6th Street. The best way to experience this historic neighborhood is with a walking, biking, or Segway tour, whether self-guided or otherwise. The **walking tour** led the **Miami**

Design Preservation League (1001 Ocean Dr.; 305/672-2014; www.mdpl.org) explores hotels, restaurants, and other commercial structures, providing an introduction to the art deco, Mediterranean Revival, and Miami Modern (MiMo) styles found within this important district.



ART DECO ARCHITECTURE ON OCEAN DRIVE

Major CITIES

MIAMI: With its wide assortment of museums, historic structures, art and architectural districts, trendy restaurants and nightclubs, and inviting beaches, Miami could easily entertain you for an extended visit. Stroll amid Miami Beach's colorful Art Deco Historic District, soak up some sunshine on the Magic City's stunning beaches, or snorkel above the coral reefs.

TAMPA: The largest leisure and industrial port in the Southeast, Tampa is an excellent family vacation destination. There's a perfect convergence of warm weather, affordable accommodations,

professional sports, kids' attractions, and upscale dining to suit every taste.

ORLANDO: Known as the Theme Park Capital of the World, Orlando is the place to come with the family. For the adventurous, Orlando has plenty of opportunities for an urban bike ride, a relaxing paddle, or an invigorating zip-line trip.

KEY WEST

Celebrated for its breezy hotels, sunset celebrations, and festive atmosphere, especially along Duval Street, the Southernmost City will certainly keep you busy for days on end. Here you can relax on numerous beaches, tour historic homes, visit engaging museums and nature centers, view the entire city from atop the **Key West Lighthouse,** or take a ferry to **Dry Tortugas National Park.** At night you'll find no shortage of lively **bars,** and throughout the year, you can participate in an array of festivals and events.

Running from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic, the famous 1.25-mi-long (2-km) **Duval Street** is the epicenter of shopping, dining, and drinking in Key West. The island also has a sizable LGBTQ+ population, resorts and tours that cater to LGTBQ+ community, and events like Fantasy Fest.

At the corner of South and Whitehead Streets, right beside the Atlantic Ocean, stands an enormous replica of a marine buoy that marks the **southernmost point** in the continental United States. It's one of the most photographed attractions in all of Key West. Just across the street lies the **Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum** (907 Whitehead St.; 305/294-1136; www.hemingwayhome.com), one of the most popular attractions in Key West. This island-style domicile once was home to the city's most famous resident, Papa Hemingway himself, and has since become a registered National Historic Landmark.

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER VISITOR COMPLEX

Space Commerce Way, Merritt Island; 855/433-4210; www.kennedyspacecenter.com

Anyone remotely interested in space exploration will enjoy a visit to the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. Here you'll learn about past and upcoming human space initiatives, take an immersive space ride, and hear stories from astronauts. You can even take a ride on the launch simulator. For space enthusiasts, there are special events like a Q&A with an astronaut or an immersive introduction to astronaut training.



KENNEDY SPACE CENTER VISITOR COMPLEX

WALT DISNEY WORLD

Orlando; https://disneyworld.disney.go.com

Walt Disney World, arguably the most well known of Orlando's theme parks, is a destination for the entire family. You can choose between four parks—or visit them all! The classic visit centers on the **Magic Kingdom Park,** home to rides like Space Mountain, the Jungle Cruise, and It's a Small World. **Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park** features an African wildlife safari and a boat ride inspired by the world of the Avatar films. At

Disney's Hollywood Studios, immerse yourself in the world of *Star Wars*, *Toy Story*, and Mickey Mouse. The fourth park, EPCOT, brings to life movie favorites of the youngest fans and celebrates the traditions of international cultures. There's no shortage of fun, food, and entertainment.

SALVADOR DALÍ MUSEUM

1 Dali Blvd., St. Petersburg; 727/823-3767; www.thedali.org

The Salvador Dalí Museum is the world's most comprehensive collection of permanent works by the famous Spanish surrealist master outside his home country. Even if you don't care for what you have seen of his work in books and prints, it is an incredible experience to view the original works in their larger-than-life sizes. And if you have never experienced his works at all, the museum is almost sure to make you a fan. Architect Yann Weymouth designed an awe-inspiring structure with an impressive helical staircase that recalls Dalí's own obsession with spirals and the double-helix shape of the DNA molecule. The **Avant-Garden** outside the building extends this theme and provides a calming space to explore the relationship between math and nature.



SALVADOR DALI MUSEUM

EDISON & FORD WINTER ESTATES

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers; 239/334-7419;
www.edisonfordwinterestates.org

When Thomas Edison arrived in Fort Myers in 1885, he purchased 13-plus ac (5.3 ha) along the Caloosahatchee River with the aim of building his winter home. **Seminole Lodge** was constructed in pieces in Maine from his designs and then sailed to Florida and assembled. The home served as the winter retreat and workplace for the prolific inventor until his death in 1931. Edison's close friend Henry Ford also must have fallen in love when he visited Fort Myers in 1915; he bought the house next door to Edison's.



EDISON & FORD WINTER ESTATES

Today, the Edison & Ford Winter Estates are 20 ac (8 ha) of botanical landscaping, the two titans' historic homes and guest cottages, Edison's laboratory, a museum containing his famous inventions and exhibits, a museum store, a garden shop, and an outdoor café.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S OLD TOWN

Long before the Spanish arrived in 1565, the area of what we now know as St. Augustine was home to the Timucua people. Much of the population was decimated by disease, and the last Indigenous inhabitants were taken to Cuba as the Spanish fled the incoming British rule. The modern St. Augustine is the longest continuously occupied European settlement in the United States. You can see Spanish and Moorish styles throughout the city. To learn more about the city's history, hop aboard the **Old Town Trolley Tours** (844/388-6452; www.trolleytours.com). If you want to see what life was like back in the day, visit the **Colonial Quarter** (14 S. Castillo Dr.; https://colonialquarter.com), where reenactors demonstrate how to work a

blacksmith's forge or load a musket. The quarter hosts music events throughout the year.

Best ROAD TRIP

DAY 1 Begin in **Miami's Little Havana,** sampling Cuban pastries in the afternoon before heading to the beach. Take a walking tour of the **Art Deco Historic District,** taking in the colorful and historical architecture before heading to dinner. **South Beach** is your best bet for fresh seafood and vibrant nightlife.

DAY 2 Leave Miami with plenty of sunscreen and bug repellent for your trip to **Everglades National Park,** just 54 mi (87 km) to the south. Hop on a tram tour to see some of the wildlife who call the park home, like turtles, alligators, herons, and maybe even a manatee.

DAY 3 Make your way through the Keys (allow at least three hours), stopping to stretch your legs and take in the beach vibes on the way to dinner and a tropical cocktail in **Key West.**

DAY 4 Start with an early bike ride through town before the heat and humidity ramp up. An underwater adventure awaits at **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park,** a 2.5-hour-drive along the scenic Overseas Highway. It's a 1.5-hour ride back to **Miami.**

DAY 5 Today you'll follow I-75 to Tampa. It's a 4.5-hour drive with plenty of spots to stop along the way. Stretch your legs at **Naples**'s municipal beach (25 12th Ave. S.) and the **Edison & Ford Winter Estates** in **Fort Myers.** Arriving in Tampa, head to **Ybor City,** a neighborhood where you'll find the city's best nightlife and dining when the sun goes down.

DAY 6 Today you'll explore **Crystal River** and get a taste of life on Florida's Gulf Coast. Take a **boat tour,** swim with **manatees,** and enjoy fresh seafood.

DAY 7 Your final stop is **Orlando,** the Theme Park Capital of the World.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

OVERSEAS HIGHWAY

US 1

Miami, the Everglades, and the Florida Keys constitute a fairly compact destination, especially given that one main highway—the 113-mi (182-km) Overseas Highway (US 1)—links much of this region. The Overseas Highway—the only drivable link between the Keys and the mainland—connects fewer than 50 of the more than 800 islands of this unforgettable chain. Starting in Florida City, you'll drive south, leaving the mainland and arriving at the Upper Keys. The first island encountered is **Key Largo,** the longest of this unique archipelago. Outdoor enthusiasts will especially enjoy **John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park,** where you can swim alongside sandy beaches, kayak among mangrove trees, or dive amid offshore coral reefs. Southwest of Key Largo are the islands that make up **Islamorada,** an upscale resort area favored by anglers and scuba divers. After experiencing Islamorada, you'll pass into the Middle Keys, the heart of which is the laid-back town of **Marathon.** You can relax on the area's lovely beaches or head south to isolated **Pigeon Key,** a historic base camp accessible by ferry or the **Old Seven Mile Bridge.** Once you've crossed the **Seven Mile Bridge,** you'll enter the Lower Keys, perhaps the most tranquil part of this legendary archipelago whose warm waters are ideal for both kayakers and snorkelers. Finally, arrive in **Key West**, the Southernmost City.



OVERSEAS HIGHWAY TO THE FLORIDA KEYS

STATE ROAD A1A (JIMMY BUFFETT MEMORIAL HIGHWAY)

The best way to experience the Atlantic side of the state is to follow State Road A1A. Running from **Key West** north to the **Georgia border,** the state road winds past quiet beach towns. While this route is considerably longer than the inland route, the ocean views make the added time worth it. In 2024, Florida renamed A1A the Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway. In particular, the stretch between **Fort Pierce** and **Vero Beach** (north of Palm Beach) has great views. Continuing north toward St. Augustine, you can stop at **Daytona Beach, Cocoa Beach, Titusville,** and **New Smyrna Beach.** Don’t miss the beaches and wildlife at Canaveral National Seashore near New Smyrna Beach. Allow at least two hours for this scenic segment without stops. From St. Augustine, it’s 50 mi (80 km) to **Jacksonville.**

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

CANAVERAL NATIONAL SEASHORE

7611 S. Atlantic Ave. (visitor center), New Smyrna Beach; 212 S. Washington Ave. (southern entrance), Titusville; 386/428-3384; www.nps.gov/cana

The Canaveral National Seashore is Florida's longest section of undeveloped coast on the Atlantic side of the state. Here you'll find rolling dunes, a thriving lagoon, and plenty of recreation opportunities. **Mosquito Lagoon** is a popular spot for paddling and fishing.

Important cultural sites along the national seashore include **Seminole Rest**, a preserved Timucuan mound from at least 2000 BCE. The houses on top of the shell mound were constructed by settlers. Nearby, the archaeological site of **Turtle Mound** preserves one of the last sites known to have been occupied by the Timucuan people. Indigenous sites like Seminole Rest and Turtle Mound are remnants of the story of the Timucuan people and their traditions, which were lost when the Spanish arrived in the area in the 16th century.

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK

36850 Overseas Hwy., Big Pine Key; 305/872-2353; www.floridastateparks.org

The 524-ac (212-ha) Bahia Honda State Park features three breezy, coconut palm-studded beaches that together offer access to the Atlantic Ocean as well as the Gulf of Mexico. The beaches of Bahia Honda are routinely voted the best in the state, and for good reason. They have a lot going for them: excellent access to snorkeling and fishing, plenty of sandy shore to walk and enjoy, the shade of the palm trees that dot the shoreline, and a tropical aesthetic of blue water and coral reefs that provides the best Caribbean-esque experience without leaving Florida.



BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK

You can take a snorkeling excursion to the offshore **Looe Key Reef,** bike the paved 3.5-mi (5.6-km) road that runs the length of the state park, fish from shore, or hike the nature trails. You can also visit the **Wings and Waves Butterfly Garden,** which is frequented by vibrant butterflies, including the zebra longwing butterfly and the endangered Miami blue butterfly.

DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

305/242-7700; www.nps.gov/drto

Roughly 70 mi (113 km) west of Key West lies a cluster of seven islands that are collectively known as the Dry Tortugas. Originally named Las Tortugas (The Turtles) by Spanish explorers, the coral-and-sand islands eventually became “Dry Tortugas” on mariners’ navigational charts to indicate the lack of freshwater here. Part of the 220-mi-long (354-km) Florida Keys archipelago, these islands and their surrounding shoals and waters comprise the 64,657-ac (26,166-ha) Dry Tortugas National Park, one of the most remote parks in the national park system.

Celebrated for its diverse wildlife, remarkable coral reefs, enthralling shipwrecks, and pirate legends and military past, Dry Tortugas is a must-see destination, the kind of place that really makes you feel as though you're a world away from the Florida mainland. If you have the time, you should board a ferry or come by private boat to this unique destination—popular with sunbathers, swimmers, snorkelers, kayakers, anglers, bird-watchers, photographers, and overnight campers.

While in the park, don't miss the tour of **Fort Jefferson,** the well-preserved Civil War fort on Garden Key, the centerpiece of these remote islands.

CALADESI ISLAND STATE PARK

727/469-5918, ferry 727/734-1501; www.floridastateparks.org

Accessible only by boat, Caladesi is the wilder of the two islands off the west coast of St. Petersburg. Largely undeveloped, the island offers tranquility away from the bustle of St. Petersburg and Tampa. The Gulf side of the island has 4 mi (6.4 km) of white-sand **beach,** which always makes the rankings of top beaches; the Tampa Bay side has a mangrove shoreline and seagrass flats. So, the Gulf side is for swimming and beach lolling, and the bay side is for birding and wildlife-watching. Kayaking is a popular activity and is a great option for avid birders.

CRYSTAL RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

1502 SE Kings Bay Dr., Crystal River; 352/563-2088; www.fws.gov/crystalriver

The Crystal River is one of the best places to see the West Indian manatee. The manatee is listed as an endangered species, but the population has rebounded tremendously in the past few years in this area. Manatee season is mid-November to March; Kings Bay in Crystal River has the densest concentration. The refuge is accessible only by boat; you can rent a kayak or canoe in the town of Crystal River or take a manatee-watching tour with **Crystal River Manatee Tour and Dive** (11 NE 4th Ave., Crystal River; 352/795-1333; www.manateetouranddive.com). On the tour, you can swim among the manatees as they graze in the protected waters.

SIESTA KEY BEACHES

The 8-mi-long (13-km) barrier island of Siesta Key is graced with beautiful beaches—most within easy access of family-owned accommodations. Despite being only a 20-minute drive from Sarasota, you'll feel miles away from the city. Lie on the sloping strand, run the warmed granules through your fingers, sniff the salt air, and listen to a plaintive gull overhead. The water is shallow and the beach incline gradual, making it perfect for young swimmers. In addition to sunbathing, the key is popular for fishing, boating, kayaking, snorkeling, scuba diving, and sailboarding. And at night, Siesta Key Village has the area's most lively entertainment.



SIESTA KEY

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Given the favorable climate, cultural diversity, and carefree vibe of the Ocean State, it's no wonder that the region hosts numerous festivals and

events throughout the year. Here are some of the highlights.

CARNAVAL MIAMI

Miami; www.carnavalmiami.com; Feb.-Mar.

The monthlong Carnaval Miami takes place in Little Havana from early February to mid-March and features culinary and athletic competitions, live concerts, a domino tournament, and Calle Ocho, one of the largest Latino block parties in the country.

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER SEASON

late Feb.-Oct.

Florida has two Major League Soccer teams: **Inter Miami CF** (Club Internacional de Fútbol Miami; www.intermiamicf.com) and **Orlando City Soccer Club** (www.orlandocitysc.com). As of 2026, Inter Miami CF calls the newly constructed **Miami Freedom Park** (https://miamifreedompark.com) home. Big names associated with the Inter Miami CF scene include David Beckham, co-owner of Inter Miami FC, and star players Lionel Messi, Luis Suárez, and Sergio Busquets. Based at the **Inter&Co Stadium,** the Orlando City SC won the US Open Cup in 2022. The club's sister team, the **Orlando Pride,** is a National Women's Soccer League team.

KEY WEST PRIDEFEST

Key West; www.gaykeywestfl.com [URL inactive]; June

The multiday Key West Pridefest in mid-June celebrates the LGBTQ+ community of the town whose motto is "one human family." Pridefest is a much-anticipated event, filled with contests, shows, tours, dance and cocktail parties, a street fair, and a pride parade along Duval Street.

BEST SOUVENIRS

Shells from Sanibel Island are a popular souvenir—just make sure the shell's inhabitant has vacated the shell. On Sanibel Island, more than 250 varieties of shells have been found along the 15 mi (24 km) of white-sand beaches. Expect crown conch, lion's paw, angel wings, alphabet cones, and sand dollars to wash up whole at your feet.

MICCOSUKEE INDIAN ARTS FESTIVAL

Miami; https://miccosukee.com; Dec.

The Miccosukee Indian Arts Festival is a multiday event during which you can experience Indigenous dances and musical performances, marvel at traditional costumes, enjoy authentic foods, browse genuine arts and crafts from various Indigenous tribes, observe alligator demonstrations, and perhaps even take an airboat ride into the Everglades.

BEST FOOD

KEY LIME PIE

The iconic key lime pie is one of the most sought-after delicacies in the Keys. It's a simple pie dish made special by the juice of key limes, which only grow in this part of the world. Look for pies with a light-yellow color—that's the authentic stuff. When you a see a neon-green slice of key lime pie, run away as fast as you can. Try the pie at **Mrs. Mac's Kitchen** (mile marker 99.3, 99336 Overseas Hwy.; 305/451-3722; www.mrsmacskitchen.com) in Key Largo or **Kermit's Key West Key Lime Shop** (200 Elizabeth St.; 305/296-0806; www.keylimeshop.com) in Key West.



KEY LIMES

FLORIDA STONE CRABS

On the west and east coasts of the state, you'll find stone crabs—those from the west are called Gulf stone crabs, while those from the east are known as Florida stone crabs. Some say the Florida stone crabs are meatier and sweeter than those from the Gulf. Both varieties are delicious when dipped in mustard.

Everglades City is regarded as the capital for harvesting **stone crabs.** The annual **Everglades Seafood Festival** (239/537-9922; www.evergladesseafoodfestival.org) in Everglades City draws thousands in early February with the promise of stone crabs.

CUBAN SANDWICHES

Cubanos, the flattened, grilled sandwiches made with sliced ham, slow-roasted pork, Swiss cheese, and pickles, were popularized by Cuban immigrants who settled in Miami in the early 1900s. The **Versailles Restaurant** (3555 SW 8th St., Miami; 305/444-0240; www.versaillesrestaurant.com) may sound—and even look—like a French restaurant, but it's actually been one of Miami's best Cuban-Caribbean restaurants since its opening in 1971. It's a wonderful place to sample a traditional cubano.

Try them at **Joe's Stone Crab** (11 Washington Ave., Miami Beach; 305/673-0365; www.joesstonecrab.com) in Miami or the **Stone Crab Festival** in Naples in October, which is the start of the stone crab season.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Miami International Airport:** MIA; 2100 NW 42nd Ave., Miami; 305/876-7000; www.miami-airport.com
- **Orlando International Airport:** MCO; 1 Jeff Fuqua Blvd., Orlando; 407/825-2001; https://flymco.com
- **Tampa International Airport:** TPA; 4100 George J Bean Pkwy., Tampa; 813/870-8700; www.tampaairport.com
- **Jacksonville International Airport:** JAX; 2400 Yankee Clipper Dr., Jacksonville; 904/741-4902; www.flyjacksonville.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Florida Board of Tourism:** www.visitflorida.com
- **Florida State Parks:** www.floridastateparks.org

NEWSPAPERS

- ***Miami Herald:*** www.miamiherald.com
- ***Tampa Bay Times:*** www.tampabay.com
- ***Orlando Sentinel:*** www.orlandosentinel.com

OceanofPDF.com

ISLANDS

Hawaii

Puerto Rico

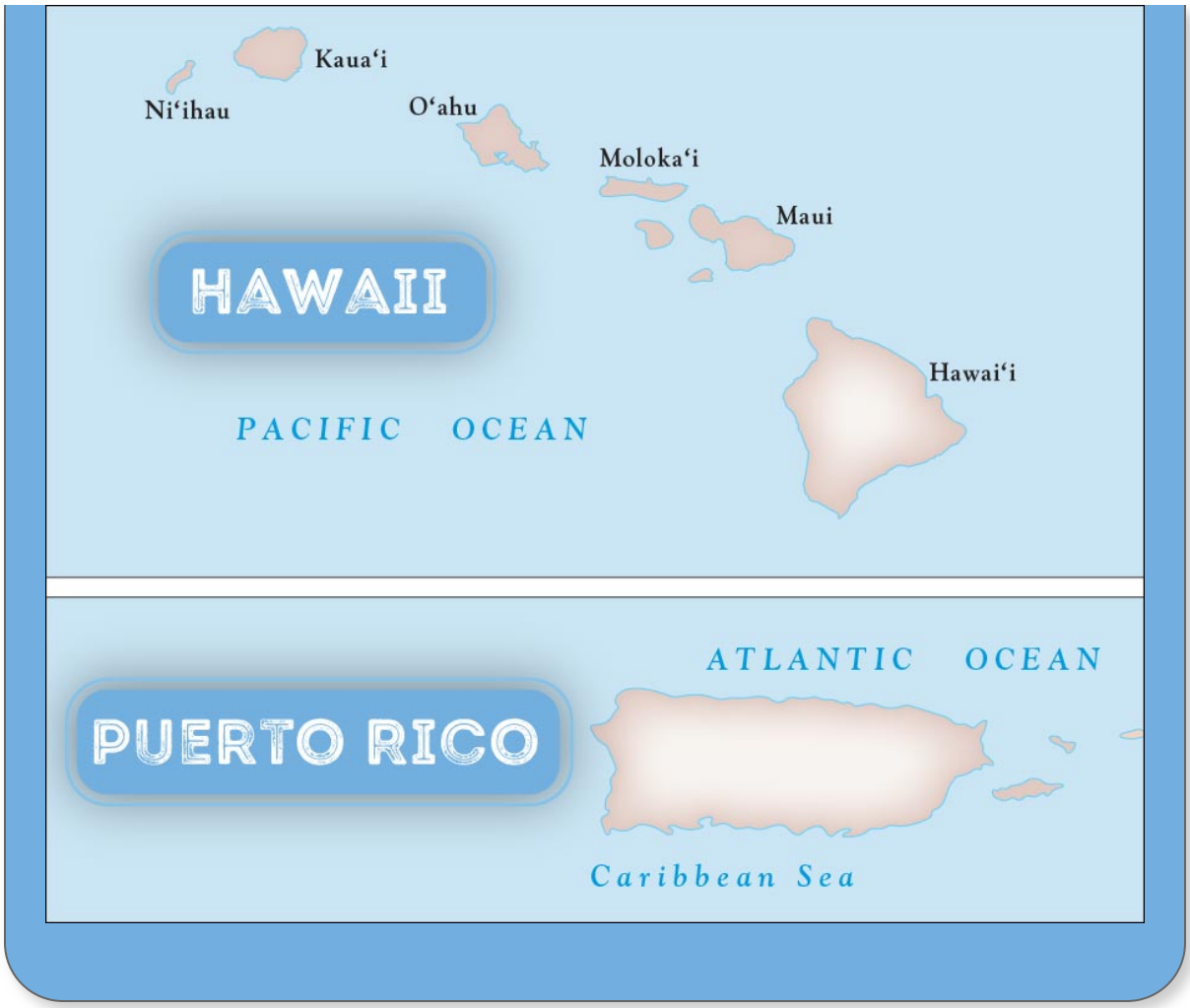
THE ISLANDS
State by State

HAWAII

Why Go: Hawaii is the island getaway of the imagination—soft, white-sand beaches; swaying palm trees; warm, clear waters for snorkeling; juicy tropical fruits—with the ever-present welcoming spirit of aloha.

PUERTO RICO

Why Go: With natural wonders like bioluminescent bays and a rich cultural life formed of Indigenous, African, and Spanish influences, not to mention the lovely beaches and the various preparations of plantains, Puerto Rico lives up to its nickname: Isla del Encanto, or Island of Enchantment.


Kaua‘i
Ni‘ihau
O‘ahu
Moloka‘i
Maui
HAWAII
Hawai‘i
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PUERTO RICO
Caribbean Sea



MOUNT BRITTON TRAIL, EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST, PUERTO RICO



HONOLUA BAY, MAUI, HAWAII



HONOLIʻI BEACH PARK, BIG ISLAND, HAWAII



MUSEO EL CEMÍ, PUERTO RICO



VIEJO SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

HAWAII

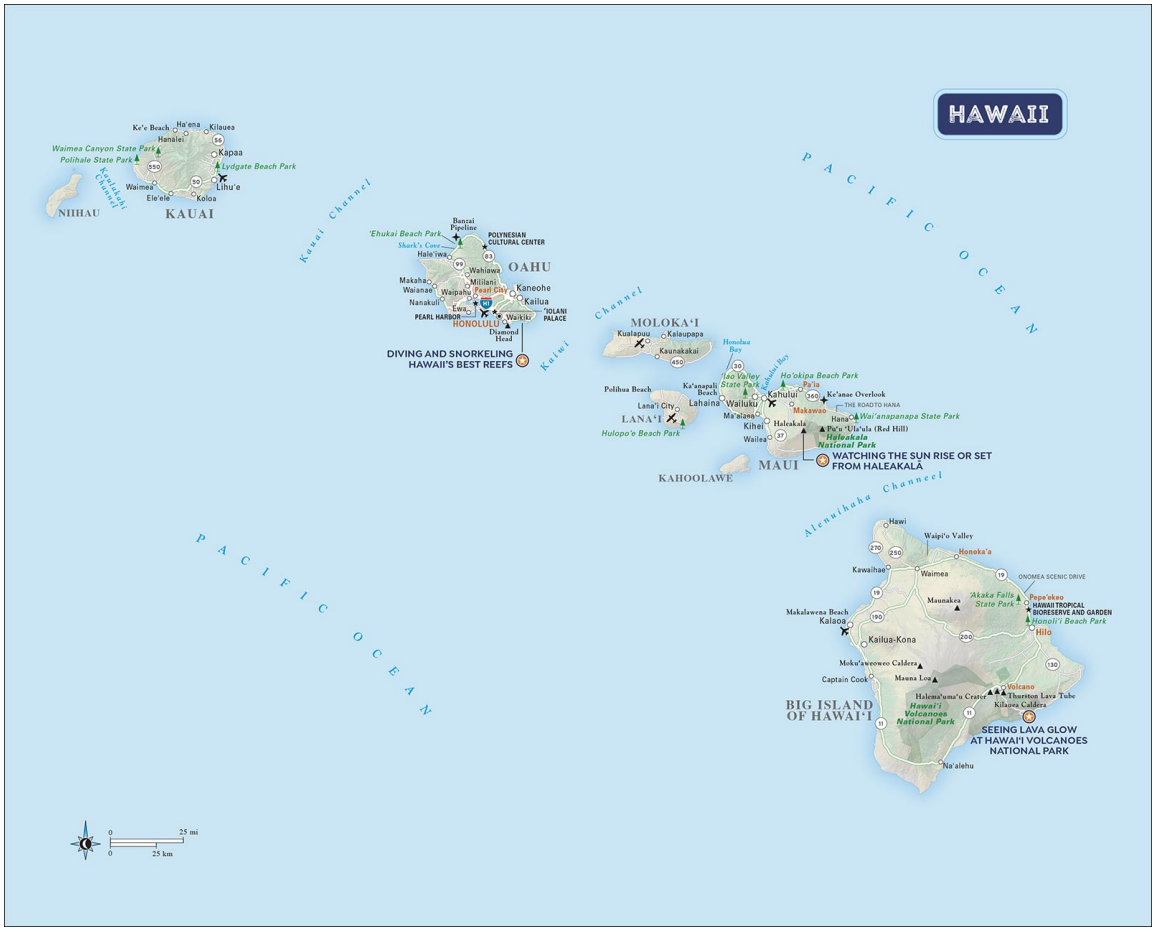
Hawaii is a place of geologic and biological extremes. Active volcanoes and erosion continually redefine a land populated by myriad endemic and native plant species found nowhere else on earth. With about a quarter of the population identifying as Native Hawaiian or part Hawaiian, the islands hold many cultures and attract immigrants from all over the globe, who contribute to Hawaii's eclectic cultural heritage, cuisine, and lifestyle. This is a place to escape the world you know. Wander beautiful stretches of white sand. Swim in warm, crystal-clear water. Explore colorful reefs teeming with marine life. Lose yourself in tropical rain forest. Cool off in passing rain showers and enjoy the rainbows that follow them. At the heart of Hawaii's ambience is aloha, a gift of hospitality from Native Hawaiian tradition ingrained with deep reverence for nature. Respect for the land, the ocean, family, and friends resonates among all who live and travel here.

AREA: 10,932 sq mi / 28,313 sq km (43rd)

POPULATION: 1,446,146 (40th)

STATEHOOD DATE: August 21, 1959 (50th)

STATE CAPITAL: Honolulu


HAWAII
PACIFIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
NIIHAU
KAUAI
Ke'e Beach
Ha'ena
Kilauea
Hanalei
Kapaa
Waimea Canyon State Park
Polihale State Park
Lydgate Beach Park
Waimea
Lihu'e
Ele'ele
Koloa
Kaulakahi Channel
Kauai Channel
OAHU
Benzai Pipeline
'Ehukai Beach Park
POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER
Shark's Cove
Hale'iwa
Wahiawa
Makaha
Waianae
Waipahu
Mililani
Pearl City
Kaneohe
Kailua
Nanakuli
Ewa
PEARL HARBOR
HONOLULU
Waikiki
'IOLANI PALACE
Diamond Head
DIVING AND SNORKELING HAWAII'S BEST REEFS
Kaiwi Channel
MOLOKA'I
Kualapuu
Kalaupapa
Kaunakakai
Honolua Bay
'Iao Valley State Park
Ma'alaea Bay
Ho'okipa Beach Park
Pa'ia
Kahului
Ke'anae Overlook
THE ROAD TO HANA
Makawao
Wai'anapanapa State Park
Polihua Beach
Ka'anapali Beach
Lahaina
Wailuku
Ma'alaea
Hana
Lana'i City
LANA'I
Kihei
Haleakala
Pu'u 'Ula'ula (Red Hill)
Haleakala National Park
Hulopo'e Beach Park
Wailea
WATCHING THE SUN RISE OR SET FROM HALEAKALĀ
MAUI
KAHOOLAWE
Alenuihaha Channeel
Hawi
Waipi'o Valley
Honoka'a
Kawaihae
Waimea
ONOMEA SCENIC DRIVE
'Akaka Falls State Park
Pepe'okeo
HAWAII TROPICAL BIORESERVE AND GARDEN
Maunakea
Honoli'i Beach Park
Makalawena Beach
Kalaoa
Hilo
Kailua-Kona
Moku'aweoweo Caldera
Captain Cook
Mauna Loa
Volcano
Thurston Lava Tube
Halema'uma'u Crater
Kilauea Caldera
Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
BIG ISLAND OF HAWAI'I
SEEING LAVA GLOW AT HAWAI'I VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK
Na'alehu
0
25 mi
0
25 km

ORIENTATION

There are six major islands in Hawaii. From northwest to southeast, they are Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Molokaʻi, Lanaʻi, Maui, and the Big Island of Hawaiʻi. **Oʻahu** is the most populous of the islands. Here you'll find the capital of Honolulu, world-class eats and shopping in Waikīkī, Pearl Harbor, and some of the island's best surfing spots on the North Shore. **Maui** is the second-largest island, and its main town, Lahaina, is in the process of rebuilding after a devastating fire in 2023. Haleakalā National Park is also located on Maui. The biggest island is Hawaiʻi, with Hawaiʻi Volcanoes National Park and two main cities, Kona and Hilo. **Kauaʻi,** sometimes known as the Garden Isle, is the oldest of the island chain. Its rugged North Shore is remote and only partially accessible by car.

WHEN TO GO

Hawaii has a beautiful, comfortable tropical climate all year long. Ocean and air temperatures vary by only a few degrees between seasons. **Winter** and **spring** are known for more rain, but showers and squalls are always possible. Surf-wise, north shores see higher waves October-March, when south shores are flat, better for snorkeling and diving. The opposite is true during the **summer** (May-Sept.). Hawaii does have defined high and low seasons, with an influx of visitors from **Memorial Day to Labor Day** and from **late March to the end of April,** thanks to spring break holidays. The busiest time to visit is around the **Christmas and New Year** holidays.

TOP 3

1 WATCHING THE SUN RISE OR SET FROM HALEAKALĀ

Maui; www.nps.gov/hale

"Hale-a-ka-lā," House of the Sun. Few places are more aptly named than Maui's 10,023-ft (3,055-m) dormant volcano, 28,000 ft (8,534 m) tall when measured from the seafloor. This is where the powerful volcano goddess, Pele, crafted her colorful cinder cones, and it's a

wahi pana, or sacred place, only inhabited by the gods. It's where the demigod Maui lassoed the sun to slow its path across the sky so his people could have time to grow their crops and dry their cloth in the sun. It's also a fragile ecological treasure, with more endangered species than any other national park.



SUNRISE OVER HALEAKALĀ VOLCANO CRATER, MAUI

Today, the most popular activity for visitors to Maui is visiting for sunrise, which requires advance reservations. But there's far more to **Haleakalā National Park** than simply the light of dawn. Over 30 mi (48 km) of hiking trails crisscross the crater, where backcountry cabins and campgrounds provide a classic wilderness experience. The sunsets and stargazing are as spectacular as viewing the crater at sunrise, and even the drive leading up to the park—where the road gains 10,000 vertical ft (3,048 m) in only 38 mi (61 km)—is part of the magical, mystical experience.

Stop at the **Park Headquarters Visitor Center** (808/572-4400), at an elevation of 6,800 ft (2,072 m), or the **Haleakalā Visitor Center,** at 9,740 ft (2,968 m), about 10 mi (16 km) up the mountain, for information, camping permits, maps and books, and guided tours.

Pu‘u ‘Ula‘ula (Red Hill) is the highest point on Maui at 10,023 ft (3,055 m), with a glass-sided view of the Big Island and coast of Maui.

2 DIVING AND SNORKELING HAWAII’S BEST REEFS

Hawaii’s reefs teem with marine life and are perfect for underwater exploration. No matter which island you visit, you can marvel at life under the sea.



SNORKELING ON O’AHU

O‘ahu: Head to **Shark’s Cove** on the North Shore for the island’s best snorkeling and diving. The reef gets its name from its shark-like shape and is home to parrotfish, triggerfish, turtles, and more. Sightings of actual sharks are rare. While the marine life favors the nooks provided by the rocky terrain, snorkelers should wear protective footwear. Families will enjoy the **Pupukea tidepools** on the south side of the cove. Here the shallow pools house coral and colorful fish. Remember to protect the fragile ecosystem by keeping off the rocks and corals.

Maui: When it comes to snorkeling along Maui's shore, **Honolua Bay** is the gold standard. This wide, scenic cleft in the coast is a biodiverse marine reserve, the valley's lush green foliage and shimmering turquoise waters exuding a supernatural beauty. Tracing the shore, rather than heading to the center of the bay, is best for viewing marine life, including Hawaiian green sea turtles. During winter, dive a few feet underwater to listen for the distant song of humpback whales.

Kaua'i: During the summer, **Ke'e Beach**'s waters are calm, making it one of the best places to snorkel. A line of rocks offshore create a protected habitat for needlefish, sea cucumbers, and more. Slip into the water where the bottom is sandy (don't step on the corals) and stay within the lava boulders marking the snorkeling area.

3 SEEING LAVA GLOW AT HAWAI'I VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

Big Island of Hawai'i; www.nps.gov/havo

The indomitable power of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is apparent to all who come here. Wherever you stop to gaze, realize that you are standing on a thin skin of cooled lava in an unstable earthquake zone atop one of the world's most active volcanoes.

The park's heart is **Kilauea Caldera,** almost 3 mi (4.8 km) across, 500 ft (152 m) deep, and encircled by 11 mi (18 km) of **Crater Rim Drive.** You'll pass steam vents, sulphur springs, and tortured fault lines that always seem on the verge of gaping wide and swallowing the landscape. On the way, peer into the mouth of **Halema'uma'u Crater,** home of the fire goddess, Pele. The **Devastation Trail** is a paved path across a desolate cinder field where gray, lifeless trunks of a suffocated forest lean like old gravestones. Within minutes is **Nahuku,** a magnificent natural tunnel overflowing with vibrant fern grottoes at the entrance and exit. Sweating in the hot lava fields, you'll see snowcapped, difficult to access, 13,681-ft (4,170-m) **Mauna Loa** in the distance; its mighty **Moku'aweoweo Caldera** is more than 3 mi (4.8 km) long, 1.5 mi (2.4 km) wide, and 600 ft (182 m) deep.



KILAUEA CALDERA, BIG ISLAND

With a multitude of ways to access the park—on foot, by car, by bike, and by helicopter—Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park truly does offer something for everyone. While the visitor center is under construction, information can be found at Kilauea Military Camp (www.nps.gov/havo/planyourvisit/kvc.htm).

HIGHLIGHTS

MAUNA KEA

Big Island of Hawai‘i

As you drive to the summit of the Big Island’s Mauna Kea (White Mountain), the tallest peak in the Pacific, you pass through the clouds to a barren world devoid of vegetation. The earth is a red, rolling series of

volcanic cones. Hiking and biking trails on the way to the summit offer spectacular views.

Atop the mountain is a mushroom grove of astronomical observatories, like a futuristic earth colony on a remote planet. Crystal-clear air and lack of dust and light pollution make the observatory complex the best in the world.

Your first stop should be the **Visitor Information Station** (Mauna Kea Access Rd., milepost 28; https://hilo.hawaii.edu). Due to the risks of altitude sickness, many visitors turn around here, at 9,200 ft (2,804 m) above sea level, after taking in the views. Check the station's website for tips on visiting the summit safely and responsibly.

Major CITIES

HONOLULU: Hawai'i's capital is situated on O'ahu. The heart of the islands' government, Honolulu is also home to historic neighborhoods, Waikīkī Beach, and the Diamond Head crater.

PEARL CITY: Northwest of Honolulu, O'ahu, this town overlooks Pearl Harbor, the site of the 1941 attack that launched the United States into World War II.

HILO: Hilo, the only major city on the Big Island's east coast, feels like old Hawaii, boasting Honoli'i Beach (the best place to watch surfing) and the mesmerizing 'Akaka Falls State Park.

WHALE-WATCHING

Maui

December through April, any vessel that floats is going to be offering whale-watching in the waters off Maui, home to the highest concentration of humpback whales on the planet. Head out for an up-close encounter with these up to 80-ton (73-metric ton) creatures. The peak of the season is January-March, when simply being out on the water turns any trip into whale-watching. The choice ultimately comes down to what sort of vessel

best suits your comfort level. **Lahaina Harbor** is the departure point for most trips.



HUMPBACK WHALE NEAR LAHAINA HARBOR, MAUI

- Small rafts from Lahaina Harbor place you the closest to the water; try **Ultimate Whalewatch & Snorkel** (808/667-5678; www.ultimatewhalewatch.com).
- Sailboats also offer whale-watching trips from both Lahaina Harbor and Ka‘anapali Beach; **Trilogy** (808/874-5649; www.sailtrilogy.com) is a good option.

PEARL HARBOR

1 Arizona Memorial Pl., Honolulu, O‘ahu; 808/422-3399; www.nps.gov/perl

Home to the US Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor’s deep waters have a long history as a strategic island port. Today, it is most well known as the site of the December 7, 1941, attack that initiated the US involvement in World

War II. Now designated the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, the historic harbor includes the USS *Arizona* Memorial, USS *Oklahoma* and USS *Utah* Memorials, and the Battleship *Missouri* Memorial. Thousands of visitors arrive every day to pay their respects to those who lost their lives in the attack. The Pearl Harbor Visitor Center is the best place to get an overview of the national monument and get tickets for tours of the memorials.

‘IOLANI PALACE

364 S. King St., Honolulu, O‘ahu; 808/522-0832; www.iolanipalace.org

From 1882 to 1893, ‘Iolani Palace was the royal residence of Hawai‘i’s monarchs. Built by King Kalākaua, the lavishly furnished palace was the site of official royal functions. When the king’s sister, Queen Lili‘uokalani, came to rule in 1891, she attempted to bolster the power of the monarchy. Ultimately, the monarchy was overthrown and Queen Lili‘uokalani was forced to live in the palace under house arrest for eight months. The palace become the headquarters of the new government, under which the furnishings were auctioned off. Today, you can tour the house and glimpse its former grandeur, though the restoration of the palace’s original collection is ongoing.



‘IOLANI PALACE, O’AHU

HAWAII'S MOST SPECTACULAR BEACHES

O'AHU

- **To mix and mingle:** Sheltered by the Waikīkī Wall, **Kuhio Beach Park** is a great spot for swimmers and sunbathers. The beach is right off the main drag, just steps away from your next meal or tropical cocktail.



KUHIO BEACH PARK, O'AHU

- **To watch expert surfers:** The barrel waves off the North Shore's **'Ehukai Beach Park** are famously dangerous. Come to watch the experts navigate the massive swells of the Banzai Pipeline.
- **To relax: Lanikai Beach** on O'ahu's eastern shore is a small, secluded beach with soft sand, calm waters, and views of Mokulua.

MAUI

- **To see and be seen:** Few stretches of Maui shore are more famous than **Ka‘anapali Beach,** a long, uninterrupted expanse of sand lined from end to end with world-class resorts and island beach activities.
- **To windsurf and kitesurf:** In the afternoon, the cobalt waves of **Kanaha Beach Park** become flecked with whitecaps and dozens of colorful sails as windsurfers and kitesurfers race across the water.
- **To watch the sunset:** In the morning, before the wind picks up, **Keawakapu Beach** is a bustle of snorkelers entering the water and kids splashing in the surf; by late afternoon, it changes into the perfect perch for the sunset.

LANA‘I

- **To hang with locals:** If you want to make your friends back home jealous, snap a picture of **Hulopo‘e Beach Park,** the undisputed favorite hangout for islanders.
- **To escape the crowds: Polihua Beach** is so remote that even Lana‘i residents consider it “out there.” A vast, windswept, and often completely empty stretch of sand, utterly unrivaled in its seclusion.

BIG ISLAND

- **To hike to the beach: Makalawena Beach** is an authentic Big Island experience, because it requires a little bit of hiking to get there. If you make the 20-minute trek to the beach from Kona, you’ll be rewarded with isolated white sand and turquoise water.
- **To surf:** While black-sand beach **Honoli‘i Beach Park** is not great for swimming, it is a great surfing spot. If you’re not a seasoned surfer, no worries: There is a “kiddie” area, and lifeguards if any issues should arise.

KAUA‘I

- **To bring kids:** Protected by a lava rock wall, **Lydgate Beach Park** offers a protected cove for swimmers and snorkelers. The park has all the facilities required for the whole family to enjoy a day at the beach.
- **For dramatic scenery:** On the North Shore, **Tunnels Beach** (also known as **Makua Beach**) offers dramatic sunsets from its crescent bay. From here, you can enjoy the calm waters and gaze at the iconic ridgeline of the Nā Pali coast.

Best HAWAII TRIP

A week only gets you so far in the Hawaiian islands; this itinerary focuses on O‘ahu, the Big Island of Hawai‘i, and Maui.

DAY 1 Start in **O‘ahu,** where your first stop is **Ala Moana Regional Park,** a tranquil beach. It’s a short drive to **Chinatown,** where you’ll have your pick of old-school noodle houses and trendy cocktail bars.

DAY 2 You’ll need to reserve timed-entry tickets ahead to climb the popular **Diamond Head State Monument.** Early risers should plan to catch the sunrise from the peak. Spend the afternoon on the North Shore relaxing on the beach, snorkeling, or exploring the tidepools of **Pupukea-Waimea Marine Life Conservation District.** Next, you’ll head to the **Polynesian Cultural Center** for a lū‘au dinner.

DAY 3 Today, you’re **Big Island** bound. Base yourself in **Hilo,** the start of a scenic drive on **HI-19,** passing **Honoli’i Beach** (a great surf spot), the **Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden,** and **‘Akaka Falls State Park,** ending in the beautiful **Waipi‘o Valley.** Grab fresh

malasadas (Portuguese pastries) from **Tex Drive In** or loco moco from **Hawaiian Style Café.**

DAY 4 Spend today in **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park,** driving **Crater Rim Drive** around the **Kilauea Caldera,** stopping at the **Halema'uma'u Crater** and the **Nahuku** tunnel.

DAY 5 You'll be in **Maui** for the last leg of your trip. Keep it leisurely and relax on famous **Ka'anapali Beach.** For dinner, grab Vietnamese at **A Saigon Café.**

DAY 6 Start your last full day by watching the sunrise from **Haleakala.** Afterwards, grab a filling lunch plate at **Sam Sato's** (you earned it) and post up at **Keawakapu Beach** until the sun goes down.

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

THE ROAD TO HANA

Maui

The Road to Hana is the most loved and loathed section of Maui. Most people who don't enjoy the trip didn't know what they were getting themselves into. Three words will make or break your trip: Don't rush Hana.

Devote a full day to the experience at a minimum. You're visiting one of the most beautiful places on earth; two or three days would be even better. Here are some mile-by-mile highlights along the **Hana Highway:**

- **Mile marker 6:** In the town of Pa'ia, you can go for a stroll on long, wide Baldwin Beach.

- **Mile marker 6.5:** Na‘ili‘ili Haele (Bamboo Forest) is one of the most popular hikes in East Maui.
- **Mile marker 13.5:** Turnoff for Pe‘ahi, also called Jaws, quite possibly the world’s most famous surf break.
- **Mile marker 17:** The Ke‘anae Overlook provides a vista of the peninsula’s mosaic of green taro fields.
- **Mile marker 32:** Turnoff for Wai‘anapanapa State Park, also known as “black-sand beach.”
- **Mile marker 42:** Here you’ll find a bridge overlooking the stunning Pools of ‘Ohe‘o.

ONOMEA SCENIC DRIVE

HI-19, Big Island of Hawai‘i

HI-19 heading from **Hilo** to **Honoka‘a** on the Big Island of Hawa‘i has magnificent inland and coastal views, one after another. Only five minutes from Hilo, just past mile marker 7, a road posted as the scenic drive dips down toward the coast. Take it. Almost immediately, signs warn you to slow your speed because of the narrow winding road and one-lane bridges; start down this meandering lane past some modest homes and into the jungle that covers the road like a living green tunnel. Stop, and you can almost hear the jungle growing. Along this 4-mi (6.4-km) route are sections of an ancient coastal trail and the site of a former fishing village. This road runs past the **Hawaii Tropical Bioreserve and Garden** (27-717 Old Mamalahoa Hwy.; 808/964-5233; https://htbg.com), attracting lovers of plants, flowers, and photography, before heading up to higher ground to rejoin HI-19 at **Pepe‘ekeo.**



HAWAII TROPICAL BIORESERVE AND GARDEN, BIG ISLAND

Continuing farther on HI-19, you'll pass HI-220, which leads to the entrance to **'Akaka Falls State Park,** everybody's idea of a pristine Hawaiian valley, as well as the abandoned plantation remnants in **Hakalau Bay.** At Honoka'a, HI-19 branches off into HI-240, where you'll find the **Waipi'o Valley.** Waipi'o, which means curved or arched waters, is known to Hawaiians as the Sacred Valley of the Kings. Locals know it as one of the best views on all of the Big Island—the valley is postcard perfect, with a river running through deep green hills and waterfalls (the two most recognizable ones are **Hi'ilawe** and **Hakalaoa**).

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

‘IAO VALLEY STATE PARK

Maui

The journey to ‘Iao Valley State Park on Maui begins the moment you leave the streets of nearby Wailuku and make the turn down ‘Iao Valley Road through a thick canopy of trees. You’ll find chickens crossing the road, rural houses, fields, and farms at the base of vertical cliffs. Before you hike to see the famous ‘Iao Needle, take a moment to read the history of the park, where Maui’s tribal army lost to King Kamehameha I and his forces in the 1790 Battle of Kepaniwai, allowing for the unification of the Hawaiian archipelago. A 133-step walkway leads you to Kuka‘emoku—better known as **‘Iao Needle**—rising 1,200 ft (366 m) from the valley floor. Rugged ridgelines line the valley, sacred and untouched because it’s believed the bones of Hawaiian royalty are buried deep inside the caves.



‘IAO VALLEY, MAUI

THE MALIKO RUN

Maui

In the sport of downwind stand-up paddling, there’s no stretch of water more legendary than the 9-mi-long (14.5-km) Maliko Run. It’s where downwind racing was born, and the place where the world’s best paddle surfers train for the professional tour. In a “downwinder,” paddlers position the wind at their backs and glide on the open ocean, connecting “bumps,” or

ocean swells. When done properly, it feels like you're surfing on a wave that virtually has no end.

KAPIʻOLANI REGIONAL PARK AND DIAMOND HEAD STATE MONUMENT

Oʻahu

East of the bustle of Waikīkī, **Kapiʻolani Regional Park** is one of the largest and oldest public parks on Oʻahu. Named after King Kalākaua's wife, this stretch of royal lands was dedicated to the public in 1877. Today, the park houses the Honolulu Zoo, miles of pathways, and an outdoor music venue. It's a great place to escape the heat or have a picnic after your ascent to the top of Diamond Head.

The iconic silhouette of **Diamond Head,** Lēʻahi in Hawaiian, is the ridgeline of a crater formed thousands of years ago. The short trail that leads to the summit was constructed in 1908 by the military. Today, the hike to the summit is most popular at sunrise. Timed-entry tickets are required and hikers should come prepared with water, hiking shoes, and sun protection. Although the trail and its stairways are strenuous, the views from the top are worth the struggle.

WAIMEA CANYON STATE PARK

Kauaʻi; https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dsp

The spectacular Waimea Canyon is 14 mi (23 km) long and, at some places, over 3,600 ft (1,097 m) deep. Carved by erosion and the power of the Waimea River, the canyon is a marvel of colorful volcanic rock. One of the best ways to see the canyon is to follow **Waimea Canyon Drive,** a scenic route running 19 mi (31 km) from the town of Waimea to Kokeʻe State Park. There are plenty of lookouts along the way.



WAIMEA CANYON STATE PARK, KAUA'I

For an easy introduction to hiking in Waimea Canyon State Park, follow the **Iliau Nature Loop** 0.3 mi (0.5 km). The **Canyon Trail** skirts the rim of the canyon with sweeping views on the way to Waipoʻo Falls (1.8 mi/2.9 km one-way). For those prepared to hike to the canyon floor, the challenging **Kukui Trail** traverses the 2,000-ft (610-m) descent over 2.5 mi (4 km, one-way). Along the way, you'll pass through forests and smooth Mars-like rocks before arriving at the Waimea River. Once you've cooled off in the rushing river, you'll make the strenuous ascent back to the canyon rim.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

ALIʻI LŪʻAU AT THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

55-370 Kamehameha Hwy., La'ie, Oʻahu; 800/367-7060; www.polynesia.com; lūʻau year-round

For a truly immersive experience, partake in a lūʻau at the Polynesian Cultural Center on Oʻahu's North Shore. Here you'll learn about the traditions of the island nations of Hawai'i, Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji, Aotearoa, and Samoa. The event features a canoe tour, a retelling of Queen Lili'uokalani's story, and performances by Polynesian dancers and musicians. And of course, there's the food: a farm-to-table feast centered around a roasted imu pig and traditional lūʻau dishes.



POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER, O'AHU

BEST FOOD

One of the pleasures of traveling around Hawaii is the proliferation of **fruit stands** and **farmers markets** selling the bounty grown on the islands—including pineapples, coconuts, bananas, papayas, and many more—and things made from them, from smoothies to freshly made banana bread.

INTERNATIONAL CUISINE

Immigrants from around the world brought their cuisine to the islands, and many of the dishes remain local favorites to this day.

- **Chinese: Wu Wei Chong Qing Cuisine** (1738 S. King St.; 808/741-2297; @wuweicuisine), in Honolulu's Chinatown, is the best place to try popular street food dishes like xiao main, fish soup, and twice-cooked pork. Noodles are sourced from the local **Yat Tung Chow Noodle Factory** (150 N. King St.).
- **Vietnamese:** At one of Maui's most popular Vietnamese venues, **A Saigon Café** (1792 Main St., Wailuku; 808/243-9560), opt for clay pot dishes with rice, chicken, and vegetables, or try the pho, banh hoi, or tasty Vietnamese soup.
- **Portuguese: Tex Drive In** (HI-19 at the corner of Pakalana St., Honoka'a; 808/775-0598) is a Big Island institution, known for fresh malasadas: sugared Portuguese pastries filled with passion fruit cream, chocolate, or strawberry.
- **Japanese: Izakaya Naru** (2700 S. King St.; 808/951-0510; https://asia-kitchen.co.jp/naru_honolulu) serves Okinawan-style izakaya. Here you'll enjoy sashimi, homemade noodles, gyoza, and Okinawan doughnuts with ice cream.

LOCAL HAWAIIAN

While local Hawaiian food is rooted in Polynesian techniques and flavors, it is also an amalgam of the cuisine from the immigrants who became an integral part of Hawaiian culture.

Plate Lunches

Plate lunches, found mainly at drive-in restaurants (island-style fast food), are served with two scoops of rice, macaroni salad, and a protein, including chicken katsu, kalbi, or kalua pork. This affordable and filling meal incorporates Japanese, Korean, American, and Hawaiian cooking. Try it at **Sam Sato's** (1750 Wili Pa Loop, Wailuku; 808/244-7124) on Maui or at **Lana'i City Grill** (828 Lana'i Ave.; 808/565-7211; www.lanaicitybarandgrill.com) on Lana'i.

BEST SOUVENIRS

ART

With Hawaii's unbeatable scenery, it's no wonder artists have settled here, making this a great place to find one-of-a-kind pieces. Some towns with a high concentration of artists include **Volcano Village** on the Big Island and historic **Makawao** on Maui.

COFFEE AND MACADAMIA NUTS

At the **Hamakua Macadamia Nut Factory** (61-3251 Maluokalani St., off HI-270 between mile markers 4 and 5; 808/882-1690; www.hawnnut.com) on the Big Island, imagine a room full of macadamia nuts and coffee of every variety imaginable that can be sampled and purchased to take home.

Loco moco is another favorite plate for lunch as well as breakfast: two fried eggs and a hamburger patty over rice smothered in gravy—talk about East meets West. Try it at **Hawaiian Style Café** (681 Manono St., Hilo; 808/969-9265) on the Big Island.

Lūʻau

The food served at lūʻau is very similar to what you'll find at a Hawaiian food restaurant, and there are several staple dishes no matter where you go. Among others, there's **kalua pig,** a smoky-flavored pulled pork tossed with cabbage, traditionally cooked in an imu (an underground earthen oven); **lau lau**—fish, pork, or chicken wrapped in taro leaves and steamed in ti leaves; and **poke,** a raw fish salad made with ahi tuna, soy sauce (called shoyu in Hawaii), and sesame oil. No Hawaiian lūʻau is complete without **poi,** a staple starch made from pounded taro root, or **haupia,** a coconut milk-based dessert usually served as a congealed pudding.

Shave Ice

Tucking into a cone of shave ice is the perfect way to cool off after a day at the beach. A classic treat, shave ice consists of a carefully packed mound of ice shavings drizzled with flavored syrup. You can get your shave ice served with ice cream, fruit, the puckeringly tart li-hing plum powder, and more to create your own favorite combinations. While the designation of Best Shave Ice is up for debate, check out these favorites:

- **Matsumoto's Shave Ice** (66-111 Kamehameha Hwy., O'ahu; 808/637-4827; https://matsumotoshaveice.com): Renowned shave ice shop on the North Shore.
- **Original Big Island Shave Ice Co.** (69-250 Waikōloa Beach Dr., Waikōloa Village, Big Island; https://obisic.squarespace.com): Delicious, natural flavor combinations.
- **Gus' Hawaiian Shave Ice** (1975 S. Kihei Rd., Kihei, Maui; 808/268-7413; www.facebook.com/gusshaveice): Shave ice with locally made syrups, served from a VW camper bus.



SHAVE ICE

- **JoJo's** (9734 Kaumualiʻi Hwy., Waimea, Kauaʻi; https://jojosshaveice.com): Classic shave ice combos whose proceeds fund free summer camps for underserved kids.

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Daniel K. Inouye International Airport:** HNL; 300 Rodgers Blvd., Honolulu, Oʻahu; 808/836-6411; https://airports.hawaii.gov/hnl
- **Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport:** KOA; 73-200 Kupipi St., Kailua-Kona, Hawaʻi; 808/327-9520; https://airports.hawaii.gov/koa

- **Kahului Airport:** OGG; 1 Keolani Pl., Kahului, Maui; 808/872-3830; https://airports.hawaii.gov/ogg
- **Molokaʻi Airport:** MKK; 3980 Airport Loop, Hoʼolehua, Molokaʻi; 808/567-9660; https://airports.hawaii.gov/mkk
- **Lanaʻi Airport:** LNY; Lanaʻi; 808/565-7942; https://airports.hawaii.gov/lny
- **Lihue Airport:** LIH; 3901 Mokulele Loop, Lihue, Kauaʻi; 808/274-3800; https://airports.hawaii.gov/lih

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau:** www.gohawaii.com
- **Hawaii State Parks:** https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dsp

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

- ***Midweek Oahu:*** www.midweek.com
- ***Honolulu Star-Advertiser:*** www.staradvertiser.com
- ***Hawaii Free Press:*** www.hawaiifreepress.com
- ***Hawaiʻi Magazine:*** www.hawaiimagazine.com

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico’s nickname is Isla del Encanto, or Island of Enchantment, and for good reason. Sandy beaches, palm trees, and tropical breezes make it a favorite getaway for the sun and surf crowd, and rugged mountains and a verdant rain forest attract adventure travelers. But Puerto Rico is more than a picture postcard. Centuries of Indigenous, African, and Spanish influences can still be experienced as part of Puerto Rico’s vibrant cultural life today. San Juan is a hip, bustling metropolis, but a simple stroll through the cobblestone streets of Viejo San Juan steeps visitors in a concentrated dose of the island’s history and cultural life. Life is vivid in Puerto Rico, where beauty abounds in the many protected coves, lagoons, caves, and three bioluminescent bays. Indigenous Taíno culture, ancient ruins, and petroglyphs can be found throughout the lush central mountain region. The sun shines brightly, rainbow-hued buildings pop with color, and tropical music fills the air. Prepare to be enchanted.

AREA: 3,424 sq mi / 8,868 sq km

POPULATION: 3,203,295

BECAME A US TERRITORY: October 18, 1898

CAPITAL: San Juan


PUERTO RICO
ATLANTIC OCEAN
AEROPUERTO INTERNACIONAL RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ
Isabela
San Antonio
Camuy
Hatillo
Arecibo
Balneario Cerro Gordo
Dorado
Vega Baja
Manatí
CASA MELAZA
CASA BACARDÍ
Catano
Viejo San Juan
SAN JUAN
Bosque Estatal de Piñones
Loiza
Carolina
Bayamón
KIOSKOS
Playa Luquillo
Luquillo
Canovanas
PORTALITO HUB
Cayo Icacos
Puente de San Juan
Playa Flamenco
Pta. de Molinos
Playa Carlos Rosario
Dewey
SOAKING UP THE SUN AND SURF
CULEBRA
Bahía de Aguadilla
Aguadilla
Aguada
Domes
Rincón
Quebradillas
San Sebastián
Ciales
Corozal
Naranjito
DIVING DEEP INTO EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST
El Yunque Nat'l Forest
Caja Falls
YOKAHU TOWER
BAÑO GRANDE
Fajardo
Sonda de Vieques
Utuado
Jayuya
LA PIEDRA ESCRITA
CAFÉ HACIENDA SAN PEDRO
TIENDA Y MUSEO
Orocovis
San Cristóbal Cañon
Caguas
SIERRA DE LUQUILLO
Ceiba
Naguabo
Punta Puerca
Punta Lima
Punta Santiago
Humacao
Isabel Segunda
Punta Este
VIEQUES
Esperanza
Mosquito Bay
ADMIRING BIOLUMINESCENT BAYS
Bahía de Añasco
Mayagüez
Maricao
LA RUTA PANORÁMICA
MUSEO DEL CEMÍ
Bosque Estatal de Maricao
Adjuntas
HACIENDA POMARROSA
MIRADOR OROCOVIS-VILLALBA
Bosque Estatal de Toro Negro
MIRADOR PIEDRA DEGETAU
CORDILLERA CENTRAL
Cidra
EL MOJITO
San Lorenzo
BARRIO GUAVATE
LA RUTA DEL LECHÓN
Cayey
Reserva Forestal de Carite
Charca Azul
SIERRA DE CAYEY
Joyuda
Cabo Rojo
San Germán
Juana Díaz
Coamo
Yabucoa
Boqueron
Yauco
Guayanilla
Patillas
Maunabo
El Combate
La Parguera
Guánica
Bosque Estatal de Guánica
Ponce
Salinas
Guayama
FUERTE CAPRON
Santa Isabel
Jobos
Bahía de Jobos
Cabo Rojo
Punta Brea
Bahía Fosforescente
Caja de Muertos
Caribbean Sea
0
5 mi
0
5 km

ORIENTATION

Puerto Rico's capital and largest city, **San Juan,** is situated on the northeast coast. The east coast of Puerto Rico contains some of its most popular tourist sights, such as **El Yunque National Forest** and **Playa Luquillo.** Off the east coast are another two small islands, **Vieques** and **Culebra.** The island's fourth-largest city, **Ponce,** is located on the south coast. Within the west coast region are fun-loving surf towns and the colonial city of **Mayagüez.** The north coast is more off the beaten path, with rocky beaches and seaside cliffs. The **Cordillera Central** mountain range runs through the interior of the island, with **Jayuya** holding many Taíno cultural sites.

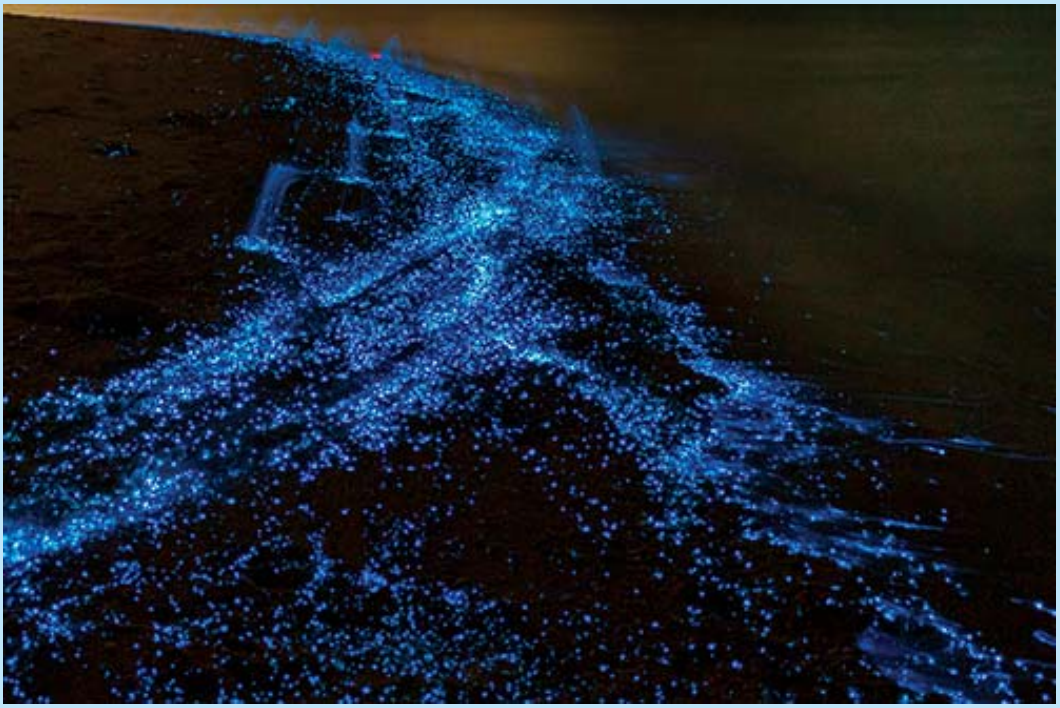
WHEN TO GO

The climate in Puerto Rico is classified as tropical marine, which means it is **sunny, hot, and humid year-round.** The average year-round temperature ranges from 80°F (26°C) on the coast to 68°F (20°C) in the mountains. There are two seasons: **Dry season** (Jan.-Apr.), when humidity is lowest and airline tickets and hotel room rates tend to be higher, and **rainy season** (May-Nov.), also hurricane season, when an average of 4-6 in (10-15 cm) of rain falls each month.

TOP 3

1 ADMIRING BIOLUMINESCENT BAYS

Puerto Rico is home to three of the world's five bioluminescent bays, created by the single-celled microorganisms called dinoflagellates, which live in the water and light up when disturbed. Though bioluminescent dinoflagellates exist throughout the ocean, it's rare for them to be concentrated enough to create the biological light show you'll see in Puerto Rico's bioluminescent bays. By day, you'll see what looks like any other body of still water; the only way to see bioluminescence is by taking a boat ride or paddling a kayak into the lagoon at night. For the best visibility, go when there's a new moon.



BIOLUMINESCENCE

- If you see only one bio-bay, make it **Mosquito Bay** in Vieques. When it's at its best, the water here glows an electric blue. **Taino Aqua Adventures** (www.tainoaquaadventures.com) takes visitors out into the bay in glass-bottomed kayaks to see the show.
- **Laguna Grande** in Fajardo traverses a mangrove canal, and the only way to access it is by a kayak tour. Book through **Kayaking Puerto Rico** (https://kayakingpuertorico.com). When conditions are optimum, the water glows a glittery green.

2 DIVING DEEP INTO EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST

787/888-1880; www.fs.usda.gov/elyunque [URL inactive]

El Yunque National Forest is the crown jewel of Puerto Rico's natural treasures, the only tropical forest in the US National Forest System, and home to some of the only virgin forest remaining on the island. It's also home to hundreds of native plant and animal species. The name El Yunque, also the name of the forest's sacred peak (3,533 ft/1,077 m), is believed to be a Spanish derivation of the Taíno Indian

name for the area, Yuke (“white earth”), referring to the clouds that often encase the mountaintops. Petroglyphs can be found carved into rocks and boulders throughout the forest, signs of the religious ceremonies and rituals that were often held here.



EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST

It’s possible to take a drive-by tour of El Yunque in about an hour, but spending the day immersed in this natural wonderland is recommended. Start at **Portalito Hub** (54 Calle Principal, Palmer, Río Grande; 787/888-1880), the National Forest Service visitor center, to pick up a map, then drive south on PR-191, the main road through the forest, to view dramatic **Coca Falls;** climb **Yokahu Tower,** a 69-ft (27-m) observation tower with a 360-degree view of the island; and see **Baño Grande,** a picturesque stone pool with an arched bridge constructed in the 1930s. In the afternoon, try the strenuous 45-minute hike one-way on **Mount Britton Trail,** and if you have time, continue another hour to the summit of **El Yunque** (allow 4-5 hours round-trip).

3 SOAKING UP THE SUN AND SURF

No two beaches are alike in Puerto Rico. **Balnearios** are large, government-maintained beaches with bathroom and shower facilities, picnic tables, and snack bars. Some have lounge-chair rentals, lifeguards, and campsites. There are also many **wilderness beaches,** which are typically remote and devoid of development and facilities. Some beaches have big waves best suited to **surfing,** and others are as calm as bathwater and ideal for **swimming.** Some, especially along the north coast, are rife with strong currents, beautiful to look at but not safe for swimming. One thing all the beaches have in common is their accessibility to the public. There is no such thing as a private beach in Puerto Rico. Here are some favorites.

- **Playa Luquillo** is considered one of the island's most beautiful beaches. It features a wide flat crescent of sand, a shady palm grove, calm shallow waters, and a couple of food vendors selling fritters and piña coladas.
- Culebra is the lucky site of **Playa Flamenco,** named one of America's best beaches by the Travel Channel, a wide, 1-mi-long (1.6-km) horseshoe-shaped beach with fine white sand and calm, aquamarine water. An abandoned graffiti-covered tank is a reminder of US Navy presence.



PLAYA FLAMENCO

- **Balneario Cerro Gordo** in Vega Alta on the north coast is a large protected cove with calm waters and a pristine sandy beach surrounded by hills covered in lush vegetation. It boasts one of the best campgrounds of any of the balnearios and great surfing too.
- **Rincón** is the surfing capital of Puerto Rico, thanks to literally dozens of popular surf sites. By far the favorite is **Domes,** located in front of the green domes of an abandoned nuclear power plant, an easy-to-access spot featuring long hollow waves.
- For easy access to a site rich in marine life, visit **Playa Carlos Rosario,** a narrow beach flanked by boulders and a protruding coral reef in Culebra. The underwater visibility is usually quite good here, so you can see all kinds of colorful fish and coral formations.

HIGHLIGHTS

VIEJO SAN JUAN

Viejo San Juan is the heart and historic center of Puerto Rico. The 500-year-old walled city is a 45-block grid of blue cobblestone streets lined with pastel-colored 16th-, 17th-, and 18th-century buildings trimmed with ornamental ironwork, flanked by two Spanish fortresses and surrounded by a 400-year-old wall. Art and history museums, plazas, shops, and ship docks: Many of the island's must-see sites are located here. At night it throbs with locals and tourists alike at some of the city's finest restaurants and bars. The best way to see Viejo San Juan is on foot. A few of the top sights to look out for:

- **Castillo San Felipe del Morro** (501 Calle Norzagaray; 787/729-6777; www.nps.gov/saju) is a daunting display of military defense featuring four levels of cannon-bearing batteries that rise on a 140-ft (42 m) promontory from the sea. Inside is a maze of rooms, connected by tunnels, ramps, and a spiral stairway.
- **Castillo de San Cristóbal** (Calle Norzagaray at the entrance to Viejo San Juan; 787/729-6777; www.nps.gov/saju) is the large fortress, built by the Spanish, at the entrance to Viejo San Juan by Plaza de Colón. Today, a section of the fort is open to the public to explore.
- **Catedral de San Juan Bautista** (151-153 Calle del Cristo; 787/722-0861; http://catedralsanjuanbautista.org) is the second-oldest church in the western hemisphere, first built of wood and straw in 1521 and destroyed by hurricanes and rebuilt multiple times.
- **Museo de las Americas** (Cuartel de Ballajá, 2nd Fl., on Calle Norzagaray beside Plaza del Quinto Centenario; 787/724-5052; www.museolasamericas.org) contains a fantastic collection of Latin American folk art.

PONCE

Elegant, cultured Ponce was an economic and cultural rival to San Juan back in the day, experiencing great growth and wealth during the 18th and 19th centuries, thanks to its international shipping trade, lucrative rum distilleries, and plantations growing coffee and sugarcane. All that wealth translated into hundreds of gorgeous, ornate homes and buildings that combine rococo, neoclassical, and Spanish Revival architecture with traditional criolla (Creole) building styles, with broad balconies, large doorways, and open-air patios.

At the city's core is **Plaza las Delicias** (bounded by Calles Isabel, Atocha, Unión, and Simón Bolívar), an enormous, shady plaza anchored by the **Fuentes de Leones** and impressive **Catedral de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe** (787/507-0134). The streets around the plaza are lined with many thriving businesses and street vendors. The **Museo de Arte de Ponce** (2325 Blvd. Luis A. Ferre Aguayo; 787/848-0505 or 787/840-1510; www.museoarteponce.org), the crown jewel of Puerto Rico's cultural institutions, contains more than 4,000 pieces of European, North American, and Puerto Rican art from the 14th century to the present. **Castillo Serrallés** (17 Calle El Vigía; 787/259-1774; https://museocastilloserrallespr.com) was built in 1934 for Eugenio Serrallés, a leader in the local sugarcane industry, and it offers a grand view of the city.



CATEDRAL DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE

MUSEO EL CEMÍ

PR-144, kilometer marker 9.3, Jayuya; 787/304-1976 or 787/828-4618

Museo El Cemí is located in the mountainous interior municipality of Jayuya, which is the place to get a glimpse of vestiges of Taíno culture in the environment where the culture once had deep roots. The building makes quite a statement as you approach. It’s shaped like a huge cemí—a triangular artifact with animal characteristics, believed to have represented a deity and to have contained many powers. Downstairs is a small collection of Taíno artifacts: necklaces of stone and shells, ceremonial maracas, and the mysterious stone collar/belt, the purpose of which is unknown. Upstairs are poster-size photographs of petroglyphs found throughout the island.

Major CITIES

SAN JUAN: Arguably the most cosmopolitan city in the Caribbean and the second-oldest European settlement in the Americas, San Juan offers world-class restaurants and luxury hotels in Spanish colonial and neoclassical buildings lining cobblestone streets, and you're never very far from the beach.

PONCE: The south coast's biggest city rivals San Juan as the island's cultural, historical, and architectural center.

MAYAGÜEZ: Mayagüez is a lovely colonial city and a bustling mini-metropolis that has resisted the siren's call of tourism and mainland influence.

Within a couple of miles of the museum on the PR-144, the enormous granite boulder of **La Piedra Escrita,** measuring 32 ft high (10 m) and 13 ft wide (4 m), is located smack-dab in the middle of Río Saliente, creating a natural pool. The rock is one of Puerto Rico's most revered reminders of Taíno culture. On the rock's surface are 86 petroglyphs carved into the rock by members of Indigenous groups sometime between 600 and 1200 CE. Some symbols clearly depict faces of humans and animals, while others are geometric or abstract. Because of the quantity of petroglyphs on the rock, some believe La Piedra Escrita was an important ceremonial site.

Best ROAD TRIP

At 111 mi long (179 km) by 39 mi wide (63 km), Puerto Rico is small enough that many of the destinations on this road trip could be done as day trips, if you prefer to base yourself in a city like San Juan or Ponce.

DAY 1 There's no better way to begin your trip to Puerto Rico than by exploring **Viejo San Juan,** wandering cobblestone streets, looking up at pastel-painted buildings from as far back as the 16th century,

and taking in the view from the **Castillo San Felipe del Morro.** In the evening, dine on Puerto Rican fare, then join the festivities on party street **Calle San Sebastián.**

DAY 2 Start your second day in **Bosque Estatal de Piñones,** which offers undeveloped, lovely beaches just east of San Juan, before continuing east to **Luquillo** to lounge on the lovely beach and eat Puerto Rican street food at the **kioskos.**

DAY 3 Plunge into **El Yunque National Forest** today, driving past captivating pools and waterfalls, taking in views from **Yohaku Tower,** and maybe even hiking **El Yunque,** the island's second-highest mountain. After dark, take a kayaking tour on glittering green **Laguna Grande,** 15 mi (24 km) away.

DAY 4 You'll take in parts of **La Ruta Panorámica** and **La Ruta del Lechón** today, starting in **Yabucoa** and passing **Charco Azul** (a great place to take a dip) as well as numerous **lechoneras** where you can try the beloved Puerto Rican roast pork. You'll pass scenic overlooks en route to **Ponce** on the island's southern coast; enjoy the early evening bustle of **Plaza las Delicias** and search for authentic Puerto Rican food at **La Casa del Chef.**

DAY 5 Spend today in the island's mountainous **Cordillera Central,** learning about Puerto Rico's Indigenous Taíno at **Museo El Cemí** and **La Piedra Escrita,** and the legacy of its coffee plantations at **Café Hacienda San Pedro Tienda y Museo.**

DAY 6 Return to San Juan on your final day, stopping at lovely **Balneario Cerro Gordo** on the way to lounge on the sand and maybe enjoy some surfing. Back in the capital, try a **rum tasting** or Viejo San Juan's **Museo de las Americas,** before dinner at **La Casita**

Blanca and dancing your last night away in nightlife district **La Placita.**

BEST SCENIC DRIVES

LA RUTA PANORÁMICA (SCENIC ROUTE)

You couldn't ask for a better way to explore Cordillera Central, the island's mountainous inland, than to drive this 167-mi (269-km) route from **Mayagüez** on the west coast to **Yabucoa** on the southeast coast. The route takes visitors to breathtaking heights on the island's highest peaks, revealing panoramic views of both the Atlantic and the Caribbean, as well as the dramatic mountains and valleys that make up the island's spine. The well-maintained, well-marked route traverses a network of secondary roads beginning on **PR-105** in Mayagüez and ending on **PR-182** in Yabucoa. From end to end, the journey takes about six hours, not including stops, so plan to spend two days to see all the landscape has to offer.

Highlights along the way include several state forests and reserves, including **Reserva Forestal de Carite** (PR-184, kilometer marker 17.8, Cayey; 787/747-4510 or 787/747-4545), **Bosque Estatal de Toro Negro** (along Ruta Panorámica on PR-143, south of Jayuya; 787/867-3040), and **Bosque Estatal de Maricao** (PR-120, kilometer marker 13.2, Maricao; 787/838-1040), as well as impressive overlooks such as **Mirador Piedra Degetau** in Aibonito and **Mirador Orocovis-Villalba** (PR-143 between Orocovis and Villalba).

LA RUTA DEL LECHÓN (ROAST PORK ROUTE)

PR-184

South of San Juan is a terrific scenic drive along PR-184 through **Barrio Guavate** in the municipality of **Cayey.** Not only does this route provide spectacular views of the mountains, but it also passes by the many popular lechoneras that make this area a favorite destination for foodies.

Specializing in pork cooked whole hog-style over a wood fire, lechoneras are casual, open-air restaurants that also serve other authentic Puerto Rican dishes and even sometimes have live salsa music on the weekends.

From **San Juan,** proceed south on PR-52, turn left on PR-184, and for the next 9 mi (14.5 km) you will drive past panoramic views of the mountains and lechoneras including **El Mojito** (PR-184, kilometer marker 32.9; 787/738-8888; www.lechoneraelmojito.com) and **Los Pinos** (PR-184, kilometer marker 27.7, Cayey; 787/722-6862). A good end point is **Charco Azul,** a natural freshwater swimming hole with a small waterfall. On weekends, street vendors sell crafts, homemade cheese, candied fruits, and mavi champagne along the roadside. Without stops, the drive takes about 30 minutes one way, but for the best experience, devote a full day to the drive.

BEST PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

BOSQUE ESTATAL DE GUÁNICA

PR-334; 787/821-5706, 787/999-2200

The primary draw for visitors to Guánica is the astounding landscape of Bosque Estatal de Guánica. This 9,000-ac (3,642-ha) subtropical dry forest sits atop petrified coral reefs millions of years old and features a variety of environments, from dry scrub forest, featuring sun-bleached rocky soil, cacti, and stunted, twisted trees, to evergreen forest, where you can find Spanish moss, mistletoe, bromeliads, and orchids. The rest of the forest is deciduous, and agave and campeche trees are common too.



FUERTE CAPRON, BOSQUE ESTATAL DE GUÁNICA

There are nearly 37 mi (60 km) of trails in the forest. From the main entrance off PR-334, follow the long narrow road to the **information center,** where you'll find the trailheads and where you can obtain trail maps and tips from the helpful English-speaking rangers. One of the most popular hikes is a trek to the ruins of **Fuerte Capron** (3 mi/4.8 km; 1.5 hours), once a lookout tower for the Spanish Armada. For a breathtakingly beautiful drive through the forest, take the **PR-333** scenic route, which starts in the town of Guánica and traverses eastward for 6.5 mi (10.5 km) along the southern rim of the forest.

SAN CRISTÓBAL CAÑON

PR-162/PR-725, between Aibonito and Barranquitas

San Cristóbal Cañon is the biggest canyon in the Caribbean, at 4.5 mi (7.2 km) long and 500-800 ft (152-243 m) deep. It's hard to believe this beautiful deep hole in the earth, now filled with verdant green vegetation, was once a garbage dump. Today it's a popular site for adventure seekers

who want to get away from it all and witness the canyon's natural beauty, including a spectacular river, waterfalls, and shoals. **Montaña Explora** (PR-191, kilometer marker 27.9, Camino Viejo, Charco El Hippie; 787/516-6194; www.mexplorapr.com) provides guided extreme adventure tours of San Cristóbal Cañon. A challenging six-hour hiking and rappelling tour is $175 and is only for the physically fit and truly adventurous, although no previous rappelling experience is required. Other tours include hiking and swimming in a freshwater pond on the less-touristy southern side of El Yunque.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Though visiting Puerto Rico during a festival is bound to be an unforgettable experience, you can find a party almost any evening in one of its party districts, like **La Placita** in Santurce, **Boca de Cangrejos** in Piñones, and **Calle San Sebastián** in Viejo San Juan. Before you go, brush up on Puerto Rican music: The island is world renowned for **salsa,** a lively fusion of jazz, African polyrhythms, and Caribbean flair that's as fun to dance to as it is to listen to. The roots of salsa music can be heard in Puerto Rico's earliest known musical styles, **bomba** and **plena,** which originated in African culture, both propelled by hand drummers.



CALLE SAN SEBASTIÁN, VIEJO SAN JUAN

FESTIVAL DE LAS MÁSCARAS (FESTIVAL OF MASKS)

Hatillo; Dec.

Hatillo, on the island's north side, one hour west of San Juan, hosts one of the island's most celebrated annual festivals. Originating in 1823 with the Spaniards who settled this part of the island, Festival de las Máscaras is a three-day costumed celebration held around December 28. Originally it was meant to retell the story of King Herod's attempt to kill the infant Jesus by ordering the death of all male babies. Men would don elaborate costumes and masks and travel house to house on horseback. After playfully harassing the residents and demanding money, which was donated to the church or a civic organization, they would receive homemade treats and beverages. Today, festivities revolve around street parades, music, dance, food, and crafts on the main plaza. The last day is reserved for **Día de Inocentes,** a festival specifically for children.

COFFEE FESTIVALS

In the 19th century, Puerto Rico was a major exporter of coffee. The industry has waxed and waned since, notably taking a big hit from Hurricane Maria in 2017, but it is slowly building back, and there are plenty of ways to experience the history and the flavors of Puerto Rico's coffee heritage. The best time to see coffee farms is during harvest season (Sept.-Dec.), or visit during a coffee festival. **Festival del Café** is an annual weeklong celebration of coffee held in March in the southern town of Yauco. In Cordillera Central, Maricao has celebrated the end of coffee harvest since the 1800s with the three-day **Fiesta del Acabe del Café** in mid-February. Both festivals have parades, award ceremonies, dance and musical performances, arts, crafts, and food vendors.

BEST SOUVENIRS

A bag of Puerto Rican **coffee** is a piece of island heritage, and you get to support local growers. Pick one up at a working coffee farm in Jayuya, like **Café Hacienda San Pedro Tienda y Museo** (PR-144, kilometer marker 8.4, Jayuya; 787/828-2083; www.cafehsp.com) or **Hacienda Pomarrosa** (PR-511 at PR-143, near Jayuya; 787/496-4305; https://pomarrosacoffeelodge.com).

Edible souvenirs don't get much better than the **brazo gitanos,** or jelly rolls, from **Ricomini Panadería** (131 Calle Méndez Vigo, Mayagüez; 787/832-0565 or 787/831-3217), a Mayagüez specialty.

Rum is another traditional Puerto Rican export, a product of the bounty of sugarcane that's integral to the island's history. You can try it at distilleries from well-known **Casa Bacardí** (PR-165, kilometer marker 6.2, Cataño; 787/788-8400; www.bacardi.com/casa-bacardi) to "rum boutique" **Casa Melaza** (74 Caleta de San Juan, San Juan; 787/562-8483; www.casamelaza.com [URL inactive]).

BEST FOOD

Puerto Rican cuisine is a hearty fare called cocina criolla, which means Creole cooking. A typical criolla dish contains fried or stewed meat (especially pork, so popular that Puerto Rico has a tourist driving route dedicated to it, **La Ruta de Lechón**), chicken, or seafood, combined with or accompanied by rice and beans.

PLANTAINS AND BANANAS

The plantain is a major staple of the Puerto Rican diet, similar to a banana but larger, firmer, and less sweet. Bananas are also popular, especially

guineitos en escabeche, a green-banana salad marinated with pimento-stuffed olives in vinegar and lime juice.

- **Tostones** are a popular plantain dish. The fruit is sliced into rounds, fried until soft, mashed flat, and fried again until crisp, often served with that ubiquitous Puerto Rican condiment, mayo ketchup. Try it at **La Casita Blanca** (351 Calle Tapía, San Juan; 787/726-5501; www.casita-blanca.com).
- Probably the most popular way plantain is served is in **mofongo,** a mashed mound of fried green plantain, garlic, olive oil, and chicharrón (pork cracklins). You'll find it on the menu of just about every restaurant on the island. Try it at **La Casa del Chef** (Callejon Fagot, Ponce; 787/843-1298).



MOFONGO

LUQUILLO'S KIOSKOS

PR-193 at PR-3

The kioskos of Luquillo are nearly as popular an attraction as the beach. This long stretch of 60-plus side-by-side kiosks is one of the best places to experience Puerto Rico's array of traditional fritters. Shaped like discs, half moons, cigars, boats, and balls, these crispy deep-fried goodies come stuffed with a varied combination of meat, fish, crab, poultry, or cheese. Most kiosks serve similar fare at stand-up bars where you can eat on your feet or seated at a table nearby. Pick one of each and wash it all down with a cold beer, a cocktail, or coco frio (ice-cold coconut water served from the shell). Be sure to buy a bag of coco dulce—sinfully rich patties of sugary coconut—for later. The following are some favorites:

- **La Parrilla #2** (787/889-0590)
- **El Jefe Burger & Mojito Factory #12** (787/604-0644; www.facebook.com/jefeburgershackmojitofactory)
- **Terruño Comida Artesanal #20** (787/889-8989; www.facebook.com/terruno.comidaartesanal)

MAJOR AIRPORTS

- **Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Muñoz Marín:** SJU; San Juan; 787/253-2329; https://aeropuertosju.com
- **Aeropuerto Internacional Rafael Hernández:** BQN; Aguadilla; 787/890-6075; https://aguadilla.airport-authority.com

MORE INFORMATION

TRAVEL AND TOURISM INFORMATION

- **Tourism Company of Puerto Rico:** www.discoverpuertorico.com

NEWSPAPERS

- ***El Nuevo Día:*** www.elnuevodia.com/english
- ***San Juan Daily Star:*** www.sanjuandailystar.com

OceanofPDF.com

ESSENTIALS

Travel Necessities

Transportation

Health and Safety

Accommodations

Travel Tips

Sustainable Travel

Resources

TRAVEL NECESSITIES

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Visitors to the United States must have a **valid passport** and a **visa.** US citizens and permanent residents traveling within the country by air should have a **passport** or **REAL ID**-compliant driver's license. For more information, visit www.dhs.gov/real-id#.

Visitors from many countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, may visit for up to 90 days without a visa. See the US government's **Visa Waiver Program** page on the US State Department's website (https://travel.state.gov) for more information. Be sure to allow plenty of time to complete the required **Electronic System for Travel**

Authorization (www.cbp.gov). You should have your passport and return flight or cruise ticket information on hand. Upon arrival in the United States, you'll be required to show your passport along with the visa waiver.

If you lose your passport while traveling in the States, you can find the contact details for your home country's embassy online through the **US Department of State** (www.usembassy.gov).

Visitors with **Canadian passports** are exempt from needing visas or waivers.

DRIVER'S LICENSE AND DOCUMENTATION

All drivers must have a **government-issued license** or **permit** to operate a vehicle and must be older than 16 years of age.

International visitors who wish to drive in the United States must obtain an **International Driving Permit,** available from the country that issued their driver's license. This permit cannot be obtained once in the United States.

Regardless of whether you're an international driver or a United States citizen, make sure all documentation is up to date and located in an accessible place within the vehicle.

MONEY AND CURRENCY EXCHANGE

Nearly all attractions, lodging, and restaurants accept major **credit cards** and **bank debit cards.** Bring **cash** for smaller businesses, as well as for emergencies and tipping. There are **bank ATMs** located in cities and small towns. Note that businesses in large cities and some national parks no longer accept cash.

International travelers should exchange currency at their major port of entry. As you travel, use ATM cards to get more cash. Smaller denominations ($50 and under) work best. Using a credit card will give you the best exchange rates.

TRANSPORTATION

BY AIR

All 50 states and Puerto Rico have at least one airport, if not more, within the state. Washington DC is served by three nearby airports. In some cases, flying into an airport in a neighboring state may more efficient than an in-state airport. Major carriers in the United States include:

- **American Airlines:** www.aa.com
- **Delta Airlines:** www.delta.com
- **Southwest Airlines:** www.southwest.com
- **United Airlines:** www.united.com

BY TRAIN

Amtrak (www.amtrak.com) is the only passenger rail company that serves the entire lower 48 states and Washington DC. Amtrak does not serve Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico. Most routes cover specific regions with stops at major population centers. A longer, multistate route can be a scenic way to see the country, but it can take days to travel the entire route.

BY BUS

Greyhound (www.greyhound.com) is the main US long-distance bus company, with stops in cities big and small across the lower 48 states and Washington DC. Greyhound does not serve Alaska, Hawaii, or Puerto Rico.

BY CAR AND RV

Rentals

CAR

Most car rental companies have locations at major international, national, and regional airports. To rent a car, most companies require drivers to be at least 21 years old and have a valid driver's license. Companies may also tack on additional fees for those under age 25. You will also need liability insurance, which you can purchase through the rental company or have included on your private auto insurance. It's best to reserve a car in advance.

Rentals are per day; however, rates vary greatly based on the type of vehicle, season, distance traveled, and availability. Weekend, holiday, and summer rentals cost significantly more. Generally, car rental agencies at airports have higher rates because of added fees; sometimes nearby towns have cheaper rates. For road trippers, rental agencies may allow vehicle drop-off at a different location from where it was picked up for an additional fee.

- **Alamo:** www.alamo.com
- **Avis:** www.avis.com
- **Enterprise:** www.enterprise.com
- **Hertz:** www.hertz.com

RVS, CAMPERVANS, AND TRAILERS

This option affords you lodging and dining flexibility while on the road, since most RVs provide sleeping quarters and small kitchens. Many campgrounds offer hookups and sites for RVs, campervans, and trailers, or you can use designated RV parks. It's important to note that these are big vehicles that can be tricky to maneuver and park. They're also expensive to rent and expensive to refuel. The major RV rental company in the United States is **Cruise America** (www.cruiseamerica.com), with branches throughout the country. Reserve well in advance.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Electric vehicles allow for a greener road trip, not to mention the ability to save money on fuel. When driving an electric vehicle, however, you're limited to where the charging stations are. Your rental company should have detailed information on the vehicle's range. Most rental companies require that you return the car with a charge of at least 10 percent. Note that electric vehicle rentals aren't available in every market, especially small towns and midsize cities.



AMTRAK TRAIN IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Vehicle Insurance

Not all states require drivers to have auto insurance, but all 50 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico do require drivers to provide proof of financial responsibility should something happen to them or the vehicle. **Auto insurance** is the most common way to obtain this proof.

When renting a car, you can opt to purchase insurance from the rental agency for the duration of the vehicle rental. If you already have private auto insurance, check with your carrier to see if the policy covers rentals.

During the trip, keep all insurance and vehicle-related paperwork in a secure place.

Road Rules and Driving Tips

In the United States, motorists drive on the right side of the road, and speed limits are displayed in miles per hour, including in Puerto Rico. Distance is measured in miles, except in Puerto Rico, where kilometers are used. Road signs are in English, except in Puerto Rico, where they are in Spanish. Vehicle speedometers display both miles and kilometers. Drivers should be familiar with the road regulations and laws for each state they visit. More information can be found at www.usa.gov/motor-vehicle-services.

CELL PHONES

Many states prohibit drivers from using handheld cell phones while operating a vehicle, and outright ban the use of a cell phone by teen drivers. If you're caught breaking one of these laws, there could be steep fines. Always have a hands-free option available. Find state-by-state rules here: www.ncsl.org/transportation/distracted-driving-cellphone-use.

SPEED LIMITS

Speed limits vary from state to state and are posted in increments of 5 miles per hour (8 kilometers per hour), or mph. Maximum speed limits tend to be higher (75-80 mph/120-129 kph) in some areas) in the West compared to states east of the Mississippi River (generally 65-70 mph/105-113 kph).

CROSSING STATE LINES

In general, the rules of the road throughout the country are the same. Notable exceptions relate to **speed limits, motorcycle helmet laws, seat belts,** and **child restraints.** Get specific state road rules at www.dmv-department-of-motor-vehicles.com.

Drivers entering California must stop at **Agricultural Inspection Stations.** You don't need to present a passport, visa, or a driver's license, but be prepared to present fruits and vegetables, even those purchased

within neighboring states. Other items that may be illegal to transport across state lines include **fireworks, exotic animals,** and **certain plants.**

Federal law allows travelers who can legally carry **firearms** under federal, state, and local laws to bring a gun across state lines. However, states have their own laws governing the transportation of firearms, so be sure to comply with the legal requirements in each state. When in doubt, carry firearms unloaded, locked in a case, and stored in the trunk. Store ammunition in a separate, locked container.

FUEL

There are remote areas within the country where **service stations** are few and far between. A good guideline for road-tripping is to keep the gas tank level above the **half-full** line, and fuel up in major towns whenever possible. Gasoline in Puerto Rico is sold in liters, whereas elsewhere in the United States, gallons are used.

ROAD CONDITIONS AND NAVIGATION

Road conditions can be affected by closures, accidents, traffic jams, construction, and weather. Most states provide real-time road conditions, construction updates, and road closure information via the **US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.** To access this information on the road, **dial 511.** Of the 50 states, 11 do not have active 511 access. These are: Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Delaware.

Never rely solely on your GPS for navigation. Always have a **printed map** or a **road atlas** in the vehicle to use as a backup.

DRIVING RVS, CAMPERVANS, OR VEHICLES WITH TRAILERS

When driving an RV, campervan, or a vehicle pulling a trailer, remember that these are heavy pieces of machinery. This means they will take longer to slow down, so give yourself time to **brake** and maintain a greater distance between you and other vehicles.

To **park** safely, use a spotter, use your mirrors, and take your time. Try to park in designated RV spots whenever possible; these are larger and often let you pull in straight on.

Slow down when driving on hills and mountains. Use **low gears** going uphill and downhill, and always stay in the right lane.

Make **turns** long and wide, especially right turns. Make good use of your side and rearview mirrors. Keep as close to the center lane as possible.

Pay attention to **height clearances** for parking garages, overpasses, and bridges. Know the maximum height of your vehicle.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Most big cities and many midsize cities in the United States have some form of public transportation, such as buses, light rail, or a metro system. Outside cities, however, it can be hard, if not impossible, to get around without a car.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

EMERGENCIES

For emergencies in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, **dial 911** on your phone for immediate assistance.

CRIME

Crime in the United States varies from location to location. Crimes against travelers are often theft-related crimes.

Given the large number of guns in the United States (the highest per capita in the world) and the frequency of shootings, mass or otherwise, the United States may seem dangerous to visit or travel around. In 2019, about 4 deaths in 100,000 in the United States were caused by gun violence, according to the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation

(www.healthdata.org) at the University of Washington. This places the United States at 32nd in the world in rate of gun violence deaths.

HAZARDS

When out in nature, be aware of your surroundings and the conditions of the area. Beyond the hazards listed below, falls, hypothermia, and simply getting lost are very real threats that can happen almost anywhere.

Poison Oak, Ivy, and Sumac

Poison oak, ivy, and sumac are vines or shrubs that inhabit forests. Common in western states, poison oak has three scalloped leaves. Found across the United States except for tropical islands and Alaska, poison ivy has three spoon-shaped leaves and grows along rivers, lakes, and oceans. With 7-13 leaflets, poison sumac grows in wet zones in the north and Florida. Contact with these plants may cause a rash and itching, which can be transferred to your eyes or face via touch. Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and long pants when hiking. Tecnu can cleanse your skin after exposure to poison oak and poison ivy. Calamine lotion can help ease the rash and itching.

Giardia

Lakes and streams can carry parasites like *Giardia lamblia*. If ingested, it causes cramping, nausea, and severe diarrhea for up to 6 weeks. Avoid giardia by boiling water (for 1 minute, plus 1 minute for each 1,000 ft/305 m elevation above sea level) or using a 1-micron filter. Bleach also works: Add 2 drops per quart or liter and wait 30 minutes. Tap water in campgrounds, hotels, and picnic areas has been treated; you may taste the chlorine.

WILDLIFE SAFETY TIPS

While you may see bison, elk, moose, deer, pronghorn, wolves, coyotes, or bears, remember that wildlife is just that . . . wild. Though bison, elk, or even bears may appear tame, they are not, and injuries are common. Act safely around all wildlife.

- **Do not approach wildlife.** Crowding wildlife puts you at risk and endangers the animal, often scaring it off a food source. Seemingly docile bison and elk have suddenly gored people crowding too close. Stay at least **100 yards away** (91 m) or the length of a football field from bears and wolves. For all other wildlife, stay at least **25 yards (23 m) or the length of 3 school buses away.**
- For spying wildlife up close, use a good pair of **binoculars** or a **spotting scope.** Use telephoto lenses for photography.
- **Take safe selfies.** Bison gorings are becoming more prevalent, many from people trying to take selfies too close. Maintain a safe distance, and snap selfies with wildlife far in the background.
- **Do not feed any animal.** Because human food is not part of their natural diet, they may have difficulty foraging on their own. As they rely on people for handouts, they become aggressive, endangering both human visitors and themselves.
- **Follow instructions for food storage.** Bears, wolves, and coyotes may become more aggressive when acquiring food, and ravens can strew food and garbage, making it more available to other wildlife.
- **Let the animal's behavior guide your behavior.** If an animal appears twitchy, nervous, or points eyes and ears directly at you, back off: You're too close. If you behave like a predator stalking an animal, the creature will assume you are one.

- If you see **wildlife along a road,** use pullouts to drive off the road to stop. Use the car as a blind to watch wildlife, and keep pets inside. Watch for cars, as visitors can be injured by inattentive drivers whenever a wildlife jam occurs.

Hantavirus

Hantavirus infection is contracted by inhaling dust from deer mice droppings. When camping, store food in rodent-proof containers. If you contract the virus, which results in flu-like symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.

Bears

Bears are dangerous around food, be it a carcass in the woods, a pack on a trail, or a cooler in a campsite. Proper use, storage, and handling of food and garbage prevents bears from being conditioned to look for food around humans and turning aggressive.

On the trail, pick up any dropped food, including wrappers and crumbs, and pack out all garbage. When camping, use low-odor foods, keep food and cooking gear out of sleeping sites in the backcountry, and store them inside your vehicle in front-country campgrounds.

Mountain Lions

Because of their solitary nature, most visitors never see a mountain lion, even on long trips in the backcountry. These large cats rarely prey on humans, but they can—especially small kids. Hike with others, keep kids close, and make noise on the trail. If you do stumble upon a cougar, do not run: Remain calm and cluster together to appear bigger. Look at the cat with peripheral vision, rather than staring straight on, and back away slowly. If the lion attacks, fight back with rocks, sticks, or by kicking.

Spiders, Mosquitoes, and Ticks

Spiders, mosquitoes, and ticks can carry diseases such as West Nile virus and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Protect yourself by wearing long sleeves and pants and use insect repellent in spring-summer, when mosquitoes and ticks are common. If you are bitten by a tick, carefully

remove it by the head with tweezers, disinfect the bite, and then see a doctor. Some spiders, such as the brown recluse, carry poison in their bites. If symptoms are severe (breathing difficulty, nausea, sweating, and vomiting), seek medical attention immediately.

Snakes

Rattlesnakes are ubiquitous in prairie and desert parks across the West. When hiking, keep your eyes on the ground and an ear out for the telltale rattle—a warning to keep away. Should you be bitten, seek immediate medical help.

Altitude

Some visitors from sea-level locales feel the effects of altitude at high elevations in mountain parks of the Rockies and the Sierra. Watch for light-headedness, headaches, or shortness of breath. To acclimate, slow down the pace of hiking and drink lots of fluids. If symptoms spike, descend in elevation as soon as possible. Altitude also increases UV radiation exposure: To prevent sunburn, use a strong sunscreen and wear sunglasses and a hat.

Ocean Safety

The ocean is beautiful but can present hazards. Avoid swimming alone, and obey all warning signs. When at an unfamiliar beach, ask lifeguards or beach attendants about conditions and follow their advice. Be aware of undertows (the waves drawing back into the sea), as they can knock you off your feet.

Stay out of the water during periods of high surf, which can create riptides. Riptides are powerful currents, like rivers in the sea, that can drag you out to sea. If caught in a “rip” don’t fight to swim directly against it, which will only exhaust you. Instead, swim diagonally across it, while going along with it, and try to stay parallel to the shore until you are out of the strong pull. The last rule is, if in doubt, stay out.

If you encounter a shark, don’t panic. Never thrash around because this will trigger their attack instinct.

Hunting Season

Where hunting is allowed, such as in many state parks and some federal lands, visitors should be aware of hunting seasons, which vary depending on the location and the bird or animal, and take necessary precautions, such as wearing blaze orange and avoiding popular hunting times (opening day, dusk, and dawn), when engaging in recreation.

ACCOMMODATIONS

During busy summer months and other high tourist periods, such as holidays and special events, accommodations can get booked up early, especially in popular destinations. Rates also go up during these times.

HOTELS

From luxury to budget, small to sprawling, hotel accommodations span coast to coast. The benefits of properties owned by major brands (Marriott, Hilton, Best Western, etc.) are that you can find them anywhere; they usually have room availability or can refer you to a sister property that does; and they offer consistent amenities.

MOTOR LODGES AND MOTOR COURTS

Vintage and full of charm, these retro gems are often found on scenic byways and in tiny towns. Because they are older, they may offer small guest rooms, no Wi-Fi, and limited amenities. But for travelers who desire one-of-a-kind accommodations, a motor lodge or court is the way to go.

BED-AND-BREAKFASTS

Plan to reserve a B&B well in advance, especially during peak season, as they usually offer only a few guest rooms. The benefit is a white-glove experience in a thoughtfully appointed home, complete with a gourmet breakfast.

CAMPING

National parks provide a safe—and beautiful—way to camp. Book campsites months in advance during the summer, except for in the Southwest, when many campsites shut down because of extreme heat. Always check with park rangers about campfire regulations, information on local wildlife, and **Leave No Trace** (www.lnt.org) policies.

VACATION RENTALS

Short-term rentals from companies such as **Airbnb** (www.airbnb.com) and **VRBO** (www.vrbo.com), or from regional companies that manage privately owned properties, let you lease a private home or room. These tend to offer affordable options in highly desirable areas, such as big cities or beach towns. Homeowners provide essentials, such as toilet paper, linens, and basic kitchen and pantry staples; you're responsible for everything else.

HOSTELS

For the budget-friendly traveler, hostels are a great option. Typically found in major metropolises, hostels offer a bed in a shared room or single room in a dorm-like setting. You might also share bathrooms, showers, and a community kitchen with other guests. **Hostelling International USA** (www.hiusa.org) lets you search by region within the United States.

TRAVEL TIPS

WI-FI AND CELL SERVICE

Wi-Fi is available at most accommodations, attractions, restaurants, and welcome centers throughout the country.

Cell phone service is widely available around the country, especially around population centers. However, the more remote the area, usually the less you can rely on having service.

TIME AND MEASUREMENTS

The time zones in the United States are Hawaii, Alaska, Pacific, mountain, central, and eastern. Each is separated by one hour. Arizona and Hawaii don't observe daylight saving time. Puerto Rico observes Atlantic standard time and does not practice daylight saving time. This means that it's one hour later than eastern time November-March and the same as eastern time March-November.

The United States uses the imperial system of measurements (miles, feet, pounds, gallons, etc.) and Fahrenheit for temperature. Puerto Rico uses the metric system, except for speed limits, which are in miles per hour.

TRAVELING TO NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATIONS

A Native American reservation is a sovereign nation within the borders of the United States. Take special care when driving on Native American lands. Each community has its own guidelines, rules, and judicial system. The website **NativeAmerica.travel** (https://nativeamerica.travel) by the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association provides travel tips, as well as destination listings and other travel information.

Attending a Powwow

Attending a powwow is a wonderful way to interact with Native American culture. It is important to respect the ceremony and the celebration of the tribes and remember that as a visitor, you are a guest. The participants in the dance will be wearing their finest regalia. Honor this and refrain from wearing grungy, torn clothing.

Many powwows, particularly on reservation lands, are held outdoors where there is very little in the way of public seating. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating. There are sometimes benches set up around the arena. These benches are reserved for dancers only. Sometimes the areas just behind the benches are reserved for family members, so ask before you set up chairs.

Some of the outfits worn by the dancers are breathtakingly beautiful. Remember to ask permission before you take pictures. Listen to the master of ceremonies for cues. Certain songs and ceremonies require the attendees to stand with heads uncovered while they are played. The Grand Entry

Song, Flag Songs, Veteran Songs, and Memorial Songs all require that you stand. Attendees are free to participate in intertribal dances whether wearing regalia or not, but should not try to dance at any other time. Blanket dances are held at traditional powwows to help defray the costs of the powwows and the travel costs of some of the drums. If you see a blanket placed on the grounds and dancers start leaving money on the blanket, feel free to contribute by asking a dancer to place money on the blanket for you. If a dancer drops or loses something off their regalia, particularly an eagle feather, do not pick it up. There are ceremonies for retrieving items that have touched the ground. Ask a dancer or other person in authority for assistance.

It sounds like a lot of rules, but the guiding principle behind attending a powwow is respect.

NATIONAL PARKS AND FEDERAL RECREATIONAL LANDS PASSES

National parks and other areas and attractions managed by the National Park Service (www.nps.gov) are among the most popular destinations in the United States. Entry fees to these sites vary, and if you are planning to visit a number of them in a year, you may want to get a pass.

The **America the Beautiful National Parks Pass** (www.recreation.gov; $80) admits entrance to all national parks and federal recreation areas for one year. Many national parks also offer their own **annual pass** ($50-70) granting access to the park, sometimes including neighboring parks, for up to one year. All US fourth graders (https://everykidoutdoors.gov) are eligible to receive a free annual pass that admits their family.

US citizens or permanent residents age 62 and older have two pass options: an **Annual Senior Pass** ($20, $10 processing fee), good for one year, or a **Lifetime Senior Pass** ($80, $10 processing fee), which is valid for life. To purchase either pass, apply online (https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes) or bring proof of age (state driver's license, birth certificate, or passport) in person to any national park entrance station (processing fee waived). Four annual senior passes can be traded in for the lifetime senior pass.

Both senior passes grant discounts on fees for federally run tours and campgrounds; however, discounts do not apply to park concessionaire services like hotels, boat tours, and bus tours.

Blind or permanently disabled US citizens or permanent residents can request a lifetime **Access Pass** (https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes; free, $10 processing fee). Passholders also receive a discount on federally run tours and campgrounds. Proof of medical disability or eligibility is required for receiving federal benefits.

Current US military personnel and dependents can get an **Annual Military Pass.** Gold Star families and veterans can get a **Lifetime Military Pass.** Both passes are free in person at entrance stations, and both can be ordered online (https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes; $10 processing fee). Proof of military service is required.

Admission to national parks is **free** on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Jan.), the first day of National Park Week (Apr.), Juneteenth National Independence Day (June), the Great American Outdoors Act anniversary (Aug.), National Public Lands Day (Sept.), and Veterans Day (Nov. 11).

ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public places to provide facilities to accommodate disabled patrons. Most major restaurants and accommodations are wheelchair accessible, but small businesses located in older properties were exempted and do not have to abide by the new laws. Chain motels generally have rooms with larger doors for wheelchair access, but it's best to call ahead and reserve the room you need.

The **Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality** (www.sath.org) publishes links to major airlines' accessibility policies and publishes travel tips for people with various disabilities, including blindness, deafness, mobility disorders, diabetes, kidney disease, and arthritis. The society publishes *Open World*, an online magazine about accessible travel.

SENIOR TRAVELERS

For discounts and help with trip planning, the **AARP** (800/454-5768; www.aarp.org) offers a full-service travel agency, trip insurance, a motor

club, and the AARP Passport program, which provides seniors with discounts for hotels, car rentals, and other things.

Travelers over 55 should always check for a senior discount. Most attractions and some hotels and restaurants have special pricing for senior citizens. There are two national parks and federal recreational lands passes for US citizens and permanent residents age 62 and older: the Annual Senior Pass ($20, $10 processing fee) and the Lifetime Senior Pass ($80, $10 processing fee).

LGBTQ+ TRAVELERS

Several guidebooks and websites specialize in LGBTQ+-friendly listings of hotels, restaurants, bars, and other establishments. The **Damron LGBT Travel Guides** (www.damron.com) sells print guides and publishes an online calendar of events, and the **International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association** (IGLTA; www.iglta.org) is a trade organization with listings of gay-friendly hotels, tour operators, and much more.

A number of states have passed or are considering laws that restrict LGBTQ+ rights. The **Transgender Law Center** publishes a National Equality Map (https://transgenderlawcenter.org/equalitymap [URL inactive]) that rates each state and territory on its policies regarding LGBTQ+ rights.

TRAVELERS OF COLOR

The **Open to All** campaign (www.opentoall.com) encourages businesses to take a pledge of nondiscrimination, and it's possible to search **Yelp** (www.yelp.com) for businesses who self-report having taken this pledge.

Wanderful (https://sheswanderful.com) is a travel community for women with a focus on making travel more equitable for all. The blog (https://blog.sheswanderful.com) includes lists of travel influencers of various backgrounds.

Travel Noire (https://travelnoire.com) offers travel guides to various cities, with an emphasis on Black-owned businesses.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

TRANSPORTATION

Air Travel

Economy class seats increase the per-passenger mile efficiency of a plane trip; first and business class seats decrease it. Fly direct whenever possible. For short flights, consider taking a train or bus instead.

Car Travel

When going on a road trip, get a pre-trip tune-up to aid in better fuel efficiency. Plan your route so you don't waste gas by backtracking. Use cruise control to maintain efficient speeds. Check your tire pressure. Tires that are not operating at the optimum pressure use more fuel.

If you're not driving your own car, rent an electric car or a hybrid.

In cities, ride the metro or buses, bike, or walk, rather than traveling by car.

REUSE AND RECYCLE

Pack reusable water bottles to fill up at hotels, welcome centers, rest areas, campsites, and parks. Bring reusable food containers. Bring your own toiletries rather than using the small bottles provided at your accommodation.

Buy cans instead of bottles. They're easier to crush, thus saving space.

Use fabric grocery bags for shopping. If you have to use plastic grocery bags, save them to reuse.

Keep recyclables separate. Stop at retailers with recycling bins or at rest stops to recycle. Access Google Maps to locate recycling centers wherever you are.

FOOD AND WATER

To create less food waste, plan out your meals. If you have food in the cooler, eat it instead of ordering at a restaurant or fast-food joint. Buy in bulk when it's feasible.

Bring reusable water bottles to avoid wasting plastic. If you must buy water, purchase gallon-size containers rather than individual bottles, then fill your reusable water bottle.

WATER CONSERVATION

Do a full load of laundry instead of several small ones. Re-wear clothes, or wash single items in your hotel sink.

Shower, don't bathe. Turn off the water when shampooing and soaping.

RESOURCES

TRAVEL BOOKINGS

Hotels.com
www.hotels.com

Kayak
www.kayak.com

FEDERAL LANDS AND DESIGNATIONS

National Park Service
www.nps.gov

National Scenic Byways
www.fhwa.dot.gov/byways

National Wildlife Refuge System

www.fws.gov/refuges

US Forest Service (National Forests)
www.fs.usda.gov [URL inactive]

MAPS

American Automobile Association
www.aaa.com

National Geographic
www.natgeomaps.com

Rand McNally
www.randmcnally.com

OceanofPDF.com

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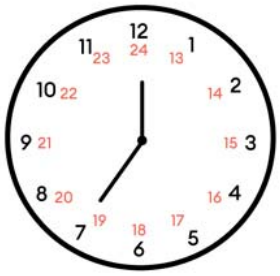
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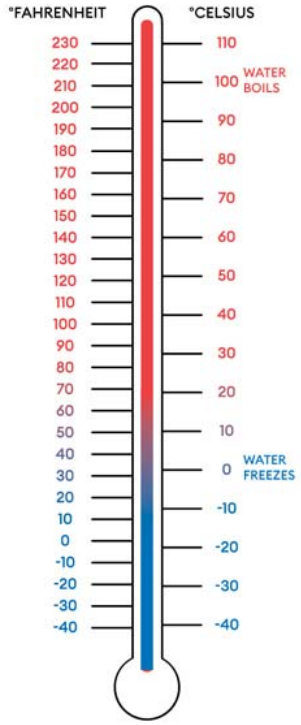
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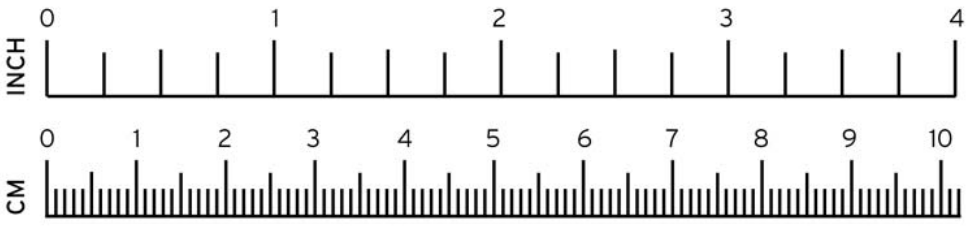
- Expressway
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Unpaved Road
- Trail
- Ferry
- Railroad
- Pedestrian Walkway
- Stairs
- City/Town
- State Capital
- National Capital
- Top 3
- Point of Interest
- Accommodation
- Restaurant/Bar
- Other Location
- Information Center
- Parking Area
- Church
- Winery/Vineyard
- Trailhead
- Train Station
- Airport
- Airfield
- Park
- Golf Course
- Unique Feature
- Waterfall
- Camping
- Mountain
- Ski Area
- Glacier

CONVERSION TABLES

°C = (°F - 32) / 1.8
°F = (°C x 1.8) + 32
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters (cm)
1 foot = 0.304 meters (m)
1 yard = 0.914 meters
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometers (km)
1 km = 0.6214 miles
1 fathom = 1.8288 m
1 chain = 20.1168 m
1 furlong = 201.168 m
1 acre = 0.4047 hectares
1 sq km = 100 hectares
1 sq mile = 2.59 square km
1 ounce = 28.35 grams
1 pound = 0.4536 kilograms
1 short ton = 0.90718 metric ton
1 short ton = 2,000 pounds
1 long ton = 1.016 metric tons
1 long ton = 2,240 pounds
1 metric ton = 1,000 kilograms
1 quart = 0.94635 liters
1 US gallon = 3.7854 liters
1 Imperial gallon = 4.5459 liters
1 nautical mile = 1.852 km







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