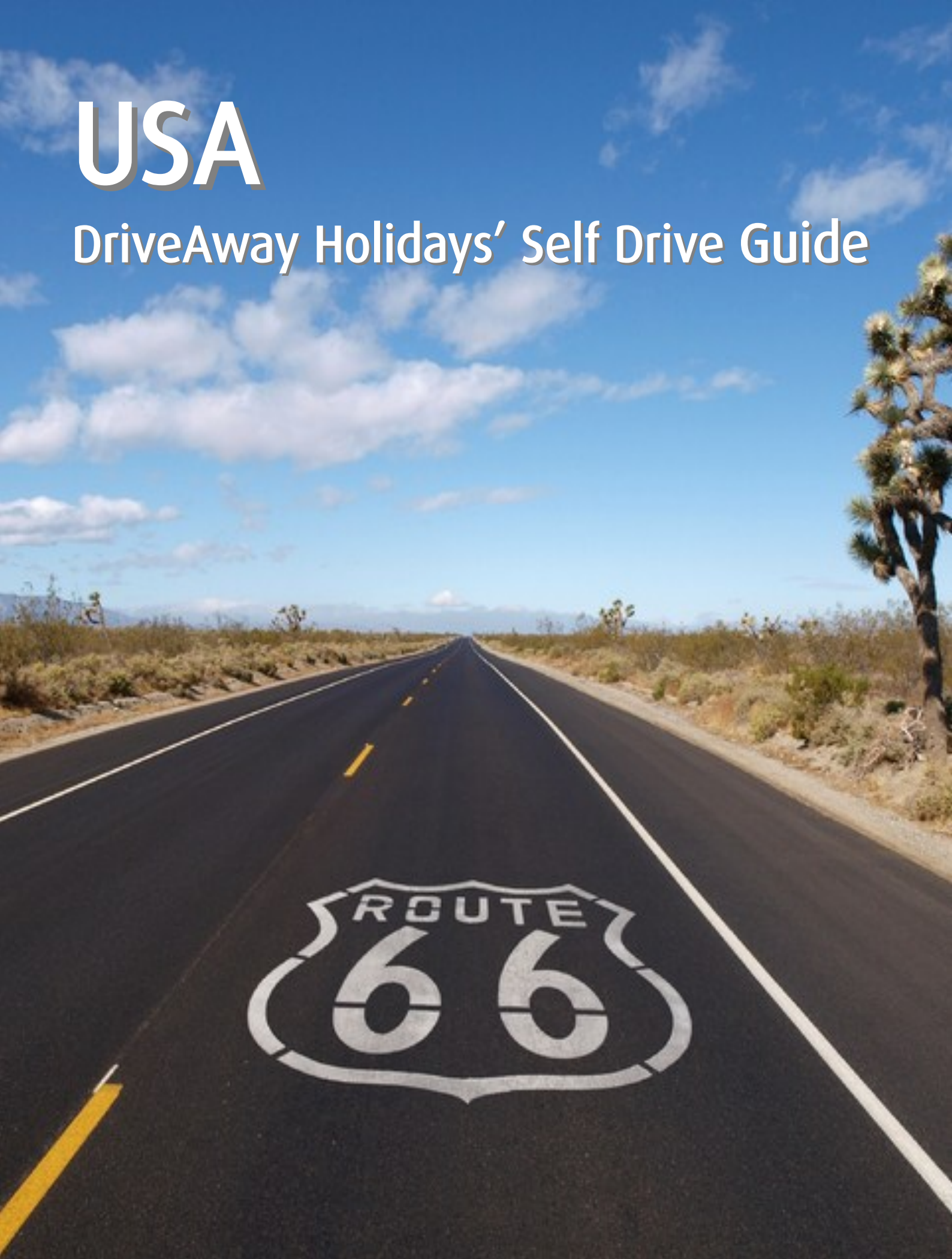


USA

DriveAway Holidays' Self Drive Guide



DriveAway Holidays - 0800 885 590
www.driveaway.co.nz



Take a Self Drive Holiday in the USA

With over 25 years experience and award-winning service, let DriveAway Holidays plan your next self drive adventure. We offer an extensive range of vehicles to suit everyone's need and budget at over 8000 locations with more than 60 suppliers. In the US, DriveAway specialises in a range of **car rental** options, **motorhome** and **motorcycle** options. Enjoy the freedom of having your own rental vehicle and discover the world at your own pace.

The United States of America is one of the world's largest and diverse countries. Consisting of fifty states and is a vast country to explore. Choose from major cities, deserts, beaches, snow capped mountains, forests, coastline and vast wetlands. Natural wonders abound, discover the unique wildlife in its national parks and endless culture in its bustling cities.

The best way to travel from 'sea to shining sea' is by road, taking advantage of the extensive highway networks which criss-cross through the States. This guide is aimed at the traveller who wants to experience freedom and flexibility in their travels. Find out more about taking a self drive holiday in the US including car hire, motorhome and motorcycle information, along with some ideas for touring the different and unique regions of this fascinating country.

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Renting a Car in the USA

When selecting a rental vehicle, take into consideration where you will be travelling, how many people will be travelling in the vehicle, luggage size and the kind of driving you intend to do. DriveAway Holidays offers a vast range of vehicles from small economy sizes to larger full-sized cars, 4WDs, convertibles and luxury vehicles. The ACRISS system on page 4 will help you find a car that suits your needs. This is internationally recognised code which will ensure you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Most rental companies only hire automatic cars, so you will have a huge selection of automatics to choose from at the time of booking.

Do I need a Credit card?

All suppliers in the USA will require a credit card imprint at the time of collection and some suppliers will freeze an amount from US\$100. Cash deposits are on request with some car rental companies, but credit cards are preferred. Check with DriveAway Holidays to verify the relevant deposit requirements.

Collecting at an Airport in The USA

At most American airports you will find your rental company has a desk in the arrivals hall, with the rental cars being located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. A courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. DriveAway Holidays offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location / airport fees and charges that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

Can I collect my rental car in one American city and drop it off in another American city?

Yes, but you may incur a one-way drop off fee, which depends on the mileage between cities and may often have restrictions on the number of days for the hire, however travelling between some states may not incur a one-way fee, eg generally there's no drop off fee for travel between California and Nevada. Make sure you are advised of these additional fees with DriveAway Holidays before you travel.


Rental Vehicle Insurance

American law requires all vehicles to have compulsory third party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car Rental Companies in the USA will normally include:

- **Third Party Insurance:** Compulsory insurance and will be included in your car hire price. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire prices. Rentals are normally subject to zero excess in the US (with the exception of selected vehicles in New York), however this will be clarified with you at the time of booking with DriveAway Holidays. If an excess is applicable, you can cover this by taking out **DriveAway Hire Car Excess Insurance** - simply ask for more details.
- **Theft and Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental price.
- **Fire and Liability:** Limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in the prepaid car hire price.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rate. It is considered an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

ACRIS System

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain	Examples: ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon	E = Electric Air
	R = Recreational			C = Electric No Air
	F = 4 Wheel Drive			
	X = Special			
	K = Commercial Van/Truck			
	P = Ute			
	X = Special			
E = Executive				

Driving In The USA

- When you collect your car rental, familiarise yourself with the car and its controls.
- Cars drive on the **right** hand side of the road, and you drive from the left hand side of the car.
- Always wear a seat belt and use child safety seats where necessary.
- Be aware of the driving laws where you're driving – laws will vary from state to state.
- Research the road signs before you travel for better understanding.
- Get a good map or a GPS with the appropriate SD card.
- Carry your licence with you at all times when you are driving.
- Avoid driving in major cities (e.g. New York) where traffic can be heavy and parking hard to find.
- Some inner city areas can be tourist crime traps, so be aware of these areas to avoid.
- Most petrol or gasoline stations require you to pay before you fill up. You may also be required to give a local postcode when you pay by credit card, if so you will need to speak to the station attendant before you pay – make sure to check all options before filling up.

Driving Laws In The USA

Although most of the road rules are the same, each state in the USA has its own set of driving laws. When you collect your car rental, make sure you check with the depot if there are specific rules that you need to observe. Here are some of the basic rules that will apply across the country:

- The max speed limit on interstate highways in most states is now 65mph (110 km/hr), 25mph on cities and towns and 15mph in school zones.
- It is illegal to pass a school bus that has stopped to unload passengers; all vehicles must wait for the bus to move back into the flow of traffic.
- Almost all states require drivers and front seat passengers to wear a seat belt, whilst most states require children to wear seat belts no matter where they are seated in the car.
- Motorcyclists are required to wear helmets in the majority of states.
- Don't litter: If you throw rubbish from the window of your vehicle you can be fined up to US\$1000.
- As a general rule, on major roadways in the US, the leftmost lanes are considered to be the fast lanes, while the right lanes are considered to be slow lanes.
- You must stop for pedestrians on a crosswalk
- In most areas, traffic that is already on a roundabout has the right of way.
- Drinking alcohol and driving is forbidden and is strictly enforced in every state. It is a crime to drive with a blood alcohol limit of 0.08 or above, so be smart: don't drink and drive!



Parking

Parking in most cities and towns in the USA isn't usually a problem. In some towns there'll be restrictions on street parking that will be clearly signposted and other illegal parking spots such as across entrances, in front of fire or ambulance stations, or within 3m of a fire hydrant.

Parking metres are common in most towns and cities, and are monitored by city police and private companies, so make sure you do park legally or take the risk of a fine, wheel clamping or even being towed. If in doubt, park your car in private or municipal car parks that are provided in most towns.

Licence Requirements

A full driving licence is required to drive in the USA. All drivers must have held a full valid driving licence for a minimum of one year. New Zealand residents are not required by law to have an international drivers licence, although it is recommended since an international licence holds more credibility with the local traffic police than your home driving licence. Contact your local motoring association for further information.

Min & Max Age Requirements

Min Driving Age: Usually 21; however with some suppliers the minimum age is 25.

Young Driver's Surcharge: Drivers aged 21-25 years may be charged from USD15+tax per day.

Max Driving Age: The majority of locations in the USA do not have a maximum driving age, however there may be restrictions for drivers aged 70-75 in some regions. In some cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with the supplier for further details.

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

I'd like to pick up my car in USA, visit Canada, then return to the USA. Is this possible?

Yes - make sure that you advise your car rental company at the time of booking as an additional insurance is sometimes required, depending on the pick up depot and the supplier. Please note that a one-way rental between US and Canada will incur a one-way drop off fee.

How about travel Mexico?

Some car rental vehicles may be driven into Mexico, and travel is usually only permitted into the Free Trade zone, about 13-25 miles into Mexico. Restrictions and additional insurances will apply. Not all suppliers permit travel to Mexico and must be requested at the time of booking. Cars collected in the USA cannot be dropped off in Mexico. Check with your car rental supplier before travelling to Mexico.

Can I travel into Alaska?

Most suppliers will permit travel into Alaska but restrictions will sometimes apply. Drivers may stay on paved roads or the insurance will become void. Check with your rental supplier before travelling into Alaska.



Red Desert, Wyoming

Child Safety

Child Car Safety Seat Laws vary from state to state, but here are some of the CSS laws in popular states:

California: Children must be in an appropriate child seat or restraint until they are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60lbs. If the child weighs more than 40lbs they can use a seat belt in the rear of the car without a booster seat. For children 60lbs and over must wear a seat belt.

New York: Children 3 years and younger must be seated in an approved child restraint. 4 to 15 year olds must be restrained with either a child or an adult seat belt.

Florida: Children 3 years and younger must be seated in an approved child restraint. 4 to 5 year olds can be restrained in an adult seat belt if a child restraint is not available. Children aged 6 and over must wear a seatbelt.

Hawaii: Children aged 3 and younger must be in a child restraint. Children aged 4-17 must wear a seatbelt.

Alaska: Children 3 years and younger must be seated in an approved child restraint. 4 to 5 year olds must be restrained with either a child or an adult seat belt. Children aged 6 and over must wear a seatbelt when travelling in the front seat. Contact DriveAway Holidays for exact details of the Child Safety Seat laws that apply to the states in which you will be driving in.

Road tolls & e tags

A toll road is a privately built road, often known as a tollway or turnpike. As with most things in the USA, the toll system varies across the country from state to state. There are more tollways in the eastern half of the US than in the western half, however its best to use a good map or GPS, where most of the tollways are marked with a distinct green stripe.

The cost of tolls varies, so when travelling in states where toll roads are prevalent carry some spare change or ask your car hire supplier for information on electronic toll collection.



California

California is located on the West Coast and is the third largest state by land in America. It's the ultimate destination for all ages, offering a wide range of attractions and activities including Disneyland, Hollywood, Yosemite National Park, Malibu Beach and the Golden Gate Bridge, to name but a few. The best way to discover the diversity of California is to travel by road and explore its vibrant cities, sleepy fishing villages, premier wine regions and the tranquil wilderness.

Events

February

Napa Valley Mustard Festival - Food, wine, art and entertainment.

April

Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach.

May

Mother's Day Festival on Olvera Street - Los Angeles.

June

The San Diego County Fair.

July

Fillmore Street Jazz Festival - San Francisco.

August

San Francisco Shakespeare Festival.

September

The annual Adams Avenue Street Fair San Diego - Attracts 50,000 fans of jazz, blues and rock for a day of concerts, food and games.

November

Drive through the Holiday of Lights showcasing more than 350 animated holiday displays at the **Del Mar Fairgrounds** - San Diego.

Attractions

Los Angeles

Disneyland, Anaheim - Fall in love with the happiest place on earth.

Explore Universal Studios - Experience the thrill of Hollywood and catch a glimpse into how movies are made.

Rodeo Drive - Spot celebrities, stroll through the streets, shop or dine.

Walk of fame - Stroll the famous Hollywood Boulevard and find your favourite star.

San Francisco

The Golden Gate Bridge - One of the most internationally recognised symbols of San Francisco and California.

Alcatraz Island - Step back in time as you take a tour of the former prison.

Union Square - San Francisco's premier shopping district.

San Diego

San Diego Zoo - Home to 4,000 rare and endangered species, 6,500 different types of birds, mammals and reptiles as well as 6,500 exotic plant species.

Head to the beach - San Diego has hundreds of beautiful beaches to enjoy. Be sure to check out the La Jolla Cove, Mission Beach or Blacks Beach.

San Diego's Seaport Village - Take a leisurely stroll through the shops, enjoy the free entertainment or sit back, relax and watch the passing boats.

Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco

Self Drive Tours around California

Los Angeles to Palm Springs

Palm Springs is a glamorous resort style oasis in the California desert and offers hiking, modern architecture, spectacular natural beauty and a host of outdoor activities. For the ultimate weekend getaway take the **Interstate 10 East**, towards Phoenix. Once you notice the lavish homes, golf courses and palm trees you can be sure you have arrived in Palm Springs.



The trip is approximately 190km east of Los Angeles and is located towards the top of the Colorado Desert. From most Southern California destinations, Palm Springs is about a two hour drive, depending on traffic.



San Francisco to Napa Valley

What better way to spend the day than living the life of luxury in the Napa Valley! From San Francisco the drive is approximately 90 minutes, however if you are planning to travel during rush hour, perhaps allow an extra hour. The most scenic route to take is via the famous Golden Gate Bridge, north bound and the picturesque surroundings you will detour are reminiscent of a drive through European countryside. Stay on Highway 101 for about 40 miles until you reach Petaluma in southern Sonoma. Take the highway 116 turnoff and merge left on Frates Road. Continue to follow the signs for approximately 23 miles until you reach the Napa Valley.



New England

New England is located in the northeastern corner of the United States, comprising the modern states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Canada and New York State, New England offers immense diversity. There are mountainous terrains with hiking and skiing trails, quaint seaside villages, hotel resorts and spas to help you relax and unwind, stretches of serene beaches, scenic driving tours and a rich cultural history waiting for you to explore!

Events

January

Jazz Festival - Featuring famous musicians at the Charles Hotel, Boston.

February

Boston Wine Expo - The largest public wine expo in the country, located at the Boston World Trade Centre.

June

The Boston Harborfest - Includes more than 220 events throughout the city.

July

Peterborough Fireworks display - New Hampshire.

Annual IndieArts Fest - In Greater Kennedy Plaza, Rhode Island.

Annual New England Arts and Crafts Festival - On Milford's Downtown Green.

November

Lights Festival - At Constitution Plaza, Connecticut

October

Oktoberfest in Vermont - Stowe's Jackson Ice Arena is transformed into a Bavarian Village.

Attractions

Connecticut

Heublien Tower - The 165-foot is located in Talcott Mountain State Park and can be reached by taking a 1-1/4 mile hike up to a cliff area to enjoy panoramic views across the state of Massachusetts to Mount Monadnock and New Hampshire.

The Sport Centre of Connecticut - Located in Shelton and offers an 18-hole miniature golf course, baseball and softball batting cages, laser tag arena, bowling and the only double-decker ice arena in the world, all year round.

Visit the wineries - Take a drive along the Connecticut Wine Trail and visit numerous vineyards that produce a wide variety of wines, ciders and fruit wines.

Massachusetts

Downtown Crossing in Boston - Commonly known as the financial district, Downtown Crossing is also a vibrant city that boasts boutiques, department stores and many restaurants.

Take a history tour - discover the history of Boston on this historic walk on the Freedom Trail.

Rhode Island

Beaches - Rhode Island has more than 100 beaches.

Narragansett Bay - Enjoy sailing, boating, fishing, cruising, swimming and seal watching or visit the quaint historic villages.

The Blackstone Valley - An area rich in history and architectural beauty.

Vermont

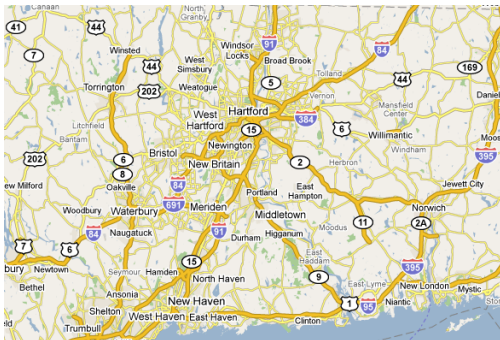
The Bennington Museum - The museum features hundreds of objects illustrating the social, cultural and historical development of New England.

Enjoy the outdoors - From skiing, hiking, fishing, through to the many festivals and events Vermont has on offer, there is always something to keep you entertained.

Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory - Located in Waterbury, one of the most popular family activities in New England.

Boston

Self Drive Tours around New England



Connecticut Wine Trail

If you are a wine enthusiast be sure to explore the Connecticut Wine Trail which boasts some of the best wineries in the United States. The route is geographically divided into two sections, the East and West and altogether there are nineteen vineyards for you to visit. Each winery welcomes guests, but be sure to allow a couple of weekends to visit all the wineries and experience the unique qualities each has to offer.



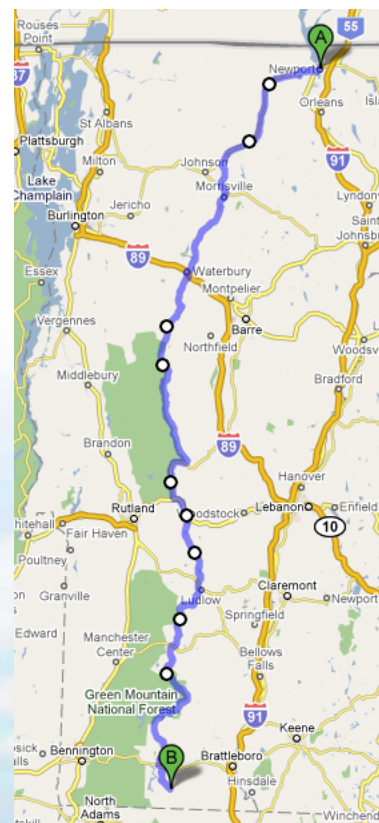
Connecticut Wine Country

At your first stop, pick up the Passport to Connecticut's Wine Trail which features the name and address of each Vineyard, their hours of operation and phone numbers.

Route 100, Green Mountain National Forest

Route 100 is one of the most scenic routes in New England that pilots through the Green Mountain National Forest of Vermont. The drive begins at the Canadian border and comes to an end where Vermont meets up with the Massachusetts borders. The Green Mountain National Forest trails the backbone of Vermont north from the Massachusetts border for 100 miles, all the way to the Appalachian Gap. Along your trip, route 100 offers plenty to see and do. Visit the Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory in Waterbury, the Moss Glen Falls in Granville, or the Vermont Country Store in Weston.

The best time to view the unsurpassed scenery route 100 has to offer is during autumn, the 'foliage season'. However take into consideration that the popularity of the route often attracts many visitors, particularly during the foliage season.



Middle Atlantic

The Mid Atlantic is the region located between New England and the South and includes New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, District of Columbia and Maryland. From the hustle and bustle of the city that never sleeps, to the capital city of the USA, to the shores of New Jersey and across the lush plains of the Pennsylvania countryside, the Mid Atlantic has something for everyone. Fuel up the car, jump in and travel wherever the road takes you. Whether you live it up in the Hamptons for the weekend, visit the White House or take a road trip through Pennsylvania, the Mid Atlantic is sure to please!

Events

January

Start the year off by watching the ball drop in **Time Square** on New Years Eve.

February

Chinese New Year Celebrations.

Lunar New Year Parade.

The Presidents Day Parade.

June

New Jersey Day Celebrations.

The Gettysburg Arts Festival -

In Pennsylvania and features more than 60 world-class exhibits as well as performances and twenty American brass bands.

July

Fourth of July Celebrations -
All around America.

Attractions

New York

See a Broadway spectacular - See one of the world's best Broadway shows.

The Empire State Building - You haven't seen New York until you've seen it from the top of the Empire State Building!

Shop till you drop - Head to Spring Street in SOHO, 5th Avenue, and be sure to check out Bloomingdales, Century 21, Sax and Macy's.

Take a cruise - Hop aboard a Harbour cruise from Midtown Manhattan and visit the Statue of Liberty.

Washington DC

The White House - See the powerhouse of the USA with a guided tour.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial - Visit the tribute to the 32nd president.

The Lincoln Memorial - Seated at the head of the Washington Monument, the 5.8m statue is a sight to behold.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial - Commemorating the loss of Americans lost in the Vietnam War.

Visit Capitol Hill - See the 55m white dome of the US Capitol and home to the US Congress.

New Jersey

The Borgata Casino - One of the most famous and luxurious casinos in the world.

The Old Barracks Museum - Learn about Colonial and American History with tours running daily.

Pennsylvania

Explore the Hershey Museum - Take a tour of the Museum, learn about the history of Hershey and find out how the chocolate is made.

Visit Liberty Bell - The site where the bell was rang to declare independence and one of the most popular sights to see in Pennsylvania.

Delaware

The Delaware Museum of Natural History - With exhibits including dinosaur displays, a coral reef and wildlife surrounding an African watering hole.

The Rockford Tower - Spectacular views of the city from the top.

Maryland

The Maryland Science Centre - From dinosaur to space exhibits and an IMAX theatre, there is sure to be something for everyone!

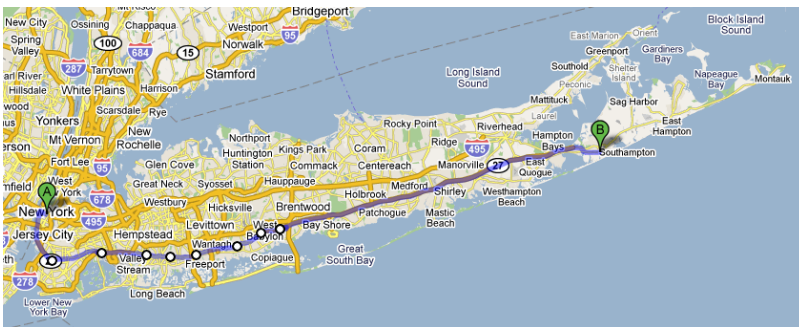
The Army Ordnance Museum - A huge collection of advanced military machines including rockets, bombs and over 200 tanks.

New York

The Mid Atlantic Self Drive Tours

Visit the Hamptons

Just the word alone conjures up visions of luxury, wealth and beauty so why not live how the rich and famous do and head to the Hamptons for the weekend? From Manhattan, take the Long Island Expressway and once you're off the LIE, take **Route 27 east** which will lead you right into the heart of the Hamptons. Whilst this route is the fastest, be sure to allow extra travelling time during holidays and weekends. Travelling time will take anywhere from 1.5 to 4 hours depending on traffic.



Fire Lighthouse, Long Island

Scenic Drives through Pennsylvania

Be sure to check out the 400 mile stretch across eleven counties known as **Pennsylvania Route 6**. Whether driving over half or the full stretch, Route 6 has an array of activities for young and old.

Arts and entertainment, history and heritage, nature and outdoors to children's activities and a host of different events happening all throughout the year, you'll always be able to find something to tickle your fancy. Not to mention the scenery. If its pristine waters, rolling hillsides and mountainous terrains you're after, head along Route 6!



Pennsylvania

The West

The Western US is the largest region covering about a third of the land area of the United States. This region includes the states of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington State and Wyoming. Its diverse landscape ranges from The Rocky Mountains to Rainforests. If you're an adventurer, there are enough mountains, deserts, oceans and valleys to keep you amused. If you would rather sit back and be entertained, pop over to Las Vegas and see one of the many spectacular shows on offer. It doesn't matter what you do; but whatever you do, be sure to do the west!

Events

January

Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade - Down Fourth street Las Vegas.

National Western Stock Show - Colorado.

February

Chinese New Year Celebrations.

Washington Boat Show.

July

4th July Celebrations - At Lincoln Park.

August

Newport Pacific Jazz Festival.

September

Utah State Fair.

October

The Taste of Baltimore Festival - With food, wine, entertainment and family fun.

Attractions

Nevada

Hunt for a bargain - Shop at the Las Vegas premium Outlets or the Outlet Centre featuring over 130 outlet stores.

Hotels - Tour the fabulous hotels along the strip of Las Vegas.

The Bellagio Hotel- Watch the Bellagio Water Show outside the hotel. There is a performance every 30 minutes.

Washington

The National Museum of Crime and Punishment - Get a glimpse into the life of solving crimes.

The Olympic National Park.

The John F. Kennedy Centre of Performing Arts.

Colorado

The Royal Gorge Bridge - The world's highest suspension bridge .

Bask in the outdoors - With skiing, hiking, climbing and kayaking there's something for everyone.

Grand Junction - Colorado's wine country.

Idaho

Visit Idaho's Native American casino.

Tee Time - Play a game of golf at, or take the Idaho Golf Trail; a golf vacation with included accommodation.

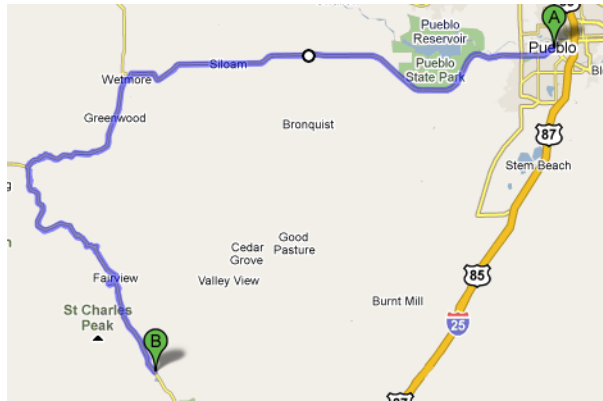
Take in some history - Visit one of Idaho's many museums and historical sites such as the memorial to Ernest Hemingway.

Self Drive Tours around the West

Frontier Pathways Old West Tour

Discover America's true Old West. On this route you can visit museums, restored nineteenth century buildings, magnificent national parks and historic ghost towns. Begin the tour at Pueblo in Colorado, where you can visit the El Pueblo Museum and learn of American Indian, Mexican and American cultures. Travel on to Wetmore to visit the site of early settlement built over 150 years ago by French traders and poor American farmers.

Further on you'll discover the ghost town of Rosita in the currently named Silver Cliff, which was a boom town in 1875. Enjoy the views of the Crista Mountains along the way. Visit the town of Rye, and the home of Bishop Castle, which was built by hand by one man, a wheel barrow and a shovel. Finish your drive on the shores of Lake Isabel, where you can go boating, fishing or picnicking.



Beartooth Highway

This is one of northern America's most spectacular roads, winding its way through the rugged, magnificent country of Montana and Wyoming. Start your drive at the border of the Custer National Forest in Montana, and head through Custer, Shoshone and Gallatin National Forests to the entrance of the Yellowstone National Park.



Along the way, enjoy the wonderful glaciers, alpine meadows and spectacular mountain ranges. In summer you can hike across the Rocky Mountains, go horse riding, fish in pristine streams, and in winter enjoy cross country or downhill skiing and snowboarding in the slopes of Red Lodge, Montana.



The South

The south includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. From the countryside of Alabama to the beaches of Miami, the south offers something for everyone. Not to mention the region's unique cultural history and events which has lead to the South developing a culture rich with literature, music and cuisine unlike anywhere else in the world. No trip to America would be complete without a visit to the south!

Attractions

Florida

Beaches - Florida has many beaches to choose from including beaches at Fort Lauderdale, St Petersburg, Clearwater, West Palm and Miami.

Go snorkelling - Florida has many sites to take a snorkelling trip such as Ginnie Springs, Peanut Island and Silver Glen Springs.

Be a star - Visit Universal Studios in Orlando for a day of fun.

Chef Mickey's Restaurant - Have dinner with Mickey, Goofy and Pluto!

Louisiana

Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo.

Listen to some Jazz - A trip to New Orleans wouldn't be complete without a visit to one of the many jazz bars.

Mississippi

Visit a Casino - Try your luck at one of the many casinos.

The Museum of Natural Science - With life size habitat displays, an aquarium home to over 200 species of marine life.

The Rainwater Observatory and Planetarium - With 16 telescopes and other optical instruments, the Observatory is the biggest in the state.

North and South Carolina

Go Hiking - South Carolina offers hundreds of scenic hiking tracks to choose from.

Columbia - Kayak or canoe down the Congarees River.

Kentucky

Visit a National Park - Kentucky has many national parks to choose from including the Mammoth Cave National Park and the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park.

Events

February

St. Patrick's Day - Join the festivities in Miami.

Food and Wine festival - At South Beach.

March

Spring Break - Every March, thousands of students head to Florida to celebrate.

Miami International Film Festival.

April

New Orleans Jazz Festival.

June

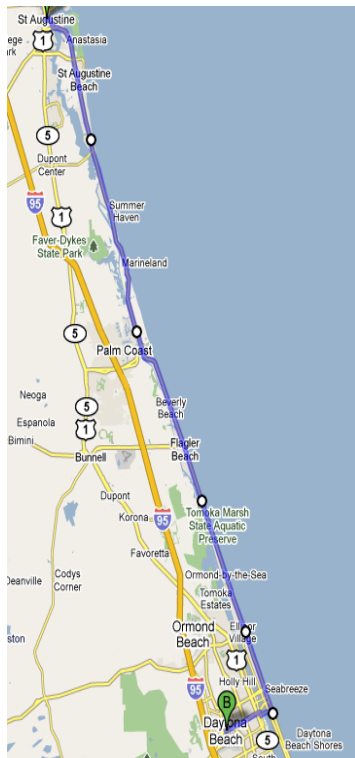
Brazilian Film Festival - In Miami.

September

The annual Kentucky Bourbon Festival.

Self Drive Tours around the South

St. Augustine to Daytona Beach, Florida



St. Augustine is located on the east coast of Florida in a region known as the First Coast which extends from Amelia Island to Jacksonville and Palm Coast. To reach Daytona, stay on the **A1A south** to reach the 'ultimate beach town', Daytona Beach. The drive is approximately an hour, depending on traffic and you will find numerous things to do along the way.

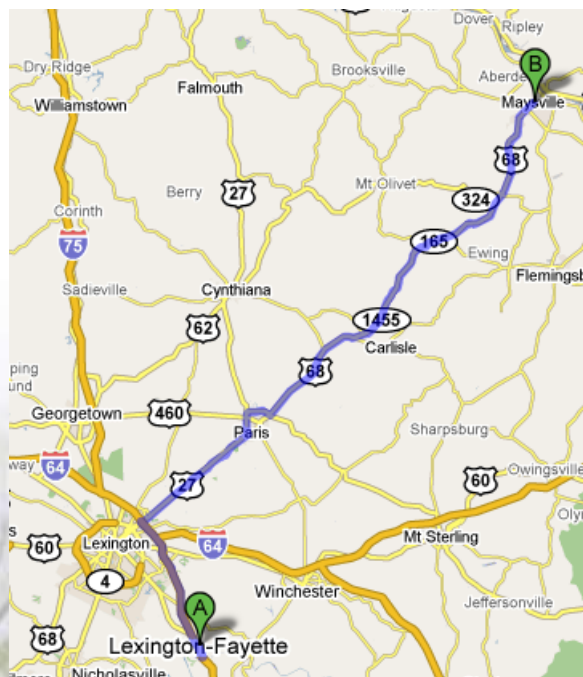
There are several state parks, recreation areas, stunning beaches and several restaurants. On arrival in Daytona, you will find a magnitude of things to do. Visit some of Florida's best beaches or enjoy the excitement of motor sports and speedways, and with accommodation facilities galore, be sure to stay for the weekend!



U.S. Highway 68

Highway 68, known as the 'scenic highway' takes drivers throughout Kentucky between Lexington and Maysville and runs for approximately 560 miles (900km). The majority of the route is surrounded by forests, mountainous terrain and abundant wildlife. Don't be surprised if you encounter a cougar, fox, cardinal or snakes along 68. Also be observant of any 'deer signs' as *collusions* are not uncommon. Native flora such as Sugar Maple Oak and variations of Pine are also plentiful.

The highway passes through several counties and along the way you are sure to find antique shopping, quaint villages, horse farms and, evidently, miraculous vistas.



Lexington, Kentucky



The Midwest

The Midwest comprises of twelve states in the central and inland north-eastern US and includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The Midwest is a diverse and exciting region that features a host of exciting activities and events that will be sure to transform your holiday into the ultimate vacation. Explore the dynamic city of Kansas, visit the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago or head off for a weekend to Door County, Wisconsin a popular destination, four hours out of Chicago. The options are endless in the Midwest...

Events

January

Martin Luther King Jr. day - Celebrations in Kansas.

March

Annual North Dakota Winter Festival.

April

Annual Spring Art and Craft Fair - North Dakota.

July

Traverse City Cherry Festival.

The Kansas City Fringe Festival - Featuring theatre, dance and art displays.

August

The Nebraska State Fair.

September

Fall Festival - Fargo.

Attractions

Indiana

The Indianapolis Zoo - Features hundreds of different animals and the world's only underwater dolphin dome.

Noblesville - Stroll down the streets and observe the architecture and cultural history of a town listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Hamilton County - With eight great towns to visit, you won't run short of things to do!

Kansas

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art - Explore the miles of galleries inside, or head out to enjoy the huge sculpture garden.

Relax in the park - Head to Jackson Park, Atchison and enjoy the scenic views of the Missouri Valley or have a picnic.

The National War Museum at Liberty Memorial - Home to one of the world's greatest collections of World War I artefacts.

Michigan

Detroit - With hundreds of attractions, a bustling street life and a lively nightlife, there's sure to be something for everyone!

The Detroit Institute of Arts - With over 60,000 works, the DIA is the 6th largest fine arts museum in America.

The Mackinac Island State Park - 80% of Mackinac Island is reserved as a State Park.

Nebraska

The Lincoln Children's Museum - A favourite amongst families due to the hands on exhibits and endless opportunities to explore and learn.

The Island Oasis Water Park - Complete with a wave pool, lazy river, two story high speed slides and plenty of thrill seeking rides to keep you entertained.

The Strategic Air and Space Museum - Featuring a collection of more than 30 aircrafts and exhibitions.

Driving Tour Ideas for the Midwest

Heritage Highway, Nebraska

Indicative of the name Heritage Highway, Highway 136, is a reverie for history buffs. Along this 238 mile/383 km stretch, drivers can anticipate heritage, culture, arts and crafts and also various fairs and festivals throughout the year. Visit the Cather Historical Museum, view the first American Homestead or tour restored Victorian Homes.

The four hour drive extends from the Missouri River to central Nebraska. Once you've taken in all the history Highway 136 has to offer, head to the Indian Cave State Park and enjoy a picnic lunch, or perhaps take advantage of the various water activities the area offers.

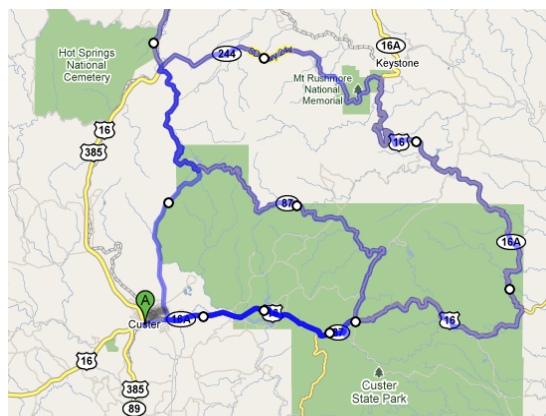


Nebraska

Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway, South Dakota

The Peter Norbeck Byway is a National Scenic Byway in the Black Hills National Forest and includes **Route 16A**, South Dakota Highway 244, 87 and 89. The 68 mile/109 km drive ventures through spiralling bridges, six rock tunnels and mountainous terrains. The drive was named after Peter Norbeck who governed and was the senator for South Dakota.

Allow approximately four hours and be sure to check out Mt. Rushmore, Hamey Park, Sylvan Lake and the spectacular scenery.



Mr Rushmore, South Dakota

The South West

Although there is some discrepancy over the states defined as incorporating the southwest, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas are frequently included. The South West offers tourists an amalgamation of different experiences that is sure to leave you wanting more. Explore the ancient sites of New Mexico, visit a ranch in Texas, experience the culture of Arizona and be sure to visit the Grand Canyon.

Attractions

Arizona

The Heard Museum - This unique Museum features over 32,000 pieces of cultural and fine arts.

The Desert Botanical Garden - Here you find 50 acres of spectacular outdoor exhibits, home to 139 rare and threatened plant species from around the world.

Climb Piestewa Peak - Part of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, Piestewa Peak attracts 4,000-10,000 hikers per week. The magnificent panoramic view from the top is well worth the 2,608 feet climb.

New Mexico

The Sandia Peak Tramway - the World's longest tramway boasts 11,000 square mile panoramic views across New Mexico.

Go white water rafting - Experience the thrill of rafting at Rio Grande or Rio Chama rivers.

Take off in a hot air balloon - Take off in the blue skies and then tour the Albuquerque International Balloon Museum.

The Traditions Festival Marketplace - Sells products and services made in New Mexico.

Oklahoma

The Myriad Botanical Gardens - Tour the beautiful gardens at Reno and Robinson.

Take a ride on the water taxi of Oklahoma - A great way to get a glimpse of the new Bricktown Canal.

The Oklahoma City Zoo - One of the most popular zoos in the United States and home to more than 2,800 animals.

Texas

Texas State Aquarium - Featuring more than 3,000 aquatic creatures and close up views of the wonders of the Gulf of Mexico.

Visit the Alamo - Step back in time as you tour the grounds and see where the battle erupted.

The Riverwalk in San Antonio - Shop and dine in a centre which winds along with the River of San Antonio.

Events

April

Jazz and Blues Festival - Glendale Arizona.

July

Annual Taste of Dallas.

August

Rhode Island International Film Festival.

September

Huntsville Antique Show - Texas.

Dusk Till Dawn Blues Festival - Rentiesville, Oklahoma.

October

Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta - The world's largest hot air balloon festival.

December

German Christmas Market - Tomball, Texas.

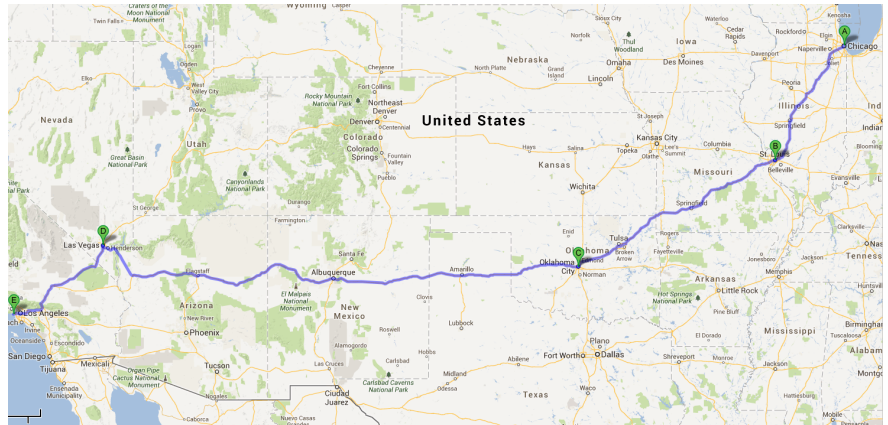
The South West Self Drive Tour

Route 66

One of the most famous highways in the US, Route 66 stretches from Chicago to Los Angeles. Built in 1926, it became the main route for migrants seeking a better life in California. The historical route has now been replaced with modern highways but the townships have preserved the heritage of historical Route 66.

After exploring the windy city of Chicago and Lake Michigan, begin your journey through the farmland of Illinois and onto St Louis, Missouri. From the Mississippi River, Route 66 will take you through Oklahoma City, where the migrant convoys in the 1930's, once began. Stop off at Oklahoma Museum which tells the story of this historical journey.

Travel through the region of the Cheyenne and Arapao Indians, where they once hunted bison; and onto Amarillo Texas, home to cowboys and oil fields. Stop off at the infamous Cadillac Ranch where you will find 10 tail-finned cadillacs buried nose first into the sand! Continue to New Mexico through the hunting lands of the Comanche Indians and onto Alberquerque.



At Alberquerque, take a ride on the aerial tramway to the top of the Sandian Mountains. The city is world famous for its hot air balloon festival in October. Travelling onto Santa Fe, taking the famous Tortoise Trail through the small artist-mountain communities. Built in 1610, visit the oldest government building in the US, Palace of the Governors.



The Grand Canyon, Arizona

Drive onto Holbrook, the Petrified Forest National Park, then through Navajo Indian Country toward the Grand Canyon National Park where you can take a helicopter flight or a hike and experience its vast majestic scenery. Stop off at Flagstaff and try your hand star-gazing at the Lowell Observatory.

Journey onto Las Vegas, otherwise known as Sin City - the entertainment capital of the world! Here you may choose to visit the Red Rock Canyon or take a flight over the West Rim of the Grand Canyon. Highlights include the Skywalk, shopping and, of course, the nightlife Vegas is renowned for.

From Las Vegas, head west through the Mojave Desert, stopping at the ghost town of Calico. Finally, Route 66 concludes at Santa Monica, Los Angeles - The City of Angels, where you can take a leisurely stroll along the boardwalk and marvel at the alternative culture along Venice Beach!



Cadillac Ranch, Amarillo, TX

Alaska

Alaska is the largest state of the United States and is located in the North West extremity of Northern America. Its rich with unique cultural experiences, however if you're a thrill seeker looking for adventure, Alaska has it all! For an unforgettable experience, embark on a driving tour through some of Alaska's roads and take in the stretches of breathtaking scenery. From the picturesque glaciers and mountainous terrains, no two days in Alaska will ever be the same.

Events

January

Russian New Year - Celebrated by many communities by holding a masquerade ball. The event features a variety of Russian food, dancing and costume judging.

The annual Anchorage Folk Festival - Brings singers, dancers and storytellers from all over Alaska.

March

The World Ice Art Championships - Held at Fairbanks and is one of the largest international ice sculpture competitions and exhibits and attracts ice sculptors from all over the world.

April

The Alaska Folk Festival - Held in Juneau and is a festival of music, dance and workshops.

October

Oktoberfest in Anchorage - With German food, music and beer.

Alaska Day Festival and celebrations - To commemorate the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867.

Attractions

Watch the mystical light show - The aurora borealis lights up the Alaskan night sky in majestic shades of green, purple and red. Whilst the aurora is active all year round, the best time to view the light show is from late August to early April.

Glacier viewing - There are many spectacular glaciers to visit across Alaska, accessible by land, sea or sky.

River Rafting - Alaska's rivers lure thrill seekers from all around the world, particularly to the Nenana River in Denali National Park.

Wildlife galore - You're most likely to see an eagle or bear, however you may also encounter a moose or caribou.

Go on a hiking expedition - Alaska's hills draw hikers of all competencies, from those seeking to have a bit of fun to the more serious hikers.

Try something new - Alaska has an array of interesting local cuisine on offer including caribou steaks and reindeer sausage.

Experience the native culture - Watch totem carving, native dancing, traditional music performances or visit historical museums or heritage centres.

Make the most of the snow - Tear up the slops, go for a skate, play ice hockey or take a horse-drawn sleigh ride. Why not even drive your own team of sled dogs!

Take a cruise - Day cruises are available across several areas of Alaska, the most popular of which are at Glacier Bay, Kenai Fjords and Prince William Sound. These trips offer the perfect opportunity to view some of the wildlife including whales, seals, sea lions, sea otters, mountain goats and many more.

Aurora Borealis

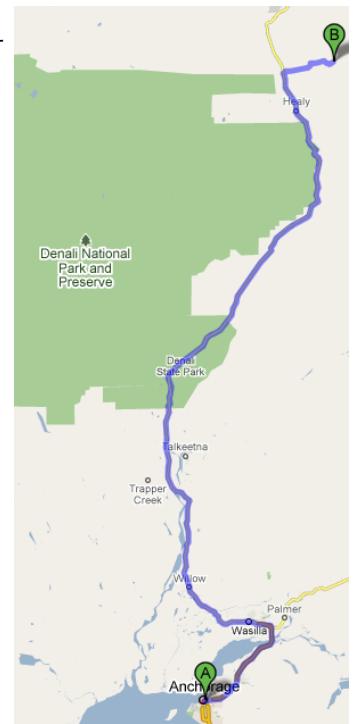
Self Drive Tours around Alaska



Anchorage to Denali National Park

The drive to Denali National Park from Anchorage is approximately 5 hours without breaks however be sure to allow time to stop and admire the spectacular scenery. From Anchorage, follow the **Glenn Highway northbound** and then continue on the Parks Highway towards Denali National Park. Once on the Glenn Highway, consider stopping at the Alaska Native Heritage Centre or the Eklunta Indian Village.

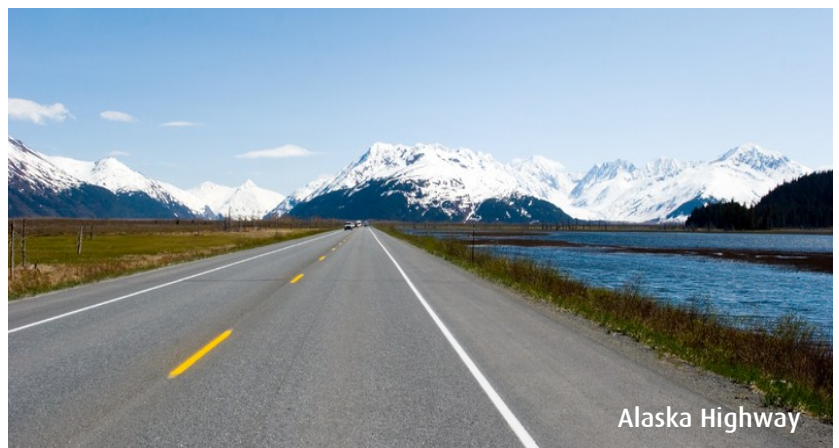
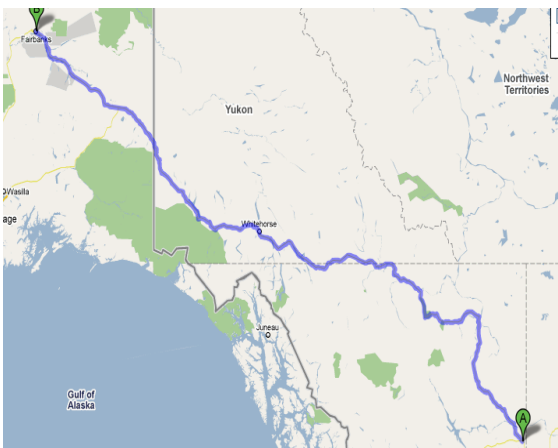
If time permits, take a short detour to the small gold mining community Talkeetna, or continue on to the National Park. Once you have arrived, options are endless. For the adventurous consider river rafting or take a jeep safari trip.



The Alaska Highway

The famous Alaska Highway begins in Dawson Creek, in north-eastern British Columbia, connects to Canada's Yukon Territory and then to Alaska. The main destination for motorists on the Alaska Highway is Fairbanks, which is approximately 1,488 miles from Dawson Creek and many tourists and even locals choose to drive the route purely to witness its striking scenery. There are many accommodation and dining options along the route.

Although many sections of the highway have been straightened and paved in the last few years, the Alaskan highway is still an adventure route. Many sections of the road are still narrow and curvy and watch out for the little red flags which signify gravel gaps. The highway should only be attempted with care and good weather conditions.



Hawaii

The state of Hawaii is comprised of six magnificent islands located in the central Pacific Ocean, southwest of the continental United States. Hawaii has it all; beautiful scenic drives, unmatched serenity and hospitable locals. By day learn how to snorkel in crystal clear waters, visit volcanoes and waterfalls, and by night taste local Hawaiian cuisine, relax at a spa resort or enjoy a traditional Luau performance.

Attractions

Hawaii Island (Big Island)

Pua Mau Botanical Gardens - Explore a garden paradise complete with a hibiscus maze, large lava boulders and ever blooming plants.

Torpedo through the Ocean - Torpedo Tours offers underwater adventurers a safe way to slowly plough through the ocean.

Maui Island

Maui Ocean Centre - Voted Hawaii's top rated family attraction, this state of the art aquarium exhibits both indoor and outdoor displays of the fascinating underwater world.

Attend a Luau - Many hotels host beachside luaus complete with Hawaiian foods, music, hula and fire dancing.

Sightsee - Visit the biggest Buddha outside Asia, tour the historic preservation district of Lahania and stop at Hawaiian churches.

O'ahu

Experience History - Take a guided tour of Pearl Harbour.

Honolulu Zoo - Featuring 1,230 mammals, birds and reptiles.

Hilo Tropical Gardens - One of Hawaii's oldest visitor gardens.

Royal Tour - Take a guided tour of the only Royal Palace on American soil.

Kauai

Learn to Snorkel - Experience the crystal-clear waters and amazing marine life off the majestic Na Pali coast.

Play golf at Kauai Golf Tee Times - The famous 18-hole course overlooks the ocean at Kauai.

Take the plunge - Experience the exhilaration of Skydiving whilst witnessing the spectacular views of Kauai.

Events

January

Sony Open in Hawaii - Honolulu

February

Annual festivities at the Hilo Chinese New Year Festival - In Kalakaua Park, the Big Island.

March

Honolulu Festival.

May

Mother's Day Orchid Show - Located at Hale Halawai on Alii Drive, the Big Island.

June

Annual Kapalua Wine & Food Festival - At the Kapalua Resort, West Maui.

Maui Film Festival.

September

64th annual Aloha festivals floral parade - O'ahu.

Maui Marathon.

Self Drive Tours - Hawaii

Hana Highway in Maui

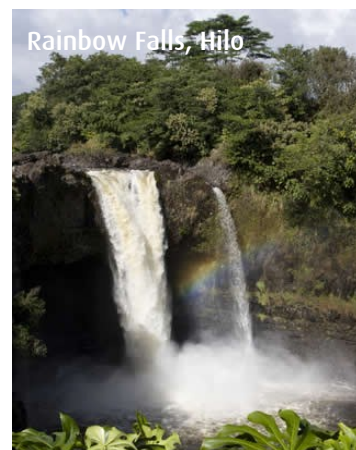
The Hana Highway is a 109km stretch of Hawaiian **State Highways 36 and 360**. The road is very winding and narrow and passes over 59 bridges and many curves which make the drive a little slower than others. Despite the time delay, this drive still remains one of the more popular routes due to the fact that around each bend the scenery is sure to surprise and delight. At the end of the Hana Highway are the famous Seven Sacred Pools which are a series of waterfalls and pools located inside the Haleakala National Park.



Waimea Canyon, Kauai

Waimea Canyon - Kauai

When visiting Kauai, be sure to take **Highway 50 west** from Hanapepe toward Waimea and visit Waimea Canyon (South West Kauai). Waimea Canyon Drive is on the right just past Mile Marker #23 and provides superlative views and lookouts of the gorge. It is advisable to fill up before starting the trip as there are no gas stations located along this road. Waimea Canyon is considered the Grand Canyon of the Pacific and measures approximately 16km long and up to 900m deep.

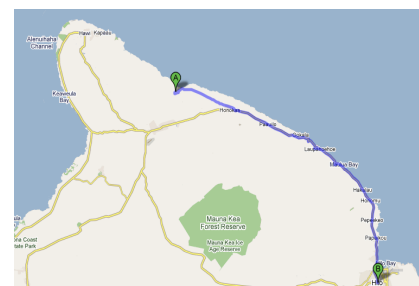


Rainbow Falls, Hilo

Hamakua Coast Drive - Big Island

When on Hawaii's Big Island, take a scenic drive along the famous Hamakua coast from Waipio to Hilo. The route follows along the Hawaii Belt Road, **Highway 19** and is also known as the Hilo- Hamakua Heritage Coast. Be sure to take your camera as the 45 mile drive is host to spectacular views of the mountainside cliffs and magnificent waterfalls.

On arrival in Hilo there is a magnitude of things to see, the most spectacular of which is the Volcanoes National Park. If time permits, also visit the Akaka Falls, Rainbow Falls and the Hawaii Tropical Botanical Gardens.



Stay Healthy

The American health system is one of the world's best in terms of quality, but can be very expensive for those without insurance. Most Americans generally have health insurance, otherwise they face expensive hospital bills or depend on the government subsidised health plans. Your comprehensive travel insurance should cover any medical costs including medical evacuation, so make sure that your insurance covers you for the whole time you'll be away and be clear on what is not included, otherwise you might face enormous hospital bills.

In the event of an emergency, call 911 for an ambulance that will take you to the hospital emergency room (ER). Alternatively, walk in to the ER if it is a less urgent situation. For routine medical care, head to a walk-in clinic, where you'll receive regular medical care. Pharmacies and drug stores carry most prescriptions, however, as with most other medical care in the USA it can be expensive, so it's best to have your scripts filled before you go, and carry these medicines along with a letter from your GP explaining your medical needs.

Stay Safe

Despite a relatively high crime rate and occasional natural disasters, the USA remains a very safe place to travel. Most crime is concentrated in inner city neighbourhoods in areas that are not frequented by visitors, and is often gang or drug related.

In the US, petty theft would be the greatest concern to travellers. Don't make yourself a target by showing off expensive jewellery and cash in public. Keep your money and credit cards in a safe place. Try to avoid walking dark, deserted streets on your own. Withdraw money from ATMs during the day or in well-lit busy areas at night. Respect the local laws and customs. The same as travelling in any foreign country, your common sense is the most valuable possession you can have.

The USA is an enormous country with varied geography that can be affected by natural disasters. Hurricanes sometimes occur in the south from June through to November; tornadoes occur occasionally in the Great Plains region, earthquakes can occur in California and Alaska, and the extreme heat of midsummer in California has been known to produce wildfires. Keep in mind that these are very wide generalisations and are certainly not guaranteed to happen.

Police

Call 911 for Police, Ambulance or Fire Service.



Money Matters

Currency

US Dollar (USD \$) = 100 cents (¢) Notes are in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5, \$2 and \$1. Coins are in denominations of \$1 and 50 (half-dollar), 25 (quarter), 10 (dime), 5 (nickel) and 1 (penny) cents.

Currency Exchange

Available in airports, major banks and bureaux de change. Generally banks are open Mon-Fri 0830-1700.

ATMs

ATMs (automatic teller machines) are located in almost all towns and cities, especially in most banks and accept major credit and debit cards.

Credit & Debit Cards

Most credit and debit cards are accepted throughout the US, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club. It is a good idea to carry at least one major credit card while travelling in the US, since most hotels and car rental companies will require a credit card imprint. Contact your credit card company immediately if your credit card is lost or stolen.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are widely accepted in the USA, and in US Dollars. Cheques in other currency are generally not accepted. You will need a form of photo identification to use travellers cheques.

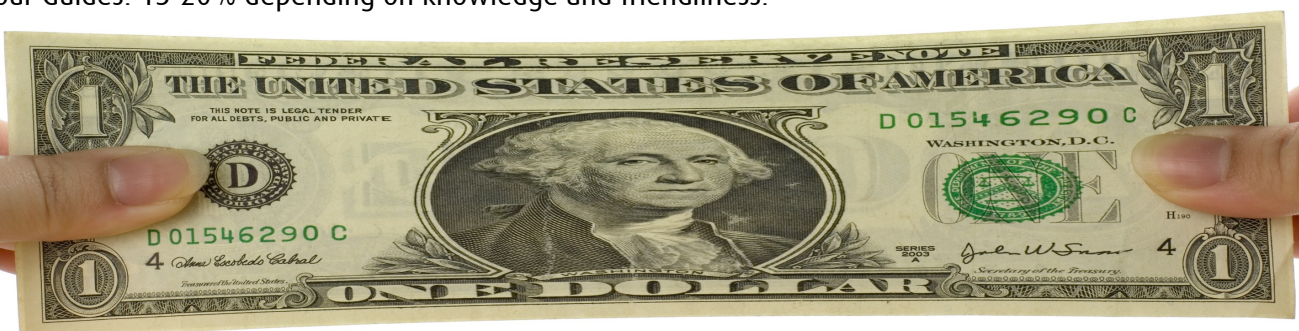
Tax

In the US, Sales Tax is added onto the price of goods and services that are purchased within the USA, and is displayed as a percentage of the sale price. Each state has its own rate of sales tax. Some states do not charge any state-wide sales tax, such as Alaska, Montana, Delaware, New Hampshire and Oregon; however local governments within these states may charge local taxes for things such as meals, room occupancies, car rentals and use of electricity.

Tipping

Tipping in the USA is standard practice and indeed often expected. There are different rules of thumb for different industries, so use this as a rough guide:

- Restaurants with table service: tip 15% of the bill, and for exceptional service 15-25%.
- Buffet restaurants: 10-15% of the bill.
- Fast food outlets: tipping is not expected however if the service has been fantastic then tips are appropriate into the tip jar.
- Bar Staff: \$1-\$2 per drink or 15-20% of the total bill.
- Bellman/Porter: \$1-\$2 per bag.
- Concierge: tipping is not expected but for exceptional service tipping is appreciated.
- Taxi Driver: 10-15% of fare.
- Valet Parkers: \$2-\$5 when collecting your car.
- Hairdresser/Manicurist: 10-20%.
- Tour Guides: 15-20% depending on knowledge and friendliness.



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