

ROUTE 66 ROAD TRIP

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Travel on Historic U.S. Route 66, seeking the ultimate destinations along the Mother Road!

Travel Guide to Route 66: The Mother Road

Route 66 was one of the United States' first continuous stretches of paved highway, and served as a major path for those who migrated to the West.

"The Mother Road" was established on November 11, 1926, and ultimately stretched 2,448 miles (3,940 kilometers) from Chicago to Los Angeles. It became the shortest, year-round route between the Midwest and the Pacific Coast, and was also known as **"The Main Street of America"** and the **"Will Rogers Highway"**. On that date, only 800 miles of Route 66 were paved, the rest being graded dirt, gravel, bricks, or planks of wood. It took 11 more years before the entire road would be paved.

From its beginning in Chicago, Route 66 headed southwest through Illinois and Missouri, and a small section of southeast Kansas. From there it turned in a more westward direction through Oklahoma and Texas, with the final stretches in New Mexico and Arizona before its termination point in Los Angeles.

During the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s, the diagonal course of the Route 66 was the primary route for migrating farm workers from the Midwest to California. The migration continued during World War II due to job availability in



California.

It linked small, rural towns to larger cities, and markets. The fact that it covered mainly flat areas and featured moderate year-round weather made it an attractive route for travelers, and truckers. During this time, it also became one of the key routes for moving military equipment across the country.



Due to the efforts of the U.S. Highway 66 Association, Route 66 became the first highway to be completely paved, in 1938. In the 1950s, Route 66 became the main highway for vacationers heading to Los Angeles. The traffic along Route 66 led to the opening of many "mom and pop" restaurants, motels, and service stations along the route to satisfy the needs of traveling motorists.

Alignments of the road changed often over the years, as improved sections of highway were constructed. In the early years many sections connected only one small town to the next, and had no official federal route number. Over time the route was formalized as Federal Highway numbered as "U.S. 66".

We've had the pleasure of driving in all eight states along Route 66, **The Main Street of America!**

Included on this website are photographs, personal experiences, commentary and travel recommendations on the various segments of the Mother Road. We hope that this site will help with the planning of your next vacation or holiday, and get Route 66 checked off your bucket list of destinations in 2025 or maybe during the Centennial in 2026!

The Lore of Route 66: The Main Street of America

Route 66 became one of the most famous roads in the United States, outdistancing others such as the Lincoln Highway.

It is popular lore in movies, songs, books like "The Grapes of Wrath", and TV shows. The legendary highway was known far and wide for its variety of "mom and pop" motels, neon lights, drive-ins, quirky roadside attractions, flat tires, cars with no air conditioning, dangerous curves, steep hills, and narrow lanes.



Today, there are more than 250 buildings, bridges, road alignments and other sites along Route 66 that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The movie "Easy Rider" was filmed at several locations along Route 66. The movie "Thelma and Louise" also featured Route 66 references and scenes.

The popularity stuck, and continues to grow today! So ... ***get your kicks on Historic U.S. Route 66 in 2025!***

Route 66 Map from Beginning to End, from Chicago to Santa Monica

Map of Historic Route 66 from Illinois to California



Road Trip Travel Guides for Various States Along Route 66

Planning a road trip on Route 66 in 2025 or for the Centennial in 2026? Here are the 2025 Route 66 Travel Guides and reviews by state...



List of Route 66 Mileage by State (1926 Alignment)

State - Miles

Illinois - 301
Missouri - 317
Kansas - 13
Oklahoma - 432
Texas - 186
New Mexico - 487
Arizona - 401
California - 314

TOTAL - 2,448 Miles

*It's time to stop for a "selfie"!
The arch in Grants, New Mexico on Route
66*





Hotels and Motels

[Click for Listings!](#)

The Demise of Route 66

Route 66 underwent many improvements and realignments during its lifetime. The passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1956 sounded the death knell for the old road, and gradually segments were replaced with new, safer and faster superhighways.

Its final demise was the completion of the Interstate Highway System. The last Route 66 town by-passed by the Interstate system was Williams, Arizona, on October 13, 1984. Subsequently, U.S. Route 66 was officially removed from the United States Highway System on June 27, 1985.

Route 66 was replaced by five Interstates: I-55 southbound from Chicago, I-44 across Missouri and Oklahoma, I-40 in Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, I-15 and finally I-10 into Los Angeles.



Standin on a Corner, in Winslow, Arizona, such a fine sight to see ... on Route 66

Route 66 Today

Today, in 2025, several states recognize the historical significance of the road, and have it marked with "66" in the state highway number. "Historic Route 66 Associations" are active in several states.

The road is also a major tourist attraction, so many states openly market attractions and lodging along the old route.

The old road still traverses dozens of small towns with vintage gas stations, quirky tourist attractions, diners, "Mop & Pop" motels, historic sites & museums, stunning vistas, and gift shops.

Touring Route 66 by Auto, Bus, or RV

Different people choose different modes of transportation to tour the Mother Road. While some elect guided bus tours, or drive their own vehicles, others seek new destinations in their RV or motor home.

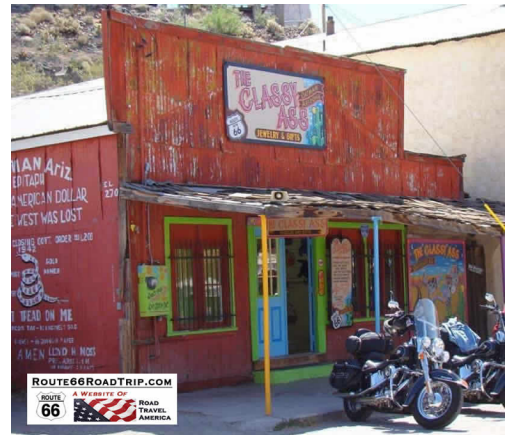
And for those that don't own an RV yet, companies like Cruise America, El Monte RV Rentals, Road Bear RV Rentals, and Camping World offer a variety of RV sizes and rental plans.

Touring Route 66 by Motorcycle

Get your motor running! Get out on the highway in 2025! Many travelers on Route 66 rent motorcycles to seek new open-air adventures on their USA road trip!

A variety of motorcycle rental plans are available, such as those from [Eaglerider Motorcycle Rentals](#). Out West, your motorcycle can be picked up at a number of rental locations in Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. If you are starting your Route 66 trip further north, motorcycle pickup locations in Illinois are available. Model options are plentiful, and cycles from manufacturers such as Harley-Davidson and Indian are available. Trikes can also be rented.

If you don't want to ride independently, choose from one of many guided motorcycle tours. Self-drive tours often include rental of the motorcycle, hotel reservations and detailed tour route information. Some companies offer one-way rentals, hotel pickups, luggage storage, helmets and other amenities.

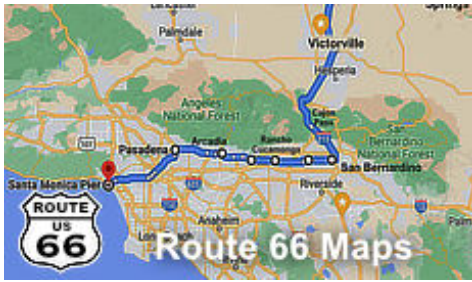


Motorcycles at the Classy Ass, Oatman, Arizona, on Route 66



Read more about [Route 66 on Motorcycle](#)

TRAVELERS LOVE THESE ROUTE 66 FEATURES



Route 66: The Song

The song **"Get Your Kicks on Route 66"** was composed by songwriter Bobby Troup in 1946. It was first recorded by Nat King Cole, and sung by other singers over the years including Chuck Berry, Perry Como, and the Rolling Stones.

If you ever plan to motor west, travel my way, take the highway that is best.

Get your kicks on Route sixty-six.

It winds from Chicago to LA, more than two thousand miles all the way.

Get your kicks on Route sixty-six.

Now you go through Saint Looey, Joplin, Missouri, and Oklahoma City is mighty pretty.

You see Amarillo, Gallup, New Mexico, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Don't forget Winona, Kingman, Barstow, San Bernardino.

Won't you get hip to this timely tip: when you make that California trip

Get your kicks on Route sixty-six.



The Munger Moss Motel in Lebanon,

Missouri, on Route 66

For the Route 66 TV series on CBS, the "Route 66 Theme" song was written by Nelson Riddle.



Read more [about Route 66 songs!](#)

Route 66: The TV Show

A popular television show during the early 1960s bore the road's name: "Route 66". Starring George Maharis as Buz, and Martin Milner as Tod, the two young adventurers drove the road in their Chevrolet Corvette for 116 episodes.

Despite the name of the series, most episodes did NOT take place on the historic road, but in 25 different U.S. states. The show was filmed mostly on location, and became known for its cinematography. A long list of well-known actors and actresses appeared on the series.



*Tod and Buz (By CBS, or
Screen Gems)*

The show ran from October, 1960, through March, 1964, and created a huge following. The interest in the show continues today by "Baby Boomers" who remember the original showings, and new generations of viewers fascinated by the show who watch it on DVD.



Read more [about the Route 66 TV series ... and those Corvettes!](#)

Cars: The Pixar-Disney Movie Inspired by Route 66

Cars is an animated comedy film released in 2006, produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures, and directed by John Lasseter. Set in a world populated entirely by imaginary vehicles, the film follows a young racecar named **Lightning McQueen** who becomes stranded in a Route 66 town named **Radiator Springs**.



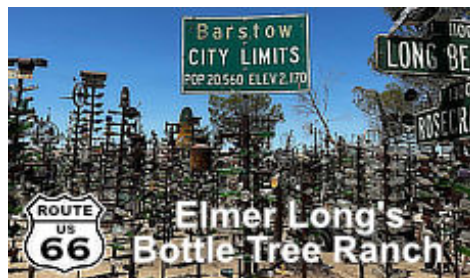
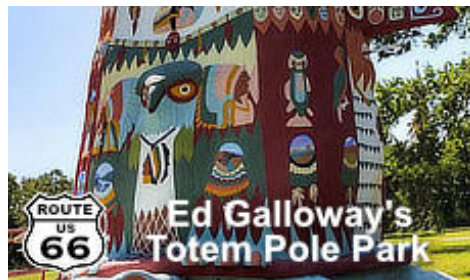
John Lasseter and Route 66 historian Michael Wallis led eleven Pixar animators in rented white Cadillacs on two different road trips across the Route to research the film. The team of animators visited the Rock Cafe, Cars on the Route in Galena, U-drop Inn in Shamrock, the Cadillac Ranch, the Midpoint Cafe, WigWam Villages and other destinations that still exist today.

Many travelers on Route 66 wonder about the inspiration for places like Radiator Springs, the Cozy Cone Motel, Ramone's Body Shop, Flo's V8 Café, Ornament Valley, and Lizzie's Curios Shop, as well as characters such as Tow Mater, Sally Carrera, Doc Hudson and Fillmore.



Read more [about the movie "Cars" and its Route 66 inspirations](#)

ALWAYS POPULAR STOPS ON ROUTE 66



Chicago: The Route Begins

The beginning point for a Route 66 road trip could be either Chicago or Los Angeles, depending on the direction of the trip. Most travelers seem to start their journey on Route 66 in Chicago, and head westbound, the direction taken by those leaving the Dust Bowl and those seeking a new life in the West. That is the direction we take on this website.

Illinois was the first of the eight states through which Route 66 passed to have its segment of U.S. 66 paved, at a time when much of the route across the country was still a gravel or dirt road. Illinois Route 66 took over Illinois State Highway 4, a pre-existing, fully paved two-lane road between Chicago and St. Louis.

The beginning point of Route 66 in **Chicago** has changed over the years. Today, the starting point is at East Adams Street at South Michigan Avenue, and the end point is at East Jackson

at South Michigan. One way streets in the area can be difficult to navigate for first-time Route 66 visitors!

While in Chicago, many Route 66 travelers seek out Grant Park, the Willis Tower, Chicago Architecture River Cruise, Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Science & Industry, the Magnificent Mile, Lincoln Park Zoo and the lakeshore shopping areas.



Read more about [Route 66 in Chicago](#)

Chicago ... the beginning point of Route 66 when heading westbound



Midpoint Cafe & Gift Shop in Adrian

Route 66 Roadside Attraction: Midpoint Cafe
and Gift Shop, Adrian, Texas

Located at the exact geo-mathematical
center of Route 66 ... 1,139 miles to either
Chicago or Los Angeles.



Read more about [The Route 66](#)

[Midpoint](#)



Santa Monica: The End of the Trail

The original terminus of U.S. Route 66 was at 7th and Broadway in downtown Los Angeles. However, over the years, and decades, Route 66 has had several "official" and "unofficial" ending points.

The route was later extended to the intersection of Lincoln and Olympic boulevards in Santa Monica, about one mile from the Pacific Ocean. This is often referred to as the **official ending point** of Route 66.



Read more about [Route 66 in Santa Monica](#)

Map showing the "official" and "unofficial" ending points of Route 66 in Santa Monica, California

(click image to open in Google Maps)



The End of the Trail ... Santa Monica, California (Staff Photo)



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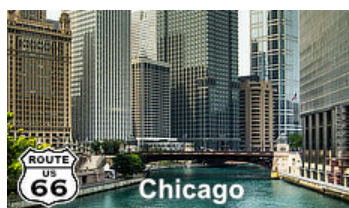


ROAD
TRAVEL
AMERICA

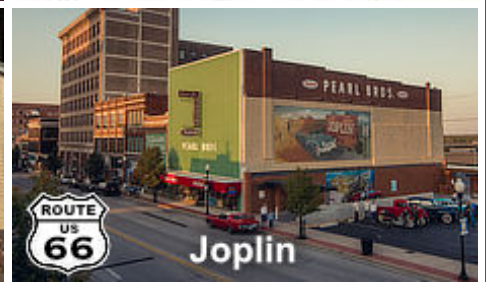
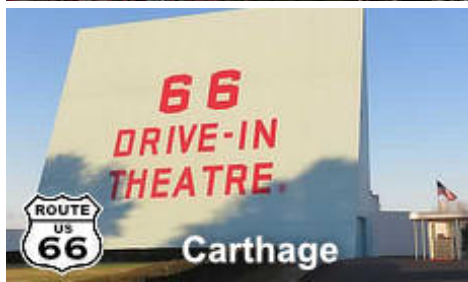
Travel Guides for States and Cities Along Route 66

Planning a Road Trip on Route 66? Here are trip planners for major segments and cities, from Illinois westward to California ... click any image for details!

ILLINOIS ROUTE 66



MISSOURI ROUTE 66



KANSAS ROUTE 66



OKLAHOMA ROUTE 66



TEXAS ROUTE 66



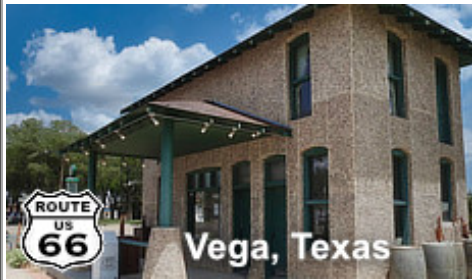
Shamrock



McLean



Amarillo



Vega, Texas

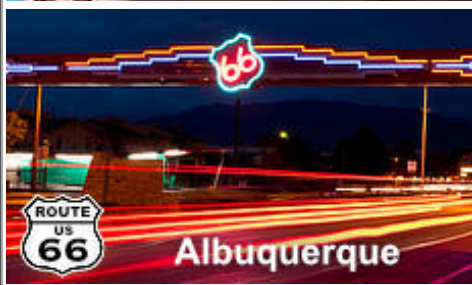


Adrian



Glenrio

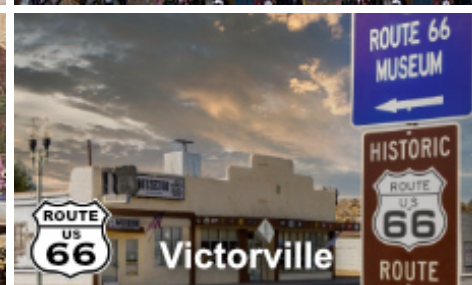
NEW MEXICO ROUTE 66



ARIZONA ROUTE 66



CALIFORNIA ROUTE 66



Popular Route 66 resources for your next road trip!

[Route 66 Travel Guide - 202 Amazing Places](#)
by Mark Watson



[Route 66 Full-throttle Adventure Handbook,](#)
by Drew Knowles

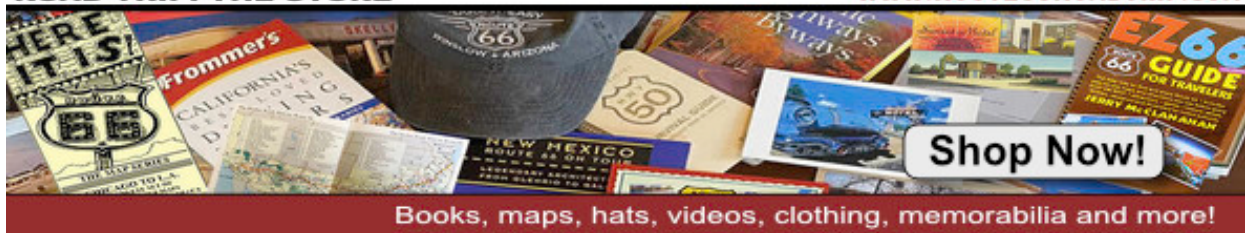


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Route 66 Centennial: 1926–2026

Route 66 was one of the United State's first continuous stretches of paved highway, and served as a major path for those who migrated west. **"The Mother Road"** was commissioned on November 11, 1926, and ultimately stretched 2,448 miles from Chicago to Los Angeles. In 2026, the nation will be celebrating the **Route 66 Centennial** ... 100 years of the Mother Road serving the traveling public! Many states and organizations are planning special events and tours to highlight the Centennial.



Read more about the [Route 66 Centennial](#) and [Centennial events planned in 2026](#)

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