

USA

Destination Guide



Contents

Drive at your own pace across all 50 states. The USA has landscapes, cultures and cities so unique it is hard to believe they belong to the same country. Experience bright lights, big city one day, hit the slopes of snow capped mountains the next, and spend the weekend watching the world go by at the beach. Discover the unique wildlife in the 59 national parks, where natural wonders abound. Take advantage of the extensive highway networks which criss-cross through states and use this Destination Guide to help plan your self drive holiday.

Contents	Page
Renting a Car in the USA	3
Rental Vehicle Insurance	4
Driving in the USA	5-7
California	8
Self Drive Tours: Los Angeles to Palm Springs / San Francisco to the Napa Valley	9
New England	10
Self Drive Tours: Connecticut Wine Trail / Route 100 Green Mountain National Forest	11
Mid-Atlantic	12
Self Drive Tours: The Hamptons / Scenic Drives through Pennsylvania	13
The West	14
Self Drive Tours: Frontier Pathways Old West Tour / Beartooth Highway	15
The South	16
Self Drive Tours: St. Augustine to Daytona Beach, Florida / U.S. Highway 68	17
The Midwest	18
Self Drive Tours: Heritage Highway, Nebraska / Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway	19
The Southwest	20
Self Drive Tours: Driving Route 66	21
Alaska	22
Self Drive Tours: Anchorage to Denali National Park / The Alaska Highway	23
Hawaii	24
Self Drive Tours: Hana Highway in Maui / Waimea Canyon / Hamakua Coast Drive	25
Stay Healthy & Stay Safe / Money Matters	26 - 27
Useful Information	28

Renting a Car in the USA

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		

Do I need a credit card?

A credit card is required when picking up your vehicle to cover the security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car, depending on the category of vehicle booked and the rate type.

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.

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. Auto Europe 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 this may incur a one-way drop off fee. Fees depend on the mileage between cities and often have a minimum rental requirement. Travelling between some states may not incur a one-way fee (e.g. there is usually no drop off fee for travel between California and Nevada). Auto Europe will verify whether one way fees apply before confirming your vehicle.

Motorhome Rental

Enjoy the convenience of accommodation and transport in one. Auto Europe offers motorhomes for up to six people with over 25 collection points across the USA.



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:** This is 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 generally 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 Auto Europe.
- **Fire and Liability:** Limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is usually 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 to be an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car, however it is usually included in your general Travel Insurance Policy.

Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance. However, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU\$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in case of an accident. To find out more, simply call Auto Europe on 1300 656 601 or visit the [Auto Europe website](#).

The Auto Europe Hire Car Excess Refund Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving in the USA



- When you collect your car rental, familiarise yourself with the car and its controls before you drive away from the depot. When driving, always wear a seat belt, use child safety seat when necessary and always carry your licence with you when you are driving.
- Cars drive on the **right** hand side of the road; the driver sits on the left hand side of the car.
- Avoid driving in major cities (e.g. New York) where traffic can be heavy and parking hard to find. Instead make use of the extensive public transport systems and give yourself more time to explore places outside of the city in your car.
- 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

While most road rules are the same, each state has its own set of driving laws. When you collect your rental, check for specific rules you need to observe. Here are some basic rules that will apply across the country:

- The maximum speed limit on interstate highways in most states is 70mph (110 km/hr), and 65mph on other four lane highways, 30mph in urban areas and 20mph in school zones. Speed limits are generally well marked along the roads.
- 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.
- 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. Be smart: don't drink and drive!

Parking

Parking in most cities and towns isn't usually a problem. In some towns there will be restrictions on street parking that will be clearly signposted. It is illegal to park across entrances, in front of fire or ambulance stations or within 3m of a fire hydrant.

Parking meters are common and are monitored by city police and private companies. Parking illegally risks a fine, wheel clamping or even towing. If in doubt, park your car in private or municipal car parks that are provided in most urban areas.

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. Australian 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.

Age Requirements

Minimum 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 USD25+tax per day.

Maximum 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 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 - just make sure that you advise your supplier at the time of booking as sometimes additional insurance is required. Please note that a one-way rental between US and Canada will incur a fee.

How about travel in to Mexico?

Some vehicles may be driven into Mexico, though usually only permitted into the Free Trade Zone (about 13-25 miles into Mexico). Restrictions and additional insurances will apply. Permission to travel in to Mexico is on a request basis 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 sometimes apply. Drivers must stay on sealed roads or the insurance will become void. Check with your rental supplier before travelling into Alaska.



Child Safety

Child Car Safety Seat Laws vary from state to state, but the general law is as follows:

Children must be properly buckled into a car seat or booster in the back seat until they weigh over 36 kilos or reach the height of 145 cm or taller. If they meet these criteria, they may use the vehicle seat belt if it fits properly with the lap belt low on the hips, touching the upper thighs, and the shoulder belt crossing the centre of the chest. If children are not tall enough for proper belt fit, they must ride in a booster or car seat.

Contact Auto Europe for details of the Child Safety Seat laws which apply to the states in which you will be driving.

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.

Should I hire a GPS for driving in the USA?

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe Australia. Our rates include the GPS unit, travel guides and entertainer. The GPS is delivered direct to your home before you depart. GPS units can also be requested directly through some suppliers, however this will be at their own rates. If time is short, or you would simply prefer to collect your GPS unit together with your rental, then this may be the option for you.

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, small beach towns, premier wine regions and tranquil wilderness.

Attractions

Los Angeles

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

Explore Universal Studios - Experience the thrill of Hollywood and get a glimpse of 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 this former island prison

Union Square - Take a trolley to San Francisco's premier shopping district

San Diego

San Diego Zoo - America's most famous 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; 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

Events

February

Napa Valley Mustard Festival - Enjoy food, art and, of course, wine in this world famous wine region

April

Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach- Witness an open-wheel race held on a street circuit in Long Beach

May

Mother's Day Festival on Olvera Street - A festival just for mum! Get a taste of Mexican culture at this L.A. fest featuring music, food, crafts and free gifts for mothers

June/July

The San Diego County Fair - This annual event has everything from horse shows to photography competitions and more

July

Fillmore Street Jazz Festival - A free jazz music festival in San Francisco

September

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

November

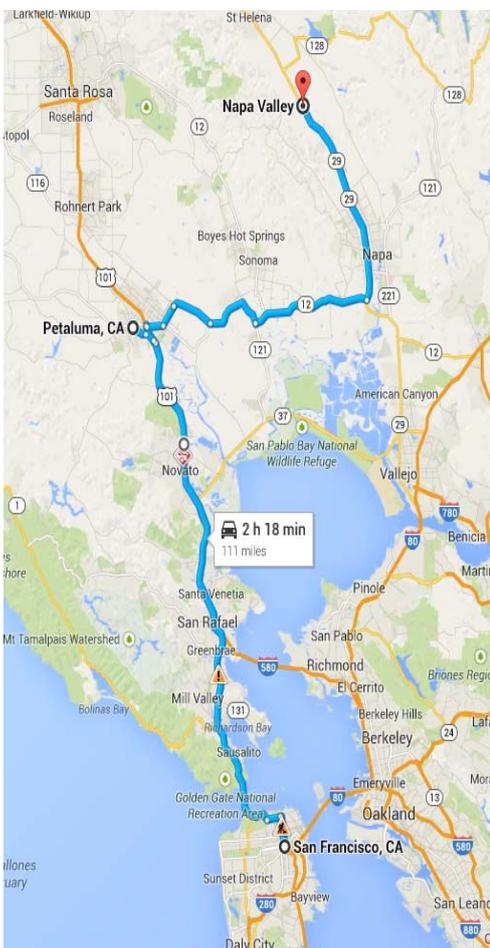
Del Mar Fairgrounds - Drive through San Diego's Holiday of Lights, showcasing more than 350 animated holiday displays

Self Drive Tours: California



Los Angeles to Palm Springs

Palm Springs is a glamorous resort style oasis in the California desert that offers hiking, modern architecture, spectacular natural beauty and a host of outdoor activities. For the ultimate weekend getaway, take 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 60-90 minutes. If you are planning to travel during rush hour, allow an extra hour to be safe. The most scenic route to take is via the famous Golden Gate Bridge, heading north from the city. On this route, you'll drive through surroundings reminiscent of the 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, and includes the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. Bound 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 where you can relax and unwind, stretches of serene beaches, scenic driving tours and a rich cultural history waiting to be explored!

Attractions

Connecticut

Heublien Tower - The 165-foot tower is located in Talcott Mountain State Park and is reached by taking a 2km hike to a cliff area, where visitors can enjoy panoramic views

Wineries - Drive along the Connecticut Wine Trail to visit numerous vineyards that produce a variety of wines, ciders and fruit wines

Massachusetts

Downtown Crossing in Boston - Commonly known as the financial district, Downtown Crossing is also a vibrant area with boutiques, department stores and restaurants

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

Rhode Island

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

The Blackstone Valley - A region rich in history and architectural beauty

Vermont

The Bennington Museum - Features hundreds of objects illustrating the development of New England

Enjoy the outdoors - Go skiing, hiking, fishing, or attend one of many festivals

Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Factory - One of the states most popular activities, located in Waterbury

Events

January

Moby Dick Marathon - Two days covering everything Moby Dick and Herman Melville in New Bedford, MA

February

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

June

Block Island Music Festival - A grassroots music festival hosted on Block Island, an island in the Atlantic Ocean under the governance of Rhode Island

July

The Boston Harborfest - An event in the days surrounding America's Independence Day (4 July), with more than 220 events throughout the city

August

Maine Lobster Festival - Don't miss this delicious festival full of this freshly caught crustacean for which Maine is known

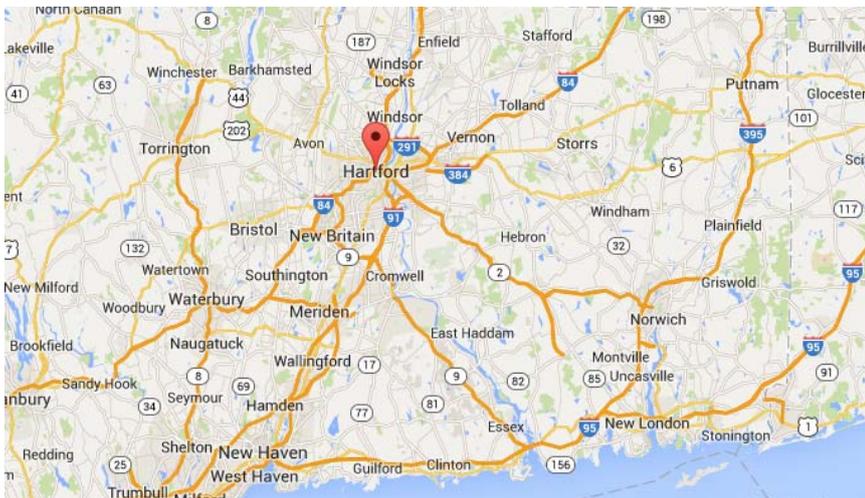
October

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

December

Jingle Bell Chocolate Tour - A horse drawn carriage through the town of Jackson, New Hampshire during which you'll be presented with heaps of chocolate Christmas treats!

Self Drive Tours: New England



Connecticut Wine Trail

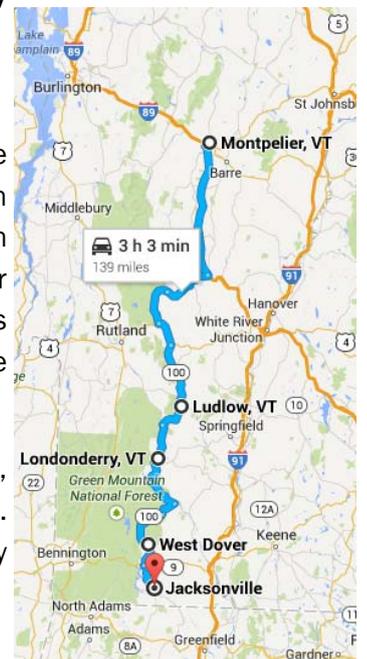
Explore the Connecticut Wine Trail, which boasts some of the best wineries in the United States. This area is home to over 20 vineyards and each winery has its own specialties so its best to review the [Connecticut Wine Trail website](#) in advance to find which locations suit your tastes. At your first stop, pick up the Passport to Connecticut's Wine Trail, which features the name and address of each vineyard,

including their hours of operation and phone numbers. This area can be easily reached from several cities, including New York.

Route 100—Green Mountain National Forest

Route 100 is one of the most scenic routes in New England, weaving through the Green Mountain National Forest of Vermont. The drive begins at the Canadian border and ends at the border of Vermont and Massachusetts. The Green Mountain National Forest trails the backbone of Vermont north of 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 of Route 100 is during autumn, referred to as the “foliage season”, which is between September and November. However take into consideration that the popularity of the route often attracts many visitors, particularly during the foliage season.





Mid-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 luscious plains of the Pennsylvania countryside, the Mid Atlantic has something for everyone. 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

Attractions

New York

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

Ride the ferry - Visit the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island

Washington DC

The White House and Capitol Hill - See two of the most important structures of the US government

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial - Honouring citizens lost in the Vietnam War

New Jersey

The Old Barracks Museum - Learn about Colonial American History

Pennsylvania

Explore the Hershey Museum - Find out how chocolate is made and sample the goods!

Visit Liberty Bell - The site where the bell was rang to declare American independence

Delaware

The Delaware Museum of Natural History - Exhibits include dinosaur displays, a coral reef and wildlife

Maryland

The Maryland Science Centre - Fantastic space with exhibits ranging from dinosaurs to space travel and an IMAX theatre

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

Events

January

Times Square - Spend New Year's Eve in New York City to witness the famous ball drop at the party of a lifetime

February

Chinese New Year - Head to NYC's Chinatown for one of the biggest Chinese New Year celebration in the country

March/April

National Cherry Blossom Festival - Held in late March/early April, celebrate the blossoming of D.C.'s fragrant Cherry Blossoms

June

Honfest - If you like the movie "Hairspray" you'll love this festival; a celebration of kitsch, beehive hairdos, rhinestone glasses and other Baltimore eccentricities

The Gettysburg Arts Festival - A 16-time International Festivals & Events Pinnacle Award winning festival celebrating food, music and visual arts

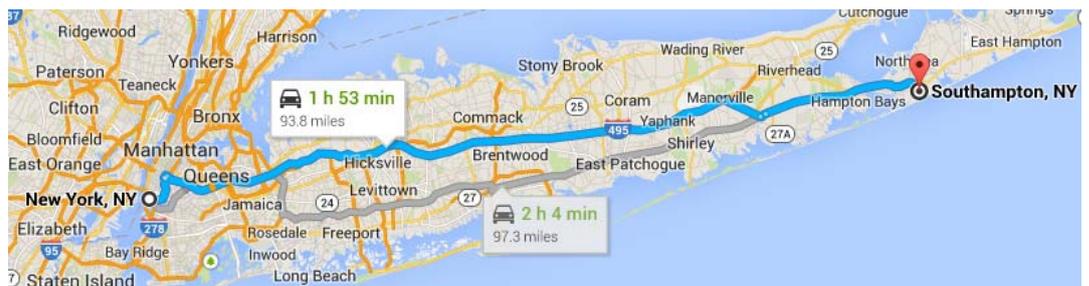
July

Fourth of July Celebrations - Festivities take place across America, complete with barbecues, fireworks and fun



The Hamptons

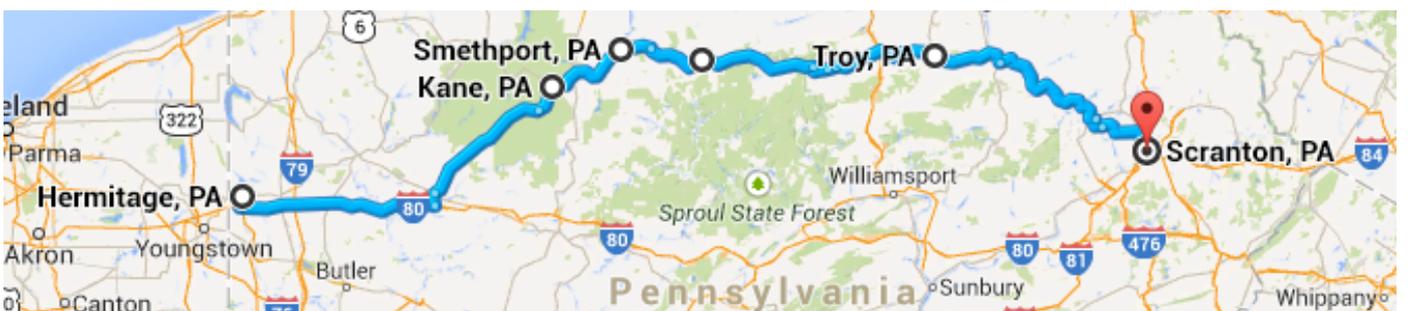
Just the word alone conjures up visions of luxury, wealth and beauty, so why not live like the rich and famous and head to the Hamptons for a

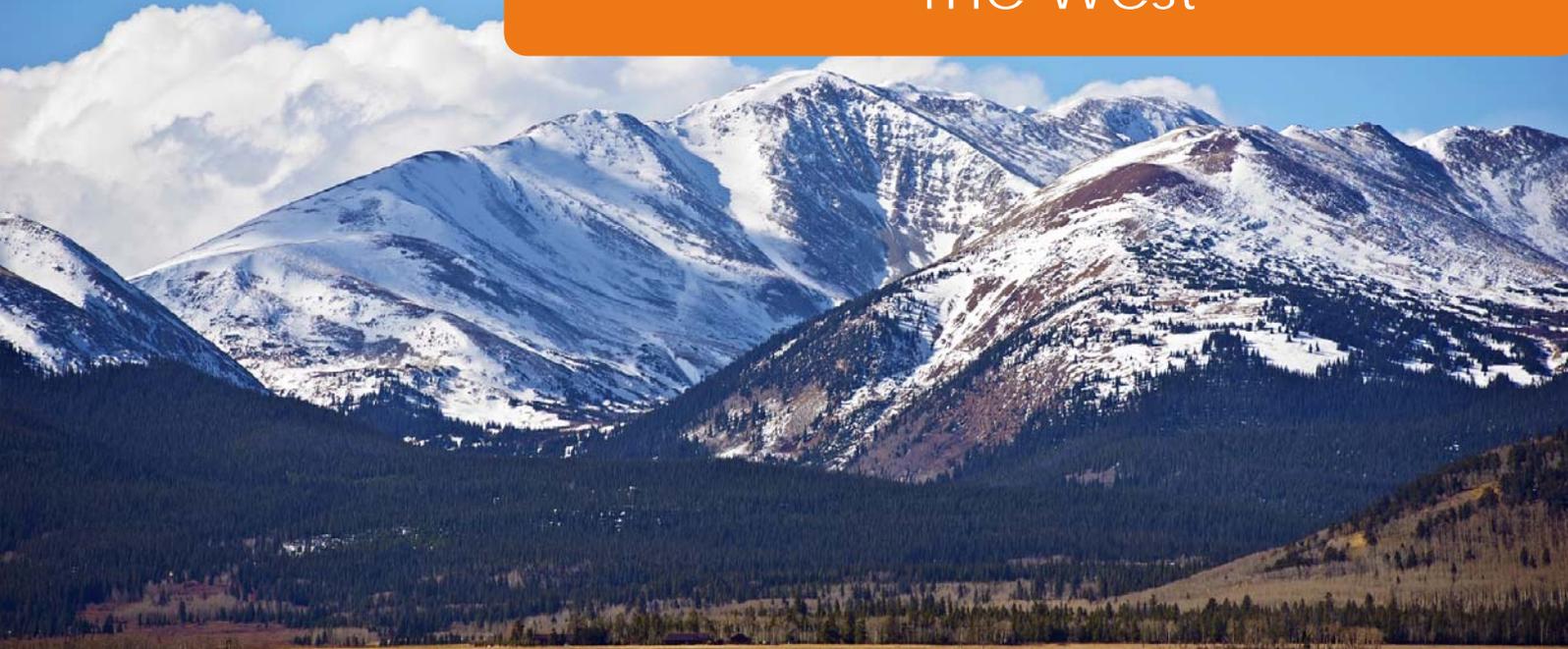


weekend? From Manhattan, take the Long Island Expressway to take Route 27 heading east, which will lead you right into the heart of the Hamptons. While this route is the fastest, be sure to allow extra travelling time during holidays and on weekends. Travel time will be anywhere from 1.5 to 4 hours depending on traffic.

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 happen all year round. Not to mention, this region has incredible scenery. If its pristine waters, rolling hillsides and mountainous terrains you're after, Route 6 is the one for you!





The Western US is the largest region, covering about a third of the country. This region includes Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington State and Wyoming. A diverse landscape ranges from Rocky Mountains to rainforests, with deserts, oceans and valleys to amuse the adventurers. If you would rather sit back and be entertained, pop over to Las Vegas and see one of the city's many spectacular shows.

Attractions

Nevada

Hunt a bargain - Shop at the extensive Las Vegas outlets

Hotels - Tour the eye-opening Las Vegas strip

Washington

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

The Olympic National Park - Located in Port Angeles, WA, this gorgeous park is situated in ancient forests

Colorado

The Royal Gorge Bridge - The world's highest suspension bridge in Canon City

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

Grand Junction - Colorado's wine country

Idaho

Tee Time - Take the Idaho Golf Trail; a golf vacation which includes accommodation

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

Events

January

Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade - Watch the parade from Fourth Street in Las Vegas

National Western Stock Show - Rodeo, stock show and horse show in Commerce City, Colorado

April

Peg Leg Smith's Liars Contest - A hysterical event during which amateur liars compete to tell the most ridiculous story about gold and mining in the Southwest, hosted in Colorado at the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

June-October

Utah Shakespearean Festival - Watch a Shakespearean play in Cedar City's Globe Theatre replica

September

Utah State Fair - 10 days of events just outside Salt Lake City

November

Death Valley '49ers - An overnight camping event devoted to the cowboys of the wild west in Death Valley National Park

Self Drive Tours: 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 Native American, 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, and Silver Cliff, considered 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 the most spectacular roads in the northern USA, 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 Billings towards Yellowstone National Park. You can detour to Shoshone and Gallatin National Forests along the way to the entrance of Yellowstone.



As you take this drive, enjoy 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 enjoy cross country or downhill skiing and snowboarding in the slopes of Red Lodge, Montana during the winter months.

The South



The South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. The region's unique cultural history and events have led to the South developing a culture rich with literature, music and cuisine unlike anywhere else in the world.

Attractions

Florida

Make a splash –Relax on one of many famed Florida beaches or take a snorkelling trip to Ginnie Springs, Peanut Island or Silver Glen Springs

Hit the parks– Visit Universal and the Disney parks in Orlando for family fun

Louisiana

Gone With the Wind - Tour the magnificent antebellum mansions of the Old South

Listen to some Jazz - A trip to New Orleans wouldn't be complete without catching a show in the birthplace of jazz

Kentucky

Visit a National Park - Mammoth Cave National Park and the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park are top picks

North and South Carolina

Outdoor Activities - South Carolina offers hundreds of scenic hiking tracks as well as great options for kayaking

Tour the towns - Don't miss Charleston, Asheville, Savannah and other fantastic cities in these states

Mississippi

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

Events

February

South Beach Food and Wine Festival - True to Miami, this event is loaded with celebrities, high-class cuisine and great entertainment

Mardi Gras - The biggest party in the USA, this event runs for several weeks leading up to Fat Tuesday, with around 70 parades that are unlike anything else in the country

April/May

New Orleans Jazz Festival - This festival always promises a great line up and delectable food over two wonderful weekends

May

Kentucky Derby - This high class event is the most famous horse race in the USA; make sure to dress in style

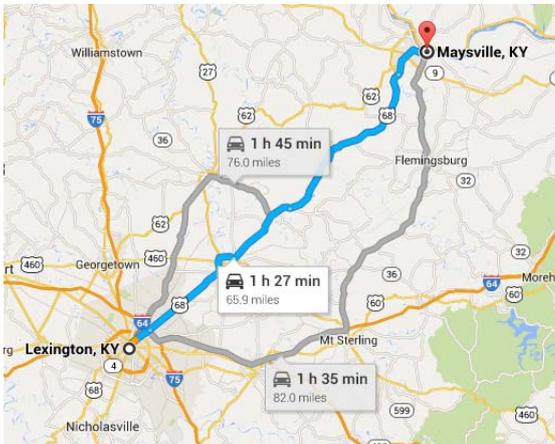
June

CMA Music Festival - Thousands of country music fans attend this blowout festival in Nashville, the heart of the genre

July

National Black Arts Festival - Atlanta hosts this festival celebrating African American music, theater, literature and film

Self Drive Tours: The South



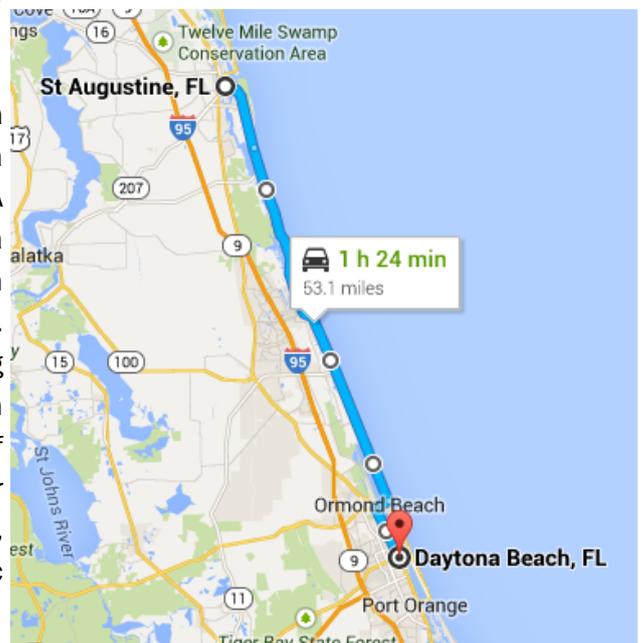
U.S. Highway 68

Highway 68 takes drivers through 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 Highway 68. Also, be observant of any signs regarding deer, as collisions are not uncommon. Native flora, such as Sugar Maple Oak and variations of Pine are also plentiful.

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

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. Stay on the A1A heading south to reach the "ultimate beach town", Daytona Beach. The drive is approximately an hour, depending on traffic, and there are numerous things to do along the way. Stop at one of the state parks, recreation areas, stunning beaches and or restaurants on this route. Upon arrival in Daytona, there is a magnitude of things to do. Visit some of Florida's best beaches or enjoy the excitement of motor sports and speedways. With accommodation facilities galore, it is easy to spend a long weekend exploring this fantastic destination!



The Midwest

The Midwest includes states in the central and inland USA and is an exciting region that will transform your holiday into the ultimate vacation. There is an endless list of things to do and see in the dynamic cities of Chicago, Minneapolis or St. Louis. To relax, head off for a weekend to Door County, Wisconsin, or one of the many charming towns, just a few hours from the cities. The options are endless in the Midwest.

Attractions

Illinois

Reach great heights - Soar to the top of Chicago's Willis (formerly Sears) Tower or the John Hancock for incredible views

Dine - Chicago is one of the biggest and best foodie towns in the U.S. so eat your heart out! Don't miss the city's signature pizza and hot dogs

Kansas

Relax in the park - Head to Jackson Park for views of the Missouri Valley in Atchison, the most haunted city in Kansas

Michigan

Mackinac Island - Visit in the summer and taste the famous fudge, but note that no cars are allowed on the island

Minnesota

Mall of America - Don't miss the largest mall in the USA, complete with an aquarium, theme parks and more

North Dakota

Chief's Looking Village - A Native American village near Bismarck

Ohio

Rock N' Roll - Check out Cleveland's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

South Dakota

Mount Rushmore - An unmissable American icon

Wisconsin

Sip - Wisconsin has an abundance of excellent microbrews; taste the best of the local beers in Milwaukee and Madison

Events

February

Be sweet - Celebrate Valentine's Day on Ohio's Chocolate is for Lovers Wine Trail

May

Indy 500 - Car racing fans cannot miss the famous Indy 500 in Indianapolis

July

Traverse City Cherry Festival - A week-long festival chock full of events, entertainment and cherry treats

August

Lollapalooza - A major, three-day music festival held in Chicago's Grant Park

Irish Festival - Witness (or participate in) a red hair and freckles contest and try a jig at this annual event in Milwaukee

September

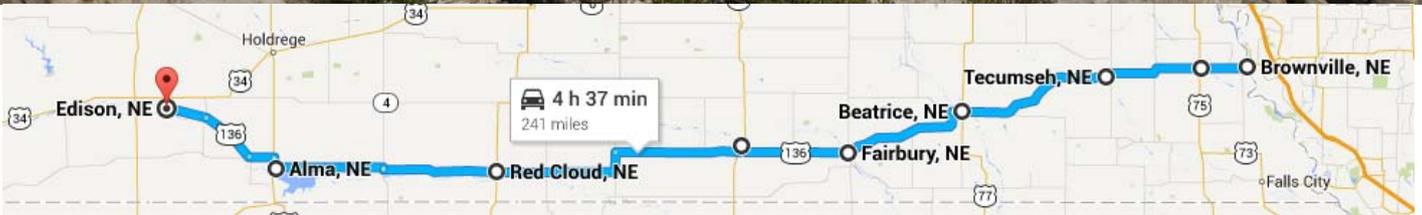
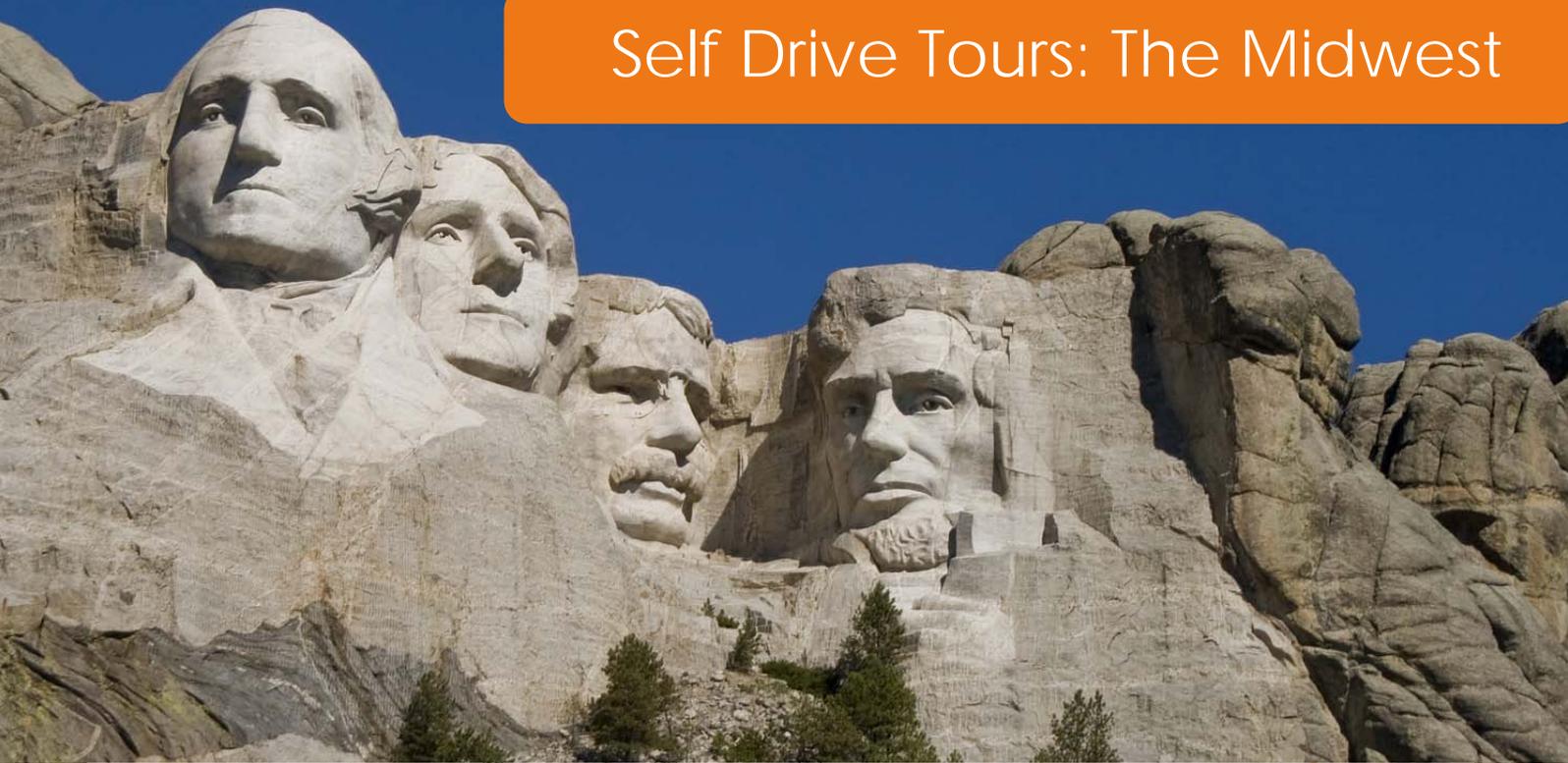
Big Muddy Blues Festival - A riverfront blues fest in St. Louis

October

American Royal World Series of Barbecue - Eat your heart out at this fantastic Kansas City event

December

Holidazzle - Minneapolis teems with holiday cheer; including parades, lights and more



Heritage Highway, Nebraska

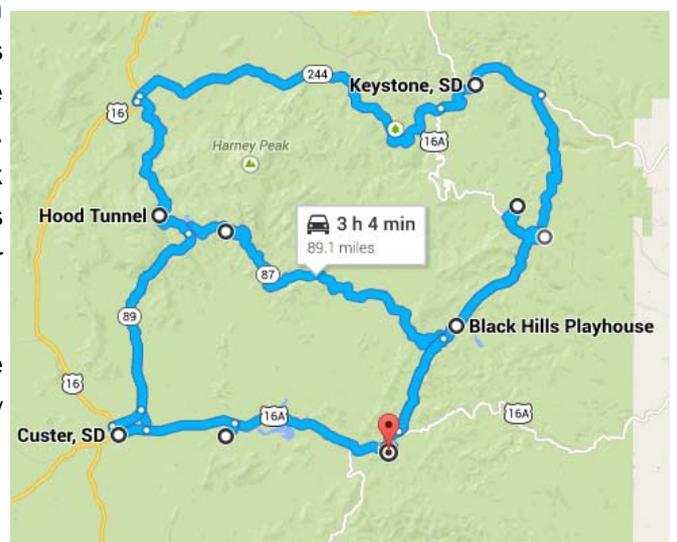
Indicative of the name Heritage Highway, Highway 136 is a reverie for history buffs. Along this 238 mile/383 km stretch, drivers can anticipate heritage, culture, arts and various fairs and festivals throughout the year. Visit the Cather Historical Museum, view the first American Homestead or tour restored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

Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway, South Dakota

The Peter Norbeck Byway is a National Scenic Byway in the Black Hills National Forest and includes The Needles Highway (SD 87), Iron Mountain Road (US 16A), Horse Thief Lake Road (SD 244) and Sylvan Lake Road (SD 89). The 115 km drive ventures through spiralling bridges, six rock tunnels and mountainous terrains. The drive was named after Peter Norbeck who served as a former South Dakota governor and senator.

Allow approximately four hours for this drive and be sure to check out Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Hamey Park and Sylvan Lake.



The Southwest



Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas are the main states of the American Southwest. This region offers tourists an expanse 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

Heard Museum - A fantastic display of Native American art

Climb Piestewa Peak - Part of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, Piestewa Peak attracts 4,000-10,000 hikers per week and is well worth the 2,608 foot climb

Fore! - Take advantage of Arizona's many first-class golf courses

New Mexico

The Sandia Peak Tramway - Located near Albuquerque, the world's longest tramway boasts 11,000 square mile panoramic views across New Mexico

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

Santa Fe - Get in touch with nature in the surrounding areas or get a taste of history and culture in the phenomenal city of Santa Fe

Oklahoma

Myriad Botanical Gardens - 17-acre botanical garden and interactive urban park in Oklahoma City

Go gallery hopping - Browse the art galleries of Tulsa's Brady Arts District

Texas

Visit the Alamo - Step back in time as you tour the grounds of this famous Texan battle

Sing along - Catch a show on Austin's Sixth Street, always teeming with talented local musicians

¡Buen provecho! - Indulge in Tex-Mex cuisine statewide

Events

January

Winter Wine Festival - Venture to the Taos Ski Valley in New Mexico for wine and food prepared by local chefs

May

Cinco de Mayo - A major Mexican festival celebrated across the US, especially in NM and TX

April

Eeyore's Birthday Party - A full blown birthday party for this beloved Winnie-the-Pooh character; dress up for this quirky Austin, TX event

June

Juneteenth - Revel in the sounds of gospel, jazz and blues music during this celebration of African American culture in Houston

July

Annual Taste of Dallas - Savour the best of Dallas at this three day event hosted at Fair Park

August

Santa Fe Indian Market - View Native American art and experience unique cultural activities

October

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

December

Dickens on the Strand - The city of Galveston, TX is transformed into Victorian London (with mild



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 townships have preserved the heritage of historical Route 66.

After exploring the windy city of Chicago and Lake Michigan, head through the farmland of Illinois and continue to St. Louis, Missouri. From the Mississippi River, Route 66 will take you through Oklahoma City, where migrant convoys began their journeys in the 1930s. Stop off at Oklahoma Museum which tells the story of this historical journey. Travel through regions inhabited by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians 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 in the sand! When you reach New Mexico, you'll drive through the hunting lands of the Comanche Indians and onto Albuquerque.

At Albuquerque, take a ride on the aerial tramway to the top of the Sandian Mountains. If you're visiting in October, make sure to attend the city's Hot Air Balloon Festival. Next, drive through Santa Fe, and take the famous Tortoise Trail through small artist-mountain communities. Built in 1610, visit the oldest US government building, Palace of the Governors.

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 in Flagstaff, Arizona to try your hand star-gazing at the Lowell Observatory.

Journey onto Las Vegas, otherwise known as Sin City - 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, Las Vegas's famed nightlife.

From Las Vegas, head west through the Mojave Desert, stopping at the ghost town of Calico. Finally, Route 66 concludes at Santa Monica, near Los Angeles - The City of Angels. There are many destinations within Southern California that are easy to drive to and endless entertainment options in L.A. itself.





Alaska is the largest state in the USA and is located in the west of Canada. It's rich with unique cultural experiences and adventure for thrill seeking travellers. For an unforgettable experience, embark on a driving tour through Alaska and take in the breathtaking scenery of this predominately rural state. From the picturesque glaciers and mountainous terrains, no two days in Alaska will ever be the same.

Attractions

Light show - The Aurora Borealis lights up the Alaskan night sky in majestic shades of green, purple and red.

Glacier viewing - There are many spectacular glaciers to visit across Alaska which are 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'll likely spot eagle or bear in Alaska, but also keep an eye out for moose or caribou in this region

Go on a hiking expedition - Alaska draw shikers of all skill levels, so take your pick and enjoy the state's many trails and hiking options

Try something new - Taste an array of unusual local cuisines 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 slopes, go for a skate, take a horse-drawn sleigh ride, or even drive your own team of sled dogs

Take a cruise - Day cruises are available across several areas of Alaska, providing the perfect opportunity to view whales, seals, sea lions, sea otters, mountain goats and more of Alaska's extensive wildlife population

Events

May

Copper Riaer Delta Shorebird Festival - Witness the largest bird migration in the USA when five million shorebirds flock to the shores of Cordova

Kodiak Crab Festival - Join the locals of Kodiak as they celebrate the end of crabbing season for a week long event including parades, races, fishing contests and, of course, plenty of deliciously fresh king crab.

July

World Eskimo-Indian Olympics - A four day event in Fairbanks during which Alaska's indigenous people compete in a variety of athletic competitions

August

Gold Rush Days - Feast on free fish before you dance your heart out and enjoy the plentiful festivities during this five day event held each August in Valdez

September

Seward Music and Arts Festival - A wide range of musicians and artists join in Seward for this family friendly festival

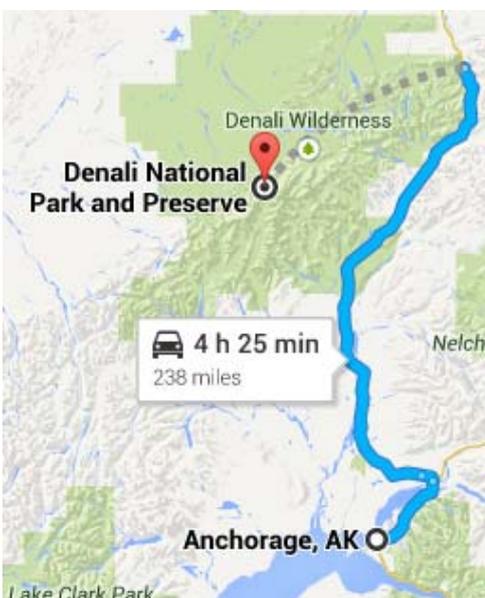
Self Drive Tours: Alaska



The Alaska Highway

The famous Alaska Highway begins in Dawson Creek, located in north eastern British Columbia, connecting Canada's Yukon Territory to Alaska. The main destination for motorists on the Alaska Highway is Fairbanks, situated approximately 2,400 km from Dawson Creek. Many tourists and locals alike choose to drive the route in order to witness its striking scenery. There are many choices for accommodation and dining along the Alaska Highway.

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 narrow and curved. Be mindful of red flags which are stationed to signal gravel gaps. This highway should be attempted with care and only during good weather conditions.



Anchorage to Denali National Park

The drive to Denali National Park from Anchorage is approximately 5 hours without breaks, but the astounding scenery along the way is well worth the trip. From Anchorage, follow the Glenn Highway northbound and 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 arrive, the options are endless. More adventurous travellers may consider river rafting or embarking on a jeep safari trip.

The state of Hawaii is comprised of eight magnificent islands located in the central Pacific Ocean, southwest of continental United States. Hawaii has it all: splendid island drives, unmatched serenity and hospitable locals. Learn how to snorkel in this state's crystal clear waters and visit volcanoes or waterfalls by day, and taste local Hawaiian cuisine, relax at a spa resort or enjoy a traditional Luau performance in the evening.

Attractions

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

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

Experience History - On a guided tour of Pearl Harbour

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

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 as you behold the sights of Kauai from above

Go star gazing - Check out the 'Imiloa Astronomy Centre of Hawai'i, a museum and planetarium that connects modern astronomy with ancient Polynesian ocean voyaging

Whalers Village Museum - Visit this fascinating museum depicting life at sea during the mid to late 1800s

Events

March

Honolulu Festival - This free festival hosts Asian and Pacific arts and cultural performances at Waikiki Beach and Waikiki Shopping Plaza

April

East Maui Taro Festival - Everything Hawaiian comes together at this fantastic cultural extravaganza including a taro pancake breakfast, poi making, hula dancing and ukulele music

Banyan Tree Birthday Party - This two day event celebrates the famed Banyan Tree in Lahaina

May

Holy Ghost Feast - This event recognises the Portuguese heritage present in Kula and includes games, crafts and markets

June

King Kamehameha Celebration - This is a public holiday in Hawaii, during which a parade of horseback riders in traditional attire, marching bands and floral floats fill the streets

September

Aloha Festivals - This is Hawaii's premier state-wide cultural festival known especially for its royal court ceremonies in Waikiki

November

E Ho'oulu Aloha - A fantastic old style Hawaiian event hosted at the Bailey House Museum known for its incredibly friendly local crowd

Self Drive Tours: Hawaii



Hana Highway - Maui

The Hana Highway, also known as the Road to Hanah, is a 109km stretch along Hawaiian State Highways 36 and 360 in Maui. The road is winding and narrow, passing over 59 bridges. Though it should be taken slowly, this road trip is visually rewarding and travelers who take this route often feel very in touch with the location and their surroundings. Take caution with this route and limit driving to daytime hours. Allow time to stop and take photos as you're guaranteed to be amazed by this surreal, lush landscape. Some travellers take a detour to Makawao, a fascinating little town just off the route, for special sweets from the T. Komoda Store & Bakery (closed on Sundays and Wednesdays). Other popular stops along the way include Twin Falls, Painted Bark Eucalyptus Tree, and the Seven Sacred Pools, a series of waterfalls and pools located inside the Haleakala National Park.



Hamakua Coast Drive

When on Hawaii's Big Island, drive along the famous Hamakua Coast from Honokaa to Hilo. This 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 could 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 and 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 while exercising the same safety precautions you employ at home.

The USA is an enormous country with varied geography that can be affected by natural disasters. Hurricanes sometimes occur from June through to November, tornadoes occur mostly around in the centre of the country, earthquakes occur in California and Alaska, and the extreme heat of midsummer in California and Colorado have 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.

Currency & Currency Exchange

US Dollar (USD \$) = 100 cents (¢) Notes are in denominations of \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, \$5 and \$1. Coins are in denominations of \$1 and \$0.50 (though rarely used), 25 (quarter), 10 (dime), 5 (nickel) and 1 (penny) cents.

Currency exchange is available in airports, major banks and bureaux de change. Generally banks are open on Mon-Fri 0830-1700 and Saturday from 0900-1200.

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.

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 and salons/spas: 20% of the bill
- 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 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
- Tour Guides: 15-20% depending on knowledge and friendliness

Useful Information

Mileage Chart Between Major USA Cities

Miles Kilometres	Atlanta	Chicago	Denver	Houston	Kansas City	Los Angeles	Minneapolis	Miami	New York	San Fran	Seattle
Atlanta		715	1405	800	805	2185	1135	665	865	2495	2785
Chicago	1150		1000	1085	525	2020	410	1380	795	2135	2070
Denver	2260	1615		1120	600	1025	915	2065	1780	1270	1335
Houston	1285	1750	1805		795	1550	1230	1190	1635	1930	2450
Kansas	1295	850	965	1280		1625	440	1470	1195	1865	1900
Los Angeles	3515	3250	1650	2495	2610		1935	2740	2800	385	1140
Minneapolis	1825	665	1470	1980	680	3110		1795	1200	2010	2015
Miami	1070	2220	3320	1915	2365	4405	2885		1280	3115	3365
New York	1390	1275	2865	2630	1925	4505	1935	2060		3055	2860
San Francisco	4015	3435	2040	3105	3000	615	3240	5015	4915		810
Seattle	4485	3330	2140	3940	3060	1835	2675	5415	4600	1305	

Time Zones

The USA is divided into 6 time zones:

Eastern Standard Time: GMT - 5 (GMT - 4 from second Sunday in March to first Sunday in November)

Central Standard Time: GMT - 6 (GMT - 5 from second Sunday in March to first Sunday in November)

Mountain Standard Time: GMT - 7 (GMT - 6 from second Sunday in March to first Sunday in November, Arizona does not observe DST)

Pacific Standard Time: GMT - 8 (GMT - 7 from second Sunday in March to first Sunday in November)

Alaska: GMT - 9 (GMT - 8 from second Sunday in March to first Sunday in November)

Hawaii: GMT - 10

Where To Get Help

Australian Embassy
1601 Massachusetts Avenue
NW Washington DC 20036
PH: 202 797 3000



Drive the World with Auto Europe!

Auto Europe are Australia's leaders in self drive holidays. Established over 60 years ago, we offer more than 60 self drive suppliers at over 10,000 global locations. We boast an extensive choice of worldwide car hire, luxury and budget motorhome rentals and Peugeot leasing in Europe. Our expertise brings you highly competitive prices alongside outstanding customer service and efficiency.

Plan your next self drive adventure with Auto Europe. Enjoy the freedom of having your own rental car and discover the world at your own pace.

Booking is easy!

Once you have planned your self drive itinerary and are ready to book, simply visit www.autoeurope.com.au
Alternatively, call our dedicated reservations team on 1300 656 601.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Auto Europe Australia hopes that you find the information in this guide helpful for your self drive holiday in the USA. This touring information has been created to be used as a guide only.

© Auto Europe - all rights reserved.

Updated: July 2014