

# Classic American Road Trips

According to Road Trip USA, here are some US trips of interest to many who want to see the USA and its geographically diverse areas.

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1. **Route 66** - See my blog post ([link here](#)) for more information. Route 66 marks the "Great Western Migration" of many people. After World War II, the road carried many travelers on various sections between Chicago and LA. The Driveby Tourist drove the entire length in April 2018. It's a "lifetime highlight"!

2. **Great River Road** - My featured post ([link here](#)) is about the Great River Road. The "road" runs on both sides of the Mississippi and contains a section of many federal, state, and local roads. The northern end begins at Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota, and the southern terminus goes down to Venice, Louisiana, about 75 miles south of New Orleans.

3. **Pacific Coast Highway** - Runs near the Pacific from Olympia, WA to San Diego, US 101 and CA 1. I've traveled the section from LA to San Francisco. CA 1 makes up the PCH from Orange County north to a terminus where it meets US 101 in Mendocino County north of San Francisco.

While the PCH has different definitions, some people include the south sections to the Mexican border and the north sections to Canada. However you choose to define it, the PCH makes a beautiful drive. (I'd like to take it, including the entire route from Canada to Mexico.)

4. **Appalachian Trail** - From New England into the heart of Dixieland. Endless beauty. However, it's a hiking trail, but many roads parallel the trail. I've been on the part of the road known as the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina.

The Blue Ridge Parkway connects Great Smokey Mountains National Park to Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and North Carolina. While it doesn't have the length of the other trips in this document (469 miles), the majestic scenery likely deserves its own place on this list.

5. **The Loneliest Road** - US-50 from Maryland to San Francisco. The road gets its name from the western part through Kansas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California. Long stretches of "No Services."

A section in western Utah into eastern California is called a dangerous highway because of summer heat and the lack of services. In at least one area, it's over 100 miles between services.

6. **The Great Northern** - US-2 starts near Acadia National Park in Maine, then across the northern US around northern Lake Michigan, to near [Voyageurs National Park](#) in Minnesota, Glacier Park in Montana, and ends in Everett, Washington. I've also been on this road in Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana.

This road also includes a wide variety of diverse geography. An oddity about the highway number: When the US developed the numbering scheme, all highways running mostly coast to coast were to end in "0". By that rule, US-2 should really be US-0!

7. **The Oregon Trail** - US-20 follows the route of early pioneers from Cape Cod to the Oregon coast. In the eastern US, the highway roughly parallels I-90. Both US 20 and I-90 are the longest highways in their category.

Initially, US 20 was to end at Yellowstone National Park and later extended into Oregon. Hence, the name Oregon Trail also paralleled the old Oregon trail of settlers moving to frontier Oregon.

8. **The Lincoln Highway** - Contrary to popular folklore, the Lincoln Highway, not Route 66, was the first US highway created by the forerunner of the US Highway System. The highway plan took a route from Times Square in New York to Lincoln Square in San Francisco. The highway's scenic parts don't really start until central Wyoming! Although, there are scenic areas in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Initially conceived in 1912 and dedicated in 1913, the highway became part of the US Numbered Highway System in 1926. The route became US-30 from the east coast to Wyoming. Then it became US-50 and then US-40 in California. Today, it's generally superseded by I-80. Some parts of the highway still exist while I-80 has replaced others. By the way, [the Lincoln Highway crosses Route 66 in Illinois \(link to Route 66 story\)](#).

9. **The Road to Nowhere** - US-83 starts at the Canadian border in North Dakota and runs nearly straight south to Mexico (in Texas) without ever passing near a conventional tourist destination. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) significantly increased truck traffic on this highway. From the Canadian border to central Texas, Bismarck, ND, is the largest city on the road.

10. **Atlantic Coast** – Typically named US-1. It starts in Fort Kent, ME, and ends in Key West, FL, staying near the Atlantic ocean for much of its length. For significant traffic, I-95 now bears much of the traffic formerly on US-1. While the remaining available parts make a beautiful drive, the dense population on the east coast makes for slow going.

11. **Southern Pacific** - US-80 and its modern-day equivalents. There are more varied landscapes and cultural diversity than any other cross-country road. This highway runs north of I-10 and occasionally intersects with I-20. Initially, US 80 ran to San Diego, but since 1991, it truncates in Dallas, TX.

If you want to go to California from Dallas, head toward Route 66 by heading north into Oklahoma or northwest into the Texas Panhandle. Or just make your own route and follow the path of US 80. Much of it became state highways.

12. **Border to Border** – US 93 starts north of the Canadian border at Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada, to the Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona. (Highway 93 is part of the Canadian highway system and retains number 93!) Part of the highway is the Extraterrestrial Highway near Area 51 in Nevada. This highway claims to cross a more diverse geography than any other highway. And it runs through Las Vegas as well!

It's unlikely you would take several of these road trips, but they could be part of a road trip doing other things as well. **If you want to know more about any of them, shoot me an email, and I'll provide information if I can include it as a blog post.** And, if you want a sample agenda for your trip, you may [subscribe to my premium services](#), and I'll provide a suggested trip for you.

**Enjoy your road-tripping!** And if you have other Classic American Road Trips to include on this list, let me know!

[The Driveby Tourist](#)