

# On the Road



## SARA BENSON

### Coordinating Author

Having visited the Sierra Nevada before in every season except winter, I hadn't expected to see such thundering waterfalls pouring down into Yosemite Valley (p1006) in March, along with a winter wonderland of snow, perfect for skiing. Even better, trails with almost no people on them! That rarely happens here.



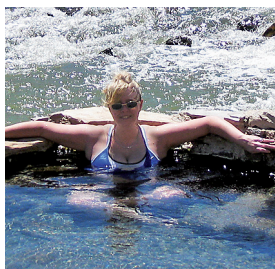
**AMY C BALFOUR** I'm standing on the patio of the View Hotel at Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park (p858), soaking in the awesomeness of the landscape. Behind me there's a fun 17-mile driving loop around the colossal formations.



## NED FRIARY & GLENDA

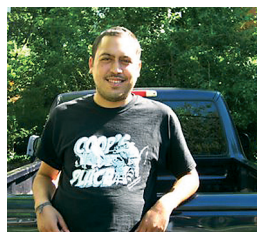
**BENDURE** Walking into Burlington's Magic Hat Brewery (p293) reminds us of an amusement-park fun house, but they do take their beer seriously here. After all, Vermont has more microbreweries per capita than any other state in the USA. Don't think we'll manage to get to them all...

**BECCA BLOND** I'm on the road for Lonely Planet a lot, which doesn't make my oversized bulldog Duke happy. So when I get to write about my Colorado backyard, he follows me everywhere – including onto this bench. My husband snapped this picture on a cloudless April morning at our Boulder home as I soaked up the rays and wrote up my notes.



**LISA DUNFORD** A family was sticking their feet in the hot-spring 'hot tub' in an old foundation ruin when we arrived on a surprisingly cool May morning (77°F) in Big Bend (p746). After they'd gone, we had a perfect moment of steaming water, refreshing breeze and the rushing sound of the Rio Grande below.

**MICHAEL GROSBERG** Even on a soggy day, work calls. I braved the approaching storm to take a canoe out on the dark waters of Lake Mohonk (p196). You can't see them but I also had to brave three other canoes with water-fighting teenagers on board.



**ADAM KARLIN** I figured I'd combine the disparate elements of my research for this picture: me in a Coop's T-shirt from New Orleans (p472), sitting on my buddy's pickup truck in Washington, DC (p318). I love both cities, and I'm thrilled I got to cover each of them for this book.

**MARIELLA KRAUSE** I happened to be in Key West during the three weeks the USS *Vandenberg* (p528) was docked there, right before it was sunk 7 miles off the coast to create an artificial reef. It was humongous! My new goal? Learn to scuba dive so I can go back and see it underwater.



**JOSH KRIST** This self-portrait is at the edge of the Grand Canyon (p851). One of the highlights of my life was watching a black cloud full of lightning sparking over the middle of the canyon, slowly approaching as I stood on the South Rim. I could smell the scent of imminent rain and felt a charge in the air.



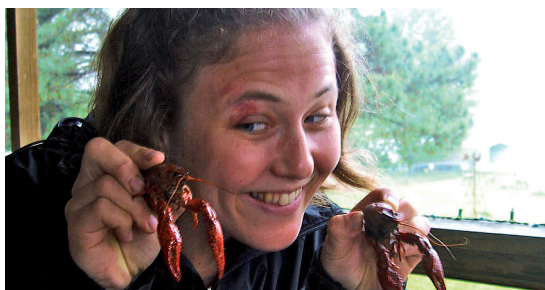
**EMILY MATCHAR** Here's Emily at Lake Mattamuskeet, in eastern North Carolina, not too far from the Outer Banks (p391). Eighteen inches deep! And no, she still can't spell 'Mattamuskeet.'





**CÉSAR SORIANO** I've been picking Maryland blue crabs (p351) as long as I can remember. It's messy, time-consuming, dangerous work, but it's all worth it once you taste that delicate, sweet, buttery flesh, seasoned with lots of Old Bay spice and accompanied by corn on the cob and cold beer. It tastes like — home.

**BRENDAN SAINSBURY** I thought I'd seen it all but I hadn't. Even in a region as jaw-droppingly spectacular as the Pacific Northwest, Crater Lake (p1064) appears like a jolting epiphany, defying every cliché you've ever heard about it.



**ELLE THALHEIMER** One rainy afternoon in Hot Springs (p495), AR, I decided it was time to dig into some crawfish boil. Our waiter obligingly taught us how to traditionally gut the little guys and heartily suck their delicious juices from every nook and crack. This is not a first-date activity.



**KARLA ZIMMERMAN** Me and Abe share a moment at the Henry Ford Museum (p617) in Dearborn, MI. Lincoln is the Midwest's main man, and shrines pop up throughout the Midwest. The Ford contains the chair he was sitting in when assassinated. Oddly, that's not the image they use for marketing in the gift shop.

**RYAN VER BERKMOES** The joy of driving the myriad two-laners across the Great Plains is that you never know what surprise you'll find. Here on a lonely stretch of US 30 somewhere east of Kearney (p688) in Nebraska I found my future selling used cars.





# Destination USA

Regis St. Louis

The playwright Arthur Miller once said that the essence of America was its promise. For newly arrived immigrants and jet-lagged travelers alike, that promise of America can take on near mythic proportions. America is a land of dazzling cities, towering coast redwoods, alpine lakes, rolling vineyards, chiseled peaks, barren deserts and a dramatic coastline of unrivaled beauty. And that's just one state (California).

In the other 49 lie an astounding collection of natural and cultural wonders, from the wildly multihued tapestry of urban streets to the mountains, plains and forests that cover vast swaths of the continent. America is the birthplace of LA, Las Vegas, Chicago, Miami, Boston and New York City – each a brimming metropolis whose name alone conjures a million different notions of culture, cuisine and entertainment.

Look more closely, and the American quilt unfurls in all its surprising variety: the eclectic music scene of Austin, the easygoing charms of antebellum Savannah, the ecoconsciousness of free-spirited Portland, the magnificent waterfront of San Francisco, and the captivating old quarters of New Orleans, still rising up from its waterlogged ashes.

This is a country of road trips and great open skies, where four million miles of highways lead past red-rock deserts, below towering mountain peaks, and across fertile wheat fields that roll off toward the horizon. The sun-bleached hillsides of the Great Plains, the lush forests of the Pacific Northwest and the scenic country lanes of New England are a few fine starting points for the great American road trip.

The world's third-largest nation has made substantial contributions to the arts. Georgia O'Keeffe's wild landscapes, Robert Rauschenberg's surreal collages, Alexander Calder's elegant mobiles and Jackson Pollock's drip paintings have entered the vernacular of modern 20th-century art. Cities such as Chicago and New York have become veritable drawing boards for the great architects of the modern era. Musically speaking, America has few peers on the world stage. From the big-band jazz that was born in New Orleans, to the Memphis blues, Detroit's Motown sound, plus funk, hip-hop, country, and rock and roll – America has invented sounds that are integral to contemporary music.

Cuisine is another way of illuminating the American experience. On one evening in the US, thick barbecue ribs and sizzling meats arrive fresh off the grill at a Tennessee roadhouse; over 2000 miles away, talented chefs blend organic, fresh-from-the-garden produce with Asian accents at award-winning West Coast restaurants. A smattering of locals get their fix of bagels and lox at a century-old deli in Manhattan's Upper West Side, while several states away, plump pancakes and fried eggs disappear in a hurry under the clatter of cutlery at a 1950s-style diner. Steaming plates of fresh lobster served off a Maine pier, oysters and champagne in a fashion-forward wine bar in California, beer and pizza at a Midwestern pub – these are just a few ways to dine à la Americana.

But America isn't just about its geography, its cities or even its art and cuisine. It's also about people. The 'teeming nation of nations' (as Walt Whitman described it), was built on immigration and still attracts over one million new immigrants each year. Representatives from nearly every country can be found inside the boundaries of the USA, adding an astounding mix of ethnicities, religions and languages to the diverse American character. In one county alone (New York City's borough of Queens), almost half of the residents are

## FAST FACTS

Population: 306 million

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): \$14.1 trillion

Barrels of oil consumed daily: 21 million

Total hybrid cars sold in 2008: 308,000

TV channels in an average US home: 118.6

States in which gay marriage is legal: 6

Biggest city by population: New York City, NY (8.3 million people; 469 sq mi)

Biggest city by area: Juneau, AK (31,000 people; 3248 sq mi)

Hottest temperature ever recorded: 134°F (in Death Valley, CA)

Coldest temperature ever recorded: -80°F (in Alaska)



foreign born and speak some 138 languages. Although the topic of immigration remains a heated one (historically, the subject has been a source of contention since the country's inception), few Americans contest the enormous contributions made by fresh-faced immigrants over the centuries.

In addition to the wide mix of racial and ethnic groups, America is a mishmash of factory workers and farmers, born-again Christians and Hatha yoga practitioners, literary-minded college students, tradition-conscious Native Americans, beer-swilling baseball lovers and back-to-nature commune dwellers. This is a country where regional stereotypes help Americans get a handle on their own elusive country, whether the people in question are gracious Southern belles, street-smart New Yorkers, humble Midwesterners, SoCal surfers or straight-talking Texans.

The collective identity, however, goes only so far in defining Americans. This is, after all, a country that celebrates – or rather mythologizes – the feats of ‘rugged individualism’, a notion well supported by the enormous ranks of the great and dastardly alike that have left their mark on America. This is the land of Eleanor Roosevelt, John Muir, Diane Arbus, Jack Kerouac, Frank Lloyd Wright, Elvis Presley and Amelia Earhart. It is also the birthplace of Billy the Kid, Al Capone, Bonnie and Clyde and hundreds of other real and fictional characters who contribute to that portrait of the American hero or outlaw heading off into the sunset.

Today's stars shine no less brightly and each help redefine in some small way what it means to be American. From the inspiring social activism of singer-songwriter Willie Nelson and feminist Gloria Steinem to revolutionary chef Alice Waters; Al Gore's laudatory dedication to fighting climate change and the powerful lyricism of Nobel Prize-winner Toni Morrison; or the record-breaking run by Olympic-swimmer Michael Phelps: each have followed a dream that led them to undoubtedly surprising places.

America is still a place where big dreamers can triumph over adversity. Although 40 years have passed since Martin Luther King was assassinated, his message of hope lives on. No one in recent history has demonstrated that more clearly than Barack Obama, America's first African American president.

‘If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time; who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.’ So began Barack Obama's election-night victory speech in November 2008, following one of the most surprising presidential victories in history.

The next day, newspapers across the country sold out quickly, despite enormously increased press runs, as Americans hurried out to snatch up a piece of history, for which they themselves were responsible. Indeed, it was a historic moment for America. This once bitterly divided nation – with a dark legacy of slavery – looked past its differences and elected an African American man to the highest office in the land. And voters did so by an overwhelming margin.

As Obama went on to say in his victory speech, ‘It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America.’ Change – that magic word so banded about by both parties in the run-up to the election – played a pivotal role in Obama's success. Yet, despite the unprecedented moment in US history, change is no stranger to the American scene. Even America's creation was a daring paradigm shift in a world of monarchies and autocracies. A country founded as a refuge for religious tolerance by early colonists later became the world's first – and perhaps its most brilliantly envisaged – democratic republic. Over the centuries, visionary statesman such as Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt have helped move the

**‘Today's stars...help redefine in some small way what it means to be American’**

country in bold new directions, but it was courageous citizens, fighting (and sometimes sacrificing their lives) in the battle against injustice, who've brought about some of America's most profound changes – in abolishing slavery, earning equal rights for women, protecting the environment and enshrining fair wages and working conditions for laborers.

Citizens from all walks of life have participated in 'the great American experiment', a concept that rewards bold ideas and hard work, no matter one's place in society. The results of nurturing this entrepreneurial spirit have been far-reaching. From the historic flight by the Wright Brothers to the Apollo moon landing, Americans have achieved ambitious goals. Technological revolutions beginning with Thomas Edison's light bulb and Henry Ford's automobile continue today in the pioneering work by Bill Gates, Steve Jobs and Larry Page. Microsoft, Apple and Google have changed the way people work, learn and interact across the industrialized world. American advances in science, medicine and countless other fields have brought meaningful changes to many lives.

The spirit of innovation remains alive and well, but on other fronts, Americans seem less optimistic. As this book went to press, the US was just starting to show signs of recovery from a deep recession stemming in part from the mortgage meltdown that erupted late in the Bush presidency. In 2008, over three million Americans lost their homes to foreclosure as unemployment soared – with some 15 million out of work in late 2009 (the highest figure since WWII).

Health care is another dispiriting topic for many Americans. Despite playing a leading role in medical technology, the USA remains the world's only wealthy industrialized country that does not provide universal health care for its citizens. More than 46 million Americans currently live without health insurance, and analysts predict that the economic downturn and rising unemployment will add another two million to their ranks.

Addressing these grievous issues – plus the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan – remain the biggest challenges of the day. Americans, however, aren't a nation easily put down. As John F Kennedy once said in an inaugural address, 'The American, by nature, is optimistic. He is experimental, an inventor and a builder who builds best when called upon to build greatly.'

**'Citizens from all walks of life have participated in 'the great American experiment'**

# Getting Started

Got your map? Ready to plot out your road trip? Just remember: the USA covers a continent and more. Texas alone is twice the size of Germany, so you may need to adjust your sense of scale. It's easy to get overambitious, blow your budget and spend more time getting to sights than actually seeing them. Our best advice? Plan what you want to see in the time that you think you will have, then take out half the stops.

Reservations are essential during peak travel seasons, especially during the summer months and around major holidays (p1141). But don't let a lack of advance planning stop you from traveling any time, because spontaneity and the adventure of the open road are what America is really all about.

You'll need to consider your transportation options carefully, balancing cost, time and flexibility – as well as your carbon footprint. The 'best' way to get around can vary by region and route. For more ecotravel advice, see p26.

## WHEN TO GO

America's size plays to the traveler's advantage when it comes to weather: it's always perfect somewhere in the USA and just shy of hell somewhere else. In other words, either your destination or your trip's timing may need tweaking depending on the season. For specific regional info, see each chapter's Land & Climate section. For current weather forecasts, check the **Weather Channel** ([www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)).

The busiest travel season is summer, which typically begins on Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) and ends on Labor Day (the first Monday in September). Americans take their vacations mainly in summer because schools are closed, not because the weather's uniformly ideal. But yes, you should hit the beaches in August, when Manhattan is a shimmering sweat bath and the deserts are frying pans.

The seasons don't arrive uniformly either. Spring (typically March to May) and fall (usually September to November) are often the best travel times, but 'spring' in parts of the Rockies and Sierras may not come till June. By then it's only a sweet memory in Austin, while in Seattle, spring often means rain, rain, rain.

And winter? It's expensive during the high season at ski resorts and in parts of the southern US (RV-driving retirees, aka 'snowbirds,' head down to Florida, Texas and other sunny climes by Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November). But planned well, winter can mean you have the riches of some American landscapes virtually all to yourself.

Whether you're planning to join the crowds or avoid them, holidays (p1141) and festivals (p1140) are factors to think about.

## COSTS & MONEY

An economical US trip is possible, but it is easy to spend much more than you bargained for, no matter what your travel style. Mode of transportation is a big factor, as is destination: cities don't chip away at budgets, they jackhammer them into pieces.

Only the creatively thrifty backpacker or road-tripper will spend less than \$100 a day. A comfortable midrange budget ranges from \$150 to \$250 a day; this usually gets you a car, gas, two meals, a decent hotel and a museum admission or two. Spending over \$300 a day isn't hard: just

See Climate Charts (p1137) for more information.



**DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...**

- Checking current US visa (p1148) and passport (p1152) requirements
- Adequate travel and medical insurance (p1141)
- Up-to-date medical vaccinations (p1168)
- Hotel reservations, particularly for your first night and near national parks (p1131)
- Your driver's license (p1163). Not driving? Take it anyway – you might change your mind once you see exactly how big the USA is
- Nerves of steel for driving on urban freeways (p1165)
- A handful of credit cards – they're often easier and safer than cash, and are sometimes required (eg for hotel reservations, car rentals, show tickets)
- An open mind: you'll find foodies in the Ozarks and hicks in Manhattan, and everything in between in the USA

splash out a few times, drive a lot, and stay, eat and whoop it up in the likes of New York, Chicago, San Francisco.

In this guide, we define a 'midrange' hotel, broadly, as costing from \$80 to \$200 per night per double occupancy. In rural areas, \$100 buys a princely night's sleep, but in some cities, clean budget places *start* at \$200. The same holds true for meals.

To travel on the cheap, plan on camping (sometimes free but up to \$35 per night) or hostelling (\$20 to \$35 a night), cooking some of your own meals, and touring by bus and train, both of which limit your flexibility and are slower than driving or flying (that's not necessarily a bad thing). Be wary of budget motel come-ons; the sign might flash \$39, but that's probably for a single room and doesn't include taxes. For money-saving advice on accommodations, see p1131.

Traveling by car is often a necessity. A rental is a bare minimum of \$30 a day (type of car, taxes, fees and insurance can push it higher), plus gas. Planning the great American road trip? Gas could actually cost more than the car itself (say, another \$20 to \$40 per day, depending on how far you're driving and on what kind of roads).

Families can save money by booking accommodations that don't charge extra for children staying in the same room, by asking for kids' menus at restaurants and by taking advantage of family discounts at museums, theme parks and other sights. For more on traveling with children, see p1136. For discounts that everyone can use, see p1139.

Don't forget that old travel chestnut: after you halve the clothes you've packed in your suitcase, double your estimated budget, and it'll all work out fine.

**TRAVELING RESPONSIBLY**

Since 1973, Lonely Planet has inspired readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the serendipitous magic of independent travel. Globally, travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring. As always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on local economies, indigenous cultures and the environment, especially native ecosystems and wildlife.

In the USA, 'going green' has become trendy, and businesses of all stripes now slap 'eco' stickers on their products and services. For the traveler, determining how ecofriendly they actually are can be difficult. Throughout this guide, our authors have carefully researched and recommended ecofriendly, sustainable tourism practices (see also the GreenDex, p1212) that support environmental

**HOW MUCH?**

Broadway show \$100-300

Major-league baseball game \$27

Internet access per hour \$3-12

Gallon of milk \$3.35

Local payphone call 35-50¢

and conservation efforts; help preserve local, regional and ethnic identity; and/or support indigenous arts and culture, particularly that of Native Americans.

Many other resources are springing up to certify ecofriendly businesses, hotels, services, tours and outfitters, including state and local tourism bureaus. Be sure to review the listings' criteria for reliability and independence carefully. Here are a few:

**Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association** ([www.awrta.org](http://www.awrta.org)) Resources for Native Alaska culture and arts, special events and discounts on outdoor activities.

**Alternative Hawaii** ([www.alternative-hawaii.com](http://www.alternative-hawaii.com)) Ecotourism website promoting Hawaiian culture and independent ecotravel.

**Chicago Sustainable Business Alliance** (<http://csba.foresightdesign.org>) For ecotourism news, events and a 'green' business directory.

**Green Hotel Association** ([www.greenhotels.com](http://www.greenhotels.com)) Self-selecting pay-to-play membership, but a useful online directory nonetheless.

**Greenopia** ([www.greenopia.com/USA](http://www.greenopia.com/USA)) City guides for ecolving in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York City and more.

**Handmade in America** ([www.handmadeinamerica.org](http://www.handmadeinamerica.org)) Art roads and farm trails in North Carolina.

**Hawaii Ecotourism Association** ([www.hawaiiecotourism.org](http://www.hawaiiecotourism.org)) Travel tips, cultural events and 'green' business listings.

**Historic Hotels of America** ([www.historichotels.org](http://www.historichotels.org)) Online directory and accommodations booking from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

**offManhattan** ([www.offmanhattan.com](http://www.offmanhattan.com)) Green travel around New York City, always accessible by public transportation.

**Travel Green Wisconsin** ([www.travelgreenvisconsin.com](http://www.travelgreenvisconsin.com)) Comprehensive, engaging website for trip planning, from agritourism, outdoor adventures and festivals to hotels, restaurants and shops.

**Vital Communities** ([www.vitalcommunities.org](http://www.vitalcommunities.org)) Green restaurants and local farmers markets in New England's Vermont and New Hampshire.

Choosing public transportation instead of renting a car will decrease your carbon footprint. But realistically, a car is often a necessity in the USA – so, consider renting ecofriendly cars when available from national agencies such as Avis, Budget or Hertz (see p1164). Also look for independent rental agencies specializing in hybrid and electric rental cars (p1164). Zipcar (p1164) is a car-sharing service now available in cities and towns in 25 states. The automobile association Better World Club (p1161) supports environmental legislation and offers ecofriendly services for members, including roadside assistance for both cars and bicycles.

While hitchhiking (p1165) is always risky, ride-sharing using online bulletin boards like **Craigslist** (CL; [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)) is not uncommon. CL also has listings for vacation rentals and housing sublets, short-term jobs and community activities, and free classified ads for anything you might want to buy, sell or barter during your trip, whether a surfboard, bicycle or used car.

Of course, sustainable tourism is about more than making 'green' choices; it's a way of interacting with people and the environment as you travel. It's practicing low-impact hiking and camping (see p126). It's volunteering during your vacation (see p1150). It's also learning about indigenous cultures and understanding the challenges they face today. For more on US environmental issues, see p128 and check out the following:

**Climatecrisis.net** ([www.climatecrisis.net](http://www.climatecrisis.net)) Official website for the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*; offers carbon-offset programs, advice and information.

**National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations** ([www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable)) Promotes 'geotourism' with webcams, digital images, maps, blogs and online traveler resources.

**Sierra Club** ([www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)) Environmental and conservation news, political activism, group hikes and volunteer vacations.

**'Sustainable tourism is about more than making 'green' choices; it's a way of interacting with people and the environment as you travel'**

# TOP 10


 PACIFIC OCEAN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Washington, DC

## SCENIC DRIVES

A road trip can't exist without roads. Here are 10 doozies. Frankly, we had to arm wrestle over our favorites, so consider this list very incomplete. Turn to the USA Road Trips (p44) and Itineraries (p33) chapters for more. For America's 'official' scenic drives, visit [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org).

- 1 Pacific Coast Hwy (Hwy 1), California: officially, just 42 miles through Orange County (p938); for the full Mexico–Canada trip, see p45
- 2 Route 66: 2400 miles from Chicago, Illinois, to Los Angeles, California (p44)
- 3 Blue Ridge Parkway: 469 miles from Shenandoah National Park (VA; p375), to Great Smoky Mountains National Park (NC; p46)
- 4 Great River Road: 2000 miles from Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to New Orleans, Louisiana (p48)
- 5 Overseas Hwy (Hwy 1), Florida: 160 miles from Miami to Key West (p523)
- 6 Hana Hwy (Hwy 360), Maui, Hawaii: 38 miles from Pauwela to Hana (p1126)
- 7 Natchez Trace Parkway: 444 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi (p432)
- 8 Hwy 12, Utah: 110 miles from Torrey to Bryce Canyon National Park (p881)
- 9 Columbia River Hwy (Hwy 30), Oregon: 74 miles from Troutdale to the Dalles (p1061)
- 10 Turquoise Trail (Hwy 14), New Mexico: 45 miles from Tijeras to Santa Fe (p894)

## PARTIES & PARADES

Americans will use any excuse to party. Seriously. Here are 10 festivals worth planning a trip around. For more, browse the destination chapters, see p1140 and p98, and visit [www.festivals.com](http://www.festivals.com).

- 1 Mardi Gras, New Orleans, Louisiana, February/early March (p481)
- 2 Mummers Parade, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, New Year's Day (p221)
- 3 National Cherry Blossom Festival, Washington, DC, late March/April (p331)
- 4 Conch Republic Independence Celebration, Key West, Florida, April (p530)
- 5 Fiesta San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas, mid-April (p723)
- 6 Gullah Festival, Beaufort, South Carolina, late May (p413)
- 7 Red Earth Native American Cultural Festival, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, early June (p697)
- 8 SF Gay Pride Month, San Francisco, California, June (p980)
- 9 St Paul Winter Carnival, St Paul, Minnesota, late January (p644)
- 10 Burning Man Festival, Black Rock Desert, Nevada, late August/early September (p835)

## BIZARRE LODGINGS

From haunted mansions to wacky themed rooms, and futuristic ecobubbles to retro concrete tips, Americans seem to like a little variety when they hit the pillow. To break up the motel monotony, try these 10 places. For more accommodations tips, see p1131.

- 1 Madonna Inn, San Luis Obispo, California (p959)
- 2 Earthship Rentals, Taos, New Mexico (p900)
- 3 Queen Mary Hotel, Long Beach, California (p928)
- 4 Wigwam Village Inn, Cave City, Kentucky (p441)
- 5 Stanley Hotel, Estes Park, Colorado (p776)
- 6 Pelican Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida (p514)
- 7 Arcosanti, Phoenix, Arizona (p845)
- 8 Myrtle Plantation, St Francisville, Louisiana (p489)
- 9 Belfry Inn, Sandwich, Massachusetts (p262)
- 10 Covington Inn, St Paul, Minnesota (p644)



# TOP 10


 PACIFIC OCEAN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Washington, DC

## OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

You can satisfy your jonesing for an adrenaline rush from coast to coast, whether on foot, bicycle or boat, while high in the sky or under the sea. For more about the USA's great outdoors, turn to p131. For national park adventures, see p106.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Trekking the epic Appalachian Trail through 14 states (p134)</li> <li>2 Kayaking the icy waters of Glacier Bay National Park &amp; Preserve, Alaska (p1083)</li> <li>3 Climbing Mt Rainier, Washington (p1043)</li> <li>4 Scuba diving and snorkeling at Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida (p531)</li> <li>5 Hiking the Narrows of the Virgin River in Zion National Park, Utah (p884)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Canoeing the Boundary Waters, Minnesota (p648)</li> <li>7 Watching lava flow around Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii (p1122)</li> <li>8 White-water rafting the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, Idaho (p815)</li> <li>9 Cycling through Northern California's wine country (p995)</li> <li>10 Surfing the waves off Southern California's Huntington Beach (p939)</li> </ol> |
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## SMALL TOWNS

Forget NYC, DC, LA and just about anywhere else with an initialism, because it's small towns that will give you the real scoop on American life. So, go on. Get to know the locals and find out why they are proud to call these blink-and-you'll-miss-them blips on the map home.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Key West, Florida (p527)</li> <li>2 Montpelier, Vermont (p290)</li> <li>3 Luckenbach, Texas (p719)</li> <li>4 Seward, Alaska (p1093)</li> <li>5 Telluride, Colorado (p788)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Hilo, Hawai'i the Big Island (p1121)</li> <li>7 Bisbee, Arizona (p865)</li> <li>8 Bozeman, Montana (p801)</li> <li>9 Ocean Springs, Mississippi (p470)</li> <li>10 Grand Marais, Minnesota (p648)</li> </ol> |
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## MICROBREWERIES

Here's proof that the liquid lunch exists in America, especially out West. You'll also find good suds up and down the East Coast, deep into the South, across the Midwest and the Great Plains, and even in far-flung Alaska. Once you've gulped down these 10, peruse [www.beerinfo.com](http://www.beerinfo.com) for more microbreweries and brewpubs in all 50 states.

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Ska Brewing Company, Durango, Colorado (p785)</li> <li>2 Abita Brewery, Abita Springs, Louisiana (p486)</li> <li>3 Lost Coast Brewery, Eureka, California (p998)</li> <li>4 Magic Hat Brewery, Burlington, Vermont (p293)</li> <li>5 Mountain Sun Pub &amp; Brewery, Boulder, Colorado (p773)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Lakefront Brewery, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (p628)</li> <li>7 Hopworks Urban Brewery, Portland, Oregon (p1056)</li> <li>8 Haines Brewing Company, Haines, Alaska (p1085)</li> <li>9 Free State Brewing, Lawrence, Kansas (p692)</li> <li>10 Spoetzl Brewery, Texas (p714)</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

# TOP 10


 PACIFIC OCEAN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Washington, DC

## FOODIE PILGRIMAGES

McDonald who?! In contemporary, food-obsessed America, Iron Chefs do battle on TV's Food Network and gastronomic wunderkinds attain the celebrity status of Hollywood stars. It's worth detouring to these 10 culinary temples. For tastebud-tempting regional specialties, see p93. For cooking schools, see p102.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 French Laundry, Yountville, California (p992)   | 6 Alan Wong's, Honolulu, Hawaii (p1115)         |
| 2 Chez Panisse, Berkeley, California (p990)       | 7 FIG, Charleston, South Carolina (p410)        |
| 3 Mat and Naddie's, New Orleans, Louisiana (p485) | 8 Arthur Bryant's, Kansas City, Missouri (p668) |
| 4 Alinea, Chicago, Illinois (p581)                | 9 Azul, Miami, Florida (p515)                   |
| 5 Daniel, New York City, New York (p184)          | 10 Hugo's, Portland, Maine (p307)               |

## SPOTS FOR SOLITUDE

When the USA's more than 306 million residents and 50 million other tourists cause claustrophobia and just make you want to scream, escape to these places. For the USA's most uncrowded national parks, see p115.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Death Valley National Park, California (p954)        | 6 Hwy 2 through the Sandhills, Nebraska (p689)    |
| 2 Ka'ena Point, O'ahu, Hawaii (p1118)                  | 7 South Manitou Island, Michigan (p621)           |
| 3 North Cascades National Park, Washington (p1041)     | 8 Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas (p753) |
| 4 Race Point Beach, Provincetown, Massachusetts (p265) | 9 Little Palm Island, Florida Keys (p527)         |
| 5 Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness, Montana (p803)        | 10 Portsmouth Island, North Carolina (p394)       |

## LANDMARK BUILDINGS

From skyscraping towers and sprawling private estates to postmodern urban icons, the building blocks of this nation are diverse. Many of these 10 are instantly recognizable worldwide, too, thanks to Hollywood. For more about the USA's groundbreaking architecture, see p90.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Empire State Building, New York City, New York (p161)  | 6 Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, California (p920) |
| 2 White House, Washington, DC (p328)   | 7 Biltmore Estate, Asheville, North Carolina (p401)        |
| 3 Willis Tower, Chicago, Illinois (p566)   | 8 Space Needle, Seattle, Washington (p1026)                |
| 4 Monticello, Virginia (p373)  | 9 'Iolani Palace, Honolulu, Hawaii (p1111)                 |
| 5 Fallingwater, Pennsylvania (p236) – or anything else by Frank Lloyd Wright (see the boxed text, p92) | 10 Las Vegas Strip, Las Vegas, Nevada (p823)               |

# TOP 10



PACIFIC OCEAN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Washington, DC

## MOVIE & TV LOCATIONS

Even if it's your first time traveling in the USA, you might feel some déjà vu when you see these 10 locations, made famous by Hollywood on the silver screen. For more recommended made-in-America films, see p84. For TV, see p83.

- 1 Los Angeles, California (p914) – just about everywhere in the city!
- 2 O'ahu's North Shore, Hawaii (p1118) – as seen on TV's *Lost* and *Baywatch*
- 3 National Mall, Washington, DC (p321) – as seen in thrillers, spy movies and disaster flicks
- 4 Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, Navajo Nation (p858) – as seen in classic Westerns such as *Stagecoach* and *The Searchers*
- 5 Alabama Hills, California (p1013) – as seen in even more Westerns such as *High Sierra*
- 6 Mt Rushmore, South Dakota (p683) – as seen in Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*
- 7 Missoula, Montana (p805) – as seen in *A River Runs Through It*
- 8 Dead Horse Point State Park, Utah (p879) – as seen in the *Mission Impossible II* opening and *Thelma & Louise* finale
- 9 Union Station, Chicago, Illinois (p586) – as seen in *The Untouchables*
- 10 Timberline Lodge, Mt Hood, Oregon (p1062) – as seen in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*

## BEACHES

So, you already know that California, Hawaii and Florida have drop-dead gorgeous beaches? Fine. But what about Texas, Alaska and Chicago? See, we knew we could still surprise you. Here are 10 gems you might not know about, and there are hundreds more waiting to be discovered: just go find 'em.

- 1 DT Fleming Beach Park, Maui, Hawaii (p1123)
- 2 Coast Guard Beach, Cape Cod, Massachusetts (p264)
- 3 Padre Island National Seashore, Corpus Christi, Texas (p733)
- 4 Siesta Key Beach, Sarasota, Florida (p543)
- 5 Assateague Island National Seashore, Berlin, Maryland (p353)
- 6 Point Lobos State Reserve, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California (p962)
- 7 Cumberland Island National Seashore, St Marys, Georgia (p458)
- 8 Fire Island National Seashore, Long Island, New York (p193)
- 9 North Avenue Beach, Chicago, Illinois (p569)
- 10 Golden Sands Beach, Nome, Alaska (p1103)

## HISTORICAL SITES

Tangled, embattled, bittersweet and triumphant – that's the USA's history in a nutshell (see p51). At these 10 sites you can walk in the footsteps of giants, including Native Americans, Western explorers and modern civil-rights activists. For more destination-worthy historic sites and itineraries, see p120.

- 1 Historic Triangle, Virginia (p367)
- 2 Freedom Trail, Boston, Massachusetts (p252)
- 3 Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Skagway, Alaska (p1085)
- 4 Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (p229)
- 5 Lewis & Clark National Historical Park, Oregon (p1068)
- 6 Mission San Juan Capistrano, Orange County, California (p939)
- 7 The Alamo, San Antonio, Texas (p720)
- 8 Brown vs Board of Education National Historic Site, Kansas (p693)
- 9 Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado (p789)
- 10 Pu'uhonua O Honaunau National Historical Park, Hawaii (p1119)



**'Perhaps the most famous American travelogue is Jack Kerouac's headlong *On the Road*'**

## TRAVEL LITERATURE

The American travelogue is its own literary genre. One could argue that the first (and still the best) is *Democracy in America* (1835), by Alexis de Tocqueville, who wandered around talking to folks, then in pithy fashion distilled the philosophical underpinnings of the then-new American experiment.

America is often most vividly described by non-Americans: two Russian satirists road-tripped during the Great Depression searching for the 'real America' (doesn't everyone?), and their *Ilf and Petrov's American Road Trip* (1935) is a comic masterpiece laced with pungent critiques.

Those who prefer their commentary and humor, like their coffee, bitter and black should stuff *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (1945) by Henry Miller in their backpack, written while the irascible and notoriously obscene writer canvassed America during WWII.

Celebrated travel writer and historian Jan Morris was clearly smitten with the country in *Coast to Coast* (1956), originally titled *As I Saw the USA*; it's crisp, elegant and poignant, particularly her experience in the pre-Civil Rights-era South.

Perhaps the most famous American travelogue is Jack Kerouac's headlong *On the Road* (1957), a Beat Generation classic that's full of hot jazz, poetry and drugs in post-WWII America.

John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley* (1962), about the novelist's trek across America with his poodle for company, takes a critical look at how technology, tradition and prejudice have shaped the regional character of this country.

Written during a crossroads in midlife, William Least Heat-Moon's *Blue Highways* (1982) is a moving pastiche of 'average Americans' as it follows one man's attempt to find himself by losing himself on the road.

Not strictly a travelogue, *On the Rez* (2000), by Ian Frazier, provides a good taste of contemporary life on Native American reservations. It's a journey of history and heart that goes into America, rather than across it.

See p79 for more on American literature.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Away.com** ([www.away.com](http://www.away.com)) Boundless ideas for outdoor and urban adventure travel across the 50 states, from Hawaii's beaches to Boston's Freedom Trail.

**Festivals.com** ([www.festivals.com](http://www.festivals.com)) From coast to coast, find where the best parties are – live-music shows, food fiestas and even more unlikely celebrations, such as of pirates and covered bridges.

**Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) Travel news and summaries, savvy hotel and hostel reviews, the Thorn Tree community forum, and links to more web resources.

**New York Times Travel** (<http://travel.nytimes.com>) Travel news, practical advice and features including 36-hour city breaks and authentic 'American Journeys.'

**Roadside America** ([www.roadsideamerica.com](http://www.roadsideamerica.com)) For all things weird and wacky: who needs the Statue of Liberty when you've got 'Muffer Men' and 'Mega-Messiahs'?!

**USA.gov** ([www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel.shtml)) The closest thing to a national tourism information resource, on the US federal government's official website.

# Itineraries

## CLASSIC ROUTES

### CITIES BY THE SEA

The nice thing about East Coast metropolises? They're near the beach! Here you can balance culture, history and cuisine with coastal idylls and long naps in the sun.

Arrive in revolutionary **Boston** (p243), then go to sandy **Cape Cod** (p260), and keep going till you reach **Provincetown** (p265), where the Pilgrims landed. Pretty, ain't it? Then scoot down I-95 to Rhode Island's quaint **Newport** (p276); time your visit for a music festival.

Now, tackle **New York City** (p145). Once you've had your fill of the bustling Big Apple, escape to the **Hamptons** (p194) on Long Island; what was the hurry, again?

In New Jersey, go 'down the shore' to **Long Beach Island** (p210), and if you're a casino gambler, **Atlantic City** (p210) and its boardwalk.

Then, make time for **Philadelphia** (p213), **Baltimore** (p339), and **Washington, DC** (p318).

Finally, cross Chesapeake Bay and relax on Maryland's **Eastern Shore** (p350).

**Why are East Coasters so stressed out? Because eastern seaboard highways couldn't be more congested. So why on earth do this road trip? Slow down, avoid rush hour, hit the beaches often, and for 1100 detour-laden miles, it's one first-class metropolis after another.**



## THE LEFT COAST

### Two to Three Weeks / Portland to San Diego

Geographically and politically, the West Coast couldn't be further from Washington, DC. This is a trip for those who lean left, and who like their nature ancient and wild, and their horizons and beaches wide-open.

Affable **Portland** (p1046) is a pretty place to start. Then jump into nature's bounty by driving east along the **Columbia River Gorge** (p1061). At The Dalles, turn south and make for **Mt Hood** (p1061) for winter skiing and summer hiking. From **Bend** (p1063), enjoy Cascades adventures around **Sisters** (p1062) and **Crater Lake** (p1064). Catch a Shakespearian play in sunny **Ashland** (p1064), then trade the mountains for the foggy coast. Enter California via Hwy 199 and magnificent **Redwood National & State Parks** (p998).

Hug the coast as it meanders south through funky **Arcata** and seaside **Eureka** (p997), get lost on the **Lost Coast** (p997), then catch Hwy 1 through quaint **Mendocino** (p996).

Make your way inland to the **Napa & Sonoma Valleys** (p991) for a wash-up and wine tasting, and thence to the romantically hilly, bohemian burg of **San Francisco** (p966).

Return to scenic **Hwy 1** (p966) through weird **Santa Cruz** (p964), bayfront **Monterey** (p962) and beatnik-flavored **Big Sur** (p960), where you can get scruffy again. In no time you'll reach **Hearst Castle** (p960) and laid-back, collegiate **San Luis Obispo** (p959).

Roll into Mediterranean-esque **Santa Barbara** (p956), then hop aboard a ferry in Ventura to the wildlife-rich **Channel Islands** (p956). At last, **Los Angeles** (p914) – aka LA, La-la Land, City of Angels. Go ahead, indulge your fantasies of **Hollywood** (p921) and gawk at the beautiful people of the **OC** (p938) before kicking back in **San Diego** (p939).

Let's see. In 1550 miles, is there eco-friendly outdoor adventure? Check. Microbrews and fine wines? Check. Heart-stopping forests and mountains? Check. Legendary coastal drives? Check. Freaks, visionaries and radicals? Check. Surf beaches, gourmet cuisine, cutting-edge art, multicultural cities? You bet! Welcome to the West Coast.



## WESTERN MIGRATIONS

### Three to Four Weeks / Chicago to Seattle

‘The West’ is not one thing. It’s a panoply of landscapes and personalities that unfold as you journey west from the past into the future. No single route could capture it all, but this stretch of I-90 is book-ended by world-class cities and packed with heartbreakingly beautiful country.

**Chicago** (p559) – aka Second City, the Windy City – is the Midwest’s greatest city. Follow I-90 to youthful **Madison** (p630) and quirky **US 12** (p632) to dispel any myths about Midwestern sobriety.

Detour north to friendly, arty **Minneapolis** (p636) for more Midwest liberalism. Return to I-90 and activate cruise control, admiring the corn (and the **Corn Palace**, p678) and the flat, flat South Dakota plains. See why lonely Westerners go stir crazy?

Hit the brakes for the **Badlands National Park** (p679) and plunge into the Wild West. In the **Black Hills** (p680), contemplate competing monuments at **Mt Rushmore** (p683) and **Crazy Horse** (p684). Watch mythic gunfights in **Deadwood** (p682) and visit **Pine Ridge Indian Reservation** (p679).

Halfway across Wyoming, cruise Hwy 14 into **Cody** (p792) to catch a summer rodeo. Save time for the wild majesty and wildlife of **Yellowstone National Park** (p793) and **Grand Teton National Park** (p798).

Through rural Montana, the outdoorsy towns of **Bozeman** (p801) and **Missoula** (p805) make fun stops. For serious adventure, detour to **Glacier National Park** (p808) and the **Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex** (p806).

Back on I-90 in Washington, stop in unassuming **Spokane** (p1042) and end in **Seattle** (p1021), which embodies the high-tech, ecoconscious New West. Still got time? Take in **Mt Rainier** (p1043), **Olympic National Park** (p1034), and the **San Juan Islands** (p1038). Ah, bliss.

**From Midwest to Wild West to New West: this route is a 3400-mile meditation on America’s evolving final frontier. Only by seeing the West’s endless plains, towering mountains and rugged coastline for yourself can you begin to understand its inhabitants’ singular multiple personalities.**



## GO EAST, YOUNG MAN

One Month to Six Weeks / San Francisco to Miami

For those contemplating an epic coast-to-coast road trip, here's a suggestion: start in San Francisco and head toward the rising sun. This route snags some seriously cool cities and classic American scenery, but be warned: it'll be *hot* come July and August.

From anything-goes **San Francisco** (p966), head for **Yosemite National Park** (p1006) and **Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks** (p1010) in the Sierra Nevada – now that's scenery! Skirt the **Mojave National Preserve** (p953) on I-15 and head for **Las Vegas** (p822), baby. Stop at **Grand Canyon National Park** (p851) for a photo-op, rattle along Route 66 through **Williams** (p849) and **Flagstaff** (p847), detour to red-rock **Sedona** (p849), then roll east on I-40.

In New Mexico, unlike Bugs Bunny, take that left at **Albuquerque** (p886) along the **Turquoise Trail** (p894) up to artsy **Santa Fe** (p892) and far-out **Taos** (p899). Drop south on I-25 through scenic **Southwestern New Mexico** (p903).

Pick up I-10 into Texas, dip through **Marfa** (p749) and jaw-dropping **Big Bend National Park** (p746). Saunter through Texas' bucolic **Hill Country** (p717) to **Austin** (p709) for live music and drinkin'. Follow the Mission Trail in **San Antonio** (p720), hit the beach at **Galveston Island** (p731) outside **Houston** (p725). Giddy-up for party-central, **New Orleans** (p472), then keep dancing and eatin' in **Cajun Country** (p489).

Explore the **Florida Panhandle** (p550) beaches. Inland, **Walt Disney World** (p548) must be seen to be believed. Along the Gulf Coast, enjoy **St Petersburg** (p541), clown around in **Sarasota** (p543) and see seashells at **Sanibel & Captiva Islands** (p544). Bisect the alligator-filled swamps of the **Everglades** (p519) and arrive in **Miami** (p505). With a beach, a mojito and some Cuban fare, party till sunrise!

Cruising from coast to coast, ocean to ocean, sunrise to sunset (or in this case, vice versa) – it's 4500 miles, give or take. Some do it in weeks, others take months. There's no right or wrong, no rules, no 'best' route, really. Just go!





## ROADS LESS TRAVELED

### BLUES & BBQ

Two to Three Weeks / Chicago to New Orleans

The Mississippi River marks a physical and psychological divide, and along this spine runs America's greatest music: blues, jazz, and rock and roll. Hwy 61 is the heart of the route, which starts in soulful **Chicago** (p559), legendary home of Chess Records, home of true-blue Mississippi Delta musicians who migrated northward, along with rhythm and blues (R & B) and early rock and roll. Scarf down a plate of juicy barbecued ribs before speeding downstate on I-55.

You'll meet the mighty Mississippi River in **St Louis** (p656), which bills itself as the 'Home of the Blues,' though original rock-and-roller Chuck Berry still plays here, too. Order up pork steaks slow-cooked in St Louis' signature barbecue sauce. Motor south to **Memphis** (p416). Pay homage to Elvis Presley at Graceland and rock and roll at Sun Studio. Smoked, dry-rubbed racks of ribs are a must. For even more of a musical pilgrimage, detour on I-40 to **Nashville** (p423), the home of country music – and yes, lip-smackin' spicy fried chicken. South of Memphis, Hwy 61 runs through the **Mississippi Delta** (p465), where the blues was born: **Clarksdale** (p466) is where Robert Johnson bargained with the devil. The town's still jumpin' with blues joints and roadside shacks dishing up wood-smoked pit barbecue with vinegary slaw.

Finally, you'll arrive at **New Orleans** (p472), birthplace of jazz. The 'Big Easy,' despite recent hard times (p472), is a place where lazy mornings blend into late nights with a soundtrack of smokin' hot funk brass bands, and succulent Cajun and Creole food always at hand.



Much of the epic, legendary, even revolutionary history of home-grown American music can be experienced along this 1100-mile stretch running (mostly) alongside the Mississippi River. Throw in a 425-mile side trip to Nashville, and you've got the musical – and gastronomic – journey of a lifetime.

## THE FOUR CORNERS

Ten Days to Two Weeks / Flagstaff to Moab

A stronghold of Native American lands and traditions, the center of the Southwest is actually not a circle, but a square. The Four Corners – where Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona meet – is a gorgeously remote, wild region that you could lose yourself in for weeks, or even months.

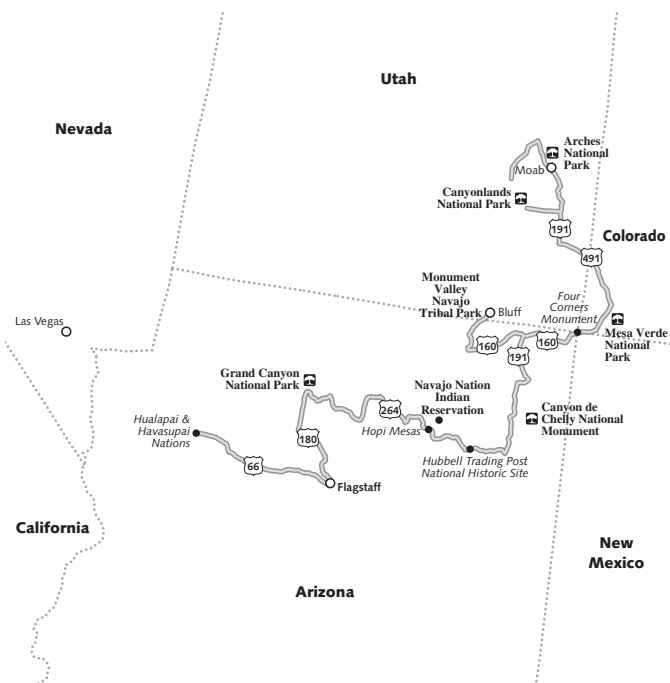
Kick up your heels in Old West frontier-flavored **Flagstaff** (p847), then take Hwy 180 north to tackle the vast **Grand Canyon** (p851), or detour west along Route 66 to visit the **Hualapai** (p856) and **Havasupai** (p856) tribal nations first.

Traveling east of the Grand Canyon's South Rim (p853) on Hwy 264, you'll enter the sacred **Hopi Mesas** (p858), bordering the vast **Navajo Nation** (p857), which is networked by rugged roads and tribal parks protecting pockets of wilderness. Head east of **Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site** (p858) on Hwy 264, then north on Hwy 191 to **Canyon de Chelly National Monument** (p858).

Drive west on lonely Hwy 160, then take your natural wonder north on Hwy 163 through the classic Hollywood Western scenery of **Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park** (p858). Rest and refuel in **Bluff** (p880), then take Hwy 191 south and Hwy 160 east for an irresistibly kitschy photo-op – yes, you can put your hands and feet in four states at once! – at the **Four Corners Monument** (p858).

Keep going east on Hwy 160 to hilltop **Mesa Verde National Park** (p789), with its famous cliff dwellings, then zoom north on Hwy 491 then 191 to **Moab** (p878), a sporty outdoor-adventure mecca and the gateway to the ancient earth of **Arches National Park** (p879) and wilder **Canyonlands National Park** (p880).

Deep canyons, deserts painted a rainbow, crumbling buttes, delicate sandstone arches, pueblo-topped mesas, ancient civilizations hidden in the cliffs – you really can't make this stuff up. To see it all requires almost 1000 brutal miles of slow, sun-baked roads, and it's worth every saddle sore.



## SAILORS, FARMERS & DAMN YANKEES

### Ten Days to Two Weeks / New York City to Acadia National Park

This is a good spring or summer trip, but in early fall – wow! Autumn dresses New England in auburn and scarlet, and the air is so crisp you can bite it. Stalwart, fiercely independent personalities settled this region, a mix of rugged wilderness, tidy towns and fruitful farms.

Launch in **New York City** (p145); soak up the excitement, the cacophony, the crowds. When you're ready, rent a car and head north on I-87. Dip into the **Catskills** (p197) along Hwy 28 for a first taste of forests, then continue north for the real deal: the **Adirondacks** (p201). Settle in for a few days at **Lake Placid** (p201) and explore the wilderness.

Take the ferry across Vermont's Lake Champlain to youthful, outdoorsy **Burlington** (p292), a vibrant introduction to New England. The **Lake Champlain Islands** (p293) are splendid. Take I-89 southeast, stopping at the four-seasons resorts of **Stowe** (p291). From **Montpelier** (p290), America's smallest capital city, take Hwy 302 east into New Hampshire. Hwy 302 runs into Hwy 112, the **Kancamagus Hwy** (p299), perhaps the prettiest drive in New England, through the magnificent **White Mountains** (p297): waterfalls, hikes and quaint villages abound. At Hwy 16, go south to historic, maritime **Portsmouth** (p295).

Now follow I-95 into Maine. Lively **Portland** (p305) has foodie-worthy eats. From Hwy 1, meander the **Central Maine Coast** (p307): you're hunting clam chowder, fresh lobster and nautical ports to let loose your inner sailor. Visit **Boothbay Harbor** (p308) for fresh-off-the-boat lobster, and **Camden** (p308) for memorable **windjammer cruises** (p310).

Finally, book yourself a historic inn at **Bar Harbor** (p311) and dive into the unspoiled splendor of **Acadia National Park** (p310).

Never experienced fall in New England? Tired of hearing everyone blather on about it? Time this 1000-mile trip right, and you'll join the proselytizers. Heck, it's gorgeous any season: the chowder fills your belly, the maritime air stirs your blood, and that damn Yankee ingenuity is a marvel.



## THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Three to Four Weeks /  
Albuquerque to Glacier National Park

On one side rivers run east, on the other, west. You'll trace the mountains in between, finding constant excuses to ditch the car and hike, climb, raft, bike, ski and get dirty.

Start in **Albuquerque** (p886) and take the **Turquoise Trail** (Hwy 14; p894) to genteel **Santa Fe** (p892). Between here and trippy **Taos** (p899), check out Native American **pueblos** (p898), atomic **Los Alamos** (p898) and the spectacular scenery of **Bandelier National Monument** (p898).

Follow Hwy 84 through **Chama** (p902) into Colorado. Enjoy bikes and brews in **Durango** (p784). Take the 'Million Dollar Hwy' (Hwy 550) north, stopping in **Silverton** (p786); for hot springs in **Ouray** (p786); and a quick detour to gorgeous **Telluride** (p788). Then go east on Hwy 50, through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and north on Hwy 24 to ritzy **Vail** (p780).

Relax a spell in laid-back **Boulder** (p770) and **Rocky Mountain National Park** (p774). For time's sake, stay north on I-25, and in Wyoming, take I-80 west to Hwy 287; follow this to **Lander** (p793) for rock climbing. Now get thee to **Grand Teton National Park** (p798) and **Yellowstone National Park** (p793).

In Montana, take Hwy 89 north and I-90 west to **Bozeman** (p801) and **Missoula** (p805), both fun places to stock up before the final push. Serious nature awaits in the **Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex** (p806) and **Glacier National Park** (p808).

And really, there's no reason not to keep following the Rocky Mountains right into Canada – but that's a story for another book.

**Work hard, play hard – or at least, play hard. Name it, and you can probably do it in the Rocky Mountains. This 2150-mile route is built for those who don't want to just admire nature, but roll around in it, then swap stories over beer.**



## ALASKA'S INSIDE PASSAGE One to Three Weeks / Bellingham to Skagway

You can take a car along, but if you are looking for an unforgettable journey that doesn't involve an automobile, cruise Alaska's Inside Passage. In summer, the Alaska Marine Highway ferries stop at towns nearly every day, and with advance notice you can get on and off at every one, just as long as you keep traveling in the same direction. See p1077 for ferry information.

Fly into **Seattle** (p1021), Washington, and linger awhile or take a shuttle directly to **Bellingham** (p1038), where you catch the Alaska Marine Highway ferry. The first stop is characterful **Ketchikan** (p1078), where you can zip-line down to watch wild bears feeding on salmon midstream. It might be worth renting a car once you land on **Prince of Wales Island** (p1079), the third-largest island in the USA and a haven for mountain biking, kayaking, caving and seeking out Alaska Native petroglyphs.

**Wrangell** (p1079) has an impressive collection of totems on Chief Shakes Island, while pretty **Petersburg** (p1080) has Norwegian pride and great seafood. Rich with Russian heritage and beautifully situated, **Sitka** (p1080) shouldn't be missed. Busy **Juneau** (p1081) is Alaska's capital, and from there it's easy to get close to magnificent **Mendenhall Glacier** (p1082) or take a tram from the dock to the timberline.

**Haines** (p1084) is another sizable town, full of gold mining, missionary and trading post history, with a Native arts center. Historic **Skagway** (p1085) is the end of the line: it's a well-preserved, atmospheric version of its once-lawless gold-rush self.

You can also fly into or out of Juneau, or make it a round-trip and take the ferry back to Bellingham.



**A trip through Alaska's Inside Passage is proof that Mother Nature is one wild woman. Awesome doesn't begin to describe it. Calving glaciers, forests thick as night, pods of whales, trees full of eagles: it's one of the most memorable trips ever.**

## TAILORED TRIPS

### DUDE, THAT'S WEIRD

Combine fierce independence with a vast landscape and what you get are lotsa crazies giving free rein to their obsessions. Call it kitschy 'Americana.' You've probably heard of the biggies (ahem, Las Vegas); here are some others.

First, what's up with Stonehenge? Modern, personal iterations include Nebraska's **Carhenge** (p689). Even Florida's megalomaniacal **Coral Castle** (p522) has been nicknamed 'America's Stonehenge.' Or maybe you're looking for the world's largest... **ball of twine** (p646)? Or **chair** (p330)? Perhaps the **world's tallest filing cabinet** (p292) or **world's biggest dinosaurs** (p950)?

For sublime examples of 'outsider' folk art, aim for **Lucas** (p693) in Kansas; California's **Salvation Mountain** (p950); **Dr Evermor's Sculpture Park** (p632) in Wisconsin; and Texas' **Beer Can House** (p728) and **Cadillac Ranch** (p746).

Sometimes Americans dress up madness and call it a 'museum.' What do you make of the **Spam Museum** (p646), the **Hobo Museum** (p673), **Stark's Vacuum Museum** (p1052) or the **Trash Museum** (p284)?

Americans celebrate strangely too. Show up for the **Interstate Mullet Toss** (p554) and **Cow Chip Throw** (p632), then cheer on the galumphing dromedaries at Nevada's **Virginia City International Camel Races** (p836).

Finally, if the folks on the ground aren't alien enough for you, look for the outer-space kind along Nevada's Extraterrestrial Hwy outside **Area 51** (p838).

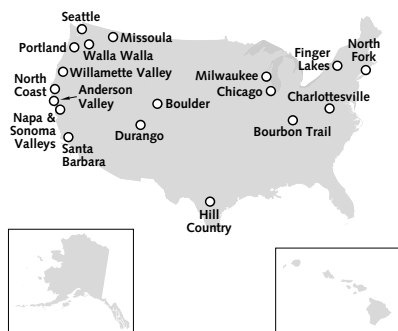


### BOOZIN' ACROSS THE USA

Americans like to drink. The US Constitution's 21st Amendment – which ended a 14-year dry spell called Prohibition – establishes the right of every adult over the age of 21 to drink legally, even emphatically. Americans are quite good at making the stuff, too.

Most states tout their 'wine countries' these days, and it ain't all bunkum. California's **Napa** and **Sonoma Valleys** (p991) are justifiably famous, but don't neglect **Santa Barbara** (p956) or rural **Anderson Valley** (p994). Other regions for tippling include **Willamette Valley** (OR; p1058), **Walla Walla** (WA; p1045), **Finger Lakes** (NY; p198), Long Island's **North Fork** (NY; p195), **Charlottesville** (VA; p375) and the **Hill Country** (TX; p718). Cowboys knocking back syrah? Hell yeah.

Americans have been brewing beer since before the Revolutionary War. Despite being the home of lightweight major-label beers, **Milwaukee** (p627) remains a beer-lover's destination, and so is **Chicago** (p559). But the microbrewery renaissance began way out West: notable brewmeister cities include **Portland** (p1046), **Seattle** (p1021), **Boulder** (p770), **Durango** (p784) and **Missoula** (p805). In California, the **North Coast** (p995) is doused in good homemade suds. Those who prefer the hard stuff should make time for Kentucky's **Bourbon Trail** (p440), a genteel Southern experience.





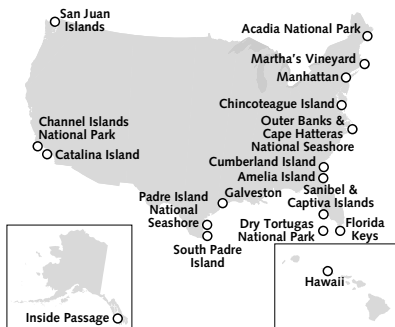
## ISLAND HOPPING

Everybody wants to go straight across the USA, but traveling around it might make an even better trip. Start at Maine's **Acadia National Park** (p310) for a sunrise hike. Then go to historic **Martha's Vineyard** (p268), from where it's a quick tack to the USA's most famous island, **Manhattan** (p145). Off the Virginia coast is **Chincoteague Island** (p373), famous for its wild horses, and off North Carolina are the **Outer Banks** (p391) and **Cape Hatteras National Seashore** (p392). Farther south off the coast of Georgia lie the Golden Isles (p457), where **Cumberland Island** (p458) is an unspoiled paradise.

Florida boasts **Amelia Island** (p538), the string-of-pearls **Florida Keys** (p523), the islands of **Dry Tortugas National Park** (p531) and lush, tropical **Sanibel and Captiva Islands** (p544).

Along the Gulf of Mexico is the Texas resort town of **Galveston** (p731 and gorgeously wild **Padre Island National Seashore** (p733) – not to be confused with **South Padre Island** (p734), where 'gorgeous and wild' describes the spring-break party scene.

Sail through the Panama Canal or go overland to California, where **Catalina Island** (p937) has Mediterranean flavor, and **Channel Islands National Park** (p956) is 'California's Galápagos.' Keep going to Washington's **San Juan Islands** (p1038) and from there to the islands of Alaska's **Inside Passage** (p1078). Finally, don't forget **Hawaii** (p1104)!



## WE'RE HERE, WE'RE QUEER

It's never been a better time to be gay in the USA. GLBT travelers will find lots of places where they can be themselves without thinking twice. Naturally, beaches and big cities typically are the gayest destinations.

**Manhattan** (p145) is too crowded and cosmopolitan to worry about who's holding hands, while **Fire Island** (p193) is the sandy gay mecca on Long Island. Other East Coast cities that flaunt it are **Boston** (p257), **Philadelphia** (p213), **Washington, DC** (p318), Massachusetts' **Provincetown** (p265) and Delaware's **Rehoboth Beach** (p355). Why even Maine brags a gay beach destination: **Ogunquit** (p302).

In the South, there's always steamy **'Hotlanta'** (p448) and Texas gets darn-right gay-friendly in **Austin** (p716) and parts of **Houston** (p730). In Florida, **Miami** (p505) and the 'Conch Republic' of **Key West** (p527) support thriving gay communities, though **Fort Lauderdale** (p517) attracts bronzed boys and girls too. Of course, everyone gets their freak on in **New Orleans** (p472).

In the Midwest, seek out **Chicago** (p578) and **Minneapolis** (p641). You will have heard of **San Francisco** (p986), the happiest gay city in America, and what can gays and lesbians do in **Los Angeles** (p934) and **Las Vegas** (p832)? Hmm, just about anything. In fact, when LA or Vegas gets to be too much, flee to the desert resorts of **Palm Springs** (p949).

Lastly, for an island idyll, **Hawaii** (p1104) is generally gay-friendly, especially in **Waikiki** (p1104).



# USA Road Trips

RoadTrip America ([www.roadtripamerica.com](http://www.roadtripamerica.com)) helps with the nitty-gritty of trip planning, from audiobook reviews and RV rental tips to fuel cost calculators, plus tons of advice from travelers.

Fill up the gas tank and buckle up. Everyone knows road-tripping is the ultimate way to experience America. You can drive up, down, across, around or straight through every state on the map. (OK, maybe not Hawaii, but even that remote Polynesian archipelago has some stunning drives – as does far-flung Alaska.) Revel in yesteryear Route 66 or the dramatic Pacific Coast Highway, or carve your own path through the Appalachian Mountains, cruising alongside the Mississippi River and around the Native American tribal lands of the Southwest. Those ‘in-between’ are places where you’ll find the real America.

So what are you waiting for? It’s time to hit the road. For more road-tripping ideas, turn to the Itineraries chapter (p33). For some riveting reads to toss in the back seat, see p32.

## ROUTE 66

For a classic American road trip, nothing beats good ol’ Route 66. Nicknamed the nation’s ‘Mother Road’ by novelist John Steinbeck, this string of small-town main streets and country byways first connected big-shouldered Chicago with the waving palm trees of Los Angeles in 1926.

Route 66 didn’t really hit its stride until the Great Depression, when migrant farmers followed it as they fled the Dust Bowl across the Great Plains. Later, during the post-WWII baby boom, new-found prosperity encouraged many Americans to hit the road and ‘get their kicks’ on Route 66, which ran through Illinois (p590), Missouri (p666), Kansas (p694), Oklahoma (p696), Texas (p745), New Mexico (p885), Arizona (p860) and California (p954).

Almost as soon as it came of age, however, Route 66 began to lose steam. The shiny blacktop of an ambitious new interstate system started systematically paving over Route 66, bypassing its mom-and-pop diners, drugstore soda fountains and once-stylish motor courts. Railway towns

The length of Route 66 keeps changing each year, as old sections of the highway are bypassed or resurrected. It’s about 2400 miles long, and is best traveled between May and September to avoid winter snow.

### BEFORE YOU HIT THE ROAD

A few things to remember to ensure your road trip is as happy-go-lucky as possible:

- Join an automobile club (p1161) that provides members with 24-hour emergency roadside assistance and discounts on lodging and attractions; some international clubs have reciprocal agreements with US automobile associations, so check first and bring your member card from home.
- Check the spare tire, tool kit (eg jack, jumper cables, ice scraper, tire pressure gauge) and emergency equipment (eg flashers) in your car; if you’re renting a vehicle and these essential safety items are not provided, consider buying them.
- Bring good maps (p1143), especially if you’re touring off-road or away from highways; don’t rely on a GPS unit – they can malfunction, and in remote areas such as deep canyons or thick forests they may not even work.
- Always carry your driver’s license (p1163) and proof of insurance (p1163).
- If you’re an international traveler, review the USA’s road rules (p1165) and common road hazards (p1164).
- Fill up the tank often, because gas stations can be few and far between on the USA’s scenic byways.

were forgotten and way stations for travelers became dusty. Even entire towns began to disappear.

By the time Route 66 was officially decommissioned in 1984, preservation associations of Mother Road fans had sprung up. Today you can still get your kicks on Route 66, following gravel frontage roads and blue-line highways across the belly of America. It's like a time warp – connecting places where the 1950s seem to have stopped just yesterday.

Even if you're not a fan of retro Americana, it's still a great road trip. Or maybe you're after big horizons and natural beauty? Route 66 runs by some of the USA's greatest outdoor attractions – not just the Grand Canyon, but also the Mississippi River, Arizona's Painted Desert and Petrified Forest National Park, and, at road's end, the Pacific beaches of sun-kissed Santa Monica.

Culturally speaking, Route 66 can be an eye-opener. Discard your preconceptions of small-town American life and unearth the joys of what bicoastal types dismissively term 'flyover' states. Mingle with farmers in Illinois and country-and-western stars in Missouri. Hear the legends of cowboys and Indians in Oklahoma. Visit Native American tribal nations and contemporary pueblos across the Southwest, all the while discovering the traditions of the USA's indigenous peoples. Then follow the trails of miners and desperados deep into the Old West.

You need to be an amateur sleuth to follow Route 66 these days. Historical realignments of the route, dead-ends in farm fields and tumbleweed-filled desert patches, and rough, rutted driving conditions are par for the course. For free turn-by-turn directions, check out [www.historic66.com](http://www.historic66.com), or purchase the illustrated 'Here It Is!' map series (Ghost Town Press). Remember that getting lost every now and then is inevitable. But never mind, since what the road offers is so valuable: a leap back through time to see what America once was, and still sometimes is. Nostalgia never tasted so sweet.

## PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

Stretching almost 2000 miles from border to border – that is, from Tijuana, Mexico to British Columbia, Canada – the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) is an epic adventure for water babies, surfers, kayakers, scuba divers and every other kind of outdoor enthusiast, including landlubbers. Or if you're a more laid-back road-tripper, who just dreams of cruising alongside the ocean in a cherry-red convertible, drifting from sunrise to sunset, the insanely scenic PCH can deliver that, too.

The PCH is a road trip for lovers, nomadic ramblers, bohemians, beatniks and curiosity seekers keen to search out every nook and cranny of forgotten beachside hamlets and pastoral farm towns along the way. It connects the

The National Historic Route 66 Federation website ([www.national66.com](http://www.national66.com)) has links to local preservation associations, as well as fan clubs overseas, ranging from the Czech Republic to Norway.

If you need a break from behind the wheel, why not ride the rails? Amtrak (p1166) runs *Coast Starlight* and commuter trains along the California coast from San Diego to San Francisco.

### ROADSIDE ODDITIES: ROUTE 66

Kitschy, time-warped and just plain weird roadside attractions? Route 66 has got 'em in spades. Here are a few beloved Mother Road landmarks to make your own scavenger hunt:

- Gemini Giant (p590) in Illinois
- Pacific's Black Madonna Shrine and Red Oak II outside Carthage in Missouri
- Blue Whale (p696) in Oklahoma
- Devil's Rope Museum (p745), Cadillac Ranch and Bug Ranch (p746) in Texas
- Seligman's Snow Cap Drive-In and Holbrook's WigWam Motel and Meteor Crater (p848) in Arizona (p860)
- Roy's Motel & Cafe in Amboy, in the middle of California's Mojave Desert

dots between some of the West Coast's most striking cities, starting from surf-style San Diego, glamorous Los Angeles and offbeat San Francisco in California, then moving north to equally alternative-minded and arty Seattle, Washington. When pounding the pavement starts to make you feel claustrophobic, just head out back on the open road and hit the coast again, heading north or south – the direction doesn't really matter.

You could bypass metro areas and just stick to the places in between, like the almost too-perfect beaches of California's Orange County ('the OC') and Santa Barbara (the 'American Riviera'); wacky Santa Cruz, a university town and surfers' paradise; redwood forests along the Big Sur coast and north of Mendocino; the sand dunes, seaside resorts and fishing villages of coastal Oregon; and finally, the wild lands of Washington's Olympic Peninsula, with its primeval rain forest, and bucolic San Juan Islands, served by coastal ferries.

There's no very bad time of year to drive the PCH, although northern climes will be rainier and snowier during winter. Peak travel season is June through August, despite that being when many stretches of the coast are socked in by fog during early summer (locals call it 'June Gloom'). The shoulder seasons before Memorial Day (ie April and May) and after Labor Day (ie September and October) can be ideal, with sunny days, crisply cool nights and fewer crowds.

## BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

What's the USA's most visited national parkland? If you said the Grand Canyon or Yosemite, you're wrong. Surprisingly, it's the Blue Ridge Parkway (p401), which snakes for nearly 500 miles through the southern Appalachian Mountains. Finished in 1940, the parkway was officially commissioned by President Franklin D Roosevelt during the Great Depression as a public-works project. Today, this rolling, rural scenic byway still connects Virginia's Shenandoah National Park with Great Smoky Mountains National Park, straddling the North Carolina-Tennessee border.

Although it skirts dozens of small towns and a few metropolitan areas, this backwoods byway really feels decades removed from the 'New South'. Here, rustic log cabins with creaky rocking chairs on the front porch still dot the rolling hillsides. Folk-art shops and live bluegrass music joints are strung along the route. The parkway is also steeped in history, from Cherokee tribal lands to early European homesteads and later Civil War battlefields. Early-20th-century mountain and lakeside resorts still welcome families like old friends, while log-cabin diners dish up heaping piles of buckwheat pancakes with blackberry preserves and a side of country ham.

When you need to work off all that good Southern cooking, over 100 hiking trails can be accessed along the Blue Ridge Parkway, from gentle nature walks and easily summited peaks to rough-and-ready tramps along the legendary Appalachian Trail (p134). Or clamber on a horse and ride off into

For traveling every back road in the western US, it's hard to beat the comprehensive Benchmark Maps ([www.benchmarkmaps.com](http://www.benchmarkmaps.com)) series of topographical road and recreational atlases.

The Blue Ridge Parkway celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2010 – get the lowdown on heritage festivities in historical communities all along the route at [www.blueridgeparkway75.org](http://www.blueridgeparkway75.org).

### DETOURS: OFF THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

Let yourself be lured inland by:

- Mission San Juan Capistrano (p939)
- Northern California's wine country (p991)
- Portland (p1046)
- Columbia River Gorge (p1060)
- Mt Rainier National Park (p1043)

the refreshingly shady forests. Then go canoeing, kayaking or inner tubing along rushing rivers, or dangle a fishing line over the side of a rowboat on petite lakes. And who says you even have to drive? The parkway makes an epic trip for long-distance cyclists, too.

Keep in mind that the weather can vary greatly, depending on your elevation. While mountain peaks are snowed in during winter, the valleys can still be invitingly warm. Most visitor services along the parkway are only open from April through October. May is best for wildflowers, although most people come for leaf-peeping during fall. Spring and fall are good times for bird-watching, with nearly 160 species having been spotted in the skies over the parkway.

## THE GRAND CIRCLE

In the early-20th-century era of tourism, the Grand Circle was a leisure-class railway and overland journey to see all the rugged, raw natural splendors of the American Southwest. It took several months, but today you need only a few weeks to witness some of the most amazing spectacles that Mother Nature has yet devised – and to get acquainted with the Southwest's rich Native American heritage.

This road trip, which covers 1800 miles or more depending on where you choose to roam, is the antithesis of a straight line. It slowly winds around and roughly encircles the Four Corners region (p38). Some backtracking is unavoidable. You can start in any of the main air-travel hubs – Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Flagstaff, Salt Lake City or Denver – and be just a half-day's drive from the heart of this remote region. Travel during spring and fall to avoid the most extreme temperatures.

In Arizona, the Grand Canyon awaits, just north of the vintage Route 66 towns of Williams and Flagstaff. Explore the Hopi mesas, with their hilltop pueblos, and the Navajo Nation, home to the majestic buttes of Monument Valley (as seen in heaps of Hollywood Western movies), and the Ancestral Puebloan of in Canyon de Chelly.

Zuni Pueblo is just outside Gallup, a Route 66 town and the unofficial 'Capital of Indian Country.' New Mexico is also where you'll find quirky

Discover Navajo (<http://discovernavajo.com>) offers free downloads of the Navajo Nation's official travel guide, written by tribal members. For the uninitiated, it even explains exactly what a 'Navajo taco' is.

The National Scenic Byways Program website ([www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)) has a clickable map of drives across the country, from Vermont's Mad River Byway to Alaska's Top-of-the-World Highway.

### DOWNLOADS: BLUEGRASS SOUNDS

If you can't catch a live show at Virginia's **Blue Ridge Music Center** ([www.blueridgemusiccenter.org](http://www.blueridgemusiccenter.org)), open from May through October, then load up your Mp3 player with beloved 'hillbilly' classics like:

- 'Blue Moon of Kentucky,' Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys
- 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown,' Earl Scruggs
- 'Orange Blossom Special,' Rouse Brothers
- 'Rocky Top,' Osborne Brothers
- 'Windy Mountain,' Lonesome Pine Fiddlers
- 'Flame of Love,' Jim and Jesse
- 'I'm a Man of Constant Sorrow,' Stanley Brothers
- 'Every Time You Say Goodbye,' Alison Krauss and Union Station
- 'Like a Hurricane,' The Dillards
- 'Angel Band,' Emmylou Harris

For a short history of bluegrass music, see p77.

Albuquerque, followed by a scenic drive up to arty Santa Fe and Taos. To stand on the Four Corners itself, trek west of Chaco Canyon, a ceremonial center for Ancestral Puebloans. Afterward, backtrack across the Colorado border to the equally ancient cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde National Park.

Red-rock Moab is the adventure-hound capital of Utah, just outside Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Sublimely scenic Hwy 12 winds west through Utah's wild 'color country,' ending in the river oasis of Zion National Park. To bring your road trip full circle, detour to the Grand Canyon's North Rim before zipping down to the neon lights of Las Vegas.

## GREAT RIVER ROAD

The Mississippi River splits the USA in two, not just geographically and historically but also psychologically speaking, defining every citizen as either an Easterner or a Westerner. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, when Napoleon Bonaparte sold off vast French colonial lands in the New World to President Thomas Jefferson, the Mississippi became the new American frontier.

Explorers Lewis and Clark soon crossed the Mississippi while making their way overland to the Pacific Coast. Earlier French voyageurs and Native American peoples used the river for trade and travel, as did African slaves seeking freedom along the Underground Railroad before the Civil War. Later novelist Mark Twain set his great American novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, along this iconic waterway.

Established in the late 1930s, the Great River Road is a 2000-mile journey from the Mississippi's headwaters in the northern lakes of Minnesota, floating downstream all the way to where the river empties into the Gulf of Mexico near New Orleans, Louisiana. You'll be awed by the sweeping scenery as you meander alongside North America's second-longest river, from the rolling plains of Iowa down past the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta. And you'll never be more than 100 miles from a riverboat casino anywhere along the route.

But seriously, this trip is worth taking for other reasons. The Great River Road diverts you off the interstate to small towns you'd otherwise miss, including Hibbing, MN, where folk rocker Bob Dylan grew up; Brainerd, MN, as seen in the Coen Brothers' indie flick *Fargo*; Spring Green, WI, where

The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center website ([www.indianpueblo.org](http://www.indianpueblo.org)) has information about New Mexico's indigenous peoples, from Acoma to Zuni, with an online calendar of ceremonial feast days.

Can anyone capture the whole history of the blues? Martin Scorsese's concert film, *Lightning in a Bottle* (2004), and the CD boxed set *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues: A Musical Journey* (2003), come mighty close.

### DOWNLOADS: ROAD-TRIPPIN' BLUES, JAZZ & ZYDECO

If you're out of range of New Orleans' community-run WWOZ radio station (90.7FM), try grooving to these rhythms out on the road:

- 'Walkin' Blues,' Robert Johnson
- 'Mississippi River Blues,' Ida Cox
- 'I've Got My Mojo Working,' Muddy Waters
- 'Johnny B Goode,' Chuck Berry
- 'Zydeco La Louisianne,' Buckwheat Zydeco
- 'Bourbon Street Parade,' Preservation Hall Jazz Band
- 'Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans,' Louis Armstrong
- 'St Louis Blues,' Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith
- 'Me & My Chauffeur,' Memphis Minnie
- 'Let the Good Times Roll,' BB King

For more about American blues see p76; and for more on jazz, see p76.



### DETOURS: BETWEEN DC & MIAMI

Going out of your way is always a pleasure, never an annoyance, whether you're heading toward the sea or inland to explore the South's spooky swamps.

- Virginia's Eastern Shore (p373)
- North Carolina's Outer Banks (p391) and Crystal Coast (p394)
- South Carolina's most genteel city, Charleston (p404), and wild swamps (p487)
- Georgia's 'Golden Isles' (p457) and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (p459)
- Florida's Space Coast (p532) and Everglades National Park (p520)

architect Frank Lloyd Wright once worked (see p92); pastoral Hannibal, MO, boyhood home of Mark Twain; and Metropolis, IL, where you'll find Superman's quick-change phone booth.

The southern section of this route (see p37) traces American musical history, from rock and roll in St Louis to Memphis blues and N'awlins jazz. And you won't go hungry either, with retro Midwestern diners serving homemade pies, Southern barbecue joints and smokehouses, and lip-smackin' Cajun taverns and dance halls in Louisiana. By the time you reach N'awlins, you'll be ready to party.

### SOUTH FROM DC TO THE SUNSHINE STATE

You could never pin down exactly how many millions of Americans have made the trip from Washington, DC, to Florida during some family summer vacation long, long ago. But there's no denying just how popular a road trip this is – I-95 isn't nicknamed the 'Disney World Expressway' for nothing, you know.

Don't start panicking: no Mickey Mouse ears are required for our sybaritic, all-ages southern road trip. We encourage you to leave behind the interstate highway as often as you can and meander over to the coast (see the Detours boxed text, above) the instant you start missing those Atlantic sea breezes, letting you soak up as much fresh air and Dixie sunshine as possible.

Start in the nation's capital, Washington, DC, wandering the National Mall's monuments and museums. Then dive right into the South, starting with the rolling hills of Virginia, dipping into colonial-era history outside of Richmond. Back on the road in North Carolina's Piedmont region, stop over in the college towns of Chapel Hill and Raleigh-Durham. In South Carolina, don't miss a side trip to Charleston, with its gracious antebellum architecture and old-fashioned romance. Savannah is another charming southern belle, just further down the coast of Georgia.

Expect a sea change of personality when you motor into Florida, with its bronzed bods, beaches, surfers and retro seaside resorts galore. Walt Disney World exerts an irresistible pull inland on I-95, but south of plasticky Orlando, the interstate quickly swings back to the coast. Get ready to cruise into spicy-hot Miami, beyond which lies the lotusland of the Florida Keys, an archipelago of island idylls in the Gulf of Mexico reached via the gorgeous Overseas Hwy (Hwy 1). At road's end, Key West is less than 100 nautical miles from Cuba – so go on, reward yourself with a mojito.

### ALSO WORTH A SPIN

So far we've only described a half-dozen of the best road trips that the USA has to offer. But there are scores of other scenic byways, country roads and blue-line highways webbing across the nation. For more faves,

'Ten states, one river' is the slogan for the Official Site for Mississippi River Travel ([www.experiencemississippiriver.com](http://www.experiencemississippiriver.com)), a comprehensive resource for history, outdoor recreation, live music and much more.

The Roadside America website ([www.roadsideamerica.com](http://www.roadsideamerica.com)) is a handy go-to source for finding obscure, infamous and kitschy roadside attractions and oddities from coast to coast.

**WORTHWHILE DETOURS**

Route	State(s)	Start/End	Sights & Activities	Best Time to Drive	More Info
Seward Hwy	AK	Anchorage/Seward	glaciers, fjords, waterfalls, wildflower meadows; watching wildlife	May-Oct	p1093
Natchez Trace Hwy	AL/MS/TN	Nashville/Natchez	'Old South' history, archaeological sites, scenic waterways; biking, camping, hiking	Mar-Nov	p432
Eastern Sierra Scenic Byway	CA	Topaz Lake/Little Lake	snowy peaks, alpine lakes, desert basins, hot springs; camping, hiking, mountain & rock climbing	May-Sep	p1012
Hwy 49	CA	Oakhurst/Sierraville	Gold Rush—era towns & historic sites; wine tasting	Apr-Oct	p1000
San Juan Skyway	CO	Durango/Durango	Old West mining & railway towns, archaeological sites; hiking, skiing	Jun-Sep	p784
Maui's Road to Hana	HI	Paia/Hana	Jungle waterfalls, beaches; hiking, surfing, swimming	year-round	p1126
Sawtooth Scenic Byway	ID	Ketchum/Stanley	jagged mountains, verdant forests; backpacking, hiking	May-Sep	p813
Going-to-the-Sun Road	MT	Glacier National Park	dizzying mountain passes, glacier views; camping, wildlife watching	Jul & Aug	p808
Turquoise Trail	NM	Albuquerque/Santa Fe	mining towns, quirky museums & folk art; cycling, hiking	Mar-May & Sep-Nov	p894
US 50	NV	Fernley/Baker	'Loneliest Road in America', epic wilderness; biking, hiking, spelunking	May-Sep	p837
Rte 28	NY	Stony Hollow/Arkville	Catskills mountains, lakes, rivers; hiking, leaf-peeping, tubing	May-Sep	p198
Historic Columbia River Hwy	OR	Portland/Portland	'gorge-ous' scenery, waterfalls, wildflowers; cycling, hiking	Apr-Sep	p1061
Rte 170	TX	Lajitas/Presidio	vast desert & mountain landscapes, hot springs; hiking, horseback riding	Feb-Apr & Oct-Nov	p749
Monument Valley	UT	Monument Valley	iconic buttes, movie-set locations; 4WD tours, horseback riding	year-round	p858
VT 100	VT	Stamford/Newport	rolling pastures, green mountains; hiking, skiing	Jun-Sep	p291
Hwy 13	WI	Bayfield/Superior	lakeside beaches, forests, farmlands; nature walks	May-Sep	p636
Kancamagus Hwy	VT	Conway/Lincoln	craggy mountains, streams & waterfalls; camping, hiking, swimming	May-Sep	p299

see the table below. Also look for the Scenic Drive boxed texts scattered throughout the destination chapters. Lonely Planet's Trips series of guidebooks covers more micro-regional to sprawling, epic road trips throughout the US, including top picks by local experts – click to [www.lonelyplanet.com/campaigns/usatrips](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/campaigns/usatrips) for free itinerary downloads and more.

# The Authors



## SARA BENSON

**Coordinating Author, California**

Midwestern by birth and Californian by choice, Sara has traveled extensively to all states except Alaska – though she dreams of heading to that wild north land as soon as possible. Already the author of more than 30 travel and nonfiction books, Sara has contributed to many Lonely Planet travel guides, including *California*, *Las Vegas Encounter*, *Southwest USA* and *Hawaii*. Her travel writing features on websites and in magazines and newspapers from coast to coast, including *National Geographic Traveler*. She has also worked as a national-park ranger. Follow her adventures at [www.indietraveler.net](http://www.indietraveler.net).



## AMY C BALFOUR

**Southwest**

Amy has hiked, biked, skied and gambled her way across the Southwest, finding herself returning with particular fondness to Moab, Zion, Park City and Taos. On this trip she discovered a few new favorites – Albuquerque, Silver City, Monument Valley – and she's already plotting her return. When she's not daydreaming about red rocks and green chili stew, Amy's writing about travel, food and the outdoors.



## ANDREW BENDER

**California**

Yet another Lonely Planet author with an MBA, this native New Englander first came to LA after B-school to work in film production, but he ended up leaving the industry to do what every MBA (and production dude) secretly dreams of: traveling and writing about it. Since then, his writing and photography have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Forbes*, *Hemispheres* (United Airlines' in-flight magazine), *SilverKris* (Singapore Airlines' in-flight magazine), some two dozen Lonely Planet titles including *Los Angeles & Southern California*, and his blog, [www.wheres-andy-now.com](http://www.wheres-andy-now.com). When not on the road, he can be seen biking the beach in Santa Monica or discovering LA's next great ethnic joint.

### LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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### ALISON BING

#### California

Over 15 years in San Francisco, Alison has done everything you're supposed to do in the city and many things you're not, including falling in love on the 7 Haight bus and gorging on Mission burritos before Berlioz symphonies. Alison holds degrees in art history and international diplomacy – respectable diplomatic credentials she regularly undermines with opinionated culture commentary for radio, newspapers, foodie magazines, and books, including Lonely Planet's *San Francisco Encounter*, *San Francisco City Guide* and *California Trips*.



### BECCA BLOND

#### Rocky Mountains

The author of more than 30 Lonely Planet guides, including *Thailand*, *Australia*, *South Africa*, *Tahiti & French Polynesia* and *Madagascar & Comoros*, Becca's adventures in travel writing have taken her across five continents in six years. But she's never happier than when she's assigned to write about her home turf, the Rocky Mountains. A Colorado resident for half her life, Becca has worked on the last two editions of this guide, and was the coordinating author of *Southwest USA* and *Arizona, New Mexico & the Grand Canyon Trips*. When not on the road, she lives in Boulder with her husband Aaron and their bulldog Duke.



### JEFF CAMPBELL

#### Hawaii

Jeff first made it to the Big Island in 1993, and he's been finding excuses to get back to Hawaii ever since (his honeymoon, for one – just like Elvis!). For Lonely Planet, he's been the coordinating author of the last two editions of *Hawaii* and the previous three editions of *USA*, plus other US titles. He lives with his wife and two kids in New Jersey.



### NATE CAVALIERI

#### California

A native of Michigan, Nate Cavaliere first dipped a toe in the Pacific while playing piano in a touring rock-and-roll outfit. He got hooked and moved West a few years later. He's lived in Northern California for six years, working as a journalist, travel writer and music critic. He's the author of seven Lonely Planet titles, including guides to California, Chicago, Puerto Rico and *Volunteer: A Traveller's Guide*.



### JIM DUFRESNE

**Alaska**

Jim has lived, worked and wandered across Alaska and even cashed a Permanent Fund Dividend check. As the sports and outdoors editor of the *Juneau Empire*, he was the first Alaskan sportswriter to win a national award from the Associated Press. As a guide for Alaska Discovery he has witnessed Hubbard Glacier shed icebergs the size of pickup trucks off its 8-mile-wide face. Jim now lives in Michigan but is constantly returning to the far north to write books on Alaska, including Lonely Planet's *Alaska* and *Hiking in Alaska*.



### LISA DUNFORD

**Texas**

As she moved there 15 years ago, and married a native, Lisa might be considered a naturalized Texan. She's driven the length and breadth of her very large adopted state, always on the lookout for good BBQ or a dance hall she hasn't seen. Before writing freelance, Lisa was an editor and restaurant reviewer at the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. Now, no matter where this wanderer roams, she always returns to the patch of east Texas riverfront that she, her husband and their dogs call home.



### NED FRIARY & GLENDA BENDURE

**New England**

Ned grew up in Massachusetts, Glenda in California, and together they've spent years traveling throughout Europe, Asia and the USA. They've set foot on 49 states – well, make it 50 if you count that two-hour stopover in Anchorage. When it finally came time to plant a garden, they zeroed in on Cape Cod, which remains their home base. Road trips and ocean swims are favorite pastimes. They've written extensively on the region and are coauthors of Lonely Planet's *New England* guide.



### MICHAEL GROSBERG

**New York, New Jersey & Pennsylvania**

Growing up in the Washington, DC, area, Michael spent holidays with his large New York City family and grew to know their neighborhoods as if they were his own. After several long overseas trips and many careers, including journalism and NGO work in South Africa, Michael returned to New York City for graduate school in comparative literature and taught literature and writing in several NYC colleges. He's lived in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn (and taught in the Bronx), and claims to know much of the city like the back of his hand. Of course, every chance he gets, he ditches Brooklyn and heads upstate or to Pennsylvania for the outdoors, or to the Jersey shore.

**ADAM KARLIN****Washington, DC & the Capital Region; The South**

Adam's Lonely Planet career has taken him from the Andaman Islands to the Zimbabwean border, but his first gig for the company was writing on his backyard: good ol' America, still one of his favorite places in the world to travel. For this *USA* guide, Adam, who can't figure out where or what to call home, got to write on the two cities in America that could most closely fit the definition for him. New Orleans vs Washington, DC – crawfish vs crabs – is a debate Adam happily engages in.

**MARIELLA KRAUSE****Florida**

As a fan of amusement parks, kitschy tourist attractions and states with pan-handles, Mariella was thrilled to take to the highways of Florida to uncover its every eccentricity. Having spent her formative years in the middle states, she's delighted to now call San Francisco home. She started her career as an advertising copywriter and now writes a little bit of everything, from books to newspaper articles to glossy brochures, all from her Victorian flat in Noe Valley, often with a cat in her lap. Mariella can tell you the difference between an alligator and a crocodile, if you'd like.

**JOSH KRIST****Southwest**

An Arizona State University alum, Josh has traveled all over Arizona and Nevada for business, pleasure and adventure. For Lonely Planet he's written about Vietnam, the Caribbean, Mexico and Thailand, and is a freelance alcohol and travel writer living in San Francisco. He won the 'Little Mr Phoenix' personality contest in 1976.

**EMILY MATCHAR****The South**

Emily was raised in the Tar Heel State and can still sometimes be found around Chapel Hill (though lately she's been bopping between New Mexico, Singapore and Sydney, Australia). Though she doesn't have an accent, her Southern nature manifests in an unlimited tolerance for pork and biscuits. She writes about travel, food and culture for a number of magazines, and has contributed to several other Lonely Planet guides, including the previous edition of *USA* and *The Carolinas, Georgia & the South Trips*.





## BRENDAN SAINSBURY

### Pacific Northwest

An expat Brit, Brendan's first exposure to Pacific Northwest culture came via a well-used copy of *Nevermind* by Washington grunge merchants Nirvana in 1992. Moving to BC, Canada, in 2004, he made his first sorties across the border to the Evergreen State in search of snow-capped volcanoes, enlightening music and a half-decent cup of coffee. Somewhere between Mt Baker and Seattle he found all three. Brendan has also coauthored Lonely Planet's *Washington, Oregon & the Pacific Northwest* guide.



## CÉSAR SORIANO

### Washington, DC & the Capital Region

Born in Washington, DC, and raised in Virginia on countless bushels of Chesapeake Bay blue crabs, César is one of the few folks who can actually call themselves a native Washingtonian. After graduating from George Mason University, César served in the US Army and worked as a celebrity reporter and war correspondent for *USA Today*. He's traveled to 55 countries but frequently returns home to some of his favorite DC-area attractions, including the National Mall, Shenandoah, Arlington, Rehoboth Beach and Washington Capitals hockey games. He lives in London with his equally wanderlusting wife and Baltimore native 'hon,' Marsha.



## ELLEE THALHEIMER

### The South

Ellee Thalheimer was born and raised in Little Rock, AR, under her mother's credo that you can't get any better than GRITS – Girls Raised in the South. Though she has left the Bible Belt to be a wilderness guide, yoga instructor, massage therapist and freelance writer based in Portland, OR, she's still able to appreciate the rich culture and unsung beauty of the South. Ellee has contributed to guidebooks to Mexico, the Caribbean and the Pacific Northwest for Lonely Planet, and has authored Lonely Planet's *Cycling Italy*.



## RYAN VER BERKMOES

### Great Plains

Ryan Ver Berkmoes first drove across the Great Plains with his family in the 1960s. Among the treasured memories are a pair of Wild West six-shooters he got at Wall Drug in South Dakota and which he still has (in a box someplace, not under his pillow). Through the years he has never passed up a chance to wander the back roads of America's heartland, listening to podcasts aplenty, finding beauty and intrigue where it's least expected and debating whether heaven would be a perpetual tank of gas or a bottomless plate of Kansas City burnt ends. Find more of his dreams at [www.ryanverberkmoes.com](http://www.ryanverberkmoes.com).



## JOHN A VLAHIDES

California

John A Vlahides lives in San Francisco. He cohosts the television series *Lonely Planet: Roads Less Travelled*, on the National Geographic channel, and is also cofounder of the California travel site 71miles.com. John studied cooking in Paris with the same chefs who trained Julia Child, and is a former luxury-hotel concierge and member of the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or, the international union of the world's elite concierges. John spends free time singing with the San Francisco Symphony, sunning on the nude beach beneath the Golden Gate Bridge, skiing the Sierra Nevada, and touring California on his motorcycle.



## KARLA ZIMMERMAN

Great Lakes

As a lifelong Midwesterner, Karla is well versed in the region's beaches, ballparks, breweries and pie shops. When she's not home in Chicago watching the Cubs...er, writing for newspapers, books and magazines, she's out exploring. For this gig, she polka danced in Wisconsin, picked blueberries in Michigan, faced Vikings in Minnesota and drank an embarrassing number of milk shakes in Ohio. Karla has traveled to more than 55 countries, and written for several Lonely Planet guidebooks covering the USA, Canada, Caribbean and Europe.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Karen Levine** earned a master's degree in art history at San Francisco State University and currently serves as managing editor, publications, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She has contributed essays, interviews and reviews to a number of art publications, including *Tema Celeste* and *Artweek*.

**John Mariani** is the author of *The Encyclopedia of American Food & Drink*, *America Eats Out: An Illustrated History of Restaurants, Taverns, Coffee Shops, Speakeasies, and Other Establishments That Have Fed Us for 350 Years* and, with his wife, Galina, *The Italian-American Cookbook*. He is also a food and travel correspondent for *Esquire* magazine and a wine columnist for Bloomberg news, radio and TV. He publishes and writes the weekly *Mariani's Virtual Gourmet Newsletter* ([www.johnmariani.com](http://www.johnmariani.com)).

**Amy Marr** has explored every US national park, hooped and pedaled all over the world, and led more than 40 biking and hiking trips. Now a cookbook publisher and travel writer, she's rooted in Marin County, where she bikes and hikes on Mt Tam and cooks up Italian feasts.

**Regis St Louis** is now a resident of NYC but is a Hoosier by birth, and grew up dreaming of big journeys across America and beyond. He's crossed the US by bus, train and automobile, and has traveled in dozens of countries across six continents. He has written for numerous Lonely Planet guides, including *New England*, *New York City* and *USA*, and his articles have appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*, among other publications.

**TophOne** is a DJ, graffiti artist and music writer from San Francisco. He grew up skating and going to punk-rock shows, but now rides his bike between bars and gigs across the West. A senior writer for *XLR8R* magazine, he pens the popular 'Lucky 13' column, is founder of the RedWine DJs and loves baseball.