

ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

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USA Driving Guide

With a comprehensive network of interstate highways, enthusiastic car culture and jaw-dropping scenery, the USA is an ideal road-tripping destination.

DRIVER'S LICENSE & DOCUMENTS

All US drivers must carry a valid driving license from their home state, proof of vehicle insurance and their vehicle's registration papers or a copy of their vehicle-rental contract.

Foreign drivers can legally drive in the USA for 12 months using their home driver's license. An International Driving Permit (IDP) isn't required, but will have more credibility with traffic police and will simplify the car-rental process, especially if your home license isn't written in English and/or doesn't have a photo. International automobile associations issue IDPs, valid for one year, for a fee. Always carry your home license with your IDP.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) has reciprocal agreements with some international auto clubs (eg Canada's CAA, AA in the UK). Bring your membership card from home.

INSURANCE

Liability insurance is legally required for all vehicles, although minimum coverage varies by state. When renting a car, check your home auto-insurance policy and, if applicable, your travel-insurance policy to see if rental cars are already covered. If not, expect to pay about \$15 a day for rental-car liability insurance.

Insurance against damage to the car, called Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), adds another \$15 to \$20 per day for rental cars. Even with a CDW/LDW, you may be required to

Driving Fast Facts

- ➔ **Right or left?** Drive on the right
- ➔ **Legal driving age** 16
- ➔ **Top speed limit** 70mph on some highways.
- ➔ **Best bumper sticker** 'Where the heck is Wall Drug?'
- ➔ **Best radio station** National Public Radio (NPR)

pay up to the first \$500 for any repairs. If you decline CDW/LDW, you will be held liable for damages up to the car's full value.

Some credit cards cover CDW/LDW if you charge the entire cost of the car rental to that card. If you have an accident, you may be required to pay the car-rental company first, then seek reimbursement from the credit-card issuer. Most credit-card coverage isn't valid for rentals over 15 days or 'exotic' models (eg convertibles, 4WD Jeeps).

RENTING A VEHICLE

To rent your own wheels, you'll usually need to be at least 25 years old, hold a valid driver's license and have a major credit card, *not* a check or debit card.

Cars

Rental car rates generally include unlimited mileage, but expect surcharges for additional drivers and one-way rentals. Airport locations may have cheaper base