

Scientists have figured out the ultimate United States road trip. Here it is

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RANDAL OLSON / GOOGLE MAPS

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Have you ever dreamed about taking a trip through all 50 states? It may sound impossible, but it doesn't have to be. [Randal Olson](#) used a mathematical equation to figure out the most optimal route that would allow travelers to hit every state (at least the 48 contiguous states) in the shortest amount of time.

The rules were simple: All 48 contiguous states must be visited, stops are only allowed at National sites (parks, monuments etc.) and the entire *car* trip must stay within the confines of the U.S. borders. "The result was an epic itinerary with a mix of inner city exploration, must-see historical sites, and beautiful natural landscapes. All that was left was to figure out the path that would minimize our time spent driving and maximize our time spent enjoying the landmarks," Olson wrote on his blog.

Using a lot of numbers and a bit of complicated math, Olson came up with this layout. The route, with clear roads and perfect weather, would take about 224 hours (more than 9 days) of driving time, but you can start at any point on the route and work from there. The trip itself would likely take 2-3 months.



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RANDAL OLSON

An interactive version of the map can be found [here](#).

The list of stops include:

Grand Canyon, AZ

Bryce Canyon National Park, UT

Craters of the Moon National Monument, ID

Yellowstone National Park, WY

Pikes Peak, CO

Carlsbad Caverns National Park, NM

The Alamo, TX

The Platt Historic District, OK

Toltec Mounds, AR

Elvis Presley's Graceland, TN

Vicksburg National Military Park, MS

French Quarter, New Orleans, LA

USS Alabama, AL

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, FL

Okefenokee Swamp Park, GA

Fort Sumter National Monument, SC

Lost World Caverns, WV
Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center, NC
Mount Vernon, VA
White House, Washington, DC
Colonial Annapolis Historic District, MD
New Castle Historic District, Delaware
Cape May Historic District, NJ
Liberty Bell, PA
Statue of Liberty, NY
The Mark Twain House & Museum, CT
The Breakers, RI
USS Constitution, MA
Acadia National Park, ME
Mount Washington Hotel, NH
Shelburne Farms, VT
Fox Theater, Detroit, MI
Spring Grove Cemetery, OH
Mammoth Cave National Park, KY
West Baden Springs Hotel, IN
Abraham Lincoln's Home, IL
Gateway Arch, MO
C. W. Parker Carousel Museum, KS
Terrace Hill Governor's Mansion, IA
Taliesin, WI
Fort Snelling, MN
Ashfall Fossil Bed, NE
Mount Rushmore, SD
Fort Union Trading Post, ND
Glacier National Park, MT
Hanford Site, WA
Columbia River Highway, OR
San Francisco Cable Cars, CA
San Andreas Fault, CA
Hoover Dam, NV

Bonus: You get to skip the hours of fields in Kansas and Nebraska!

If you want to plan your own trip, check out [Route XL](#) which lets you put in your address, any stops you want to make and fuel stops. The program spits out the most efficient route so you can save hours of planning time and hours in the car!

5 iconic cross-country routes that belong on every American's bucket list

<http://trekthehorizon.com/2016/07/25/5-iconic-cross-country-routes-that-belong-on-every-americans-bucket-list/?src=sidexpromo&et=syn&eid=53473&pid=53473&syn=car>



Traveling the United States in a car can be one of the most informative (and memorable) vacations you ever take. There are literally hundreds of historical sites, interesting landmarks, and natural wonders to see scattered over the contiguous 48. If you've ever stared at a map with a bit of wanderlust, you'll want to check out our list of the best routes you can take to maximize your time in the car. Each of the routes listed has some historical significance which should be enough to add them to your bucket list. In addition, each route touches on a few fun places you and your family or friends can stop to enjoy on your journey.

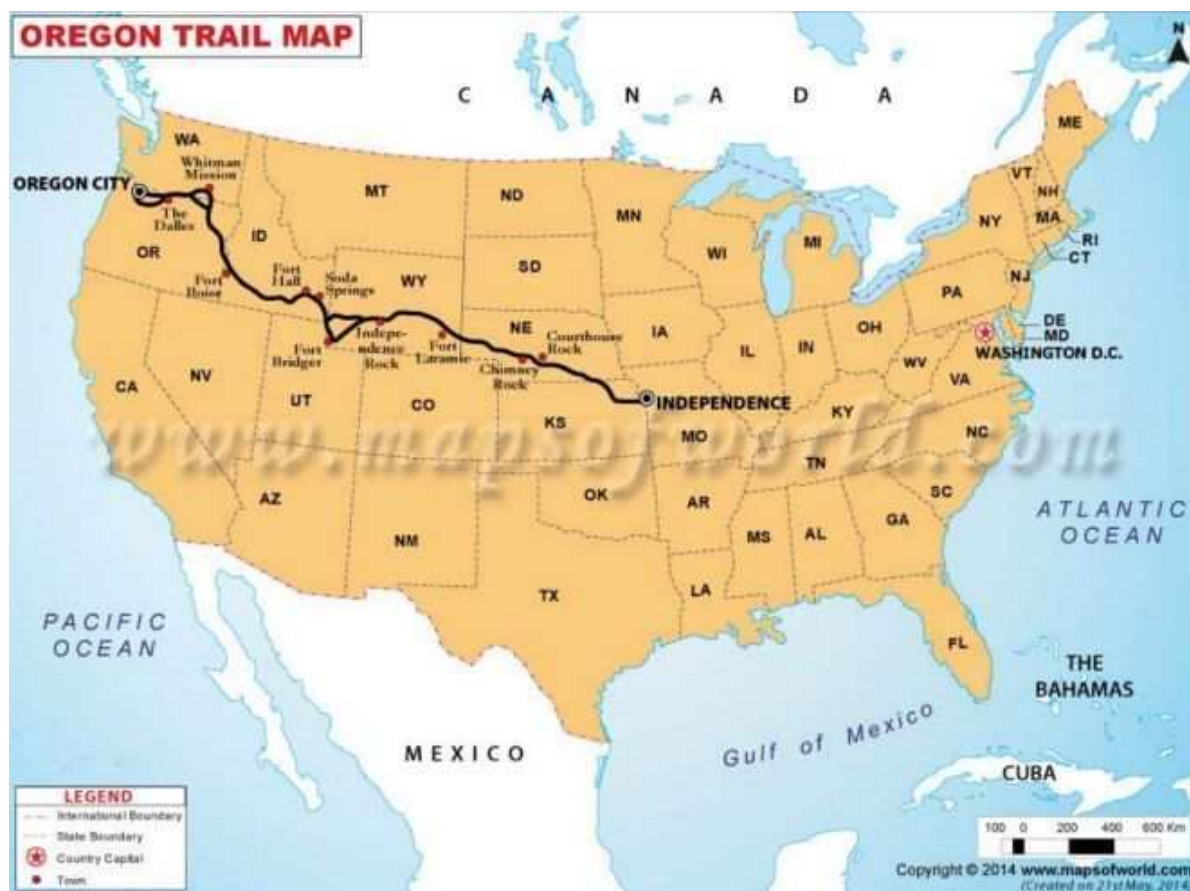
1. Route 66



If crooners like Bing Crosby, Chuck Berry, and The Rolling Stones are to be believed, you'll "get your kicks on Route 66." Route 66, formally known as the Will Rogers Highway, is one of the oldest highways, dating back all the way to 1926, according to [National 66](#).

Snag details for this route at [Driving Route 66](#) and you could see sites like 360 Chicago (The John Hancock Observatory), Abraham Lincoln's Home, Sky City, The Tower Theater, The Vrooman Mansion, Route 66 Auto Museum, and the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest, among others.

2. The Oregon Trail



If the only Oregon Trail you've been on involves a grainy computer screen, oxen and battling dysentery, you might want to consider the real deal. The Oregon Trail was used by gold seekers and travelers as early as the 18th century. Travelers took six months or more to travel from Independence Missouri to Oregon and California (and those who survived battled disease, confrontations with Native Americans, and low rations). Thankfully you can safely traverse the same [route](#) from your car.

You'll get to see sites like the National Frontier Trails Museum, Craters of the Moon, Council Bluffs, Devils gate, Oregon City, Rock Creek Station, Chimney Rock, Courthouse Rock, Fort Vancouver and Whitman Mission.

3. Great Northern Route (US-2)



Insight Guides

If you want to tackle the northern part of the country, head to the Great Northern Route which travels between Seattle Washington to the coast of Maine. While you can take the entire trip within the United States, an alternate route heads a little further north and explores bits of Canada. You will need a passport, but staying on the US-2 takes you between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, a sight many say should not be missed.

This route is named after a pioneer railroad that runs along the western half of the route, according to [Road Trip USA](#). You'll get to explore sites like the Space Needle, The Great Lakes, The Paul Revere House, Niagara Falls, Chicago Skyline, Badlands National Park, Mount Rushmore and Yellowstone National Park.

4. Southern Route (US-180 and US-80)



Wikimedia

Get up close and personal with the southern states via an interstate that traverses more than 1,000 miles of country. Head east on Route 80 from San Diego. You'll have to split off onto Route 180 during the second half of your trip before landing in Savannah Georgia. This route takes you near some interesting historical sites, including the scene of Bonnie and Clyde's historic demise.

[Red River Historian](#) gives more detailed instructions for staying on the original Interstate 80, hitting places like Division Street, Mineral Wells, Bankhead Highway and Mingus. Follow [Road Trip USA's](#) guide to view sites like the hometowns of Buddy Holly and Little Richard, Algodones Dunes and the Civil Rights Movement National Historic Trail.

5. The Loneliest Road



Wikimedia

If the idea of an open highway for miles upon miles upon miles, thrills you to the core, Route 50, also known as the Loneliest Road, may be just the trip you need. Route 50, stretches for more than 3,000 miles from Maryland to California. The route is so dubbed because the highway hits mostly rural towns, specifically in Nevada.

[Unusual Places](#) promises unparalleled views of natural beauty undisturbed by big towns. Instead, your eyes will be treated to views of mountains, sand, and sky. Keep an eye out for old gas stations and diners for a unique view into the past. You may want to make a pit stop at the [shoe tree](#) and add your own footwear to the collection. Find more information about the route [here](#).

ADVERTISEMENT

Do any of these road trips peak your interest? Have you ever traveled one of these routes? Share your adventure in the comments below.

RESOURCES [NATIONAL 66](#), [ROAD TRIP USA](#), [VISIT THE USA](#), [INSIGHT GUIDES](#), [RED RIVER HISTORIAN](#), [TRAVEFY](#), [ROAD TRIP USA](#), [NEWSWEEK](#), AND [UNUSUAL PLACES](#)