

BEST ROAD TRIPS IN EVERY STATE

Autumn. Crisp breezes. Vibrant landscapes. Let's drive!

BY STEPHANIE CITRON



Vast flocks of migratory birds can be viewed along Delaware's Bayshore Byway.

We scoured the nation for the best driving excursions

in every state. Many showcase stunning fall foliage backdrops. Others present unique and spectacular geography. In some cases, we bypassed the best-known byways to feature hidden gems. Oh, we surely missed some — there are just too many to choose from. (Send us your favorites at letters@saturdayeveningpost.com.) We hope to inspire you to venture out and explore this beautiful country we call America. Happy motoring!

For the latest safety precautions for traveling during the pandemic, go online to bit.ly/CovidTravelUS.



Louisiana's Bayou Teche Byway loops through the nation's largest wetland.



Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway showcases South Carolina's lush Blue Ridge Mountains.

ALABAMA

Wrapping around Mobile Bay on Alabama's southern tip, the 130-mile Coastal Connection Scenic Byway runs alongside pristine, powder-white Gulf beaches, shorebird sanctuaries, pecan and produce farms, and historic Fort Gaines and Fort Morgan.

ALASKA

Dream of driving from Fairbanks to the Arctic Circle? Then gas up and prepare to not see another human soul for hours, just lots of wildlife, including migrating caribou, Dall sheep, musk oxen, and arctic foxes. While spellbinding, the rugged 415-mile mountain-pass Dalton Highway is largely void of civilization and creature comforts.

ARIZONA

A favorite of motorcyclists and sports car enthusiasts, the harrowing 123-mile Coronado Trail, aka Devil's Highway, ascends, narrows, dips, and twists through more than 400 switchbacks as it climbs from high desert floor to 9,000-foot alpine forest.



California's Sierra Nevadas offer nonstop stunning views.



ARKANSAS

Arkansas's 363-mile section of the multi-state Great River Road runs alongside the Mississippi River through its Delta region, brimming with ancient Native American and Civil War sites, steamboats, and Mark Twain's boyhood haunts.

CALIFORNIA

U.S. Route 395, "El Camino Sierra," stretches from Mexico to Canada, and the California section packs in some of its most diverse landscapes: 14,000-foot peaks, tufa formations, ancient volcanos, ghost towns, and a bristlecone pine forest. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** The Gold Rush Highway journeys through California's gold rush era in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas.

COLORADO

Drivers cross the Continental Divide twice while traversing the Top of the Rockies Scenic Byway's 82 miles from Aspen to Copper Mountain. The road seldom drops below 9,000 feet while passing through three national forests — Pike, Arapaho, and White River — abounding with bighorn sheep, red-tail fox, and mountain goats.

CONNECTICUT

Rolling hills, covered bridges, historic taverns, charming villages... the vast array of Litchfield Hills Loop's scenic routes will have you wondering if you've been dropped in an Andrew Wyeth canvas. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Trailing the coastline, the 105-mile Connecticut Coast Scenic Highway between Stonington and Greenwich features salt marshes, wide beaches, and some of the East Coast's oldest towns.

DELAWARE

Tranquil, two-lane Bayshore Byway parallels the Delaware Bay and migratory flyways between New Castle and Lewes. Antique-filled towns give way to corn and soybean farms, wildlife refuges, and marshlands.

FLORIDA

The southernmost leg of Route 1 spans 165 miles over scenic bridges from Miami to Key West, showcasing coral islets, reedy wetlands, and unobstructed sunsets over the aquamarine sea. Watch for white herons, roseate spoonbills, pelicans, and dolphins.

GEORGIA

Three-state Russell Brasstown Scenic Byway travels 40 miles through Georgia's mountain country, crisscrossing Brasstown Bald (Georgia's highest peak), granite canyons, and the Chattahoochee River.

HAWAII

Just 11.2 miles long, the Big Island's Mauna Loa Road traverses lava fields and koa forests while climbing majestic Mauna Loa for panoramic views of Kilauea volcano. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Famed for its 620 curves and 59 bridges, Maui's Hana Highway abounds with fragrant South Pacific foliage (think rainforests, cascading waterfalls, and multi-hued beaches).

IDAHO

The Ponderosa Pine Scenic Byway's 131 wooded miles wend from Boise to Sun Valley, past old gold mines, Western towns, and national forests, including the massive Frank Church—River of No Return Wilderness.

ILLINOIS

Nicknamed a "living museum," 150-mile Illinois River Road Scenic Byway embodies more than 100 nature-based, historic, and cultural sights, including



One of five bridges on Iowa's Covered Bridges Scenic Byway.

Lewistown's Dickson Mounds Museum, which interprets the ecology of the Illinois River.

INDIANA

The Indiana track of America's first paved transcontinental route, the Lincoln Highway, includes a sundry of historic sites (some commemorating Abraham Lincoln) a circa-1889 synagogue, and lodgings from the early days of road-tripping.

IOWA

Travel the 82-mile Covered Bridges Scenic Byway across Madison County and see the five famous bridges. Also drive by the birthplace and museum of legendary actor John Wayne and the stunning Iowa Quilt Museum, both in Winterset.

KANSAS

Western Vistas Historic Byway, a 102-mile, one-time pioneer and cowboy trail (trod by the likes of "Wild

Bill" Hickok), encompasses extraordinary landscapes, 70-foot spire Niobrara Chalk formations, dinosaur fossils, and limestone-ledged buttes amid roaming buffalo and prairie dogs.

KENTUCKY

Trekking by Daniel Boone, Civil War soldiers, and European explorers, the 92-mile Wilderness Road Heritage Highway features Cumberland Gap National Park, mountain music venue Renfro Valley, and Kentucky's crafts capital, Berea.

LOUISIANA

Bayou Teche Byway loops 125 miles through lush bayous, Acadian cultural districts, and the country's largest wetland, the million-acre Atchafalaya Swamp Basin.

MARYLAND

Three hundred years of history, marked in significant mileposts, tollhouses,



WINTERSSET BRIDGES; VISIT MAINE

MAINE

The 125-mile Bold Coast Scenic Byway winds through Downeast Maine's craggy seashore, foggy coastal forests, blueberry barrens, and historic towns Millbrook and Eastport, filled with maritime heritage. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Old Canada Road National Scenic Byway, a mountain-hugging trail tracing a logging-era U.S.—Quebec trade route.

taverns, and stone arch bridges, line the Historic National Road's 170 miles spanning Baltimore to Maryland's western border.

MASSACHUSETTS

Mohawk Scenic Byway began as a Native American trade route. Centuries later, Benedict Arnold marched his army here. Today, its 69 miles offer centuries-old churches, mountain passes, pristine rivers, and quaint towns.

MICHIGAN

U.S. Route 23 stretches from Florida to northern Michigan. Avoid all of it ... except its final 200 miles along Lake Huron's Sunrise Coast. The panoramic Huron Shores Heritage Route snakes along hardwood forests, waterfalls, sand dunes, and freshwater beaches.

MINNESOTA

Road trippers pass by four of Eastern Minnesota's state parks, basalt rock cliffs, steep gorges, and 19th-century towns, including lovely Stillwater, following the 124 rolling miles of the St. Croix Scenic Byway. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway, 287 miles of prairies, woodlands, and Dakota heritage.

MISSISSIPPI

Traversing three states, the Natchez Trace was once an east-west passage for Native Americans, slave traders, and campaigning presidents. Mississippi's 308 miles include a Plaquemine-culture ceremonial site, the antebellum Windsor Ruins, and Elvis's birthplace.



Lake Huron's crystal waters along Michigan's Sunrise Coast.

MISSOURI

Just 27 miles long, Glade Top Trail in the Ozarks is the Show Me State's only National Forest Scenic Byway. Largely unchanged since its construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, its many panoramic "pull-outs" showcase limestone glades, tall-grass prairies, and eastern red cedars in the Mark Twain National Forest.

MONTANA

The All-American Scenic Byway Beartooth Highway abuts a plethora of national forests, climbs high alpine plateaus, overlooks glacial lakes, and crosses the 45th parallel — the halfway point between the North Pole and Equator. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Seeley-Swan Scenic Drive spans 90 miles between the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Mission Mountains.

NEBRASKA

Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway's 231 miles of rough, rambling topography made it a prime hideout for Old West bandits like the James Gang and Doc Middleton. Sights include Smith Falls (Nebraska's tallest), Monowi (a one-resident town), and authentic cowboy saloons.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Kancamagus Scenic Byway's 34.5 alpine miles through the White Mountains deliver monumental panoramic overlooks (especially the 2,860-foot Kancamagus Pass), dramatic bluffs, lush forests, and Sabbaday Falls.

NEW JERSEY

Bucolic 89-mile CR-519 feels more New England than central Jersey. This country lane twists through picturesque woodlands with idyllic rivers, wholesome



NEW YORK

We'll bet no other 30-mile drive ever felt as thrilling. Interconnected by a series of stunning mountain passes, the Adirondacks' High Peaks Scenic Byway ascends through verdant forests and past crystal-clear waterways, offering views of more than 40 peaks that soar over 4,000 feet.



NEVADA

The landscape fluctuates between high and low desert microclimates along 355-mile Great Basin Highway. Don't miss the Miller Point and Mathers Overlooks, Lehman Caves, and the 19th-century Ward Charcoal Ovens.

PURE MICHIGAN; SYDNEY MARTINEZ/TRAVELNEVADA

farmsteads, and tiny towns. Fittingly, it's nicknamed The Land of Make Believe Highway, after one of its many roadside attractions.

NEW MEXICO

Trail of the Mountain Spirits Scenic Byway weaves for around 100 miles through high desert forests and wilderness regions where Wild West explorers once roamed. Interspersed within jaw-dropping vistas are the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, desert towns, and the Continental Divide.

NORTH CAROLINA

Sandwiched between the Atlantic Ocean and Pamlico Sound, Outer Banks National Scenic Byway

breezes through 138 miles of driving (plus another 25 miles by ferry) alongside salt-air beaches, sea turtles splashing around barrier islands, quiet coastal villages, and wildlife refuges.

ALSO CHECK OUT: Famous Blue Ridge Parkway, America's longest linear park, runs 469 miles through the breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia.

NORTH DAKOTA

Extending 64 miles from the Killdeer Mountains to the Badlands, Killdeer Mountain Four Bears Scenic Byway's hilly landscape provides visual respite from North Dakota's flat, barren terrain. The drive is a cultural

tour of the region's history, featuring the 1864 Killdeer Mountain Battlefield and the reservations of native Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes.

OHIO

The 26.4-mile Hocking Hills Scenic Byway offers so many Instagram-worthy vistas and must-see historic sites, driving it could take the whole day. The road winds around Hocking Hills State Park's towering Black Hand sandstone cliffs, carved gorges, recessed caves, and plunging waterfalls.

OKLAHOMA

Nineteenth-century Texas ranchers drove millions of cattle across the Chisholm

Trail to Kansas for beef distribution in the north. The Oklahoma portion (now US-81) is exquisitely rural, with sightsee stops dedicated to cowboy and outlaw history.

OREGON

The Pacific Coast Scenic Byway follows Oregon's 363-mile coastline. Public beach access is protected by state law, ensuring opportunities for up-close views of soaring cliffs, marine caves, dunes, splashing sea lions, and naturally formed landmarks. **ALSO CHECK OUT:** Circling from Baker City to Le Grande, Hells Canyon Scenic Byway snakes above America's deepest (7,993 feet) canyon.

ROOST

PENNSYLVANIA

The 265-mile Scranton-to-Warren portion of Scenic Route 6 is at its most impressive in the Endless Mountains, Pennsylvania Wilds (home to Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon), and the hardwoods and hemlock of the Allegheny National Forest.

RHODE ISLAND

Covering just 13 miles in the nation's smallest state, RI-77 offers waterfront Sakonnet Peninsula vistas and alluring places to explore: Nonquit and Nannaquaket Ponds, the Emilie Ruecker Wildlife Refuge, and historic towns Tiverton Four Corners and Little Compton.

SOUTH CAROLINA

We love 118-mile Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway's picturesque path through the Blue Ridge Mountain's Piedmont region, featuring glistening green forests with cascading waterfalls, jagged granite cliffs, and the postcard-perfect mountain town Walhalla.

SOUTH DAKOTA

The 68-mile Peter Norbeck National Scenic Byway drives like an amusement park ride, tackling hairpin curves, spiraling bridges, plunging tunnels, and granite pinnacles. Mt. Rushmore and Cathedral Spires are added bonuses.

TENNESSEE

The Cherochala Skyway gives you mile-high views of the Cherokee and Nantahala National Forests as it zigzags past freshwater mountain lakes and waterfalls, crimson



WASHINGTON

The 440-mile Cascade Loop encompasses three scenic byways, touring through Washington's diverse array of ecosystems: Puget Sound islands, open desert, lush forest, craggy alpine peaks, sagebrush lowlands, and cityscapes.

and gold vistas, and apricot fall foliage.

TEXAS

The longest highway in Texas, the 542-mile, two-lane Highway 16 travels through dusty ranchlands, red rock hills, cowboy towns, and the Hill Country's "Swiss Alps of Texas."

UTAH

Traversing the Grand Staircase-Escalante, Henry Mountains, and Capital Reef Natural Park, the otherworldly geology along 123-mile Scenic Byway 12 doesn't disappoint with its random arches, "hoodoo" rock formations, and deep-slot canyons.

VERMONT

The 51-mile Northeast Kingdom Scenic Byway showcases quintessential Vermont backcountry: hilly farm towns, colorful

mountains, covered bridges, and shimmering lakes. **ALSO CHECKOUT:** The Crossroad of Vermont Byway with panoramic views of and from the Green Mountains.

VIRGINIA

Skip Skyline Drive, swarming with bumper-to-bumper scenery seekers. Southbound from Winchester to Roanoke, the Wilderness Road meanders through the Shenandoah Valley's historic towns and natural wonders: vertiginous sandstone cliffs, gushing waterfalls, and majestic mountains.

WEST VIRGINIA

The 180-mile Midland Trail National Scenic Byway offers mountain landscapes; plummeting waterfalls; purveyors of authentic Appalachian craft food, drink, and art; mountain-music venues;

and adventure destinations for rafting, spelunking, and fly fishing.

WISCONSIN

The 100-mile Lower Wisconsin River Road through the Driftless Area was Wisconsin's first designated scenic byway. Following the Wisconsin River, it winds around rocky bluffs, through mysterious bottomlands, and into quaint river towns.

WYOMING

Encompassing 162 miles of steep mountain passes and verdant forests, through Grand Tetons National Park and famous Jackson Hole, Parks Centennial Scenic Byway is cited as one of the finest drives in the Rockies.

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