

AMERICA'S FAMOUS ROUTE 66 REVISITED

15 days

The history of Route 66 has been a natural progression: from prehistoric Indian trails, to pioneers' wagon trains, to a modern highway. Traveling on Route 66 reminds us of what is missing on today's super highways – and in our lives. Sit back, relax, and enjoy a part of Americana that gives you a sense of history, romance and adventure. Join us for a journey along "America's Main Street!"

Day 1 Fly to Chicago. Welcome to the "Windy City." Upon arrival you will be met by your Tour Director at the airport for your transfer to your Chicago hotel for the next two nights.

Day 2 Chicago. Chicago is the start of famous Route 66 and home to the world's tallest building, legends such as Al Capone and his notorious gang, and of course countless jazz and blues clubs. Today see the magnificent Chicago skyline from a unique vantage point, the Chicago River and locks. This afternoon is at leisure. Ride the elevator to the top of the Sears Tower, or stroll in Grant Park along the waterfront. Perhaps this evening you would enjoy dinner on the Navy Pier, with its collection of shops and restaurants. (B)

Day 3 Chicago-Springfield, IL-St. Louis. Travel across the fertile Illinois farmlands today en route to Springfield. There's time to visit SHEA'S GAS STATION MUSEUM, a favorite photo stop for Route 66 travelers. Enjoy the charming and eclectic collection and hear a few stories about the Mother Road. Springfield is also the former home of President Abraham Lincoln. We'll visit his ABRAHAM LINCOLN HOME AND GRAVE after his untimely assassination in 1865. We then cross the mighty Mississippi River and continue to St. Louis, the "Gateway to the West". Tonight enjoy one of the many jazz and blues clubs the city has to offer. (B)

Day 4 St. Louis-Branson. This morning your city tour includes the towering GATEWAY ARCH, which commemorates the city's key role in westward expansion. Be sure to visit the museum under the arch, celebrating the famous expedition of Lewis and Clark 200 hundred years ago. We continue to trace the old Route 66 heading south west through the Missouri countryside to Branson, one of the country's biggest music and entertainment centers. This evening enjoy your included BRANSON SHOW. (B)

Day 5 Branson-Oklahoma City. Today we head into cowboy country as we enter Oklahoma, once known as Indian Territory. Travel over historic lands and learn how in 1838, the US government forcibly removed more than 16,000 Cherokee Indian people from their homelands and sent them here. The impact to the Cherokee was devastating and became known as the Trail of Tears. We'll make a stop in Tulsa, a city with a mix of Southern charm, Eastern elegance, and Western flair. Later today we arrive in Oklahoma City. (B)

Day 6 Oklahoma City-Amarillo. Your city tour this morning will include the NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF FAME and WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM. Visitors of all ages will enjoy an adventure into the Old West at this national memorial to the American cowboy. We then continue across Oklahoma and into the panhandle of Texas where we'll visit PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK and travel the scenic trails used by Native Americans, early Spanish explorers, buffalo hunters and pioneers. We overnight in Amarillo, home to the Texas oil industry and the cattle market. (B)

Day 7 Amarillo-Tucumcari-Santa Rosa-Albuquerque. As we leave Amarillo, we'll see the CADILLAC RANCH, a quirky art sculpture consisting of a collection of Cadillacs. We then cross into New Mexico where our first stop today is Tucumcari, a classic Route 66 town in every sense of the word. Hear the ancient Indian fable on how Tucumcari received its name, shop for souvenirs at Tepee Curios, and see the neon lights of the Blue Swallow hotel that has been serving travelers of Route 66 since 1939. We continue along old Route 66 west to Santa Rosa. Look for the neon signs of the good ol' days: Comet Drive In, Silver Moon, Sun and Sand, and in the still-grinning faces of Fat Man billboards outside of town. We'll visit the ROUTE 66 AUTO MUSEUM to see memorabilia and cars of the era. Later today we arrive in Albuquerque. (B)

Day 8 Albuquerque. This morning's included guided WALKING TOUR includes Albuquerque's Old Town, site of the city's original settlement. Next we'll visit Central Avenue where many of the original Route 66 buildings and businesses still stand. Perhaps stop at the 66 Diner and sample a real American hamburger and a rich, creamy malt that taste the way they're supposed to. The remainder of the day is yours to explore this fascinating city. This evening why not join us on our optional trip up to 10,378 foot Sandia Peak for an exhilarating ride on one of the world's longest aerial tramways? (B)

Day 9 Albuquerque-Gallup-Winslow-Flagstaff. This morning we visit ACOMA SKY CITY home of the Pueblo Indians, situated on 357-foot-high sandstone rock. It is considered to be the oldest inhabited village in the United States. We then continue to Gallup located on Route 66 and where trading posts featuring unique Native American jewelry, baskets, hand-woven rugs dot the city. Route 66 buffs will enjoy Winslow's historic downtown district, located right on the Mother Road, where shops offer Route 66 and railroad memorabilia. Make sure to visit "The Corner" made famous by the Eagles' song "Take it Easy". The verse "Standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona" helped put Winslow on the map and draws visitors from far and wide. Our overnight is in Flagstaff, nestled at the base of the San Francisco Mountains. (B)

Day 10 Flagstaff-Grand Canyon-Williams. We deviate from Route 66 to see one of the 7 natural wonders of the world, the GRAND CANYON. There's time to wander along the canyon rim and experience breath-taking views. You may also decide to join the optional helicopter "flightseeing" tour for a once-in-a-lifetime-experience. Later this afternoon, we return to Route 66 and overnight in historic Williams. The entire downtown area is listed in the National Register for Historic Places. Make sure to appreciate the neon signs of the intact circa 1940's "Motel Row". (B)

Day 11 Williams-Oatman-Kingman-Las Vegas. Today we journey on passing historic Route 66 towns such as Seligman, Grand Canyon Caverns, Peach Springs, and Kingman. Your Tour Director will share stories and tell you the history of this unique area. We'll visit Oatman, a mining town where wild burros still wander the main street. Watch the gunfight on Main Street, browse the storefronts or visit the Oatman Hotel believed to be haunted by the ghosts of Clark Cable and Carol Lombard who spent their honey moon here in 1939. We detour once again from Route 66 in order to visit the bright lights and excitement of Las Vegas. (B)

Day 12 Las Vegas. Full day at leisure. Relax by the pool or walk the famous Las Vegas "Strip" with its casinos, shopping plazas and other attractions. A variety of optional excursions are available, including a raft trip through dramatic Black Canyon on the Colorado River. In the evening, there's a chance to join us for an optional night out at a dazzling show featuring top Vegas entertainment. (B)

Day 13 Las Vegas-Calico Ghost Town-Los Angeles. We leave "Sin City", cross the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains, on our way to Los Angeles. We make a stop at CALICO GHOST TOWN to relive the wild, tough days when miners struck it rich. Time to stop in Barstow to visit the ROUTE 66 MOTHER ROAD MUSEUM. We then head for the Santa Monica Pier, the official end of Route 66. The remainder of our city tour includes Beverly Hills, Sunset Strip, Hollywood, Mann's Chinese Theatre and the famous Kodak Theatre. Join us tonight for an optional farewell dinner celebrating your journey along "America's Main Street." (B)

Day 14 Los Angeles. A full day to explore this exciting city at your leisure. Spend the day at Disneyland, Universal Studios or take our Inside Historic Hollywood tour where you'll discover the history and glamour of Hollywood through its famous and infamous landmarks and buildings. Others may want to shop for some last minute souvenirs or just relax by your hotel's pool. (B)

Day 15 Los Angeles. Transfer to the airport for your flight home. (B)

Meals: B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner