

ROUTE 66 TURNS 100



Sign at end of Route 66, Santa Monica, CA (Getty Images)

Map by Peter Sucheski



2026 marks the 100th birthday of America's most iconic road: Route 66. Established in 1926, the legendary route stretched 2,448 miles from Chicago to California. Since then, the road and its famous shield-shaped sign has become an emblem of Americana. In bad times, migrants fleeing the Dust Bowl drove Route 66 to California, their cars weighed down by

possessions and unrealized dreams. In good times, World War II veterans saw the road as a path to freedom, loading their families into cars to explore the charm of small towns, California's sunny beaches and Disneyland.

While it was decommissioned in 1985 and replaced by five interstates, the remnants of the road have not lost their allure for countless travelers seeking nostalgia and

seemingly simpler times. In Chicago, find the sign marking the start of Historic Route 66 at Adams Street and Michigan Avenue.

As you follow the road through Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, you'll find small towns celebrating the history of the American road trip, especially this year as the centennial gets underway.





Celebrate 100 years of Route 66 by tracing the iconic Mother Road through New Mexico and Arizona, finding nostalgic charm along the way.



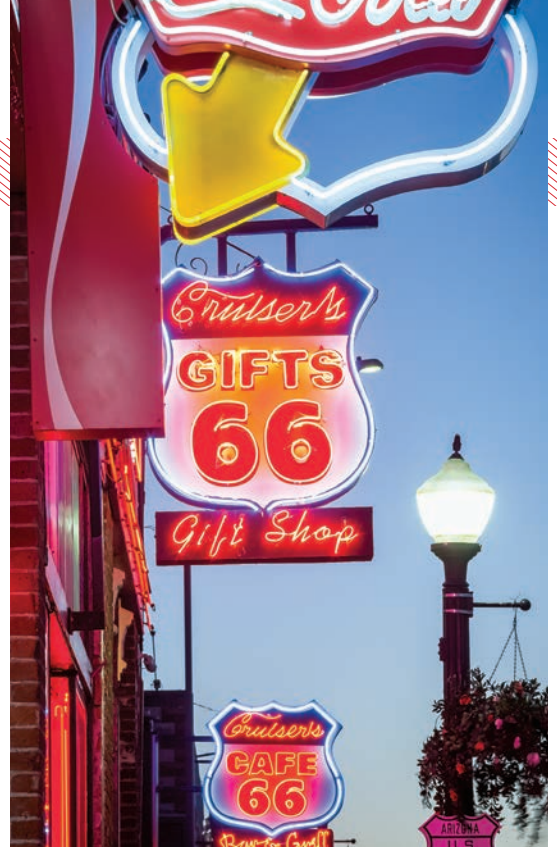
Traveling at least one section of Historic Route 66 is part of the ultimate American bucket list, and this year is the best time to do it as we celebrate its 100th birthday. We've picked a road trip running through New Mexico and Arizona, including the spectacular Grand Canyon, to give you a taste of this piece of history steeped in nostalgic Americana.

While the Mother Road may conjure images from the 2006 movie, *Cars*, where a desperate (and fictional) Route 66 town has been left behind thanks to the new Interstate System, you'll be delighted to find that reality is a different story. As you stop in Arizona towns like Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams and Ash Fork, you'll realize they've accomplished the impossible. They've frozen time, offering the past as a vibrant, present-day experience. You'll hear it at vintage gas stations playing 1960s music. You'll taste it in your root beer float and hamburger served in 1950s-style diners like Falcon 66 in Winslow. You'll feel it as you drive the open two-lane road that cuts through some of the country's vast stretches of prairie and desert.

While you could take this road trip any year, 2026 will be full of fun events commemorating a century of memories. Classic car shows in Winslow, Holbrook, Williams and Flagstaff—plus the June vintage car rally along the entire length of the route—may make you do a double take to see if you've really been transported back in time. Festivals, like Winslow's two-day music and food event in September called Standin' on the Corner Festival, take the celebrations up a notch. And if you're a runner, ultramarathons and color runs alike will take on sections of the historic route. Find a full calendar at route66centennial.org.

Today, the lyrics Nat King Cole sang still embody the spirit of this lively stretch of highway: "Go west, it's best, travel my way / Take the highway that's the best / Get your kicks on Route 66." What follows are the road's highlights when your wheels traverse New Mexico and Arizona, home to the longest uninterrupted stretch of Historic Route 66.

PHOTOS: Route 66 neon sign in Williams, Arizona, Grand Canyon South Rim at sunrise (Grant Ordelheide)





Biking in Galisteo Basin Preserve
(Courtesy of Santa Fe County)

More Than a Desert Stopover

Santa Fe is a world class destination, but there are fascinating sights dotting the stunning landscape around it. Lose the crowds and enjoy spectacular outdoor activities with these six things to do.

By Tori Peglar

1 Pecos National Historical Park

See what was once one of the largest pueblos in the Southwest, tour the property of a former Hollywood actress and explore the remnants of an 18th-century Spanish mission at this park 25 miles southeast of Santa Fe.

TIP: Join a ranger for one of several fun tours, including the Ancestral Sites, Civil War Walking and the Forked Lightning Ranch House Caravan tours, in which you'll explore the property once owned by Oscar-winning Greer Garson and husband Buddy Fogelson.

2 Galisteo Basin Preserve

Experience dry creek beds weaving through grasslands and rocky outcroppings at this nature preserve, which offers 30 miles of trails for hikers, bikers and horseback riders.

TIP: There's intermittent cell service here. Be sure to bring water, sunscreen and snacks with you.

3 Lamy

A former bustling stop on the Atchinson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Lamy, pronounced "Lay-me," is a quaint town that's attracting artists, writers and food lovers these days.

TIP: Enjoy a drink and a delicious meal at Legal Tender Saloon & Eating House located in a historic structure built in 1881. Relax on the patio and watch Amtrak's Southwest Chief pull into the depot across the street twice a day.

4 Cerrillos Hills State Park

Five miles of trails in Cerrillos Hills State Park offer you a glimpse of more than 1,000 years of turquoise mining history, plus magnificent views of four mountain ranges.

TIP: Check the park's schedule for its Star Parties, where a guide reveals galaxies, star clusters, planets and constellations in the sky above you. The park also hosts birding hikes and other fun events.

5 El Rancho de las Golondrinas

An easy detour, this gem celebrates the state's rich cultural heritage from the 17th and 18th centuries with costumed docents, historic buildings and annual festivals.

TIP: The October Harvest Festival offers cider making with a traditional apple press and other hands-on activities that bring New Mexico's unique history to life.

6 Ojo Santa Fe Spa Resort

Stay at Ojo Santa Fe Spa Resort, an award winning retreat offering secluded and warm outdoor pools with spring fed waters. Indulge in wellness by joining a yoga session followed by getting a hot stone massage.

TIP: Savor a meal at Blue Heron, which showcases seasonal ingredients grown on the resort's farm. The Three Sisters Tamale is a delicious blend of squash, pinto bean ragout and New Mexico's famous Chimayo red chile.

Learn more at SantaFeNMTrue.com.



Kayaking on Clear Creek
(Courtesy Winslow Chamber of Commerce)

Take It Easy

In Winslow, see the best eras of the Southwest brought back to life, from a historic Harvey House to Route 66.

By Mikaela Ruland and Tori Peglar

It can be argued that Winslow, Arizona was saved by a song and a boarded-up hotel that was slated for demolition.

The Eagles may have put this hardscrabble Route 66 town on the pop culture map with their 1972 hit song *Take It Easy*, but the now revitalized La Posada Hotel is what has invited visitors back to kick up their feet and stay a while.

When it opened in 1929, La Posada was considered the finest Harvey House in the Southwest, attracting guests like President Harry Truman, Albert Einstein and Amelia Earhart, and drawing travelers from Route 66. All that changed when I-40 bypassed the town and Route 66 was decommissioned. After La Posada shut its doors to guests in 1958, the building languished for years as the Santa Fe Railway offices before being slated for demolition.

Luckily for Winslow, Allan Affeldt convinced the railway to sell it to him

and—with the help of his wife, artist Tina Mion, and hotel general manager, Daniel Lutzick—set about restoring the 54-room hotel to its former glory. Today, you can dine, stay or simply visit the historic hotel. Wander the public spaces which are filled with art, visit the Affeldt Mion Museum, and enjoy dinner at the award winning Turquoise Room.

Afterward, visit Standin' on the Corner Park which features two bronze sculptures—one of a balladeer named “Easy,” and the other a tribute to Glenn Frey, the front man for the Eagles—plus a vibrant trompe l’oeil-style mural of a girl in a flatbed Ford. Considered the most famous corner on the Mother Road, you’ll hear classic rock tunes from speakers in the park and be poised for the classic Winslow photo opp. Stop in the Old Trails Museum which tells the history of Winslow’s stretch of Route 66. You can find the original concrete roadway on 2nd and 3rd streets. Be sure to drive into town headed east on 3rd Street going at least 35 mph. A special texture on the roadway will cause your tires to hum *Take it Easy*, so roll down your windows and enjoy the ride.

Across the street, grab a bite to eat at Flatbed Ford Café, which serves classic breakfast fare with a Southwestern twist. Think breakfast burritos alongside banana bread French toast. Another great spot is Falcon 66, a classic diner where you can

order a burger and root beer float and admire the giant mural. For a sampling of the local craft beer scene, RelicRoad Brewing is a local favorite with a dog friendly patio where you can enjoy a laid-back afternoon.

Winslow is taking its Route 66 Centennial celebrations seriously. From kayak races down the Mother Road to a color run and low rider car show, there is tons going on throughout the entire year. Stop into the visitor center, once a historic trading post, for more information on events and to take a look around. You can also find a list of events at visitwinslow.com. The visitor center is where you can pick up a scavenger hunt list, adding a challenge to your time in Winslow. Find all the Route 66 themed items listed.

If you’re in town for a long weekend and looking for some outdoorsy adventures, head to McHood Park at Clear Creek Reservoir five miles southeast of downtown where you can kayak or stand-up paddleboard on the lake or along Clear Creek itself. Rent your equipment at Clear Creek Rentals in town.

Homolovi State Park is another beautiful recreation area where you can stretch your legs, tour ancient buildings and spend the night under the stars.

Learn more at VisitWinslow.com.

Come, Discover & Take It Easy in Winslow!

Standin' on a Corner & So Much More

Celebrate the 100th Birthday of the Mother Road With Us!



Pick up an Arizona Route 66 Passport at the Winslow Visitor Center, and while you're there, learn more than you knew you wanted to know about our historic little city.

For many travelers, Winslow will offer an authentic "Arizona small town" experience. This is in part due to Winslow's location on the historic Route 66, a classic American journey with many iconic stops, and whose spirit the town has preserved in the form of historic hotels, vibrant cultural centers, and unique American imagery built into the very streets and sidewalks of the city. In fact, Winslow is one of the numerous iconic stops on Route 66 in Arizona, and much of this world-famous adventure's imagery is preserved on Winslow's famous 1st Street Pathway, which maintains the classic vibe of old Route 66 road trips, with up-close and personal views of passing trains.



www.visitwinslow.com

Mountain Time

Flagstaff is an ideal home base for outdoor exploring, but it's also a destination in its own right, with a vibrant downtown, award winning restaurants, and a proud dark sky culture. Here are five ways to get acquainted with this thriving town.

by Susanna Klingenberg

1 Explore the Cosmos

As the world's first International Dark Sky City, Flagstaff is fiercely proud of its spangled night skies. Get an up close view of stars, planets and galaxies at Lowell Observatory (pg. 39), but it's not the only spot to feel the city's bent toward astrotourism. Downtown, you'll notice the special streetlights—Narrow-Band Amber LEDs, with shields—to keep the night sky dark. You can learn about the work of the passionate Dark Sky Coalition, which ensures residents and visitors can continue to encounter the universe from Flagstaff. Just a short trip from the city, you'll see the 50,000 year-old Meteor Crater, which stretches 50 football fields across. While you're at the crater, visit the Barringer Discovery Center and Space Museum to learn about meteor impacts around the globe.

2 Stamp Your National Parks Passport

The Grand Canyon might be Flagstaff's most famous neighboring park, but it's only the beginning of all there is to explore within two hours of the city. Visitors can easily access Petrified Forest National Park, as well as six national monuments: Wupatki, Sunset Crater Volcano, Montezuma Castle, Tuzigoot, Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon, and Walnut Canyon.

The cliff dwellings of Walnut Canyon preserve the vibrant life of Sinagua cave dwellers who lived and farmed there in the 12th and 13th centuries. Journey down 273 stairs and walk right through the granaries and intact dwellings on the cliff face.

3 See the World's Largest Ponderosa Pine Forest

Flagstaff is set amid an expansive emerald forest that stretches from the Grand Canyon all the way into New Mexico—the largest tract of ponderosa pines in the world. The options for hiking and biking are many, but if you're seeking solitude, download the digital Flagstaff Trails Passport at discoverflagstaff.com and find more than 30 lesser-known trails to help visitors find a peaceful respite in the forest.

For a steep challenge, climb the 3.5-mile Little Bear Trail on the east side of Mount Elden and take in the view toward Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument. If you're looking for an easier stroll, take the mostly flat, 2-mile Nate Avery Trail from Buffalo Park, right in the city.



4 Explore the Museum of Northern Arizona

When the Museum of Northern Arizona was founded almost 100 years ago, some of its first employees were local Indigenous people who helped preserve Native American artifacts and history. The museum continues to bring Indigenous culture to life, and its annual Heritage Festival in June showcases Indigenous dancers, basket makers, potters and jewelers.

The museum also explores the region's varied flora, fauna and geology, including some impressive fossils discovered there. All ages will enjoy the hands-on exhibits and leave with an enlarged sense of the region's rich history, diverse ecosystems and thriving culture.

5 Sample the Award Winning Restaurant Scene

Flagstaff has become a culinary destination in recent years with a buzzy restaurant landscape. Its more than 200 eateries include four James Beard nominees within walking distance in the historic downtown, located right along Historic Route 66. After you've spent a day exploring outside, drop in for a cold beer and wood-fired pizza at Dark Sky Brewing—one of Flagstaff's eight award winning craft breweries. Dark Sky has several house staples, but beer connoisseurs will find small-batch delights, using unusual hops and unexpected flavor combinations like The Wooden Crusade, a sour beer with notes of cherry blossom tea.

Learn more at DiscoverFlagstaff.com.

PHOTOS: Lowell Observatory (Abe Snider), Heritage Festival at the Museum of Northern Arizona (Museum of Northern Arizona) Images courtesy of Flagstaff, Arizona

Galaxy Gazing

By Tori Peglar


Discover the rings of Saturn or the arms of a distant galaxy at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, the world's first International Dark Sky City. Located atop Mars Hill one mile from downtown, this incredible family friendly venue was founded in 1894 and is filled with rich history. In 1930, Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto here.

Today, you can explore the moon, planets, beautiful galaxies and more through the advanced telescopes of the Giovale Open Deck Observatory. Unique in the world, this innovative observing plaza includes a luminescent walkway, solstice and equinox markers and a building that rolls aside to reveal six incredible telescopes. Experience the universe and its wonders with the historic and publicly accessible Clark Telescope, one of the largest in Arizona, and cap off your evening with a laser-guided constellation tour. Or, check out the new Marley Foundation Astronomy Discovery Center which features a two-story, 16K LED-screen theater, a rooftop dark sky planetarium with heated seats, and more fun for all ages. In 2026, keep an eye out for Route 66 themed presentations and exhibits.


Visit at [1400 W. Mars Hill Road](https://www.lowell.edu) or [Lowell.edu](https://www.Lowell.edu).

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A Taste of History

By Mikaela Ruland

Tucked away from the glare of neon lights and tourist kitsch, the tiny town of Ash Fork offers a different taste of Route 66. Start at the free Route 66 Museum, filled completely with donated relics from the town and Mother Road's past. You'll find intricate dioramas made by a local artist showcasing the Escalante Hotel, a Harvey House property, in 1907 and the intersection of Route 66 that ran between 2nd and 4th streets. The five gas stations show just how bustling this spot was before the Interstate bypassed it. Check out a 1926 Model T Ford, alongside a 1940s firetruck, and the original town jail that arrived on a railroad boxcar from Yuma. Outside, take the history walk guided by bronze plaques sharing more of the town's past and then head to Centennial Park where trains still come through several times a day. It's worth strolling the small town to check out all the historic buildings.

Take a detour five miles west of Ash Fork to hop on the longest continuous intact stretch of Historic Route 66 at Crookton Road. For more outdoor adventure, don't miss a walk between Stone and Steel dams. These two historic dams brought water to power the steam railroad and today are a great spot for a picnic. At dinner, head to The Ranch Cafe, a homey Ash Fork staple that serves a fantastic green chile burger and fries.

Learn more at [AshForkRt66HistoricMuseum.com](https://www.AshForkRt66HistoricMuseum.com).

Ash Fork, AZ: The Town That Holds the History

RT 66 MUSEUM

From Wagon Trails to Route 66—It All Started Here



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Pete's Gas Station Museum
(Courtesy of Experience Williams)

Only in Williams

There are 2,448 miles of Route 66 packed with neon signs, jukeboxes and sentimentality galore but in Williams, you'll find several quirky attractions you won't get anywhere else. Located along the route and on the doorstep to Grand Canyon National Park, here are five stops you don't want to miss.

By Mikaela Ruland

■ Grand Canyon Railway

It takes about an hour to drive to the South Rim from Williams, or you could take the train. A ride on the Grand Canyon Railway not only saves time spent in traffic and searching for parking, it's a nostalgic, Old West experience that's perfect for the whole family. Hop on board a vintage coach and feel like you've gone back in time to when rail was the main way to access the canyon. Along the journey take in the scenery and find yourself smiling ear to ear at the staged train robbery and cowboy sing-alongs.

■ Bearizona

Take a walk on the wild side when you visit Bearizona, a drive-through wildlife park. Along the three-mile drive you'll see free-roaming animals that call North America home like bears, wolves, bison

and bighorn sheep. There's also a walking trail through Fort Bearizona where you can spot smaller creatures in enclosures like river otters, raccoons and even a jaguar. Up-close wildlife encounters throughout the day help you learn more about the park's animal friends, nearly 50% of which are wild rescues who could no longer live alone in nature.

■ Canyon Coaster Adventure Park

If you're a thrill seeker, this is the spot for you. Enjoy a peaceful ascent through the ponderosa pines before racing down a mile-long mountain track including 360-degree corkscrews. You control your speed, so make this adventure as adrenaline inducing or chill as you prefer. You'll also find a year round tubing hill, with slick tracks to slide down in the summer and snowy hills to enjoy in the winter.

■ Vintage Car Events

2026 marks Route 66's centennial and in Williams, the year will start off with a bang—literally. On New Year's Eve, the town is planning a one-of-a-kind celebration including a wine and beer festival and fireworks display, but the pinnacle of the evening comes at midnight. As soon as the clock strikes 12, a 1927 Chevrolet Capitol will be dropped from high above a vintage gas station, marking the start of a year that's sure to play out in retro style. In June, don't miss the annual Historic Route 66 Car Show where classic vehicles of every make, model and vintage will cruise through town.

■ Rodeo Culture

There's more history to Williams than just Route 66 lore. It's also a hot spot for a Wild West staple: rodeo. On Friday and Saturday nights in June and July, head to the Williams Rodeo Grounds, just off Route 66, for a fun night of bull riding, barrel racing and team roping, plus great local eats. You'll also find many rodeo events throughout the year, including several World Series Team Roping qualifiers.

Learn more at [ExperienceWilliams.com](https://www.experiencewilliams.com).



Experience Williams and enjoy Route 66, outdoor adventures, exciting attractions, and so much more.



Visit experiencewilliams.com to begin your trip planning today!





Desert Oasis Meets the American Road Trip

This boutique Williams hotel is the perfect pairing for your national park adventure.

By Mikaela Ruland

As one of the most iconic natural places in the world, a visit to the Grand Canyon is more than just ticking off another bucket list travel destination. It's a transformational experience. After bearing witness to the magnitude of this colossal canyon, representing billions of years of Earth's history, checking into a generic chain hotel just won't do. The folks at Trailborn understand this. Its Williams location pays homage to its setting at the intersection of Grand Canyon National Park and iconic Route 66, with a decided sense of place. It's an unmistakable feeling you'll get as soon as you walk through the door.

Trailborn Grand Canyon found its home in a discerningly renovated 1950s motor lodge, and the result is equal parts nostalgia and design-forward comfort. While your eyes may be drawn to the gorgeous, leather-paneled check-in desk or the turquoise-tiled bar at the on-site restaurant, Miss Kitty's, take notice of the "What's On" letterboard offering up the hotel's latest happenings. This spot aims to be more than just a place to lay your head in between activities. And it hits the mark. A stay at Trailborn Grand Canyon becomes part of your experience itself. Upon check-in you'll receive a curated Field Guide with tons of information to make your trip special from park tips to



local experiences you can book directly with the hotel like astrophotography and cocktail making classes. If you're traveling with little explorers, book the in-room camping option. When you walk into your room you'll find an indoor tent set up with special treats.

While the hotel will make any soul with an eye for design happy, Trailborn isn't a luxury property. Its thoughtful approach will make families feel just as comfortable as those embarking on a couples' vacation. Each room features custom fixtures and elevated amenities like blackout shades, Bluetooth speakers and complimentary craft coffee. You'll even find a cooler in your room, so it's easy to pack a picnic for the park at The Market with grab-and-go snacks located just off the lobby.

Make sure you budget plenty of time to take advantage of the hotel's great amenities. A beautiful seasonal pool and hot tub, along with a lovely outdoor space including lawn games, is the perfect spot to unwind and savor the day's memories. Grab a s'mores kit from the front desk to enjoy around the fires.

Inside, Camp Hall is the heartbeat of the property. Gather with new friends at the end of the day to play darts, enjoy a local

beer or handcrafted cocktail, and take part in the evening's activities. There's always something fun happening, from live music to Wild West Bingo, line dancing and movie nights. Camp Hall is also where a delicious breakfast is served each morning. Don't miss the delectable breakfast burrito.

Trailborn Grand Canyon is located right in downtown Williams, meaning you can walk to all the fun, Route 66-themed businesses oozing nostalgia. But you don't even have to leave the property when it's time for dinner. Plan at least one night to dine at Miss Kitty's, the Southwestern steakhouse concept on site. Delicious food and beverage is a hallmark of Trailborn's properties and Grand Canyon is no exception. Our order? The Classic 66 Smash Burger followed by Green Chile Apple Pie served with cinnamon ice cream. Be sure to add on a Blood Orange Margarita, served frozen in a cactus-stemmed glass.

Perhaps the best part? Your booking supports the park through the hotel's partnership with the Grand Canyon Conservancy.

Learn more at Trailborn.com/Grand-Canyon.

PHOTOS: Courtesy of Trailborn Grand Canyon



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