

Happy Birthday Route 66!



An **exclusive** itinerary in **2026** to celebrate the **centenary** of the 'Mother Road', **Route 66**. Following in the footsteps of the **westward pioneers**. No fewer than **8 states** crossed, from the **Great Lakes** to the **Pacific**: **Illinois** (with **Chicago**), **Missouri** (with **St. Louis**), **Oklahoma**, **Texas**, **New Mexico** (with **Santa Fe**), **Arizona** (with **Grand Canyon**, **Petrified Forest**, **Canyon de Chelly**, **Kingman...**), **Nevada** (with **Las Vegas**), and **California**, terminus of the **66** in **Santa Monica**. French-speaking escort.

The itinerary can be done **in either direction**: east to west (the 'historic' direction), or the reverse, from Los Angeles to Chicago. We present here the **historic direction**, but the stages are identical for both versions.



Day 1

Arrival at Chicago airport. Transfer to your hotel near the airport.

Chicago, famous for its architectural heritage, is considered the birthplace of the "skyscraper". Located on the shores of the immense Lake Michigan, it is also the starting point of the historic Route 66. Check-in at the hotel.

Dinner at leisure. Overnight in Chicago (out-of-town hotel near the airport).



Day 2

In the morning, guided tour of Chicago, including Michigan Avenue, nicknamed the Magnificent Mile.

The starting point of Route 66 is at the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street, at the famous Lou Mitchell's diner.

During the tour you will see the Water Tower, Rush Street, the iconic

Hancock Center, the equally massive Willis Tower, State Street, and the famous Loop, defined by Chicago's elevated train.

Pass by the Field Museum, the Adler Planetarium, and Grant Park, a magnificent park where President Obama delivered a memorable speech on election night.

Lunch. In the afternoon, ascend to the Skydeck of the Willis Tower, rising to 443 m. The view over Chicago is spectacular.

Late afternoon at leisure. Dinner at leisure. Overnight in Chicago (out-of-town hotel near the airport).



Day 3

“Get your kicks on Route 66”! Departure on Route 66, with typical stops such as Joliet (the Blues Brothers town), Dwight, Odell or Pontiac, which has the most beautiful murals along the route!

Stop at the Dixie Truckers Home in McLean to admire superb American trucks. Drive to Springfield, capital of Illinois, and visit the home of the 16th president, Abraham Lincoln, who was born here.

Lunch. In the afternoon, drive to Litchfield then St Louis in Missouri, where two legendary roads meet: US-61 (the “Blues Highway”) and Route 66. St Louis is the city of rock legends like Chuck Berry and Johnny B. Goode.

Arrival in St. Louis, at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Ride a capsule-shaped elevator to the top of the spectacular Gateway Arch. The view from 192 m is magnificent.

Dinner at leisure.

Optional: evening in one of the many blues clubs in the Soulard district. Overnight in St. Louis (out-of-town hotel).



Day 4

Orientation tour of St. Louis, then drive to Devils Elbow for a crossing of Missouri, Mark Twain country, on Route 66 through the Ozark Mountains, home to more than 6,000 caves!

Visit the Meramec Caverns, whose 35 km of galleries are said to have served as a hideout for Jesse James. On the program: magnificent stalactites and stalagmites, 70 million years old.

Lunch at leisure. Drive to Springfield, Missouri (not to be confused with

the capital of Illinois). Americans nickname it the “Queen of the Ozarks”. On the “Square”, a famous gun duel took place in July 1865, in which gunslinger Wild Bill Hickok defeated his enemy Davis Tutt.

Free time.

Dinner and overnight in Springfield, MO (out-of-town hotel).



Day 5

Departure from Springfield. The road, lined with old farms, follows the railway. It is nicknamed the Wire Road, referring to the telegraph wires installed during the Civil War, which are still there.

After Joplin, you cross Galena, Riverton and Baxter Springs in Kansas, before reaching Oklahoma, a land of agriculture and ranching. Many Native populations were forcibly displaced by the army. The state has the largest Native American community in the United States.

Stop in Tulsa, mother city of Route 66, once the oil capital. Continue to Sapulpa and its Rock Creek Bridge, half iron and half brick. Lunch at leisure.

Drive to Oklahoma City, capital of Oklahoma. Atop the State Capitol, you can see a Native American statue. Visit the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum to learn about cowboy life through history, among other things.

Dinner in the Bricktown district. Overnight in Oklahoma City (out-of-town hotel).



Day 6

You'll see here and there windmills, oil pumps amid the fields, and sometimes oversized monuments paying tribute to the oil industry. Stop in El Reno where a scene from the film “Rain Man” was shot, at the Big 8 Motel.

In Clinton you'll find the Tradewinds Motel, once frequented by Elvis. Visit the Route 66 museum. Arrival in Texas. In McLean, visit the small museum telling the story of barbed wire, the “Devil's Rope Museum”. Lunch at leisure.

Head for Palo Duro Canyon, the “Grand Canyon of Texas” and the 2nd largest in the USA, in a Western setting. A fierce battle between “Bluecoats” and the Comanche took place here in 1874.

Drive to Amarillo, surrounded by endless ranches and many oil wells.

Major cattle auctions take place in this meat capital.

Dinner at the Big Texan Steak Ranch, which offers the 2 kg steak for free if you can eat it in under an hour (attempt at your own expense!).
Overnight in Amarillo (out-of-town hotel).



Day 7

Departure from Amarillo, with a stop just outside the city at the famous Cadillac Ranch, where ten Cadillacs (ten different models) are half-buried in the ground, aligned on an east-west axis, with the same inclination as the faces of the Pyramid of Khufu...

Drive through the semi-ghost towns of Bushland, Vega, then Adrian, located exactly halfway between Chicago and Los Angeles. Arrival in New Mexico, known for its intense blue skies and red rocks.

Arrival in Tucumcari, home of the famous Blue Swallow Motel, an iconic lodging on Route 66. Lunch.

Drive to Montoya, then to beautiful Santa Fe, famous for its world-class art galleries, museums, delicate architecture with beautiful adobe houses, and its blend of Native American, American and Hispanic cultures. City tour including the Plaza, San Miguel Chapel, Loretto and San Francis churches, and the Palace of the Governors.

Dinner on your own. Overnight in Santa Fe (outskirts hotel).



Day 8

Drive to Bernalillo and Alameda. Arrival in Albuquerque for a city orientation tour, where the famous series Breaking Bad was filmed. Historic Central Avenue is a segment of Route 66. Visit the charming Old Town District.

Free time. Drive to Isleta, crossing the Rio Grande River, then to Lunas. Discover the Native American village of Acoma Pueblo, known as Sky City, a magnificent pueblo perched on its mesa over 2,000m above sea level. In case of exceptional closure, the visit will be replaced by an excursion to El Morro National Monument.

Arrival in Grants, the uranium city. Old motel and restaurant signs from Route 66 can still be seen. Lunch on your own.

Head to Gallup, the "Capital of Native Americans", famous for its large pow-wows gathering many tribes during traditional festivities. You will see the El Rancho Hotel, where Ronald Reagan, Humphrey Bogart, Kirk Douglas, Gregory Peck and John Wayne stayed.

Dinner. Overnight in Gallup.



Day 9

Departure to the beautiful Canyon de Chelly, in Navajo territory. You will follow the canyon by bus with magnificent views.

Optional: guided jeep tour at the bottom of the canyon (not included – to be booked and paid locally).

Lunch on your own.

Drive to Petrified Forest National Park, home to an incredible concentration of colorful petrified wood.

This is the result of the crystallization of wood into quartz over centuries. The park also features archaeological sites containing fossils, as well as the Painted Desert, with multicolored badlands landscapes.

Drive to Flagstaff, a small mountain town and gateway to the Grand Canyon.

Dinner. Overnight in Flagstaff (outskirts hotel).



Day 10

Departure to the majestic Grand Canyon National Park, a gigantic gorge stretching over 400 km and plunging more than 2,000m deep, with the Colorado River winding far below. Stops along Desert View Drive offer splendid views over the Colorado.

Optional: Grand Canyon helicopter flight (not included – to be booked and paid locally).

In the afternoon, enjoy one of the most beautiful sections of Route 66, with stops in legendary towns such as Williams, Seligman and Hackberry.

Arrival in Kingman and visit of the small Route 66 Museum. Kingman still features some murals and typical diners. The museum also displays historic electric vehicles and reconstructions of a vintage diner and gas station.

Dinner and overnight in Kingman.

Day 11



Departure for Oatman, founded in 1906 in the middle of nowhere, once home to the richest gold deposits in Arizona until 1930. Oatman is a small town frozen in time, famous for its freely roaming donkeys.

In 1939, Clark Gable and Carole Lombard spent their honeymoon night at the Oatman Hotel.

Drive to Las Vegas, the city that never sleeps, famous for its huge resort casinos along the Strip, its music-hall shows, Cirque du Soleil performances, and spectacular attractions like the Bellagio fountains and the Venetian canals.

Lunch. Hotel check-in. Free afternoon and evening.

Overnight on the Las Vegas Strip.



Day 12

Back on Route 66! Stop at the Bagdad Café, then Barstow in the heart of the Mojave Desert. Arrival in Los Angeles, the final point of Route 66 at Santa Monica Pier. Lunch.

Afternoon guided city tour: Beverly Hills and Rodeo Drive, Sunset Boulevard, and Hollywood Boulevard with handprints and footprints of movie stars at the Chinese Theatre.

Visit L.A. Downtown, the historic Pueblo and Olvera Street.

Dinner on your own in Santa Monica. Transfer to your hotel.

Overnight in Los Angeles (Norwalk area).



Day 13

Depending on your return flight schedule, free time.

Transfer to the airport and return flight to Europe (arrival the next day).

Optional non-guided extension in Los Angeles and/or Chicago depending on the itinerary direction (east to west or vice versa): please contact us.

Accommodation