

Enjoy your trip and indulge in the journey!

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*"The American Road Trip isn't just a pastime; it's a birthright, a necessity, a rite of passage, it's a way of life."
(Erin McHugh, The Little Road Trip Handbook)*

The road trip is a constant narrative in US-American pop culture and is synonymous with escape, freedom, and independence from borders and boundaries. In the land of the free and the home of the mobile, the *Asphalt Nation* of America, as observed by Jane Holtz Kay, is built around automobiles and cherishes the ideal of mobility. Some road-enthusiasts, referring to themselves as road trippers—

if you would like to go straight, left or right, and not planning ahead too much. It is about impromptu 'moseying' down the road rather than following a strict schedule.

have developed the science of a road trips, *roadology*, that explores the effects of roads on societies.

A true American road trip starts at the first crossroads, not knowing

This road trip combines two routes, the hiker-favourite Appalachian Trail, starting in Pennsylvania and exploring Southern Atlanta, and the NYC-Miami Atlantic Coast Route to Florida. The routes explore the historical birthplace of the United States in Philadelphia, the impressive nature of the Shenandoah, Great Smoky Mountains and Everglades National Parks, Ivy League university campuses of Cornell, Princeton and Pennsylvania University, the cradle of the African-American civil rights movement and global news in Atlanta, the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, and the colourful Miami.



For outlanders, a well-kept rental car, sufficient insurance coverage, a working mobile phone and a good map, as well as credit cards and some dollar bills to secure cash-flow are enough. In local supermarkets, one can get a regular supply of water, fresh fruit and chopped veggies. In some states, one might be lucky to find on-the-road selling stations of local produce. With most rentals nowadays, you get access to hundreds of digital radio stations that complete the road track with the perfect sound track. Jamie Jenson, author of *Road Trip USA*, offers a road trip blog and podcast at www.roadtripusa.com.

Motels are available easily down the road; with the Days Inn as well as Jamestown being on the (more) pleasant side. However, their early nutrition consists mostly of a crime called Con-

_Going green

Nature parks in the States truly signify the gorgeousness of this country, and function as an oasis from civilization—no gigan-tomantic malls and no fast food restaurants disturb the scenic nature. A small entrance fee is valid for a couple days up to a week. Hotels or camping facilities offer a place to stay for the night.

Being thrown into nature, one is to respect the speed limit in order not to hurt an animal. A 35-mile-speed limit in Skyline Drive explores Shenandoah National Park. Down the Appalachian Trail, the fog-covered mountains name the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and amaze visitors in the most popular park in the United States. Alligators, pythons and vultures come close in the Florida Everglades Park, and protection from mosquitoes is mandatory!



tinental Breakfast. The Waffle House, for example, offers a more decent way to start the day and is open-all-night to savour fresh waffles with maple syrup, eggs'n'bacon and grits in enormous portion sizes. For a decent dinner, one should always ask for the best local diner on the way, and fast food branches offer a quick snack to go.

The concept of Park and Ride is not compulsory in most cities. Most downtown areas are quite car-friendly, with most sights offering free parking or at rates for a couple of dollars per hour. Park and Ride is only mandatory in city molochs like New York.

_Going Ivy

American elite Ivy League Universities—Cornell, Pennsylvania University and Princeton—are always worth the trip, since their campuses blend in with the nature and offer an



impressive architecture. University bookstores are tea'n'coffee havens to indulge in the oeuvres of university lecturers, for instance novelists Vladimir Nabokov in Cornell, Philip Roth at PennU, and Jeffrey Eugenides at Princeton.



The campuses also own captivating museums: The University of Pennsylvania, that claims to be America's First University, possesses in Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology one of the finest ethnology collections in the world.

_Shopping in the USA

Since consumption of goods has been elevated to a true art form in the United States of America, a typical road tripper goes shopping. In times of crisis, outlet shopping centres function as a holy grail for an almost guilt-free indulgence. It is more fun to explore the less-crowded centres in the South, such as in *nomen est omen* Commerce.



impressive art collections. Film legend Rocky Balboa turned its stairs into an American pop culture icon—to climb and conquer the stairs and to cheer on top has become a verb, "to do the Rocky (Balboa)". Cruising South Philly is even more amazing—it unravels graffiti buildings, outdoor neighbourhoods and family businesses. Geno's and Pat's just face each other to win the culinary competition over the Best Philly Cheese Steak, a sandwich filled with steak and cheese sauce.



_Rocking Philly

Philly forms the perfect symbiosis between history and relaxation. The City of Brotherly Love is the historical birthplace of the United States and welcomes you with American historical sites in the Independence National Historical Park, home of the Liberty Bell, as well as the Betsy Ross House, where historians still debate if the first US-American flag had been indeed designed there. The Philadelphia Museum of Art offers one of the most



_Hotlanta

Temperatures and heartiness rise as one reaches the capital of the Peach State Georgia, Atlanta. Hotlanta is the home of Coca-Cola and CNN, and of Martin Luther King Jr, who was born and raised here. The King Center and his birthplace blend in unpretentiously with the neighbourhood. King's powerful rhetoric accompanies insightful information on his life path that reflects the struggles of the civil rights movement, and on current human rights movements around the world in this living memorial.

When Hotlanta makes hungry, The Varsity is considered as the best Drive-In hot dogs, greeting the customers with the legendary "What'll ya have?".



The CNN Headquarters satisfies an appetite for information, where the longest escalator of the world guides one to the CNN studios, where visitors can see directly into studio windows. News is today a highly-complex and digitalised production. CNN anchormen and -women work directly from news bureaus, endowed with highly-sensitive microphones that block surrounding noises, and are digitally beamed into futuresque studio settings.



calypso sound. The Spanish churros pastry, along with hot chocolate, drench the night.

Going up

The Kennedy Space Center is financed uniquely with entrance fees, and is the most gigantic PR measure to promote aerospace. The space center is located in a gigantic



Bienvenidos a Miami!

Miami truly cites its *Miami Vice* pop culture reference, shimmering in pleasant pastel colours, and glowing as the vibrant and voluptuous as the eighties era. Pastel-blue daytime skies change into dramatic evening shades. The Art Déco district can be explored with guided tours, and it is the sight of a tragedy: Gianni Versace was murdered at Ocean Drive 1116 in his Casa Casuarina.

The Magic City merges into a true melting point and is the largest and most vibrant out-of-Latin America community, visible in Little Havana. Two-thirds of Miami people cite Spanish as their mother tongue. Those Latin, Caribbean, Central and South American as well as European influences melted into the unique New World, or Nuevo Latino, cuisine. In the Las Vegas Restaurant, one can get a taste of the Cuban Fusion cuisine. After sun-bathing at South Beach, synonymous to "showing what you've got", most restaurants turn into nightclubs. Coconut Grove offers after-dinner cocktails in outside cafés and bars, where one cannot only indulge in tastes, but also sounds of Latin America and the Caribbean. Cubans brought the conga and rumba to Miami from their homelands, instantly popularising it into US-American culture. Dominicans carried bachata, and merengue into the bars, while Caribbeans brought reggae, soca,



nature reserve and is not only a high-tech playground, visitors can witness work in progress on the working facilities.

For outlanders, an All-American road trip is the path to understand that the United States of America is a gathering of civilizations and cultures, flora and fauna, images and sounds, flavours and aromas, styles, and feelings; and "to get the feel of the road", notes Erin McHugh in *The Little Road Trip Handbook*, "remember that it's the journey, not the destination."

