



KICKIN' IT

St. Louis Style

ST. LOUIS IS THE ARTERY OF Historic Americana

Since 1926, the colorful, captivating culture of America's past has been found on the stops along Route 66. Because the route that passed through St. Louis changed several times, and roadside treasures are many, plan on spending at least two days here. When you add on those "while you're in the neighborhood" destinations, you'll want to spend three!

THE VITALITY OF AMERICA'S PAST IS THRIVING HERE TODAY

You start in Chicago. You end in LA. St. Louis is the largest city Route 66 takes you through – and you'll want the convertible top down for all of it. The section here in St. Louis still has historic motels and hotels, museums and parks, and diners and bowling alleys that have maintained their Americana character.

Make Note: There are three Route 66 roadways to visit: City 66, Original City 66, and Bypass 66. You'll want to hit them all – and more!



2026 WILL MARK THE 100th Anniversary OF ROUTE 66



ITINERARY

Day 1-3: Chicago to St. Louis, Missouri Approx. 300 miles

Traveling on your first leg of the Main Street of America, you'll enjoy a picturesque drive through bountiful farmland. One stop you'll want to make is in Mount Olive, south of Springfield, Illinois, where you can gawk at the fully restored historic Soulsby Service Station. Then it's on to "St. Louie."

OLD CHAIN OF ROCKS BRIDGE & PARK

Plan to stay: 30-45 minutes

Get here by crossing the "New Chain of Rocks Bridge" (Hwy 270) and turn immediately south to get to the old one. As you admire this newly renovated bridge, imagine the 1930s roadsters that used it to cross the Mississippi River when it became Route 66 in 1936. The unusual 22-degree bend must have given those drivers pause, though today it's open only to pedestrians. Then enjoy the new 16-acre Chain of Rocks Park on the Missouri side. greatriversgreenway.org

CROWN CANDY KITCHEN

Plan to stay: 30 minutes

During the 1920s and 1930s, this delectable landmark was a must for travelers craving world-renowned hand-made malts. First opened in 1913, this continuously family-owned operation offers thick-stacked sandwiches to assure no one goes away hungry. crowncandykitchen.net

THE GATEWAY ARCH

Plan to stay: 2-3 hours

Since 1965, Route 66 travelers have taken in this inspiring symbol of the Gateway to the West as they begin on the Missouri part of their journey. Today it features an exciting new museum, but of course you'll want to ride to the top of the tallest human-made monument in the US. gatewayarch.com

THE CHASE PARK PLAZA HOTEL

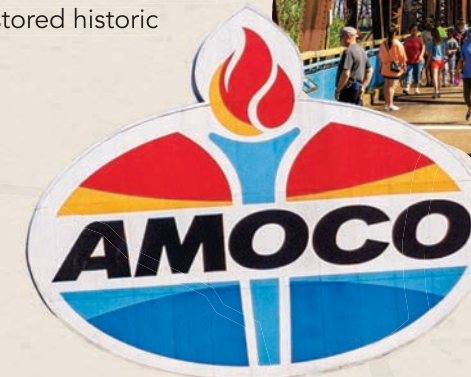
Plan to stay: 30 minutes...or a night!

Route 66 was packed with down-on-their-luck dreamers traveling to a new life and desperadoes on the run. But plenty of the well-heeled traveled the motorway, too, and they stayed at the Chase Hotel. Be quartered in style, or at least get that perfect martini in the classy bar. chaseparkplaza.com

THE NEON MUSEUM

Plan to stay: 1 hour

Locals are excited about this more recent addition to the city, and travelers should be too. Stop and enjoy its dazzling showcase of authentic historic neon signs that illuminated America's highways for decades. You'll definitely want to take a guided tour – it'll leave you glowing! neonmuseumstl.com



MISSOURI HISTORY MUSEUM

Plan to stay: 1-2 hours

This award-winning museum is a jewel among Forest Park's many institutions. From 1866, the museum has deftly portrayed Missouri's history and is currently housed in a building that is the first national monument to Thomas Jefferson. Plus it has a recently renovated 1904 World's Fair exhibit you must see! Always free. mohistory.org

HI-POINTE THEATRE/AMOCO SIGN

Plan to stay: 30 minutes (plus a movie?)

Built in 1922, this gem of a movie theater sits across from the world's largest Amoco gas sign. This classic theater (two screens!) takes its name from the neighborhood, as in the highest point in the city of St. Louis. Whether you're a history buff or simply cruising down Route 66, this stop is sure to be a memorable one. cinemastlouis.org/hi-pointe

DONUT DRIVE-IN

Plan to stay: 15 minutes

Stop at the Donut Drive-In, which is a shrine to neon road signs and fried dough deliciousness. You don't think you need that chocolate glazed or that custard filled donut, but trust us: You need both. donutdrivein.com

TED DREWES FROZEN CUSTARD

Plan to stay: 15-30 minutes

Yup – pull in, get a "concrete," and turn it upside down. This thick milkshake made from vanilla frozen custard and blended with traditional and inventive treats will not fall out. Since 1929, travelers have been delighted by this popular custard-stand dessert so thick that it earned that nickname. Oh, and pick us up the Cardinal Sin – hot fudge and tart cherries – would you? teddrewes.com

MAPLEWOOD MEMORIES

Plan to stay: 30 minutes-2 hours

You'll find this charming neighborhood on the original Route 66 (1926-1932). Among the quirky shops, there's the 1950s Tiffany's Original Diner; Sarasota Lanes, the 100-plus year-old bowling alley; and a hardware store that dates back to 1905. cityofmaplewood.com

CARL'S DRIVE-IN

Plan to stay: 30-45 minutes

A little further down Route 66, you'll discover the 16-stool marvel that is Carl's Drive-In diner. Originally a service station in 1918, it was converted into a summer-time hot dog stand before being made into a Route 66-worthy diner in 1959. carlsdrivein.com

SPENCER'S GRILL

Plan to stay: 45 minutes-1 hour

Another iconic diner that should be on your Route 66 menu. Since 1947, locals and travelers have enjoyed great American breakfast and lunch standards (the pancakes are a must!). After, walk off those calories in charming downtown Kirkwood. facebook.com/spencersgrill.com

CRESTWOOD BOWL

Plan to stay: 15 minutes-2 hours

Stop and knock out a few frames, and make some new friends at this old-school bowling alley. In 2012 the original neon sign was restored through a grant from the National Park Service – that alone is worth a stop. crestwoodbowl.com

THE VILLAGE BAR

Plan to stay: 1 hour

You have an embarrassment of riches on where to dine in Route 66 style, but this beloved tavern must top the list. It got its start in 1872 as a post office and general feed store, becoming a bar after Prohibition (appropriately). It regularly wins those "best burger in town" honors. facebook.com/villagebarst/

LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK

Plan to stay: 1-2 hours

This stunning and conversation-starting collection of over 60 outdoor sculptures spread out over 105 acres is an open-air museum that is beloved by locals and visitors alike. laumeiersculpturepark.org

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

Plan to stay: 1-2 hours

This national treasure has it all in terms of transportation history, it's filled with trains and planes – but let's get real, you're here to see the car collection, particularly Bobby Darin's "Dream Machine." The museum is recognized as the largest collection of vehicles in the world. Bonus: The infamous Coral Court motel façade resides here, making this a must stop for any Route 66 fan. tnmot.org

On your way out of town...

Highway 44 replaced Route 66 in 1956 as part of President Eisenhower's high-speed interstate system, and it will take you to your next destinations. But don't be in a hurry because there are a couple of great stops before you continue your journey...

ROUTE 66 STATE PARK & MUSEUM

Plan to stay: 30 minutes-2 hours

Housed in a 1935 roadhouse formerly known as Steiny's Inn, the park's visitors' center is a treasure trove of Route 66 memorabilia. This is where the story of "Main Street, America" is told. Stretch those legs with seven miles of hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding trails. Bonus: A cool new walking bridge takes you across the Meramec River, one of the longest free-flowing waterways in the US. mostateparks.com/park/route-66-state-park

MERAMEC CAVERNS

Plan to stay: 1-2 hours

As you head out west with St. Louis in the rearview mirror, stop by and explore these fantastic caverns. At five stories high, it is the largest commercial cave in Missouri and offers guided tours. Bring a sweater as it is pleasantly cool in this magnificent cavern that has been wowing roadsters since 1935. americascave.com

While you're in the Neighborhood...

As long as you're experiencing St. Louis, consider spending time in these local gems – especially if you're a nature lover!

ENDANGERED WOLF CENTER

endangeredwolfcenter.org

LONE ELK PARK

mo-outdoors.com/lone-elk-park

WORLD BIRD SANCTUARY

worldbirdsanctuary.org



www.explorestlouis.com/guide/route-66

St. Louis

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