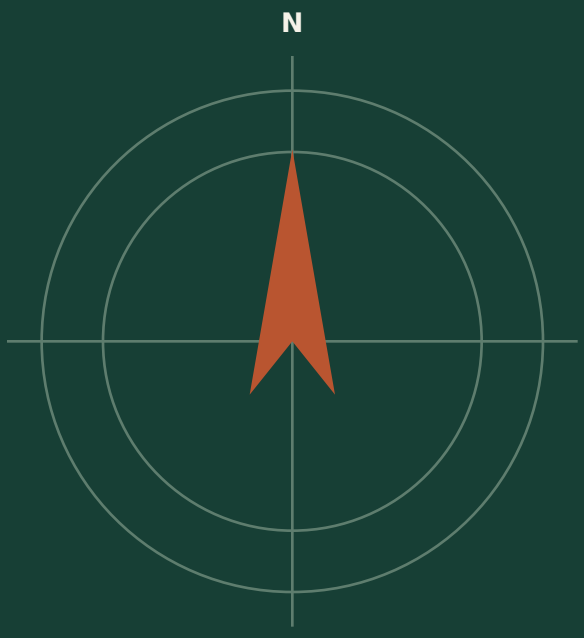
50 Scenic Stops

Good reasons to take your time.

Overlooks, shorelines, canyon walks and memorable places along 40 selected American roads.



SELECTED USA JOURNEYS

A reader bonus for the road ahead.

A PLACE TO PAUSE

The stops make the trip.

Pick one or two stops for a driving day, then leave room for an unplanned pause. Each entry names its companion route and links to official visitor information.

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STOP 01

Diablo Lake Overlook

Along the route: North Cascades Highway

A roadside panorama of Diablo Lake, forested slopes and North Cascades peaks.

Plan your pause. Stop in the formal overlook parking area; clouds and season change the lake’s appearance.

Official visitor information

STOP 02

Lake Crescent at Barnes Point

Along the route: Olympic Peninsula Loop

A lakeshore pause beneath steep forested mountains, reached from the Lake Crescent Lodge area.

Plan your pause. Allow time simply to sit by the water; lodge operations and food service are seasonal.

Official visitor information

STOP 03

Ruby Beach

Along the route: Olympic Peninsula Loop

Sea stacks and a rugged Pacific shoreline create one of the peninsula’s memorable coastal stops.

Plan your pause. The beach path descends steeply; the parking-area viewing option may suit a shorter visit.

Official visitor information

STOP 04

Vista House at Crown Point

Along the route: Columbia Gorge Waterfall Corridor

Look across the Columbia River Gorge from the historic observatory at Crown Point.

Plan your pause. Wind can close the building. Check current hours and parking requirements before setting out.

Official visitor information

STOP 05

Cape Perpetua High Viewpoint

Along the route: Oregon Pacific Coast

An elevated coastal panorama where forested slopes meet the Pacific.

Plan your pause. Choose a clear-weather visit and check the summit access road before turning off US101.

Official visitor information

STOP 06

Arch Rock Picnic Area

Along the route: Oregon Pacific Coast

A coastal stop in Samuel H. Boardman State Scenic Corridor, with views toward an offshore rock arch.

Plan your pause. Use the designated picnic-area parking and signed path; keep away from cliff edges.

Official visitor information

STOP 07

Pfeiffer Big Sur Redwood Day Use Area

Along the route: Big Sur Coast

Pause beside redwoods and the Big Sur River for a change from the exposed coast.

Plan your pause. Check park alerts and nature-center hours. This is Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, not Pfeiffer Beach.

Official visitor information

STOP 08

Humboldt Redwoods Visitor Center

Along the route: Avenue of the Giants

An orientation stop on the Avenue of the Giants, with nearby old-growth redwood walks.

Plan your pause. Ask which grove paths are currently open and select a walk that fits the day.

Official visitor information

STOP 09

Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center

Along the route: Eastern Sierra Highway 395

Learn about Mono Lake and the volcanic basin before choosing a local viewpoint or short walk.

Plan your pause. The center is seasonal; confirm current operating dates instead of assuming year-round indoor access.

Official visitor information

STOP 10

Manzanar National Historic Site

Along the route: Eastern Sierra Highway 395

An essential historical pause that explains the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans in this mountain-framed valley.

Plan your pause. Allow more time for the exhibits than for a photo stop; visitor-center hours differ from grounds access.

Official visitor information

STOP 11

Beluga Point

Along the route: Seward Highway

A formal Turnagain Arm viewpoint with mountain scenery and interpretive displays.

Plan your pause. Whale sightings are a possibility, not a promise; use the designated viewpoint and stay off tidal mudflats.

Official visitor information

STOP 12

Logan Pass Visitor Center

Along the route: Going-to-the-Sun Road

An alpine stop at the Continental Divide, surrounded by Glacier’s high mountain landscape.

Plan your pause. Parking fills early; check current shuttle options and road status before depending on a stop.

Official visitor information

STOP 13

Rock Creek Vista Point

Along the route: Beartooth Highway

Look down into Rock Creek Canyon from a formal rest area on the Beartooth climb.

Plan your pause. Bring a warm layer and keep the stop flexible when clouds obscure the view.

Official visitor information

STOP 14

Jackson Lake Dam Overlook

Along the route: Grand Teton to Yellowstone’s West Thumb

A lakeside view of the northern Tetons with interpretation of Jackson Lake’s altered water level.

Plan your pause. Treat this as a short Teton Park Road side stop from the northbound main highway.

Official visitor information

STOP 15

West Thumb Geyser Basin

Along the route: Grand Teton to Yellowstone’s West Thumb

Boardwalks pass colorful thermal features beside Yellowstone Lake.

Plan your pause. Stay on the boardwalks. Check the information station's current status before relying on indoor visitor services.

Official visitor information

STOP 16

Sunset Point at Bryce Canyon

Along the route: Utah Scenic Byway 12

A high rim viewpoint over Bryce Amphitheater’s fins and hoodoos.

Plan your pause. A rim-level visit can be worthwhile without descending into the canyon; check ice and parking conditions.

Official visitor information

STOP 17

Anasazi State Park Museum

Along the route: Utah Scenic Byway 12

Discover the Coombs Site and the history of an Ancestral Puebloan community beside the byway in Boulder.

Plan your pause. Check current gallery availability and opening hours before setting aside time for the museum.

Official visitor information

STOP 18

Capitol Reef Petroglyph Panels

Along the route: Capitol Reef Highway 24

See Fremont Culture petroglyphs from wooden boardwalks along the sandstone cliff.

Plan your pause. Bring binoculars and look patiently; lighting changes which figures are easiest to see.

Official visitor information

STOP 19

Oak Creek Vista

Along the route: Oak Creek Canyon

Pause above Oak Creek Canyon before the drive descends toward Sedona.

Plan your pause. Use the signed overlook; check current hours and winter road conditions.

Official visitor information

STOP 20

Sotol Vista

Along the route: Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

A broad desert panorama across western Big Bend, with Santa Elena Canyon visible in the distance.

Plan your pause. Use the paved loop and designated parking; carry drinking water even for a short stop.

Official visitor information

STOP 21

Cerrillos Hills Visitor Center

Along the route: Turquoise Trail

A small-town heritage stop introducing the mining landscape and hills around Cerrillos.

Plan your pause. Check current opening days and any appointment requirements before making an indoor visit the main stop.

Official visitor information

STOP 22

Molas Pass Overlook

Along the route: San Juan Skyway

Take a mountain panorama break on the US550 approach to Silverton.

Plan your pause. Keep the visit short if weather changes; use the formal overlook rather than a highway shoulder.

Official visitor information

STOP 23

Alpine Visitor Center

Along the route: Trail Ridge Road

Learn about alpine tundra near the high point of the Trail Ridge crossing.

Plan your pause. The building and road are seasonal, and temporary weather closures can occur during summer.

Official visitor information

STOP 24

Bethine and Frank Church Overlook

Along the route: Sawtooth Scenic Byway

Look over the Sawtooth Valley and the Salmon River headwaters from the Galena-area highway overlook.

Plan your pause. Plan a short stop after the summit when northbound, and use the formal pullout.

Official visitor information

STOP 25

Big Badlands Overlook

Along the route: Badlands Loop Road

A first expansive view across the eastern Badlands wall close to the Northeast Entrance.

Plan your pause. Return when the light improves if the day permits; the exposed overlook can be windy.

Official visitor information

STOP 26

Mabry Mill

Along the route: Blue Ridge Parkway

A wooden mill and pond introduce the working landscape of rural Appalachia. The site is a natural place for a photo stop and a short wander around the historic grounds.

Plan your pause. Check seasonal building access and any demonstrations before visiting. Use the designated parking area.

Official visitor information

STOP 27

Waterrock Knob Viewpoint

Along the route: Blue Ridge Parkway

A high-elevation viewpoint near the southern Parkway opens across layers of mountains. You can enjoy the parking-area outlook without committing to the summit trail.

Plan your pause. Fog and cooler temperatures are common. Check Parkway access and choose the summit walk only if the steep terrain suits you.

Official visitor information

STOP 28

Big Meadows

Along the route: Skyline Drive

An open mountain meadow breaks the rhythm of Shenandoah’s forest. It is a good place to slow down, notice wildlife from a distance and choose a short walk.

Plan your pause. Use the visitor/wayside area for arrival and check available services. Keep wildlife wild and stay well back from animals.

Official visitor information

STOP 29

Cypress Swamp

Along the route: Natchez Trace Parkway

A wetland stop beside the Trace introduces bald cypress and water tupelo. The short nature outing reveals a different landscape from the upland road.

Plan your pause. Check the trail’s current status and stay on the designated route; observe wildlife without approaching it.

Official visitor information

STOP 30

Meriwether Lewis Site

Along the route: Natchez Trace Parkway

A wooded historic site preserves the burial monument and the setting of Meriwether Lewis’s final days. Interpretive material adds context to the old travel corridor.

Plan your pause. The information center is seasonal. Use the official site directions and allow time to read the outdoor interpretation.

Official visitor information

STOP 31

Jordan Pond

Along the route: Acadia Park Loop Road

Mountain slopes frame a clear glacial pond, making this one of Acadia’s classic shoreline views. A brief look from the southern end works even when a longer walk is not on the agenda.

Plan your pause. Parking can fill. Check the seasonal bus option and choose a walk that fits conditions and mobility.

Official visitor information

STOP 32

Rocky Gorge

Along the route: Kancamagus Highway

The Swift River narrows into a rocky gorge beside the Kancamagus Highway. A short approach and footbridge offer a close view of moving water.

Plan your pause. Check recreation parking requirements and posted access rules. Do not enter or jump into the gorge.

Official visitor information

STOP 33

Moss Glen Falls, Granville

Along the route: Vermont Route 100: Wilmington to Stowe

A waterfall drops beside the forested Route 100 corridor in Granville Gulf. The short approach makes it an appealing pause on a longer Vermont driving day.

Plan your pause. This is the Granville waterfall, not the separate Moss Glen Falls near Stowe. Use the designated roadside parking and check surface conditions.

Official visitor information

STOP 34

Mohawk Trail State Forest

Along the route: Mohawk Trail: Williamstown to Greenfield

Wooded ridges and the Cold River landscape provide a quiet counterpoint to Route 2’s town stops. Choose a picnic or a suitable marked walk.

Plan your pause. Check the current trail map and open facilities. Some forest walks climb sharply; a forest stop does not require reaching a summit.

Official visitor information

STOP 35

Ashokan Rail Trail - Boiceville Bridge

Along the route: Catskill Mountains: Olive to Andes

The rail trail gives visitors a level, non-motorized way to experience the reservoir landscape. Walk as far as you wish and turn back to the same trailhead.

Plan your pause. Use the Boiceville Bridge trailhead at 5080 NY-28A. The trail is open sunrise to sunset; keep bicycles and walkers in mind.

Official visitor information

STOP 36

Hawk’s Nest

Along the route: Upper Delaware Scenic Byway

Cliffside pullouts look across a dramatic bend of the Delaware River. It is one of the strongest landscape views on this route.

Plan your pause. Parking is narrow and limited; southbound access is easier according to NPS. If all spaces are occupied, continue to another stop.

Official visitor information

STOP 37

Ash Cave

Along the route: Hocking Hills Scenic Byway

A broad sandstone recess creates a memorable forest destination at the southern end of Hocking Hills. The short gorge approach suits a compact visit when conditions are good.

Plan your pause. Check the Ohio DNR trail map and closures before leaving the parking area. Ice or wet surfaces can change the outing.

Official visitor information

STOP 38

Clifty Falls State Park

Along the route: Ohio River Towns: Aurora to Madison

A wooded canyon and waterfalls make this a worthwhile detour from Madison’s riverfront. Choose a route from the official trail map rather than assuming every falls walk is easy.

Plan your pause. Enter by the signed public park entrance and check trail notices, including the current status of Brough's Tunnel.

Official visitor information

STOP 39

Pere Marquette State Park

Along the route: Meeting of the Great Rivers: Hartford to Pere Marquette

Wooded hills above the Illinois River complete the Great Rivers drive. A visitor-center stop, picnic and selected viewpoint make a balanced park day.

Plan your pause. Ask which park roads and viewpoints are open. Use the signed park entrance, and select walks from the official map.

Official visitor information

STOP 40

Wyalusing State Park

Along the route: Wisconsin Great River Road

Bluff-country viewpoints overlook the meeting of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. The park offers a contrasting stop above the river road.

Plan your pause. This is a separate park detour. Check road and viewpoint access, park admission and the walk involved at your chosen outlook.

Official visitor information

STOP 41

Gooseberry Falls State Park

Along the route: Lake Superior North Shore

Waterfalls and river scenery make a rewarding first major park stop north of Two Harbors. Choose the visitor-area paths that fit your available time.

Plan your pause. Check the park map, current trail conditions and permit rules. Wet rocks and winter ice need care.

Official visitor information

STOP 42

Split Rock Lighthouse

Along the route: Lake Superior North Shore

The lighthouse occupies a striking position above Lake Superior. Pair the historic-site visit with an appropriate nearby shore or park viewpoint.

Plan your pause. Historic-site hours and state-park access are separate. Follow the published parking directions and check admission before arrival.

Official visitor information

STOP 43

Sleeping Bear Dune Climb

Along the route: Michigan M-22: Lake Michigan and Leelanau

A large open dune rises above a picnic area and offers an energetic optional climb. Watching the changing sand and the activity from the base is also a complete stop.

Plan your pause. The climb is strenuous; Lake Michigan is not just beyond the first dune. Bring water and use the designated M-109 access.

Official visitor information

STOP 44

Lumberman’s Monument

Along the route: River Road: Au Sable Valley

Interpretive grounds above the Au Sable River connect the landscape with Michigan’s logging history. Upper viewing areas offer a shorter alternative to the stair descent.

Plan your pause. Check seasonal visitor-center hours. Decide on the stair walk before descending; returning uphill takes effort.

Official visitor information

STOP 45

Cave Point County Park

Along the route: Door County Coastal Byway

Lake Michigan meets wave-cut limestone ledges along Door County’s eastern shore. A short forest walk and a cautious viewpoint stop reveal the rock coast.

Plan your pause. Stay back from cliff edges and slippery rocks, especially in waves or ice. Follow posted restrictions at the water's edge.

Official visitor information

STOP 46

Cape Hatteras Light Station

Along the route: Outer Banks: Whalebone Junction to Cedar Island

The striped lighthouse and surrounding grounds are a landmark of the barrier-island journey. An exterior visit remains worthwhile without a tower climb.

Plan your pause. Check restoration and tower-climbing access for your travel date; availability may differ from earlier seasons.

Official visitor information

STOP 47

Ocracoke Light Station

Along the route: Outer Banks: Whalebone Junction to Cedar Island

A small white lighthouse stands within Ocracoke village, a quiet contrast to Cape Hatteras’s much taller tower. Combine the grounds with a village walk.

Plan your pause. The lighthouse is not open for climbing and parking is very limited. NPS recommends walking from the island visitor-center area.

Official visitor information

STOP 48

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

Along the route: Florida Keys Overseas Highway

Mangroves, short shore walks and the possibility of a separately booked reef excursion make this a useful Upper Keys stay-day anchor.

Plan your pause. Water trips depend on weather and operator availability. Check current park construction notices and book any chosen tour independently.

Official visitor information

STOP 49

Bahia Honda State Park

Along the route: Florida Keys Overseas Highway

Beach scenery and views toward the historic bridge make this a strong pause between Marathon and the Lower Keys. Leave enough time to enjoy the shore rather than only taking a photograph.

Plan your pause. Arrive early at busy times; the park can close temporarily at capacity. The historic bridge trail is for a visit, not a vehicle crossing.

Official visitor information

STOP 50

Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Area

Along the route: Creole Nature Trail: Coastal Core

The refuge introduces coastal prairie and wetland habitat, with wildlife observation and interpretation along the Creole Nature Trail.

Plan your pause. Check current opening hours and refuge access. Bring binoculars, water and insect protection; wildlife sightings are never guaranteed.

Official visitor information

A good stop begins before you park.

Use designated parking and follow posted signs. Walk lengths, surfaces, opening hours and access arrangements vary. Check the official visitor information for the details that matter to your group.