



## ROUTE 66

Cities: Joplin, Springfield, Lebanon, Rolla, St. James, Cuba, Stanton, Eureka, St. Louis (option to include Branson)

### Day 1 - Joplin, Springfield

The tour begins in Joplin, MO ([www.visitjoplinmo.com](http://www.visitjoplinmo.com)). Discover the history of the town, including the famous shootout between Bonnie & Clyde and local law enforcement, at the **Joplin History & Mineral Museum** ([www.joplin-museum.org](http://www.joplin-museum.org)). The **Spiva Center for the Arts** ([www.spivaarts.org](http://www.spivaarts.org)) is the place to see and learn about art. The facility prides themselves in hosting the oldest photography competition in the U.S., PhotoSpiva. Before leaving town, don't miss the **Route 66 Mural Park** - where two alignments of Route 66 intersect - featuring one-half of a 1964 Corvette replica embedded in a wall and two tile murals, all of which make great photo opportunities!

*Depart Joplin for Springfield, 71 miles.*

Officially recognized as the birthplace of Route 66, it was in **Springfield** on April 30, 1926, that officials first proposed the name of the new Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway be designated 66 ([www.springfieldmo.org](http://www.springfieldmo.org)). The **Route 66 Car Museum** boasts an impressive collection of historic cars, some of which may have traveled the Mother Road back during its hey-day ([www.66carmuseum.com](http://www.66carmuseum.com)). For an in-depth look at the history of Route 66, make your way to **History Museum on the Square** which houses exhibits on the route's history, shootout between Wild Bill Hickok and Davis Tutt and the town's storied past ([www.historymuseumonthesquare.org](http://www.historymuseumonthesquare.org)). Later, be awed by the vast assortment of animals at **Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium** ([www.wondersofwildlife.org](http://www.wondersofwildlife.org)). The attraction is connected to **Bass Pro Shops National Headquarters** (<https://stores.basspro.com/>), which makes it a convenient stop for shopping and dining in the upstairs **Hemingway's Blue Water Café** before settling in at one of Springfield's hotels for the evening.

**OPTION:** *Travel to Branson for overnight & entertainment. Springfield to Branson, 43 miles ([www.explorebranson.com](http://www.explorebranson.com)).*

## Day 2 – Springfield, Lebanon, Rolla

*Springfield to Rolla, 110 miles.*

This morning, arrive at **Fantastic Caverns** ([www.fantasticcaverns.com](http://www.fantasticcaverns.com)) where a Jeep-drawn tram will take you on a journey through the cave where temperatures linger at 60 degrees year-round. As you ride through the cave you will see thousands of cave formations that include stalactites and stalagmites, cave pearls and massive columns. Sports fans, the next stop is for you. Thousands of sports memorabilia and hands-on exhibits await at the **Missouri Sports Hall of Fame** ([www.mosportshalloffame.com](http://www.mosportshalloffame.com)).

After lunch, depart Springfield and continue east to Lebanon. Located inside the Lebanon-Laclede County Library you'll find the **Route 66 Museum and Research Center** ([www.visitlebanonmo.org](http://www.visitlebanonmo.org)). The museum features recreations of a 1950s gas station and diner, as well as exhibits containing historical photos and newspaper clippings.

Stretch your legs near St. Robert as you take in the **Mahaffey Museum Complex at Fort Leonard Wood** (<https://visitpulaskicounty.org>). The museum houses exhibits on three Army divisions – Engineer, Chemical, and Military Police – in addition to history of Fort Leonard Wood as an Army installation.

Overnight this evening in Rolla ([www.visitrolla.com](http://www.visitrolla.com)).

## Day 3 – Rolla, St James, Cuba, Stanton

*Rolla to Eureka, 80 miles.*

Before departing Rolla make a stop at the University of Missouri's half-scale replica of Stonehenge, which was created using water-jet technology.

Continue on to St. James. Enjoy a tasting at **St. James Winery** ([www.stjameswinery.com](http://www.stjameswinery.com)), where the tasting bar offers free samples of 25 varieties of wine and juice. Beer lovers can opt for a tour of **Public House Brewing Company**, located next door ([www.publichousebrewery.com](http://www.publichousebrewery.com)).

Take Exit 203 and hop on Route 66 towards Cuba for a sight to behold. The **Fanning Outpost** is home to a 42-foot tall Rocking Chair – former Guinness World Records holder for largest rocking chair. After a photo-op and quick browse through the general store, continue to **Cuba** for a driving tour. The town features 12 murals that depict scenes of Cuba and the nation's history. Every mural has its own story to tell (<http://cubamomurals.com>).

Next up is another long-standing landmark and attraction on Route 66, **Meramec Caverns** ([www.americascave.com](http://www.americascave.com)). A guided tour of the cavern, which was once a hideout for Jesse James, offers a view of the natural formations of this seven-story wonder.

In Eureka, stop at **Route 66 State Park** (<https://mostateparks.com/park/route-66-state-park>). The park's visitor center is housed in the former Bridgehead Inn, a 1935 roadhouse, and it features Route 66 memorabilia and tells the story of "The Main Street of America." Active groups can get their kicks on the seven miles of hiking, bicycling and horseback riding trails, or enjoy a drive through the wildlife-filled parkland.

Travel on to the Eureka/St. Louis area to overnight.

#### **Day 4 – Eureka, St Louis**

*Eureka to St. Louis, 28 miles.*

Arrive in **St. Louis** ([www.explorestlouis.com](http://www.explorestlouis.com)) and visit **Grant's Farm** ([www.grantsfarm.com](http://www.grantsfarm.com)). Encounter many exotic animals as you ride a tram through the 281-acre ancestral home of the Busch family. The farm is home to more than 1,000 animals from six continents. After lunch, spend the afternoon at **Forest Park**. Located in the heart of St. Louis, this is one of the largest urban parks in the U.S. In 1904, the St. Louis World's Fair drew more than 20 million visitors from around the world to Forest Park. The **Saint Louis Zoo**, **Saint Louis Art Museum**, **Missouri History Museum**, **Saint Louis Science Center** and **The Muny** outdoor amphitheater are all located at Forest Park ([www.forestparkforever.org](http://www.forestparkforever.org)).

Take time to savor an afternoon treat that Route 66 travelers have been enjoying since 1929, when **Ted Drewes Frozen Custard** ([teddrewes.com](http://teddrewes.com)) opened. Try their famous "concretes", which are shakes that are so thick you can turn them upside down and they won't fall out of the cups. St. Louis has many options for dinner and your overnight.

#### **Day 5 – St Louis**

This morning visit the famous **Gateway Arch National Park** ([www.gatewayarch.com](http://www.gatewayarch.com)). Your experience begins with a walk through the Museum, located beneath the Arch, which celebrates America's pioneering spirit and explains westward expansion. Next up is the **Tram Ride to the Top** for magnificent view of St. Louis and the Mississippi River.

Few forms of American music can claim a history as long, tradition-rich and complex as the Blues. Since its origins in the Deep South, Blues music has been a foundation for virtually all American popular music from the last century.

Experience Blues history at the **National Blues Museum** ([www.nationalbluesmuseum.org](http://www.nationalbluesmuseum.org)).

See one of the largest mosaic collections in the world as you tour **Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis** (<http://cathedralstl.org>).

Continue on to **The National Museum of Transportation** (<https://tnmot.org/>), dedicated to America's love for life in the fast lane. In addition to the Route 66 Corral Court Motel exhibit, the museum features more than 300 vehicles, including locomotives, streetcars and, of course, automobiles.

Enjoy a farewell dinner, recalling wonderful experiences along America's iconic road.