



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). The **Spiva Center for the Arts** (www.spivaarts.org) is the place to see and learn about art and boasts about PhotoSpiva being the oldest continuous photographic competition in the states. **Sandstone Gardens** is a must-stop for tour groups. The spirit of Sandstone is to envelope the customer with a relaxed atmosphere of beauty and tranquility. The showroom and gift shop is a 55,000 sq. foot display that features the best in home interiors and gardening accents. Before leaving town, don't miss the **Route 66 Mural Park**- where two alignments of Route 66 intersect — features one-half of a 1964 Corvette embedded in a wall and two tile murals all of which make great photo opportunities!

Depart Joplin for Springfield.

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 in **Springfield** (www.springfieldmo.org). The Fox Theatre rose from the ashes of a disastrous fire that destroyed one fourth of the Public Square in 1913. Over the years it would be called the Electric, Paramount and the Fox and for 32 years it was a church. It would be a place of entertainment and community activity for the entire duration of Route 66 (www.historymuseumonthesquare.org). Later, enjoy time shopping at **Bass Pro** and enjoy dinner upstairs in **Hemingway's Blue Water Café** before settling in at one of Springfield's hotels for the evening. For a list of hotels: www.springfieldmo.org/places-to-stay/cat/157/menu/125

Joplin to Springfield, 71 miles

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

Day 2 – Springfield, Lebanon, Rolla

This morning, arrive at Fantastic Caverns (www.fantasticcaverns.com) where a jeep drawn tram will take you on a journey thru the cave where temperatures linger at 60 degrees all year. As you ride thru 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 us at the **Missouri Sports Hall of Fame** (www.mosportshalloffame.com). After lunch, depart Springfield and continue east to Lebanon where you will find the **Route 66 Museum and Research Center** ([/www.lebanon-laclede.lib.mo.us/Museum.htm](http://www.lebanon-laclede.lib.mo.us/Museum.htm)) inside the Lebanon-Laclede Co. Library. The museum features recreations of a 1950s gas station, a diner, and includes a collection of Route 66 books and a rotating display of antique cars. Honor our veterans and active military as you visit the **Mahaffey Museum Complex at Fort Leonard Wood** (www.museumsusa.org/museums/info/1164507) a support center for three Army divisions: Engineer, Chemical, and Military Police while the Fort Leonard Wood Museum presents the history of Fort Leonard Wood as an Army installation.

Overnight this evening will be in Rolla (www.visitrolla.com).

Springfield to Rolla, 110 miles

Day 3 – Rolla, St James, Cuba, Stanton

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 Route 66 to St James, Missouri for some wine tasting at **St. James Winery** (www.stjameswinery.com) where the tasting bar offers free samples of 25 varieties of wine and juice. A driving tour of **Cuba** (<http://cubamomurals.com>) will feature 12 murals that depict scenes of Cuba and the nation's history. Every mural has its own story to tell. Today visit another long standing landmark and attraction of Route 66, **Meramec Caverns** (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, Missouri stop at **Route 66 State Park** (www.mostateparks.com/route66.htm). The park's visitor's 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 driving cruise that traverses the wildlife-filled parkland

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

Rolla to Eureka, 80 miles

Day 4 – Eureka, St Louis

Arrive in **St. Louis** (www.explorestlouis.com) and visit **Grant's Farm** (www.grantsfarm.com). Encounter many exotic animals as we ride a tram thru 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. and in 1904 the St. Louis World's Fair drew more than 20 million visitors from around the world to Forest park. The **St. Louis Zoological Park, St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri History Museum** (www.mohistory.org), and **St. Louis Science Center** are all located at Forest Park. Take time to enjoy an afternoon treat that Route 66 travelers have been enjoying since 1929 when **Ted Drewes Frozen Custard** (www.teddrewes.com) opened. Try the famous "concretes" which is the name given to the 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 our overnight and dinner this evening.

Eureka to St. Louis, 28 miles

Day 5 – St Louis

This morning visit the famous **Gateway Arch** (www.gatewayarch.com) where we will take a trip to the top of the arch for a magnificent view of St. Louis. While at the Arch visit the **Museum (opening 2017), located beneath the Arch. The museum** preserves rare artifacts from the days of Lewis and Clark along with exhibits of early day pioneers who helped shape the history of the American West. See one of the largest mosaic collections in the world as you tour the **Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis** (<http://cathedralstl.org/intro/>). Continue on to **The Museum of Transportation** (www.museumoftransport.org) which is dedicated to America's love for life in the fast lane. In addition to the unit of the streamline modern-style Coral Court Motel, the museum features more than 300 moving vehicles on display, including locomotives, streetcars and, of course, automobiles. Few forms of American music can claim a history as long, as tradition-rich, and as complex as the Blues. Since its origins in the Deep South long ago, the Blues has been a bedrock for virtually all American popular music of the last hundred-plus years. Experience Blues history at the **National Blues Museum** (www.nationalbluesmuseum.org).

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