

ILLINOIS ROUTE 66 SCENIC BYWAY



NOSTALGIA MEETS NEWFOUND
ADVENTURE



DAVID SCHWARTZ PHOTOGRAPHY - PICS ON ROUTE 66

ILLINOISROUTE66.ORG

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IT IS YOUR TIME TO TRAVEL THE MOST FAMOUS ROAD IN THE WORLD!

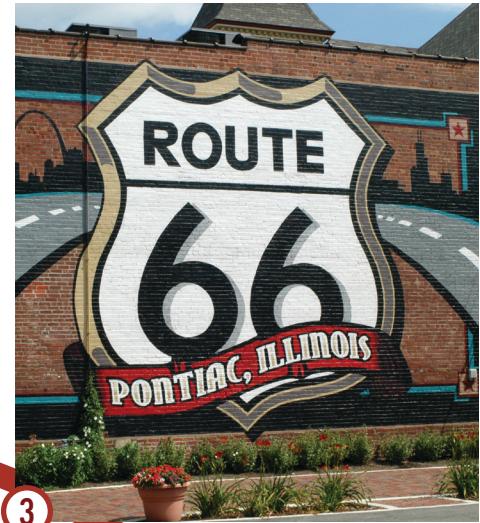
Small bands of light break the horizon; the air is crisp. You pack the last of your travel bags into the car and slowly close the trunk. You are about to hit the road. Our beloved National Highway System and our love for road trips to somewhere new would not exist without Route 66. Today, we celebrate the past by living adventurously in the present—enjoying miles of open road. The **Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway** represents the best of our diverse American culture. Turn after turn, you are experiencing the longevity of history in the same way as generations before—on the open road. When you drive **The Mother Road**, you will soon know that vacations are made in the hours between pit stops and final destinations. The ride to your destination can be just as memorable as the journey it takes to get there, and for many, **Illinois Route 66** is the destination. Route 66 becomes alive as you hop in the car to visit the iconic places located all along this extraordinary Byway. With famous roadside attractions, museums, restaurants, and other cool places, you will find it hard to decide on your favorite moment. Will it be driving down the open road or meeting all those new faces along the way?



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1 Ambler/Becker Texaco Station, Dwight 2 Sonrise Donuts, Springfield

Behind the Wheel: Route 66 in Illinois

Route 66 is the most famous road in the world! The road's iconic status was amplified by the unprecedented volume of books, music, and film that artistically centered it at the helm of America's highway culture.

Created in 1926, Route 66 became the preferred road in traveling westward. It may not be as old as Yellowstone or the Lincoln Highway, but it quickly gained notoriety as the shortest, year-round route between the Midwest and the West Coast. A national transformation took place as Route 66 turned an isolated western frontier into an economically vital region of the country. Now easily accessible on four wheels, this road passed through the fabled landscape of the American Southwest.

Beginning with Ford Model T's plodding through rutted dirt, to the rise of the monolithic American Interstate Highway System, Route 66 witnessed a transportation evolution. During its heyday, Route 66 mirrored the mood of the nation. During the Great Depression, it became the Road of Flight for farm families escaping the Dust Bowl. Post-World War II people flocked to California's booming job market. Travelers took two-week vacations and ventured up and down The Mother Road to see the wonders of the western half of the country. In the '60s, the "Hippie" counterculture lured thousands of the nation's disenfranchised youth west on Route 66 as they hitchhiked and packed into microbuses. For many, now Route 66 represents one of dreams and newfound inspiration, and embodies freedom.

Many tangible relics of the old road have been preserved for the visitor experience. On September 22, 2005, **Illinois Historic Route 66** was designated a **National Scenic Byway**. Since its establishment, organizations, like the **Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway** have dedicated time to developing historic route markers, visitor guides, museums, and interpretive exhibits to highlight attractions. Experience a renaissance of true, pedal-to-the-metal travel as people look to bring the vibrant history of Route 66 into present day.

3 Rt. 66 Shield Mural, Pontiac

How do you plan to explore the Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway?

Beginning in Chicago, you will discover incredible museums and classic eateries. It does not stop there! Work your way down the **Illinois Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor**, visiting the amazing attractions in Joliet, Wilmington, Dwight, Pontiac, Lexington, and many other communities in the northern part of the state.

Illinois is the only Route 66 state that travels through the **Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area**, located in the central portion of the state. Spend time visiting the various Abraham Lincoln attractions in Bloomington-Normal, Lincoln (the only city named in person by Abraham Lincoln), and Springfield, which hosts the **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Lincoln's Home, Lincoln's Tomb, and is the state capital.**

Starting south? The southern portion of Illinois Route 66 offers beautiful scenery and bountiful shopping. Grab your camera to spot some iconic Mother Road memorabilia. Can you say **Giant Pink Elephant**? Then, keep working your way up to the **Litchfield Museum and Route 66 Welcome Center** to take in a variety of historical attractions like **Soulsby's Service Station, Cahokia Mounds, and the Million Dollar Courthouse** in Carlinville. Plan to dine in some famous eateries while you are exploring all the southern Route 66 sites.



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Search 'Explore Illinois Route 66' in the App Store or on Google Play.



GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store

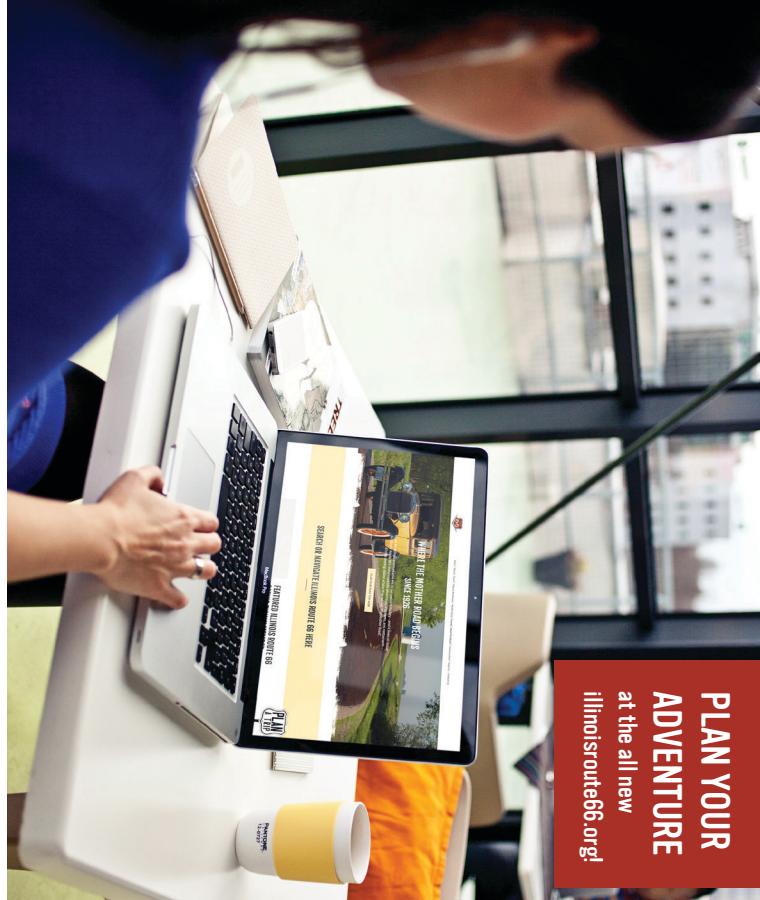
Planning the perfect trip along historic Illinois Route 66 just got easier!

The new Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway website features an interactive map and the new mobile app outlines all of the stops you must see along the way! Explore hotels, popular restaurants, events, historic stops, and more.

**PLAN YOUR
ADVENTURE**
at the all-new
[illinoisroute66.org!](http://illinoisroute66.org)



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A Story in 3 Parts: Three Alignments to Route 66 History

Route 66 has always been an ever-adapting ribbon of highway that has been shaped by transportation and American history. As vehicles changed, so did **The Mother Road**. Illinois has attempted to maintain this story through the preservation of three active alignments. Each segment preserves the story surrounding the evolution of the automobile and the story of travelers from the era.

1926-1930 Alignment

In 1924, two years before the construction of Route 66, State Bond Issue 4 (SBI 4) was created from existing roads and paved to make an all-weather passageway from Chicago to St. Louis. The 1926 alignment of Route 66 followed SBI 4 and enabled Illinois to become the first state to finish the pavement of Route 66 from top to tail. In prohibition years, Al Capone used The Mother Road to transport illegal alcohol to bars and clubs statewide, since all year long. For example, production stills located in central and southern Illinois could easily ship products to speakeasies in Chicago and St. Louis using Route 66.

1930-1940 Alignment

Until prohibition was repealed, rum running continued in full swing. Cars could now top 60-80 mph, and speed limits were set by states and municipalities. The moniker "Bloody 66" was widely used to describe the relative unsafety of driving along Route 66. Eventually, The Mother Road was re-routed to bypass larger, more congested communities, such as Springfield and Joliet. By 1940, a maximum speed limit was set at 70 mph. Picnic and rest areas became recognized as a necessary part of highway planning.

1940-1977 Alignment

In June 1940, as WWII raged in Europe, President Roosevelt asked for a study on the use of the nation's highways to meet defense needs. The result was the Highways for the National Defense Report. This report identified two types of defense roads: roads required for defense operations and roads required to improve the strategic network of defense roads. Route 66 played a significant strategic role in the wartime efforts, including transportation of personnel, equipment, and munitions.

The 1956 Highway Act began the construction of the Interstate Highway System which ultimately replaced Route 66 as the main transportation route west. Many sections of Route 66 became Interstate 55 by the end of 1956. By 1977, The Mother Road was deemed obsolete in Illinois as much of it had been replaced by I-55. The last sign was removed on January 17, 1977. The entire road was decommissioned on June 27, 1985.

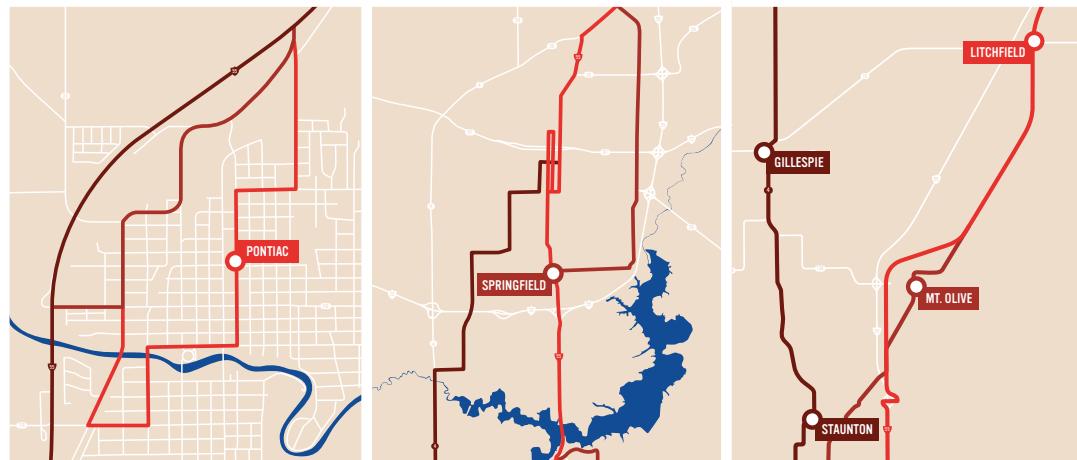
Now, hop in the car! It is time for you to drive your name into Illinois Route 66 notoriety.

LET'S HIT THE MOTHER ROAD!

Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area



Traversing the Alignments of Illinois Route 66



Eat & Drink

From north to south, you will find so many eclectic choices to get your grub on and learn a bit more about the eateries and watering holes located on the road.

- Lou Mitchell's Restaurant & Bakery, *Chicago*
- Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket, *Willowbrook*
- Polk-A-Dot Drive-In, *Braidwood*
- DESTIHL, *Bloomington-Normal*
- Fat Jack's Bar, *Bloomington*
- Maldaner's, *Springfield*
- Fulgenzi's/Mahan's Filling Station, *Springfield*
- Obed and Isaac's Microbrewery, *Springfield*
- Cozy Dog, *Springfield*
- Route 66 Motorheads Bar, Grill & Museum, *Springfield*
- Sangamo Brewing and Breweriana Museum, *Springfield*
- Doc's Soda Fountain, *Girard*
- Ariston Cafe, *Litchfield*
- Jubel's Bakery & Restaurant, *Litchfield*
- Weezy's Bar & Grill, *Hamel*

Explore

The open road is an adventure in itself, but you will want to explore the countless destinations along the way.

- Joliet Historical Museum, *Joliet*
- Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum, *Pontiac*
- McLean County Museum, *Bloomington*
- The Mill on 66 Museum, *Lincoln*
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, *Springfield*
- Ace Sign Museum, *Springfield*
- Litchfield Museum, *Litchfield*
- Illinois Coal Museum, *Gillespie*

Shop

Bring some goodies home with you, courtesy of the unique boutiques all along The Mother Road.

- Historic Downtown District, *Plainfield*
- Historic Water Street Shopping District, *Wilmington*
- Uptown Normal & Downtown, *Bloomington*
- Abe's Carmelcorn Shoppe, *Lincoln*
- Rusty Star Marketplace, *Auburn/Divernon*
- Cherry Tree Treasures & Gifts, *Carlinville*
- Pink Elephant Antique Mall, *Livingston*

Entertainment

What is a road trip without a few stretching breaks? Plan to play your way through some of the amazing places below.

- Rialto Square Theatre, *Joliet*
- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, *Wilmington*
- Miller Park & Zoo, *Bloomington*
- Knight's Action Park & Route 66 Drive-In, *Springfield*
- Skyview Drive-In, *Litchfield*
- Lake Lou Yaeger Recreation Area, *Litchfield*

Photo Op!

Grab your camera, you're not going to want to miss these photo op spots!

