



LEGENDARY ROUTE 66

The Missouri Ribbon of the Mother Road

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The “Show Me State” of [Missouri](#) not only has some of the most scenic views of the [Mother Road](#), it also has dozens of vintage icons along the old highway, many of which can still be visited today.

Crossing [Missouri](#) diagonally from the Mississippi River in [St. Louis](#) to the plateau region beginning at [Springfield](#) and ending at the [Kansas](#) border, [Missouri's](#) 300-odd-mile-journey provides a multitude of picturesque scenes along old [Route 66](#).

The old highway closely follows the route of an ancient pre-[Civil War](#) stage line and today, it parallels and zigzags across Interstate 44. Many signs of the old highway survive on the stretches of the original ribbon of highway, but if you prefer the interstate, every exit will land you within a moment's drive of original [Route 66](#).



Chain of Rocks Bridge near [St. Louis](#), [Missouri](#).

September, 2004, Kathy Weiser.

Along the way, you will see some of the [Mother Road's](#) best tourist attractions, including the [Route 66 State Park](#) and [Meramec Caverns](#), as you wind across the “[Show Me State](#)” of [Missouri](#). Vintage icons such as the Chain of Rocks Bridge and Ted Drewes Frozen Custard in [St. Louis](#), the Munger-Moss Motel in [Lebanon](#), and the Boots Motel in [Carthage](#) provide great photo opportunities. In addition, the [Missouri](#) route also provides an abundance of side trips to great travel destinations, in and of themselves, such as Lake of the Ozarks and historic [Branson, Missouri](#).

A very large portion of what was once [Route 66](#) in [Missouri](#) is still under state jurisdiction as either primary or secondary state highways. While its “official” state designation may not always be “[66](#),” [Missouri](#) has more miles of the old highway under state management than any other state.



Ted Drewes Frozen Custard has been a [Route 66](#) icon in [St. Louis](#) for 75 years, September, 2004, Kathy Weiser.

The State of [Missouri](#) has done a good job of installing commemorative [Route 66](#) signs along the old highway; however, you will still need a map, as these signs will not always tell you when the road turns.

Beginning your journey in [St. Louis](#), check out the Chain of Rocks

Bridge before you venture into the city, where you'll see numerous historic buildings and the [St. Louis](#) Arch. On your way out of [St. Louis](#) be sure not to miss Ted Drewes Frozen Custard which has been dazzling taste buds since 1929.

Moseying on down the road, you will soon approach the [Route 66 State Park](#), once the site of [Times Beach](#), which was completely evacuated and "mowed down" due to chemical contamination. At the park you can see [Route 66](#) exhibits that chronicle the history of the [Mother Road](#), as well as the story of the ill-fated town.

In the town of [Gray Summit](#), you can stretch your legs among the [Missouri](#) wildflowers at the Shaw Arboretum of the [Missouri](#) Botanical Garden.



A closed stretch of the [Mother Road](#) at the [Route 66 State Park](#),

which was once the site of the condemned town

of [Times Beach, Missouri](#). September, 2004, Kathy Weiser.

Continuing along your way, a "must see" along your journey is [Meramec Caverns](#) in [Stanton, Missouri](#), which has been enticing visitors since 1933. While you're in [Stanton](#), you can also visit the [Jesse James](#) Museum.

Be sure to take a peek at the Wagon Wheel Motel and the former Midway Restaurant and Garage as you travel through [Cuba](#). Along this stretch of the road begins one of [Missouri's](#) finest wine and grape producing regions. Some vineyards can be observed from the road and you'll find several roadside stops selling grapes, grape juice, wine, honey, and other locally produced products in the summer and fall months.

[Rolla, Missouri](#) provides several vintage views of [Route 66](#) as well a popular auto museum called Memoryville USA. For an interesting look something else altogether, visit the [Rolla Stonehenge](#), a

partial reconstruction of the ancient megalith, built by students at the University of [Missouri](#) at [Rolla](#).

Continuing along towards [Devil's Elbow](#), your journey will provide an extremely scenic route along the bluffs over the Big Piney River. Sheldon's Market and the Elbow Inn Bar and Barbeque Pit, both vintage [Route 66](#) businesses, are interesting stops in [Devil's Elbow](#).

Soon, you'll arrive at the historic town of [Waynesville, Missouri](#), which not only displays vintage peeks of the Mother Road, but also several historic buildings that date back to the days of the [Civil War](#).



Wrink's Market in [Lebanon, Missouri](#), October, 2004,

Kathy Weiser.

In [Lebanon](#), you can see the 1940s Munger-Moss Motel; still open today, as well as Wrink's Market, a [Route 66](#) institution for more than a half a century. Continuing on to [Springfield](#), you will view great architecture as you continue on your westward trip.

Beyond [Springfield](#) is an extremely vintage portion of the highway that was bypassed long ago. Along this stretch, you will see several sad and forgotten towns that died at the hands of newer transportation routes. These old towns include [Halltown](#), [Paris Springs Junction](#), [Spencer](#), [Heatonville](#), and several others.

Soon, you will enter the historic town of [Carthage](#), filled with Victorian Homes and a wealth of history – from the [Civil War](#) to an abundance of [Route 66](#) icons. Continue your asphalt trip through [Joplin](#) before entering the state of [Kansas](#), with its “full” 13 miles of [Route 66](#).

As always, enjoy the ride!!

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