



TRAVEL

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Roll down the windows, fire up your playlist, and shake off a year of quarantine with a road trip. Whether you have a few days or more than a week, these five routes will satisfy your wanderlust.

BY KATIE JAMES WATKINSON

TEXAN TREK

A little bit city, a little bit country, this long-weekend drive combines the made-for-TV charms of Waco with the hipster cool of Austin and the pastoral beauty of Hill Country.

DAY 1: WACO & SALADO

Land early in Dallas for the nearly two-hour drive south to Waco, home to the *Magnolia Journal*'s Chip and Joanna Gaines. Visit their Magnolia Market for chic housewares and pick up some bacon-cheddar biscuits from the on-site bakery. Baylor University's Mayborn Museum Complex has interactive exhibits that will entertain both tactile tots and temperamental tweens. Dig for antique treasures at Cameron Trading Co. before moving on to Salado. There, enjoy craft brews and food truck fare at Barrow Brewing Company, then turn in at the throwback Shady Villa Hotel (from \$149 a night).

DAY 2: AUSTIN

It's less than an hour to downtown Austin. Drop off your bags at the Kelly Wearstler-designed Austin Proper (from \$369 a night) and walk to Veracruz All Natural, a food truck serving the best breakfast tacos in town. Snapping a pic in front of the "Greetings from Austin" mural is a tourist's rite of passage. At Stag Provisions for Men, hipster-lite styles from Faherty and Portuguese Flannel will take a guy's wardrobe from inept to influencer. Grab ribs at J. Leonardi's Barbeque, then do like the YoPros (that's "young professionals") and barhop on Rainey Street.

DAY 3: FREDERICKSBURG

Grazing cattle and azure bluebonnet fields line the 13-mile Willow City Loop, a scenic detour on your way to Texas Wine Country. Once in Fredericksburg, check into a rustic-chic cabin at Contigo Ranch (from \$178 a night) before sampling unique regional varietals, like Albariño at Southold Farm + Cellar. Those at-home HIIT workouts will prove their worth on the climb up monolithic Enchanted Rock, where panoramic views of rolling hillsides are the perfect send-off.



CALI COAST ODYSSEY

Restore the soul with a 10-day ride down California's Pacific Coast Highway (a.k.a. Highway 1).

DAY 1: SAN FRANCISCO, HALF MOON BAY & MONTEREY

Spend the morning in San Francisco exploring the Painted Ladies and Union Square before merging onto the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). Make a pit stop in Half Moon Bay for lunch at Sam's Chowder House and a lap around Pigeon Point Lighthouse, one of the tallest in the U.S. Pull over in Capitola, a candy-colored town that will make your Instagram feed pop. Then check into the beachfront Monterey Tides (from \$229 a night) for that first Cali sunset.

DAY 2: CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA & BIG SUR

Get breakfast at the Tuck Box in button-cute Carmel-by-the-Sea. You could spend hours in nearby Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, but you've got places to be, so just hike the Cypress Grove Trail (it's a loop less than a mile long) for rugged coastline and wildflower hillsides as far as the eye can see. Then start your drive down the majestic Big Sur portion of the PCH. Hit the Garrapata State Park trails for views of the Pacific Ocean and Santa Lucia Mountains. Stop for a photo op at famed Bixby Creek Bridge, then beeline to Big Sur Bakery for wood-fired pizza. Spend time at McWay Falls—an 80-foot cascade into

NOTE: Please look up local health guidelines and check for road closures before traveling.



emerald Pacific waters—and look for sea otters floating among dense kelp beds. Kick it on the porch of your glamping suite at Ventana Big Sur (from \$240 a night) before sleeping among giant redwoods.

DAY 3: SAN SIMEON, CAMBRIA & MORRO BAY

Head out early for the approximately two-hour drive to Hearst Castle, a towering estate built by publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. Drop off your bags at Cambria Beach Lodge (from \$219 a night), a revamped 1960s motel, and make a round-trip jaunt to quirky harbor town Morro Bay. Have lunch at Dorn's Breakers Cafe, which offers

views of sea otters and Morro Rock, a volcanic offshore behemoth. Swim in the cool waters or take a glass-bottom-boat tour.

DAYS 4 & 5: SOLVANG

Drive less than two hours to Solvang, an adorably odd Danish-inspired town in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley. Check into the Vinland Hotel (from \$219 a night) and spend the next two days popping around town on an electric vehicle called an eMoke. The Book Loft is a cute indie bookstore, Oneder Child curates kids' toys and gifts, and Olsen's Danish Village Bakery serves deli-

cious krinkles. Make time for a daily wine-centric outing, like a 90-minute horseback tour of the Santa Ynez hills via Vino Vaqueros.

DAYS 6 & 7: SANTA BARBARA

In about 40 minutes, you'll arrive at the Palihouse Santa Barbara (from \$325 a night). Grab nitro cold brews at Dune Coffee Roasters, peruse the shops on State Street, and explore the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Hang out in the Funk Zone, a hip district with wine-tasting rooms, and get barbecue at Barbareño.

DAY 8: MALIBU

Grab your sunnies: You won't want to squint through the 75-minute cruise to the 'Bu. After settling into the bungalow-beautiful Surfrider (from \$325 a night), sip agave lemonade at Malibu Farm Cafe. Watch surfers catch swells at First Point, then browse Malibu Country Mart before a toes-in-the-sand dinner at Paradise Cove Cafe.

DAYS 9 & 10: PALM SPRINGS

Savor the 2½-hour ride—this is the home stretch. The Moroccan-style Sands Hotel & Spa (from \$299 a night) practically begs you to lounge poolside all day, but don't. Hike Palm Canyon, visit Moorten Botanical Garden, or get in a little shopping at the Frippery (Cali-cool caftans galore) and the Shops at 1345 (midcentury-inspired home decor). Cap the trip with live music, crunchy taquitos, and blood-orange margaritas at Las Casuelas Terraza.



MIDWEST QUEST

Spend three days southbound on Michigan's Leelanau Peninsula and you'll forget all about GPS. Tiny fishing towns, powder-soft beaches, historic lighthouses—the excuses to pause are as plentiful as the panoramas.

DAY 1: TRAVERSE CITY & LELAND

Four hours from Detroit, Traverse City is the northern terminus of the storied M-22 highway. First go to the Village at Grand Traverse Commons, a 19th-century hospital turned market. Pick up Leelanau lavender at Moonstruck Gardens, and sit down for red velvet pancakes at Red Spire Brunch House. In the afternoon, check out the collections of Inuit art and sculpture at the Denny's Museum Center. Stay overnight at the Riverside Inn in Leland (from \$175 a night).

DAY 2: LELAND & GLEN ARBOR

Wake and stroll to Fishtown Preservation, where weathered shanties commemorate Michigan's maritime history. Make the short drive to Glen Arbor, home of the cult-favorite shop M-22 and Sleeping Bear Dunes, where the sand dunes soar 450 feet and the water is crystal clear.

DAY 3: FRANKFORT & ARCADIA

Cruise farther down M-22 to reach Point Betsie Lighthouse, a backdrop for your 2021 holiday card. Five miles south is Frankfort; walk the pier and sip Belgian-inspired beers at Stormcloud Brewing Company. As you cover your last stretch of highway, stop at Inspiration Point in Arcadia for one final view of Lake Michigan.

SOUTHERN SOJOURN

Don't be surprised if you barely hit the speed limit on this four-day route linking Charleston and Florida—a ride through Low Country requires you to slow your roll and take it all in.

DAYS 1 & 2: CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Book two nights at the elegant Zero George (from \$599 a night). Eat buttermilk-biscuit breakfast sandwiches at Callie's Hot Little Biscuit and then swoon over every house on your walk through the South of Broad neighborhood. At Amanda Lindroth, buy some block-printed table linens and wicker serving trays for dinner parties back home. Then sip hibiscus mojitos at the rooftop Citrus Club before a Southern dinner at Husk. Spend the next day leisurely—have brunch at Butcher & Bee, visit the beach on Sullivan's Island, take a sunset sail on the *Schooner Pride*, and enjoy a romantic dinner at Chez Nous.

DAY 3: SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

In less than two hours, Spanish moss is everywhere you turn. Check into Perry Lane Hotel (from \$259 a night) before walking to Forsyth Park. After perusing the exhibits and ace gift shop at the SCAD Museum of Art, browse the cozy home goods at Hygge. When the clock strikes 5 (OK, 4), embrace the city's tippling traditions at the speakeasy-style Alley Cat Lounge. Then head to the Wyld for an Oaxacan old-fashioned followed by a twice-cooked pork taco.

DAY 4: ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Get an early start on the three-ish-hour drive to this centuries-old city. Unload at the Hilton St. Augustine Historic Bayfront (from \$229 a night), then nab a courtyard table at the Floridian for shrimp-and-sausage pilau. Drive north to Vilano Beach, a destination with few tourists, then come back to town and visit Mission Nombre de Dios. Grab refreshing strawberry-basil pops at the Hyppo Gourmet Ice Pops before a cheesy, yes, but thoroughly fun nighttime ghost tour.



NORTHEASTERN ESCAPE

Rocky headlands, quaint harbor towns, cliffside national parks—five days northbound on Maine’s Route 1 will have you embracing all the coastal feels.

DAY 1: OGUNKIT & KENNEBUNKPORT

Take I-95 North from Boston, and in a little over an hour you’ll be transported to the seaside village of Ogunquit. Sink your toes in the sand, then meander the Marginal Way footpath toward Perkins Cove. Pick up handcrafted stoneware at Perkins Cove Pottery Shop and dine on scallop carbonara at the Front Porch. Make the 20-minute drive to Kennebunkport, a historic fishing village that draws a posh crowd. Plop your bags at Kennebunkport Inn (from \$169 a night) and enjoy a sunset stroll through Dock Square.

DAY 2: KENNEBUNKPORT & KENNEBUNK

Start the morning like true Mainers—out on the water. Captain Bob Danzilo teaches trap hauling and sustainable fishing practices aboard the *Rugosa*. Head to nearby Kennebunk to shop for upcycled furniture at Antiques on Nine and terra-cotta pot candles at Snug Harbor Farm. The White Barn Inn Restaurant offers dinner at its most decadent (think caviar-truffle lobster rolls).

DAY 3: CAPE ELIZABETH & PORTLAND

Biddeford’s Palace Diner has just 15 counter seats, so depart early for your stack of buttermilk flapjacks. Cape Elizabeth is a rugged peninsula featuring the oldest lighthouse in Maine, Portland Head Light. Snap



some pics and then get in line at Bite into Maine, a nearby food truck famed for piled-high lobster rolls (order yours Maine-style, with mayo and chives). You’re just a few miles from downtown Portland, where a crop of young chefs have energized the city’s food scene. If you can’t get into Eventide Oyster Co., walk next door to the Honey Paw. Pan-Asian dishes, like smoked lamb khao soi, will have you rethinking the definition of New England cuisine. Then tuck into a heavenly bed at the Blind Tiger (from \$209 a night).

DAY 4: PORTLAND

After sticky buns at Tandem Coffee + Bakery, shop for outdoorsy staples at Portland Dry Goods and vintage home decor at Blanche + Mimi. Next on tap: a walkable brewery tour. Make your way from Rising Tide Brewing Company to Lone Pine

Brewing Company to Oxbow Blending & Bottling. Bites from Duckfat double as dinner.

DAY 5: BAR HARBOR

Layer on your Lululemon and call in boxed lunches from Down East Deli & Boxed Lunch Co. before the three-hour drive to Acadia National Park. Admire panoramas of the Schoodic Peninsula from the summit of Cadillac Mountain. Then stretch your legs on the moderate Bubbles Trail. Bar Harbor Inn (from \$159 a night) is the spot for a much-needed shower and catnap. Just don’t snooze through sunset at Bass Harbor Head Light Station. End the journey with a nightcap of blueberry basil sorbet at Mount Desert Island Ice Cream. ■