



ROUTE 66 ROAD TRIP

Sometimes life is more about the journey than the destination! Buckle up and get ready to harness the spirit of adventure with an exciting experience going back in time while learning about Arizona’s exciting past as you travel a piece of America’s Main Street. Historic Route 66 crosses the northern part of Arizona from east to west. There are 388 miles of Route 66 in Arizona including the longest undisturbed stretch of the original Route 66!

This Council’s Own Patch is designed to be fun for everyone! To earn this patch, complete one activity from each section. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors should also complete one of the “more to explore” or suggested service activities.

Don’t forget to document your road trip using the hashtag [#GSRT66RoadTrip](#)

Get ready to get out and explore!

PURPOSE

When I have earned this badge, I will know more about the history of and how to help preserve Arizona’s stretch of Route 66.

HISTORY

One of the original highways in the U.S. Highways System, US 66 was established in 1926. It was the first major route connecting the east to the west running from Chicago, Illinois to Los Angeles, California serving as a route for people migrating west, especially during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. In 1939 after John Steinbeck’s classic novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Route 66 became a symbol of escape, being nicknamed “The Mother Road.”

The road supported many small communities in its path, especially after WWII, when people started traveling and businesses along the route became prosperous with the popularity of the highway. From 1958 to 1985, a new Interstate Highway System caused several of those communities to be bypassed, and as a result a lot of those places fell into decline becoming nothing more than memories.

In 1990, the United States Congress recognized that Route 66 had “become a symbol of the American people’s heritage of travel and their legacy of seeking a better life.” In recent years, there has been an increase in popularity for Route 66 sites and communities are trying to preserve and protect some of the most significant and representative historic resources along the route for people to learn from and enjoy.



STEPS

STEP 1: It Winds from Chicago to LA

Every road trip takes a bit of planning! Get together with your family, or your troop, and start preparing to hit the road!

1. **Sing along!** Listening to music on a road trip can be a great way to pass the time! Route 66 was immortalized in a famous song written by Bobby Troup in 1946. There are numerous versions of the song. Listen to a few of them, and choose your favorite to add to your playlist. Have each person in your travel group choose a song (or two) they think everyone would like to sing along to!
2. **Map it out!** Do you know where you can find Route 66? Find a map and trace the route, or draw your own. How many states did Route 66 pass through? How many miles was Route 66? Make a list of cities in Arizona that Route 66 would have passed through. Where is the closest city to where you live?
3. **Snack Attack:** How long will it take you to travel to the closest section of Route 66? Plan what kind of snacks you will bring along with you on the road. There were plenty of cafes and diners along Route 66 to accommodate hungry travelers. Soda fountains were a popular option! Learn how to make a malt or a milkshake. What is the difference?

STEP 2: Get Your Kicks!

With so many choices to stop at along Route 66, business owners had to get creative with how to entice customers to their location. Choose one of these forms of advertising to explore a little further.

1. Murals are a common sight on Route 66 stops. You will find them painted on the sides of buildings all up and down the Mother Road. Find two different examples as you explore and photograph them. Why do you think the artists chose those locations to paint? What message do you think the artist was hoping to convey with their image?
2. Billboards are also an important part of Route 66. With so many places to stop businesses had to come up with new and exciting ways to convince people to stop! Find an example of a Route 66 billboard and a modern billboard. Take pictures. Which do you think is a more effective style of advertising? Design a billboard for a Route 66 business or attraction.
3. Statues and other oversized landmarks dot the Route 66 landscape. Find one example in your Route 66 town. Pose with it for a picture. Do you think this would be a successful way for modern businesses to attract customers? Why or why not?

STEP 3: Shifting Gears

Cars were a big part of travel on Route 66! Choose one of the options below to find out more about how people traveled on Route 66.

1. Do some research on types of vehicles that may have traveled at the height of popularity for Route 66. Have each traveler choose one and share what they learned with the rest of the group.
2. While exploring Route 66, look for older model cars. Lots of travelers with vintage vehicles can be found driving the Mother Road. See how many different ones you can find and try to take a picture of each one.
3. Many towns on Route 66 host vintage car shows. Find one to attend. See if you can identify vehicles from the 1950s and 1960s. Take pictures of your favorites.

STEP 4: Standing Tall

Route 66 was full of interesting places to stop, and many of those places are still in operation today! Visit one of the options below for an authentic first hand Route 66 experience. You may want to research options in your closest Route 66 town ahead of time, so you have an idea of which path is the best to travel!

1. Curios Shops and Trading Posts provided travelers with lots of one of a kind souvenirs! Visit a Route 66 Trading Post or Curios Shop and identify at least five items that you would not be able to find at a more modern store. What is the most unusual item you found?
2. There were lots of choices for travelers to stop to grab a quick snack or stop for a home-cooked meal. Find a Route 66 restaurant. Look at the menu. Look for items that are different than you might find at your favorite chain restaurant. What makes a Route 66 restaurant different? Find at least five things that you wouldn't find at a more modern eatery.
3. Hotels/Motels on Route 66 are best known for attracting weary night time travelers with neon signs. Drive a stretch of Route 66 after sunset and find examples of hotel neon. Take pictures of your favorite ones. Talk about why those particular signs would help you choose a hotel to stay at. If you are traveling during the day, look for other features of the hotel that might help you decide where to stay. Was there anything about that hotel (like the color or a mural) that stood out for you?

STEP 5: Keep the Dream Alive!

Everyone can help keep the history of Route 66 alive! Choose one of the activities below to help preserve this piece of Arizona history!

1. Find a stretch of Route 66 and plan a cleanup party!
2. Make a scrapbook using pictures and other memorabilia collected along your travels. Share all the fun you had with family and friends.
3. Find out more about the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program administered by the National Park Service. Contact them to see if there is a current service project in your area that your troop can help with. After providing community service, share your experience with your family and friends.

MORE TO EXPLORE

- » Connect with your local library to see if they have any resources on Route 66. Or see if there is a historic society in your community that might have additional resources.
- » Attend a "Route 66 Festival" and meet people who have traveled from all over the world to come and celebrate this classic American icon.
- » Research other Route 66 attractions outside of Arizona to visit. How many of them have been placed on a state or national historic register? Plan a road trip to see how many of those attractions you could visit.

Now that I have earned this badge, I can give service by.....

- » Sharing the history of Route 66 by hosting an art show using all the pictures that were taken during this adventure. Tell friends and family what you have learned and why Route 66 is an important part of Arizona history.
- » Write a short article for your local newspaper about your adventure. Include pictures and invite your readers to explore living history in Arizona.

DID YOU KNOW?

Here are some fun facts about places you won't want to miss on your Road Trip!

- » The Wigwam Motel in Holbrook, AZ was one of the inspirations for the famous Cozy Cone Motel in the Disney movie Cars
- » You can drive 158 miles of the original Mother Road right here in Arizona! The longest undisturbed stretch of the original Route 66 can be found between Ash Fork, AZ and the Colorado River near Topock, AZ.
- » You really can “stand on the corner” in Winslow, AZ just like in the Eagles hit song, *Take it Easy*
- » Grand Canyon Caverns near Peach Springs, AZ is one of the original Route 66 tourist attractions and is still in operation today!
- » Route 66 is the main street of Oatman, AZ. Take a stroll down the 0.4 miles of Route 66 here, and you will be sure to see the famous Burros of Oatman! The town's burros were brought to the area by gold miners to use as pack animals. When the mines closed down, the burros were set free and roamed freely around the town.