

Totally terrific road trips

Your vacation days are precious, and you'll want to fill every moment of them with surprise, excitement, and quality family time. These routes do that and more. Pack up the car, head out, and you'll come home with phenomenal memories and plenty of money left in the bank.

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THE SOUTHWEST TIME-TRAVEL ADVENTURE

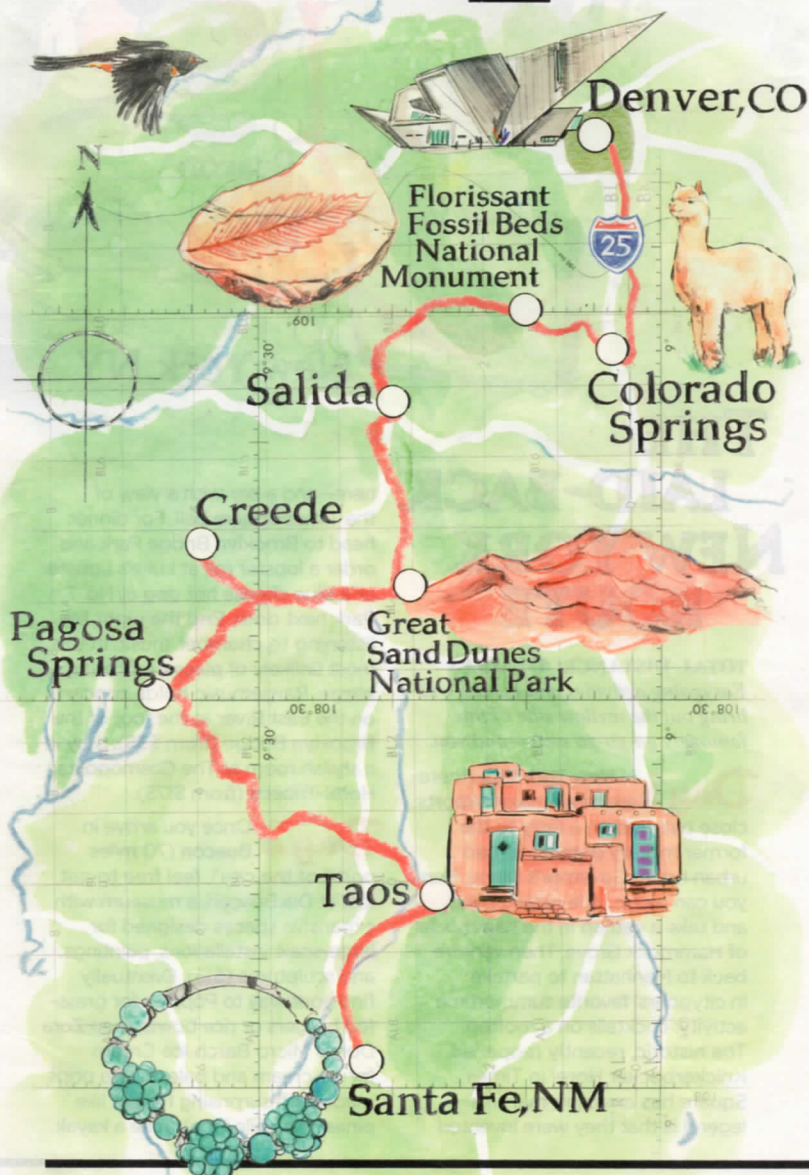
TOTAL DISTANCE:
637 MILES

This region's unique blend of cultures yields some astounding sights, plus history lessons so captivating you might take up a second career as an archaeologist.

known for savory red and green chiles, and The Shed smothers its enchiladas with the best red chile sauce in town. Spend the night at Old Santa Fe Inn (from \$199*)—there's a breakfast burrito bar.

Day 1 The art of Santa Fe, NM (about an hour from Albuquerque International Sunport), will inspire you to make something amazing, even if it's with macaroni and puffy paint. First up: La Cieneguilla Petroglyph Site, home to hundreds of prehistoric native rock art drawings. Then on to the Museum of International Folk Art, where the pieces are pure delight (Indonesian shadow puppets: much cooler than your hands-as-bunny-ears). At the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture, the artifacts will give you a deep sense of Native American heritage. Hungry? New Mexico is

Day 2 Taos, NM (70 miles away), is beloved for its spiritual retreats, but you can soak up the meditative vibes just by admiring the gorgeous landscape, adobe buildings, and historic churches. It's also artsy, so visit the Harwood Museum of Art (\$10), which features paintings, woodworking, and tinware by local artists. Then hit the shops: Las Comadres Gallery sells pottery and clothing from female artists. While lunching at Ranchos Plaza Grill, order airy sopaipillas, a fried pastry, and drizzle them with honey. Take a tour of the ancient adobes of Taos Pueblo (\$16) to get a glimpse into the life



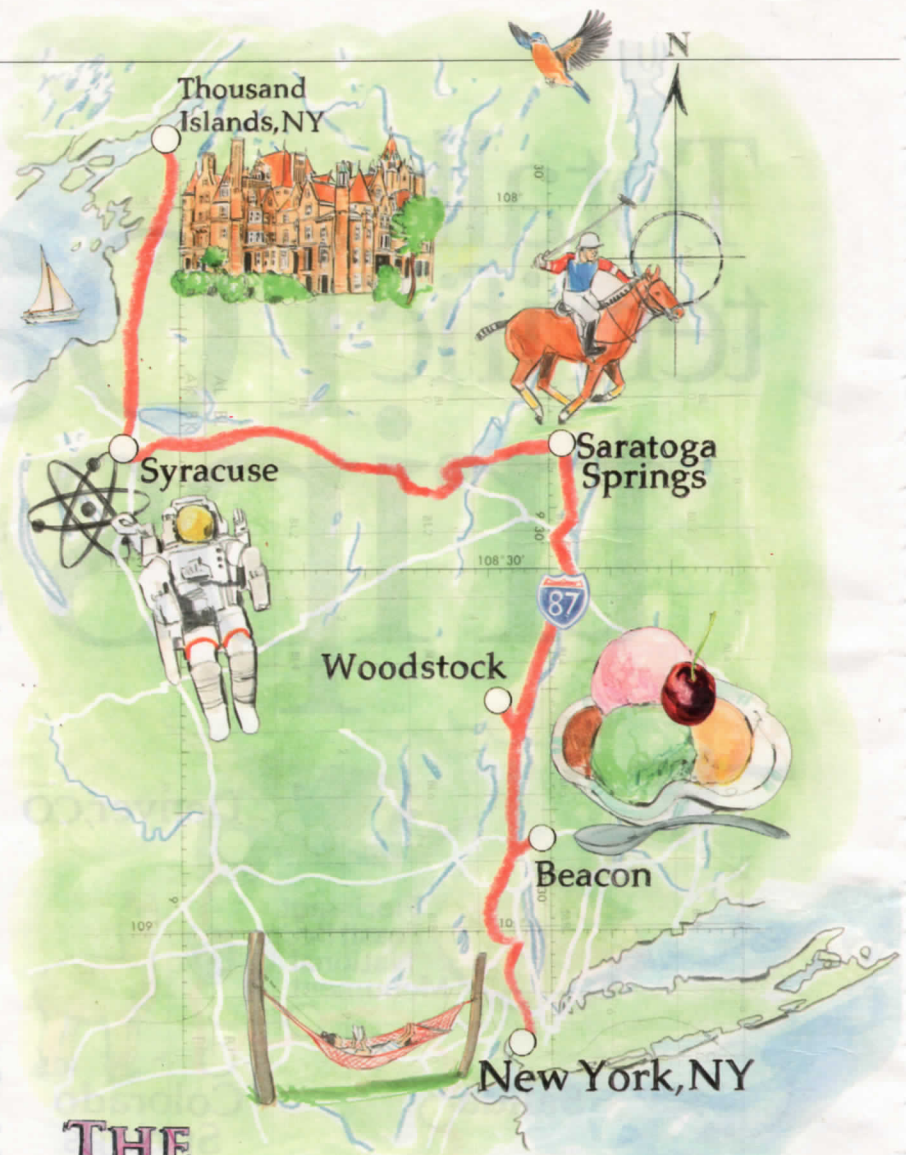
of a Native American community. Dine on delicious tamales at The Love Apple, and stay overnight at the adobe B&B Hacienda del Sol (from \$145).

Day 3 Drive 141 miles to **Pagosa Springs, CO**, and lunch at Farrago Market & Cafe. Then fill your afternoon with *ahhh* moments by soaking in one of the 23 mineral hot springs at the Springs Resort & Spa (from \$26). Arrive in **Creede, CO** (64 miles away), in time to enjoy the comfort food and antler decor at Arp's. Then catch a comedy or musical at Creede Repertory Theatre (from \$33) before sleeping in a pretty cabin at Windssock Acres (from \$150).

Day 4 In the a.m., experience life as a silver miner (minus the long days of manual labor) at Creede Underground Mining Museum. Then drive 88 miles to **Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve**, where a roughly 30-square-mile area feels like one giant sandbox. Rent sandboards and sand sleds and get the thrill of sledding without the frozen toes (\$18 at Kristi Mountain Sports in Alamosa). Afterward, drive 89 miles to **Salida, CO**. There are two exhilarating ways to soak up this town's Rocky Mountain views: Zip-line through aerial obstacle courses (from \$79 at Captain Zipline), or rent a Jeep (from \$150 at Rocky Mountain Jeep Rentals) and drive one of the trails that lead to high mountain lakes and ghost towns. End the night with wood-fired pizzas at Amica's Pizza & Microbrewery before tucking into a spacious room at Salida Inn & Monarch Suites (from \$109).

Day 5 At **Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument** (81 miles away; \$5), there are petrified redwood stumps and fossils so detailed you can see the veins of plant leaves and insect wings. Try the Irish fare at McGinty's Wood Oven Pub before heading to **Colorado Springs** (34 miles away). Your first stop—cue the angel music—should be Garden of the Gods, a free park with massive, gravity-defying rock formations. Next, tour ancient sandstone homes at the Manitou Cliff Dwellings (\$9.50), then have a close encounter of the adorable kind at Las Bonitas Alpaca Ranch. If there are baby alpacas, you can hold one. (You're welcome.) Dive right into the cauliflower mac and cheese at The Rabbit Hole, then it's off to bed at the all-suites Blue Skies Inn (from \$145).

Day 6 Drive 70 miles to **Denver**, and when you reach the Denver Art Museum, take a second to admire its futuristic design before going inside to see its exhibits, like a collection of intricate objects carved out of bamboo. You can also visit the home of *Titanic* survivor and all-around badass Molly Brown, or stroll through the 23-acre Denver Botanic Gardens. Go to Nocturne for dinner, killer cocktails, and live jazz; spend your last night at The Curtis (from \$289), with its quirky themed rooms. The knock-knock-joke room will have you groaning—and give you ideas for how to pass the car time on your next road trip.



THE LAID-BACK NEW YORK ROUTE

TOTAL DISTANCE: 471 MILES
Easygoing activities and locales will bring out the mellow side of this famously go-go-go state—and you.

Day 1 In **New York City** (there are three major airports close by), hop on a ferry to the former military outpost turned urban haven Governor's Island. Here, you can picnic, ride rented bikes, and take a catnap in the hammocks of Hammock Grove. Then venture back to Manhattan to partake in citygoers' favorite summertime activity: cocktails on a rooftop. The historic, recently reopened Knickerbocker Hotel in Times Square has amazing martinis—legend is that they were invented

here—and a bar with a view of the Times Square ball. For dinner, head to Brooklyn Bridge Park and order a lobster roll at Luke's Lobster or a blue cheese hot dog at No. 7 Park next door. End the night by listening to chamber music in the most unlikely of places: a floating barge. Bargemusic holds concerts on the East River at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge (from \$35). Stay in a stylish room at The Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca (from \$175).

Day 2 Once you arrive in **Beacon** (70 miles north of the city), feel free to get lost at Dia:Beacon, a museum with expansive spaces designed for large-scale installations, paintings, and sculptures (\$15). Eventually find your way to Poppy's for grass-fed burgers or rice bowls, then Zora Dora's Micro Batch Ice Cream for ice cream and paletas (ice pops made with surprising flavors like pineapple chile lime). Take a kayak

out on the Hudson River (\$20 at Mountain Tops Outfitters), or walk the one-mile waterfront Klara Sauer trail. Afterward, do dinner at the Roundhouse—it's got waterfall views—before heading back to your lovely, Victorian-style room at Botsford Briar (from \$185).

Day 3 Motor 51 miles to **Woodstock** and brake nearby for brunch at the Phoenicia Diner, where they serve elevated American fare like duck-confit Cheddar grits. Then visit one of the many swimming holes (Big Deep has a rope swing!) for a quick dip before you're back in the car. Got a crick in your neck? Try drinking the famous mineral water of **Saratoga Springs** (91 miles away), believed to have healing powers. Four of the 18 public springs are at Congress Park; bring a bottle to taste the bubbly water and take a spin on the wooden carousel. Then, watch a polo match at the Saratoga Polo Association (from \$20)—preppy attire optional. Stop by Hattie's Chicken Shack for the fried chicken, and order beignets to enjoy back at the centrally located Saratoga Downtowner (from \$189), which has an indoor pool.

Day 4 Drive 139 miles to **Syracuse**. After refueling at the adorably named Pastabilities, the whole fam can expand their knowledge at WonderWorks. It's an indoor amusement park with more than 100 interactive, educational exhibits, including a hurricane shack that simulates the effects of 71-mph winds. Then drive 120 miles to the **Thousand Islands** region, a cluster of islands on the border between the U.S. and Canada. Hit up Riley's by the River, a casual seafood and steak spot, and get a room at the elegant Captain Visger House Bed & Breakfast (from \$199).

Day 5 Take a scenic boat tour to see the lush little islands on America's side of this region and the stunning mansions that occupy them. Uncle Sam Boat Tours (\$18) offers one that stops at Boldt Castle, a six-story mansion with 120 rooms, secret tunnels, and Italian gardens. You'll say "Whoa" more times than you have all year—a reminder why road trips were invented in the first place.

THE UNCONVENTIONAL SOUTHERN TOUR

TOTAL DISTANCE: 444 MILES

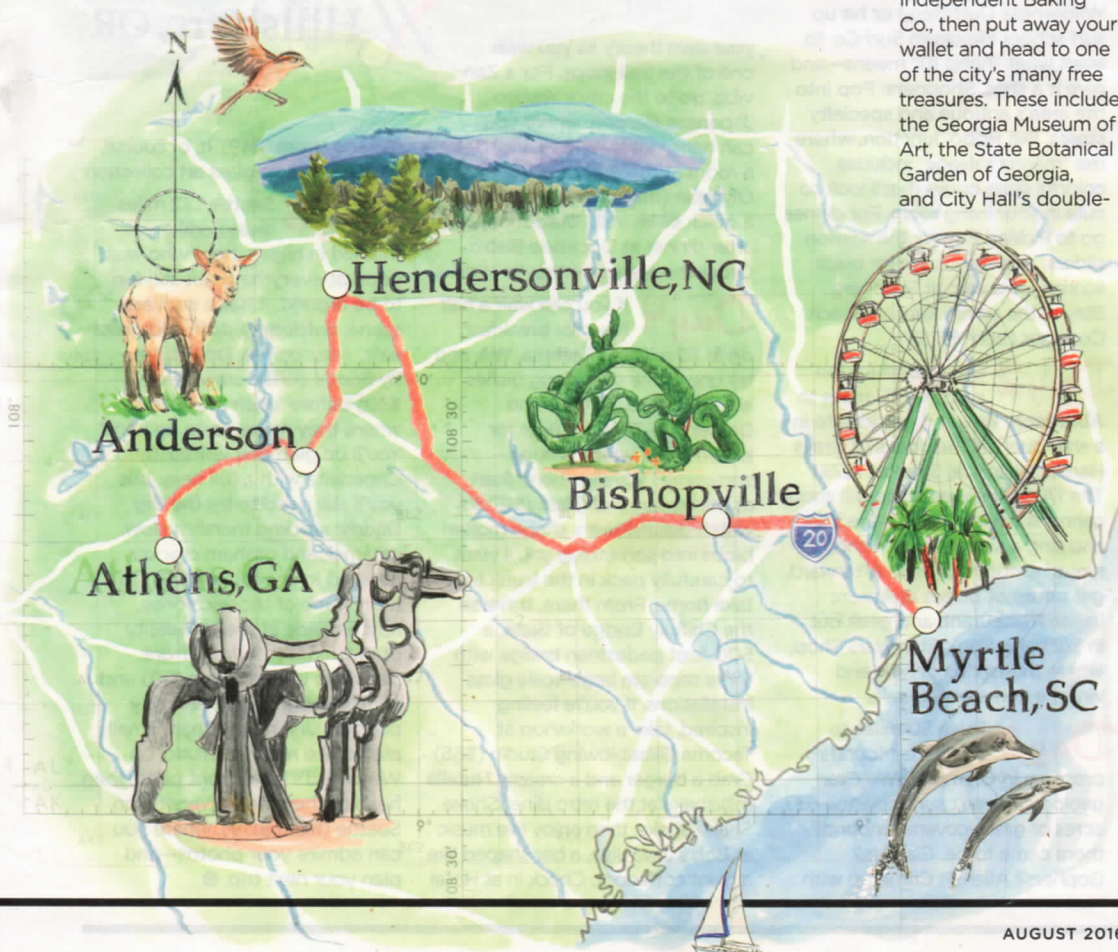
This region's signature charm isn't limited to the big cities. You'll fall so in love with these under-the-radar spots, you may never come back.

Day 1 Start this trip with a true roadside attraction: the Iron Horse, about 20 miles south of **Athens, GA** (1½ hours from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport), on Georgia Highway 15 South. This sculpture looks majestic standing in a farm field (and just as nice on your Instagram). Once in Athens, pick up fresh pastries at Independent Baking Co., then put away your wallet and head to one of the city's many free treasures. These include the Georgia Museum of Art, the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, and City Hall's double-

barreled cannon, a would-be Civil War superweapon gone awry. While in town, keep your eyes peeled for the 40 whimsically painted fiberglass bulldogs (the University of Georgia's mascot) scattered around town. Try the sophisticated Southern fare at Home.made, then catch a live music show—country, pop, you name it—at the Georgia Theatre. Rest up at Graduate Athens (from \$119), a charming hotel with an on-site spa.

Day 2 Drive 64 miles to **Anderson, SC**, and play around with a bunch of kids—baby goats, that is—at Split Creek Farm. Here you can learn about different goat breeds, tour the milking parlor, and sample goat cheeses (\$6). Later, hear about Prohibition-era hooch during a tour of the Palmetto Distillery (but do *not* imbibe and drive). Sullivan's Metropolitan Grill is a great dinner spot, though you'll be tempted to order only off its extensive dessert menu. Sleep off your food coma at The Bleckley Inn (from \$150), a beautiful boutique hotel nearby.

Day 3 The Blue Ridge Mountains surrounding **Hendersonville, NC** (71 miles away), are breathtaking, and there are dozens of worth-the-exhaustion hikes—or just do them on horseback (from \$37 at Cedar Creek Stables). Go to Elijah Mountain Gem Mine, where the kids (or you!) can sift through crates of dirt hunting for quartz, amethyst, and even rubies (from \$12.50). Once you've amassed



a Liz Taylor-worthy collection, go to Mast General Store and snap up some old-fashioned candy and locally produced goods like stone-ground grits. For dinner, try the inventive wood-fired pizzas at Mezzaluna, and overnight it at Mélange Bed & Breakfast (from \$179), with its pretty courtyard.

Day 4 186 miles away in **Bishopville, SC**, is the Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden, the most mind-blowing stretch-your-legs stop ever. All of the topiaries are abstract, a playful mix of spirals and waves and geometric shapes. Before you're back on the road, grab a bite amid the wacky decor at Harry & Harry Too. Then drive 103 miles to **Myrtle Beach, SC**, a family-friendly town with old-school carnival vibes. Sit down for dinner at Wicked Tuna; you can't go wrong with any seafood dish—the restaurant employs in-house fishermen. Rest up at the Breakers Resort (from \$99), with its 418-foot lazy river.

Day 5 The secret to happiness: dolphins. Spend the day doing a dolphin-sighting boat tour (from \$31 at Blue Wave Adventures), and don't be scared when you suddenly lose the ability to frown. At night, order the crab soup at Sea Captain's House, then stop by Family Kingdom amusement park. It's got more than 35 rides, like the Sling Shot with a 110-foot drop, as well as more mild ones for those who don't wish to end their trip on that high a note.

THE GORGEOUS, DELICIOUS NORTHWEST TRAIL

TOTAL DISTANCE: 283 MILES

This road is paved with treats for your eyes and belly. Our advice: Pack stretchy pants and try not to blink too much.

Day 1 First, toss out that little pine tree and fill your car with the heavenly scent of lavender. Go to Mountainside Lavender farm in **Hillsboro, OR** (about an hour from Portland International Airport), where you can pick a bundle from the farm's more than 2,000 lavender plants. Then, load up on puffy German pancakes at Elmer's restaurant before driving 99 miles to **Long Beach, WA**, which lies on a 28-mile peninsula of soft, silver-sand beaches. There, you can go for a horseback ride on the beach (\$30 at Back Country Wilderness Outfitters) or hit up surf school Skookum Surf Co. to learn what "hang 10" means—and give it a shot. Shoppers: Pop into the area's antique and specialty stores, like Hobo Junction, where the "marine salvage" includes colorful glass buoys that'll look so cute in your living room. For dinner, go to Pickled Fish for the salmon sliders. Just save room for black licorice ice cream at Scoopers. Stay at the comfy Klipsan Beach Cottages (from \$175).

Day 2 Drive north up the coast for 72 miles to **Aberdeen, WA**, and participate in a ship duel off the docks of Grays Harbor Historical Seaport (\$75). The 1700s-inspired ships will shoot cannons while you raise the sails and sing a sea chantey without a hint of embarrassment. Afterward, get gourmet pizzas at Amore Italian Restaurant, and geek out in Sucher & Son's Star Wars Shop, where thousands of new and vintage items are for sale.

Day 3 Drive 50 miles to the Mima Mounds preserve in **Olympia, WA**. Even geologists aren't sure how the 637 acres of grass-covered mounds there came to be. Glaciers? Gophers? Aliens?! Come up with

your own theory as you walk one of the trail loops. For a Zen vibe, go to the city's Yashiro Japanese Garden, where you can hang out by a koi pond. Get a room at the Red Lion Hotel Olympia (from \$124) and grab a quick swim in its outdoor pool after dinner at Dockside Bistro. Order the scallops—they're local.

Day 4 If you can wait a half hour for breakfast, drive 30 miles to **Tacoma, WA**, and try one of the stellar egg dishes at Old Milwaukee Café and Dessert Co. Then it's time for blown glass, which is huge—sometimes literally—here. Start at the Museum of Glass (\$15) to watch glassblowers shape molten blobs into something you'll want to carefully pack in the trunk to take home. From there, traverse the Chihuly Bridge of Glass, a 500-foot pedestrian bridge with three separate large-scale glass installations. If you're feeling inspired, take a workshop at Tacoma Glassblowing Studio (\$65). Grab a burger and a creamy Nutella milkshake at the retro diner Shake Shake Shake, then enjoy live music at Bob's Java Jive, a bar shaped like a giant coffeepot. Check in at Hotel

Murano (from \$149). It, of course, has an in-house glass art collection.

Day 5 **Seattle** (32 miles away) is like that kid in high school who was good at everything but still fun to be around. It has a cool arts scene, outdoorsy stuff, and great eats. Also: *coffee*. Do Seattle by Foot's coffee crawl (from \$30) before lunch at Il Corvo, where they make pasta by hand. You'll be glad you visited Theo Chocolate with a full belly, but you'll still need to try the Big Daddy: stacked marshmallow, caramel, and graham cracker covered in chocolate (\$10). To burn some of those calories, rent a canoe at the University of Washington's Waterfront Activities Center (from \$10) and glide through the floating lily pads on Union Bay. Share small plates, like rockfish crudo, on Westward's waterfront patio, then head to the cute University Inn Seattle (from \$179), where you can admire your photos—and plan your next trip. ☘

