

Road Trip!

By Jennifer G. Williams

The open road along a valley basin near Monte Vista in South Central Colorado, photo by Matthew Inden

Why settle for a stressful, hurry-up-and-move kind of PCS? This time, whether you are moving across the state or across the country, take a little extra time to check out the oddities and attractions along the way—think of it as a value vacation...and you'll create memories that can last a lifetime.

Long before the Eisenhower Interstate System was created in the 1950s, U.S. highways and byways snaked their way through small-town America from sea to shining sea. Take a break from the interstate monotony and try one of these routes for a leg of your trip.

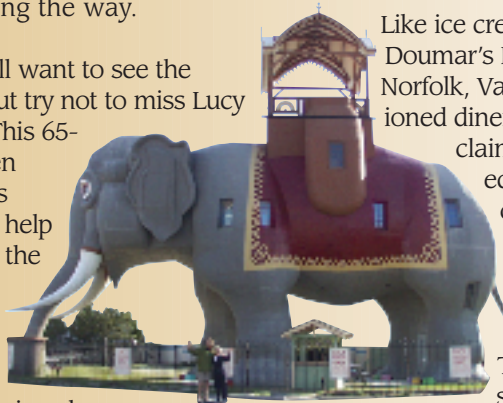
East Coast Corridor

Starting on the East Coast, highways 9, 113, 13, 17 and 1 can help you avoid the congestion and craziness of the I-95 corridor, with many historic and interesting attractions along the way.

Of course, you'll want to see the Jersey Shore, but try not to miss Lucy the Elephant! This 65-foot-tall wooden pachyderm was built in 1881 to help draw people to the then-new community of South Atlantic City, now Margate. It has since been used as a hotel and a tavern. These days, Lucy houses a small museum, and even has its own website: www.lucytheelephant.org

If you're still nostalgic for the old-time carnival rides and atmosphere, drive on down to Ocean City, Md., and Trimper's Amusements. This family-owned park features roller coasters, WWI-style kiddie planes, bumper cars and many carnival games to test your skills (and luck). But the main attraction there is the 50-foot-diameter

Herschell-Spillman carousel, bought for the park in 1902. Generations of families have enjoyed picking their favorite animal to ride on this now-automated gem. Visit www.trimperrides.com for more information.



Like ice cream? Visit Doumar's Barbecue in Norfolk, Va. This old-fashioned diner and drive-in claims to have invented the ice cream cone—the owner's uncle served the first ones at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. They still offer the same hand-rolled cones and great service that made them famous. Visit www.doumars.com for more information.

If pirates are more your thing, explore the legendary stomping grounds of Edward Teach, a.k.a. Blackbeard the Pirate, along coastal North Carolina. Blackbeard and most of his men were killed in 1718 in a battle with the British Royal Navy off the coast of Ocracoke. Blackbeard's ship, Queen Anne's Revenge, was discovered off the coast of Bogue Bank, and items

including cannons, coins and Ballast stones can be seen at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort. The ship still lies under 20 feet of water near Fort Macon. Blackbeard reportedly stayed in what is now known as "Hammock House," the oldest home in Beaufort, circa 1700. Visit www.blackbeardthepirate.com or www.historicbeaufort.com for more information.

Keep going down U.S. 17 to Mount Pleasant, S.C., just north of Charlestown, and see the line of roadside stands where women still weave their African sweetgrass baskets. Making these baskets from sweetgrass bulrush, pine needles and palm leaves has been a tradition in this community for more than 300 years. Mount Pleasant remains the only place in the United States where this particular type of basket is crafted. Check out the baskets and the centuries-old Gullah language and culture. Visit www.townofmountpleasant.com for more information.



Down in Savannah, Ga., you can see where Forrest Gump sat on a bus bench (Chippewa Park, but the bench itself is now in the visitor's center) and the childhood home of Girl Scouts Founder Juliet Gordon Low (current Girl Scouts earn a badge just for visiting!) Visit www.savannahoffthebeatenpath.com and www.julietgordonlowbirthplace.org for more information.

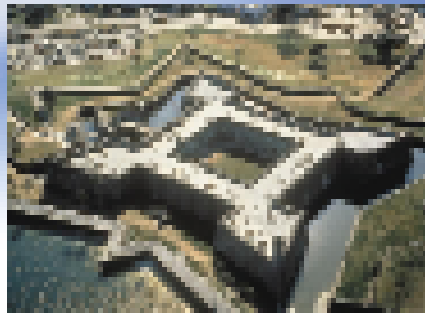
Of course, coastal Florida offers beaches of all kinds (beaches make up almost all of Florida's borders...), but there's more to this state than its sandy surroundings.

Since St. Augustine is known as the oldest permanent settlement in the United States (founded in 1565), there are many attractions claiming to be the oldest, including the oldest wooden schoolhouse and oldest house in Florida. The city's Spanish Quarter, offers a step back in time, with demonstrations of how life was there centuries ago. Visit www.staugustineattractions.net and www.staugustinehistorical society.org for more information.

U.S. 50, From Sea to Shining Sea

From its start in San Francisco to winding through the Great Plains and Washington, D.C., U.S. 50 bisects the country and offers a true cross section of the United States. From the breathtaking Lake Tahoe and Rocky Mountains to the more monotonous Nevada desert and Great Plains, the "Lincoln Highway," as it was called before such roads were numbered, is "the best national road across the middle of the United States," according to *Blue Highways* author William Least Heat Moon.

Interstate 80 has picked up the U.S. 50 route from San Francisco to Sacramento, where you can find Sutter's Fort, the oldest commercial settlement in California, as well as the origination of the



Castillo de San Marcos, St. Augustine, courtesy of VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official source for travel planning.

California Gold Rush and the destination of the doomed Donner party in the mid 1800s. The reconstructed Sutter's Mill, where Sutter employee James Marshall first discovered flakes of gold, is in nearby Coloma at the Gold Discovery State Historic Park. Visit www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=485 and www.coloma.com for more information.

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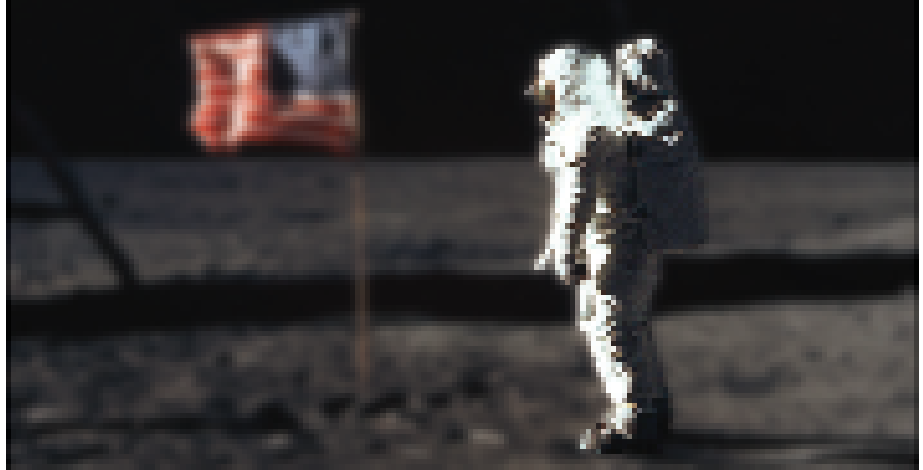
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