

For some truly spectacular scenery, take a detour at the California-Nevada border and drive along the 72-mile shoreline of Lake Tahoe, the country's largest alpine lake, as well as its second deepest. From quaint shops and restaurants to neon casinos and kitschy souvenir stands, there is truly something for everyone. In the summer, enjoy the gorgeous vistas; in the winter, enjoy the legendary skiing. Visit www.visitinglake-tahoe.com for more information.

Continue on through Nevada on what is known as the "Loneliest Road in America," and follow the Pony Express route that runs 400 miles across the state. Check out the 8,000-year-old petroglyphs at Grimes Point near Fallon or the still-operating gold and silver mines of Eureka and Virginia City. Visit www.nv.blm.gov/carson/Recreation/Rec_grimes_pt.htm, www.co.eureka.nv.us and www.virginiacity.nv.org for more information.

Once in Utah, head for the scenic and unique Arches National Park, just south of Route 50 and I-70 (which meet up at Salina) in the eastern third of the state. Arches National Park preserves over 2,000 natural sandstone arches, like the world-famous Delicate Arch, as well as many other unusual rock formations. Visit www.nps.gov/arch for more information.

Route 50 splits from I-70 near Grand Junction, Colorado, giving you the opportunity to get up close and personal with the majestic Rocky Mountains. One detour you may want to consider is U.S. 550, also known as the "Million Dollar Highway." Part of the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway, this 23-mile stretch of road between Silverton and Ouray gives exaggerated meaning to the phrase "a scenic drive."

The true reason for the nickname given to this section of U.S. Highway

550 is in dispute. According to Colorado Tourism officials, the most popular beliefs are: 1) it cost a million dollars to build this section of road, 2) the earth the road is paved on is mixed with a million dollars worth of gold and 3) the precarious heights the road traverses occasionally elicits the response, "I wouldn't drive that again for a million dollars!" Regardless of the reason, views of valleys, wildlife and sharp pinnacles saturate the scenery. Its natural endowments are well worth braving the twists, turns and towering heights of the road. Visit www.colorado.com for more information.

If you like endless waving prairie grasses and pheasants jumping and running alongside the road, you'll love Kansas. But the drive is by no means boring. From the Wild West's Dodge City and Fort Larned to Cottonwood Falls and the Tallgrass Prairie National Reserve, there are plenty of things to see and do. In Kinsley, you can honestly say you were in middle America: the small town dubs itself "Midway USA," having the distinction of being right in the middle of the country—1,561 miles to New York or San Francisco. Visit www.travelks.com, www.nps.gov/fols and www.nps.gov/tapr for more information.

In Missouri, Sedalia was known as the "Queen City of the Prairies" when the Pacific Railroad first came through the frontier town. Now the town has a different moniker: "The Home of Rails, Trails and Ragtime." Ragtime music and one of its greats, King of Ragtime Scott Joplin, are honored each year in this city that Joplin called home at the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival—the only pure classical Ragtime Festival

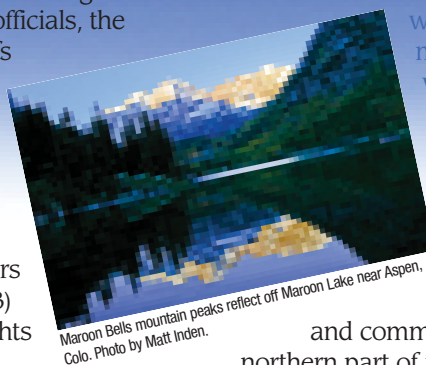
in the world. Visit www.visitedalia.mo.com and www.visitmo.com for more information.

Route 50 through Illinois provides a sharp contrast from the industrial

and commercial areas in the northern part of the state. This relatively short ride takes you through Illinois' farmlands, along much the same route migrating bison once used (hence one nickname, "Buffalo Trace"). Be sure to stop at the 17th Street Bar and Grill in O'Fallon for the ribs *Bon Appetit* magazine picked in 2007 as the "Best Ribs in the U.S." Visit www.enjoyillinois.com and www.17thstreetbarbecue.com for more information.

In Indiana, stop in Vincennes, the French-settled capital of the Indiana Territory in the early 1800s. Visit GrouseLand, home to ninth president William Henry Harrison when he served as governor of the frontier territory, and see the views from the two large Indian mounds on the heights overlooking the town to the south. Route 50 then takes you to the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, just three miles east of I-65 at Seymour. Check out the new Conservation Learning Center, in the refuge's visitor center. Visit www.in.gov/visitindiana, www.vincennes.org and www.fws.gov/midwest/muscatatuck for more information.

Ohio brings more farmland, although U.S. 50 snakes through Cincinnati just after crossing the Ohio River. Stop just east of Cincinnati in the town of Milford to see the huge smiling "Big Boy" at Frisch's Big Boy restaurant on Lila Avenue, where you can still get the famous "Big Boy" burger or their famous tartar sauce. Visit www.frischs.com to find a location in the Ohio-northern Kentucky area. Many old Indian mounds remain along the drive across Ohio,



Maroon Bells mountain peaks reflect off Maroon Lake near Aspen, Colo. Photo by Matt Inden.



Double Arches in Utah, courtesy of the National Park Service