10-Day Route 66 Essentials Itinerary with Times and Overnight Stays

Stretching from Chicago to Santa Monica, Route 66 is the ultimate American road trip. This 10-day essentials itinerary slows the pace compared to the classic 7-day plan, giving you more time to enjoy iconic landmarks, quirky roadside attractions, and authentic motels along the way. With daily mileage, suggested times, and overnight stays at legendary Route 66 lodgings, this guide ensures your journey is both memorable and manageable.

Day 1: Chicago -> Springfield, IL (~200 miles, ~3-4 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
08:00 AM	Breakfast at Lou Mitchell's, Chicago	Classic Route 66 start
09:00 AM	Depart Chicago	Stop in Joliet for Welcome Center
11:00 AM	Pontiac Route 66 Museum & murals	Photo ops
02:00 PM	Arrive Springfield	Cozy Dog Drive-In

Overnight: Route 66 Hotel & Conference Center, Springfield

Day 2: Springfield -> St. Louis (~100 miles, ~2 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
09:00 AM	Depart Springfield	Easy drive
11:00 AM	Chain of Rocks Bridge	Photo stop
01:00 PM	Lunch downtown St. Louis	Local eats
02:00 PM	Gateway Arch	Iconic landmark

Overnight: Holiday Inn St Louis SW - Route 66, La Quinta Inn & Suites, Wayside Motel

Day 3: St. Louis -> Rolla (~110 miles, ~2 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
09:00 AM	Depart St. Louis	Scenic drive
10:00 AM	Meramec Caverns	Cave tour
12:00 PM	Lunch in Cuba, MO	Murals + Wagon Wheel Motel cafe
02:00 PM	Arrive Rolla	Explore local Route 66 sites

Overnight: Wagon Wheel Motel, Cuba

Day 4: Rolla -> Tulsa (~280 miles, ~5 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
08:00 AM	Depart Rolla	Morning drive
11:00 AM	Springfield Route 66 Car Museum	Classic cars

02:00 PM	Blue Whale of Catoosa	Iconic roadside stop
04:00 PM	Arrive Tulsa	Vintage motel check-in

Overnight: Campbell Hotel, Tulsa

Day 5: Tulsa -> Oklahoma City (~120 miles, ~2-3 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
09:00 AM	Depart Tulsa	Route 66 Historical Village
11:00 AM	Lunch at Rock Cafe, Stroud	Classic diner
01:00 PM	Round Barn, Arcadia	Historic landmark
02:00 PM	Pops Soda Ranch	Try unique sodas
03:00 PM	Arrive Oklahoma City	Cowboy Museum

Overnight: Skirvin Hilton, Oklahoma City

Day 6: Oklahoma City -> Amarillo (~260 miles, ~4-5 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
08:00 AM	Depart OKC	Stop at Lucille's Gas Station (~09:30 AM)
11:00 AM	Clinton Route 66 Museum	Exhibits
01:00 PM	Lunch en route	Continue west
04:00 PM	Cadillac Ranch	Bring spray paint
05:00 PM	Arrive Amarillo	Overnight stay

Overnight: Big Texan Motel, Amarillo

Day 7: Amarillo -> Tucumcari (~120 miles, ~2 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
09:00 AM	Depart Amarillo	Morning drive
10:00 AM	Midpoint Cafe (Adrian, TX)	Celebrate halfway point
12:00 PM	Arrive Tucumcari	Murals, Tee Pee Curios

Overnight: Blue Swallow Motel, Motel Safari, Tucumcari

Day 8: Tucumcari -> Albuquerque (~180 miles, ~3 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
09:00 AM	Depart Tucumcari	Scenic drive
11:00 AM	Santa Rosa Auto Museum	Classic cars
02:00 PM	Arrive Albuquerque	Neon signs, Route 66 Diner

Overnight: Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, El Vado Motel

Day 9: Albuquerque -> Flagstaff (~320 miles, ~5-6 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
08:00 AM	Breakfast at Route 66 Diner	Albuquerque classic
10:00 AM	Gallup murals stop	Local art
12:00 PM	Petrified Forest National Park	Scenic views
02:00 PM	Wigwam Motel, Holbrook	Retro stay
05:00 PM	Arrive Flagstaff	Overnight stay

Overnight: Wigwam Motel, Holbrook; Little America Hotel, Flagstaff

Day 10: Flagstaff -> Santa Monica (~460 miles, ~7-8 hrs)

Time	Activity/Stop	Notes
07:00 AM	Depart Flagstaff	Stop at Meteor Crater (~08:00 AM)
10:00 AM	Seligman	Burger + Route 66 revival town
12:00 PM	Hackberry General Store	Roadside charm
02:00 PM	Oatman burros	Wild burros experience
06:00 PM	Arrive Santa Monica Pier	Route 66 End Sign

Overnight: Fairmont Miramar Hotel, Sea Shore Motel