Seasonal Route 66 Itineraries - Fall Highlights (10 Days, September-Novem

Experience Route 66 in its autumn glory with this Fall Highlights itinerary. From Chicago's crisp mornings to Santa Monica's coastal sunsets, the journey blends iconic roadside stops with seasonal charm - golden foliage, harvest festivals, and cozy motels along the Mother Road. This 10-Day adventure captures the warmth and color of fall across America's most legendary highway.

Day 1: Chicago, IL -> Springfield, IL (~200 miles, ~4.5 hrs)

- 08:00 AM - Route 66 Begin Sign, Chicago (Start of the journey)
- 09:00 AM - Joliet Route 66 Welcome Center (Photo ops)
- 11:00 AM - Pontiac Route 66 Museum & murals (Fall mural stroll)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Dell Rhea's Chicken Basket (Classic Route 66 diner)
- 02:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Lincoln (Top off fuel)
- 06:30 PM - Dinner: Cozy Dog Drive-In (Springfield original)

Overnight Stay: Route 66 Hotel & Conference Center, Springfield

Seasonal Note: Crisp September air makes outdoor stops refreshing.

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

- 09:30 AM - Lincoln Library (Historic exhibits)
- 11:00 AM - Gateway Arch (Iconic landmark)
- 12:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Litchfield (Top off fuel)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Ariston Cafe (Historic Route 66 eatery)
- 01:00 PM - Forest Park (Fall foliage picnic)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: Pappy's Smokehouse (Famous BBQ)

Overnight Stay: Red Roof Inn, St. Louis

Seasonal Note: October evenings perfect for Forest Park's autumn colors.

Day 3: St. Louis, MO -> Springfield, MO (~215 miles, ~4.5 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - Missouri Botanical Garden (Fall blooms & foliage)
- 11:00 AM - Route 66 State Park (Scenic stop)
- 12:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Rolla (Top off fuel)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Ted Drewes Frozen Custard (Seasonal pumpkin flavor)
- 01:30 PM - Fantastic Caverns (Underground tour)

- 03:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Lebanon (Top off fuel)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: The Order (Modern American cuisine)

Overnight Stay: Best Western Route 66 Rail Haven, Springfield

Seasonal Note: October foliage brightens the drive.

Day 4: Springfield, MO -> Tulsa, OK (~180 miles, ~4 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - Vintage Iron Motorcycle Museum (Classic bikes)
- 12:30 PM - Fuel Stop: Miami (Top off fuel)
- 01:00 PM - Lunch: Burn Co BBQ (Local BBQ)
- 02:30 PM - Fuel Stop: Claremore (Top off fuel)
- 03:00 PM - Tulsa Art Deco District (Architecture walk)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: The Tavern (Gastropub fare)

Overnight Stay: Route 66 Harley Motel, Tulsa

Seasonal Note: September evenings lively with fall festivals.

Day 5: Tulsa, OK -> Oklahoma City, OK (~105 miles, ~2.5 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - OKC National Memorial (Reflective visit)
- 11:00 AM - Bricktown Entertainment District (Shops & sights)
- 12:30 PM - Fuel Stop: Chandler (Top off fuel)
- 01:00 PM - Lunch: Empire Slice House (Creative pizza)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: Cattlemen's Steakhouse (Historic steakhouse)

Overnight Stay: Skirvin Hilton, Oklahoma City

Seasonal Note: November nights are cozy in Bricktown.

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

- 09:00 AM - Cadillac Ranch (Iconic roadside art)
- 11:00 AM - Fuel Stop: Elk City (Top off fuel)
- 11:30 AM - Amarillo Historic District (Explore downtown)
- 01:00 PM - Lunch: Big Texan Steak Ranch (Route 66 classic)
- 02:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Shamrock (Top off fuel)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: Tyler's Barbecue (Local favorite)

Overnight Stay: Big Texan Motel, Amarillo

Seasonal Note: October sunsets glow over Cadillac Ranch.

Day 7: Amarillo, TX -> Santa Fe, NM (~280 miles, ~5 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - Midpoint Cafe, Adrian (Halfway point of Route 66)
- 11:30 AM - Fuel Stop: Tucumcari (Top off fuel)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Watson's BBQ, Santa Rosa (Local favorite)
- 02:30 PM - Santa Fe Plaza (Shops & culture)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: The Shed (New Mexican cuisine)

Overnight Stay: Inn of the Governors, Santa Fe

Seasonal Note: Cool mountain evenings in October-November.

Day 8: Santa Fe, NM -> Gallup, NM (~200 miles, ~4 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - Santa Fe Art Stroll (Morning galleries)
- 12:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Grants (Top off fuel)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Local Cafe (Quick bite)
- 01:00 PM - El Rancho Hotel (Historic Route 66 stop)
- 03:00 PM - Red Rock Park (Hiking & views)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: Jerry's Cafe (Local favorite)

Overnight Stay: El Rancho Hotel, Gallup

Seasonal Note: October evenings vibrant at Gallup's Red Rock Park.

Day 9: Gallup, NM -> Flagstaff, AZ (~185 miles, ~3.5 hrs)

- 09:00 AM - Petrified Forest National Park (Scenic drive)
- 12:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Holbrook (Top off fuel)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Joe & Aggie's Cafe (Route 66 classic)
- 01:00 PM - Wigwam Motel (Photo stop)
- 03:00 PM - Flagstaff Downtown (Shops & culture)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: Beaver Street Brewery (Local brews & food)

Overnight Stay: Little America Hotel, Flagstaff

Seasonal Note: Autumn skies perfect for stargazing in Flagstaff.

Day 10: Flagstaff, AZ -> Santa Monica, CA (~470 miles, ~7.5 hrs)

- 08:00 AM - Grand Canyon Detour (Optional) (Early start for long drive)
- 12:00 PM - Oatman Ghost Town (Historic mining town)
- 12:30 PM - Lunch: Oatman Hotel (Western-style meal)

- 01:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Kingman (Top off fuel)
- 03:00 PM - Fuel Stop: Barstow (Top off fuel)
- 04:00 PM - Route 66 End Sign, Santa Monica Pier (Photo finish)
- 07:00 PM - Dinner: The Albright (Seafood by the ocean)

Overnight Stay: Ocean View Hotel, Santa Monica

Seasonal Note: November rides capture desert crispness and coastal cool.

Why Autumn Is the Perfect Season for Route 66

- Golden foliage brightens Midwest and Missouri stretches.
- Crisp mornings and mild afternoons offer ideal riding weather.
- Local towns host fall festivals, pumpkin patches, and harvest events.
- Historic motels and diners feel especially cozy in cooler months.
- Clear skies enhance photography and stargazing opportunities.
- Fewer crowds mean easier access to iconic stops.
- Seasonal treats like pumpkin custard and hearty stews add flavor to the ride.