

SLOW DOWN AND ENJOY THE JOURNEY: 8 PLACES TO STOP ALONG THE WAY



Generations of family fun.

Throughout history some influential people have articulately expressed how a trip, a journey, is a great source of joy; taking the time to soak it all in can be just as, if not more enjoyable and instructional than the destination.

We're fortunate in North America to have many amazing destinations, and even more spots in the middle, that make taking the Relaxed Roamer, set-up-camp-anywhere approach to hitting the road a wonderful choice.

So, kick back and let's take a peek at eight of those in-between places that help fill in the spaces on your trip that complete your journey.

"It is good to have an end to the journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

-Ernest Hemingway



ON YOUR WAY TO OR FROM THE GRAND CANYON...

...whether you're still processing what you just experienced, or eagerly anticipating, the spectacle that is the Grand Canyon, you should be aware of another nearby beauty, the Sedona, Ariz. area. About 60 miles from the southern edge of the canyon, in the heart of Red Rock Country, Sedona is a nature lover's dream with dazzling rock formations and a natural palette of colors. There's even legend of a unique energy that emanates from the earth in and around the town called a vortex.

The Chapel of the Holy Cross, perched high above a rocky cliff is a sight to behold as is Red Rock State Park. The nature-loving Roamer might want to dial back their pace even more in Sedona. Learn more about visiting Sedona and the bountiful camping options <u>here</u>.





THINGS MAY BE BIGGER IN TEXAS, BUT...

...the tiny state flower, the bluebonnet, makes for one of the most beautiful sites your eyes will ever behold. In the spring, the blue, white and purple flowers bloom, making for magical wildflower-strewn landscapes as far as the eye can see. Several routes across the state claim the title "Bluebonnet Trail," but a safe bet is to explore the country roads south of Houston and north of Austin—for miles and miles, "enjoying the journey" will take on a whole new meaning. Learn more about the routes in and around the Texas bluebonnets here.





RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF DES MOINES AND MINNEAPOLIS...

...you'll find an architecture enthusiast's dream—that's right, Mason City, IA. It may be relatively remote, but it's a star in the world of building design and just the kind of laid back place where a Relaxed Roamer will enjoy setting up camp. Frank Lloyd Wright left his mark here designing many homes as well as one of his few hotels, The Park Inn Hotel. The town of less than 30,000 people boasts more than 30 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more about visiting and camping around Mason City here.





HEADING NORTH OF THE BORDER...

...cross into Canada from Minnesota and take some time to soak in the pristine Boundary Waters region. The glaciers of the last ice age tore through this 150-mile stretch of the Minnesota/Canada border—and we're reaping the benefits today. The U.S. Forest Service describes the pristine area best on their website: "Rugged cliffs and crags, canyons, gentle hills, towering rock formations, rocky shores, sandy beaches and several thousand lakes and streams, interspersed with islands and surrounded by forest."

Great care is taken to protect the area and permits are required for overnight camping trips during the warmer months, so this trip will require some minimal planning. Learn more about visiting The Boundary Waters, also known as The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), here.





TAKING IT EASY NEAR THE BIG EASY...

...Mardi Gras and bayou flair fascinates, but the party atmosphere isn't quite your speed. Spend a day or two in Lake Charles, La. The city hosts dozens of festivals throughout the year, including its own Mardi Gras celebration. You'll also find one of the foremost Mardi Gras museums where you'll see spectacular parade costumes while learning about the history and significance of the annual New Orleans celebration. There's also the chance to explore the swamps in an air boat and you won't want for genuine Cajun fare. Learn more about visiting Lake Charles and its dozens of campgrounds and RV parks here.





COLDER WEATHER HAS YOU SEARCHING FOR SUN...

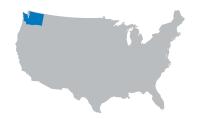
...camping near the beach—sounds delightful! Escape to one of the increasingly rare old-Florida outposts, Anna Maria Island. Situated about an hour from Tampa, just across the stunning 4-mile long, 430-foot tall Sunshine Skyway Bridge, you won't find high rises or high speed limits here. Instead, pristine beaches, a fishing village and laidback waterside dining feed a charm that can be hard to find on the Sunshine State's densely populated coastline. Learn more about visiting Anna Maria Island here.





WHEN VISITING THE NATION'S CAPITAL...





ON A DRY DAY IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST...

...explore some treehouses that will put even your inner child's wildest dreams to shame. Half an hour from Seattle, deep in a forest along the Raging River you find TreeHouse Point. The private property hosts events and even offers bed and breakfast-style lodging in six treehouses built by the star of the Animal Planet show "Treehouse Masters," Pete Nelson.

The property is so serene and secluded that visits must be scheduled in advance. But, tours that cost just a few bucks, miles and miles of hiking trails and a number of local farmer's markets make taking some time to explore this territory well worth it. Learn more about visiting this camper's fantasyland here.



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