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“America’s Favorite Drive”

Road Trips

by admin



To receive an All-American Road designation, a road must possess multiple intrinsic qualities (historic, cultural, natural, scenic, recreational, archeological) that are nationally significant and contain one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere. The road must be considered a destination unto itself.

Such is the case of the Blue Ridge Parkway, often called “America’s Favorite Drive.” It is literally the “backbone” of a great scenic mountain region embracing the Southern and highest portion of the Appalachian mountain range.



The Parkway was constructed, in part, to connect the Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. Begun in 1935, the Parkway was also envisioned as the first elongated national park providing the recently enamored automobile traveler of the time with some of the most spectacular natural scenery in the United States. The Blue Ridge Parkway’s continuous 469-mile route was not fully completed until 1987. In Virginia, the Parkway runs through the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and into North Carolina.



It’s a high road of adventure, “intended for leisure travel on the ride-awhile, stop-awhile basis,” according to the official publication of the Blue Ridge Parkway Association. Stops can include everything from canoeing, kayaking, rafting and tubing down the Shenandoah River to hiking past waterfalls, viewing wildlife, fishing or bicycling. There are options to tour and taste at the area’s world-class wineries, play the greens at award-winning golf destinations, and of course dine, shop and take in the arts in the quaint towns that line the route.

The best way to plan your trip is to [view the Blue Ridge Parkway Association’s official publication online](#). It provides a mile by mile guide to overlooks, visitor centers, camp and picnic grounds, hiking trails, attractions and lodging starting at Junction US 340 and Skyline Drive at the Front Royal, VA (North) Entrance Station and ending 469.1 miles later at Junction Parkway and US 441 at the southern entrance/exit to the Parkway in Cherokee, NC.

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Drive the Blue Ridge Parkway in one of the latest vehicles from Chevy or Ford. You’ll be surprised at the level of style, safety, technology and fuel efficiency you might expect to find in cars costing thousands of dollars more in affordable best-selling compact and mid-size vehicles from our American manufacturers. To read our reviews on the just released and totally redesigned 2013 models of Chevy Malibu and the Ford Fusion, just lick just below in the RECENT POSTS section on “CHEVY AND FORD THINK GLOBAL IN THE DESIGN OF NEW VEHICLES”. If you want more cargo and/or passenger space, consider a crossover or minivan. Click below to view our article “CROSSOVERS AND MINIVANS EQUIPPED TO HANDLE ROAD TRIP CARGO.”

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Hotel Roanoke carefully preserved the past with touches such as an antique-filled lobby, original Czech-made chandeliers, a restored Regency Room (home of the signature Peanut Soup), Pine Room (formerly an Officers' Club in World War II), and the Palm Court, the original ceiling of which was painted to show the constellations as they appeared in the skies the day the first train came to Roanoke in 1852.

stops should include a stayover in Roanoke Valley, Capital of the Blue Ridge, distinguished by its famous 100-foot tall star atop Mill Mountain. The star was built in 1949 by the Roanoke Merchants Association and Chamber of Commerce as a gimmick to attract people to the valley for holiday shopping. Check out the overlook from the star by visiting the [Starcam](#).



The Valley is recognized for its railroad heritage, many festivals and historic farmers' market area where you'll find hand-made crafts and Virginia specialty items offered up and down Roanoke's noted downtown Market Street with unique shopping, art galleries, country stores and restaurants.



The Roanoke Valley has the highest number of restaurants per capita ratio than any other city in Virginia but be sure you don't miss breakfast at [The Roanoker](#) which has been in business for 70 years and has become an institution for its classic, fluffy Southern biscuits which you simply must try with gravy. Buy Southern Living's "Off the Beaten Path" cookbook featuring the recipe for them and have the owner "Butch" Craft sign it; be sure to ask her to tell you how she earned her nickname, "Butch."

On Market Street, [Thelma's Chicken & Waffles](#) is a trip back in time. (and clicking on the website link will open up an audio that says it all!). The food is as great as the people are hospitable!



Ms. Gigi made our experience at Thelma's Chicken and Waffles one we'll never forget!

If wine is your thing, you won't be disappointed in the wineries you will find along your route. Near Roanoke, be sure to pay a visit to [Chateau Morrisette](#), which made [The SAVVY List](#).

All photos, courtesy of the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau.

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