

# ANNUAL MANUAL 2009



**URBAN  
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# HAVE CAR, WILL TRAVEL

Hit the highways, byways and routes for Oklahoma sightseeing

By Tammie Dooley

**J**ust about the time we're contemplating a jail break from the confines of our air-conditioned homes, the light and air begin signaling fall. The itch to wander off the beaten path starts gathering steam as the sun starts changing its slant on the Earth. Our thoughts, as we look upon an errant runner of Bermuda grass, turn suddenly from being annoyed by it, to the desire to be like it – free to meander and roam.

Those far-off looks in our eyes and that nagging restlessness have only one diagnosis – wanderlust. The condition has only one cure – a road trip.

UTW has put together four variations on the cure, one for every direction away from Tulsa. So, get out a map (or not), buy some sandwich foam, gas up the car, clean and fill the ice chest, throw in some fishing gear (just in case), recharge the camera battery and load up.

## Scenic Road Trip #1 – East Loop to Jay

185 miles round-trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 4.5 hours

This loop heads east from Tulsa towards Locust Grove on Highway 412. The route delivers three state parks, Lake Eucha S.P. (pronounced ooochee), Spavinaw S.P. and Snowdale S.P.; takes you past both of Tulsa's water supplies, Lake Eucha and Spavinaw Lake; will have you checking out one of the earliest permanent settlements in the state at Salina; puts you on a portion of Rt. 66 on the return trip (from Claremore to Catoosa); and provides a photo opportunity at one of Oklahoma's best known curiosities – Catoosa's Blue Whale.

### The Route:

From Tulsa, head east on Highway 412 to Kansas, Oklahoma (Choctaw and Locust Grove will be on the way). In Kansas, go North on Highway 59/10 to Jay. You'll pass Lake Eucha S.P. on this route – it's just south of Jay. At Jay, take Highway 20 west to Spavinaw (and Spavinaw S.P.). From Spavinaw, Highway 20 will take you through Salina, then Pryor. Snowdale S.P. is along this route between Salina and Pryor. Continue west on Highway 20 past Pryor, through Claremore, turning west on Rt. 66. Rt. 66 will take you into Catoosa where you can hit Highway 412 for the return to Tulsa.

**Side Trip:** Rheingarten German Restaurant in Grove for lunch (918-786-8737). Grove is north of Jay on Highway 59. You can also add another state park to your list. Honey Creek S.P. is just south of Grove.

**Side Trip:** The Will Rogers Memorial Museum is in Claremore. Just a bit north is Ologah's Dog Iron Ranch, the 1879 birthplace of Will Rogers.

## Scenic Road Trip #2 – North Loop to the Tallgrass Prairie

165 miles round-trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 4 hours

Heading north of Tulsa, this road trip pivots around the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, the largest protected remnant of tallgrass prairie left on earth. The grass reaches its full height in early fall and grows among 650 other plant species. Look for large brown animals roaming. As many as 2,500 head of bison, the largest land mammal native to the Western hemisphere, live on the prairie. Osage Hills S.P. is along this route, as is Bad Bead's Barbeque (918-287-1212) in Pawhuska.

### The Route:

From Tulsa, take 75 North to the Collinsville/Skiatook exit. Turn towards Skiatook (west on Highway 20) and continue to Hominy. At Hominy, turn north on Highway

99, and continue through Pawhuska to the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (about 30 minutes north of Pawhuska). From there, take Highway 60 East into Bartlesville, then go south onto Highway 123 to Barnsdall. Go south on Highway 11 to Skiatook, then south on 75 back to Tulsa.

**Side Trip:** Tom Mix Museum & Western Theatre is in Dewey, north of Bartlesville on Highway 75.

**Side Trip:** Woolawoc, Frank Phillips' 1925 ranch retreat and all around outdoor playground is south of Bartlesville on Highway 123 (on the return trip to Tulsa).

## Scenic Road Trip #3 – South to the Talimena Drive, Southern Variation

570 miles round-trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 11 hours, 45 minutes

This is the classic fall circuit for Oklahomans – Talimena Drive. This variation diverts south to Broken Bow after completing the length of the Talimena Scenic Byway. From Wilburton to Broken Bow, the entire stretch is a designated scenic drive.

The trip passes five of our state parks and one National Recreation Area – Okmulgee's Dripping Springs S.P., Wilburton's Robbers Cave S.P., Talimena S.P., Winding Stair Mountain N.R.A., Broken Bow's Hochatown S.P.,



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and Beavers Bend State Resort Park. To do this trip justice, plan for two days.

**The Route:**

From Tulsa, take Highway 75 south to Henryetta, where the Indian Nation Turnpike begins. Continue south on the Turnpike to McAlester. Exit the Turnpike at McAlester, heading east on Highway 270 to Wilburton. At Wilburton, turn south on Highway 2 and begin watching for the Highway 163 EAST sign. Heading east on Highway 163, follow this to Talihina. At Talihina, go north on Highway 271, watching for Talimena Scenic Byway signs. These will direct you to go east on Highway 1, all the way to Meru, Arkansas.

In Meru, the Byway loops back west into Oklahoma on Highway 63. Follow this to Big Cedar. At Big Cedar, turn South on Highway 259 to Broken Bow. At Broken Bow you can either turn around and head back to Tulsa the way you came (everything looks different from the other direction), or you can continue south on 259 to Highway 70 west to Hugo, where hitting the Indian Nation Turnpike will cut some time off the return trip.

From Hugo to Tulsa on the Indian Nation takes about 2.5 hours. The round trip mileage of 568 miles is for the route to Hugo from Broken Bow and the return to Tulsa on the Indian Nation.

**Side Trip:** Hugo's Circus Performers Cemetery at Mt. Olivet's Showman's Rest. And a double-double cheeseburger at Hugo's Busy Bee Café, 580-326-5684 (closed Sundays).

**Side Trip:** Krebs, Oklahoma (just east of McAlester) for Roseanna's Italian Food's potato dumplings, 918-423-2055 (closed Mondays), and/or a pint of Pete's Choc beer, 918-423-2042.

**Scenic Road Trip #3 – South to the Talimena Drive, Northern Variation**

470 miles round-trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 10.5 hours

Upon the completion of the Talimena Scenic Byway loop, instead of heading south at Big Cedar to Broken Bow, take Highway 259 north.

This return trip winds by Heavener Runestone S.P., Spiro Mounds S.P., Tenkiller S.P., Cookson's Cherokee Landing S.P., through Tahlequah, then by Natural Falls S.P., and ends at Highway 412.

The Heavener Runestone is a sandstone slab carved with eight runic letters. Years of debate have centered on the question of whether or not the markings were made by Vikings.

**The Route:**

At Big Cedar, turn north onto Highway 259, then north on 59. Continue on this until reaching Sallisaw where you'll turn west on Highway 64. Follow this to Vian. At Vian turn north on Highway 82. Take Highway 82 to Tahlequah, veering north onto Highway 10. Continue north on Highway 10 to Kansas (Oklahoma) where you can pick up Highway 412 west for the return to Tulsa. The road from Vian to Kansas is a designated scenic route.

**Side Trip:** The Spiro Mounds Site. The Spiro Mounds Site is Oklahoma's only state archeological park, dating from 950 A.D. to 1450 A.D. Trade goods found at the Spiro site include copper from the Great Lakes, shell beads from the Gulf of California, and conch shell from the Gulf of Mexico. The goods indicate the extensive trade networks connecting different cultures across the continent at the time. Spiro is between Poteau and Sallisaw just west of Highway 59.

**Scenic Road Trip #4 – West Loop to Little Sahara/Anadarko**

550 miles round trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 11 hours

This western circuitous route encompasses two of Oklahoma's most surprising topographic wonders – the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge and Little Sahara S.P.

The sea salt of The Great Salt Plains was deposited by an inland sea that once covered the area. The world's only known deposit of selenite, a crystallized form of gypsum, is found here.

Ancient deposits of quartz and volcanic rock have eroded into the sand-dunes of the Little Sahara. Approximately 1,500 acres of the shifting dunes were set aside for the state park.

The wide loop meanders past five state parks: Keystone S.P., Great Salt Plains S.P., Little Sahara S.P., Watonga's Roman Nose S.P. and Hinton's Red Rock Canyon S.P., with several others located in the surrounding areas.

The entire route from Little Sahara S.P. to Anadarko is a designated scenic drive.

Nicola's Italian American Restaurant in Anadarko is worthy of a refuel (for you, not the car). Call for reservations at 405-247-6340; open only on Friday and Saturday evenings 5 – 9pm. www.scaffettas.com.

**The Route:**

From Tulsa, head west on Highway 412 to Highway 35 north. At Tonkawa, take Highway 60 west to Jet, then north on Highway 38 to the Great Salt Plains S.P. From there, turn west on Highway 11. Highway 11 becomes Highway 64 at Ingersoll (stay west on Highway 64). Continue west through Alva to Highway 14. Turn south on Highway 14. Just past Waynoka is Little Sahara S.P.

From there, continue south on Highway 281, veering east on Highway 412 to Orienta. At Orienta, go south (west) on Highway 60, staying south on this road to Watonga (the highway changes from 60 to 58, to 51A). At Watonga take south 270/281 to Interstate 40 (where you'll CROSS 40). Continue south on Highway 281 to Anadarko. At Anadarko's Highway 962, head east past Chickasha, to Interstate 44 east for the return to Tulsa.

**Side Trip:** The pink and white gypsum caves of Alabaster Caverns S.P. are a short distance west of Alva. Instead of turning south on Highway 14 outside of Alva (and towards Little Sahara), continue west on Highway 64 to Highway 50 and go south.

**Scenic Road Trip #4 – West Loop to Little Sahara/Guthrie**

465 miles round trip from Tulsa  
Driving time: 10 hours, 20 minutes

Instead of continuing south at Watonga, take Highway 3/33 east to Guthrie - Oklahoma's original capitol city. Along this route are the Chisholm Trail Museum and Governor Seay Mansion in Kingfisher, and the Oklahoma Territorial Museum in Guthrie.

**The Route:**

At Guthrie, continue east on Highway 33 through Langston, Cushing and Drumright, until arriving at Interstate 44 east for short return to Tulsa.

**Side Trip:** Jim Thorpe's home. At Cushing, take Highway 18 north to 51 east to Yale, Oklahoma. Closed on Sundays.

So your appetite's been whetted for road trips within our great state? Order the 2009 Travel Guide from www.travelok.com. You can also order free maps and a glove box full of additional state-wide resources. Want to know more? Steve's Sundries carries *Off The Beaten Path Oklahoma* and *Oklahoma Curiosity*; both worthy of any Okie library.