

Online since 1996, the site's founders hit the road themselves for six solid years after losing their home to a fire in 1993. They now claim their front yard "stretches to the Gulf of Mexico" and their back yard "all the way to Prudhoe Bay." Beyond a Today's Route post, the site has a handy Fuel Cost Calculator, Featured Road Trip Book and Road Trip Gear sections, headlines, and Road Trip Routes divided by region. Additionally, you can ask others for tips, view photo slideshows, book hotel rooms, access and share custom routes, create your own custom maps in the Map Center, and discover roadside attractions worth seeking out.

**BudgetTravel Road Trips**  
www.budgettravel.com

One unfortunate reality that prevents many people from traveling more is a lack of funds. This page (on the home page, click Trip Ideas and Road Trips) aims to help would-be travelers work around this problem by offering money-saving deals and tips. The Road Trips section contained within the site's main Trip Ideas category focuses on presenting cost-conscious advice and experiences when it comes to executing road trips on the cheap. Other than slideshows, the better part of the site's content falls within the Top Stories section, which essentially consists of first-hand accounts of traveler's trips. ■

For some purists, a road trip should entail as little planning as possible. For those road tripping specifically to major and minor league baseball games within a given timeframe, this fly-by-night approach isn't really realistic due to teams' various home and away schedules. That's where a tool such as Baseball-RoadTrip.com's (www.baseball-roadtrip.com) Baseball Road Trip Planner comes in. Simply put, the site aims "to make it simple to plan a baseball road trip."

The tool presents users with several menus and fields to set the trip's parameters. These include eight drop-down menus listed as Team 1, Team 2, Team 3, etc. Each contains all Major League teams and their Triple-A affiliates. The other fields let you enter the maximum days your trip will run and beginning and ending dates. There are also

options to match your trip in reverse order and switch the order of teams based on distance between stadiums.

To start, select your teams and the number of days off you'd prefer between games. To see games on consecutive days, leave the Days Off field at 0. Our trip included the Kansas City Royals, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, Milwaukee Brewers, and St. Louis Cardinals. After clicking Plan Your Trip, we received 115 different trip options. The planner also listed each game's visiting team and start time, links to both teams' Web sites, and three options to buy tickets. Further, the plan detailed the distance between cities and let us view a map of the trip's route and email the trip's details.

# THAT'S News TO YOU

*Finding the appropriate online group to match your interests can be a monumental task. So each month, we scour the Internet to bring you the friendliest forums and most interesting bloggers the Web has to offer. This month, we focus on those blogging about road trips.*

**Solo Road Trip**  
soloroadtrip.com

Freelance writer Tammie Dooley describes herself on her Solo Road Trip blog as "a traveler, writer, and photographer for whom the open road frequently summons." She also states that "adventurous solo road trips are a staple for me, and a curiosity." She depicts the results of her curiosity via detailed blog posts aesthetically fleshed out by innovative, absorbing, professional-level photos that are reason alone to visit the blog.

"I've always wanted to call myself a writer and not laugh and stutter while saying it. So I figured a blog would give me reason enough to finally apply the description with a straight face," says Dooley. But why travel alone, anyway? "Blog readers have

asked me about taking a dog for a companion because they can't fathom being totally alone. Of course, I couldn't care less if you want to take a dog. But I will tell you the experience will be completely different. The liberation of making decisions on the fly, as fast as the brain can process, unfettered by the diplomatic process of asking what someone/something wants to eat, see, do, and when is something everyone should experience once."





by Blaine Flaming

## Find It Online

# Time To Hit The Road

### National Geographic Ultimate Road Trips

[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)

As *National Geographic* aptly puts it, “sometimes it’s the journey, sometimes it’s the destination—and sometimes, it’s both.” If you’re seeking ideas for an off-the-beaten-path road trip overflowing with jaw-dropping surroundings, this page (on the home page highlight, Travel, click Trip Ideas, and on the subsequent page click Road Trips) has plenty on tap in the 50 Ultimate Road Trips section, which includes such routes as Alaska’s Seward Highway, The Blues Highway in America’s South, Kentucky’s Bourbon Trail, Nebraska’s Pioneer Trail, and the Vermont Cheese Trail. Conveniently, trips are broken down into U.S. Road Trips and International Road Trips. Need further inspiration? Check out the Photo Gallery, which contains the type of amazing photos you’d expect from *National Geographic*, and the trips you can book with experts, such as a Tanzanian safari with biologist and artist David Bygott.

### Road Trip USA

[www.roadtripusa.com](http://www.roadtripusa.com)

Ah, the two-lane highway. What better way to travel cross-country? That’s the opinion at least of Jamie Jensen, who has authored multiple books “covering more than 35,000 miles of classic blacktop” along the Pacific Coast Highway, Route 66, the Appalachian Trail, the Great River Road, and more. Beyond a Road Tripper Blog; Drive Of The Month section; plethora of travel-related links; tourism information organized by state; and podcasts with tips, route highlights, and travel ideas, The Routes area presents driving tours for such routes as The Great Northern route starting in Seattle and following US-2 to Acadia National Park in Maine.

### Travel Channel Road Trips

[www.travelchannel.com](http://www.travelchannel.com)

For all things travel-related, including road trip ideas and tips, a logical starting place is the Travel Channel’s Web site. The main thrust of the road trip section (click Places & Trips on the home page

and Road Trips and National Parks on the subsequent page) is the individual, detailed experiences covering eco-adventure in Costa Rica; an “all-American high road” trip on U.S. Highway 34 in Colorado along the Trail Ridge Road; Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch in Picacho, Ariz.; House On The Rock in Spring Green, Wis.; and more. There is also a wealth of related videos and slideshows, as well as Road Trip Tips that provide a lowdown on calculating gas mileage, traveling with kids, packing, and more.

### OpenRoadJourney—Motorcycles

[www.openroadjourney.com](http://www.openroadjourney.com)

Whether you ride a Harley, Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, cruiser, dirt bike, or scooter, you’ll benefit from this site’s resources relating to taking to the road with the wind in your face. The most valuable asset here is the numerous routes other riders have detailed and presented photos of. In addition to acquiring turn-by-turn directions, you can share maps via email, copy them to your blog or Web site, and print them. The Bikers section is filled with individual user pages featuring photos, experiences, and more, while the Articles section is teeming with in-depth content on specific road trips.

### Road Trip America

[www.roadtripamerica.com](http://www.roadtripamerica.com)

If a North American road trip is in your future, head to this site, pronto.

## Share THE WARES

*Some of the best apples in the online orchard are the free (or free to try) programs available to download. Each month, we feature highlights from our pickings. This month, we delve into software that helps plot a baseball-themed road trip.*