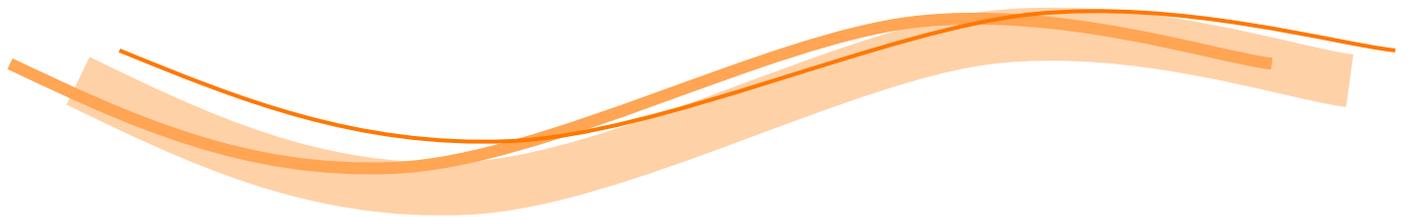




# Great American Road Trips: The Oregon Trail





<b>The Great American Road Trip</b>	<p>Discover America, the national US tourism team, has created a website at <a href="http://www.DiscoverAmerica.com">www.DiscoverAmerica.com</a> that has enough bells and whistles to tempt any Canadian with wanderlust to venture south of the border. One of the most compelling sections on their website is simply titled: "Road Trips"... But beware! For here you will find details on all those great American Road Trips that you always dreamt you would take one day...</p> <p>From the Blues Highway to Route 66... from The Great River Road to the Pacific Coast Highway... take your choice and experience the USA on the road on an epic journey of your own making!</p>
<b>THE OREGON TRAIL</b>	<p>I selected one of the most iconic of all the Great American Road Trips for my Western US adventure - I drove the historic Oregon Trail.</p> <p>The Oregon Trail is a 3,500 kilometer historic east–west wagon route and emigrant trail that connected the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean coast of Oregon. The eastern part of the Oregon Trail spanned part of the future state of Kansas and nearly all of what are now the states of Nebraska and Wyoming. The western half of the trail spanned most of the future states of Idaho and Oregon.</p> <p>The Oregon Trail was laid by fur trappers and traders from about 1811 to 1840 and was only passable on foot or by horseback. By 1836, when the first migrant wagon train was organized in Independence, Missouri, a wagon trail had been cleared to Fort Hall, Idaho. Wagon trails were cleared further and further west, eventually reaching all the way to the Willamette Valley in Oregon and the Pacific Coast. What came to be called the Oregon Trail was complete. From various starting points in Missouri, Iowa or Nebraska Territory, the routes converged along the lower Platte River Valley near Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory and led to rich farmlands west of the Rocky Mountains.</p> <p>From the early to mid-1830s (and particularly through the epoch years, 1846–1869) the Oregon Trail and its many offshoots were used by about 400,000 settlers, ranchers, farmers, miners and businessmen together with their families. The eastern half of the trail was also used by travellers on the California Trail, Bozeman Trail, and Mormon Trail before turning off to their separate destinations. When the first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869 the trip west became much faster, cheaper and safer. Today, modern roads still follow parts of the same course westward and pass through towns originally established to serve those using the Oregon Trail.</p>

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	<p>And it's those roads I travelled for his Oregon Trail road trip, starting in Independence, Missouri and ending in Portland, Oregon. My road trip allowed me to stop by the springs where the Pioneers camped on their journey and to visit the places where they carved their names in the rock for us still to see today. I walked in the ruts made by their wagons and followed the landscapes and landmarks that helped them navigate their way West. I dipped my toes in the Missouri River - the first great barrier as they started their epic migration Westwards - and I frolicked in the waves of the Pacific Ocean at journey's end.</p>
<p><b>Historical Developmeny of the Oregon Trail</b></p>	<p>The Oregon Trail was a wagon road stretching 3,500 kms from Missouri to Oregon's Willamette Valley. It was not a road in any modern sense, only parallel ruts leading across endless prairie, sagebrush desert, and mountains. From the 1840s through the 1880s, thousands trekked westward, carrying only a few belonging and supplies for the journey, and settling on the western frontier, forever changing the American West.</p> <p>The first Europeans and Euro-Americans to see the far west were mountain men, trappers, overland explorers, and maritime explorers of the fur trade era. Maps and reports published information about landscapes and resources. Fur trading posts began to spring up throughout the interior. John Jacob Astor of the American Fur Company established Astoria on the west coast in 1811, and the next year sent Robert Stuart eastward with dispatches. Weaving together a series of Indian trails, Stuart found South Pass through the Rockies, a route with an elevation of 7000 feet and easy grades which allowed passage through this barrier. Stuart's route would ultimately become the Oregon Trail.</p> <p>As frontiersman and fur traders from Canada and the United States began to populate the west, the network of trading posts and small settlements set up a political debate between England and the US on claims to land in the Pacific Northwest in the 1830s and 1840s. Increasing American settlers would cement US claims to the territory, in the mind of political leaders, who encouraged westward migration. At the same time, the US was rocked by a depression. Unemployment was high, money was scarce, and epidemics of malaria and yellow fever spurred people, especially of the middle and lower classes, to look for better opportunities.</p> <p>A missionary to Oregon, Jason Lee, toured the eastern states in 1838 extolling the virtues of the West, and Oregon in particular. Missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman sent back letters from their mission in the interior of Oregon Country, furthering the interest in a promising new</p>

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life for farmers and tradesman in the West.

In 1840, Joel Walker successfully brought his wife and five children westward over the route to Oregon. In 1841, the Bidwell–Bartleson party of over 60 people gathered at Independence, Missouri, the last settlement on the western frontier, to make the trek west to California. Poorly organized and supplied, they encountered hardships; about half the party changed plans and went to Oregon. In 1842, Elijah White led an organized wagon train of 100 people with an experienced guide. Two thousand miles later, across prairies, towering mountains and parched deserts unfamiliar to eastern farmers, they completed the trek. About half settled in Oregon, while the other half moved further south to California. They proved the journey could be successful, and kindled the hopes of thousands.

In 1843, almost 900 people made the trip, bringing along cattle for new farms. In 1844, 400 people, and in the next two years, more than 5000 people completed the trek. Mormons, seeking refuge from religious persecution, followed part of the trail to new settlements around Salt Lake, and in the late 1840s, an explosion of fortune seekers responded to word of the California gold strikes. In April of 1849, more than 20,000 people left for Oregon and California.

Throughout the 1840s, politicians in the east advocated for settlement in the west, negotiated treaties solidifying claims, and established land grants for settlers. In July 1843, the Provisional Government of Oregon, made up of mostly American settlers, provided a means to claim up to 640 acres, a full square mile. Oregon became a US territory in 1848. The Donation Land Law of 1850 formalized the land law granting a single man 320 acres, with an additional 320 acres to his wife if he was married. Land claim options changed frequently over the next few years until national establishment of the Homestead Act in 1862. The promise of free land inspired many to take on and complete the difficult journey. In addition to the plodding pace and agonizing labor of traveling 3,500 kmsa step at a time, the trip could kill. In summer, water sources dried up, oxen perished and families endured thirst. Others experienced starvation when they brought insufficient food supplies and found it impossible to live off the land. The route of the Oregon Trail was littered with cast off belongings as families struggled to lighten the load and save the health of their draft animals.

The most dreaded danger was cholera. It could spread rapidly among wagon trains. The mysterious nature of cholera made it even more frightening; a strong healthy person could develop a slight fever in the

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morning, be unconscious at noon, and dead in the evening. Combined with accidents, drowning at dangerous river crossings, and other illnesses, at least 20,000 people died along the Oregon Trail. Most trailside graves are unknown, as burials were quick and the wagon trains moved on.

Indians living along the route watched the growing number of emigrants with curiosity, suspicion, and the anxiety of unexpected and unwanted change to their way of life. Wise leaders of both sides made an effort to avoid trouble, and for the most part succeeded. Many Indians traded with wagon groups providing crucial food and supplies to emigrants, and offered guide services through difficult or dangerous crossings at rivers.

Each part of the journey had its challenges, but always the need to keep moving and complete the journey before supplies were exhausted, poor health killed, or winter weather closed mountain passages. Between 1841 and 1884, when a network of railroads connected the east coast to the Pacific Northwest, an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 people traveled overland. Some were born along the way, some were buried. Some settled permanently, and some traveled back east. Certainly no one who made the 4–6 month journey was ever the same. For many, it was the most incredible and defining event of their lives. Their legacy of courage and determination is a legendary part of the American experience.

As the frontier west gave way to settlement the Oregon Trail might have been forgotten, save for pioneers who formed historical societies, and especially the work of 1852 pioneer Ezra Meeker, an advocate of trail preservation. He retraced the journey back and forth across the continent starting in 1906, placing markers. In 1978, Congress designated it as the Oregon National Historic Trail, part of the National Trails System. While only about 500 kms of actual trail ruts still remain, the route is preserved with over 125 historic sites, auto tour routes, and markers. The trail is managed by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, state agencies, and private organizations and land owners who want the history and memory of this remarkable American event preserved.

It's difficult to estimate the numbers due to the nature of the large scale emigration. People on the move, in sometimes large groups, with varying destinations are difficult to count. The emigration lasted over several decades. People were born and people died during the typical five month journey. Some historians have made estimates based on

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	<p>diary accounts, newspapers reports from the time, and from registers and wagon counts kept at Fort Laramie and Fort Kearney. Historian John Unruh estimated 296,000 traveled to Oregon, California, and Utah from 1840 to 1860. Merrill Mattes estimated 350,000 overland travelers from 1841 through 1866, and later expanded his estimate closer to 500,000 for all travelers on western trails during that time period.</p>
<p><b>Oregon Trail Pioneer Quotes</b></p>	<p>The Oregon Trail migrations in the mid-1800s coincided with a popular American trend of keeping a diary or journal. Many of the journals kept by pioneers as they traveled survived the years and are not kept in libraries and archives around the country. Diary quotes give us a first person look at the observations, thoughts, feelings, and experiences of everyday people on an extraordinary journey.</p> <p>"The road to-day was very hilly and rough. At night we encamped within one mile of Fort Hall. Mosquitoes were as thick as flakes in a snow-storm. The poor horses whinnied all night, from their bites, and in the morning the blood was streaming down their sides." -Margaret A. Frink, July 11, 1850</p> <p>"We have good roads comparatively. We mean good roads if the sloughs are not belly deep and the hills not right straight up and down and not rock enough to turn the wagon over." -Henry Allyn, August 11, 1852</p> <p>"Started at half past 4, after being up with team nearly all night. Came on to the good camp at spring. On our way here at Powder River we killed a noble salmon, taking breakfast out of him, and a fine dish it was." -David Maynard, September 1, 1850</p> <p>"There is some of the largest rattle snakes in this region I ever saw, being from 8 to 12 ft. long, and about as large as a man's leg about the knee. This is no fiction at all." -Amelia Hadley, July 19, 1851</p> <p>"Raining all day...and the boys are all soaking wet and look sad and comfortless. The little ones and myself are shut up in the wagons from the rain. Still it will find its way in and many things are wet; and take us all together we are a poor looking set, and all this for Oregon...I am thinking as I write, 'Oh Oregon, you must be a wonderful country'" -Amelia Stewart Knight, June 1, 1853</p> <p>"After passing this morning through the valley in which we encamped last evening, the road brought us to the top of a high ridge, giving us a beautiful view of the mountains, running east and west, and parallel to the ridge over which we were passing. The sight was very fine, as these</p>

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mountains were the first we had seen covered with pine since leaving Soda springs. This range is high and rugged, with its base well wooded; those to the left were equally as much so, while the Blue mountains to the northwest reared their peaks in dark blue masses high above the rest, and are covered with a growth of as beautiful timber as can be found between here and the Pacific ocean.." -Osborne Cross, September 6, 1849

"I will say that this part of Oregon is the most fertile for rocks and sagebrush of any part of the world that I have ever seen." -Charlotte Stearns Pengra, August 22, 1853

"One wagon just passing...with the motto, 'Root, little hog or die'...on both sides...and on another cover is written, 'Bound for Origen.'" -E.W.Conyers, May 25, 1852

"Left camp at 6 & traveled 9 miles when we laid by on the Little Blue to give the boys an opportunity to hunt Buffalo as they have been almost wild with excitement since they came into the Buffalo country. About 10 A.M. they started off with a good supply of powder shot & ball & great anticipations but poor fellows their feathers looked sadly drooping as they came straggling into camp near night fall foot sore & weary & having secured among them all one small Antelope." -Louisa Cook, June 13, 1862

"We have been traveling among the hills and the monotony has been relieved by the ever varying beauty of the scenery and the pleasantness of the weather. Today we traveled till noon, and then stopped to get a fourth of July dinner and to celebrate our nation's birthday. While making the preparation, and reflecting at the same time of what the people of Morton and Peoria were doing, and contrasting my situation with what it was this day last year, a storm arose, blew over all the tents but two, capsized our stove with it delicious viands, set one wagon on fire, and for a while produced not a little confusion in the camp. No serious injury, however, was done." -Elizabeth Wood, July 4, 1851

"we are in the Powder river country and begin to see forests of Pine & Fir. Came down the mountain into Grand Ronde vally - a perfect gem - an oasis in a desert. The descent was made with difficulty - the wagons being chained & let down with ropes much of the way...Thousands of horses - many of them curiously spotted feed upon the mountain side. Hundreds of Indians of the Nez Percies tribe, are camped here..." -Harriet Talcott Buckingham, Sept. 8, 1851

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## Lewis and Clark Expedition

The Lewis and Clark Expedition made the Oregon Trail possible and inevitable. It is well worth taking in some of the sites for this expedition along the way. At the end of the Trail I visited Lewis and Clark National Historic Park in Astoria, Oregon ( [www.nps.gov/lewi/](http://www.nps.gov/lewi/) ) to discover what life was like for the Lewis and Clark Expedition during their 1805-06 winter stay at Fort Clatsop.

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson issued the following instructions to Meriwether Lewis: "The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri river, & such principal stream of it, as, by its course & communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado and/or other river may offer the most direct & practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce."

Although Lewis and William Clark found a path to the Pacific Ocean, it was not until 1859 that a direct and practicable route, the Mullan Road, connected the Missouri River to the Columbia River.

The first land route across what is now the United States was partially mapped by the Lewis and Clark Expedition between 1804 and 1806. Lewis and Clark initially believed they had found a practical overland route to the west coast; however, the two passes they found going through the Rocky Mountains, Lemhi Pass and Lolo Pass, turned out to be much too difficult for wagons to pass through without considerable road work. On the return trip in 1806 they traveled from the Columbia River to the Snake River and the Clearwater River over Lolo pass again.

They then traveled overland up the Blackfoot River and crossed the Continental Divide at Lewis and Clark Pass and on to the head of the Missouri River. This was ultimately a shorter and faster route than the one they followed west. This route had the disadvantages of being much too rough for wagons and controlled by the Blackfoot Indians. Even though Lewis and Clark had only traveled a narrow portion of the upper Missouri River drainage and part of the Columbia River drainage, these were considered the two major rivers draining most of the Rocky Mountains, and the expedition confirmed that there was no "easy" route through the northern Rocky Mountains as Jefferson had hoped.

Nonetheless, this famous expedition had mapped both the eastern and western river valleys (Platte and Snake Rivers) that bookend the route of the Oregon Trail (and other emigrant trails) across the continental divide—they just had not located the South Pass or some of the interconnecting valleys later used in the high country. They did show the

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	<p>way for the mountain men, who within a decade would find a better way across, even if it was not to be an easy way.</p>
<b>Recommended Books</b>	<p>The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West John Unruh. University of Illinois Press. 1979. A comprehensive study of the Overland Trail experience based on extensive research of primary source documents. Covers most major subjects, and is a reliable, accurate, and well-balanced presentation on history of the Oregon and California Trails. Considered by most Oregon Trail scholars to be the premier work on this subject.</p> <p>The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Mainline Via Fort Kearney to Fort Laramie Merrill J. Mattes. University of Nebraska Press. 1969. Focuses on the stretch of trail which followed the Platte River through Nebraska, but includes detailed information about emigrant experiences, significant trail events and dates, and trail landmarks.</p> <p>The Overland Migrations Handbook 105, Division of Publications, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 1979. Text written by David Lavender. Provides a brief overview of events, people and places associated with the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails. A good introductory book.</p>
<b>Oregon Trail Itinerary</b>	<p>My Oregon Trail itinerary with two side trips to Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore is detailed below, organized by the major states I passed through on my journey. In total, the trip was 48 hours driving through some of the most scenic country imaginable.</p>
<b>Kansas</b>	<p>Flew from Toronto to Kansas City Airport in Missouri and picked up a rental car.</p> <p>National Frontier Trails Museum 318 W. Pacific Ave. Independence, MO 64050 Crossed the Missouri into Kansas at the start of the Oregon Trail Missouri River to Topeka 1 hour (I/S 435 south to I/S 70 west to Topeka) Old Prairie Town at Ward-Meade Historic Site 124 NW Fillmore Street, Topeka, Kansas 66606 (785) 251-2989 Overnight: The Woodward Inns on Fillmore, 1272 SW Fillmore, Topeka, KS 66604 Topeka to Alcove Springs 1 hour 40 mins (Interstate 70 west to 99 north to Frankfort; 9 west to 77, then 77 north to Sunflower road and west to park)</p> <p>Alcove Springs, Oregon Trail camp site and wagon ruts Alcove Springs to Lincoln Nebraska 2 hours (Hwy 77 north all the way,</p>

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	then east on Rosa Parks Way to Capitol)
<b>Nebraska</b>	<p>Alcove Springs to Lincoln Nebraska 2 hours (Hwy 77 north all the way, then east on Rosa Parks Way to Capitol)</p> <p>Lincoln Nebraska capital building          Lincoln to Kearney 2 hours (I/S 80 west all the way)          Fort Kearny - A military post established in 1848 to protect emigrants heading west to Oregon and California. The fort was also a stop for Pony Express riders. Fort Kearny is part of a Nebraska state historical park that includes an interpretive center, reconstructed buildings, and replica Oregon Trail wagons.          Kearney to Scottsbluff 4 hours 15 mins (I/S 80 west to Ogallala; 26 north and west to Bridgeport to Chimney Rock to Scottsbluff)</p> <p>Jail Rock and Courthouse Rock 10 minutes south of Bridgeport. Jail Rock and Courthouse Rock - Two famous landmarks familiar to the pioneers are a short distance south of the North Platte River and easily visible to travelers driving along U.S. Highway 26.          Chimney Rock The most famous of the trail's landmarks has suffered erosion over the years and, as a result, is not quite the majestic formation observed by the pioneers, but it is difficult not to experience a thrill when it first comes into sight. Highway 26 is on the south side of the river and passes relatively close to Chimney Rock that is accessible by vehicle.          Scottsbluff          Overnight: Barn Anew Bed &amp; Breakfast, 170549 County Road L, Mitchell, Nebraska 69357 Phone: 308.632.8647          Scotts Bluff National Monument</p> <p>Early wagon trains skirted the imposing bluff by looping south through Robidoux Pass. Following the opening of Mitchell Pass in 1850, wagons moved single-file and cut deep ruts that remain visible to today's visitors. Scotts Bluff National Monument preserves the ruts and offers an excellent visitor center that interprets the trail and the pass used by the pioneers. Visitors can walk along the wagon ruts just west of the visitor center. Replica wagons are on the site. A paved road leads to the top of the bluff where outstanding views are available.          Scottsbluff Nebraska to Mount Rushmore, South Dakota 3 hours 15 mins</p>
<b>South Dakota</b>	<p>Scottsbluff Nebraska to Mount Rushmore, South Dakota 3 hours 15 mins (North on Hwy 71 to Crawford; East on Hwy 20, north on Hwy 385 into South Dakota and through Hot Springs, up through Wind Cave National Park, for bison and other wildlife), into Custer City, then north again just a few miles to Crazy Horse Memorial for a quick drive by.</p>

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	<p>From here continue north on Hwy 385, then take Hwy 244 to Mount Rushmore.)</p> <p>Mount Rushmore: iconic American sight carved into a mountainside          Mount Rushmore to Cody WY 6 hours 15 mins (Hwy 16 up to Rapid City to I-90 west to Ranchester WY; US14 to Cody across Bighorn National Forest)</p>
<p><b>Wyoming</b></p>	<p>Mount Rushmore to Cody WY 6 hours 15 mins (Hwy 16 up to Rapid City to I-90 west to Ranchester WY; US14 to Cody across Bighorn National Forest)</p> <p>Cody, Wyoming          Overnight: Garden Loft Apartment, Chamberlin Inn, 1032 12 Street, Cody, WY 82414 307-587-0202          Cody to Yellowstone National Park 2 hours (highway 14/16/20 west all the way)</p> <p>Yellowstone National Park - Yellowstone National Park is a nearly 3,500-sq.-mile wilderness recreation area atop a volcanic hot spot. Mostly in Wyoming, the park spreads into parts of Montana and Idaho too. Yellowstone features dramatic canyons, alpine rivers, lush forests, hot springs and gushing geysers, including its most famous, Old Faithful. It's also home to hundreds of animal species, including bears, wolves, bison, elk and antelope.          Yellowstone to Jackson WY 3 hours (Highway 287 south to Moran, then 89/191/26 south to Jackson)</p> <p>Grand Teton National Park - At approximately; 1,300 km<sup>2</sup>, the park includes the major peaks of the 64 km Teton Range as well as most of the northern sections of the valley known as Jackson Hole. It is only 16 km south of Yellowstone National Park, to which it is connected by the National Park Service-managed John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. Along with surrounding National Forests, these three protected areas constitute the almost 7,300,000 ha Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, one of the largest intact mid-latitude temperate ecosystems in the world.          Jackson Hole, Wyoming          Overnight: Hampton Inn Jackson Hole, 350 S Hwy 89, WY 83002</p> <p>Jackson WY to Montpelier, ID 2 hours (South on 189; 89 south to Montpelier)</p>
<p><b>Idaho</b></p>	<p>Jackson WY to Montpelier, ID 2 hours (South on 189; 89 south to Montpelier)</p>

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Montpellier: The National Oregon/California Trail Center, Montpellier  
Montpellier to Soda Springs 30 mins (Highway 30 to Soda Springs and Geyser Park)

Soda Springs: The captive geyser erupts on the hour until 10:00pm.  
Soda Springs to Lava Hot Springs 20 mins (Highway 30 to Lava Hot Springs)

Lava Hot Springs: a soothing soak at the Lava Hot Springs Foundation Hot Pools

Lava Hot Springs to Massacre Rocks State Park 1 hour (Highway 30 to I-15 North toward Pocatello and I-86 West)

Massacre Rocks State Park - site of a famous incident on the Oregon Trail and a rock on which are carved many of the names of the early Pioneers.

Massacre Rocks State Park to Twin Falls 1 Hour 10 mins (Hansen Exit 182 to leave the interstate for Highway 50 then Highway 30 to Twin Falls.)

Twin Falls: Shoshone Falls. Turn north on N. 3300E Road (Champlin Rd.) and follow the road into the canyon to the falls. Often referred to as the "Niagara of the West", the waters of the Snake River cascade 212 feet (64.7m) down over the 900 ft. (274m) wide canyon rim to the river below, making Shoshone Falls 36 ft. (10.97m) higher than its majestic sister in upstate New York.

Travel into Twin Falls on Falls Ave. to Blue Lakes Blvd. N. to the Buzz Langdon Visitors Center near the Perrine Bridge – a great location to watch BASE jumpers. The Perrine Bridge is the only manmade structure in the U.S. where BASE jumping is allowed year-round without a permit and is a popular destination for BASE jumping enthusiasts from around the world. This spectacular bridge spans the majestic Snake River Canyon on the northern edge of Twin Falls. It is 1,500 feet long and 486 feet above the Snake River.

Twin Falls to Glens Ferry 1 hour (I-84 West)

Glens Ferry: Three Island Crossing State Park – where the Native Americans assisted the Oregon Trail travelers in crossing the mighty Snake River. Take Exit 121 and follow the signs to the state park.

Glens Ferry to Boise 1 hour 10 mins (Drive through Glens Ferry, return to I-84 West and continue to Boise)

Boise, Idaho

Oregon Trail wagon ruts and wagon ramp cut into cliffs

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	<p>Overnight: Red Lion Hotel, Boise ID: 1800 Fairview Ave, Boise, ID 83702</p> <p>Boise to Baker City Oregon 2 hours</p>
<p><b>Oregon</b></p>	<p>Boise to Baker City Oregon 2 hours</p> <p>Baker City: National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretative Centre, 22267 OR-86, Baker City, OR 97814 (541) 523-1843  <a href="http://www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail">www.blm.gov/or/oregontrail</a> The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center brings to life the Oregon Trail experience through living history demonstrations, interpretive programs, exhibitions, and special events. Oregon Trail ruts carved by pioneer wagons are located onsite and are featured in a four mile interpretive hiking trail system. Trails and picnic areas offer scenic vistas of the Blue Mountains, the Wallowa Mountains, and Baker Valley.</p> <p>Baker City to Columbia River Valley, Mount Hood 5 hours</p> <p>Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, 47106 Wildhorse Blvd, Pendleton, Oregon 97801 Immerse yourself in the history, culture and hospitality of the people who have lived on this land for more than 10,000 years. Come to Tamástslikt Cultural Institute and experience the storied past, rich present and bright future of the local tribes through interactive exhibits, special events and a Living Culture Village. More than just a museum, Tamástslikt celebrates the traditions of Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Tribes. With dramatic exhibits, renowned artwork and interesting events year-round. Tamástslikt Cultural Institute offers a 10,000-year voyage in a single afternoon. <a href="http://www.tamastlikt.org">http://www.tamastlikt.org</a></p> <p>Overnight: Columbia Gorge Hotel, 4000 Westcliff Dr, Hood River, OR 97031 tel: 541-386-5566 <a href="http://www.columbiagorgehotel.com">www.columbiagorgehotel.com</a> The Columbia Gorge Hotel is a historic landmark in the Columbia River Gorge. Continue West through the Columbia River Gorge.</p> <p>Take the Historic Columbia River Highway and follow the old highway past scenic vistas and rushing waterfalls – the best way to experience the Columbia River Gorge. This drive, with stops in the Gorge will take 2-2.5 hours until you reach the outskirts of Portland. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area offers 292,500 acres of unparalleled scenery and outdoor recreation options. A leisurely drive on the Historic Columbia River Highway is a popular way to experience the gorge. Completed in 1922 the road is the oldest national scenic highway in the nation.</p> <p>Driving along the Historic Columbia River Highway, pass several waterfalls. Continue east to Horsetail Falls, and take the 15 minute hike (uphill at the start) to Upper Horsetail Falls (also known as Ponytail</p>

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	<p>Falls), where you can walk behind the waterfalls.          Take the short walk to Multnomah Falls. Plummeting 620 feet (189 m) from its origins on Larch Mountain, Multnomah Falls is the second highest year-round waterfall in the United States. Nearly two million visitors a year come to see this ancient waterfall, making it Oregon's number one public destination. Fed by underground springs from Larch Mountain, the flow over the falls varies but is highest during winter and spring.          Continue on Highway 30 through Portland all the way northwest to Astoria</p> <p>Astoria: Lewis and Clark National Historic Park 92343 Fort Clatsop Rd, Astoria, Oregon 97103 (503) 861-2471 <a href="http://www.nps.gov/lewi/">www.nps.gov/lewi/</a> Explore the timeless rainforests and majestic coastal vistas. Discover the rich heritage of the Native people. Unfold the dramatic stories of America's most famous explorers. The park encompasses sites along the Columbia River and the Pacific Coast. Follow in the footsteps of the explorers and have an adventure in history. Step back in time to discover what life was like for the Lewis and Clark Expedition during their 1805-06 winter stay at Fort Clatsop. There are nature trails, forest and river exploration.          Astoria to Canon Beach 45 mins</p> <p>Canon Beach: The end point for the Oregon Trail trip westwards is the sleepy coastal town of Cannon Beach. Grab a warm cup of coffee at the Sleepy Monk and a walk through the sand out to Haystack Rock located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean surf.          Canon Beach to Portland 1 hour 30 mins (West on Highway 26)</p> <p>Overnight: Embassy Suites Portland Airport, 7900 North East 82nd Street, Portland OR 97220 503-460-3000          Return rental car and fly back to Toronto from Portland International</p>
<p><b>Mount Rushmore</b></p>	<p>For the generation that saw it born, Mount Rushmore in South Dakota was the symbol of American optimism after the triumph of WWI. For many who grew up in the 1950s and '60s, it became a symbol of the family road trip. And for American Indians of any generation, it's a complicated symbol of broken treaties and loss.</p> <p>Conceived in 1924 by Danish-American sculptor Gutzon Borglum, the great sculptures on Rushmore were to be a 'Shrine of Democracy' that would use the presidents' images to trace the country's history, from its birth (Washington) through to its early growth (Jefferson), preservation (Lincoln) and robust development in the 20th century (Teddy</p>

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	<p>Roosevelt). Work on the monument began on October 4, 1927, and ended 14 years later, on October 31, 1941. When the granite dust cleared, Rushmore had been transformed forever, with four enormous faces, six storeys high, peering into the Black Hills.</p> <p>Though America hailed Borglum’s great achievement (completed by the sculptor’s son, Lincoln, after his father’s death), the work was a slap in the face to South Dakota’s Lakota people, to whom Paha Sapa (the Black Hills) was a sacred place that figured prominently in their creation stories. An 1868 treaty had given the deeds of the land to the Sioux ‘in perpetuity’, but their ownership lasted only six years. When gold was discovered in the area, the U.S. government reclaimed the land. In 1876, when the government ordered all Lakota bands on to reservations, the great chiefs Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and Gall organised a resistance that eventually destroyed the Seventh Cavalry in General George Custer’s Last Stand at the Little Bighorn. But the Sioux’s victory was short-lived; in less than two years Crazy Horse was dead, and their fate was sealed.</p>
<p><b>Yellowstone National Park</b></p>	<p>Established in 1872, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming is the world’s oldest and perhaps most famous national park, known worldwide for its geysers and geothermal pools. The largest of America’s national parks outside Alaska, Yellowstone crosses volcanic plateaus and heavily forested peaks, containing 2.2 million acres of steaming hot springs, crystalline lakes and thundering waterfalls.</p> <p>Of course, this natural glory is no secret. With over three million visitors a year - the vast majority coming between June and September - the park’s popularity may mean that summertime visitors can see more RV (recreational vehicle) bumpers than buffalo. This doesn’t mean that summer visits to this beloved park aren’t worth it; just come expecting plenty of company.</p> <p>Geothermal curiosities such as Old Faithful and the Norris Geyser Basin are just the beginning of Yellowstone’s beguilements. The park offers incredible natural diversity and abundant wildlife, together with picture-postcard views. The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, 24 miles long and up to 1,200 feet deep, begins at the river’s thundering 308-foot Lower Falls; bear and bison roam the grassy meadows of the Hayden Valley; elk linger near the hot springs terraces at Mammoth; some 225 bird species flit from spruce to fir; and grey wolves, reintroduced to the park in 1995 after being almost eradicated in the 1930s, hunt in the Lamar Valley.</p> <p>One highlight of a summer visit may be a stay at the Old Faithful Inn.</p>

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	<p>The huge lodgepole pine edifice, designed in rugged American Craftsman style, is right next to its namesake geyser, which sends a spray of steaming water up to 184 feet into the air every 68 to 98 minutes. The recently renovated 100-year-old inn (possibly the world's largest log building) set the fashion for all the great lodges of the national park system back in its day. The rooms are somewhat spartan, but take a seat in the inn's grandly evocative log-and-stone lobby, highlighted by a massive four-sided fireplace rising more than 90 feet; it's guaranteed to make your heart soar.</p> <p>In the off-season, Yellowstone seems less like a park and more like nature itself. This is when you realise that the real tension here is not about traffic or crowded campsites, but about what's brewing beneath the earth's crust. The park's 150 geysers and the bubbling mud pools, hissing fumaroles and hot springs act as pressure valves, releasing the heat and steam that build up below the ground. Together, they make up the world's largest geothermal system (75 per cent of the earth's geysers are found here in Yellowstone), remnants of a tumultuous volcanic past that Rudyard Kipling described as "the uplands of Hell".</p> <p>Winter is the serene season in Yellowstone. Only one entrance, from Gardiner, Montana, remains open to vehicles as far as Mammoth Hot Springs, while the park's other entrances are open to cross-country skiers and snowshoers, as well as to guided tours on snowmobiles and snowcoaches (van-like vehicles with ski runners and snowmobile-like treads). Snowcoaches also run deep into the park to Old Faithful Snow Lodge. Completed in 1999, this is the newest Yellowstone lodge, and with winter accommodation and dining, it's the perfect base for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing.</p> <p>Only one per cent of visitors to Yellowstone venture beyond five kilometers of the park's paved highways, regardless of the season. Yellowstone is a big place, so that a quiet communion with nature is never more than a short walk away.</p>
<p><b>Travel Show Blog: The Oregon Trail</b></p>	<p>You can read all about my personal journey along the Oregon Trail over 4,500 kms and seven US states on my travel blog, complete with photographs from the trip:  <a href="http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/87/Great-American-Road-Trips-The-Oregon-Trail.aspx">http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/87/Great-American-Road-Trips-The-Oregon-Trail.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>Contacts</b></p>	<p>You can interact with Discover America in many ways:</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.discoveramerica.com">www.discoveramerica.com</a></p> <p>Ask for more information: <a href="http://www.visittheusa.ca/usa/contact-us.aspx">http://www.visittheusa.ca/usa/contact-us.aspx</a></p>

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Great American Road Trips:

<http://www.visittheusa.ca/usa/road-trips.aspx>

Discover America Magazine:

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