

# Introduction: Why You Should Hit the Road, Jack!

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There's nothing quite as freeing as watching all that's familiar disappear into the rearview mirror. As the confines of the world grow ever closer and its content more homogenous, sometimes you need to step out of the routine and demands of everyday life, whether for a weekend or a season, to see what's different in other places, to spend some time with yourself, or to blow off all that energy that's been building up.

It's time for a roadtrip.

Welcome to the first edition of *MTV Roadtrips U.S.A.* The United States is a pretty big place, and we've only got 864 pages. How do you even begin to cover what there is to see and do on a good portion of the continent? (And we're not even talking about Canada and, except for a sliver of it, Mexico!) In this case, I found some writers with wanderlust, people from different parts of the country, and asked them: "What's the roadtrip you've always wanted to take? Where do you want to go that is your idea of a great journey?" And they told me.

Californian Maya Kroth wanted to follow bands up the West Coast . . . and look for the best barbecue from Austin to the Carolinas. Valerie Willis, from landlocked Oklahoma, wanted to do a classic beach trip from Miami to the Outer Banks. Ashley Marinaccio wanted to look for ghosts in the Northeast. Heather McNiell and Dan Yim, newly arrived in Minneapolis, wanted to find what's cool in the Midwest. Dara Bramson wanted to go to festivals and fairs; Nick Honachefsky wanted to introduce people to the Jersey Shore experience, and continue down to Maryland. New Yorker

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Ethan Wolff wanted to go West to explore the settlements of the first Americans. John Vorwald wanted to drive from the desert to the beach, from the bling and glitz of Las Vegas to the Pacific waves washing up against the shore of Baja California. And Kelsy Chauvin wanted to drive from border to border, along American highways.

So they did. They took along cameras and notebooks and ate at roadside diners and gourmet restaurants, stayed at campgrounds, hostels, old-fashioned motor courts and famous hotels; visited unique museums and parks, and climbed mountains and rode waves, and partied some

and explored a lot. Then they came home and wrote about it.

The results are between these covers: 10 trips that cover the U.S. from shore to shore, each with a different focus, theme, and style. That, and a chapter on planning your own trip: because these trips aren't meant to be replicated, stop-by-stop. They are meant to inspire, to motivate, and to instruct. Whether you want to visit every ballpark in the American League, or every National Park in the Pacific Northwest, your roadtrip is your own journey. And we want you to take it.

### Editor's Playlist: Music to Edit Roadtrips By

- *Welcome to My Life*, **Melissa Ferrick**, "Valentine Heartache," 2001
- *I Love New York City*, **Andrew W.K.**, "I Get Wet," 2002
- *The Road*, **Chapter in Verse**, EP, 2000
- *Foot On the Gas*, **Sexpod**, "Goddess Blues," 1995
- *Wildwood Days*, **Bobby Rydell**, "Best of Bobby Rydell," 1995
- *Good Morning Baltimore*, **Hairspray**, "Original Broadway Cast," 2002
- *Carolina Girls (Are the Best in the World)*, **General Johnson & the Chairmen of the Board**, "The Beach Music Anthology," 1992
- *Roadrunner*, **Jonathan Richman & the Modern Lovers**, "Modern Lovers," 1976
- *Graceland*, **Paul Simon**, "Graceland," 1986
- *Love is All Around*, **Joan Jett & the Blackhearts**, 1996
- *Kansas City/Hey, Hey, Hey, Hey*, **The Beatles**, "Beatles for Sale," 1964
- *Rocky Mountain High*, **John Denver**, "Rocky Mountain High," 1973
- *Paint Me Back Home in Wyoming*, **Chris LeDoux**, "Paint Me Back Home in Wyoming," 1978
- *All My Exes Live in Texas*, **George Strait**, "Ocean Front Property," 1987
- *Flyer*, **Nanci Griffith**, "Flyer," 1994
- *Wicked Little Town*, **Hedwig & the Angry Inch**, Original Cast recording, 1998
- *Everywhere I Go*, **The Muffs**, "The Muffs," 1993
- *Rock Star*, **Hole**, "Live Through This," 1994
- *What a Wonderful World*, **Joey Ramone**, "Don't Worry About Me," 2002

We hope you'll use this book as a springboard, that as you read, ideas for your own trip are percolating in your head, and pretty soon, you'll be on your way. If you've got some time stretching out before you—whether it's a 3-day weekend or a break between schools, jobs, homes—you need to get moving.

Go for what you need: a joyful spree to blow off some steam, or a focused pilgrimage to explore who you really are, or what

you really love—you'll be changed at the end of the journey. And you'll bring what you learned on the trip home with you.

Go on . . . get out there! And tell us about it after. We need some ideas for the next edition.

We'll see you when you get back (if we aren't off on our own trip).

Drive safely, stop to look at things, and be careful of speed traps. Home safe!

—*The Editor*