

Ohio River Scenic Byway

This history-rich byway meanders along the banks of the Ohio River, hugging its shoreline and offering almost continuous views of the river. The history of the Ohio is found both in rural landscapes and quaint river communities, covering periods from Native American habitation through western settlement, affecting transportation patterns and industrialization.



Length: 943 miles / 1508.8 km

Time Two and a half days to drive to or eight days to enjoy this

Allow: byway

Local Information

Illinois

Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

618-833-9928

800-248-4373

[Send E-mail](#)

Indiana

Historic Southern Indiana

1-800-489-4474 or 812-465-7014

Ohio

Ohio River Trails, Inc.

740-423-7233

[Send E-mail](#)

Visitor Services



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

The nationally-designated American Discovery Trail follows, or is planned to follow, much of the Ohio River. In Illinois and Indiana, hikers share the trail with bikers along the proposed southern route. In Ohio, it parallels the Ohio River Scenic Byway in western Hamilton County. The Illinois section of the byway offers hiking in the Shawnee National Forest, along the River to River Trail, and along the proposed southern route of the American Discovery Trail. Officially designated bike routes are along the byway within the Shawnee National Forest and along Illinois SR 146 between Cave-in-Rock and Golconda. Also, pedestrians are easily accommodated at all identified sites in the byway corridor and in all communities along the route. In Indiana, a new bicycle trail along the byway includes Perry and Crawford counties. There are also many hiking trails near the byway in the Angel Mounds State Historic

Site and the Hoosier National Forest. Several walking trails meander along the Ohio River, and Clifty Falls State Park has several fairly rugged hiking trails. A recreational hiking and biking trail east of Cincinnati, Ohio, is being planned to link Hamilton County with the Little Miami Scenic Trail that currently runs from Lunken Airport north along the Little Miami River. Another proposed bike path runs from the Little Miami Scenic Trail along US 52 to New Richmond, Ohio.

Camping



Shawnee, Wayne, and Hoosier National Forests offer camping facilities. For nearby campground reservations: *

[Recreation.gov](<http://www.recreation.gov/>) - National Forest Campgrounds
* [ReserveAmerica.com](<http://www.reserveamerica.com>) - State and Federal Campgrounds

Food



There are places to buy food along this byway.

Gasoline



Gasoline is available.

Information



Information about travel and tourism in southern Indiana may be found at the Southern Indiana Visitor Center in Jeffersonville.

Lodging



It is common to find bed & breakfasts, inns, motels, and hotels along the corridor, to accommodate all lodging preferences.

Phone



Public phones are available along this byway.

Restrooms



There are toilet facilities along this byway.

Retail



There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

The roads are well surfaced and in good condition. Passenger vehicles are easily accommodated. A narrow and hilly segment of the byway near Tower Rock in Hardin County, Illinois, is not advised for RVs or tour buses. An alternate route has been identified for these vehicles along the roadside.

In general, the route location and flood control systems allow the route to be traveled during ordinary periods of high water. Although flooding along the Ohio River is a rare event, it is most likely to occur between November and April. In addition, short sections along the route may experience annual or bi-annual flooding, including the portion of US 52 east of Cincinnati, Ohio, known as Eastern Avenue.

Restrictions

The byway is open year-round. However, snowstorms are possible, particularly from mid-December through mid-March, and can cause road closures. Floods can also result in road closures, especially the terminus of the route in Cairo.

The byway has narrow shoulders and winding roads.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

This byway is a beautiful drive any season. In the forest, fall foliage and spring blooms are equally breath-taking, as are the flowing creeks and greenery. Rocky cliffs are beautiful under the freshly fallen snow.

High Season

The route is rarely crowded, except for segments near large cities during peak traffic times of day. The byway sees its heaviest use from July through October.

Shoulder Season

Some areas along the byway are prone to flooding during the fall and spring, causing occasional closures.

Map and Directions

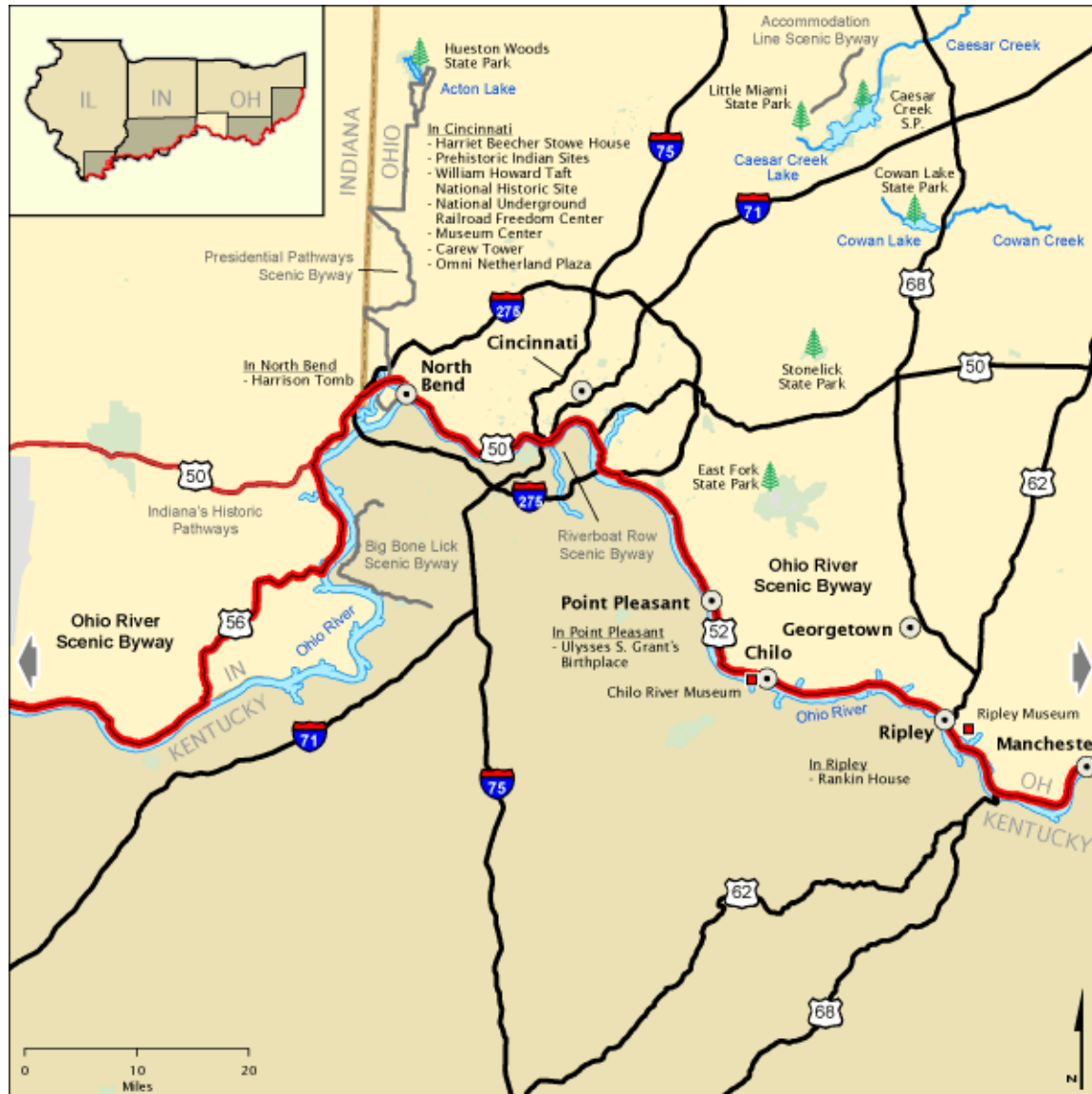
Standard Map - Illinois Section



Standard Map - Ohio's Middle Section



Standard Map - Ohio's Western Section



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

Driving from west to east, the Ohio River Scenic Byway generally follows the Ohio River across the southern border of three states: Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

Illinois Section

The Illinois portion of the Ohio River Scenic Byway generally follows the Ohio River from Missouri/Kentucky to Indiana across the southern part of Illinois.

- The byway starts at the conjunction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers near Fort Defiance State Park. Drive IL-37 north through Cairo, Mounds, and Olmsted, IL.
- At Grand Chain leave IL-37 and turn east.
- Travel through Joppa, Metropolis, Brookport and Unionville.
- At New Liberty turn north and drive through Bay City to Golconda and IL-146.
- Continue on IL-146, following the Ohio River north and east through Pope and Hardin counties.
- Near Cave-in Rock State Park in Hardin County, turn north on IL-1.
- Turn east at the junction with IL-13.
- At Shawneetown go north to New Haven.
- Take IL-141 east to the Illinois-Indiana border where the route number changes to IN-62 and the Indiana portion of the Ohio River Scenic Byway begins.

Indiana Section

In Indiana, the byway begins on State Route 62.

- Starting on the IL-IN border, head east on Route 62.
- Cross Interstate 164 and take State Route 66 south and east as it meanders across the state, through Tell City and Hoosier National Forest.
- In Hoosier National Forest Route 66 turns north.
- At Sulphur in the Hoosier National Forest, take State Route 62 east to Louisville and on north to Madison.
- At Madison take State Route 56 east.
- State Route 56 becomes State Route 156 and then turns back into 56.
- At Aurora, SR 56 becomes Highway 50.
- Follow this to the state line, where the Indiana part of the byway ends and the Ohio part begins.

Ohio Section


- The byway begins near Cincinnati, Ohio on Highway 50.
- In Cincinnati take Highway 52 southeast.
- Follow Highway 52 as it meanders across the state. Near Proctorville Highway 52 becomes State Route 7.
- After Pomeroy take State Route 124 southeast towards Minersville.
- Take State Route 338 south at Racine and follow it until it reunites with SR 124.
- Follow SR 124 to Little Hocking where it reunites with Highway 7.
- The road enters Wayne National Forest about 7 miles after Marietta and exits the forest after 27 miles.
- Follow Highway 7 to the end of the byway, at East Liverpool.

Getting to the Byway



Nearby cities


Champaign, IL (211 miles / 339.57 km, 3 hours 30 minutes)

- Start:**  I-57 southbound, Champaign, IL
 N 40.120° W 88.306° [?]
- Take I-57 south.
 - Continue onto I-64 east, just south of Mt. Vernon, IL.
 - Take exit 110 for US-45 and head south.
 - Turn east off US-45 onto IL-141.
 - Follow IL-141 east to New Haven to enter the byway.
- Directions:**

- Junction with byway:** * Intersection of IL-141 and CR-8 (1200 E), New Haven IL
 N 37.908° W 88.154° [?]




Charleston, WV (54 miles / 86.90 km, 53 minutes)

- Start:**  I-64 westbound, Charleston, WV
 N 38.358° W 81.644° [?]
- Take I-64 West to Huntington, WV and cross the Ohio River at any Ohio River bridge to enter the byway.
- Directions:**

- Junction with byway:** * OH-7, OH
 N 38.422° W 82.493° [?]



Cleveland, OH (163 miles / 262.32 km, 2 hours 40 minutes)

- Start:**  I-77 southbound, Cleveland, OH
 N 41.488° W 81.665° [?]
- Take I-77 south to Marietta, OH where you enter the byway.
- Directions:**

- Junction with byway:** * OH-7 from I-77, Marietta, OH
 N 39.410° W 81.427° [?]



Indianapolis, IN (109 miles / 175.42 km, 1 hour 40 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-65 southbound, Indianapolis, IN
N 39.749° W 86.143° [?]
- Take I-65 south to the Jeffersonville exit, mile marker 0.
 - Follow the exit ramp to Market Street and turn right.
- Directions:**
- Turn left at the next stop sign onto Southern Indiana Ave. and right onto Riverside Dr. where the byway runs east and west along the river.



Junction with byway: * Entrance to US-31 from Old IN-62, Jeffersonville, IN
N 38.279° W 85.750° [?]

Nashville, TN (170 miles / 273.59 km, 2 hours 50 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-24 northbound, Nashville, TN
N 36.177° W 86.772° [?]
- Take I-24 northwest to Paducah, KY.
 - Get on US-60 and go west to Cairo, IL.
 - Travel northwest on US-51 where the byway begins.
- Directions:**



Junction with byway: * US-51, Cairo, IL
N 36.996° W 89.162° [?]

Pittsburgh, PA (52 miles / 83.69 km, 54 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-79 southbound, Pittsburgh, PA
N 40.416° W 80.104° [?]
- Take I-79 south to I-70 in Washington, PA to Bridgeport, OH where you enter the byway.
- Directions:**



Junction with byway: * OH-7, Bridgeport, OH
N 40.072° W 80.740° [?]

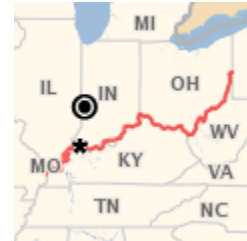
St. Louis, MO (143 miles / 230.14 km, 2 hours 30 minutes)

- Start:** ● I-64 eastbound, St. Louis, MO
N 38.629° W 90.159° [?]
- Take I-64 east to Exit 110, Route 45.
- Directions:**
- Travel south on Route 45 to Route 141.
 - Follow Route 141 east to enter the byway.
- Junction with byway:** * Intersection of IL-141 and CR-8 (1200 E), New Haven IL
N 37.908° W 88.154° [?]



Terre Haute, IN (109 miles / 175.42 km, 2 hours 20 minutes)

- Start:** ● US-41 southbound, Terra Haute, IN
N 39.465° W 87.414° [?]
- Take US-41 south through Evansville.
 - Exit on Veteran's Memorial Parkway.
 - Follow the parkway for 3.1 miles before connecting to Riverside Dr. in Evansville.
- Directions:**
- Junction with byway:** * IN-66, Evansville, KY
N 37.977° W 87.550° [?]



Road Trip: Ohio River Scenic Byway -- Illinois Must See Tour

Departure: Fort Defiance Park, Illinois

Destination: Garden of the Gods, Illinois

Time to allow: 1 day

The Byway through Illinois offers one adventure after another.

Day 1

- **Start: Fort Defiance Park**

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

The park commemorates the Civil War Fort Defiance, commanded by General U.S. Grant. The site offers a breathtaking view of the river. Stop for a few minutes to view the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, where you can see tugs working on the rivers. There are picnic tables and the Boatmen's Memorial, which lends itself to great photo opportunities, where the nation's largest rivers meet.

- **Stop 2: Cairo**

From previous stop: 5 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

Directions: Go north on Highway 51 to Cairo.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

One of the southernmost tips of Illinois, Cairo lies at the intersection of Highway 51 and Interstate 57, on the Ohio River. Taking Hwy. 51 right through Cairo (on Washington Ave.) travel 1 1/2 miles to The Hewer Statue in Halliday Park, on the corner of Washington and Poplar Avenues. About 1/2 mile later you can see the Safford Memorial Library (a 15 minute stop), where you can pick up a 50 cent book out of the "treasure bin" to read in bed that night. Across the street is the U.S. Custom House Museum (a 30 minute stop).

- **Stop 3: Millionaires' Row**

From previous stop: same location

Directions: Follow Washington Avenue where Highway 51 and Washington Avenue split.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

Where Hwy. 51 and Washington Ave. split you can take a short detour following Washington Ave. along "Millionaires' Row" to see turn of the century mansions such as "River Lore" and "Magnolia Manor," which is open for tours. Turn right on 28th St. to rejoin the Byway.

- **Stop 4: Mounds City National Cemetery**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: Head north on Hwy. 51 out of Cairo. The Mounds City National Cemetery is at the junction of Highways 51 and 37.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

Confederate and Union soldiers are buried here. Started in 1864, the cemetery is one of 12 original national cemeteries.

- **Stop 5: Olmstead Lock and Dam Project**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 5 mi (8.0 km)

Directions: Travel north on Hwy. 37.

Suggested time at this stop: 15 minutes

The Olmstead Lock and Dam is scheduled to be completed in 2006. There are a lookout pavilion and restrooms here.

- **Stop 6: Superman Square**



From previous stop: same location

Directions: Follow Hwy. 37, for about 5 miles, to the Grand Chain Joppa Blacktop which intersects Hwy. 45. Highway 45 goes south into Metropolis, where you can see the Superman Square in the center of town.

Suggested time at this stop: 10 minutes

Metropolis features a 15-foot Superman statue in its town square, using its one-of-a-kind name in its favor. You can also visit an accompanying museum about the city's favorite, self-proclaimed son.

- **Stop 7: Fort Massac State Park**



From previous stop: 5 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

Directions: Go south on Highway 45 to the park.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Fort Massac State Park overlooks the Ohio River from the southern tip of Illinois. This location has been preserved and maintained since 1908, when it became Illinois' first state park.

Today, Fort Massac is a captivating reminder of days gone by. The reconstructed timber fortification (a replica that includes blockhouses) of one built in 1794 provides a unique hands-on opportunity to explore our national heritage. A museum presents the engrossing tale of the fort's history with actual artifacts, archive photographs, period costumes, and a short interpretive video presentation.

Actual re-creations of 1700s pioneer life during the annual Fort Massac Encampment and several living history weekends each year bring the past to life, letting you experience it yourself. With all this, and picnicking, camping, hiking, boating, and hunting opportunities available in the rest of the 1,450-acre area, the park is a self-contained family vacation spot.

- **Stop 8: Kinkaid Mounds**

From previous stop: same location

Directions: Travel east on Highway 45 through Unionville and New Liberty and then north to the Kinkaid Mounds.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

A monument to the Native American people who once inhabited the region.

- **Stop 9: Golconda**

From previous stop: same location

Directions: Continue north on the Byway, through Bay City, to the city of Golconda (about 45 miles from Metropolis).

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

In Golconda you can visit the Golconda Marina (15 minute stop), the Buel House, and many antique and novelty shops. At the Buel House (certified by the National Park Service as an official Trail of Tears designated site), the Cherokee were offered food and hospitality.

- **Stop 10: Cave in Rock State Park**



From previous stop: 35 minutes / 27 mi (43.2 km)

Directions: Head north on Hwy. 146; you will go beyond Elizabethtown. Cave-in-Rock is a little south of the Byway on Highway 91.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Cave-in-Rock State Park is a great limestone cavern on the Ohio River. The enormous cave, once home to river pirates, provides a vantage point from which to watch today's river traffic.

Visitors can enjoy lodging, trails, picnic facilities, a restaurant, and a ferry across the river.

• **End: Garden of the Gods**



From previous stop: 45 minutes / 25 mi (40.0 km)

Directions: Go north from Cave-In-Rock on Highway 1 to the turn-off for Garden of the Gods. Head west to Garden of the Gods.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

Garden of the Gods in the Shawnee National Forest, with its unique rock formations, has been a popular attraction in Southeastern Illinois for a great while. One of the first roads in this region passed through the area running from the salt works at Equality to the Ohio River.

Anvil Rock, then known as Devil's Rock, became one of the first rock formations named in the interior of Southern Illinois. Today, a paved road off of Karber's Ridge makes it much easier for visitors to explore Garden of the Gods. A short-looped trail from the parking lot makes it easy for visitors to see the main rock formations, including the well-known Camel Rock.

Anvil Rock and other formations can be seen along the trails in the Garden of the Gods Wilderness Area.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 66 miles / 105.6 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 40 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 6 hours 50 minutes