



The Road to Recovery

Destinations Are Putting Themselves Back on the Map with Road Trips That Allow for Social Distancing

(June 18, 2020) – As regulations have relaxed and people are becoming more comfortable leaving their homes after months of sheltering in place, wannabe travelers are getting the “itch” to go on an adventure to any place that is NOT their living room or refrigerator. We all know that travel will look very different this summer, and research tells us that COVID-19 has given people a greater appreciation for the outdoors. They crave family vacations featuring the ultimate matriarch, Mother Nature, and we think the best way to explore the Great Outdoors is on an old-fashioned road trip. So pack those snacks, grab the kids and hop in the car! When you feel comfortable getting out there again, these MBPR client destinations will be waiting to welcome you and your road-trip companions with open arms ... which they will absolutely NOT wrap around you. They’ll stand at least six feet away as they say, “Welcome!”

Note: All the destinations, activities and restaurants mentioned here are open in some capacity at the time of this release.

[The National Road Scenic Byway](#)

Allegany County, Maryland

If this is your family’s first-ever road trip, you might feel particularly drawn to the **National Road** in Allegany County, “The Mountain Side of Maryland.” The county seat of Cumberland is home to Mile Marker Zero, meaning this is where America’s first federally funded highway got its start, thanks to a decree by Thomas Jefferson. In short, the National Road was indeed “America’s First Road Trip.” The National Road now stretches across most of the state of Maryland and then into five other states, but Allegany County, where it all began, has some of the very best stretch of this historic highway.

Drive westward through the scenic Cumberland Narrows, and then you’ll pass through Historic Downtown Frostburg, which is home to adorable local shops (you’ll love the book and record stores) and plenty of public art. In LaVale you’ll find the National Road’s only remaining [Toll Gate House](#), where you can see how much it cost travelers to use the highway more than 200 years ago. Not to worry, this place hasn’t collected tolls in a long time! If you’re nature lovers, there’s plenty to do and see outside the car. Check out the [C&O Canal Towpath](#) if you want to bike or hike, as well as the Potomac River if you and your family love to be out on the water.

After a day of exploring all that this part of Maryland has to offer, there’s nothing better than a nice, cold scoop of ice cream ... or eight. Allegany County’s [Ice Cream Trail](#) is the perfect way to end your travels. The eight participants include a variety of locations, from roadside stands to diners

to full-fledged, old-fashioned ice cream parlors. You'll have an array of cold and creamy offerings, ranging from super shakes to sundaes to frozen custard. The one thing they all have in common? No chains. Every stop is 100% locally owned and 100% delicious!



One of the delicious stops on the Allegany County Ice Cream Trail.

[Creole Nature Trail All-American Road](#)

Lake Charles, Louisiana

Getting away from it all doesn't get any easier than heading for the **Creole Nature Trail** in Louisiana. This 180-mile trip takes you deep into "Louisiana's Outback," an area of the state where nature reigns supreme and time seems to stand still.

You'll drive past sandy beaches (get out at Holly Beach to check out the incredible shells) and estuaries, where you can spot wildlife ranging from alligators to birds (there are about 400 species here!) and butterflies. You can fish, hunt or go crabbing along the Trail, and if you need still more magnificent wildlife, you'll want to veer onto [Pintail Wildlife Drive](#), a three-mile self-driving tour where you're sure to see plenty of alligators. (The MBPR record is 27 in one outing.) The Trail also offers a boardwalk if you want to get up close and personal with the marsh's animal residents. Be sure to pack your old-fashioned camera for this trip, because the opportunities for nature photography are endless.

With plenty of picnic sites along the route, stopping at a local restaurant to pick up lunch is a must. For burgers and traditional Louisiana Cajun food, there's [T-Boys Cajun Grill](#). If you're looking for a po-boy to pack on your picnic, you'll want to try [Anchors Up Grill](#). Both restaurants will give you that authentic Louisiana cuisine – and plenty of it – so you can fuel up for this adventurous trek.

[Highway 28](#)

Lake Hartwell, South Carolina

This part of South Carolina's "Upstate" has been the ideal place for outdoor travel since it first started welcoming visitors years ago. The state's "Lake Hartwell Country" is known for unmatched recreational opportunities, whether that means hiking, biking or fishing, and it offers some awe-inspiring views to supplement whatever activity suits your fancy. There's no better place to take a road trip if you're looking for fun outdoor activities with great scenery.

You can dedicate either a half or full day to taking a leisurely drive down Highway 28. On this route, you'll pass through downtown Walhalla, the "Gateway to the Blue Ridge," where you can check out a few local shops or get an excellent cup of coffee at Mountain Mocha. Walhalla is also home to [Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park](#), where you'll find the famed [Stumphouse Tunnel](#). While you're in the area, take the opportunity to hike the easy route to [Issaqueena Falls](#), a beautiful 100-foot cascading waterfall.

If you want to support local restaurants on your road trip, be sure to stop by [Carolina Pizza Company](#) for a fresh slice or visit [Walhalla Steak House Cafeteria](#) if you're looking for a classic Southern meal complete with mac and cheese, mustard greens and fried okra. And on a hot summer day, there's no better end to this road trip than some ice cream from [Mountain Rest Café](#). (Insider tip: You also can't go wrong with their fresh strawberry pie. 'Tis the season!)

[Delaware's Bayshore Scenic Byway](#)

Wilmington, Delaware

This 50-mile section of Route 9 will take you through a preserved coastal marshland known as the Bayshore Byway.

You'll be driving alongside the Delaware River for most of your journey and if you're a birder, you're in luck: This area is well known for its bird migrations, so keep those eyes open! You'll pass through Historic New Castle on your route, driving down cobblestone streets and admiring the beautiful architecture of the townhomes and buildings throughout the town. There are charming stores along these streets, including galleries, gift shops, jewelry boutiques, antiques vendors and even an independent bookseller.

[Jessop's Tavern](#) is your go-to spot for a colonial-style picnic lunch. With pot roast, fish and chips, mouthwatering lobster mac and cheese, and several other unconventional picnic options, this historic restaurant will make you feel right at home in historic New Castle. Battery Park is where you'll want to take your lunch if you'd like to dine beside the river. The gently lapping water is the perfect complement to a delicious meal and beautifully warm day!



Just a small taste of the jaw-dropping views you'll be privy to in the Ozarks.

“Only in the Ozarks”

Branson, Missouri to Eureka, Arkansas

For those who need to be back for an afternoon nap time (either your little one's or yours – we don't judge!), the journey from Branson to Eureka Springs can be made in just an hour.

The family vacation town of Branson is home to ziplines, mountain coasters, three lakes, and golf on a Bigfoot-themed mini course or the real thing on Tiger Woods' first public golf course (which is family-friendly). Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is a Victorian village that's become one of the finest artisan communities in the nation. You can find one-of-a kind shops, galleries and restaurants as well as plenty of public parks to enjoy a nice picnic lunch while remaining an appropriate distance from others. The journey between the two towns is nothing short of breathtaking. The routes you can take provide glimpses of the Ozark Mountains at their best. Tell your traveling companions to keep their eyes peeled; there are bald eagles in these hills!

If you take Highway 86 and your stomach starts growling, stop at Dogwood Canyon, a nature park complete with a [stream-side restaurant](#) that serves deliciously unique proteins like bison burgers and elk sausages. If you're not into that sort of thing, don't worry ... their salted caramel brownie is reason enough to stop by! If you choose the alternate route of Highway 62, you'll drive by the [Rockin' Pig](#), where you can find a chicken fried steak made with filet mignon. (I know what you're thinking ... but it's been a rough few months. You deserve to treat yourself.)

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