# National Sightseeing 2017 ITINERARY AND DETAILED OUTLINES

After graduating from university, one of my biggest goals is to see more of my home country. Many of my colleagues have in the past studied abroad, travelled extensively in Europe and Asia, and lauded the beautiful sights there are to see in the far-reaching corners of the world. While I don't doubt the substantialness of these claims, I believe that one should "know his or her own backyard" before setting foot in others', as it were. In particular, I have never travelled much outside of the Northeastern United States; nay, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. While I did spend some time in Northern California in 2013 for a research/learning program at Stanford University, I have not really seen much of what the vast expanses of North America has to offer.

Consequently, for the summer after graduation from my undergraduate institution, I have organized a cross-country trip around some of the major sites, monuments, and parks that the United States has to offer. The over-arching goal of the sightseeing trip is to survey a modicum of the All-American natural terrain in roughly 75 days (or approximately two-and-a-half months). Of course, an unfortunate consequence of arranging such a trip in the summer months is that not all of the attractions may be at their peak marvel potential. In particular, many of the chasms and foliage-based National Parks in New England and the mid-Atlantic (such as Ausable Chasm and Cuyahoga Valley National Park, respectively) sport much more beautiful natural foliage in the fall months, such as in mid-October. On the other hand, many of the mountains and peaks are much more beautiful in the summer as the snow melts and temperatures become more bearable (such as Voyageurs National Park). This sort of trade-off is natural, and cannot be avoided unless one has a full year or two on hand to truly explore the thick and thin of North America. As a graduate student, the amount of free time I am afforded for myself hardly qualifies as vacation time, and thus I must sadly relegate to enjoying as much as possible in this one free summer.

My hope is that this trip sparks a lifelong interest in the outdoors, the wonders of the world, the art of hiking, and the exploration of wilderness. I firmly believe that a trip of this sort will enable me to appreciate all that nature has to offer and keep me coming back for more in future vacations, be it in completing my tour of the American National Parks or finally travel abroad and view international wonders as my compadres have before me.

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#### 0. Overview and General Outline

#### 0.1. Discussion of Trip Arrangement

#### Overview

Overall, this arrangement of the trip follows a (mostly) circular loop ("The Loop") around the edges of the United States. However, the aforementioned loop is not exactly tight, and as a result many in-between states are also covered, such as Utah, Colorado, and Tennessee. The arrangement is meant to be traversed via car, preferably an SUV or a sedan that gets decent mileage on the highway. In addition, the suggestion is to avoid bivouacking; rather, the intended method is to use hosting services such as Airbnb to "surf" between venues, as it were. Furthermore, the arrangement is designed for a solo trip, so that only one driver may be behind the wheel — as a consequence, there are breaks between venues if their distance exceeds northward of 700 miles, to avoid driver fatigue. A detailed discussion of The Loop by region is presented below.

#### Leg 1: Mid-Atlantic and Southeast (Days 1-8)

The journey begins in suburban New Jersey and heads southward, visiting some of the major sites around the area. These include colonial sites, natural terrain, and a National Park. Most of the areas in this first leg of the trip are in the mid-Atlantic and Southeastern United States, in such states as West Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Afterwards, The Loop hugs the Eastern seaboard towards Florida, where about half a week is allocated for exploring the various cultural and natural artifacts under the bright summer sun. Some key points include the southern end of U.S. Highway 1 as well as the southernmost point in the contiguous United States ("the lower 48") in Key West. This ends the southern tier of The Loop, which then begins heading west.

#### Leg 2: South Central (Days 9-13)

Because the trip from Key West to New Orleans spans over 1000 miles (surprisingly!), a stop-over in Tallahassee (approximately halfway) for the night makes sense. After this, though, The Loop begins covering greater distances (greater than 300 miles apiece, at least) between venues, though perhaps the sites themselves are not as gruelling as what is to come. This leg of the trip surveys some iconic locations from historical aspects of the United States. In particular, parts of the French district in New Orleans, historical Route 66, and other inspirations for Pixar's 2006 film, *Cars*. Of course, no leg is complete without at least one National Park, and the Hot Springs in Arkansas serves this purpose. This leg of the trip is particularly wanting of some excitement, since it traverses through the Southern United States but without many picturesque sites — only historically-significant ones. Nevertheless, as The Loop moves westerly to the Southwest, the excitement and intensity that the original trip called for becomes apparent.

#### Leg 3: Southwest (Days 14-22)

This part of the trip is likely one of the most gruelling, despite coming relatively early in the trip. The Loop surveys many sites in this short span of time, including ones that are both historically important (such as the Grand Canyon) as well as outstandingly picturesque (such as Antelope Canyon). Truly, more time is needed in this area to truly appreciate it, but enough is allocated to do moderate justice to the suggested areas. It is on this leg of the trip that The Loop begins assigning certain venues more than a single day, as there is simply too much to see — even in a span of 8 to 12 daylight/nighttime hours. Notably, the Fourth of July fireworks over the Grand Canyon is purportedly a spectacular sight, and the timing makes it quite convenient to be on this leg of the trip around that time of the year. Almost the entire time is spent in two states: Utah and Arizona, which each have a surprising abundance of National Parks, Native American reservations, vast desert expanses, and other historical sites.

#### Leg 4: Pacific Southwest (Days 23-33)

After the intensity of climbing and hiking in the likes of the Grand Canyon and other valley/desert-featured National Parks, The Loop winds its way to southern California, which is unfortunately the only state in the Pacific Southwest that it tours (this is due to the exorbitant prices of airfare to Hawaii, what with the summer months offering the best time for a long-weekend getaway). Here, beautiful desert and forest-based camps are explored, such as the beautiful Joshua Tree National Park, the notorious Death Valley National Park, and the ever-famous Yosemite National Park. These venues offer much in the way of breathtaking views and unparallelled nighttime stargazing. As a result, at least two days are allocated to every single venue on this leg of the trip (including San Francisco) as The Loop winds northward along the Western seaboard.

#### Leg 5: Pacific Northwest (Days 34-43)

At this point in the trip, the traveller is about halfway through the allocated 75 days, and indeed, The Loop is on the diametrically opposite side (in the East-West sense) of the starting point in central New Jersey. Starting at the Redwood Forest and caricaturing various falls (such as Multnomah Falls) and mountain-based National Parks in Cascadia (i.e. Oregon and Washington state). Although most of the mountain snow would have melted by mid-to late-July, they complement the falls quite well, leaving for a wet/rainy experience. This ends the northern spur of The Loop, which then begins winding its way back east after exiting the Pacific Northwest.

#### Leg 6: Rocky Mountains (Days 44-53)

In the Rocky Mountains, The Loop finds some more mountainous terrain (e.g. Glacier National Park), but eventually finds more flat landscapes as the traveller settles into the second half of the arrangement. Notably, Yellowstone National Park is explored in this leg, and is the sole venue to be allocated three days (as opposed to two) due to the vast amount of natural material and trails there are to see and hike, respectively. Furthermore, some excellent nighttime views can be found in the rural parts of Colorado, and indeed The Loop visits these despite their remoteness from the edges of the United States (indeed, one can consider this straying from the path to be akin to a much-needed detour). The Loop continues further east after touring the Rockies.

#### Leg 7: Midwest (Days 54-62)

In the penultimate leg of the arrangement, The Loop explores the Great Lakes, natural gorges, and various valleys in the epithet of natural wonders (especially in the Northern United States). All five Great Lakes are encountered in some capacity, although Isle Royale National Park on Lake Superior didn't make it onto The Loop due to time constraints, despite its proximity to Houghton. Appreciably, though, that National Park sports fairly impressive foliage in the fall months, so saving the inaugural trip there for another time is not entirely nonsensical. The Loop continues easterly through Upstate New York after several days in the American Midwest.

#### Leg 8: New England and Miscellaneous (Days 63-75)

As the traveller begins winding down in the dying embers of the summer sun, so too does the trip arrangement come to an end (and with it, The Loop encloses itself). However, this is not without some spectacular final sights. Although most of the locations on the trip itself are not quite that impressive (save for Ausable Chasm and Plymouth Rock), the salvaging sight from this last bit of the trip is the viewing of the 2017 total solar eclipse. As it happens, Nashville, TN is the largest city through which the path of totality passes, and as a result will be completely engulfed in darkness for about 2 and a half minutes. After making the detour from Upstate New York to Nashville for the first reasonably-visible total solar eclipse in over four decades, The Loop resumes northerly, exploring New England before finally turning around in Fort Kent and halting back in central New Jersey (after a pit stop in Rhode Island).

Residence, Budget, and Planning

Some of the more specific/technical details of the trip (as projected prior to its start) are presented below:

- Total mileage consumed: TBD mi
  - TBD oil changes
  - TBD gas station stops
  - TBD rest areas
- Total amount spent (USD): \$ TBD
  - \$ TBD in site costs
  - \$ TBD in Airbnb costs
  - \$ TBD in hotel costs
  - \$ TBD in food costs
  - \$ TBD in gas station costs
  - \$ TBD in oil change costs

- Total duration of trip: 75 days
  - Mid-Atlantic and Southeast: 8 days
  - South Central: 5 daysSouthwest: 9 days
  - Pacific Southwest: 11 daysPacific Northwest: 10 daysRocky Mountains: 10 days
  - Midwest: 9 days
  - New England and Miscellaneous: 13 days
- States visited directly (i.e. with intent of visiting):
  - West Virginia (WV)
  - Virginia (VA)
  - North Carolina (NC)
  - Tennessee (TN)
  - Florida (FL)
  - Louisiana (LA)
  - Arkansas (AK)
  - Oklahoma (OK)
  - Texas (TX)
  - Utah (UT)
  - Arizona (AZ)
  - California (CA)
  - Oregon (OR)
  - Washington (WA)
  - Montana (MT)
  - Wyoming (WY)
  - Colorado (CO)
  - South Dakota (SD)
  - Minnesota (MN)
  - Michigan (MI)
  - Ohio (OH)
  - New York (NY)
  - Massachusetts (MA)
  - Maine (ME)
  - Rhode Island (RI)

- States visited indirectly (i.e. drive through):
  - New Jersey (NJ)
  - Delaware (DE)
  - Maryland (MD)
  - South Carolina (SC)
  - Alabama (AL)
  - Mississippi (MS)
  - New Mexico (NM)
  - Idaho (ID)
  - North Dakota (ND)
  - Wisconsin (WI)
  - Pennsylvania (PA)
  - Kentucky (KY)
  - Connecticut (CT)
  - New Hampshire (NH)
- Major highways utilized:
  - Interstates: TBD
  - Various state highways (see detailed itineraries)
  - ...and various local roads!

#### 1. 15 June 2017

#### 1.1. Harpers' Ferry, WV

#### Attractions:

- The town: High Street, footbridge to C&O Canal, Lower Town
- Battlefield Park, John Brown's fort
- Trails and hiking:
  - Appalachian Trail (62 stone steps, classic)
  - Camp Hill-Virginius Island Loop (DuBois' college; 2-3 miles, 1-2 hours)
  - Maryland Heights Trail (mountainous, excellent views; 4.5 miles, 5 hours)
- Ghost tours of Harpers' Ferry
- Notable souvenirs: Passport stamps

#### Sources:

- 1. https://www.nps.gov/hafe/index.htm
- 2. https://www.northernvirginiamag.com/day-trips-harpers-ferry/
- http://followgreg.com/gregoryng/2016/06/14/5-things-to-know-about-visiting-harpers-ferry-nationalhistorical-park/

#### 1.2. Metadata and Residence

- Total distance: 221 mi (approx. 3h, 28m)
- Route: I-95S to I-70W to US-340W
- Food: Approximately \$20
  - Lunch: Buy a light snack/meal: \$5
  - Buying raw ingredients for the week at Safeway: \$15
- Residence:
  - Airbnb: Heather from Frederick, MD (22.2 mi)
  - \$23 for the night, kitchen amenities provided

#### 1.3. Expected Timeline

- 06:30 07:00: Breakfast at the Bagel Shoppe in Franklin Park, NJ
- 07:00 10:30: Drive from Kendall Park, NJ to Harpers' Ferry, WV
- 10:30 12:00: Appalachian Trail, Battlefield Park, John Brown's fort
- 12:00 13:30: Camp Hill-Virginius Island Loop
- 13:30 14:30: Lunch at the Bistro 1840
- 14:30 15:00: Explore the town
- 15:00 20:00: Maryland Heights Trail
- 20:00 20:30: Buy one week's worth of ingredients at Weis Markets
- 20:30 21:00: Check into Airbnb, settle in
- 21:00 21:30: Make a light dinner with ingredients
- 21:30 22:00: Write in journal, check social media

# 2. 16 June 2017

- 2.1. Jamestown, VA
- 2.2. Metadata and Residence
- 2.3. Expected Timeline

## 3. 17 June 2017

- 3.1. Blue Ridge Mountains, NC
- 3.2. Metadata and Residence
- 3.3. Expected Timeline

## 4. 18 June 2017

- 4.1. Great Smoky Mountains National Park, TN
- 4.2. Metadata and Residence
- 4.3. Expected Timeline

# 5. 19 June 2017

- 5.1. Jacksonville, FL
- 5.2. Metadata and Residence
- 5.3. Expected Timeline

## 6. 20 June 2017

- 6.1. Kennedy Space Center, FL
- 6.2. Jupiter, FL
- 6.3. Metadata and Residence
- 6.4. Expected Timeline

### 7. 21 June 2017

- 7.1. Everglades National Park, FL
- 7.2. Key West, FL
- 7.3. Metadata and Residence
- 7.4. Expected Timeline

### 8. 22 June 2017

- 8.1. Driving from FL to LA
- 8.1.1. Tallahassee, FL
- 8.2. Metadata and Residence
- 8.3. Expected Timeline

## 9. 23 June 2017

- 9.1. French Quarter, LA
- 9.2. Metadata and Residence
- 9.3. Expected Timeline

### 10. 24 June 2017

- 10.1. Driving from LA to AK
- 10.1.1. Little Rock, AK
- 10.2. Metadata and Residence
- 10.3. Expected Timeline

### 11. 25 June 2017

- 11.1. Hot Springs National Park, AK
- 11.2. Metadata and Residence
- 11.3. Expected Timeline

#### 12. 26 June 2017

- 12.1. Rock Café, OK
- 12.2. Driving from OK to TX panhandle
- 12.2.1. Pampa, TX
- 12.3. Metadata and Residence
- 12.4. Expected Timeline

### 13. 27 June 2017

- 13.1. Midpoint Café, TX
- 13.2. Driving from TX to NM
- 13.2.1. Farmington, NM
- 13.3. Metadata and Residence
- 13.4. Expected Timeline

#### 14. 28 June 2017

- 14.1. Four Corners Monument, NM/AZ/CO/UT
- 14.2. Canyonlands National Park, UT

Island in the Sky

- 14.3. Metadata and Residence
- 14.4. Expected Timeline

## 15. 29 June 2017

- 15.1. Arches National Park, UT
- 15.2. Expected Timeline

# 16. 30 June 2017

- 16.1. Bryce Canyon National Park, UT
- 16.2. Metadata and Residence
- 16.3. Expected Timeline

## 17. 1 July 2017

- 17.1. Zion National Park, UT
- 17.2. Metadata and Residence
- 17.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

# 18. 2 July 2017

- 18.1. Zion National Park, UT
- 18.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

## 19. 3 July 2017

- 19.1. Antelope Canyon, AZ
- 19.2. Metadata and Residence
- 19.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

#### 20. 4 July 2017

- 20.1. Antelope Canyon, AZ
- 20.2. Horseshoe Bend, AZ
- 20.3. Fourth of July fireworks
- 20.3.1. Page, AZ
- 20.4. Expected Timeline Day 2

## 21. 5 July 2017

- 21.1. Grand Canyon National Park, AZ
- 21.2. Metadata and Residence
- 21.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

## 22. 6 July 2017

- 22.1. Grand Canyon National Park, AZ
- 22.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

## 23. 7 July 2017

- 23.1. Driving from AZ to CA
- 23.1.1. Riverside, CA
- 23.2. Metadata and Residence
- 23.3. Expected Timeline

## 24. 8 July 2017

- 24.1. Joshua Tree National Park, CA
- 24.2. Metadata and Residence
- 24.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

# 25. 9 July 2017

- 25.1. Joshua Tree National Park, CA
- 25.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

## 26. 10 July 2017

- 26.1. Death Valley National Park, CA
- 26.2. Metadata and Residence
- 26.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 27. 11 July 2017

- 27.1. Death Valley National Park, CA
- 27.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 28. 12 July 2017

- 28.1. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, CA
- 28.2. Metadata and Residence
- 28.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 29. 13 July 2017

- 29.1. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, CA
- 29.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 30. 14 July 2017

- 30.1. Yosemite National Park, CA
- 30.2. Metadata and Residence
- 30.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 31. 15 July 2017

- 31.1. Yosemite National Park, CA
- 31.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 32. 16 July 2017

- 32.1. San Francisco, CA
- 32.2. Metadata and Residence
- 32.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

# 33. 17 July 2017

- 33.1. San Francisco, CA
- 33.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 34. 18 July 2017

- 34.1. Redwood National Park, CA
- 34.2. Metadata and Residence
- 34.3. Expected Timeline

### 35. 19 July 2017

- 35.1. Crater Lake National Park, OR
- 35.2. Metadata and Residence
- 35.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 36. 20 July 2017

- 36.1. Crater Lake National Park, OR
- 36.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

### 37. 21 July 2017

- 37.1. Multnomah Falls, OR
- 37.2. Metadata and Residence
- 37.3. Expected Timeline

### 38. 22 July 2017

- 38.1. Mount Rainier National Park, WA
- 38.2. Metadata and Residence
- 38.3. Expected Timeline

### 39. 23 July 2017

- 39.1. Seattle, WA
- 39.2. Metadata and Residence
- 39.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 40. 24 July 2017

- 40.1. Seattle, WA
- 40.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

### 41. 25 July 2017

- 41.1. Olympic National Park, WA
- 41.2. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 42. 26 July 2017

- 42.1. Olympic National Park, WA
- 42.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

### 43. 27 July 2017

- 43.1. North Cascades National Park, WA
- 43.2. Metadata and Residence
- 43.3. Expected Timeline

### 44. 28 July 2017

- 44.1. Driving from WA to MT
- 44.1.1. Columbia Falls, MT
- 44.2. Metadata and Residence
- 44.3. Expected Timeline

### 45. 29 July 2017

- 45.1. Glacier National Park, MT
- 45.2. Metadata and Residence
- 45.3. Expected Timeline

### 46. 30 July 2017

- 46.1. Driving from MT to WY
- 46.1.1. West Yellowstone, MT
- 46.2. Metadata and Residence
- 46.3. Expected Timeline

#### 47. 31 July 2017

- 47.1. Yellowstone National Park, WY
- 47.2. Metadata and Residence
- 47.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

### 48. 1 August 2017

- 48.1. Yellowstone National Park, WY
- 48.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 49. 2 August 2017

- 49.1. Yellowstone National Park, WY
- 49.2. Expected Timeline Day 3

## 50. 3 August 2017

- 50.1. Grant Teton National Park, WY
- 50.2. Expected Timeline

### 51. 4 August 2017

- 51.1. Driving from WY to CO
- 51.1.1. Silverthorne, CO
- 51.2. Metadata and Residence
- 51.3. Expected Timeline

#### 52. 5 August 2017

- 52.1. Rocky Mountain National Park, CO
- 52.2. Expected Timeline Day 1

#### 53. 6 August 2017

- 53.1. Rocky Mountain National Park, CO
- 53.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

#### 54. 7 August 2017

- 54.1. Driving from CO to SD
- 54.1.1. Rapid City, SD
- 54.2. Metadata and Residence
- 54.3. Expected Timeline

### 55. 8 August 2017

- 55.1. Mount Rushmore National Memorial, SD
- 55.2. Expected Timeline

### 56. 9 August 2017

- 56.1. Driving from SD to MN
- 56.1.1. Fargo, ND
- 56.2. Metadata and Residence
- 56.3. Expected Timeline

#### 57. 10 August 2017

- 57.1. Voyageurs' National Park, MN
- 57.2. Metadata and Residence
- 57.3. Expected Timeline Day 1

#### 58. 11 August 2017

- 58.1. Voyageurs' National Park, MN
- 58.2. Expected Timeline Day 2

### 59. 12 August 2017

- 59.1. Great Lakes: Lake Superior
- 59.2. Metadata and Residence
- 59.3. Expected Timeline

### 60. 13 August 2017

- 60.1. Great Lakes: Lake Huron
- 60.2. Metadata and Residence
- 60.3. Expected Timeline

#### 61. 14 August 2017

- 61.1. Great Lakes: Lake Michigan
- 61.2. Driving from MI to OH
- 61.2.1. Ann Arbor, MI
- 61.3. Metadata and Residence
- 61.4. Expected Timeline

#### 62. 15 August 2017

- 62.1. Great Lakes: Lake Erie
- 62.2. Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH
- 62.3. Metadata and Residence
- 62.4. Expected Timeline

### 63. 16 August 2017

- 63.1. Great Lakes: Lake Ontario
- 63.2. Metadata and Residence
- 63.3. Expected Timeline

### 64. 17 August 2017

- 64.1. Watkins Glen, NY
- 64.2. Metadata and Residence
- 64.3. Expected Timeline

## 65. 18 August 2017

- 65.1. Ausable Chasm, NY
- 65.2. Metadata and Residence
- 65.3. Expected Timeline

### 66. 19 August 2017

- 66.1. Driving from NY to TN
- 66.1.1. Pittsburgh, PA
- 66.2. Metadata and Residence
- 66.3. Expected Timeline

### 67. 20 August 2017

- 67.1. Driving from PA to TN
- 67.1.1. Nashville, TN
- 67.2. Metadata and Residence
- 67.3. Expected Timeline

#### 68. 21 August 2017

- 68.1. Total solar eclipse viewing
- 68.1.1. Path of totality: Nashville, TN
- 68.2. Metadata and Residence
- 68.3. Expected Timeline

### 69. 22 August 2017

- 69.1. Roanoke, VA
- 69.2. Metadata and Residence
- 69.3. Expected Timeline

### 70. 23 August 2017

- 70.1. Flushing, NY
- 70.2. Metadata and Residence
- 70.3. Expected Timeline

### 71. 24 August 2017

- 71.1. Plymouth, MA
- 71.2. Metadata and Residence
- 71.3. Expected Timeline

# 72. 25 August 2017

- 72.1. Boston, MA
- 72.2. Metadata and Residence
- 72.3. Expected Timeline

## 73. 26 August 2017

- 73.1. Fort Kent, ME
- 73.2. Metadata and Residence
- 73.3. Expected Timeline

### 74. 27 August 2017

- 74.1. Driving from ME to NJ
- 74.1.1. Providence, RI
- 74.2. Metadata and Residence
- 74.3. Expected Timeline

### 75. 28 August 2017

75.1. Driving home to NJ