

HIT THE ROAD

Turn your holiday into an adventure...

From Jack Kerouac's epic novel *On the Road* to Ewan McGregor's 20,000 mile TV adventure *The Long Way Round*, popular culture has always reflected our preoccupation with the spontaneity and freedom of the road trip. This month we have selected six of the most awe inspiring, well trodden tracks in the world in a bid to get you up and out on the road.

USA'S HISTORIC ROUTE 66

Arguably the most famous road trip of all time, Route 66 ran from Chicago, Illinois to Los Angeles, California until it was sadly decommissioned in 1985. Now dubbed 'Historic Route 66' much of the original track can still be navigated (though it's not the most straightforward of routes) and many tour operators offer flydrive holidays, making it possible to experience this legendary highway for yourself in 2008.

Virgin Holidays' 'Route 66' flydrive tour encompasses all the highlights of the original trail on its 16 night itinerary. Starting in Chicago, you can visit the magnificent Sears Tower and splash your cash on designer wares along the city's famed 'Magnificent Mile'. Continuing on through the Southern states you'll visit Missouri, Tulsa, Amarillo and Santa Fe among others before passing through fabulously gaudy Las Vegas where you can try your luck with the high rollers. Finally you'll end up in Santa Monica for some rest and recuperation on the city's 3.5 miles of pristine beaches. With an average 340 days of sunshine per year this is the perfect place to complete your journey and relax before the long flight home.

Prices for the 'Route 66' tour start at £1,045 per person including return flights with Virgin Atlantic, car hire and accommodation (based on two sharing). Book by visiting www.virginholidays.co.uk or call the reservations team on 0844 557 3861.

NEW ZEALAND AUCKLAND TO CHRISTCHURCH

It's no surprise that blockbusters like *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy were filmed on location in New Zealand. Snowy pistes, rolling hills and thermal hotspots are just some of the country's natural attractions, and the trail from Auckland in the North Island, to Christchurch in the South, will allow you to experience the very best it has to offer.

New Zealand based travel company, Relaxing Journeys, offers luxury tours between the two cities. Soak up the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Auckland, relax in the beautiful Bay of Islands, marvel at the mudpools in Rotorua, go whale watching in Kaikoura, bungy jump in Queenstown, and drift away on the serene Milford Sound.

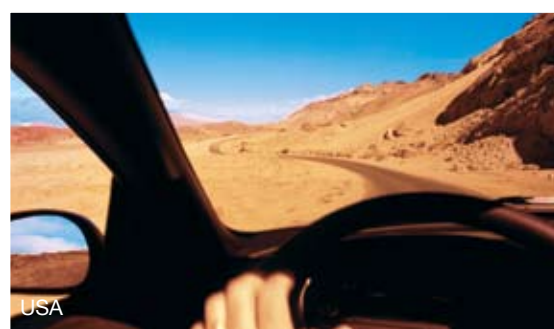
A choice of accommodation is available for this tour from basic bed and breakfast

to luxury boutique hotels like Mollies in Auckland. With perfect harbour views and a range of immaculate suites this hotel offers a relaxing ambiance at the end of a long day of sightseeing.

Prices begin at £3,661 per person for a 22 day, premium self drive tour including car hire and boutique accommodation. To enquire and book visit www.relaxingjourneys.co.nz. Flights can be booked from British Airways who offer return flights from London to Auckland from £544 in March (0870 850 9850, www.britishairways.com)



USA



USA

NEW ZEALAND





AUSTRALIA'S GREAT OCEAN ROAD

The vast and varied land of Australia is teeming with road trip options. Winding their way along the country's dramatic coastlines or through the desolate outback, you can choose from routes which stretch up the tropical East coast or take you into the more temperate state of Victoria. The Great Ocean road begins near the cultural city of Melbourne and meanders its way past 400 kilometres of sleepy fishing villages, stunning coastal scenery and expansive woodland. The highlight of this scenic route comes in the form of 'The Twelve Apostles' – huge rugged rock stacks which reside in the Port Campbell National Park. If possible catch these natural marvels at sunset when they turn a jaw-dropping shade of orange.

Virgin Holidays offer a self-drive tour of The Great Ocean Road priced from £1,178 in March. This 4 day/3 night tour includes car hire, accommodation (based on two adults sharing) and return flights from Heathrow to Melbourne. If 4 days just isn't enough we recommend an extended stay at The Langham Hotel in Melbourne (£69 pp per night). To book visit www.virginholidays.com or call 0844 5573 861.



NEW ZEALAND

AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIA



SOUTH AFRICA



SOUTH AFRICA'S GARDEN ROUTE

Despite its controversial history, South Africa is a country rich in natural beauty and vibrant wildlife. The country's legislative capital, Cape Town, is a shimmering cosmopolitan city of culture and heritage where you can shop till you drop in the Cape Quarter or catch a cable car up Table Mountain for magnificent views of the entire area.

If wine tasting, unspoiled wilderness and close encounters with exotic animals sound appealing then Virgin Holidays' 'Cape town, Garden route and wildlife' tour might just be the adventure you've always dreamed of. Beginning in Cape Town this route takes in the Cape Winelands, the vast and beautiful Garden Route and a three day stop in Johannesburg where you'll partake in guided bush walks and game drives.

The 12 night tour is priced at £1,639 (leaving end of March) and includes return flights from Heathrow, car hire and accommodation (based on two sharing). To book visit www.virginholidays.com or call 0844 5573 861.



NORWAY

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NORWAY'S ATLANTIC ROAD

The Atlantic Road in Norway is one of the world's little known road trips marvels. This relatively short road weaves its way across 12 bridges which jut out over the ocean, linking various small islands between Kristiansund and Molde (famed for its annual jazz festivals).

During fine weather this stretch is a fantastic area for spotting whales and seals, while in stormier weather its dramatic waves attract travellers from far and wide.

With Scandinavian Airlines opening a direct service from Bristol international Airport to Oslo starting on 30th March now is the ideal time to explore Norway's Atlantic Road. (Flights from £29 one way, book via www.flysas.co.uk or call 0871 521 2772). We recommend renting a car (www.scandinaviancarrental.com charge £242 for 1 weeks hire) purchasing a trusty Norwegian road map and traveling from Oslo via Bergen and up to Kristiansund, which takes in glaciers, breathtaking fjords, sand dunes and thriving cities in just 6-10 days.

ITALY'S AMALFI COAST

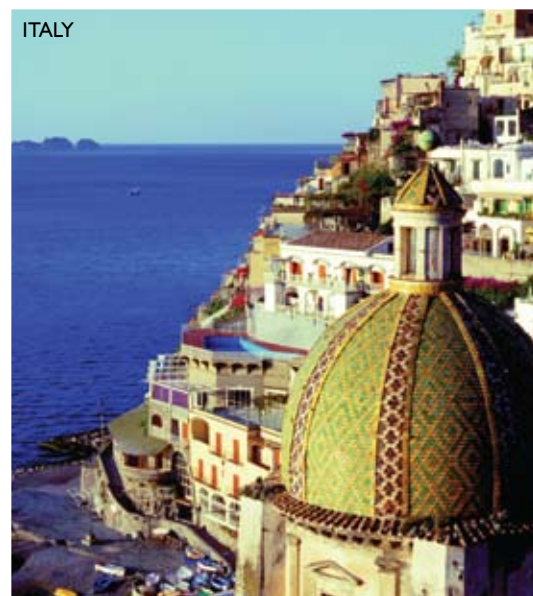
Small windy coastal roads, rows of charming pastel coloured houses, and mile upon mile of sparkling blue ocean – the Amalfi Coast is every bit the embodiment of quaint Italian sophistication. Spend your days leisurely exploring the crumbling white washed churches then dine alfresco by candlelight and savour the subtle zesty fragrances carried on the wind from the regions many lemon groves.

The Amalfi Coast is every driving enthusiasts dream – the road twists and turns (sometimes unexpectedly!) for miles and miles with striking panoramic views on all sides. Punctuated with charming cafés and other hidden gems, it's not hard to see why so many car adverts are filmed in this picture perfect area.

Expressions Holidays offer a 12 night tour which stretches from the Tuscan vineyards, through rural Umbria and Latium, and concludes on the sublime coastal path



ITALY



known as the Amalfi Coast. They are available from £1,590 per person including return flights with British Airways, car hire and accommodation with breakfast. Bookings can be made via their website, www.expressionsholidays.co.uk or by calling 0207 433 2675.