



WILDSAM

**THE
RAMBLER'S
GUIDE
TO
AMERICAN
ROAD TRIPS**

Explore lost highways,
time-tested small towns
and glittering cities.

WEST COAST | NEW ENGLAND | AMERICAN SOUTH
GREAT LAKES | SOUTHWEST/TEXAS | MOUNTAIN WEST

THE WEST COAST

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

NORCAL'S BOHEMIAN WEEKEND

DAY 1: BOLINAS

To visit Bolinas is to slip into another dimension: places like BOLINAS PEOPLE'S STORE and BOLINAS BOOK EXCHANGE, an alternative to 21st century capitalism plays out daily. Unusual currents govern life. Walks take detours. Conversations take unexpected twists. Mostly, though, Bolinas is gorgeous. Stroll along the mesa above town, surf the legendary waves, and, at low tide, join the families mucking around on the mud flats.

DAY 2: POINT REYES

CHEESE: Cowgirl Creamery has been on the California cheese trail for years; Mt Tam and Red Hawk are standouts. OYSTERS: Tomales Bay is bivalve paradise. Go super-classic at Hog Island Oyster Company [reservations are a thing]. Then, order the BBQ'ed oysters at Nick's Cove, a bayside mahogany bar dream. SOURDOUGH: Follow the wafts on Shoreline Hwy to Brickmaiden Breads for *pain au gros* or the country white sourdough.



DAY 3: RUSSIAN RIVER

Guerneville, Monte Rio, Forestville: Unfussy old river towns like these get harder and harder to find. Affordable canoe rentals at [BURKE'S CANOE TRIPS](#) [call for reservations] and beers at [STUMPTOWN BREWERY](#) [Guerneville] are extra-welcome these days. Head north to check out the fascinating Russian colonial outpost at [FORT ROSS](#), or drift into the trees at [ARMSTRONG REDWOODS STATE NATURAL RESERVE](#), home to 805 acres of giant sequoias.

DAY 4: SAN FRANCISCO

The [PRESIDIO](#), a former military base turned into a national park in the Golden Gate's shadow, connects you to California's storied past at two fine hotels: [INN AT THE PRESIDIO](#) and [LODGE AT THE PRESIDIO](#). Noted hikes lead to the state's very edges—now as ever, made for looking to the far horizon.


CITY & TOWN

PALM SPRINGS, CA

Everyone feels hipper in Palm Springs, desert magnet of time-bending appeal. Bing Crosby threw serious bashes at RANCHO MIRAGE ESTATE, and there are plenty of other midcentury manses available for pool-centric hedonism. No matter what time you wake up, CHEEKY'S serves the breakfast, though early birds score the cinnamon rolls. Downtown is crammed with galleries and vintage shops, good hunting for poolside scene looks to be worn at the ACE HOTEL & SWIM CLUB, an ex-Howard Johnsons transformed into an eternally groovy desert hang.

ASTORIA, OR

The West Coast's oldest American town packs in lore, from Lewis & Clark [who bunked at FORT CLATSOP] to GOONIES LOCATIONS [private homes—be cool]. The ASTORIA COLUMN, throwback monument, is worth a climb for lively murals and Columbia River views busy with ships. The COLUMBIA RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM puts "the Graveyard of the Pacific" in context, and stranger things await at haunted-manor-ish FLAVEL HOUSE MUSEUM. Assess it all over a pint of City of Dreams at FORT GEORGE BREWERY, named for Britain's brief rule here.



SCENIC DRIVES

Pacific Coast Highway

Los Angeles to San Diego [CA]

Up the Coast

San Luis Obispo to San Simeon [CA]

Rogue-Umpqua Scenic Byway

Grants Pass to Roseburg [OR]

State Route 20

Whidbey Island through North Cascades
National Park [WA]

LODGING

Captain Whidbey Inn [WA]

A wayback lodge and fancy-rustic cabins
on a wooded isle.

Salishan [OR]

Significant '60s architecture: a moody
coastal take on midcentury mod.

Timber Cove [CA]

Ansel Adams stomping grounds slung
on a staggering Hwy 1 headland.

BOOK LIST

Astoria

by Peter Stark

There There

by Tommy Orange

Where I Was From

by Joan Didion

SOUNDTRACK

Grateful Dead

The Beach Boys

Savilá

Nirvana

Brandi Carlile



NEW ENGLAND

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

THE CAPE COD EXHALE

DAY 1: PROVINCETOWN, MA

Little more than a scorpion's tail of sunstruck dune, Provincetown is Cape Cod's salute to the mainland. Its genesis as a mecca to the creative class dates to 1907, when painter Charles Hawthorne founded an art school high on a hill, inspiring the likes of Normans Rockwell and Mailer. Each spring, thanks to the nonprofit festival TWENTY SUMMERS, the barn plays host to dozens of musicians, artists and authors, testifying to Provincetown's gypsy soul.

DAY 2: WELLFLEET, MA

Cape architecture isn't all clapboard cottages. Between the 1940s and 1970s, the Cape was a magnet for the Bauhaus movement. More than 110 Modernist homes were built, and THE CAPE COD MODERN HOUSE TRUST has restored three in Wellfleet to midcentury glory. The most iconic, the cube-like HATCH HOUSE, is set within the Cape Cod National Seashore, and available for weekly rentals from April through November.

DAY 3: OLD KINGS HIGHWAY

Down the Old Kings Highway, Route 6A, make a day of pulling off and exploring a string of beach towns. HAPPY FISH BAKERY in Yarmouth Port has morning lines for good reason. Try SNOWY OWL in Brewster if the wait is too much. Come lunch, CAPTAIN FROSTY'S in Dennis is one of those old clam shacks that feels perfectly Rockwellian. Order a fried scallop basket and finish with soft-serve. Both MAYFLOWER BEACH and CHAPIN BEACH are sandy favorites. Stay until the sun is long gone.

DAY 4: NANTUCKET

The landscape here feels as remote as it did in Melville's time. Rent a cruiser from YOUNG'S BICYCLE SHOP, outfitting since 1931, and explore 30 miles of island paths. Head to MILLIE'S at Madaket Beach for fish tacos and local lore (namesake "Madaket Millie" Jewett is an island legend known for patrolling for shipwrecks). For an afternoon spot, try CISCO BREWERS, a hoppy playground on the south side. Set up camp in one of 21 BROAD's minimalist chic rooms.



CITY & TOWN

PORTLAND, ME

Portland boasts the second highest number of restaurants per capita in the U.S.—plus stellar coffee shops, microbreweries, and famed lobster hauls. EVENTIDE OYSTER CO. is the place to get schooled in New England catch. Stay at the PRESS HOTEL, once home to the *Portland Press Herald*. From there, tap the network of bikeable trails and ferries to see famous lighthouses, such as PORTLAND HEAD LIGHT, the state's oldest beacon.

MAD RIVER VALLEY, VT

A gung-ho, independent spirit defines Central Vermont's Mad River Valley, anchored by the steeped villages of Waitsfield and Warren. Stay in the latter, at the PITCHER INN, originally a rest stop for wagon drivers. Hit the MAD RIVER BYWAY, a 36-mile drive through covered bridges and forested mountains. In summer and fall, locals and visitors share the trails of GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST and paddle the Mad River's Class II and III rapids.

SCENIC DRIVES

Housatonic River Stretch

North from New Milford [CT]

Kancamagus Highway

Lincoln to Conway [NH]

North Maine Woods

Millinocket to the Canadian border [ME]

LODGING

Tourists Lodge [MA]

Opened two years back, this cool Berkshires outpost is where Eames would summer

The Dean Hotel [RI]

A century-old building with modern renovation by Manhattan design group ASH NYC

Hidden Pond [ME]

Cluster of getaway cabins and day spa dropped into a coastal Maine treescape

BOOK LIST

Jaws

by Peter Benchley

The World According to Garp by John Irving

The Secret History

by Donna Tartt

SOUNDTRACK

Deer Tick

James Taylor

Grace Potter and the Nocturnals

Phish

AMERICAN SOUTH

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

NEW ORLEANS TO KEY WEST

DAY 1: NEW ORLEANS, LA

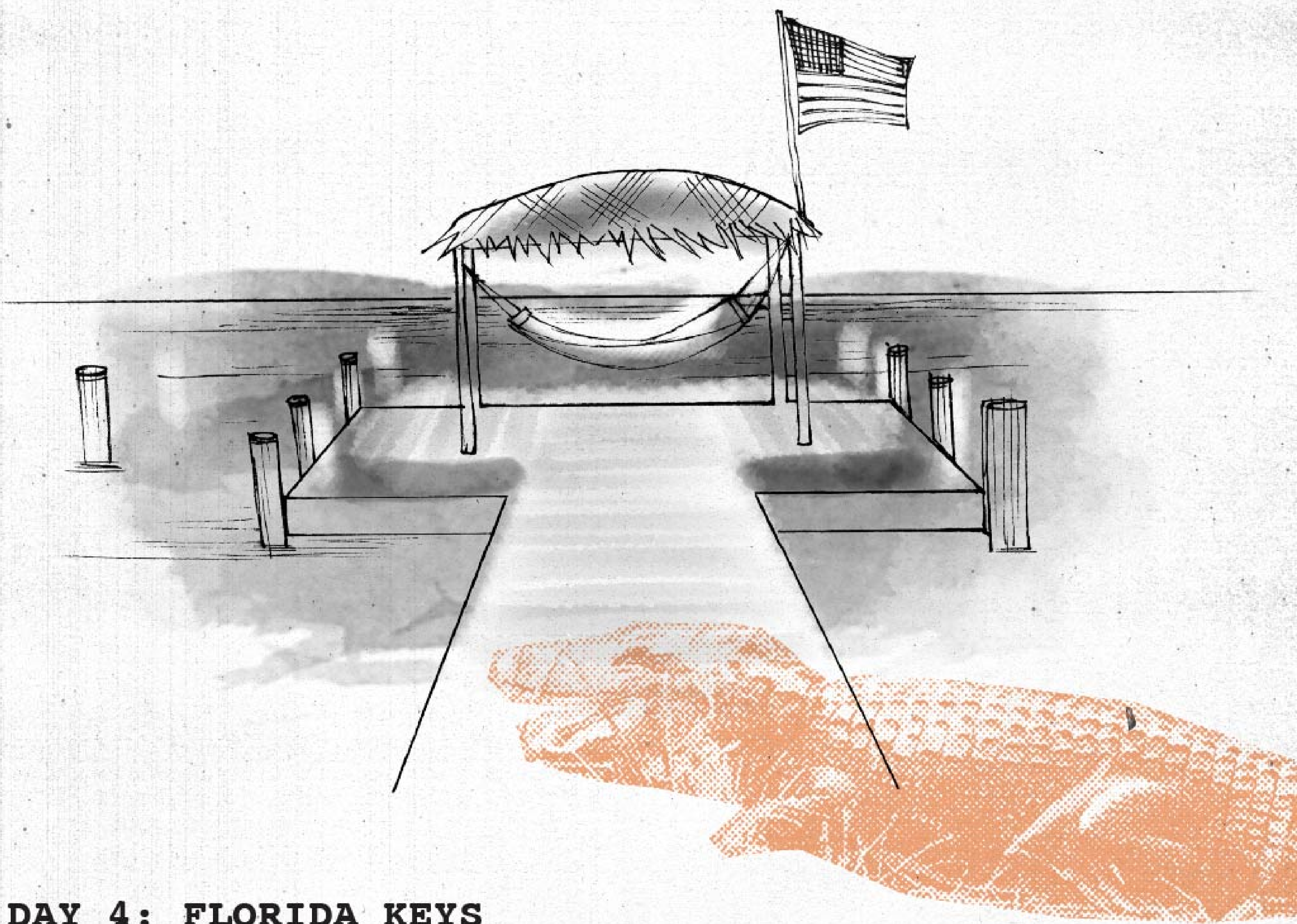
Three culinary musts: Start with CENTRAL GROCERY's muffuletta, a monster sandwich loaded with salumi and marinated olive salad. Next, PARKWAY BAKERY & TAVERN's fried shrimp po'boy, the king of the working man's lunch, made exclusively on crusty Leidenheimer French bread. Last stop, velvety-smooth ice crammed high into paper bowls, doused in sweet homemade flavors, and spooned into hot summer nights: a satsuma Sno-Bliz at HANSEN's.

DAY 2: BILOXI & OCEAN SPRINGS, MS

Just east of New Orleans, two museums animate Mississippi beach towns. No artist better captured the fluidity of Gulf Coast life than Walter Inglis Anderson. The WALTER ANDERSON MUSEUM OF ART in Ocean Springs explores the painter's work through his watercolors, linoleum block prints and writing. Across Biloxi Bay, the OHR-O'KEEFE MUSEUM OF ART houses the experimental fired-clay creations of George Ohr, the "Mad Potter of Biloxi."

DAY 3: FLORIDA SPRINGS

In Gilchrist County, take a dip, snorkel or dive in the cold, crystalline turquoise waters of GINNIE SPRINGS. On the Crystal River, THREE SISTERS SPRINGS offers snorkeling and paddling, except during the winter months, when migratory manatees arrive; the boardwalk offers year-round access. Citrus County's CHASSAHOWITZKA SPRINGS brims with calm, kayak-able waters, warm lagoons and wildlife.



DAY 4: FLORIDA KEYS

Highway 1 pencils a southwesterly path over these shipwreck isles. As Joy Williams wrote, the Keys have a "seedy tropicality." Certainly, moments of splendor too—The Moorings, Cheeca Lodge, Little Palm, Marquesa Hotel: all deliver a Caribbean sophistication. The natural island beauty can be found combing Bahia Honda State Park with the herons, or snorkeling shipwrecks in the NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY.

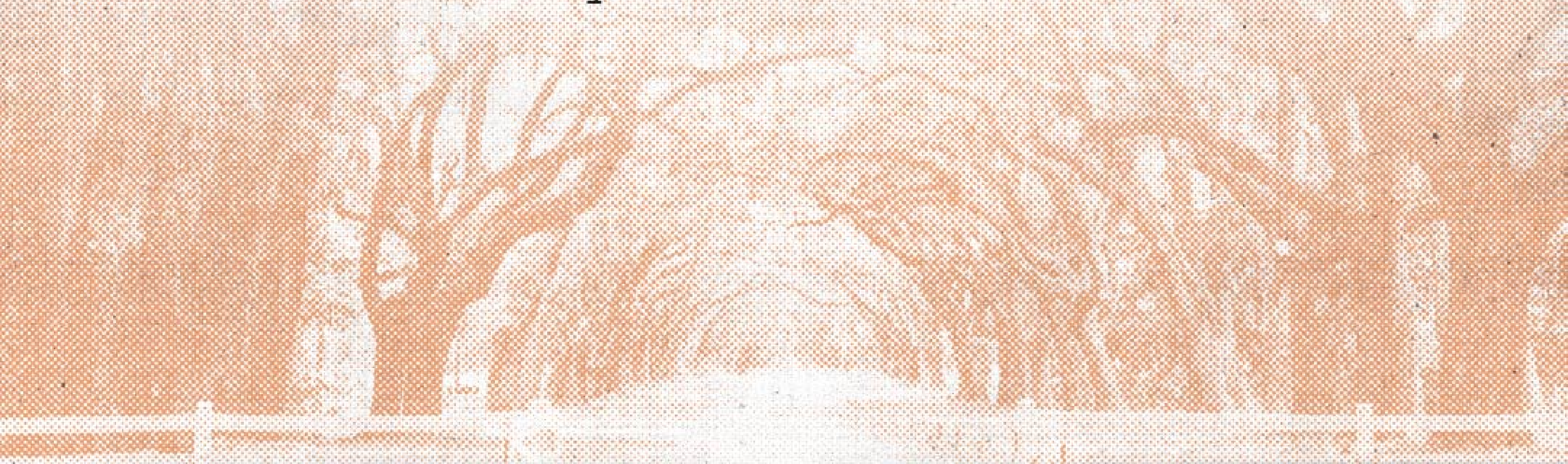
CITY & TOWN

MEMPHIS, TN

Memphis is musky, cool, fermented with all that's complex about the South. Wafts of smoke cover world-renowned barbecue joints like PAYNE'S COZY CORNER and RENDEZVOUS. The MEMPHIS BROOKS MUSEUM OF ART boasts a robust photo collection from Willam Eggleston, godfather of color photography. For deeper historic cuts, head to the well-done STAX MUSEUM, where Otis Redding and Booker T. rained hot-buttered soul. And there's never a bad night to end up at EARNESTINE & HAZEL'S, a red-tinted bar with a haunted jukebox.

SAVANNAH, GA

Georgia's oldest city is its loveliest, with mannered, moss-draped mystique. Start at City Hall and head south down Bull Street to hit five of the famed 22 squares, arriving at 30-acre FORSYTH PARK. Amble on to THE GASTONIAN, a graceful B&B in adjoining 1868 mansions; breakfast is included, but save room for BACK IN THE DAY BAKERY's biscuits. Make your way through three eras of art, architecture and history at the TELFAIR MUSEUMS. End the day at THE GREY, serving "port city Southern" fare in an overhauled Greyhound station.



SCENIC DRIVES

Lookout Mountain Parkway

from Chattanooga to Gadsden [TN & AL]

Highway 98

Tallahassee to Apalachicola [FL]

Waterfall Byway, US 64

Rosman to Murphy [NC]

Natchez Trace Parkway

Tupelo to Natchez [MS]

LODGING

Noelle Hotel [TN]

A 224-room design love child created by Nashville's brightest artisans.

Hotel Clermont [GA]

Funky 1924 revamp, stumbling distance from iconic Clermont Lounge.

Zero George [SC]

Deep porches, fancy millwork, courtyard that feels like a secret.

BOOK LIST

The Complete Stories

by Flannery O'Connor

Sing, Unburied, Sing

by Jesmyn Ward

Carry Me Home

by Diane McWhorter

SOUNDTRACK

Mahalia Jackson

Fats Domino

Allman Brothers

Loretta Lynn

GREAT LAKES

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

THE NORTH

DAY 1: DULUTH, MN


Aquavit has become to Minnesota what bourbon is to Kentucky, thanks to a slew of distilleries and bars embracing the caraway-flavored Scandinavian spirit. Aquavit comes from the Norwegian word "øvre vann," meaning "upper lake." Fitting for [VIKRE DISTILLERY](#), which sits on Lake Superior. Aquavit aged in cognac barrels produces flavors like lympa, a sweet rye bread.

DAY 2: ELKHORN, WI

[CAMP WANDAWEGA](#) is a dreamy summer camp for grown folks fashioned out of a historic 1920s "resort" for Chicagoans looking to dodge Prohibition-era regulations.

Husband-wife owners Tereasa Surratt and David Hernandez have turned the property into a *Moonrise Kingdom*-like ramble where accommodations range from A-frames perched over Lake Wandawega to the Hill House, a renovated 1930s summer cabin.

DAY 3: CHICAGO, IL



LAKE MICHIGAN, Chicago's front yard beachfront, is home to more than verdant park systems; it's the site of folklore and oft-hidden treasure. About 300 feet off the Hyde Park shoreline, MORGAN SHOAL presents a vibrant diver's delight—32 acres of limestone sheet are 425 million years old and teem with rainbow trout. GRANT PARK LANDFILL is an idyllic lawn and city greenspace, forged almost entirely from the The Great Chicago Fire's debris and ruins.

DAY 4: DETROIT, MI

Booming manufacturing brought iconic towers and inspiring home design to Detroit. Take a driving tour of architectural landmarks including: the BOSTON-EDISON historic neighborhood, domain of grand 10,000-square-foot Tudor mansions and Italian villas; the GUARDIAN BUILDING, monument to Art Deco, ornamented with Mankato stone, orange brick and locally fired Pewabic tiles; and MICHIGAN CENTRAL STATION, melancholy monument to urban ruin.

FLEETWOOD

DINED

CITY & TOWN

CHICAGO, IL

Think of Chicago and foundational American scenes parade in metered rhythm, iambs hard and soft. Observe from the [THE PENINSULA](#), Mag Mile's most glamorous hotel, with a top-of-the-world 19th- and 20th-floor spa. Head down Michigan Avenue to the [ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO](#) to see its esteemed collection, including Wood's *American Gothic* and Hopper's *Nighthawks*. Speaking of diners, the best burger of that vernacular might just be flipped at [AU CHEVAL](#)'s, a shoebox of coveted banquettes. More in the mood for deep-dish? Owner Brian Tondryk, the grand-son of a [GINO'S EAST](#) co-founder, re-creates the pie of his childhood.

ANN ARBOR, MI

The quintessential college town perfectly balances jock and geek leanings. The University of Michigan's all-time great fight song, "[THE VICTORS](#)," should rock in your mind the whole time, so you might as well parade the knowledge that John Philip Sousa himself debuted this jam in 1898. In season, if you can be part of a 100,000-plus football crowd at [THE BIG HOUSE](#), do it. [The round-the-clock [FLEETWOOD DINER](#) is a clutch pre-game spot.] Then realign to more reflective spirits at [LITERATI](#), the reigning indie bookstore, and the sumptuous [WEST SIDE BOOK SHOP](#), a 45-year-old glory of used and rare volumes. Reconcile all your different ways of looking at the world with a cocktail at [THE LAST WORD](#).

SCENIC DRIVES

US 57

Green Bay to Gills Rock [WI]

US 61

Duluth to Grand Marais [MN]

Tunnel of Trees Heritage Route (M-119)

Cross Village to Harbor Springs [MI]

Lakeshore Drive (US 41)

Highland Park to Rainbow Beach Park [IL]

LODGING

Chicago Athletic Association [IL]

Once an elite, private sportsman's paradise, now a hub of hip.

Hotel Siren [MI]

A luxe art deco funhouse done in local color.

Park Hyatt [IL]

A 189-room tower that embraces sleek, minimalist style. Big views of the Lake.

BOOK LIST

The Coast of Chicago
by Stuart Dybek

Detroit City Is the Place to Be
by Mark Binelli

The Long-Shining Waters
by Danielle Sosin

SOUNDTRACK

The Supremes

Aretha Franklin

The Stooges

Bon Iver

Trampled by Turtles

THE SOUTHWEST + TEXAS

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

LET'S WEST TEXAS

DAY 1: BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

Take in a different view of the borderland in one of the nation's most remote parks. THE GAGE HOTEL, with its WHITE BUFFALO BAR and starry skies, is tailor-made for explorers. From Marathon, set out on Hwy 385 toward Grapevine Hills Trail; an easy hike leads to BALANCED ROCK, a marvel of suspended boulders. Boquillas Canyon leads toward BOQUILLAS DEL CARMEN, a resilient Mexican village that can be reached by boat.

DAY 2: TERLINGUA

A smattering of structures strewn across the Chisos foothills, Terlingua's population officially stands at 60-ish, but come sunset, and thanks to anchors like STARLIGHT THEATRE and LA KIVA BAR, you can see why they call this hardscrabble hamlet home. BIG BEND STABLES leads two-hour guided rides, which take you around the town's old mine shaft, through Rough Run Creek and along the spine of the mountain ridge.

DAY 3: MARFA

Donald Judd moved to Marfa in 1971, lured by the stark contour of the land. Judd died in 1994 but the artist's legacy—made tangible by installations like LA MANSANA DE CHINATI—is still foundational. Much of what makes Marfa shimmer can be found downtown, from shop-gallery WRONG STORE to printer ARBER & SONS EDITIONS and vintage-art boutique RABA MARFA. Keep an eye out for the Brite Building, an in-town outpost of campground cousin ELCOSMICO.

DAY 4: EL PASO

Grab a Savage Goods coffee followed by huevos rancheros at H&H CAR WASH. Next, Trost-hop downtown; spot dozens of the architect's designs, including the O.T. BASSETT TOWER. Around lunchtime set off for sister-city Ciudad Juárez, where street tacos, KENTUCKY CLUB margaritas and Our Lady of Guadalupe await. Once back on Texas soil the YSELTA MISSION is the city's holy center and a jaunt up to SCENIC DRIVE OVERLOOK reveals a blurred border hemmed in by a high desert patchwork.



CITY & TOWN

HOUSTON, TX

Houstonians move with purpose and without pretension, but their soft spot is their enormous hometown pride. Head to [WEST ALABAMA ICEHOUSE](#), an open-air relic of this very-Texas kind of gathering place. Next up, a fajita plate at the original [NINFA'S ON NAVIGATION](#). Houston is also home to the [JOHNSON SPACE CENTER](#), where NASA set its sights on the stars in the 1960s. This museum makes the moonshot feel more personal. In many ways, this is the Houston trademark: hefty ambition comes down to earth.

SEDONA, AZ

It's hard not to be bewitched by the natural majesty of Sedona, long a draw for free spirits as well as seasoned ranchers. Head here for epic hikes, swimming holes and sacred sites among towering cliffs. You couldn't get closer to staying amongst the red rocks than [ENCHANTMENT](#), luxury casitas secreted within [BOYNTON CANYON](#). For a more extended view, hit the pine-scented stretch of 89A between Sedona and Flagstaff. Fuel up at [INDIAN GARDENS CAFÉ & MARKET](#) before exploring the [WESTFORK TRAIL](#).

SCENIC DRIVES

Pineywoods Autumn Trail
Athens to Palestine [TX]

Jemez Mountain Trail
Coronado Monument to Bandelier Monument [NM]

Willow City Loop
Fredericksburg [TX]

Million Dollar Highway U.S.550
Silverton to Ouray [CO]

LODGING

The Inn of the Five Graces [NM]
Adobe village inn adorned with colorful tile work, kiva fireplaces

Hotel Ritual [TX]
Wes Anderson would approve of this retreat with spa and luncheonette

Amangiri [UT]
Modern, otherworldly desert escape and a big-time splurge

BOOK LIST

Lonesome Dove
by Larry McMurtry

Face of an Angel
by Denise Chávez

**Fear and Loathing
in Las Vegas**
by Hunter S. Thompson

SOUNDTRACK

Selena

Gram Parsons

Willie Nelson

Lightin' Hopkins

Jenny Lewis

MOUNTAIN WEST

4 DAY
ROAD TRIP

ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGHS

DAY 1: CHAUTAUQUA PARK

This wilderness park, whose steep rock faces—the Flatirons—give Boulder its iconic backdrop, is a mecca for rock climbers. Of the miles of hiking trails, the low-key GREGORY CANYON loop is a must come fall. You have to earn those beers at the history-marinated DARK HORSE BAR & GRILL, after all.

DAY 2: ST. ELMO GHOST TOWN

In the Sawatch Range, sun-washed storefronts remain from the swell of gold and silver seekers. So do ghosts of local lore—like the Home Comfort Hotel owner “Dirty Annie.” Tip: the ST. ELMO GENERAL STORE stays open all summer and rents out a rustic cabin at a nice price. Bunk down with historian Duane Smith’s THE TRAIL OF GOLD AND SILVER or Elliot West’s THE CONTESTED PLAINS to get schooled on Colorado’s wild mining history.

DAY 3: STRAWBERRY HOT SPRINGS

Nestled into the wilderness near STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, these five thermal pools vary from 101 to 106 degrees. Accessible by a rutted-out dirt road or three-mile hiking trail, amenities are sparse; clothing is optional after dark. Lodging options include an actual train caboose, so check that off your life list right now. A nice and easy pint of Sunshine Express from Steamboat's BUTCHERKNIFE BREWING might be in order, as well.

DAY 4: DENVER

Once called the wickedest street in America, the 26 miles of COLFAX AVENUE hold on to Western grit even as the city evolves. The strip is a gallery of neon and kitsch, notably at BASTIEN'S [home of the sugar-rubbed steak] and CASA BONITA [don't miss Black Bart's Cave]. Across town, from August to October, green chile stands line Federal Boulevard, spiking the air. Keep a nose out for D & D PRODUCE and the CHILI GUYS. Amid a bustling beer scene, the mad-science wild yeasts of BLACK PROJECT produce some of the most intriguing pours.



CITY & TOWN

FLAGSTAFF, AZ

Grand Canyon Country's de facto capital perches at almost 7,000 feet near the San Francisco Peaks. The [MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA](#) is a must-visit center of regional expertise, while the feisty literary circuit includes [UPTOWN PUBHOUSE](#), owned by local poet James Jay. The respected [MOTHER ROAD BREWING](#) and adjoining [PIZZICLETTA](#) are purveyors of superb wood-fired pies. Hit [BRIGHT SIDE](#) for books. And if you're taking the high road to the national park, Highway 180, be sure to stop at the [CHAPEL OF THE HOLY DOVE](#), a curious roadside devotional.

LIVINGSTON, MT

This gateway town for [YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK](#) is worth a linger for a handsome downtown, strong literary roots and creative enterprise. [Rip-roaring writer Jim Harrison was a local fixture.] Downtown's [MURRAY HOTEL](#), a swatch of '20s elegance, puts you within a stroll of, basically, everything. [LIVINGSTON BAR & GRILLE](#) is the spot for bison steak and feeling like an old-time swell en route to the sporting grounds. Down the road toward the park, [CHICO HOT SPRINGS](#) has a fanatical following for good reasons: a mountainside pool, Gallatin Forest horseback rides, etc.



SCENIC DRIVES

42-Mile Drive

Grand Tetons [WY]

International Selkirk Loop

From Sandpoint [ID & BC]

US 93

Hamilton to Whitefish [MT]

Trail Ridge Road

Estes Park to Grand Lake [CO]

LODGING

Symes Hot Springs Hotel [MT]

Creaky, much-loved throwback to Wellville-era bath resorts.

The Maven [CO]

High design in Denver's Dairy Block micro-hood of historic buildings.

Mountain Modern [WY]

Spiffed motel quarters in Jackson Hole, bike-fixing station included.

BOOK LIST

The Last Good Kiss

by James Crumley

In the Wilderness

by Kim Barnes

Roughing It

by Mark Twain

SOUNDTRACK

John Denver

Birds Mile Home

Utah Phillips

Alicia Stockman

Modest Mouse



Read More Wildsam

WILDSAM.COM

**THE WORLD
WAS PEOPLED
WITH WONDERS.**