

2002 RV Trip – The Southwest

**Day 1 – Drive to Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania (366 miles; 6 hours)**

Drive 6 hours  
Stay in Walmart parking lot

**Day 2 – Mammoth Cave (500 miles; 8 hours)**

Drive to Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky  
Bike the Green River Ferry Road down to river  
Stay at National Park Headquarters campground  
Attend Ranger Talk on the History of the Caves at the campground amphitheater

**Day 3 – Mammoth Cave Tour and Natchez Trace Parkway (250 miles; 5 hours)**

Take 2-hour Natural Entrance Historic Tour of Cave  
Drive Natchez Trace Parkway through Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi  
Stop at Meriwether Lewis gravesite  
Stop at Pharr Mounds – 2,000-year-old, dome-shaped burial mounds  
Stay at Tishomingo State Park in Mississippi  
Swim in pool; hike over bridge  
Take rowboats out on lake

**Day 4 – Natchez Trace / Vicksburg National Monument / Louisiana (360 miles; 7.5 hours)**

Continue driving Natchez Trace Parkway  
Tour Vicksburg National Military Park  
Drive to Louisiana  
Stay at Monroe's Shiloh Campground  
Swim in campground pool and fish in campground pond

**Day 5 – Lake Colorado City State Park (550 miles; 10 hours)**

Drive to Texas  
Stay at Lake Colorado City State Park  
Swim in lake from the rocks by the campground  
Fish from the fishing pavilion in the campground

**Day 6 – Carlsbad Caverns (270 miles; 5.5 hours)**

Drive to White City right outside Carlsbad Caverns  
Stay at White City Resort RV Park  
Go to White City Resort Water Park  
Tour Carlsbad Caverns - take Natural Entrance and self-guided Big Room Tour  
At dusk – see bat flight at amphitheater at cave's Natural Entrance

**Day 7 – Guadalupe Mountains National Park / White Sands (270 miles; 5.75 hours)**

Drive 45 minutes to Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas  
Stop at Pine Springs Visitor Center  
Hike the Devil's Hall Trail  
Drive 5 more hours to Alamogordo, New Mexico

Stay at Alamogorda / White Sands KOA  
Swim in campground pool  
Go to White Sands National Monument  
Drive the 16-mile Dunes Drive  
Hike and slide down dunes

**Day 8 – Elephant Butte State Park (144 miles; 3.75 hours)**

Drive to Elephant Butte  
Make futile attempt to camp on beach – sand too soft  
Stay in State Park Campground on asphalt  
Ride bikes to beach – extremely mucky ride because lake levels low  
Swim in lake

**Day 9 – Petroglyph National Park / Tinkertown / Santa Fe (250 miles; 5.5 hours)**

Drive to Petroglyph National Park  
Hike up Mesa Point Trail to top of mesa to see petroglyphs  
Drive Turquoise Trail to Santa Fe  
Stop at Tinkertown Museum  
Drive to Santa Fe  
Stay at Rancheros de Santa Fe Campground  
Swim in pool / watch movie about Santa Fe / make fire

**Day 10 - Santa Fe (25 miles; .5 hours)**

Drive into Santa Fe and tour city  
Walk through old town  
Tour San Miguel Mission (oldest church in North America)  
Tour Loretto Chapel (miraculous spiral staircase)  
Walk and shop at Santa Fe Plaza by Palace of the Governors  
Eat lunch at Café Pasqual's  
Tour Georgia O'Keefe Museum  
Drive back to Rancheros de Santa Fe Campground  
Run on hiking trails around campground  
Swim in pool / kids go to movies

**Day 11 – Chimayo / Heron Lake State Park (185 miles; 5 hours)**

4.5 hours; 180 miles  
Drive scenic High Road to Taos  
Tour Sanctuary de Chimayo (old Spanish chapel with legendary healing powers)  
Should have gone to Taos, but left road to find bike trailhead for Rio Grande Gorge Trail  
Horrible dirt, winding road – couldn't turn back - skip Taos  
Drive to and stay at Heron Lake State Park – Brushy Point Campground  
Launch blowup boat and tour lake and island  
BBQ and make campfire  
Stay at Heron Lake

**Day 12 – Heron Lake State Park (0 miles; 0 hours)**

Stay another day at Heron Lake

Bike ride from campground to Rio Chama Trailhead near dam  
Walk over impressive suspension bridge over the Rio Chama River  
BBQ and make campfire

**Day 13 – Ship Rock / Four Corners / Monument Valley (302 miles; 6 hours)**

Drive 3 hours to Shiprock  
Pull over on shoulder of road to photograph  
Drive another hour to Four Corners Monument  
Straddle 4 states and take pictures  
Drive 2 more hours to Monument Valley  
Bike ride 12-mile dirt loop road through valley  
Stay at Goulding's Monument Valley Campground and RV Park  
Swim in campground pool

**Day 14 – Tuba City / Grand Canyon (182 miles; 4 hours)**

Drive 2 ¼ hours to Tuba City  
Eat at Tuba City Truck Stop and Café – best Navajo Tacos  
Drive another 1 ¾ hours to the South Rim of Grand Canyon  
Drive scenic Desert View Drive from the East Entrance  
Hike down Bright Angel Trail  
Hike Rim Trail  
Stay at Trailer Village in Grand Canyon

**Day 15 – Sunset Crater Volcano / Slide Rock State Park (120 miles; 2.75 hours)**

Drive to Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument  
Hike Lava Flow Trail  
Drive Oak Creek Canyon Scenic Drive  
get campsite at Coconino National Forest in Sedona  
Drive to Slide Rock State Park  
Swim and play on natural water slide over rocks  
Stay at Coconino National Forest Campground

**Day 16 – Bell Rock / Walnut Canyon National Monument / Petrified Forest National Park / Red Rock State Park, New Mexico (305 miles; 6 hours)**

Drive ½ hour to Oak Creek Canyon  
Mountain Bike Bell Rock Parkway through red rock country  
Drive 1 ¾ hours to Walnut Canyon National Monument  
Hike Island Trail down into canyon to see cliff dwellings  
Drive 2 ¼ hours to Petrified Forest National Park (section north of I40)  
Stop at historic Painted Desert Inn  
Stop at Kachina Point for great views of the Painted Desert  
Drive 1 ½ hours to Red Rock State Park, New Mexico  
Kids skateboard; Herb and I walk out into field by Church Rock  
Stay at Red Rock State Park Campground

**Day 17 – Red Rock State Park / El Malpais / Santa Rosa Lake State Park (280 miles; 5.5 hours)**

Hike to Church Rock from Red Rock State Park Campground

Drive 1.5 hours to El Malpais National Monument

Stop at Sandstone Bluffs Overlook for panoramic views of the volcanic landscape

Stop at Natural Arch parking lot - Hike to La Ventana Natural Arch

Drive another 4 hours to Santa Rosa Lake State Park Campground

**Day 18 – Cadillac Ranch / Oklahoma (335 miles; 6 hours)**

Drive 3 hours to Amarillo, Texas

Stop at Cadillac Ranch and view 10 classic Cadillacs buried nose-down in dirt

Drive another 3 hours to Elk City/Clinton KOA in Oklahoma

Swim in campground pool

**Day 19 – Oklahoma Route 66 Museum / Fort Smith NHS / Lake Dardanelle State Park (360 miles; 6.5 hours)**

Go to Oklahoma Route 66 Museum in Clinton, Oklahoma

Drive quickly out of Oklahoma to get away from storm – very windy

Drive 5 hours to Fort Smith National Historic Site in Arkansas

Tour Visitor Center and museum

Drive another 1 ½ hours to Lake Dardanelle State Park Campground in Arkansas

Nice lake (except for nuclear power plant view)

Kids bike ride, Herb and I walk – very nice park

**Day 20 – Friend’s house in Kentucky (370 miles; 6.25 hours)**

Drive to visit friends in Murray, Kentucky

Stay in friends’ driveway

**Day 21 – Friend’s house / Land Between the Lakes (30 miles; .75 hours)**

Visit Murray State College with friend who is a professor there

Drive to Land Between the Lakes

Tour the Elk and Bison Range

Swim in Lake Barclay

Stay in friends’ driveway again

**Day 22 – Cracker Barrel / Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park, WV (550 miles; 10 hours)**

Stop and have lunch at a Cracker Barrel in Kentucky

Stay at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park in West Virginia

**Day 23 – Home (460 miles; 7.5 hours)**

Drive the rest of the way home

Total Trip Mileage: 6464 miles

Average Miles per Day: 281 miles per day

