

Road tripping

As racing organisation Nascar rings in its 75th anniversary, suggest car-loving clients celebrate with an all-American road trip, says **Adam Shaw**

freedom, romance, a sense of adventure: there's so much that the great American road trip can inspire. And there's so much to see, from wide-open plains to bustling beach cities.

Nascar's Cup Series grips the US every year, but this year the organisation marks 75 years since it began in Prohibition, when drivers would deliver moonshine in souped-up cars fast enough to evade the law.

This season runs until November, spanning 27 venues in 19 states, hopping from Daytona Beach on the coast, to Las Vegas, in the desert, and Nashville, a jumping off point for the Great Smoky Mountains. So what better way to embrace the spirit of Nascar than with a road trip – keeping to the speed limit, of course.

BEACH TRIP

It's impossible to mention Nascar without talking about Daytona Beach, the competition's spiritual home and where the season kicks off with the Daytona 500. North

America Travel Service's Florida's A1A self-drive itinerary visits the city, where you'll find white-sand beaches and thriving entertainment on Main Street, which is known for its motorcycle parades.

The route starts in Jacksonville, passes through St Augustine, home to a historic Spanish fort, spends two nights in Daytona Beach and then heads on to Palm Beach, with its rows of boutique shops and world-class golf courses, before ending in Miami, another race location. September prices for the 13-night route start at £3,939 per person, based on two adults sharing, including flights, accommodation and car hire.

Also worth considering is Pettitts Travel's Coastal Florida and the Beaches of Key West self-drive, which combines the buzz of Miami with the clear waters of the Gulf Coast and the grassy wetlands of the Everglades.

This route also gives visitors the chance to travel along one of America's iconic roads, the Overseas Highway, which crosses 42 bridges en route from

DESTINATIONS

SELF-DRIVE HOLIDAYS | THE US



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Daytona 500, Florida; mountain biking in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia; Lake Powell; Florida Keys

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Grindstone Media Group, Galyna Andrushko, Mia2you; Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge



Miami to Key West. The 14-day itinerary costs from £2,750 including flights, accommodation and car hire, departing October 20.

DESERT DREAMING

Speaking of iconic roads, there's no ignoring Route 66. This winds from Chicago to Los Angeles (both Nascar host cities for 2023), passing through Albuquerque, Oklahoma City and Las Vegas (home to another Nascar track) and seemingly endless stretches of farmland and desert. The latter portion of the route feels like being dropped into a Sergio Leone western film.

Premier Holidays' Historic Route 66 self-drive itinerary covers all the classics including the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas. The 15-night tour can be booked from £2,199 per person based on two adults sharing, including car hire (local \$500 drop-off fee applies), accommodation and flights from Heathrow, departing on October 12.

For a more in-depth look at the deserts and otherworldly rocky landscapes of the American Frontier, Inspiring Travel has a

Discover Arizona's Canyon, Deserts & Ranches self-drive trip, from Tucson to Las Vegas via Phoenix, which is scheduled to hold the final Championship race in November.

On this route, drivers can ride a horse at White Stallion Guest Ranch, see the red geological formations of Lake Powell and have the chance to take a camel or hot-air balloon ride outside Scottsdale (charges apply). A September 1 departure starts at £4,859 for the 14-night trip, including flights, accommodation and car hire.

MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS


In the south, where Nascar's roots are, clients will find mountain scenery that's perfect for a winding journey.

America As You Like It's Virginia's Crooked Road self-drive itinerary takes travellers through the weathered peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains and visits Bristol, Tennessee, which hosts two Nascar races this year. The route stops in Natural Bridge State Park and the hills of Roanoke, where visitors can enjoy mountain bike runs or hikes along the Appalachian Trail. The

10-night itinerary costs from £1,890, including car hire, flights from Heathrow and accommodation, departing in May and September.

Keen walkers can also hike in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on First Class Holidays' 10-day Bluegrass & Bourbon Trail – a route that links Memphis and Nashville, the latter of which will host a Nascar event in June. It travels through Kentucky and Tennessee, embracing the Appalachian Mountains and Daniel Boone National Forest. Prices this year start at £1,899 per person based on two adults sharing, including accommodation, car hire and flights from Heathrow.

So whether clients want to channel their inner Sal Paradise, from Jack Kerouac's classic novel *On the Road*, and crisscross between east and west, or are more akin to Ricky Bobby, Will Ferrell's character in Nascar-themed comedy *Talladega Nights*, and fancy a spin around the south, there's a road trip to suit. Just don't forget the map.

● Discover more routes with Brand USA's Road Trip itineraries. Visit: travelweekly.co.uk/hub 

ASK THE expert

"A self-drive through the US is the perfect choice to visit a variety of places and attractions in one holiday. When it comes to advising clients, I'd say plan the itinerary carefully, don't fill it with one-night stops as you spend your entire holiday travelling and not experiencing what each destination has to offer. Recommend at least two nights in each stop"

David Pointer, senior product manager, Inspiring Travel

