

Explore the Kansas Byways

Over a millennium, geologic shifts shaped the state's landscape to create a scenic backdrop for travelers. Follow the paths of great expedition teams and adventurers to see where history happened along Kansas' 10 distinctive byways. During the journey, visit museums and shops or enjoy local dining and lodging to create your own byway experience.



Flint Hills National Scenic Byway (47 miles)

Destinations: Cassoday, Matfield Green, Cottonwood Falls, Strong City, Council Grove

As the Conestoga wagons headed west, endless stretches of prairie and glistening hills lay ahead. Council Grove's driving tour and programs at Pioneer Bluffs tell of early settlers

and ranching heritage. Trek to the third-floor oval window of Cottonwood Falls' historic courthouse for a view of the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, just a short drive away.

Frontier Military Scenic Byway (167 miles)

Destinations: Leavenworth, Fort Scott, Pleasanton, Pittsburg, Baxter Springs

Dreaming of a better life, pioneers endured the difficult overland trek by seeking rest and supplies at places like Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm in Olathe. Troops from

Forts Leavenworth and Scott patrolled the Kansas (free) and Missouri (slave) state borders. Today, museums and historic sites depict these significant events.

Glacial Hills Scenic Byway (63 miles)

Destinations: White Cloud, Troy, Atchison and Leavenworth

In 1804, Lewis and Clark explored here, recording a French fort and Kanza Indian village, even firing a cannon near Atchison to celebrate Independence Day. Shops and restaurants now

line the brick streets of downtown Atchison and Leavenworth. Trolley tours tell the story of these historic steamboat and railroad towns.

Gypsum Hills Scenic Byway (42 miles)

Destinations: Coldwater, Medicine Lodge

Iron-rich soil and white gypsum create the stunning landscape of red rocks, buttes and mesas. After wagon trains, troops and railroads disrupted the lives of Plains Indians, the Medicine

Lodge Peace Treaty helped end the conflicts. Museums and kiosks describe the region's history, including the story of local temperance-leader Carry A. Nation.

Native Stone Scenic Byway (48 miles)

Destinations: Alma, Eskridge, Lake Wabaunsee, Keene, Dover

The many stone fences along this byway are the result of an 1867 law abolishing the open range, offering payment of 40 cents per rod to landowners to build and maintain a

4½-foot stone fence. Tour Alma, the "City of Native Stone" built by German and Swedish immigrants.



Post Rock Scenic Byway (18 miles)

Destination: Lucas

Early settlers discovered that limestone cuts easily and then hardens with air and weather, making it perfect for fence posts. Post-rock fencing frames the rolling prairie and spectacular

views of Wilson Lake along the byway enroute to Lucas, the Grassroots Arts Capital of Kansas. Don't miss the folk art or local delicacies.

Prairie Trail Scenic Byway (56 miles)

Destinations: Canton, Lindsborg, Marquette

Traverse this byway to experience the legacy of early residents. John Maxwell made it possible for generations to experience pre-settlement Kansas, complete with free-roaming buffalo and elk at the Maxwell Wildlife Refuge near Canton.

Lindsborg celebrates its Swedish heritage at galleries, inns and restaurants. And nearby, Marquette pays homage to motorcycles with a museum!

Smoky Valley Scenic Byway (60 miles)

Destination: WaKeeney

This wagon and railroad route to Denver from Fort Leavenworth was once a battleground between Indians and settlers. Now it's a pathway of natural beauty where residents hand-gathered wildflower seeds and re-seeded road shoulders,

creating a beautiful spring and summer carpet of color. Enjoy great fishing near the dramatic limestone cliffs at Cedar Bluff State Park.

Western Vistas Historic Byway (102 miles)

Destinations: Scott City, Oakley, Wallace, Sharon Springs

The badlands of Western Kansas are breathtaking, with pinnacles of limestone rising above the plains. This geographic area is world renowned for its fossil discoveries. See where the

early pioneers traveled the Butterfield Overland Despatch Trail, via railroads and wagon trains on the journey west to Fort Wallace, considered the "Wildest Fort in the West."

Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway (76 miles)

Destinations: Claflin, Ellinwood, Great Bend, Hoisington, Hudson, St. John, Stafford

Although prairie vistas and rural life will charm travelers, wildlife captures the spirit of this byway. Clouds of sand hill cranes descend. Bald eagles, shorebirds and whooping cranes

gracefully rest here. The marshes anchoring this drive are international treasures and the seven distinctive communities along the way will enhance your experience.