

USA

'Along the Loop Road, I felt the pure joy of biking'

EASY RIDER

Fifty years after the release of the classic film, Chris Coplans jumps on to a Harley and hits Route 66

I didn't do no drug deal, smoke weed or drop acid. Nor did I visit a brothel. But I did ride a Harley Davidson from the Californian desert to the bayous of southern Louisiana. When *Easy Rider* burst onto our screens 50 years ago, the super cool "Captain America" Peter Fonda (Wyatt) and the crazed Denis Hopper (Billy) did all of the above and, according to legend, much more. The low budget counterculture hit follows two hippie bikers who hit the road "looking for the real America". From the moment I set eyes upon Fonda's heavily customised chrome and steel Harley, with its iconic "Captain America"

'Pullquote, Austin deck light 16pt on 16pt. Pullquote, Austin deck light 16pt on 16pt'

ROMANTIC LIAISON
A mural at the Aztec Hotel



stars and stripes teardrop tank, gleaming in the Californian sun, I was on my imaginary "chopper" with him.

Technically, the movie starts in Los Angeles, as our banditos head for Mardi Gras in New Orleans, 2,000 miles (3,200km) away. However, the movie kick-starts 300 miles (480km) further east in Needles, California where the credits roll to the driving beat of Steppenwolf's classic *Born To Be Wild*. I headed to Needles on my modern Harley Davidson Sportster from Las Vegas, a much shorter and easier ride than from LA. Those pulsating opening credits were filmed along Route 66 between Needles and Flagstaff, a rip-roaring 200-mile (320km) ride to the east. I gunned my Harley into action and with a twist of the throttle and a rumble of the 1200cc V-twin engine, followed in their counterculture tyre tracks.

Route 66 climbs, winds and snakes its way through canyons and valleys, past abandoned mines, as it rises over 3,000 feet (914m) to the Sitgreaves Pass, 26 miles (41km) to the north. The air became crisper, the gradients steeper and the drops more precipitous as I zig-zagged my way to the summit. With its endless array of curves and corkscrews, the Sitgreaves Pass is a pulse-racing ride and you are amply rewarded with spectacular panoramic views of the Black Mountains and a blissful silence.

Kingman, 20 miles (32km) on, has crowned itself as the capital of the "Mother Road", as Steinbeck coined Route 66 in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The Arizona Route 66 museum, located in the Powerhouse Visitors Center (www.gokingman.com), is the best of a host of Route 66 museums stung out along its length. It chronicles the history of "America's Main Street". Willy Nelson's knock-off Rolls-Royce golf cart, complete with its own cocktail bar, is one of the museum's more eclectic oddities. Route 66 continues to climb



THE BIKES

The bikes caused nearly as much controversy as the film itself. Fonda purchased four police Harleys at auction in 1967 and had two *Captain America* and two Billy designs by some African-American bike-builders from Watts. One was blown up in the final sequence and the other three were stolen before the movie was completed (that is why you don't see the bikes in

the final camp fire scene where Wyatt tells Billy, "We blew it."). The fourth bike was restored by Grizzly Adams actor, Dan Haggerty, who was in charge of the bikes during the shoot. Allegedly he sold two "originals" to different buyers and to this day not everyone is convinced that the Captain America bike that sold at auction for \$1.35m (£840,000) in 2014 is the original.

north from Kingman towards the Grand Canyon, where the road becomes wilder and more spectacular. The landscape opens up and I rode across high-altitude desert prairies, dwarfed by huge mountain ridges. I reached Seligman, more of a street than a town, where I stayed at the quirky Aztec Motel (001 928 422 3055). The exterior walls are decorated with some racy images, including a flamboyant *Easy Rider* mural.

There are some easily identifiable locations as Fonda and Hopper ride through Flagstaff. The red brick hotel still stands at the corner of N Leroux St and Historic Route 66. And the red-shirted Lumberjack Muffler Man, who they ride past, still stands in the same location on South Milton Rd (Historic R66), albeit a smaller version and now sporting a yellow shirt.

I stayed in the historic 1929 Motel

BORN TO BE WILD
A scene from the cult 1969 movie *Easy Rider*



DuBeau (001 928 774 6731; modubeau.com) on the original Route 66. It's a charming example of early Route 66 motel architecture and design (I was delighted to learn that John Ford and

Fly direct to Bergen

HURTIGRUTEN

NORWAY'S NORTHERN LIGHTS

Northern Lights Promise

FREE VOYAGE
if the aurora borealis doesn't occur on your 12-day voyage, October to March.

12-Day Classic Round Voyage WITH FLIGHTS

We still have limited availability on some Winter 2020 departures from selected airports. Call us or go online to book now!

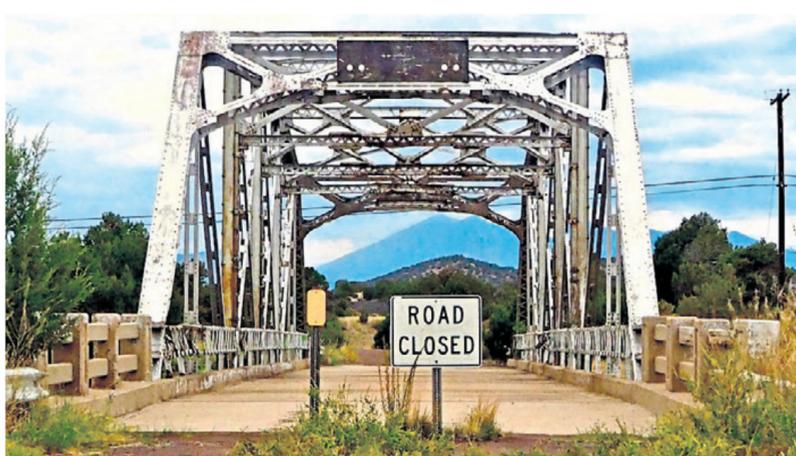
Birmingham: 26.02.20; 01.04.20	Glasgow: 04.02.20	Manchester: 17.01.20; 06.02.20; 19.02.20; 10.03.20; 19.03.20
Bournemouth: 28.01.20; 08.03.20	Leeds Bradford: 12.03.20	Newcastle: 30.03.20
Bristol: 26.01.20; 15.02.20	London Gatwick: 24.01.20; 08.02.20; 17.02.20; 28.02.20; 23.03.20	
Cardiff: 23.03.20	01.03.20; 21.03.20	

NORWEGIAN COASTAL VOYAGES WITH FLIGHTS
from **£1,449pp***

LIMITED AVAILABILITY - BOOK NOW

*Full itineraries and terms and conditions available at www.hurtigruten.co.uk

CALL 0203 553 3154 | VISIT WWW.HURTIGRUTEN.CO.UK | CONTACT YOUR PREFERRED TRAVEL AGENT



ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE
Chris Coplans was a guest of Virgin Atlantic (0344 209 7777; virginatlantic.com).

RIDING THERE
Orange & Black (01256 771770; orange-and-black.co.uk) offers 13-day self-guided tours including return economy flights from the UK to Las Vegas and returning from Phoenix. The tour includes a

Harley-Davidson touring motorcycle, insurance, taxes, and one-way fees, on a room-only basis and costs from £2,900 per person. With a car, the cost is £2,500. Tours can be customised.

MORE INFORMATION
VisittheUSA.co.uk; visitarizona.com; louisianatravel.com; visitutah.com/uk. Visit themovie district.com/easy-rider/ for Easy Rider sites on Google Street View.



John Wayne had once stayed there). Two of the most impressive bike sequences are shot after leaving Flagstaff and Route 66. The first is just 18 miles (29km) north of Flagstaff, off Highway 89. At an elevation of over 8,000ft (2,438m), Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument has pine-clad climbs and bends opening up to reveal huge desert vistas below. It is here that they pick up a hitchhiker to the sweet sounds of The Byrds' *Wasn't Born to Follow*. They shot several short sequences along the 33-mile (53km) scenic Loop Road and it was there I felt the joy of biking. There was a whisper of a breeze as the road opened up, a hint of lavender as I rode through the purple sage, and then the smell of pine as the road twisted through a steep alpine accent. I rode through the impressive Bonito Lava Flow. The Wupatki National

'With a rumble of the 1200cc V-twin engine, I followed in their counter-culture tyre tracks'

Monument, an Ancestral Puebloan ruin, just a short walk off Loop Road, is where the Monument Valley camping scene was shot. After gassing up at the now defunct Sacred Mountain gas station on H89 (junction of Road 150), Fonda and Hopper saddle up for what many consider to be the most stunning ride sequence of the movie. As they hit the road, the first chords of The Band's *The Weight* starts playing and the three-minute sequence takes them all the way to Monument Valley, 150 miles (240km) away. At one point, Hopper does a majestic sweep round Fonda's bike allowing the cinematographer, Laszlo Kovacs to open the shot up into the most magnificent panoramic shot of the high desert. Hopper actually hated bikes. "I was terrified of that bike," he said. His favourite time of day on the

shoot was apparently "seeing the bikes loaded back onto the truck". They ride through an intoxicating landscape, including the Blue Mesa rock formations on the edge of the Painted Desert, before gliding into Monument Valley for the most magnificent of sunset rides. My ride was not as carefree. In minutes, thick, ominous clouds cascaded through the mountain ridges as the temperature dipped, revving my anxiety level up to the red line. After what seemed like an eternity I rode into Kayenta, a Navajo reservation town. Then it all came together. As I entered the valley, the cloud thinned and evaporated and in a heartbeat, the sun broke through. The foreboding grey sandstone mesas, buttes and spires, turned pink, then a deep ochre. With every glance up, the sky changed colour and hue as the

HAVE BIKE WILL RIDE
Chris on his Harley Davidson at a local gas station, above; a disused bridge near Fairfax, top

light faded. My ride was every bit as exhilarating as when the easy riders rode through this ancient landscape. Unlike the movie, where they camped at the Wupatki ruins, I stayed at Goulding's Lodge (001 435 727 3231; gouldings.com), established as a trading post by Harry Goulding in the 1920s. It is one of only two hotels located in Monument Valley and still operates as a trading post today. It was Harry Goulding who introduced director John Ford to Monument Valley (the promptly shot *Stagecoach* and many other westerns there). Hopper, in his state of paranoia, was scared of setting foot in Texas, telling Fonda "they're cutting dudes' hair with rusty razors". The movie skips Texas and cuts to the Louisiana bayous, swamps and plantations. It picks up with a burst of Jimi Hendrix's *If 6 was 9* as they cross the Long-Allen Bridge over the Atchafalaya River from Berwick to Morgan City in the heart of Cajun Country. By this point I had spent 10 days on my own in the desert. I was now joined by a local Lafayette rider, Johnny Williams, who would guide me through the Louisiana back roads. Our first port of call was nearby Franklin. Franklin typifies small-town Louisiana and is little changed since *Easy Rider*. Fonda and Hopper ride down Main Street, lined with majestic live oaks, past the old Post Office, and Arlington and Alice plantations and a

second cemetery located along the Bayou Lafourche in Raceland, an hour to the east. The Mardi Gras scenes in New Orleans were shot around Canal Street and the French Quarter, and the notorious cemetery scene that caused so much indignation was shot, without permission, at St Louis #1 Cemetery. You can only enter the cemetery now with a licensed tour guide (twochickswalkingtours.com). It's a creepy, but fascinating place. The scene with Fonda clutching the statue was shot at the Italian Benevolent Society Tomb. The movie reaches its climax on nondescript North Levee Rd/Rt 105 (part of the Zydeco Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway) just outside Krotz Springs. A roadside marker now identifies the spot where Hopper gives the redneck truckers that fateful "finger" and they respond with both barrels. As we stood next to the marker taking photographs, two study locals alighted with bulging holsters on their hips. Were we trespassing on their land? Was life about to imitate art? It turned out they were concerned there had been an accident. "No wonder y'all lost the Revolutionary War," said one, with a grin the size of the Mississippi River, when I attempted to explain our presence. Thanks for the ride, boys, and rest in peace, Captain America.

TRAILFINDERS

THE TRAVEL EXPERTS



TAILORMADE TRAVEL WORLDWIDE
020 7368 1200

CRUISE TRAILFINDERS
020 7368 1300

FIRST & BUSINESS CLASS TRAVEL
020 7368 1400



Book now to WIN the cost of your holiday as part of TF's 50th anniversary celebrations

NEW ZEALAND & THE PACIFIC 2020 BROCHURE OUT NOW – ORDER YOUR FREE COPY TODAY!

New Zealand Islands & Fiji Horizons

18 nights from **£2,829***
Flights, 4* to 4** accommodation, car hire incl a free upgrade in New Zealand, Milford Sound Day Tour and transfers
• New Zealand
• Fiji • Mamanuca Islands

Ultimate New Zealand Experience

18 nights from **£6,499***
Flights and guided group tour incl 4** accommodation, transfers & most meals
• Board the TransAlpine train
• Experience a Te Puia Maori hangi feast • Enjoy high tea at Larnach Castle, Dunedin • Overnight on Doubtful Sound

Best of New Zealand

19 nights from **£2,879***
Flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 3* to 4* accommodation, Kaikura Whale Watch Cruise, Mount Aspiring Wilderness Adventure and Milford Sound Day Tour
• Rotorua • Tongariro NP • Wanaka • TransAlpine train • Kaikoura

The Long White Cloud

21 nights from **£7,899***
Flights and guided group tour incl 4* to 5* accommodation, selected sightseeing & most meals
• Bay of Islands • Franz Josef Glacier • Stay in Milford Sound
Includes an early booking discount – saving over £1,500 per couple

Family Kia Ora Explorer!

16 nights from **£1,999****
Flights, 5 nights 4* accommodation, 11 nights motorhome, America's Cup Sailing experience, Hobbiton Movie Set Tour, Kiwi Encounter, Te Puia Thermal Reserve tour and Kaikoura Swim with Dolphins experience
Priced for school summer holidays



DISCOVER CANADA – FIND A REASON TO VISIT EVERY SEASON...

Festive Cities & Winter Wonders

11 nights from **£2,049***
Flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 4* to 5* Fairmont accommodation, traditional maple syrup experience, Tremblant Dogsled Tour, Tremblant Helicopter Flight and Ottawa Walking Tour

Maritime Marvels

15 nights from **£2,299***
Direct flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 3* to 4* accommodation and Brier Island Whale & Seabird Cruise
• Historic Halifax • Bay of Fundy • Nova Scotia • Prince Edward Island • Cape Breton Highlands NP

Rocky Mountain Wanderer

10 nights from **£1,879***
Flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 3* to 4** accommodation and Mountains, Lakes & Waterfalls tour
• Banff NP • Jasper NP • Columbia Icefield • Elk Island NP • Edmonton

Vancouver to Whistler Snow Sensation

10 nights from **£2,379***
Flights, 3 nights Vancouver hotel, 7 nights Whistler ski resort, Whistler & Blackcomb Ski Lift Pass and transfers
• Explore downtown Vancouver • Experience one of the top ski resorts in the world

Ultimate Quebec Family Adventure

11 nights from **£1,299****
Flights, car hire 3*+ to 5* hotels, traditional maple syrup experience and Ziptrek Tremblant tour
• Family friendly fun • Canadian Culture • The great outdoors
Priced for school summer holidays



Say hello to the fastest booking engine in travel

FIND YOUR INSPIRATION...

A Taste of Vietnam

12 nights from **£2,699***
Flights and private tour incl 11 nights 4* hotels, 1 night on board boat, private vehicle & driver, private guides & 21 meals
• Hanoi's Old Quarter • Hoi An's Street Food • Craft beer in Ho Chi Minh City

Nature & Gourmet Retreats of Southern Australia

15 nights from **£2,999***
Flights with Singapore Airlines, 2 nights Singapore hotel, Singapore Explorer Pass, car hire in Australia, 13 nights 3* to 5* hotel, Fleurieu Explorer with Gourmet Food & Wine and Lanes & Arcades Walking Tour

Norway's Northern Lights

6 nights from **£999** dep 28 Jan 20
Direct flights and full board Hurtigruten cruise
• Includes onboard lectures and presentations • See the Aurora Borealis • Discover the Lofoten Islands • Experience the Norwegian Fjords • Visit historic Tromsø

South Africa's Safari & Garden Route

12 nights from **£1,699***
Flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 3*+ to 4** hotels incl all inclusive Eastern Cape lodge with game drives and Meerkat Safari
• Cape Town • Stellenbosch • Garden Route

California Coast & World Class Wine

11 nights from **£1,699***
Flights, car hire incl a free upgrade, 3* to 4* hotels, Napa Valley Wine Train and Highlights of Hollywood tour
• San Francisco • Monterey • Drive the Big Sur • Santa Barbara • Los Angeles • San Diego



TF's 50th Anniversary Competition – Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Cramond
"We have relied on the experience and service of the Trailfinders' team for our bespoke travel plans over the years and were absolutely delighted and surprised to have been picked as the winners of the first monthly prize during the 50th anniversary year."
Book now to be in with a chance to win the cost of your holiday!

STAND OUT AIRFARE SALES – INCLUDING AT LEAST 20KG BAGGAGE

	Economy	Business		Economy	Business		Economy	Business
New York	£324*	£1,480*	Singapore	£401*	£1,729*	Sydney	£476*	£2,250*
Bangkok	£368*	£1,618*	Toronto	£420*	£1,499*	Vancouver	£511*	£1,631*
San Francisco	£393*	£1,581*	South Africa from	£434*	£2,022*	Auckland	£680*	£2,222*

AWARD-WINNING SERVICE

Travel Brand of the Year – Voted by Which?
Best Tour Operator – readers of the Times, The Sunday Times & The Sunday Times Travel Magazine for 7 consecutive years
Travel Experts – readers of National Geographic Traveller
Most Trusted Travel Brand – readers of The Guardian & Observer

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
LONDON KENSINGTON	020 7938 3939	020 7938 3444
LONDON CITY	020 7628 7628	020 7628 2345
LONDON CANARY WHARF	020 7147 5300	020 7147 5344
LONDON CONDIT STREET	020 7408 9000	020 7408 9044
RICHMOND	020 8799 0444	020 8799 0445
ABERDEEN	01224 578 600	01224 578 644
BATH	01225 724 000	01225 724 044
BELFAST	028 9027 1888	028 9027 1844

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
BIRMINGHAM	0121 236 1234	0121 236 3444
BOURNEMOUTH	01202 411 600	01202 411 644
BRIGHTON	01273 715 500	01273 715 544
BRISTOL	0117 929 9000	0117 929 1036
CAMBRIDGE	01223 461 600	01223 468 188
CANTERBURY	01227 865 700	01227 865 744
CARLISLE	02920 728 600	02920 728 644
CHELMSFORD	01245 961 400	01245 961 361

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
CHESTER	01244 888 777	01244 888 744
EDINBURGH	0131 243 2800	0131 243 2844
EXETER	01392 458 200	01392 458 244
GLASGOW	0141 353 2224	0141 353 2400
GUILDFORD	01483 478 400	01483 478 444
LEEDS	0113 246 2200	0113 246 2244
LIVERPOOL	0151 221 9500	0151 221 9544
MANCHESTER	0161 839 6969	0161 839 3434

	ECONOMY	BUSINESS
MILTON KEYNES	01908 348 400	01908 348 34
NEWCASTLE	0191 261 2345	0191 261 7344
NORWICH	01603 216 216	01603 216 244
NOTTINGHAM	0115 948 7700	0115 948 7744
OXFORD	01865 261 000	01865 261 044
READING	0118 334 6500	0118 334 6544
SHEFFIELD	0114 349 9200	0114 349 9191
ST ALBANS	01727 807 700	01727 807 744
WORCESTER	01905 349 555	01905 349 600

Trustpilot ★★★★★
Trailfinders is Trustpilot's No.1 rated travel company
"Truly excellent: patient, friendly, helpful and a mine of knowledge, tips and advice."



SPECIALIST TEAMS

HONEYMOONS & WISHLIST 020 7408 9008

EUROPEAN TRAVEL 020 7937 1234

GROUP TRAVEL 020 7938 3858

VISA SERVICE 020 7368 1304

TRAVEL INSURANCE 020 7408 9005

WORLDWIDE TRAVEL TAILORED SPECIFICALLY FOR YOU

Prices are per person based on twin share including flights from London and Manchester (call for details), are subject to availability & valid for selected departures in the next six weeks except: *1 Jan - 28 Feb †1 Mar - 30 Apr ‡1 May - 30 Jun †#1-30 Sep †*1 Oct - 30 Nov **2 adults and 2 children under 12 travelling together in August †visit trailfinders.com/win for T&Cs

