

## Planning a Roadtrip. Where do I begin?



Picture this— you’re scrolling through Instagram or TikTok or whatever your preferred social media platform is, and up pops a video of a stunning glacier lake or a photograph of soaring red rock arches. You pause for a moment, maybe add the destination to a bucket list, and scroll on with no concrete idea of how to make a trip like that happen. If this sounds like you (or if you just want the name of a cool travel app) read on.

I know first hand just how impossible it can be to get a trip out of the idea/planning phase and into reality. It can be hard to know where to even start with planning a trip, especially a road trip, beyond simply choosing a destination. I’m going to walk you through my process to help turn road trips from daydreams to reality.

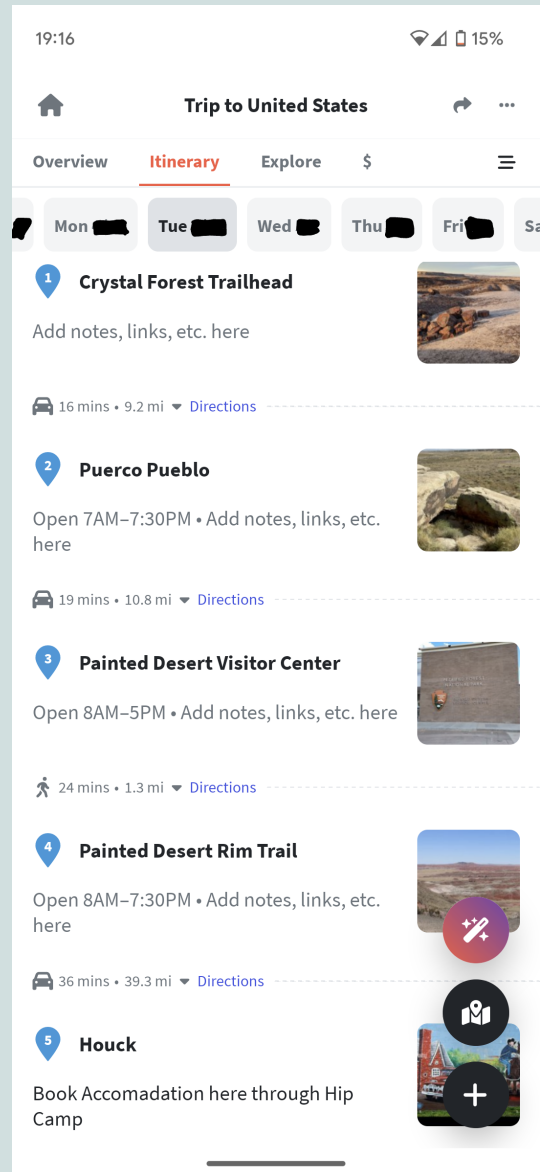
I start by choosing my must-stops. These places will determine the area I will be road tripping through/too. When I did the HWY 101 trip, my route was already chosen, but by choosing my must-stops I was able to section off the driving into days, based on where I wanted to spend the most time.

Right now, I am planning a post-graduation trip through the American Southwest. The trip came from a single must-stop— visiting my friend’s college in Arkansas for her graduation. From there, I looked at the states I would be traveling through on my way out and back. I noticed a lot of states had National Parks, so I decided to try and include as many NPs as possible.

If you have a lot of must-stops it's best to be flexible on dates, so that you can see all the things you want to without being stressed about time. But if you have to stick inside set dates, which I have to so I can get to the graduation on time, you might have to give up some must-stops.

Once I had created a list of all the National Parks I wanted to go to, I entered them on Google Maps and fiddled around till I found the best route possible between them. Unfortunately, it wasn’t short enough to make it to the graduation on time, so I had cut a few places. I chose the two National Parks that I would want to spend the most time at and are easily accessible— either by car or plane— and will try and visit them at a later date.

*“Wanderlog is super helpful for building itineraries, and when you insert places, it pulls up all their information, like websites, locations, and prices.”*



Once the logistics of dates/major locations is figured out, you reach the fun part. This is when I take my route and insert it into an app called Wanderlog. Wanderlog is super helpful for building itineraries, and when you insert places, it pulls up all their information, like websites, locations, and prices. You can connect your hotel and activity bookings to the app, make notes about certain places, and create a driving map that will show you your route. The app also has a social feature that allows you to view others' trips and guides to areas, making it a great tool for research as well.

Once you have saved your main stops and dates to the app you can take your time to plan the rest of your trip. I began to look into hikes in the Parks, monuments and museums along my drive, and kooky restaurants and lodgings, all the while saving these places into Wanderlog.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wanderlog.android>

The app is free to use, although you can pay a small monthly fee for extra features, and it makes the process of planning road trips so much less stressful. My mom and I used it in

Ireland, checking in every day to find our driving distances, bookings, and recommended stops. If you'd like to see how it turned out for us, check out the link below for our vlog on the trip!

### [Day 1 - Road Tripping Ireland](#)

Now that you have an idea on *how* to plan a trip, I'm going to spend the next couple weeks giving you ideas about places to go in Oregon and beyond.

Happy Driving!

Rachael



## Roadtrippin With Rachael

content creator and student

*I started Roadtrippin With Rachael in May of 2023 as a way to record my adventures and share them with friends, family, and fellow adventurers. I have travelled to South Africa, Spain, Ireland, the UK, and across the United States.*



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