



LEGENDARY ROUTE 66

The Texas Ribbon of the Mother Road

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Almost immediately after leaving the rolling hills of [Oklahoma](#), you feel different as you enter the vast plains of the [Texas](#) Panhandle. It is easy to imagine how it might have once been to be a lone-rider in the midst of what was a wild and primitive country just a little more than a century ago. It is here that old [Route 66](#) stretched across the Llano Estacado (the Staked Plains) and where the romance of cattle-driving days still drifts through the many small towns of the [Texas](#) Prairie.



[Texas](#) Windmill, David Alexander, May, 2004.

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As for the [Mother Road](#), when you glance at a map, [Route 66](#) looks as if it is easy to follow. Though more than 150 miles of the original 178 miles that crossed [Texas](#) still remain, you will actually need to keep your eyes wide open in order to not miss the vintage architecture and

many landmarks that dot the landscape.

The only sections of original [Route 66](#) not available are between Jericho and [Alanreed](#) and [Adrian](#) to [Glenrio](#). Otherwise, [Route 66](#) still exists even with original concrete paving.

[Route 66](#) primarily lies to the south of I-40 between Texola and [Amarillo](#) except at [McLean](#). And from [Amarillo](#) west to [Glenrio](#), the [Mother Road](#) mostly lies to the north side of the interstate. However, that being said, the road underwent many transformations over the years as the road was paved, new alignments were created, and the interstate was born. As such, the old road zigs and zags from one side of I-40 to the other with little, in the way of signs, to direct you. So, get a few good maps, plan your trip, and prepare to take it slow as you savor the sights of not only the [Mother Road](#), but a glimpse at the [Wild Wild West](#).

If you are not dedicated to driving the “original” piece of concrete, [Route 66](#) is a fairly easy route through Texas as you follow I-40. All of the old [Route 66](#) towns have an exit that can easily be accessed from I-40. Pick and choose what you want to see and take the easy off-ramps, which are usually designated as Business I-40.

Starting your journey at [Texola](#), follow the south service road along I-40 into [Shamrock](#), home of the famous [U-Drop Inn](#). As you skirt around town, get a look at the old motel district and other vestige remains of [Shamrock's](#) heyday along the thriving road.

After leaving [Shamrock](#), the south frontage road is one of the most authentic stretches of the old road in existence and you'll know it as you feel the thumpety-thump of the old road. Soon, you'll pass through the [ghost town](#) of [Lela](#) before entering [McLean](#), home of the [Texas Route 66](#) Association and a true [Main Street USA](#) city. [McLean](#)

houses the Devil's Rope Museum/Texas [Route 66](#) Exhibit complex, the old Avalon Theater, and the first Phillips 66 station in [Texas](#), which has been beautifully restored.

Resuming your journey, will soon reach [Alanreed](#), which contains the oldest cemetery and oldest church along the [Texas](#) route. This, now almost [ghost town](#), once housed the popular Regal Reptile Ranch. Today, its crumbling buildings and closed businesses attest to its loss of the [Mother Road](#).

Beyond [Alanreed](#), is the infamous [Jericho Gap](#) where old [Route 66](#) travelers were often left stranded in the wet black soil. Most of this original road is missing segments and is partly on private property so cannot be traveled. After returning to the south service road, keep your eyes open for the Leaning Water Tower before reaching [Groom](#).

In [Groom](#), you can see the Golden Spread Grill, which has been serving customers for years and the tallest Cross in the Western Hemisphere. Continue on to Conway where you can see "Bug Ranch USA," obviously a tribute to the more famous [Cadillac Ranch](#) further down the road. From Conway, to [Amarillo](#) is another stretch of the original road, complete with more bumpity-bumps for your travel pleasure.



[Tower Station and U-Drop Inn](#), Kathy Weiser, August, 2007.

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In [Amarillo](#), there are two eras of [Mother Road](#) history, the first on Old Third and Sixth Streets, and later when [Amarillo](#) Boulevard became the favorite. Both alignments are home to many vintage [66](#) businesses and photo opportunities. And don't

forget to visit the [Big Texan Steak Ranch](#), home of the “Free 72 oz Steak.”

Leaving [Amarillo](#) on the north service road, keep your eyes open for the [Cadillac Ranch](#), to the south of I-40. Continuing on the old road will jog around through [Bushland](#) and [Wildorado](#) on your way to [Vega](#), where many great vintage buildings can be seen as well as the beautiful Court House Square.

Persisting on to [Adrian](#), watch to the north for two old [Route 66](#) bridges. In [Adrian](#) you can see the Mid-Point Water Tower and visit the Midway Café that has served travelers for ages. The service road dead-ends just west of [Adrian](#) and the old route completely disappears until a mile before you reach [Glenrio](#).

[Glenrio](#) is a definite “must-stop” on the vintage path, where many original buildings of this [Texas ghost town](#) can still be seen. [Glenrio](#), was completely wiped out by the [Mother Road's](#) demise.



The [Big Texan Steak Ranch](#) in [Amarillo](#) is a long known [Route 66](#)

icon. November, 2005 Kathy Weiser.

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Start your journey now in [Shamrock](#) for a picturesque peek at the history of [Route 66](#) as well as a little bit of the [Old West](#).



The old Britten Truck Stop sign still stands next to the leaning water tower, September, 2007, Kathy Weiser

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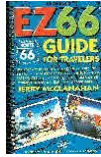
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