



United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
Southwestern Region
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Historic Route 66 Mountain Bike Tour

Williams Ranger District Kaibab National Forest



Get Your Bikes on Route 66

These abandoned sections of America's most famous highway are ideal for sturdy all-terrain bicycles. The two loop trails are at the top and bottom of one of the steepest stretches on all of Route 66. Each loop begins on the original Route 66.

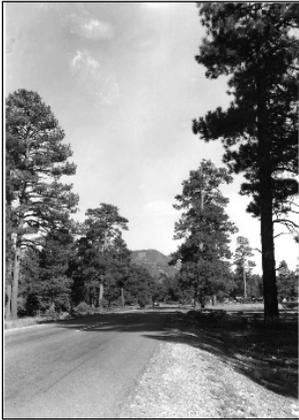
Built in 1922, when the science of highway engineering was still in its infancy, this narrow, unpaved roadway twists and turns as it clings close to the canyon wall. Where the roadbed was cut by washes and gullies, local workers built rock-walled culverts to bridge the gap. The return ride on each loop follows the 1932 roadway. The original pavement, crumbling from decades of use, still remains in place.

Notice how straight and wide the new road is compared to the old. Concrete culverts and guard rails had become standard features by then. Route 66 was in its heyday during the years that traffic rumbled down this road. Even the improved highway up Ash Fork Hill eventually had to be replaced. In 1950, engineers abandoned this section and built a new, more expensive road straight up the hill. It is now covered by Interstate 40.

Ash Fork Hill Trail

This 6-mile-long loop features wide open vistas, with Picacho Peak and Mount Floyd on the western horizon and Bill Williams Mountain to the east. The 1922 section stands in startling contrast to nearby Interstate 40. The rough ride down this road is followed by a smoother, but steep return up the 1932 roadway. You may choose to continue riding north on Forest Road 6 for another 2 miles to Johnson Crater, a huge natural depression. As you ride, you'll notice clearings in the dense pinon-juniper woodland. The Forest Service created these in the early 1960s to provide forage for livestock and wildlife. Watch for deer, antelope, jackrabbits, red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, and other wildlife.

Devil Dog Trail



Devil Dog section, Route 66, 1937.

This 5-mile loop winds through the cool ponderosa pines at the top of Ash Fork Hill. From the parking area, ride south on Forest Road 108 for .3 mile and make a left onto the 1932 alignment (still Forest Road 108). Travel .4 mile on Forest Road 108 and turn onto Forest Road 9223, which is the 1922 roadway. You will need to ride around a “road closed” gate in order to continue on the bike tour.

From this section of the ride, you may decide to choose a challenging side trip on Forest Road 45 to Bixler Mountain. The ride loops back via a 1932 stretch of Route 66 (Forest Road 9217E) from which the pavement has been removed. Notice how engineers had to make deep cuts into the hills in order to provide for a smoother road. The ride then returns to the starting place via Forest Road 108. The origin of the name Devil Dog is lost to history.



Route 66 wound across scenery most Americans only saw on pages of magazines. Stretching 2,448 miles, the road was a highway to the American dream of hope, adventure, and freedom. In the 1920s pioneer motorists found excitement on the road in their “tin lizzies.” During the Great Depression, Route 66 carried Dust Bowl refugees west in search of a better life. During World War II it served the military to carry soldiers and supplies. After the war, the highway became a pathway of promise for millions of people heading west for a new life, or a one in a lifetime vacation.

All this started at the beginning of the century. Model T motorists, forced to follow muddy wagon trails from town to town as they bounced their way west, organized and lobbied for better roads. The Old Trails Highway was built in the early 1920s along the course of the Santa Fe Railroad. Designated Route 66 in 1926, this first, unpaved road was rough, narrow, twisting, and steep, but it opened the doors to the scenic Southwest.

Americans took to the open road in record numbers during the 1920s, overloading the nation’s highways. Federal funding for road building increased in the 1930s, fueled by the ever-growing demand for better roads and the need to put the unemployed to work during the Great Depression. A new more modern Route 66 was finally built. In 1938, Route 66 became the first completely paved cross-country highway in the United States. Its straighter and wider travelway, better visibility, and gentler grades attracted even more travelers.

This road became America’s Main Street, its most famous highway. It was celebrated in song, in books, and with its own television program. But the success of Route 66 would become its downfall. Despite improvements and realignments in the 1940s and 1950s, traffic finally overwhelmed the highway. Its replacement, Interstate 40, was begun in 1956. The last stretch of Route 66, in Williams, was bypassed in 1984. Still, the legend of America’s Main Street lives on. Several sections of old Route 66, including its tour, are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



These trails have rough terrain, varying from broken pavement to gravel surfaces. A little trip planning and common sense will make your bike tour both safe and fun!

We recommend the following:

- Use sturdy, all-terrain mountain bicycles. Make sure they are in good condition before you start your ride.
- Wear a helmet and leather gloves. A good pair of shatterproof sunglasses will protect your eyes.
- Carry a tire repair kit, air pump, and necessary tools. Learn how to fix a flat and make other simple repairs.
- Bring plenty of water! Hot dry weather and high altitude will dehydrate you quickly.
- Dress should be adaptable to changing mountain weather conditions.
- Check local weather reports before beginning your trip.
- Watch for auto and truck traffic. Portions of the tours are on Forest Service roads.
- Extend common courtesy to all other trail users. Give right of way to hikers and horseback riders. Respect private property.

The Route 66 Mountain Bike Tour is part of an ongoing effort to make places of historic interest available for you to enjoy on your national forest, truly a land of many uses. While you're enjoying this ride into the past, don't forget to notice the present. Watch for evidence of stock grazing, timber sales and reforestation, hunters, woodcutters, hikers, and bikers. All are here just as you, to make use of some feature of this diverse and productive land.

You can do your part to take care of your national forest by keeping it free of litter. Remember to leave historic sites, artifacts, and all cultural remains untouched so that others may enjoy them as you have.

Although it's an average 5,500 feet above sea level, the Ash Fork Hill Tour can be hot during summer months. Wear a hat and use sunscreen.

The Devil Dog Tour is higher, at 6,500 feet above sea level and, therefore, cooler. These trails may occasionally be inaccessible during winter months because of mud and snow.

For more information about Historic Route 66, contact:

Historic Route 66 Associate of Arizona at www.azrt66.com. An auto tour of Historic Route 66 between Williams and Flagstaff is also available.

For More Information: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

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