



RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to  
RV Travel in

# Arkansas

Speed limits, towing rules, NPS reservations, Ozark grades,  
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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[rvtripgen.com](https://rvtripgen.com)

# RV travel in Arkansas

Arkansas punches well above its weight for RV travel. Hot Springs National Park sits at the south end of the Ouachita Mountains; the Buffalo National River cuts through limestone bluffs in the Ozarks; the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests give you a million-plus acres of free dispersed camping; and the state-park system is one of the best-run in the country. Roads are generally good, fuel is cheap, and the Bill Clinton Birthplace, Little Rock Central High, Pea Ridge, and Fort Smith add a dense set of NPS day-use stops. The catch: the Ozarks have steep, twisty back roads where a 40-ft motorhome will struggle, spring brings flooding to the Ouachita and Buffalo river valleys, and Arkansas sits in the heart of Tornado Alley -- the Mar-May peak is intense and the autumn secondary season (Nov) is real.

## Arkansas by the numbers

<b>Boondocking + dispersed sites</b>	348
<b>Established campgrounds</b>	197
<b>Dump stations</b>	22
<b>Propane refills</b>	16
<b>Potable water fill-ups</b>	52
<b>Laundromats</b>	17
<b>RV showers</b>	13
<b>Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)</b>	9

Source: iOverlander community database (63% of Arkansas spots verified in the last 24 months).

## Driving rules

<b>Interstate (cars)</b>	75 mph
<b>Interstate (trucks + towing)</b>	70 mph
<b>US/State highway (cars)</b>	65 mph
<b>US/State highway (towing)</b>	55-65 mph (posted)
<b>Built-up areas</b>	25-35 mph (posted)
<b>Drive on</b>	Right
<b>RV passenger seatbelts</b>	Required for all front-seat occupants
<b>Cell phone use while driving</b>	Texting banned statewide; hands-free required in school and work zones

## Highways

### RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-40	East-west spine through Little Rock and Fort Smith. Coast to coast. Big rigs, easy.
I-30	Little Rock down to Texarkana. Standard interstate.
I-49	Western Arkansas from Fort Smith to Bentonville and on into Missouri. Mostly four-lane divided; recent construction has filled in old US-71 sections.
I-55	Crittenden County across to Memphis. Short stretch but heavy truck traffic.
US-65	Conway up through the Ozarks to Harrison and the Buffalo NR. Four-lane in stretches, two-lane in the scenic Ozark sections. Fine for any rig but slow.
US-67	Little Rock to the Missouri line. Mostly four-lane divided.
AR-7	Russellville to Harrison via Jasper. Scenic Byway. Two-lane mountain road with switchbacks and 8% grades -- one of the prettiest drives in the state but not for rigs over 35 ft.

### RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
AR-23 (Pig Trail Scenic Byway)	Famous motorcycle road through the Ozark NF. Switchbacks every few hundred yards. Do not attempt with a trailer or anything over 28 ft.
AR-21 north of Boxley	Tight, twisty, narrow shoulders. Buffalo River access road but unkind to big rigs.
Talimena National Scenic Byway (AR-88 east end)	Drives the spine of the Ouachita Mountains from Mena into Oklahoma. Beautiful but steep with sustained climbs; manageable for a 30-ft motorhome with engine braking.
Push Mountain Road (AR-341)	Locally famous for hairpins. Cars and motorcycles only -- physically possible in a small RV but a genuinely bad idea.
Mount Magazine summit (AR-309)	Highest point in Arkansas. The state-park road is paved and manageable to a point, but the final summit access has tight switchbacks; trailers should park at the lower lot.

## Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
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Mount Magazine summit (AR-309)	2753 ft	Highest point in Arkansas. State-park access road is paved; final summit road has tight switchbacks. Park trailers at the lower lot.
Talimena National Scenic Byway (AR-88)	2681 ft	Crests Rich Mountain. Open year-round but plows infrequent; closed in heavy ice. Manageable for 30-ft motorhomes with low gears.
Buffalo Lookout (AR-7 N of Jasper)	2200 ft	Sustained 7% grade approaching the Buffalo NR. Engine-brake on descent.

## National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Hot Springs NP	Free entry	Gulpha Gorge Campground in the park has 40 sites with electric/water/sewer hookups, reservable Mar-Nov via recreation.gov, takes rigs to 60 ft. Books up months ahead in spring and fall.
Buffalo National River	Free entry	Multiple NPS campgrounds along the river (Tyler Bend, Buffalo Point, Ozark, Steel Creek). Buffalo Point has electric hookups; the others are dry. Reservable via recreation.gov.
Pea Ridge NMP	\$10/vehicle (7 days)	Day-use only. Nearest RV camping at Beaver Lake or Hobbs State Park.
Fort Smith NHS	\$10/person (7 days)	Day-use only. Multiple commercial RV parks in Fort Smith proper.
Arkansas Post NMem	Free entry	Day-use only. Wilbur D. Mills Park 20 miles east takes RVs.
Central High School NHS (Little Rock)	Free entry	Day-use only. Stay at Maumelle Park (USACE) or Downtown Riverside RV Park.
President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home NHS	Free entry	Day-use only in Hope. Crater of Diamonds State Park 30 miles north has full hookups.
Trail of Tears NHT	Free (auto tour route)	Auto-tour driving route. No NPS camping; state-park and commercial RV options throughout.

## State parks

Arkansas State Parks operate 52 parks and are widely regarded as one of the best-run systems in the country. Full-hookup RV sites at Petit Jean, DeGray Lake Resort, Mount Magazine, Lake Catherine, Crater of Diamonds, Bull Shoals-White River, Lake Ouachita, and Lake Fort Smith. Reservable up to 13 months ahead via arkansasstateparks.com. Day-use free at most parks (a handful charge \$4/vehicle). Camping \$20-45/night for full hookups. Petit Jean is the crown jewel.

## Boondocking + dispersed camping

**BLM:** Very limited BLM presence in Arkansas -- a few small parcels in the south-central and western counties, not significant for dispersed camping. Focus on national forests instead.

**National Forest:** Ozark-St Francis NF (north Arkansas) and Ouachita NF (west/central Arkansas) together cover 2.6 million acres and permit free dispersed camping along forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. Popular areas: Richland Creek WMA (no RVs over 25 ft on the access road), Lake Sylvia, Albert Pike (rebuilt after the 2010 flood; flood-watch-aware now), Cossatot River. Many developed NF campgrounds take rigs to 40 ft but have no hookups.

**Stay limit:** 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

## Tribal lands

No federally-recognized tribal nations are based in Arkansas today (the Quapaw, Caddo, and Osage were forcibly removed in the 1800s). Several heritage sites along the Trail of Tears NHT acknowledge this history; Arkansas Post NMem and Toltec Mounds SP are particularly worth visiting.

## Propane, dump stations, fuel

**Propane:** Plentiful in Little Rock, Fort Smith, Bentonville/Rogers, Hot Springs, and along I-40 and I-30. Tractor Supply and U-Haul are reliable. Sparse in the Ozark backcountry and along the southern timber-county highways; fill at Russellville or Harrison before heading deep into the Buffalo NR area.

**Dump stations:** Most Arkansas State Parks have free dumps for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot truck stops on I-40 and I-30 have fee dumps. USACE lakeshore campgrounds (Beaver Lake, Greers Ferry, DeGray, Ouachita) have free dumps for guests. Sparse in the deep Ozarks -- empty before heading up AR-7 or into the Buffalo NR.

**Fuel:** Diesel and gas widely available along all interstates. Rural Ozark stretches on AR-7 between Russellville and Jasper, and on AR-23 through the Pig Trail, can run 30-40 miles between stations. Top up at Russellville, Harrison, Mena, or Mountain View before heading into the backcountry. Fuel prices among the lowest in the South; Texarkana and Fort Smith reliably cheapest.

## Weather windows

**Best months:** April through early June, and mid-September through early November. Daytime highs 65-80 F, nights cool, leaves spectacular in the Ozarks late October.

**Avoid:** July and August: 90-95 F with high humidity and near-daily afternoon thunderstorms. Spring (Mar-May) is severe-weather season with tornadoes and large hail; the Arkansas River valley and the I-40 corridor are particularly active. Winter (Dec-Feb) is mild but ice storms shut down the state every 2-3 years and the Ozarks see occasional snow.

### Climate caution

Spring flash-flood risk is severe in the Ozark and Ouachita valleys -- the 2010 Albert Pike flood killed 20 campers in a single overnight rise. Never camp on a sandbar or in a low river bend if rain is forecast upstream, even if your immediate sky is clear.

## Emergency + road conditions

<b>State patrol</b>	Dial *55 from a cell phone, or 501-618-8000 for Arkansas State Police main line
<b>Road conditions</b>	<a href="https://idrivearkansas.com">https://idrivearkansas.com</a>

## How RV TripGen helps

### We flag spring flash-flood risk

RV Tripgen cross-checks your Arkansas overnight stops against active NWS flash-flood watches and historical flood-prone river-bend campsites in the Ozarks and Ouachita valleys.

### Ozark grade-aware routing

RV Tripgen knows AR-7, AR-23, and the Talimena Byway grades and will route a 40-ft motorhome around them in favour of I-40 and US-65, even when the GPS says the byway is shorter.