



WELCOME TO
FLINT HILLS

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in

Kansas

Speed limits, towing rules, Flint Hills routing, tornado windows,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

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RV travel in Kansas

Kansas is more interesting than its drive-through reputation suggests. The Flint Hills -- 11,000 square miles of tallgrass prairie around Cottonwood Falls and Council Grove -- is the last large tract of original tallgrass in North America, and Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve protects the core of it. Cimarron National Grassland in the SW corner gives you genuine high-plains emptiness, and the wetlands at Quivira and Cheyenne Bottoms are world-class bird country in spring and fall. The state is mostly flat-to-rolling, fuel is cheap, traffic is light off I-70, and you can usually pick up state-park sites without much notice. The catch is wind and tornados: late March through early June is peak tornado season across central and eastern Kansas, and sustained crosswinds 25-40 mph are the rule, not the exception, anywhere west of Salina.

Kansas by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	191
Established campgrounds	174
Dump stations	39
Propane refills	12
Potable water fill-ups	58
Laundromats	12
RV showers	17
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	5

Source: iOverlander community database (68% of Kansas spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	75 mph
Interstate (trucks + towing)	75 mph
US/State highway (cars)	65-70 mph (posted)
US/State highway (towing)	65-70 mph (posted)
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
RV passenger seatbelts	Required for all front-seat occupants (primary enforcement)
Cell phone use while driving	Texting banned; hand-held legal for voice calls

Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-70	East-west spine: Kansas City to Colorado via Topeka, Salina, Hays. Big-rig easy, freight-heavy, well-maintained.
I-35	North-south via Wichita and Emporia. Joins I-70 at Emporia. Big-rig friendly.
I-135	Salina to Wichita. Short connector, flat, fast.
US-50	East-west alternative through the Flint Hills via Emporia and Newton, then across to Dodge City and Garden City. Two-lane in places, RV-friendly.
US-54	Wichita to Liberal and on into Oklahoma. Long flat stretches across the south. Light traffic.
K-177 (Flint Hills National Scenic Byway)	Council Grove south through Cottonwood Falls. The Flint Hills drive. Two-lane, low traffic, RV-friendly to 40 ft.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
K-27 north of Sharon Springs	Two-lane with occasional rough patches and steep ditch sides. Doable, not ideal.
Cimarron National Grassland back roads	Mostly unpaved. Stay on K-27 and US-56 with any RV.
Konza Prairie/Tallgrass Prairie NPres internal roads	Hiking trails and ranch roads not open to RVs. Visitor-center parking at Tallgrass Prairie NPres fits rigs to 40 ft.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve	Free entry	No camping inside the preserve. Cottonwood Falls and Council Grove have small private RV parks; Council Grove Lake (USACE) has electric sites for RVs to 40 ft.
Brown v. Board of Education NHS	Free entry	No camping. Day-trip from Topeka. Lake Shawnee or Perry State Park nearby for RV stays.
Nicodemus NHS	Free entry	No camping inside the site. Webster State Park 20 miles east has RV camping with electric hookups.

Fort Larned NHS	Free entry	No camping inside the historic site. Nearest RV camping at Pawnee Lake or Fort Larned KOA.
Fort Scott NHS	Free entry	No camping. Bourbon State Fishing Lake nearby has primitive sites.

State parks

Kansas State Parks operate 28 parks. Standouts for RV camping: Wilson, Cheney, Hillsdale, Kanopolis, Tuttle Creek (some USACE-shared), Milford. Reservable via ksoutdoors.com up to 12 months in advance. Vehicle permit \$5 daily or \$25 annual. Camping \$10-35/night depending on hookups.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Kansas has essentially no BLM-administered land open for dispersed camping. The free-camping option is Cimarron National Grassland (USFS) in the SW corner, which permits 14-day dispersed camping on numbered grassland roads. Several USACE (Army Corps) lakes -- Council Grove, Pomona, Tuttle Creek -- allow primitive shoreline camping for free or low fee.

National Forest: Cimarron National Grassland (108,000 acres, administered by Pike-San Isabel NF) is the only national forest unit in Kansas. Free 14-day dispersed camping on most numbered grassland roads; Cottonwood Picnic Ground is an established free site with vault toilets but no water or hookups. Spring through fall best; summer brings high heat and minimal shade.

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

Tribal lands

Kansas contains four tribal nations: Kickapoo, Iowa (shared with Nebraska), Sac and Fox, and Prairie Band Potawatomi. Most reservation land is concentrated in the NE corner of the state. Tribal lands are sovereign; state laws do not apply on reservation. Prairie Band Potawatomi operates a casino with RV parking near Mayetta. Respect signed restrictions and stay on numbered roads.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful in Kansas City, Wichita, Topeka, Salina, Hays, Dodge City, and most county-seat towns. Sparse in the western tier west of Hays and in the Flint Hills outside Council Grove. U-Haul and Tractor Supply locations reliable. Most state parks have on-site fills. Cenex farm co-ops in smaller towns often have propane during business hours.

Dump stations: Adequate along I-70 and I-35. Most state parks have free dump stations for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot at Kansas City, Topeka, Salina, Hays, and the Oakley/Colby area have fee dump stations. USACE lake recreation areas typically have free dump stations.

Fuel: Diesel and gas plentiful along I-70, I-35, and US-54. Long stretches without fuel on K-27 between Tribune and Elkhart (95 miles), on US-83 between Garden City and Oakley, and on the Cimarron Grassland gravel roads. Carry full tanks for any SW-corner loop. Fuel typically cheapest along I-70 at Salina and Hays, highest along the Oklahoma and Colorado borders.

Weather windows

Best months: May (after peak tornado risk) and September-October. Daytime 70-85 F, nights 55-65 F. Spring brings prairie greenup; fall brings cooler nights and clear skies.

Avoid: Late March through early June is peak tornado season across central and eastern Kansas. July-August routinely hits 100-105 F with high humidity east of Salina. December-February ground blizzards close I-70 and the central plains 3-5 times per winter.

Climate caution

Tornado-alley primary means anywhere east of Garden City between mid-March and early June. NOAA weather radio is mandatory equipment. Most state parks have storm shelters; private RV parks usually point you to basement-built common buildings. Know which way to run before you go to sleep.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial *47 from a cell phone or 911 for emergencies
Road conditions	https://www.kandrive.gov

How RV TripGen helps

Tornado-window planning for spring routes

RV Tripgen overlays NWS Storm Prediction Center risk areas on any Kansas route between mid-March and early June, so you can shift travel days off peak watch windows.

Flint Hills and Sandhills slow-travel routing

RV Tripgen builds slow-travel loops through the Flint Hills via K-177 and US-50, with overnight stops at Council Grove Lake and Chase State Fishing Lake -- the right Kansas, not the I-70 Kansas.