

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in

Missouri

Speed limits, towing rules, Ozarks routing, Branson logistics,
and everything else you need to know before you cross the state line.

2026 Edition | Last verified: 25 April 2026

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RV travel in Missouri

Missouri's RV identity is the Ozarks: 1.5 million acres of Mark Twain National Forest, the spring-fed rivers of Ozark National Scenic Riverways (the first national river protected in the US), Lake of the Ozarks, Table Rock Lake, and Branson with its 50+ live-music theaters and 100+ RV parks. The state also straddles two great rivers: the Missouri across the central tier and the Mississippi along the eastern border. The road network is dense, fuel reliable, and the state-park system is one of the better-funded in the Midwest. The catch is two things: tornado season (March through May is peak across the state, with northern Missouri in primary Tornado Alley) and Branson's summer/fall traffic surge -- Branson's main strip (W 76 Country Boulevard) is one of the slowest-moving RV corridors in the country between Memorial Day and mid-November. Plan around both and Missouri rewards with some of the cheapest, densest RV infrastructure in the Midwest.

Missouri by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	305
Established campgrounds	261
Dump stations	30
Propane refills	20
Potable water fill-ups	59
Laundromats	13
RV showers	10
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	14

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

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	70 mph
Interstate (trucks + towing)	70 mph
US/State highway (cars)	60-65 mph (posted)
US/State highway (towing)	60-65 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 for all drivers; hand-held legal for voice calls

Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-70	East-west spine: Kansas City to St Louis via Columbia. Major freight corridor, big-rig easy.
I-44	St Louis SW to Joplin via Rolla, Springfield. Big-rig easy, freight-heavy.
I-49	Kansas City south to Joplin and on to the Arkansas line. Big-rig friendly.
I-55	St Louis south to the Arkansas line. Mississippi River corridor.
I-29	Kansas City north to the Iowa line.
US-65	Branson north to Iowa via Springfield and Sedalia. Four-lane most of the way.
US-60	East-west across the south through the Ozarks. Two-lane in places but RV-friendly.
MO-19 (Ozark NSR access)	Two-lane scenic corridor through the riverways. RV-friendly to 35 ft.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
Branson's W 76 Country Boulevard (the strip)	Technically open to RVs but you'll spend an hour going two miles in summer. Bypass via Gretna Road or MO-265.
MO-Y and other Ozark county-letter routes	Tight switchbacks, narrow shoulders, steep grades into hollows. Class A and 40+ ft fifth-wheels stick to numbered state highways.
Big Spring Road and other Ozark NSR access spurs	Narrow with deep ditches. Smaller rigs only beyond the main parking areas.
Forest roads in Mark Twain NF	Many are gravel/dirt, narrow, with low overhangs. Stick to numbered through-routes.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Ozark National Scenic Riverways	Free entry; some boat launches have day-use fees	Akers, Round Spring, Pulltite, Alley Spring, Big Spring, and Two Rivers campgrounds reservable via recreation.gov May-Oct, first-come otherwise; RVs to 40 ft at most, smaller at Pulltite and Round Spring.

Gateway Arch National Park (St Louis)	\$3 grounds (free for many); tram/movie tickets separate	No camping inside the park (urban core). Nearest RV camping at Casino Queen RV Park (East St Louis IL) or 370 Lakeside Park (St Charles).
Wilson's Creek National Battlefield	Free entry	No camping inside the battlefield. Day-trip from Springfield. Several Springfield-area RV parks within 15 miles.
Harry S Truman NHS	Free entry	No camping. Day-trip from Kansas City. Lake Jacomo or Smithville Lake regional parks have RV camping.
George Washington Carver National Monument	Free entry	No camping inside the monument. Diamond and Joplin area have private RV parks.

State parks

Missouri State Parks operate 92 parks and historic sites. Standouts for RV camping: Bennett Spring, Big Lake, Crowder, Cuivre River, Ha Ha Tonka, Johnson's Shut-Ins, Lake of the Ozarks, Mark Twain (the state park, not the NF), Meramec, Stockton, Table Rock, Wakonda. Reservable via [icampmo1.usdirect.com](https://www.icampmo1.usdirect.com). No park entrance fee. Camping \$14-37/night depending on hookups.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Missouri has essentially no BLM-administered land. Free dispersed camping in Missouri means Mark Twain National Forest (USFS) and select USACE (Army Corps) reservoir shoreline areas. Several Conservation Department areas administered by Missouri Department of Conservation allow primitive camping with a free permit.

National Forest: Mark Twain National Forest (1.5M acres across the Ozarks in nine ranger districts) permits free dispersed camping along most numbered forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. Popular dispersed corridors: along the Eleven Point River, in the Glade Top Trail area, and around Big Piney. Established USFS campgrounds reservable via [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov); fees \$8-22. Fire restrictions common Jul-Sep.

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

Tribal lands

Missouri has no federally-recognized tribal nations resident on reservation land within the state's modern boundaries -- a result of forced 19th-century removals. Several nations (Osage, Otoe-Missouria, Iowa, Sac and Fox) maintain ancestral and cultural ties to Missouri land. Visitors interested in pre-removal indigenous history will find good interpretation at Trail of Tears State Park (near Jackson, on the Mississippi) and at Osage Village SHS.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful statewide. St Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, Branson, Columbia, Joplin, Cape Girardeau, and most county-seat towns have multiple refill points. U-Haul, Tractor Supply, Ferrellgas, AmeriGas all common. Most KOA and Good Sam parks fill on-site. Branson alone has 15+ propane sources.

Dump stations: Excellent density statewide. Most Missouri state parks have free dump stations for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot along I-70, I-44, I-55, and I-49 have fee dump stations. Branson and Lake of the Ozarks RV resorts almost universally have free dumps. USACE lake recreation areas typically have free dumps.

Fuel: Diesel and gas plentiful along all interstates and US highways. Few fuel gaps over 30 miles. Long-ish stretches on MO-19 between Eminence and Salem, and on US-160 in the Mark Twain NF. Fuel typically cheapest along I-44 at Rolla and Springfield, highest in Branson tourist core and at Lake of the Ozarks marinas.

Weather windows

Best months: Mid-April through May and September through October. Daytime 70-80 F, nights 50-60 F. Spring brings dogwood and redbud bloom; fall brings Ozark color peaking mid-October.

Avoid: March through May is peak tornado season -- particularly across northern and central Missouri. July-August routinely hits 90-95 F with very high humidity in the river valleys. Late December through February brings ice storms across the south that can drop power for days.

Climate caution

Tornado season in Missouri is no joke. Most state parks have storm shelters; many private RV parks point you to basement-built common buildings. Joplin (2011 EF-5 tornado) is a reminder that Missouri storms can be catastrophic. NOAA weather radio is mandatory equipment March-May. Know which way to run before you go to sleep.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial *55 from a cell phone or 911 for emergencies
Road conditions	https://traveler.modot.org

How RV TripGen helps

Branson strip-bypass routing

RV Tripgen routes you around W 76 Country Boulevard via Gretna Road and MO-265, so your two-mile crawl through theater traffic becomes a six-minute bypass with parking suggestions at the venue you're aiming for.

Ozarks spring-and-fall window prioritization

RV Tripgen prioritizes Ozark NSR and Mark Twain NF overnights in late April, May, September, and October -- avoiding the tornado-peak March risk and the high-humidity August load -- and surfaces the best spring-fed-river paddle days.