



RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in
Ohio

Cuyahoga Valley -- a rare urban National Park, Hocking Hills RV country, Wayne NF dispersed, Lake Erie islands, and a state-park system with no camping fees.

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RV travel in Ohio

Ohio is one of the most underestimated RV states in the Midwest. Cuyahoga Valley NP between Cleveland and Akron is one of the few truly urban National Parks in the country -- a green corridor along the river with Ohio & Erie Canal towpath, the Brandywine Falls, and the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad all within 30 minutes of either city. Hocking Hills State Park in the southeastern hills is one of the most popular RV destinations in the Midwest. Wayne NF covers the unglaciated Appalachian foothills in the southeast with dispersed camping. The Lake Erie islands (Put-in-Bay on South Bass Island, Kelleys Island) are ferry-accessible -- small rigs only, and most RVers stay on the mainland and day-trip. The big planning factor is mid-summer demand for Hocking Hills (book months ahead) and winter, which is cold, snowy, and shuts down most state-park RV loops Dec-Mar.

Ohio by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	307
Established campgrounds	109
Dump stations	32
Propane refills	22
Potable water fill-ups	43
Laundromats	18
RV showers	12
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	13

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

Driving rules

Interstate (cars)	70 mph (rural)
Interstate (trucks + towing)	65 mph (rural)
US/State highway	55-60 mph (posted)
Ohio Turnpike (I-80/I-90)	70 mph (cars), 65 mph (trucks + towing); E-ZPass strongly recommended
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
Seatbelts	Required for front-seat occupants and all under-15 in any seat

Cell phone use while driving	Texting prohibited; hands-free required statewide (2023 distracted-driving law)
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Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-70	Indiana line through Columbus to West Virginia line. Easy big-rig route, dense truck stops.
I-71	Cincinnati to Cleveland via Columbus. Easy, the standard southwest-to-northeast transit.
I-75	Cincinnati to Toledo via Dayton and Findlay. Easy big-rig route through western Ohio.
I-77	Marietta to Cleveland via Cambridge and Akron. Easy.
I-80 / I-90 (Ohio Turnpike)	Indiana line to Pennsylvania line via Toledo and Cleveland. Toll, well-maintained, fastest east-west route across northern Ohio. E-ZPass works.
I-76	Akron to Pennsylvania line. Easy.
I-475 / I-275 (metro bypasses)	Toledo and Cincinnati beltways respectively; use them to avoid downtown.
US-30	Indiana line to East Liverpool. Major truck route, easy.
US-23	Toledo to Portsmouth via Columbus. Easy.
US-33 (Lancaster to Logan to Athens)	The main RV route to Hocking Hills. Easy, mostly 4-lane.
OH-2 (along Lake Erie)	Toledo to Cleveland via Sandusky and Vermillion. Scenic shore route, easy for big rigs east of Vermillion; tighter through the Marblehead Peninsula.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
Catawba Island + Marblehead Peninsula minor roads (Lake Erie islands ferry approaches)	Tight, seasonal traffic, narrow shoulders. Big-rig access to the ferries (Miller Boat Line, Jet Express) is possible but most RV owners leave their rigs on the mainland and day-trip to South Bass Island.
Put-in-Bay (South Bass Island)	Small island, mostly golf-cart traffic, no RV camping infrastructure on-island. Day-trips only via the Miller ferry from Catawba Point; the auto ferry runs but charges \$24+ per RV.
Kelleys Island ferry	Auto ferry takes RVs but island roads are narrow and the campground at Kelleys Island SP is limited. Verify rig length fits.

Hocking Hills SP interior roads (Old Man's Cave to Cedar Falls connector)	Some park loops length-restricted to 30 ft; check before booking. Main RV loops accept rigs to 50 ft.
Cuyahoga Valley NP interior + Towpath Trail access points	Some lots are car-only; check the visitor-center map. Big-rig parking exists at Boston Mill and Canal Exploration Center.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Cuyahoga Valley NP	Free entry	No NPS-operated campgrounds inside the park (rare among the big NPs). Closest RV camping: Streetsboro / Cleveland SE KOA, Country Acres Family Campground, Akron Canton Jellystone, or further afield at Punderson SP (45 min east) and Mohican SP (90 min south). Park-and-Ride at Boston Mill Visitor Center is the standard logistics base; Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad runs the length of the park.
Hopewell Culture NHP	Free entry	Day-use only (Mound City Group + four affiliated earthworks sites). Stay at Tar Hollow SP or Great Seal SP.
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial	\$10/adult (May-Oct)	On South Bass Island (Put-in-Bay); ferry-only access. Day-use only; no camping on-island for RVs.
Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP	Free entry	Multi-site Wright Brothers heritage park. Day-use only. Stay at Englewood MetroPark or Sugar Grove RV Resort.
First Ladies NHS (Canton)	Free entry	Day-use only.
David Berger NM (Cleveland)	Free entry	Day-use plaque-style memorial.
James A. Garfield NHS (Mentor)	Free entry	Day-use only.
William Howard Taft NHS (Cincinnati)	Free entry	Day-use only.

State parks

Ohio State Parks operates 75+ parks, the majority RV-accessible, and Ohio is one of the few states with NO day-use fees at any state park. Camping fees are also among the lowest in the country. Standout RV parks: Hocking Hills SP (the headline park, southeastern hills, books out months ahead summer + fall), Mohican SP (central OH, full hookups), Salt Fork SP (largest in the system, 17,000 acres in eastern OH), East Harbor SP (Lake Erie shore near Marblehead, full hookups), Punderson SP (NE OH, full hookups, lodge available), Geneva SP (Lake Erie shore east of Cleveland), Maumee Bay SP (Lake Erie at Toledo, full hookups), Caesar Creek SP (between Dayton and Cincinnati), Burr Oak SP, Lake Hope SP, Tar Hollow SP, John Bryan SP. Reservations open 6 months ahead at ohiostateparks.reserveamerica.com.

Day-use free. Camping \$25-45.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Ohio has no BLM land. Federal-land dispersed camping is via Wayne NF -- see NF summary. Practical workarounds: Walmart and Cracker Barrel overnight (Ohio is generally permissive outside the Cleveland and Cincinnati metros), Harvest Hosts at OH wineries and farms (Lake Erie wine country is dense; over 50 Harvest Hosts), Boondockers Welcome statewide, Amish-area Harvest Hosts (Holmes County is the largest Amish settlement in the US and has several hosts).

National Forest: Wayne NF is the only NF in Ohio -- about 244,000 acres in the unglaciated Appalachian foothills of southeastern Ohio, split into three units (Athens, Marietta, Ironton). Free dispersed camping along forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. Most dispersed sites accept rigs to 25-30 ft. Several developed campgrounds: Burr Oak Cove (rigs to 35 ft, reservable), Lake Vesuvius (Iron Ridge + Oak Hill campgrounds, rigs to 35 ft, reservable), Hanging Rock OHV area (primitive). The Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area threads the Cuyahoga corridor but has no dispersed federal camping.

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

Tribal lands

Ohio has no federally-recognized tribes with reservation land within the state. The Eastern Shawnee, Wyandotte, Miami, Seneca-Cayuga, and other nations historically lived in Ohio but were forcibly relocated -- most to Oklahoma -- in the 19th century. Native heritage sites (Serpent Mound, Newark Earthworks, Fort Ancient, Mound City at Hopewell Culture NHP) are state or federal day-use sites; no tribal-managed RV camping in Ohio. Serpent Mound and Newark Earthworks are UNESCO World Heritage Sites as of 2023.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful along all interstates and US highways. Tractor Supply in every county seat, U-Haul in every metro. Most KOA, Sun, and Good Sam parks fill on-site. Amish-country (Holmes / Wayne counties) has several mom-and-pop propane fillers in addition to Tractor Supply. No notable gaps -- Ohio's road network is too dense.

Dump stations: Dense statewide. ALL Ohio State Parks with RV camping have free dump stations for registered guests. Flying J / Pilot / Love's / TA truck stops along the interstates and turnpike charge \$10-15 for non-guest dumps. Many MetroParks (Cuyahoga Valley, Cleveland Metroparks, Hamilton County) have dump stations for guests.

Fuel: Diesel and gas widely available statewide -- one of the densest road networks in the US. No significant fuel gaps. Diesel is cheaper than the East Coast; the Ohio Turnpike service plazas are convenient but typically 20-40 cents/gallon more expensive than off-turnpike. Fuel prices typically lowest along I-75 in western Ohio, highest in resort towns (Put-in-Bay, Hocking Hills).

Weather windows

Best months: Late May through mid-June, and mid-September through October. Daytime highs 65-80 F, fall colour peaks mid-Oct in southeastern Ohio (Hocking Hills, Wayne NF) and late Oct along Lake Erie.

Avoid: December-February statewide are cold, snowy, and lake-effect blizzards off Lake Erie can shut I-90 and I-271 for days. July-August can hit 90+ F with humidity in the south; mosquitoes thick in the Lake

Erie marshes. Spring (March-April) is mud season in Wayne NF -- many forest roads are too soft to drive on.

Climate caution

Lake-effect snow off Lake Erie in winter is no joke -- the Snow Belt running from Cleveland through Erie PA can drop 24-36 inches in 24 hours when wind direction lines up with the long axis of the lake. I-90 and I-271 closures are common Nov-Feb. If you must travel northern Ohio in winter, watch the lake-effect forecast (Cleveland NWS office is the authoritative source) and have a 24-hour weather window before committing.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol

Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies; #677 from a cell phone for Ohio State Highway Patrol non-emergency

Road conditions

<https://www.ohgo.com>

How RV TripGen helps

Hocking Hills booking window watched

RV TripGen flags the 6-month state-park booking window for every Hocking Hills overnight in your plan and prompts you the morning the window opens -- the main RV loop fills within minutes for summer weekends and fall foliage.

Lake-effect snow alert for winter routing

RV TripGen pulls the Cleveland NWS lake-effect forecast for any northern Ohio leg Nov-Mar and warns when the lake-effect band is forecast to cross I-90 / I-271 / I-271 during your travel day, so you can hold over an extra night south of the snow belt.