

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to
RV Travel in

West Virginia

New River Gorge -- America's newest big National Park, Monongahela NF dispersed, steep coal-country roads, narrow bridges, and the most underrated state east of the Mississippi.

2026 Edition | Last verified: 25 April 2026

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RV travel in West Virginia

West Virginia became home to the newest big National Park in 2020 when New River Gorge was redesignated, and that single change has shifted the state's RV profile upward. Add the Monongahela NF -- one of the best NF dispersed-camping zones east of the Rockies -- the C&O Canal terminus at Cumberland (just over the line in Maryland), Harpers Ferry's confluence town, and a state-park system that's small but solid, and you have a fortnight's RV trip without leaving Appalachia. The catch is the roads: West Virginia is the only state entirely inside the Appalachian Mountains, the secondary network is narrow and steep, rural-bridge weight limits are real (some posted as low as 5 tons), and coal-truck traffic on routes like US-19 south of Beckley and WV-10 through Logan can be heavy. Plan around grades and bridge weights and West Virginia rewards every mile.

West Virginia by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	172
Established campgrounds	112
Dump stations	20
Propane refills	5
Potable water fill-ups	20
Laundromats	8
RV showers	11
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	3

Source: iOverlander community database (64% of West Virginia spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars + RVs)	70 mph (most rural segments)
Interstate (towing)	65-70 mph (matches posted)
US/State highway	55-60 mph (posted)
Built-up areas	25-35 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
Seatbelts	Required for front-seat occupants and all under-18 in any seat
Cell phone use while driving	Hands-free only (banned hand-held); texting prohibited

Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-64	Charleston to White Sulphur Springs to the Virginia line. Easy big-rig route; passes near New River Gorge.
I-77 / WV Turnpike	Charleston to Bluefield. Toll road, well-maintained, sustained 5-7% grades through the Big Walker / Bluestone area -- engine-brake descending. Bluestone Travel Plaza is the best RV stop on the turnpike.
I-79	Charleston to Morgantown. Easy at posted speed; some long grades north of Sutton.
I-68	Brief WV segment near Morgantown; continues into Maryland. Easy.
I-70	Brief WV segment through Wheeling; continues into Ohio and Pennsylvania.
US-119	Charleston to Williamson; the Coalfields Expressway alternate. Easier than the old US-52 route.
US-50	Clarksburg to Romney to the Virginia line. Scenic, twisty in places but big-rig OK.
US-219	Beckley to Morgantown via Snowshoe and Elkins. Long, scenic, mostly OK for big rigs but several 6% grades.
WV-39 + WV-15 (Highland Scenic Highway)	NPS-designated scenic byway through Monongahela NF; well-graded, easy, spectacular fall colour.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
WV-32 / WV-72 along the Blackwater Canyon	Tight switchbacks descending into Blackwater Falls SP; rigs over 35 ft should use US-219 / WV-93 alternates.
WV-10 through Logan and Mingo counties	Narrow, heavy coal-truck traffic, frequent loaded-truck speeds well below posted. Not dangerous for RVs but slow and stressful.
US-52 in Mingo / McDowell counties (old coalfields route)	Twisty, narrow, has been bypassed by US-119 for most through-traffic. Use US-119 instead.
WV-39 through Richwood + Summit Lake	Steep grades and tight curves; check rig length before committing. The Highland Scenic Highway section (39 then 150) is easier.
Many rural bridges (county and state secondary routes)	Weight limits posted as low as 5-10 tons on some county routes. WVDOH 511 lists active weight-restricted bridges; do not trust GPS routing on county routes without checking.
WV-72 along the Cheat River through Rowlesburg area	Tight, narrow, coal-truck country. Use US-50 / I-68 alternates.

Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Spruce Knob summit road (FR 112)	4863 ft	Highest point in West Virginia. Paved, well-graded, accessible to RVs to 30 ft.
Snowshoe Mountain (US-219 / WV-66)	4848 ft	Ski resort summit. US-219 grade is 5-6%; engine-brake descending. Winter chains may be required Dec-Mar.
Bluestone Summit (WV Turnpike)	3500 ft	Long 7% grade descending southbound into Princeton; truck runaway ramps present. Top up brakes / coolant before the descent.
Highland Scenic Highway summit (WV-150)	4500 ft	NPS scenic byway high point. Easy at posted speed; closed sections in winter.
Dolly Sods Plateau (FR 75)	4000 ft	Rough gravel access road into the Sods. Rigs over 25 ft should not attempt; use a tow vehicle / day-trip from a lower-elevation campground.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
New River Gorge NP and Preserve	Free entry (national park; preserve fee waived 2020-)	Designated NP in 2020 (formerly New River Gorge NR). Four primitive campgrounds: Army Camp (rigs to 24 ft, first-come), Stone Cliff Beach (small rigs, first-come), Glade Creek (rigs to 24 ft, first-come), Grandview Sandbar (rigs to 24 ft, first-come). All FREE -- no fees and no reservations as of 2026. For larger rigs: Babcock SP (5 min from Cunard takeout, full hookups) and Plum Orchard Lake WMA. NPS lodge accommodations not available; nearest commercial RV parks at Fayetteville and Beckley.
Gauley River NRA	Free entry	Co-managed with New River Gorge. No NPS campgrounds; primitive sites along the river. Stay at Summersville Lake (Corps of Engineers, \$20-30, reservable) or Battle Run Campground.
Bluestone NSR	Free entry	Co-managed with New River Gorge. No NPS campgrounds. Stay at Pipestem Resort SP (5 min away, full hookups, the standout state park in southern WV).
Harpers Ferry NHP	\$20/vehicle (3 days)	Day-use only inside the park. Stay at Harpers Ferry / Civil War Battlefields KOA, Hidden Springs RV (Charles Town), or across the Potomac at MD's C&O; Canal Brunswick area. Park-and-shuttle from the visitor center is required during peak season; do not try to drive a Class A into Lower Town.

State parks

WV State Parks operates 35 parks and 9 state forests, most RV-accessible. Standout RV parks: Pipestem Resort SP (Bluestone gorge, full-hookup resort), Babcock SP (the iconic Glade Creek Grist Mill, full hookups, 5 min from New River Gorge), Watoga SP (largest in the system, 8,000 acres in the Monongahela area), Blackwater Falls SP (full hookups, near Davis and Canaan Valley), Canaan Valley Resort SP (4,000 ft, full-hookup full-service resort), Cacapon Resort SP (Eastern Panhandle near Berkeley Springs, full hookups), Twin Falls Resort SP (southern coalfields), Tygart Lake SP, North Bend SP, Stonewall Jackson Resort SP. Reservations open 13 months ahead at wvstateparks.com. Day-use free at most parks. Camping \$25-45 standard, \$40-55 full hookup. The 'Resort' parks have lodges in addition to RV loops.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: West Virginia has effectively no BLM land. Federal-land dispersed camping is via Monongahela NF -- see NF summary, which more than makes up for the BLM absence. Workarounds for non-NF nights: Harvest Hosts at WV wineries and Civil War sites, Boondockers Welcome hosts statewide, Walmart and Cracker Barrel overnight (more permissive than the I-95 corridor states), Tudor's Biscuit World in some markets (call first), several state parks with cheap primitive sites.

National Forest: Monongahela NF is the headline -- 921,000 acres covering the high country of eastern West Virginia, with the Highland Scenic Highway (WV-39/150) as the spine. Free dispersed camping along forest roads (most accept rigs to 30-35 ft, some only to 25 ft on tighter forest roads) with a 14-day stay limit. Popular dispersed areas: Cranberry Wilderness peripheries (along FR 86), Spruce Knob area (highest point in WV at 4,863 ft), Dolly Sods Wilderness peripheries, Seneca Rocks area. Several developed campgrounds also exist: Lake Sherwood, Spruce Knob Lake, Day Run, Bishop Knob, Bear Heaven, Stuart, Big Bend, Red Creek (Dolly Sods). George Washington NF also dips briefly into eastern WV (Lost River + Trout Pond area) with dispersed and developed camping. WVDNR Wildlife Management Areas (Plum Orchard Lake, Burnsville Lake, Beech Fork) also permit primitive camping by permit.

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

Tribal lands

West Virginia has no federally-recognized tribes with reservation land within the state. Pre-contact Native sites are managed by NPS (Harpers Ferry, Bluestone, New River Gorge) and state parks; no public reservation camping. Always respect posted boundaries and signage at archaeological sites.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Available along all interstates and US highways. Tractor Supply in Beckley, Charleston, Morgantown, Bridgeport/Clarksburg, Martinsburg, Princeton, Lewisburg, Buckhannon, Elkins. U-Haul in larger towns. Most KOA and Good Sam parks fill on-site. Thin in the southern coalfields (Logan, Mingo, McDowell counties) -- top up in Beckley or Princeton before heading west of US-52.

Dump stations: Adequate density. Most WV state parks with RV camping have free dump stations for registered guests (Pipestem, Babcock, Twin Falls, Watoga, Cacapon, Tygart Lake, Bluestone, Stonewall Jackson, North Bend, Beech Fork, Holly River, Tomlinson Run, Berkeley Springs / Cacapon area). Flying J / Pilot stations along I-77, I-64, I-79 and I-68 charge \$10-15 for non-guest dumps. Corps of Engineers

parks (Summersville, Sutton, Burnsville, Bluestone) have free dumps for guests.

Fuel: Diesel and gas available along all interstates and most US highways. Notable fuel gaps: the Highland Scenic Highway (WV-39/150 through Monongahela NF -- no fuel for 60+ miles; top up in Marlinton or Richwood), US-219 between Marlinton and Elkins, and Spruce Knob road (no fuel beyond Riverton). Fuel prices typically lowest along I-79 and I-77 (truck-stop competition), highest in deep rural Pocahontas and Pendleton counties.

Weather windows

Best months: Mid-May through mid-June, and mid-September through October. Daytime highs 65-78 F in the high country, 75-85 F in the valleys; fall colour mid-Oct in the high country (one of the best displays in the East).

Avoid: July and August in the valleys (Charleston, Martinsburg, Huntington) hit 90+ F with high humidity, though the high country (Snowshoe, Davis, Spruce Knob) stays 10-15 F cooler. December-March in the high country brings heavy snow and frequent road closures on WV-32, WV-39, WV-150 and forest roads; Snowshoe ski-resort traffic on US-219 in winter. Spring (April) is mud season in the NF -- many forest roads are too soft to drive on.

Climate caution

Mountain thunderstorms in the high country produce lightning and flash flooding in narrow Appalachian hollows June-Sep. Camp on higher ground, never in a streambed; many WV creeks rise 4-6 feet in 30 minutes during heavy summer storms. Cell coverage is poor or absent through much of the Monongahela NF and the southern coalfields -- carry a paper map and a satellite messenger for the deep dispersed-camping zones.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies; (304) 746-2100 for West Virginia State Police HQ non-emergency
Road conditions	https://www.wv511.org

How RV TripGen helps

Rural-bridge weight check on county routes

RV TripGen flags WVDOH posted-bridge weight restrictions on any planned county-route shortcut. Some posted as low as 5 tons -- well under a Class A. We route you around them so you don't find out at the bridge.

New River Gorge free-camping logistics

RV TripGen surfaces the four free NPS campgrounds at New River Gorge alongside Babcock SP and Pipestem Resort SP, so you know which way the trade-off cuts -- free and primitive (24-ft max), or full-hookup state park five minutes away.