

DISCOVER ONE-TANK Trips

THE FRONTIER & MOUNTAIN STATES

29

MISSOURI

Total mileage / average drive time:
140 miles – 2 hours, 57 minutes

Long before the Arch dominated the St. Louis skyline, Missouri has been a gateway of sorts into the West. Lewis and Clark began their travels here, the eastern leg of the Pony Express started here and the much-traversed Santa Fe and Oregon Trails also started here.

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1 Branson

We're heading right for the crown jewel of the **Ozark Mountains**, Branson. If you're in need of a one of a kind, family oriented destination that will knock your socks off, you've come to the right place! In recent years, Branson has become widely known as the "**Live Music Capital of the World**", where some of the biggest names in **Country**, **Bluegrass** and the like play, but Branson also hosts a variety of theater shows as well. There is always something great happening in Branson, and it's proximity to the **Ozarks** is just icing on the cake. Located nearby, travelers will find **Table Rock**, **Taneycomo** and



Bull Shoals Lakes, widely known through the state for exceptional fishing opportunities as well as a variety of water sports. It's been said the waters of these lakes don't freeze, making it a great destination any time of the year. Want to know another secret? Branson is home to some of the **finest golf courses** in the Midwest, designed by Tom Fazio and Jack Nicklaus. The rugged Ozark topography just adds to the beauty of these courses, with plenty of lakes, waterfalls and creeks surrounding the courses. To discover some of Branson's unique and very humble beginnings, head to **Historic Downtown** where you can

tour the city on a trolley, catch a show in Branson's first theater or maybe wine and dine your mate with a carriage ride through the city and a little dinner and live show afterwards.

2 Springfield

42.6 miles – 54 minutes

We know, it's hard to pull yourself away from Branson, but we're heading out to our next destination, Springfield, via US-65N, around 44 miles away. Springfield is an exquisite city that manages to maintain a small town feel despite its size. Historically, Springfield has been the site of two major battles during the **Civil War**, has the honor of giving birth to the **Wild West Era** as the site of the nation's first recorded shootout between **Wild Bill Hickok** and **Dave Tutt** and is the officially recognized birthplace of **Route 66**. Whew! That's quite a chunk of history! Exploring the city, you'll find a wealth of history throughout the overwhelming amount of museums located here. A few notables are the **History Museum of Springfield**, which traces area history with a series of revolving exhibits from the **Prehistoric Era through the Civil War**, and the **Wilson's Creek National Battlefield**, the site of the first major Civil War battle fought west of the Mississippi. The Museum houses and has an outstanding collection of artifacts



relating to the war, as well as a great collection of recently digitized photographs from the era. If you feel like a side trip, head over to the **Laura Ingalls Wilder home and museum**, just a short distance away in **Mansfield**, which contains handwritten manuscripts, Pa's fiddle and many other pieces of memorabilia. Definitely worth a visit!

3 Lebanon

54.3 miles – 1 hour, 1 minute

From Springfield, we continue east via I-44 for the 54 mile trip to Lebanon. There was a time in Lebanon, not long after **Route 66** was established, you could set up a tent at **Camp Joy**, for just 50 cents a night. It might be a little more expensive today, but it's well worth it! Lebanon is filled with **Americana history, landmarks and stories** of the wonderful days of the **Mother Road**. Aside from the fascinating history of yesteryear, travelers will discover a wealth of beauty and a few unexpected sites like the **Bennet Spring**, one of Missouri's four trout parks just a stone's throw from Lebanon and the fourth largest. The spring rises out of a narrow cave, outpouring more than 100 million gallons of water a day. The Native Americans called the spring, "eye of the sacred one", and it is a



popular destination not only for trout fishing but also for the 12 miles of hiking trails, float trips at the **Niangua River** and dining at the rustic lodge, where the chef is more than happy to prepare your days catch.

4 Camdenton

25.1 miles – 35 minutes

From Lebanon we're off on MO-5N for 25 miles into Camdenton. A tranquil and beautiful location, Camdenton has a reputation as a good base camp for exploring the surrounding area that contains numerous state parks and conservation areas. Just a couple of miles north of Camdenton, or at the 10 mile marker of the **Big Niangua arm of Lake of the Ozarks** if your heading there by boat, is one of the areas best treasures. **Bridal Cave** is an enormous cavern with winding passages, mineral deposits and stalactites adorning the ceiling. Local folklore tells the tale of a legendary Indian wedding ceremony held here in the early 1800s, and to date there have been over 2,000 couples who have exchanged vows here in the bridal chapel. Tours are available and we don't want to give away all the surprises, just remember to keep your eyes open for the **Mystery Lake** located somewhere within the cavern!

