

American Auto Trail: Louisiana Highway 90, a Journey through History

The American Auto Trail system, established over a century ago, played a pivotal role in the development of automotive tourism and the shaping of America's transportation infrastructure. One such trail, the Louisiana Highway 90, stands as a testament to the era's pioneering spirit and enduring legacy.

The Birth of the American Auto Trails

In the early 20th century, the United States experienced a surge in automobile ownership, leading to a growing desire for road trips and the exploration of the country's vast landscapes. However, roads at the time were often poorly maintained and lacked standardized signage, making long-distance travel challenging.



American Auto Trail-Louisiana's U.S. Highway 90

(American Auto Trails) by Lyn Wilkerson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In 1911, a group of automotive enthusiasts founded the American Automobile Association (AAA). One of the AAA's primary goals was to improve road conditions and establish a system of marked trails to guide motorists.

Louisiana Highway 90: A Key Link

In 1915, the AAA designated Louisiana Highway 90 as part of the American Auto Trail system, stretching from New Orleans to the Texas-Louisiana state line. The route played a significant role in connecting major cities such as New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Alexandria, opening up vast areas of Louisiana to automobile travelers.

A Scenic and Historic Byway

Louisiana Highway 90 traverses some of the most picturesque and historically rich regions of the state. It winds through lush swamps and forested bottomlands, past stately antebellum plantations, and bustling coastal towns.

Along the way, travelers can explore cultural landmarks like the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, the Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folk Life Park, and the Port Hudson State Historic Site.

Automotive Tourism Boom

The establishment of the American Auto Trails, including Louisiana Highway 90, led to a boom in automotive tourism. Motorists flocked to the roads, eager to experience the freedom and adventure that came with driving their own cars.

Communities along these trails benefited from the increased traffic, as tourism brought jobs and economic growth. Hotels, restaurants, and service stations sprang up to cater to the needs of the traveling public.

The Legacy Continues

Although the American Auto Trail system is no longer officially in use, many of its original routes have been preserved as scenic byways. Louisiana Highway 90 is one such example, designated as the Old Spanish Trail, Louisiana Highway 90 Historic Byway.

Today, the byway offers motorists a unique opportunity to travel back in time and experience the spirit of the early days of automotive tourism. It is a living testament to the transformative impact that the American Auto Trails had on American travel and history.

Highlights of Louisiana Highway 90

- **New Orleans:** Start your journey in the vibrant city of New Orleans, known for its French Quarter, live music, and delicious cuisine.
- **Houma:** Explore the heart of Cajun Country in Houma, home to the South Louisiana Wetlands Discovery Center and the Louisiana Bayou Country Museum.

- **Morgan City:** Visit the famous Tabasco Factory and Museum, where you can delve into the history and production of the world-renowned hot sauce.
 - **Lafayette:** Immerse yourself in the Cajun and Creole culture of Lafayette at the Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folk Life Park.
 - **Alexandria:** Discover the rich military history of Alexandria at the Louisiana Maneuvers and Military Museum.
 - **Natchitoches:** Step back in time to the 18th century at Natchitoches, the oldest permanent settlement in Louisiana.
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Louisiana Highway 90, a remnant of the American Auto Trails, remains a captivating and historically significant route. It invites travelers to explore the diverse landscapes, cultures, and history of Louisiana, offering a glimpse into the past and a reminder of the enduring legacy of the American Auto Trails.

Whether you are a history buff, a nature enthusiast, or simply seeking a scenic road trip, Louisiana Highway 90 is a journey not to be missed. So, fire up your engines and embark on an unforgettable adventure along this historic byway.



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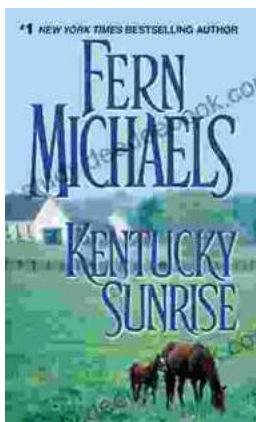
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