

# TRAVEL EXTRA

A NEW BONUS SECTION FOR OUR SUBSCRIBERS

## ROAD TRIP TIPS

# PUT YOUR RELAXATION INTO OVERDRIVE!

By Lynn O'Rourke Hayes | The Dallas Morning News

Pile in a car and cruise our scenic byways. Here are five to consider:



**1 Trail Ridge Road; Estes Park, Colo.** During a 48-mile, two- to three-hour drive through majestic Rocky Mountain National Park, marvel at the park's wildlife, crystalline lakes and jagged peaks. The nearby Continental Divide provides the opportunity to explain to the kids how the "roof of the continent" spills moisture to the east and the west from its apex. Consider a stop at the Stanley Hotel (above) in Estes Park, which inspired Stephen King's novel "The Shining." Also, visit the charming town of Grand Lake, home of the largest natural lake in the state of Colorado.

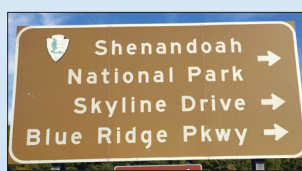
**Contact:** colorado.com; nps.gov/romo/

**2 The Beartooth Highway.** Visitors who travel this extraordinary byway experience the visual trifecta of Montana, Wyoming and Yellowstone Park, home to the Absaroka and Beartooth mountains. The windy, cliff-hugging 68-mile stretch introduces road explorers to one of the most diverse ecosystems accessible by auto. It's also the highest elevation highway in the Northern Rockies. The drive showcases high alpine plateaus, painted with patches of ice blue glacial lakes, forested valleys, waterfalls and wildlife.

**Contact:** beartoothhighway.com

**3 Skyline Drive, Va.** Virginia's Skyline Drive begins in Front Royal and twists and turns southwest through Shenandoah National Park. It meanders along the crest of the mountains through the woods and past spectacular vistas. Hike in the shade of oak trees along the Appalachian Trail, discover the stories from Shenandoah's past, or explore the wilderness at your leisure.

**Contact:** 540-999-3500; nps.gov/shen



**4 Monument Valley, Ariz.** You've seen the skyline in the movies and on television commercials. Your family will marvel at the 250-million-year-old red rock formations, the magical light, the starry night and the Native American history that infuses the iconic landscape. Take in the 17-mile scenic loop road on your own or hire a guide to delve deeper into the storied region and to access off-limit areas. Overnight at The View hotel (above) for the best chance to capture the incomparable sunrise and sunset hues. Don't forget your cameras!

**Contact:** navajonationparks.org/htm/monumentvalley.htm



**5 Lighthouse Tour; Maine.** Travel the 375 miles between Kittery and Calais, Maine, visiting lighthouses along the way (below), and learn about the dangers that seafaring vessels and their crews endured along the craggy Northeastern coast. Hear tales of shipwrecks and ghosts, and of the difficult and lonely life led by those who kept the lights burning brightly. Visit the Maine Lighthouse Museum, where artifacts and hands-on exhibits for children provide an enticing break.

**Contact:** mainelighthousemuseum.com; visitmaine.com

## Virginia

continued from 1

The Georgian-style resort, roughly 250 miles from Pittsburgh, was acquired by the Omni group last year. It sits on sacred hunting grounds of the Shawnee tribe, but it is named after the homesteaders who settled the region and helped to build it.

One of the modern-day perks of a stay at The Homestead is the daily tour conducted by historian Keene Byrd. After Goode died, he says, some investors, including M.E. Ingalls and J.P. Morgan, took it over. That was in the early 1880s.

A fire in 1901 destroyed the hotel, but the Casino Building built in 1895 was spared and still stands. Once used for sports, it is now the pro shop for tennis and golf and a popular lunch spot. Also saved from the flames were the cottages on cottage row and the spa. Rebuilding commenced immediately, and by 1902 the great hall as it is known today was completed.

Next, the east and west wings were finished in 1914. Three years earlier, Ingalls had become the sole owner of the hotel and the first of four generations to run The Homestead. In a stroke of bad timing, the iconic clock tower was completed in 1929 just as the stock market crashed. Still, for more than two centuries, The Homestead has withstood disaster and economic decline.



Virginia Strasser, 88, holds her "Star Employee" trophy at The Omni Homestead Resort & Spa in Hot Springs, Va. Strasser came to work there in 1943 and has there been ever since.

"I remember when the children ate in the children's dining room, which was off the main dining room," recalls Petrus. Parents would eat and dance to a live band free from parental duties, at least while dining. "Then there were the tray dances," he says, smiling. "It was in the Crystal Room and these guys, Norman Lacy was one, would dance with trays piled high with candles, plates, coffee pots and glasses on top of their heads. It was something."

Arthur Bryan, who has been at The Homestead for 42 years, chimes in, "They also had the tray races on the Casino lawn." That started in the 1940s and continued until 1965. "They had to stop because of the

betting," he said. A lot of things have changed since the days of tray dances, but the old ambience still hangs on even with modern amusements such as a water park with slides and a lazy river, and a miniature golf course.

Jimmy Cauley, the shooting instructor who ran the Gun Club until 1992, worked at The Homestead for 60 years and remembers shooting with the Ingalls family. "In those days it was all families, and people would come and stay for at least two weeks. Now we have more conventions, but then those people come back with their families."

"The Homestead is old-school, family, traditional," says Travis Braxton Jr., activities supervisor. Croquet, tennis, archery, archery tag, paint ball, canoeing, shooting, riding, hiking and, of course, golf. There are two world-class courses at The Homestead: the Cascades and the Old Course, which has the oldest continuous-use tee box in the United States and has never been altered. Sam Snead said the greens on the 18th hole rolled truer than anywhere he ever played. The winter options include skiing, snowmobiling, tubing, ice skating and more.

What makes The Homestead special are the spring waters — naturally heated to a soothing 104 degrees — that Native Americans believed had healing powers. Thomas Jefferson came in 1819

to take the cure for his rheumatism and stayed for 22 days. Others who followed included presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Eisenhower, William Taft, James Madison and James McKinley. Twenty-two sitting presidents, various dignitaries, captains of commerce and royalty have all visited The Homestead.

The duke and duchess of Windsor stayed 30 days, but the duke had a habit of leaving without paying his bill. He tried to slip away and stiff the hotel, but Fay Ingalls would have none of it. He chased after him, boarded the Windsors' private train car and presented him with the bill. It was the duchess who paid.

In the early 1900s, The Homestead was part of

the "springs circuit," a route traveled by affluent people from Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., who also enjoyed the waters at The Greenbrier in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., and Bedford Springs in Bedford, Pa.

During World War II, the U.S. government asked The Homestead to serve as an internment center for 363 Japanese diplomats, businessmen, press and others. They were held for a year from 1941-42.

The European-style spa and spa garden includes the hot spring that Jefferson soaked in, as well as a small lap pool. The famous indoor pool, which is filled with chlorinated spring water, is much the same as it was when then-New York Gov. Franklin Delano

Roosevelt took a dip with Fay Ingalls, the hotel's owner at the time. They were polar opposites politically, but Ingalls was a gracious host. Modern-day amenities have been added, such as the Aqua Thermal Suite and a range of spa and anti-aging treatments.

When the day is done, there are several dining options. The main dining room is more formal (no jeans or spandex allowed), where such dishes as freshly caught Allegheny Mountain trout and chateaubriand are served. The casual set can head to Sam Snead's Tavern in town or the more upscale Jefferson's Restaurant and Bar in the hotel. (Don't miss the deep-fried meatballs.) The Lobby Bar offers cocktails and conversation.



The pool complex at The Omni Homestead Resort boasts water slides and a lazy river, as well as a more standard pool. PATRICIA SHERIDAN PHOTOS / PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE / MCT