



"What in the world do people do here?"

If you're a motorcyclist and you've done even a little bit of backroads exploring I'm sure you've muttered these words to yourself a few times as you rolled through some long since forgotten little country town. Usually these towns consist of a stoplight and a post office - if they're lucky. Most often it's only a post office and a population sign that makes for a good photo opportunity with the motorcycle.

Usually, I simply roll through these towns on my given road and wonder what it's like to live there. I rarely give it more of a thought and almost never explore the place other than pulling over for some gas.

That was until a few years back when I discovered that you can't judge a book by its cover or in this case, a town by the particular road you're on.

A case in point is the following day tour I'm about to share with you. It's one of my wife and mine's favorites for just getting out and riding to enjoy the weather or just stretch our motorcycle legs a bit.

It's a simple loop up one side of the Ohio River, and back down the other. A motorcycle tour you can easily do in a day. A majority of your time will be exploring little backroad river towns along the way, stepping back in time, and just s-l-o-w-i-n-g d-o-w-n. These towns are truly jewels in the rough just waiting to be discovered by a rider out exploring by motorcycle. I just happened to stumble on them through sheer luck and have been coming back ever since.

Birthplace of a President

The route starts on the Ohio side of the Ohio River, just a little bit west of my hometown - Cincinnati, Ohio. The directions for this route are particularly easy. Follow U.S. 52 along the Ohio side of the river, then follow KY U.S. 8 on the Kentucky side of the river to get back. That's it (basically). You don't even need to program your GPS for this one.

By time we start the route it's around 10AM and the sun is fully up in the sky. My wife and I don't start particularly early in the morning since this is meant to be more of a lazy day trip and what's a better way to start a lazy day than with sleeping in? Get your mind out of the gutter, this isn't that kind of website. ;)

This particular tour is great to do alone if you're just looking to decompress and relax. But, my recommendation is to ride it with a spouse or a couple of close friends. The kind of friends that you won't feel uncomfortable with just sitting in silence watching the river roll by and getting lost in your thoughts.



As we roll through New Richmond on U.S. 52 it's starting to warm up significantly, so we're quite happy that the next 35 miles to our first stop are through forests providing lots of shade.

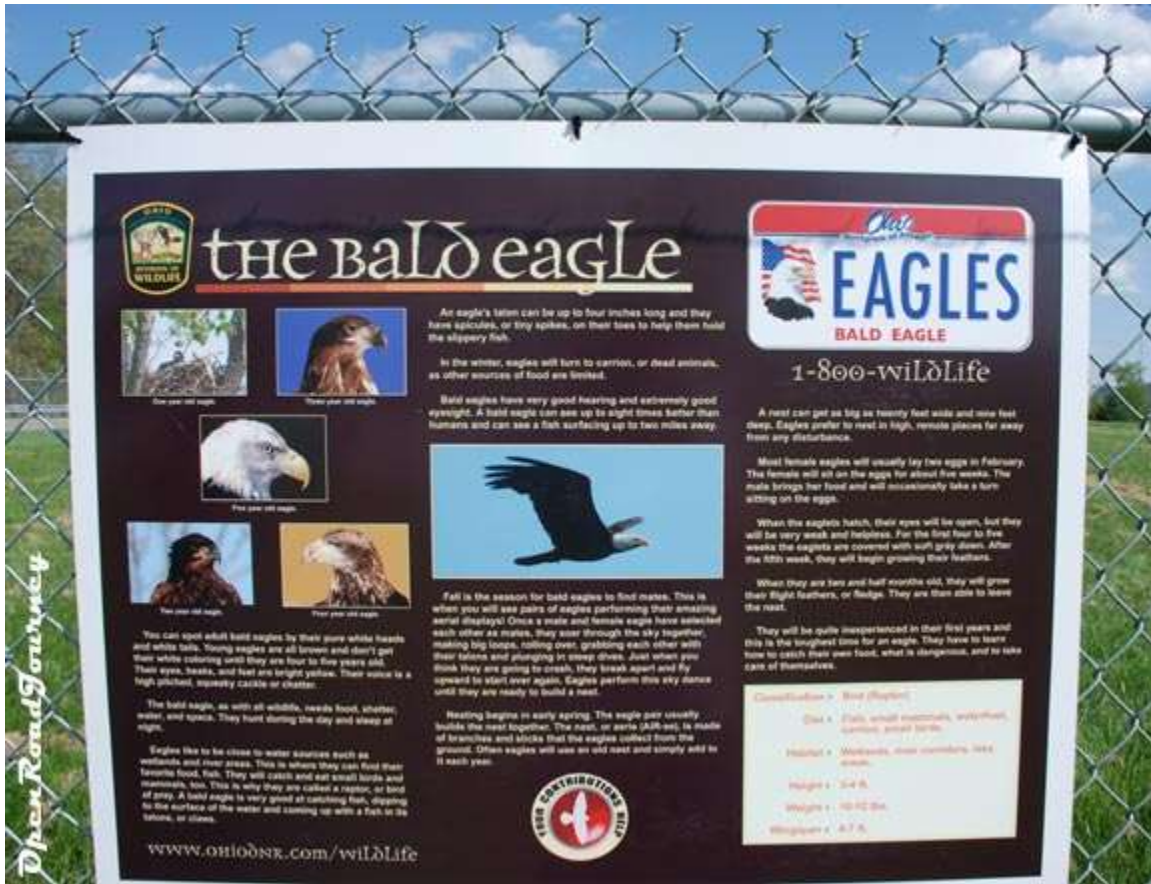


As we're cruising along, we pull over at Point Pleasant to visit the birthplace of Ulysses S. Grant. This restored one-story, three-room cottage, which was built in 1817, was next to the tannery where Grant's father worked. The small cottage is furnished with period items. It's only \$2 to walk through the house and experience this bit of history.

You can also take a break at a great rest area that exists in Point Pleasant along the river, there's picnic tables and clean restrooms - all overlooking the mighty Ohio. We didn't spend much time there this particular morning but we'll usually spend some time hanging out at this location on our way back home at the end of the day. It's quite enjoyable to sit at a picnic table and watch the river. The rest area sits right next to an old fashioned convenience store so you can grab a refreshment as well.



Grant's birthplace... \$2 to tour a bit of history. Not bad.



Part of U.S. 52 is known as Bald Eagle Alley.

Yep, that's right, bald eagles and I'm not talking about the kind that you see people carve out of tree stumps in their front yard (if you don't live in the Midwest you probably won't understand what I'm talking about). Nope, I'm talking about the real American bald eagle in the wild - five to seven foot wingspan and all. They do exist in Ohio, and not only do they exist, apparently they are quite popular here. Even popular enough that this next section of U.S. 52 is referred to as "Eagle Alley."

As you continue east on U.S. 52, about 2 miles past Higginsport, Ohio, there is a pull-off area with picnic tables overlooking a tree line across a pasture field. Those trees are located along the riverbank, and over the years a number of bald eagles have been observed perched in this tree line.

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RIDERS GUIDE

MILEAGE & TIME

Total Miles: 123

This is a single day motorcycle trip. You can finish it in far less than a day, but to truly enjoy it spend a whole day meandering around these old river towns and just slowing down a bit.

OVERVIEW

The route itself is a loop, and a very easy loop at that. You head up one side of the Ohio River in Ohio, cross over the river, then head back down the other side of the Ohio River in Kentucky. It's pretty darn hard to get lost.

Overall, the route does not have much traffic and the speed limit is a pretty constant 55 mph, except through the little towns you'll pass. The roads are all flat, and mostly straight. This ride will take you through numerous little river towns with lots of little places to stop and just hang out.

Lodging isn't hard to find, especially if you're ok with bed and breakfasts. The best place to find a motel is in Maysville, though you'll have to get a few miles out of the historic district. Once you do that, you'll find pretty much all of the regular chain hotels. RV camping is abundant along U.S. 52 at the river, in a pinch I'm sure you could stop in and ask to pinch a tent.

As far as food and gas goes, you won't have any problems in this category - especially in the food category. There are numerous places to eat in each of the little river towns. Gas is pretty plentiful along the Ohio side, not so much along the Kentucky side. But, the distances are short so don't sweat half a tank.

U.S. 52 and KY 8 are both pretty popular motorcycle routes, so you'll see lots of other bikes out and about. Make sure you bring cash as well, the ferry and a couple of the local restaurants don't take credit cards.

EATING & DRINKING

Cohearts Riverhouse
18 N Front St Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-4819

Fifties Diner
15 S 2nd St Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-9328

Ripley's 19th Main Tavern
19 Main St Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-0019

Snapper's Saloon
1 Main Street St Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-4058

Rockin' Robin's Soda Shoppe
8 North Front Street Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-1300

Corner Cafe
214 Hamilton Ave
Augusta, KY 41002
(606) 756-3219

Candlelight Restaurant
311 Columbia St
Higginsport, OH 45131
(937) 375-1519

Beehive Tavern
101 W Riverside Dr
Augusta, KY 41002
(606) 756-2202
www.beehivetavern.com

Augusta Irish Pub
120 Main St, Augusta, KY 41002
(606) 756-9910

Carota's Pizza
115 Main St, Augusta, KY 41002
(606) 756-2343

The Augusta General Store
109 Main St, Augusta, KY 41002
606-756-2525

THINGS TO DO

The Rankin House
6152 Rankin Road
Ripley, OH 45167
(937) 392-1627 or (937) 392-4044
ohiohistory.org

City of Maysville Kentucky Tourism

www.cityofmaysville.com/

National Underground Railroad Museum

115 E Third Street Maysville, KY

Maysville Flood Wall Murals

The Murals depicts the history of the Maysville and Old Washington waterfront and pioneer times.

216 Bridge Street, Maysville, KY

City of Augusta Kentucky Tourism

<http://www.augustaky.com/>

The Augusta Art Guild's Gallery

116 Main Street, Augusta, KY 41002

606-747-5007

The Rosemary Clooney House Museum

106 East Riverside Drive, Augusta, KY 41002

606-756-2603

The 1811 Augusta Jail

Appelman Park on 2nd Street, Augusta, KY 41002

LODGING

The Signal House Bed and Breakfast

234 N. Front Street Ripley, OH 45167

(937) 392-1640

www.thesignalhouse.com

The Ohio River House Bed and Breakfast

101 Brown Street, Higginsport, OH 45131

www.ohioriverhouse.com

The Parkview Country Inn

103 West Second Street

Augusta, Kentucky 41002

(606) 756-2603

www.parkviewcountryinn.com