



CENTENNIAL FIELD GUIDE

US Route 20 at 100

A paper-first guide to what actually turns 100 in 2026, how the route grew from Yellowstone to Newport, why the longest-current-highway distinction came later, and how to turn that history into a modern Route 20 trip.



NOVEMBER 11, 1926

The designation

US 20 was included in the U.S. Numbered Highway System approved on this date.

1943

Newport confirmed

AASHO confirmed the Oregon extension from Albany west to Newport.

1963

Longest current U.S. highway

US 20 took that distinction after US 6 was shortened.

The centennial is about the US 20 designation. It does not mean every present endpoint, bridge, bypass, alignment, or mile of pavement has carried US 20 continuously since 1926.



Current centennial hub

Scan for the canonical online history, related route pages, and current planning handoffs.



What actually turns 100?

One numbered identity, a century of route change

US 20 entered the approved national system in 1926. Its present Boston-to-Newport form was assembled through later extensions, adjustments, and changing route status.

NOVEMBER 11, 1926

US 20 enters the approved U.S. Numbered Highway System

This is the centennial date used by the Route20RoadTrip history.

ORIGINAL WESTERN FRAME

The final 1926 route stops at Yellowstone

The modern Oregon endpoint should not be read backward into the original plan.

EARLY 1940S

The route expands west through Idaho and Oregon

The later western growth creates the coast-to-coast reach travelers recognize today.

1943

Albany-to-Newport extension confirmed

Newport becomes the modern Pacific endpoint as part of the later route story.

1963

The longest-current-highway distinction arrives later

US 20 becomes the longest current U.S. highway after US 6 is shortened.

Useful rule: when the modern road and the 1926 story differ, keep both facts. The difference is part of the history.



1926

ORIGINAL ROUTE

Boston to Yellowstone was the original frame

Eastern identity

The original Route 20 story already had a long east-west identity reaching the Boston side of the country.

Western stop

The final 1926 US 20 routing stopped at Yellowstone National Park rather than continuing to Oregon.

What that means now

Do not flatten the historical map into the modern map.

1 Keep Newport in the modern route story

Newport is the present Pacific endpoint and a legitimate Route 20 destination.

2 Keep Yellowstone in the original-route story

The 1926 western endpoint explains why the centennial needs a timeline instead of a single modern map.

3 Do not claim every current mile is 100 years old

The designation's age and the age of today's individual roads are different questions.

Original-route fact I want to remember

Modern-route fact I want to compare

The route's evolution does not weaken the centennial story. It is the centennial story: one designation that kept changing with the national road network.



WESTWARD GROWTH

NEWPORT CAME LATER

How Route 20 reached the Pacific

EARLY 1940S

US 20 expands through Idaho and Oregon

The route's western reach grows beyond the 1926 Yellowstone endpoint.

1943

AASHO confirms the Oregon extension from Albany to Newport

This later extension establishes Newport as the modern Pacific endpoint described throughout the guide.

Newport

Modern Pacific endpoint and a natural place to mark the present-day western end of Route 20.

Albany

The 1943 confirmation connects the existing Oregon reach westward to the coast.

Yellowstone

Remains central to the route's original western story even after the route grows farther west.

Travel meaning

If you drive to Newport today, you are completing the modern Route 20 corridor - not reenacting an unchanged 1926 alignment.

Pacific endpoint date / visit note

Oregon chapter I want to drive



Why "longest current U.S. highway" is not a 1926 claim

Route20RoadTrip's historical frame: US 20 became the longest current U.S. highway after US 6 was shortened in 1963.

THEN

1926 designation

US 20 belongs to the original numbered system, but the final 1926 route did not yet have its modern Newport extent.

LATER

Longest-current status

The route's present distinction arrives decades after designation approval, once US 6 is shortened in 1963.

Three statements that can all be true

Keep the dates attached to the claims.

- ☐ US 20 is an original 1926 U.S. highway designation.
- ☐ Newport is a later Pacific endpoint reached through westward route growth.
- ☐ US 20's longest-current-highway distinction dates from 1963, not 1926.

Centennial fact to share

Later route-evolution fact to share



YELLOWSTONE HANDOFF

PLAN THE BREAK

The travel story continues; the designation does not

Important: the US Route 20 designation does not continue through Yellowstone National Park. Treat the park as a real planning handoff rather than a hidden through-line.

East approach

Use the Cody and Wapiti Valley side for the final Route 20 chapter before the park boundary.

Park crossing

Handle Yellowstone as its own access, weather, road, and lodging problem when the park is part of the trip.

West re-entry

Resume the Route 20 story at West Yellowstone and Island Park on the Idaho-side chapter.

Before a Yellowstone-area Route 20 trip

Use current official conditions.

- ☐ Check park-road opening and closure status.
- ☐ Check weather and seasonal access.
- ☐ Confirm lodging or camping before depending on it.
- ☐ Separate the numbered-highway discontinuity from the continuous travel itinerary.
- ☐ Keep an alternate plan if park conditions change.

East-side handoff

West-side re-entry



Choose a chapter, not a commemorative marathon

History-first

Read the centennial hub and the Route 20 at 100 editorial, then choose one place where the history changes how you see the road.

Experience-first

Use the Twenty Route 20 Experiences checklist to pick one western, heartland, Midwest, or eastern chapter.

Trip-first

Use a state planner or flagship trip companion when the practical drive matters more than completing a centennial theme.

Useful online handoffs

Each page answers a different question.

1 Centennial hub

The detailed historical frame for 1926, Yellowstone, Newport, and the later longest-highway distinction.

2 Twenty Route 20 Experiences

A west-to-east discovery sequence that hands off to real place, trip, segment, and state pages.

3 Road-trip planner

Use it to choose the scale of the drive rather than forcing the entire highway into one trip.

4 Route 20 FAQ

Use the common-question layer for route continuity, states, timing, and general driving context.



FIELD NOTES

REVISION: AUGUST 2026

Carry the history forward without freezing it

Route 20 chapter I want to experience

Historical point I want to notice there

Place / segment / trip page to open

Current condition I must verify

Accuracy reminder: this printable is a companion to Route20RoadTrip's current centennial material. It is not a claim that every present Route 20 mile or attraction dates to 1926. Use the canonical online page for the current historical framing and linked source notes.



Continue with the current centennial hub

Use the online page for the detailed history, the Route 20 at 100 editorial, the Roads of 1926 comparison, and current trip-planning links.

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