

The Rules



**“Whither goest thou, America,
in thy shiny car in the night?”**

—JACK KEROUAC, *ON THE ROAD*

*The road trip is as much a voyage of self-discovery as it is a physical journey. The traveler need do no more than turn the key in the ignition, shift gears and head out into the great unknown ... pausing only to execute a six-point turn on a suburban dead-end street while mopping up lap-scalding coffee and shouting, “You’re the one with the map!” Alternatively, you could do a little prep. To this end, we gave our intrepid correspondent **Sam Polcer** a Corvette, a map of Route 1 (Massachusetts to Maine) and a mandate to write down all the things that make a road trip work.*





Rule No. 1

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

The most critical parts of any road trip are also the most obvious: co-pilot, route, car. I suspected I'd made a good choice on the first requisite with Amanda, an old high school buddy, the moment she eagerly tucked into a tray of local delicacies while bantering with the waitstaff at a Maine roadside eatery named Flo's. My wisdom was confirmed later, as we strolled road-weary along a rocky beach by our motel, and she conjured a bottle of Bulleit Rye from her bag.

As for the drive itself, we had decided on Route 1, from Boston up through Maine, ending in gorgeous Acadia National Park. Early on in the journey, around the town of Topsfield, Mass., the asphalt narrowed to two lanes and the blur of trees gave way to a procession of kitschy motels, age-old diners and adorable antiques shops. It was here, I think, that we realized the drive would not be about getting anywhere fast.

It might seem a little odd, then, that we'd opted to take

our trip in a 2012 Chevy Corvette Grand Sport Centennial Edition, perhaps not the obvious vehicle for some New England pottering. But then, it is a 'Vette, the epitome of the American muscle car. Better yet, the Centennial is a convertible that comes in just one color: black. What else would we go in?

The instant a road trip begins, the clichés start piling up: Amanda's hair whipping in the wind, the pair of us cruising the oldest East Coast highway toward a state that bills itself as "Vacationland," old friends escaping the city for a spell, reminiscing and sharing our current problems over endless cups of bad gas-station coffee. As I look back on it now, the trip unfolded like a movie montage, set to a compilation of songs with the word "free" in them.

Rather than bucking the clichés, we decided to play along. We munched lobster rolls at roadside shacks, stopped to ogle pretty little farms, chatted with no-nonsense waitresses, got strangers to take our picture at lighthouses. We sang along to every corny song we knew. Finally, as we neared our destination, we pulled onto the highway for a while, just to see how the 'Vette performed in top gear.

We kind of had to, didn't we?



RULE NO. 2

Pack Light

This is essential, particularly if you're driving something sporty (a word derived from the Greek for "limited trunk space"). Also, you'll be checking into and out of hotels every day, so you won't want to waste valuable driving time segregating your socks from your T-shirts in a dozen easily misplaced baglets. A general rule is that you have to be able to toss your luggage into the car—emphasis on the word "toss." The Parma duffel from Floto is durable enough to withstand such stylish insouciance while also looking the part. Italian calfskin, stainless steel zippers, thick khaki stitching ... it feels good to toss this beauty pretty much anywhere. \$549, flotoimports.com

LEATHER
THAT ONLY
GETS BETTER
WITH TIME



RULE NO. 3

AMUSE YOURSELF

HOW TO ALLEVIATE THE INEVITABLE PERIODS OF BOREDOM

HIT THE BUM NOTES

When you're in a car, all issues relating to musical aptitude are off the table. It really doesn't matter if you sound like a seagull being tickled to death. You will, many times during your trip, feel compelled to sing, and sing badly. Don't fight it. "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me?" is a good place to start.

EAT UP

If you've chosen your route wisely, you'll pass scores of great roadside food joints, and it would be rude to neglect them. In a single day, I had a breakfast sandwich (Becky's Diner), a burger and fries (Fat Boy Drive-In), a lobster roll the size of my head (Red's Eats) and seared salmon (Bar Harbor Inn), along with a shameful amount of

beef jerky (purchased with cash, per Rule No. 9), all without breaking a sweat.

PIPE DOWN

The limitations of dialectical materialism, the relative merits of Ho Hos and Ring Dings, the time you did the chicken dance at your high school prom—road trips are an invitation to exhaust every conversational subject known to man. Even more important, however, is the ability to endure long silences without discomfort.

PLAY STUPID GAMES

There will be times when discussions about how boring Facebook has gotten will lose a bit of

their sheen. So you'll need some stupid games to pass the time. Spot the Silly License Plate is a good one for Maine. Also, Spot the Antiques Shop, Spot the Inappropriate Motorcycle Attire, and Spot the Cop Car a-Hiding Behind That Tree. D'oh!



Rule No. 4

PICK A SUITABLE CAR-MATE

Other than marriage or long-term incarceration, it's hard to imagine a situation that thrusts people together more inexorably than the road trip. So, to avoid long stretches of tedium and even unpleasantness, you'll want to choose your co-driver very, very carefully.



Rule No. 5

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE 'VETTE ...

Should you find yourself road-tripping in a sports car, you will have the urge to look nonchalant as you wait at traffic lights, your elbow jutting from an open window. You will also be tempted to rev the engine excessively, and may even make little *brrm-brrm* noises with your lips. All of this is fine, as long as you don't tell anyone about it when you get home. It's a bit unbecoming.



Rule No. 6

TAKE DETOURS

All good road trips feature a few unpredictable moments, and the best way to go about finding these is by turning off onto a dirt road every so often. You might come across a quaint old farmhouse, or a field of fragrant wildflowers, or a local willing to brief you on the intricacies of lobster trapping—the point is, you never know.

Rule No. 7

WEATHER IT

If you're in a convertible, your first response to rain will be to shout, "The roof! The roof!" After the initial excitement dies down, you'll spend a contented hour being mesmerized by the rhythmic back-and-forth of the wipers. When this gets old, linger over a cup of coffee in a roadside diner, or loiter for a while in someplace like the Musical Wonder House, a Maine museum devoted to antique music boxes.



Rule No. 8

PROP UP A LOCAL BAR

Before turning in for the night, find the place where the townsfolk go to unwind. Order a local brew, or something that allows you to use the word "neat." Don't be intimidated. Talk to people. Ask questions. Tell jokes. You can do all of these things at Novare Res Bier Café, hidden down an alley in Portland—provided you're not paralyzed by the menu of 525-plus beers.



Rule No. 9

BRING CASH

No matter how much it may seem like an appropriate substitute for a couple of bucks, you should never try to tip a gas station attendant with beef jerky. Similarly, do not attempt to buy a stick of jerky with a credit card. In fact, unless you have some hard currency on your person, stay away from all heavily cured meat products.



RULE NO. 10

ASK THE EXPERT

Five driving tips from long-haul trucker Slowpoke*

DRINK UP, STRETCH OUT

"I like to drink water and Gatorade while driving [to stay] well hydrated. And every two or three hours, pull over, get out, walk around and stretch."

CHEW IT OVER

"While you're in the seat, chewing sugarless gum will help you feel more alert—it causes increased blood circulation to the face. An old tour-bus driver told me that, and it really does work!"

STAY SHARP

"Be well rested, have a clear mind and pay attention to your surroundings. And keep your cool when (when, not if) another motorist drives poorly."

STOP FOR A BITE

"I like Sierra Sid's in Sparks, Nev. They have a big parking lot, the food is good, there is very cool memorabilia on display, the best truck stop showers I've ever used, and there's a casino too."

DON'T MULTITASK

"I once saw a guy in Austin, Texas, playing a mandolin—with both hands—while driving during evening rush hour."

*CB handle

RULE NO. 11

PUT SOME THOUGHT INTO YOUR MUSICAL SELECTIONS

THREE TUNES WORTH SINGING ALONG TO FROM THE PASSENGER SEAT, BY AMANDA PETRUSICH, CO-PILOT



"I WANNA BE FREE," LORETTA LYNN

Lynn was preaching gleeful feminine independence long before "girl power" became a marketing meme, and "I Wanna Be Free" ("I released my heart, my soul and my mind / And I'm a-feelin' fine!") is exactly the sort of giddy, everything-is-possible anthem you want shaking the speakers when you put the top down for the first time.



"WHEELS," THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS

I'm a sucker for just about anything involving Gram Parsons—I subjected Sam to at least a few consecutive hours of Parsons-related country rock (strengthened, I like to think, by several of my own invented harmonies). And "Wheels" is Parsons' untouchable testament to the transformative power of the road ("Come on, wheels, take this boy away").



"FREE FALLIN'," TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

A clichéd pick, perhaps, but arguably the single greatest driving song ever committed to tape. Go ahead and try *not* punching the steering wheel when the drums kick in after the first verse. Just don't overdo it (see Rule No. 15).



BOBBLEHEAD HULA GIRL:
It's a serious car, but it shouldn't be taken too seriously.

ROAD MAP:
If you're doing this right, you'll find yourself in a place where the GPS doesn't work. Pick up a map.

COFFEE AND BEEF JERKY:
Only Shell's finest.

IPHONE:
Mix CDs last only an hour. Get over your nostalgia and load this up.

RULE NO.12

LOVE YOUR DASHBOARD

IF THE WINDSHIELD IS YOUR TV, THIS IS YOUR LIVING ROOM—SO MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE WITH A FEW PERSONAL TOUCHES

RULE NO.13

Take Pictures

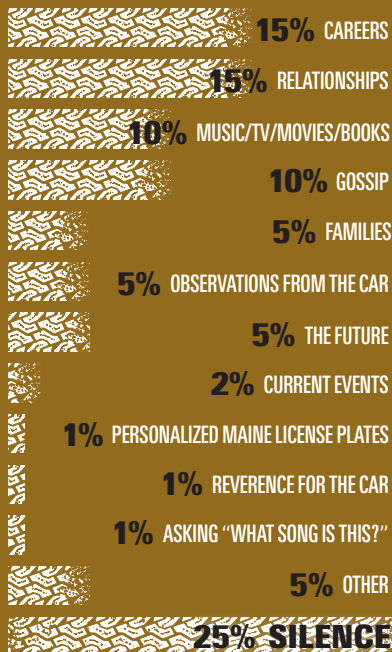
Every epic journey demands visual documentation, a rule exemplified by photographer Robert Frank's road trip masterpiece, *The Americans*. Frank, however, was bankrolled by the Guggenheim Foundation; you are not. Luckily, the X-Pro1, Fuji's latest entry into the prosumer interchangeable-lens digital camera market, provides a relatively cheap and supremely portable option. You can outfit the X-Pro1—which boasts a new high-resolution sensor—with three fixed-focal-length lenses, including an incredibly versatile 35mm f/1.4. And if your pictures don't end up being museum-quality, you can always sit and admire the attractive retro styling of the camera itself. \$1,699, fujifilm.com



SHOOTS MOVIES IN FULL HD, TOO!

CHAT-O-METER

TOPICS EXPLORED DURING A TWO-DAY ROAD TRIP



Rule No. 14

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Those slim-fit jeans and T-shirts may have seemed like a good idea, but on a road trip they bind in all the wrong places—by which we mean around mile three of your journey. A rule of thumb: If you wouldn't go to bed in it, don't drive in it.

Rule No. 15

STOP DOING THAT

Tapping on the steering wheel. Reading aloud every road sign you pass. Hollering "Cow!" every time you see a cow. Groaning theatrically every time you get out of the car. Asking every 10 minutes if we've passed Kennebunk yet. Picking your teeth with toll tickets ...

Rule No. 16

GO SHOPPING

The success of a road trip directly correlates with the weirdness of the stuff that you obtain along the way. Among our haul was a 1960s comic book titled *The Secret House of Sinister Love*, a cougar pendant fashioned from a seashell, and a fridge magnet bearing a dreadful illustration of a lobster pot. Priceless.



Rule No. 17

CALL YOUR MOTHER

"Hi, Mom? We just pulled over to watch this beautiful sunset, and it made me think of you. Oh, and by the way, do you mind swinging by my place to check if I turned the AC off? Thanks! Bye!"

RULE NO. 18

PLAN AHEAD

When you've finally returned home again, it's time to park the car, kill the engine ... and start thinking about where you're off to next



Appalachian Trail, U.S.

The ergonomic boot-wearing 2,184-milers will scorn you, but it is possible to do the Appalachian Trail by car. The truly idle may cut the trip in half by driving from the trail's Georgia starting point to Gettysburg, Pa., a trip that allows for air-conditioned pioneering while providing a glimpse at the cultural and physical landscapes of the American South.

WHAT TO DRIVE: *Lexus IS F*



Dempster Highway, Canada

You're not going to get a lot of variety on the Dempster Highway. The road starts in Dawson City, in the Yukon, and terminates 450 miles later in Inuvik, way inside the Arctic Circle. What you'll see en route is wilderness—sometimes flat, sometimes not—and snow. A journey for hardy types eager to get in touch with their inner Inuit.

WHAT TO DRIVE: *Subaru Outback*



Romantic Road, Germany

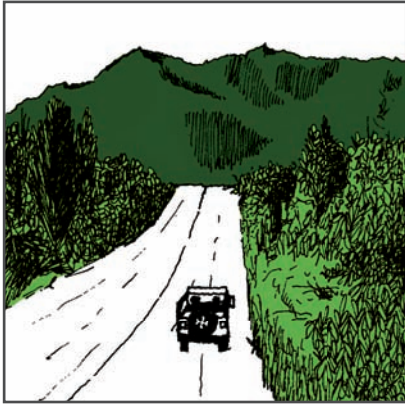
The world's most aptly named stretch of black-top, the Romantic Road starts at the ancient shambles of Würzburg and weaves for 220 miles alongside fairy-tale castles and sloping meadows, concluding at the mist-shrouded Bavarian Alps. The only downside? By the end, trippers tend to start quoting Goethe.

WHAT TO DRIVE: *1962 Mercedes-Benz 190SL Coupe*

GETTING A FLYING START

The New England stretch of U.S. Route 1 is not only famously scenic (and hence the ideal backdrop for our road trip package), but also

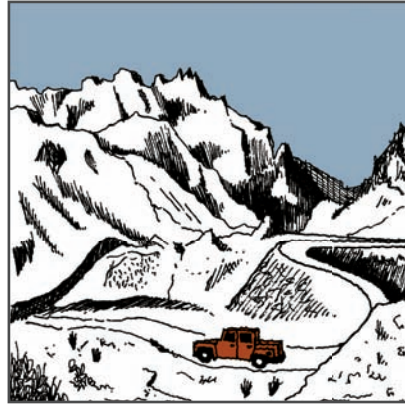
convenient to a number of cities in the Northeast. United makes it easy to launch your coastal road trip from across the country with service to the following:
New York/Newark: Daily flights from United's seven other U.S. hubs and more than 130 other cities.



Pan-American Highway, Peru

You wouldn't want to drive the whole continent-spanning thing, but the Pan-American Highway from Lima to Arequipa is doable. The road traces Peru's Pacific coast, packing a ton of spectacle into 623 miles: Incan ruins, volcanoes, UFO landing sites, oases, gift shops. Try to avoid the alpacas, which tend to congregate in the middle of the road.

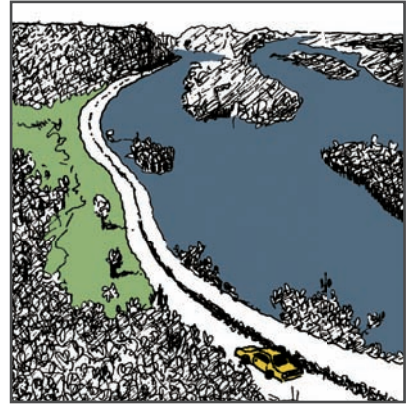
WHAT TO DRIVE: *Jeep Wrangler*



The Silk Road, Europe and Asia

Winding from Venice to Beijing, this one represents a serious undertaking. The ancient trading route runs for 12,500 miles through 12 countries, with rugged terrain and exotic political systems, requiring even the hardest travelers to seek help. The standard duration of a self-drive tour is 80 days, and it doesn't come cheap—but the things you will see!

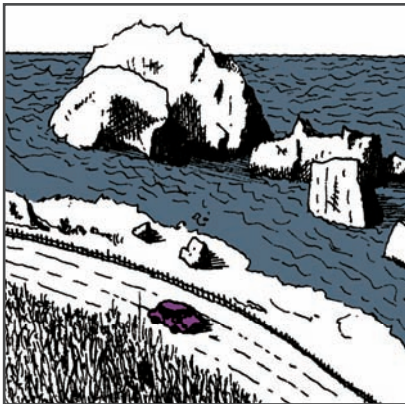
WHAT TO DRIVE: *Hummer H3T*



Great River Road, U.S.

Fixed in the American popular imagination, the Mississippi is as rich in cultural significance as it is in mud. Apart from hopping a barge, the best way to follow its 2,350-mile journey is via the Great River Road. The trip can be gritty (you're often as likely to see a smokestack as a sycamore), but that's part of the poetry.

WHAT TO DRIVE: *Dodge Challenger Yellow Jacket*



Route 101, Oregon

While often overshadowed by its Northern California stretch, the Pacific Coast Highway's 350-mile squiggle through Oregon is an equally good bet for hairpin turns and sublime vistas. The route bristles with coves, crags and looming pines, interspersed with wineries whose proprietors have worn the same pair of sandals for 20 years.

WHAT TO DRIVE: *Volkswagen Jetta Hybrid*

Boston: Daily flights from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Houston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York/Newark and Washington, D.C.
Portland, Maine: Daily flights from New York/Newark, Cleveland, Chicago and D.C.

RULE NO. 19

Replace Sunglasses

Fat Boy Drive-In in Brunswick, Maine, may be known as a mecca for onion rings, but to you it's the place where you left your shades. So, by necessity, you go in search of a replacement. The most important attribute for any good pair of driving sunglasses—besides making you look as broodingly hip as Ryan Gosling in *Drive*—is that they allow you to see where you're going. To cut the glare while maintaining Gosling-esque panache, go with the unisex Cayton from Mosley Tribes, Oliver Peoples' active-lifestyles offshoot, with VFX polarized lenses and antiqued-gold frames. **\$220, mosleytribes.com**

