Franklin Delano Roosevelt faced two of the most daunting challenges of any president in U.S. history—the Great Depression and World War II. When he became the 32nd president in 1933, America was mired in a malaise of unemployment and feeble manufacturing output, grim legacies of the stock market crash that had occurred four years earlier. Although Roosevelt's promise to repeal Prohibition practically ensured his election, it was the New Deal—his legislative agenda of government-funded programs designed to help get the country on its economic feet—that not only put people back to work but established a system of regulatory policies that are still in place today.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor came early in Roosevelt's third term as president, thrusting the nation into World War II. He again galvanized the nation; the first president to utilize mass media as a communication tool, FDR's radio "fireside chats" played an instrumental role in allaying the fears and rallying the spirits of Americans. In response, wartime-fueled industrial production rose to an unprecedented level.

Roosevelt's political and presidential achievements, remarkable in and of themselves, take on added significance given the fact that he was stricken with poliomyelitis at 39 years of age, losing the use of his legs. Although FDR did not live to see the war's end, his leadership helped propel the United States to new heights as a world superpower. And although not universally loved ("Judge me by the enemies I have made," he once said), Roosevelt's fervent belief in
democracy brought hope and confidence to a nation at a time when it dearly needed both.

AAA developed a Roosevelt-themed drive trip due to the fact that many New Deal programs were specifically aimed at improving automobile transportation, a traditional association concern. The route covers a healthy portion of the eastern United States, beginning in New York's Hudson River Valley, proceeding south to the nation's capital and continuing on to Warm Springs, Ga. The journey parallels key stages in Roosevelt's life, from his Hyde Park beginnings to his presidential triumphs to his final days. It also takes in two of the country's loveliest drives, Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway—roads that owe their existence to FDR's New Deal. Each is at its scenic peak in springtime, making April or May ideal months to depart.

Fast Facts: 3 Legs - 1,154 Miles

- Leg 1: From Hyde Park, N.Y., take US 9 s. to Poughkeepsie, SR 55 from Poughkeepsie w. to US 9W, US 9W s. to I-84, I-84 w. to I-87, I-87 s. to the Garden State Parkway, the Garden State Parkway s. to I-95, I-95 s. to I-295, I-295 s. to US 50 and US 50 w. to Washington, D.C. (317 mi./approximately 5 hrs., 15 min.)
- Leg 2: From Washington, D.C., take I-66 w. to SR 55, SR 55 w. to US 340, US 340 s. to Skyline Drive, Skyline Drive s. to the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Blue Ridge Parkway s.w. to US 70 and US 70 w. to Asheville, N.C. (558 mi./approximately 12 hrs.)

NOTE: Actual time to complete the entire trip may vary, based on the number of attractions you elect to visit and the time spent at each attraction. The drive time for Leg 2 is estimated due to lower speed limits on Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**LEG 1: HYDE PARK, N.Y., TO WASHINGTON, D.C. - 317 MILES**
Estimated Driving Time - 5 hours 15 minutes

This trip begins in **Hyde Park**, one of a string of towns nestled in southern New York State's Hudson Valley. Fly-in visitors arriving at Albany International Airport in Albany can take CR 151 south from the airport to I-87, then I-87 south to exit 19 (Kingston/SR 28), then west on SR 28, north on US 209 N, east on SR 199, southeast on SR 9G and south on US 9 to get to Hyde Park. Locally, Hyde Park can be reached from I-87, I-84 and US 9.

**Note:** The distance from the Albany airport to Hyde Park is about 85 miles and will add approximately 90 additional minutes of driving time.

The Hudson Valley was discovered by accident. In 1609 English explorer Henry Hudson, searching for a way to get to China, entered the river named for him while navigating the waters of northeastern North America. Hudson and his crew got as far as the site of present-
day Albany, about 150 miles upriver, before realizing it was not going to lead to their intended destination. His explorations opened up the valley to Dutch settlement (Hudson was hired for the journey by the Dutch East India Trading Co.), and the region first known as New Amsterdam in time became part of New York.

The river figured prominently during Revolutionary War fighting, as it was a vital link connecting New England to the Middle Atlantic colonies. With the invention of the steamboat in 1807, the Hudson became popular for leisure travel, and after completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 a major trade artery as well. That same year a young artist named Thomas Cole traveled the valley, sketching its natural beauty. The landscapes created by Cole and other painters came to be known as the Hudson River School of Painting.

In the mid-19th century wealthy New York City residents such as financier J. Pierpont Morgan, governor Hamilton Fish and Union Pacific railroad president Edward H. Harriman began building opulent summer estates, particularly in a part of the middle valley that was dubbed "Millionaires' Row." Several of these mansions stand in Hyde Park, including the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site and the Staatsburgh State Historic Site in nearby Staatsburg, both AAA GEM attractions. The most famous Hyde Park homes, however, belonged to the Roosevelt family.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born in Hyde Park in 1882. The Roosevelts were a powerful political family; Theodore (a fifth cousin) was president when FDR graduated from Harvard University. Roosevelt was elected to the New York state Senate and served two terms as governor before being elected president. The Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, a AAA GEM attraction, is 2 miles south of Hyde Park on US 9. Here stands Springwood, the family's home. Visitors can take a guided tour of the stucco mansion, which was built in 1826 and is preserved to look essentially as it did at the time of FDR's death. During visits Roosevelt traveled around the grounds in his wheelchair, away from reporters and photographers. He and his wife Eleanor are buried in the Rose Garden; the gravesites are marked by a simple white marble monument. Miles of hiking trails wind through the 300 acres of grounds.

Also at the national historic site is the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, another AAA GEM attraction. This is the first presidential library; prior to Roosevelt's presidency, the papers of chief executives were private property. Some collections ended up in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., but others were sold, destroyed, lost or kept by families and thus unavailable to historians for long periods. The building is Hudson Valley fieldstone, and resembles the Dutch colonial architectural style that FDR favored. Several of his "fireside chats" were delivered from the library study. The museum's displays of family possessions, memorabilia and photographs illuminate the lives of both President and Mrs. Roosevelt.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was in many ways as notable as her husband. She transformed the traditionally unassuming role of first lady, traveling extensively, holding press conferences
and giving lectures—all while dedicating her life to FDR's political purposes. Following his death she was a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly as well as a globe-trotting humanitarian. The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, a few miles southeast of Hyde Park off SR 9G, preserves Val-Kill, the modest cottage that was her weekend and holiday retreat during Roosevelt's presidency. You can see the furnished home on a guided tour and then enjoy the gardens and walking trails that meander through the surrounding woodland. **Note:** The access road to the site is narrow and unpaved, so check weather conditions before visiting.

From Hyde Park, proceed south on Albany Post Road/US 9 (*a AAA Scenic Byway*) about 6 miles to **Poughkeepsie**, built on a plateau high above the Hudson River. Here you can see several examples of artwork commissioned by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of Roosevelt's New Deal agencies that provided jobs and income to unemployed persons during the 1930s.

At the offices of the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 85 Civic Center Plaza, check out the spiraling lobby mural that depicts the history of publishing and newspapers (on the second floor one of the scenes shows FDR meeting with the press at his Hyde Park home). More New Deal artwork is on display at the Main Post Office, 55 Mansion St. This National Historic Landmark contains five murals depicting local history, two in the first-floor lobby and three in the second-floor mezzanine area.

From Poughkeepsie, cross the Mid-Hudson Bridge (SR 55) and proceed west to the junction with US 9W, then take US 9W (*a AAA Scenic Byway*) southwest. It's easy to see what inspired the artists of the Hudson River School—the dense woods, rocky cliffs and water views are prime landscape subjects. Continue south to the junction with N. Plank Road (SR 52), then proceed west to access I-84 West. Take I-84 exit 7S to access I-87 South via SR 300. Proceed south about 36 miles on I-87 (New York State Thruway) to exit 14A to access the Garden State Parkway. Take the Garden State Parkway south about 42 miles to exit 129 (I-95/New Jersey Turnpike). Follow the signs to get on I-95 South, which becomes the New Jersey Turnpike.

Take the turnpike south about 91 miles to I-295 South. Stay on I-295 for 5.5 miles, crossing the Delaware Memorial Bridge (toll westbound). Take the exit to access I-95 South. Continue south on I-95 about 98 miles. **Note:** There is a toll for the Ft. McHenry Tunnel in downtown Baltimore.) Take I-95 exit 22B to get on I-295 South (Baltimore-Washington Parkway). Stay on I-295 for 5.5 miles to the US 50 exit. Take US 50 west into the District of Columbia; after 4.8 miles turn left to access I-395 South. Proceed on I-395 2 miles to the 12th Street/Maine Avenue/Downtown exit. Follow the signs to 12th Street S.W. Turn left onto Independence Avenue S.W., which runs along the south side of the National Mall.

**Note:** Although this is a long driving leg, it can be broken up by stopping at one of the many interstate exits along the way.

**Washington, D.C.** is without a doubt one of the country's tourist meccas. There are so many things to see that coming up with a sightseeing itinerary on your own could be daunting. However, the attractions referred to on this drive trip all have a direct connection to Roosevelt.

**Note:** Parking spaces are at a premium in the District, particularly in the area around the
National Mall. Most are metered (except on weekends), there are parking restrictions on
some city streets, and violations are strictly enforced. Whether you're staying in
Washington overnight or just spending the day, it's advisable to leave your car at your
lodging or in a parking garage and use Metro, D.C.'s efficient and economical subway
system.

Your first stop should be the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, a AAA GEM attraction.
It's in West Potomac Park along the western edge of the Tidal Basin, between the Jefferson
and Lincoln memorials; the closest Metro station is Smithsonian. Dedicated in 1997, the
memorial spreads out along the Tidal Basin shoreline. The four outdoor "rooms" depicting
the chronological progression of Roosevelt's four-term presidency are accented by shade
trees, waterfalls, statuary and quiet little alcoves, providing a serene atmosphere. The
bronze sculptures are evocative—a reclining figure waiting in a bread line, a man listening
to one of the president's fireside chats, a seated FDR 9 feet tall. Roosevelt quotations,
articulations of hope during tumultuous times, are carved into the walls of red South Dakota
granite.

If you're lucky enough to be in Washington when the cherry trees are in full bloom (usually
early April), take a walk south along the Tidal Basin from the FDR Memorial toward the
Jefferson Memorial. The clouds of pale pink blossoms are exquisitely beautiful.

Roosevelt's greatest challenge as president was
guiding the nation's course through a
momentous war. The National World War II
Memorial commemorates that conflict. This
AAA GEM attraction is just off 17th Street
N.W., behind the Washington Monument
grounds. This appropriately somber memorial,
dedicated in 2004, pays tribute to the 16
million men and women who served in the
U.S. armed forces and the more than 400,000
who died, and also pays tribute to the
generation of Americans who joined together
in sacrifice and commitment to aid the war
effort.

It's surprisingly intimate given the war's global scope—two pavilions representing the
Atlantic and Pacific theaters are connected by a circular layout of 56 pillars, one for each
U.S. state and territory as well as the District of Columbia. On each side of the 17th Street
entrance are 12 bas-relief sculptures, including one scene showing a family listening to
Roosevelt ask Congress for a declaration of war following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.
V-E (Victory in Europe) day, which signaled the war's end in Europe, was celebrated less
than a month after the president's death.

From the National World War II Memorial, head to the Department of the Interior building,
which covers two city blocks from C to E streets and 18th to 19th streets N.W. (the closest
Metro station is Farragut West). Comprising eight bureaus, the Department of the Interior
manages one out of every 5 acres of land in the United States. In addition to housing
agencies that govern the development, use and conservation of our natural resources, this
huge building also is a museum displaying Washington's largest concentration of New Deal
artwork. More than 25 murals and sculptures are scattered throughout its eight floors, depicting such events as the Oklahoma land rush, construction of a dam, American Indian life and the scientific achievements of African Americans. **Note:** The murals can be viewed on a guided tour; reservations should be made at least two weeks in advance.

Don't leave the nation's capital without visiting the United States Capitol, a AAA GEM attraction on Capitol Hill at the east end of the Mall (the closest Metro stations are Union Station and Capitol South). The site was selected by George Washington and Pierre L’Enfant, the French-born architect who envisioned the layout of the new city; Washington laid the cornerstone in 1793 with a trowel used 143 years later by Roosevelt to lay the cornerstone for the Department of the Interior building. The spacious Rotunda is encircled by a frieze depicting more than 400 years of American history, from the explorations of Christopher Columbus to the aviation experiments of the Wright Brothers. Look up for a view of the fresco adorning the canopy of the Capitol dome, 180 feet above the floor.

**Note:** The Capitol is open to the public only by guided tour. Tickets are required and are available on a first-come, first-served basis Mon.-Sat. (except Thanksgiving and Dec. 25) beginning at 9 a.m. from the Capitol Guide Service kiosk, near the intersection of 1st Street and Independence S.W.

**Stay in a AAA Approved lodging in the following cities:**
- HYDE PARK, N.Y.
- POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y.
- WASHINGTON, D.C.

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**LEG 2: WASHINGTON, D.C., TO ASHEVILLE, N.C. - 558 MILES**

Estimated Driving Time - 12 hours

From downtown Washington, D.C., take Constitution Avenue N.W. west to the beginning of I-66. Take I-66 west about 62 miles to exit 13 (SR 79/SR 55). Access SR 55 via SR 79 and proceed west about 5 miles to the junction with US 340. Take US 340 south about a mile to the beginning of **Skyline Drive (a AAA Scenic Byway)**. This AAA GEM attraction runs the entire length of Shenandoah National Park, itself a wonderfully scenic portion of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Congress authorized the creation of a park in 1926. President Herbert Hoover, after deciding that the cool, stream-fed woodlands near Big Meadows (near the drive's midpoint) were a perfect spot for a summer retreat away from hot, humid Washington, championed a personal interest in building a road along the mountaintops so the Blue Ridge would be accessible by car. The park was officially designated in 1935 during Roosevelt's first term.

FDR and his New Deal also made Skyline Drive a reality. Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which enabled people living in the region—many of whom were unskilled, impoverished young men—to learn a skill as well as earn a living. They not only built the road that motorists travel today but created hiking trails, overlooks, comfort stations and other improvements. The effort also entailed the most
extensive reforestation project ever undertaken at the time; literally hundreds of square miles of trees were planted, many of them to return land stripped for farming and timber operations back to its natural state.

Construction of Skyline Drive was difficult and dangerous; huge cuts had to be made into the side of mountain peaks in order to create a road wide and level enough to accommodate touring automobiles as well as trucks hauling loads of stone during the construction process. The results of this enormous project are the panoramic views from your car window.

The two-lane road has gentle grades but many sharp turns as it negotiates the mountain chain's knobs, knolls and gaps. The 35-mph speed limit is enforced, but you won't feel like hurrying. There are plenty of pulloffs where you can stop, stretch your legs and enjoy the park's peaceful vibe. April, when spring is in full glory, and October, when fall foliage is at its peak, are prime months to visit Skyline Drive, although traffic is likely to be heavier at these times.

Skyline Drive extends for 105 miles. The Blue Ridge Parkway (a AAA Scenic Byway) picks up where it leaves off. The 469-mile road, a AAA GEM place, stretches along the crest of the Blue Ridge and other mountain ranges runs as it runs southwest, connecting Shenandoah National Park to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee.

Like Skyline Drive, construction of the parkway began during Roosevelt's administration. Its official completion was not until 1987, but travelers have long enjoyed most of the route. Concrete mileposts begin at 0 at the northern end and conclude at marker 469 in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. They're a convenient way to keep track of your parkway mileage. The speed limit is 45 mph and is enforced throughout, but to really enjoy the scenery a speed of about 30 mph is recommended. The parkway is open all year, but sections of the road may close due to snow or icy conditions.

The mountain scenery is the chief attraction, and there are plenty of places to stop and admire the view, walk along a trail or have a picnic. But the historical and cultural offerings are appealing as well. At the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center, Milepost 5.8 near the beginning of the parkway, you can take the Mountain Farm self-guiding trail past a collection of 19th-century farm buildings; living-history demonstrations often take place during the summer months.

The Peaks of Otter Visitor Center at Milepost 86 is located in exceptionally scenic surroundings and has exhibits on history and forest ecology. A loop trail here leads to a farm worked by generations of one family. At Mabry Mill, a popular stop at Milepost 176.2 (just north of US 58), you can see a blacksmith shop, a sawmill, a whiskey still
and the Mabry gristmill. If you like Appalachian handicrafts, browse the locally made items at the Parkway Craft Center (Milepost 294.1), 3 miles west of Blowing Rock, N.C., or the Folk Art Center at Milepost 382.

Stay on the Blue Ridge Parkway as far as US 70 (Milepost 382), then take US 70 west a few miles to Asheville.

Note: For more information about Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway, consult the "Blue Ridge Parkway" drive trip. If you want to pull off to spend the night before reaching Asheville, Lexington, Va., is about 10 miles west of the Blue Ridge Parkway via US 60; Roanoke, Va., is just off the parkway via SR 24; and Boone, N.C., is a short distance west of the parkway via US 421.

Stay in a AAA Approved lodging in one of the following cities:
LEXINGTON, Va.
ROANOKE, Va.
BOONE, N.C.
ASHEVILLE, N.C.

LEG 3: ASHEVILLE, N.C., TO WARM SPRINGS, GA. - 279 MILES
Estimated Driving Time - 5 hours 15 minutes

Note: For more information about Asheville and Atlanta, which are not primary stops on this route, consult the drive trip "The Mountains of Georgia and North Carolina."

From downtown Asheville, access I-26 East via I-240 and proceed south about 23 miles to the junction with US 25. Proceed south on US 25 about 38 miles to the junction with I-185 South, then take I-185 exit 14B to access I-85 South toward Atlanta. Stay on I-85 for about 179 miles. Take exit 41 to access US 27-Alt. and proceed south about 21 miles to Greenville, Ga., then continue south on US 27 (Roosevelt Highway) about 10 miles to Warm Springs.

Long before this quaint little tourist town's heyday as a popular 19th-century health resort, the alleged therapeutic properties of the freshwater springs issuing from the ground in the shadow of Pine Mountain drew Creek and Iroquois Indians, who brought their sick and wounded for healing. By the 1830s the mineral-rich spring waters—flowing at a constant temperature of 88 degrees Fahrenheit—were attracting yellow fever and polio sufferers as well as city dwellers seeking a summer retreat.

Roosevelt brought renewed recognition to Warm Springs when he came in 1924 for treatment of his polio-related paralysis. He swam in the public pool near the
Meriwether Inn, a fashionable Victorian hostelry in the 1890s that had declined by the time of FDR's visit. Encouraged by the belief that the pool's spring water benefited his limbs and taken with the village's quintessentially Southern charm, he oversaw construction of the modest six-room vacation cottage that came to be known as the Little White House.

FDR's Little White House State Historic Site, a AAA GEM attraction, is less than half a mile south of Warm Springs. The white clapboard house is a memorial shrine to Roosevelt. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage here on Apr. 12, 1945, while posing for a painting known as the "Unfinished Portrait." Both this portrait and a finished version—painted by the same artist, Elizabeth Shoumatoff—can be seen as part of a guided tour. FDR's 1938 Ford convertible equipped with hand controls and a re-created 1930s kitchen with one of his fireside chats playing on the radio are among the exhibits at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial Museum on the grounds. Take time to watch the short film narrated by Walter Cronkite, which includes historic footage of the president's funeral procession.

Warm Springs itself has a main street lined with benches and rocking chairs. For shoppers, Warm Springs Village Mall is a treasure trove of specialty stores selling antiques, collectibles, craft items and gifts. The lovely botanical gardens at Callaway, a AAA GEM attraction, are an easy side trip from Warm Springs; take US 27 north to the junction with SR 194, SR 194 west a little over 5 miles to the junction with SR 18 and SR 18 about 7 miles west to Pine Mountain. The gardens are about a mile west of town at the junction of SRs 18 and 354.

F.D. Roosevelt State Park, about halfway between Warm Springs and Pine Mountain off SR 190, is Georgia's largest state park. Liberty Bell Pool, a spring-fed pool with a rock bottom, was built by CCC workers hauling stone by from nearby quarries. The pool is located on SR 354 within the park. Hikers will find 37 miles of trails. Pine Mountain Trail winds through 23 miles of woodland brightened by flowering dogwood, native azalea, mountain laurel and rhododendron in the spring and ablaze with colorful foliage in the fall. Dowdells Knob, which overlooks a lushly scenic valley, was FDR's favored picnic spot.

Warm Springs marks the end of this FDR-themed drive trip. Fly-in visitors can elect to backtrack north on US 27 to I-85 and take I-85 northeast to Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. An alternate route is to continue south to Columbus Metropolitan Airport in Columbus; from Warm Springs, take White House Parkway/SR 85 and US 27-Alt. south to I-185.

Stay in a AAA Approved lodging in the following city:
WARM SPRINGS, Ga.

For additional information about places mentioned on this tour, contact:
Blue Ridge Parkway, (828) 298-0398
Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. N.W., (202) 208-4743
Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, SR 9G, (845) 229-9115
F.D. Roosevelt State Park, (706) 663-4858
FDR's Little White House State Historic Site, 401 Little White House Rd., (706) 655-5870
FDR Warm Springs Welcome Center, 1 Broad St., (706) 655-3322 or (800) 337-1927
Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, 4079 Albany Post Rd., (845) 486-7770 or (800) 337-8474
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, (202) 426-6841
Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, 4097 Albany Post Rd., (845) 229-9115
Hyde Park Chamber of Commerce, 4389 Albany Post Rd., (845) 229-8612
National World War II Memorial, (202) 426-6841
Poughkeepsie Area Chamber of Commerce, 110 Main St., (845) 454-1700
Shenandoah National Park, (540) 999-3500
United States Capitol, between Constitution and Independence avenues, (202) 225-6827