

BackRoadsWest.com

NEWBERRY SPRINGS DRIVING TOUR GUIDE

This tour guide will take you on a driving route through a unique community in the heart of the Mojave Desert, known as Newberry Springs. What makes this community special are the many sights and attractions to see along this tour that are found nowhere else.

Newberry Springs is located along historic Route 66 and the travel corridor of Interstate 40, about 20 miles east of the desert crossroads town of Barstow, and about 8 miles south of Interstate 15.

Tour length: About 80 miles (128 km)

See the map on the next page that points out all the stops highlighted in this tour.

Be sure to watch the video tour that visually shows the stops detailed here, plus a whole lot more information. See the Newberry Springs Chamber of Commerce website to find the video or search YouTube for “Newberry Springs”.

Stop #1: Start of Tour & Newberry Mountain

Start your driving tour by taking the Newberry Springs exit from Interstate 40, which is 18 miles east of Barstow. At the end of the offramp, turn towards the big purple mountain, which is Newberry Mountain.

The unique purplish color in this mountain was formed from repeated volcanic activity here about 5 to 20 million years ago. Newberry Mountain is full of twisting canyons and, in the spring, big wildflower displays.

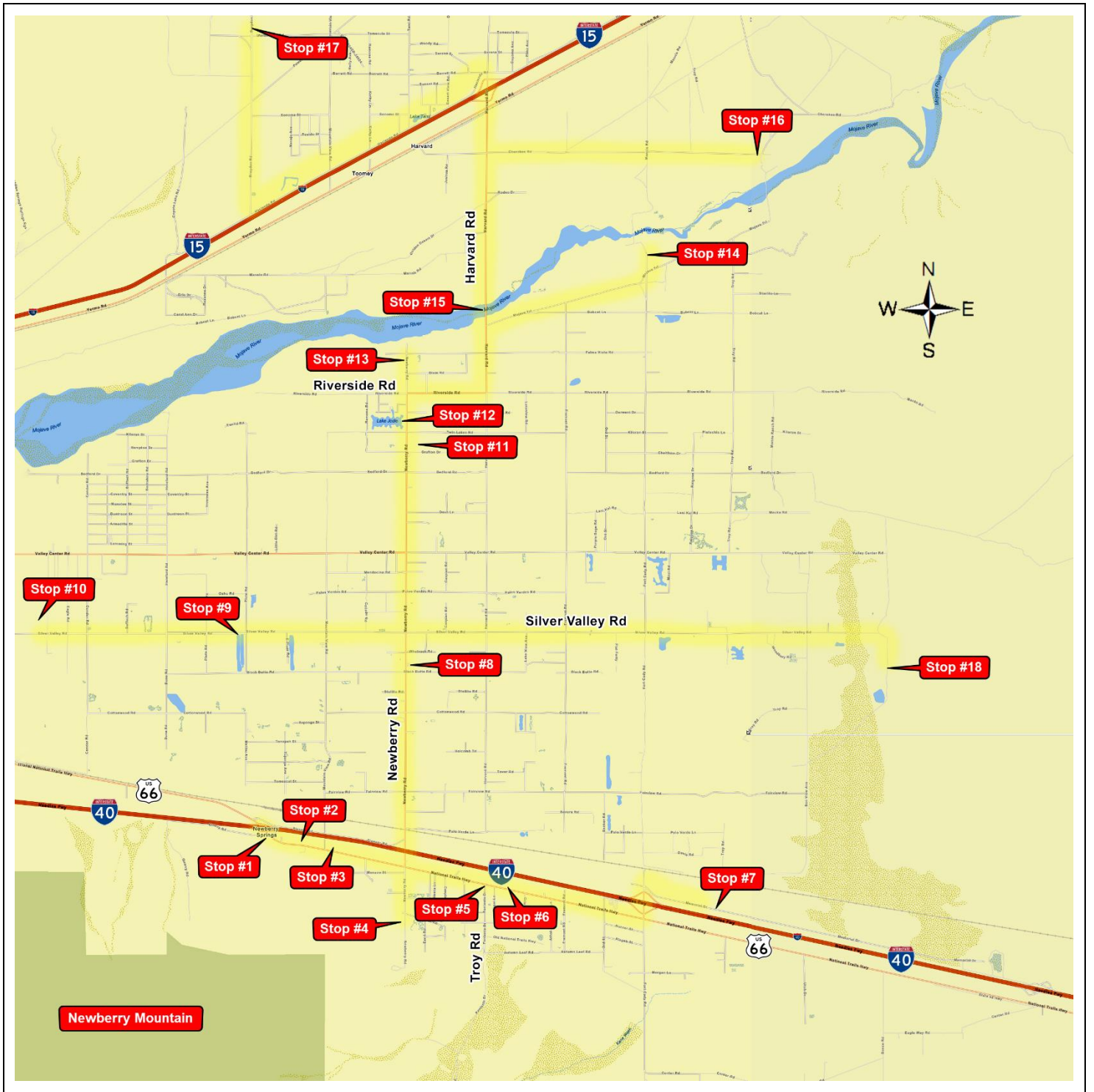


Route 66

The road we're on now is Route 66. This historic road parallels its successor, I-40, all the way through Newberry Springs. We'll follow Route 66 for the first several miles of our tour.

Many of Newberry Springs historical buildings, as well as its history are tied to the Mother Road. For the next few miles, you'll see buildings and businesses that were built along this once major highway starting in the 1920s. Some of these buildings are still clinging on to life, whereas others are in a state of decay.





Stop #2: Deel's and The Barn

The first place of interest will be on the right, which is Deel's. This used to be the Cliff House that was established in 1929.

It was a full-service desert oasis that included a garage, store, café, cabins, post office, general store, and even a swimming pool. In the 1950s, both Greyhound and Continental Trailways bus companies stopped here. It also had the only telephone in town, which made it quite the popular place.

If you look in the back, you can see remains of the old pool and a few of the cabins. As you can see, it abuts the volcanic rocks of Newberry Mountain.



Just down and across the street is *The Barn*. It was built on the foundation of what was the Newberry Market and Café that burned to the ground in the 1960s.

On the weekends, you might see motorcycles and classic cars parked here taking a break from enjoying a cruise along the Mother Road. Walking into the Barn reveals a classic roadhouse, the kind that once dotted Route 66 in its heyday. In the back is a stage where you might be lucky to catch a live music performance.



Stop #3: Newberry Spring

Continuing east, the road passes between two hills. Behind the shorter hill on the left, is the site of the actual Newberry Spring. During the early period of the road, before it was designated Route 66 in 1926, this was the only source of water for drivers to rely on coming from Needles, a stretch of about 160 miles.

During the 1940s, traveling merchants, known to everyone as Gypsies, came here to Newberry Spring in horse drawn wagons. They lit a big campfire to attract people from all around to sell and trade their goods.



Stop #4: Newberry Springs Community Center & Park

Turning right on Newberry Road off Route 66 will bring you to the Newberry Springs' Community Center. This is home of the annual Pistachio Festival that occurs on the first Saturday of every November. It started in 1997.

Next to the community center is a small park with picnic benches. The side of the building has a mural depicting a quaint desert scene.



Stop #5: Poniente Drive – Troy Road

From stop #4, return to Route 66 and turn right. In one mile, a road to the right called Poniente Drive, turns into Troy Road in a short distance. It leads to a wonderland of off-highway exploring.

This road dirt road passes around the Newberry and Rodman Mountains Wildernesses. One can spend a day exploring this area and make a loop trip on Camp Rock Road that leads back to I-40 near Daggett. Along the way, you'll find a series of lava flows and a cinder cone, a canyon full of Native American rock art, and you'll see a whole lot of Mojave Desert scenery



Stop #6: Bagdad Café & Gas Stations

Just past the turnoff to Troy Road, you'll go by one of the more popular attractions along the Mother Road – the Bagdad Café. People from all over the world stop here to visit this unique desert eatery.

Originally named the Sidewinder Café, this place was made famous by a 1987 movie named Bagdad Café. The movie and the café were actually named after another Route 66 town called Bagdad, which is 50 miles to the east from Newberry Springs.



Just past Bagdad Café are the remains of a Whiting Brothers gas station. Originally, this building housed Tony's Spaghetti House, which was converted to the gas station we see today in the 1960s.

Next door to Tony's, are the remains of Reed's Texico Station. The owners were known to run a spic and span operation. Today, the neatly kept remains of this gas station, still reflects the original owner's attitude.



Stop #7: World's Longest Driveway

Continuing east on 66 for 1.5 miles, the intersection with Fort Cady Road will be reached. Turn left here to cross I-40, then turn right just past the truck stop. This road was part of a rather odd bit of motor racing history, known as the *world's longest driveway*.

This "driveway" was built for Mrs. Orcutt after I-40 cut off access to her residence. Since this very straight and long road has no law jurisdiction, Mrs. Orcutt allowed car enthusiasts to speed-test vehicles on it. This road soon became famous for testing cars up to 200 mph.



Stop #8: Newberry Springs Family & Senior Center

Cross back over I-40, turn right on 66, then continue 3 miles to Newberry Road and turn right to cross I-40. The Newberry Springs post office will be seen on the right.

Two miles from the railroad tracks, on the right, we'll pass the Newberry Springs Family & Senior Center and Drifting Sands Café. This is a community hub offering year-round activities as well as fresh cooked breakfast and lunch, Wed. through Sun., each week.



Stop #9: Waterskiing Lakes

A short distance past stop #8, turn left onto Silver Valley Road, heading west now. We're now going to focus on one of the area's bigger assets, its abundance of water.

Because of ample ground water, the residents here have created many small lakes. Please be aware that all lakes are privately owned either by a single owner or a lake community. There are over a dozen lakes scattered across Newberry Springs, some of them competition waterskiing lakes, others recreational. World-class competitions occur at these lakes regularly. Each lake is between 10 to 50 acres in size, with a total of about 300 homes around them.



Stop #10: Barstow Koi Farm

Continuing west on Silver Valley Road 4.5 miles from Newberry Road will reach the Barstow Koi Farm. It has been here for decades and is open to visitors only on the weekends. Check with someone at the front office before wandering around the farm and its buildings.

There are a series of ponds, mainly inside a greenhouse, where koi are raised from eggs, all the way to adult fish that are then sold to customers and wholesalers all over the USA. The facility uses custom equipment that was developed by its owners. Some of the fish raised here became prize-winning koi, as this banner shows.



Stop #11: Pistachio Farm

Head east on Silver Valley Road to return to Newberry Road and turn left (north). Along with many lakes, Newberry Springs is known for pistachios, and you'll find orchards scattered all over the community. In 2.2 miles after turning, you'll see Big Al's Pistachio Farms, which consists of about seven thousand trees total.



Stop #12: Lake Jodie

Keep heading north on Newberry Road and, in about half a mile, Lake Jodie is reached, which is another one of those private lake communities.

Lake Jodie is the largest recreational lake in Newberry Springs. It covers 55 acres and has the largest number of homes surrounding its shores. Its residents enjoy water sports of all kinds, or simply chilling out on the deck to enjoy the views.



Stop #13: Homes Buried in the Sand

From Lake Jodie, continue on Newberry Road until the pavement becomes buried by drifting sands from the Mojave River. Don't drive any further as it is easy to get a vehicle stuck in the sand.

After people built their homes here, they didn't realize how strong Mother Nature was with her blowing sand. Several houses built here have since been buried and are now abandoned. The house pictured at right only has its roof and chimney sticking out of the sand.



Stop #14: Camp Cady wildlife area

From the sands, head south back towards Lake Jodie, then turn left (east) onto Riverside Road. In one mile, turn left once more onto Harvard Road. In 0.8 mile, turn right onto the dirt Mojave Road to visit Camp Cady. The parking area is reached in 2 miles, on the left.

Originally called Fort Cady, it was established in 1860 as a military camp to suppress Piute attacks on wagon trains traveling the Mojave Road. Now, Camp Cady is a wildlife area. You are welcome to hike into Camp Cady and explore its old buildings, which is a ranch that was established long after Fort Cady was in operation.



Stop #15: Mojave River

Get back to the pavement of Harvard Road and turn right. Soon, you'll be passing through the Mojave River, which is the primary source of underground water to Newberry Springs and all its lakes.

This river drains a big portion of the San Bernardino Mountains, some 80 miles away. This river is rare, as it flows away from the ocean and deposits its water into the desert. There is rarely water at the surface.



Stop #16: Ironwood Camp

Continuing one mile north past the river, turning right onto Cherokee Road will lead to Ironwood Camp. The road dead-ends at its gates in three and a half miles.

Ironwood is a unique Christian-based facility that provides overnight stays for meetings and retreats. Access to the camp is by reservation only.



Stop #17: Saint Antony Monastery

I-15 is reached just a short distance north on Harvard Road. To visit our next stop, cross over I-15, then turn left onto the frontage road. Follow the signs to Saint Antony Monastery, which is 9 miles from this point.

Saint Antony Coptic Orthodox Monastery is part of the worldwide Coptic Church, which was formed in Egypt, and originating in the year 42 A.D. This monastery was built in 1972 and is the first one to be built outside of Egypt. Its architecture is very unique.



Stop #18: Volcano House

Our last stop is the unique architecture of the Volcano House. Retrace the tour back to the junction of Newberry Road and Silver Valley Road. From here, turn left (head east) on Silver Valley Road for 6 miles. As you head east, about when the road turns to dirt, look to the southeast and you'll see it in the distance.

Resembling a flying saucer that has landed on top of a small cinder cone, the Volcano House was built in 1968 by Bard Wallace, the person that patented the skateboard. It was later purchased in 2003 by beloved PBS personality, Huell Howser, host of the popular TV show, California's Gold. When Huell passed away in 2013, the house and surrounding property was sold to a private party that doesn't allow access.



From the Volcano House, return to Newberry Road via Silver Valley Road, then turn left (south) to return to Route 66, which will bring you back to where this tour began.

For more information about this tour or the Newberry Springs community in general contact:

Newberry Springs Chamber of Commerce
www.NewberrySpringsChamber.com

Tour sheet produced by BackRoadsWest.com