Points of Interest Near the Byway

Galena Mining Museum, Galena
Hell’s Half Acre & Red Hot Street, Galena
Historic Homes & Downtown Buildings, Galena
Ghost Writing on Buildings, Galena
Tow Tater @ 4 Women on the Route, Galena
Schermerhorn Park Nature Center, Galena
Nelson’s Old Riverton Store, Riverton
Marsh Arch “Rainbow” Bridge, between Riverton and Baxter Springs
Field of Dreams Baseball Park, Baxter Springs
Baxter Springs Heritage Center, Baxter Springs
Fort Blair - Civil War Site, Baxter Springs
Historic Homes & Downtown Buildings, Baxter Springs
Route 66 Visitor Center, Baxter Springs
Baxter Springs City Cemetery Soldiers’ Lot, Baxter Springs

Nelson’s Old Riverton Store is still operating as it was 75 years ago. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Get your kicks on Kansas Route 66 Historic Byway

Plan to motor west on 13.2 miles of Old Route 66, in the southeast corner of Kansas, also known as the "Ozark Plateau" region of the state. Your journey of the Kansas portion of the "Mother Road" begins at the Missouri State Line and winds along county, city and state roads to the Oklahoma State Line continuing the route of the original Route 66 highway. Along with some of the original roadbed, you will find culverts and bridges built in the 1920's.

Driving toward Galena over the Katy railroad viaduct, one of the many iconic features of that formed the character of Route 66, catch a view of "Hell's Half Acre," landscape remnants of the mining era. Mostly reclaimed land now, during the mining years, this area was the leading producer of lead and zinc concentrates in the world.

Follow the route into Galena and check out "Cars on the Route," a former gas station that serves as a Route 66 welcome center, sandwich and souvenir shop. Take your picture with "Tow Tater" the inspiration for "Tow Mater" from the Disney Pixar movie "Cars".... Continue on Route 66 through Galena's Main Street lined with historic buildings, some that still have visible ghost writing advertising, calling to the "Mother Road" traveler. Explore Galena's rich mining and railroad history at the Galena Mining Museum and dine in one of the local restaurants. Schermerhorn Park, just south of Galena and tucked back in Ozark hills, features work done under the 1930’s Work Project Administration (WPA). This is the perfect place for a picnic and a visit to the Nature Center.

Follow Route 66 west from Galena to Riverton and enjoy a stop at Nelson's Old Riverton Store. The building, originally opened in the 1920's as a Route 66 gas station, has been a mainstay on the Route for over 75 years. Though no longer a fuel stop, you may enjoy a custom deli sandwich and browse the store for your perfect Route 66 memorabilia. Driving west from Riverton, through the roundabout, follow the original route (Beasley Road exit) and drive over the Marsh Arch "Rainbow" Bridge. Though a typical structure on Route 66 in its heyday, it is the only remaining bridge of its kind on the "Mother Road." Capture your own pictures at this stop that also serves as a popular wedding site.

What is more American than apple pie and Route 66? Baseball, of course! Traveling south from the bridge the route takes you past homes and rolling farmland where you will find the "Field of Dreams," a modern baseball facility, just north of Baxter Springs. This community is proud of its baseball history and rightfully so! Baxter Springs was once the home of the "Whiz Kids," a team that included baseball great, Mickey Mantle, on their roster.

Fort Blair in Baxter Springs was the site of one of the earlier battles of the Civil War, an attack on the fort by Quantrill's Raiders in 1863. Many of the casualties of that battle were buried at the Baxter Springs Cemetery Soldiers' Lot, a Civil War Era National Cemetery, found a mile west of town. Southeast of the fort site is the Baxter Springs Heritage Center and Museum with exhibits preserving and interpreting the rich regional history.

Housed in a restored Phillips Petroleum Station, the Baxter Springs Visitor Center offers local information and souvenirs to commemorate your Route 66 adventure. Cruising on south through downtown, many of the buildings retain their original storefronts. There are murals that depict some of the area's history, including the early cow town days or buildings such as the 1870 Crowell bank building that was said to have been robbed in 1876 by Jesse James and Cole Younger.

“Cars on the Route,” Galena Home of “Tow Tater” the inspiration for Tow Mater in the Pixar movie “Cars”

Baxter Springs City Cemetery Soldiers’ Lot

Visitor Center in Baxter Springs

Food cravings may be satisfied at any of the many restaurants found along the route in Baxter Springs. Continuing south through town, be sure to stay on the original Route 66 roadbed as it curves its way out of town toward the Oklahoma State Line, but not before you "get your kicks" enjoying the many one-of-a-kind places you can only find along the Kansas Route 66 Historic Byway.

Frieze depicting Baxter Springs heritage