



Visiting Colleges? Travel Advice for a Great Road Trip

You've done your research. You've made your list of schools. Now, you're finally ready to hit the road.

For many high school students and parents, it is a great time to be visiting colleges. Travel advice from Go See Campus will help you get there safer, faster, cheaper, and happier.

While some students take planes, trains, and subways to visit campuses, information in this article focuses on driving from school to school. If you have a full tank of gas and are ready to put your search into high gear, read on and get our best tips for visiting colleges.

Travel Advice: Saving Time

The number one tip from Go See Campus: There is no substitute for preparation. Know when you want to be where and what activities you want to do, especially for the campuses that are your greatest priorities.

This doesn't mean having every single thing planned. It is a road trip, after all, and improvising is part of the fun. A spur-of-the-moment decision to stop at an Elvis-themed diner or to gas up at a station boasting the world's smallest armadillo could make for some great memories of visiting colleges.

However, you should prepare by...

1) Planning Your Campus Visits: Research the activities and events available on campus at the schools you may be visiting. This should take place weeks in advance of your trip. Then, register for campus tours and other activities at the schools that require advance notice. If you do not register in advance and miss an activity, you will be left with the choice of delaying your schedule to attend a later event or skipping the activity altogether.

2) Checking the traffic and weather: In advance of your trip and before getting on the road each day, take a look ahead. If you know that a storm system is coming or that a route will be under construction, leaving early for your next stop can help you stay on schedule.

3) Knowing your way around: You will save time by not having to stop for



directions along the way. Consider bringing:

- A GPS so that you can change your route between campuses if necessary.
- Printed maps in case the GPS loses its signal, which can happen in rural or wooded areas.
- Campus maps so that you can easily get to the correct parking lot and find the admissions office.

Go See Campus' College Trip Planner can help you with many of these steps (<http://goseecampus.com/college-trip-planner>). It's a free tool you can use to build a trip itinerary and get resources you need for visiting colleges.

Travel Advice: Keeping Safe

As with any road trip, travelers should be aware of both the security of their personal items and driving safely.

Personal items: If you are traveling with expensive gadgets and fine luggage, have your belongings in sight when you stop for food or stay overnight at a hotel. In fact, it is not a bad idea to unload the car each night and to lock the most important valuables in a hotel safe when you are visiting campus.

Along those lines, leave your pets at home. Even if they are purse-sized, they may be unwelcome distractions on campus and give the wrong impression to admissions about the sincerity of your interest. You can tell Fluffy all about the trip when you get back!

Driving Safely: Make sure that your trusty steed is in top condition before hitting the road. There is a world of difference between a vehicle that is in good enough shape to cross town for groceries and a car that needs to travel hundreds of miles at high speeds. Get your vehicle inspected in advance of your trip and take care of necessary maintenance. Purchasing roadside assistance services is an especially good idea before visiting colleges.

Travel Advice: Maintaining Your Energy

Driving alone? If you are visiting colleges alone, limit your driving to only a few hours per day. You will want to conserve your energy for the campus experience, and if you are spending six hours of car time between schools, you will get little out of your visits. For the time that you are in the car, find ways to keep your mind sharp without distraction. Many travelers rely on audio books, which you can get from the library or download from several websites.



Driving with a parent or friend is smart. Talking with someone will make the time pass faster. Also, you can compare notes on the visits you have made together to get their opinions about the experience.

Prepare like it's an athletic competition. Give yourself plenty of sleep every night. Avoid high-fat, low-energy foods and pack tasty-but-healthy snacks. Relying on caffeine and sugar may help in the short-term, but soon enough, it can just give you a headache and turn the road trip sour.

Drive early. Do the bulk of your driving in the morning because activities on campus will wear you out. Also, try to do more of the driving earlier in your trip. Nearing the end of your travels, you may be excited to get home and share your experiences, and that can lead to carelessness on the road once you have finished visiting colleges.

Travel Advice: Going Cheaper

Advanced planning can save you money. Book at least some of your hotels before you travel, and make the purchase all at once. When you are planning your trip at Go See Campus, you can access one of several trusted booking websites (here's how: <http://goseecampus.com/help#travel>), and all provide discounts for bulk bookings.

When you are visiting colleges, save money on driving and parking:

- If you have a car with good fuel economy and it will not take any extra time, look for options with fewer tolls.
- When visiting colleges, pay attention to university guidelines about visitor parking. If you will have to pay to park on or near campus, consider leaving the car at the hotel and taking public transportation or taxis.
- For many cities, such as New York and Boston, subway systems offer great inexpensive alternatives to driving.

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Wherever you go, remember to keep your trip in perspective with our travel advice. Visiting colleges is important but only if you return safely with great experiences to discuss. Go See Campus looks forward to hearing about them.

Have a travel tip you want to share? Post your opinion at <http://www.facebook.com/goseecampus>.