



THE ROAD THAT BUILT THE NATION

WASHINGTON COUNTY / HAGERSTOWN

Directions

- » Visit Washington Monument State Park by turning right opposite the South Mountain Inn. On July 4, 1827, the residents of nearby Boonsboro gathered on the mountain to build a 20-foot tower in memory of George Washington. A short climb to the top of this first monument to the nation's first president offers a breathtaking view of the valley below.
- » Continue west on US 40 Alternate, descending South Mountain into Boonsboro, a town of solid brick and stone houses founded in 1792. The town prospered in the 1830s when the National Pike was alive with westbound traffic that kept its blacksmith shops and 82 stores busy and its inns and taverns filled with travelers and teamsters. On Main Street, visit the Boonsborough Museum of History, which houses historical items of local and national significance with an emphasis on Civil War relics. Mention Antietam and proximity?
- » Driving through farmland on your way to Funkstown, notice the unique Pennsylvania-German Bank Barns with their limestone-faced gable ends. Here, too, you'll also see smaller English-style barns.
- » Follow Alternate US 40 through Funkstown where Main Street (Baltimore Street), is flanked by handsome, well-kept brick and stone houses.
- » To stay on the National Pike, turn right on Westside Avenue. Notice the limestone Three-Arch Bridge on the left as you cross Antietam Creek. The bridge, built in 1823 for the National Pike, withstood several efforts to destroy it during the Civil War.
- » Follow Alternate US 40 into Hagerstown, where the road becomes Frederick Street. At East Baltimore Street turn left and then right onto Locust Street, which will take you to the center of town. Turn left on westbound Franklin Street. (To see more of the historic district turn left on Prospect Street followed by another left on eastbound Washington Street, (MD 144)).
- » Hagerstown has prospered as a crossroads on the historic north-south migration and trade route through the Great Valley that stretches from the Cumberland Valley to the north and the Shenandoah Valley to the south. It is a town of historic charm found in a number of its vintage buildings.
- » Continue west on US 40 through a region of large mid-19th-century farms and homesteads, as well as Newcomer's Tavern (private), a busy establishment in the pike's heyday.

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Directions continued

- » As you continue west, bear right to the Wilson Bridge where the older pike crossed Conococheague Creek. A small waterfront park offers a fine view of the bridge, which is an excellent example of the quality of the engineering and craftsmanship that went into building the National Pike. Wilson Bridge is the county's oldest and longest stone arch bridge, dating from 1819, and served as a model for more than a score of similar bridges.
- » Cross the creek, and turn left on Cedar Creek Road to visit the hamlet of Wilson where a general store, church, school, barn, and post office are typical of such mid-19th Century crossroads communities.
- » Follow US 40 west to Clear Spring, a trading village named for a spring so large that at one time it turned a mill wheel. Federal-style brick buildings line both sides of the pike for about ½ a mile.
- » US 40 next takes you along the Fairview Mountain ridge where a few remaining sandstone tourist cottages have survived from the early days of the automobile era.
- » Continue west to Indian Springs. West of Indian Springs, US 40 merges with I-70 as it crosses the state's narrow panhandle. As you follow I-70 west toward Hancock, look for traces of the old pike winding up and down the northern bank.
- » After about 11 miles, exit on MD 144 in Hancock, where the state is only 1½ miles wide. Originally a trading post on the Nemaquin Indian Trail, Hancock became a boom town when the National Pike reached it in 1818. In addition to being a trading center for this fruit-growing region, the town was a stopover point for turnpike travelers and later for the C&O Canal and the Western Maryland Railroad.
- » MD 144 becomes Main Street as it passes through town. The C&O Canal National Historic Park Visitor Center, which features exhibits on canal life, is located on Main Street.
- » To reach the C&O Canal Tonoloway Area, turn left on Church Street followed by a right turn on Canal Road. You can take a short hike along the Western Maryland Rail Trail or the C&O Canal Towpath, which parallel each other in this narrow section of Maryland. These hiking and biking paths are part of a 315-mile corridor between Washington, D.C. and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- » Continue west on MD 144 through several miles of orchard country where you can see remnants of the Hancock Tollhouse on the road's north side opposite Locker Road. Farther west is Old Mr. Flints House, where George Washington stayed overnight in 1769.
- » West of Hancock, MD 144 becomes Scenic 40 in an encounter with I-68, or the National Freeway.
- » Scenic 40 leaves the freeway and follows a portion of the old wagon road four miles up the side of Sideling Hill. This is the longest climb during your journey from Baltimore to Cumberland. Years ago, before the interstate, many wagoners lost their loads and teams, and later, truckers had a struggle on this difficult and treacherous stretch of road. The Overlook at one time offered a spectacular view to the west.
- » As you descend the western flank of Sideling Hill, turn left on McFarland Road, which changes back to Scenic 40 as you enter Allegany County.