

Route 66

Trascrizione

U.S. Route 66, also known as Route 66, or the Main Street of America or the Mother Road, was established on November 11, 1926. It is also referred to as the Will Rogers Highway, after a famous comedian who did a lot to promote the building of the highway. Route 66, which became one of the most famous roads in the United States, originally ran from Chicago, Illinois, through the states of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona ending up in the city of Santa Monica, California. It ran for almost 2,500 miles. It was laid out to connect the towns and cities that already existed, and so it looks a bit "twisty" on the map.

Route 66 underwent many improvements and changes over its lifetime, and it was officially taken off the United States Highway System in 1985 because there was a new interstate road system that was much faster for travelers. However, Route 66 did not die out of the memory of the American people. It had become one of the most famous highways in America, the route that people traveled as they moved west, especially during the economically difficult years of the 1930s. It had become a symbol of hope, freedom and adventure.

Route 66 was immortalized in literature in John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The book tells the story of a family travelling along the highway during the Great Depression of the 1930s, in search of a better future. More upbeat is the famous song "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66", a happy travelogue of the highway, first sung in 1946 by Nat King Cole. The road was also the setting of a popular TV series – "Route 66" – broadcasted from 1960 to 1964, about two young men who wander America in a Chevrolet Corvette. After President Eisenhower signed the Act to create the Interstate Highway System in 1956, which eventually made Route 66 obsolete, lots of groups

were formed to help preserve that historic highway and make it an attraction of adventure and sightseeing.

Nowadays, the new generations are anxious to travel this route. Thousands of bikers, hikers, cyclists and motorists do part or all of it every year. They love to stop and see all of the original signs, buildings and memorabilia along the way. It's the ultimate trip through the heart of America and American history.