

VERMONT HERITAGE: A President, Fine Furniture, Marble, Cheese and a Mountain!
70/100 MILES (depending on side trips)

The Calvin Coolidge Homestead in Plymouth, the Black River Academy in Ludlow, the Crowley Cheese Factory in Healdville, the New England Maple Museum in Pittsford, and Pico and Killington Ski areas are all on this circuit. Perfect for a fall foliage drive to stop to enjoy some of Vermont's finest attractions including Calvin Coolidge Historic Site, cheesemaking and Vermont's largest ski mountain. (Mileages are approximate but set your odometer to 0 when starting out from the Woodstock Green)

Driving west on route 4 out of Woodstock you will pass the Lincoln Covered Bridge, built in 1877, on the left. In the village of Bridgewater (5.7 miles from Woodstock), the old woolen mill has been beautifully restored and houses Charles Shackleton Furniture and Miranda Thomas Pottery where tours of the craftspeople at work are given daily. The old mill also includes dozens of shops, fine art and crafts studios, and a flea market. The restored Southgate House, built in 1779, serves as the town's library and municipal building. At Bridgewater Corners (7.6 miles), turn left on route 100A. The Coolidge State Forest (12.2 miles), which has camping facilities, soon comes into view. Soon you will arrive at the tiny village of Plymouth Notch (13.6 miles), birth-place and ancestral home of Calvin Coolidge, and now a State Historic Site. You can turn right towards Plymouth Cheese Corporation where there is parking (13.9 miles). Frog City Cheese is made three days a week and a display of Vermont's Cheese industry is available to view.

The Coolidge Homestead is furnished as it was then and Coolidge's birthplace is across the road. The Church and the Farmer's Museum are all open to the public. President Harding died in San Francisco at 7:30 pm on August 2, 1923. No phone was installed in the Coolidge Homestead, where the Vice President was on vacation, so news was carried to Plymouth by the husband of the telephone operator in Bridgewater of the President's death. There, just across the street from the house where he was born, Calvin Coolidge took the oath of office, administered by his father, to become the 30th President of the United States in the early hour of August 3rd.

Meals are served at the Wilder House 10 AM to 3:30 PM, through mid-October. President Coolidge is buried in the village cemetery off 100A. To get to the junction of Route 100 (15 miles) continue right out of Plymouth Notch on 100A down the hill to Plymouth Union. Turn left on 100. You will travel past Hawk Mountain Inn & Resort (17.7 miles) through country dotted with farms, sugar-houses and inns. Echo Lake State Park (20 miles) starts a lovely string of lakes on the left along the road. Clear Lake Furniture (23.2 miles), one of Vermont's premier furniture makers is on your left and also has regular tours of their studios. Upon reaching route 103 (23.8 miles) you may turn left into Ludlow and seek out the Black River Academy Historical Society building, where young Calvin Coolidge attended school. Or go right going west on route 103 towards Rutland. You will see lovely vistas as this is one of the highest roads in this part of the state. The Crowley Cheese (26.9 miles) store is at the crest of a hill where you can purchase cheese seven days a week, May to December. January through April they're open five days. If you want to visit the factory which is open mid-week 8 AM to 4 PM, at 27.9 miles, left for 3.8 miles on Healdville Road, a dirt road leading to the Cheese Factory in continuous operation since 1824. Returning to route 103, continue through the village of East Wallingford (35 miles) where you'll see Black Satin Silversmiths. Proceed to Cuttingsville (38 miles), which boasts an unusual mausoleum in the cemetery. Consider a side trip to the much-photographed Shrewsbury Community Church. Take Town Hill Road five miles to a "T" and turn right into Shrewsbury. There are gorgeous views of the Okemo Valley from this vantage point.

Turn right back on 103 after returning from Shrewsbury (45 miles if you took the side trip), to Rutland. You'll cross the Appalachian and Long Trails (53.1 miles) and see "The Whistle Stop" a noted lunch spot in East Clarendon. 2.2 miles later, turn right onto Route 7 North to Rutland. As a side trip, you may want to continue west on to Proctor via route 7 and route 3. Here is the Vermont Marble Company and the site of the largest marble display in the world. The exhibit includes a hall of Presidents and a marble replica of DaVinci's "Last Supper." Also in this area are the New England Maple Museum in Pittsford, which details the history and methods of making ample syrup and other maple products, and Wilson Castle, an authentic 19th century architectural masterpiece.

Or simply continue through Rutland which is Vermont's second largest city after Burlington. You'll pick up route 4 East if you turn right off 7/4 just past the Chaffee Gallery on your right which has regular exhibitions of local Vermont artists. After turning right on to Route 4 east, you will find yourself climbing steadily. Just before reaching Sherburne Pass at 2200 feet, you will see the Pico Ski Area on your right, with skiing in the winter and an Alpine Slide in the summer. There is a 2.5 mile hiking trail at the Inn at Long Trail from the pass to the summit of Pico, with its rewarding view. You can also enjoy hiking on the Appalachian Trail that travels across the top of Killington.

Eleven miles from Rutland, you'll come to the intersection of route 100 and route 4. An access road to the right takes you to the Killington Ski area, where summer activities include golf, horse shows, Killington Music Festival and mountain biking on the summit. The Killington Ski Lift offers summer and foliage tours for a fee to the summit of the mountain where there is a restaurant and spectacular views. Killington awed an early French explorer who named the state "Vert-Mont" for the striking Green Mountains seen from the top of the mountain.

Back on route 4, the trip continues 17 miles east along the Ottawaquechee River Valley to Bridgewater and back into Woodstock. You'll pass several wonderful places to dine including The Corners Inn on your left in Bridgewater Corners and Mangowood at the Lincoln Covered Bridge in West Woodstock along Route four if you're hungry for dinner after your driving tour.