



Rest Areas

A rest area, also known as a travel plaza, rest stop, or service area is a public facility, located along a roadway at which drivers and passengers can go to the toilet, relax and rest, eat, or refuel without exiting into a town or city on surface streets. A rest area with limited or no public facility is considered a pull-off or scenic area.

The standards and upkeep of rest areas on major and minor sized roadways vary. Many government-run rest areas tend to be located in remote and rural areas where there isn't food service, fuel, motels or repair centers. Driving and tourist information is sometimes available at these locations. Drinking fountains and/ or vending machine are sometimes located at rest areas that don't have commercial businesses.

Rest areas run by corporations or small business people are often called truck stops and they generally offering everything for the traveling public. Truck stops commonly supply fuel, food and toilets, showers, gift store, video and ATMs.

Today and in the future road trip families and others will have fewer rest areas available for them on a cross country trip. Several states are closing their close rest areas in order to save money. Arizona's Department of



Transportation announced it has closed 13 rest stops to save money even though research shows that over two out of ten fatal accidents are a result of over-tired drivers

A rest area near a state border is called a welcome center. These rest areas are usually larger than a typical rest area and can even include extra features such as a small museum or at least a basic information kiosk.

Rest areas are also different in different parts of the country. The older east coast highways with their turnpikes, long-distance intercity toll roads, had already built privately funded service areas before our current Interstate Highway System was built in the 1950's.

Other countries also have rest areas and while the names may be different, such as 'motorway services' in the UK, they are very similar to the rest areas in the United States.

For more information please visit www.restareahistory.org