

# Route 66 Place

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## That Route 66 Place

**An Arizona restaurant serves up hamburgers, ice cream and a good serving of the past.**

By Nancy Dickinson



**The black-and-white-tiled floor, chrome accents and retro Coca-Cola signs give Twisters Soda Fountain a 1950s vibe.**

*Nancy Dickinson*

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck called it The Mother Road. From 1960 until 1964, it was the title of a television series. It was also the focus of a song recorded by Nat King Cole.

Though the United States has tens of thousands of miles of highway, none of them carries the measure of nostalgia that is given to Route 66.

Stretching from Chicago to Los Angeles, Route 66 was one of the first highways built to allow auto travel between eastern reaches of the country and the West. Begun in 1926, Route 66 became the primary course for families traveling cross-country together. Because of the great amount of traffic the highway enjoyed, the addition of service stations, restaurants and motor lodges put in place to offer services to weary travelers changed the landscape of America forever.

In order to connect with the roads and main streets in hundreds of small towns across the country, the route was planned to allow these towns to enjoy the benefits of a major thoroughfare while still maintaining their small-town flavor. One such town is Williams, Ariz., located 53 miles from the Grand Canyon. In October 1984, Williams became the last Route 66 town bypassed with Interstate 40, and while other cities suffered for the loss of the Mother Road, Williams has thrived.



Twisters boasts a typical 1950s menu, which includes the Kraut Dog.

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### **From Service Station to Restaurant**

Located in Williams is a one-time service station built to serve travelers on Route 66, a Texaco on the edge of town. Built in 1926, the Texaco Star—among other signs—hung proudly over the service station until Williams was bypassed. Though no one is certain when The Route 66 Place came into being, it became a diner and with freshly made hamburgers, an ice cream counter serving the most delicious milk shakes found anywhere and Elvis on the jukebox, the history of Route 66 is alive and well. While the location is called the Route 66 Place, the diner is called Twisters Soda Fountain, and it's ready to give a generous portion of the 1950s.

The menu reflects the era, which made the road famous. Ice cream is offered in sugar cones, waffle cones and bowls, with a choice of nine different toppings. There are also freshly scooped shakes and malts. More reminiscent of a bygone era are cherry phosphates, suicide or cherry Cokes, homemade cream sodas, "Route" beer floats and Brooklyn egg creams, a combination of milk, soda water and chocolate syrup.

The menu reflects times past with burgers called the Big Bopper, Route 66 and La Bamba, all served with a heaping order of French fries or onion rings. Also on the menu are sandwiches carrying the names of Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne and Betty Boop. A can't miss is the Elvis, which ain't nothin' but a hot dog.

The kids' menu offerings carry the names of characters from the animated movie *Cars*. On the menu are items such as a burger called the McQueen, a hot dog named the Hudson and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich called The Sally, all with a side of chips or French fries.

### **Rock 'n' Roll Is Here to Stay**

Sitting for a spell at Twisters takes diners to a time when rock 'n' roll was young, the '57 Chevy was just a car and Chubby Checker shocked the nation with *The Twist*. Twisters brings a smile to the face of everyone who walks through the door. With black and white tiles on the floor, retro chrome-plated dining tables and an old gas pump against the wall, the ambience in Twisters is pure 1950s.

Each year during the second weekend of August, owners Jason and Stefanie Moore host the Cool Country Cruise-in, which attracts visitors with their vintage automobiles from across the country.

Though any car is welcome to enter the competition, most are class and muscle cars from the 1950s and '60s and have been restored to their original splendor.

Although, there might be other places trying to grasp the aura of being part of the 1950s and the history of Route 66, Twisters makes it happen daily. To borrow the title of a song written by Bobby

Troup in 1946, get your kicks on Route 66 and pay a visit to Twisters.

For more information on The Route 66 Place, visit [www.route66place.com](http://www.route66place.com). Contact your AAA Travel agent or [AAA.com/travel](http://AAA.com/travel) for help planning your Route 66 vacation.

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