



The Ark Loop – Curviest Ride in all Creation!

Revved Route

East on Main Street (US 421) towards Kentucky
Stay on 421 South as it curves and crosses the bridge
Curving off the bridge, take a left on 36 (in front of the Dairy Queen)
Stay on 36 through Carrollton, and then turn right to stay on 36
About a mile up from Carrollton, turn left to stay on 36
Stay on 36 (turn right) through Sanders
About 3 miles out of Sanders, turn right on 36 as it joins 227
Veer left to stay on 36E
Right to stay on 36 as it joins 127
You'll come to the Ark Encounter about 59 miles out
Turn around and come back on the same route
Turn right as 36N joins 127
Go straight on Route 35, heading towards Sparta
Pass the Kentucky Speedway on your left
In the river town of Warsaw, turn left on 42
Stay straight on 42 all the way to Carrollton
Straight through Carrollton on 42/36 to Madison
Stay Straight on 36 to Milton
In Milton, pick up 421 North to Madison (cross the bridge)

Revved Difficulty: Half Tank

Revved Length: 124.5 Miles

REVerie Scenic Stops (or Lookouts?):

- **The Ark Encounter**
- **The Markland Dam & Bridge**
- **Belterra Casino**
- **The Milton-Madison Bridge**



REVerie Roads & Serpent of 62 are the property of Visit Madison, Inc.

Let's ride or drive!

(Note: All odometers read slightly different, so the mileage stated here is meant to serve as a general guideline. But it should get you very close.)

0.00 Start

Start your adventure in Madison at the county courthouse, at Jefferson and Main Streets. Head south on US 421, which is also east on Main Street. Stay on 421 South across the bridge into Kentucky.

1.2 Left onto 36 (in front of the Dairy Queen)

There will be many turns on your way to the Ark, but you are basically just staying on Route 36 the whole way. It will sometimes join 227 or 127, but always stay on 36 and you will be heading the right way. On the way back you'll return on 36 for almost 30 miles, then you'll diverge onto 35 down to the Ohio River in Warsaw, KY. Just follow the prompts!

6.0 Passing Nugent Sand & Gravel Company

The many sand and gravel quarries along the Ohio River provide a seemingly inexhaustible supply of raw material for concrete, asphalt, and a host of other uses. The gravel was deposited during the glacial period about one million years ago. Or 6,000 years ago.

8.4 Crossing Locust Creek

You'll cross a small bridge across a tiny little creek as it enters the Ohio River, called Locus Creek. The creek is home to a very well-established Bald Eagle nest, just a couple hundred yards upstream from the road. Keep a sharp eye to the sky and if you are very lucky you might see one!

12.8 Cross the Kentucky River on the Purple Bridge

The Kentucky River may not seem like much as you shoot across this small bridge, but it's long and it's deep, and it figures prominently in Kentucky history. The river was a major transportation artery during pioneer times, and then even into recent modern times the river was equipped with several locks and dams to facilitate barge traffic. It actually travels 263 miles, all the way to Beattyville in Lee County, quite a way southeast of Lexington.

13.2 Downtown Carrollton

Carrollton, like many Kentucky towns, is extremely old and historic. It was laid out in 1792, scarcely 10 years after America won its independence from Britain. Compared to Indiana, the land south of the river was much less contested by the Indians, so the towns tended to be settled much earlier.

14.2 Right on 36



14.5 Tobacco Warehouses

You may notice a number of very large warehouse style buildings in and around Carrollton. These are vestiges of a bygone era when tobacco was “King” in this part of the country, and virtually every farm put in a “patch” of the cash crop. In the fall, after harvesting and curing the tobacco in the many large barns you’ll see in the region, the farmers would bring it to these giant warehouses where it would be sold at auction to the many cigarette company buyers who would come to town. It was a huge economy in its day, and fortunes were made in this smokey trade.

15.2 Left to stay on 36

21.2 Classic rolling bluegrass country

Take a look around as you ascend and descend the gentle rolling hills of central Kentucky. This is what ground looks like when it hasn’t been scoured flat by ancient glaciers, plowing all before them as they slid down from the north in the last ice age. Unlike most of Indiana and Ohio, with their table flat corn and bean fields, Kentucky retains the picturesque beauty of a landscape carved by water and time. It’s God’s Country for riders and drivers, that’s for sure!

29.3 Right in Sanders to stay on 36

33.2 Left at STOP sign to stay on 36E/227S

34.3 Veer left to stay on 36

37.2 Right to stay on 127/36

45.1 Jonesville, the town of two counties!

If you keep a sharp eye in this sleepy little burg, you’ll see the line between Owen and Grant counties, right smack dab in the middle of town.

51.5 Straight to stay on 36

59 Ark Encounter on your right

You can pull into the Ark parking lot and peer way off in the distance and see the huge replica Noah’s Ark. At almost 2 football fields long, it is hard to miss! If you choose to visit the attraction, you can pay for parking and head on back to buy your tickets.

Up ahead, if you stay straight past the Ark, you’ll come to an interchange off I-75, with the typical gas stations, Mexican restaurant, and motels, if you need them.

Ready to head back to Madison? Turn around and go back the same way.



66.7 Straight on 36 (The Chase Duvall Highway!)

This stretch of highway is dedicated to a young man who served as the Jonesville Fire Chief until his untimely death at the age of 43 in 2016.

74.9 Keep a sharp eye to the left for “Pilot’s Dream” airfield.

Up high on this ridge, with long flat spur ridges branching out to the sides, some developer built a small grass airstrip with a row of houses along the runway for private pilots who want to literally drive their plane right out of their garage and into the air!

78.1 Right on 127/36

82.7 Stay straight onto Route 35. That’s right it’s THIRTY-FIVE now, not 36!

86.4 Straight through the town of Sparta.

89.2 Kentucky Speedway (now abandoned and not in use)

This is a cautionary tale, for anyone who goes by the adage, “If you build it, they will come.” The problem, as the Kentucky Speedway discovered, is they may also stop coming. The 1.5-mile track opened in 2000 at a cost of about \$150 million, and by 2011 it was hosting NASCAR Cup Series races. Alas, by 2018 the marquis race was pulled and the date given to Las Vegas, and the track went into decline, eventually closing. But in its heyday, it attracted massive crowds. In fact, the interchange off I-71 near the track was put in specifically to handle the large influx of traffic. Today it is a sleeping giant, and only time will tell if it will rise again.

95.0 Warsaw, Kentucky, turn left onto U.S. Hwy. 42

Warsaw is a lovely little river town, and unlike many of the counties you’ve been traveling through on this loop, it does allow alcohol sales. So, if you are inclined, check out any of the quaint downtown bars and eateries, including Jewell’s on Main, Longo’s Bar, and Hey Turtle.

97.5 Sunset Bar & Grill

As you head out of town from Warsaw, you’ll see the Sunset Bar and Grill on your right, overlooking the river. This is a very popular rest spot, and the food is great!

97.9 Belterra Casino, the tall building off to the right, across the river

If you want to take a little side trip to the casino, just cross the river at the Markland dam and backtrack up to the casino on the Indiana side. Belterra has hotel rooms, several restaurants, a concert venue, and of course, a gambling casino. When you’ve had your fun, just come back and follow the signs up and across the bridge to continue the loop.



99.0 Markland Dam & Bridge over the Ohio River

As you pass by the locks & dam, with a bridge across the top, keep an eye out for any of the massive towboats and barges that might be locking through. The water in the locks lifts or lowers the boats about 35 feet in normal conditions.

There is a nice picnic and viewing area where you can observe the boats locking through and take a quick break. There are public restrooms and some nice benches here.

111.5 Stay straight onto Hwy. 36

112 Carrollton's "Mansion Row" on the right

Just before getting into downtown Carrollton, you'll be passing a very impressive row of large historic homes. These were built when the thriving tobacco trade brought millions of dollars into the local economy, and they stand as a monument to those bygone days.

Entering Downtown Carrollton

If you want to take a right into downtown Carrollton proper, you'll be rewarded by a classic town square with some nice old architecture. You'll find some food and drink downtown, but the gem of the town is Glauber's Sporting Goods. It's an old-time sport and gun store that will bring back memories of the times before Bass Pro and all the rest.

You are now entering Factory Row!

The Ohio River valley is an ideal location for manufacturing and industry. Easy proximity to water, accessible shipping via barge, truck and rail, and a skilled and ready workforce make it a prime choice for many large companies.

You will pass, in this order: NuCor Steel. Kentucky Utilities power plant, North American Stainless (this one is huge!) Certainteed Gypsum, Dow Chemical (maker of silicone products) and PMC Chemical.

124.4 Turn left and then a quick right at the Dairy Queen in Milton

Right in front of you, as you make the left turn, stands a tan building with a sign that reads "Kountry Korner Gifts & Things". On the south side of this building (away from the river) there are several highwater marks painted on the bricks, showing the water levels from the many floods that have submerged Milton over the years. You'll be astounded at the 1937 mark, but you'll also see how often it happens, about every 20 years or so.

Milton was actually a vibrant and fairly large town in the early 1900's, until the floods and the new bridge to Madison hastened the town's decline.

124.5 Cross the bridge back into Madison.



About the **Madison-Milton Bridge** (should be **Milton-Madison Bridge**) – an engineering marvel!

As mentioned above, the original bridge was opened in 1929, and it was an excellent steel truss design. It was 20 feet wide, which was plenty for the narrow cars and trucks of the time. But by the early 2000's, the bridge was just too narrow and suffering from old age. Madison needed a new bridge!

Rather than the typical method, where you'd tear down the old and build new, resulting in a closure of a year or more, it was proposed to build a new bridge on temporary piers **BESIDE** the old bridge, allowing traffic to keep flowing. When the new bridge was complete, traffic was routed onto it and the old bridge imploded down into the river.

The next phase was enlarging and strengthening the old bridge piers. And then, when all was ready, the new bridge was slid over onto the upgraded piers. As soon as it was in place, traffic resumed. The total down time for the entire project was just 10 days! The project won multiple international engineering awards, and this vital cross-river connection is good for another 90 years or so!

Welcome back to Madison!

Madison is widely known as Indiana's Music City. That's because on any given Friday or Saturday night you'll find great live music playing at 5 or more places, all within easy walking distance of the core downtown area. So, park your machine, let it cool down, and visit the Off Broadway Taproom or Shipley's Tavern or the Central Hotel Bar and relive the excitement of the day.

And start planning your next adventure, because The Ark Loop is not the only adventure route you can take out of Madison. There are 4 more great routes of varying lengths and intensity, including the flagship route, the **Serpent of 62** – 1,000 curves in 100 miles! So, keep riding, for an entire weekend, or even a full week!

