

Drive Instructions

MINIs On the Dragon 2008

Highlands Fun Drive

Organizer: Aaron Granger

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(Although it probably doesn't work at Fontana)

**Just look for my car, Jango... a Pepper White '06 MCS with
Pepper White roof and painted arches**

About Highlands:

Highlands is a cute little mountain town that is chock full of boutique shopping, antique stores, art galleries, craft shops and everything in between. The downtown area has been preserved and gives you a great chance to wander the shops and grab a bite to eat. The town also happens to connect some of the best twisty roads I've ever seen, making this run a great chance to satisfy both the avid motorist and the spouse, S.O. or family members who are just along for the ride. Just after we leave Highlands on the way back to Fontana, I'll lead us by Bridal Veil falls (weather permitting), which will make for an excellent photo opportunity with your MINI.

From "1,000 Places to See Before You Die in the USA and Canada" (http://www.amazon.com/000-Places-U-S-Canada-Before/dp/0761136916/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1199735014&sr=8-1):

"...and then 20 miles on dramatically beautiful US 64 to the dapper summer resort community of Highlands. The road climbs past mesmerizing waterfalls, including the 250-foot high Cullasaja River Gorge and Falls. At an elevation of nearly 4,000 feet, Highlands is green with lichens and moss and boasts an archetypal Main Street lined for a half-dozen blocks with diverting boutiques and inviting cafes. The population swells from 3,000 to about 25,000 in summer when it can be challenging to find a table at the venerable Kelsey Place Restaurant, part of the rustic Highlands Inn."

Date/Time: The group will launch at 10 am on Thursday, May 1, 2008 from the base of Fontana Dam.

The Route: We will take NC 28 Southeast from Fontana, crossing the "Hellbender" and heading through some beautifully twisty mountain roads that I discovered right after MOTD 2006. After a 2 hour stop in Highlands for lunch on your own and some wandering through the little village shops, we will head back home via Wayah road, an up-and-coming road in the area that is said to rival the Dragon in terms of twisty back-roads driving. We will come back through Robbinsville, which is a great place to stop for provisions, fuel and cell phone signal if you are staying at Fontana. The entire trip is 158 miles long.

Duration: The drive is about 1.5 to 2 hours, each way. This, when combined with a 2 hour stop in Highlands, means that we should be back around 4pm. It may run a bit longer... It may run a bit shorter. You never know!

Cost: There is no cost for this event, though lunch is on your own. You must be a registered participant for MOTD 2008 (register at the NAM store) to participate in this drive.

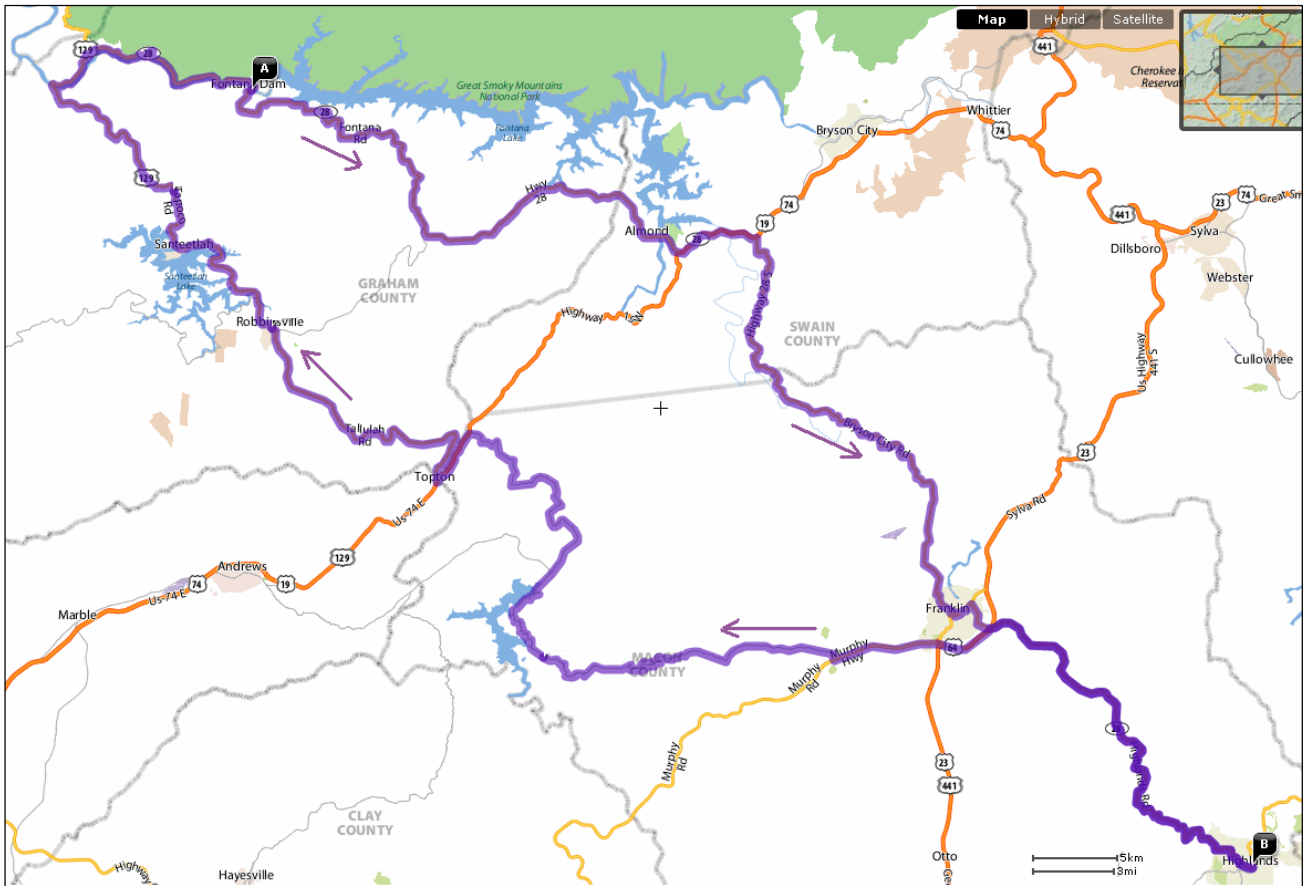


Radios: FRS radios are wonderful for this type of event. We will run on Channel 8 (no sub-channel).

The Drive: This is a SCENIC drive. Please keep all four wheels on your side of the yellow line. I'll keep the pace brisk, but will happily respond to radio requests to slow down a bit. You will have a complete set of directions, so if you feel that you are driving beyond your limits to keep up with the group, please use the radio to request that we slow down a bit or enjoy the rest of the drive at your own, safe pace. The most important thing is the safety of everyone involved.

Warnings: Mind your speed on anything that resembles a highway... radar WILL be present. The roads on the way down are very scenic but are also very twisty and frequently have rock ledges along them... they are mountain roads, after all. Drivers; please leave the sight-seeing for your stay in Highlands... keep your attention on the road at all times.

An Overview of the Route:



Liability Waiver & Release Agreement

By participating in an organized drive at MINIs on the Dragon 2008 (MOTD 2008), I represent that I am at least 18 years of age and have a valid driver's license. I further represent that I have all necessary licenses and insurance to participate in events at MOTD 2008 and that I am not taking any drugs or medication, nor do I have any physical or mental limitations that would interfere with my safe participation in the Tour. I recognize that the operation of any MINI is an inherently dangerous activity with a risk of loss of the MINI and serious injury or death of myself or others. I understand that these risks include, but are not limited to, road surface conditions, debris on roads, varying road widths, curves and other vehicles and pedestrians sharing the roadway, and the skills of other participants in the Road Tour.

_____ (initial here)

In consideration for being permitted to participate in an organized drive at MOTD 2008, in which I will participate on May 1, 2008, I the undersigned on behalf of myself and my heirs, executors, administrators, assigns and legal representatives, agree and indemnify, defend and hold harmless the organizers of the Scenic Drive around the Smoky Mountains at MOTD 2008, the organizers of MOTD 2008 and both of their representatives, individually and in the capacity indicated, from and against any and all damages, claims, suits, causes of action to and against a person and property, (including but not limited to attorney's fees) arising in connection with or related to my participation in this event.

_____ (initial here)

Further, I assume all the risk of injury and loss, waive and release any claim of damage and injury of any nature I might state against the organizers of an organized drive at MOTD 2008 and the organizers of MOTD 2008 and their representatives who assist in the capacity indicated, arising out of my participation in the Tour.

_____ (initial here)

I have consulted with the legal and/or other advisors of my choice before signing this unconditional waiver and release, and I enter into freely and on behalf of myself and my heirs, successors and assignees.

_____ (initial here)

This Unconditional Waiver and Release shall be constructed under the laws of *the State of Virginia*, and the exclusive venue for the resolution of all disputes pertaining to the road tour shall be in the appropriate municipal, state, or federal court located closest to where the event is taking place.

All persons who might drive during the event must sign and initial this waiver before departure.

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Name Printed: _____

Name Printed: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

HOW TO DRIVE THE DRAGON (Reprinted from an article by Ron Johnson at www.tailofthedragon.com):

Drive the Dragon at your skill level - don't try to push it or keep up with faster vehicles.

STAY IN YOUR LANE, There are videos available for sale that show vehicles cutting the corners and taking chances that might appear "fun" while sitting in your easy chair. **BEWARE !** This style of driving on the Dragon can cost you dearly. The challenge of the Dragon is to take the many curves in the best line possible and both lanes **IS NOT** "the line". Drive Florida if you like to straighten out the curves.

Do **NOT** sightsee. The Dragon is to drive, not to watch the sights. On many runs I don't even see what is on the side of the road. I'm watching the roadway way ahead.

Look far ahead at the road, curves, bushes, other vehicles, etc. If you haven't seen the hazards right in front of you, you are going to hit them anyway, so you might as well pay attention to what you have time to avoid.

We have seen deer, bear, turkeys, and wild boar on the roadway. Be ready to brake and slow. When we say brake we **DO NOT** mean slamming on the brakes. That will get you turned around in a hurry and it's no fun looking at where you've been at any speed.

Maintain a "safe zone". Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you. Watch your rear view mirrors for faster vehicles. If you see a faster rider/driver coming up behind you, pull over to the right of your lane, slow down just a little, and wave them around. It is much safer to let a faster vehicle around you than to try to outrun them. **NEVER** stay left trying to keep someone from passing you. **NEVER** pull off the road onto the shoulder unless it is at one of the pull-off parking areas. It may be illegal to pass on the Dragon, but I'll let a faster vehicle get around me to protect my safe zone.

There will always be faster drivers than you. Don't try to be the King of the Dragon.

Drive the Dragon many times before trying to challenge it. Then you still need to respect it at all times.

DO NOT STAND ON THE BRAKES if you see danger ahead. You are much better off to tap the brakes and maintain control. Some 90% of the accidents on the Dragon are due to speed and then over-braking. If you see another vehicle coming at you in your lane, hug the white line in your lane. In all likelihood you can avoid trucks and trailers if you stay alert and watch ahead.

DO NOT be spooked by other vehicles. **DO NOT** make sudden avoidance moves. You might have to adjust your line to avoid a car, truck, or bike, but **DO NOT** lay on the brakes or turn off the roadway suddenly unless that is the only out you have. Motorcycles might dent your car, but that is better than going off the bank and hitting a tree sideways. If a cycle is in your lane that is their mistake and problem ... don't let them force you into a worse situation for yourself.

Trucks are usually traveling at a very slow speed and you should have time to stop and back-up if you see one coming at you and taking the whole corner. Watch for signals from drivers/riders coming at you. Many times they will escort a big truck over the Dragon and wave a warning to you to pull over. **DO NOT** ignore these warnings.

Avoid driving hard on the Dragon in heavy traffic times. Weekends from 11 am to 5 pm are the busiest. These are the times to lay back and enjoy watching the "show" go by.

The early mornings (before 11 am) and the late afternoons (after 5 pm) have the least traffic.

ALWAYS stay 100% alert. You do not have the advantage of relaxing on the Dragon.

Make sure your vehicle is mechanically sound and that your tires are good.


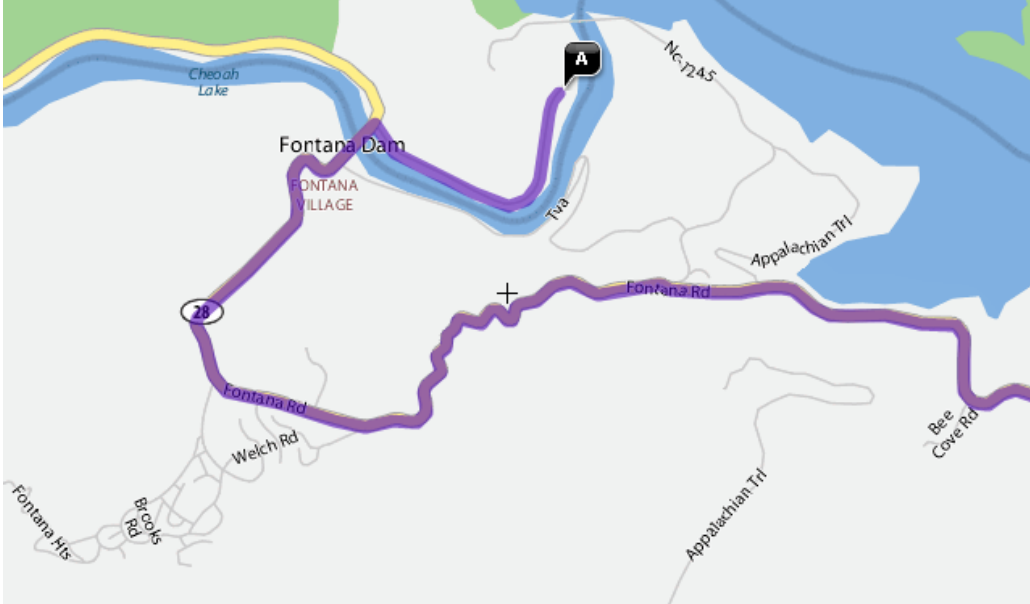

Plan to make several runs, the first is always a nervous one then you can have fun on the second and third.

DO NOT over-use your brakes. Use your gears and **DOWNSHIFT**. A good Dragon driver **WILL NOT** use a lot of brakes.

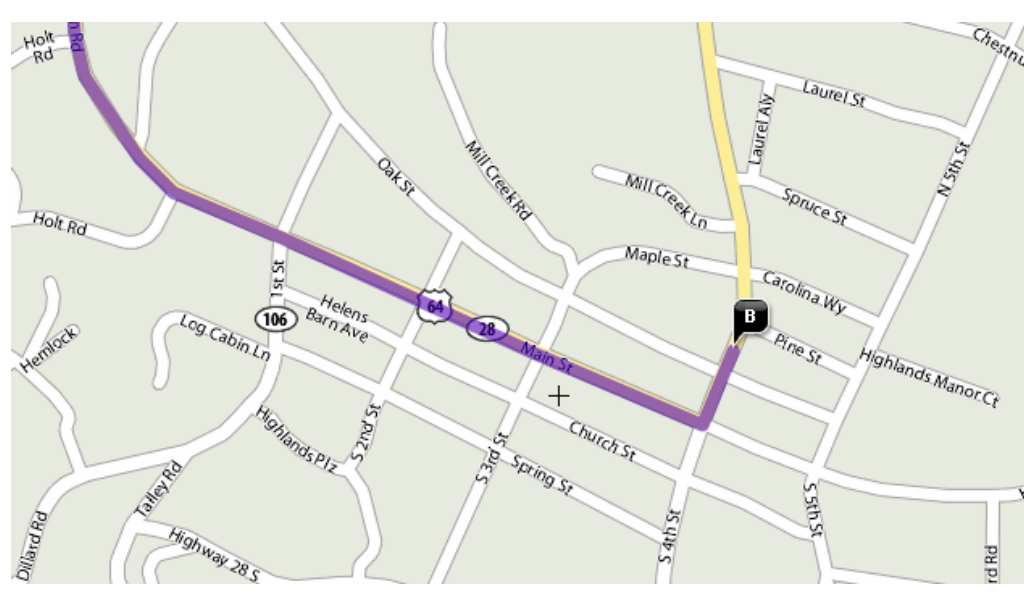

Focus - do not daydream. Watch the road, your mirrors, and pay attention to other bikes/cars/trucks.

99% of the accidents on the Dragon come from the following:

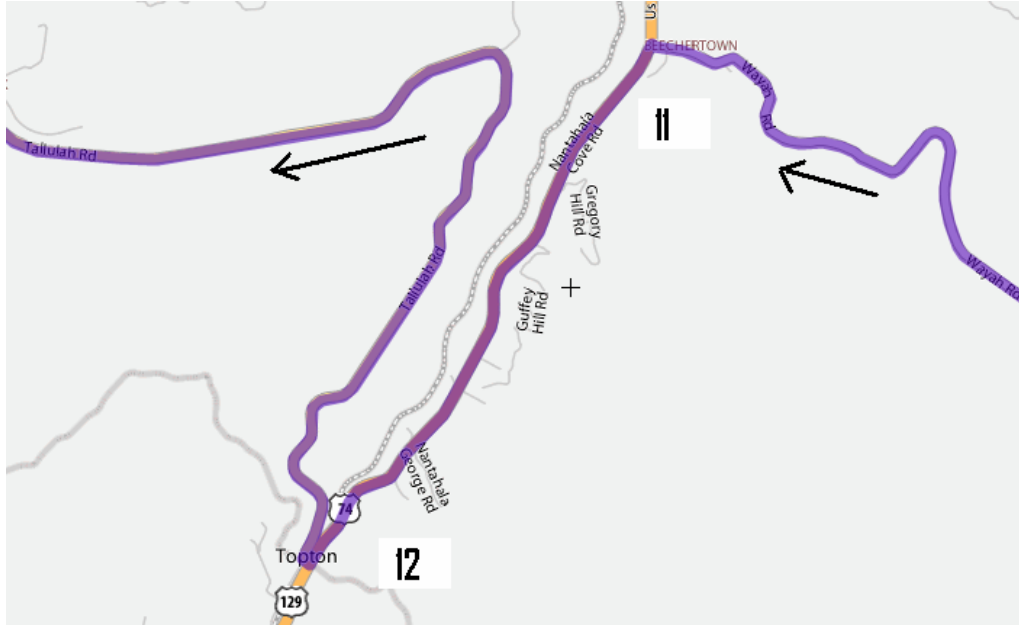
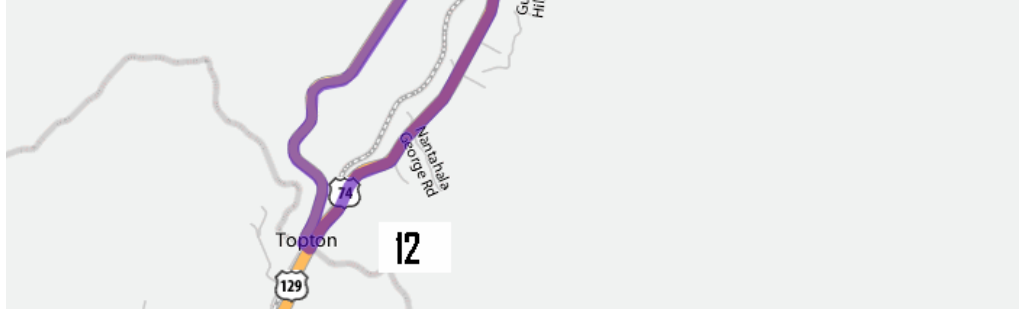
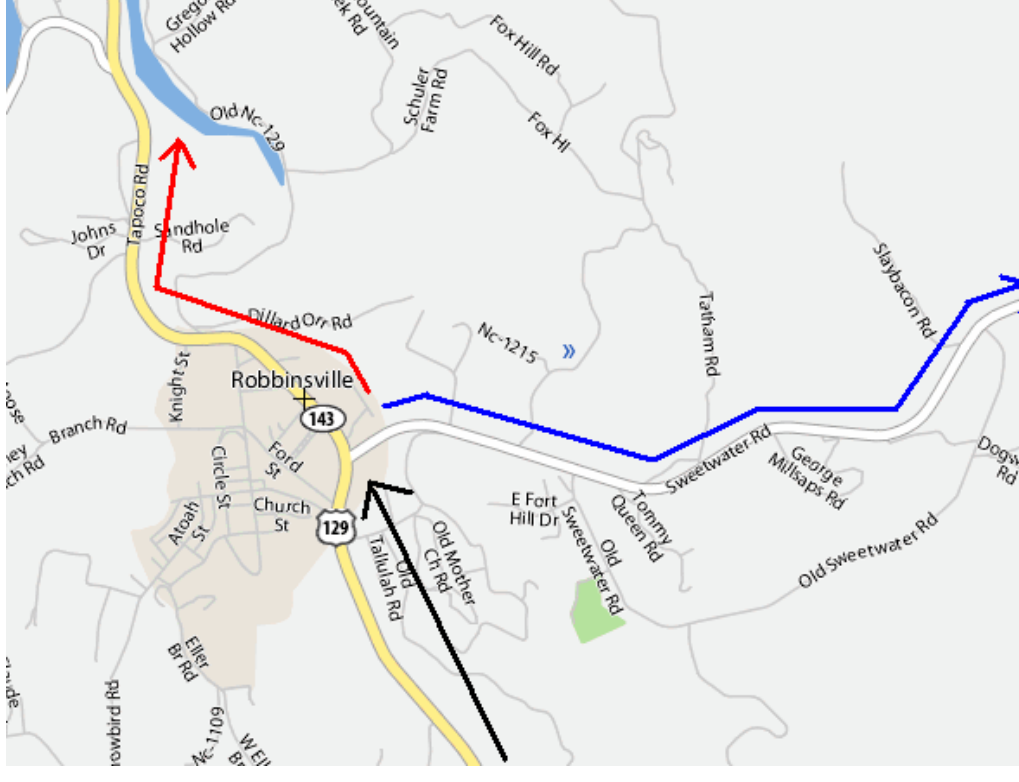
- Too much speed
- Too much brakes
- Inattentiveness
- Driving above your abilities

Miles	Map	Directions
		<p>1: Depart the staging area at the base of Fontana Dam.</p>
<p>0 Miles on trip 24 to next turn</p>		<p>2: TURN LEFT onto 28 towards the bridge to Fontana Village – Reset your trip meter as you make this turn to match the numbers to the left.</p>
<p>24.0 miles 3.2 to next turn</p>		<p>3: TURN LEFT where 28 East joins US 74 East</p>

<p>27.2 miles</p> <p>20.7 to next turn</p>		<p>4: TURN RIGHT, leaving US 74 and following NC 28</p>
<p>47.9 miles</p> <p>2.1 to step 5e</p> <p>18.5 to next turn</p>	<p>Follow NC 28 through the town of Franklin.</p>	<p>5a: TURN RIGHT onto West Main St</p> <p>5b: TURN LEFT onto Porter St.</p> <p>5c: TURN LEFT onto West Palmer Street</p> <p>5d: Palmer becomes East Main St.</p> <p>5e: TURN RIGHT onto Highlands Rd (AKA: NC28)</p>

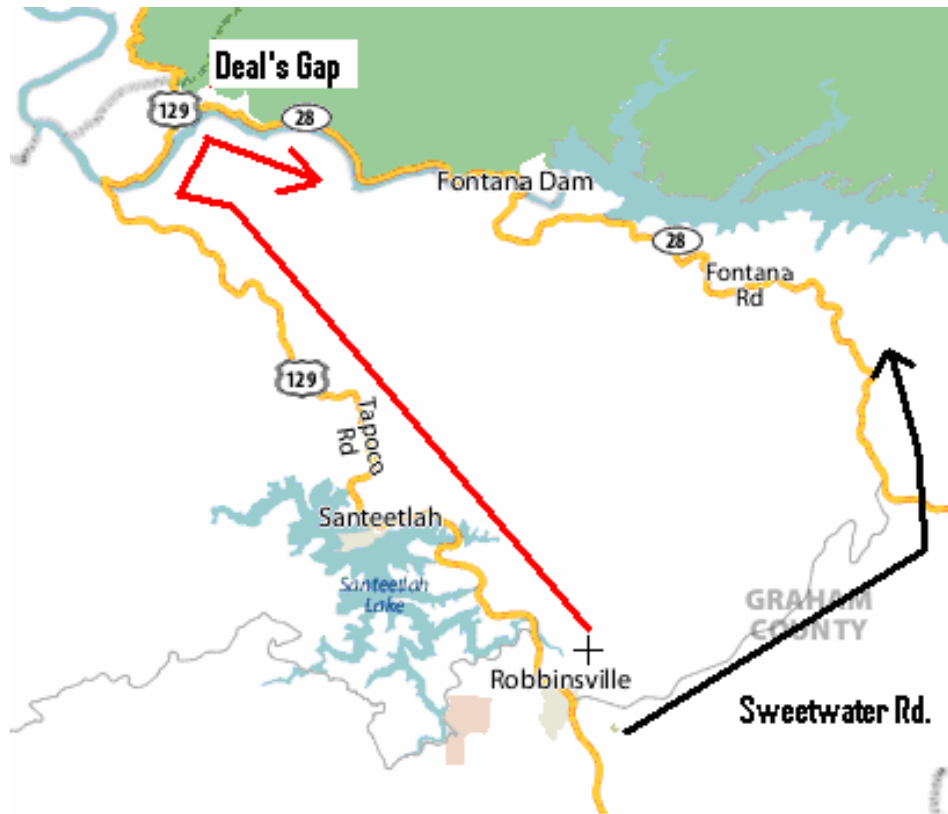
<p>68.5 miles</p>		<p>6: TURN LEFT onto 4th street and park one block ahead near Town Hall</p>
	<p>2 Hour Break for shopping, lunch, etc. We will announce the time to reconvene at town hall when we get there. If you got separated from the group and arrive late, I'll leave a note on my windshield (Pepper White MCS with painted arches) with the re-assembly time. We will depart promptly, 15 minutes after the posted re-assembly time.</p>	<p>7. Lunch & Shop</p>
<p>RESET TRIP METER</p> <p>0.0 miles on trip</p> <p>17.1 miles to next turn</p>	<p>Bridal Veil Falls is about 2 miles out of Highlands. Weather permitting; we will stop briefly for a photo op... This may be your only chance to DRIVE YOUR MINI UNDER A WATERFALL!!!</p> 	<p>8: RESET YOUR TRIP METER and Head out of Highlands on NC28, back the way we came.</p>

<p>17.1 miles on trip</p> <p>6.0 miles to next turn</p>		<p>9: TURN LEFT onto US 64 West (Sylva Rd)</p>
<p>23.1 miles on trip</p> <p>Turn Right and then turn Left in 0.1 mile</p> <p>28.1 miles to next turn</p>		<p>10: TURN RIGHT onto Patton Rd. and then 0.1 miles ahead TURN LEFT onto Wayah Road.</p>

<p>51.2 miles on trip</p> <p>2.1 miles to next turn</p>		<p>11: At the end of Wayah Road, TURN LEFT onto US 74 West / US 129 South AKA Nantahala Cove Rd.</p>
<p>53.3 miles on trip</p> <p>11.7 miles to Robbinsville</p>		<p>12: Turn Right in Tipton onto Tallulah Rd.</p>
<p>65.0 miles on trip</p>		<p>13: End of Tour at Robbinsville</p>

A lot of people will be leaving us in Robbinsville. It's a great place to get gas, pick up some food for the next few days or stop to make some last minute cell phone calls before driving out of range of the towers on your way to Fontana Village. Feel free to head your own way from here on out. Several tour members will also be staying in hotels in the Robbinsville area so they will probably peel away from the group heading back to Fontana Village.

I'll be stopping for gas at one of the larger gas stations there as it is much cheaper to buy gas here than at Fontana. If you want to follow me back to Fontana, I'd be happy to lead a group the rest of the way in after filling up.



There are 2 ways back to Fontana...

- You can go via Sweetwater Road and TURN LEFT onto NC 28 when you hit it in 8.8 miles and continue on 12.7 miles until you get to Fontana Village.
- You can continue up 143/129 through Robbinsville 17.8 miles to Deal's Gap. TURN RIGHT onto NC 28 and continue on 8.8 miles until you get to Fontana Village.

One Page Instructions the Highlands Drive – MOTD 2008

1		Depart the staging area at the base of Fontana Dam.
2	Trip: 0 mi 24.0 to next turn	TURN LEFT from the lower dam access road onto 28 towards the bridge that leads to Fontana Village Reset your trip meter as you make this turn.
3	Trip: 24.0 mi 3.2 to next turn	TURN LEFT where 28 East joins US 74 East
4	Trip: 27.2 mi 20.7 to next turn	TURN RIGHT, leaving US 74 and following NC 28
5	Trip: 47.9 mi 2.1 to end of turning directions in this step. 18.5 to next turn	<u>Follow NC 28 through downtown Franklin, NC</u> TURN RIGHT onto West Main St TAKE IMMEDIATE LEFT onto Porter St. TAKE IMMEDIATE LEFT onto West Palmer St. CONTINUE STRAIGHT when West Palmer becomes East Main St. TURN RIGHT onto Highlands Rd (AKA NC 28)
6	Trip: 68.5 mi	TURN LEFT in Highlands on 4 th St. and park one block ahead near Town Hall. There are public bathrooms ahead 1 block on the left.
7		Break for 2 hours. I will announce the time to reconvene when we get to Highlands and will post it on my windshield, just in case you got left behind somewhere – A Pepper White '06 MCS with painted arches We will depart promptly, 15 minutes after the announced meeting time
8	Trip: 0.0 mi 17.1 to next turn	We will head out of Franklin the same way we came in. Reset your trip meter as you TURN RIGHT onto Highlands Rd. Weather permitting; We will stop at Bridal Veil Falls, about 2 miles outside of Highlands, for a photo op. Where else can you drive your MINI under a waterfall?
9	Trip: 17.1 mi 6.0 to next turn	TURN LEFT onto US 64 West (AKA Sylva Rd)
10	Trip: 23.1 mi 28.1 to next turn	TURN RIGHT onto Patton Rd and drive 0.1 mile. TURN LEFT onto Wayah Road.
11	Trip: 51.2 mi 2.1 to next turn	TURN LEFT onto US 74 West / US 129 South (AKA Nantahala Cove Road) and continue on 2.1 miles
12	Trip: 53.3 mi 11.7 to Robbinsville	TURN RIGHT in Topton onto Tallulah Road
13	Trip: 65.0 mi	This is where the tour officially ends. See Page 11 of this packet for directions to Fontana or stop with me to get gas and I'll lead you the rest of the way back.