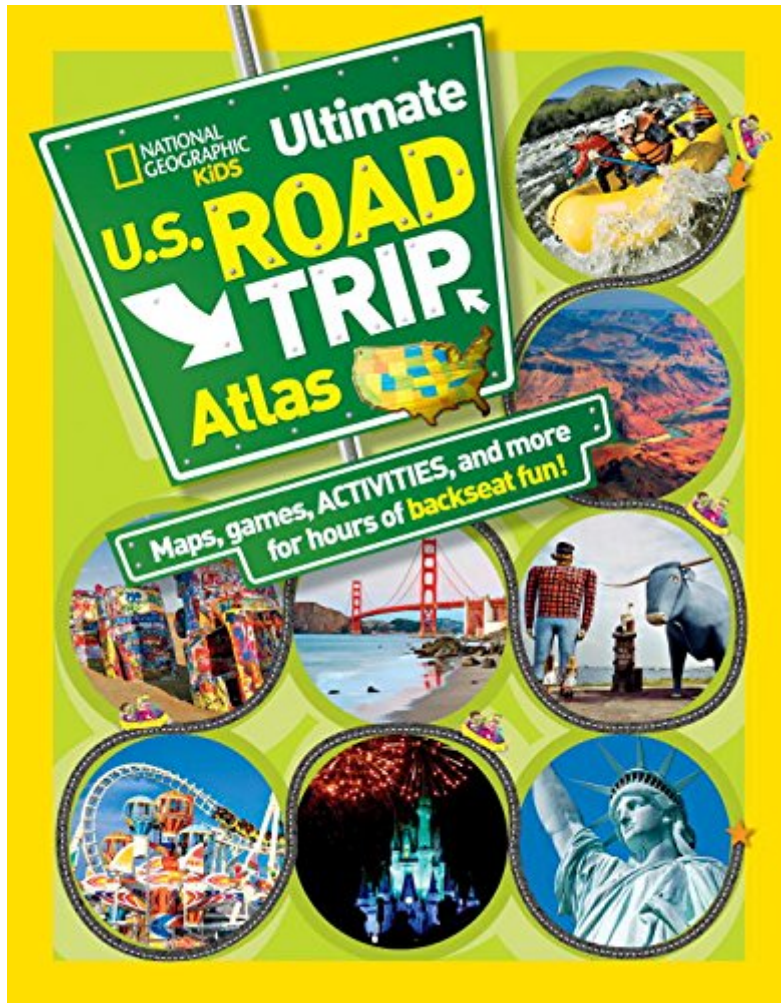


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# NAT GEO Ultimate U.S. Kids Road Trip Atlas



## Customer Reviews

Of all the books at my recent book fair, "National Geographic Kids Ultimate U.S. Road Trip Atlas" was my favorite. I'm the librarian/chair of the book fair, thus I familiarize myself with every book on the case shelves. As a cartophile (map lover), I immediately grabbed this book and Aha! thrilled to its pages!! I evaluate such a book of the 50 states by what is written about my home state, Louisiana. I begin there/here. Each state is allotted two pages. The state map fills one page and information and state symbols the other. The little roads are missing--after all, it takes a big fold-out to include those--but all the state and federal roads are intact. How do I know? A rather narrow state road, 28, runs between Federal Highway 171 and Interstate 49. So what? My grandparents lived in a small community, Simpson, along 28. No, Simpson didn't make the map, but 28 is there. What is included for each state are these items: 1. 5 Cool things to do here (In Louisiana you can visit the Rose Garden in Shreveport, take a Bayou Boat Tour, visit the Aquarium of the Americas, go through Cajun Country, and tour the French Quarter of New Orleans. A green line exactly locates each place.) 2. A summary paragraph 3. Roadside attractions, like Mardi Gras World, a museum showing how a float is made 4. Odd information: Did you know that alligators must stay at least 200 yards away from the Mardi Gras parade route. Each state is set up similarly. Imagine how children can have fun with this--and learn during the summer on those ghastly road trips. The U. S. Road Atlas is most beneficial. I just flipped open to a particular state. Question: Which state is divided into two parts by the Chesapeake Bay? Yes, if you live near this region, you can answer that.

One reviewer made it sound like there's not much to this atlas. I'm a high school teacher, and I notice that many items generically labeled 'for kids' don't have a specific audience or age range in mind. This book is recommended for kids 8 and up. We have a 5 year old and an 11 year old. The 11 year old thinks it's a great trivia book with tons of maps. Our 5 year old thinks it's cool that he has his own maps, like the ones on our navigation system. The book is colorful, magazine-sized, and very appealing, visually. Most states get a 2-page spread, with a map of the state on one page, 5 Cool Things to do Here surround the map, with colored pointers to their locations, and off to the side a few smaller sections like popular roadside attractions (usually 3), and either a Fantastic State Facts or Traffic Laws You Won't Believe section. There is a brief description of the geography of each state, and images of the state bird, flower, and animal are near the state's name. Each state also has its own Boredom Buster that will occupy kids for quite a while, though they can be technology-focused. Examples include taking pictures of Clinton references as you travel through Arkansas, searching for famous people from Iowa and see who can find the most, taking pictures of

tornado shelters in Kansas and see who can find the most, etc. It also includes 10 pages of games at the back which are colorful, but probably won't last more than a half hour. Some critics have made it sound like there's not much to the book. I can see that argument in one sense. There's not enough information to occupy bored kids for several hours, as you drive through a state. I do agree with the comment that the US map is too small.

I'm giving this 2.5 stars and quite frankly I'm surprised by the number of high rankings, and those are what I went off of to decide to purchase. To start with, a pretty basic state fact or piece of information is its flag but it's not included. I even looked for a reference page of just flags, but nope. The map of the US overall has interstate routes/times printed all over it with light gray state boundaries, so unless you have a decent idea where a state is, it's hard to find. Also, unlike many other atlases this one is done alphabetically. I don't really mind that and in many ways it's very nice, but again there's no reference to where the state is in relation to region. There's very little information overall. And while I haven't dissected many states, I started with ours and was surprised that one of the places to visit mentioned is hard to see on the map since they have a bold dark blue line right through it, and lots of open space around it. I knew where it was and thought it had been left out at first. So to tell kids they should go to a town to see a feature and have that town effectively crossed out on the map seems weird to me. There were surprisingly few towns listed and no index to easily find any that might be on the map. It's a real guessing game. Another annoyance is the format for the pages change considerably. Some are portrait and some are horizontal. That wouldn't be so bad (presumably it's based on state shape) but there's no consistency on state name placement so you have to look at the top left and bottom left as you search through. And one of my biggest gripes is the lack of and state of the activities. I expected state related activities, maybe even with the state page, to help encourage kids to look through the information provided and learn it more deeply.

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