

## Get out and drive!

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Well here we are, approaching the middle of summer already! Hopefully, all of us are out there enjoying these top-down months... between the raindrops anyway! I don't know about you, but I'm always on the search for a good road. Perhaps you've noticed that Miatas tend to find interesting roads on their own! Well here are some thoughts to get you out of the garage and onto the back roads.

First, where can we find fun roads in our area? Some would say that Central Ohio is flat and there's not much fun to be had. Actually, there are some interesting routes; you just have to know where to look. In general, you'll always find a scenic road with hills and curves near rivers and creeks. For example, grab a map and follow the Scioto from Dublin to Prospect, or follow Big Darby Creek from West Jefferson to Bellefontaine. When you get to the end, turn around and do it again!

With just a short drive, you can be in some really great country in the Hocking Hills area south of Lancaster. Did you know that a couple of the Detroit-based car magazines drive down to this area to test cars? Yup, many of those nifty cover shots through the woods were taken in the Hocking Hills area. You can make a neat loop with Rt 374, Rt 664 and Rt 56 and end up in Circleville or Chillicothe for a meal along the way. Looking at the topography of Ohio, any terrain east of I-71 is likely to be interesting, especially south of I-70 and east of Rt 23. And all this fun is just an hour or so away!

Some will say that the roads and scenery are incredible in KY or TN or PA or some other state, and they'd be right. I've done a few of those areas myself, including two trips to the now-infamous Deal's Gap. In fact, I highly recommend you plan a trip to those areas. But I've also found many roads in SE Ohio that are just as good and not as far away (Rt 555/78/26/etc.). I have a theory on why this is true: *For truly fun (read: lots of curves) roads, you want terrain that is rough enough to cause the road engineers go around and over obstacles and not so rough that they cut through it instead.*

There are some great resources available to us to plan our routes or find interesting areas to explore. You can accomplish a lot with a state or county map, but my favorite is the Ohio Atlas & Gazetteer, available at many bookstores and gas stations. It contains detailed maps of each county, in a very easy-to-use format. Those more computer-minded folks can use a mapping website, like Mapquest or Yahoo! Maps, or mapping software from Microsoft or Delorme. The real travel geeks equip themselves with GPS locators (don't they Jim?). :O)

There are a few online repositories for information on cool roads. You might try a few of these:

- *Miata.net's Best Drives forum* - <http://forum.miata.net/vb/forumdisplay.php?f=19>
- *RouteMeister's Back Roads* - <http://home.rochester.rr.com/backroads/>
- *MotorcycleRoads.com* - <http://www.motorcycleroads.com/>

Lastly, our own BMC website has a section called Recommended Drives. Unfortunately, there are only a few items there. **So here's my suggestion:** Send your cool roads and routes to [webmaster@buckeyemiataclub.com](mailto:webmaster@buckeyemiataclub.com) and ask to have them added. It doesn't have to be a whole route, just a road name and a start and end point, for example: Creek Rd. between Scioto-Darby Rd. and Cemetery Pike near Darby Creek. Let's share some of that wealth of knowledge that we all have about the area and build a resource we can all draw from. I'll be sending my list shortly.

Now get out there and drive... and be sure to wave!

**Did you know?** Driving top-down in the rain is some of the most fun you can have as a Miata owner. There's just something funny about it that makes me smile and laugh. Most Miata owners have found that if you can keep your speed up, you don't get wet! It's those pesky stop signs and stoplights that spoil our fun! Try it, you'll see. :O)