



# The Cotton Candy Road Trip: A Coast-to-Coast Tour of Vintage American Theme Parks

*Pam Turlow*

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## A Coast-to-Coast Tour of Vintage American Theme Parks

In the shadow of Disney and Universal there exists a dying breed of little-known theme parks, brimming with regional charm, authenticity, and the American spirit. Pam Turlow visited 40 of them. This is her road trip.

From Maine to California, if you exit the too-bright interstates and drive down the local traffic roads, or maybe up the dark side of Route 88, you'll sometimes find up ahead in the distance a shimmering light, a remnant of an America where *everything* was local, where painted, peeling carousels and cotton candy spun before your eyes was the real magic of Saturday night.

These theme parks, known mostly to the people who live near them and who have been playing in them for generations, captured the imagination of voice actress Pam Turlow, who packed up her husband and went in search of her childhood, and of our childhoods, in such fanciful fantasylands as:

- The Enchanted Forest, built on a hill in rural Oregon, by a man who decided one day that he wanted to run a theme park and sunk his life savings into creating it
- Nelis' Dutch Village, in Holland (where else?), Michigan, a re-creation so authentic that it's like a country escaped from Epcot's World Showcase and ended up here
- Rye Playland, so old it's a National Historical Landmark, and once so popular during the Depression that visitors really did forget their troubles, but now in peril
- Knoebels, in rural Pennsylvania, a park with its own Haunted Mansion dark ride, wooden coasters, steam trains, and funnel cakes, and no charge to walk inside
- Disneyland, the park that sprouted from an orange grove, where Pam closes her eyes to the glitz and merchandise, and recalls the time when Walt walked Main Street

Come join Pam Turlow on her Cotton Candy Road Trip and experience the tucked-away theme parks where the Ferris wheels still turn, the haunted houses still drip blood, and the brass rings are still there for you to grab, in Mickey Mouse's shadow.

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