

**Third Eastern Iowa MINIs Border Skirmish Drive**  
 Saturday, April 21, 2012  
 Route Details

Time	Waypoint	Coordinates	Leg Miles
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<b>9:30 am</b>	#1. Decorah Trout Hatchery	43° 16.432'N, 091° 46.808'W	0.0
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Meet up at the Decorah Trout Hatchery, located approximately one mile south of town. Turn south on Trout Run Road off of IA-9 east of Decorah (this intersection has a stoplight and is adjacent to the local Wal-Mart). If you arrive early, you'll have time to visit Siewers Spring Park and the hatchery, feed the trout in the rearing raceways, and check out the now world famous Decorah Bald Eagles (<http://www.ustream.tv/decorahaegles>; the baby chicks should be ~2-3 weeks old by then). The restrooms here are primitive, so you may want to stop somewhere prior to arriving. We'll plan to depart the Hatchery at 10:00 am sharp and motor north towards Freeport.

	#2. Freeport, IA	43° 17.773'N, 091° 44.629'W	2.4
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Bear right on to IA County Road A52. Slow for the speed zone passing the trailer park. In about two minutes you're into a few good local twisties. The last 6 miles into Waukon is straight and slightly rolling.

	#3. Waukon, IA	43° 16.168'N, 091° 29.265'W	14.3
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Turn left and go north on IA-76. The road gradually descends into the Upper Iowa River valley. Enjoy the beautiful, expansive views to the west, north, and east.

	#4. IA County Road A26	43° 25.709'N, 091° 30.717'W	12.3
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Turn right onto County Road A26, about 3 miles south of Dorchester. This is a designated Iowa Scenic Drive with views of the bluffs lining the river. Nice road with mostly broad sweeping curves and an occasional twisty. The bluffs provide a nice backdrop for photos.

	#5. IA-26	43° 28.779'N, 091° 18.257'W	14.2
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Turn left onto IA-26 towards New Albin for a short distance.

	#6. IA County A11 / MN 2	43° 29.568'N, 091° 17.841'W	1.0
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Turn left onto IA County Road A11 (alternately MN County Road 2). This is the true, bona-fide "border skirmish" portion of the Border Skirmish Drive. Watch how the road surface changes its composition as you jump back and forth across the IA-MN border.

	#7. Eitzen, MN	43° 30.473'N, 091° 28.042'W	9.8
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Motor through the town of Eitzen; turn right on MN-76 and head north toward Caledonia.

	#8. MN-44	43° 36.104'N, 091° 30.689'W	7.3
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Turn right on MN-44 and continue into the town of Caledonia. Bear right on Old Highway Drive, which heads into town and bends to the right, becoming West Washington Street. When you arrive at the beautiful old Houston County Courthouse, turn right on South Kingston Street, go south one block and turn left on South Street. Motor east for five blocks, turn right, and head south on South Winnebago Street / MN County Road 249.

	#9. MN County Road 249	43° 37.915'N, 091° 29.500'W	2.9
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After heading south for six blocks, MN County Road 249 takes a left turn and heads out of town. The road that takes us to Freeburg and lunch is a superb, hidden gem of a motoring road, not widely traveled since the pavement doesn't extend past Freeburg to the river.

<b>11:30 am</b>	#10. Freeburg, MN (Lunch)	43° 36.614'N, 091° 21.656'W	8.8
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As we arrive in the tiny town of Freeburg the road turns right, we cross over a small bridge and arrive for lunch at **Covey's Little Miami**. We'll park along the road in front of the restaurant. They have a simple lunch menu with a variety of sandwich and grill items. Here's one review: <http://www.restaurantica.com/mn/caledonia/coveys-little-miami/23232676/>

We'll plan to depart the restaurant around 12:45 pm.

	#11. MN-76	43° 38.590'N, 091° 29.844'W	9.8
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Didn't get enough of the twisty road to Freeburg? You're in luck because we back-track on the same stretch of MN County Road 249 back to Caledonia. Once in town, we turn right on South Winnebago Street and stay straight until reaching Main Street, where we turn left, motor for five blocks, and then turn right on North Kingston Street. As we cross MN-44 and re-join MN-76 we'll slow until everyone has managed to cross through the intersection.

#12. MN County Road 10                      43° 43.929'N, 091° 34.178'W                      8.7

Just west of Caledonia, the road takes a sharp turn to the right, heads north on a rather straight and hilly stretch for a couple of miles, and then takes a sharp twist to the left and begins to descend into the Root River Valley. The next few miles are about as good as it gets in a MINI. This road used to be too rough for good motoring but has been resurfaced and is now quite heavenly, both in terms of scenery and the curves. We'll take a left turn when we come to the intersection with MN County Road 10.

#13. MN-76                                      43° 39.575'N, 091° 30.694'W                      9.8

MN County Road 10 heads southwest and then south along some broad curves through the valley until arriving at Sheldon, another tiny town in the MN countryside. The road then turns east and gets quite curvy for a couple of miles as it climbs up the ridge, eventually rejoining MN-76 where we'll turn left and motor north.

**1:30 pm**                      #14. Houston, MN (rest stop)                      43° 45.803'N, 091° 33.766'W                      9.9

If things look familiar, it's because we're re-running the great stretch of MN-76. When we reach the MN County Road 10 intersection, instead of turning we'll stay on MN-76 until we reach MN-16, then take a left turn to head into the town of Houston. At the east edge of town we will plan for a 20-minute pit stop at the BP Station on the right side of the road. There's a single, unisex restroom here. We'll let the ladies go first.

#15. Bratsberg, MN                              43° 43.874'N, 091° 46.228'W                      12.4

Our route heads west on MN-16 from the BP Station into downtown Houston. Turn left on MN County Road 13 (South Grant Street), go south a couple of blocks to Spruce Street, and take a right. You'll be heading west. Just like two years ago, the hairpin turns climbing out of the valley were quite sandy on the outside lane of the turns when the route was pre-run in March. The sand is slippery so be careful (this is the *one and only place* where cheating into the left lane is warranted for safety's sake on the two tight left-hand turns climbing the hill, provided, of course, there is no oncoming traffic...the lead MINIs will confirm over the radio that the road is clear ahead). We will stop half-way up the hill for a photo opportunity. MN County Road 13 becomes MN County Road 10 as the road crosses into Fillmore County. Take a left turn and head south when you reach MN-43 just south of Bratsberg.

#16. Mabel, MN                                      43° 31.466'N, 091° 46.195'W                      16.2

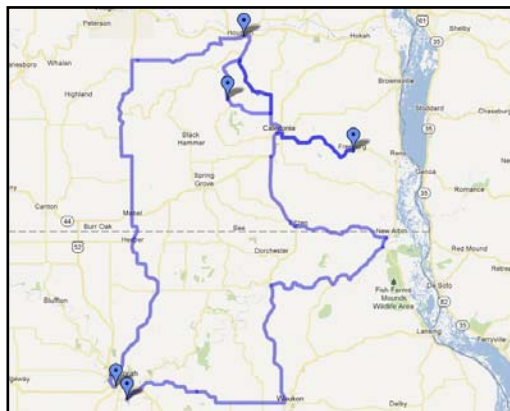
MN-43 starts out straight and hilly, and then descends into the steep-sided valley of the South Fork of the Root River until reaching Choice (the tiniest town we'll have seen yet – just a few buildings) then climbs back out the south side. This is another wonderful stretch of road that was too rough for quality MINI motoring the past couple of years, but thankfully is back in good shape. Once out of the valley, the road is fairly straight and hilly, although there is a sweeping left followed by a sharp right at the intersection of MN County Highway 18.

**2:45 pm**                      #17. Decorah, IA                                      43° 17.483'N, 091° 48.015'W                      21.1

Turn right on MN-44 followed by an immediate left on Maple Street. Motor through Mabel, and enjoy the quick left-right S turn on the south edge of town as the route joins up with MN County Highway 28. The road turns into IA County Road W40 as we cross the border into Iowa. Once in Hesper, continue straight ahead at the stop sign. After a few miles the road comes to an intersection with IA County Highway W38 / Locust Road, where we bear to the right and continue motoring south into Decorah. At the bottom of the ravine entering Decorah, turn left at the stop sign on College Drive, then turn right at the stoplight at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (if you cross the bridge here, you've gone too far). Follow 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue towards the west edge of town, cross over the Upper Iowa River bridge, and take the first left turn which will put you on Pulpit Rock Road, along the river to your left and Pulpit Rock on your right. Follow the bend in the road to the right, and pass the Pulpit Rock Campground on your left. Take a left turn on US-52, drive a half-mile through the cut in the rocks, and at the stop sign take a left turn on IA-9. Go a short distance, and once you're just past the construction of the Trout Run Trail bridge over IA-9, take a right turn on to the frontage road.

Our final destination is **Cooper's Pub** (yes, you heard that right!) in Decorah, which is adjacent to the Oaks Restaurant on the southwest side of town. We can park in a row along the cliff overlooking IA-9. Enjoy the complementary dessert and soft drinks; a cash bar will be available too. Linger as long as you like (and if you hang around long enough and want an excellent meal, the neighboring Oaks is highly recommended).

Total Route Miles - 160.9



Links to Google Route Maps:

- Decorah to Freeburg leg: <http://g.co/maps/g7f7x>
- Freeburg to Houston leg: <http://g.co/maps/trf4d>
- Houston to Decorah leg: <http://g.co/maps/q9yjd>