



Backroads, New Jersey: Driving at the Speed of Life

Mark Di Ionno

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Mark Di Ionno is a Jersey guy through and through. He's lived in fifteen different towns in six different New Jersey counties. He's been a journalist for the state's top newspapers, currently the *Star-Ledger*, where his first job was to go out and write about things that were "interesting." Who better to take readers on a personal tour of the backroads of New Jersey?

In *Backroads, New Jersey*, Di Ionno leads readers off the congested interstates with their commonplace scenery to the seldom-explored secondary roads, where the *real* life of the state can be found. These inter-county or 500 series roads are a 6,788-mile network of mostly one-lane highways. Marked by blue-and-yellow five-sided shields bearing county names, they make up more than 20 percent of New Jersey's public roads. They are never the fastest or most direct way to get anywhere, but when you break out of the towns and hit the country, they are a pleasure to drive.

Travel with Di Ionno as he takes readers to see the state's amazing beauty^¾from the dizzying cliffs of the Palisades, to the blunted peaks of the Highlands and Kittatinny Ridges, to the rolling hills of Morris, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties, to the topsoil-wealthy agricultural belts of Monmouth and the southern counties, to the flat, sandy beaches of the 127-mile Jersey Shore. Travel with him as he shows us the homes of New Jersey's culturally diverse population, whose men and women work at everything from farms to pharmacies, from banks to auto assembly lines. And travel with him as he recounts the history made along the back country roads in towns like Rocky Hill, where George Washington wrote his farewell orders. Di Ionno calls New Jersey "a place of infinite natural beauty, a place of intricate human patterns. A place where you can see a lot in a little time. This is, simply put, the overriding theme of this book. New Jersey is a restless state for restless people. A state for wanderers to explore." *Backroads, New Jersey* is a rare chance to see it all through the eyes of a well-traveled Jerseyan. Happy wandering!

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