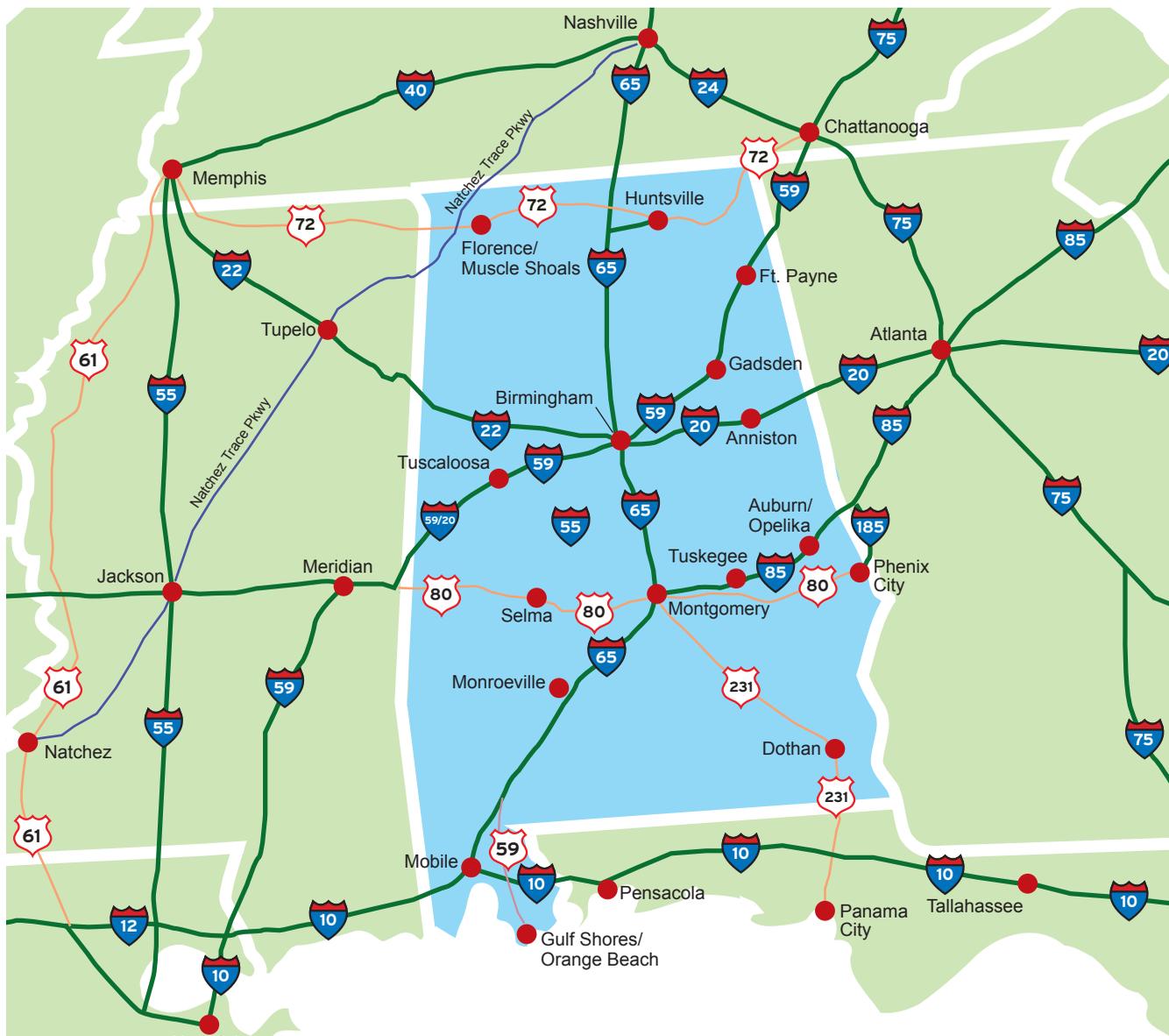


# Sweet Home Alabama

*Inspiration Guide*





**AIRPORTS**

**Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport** (BHM) offers more than 120 daily flights to 25 cities with American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines and Frontier Airlines.

**Muscle Shoals (MSL)**-Boutique Air

**Huntsville International Airport** (HSV) offers daily flights on American Airlines, Delta and United.

**Montgomery Regional Airport** (MGM) offers daily flights by American Airlines, Delta Connection, and Via Airlines.

**Mobile Regional Airport** (MOB) offers daily flights aboard American Airlines, Delta, United, and Via Airlines.

**MILEAGE CHART**

*Mileage is for general information and may vary based on route taken. Kilometers in red.*

	AL Beaches	Birmingham	Dothan	Florence/ Muscle Shoals	Huntsville	Mobile	Montgomery	Tuscaloosa
AL Beaches	—	320/515	258/415	398/640	420/676	60/96	231/371	272/438
Atlanta, GA	390/628	147/263	214/344	252/405	196/315	331/533	159/256	202/325
Birmingham	320/515	—	204/328	118/190	103/166	260/331	92/148	59/95
Huntsville	421/677	103/166	305/491	73/117	—	361/581	193/311	156/251
Jackson, MS	253/407	244/393	362/582	274/441	342/550	196/315	260/418	191/307
Knoxville, TN	529/851	257/413	415/667	283/455	212/341	509/819	344/554	314/505
Memphis, TN	448/720	243/391	436/701	155/249	216/348	398/640	334/537	237/381
Mobile	60/96	260/418	198/319	372/599	361/580	—	172/277	213/343
Montgomery	231/371	92/148	112/180	206/331	193/311	172/277	—	110/177
Nashville, TN	512/823	194/312	396/637	131/211	116/187	453/729	284/458	247/398
New Orleans, LA	175/282	347/558	342/550	405/652	445/716	144/232	313/504	295/475
Tuscaloosa	272/438	58/93	220/354	125/201	156/251	213/343	110/177	—

## Features

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# To the Moon!

**ONE OF ONLY THREE** left in the world, the Saturn V moon rocket at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center** in Huntsville is separated into three pieces, so visitors can see the engines of each stage. In addition to the National Historic Landmark, the center displays the only full-scale vertical model of Saturn V in existence.

**363 ft.**  
the height of Saturn V,  
which was the tallest  
rocket ever to fly

**3**

the number of astronauts that could be carried in the command module that would circle the moon



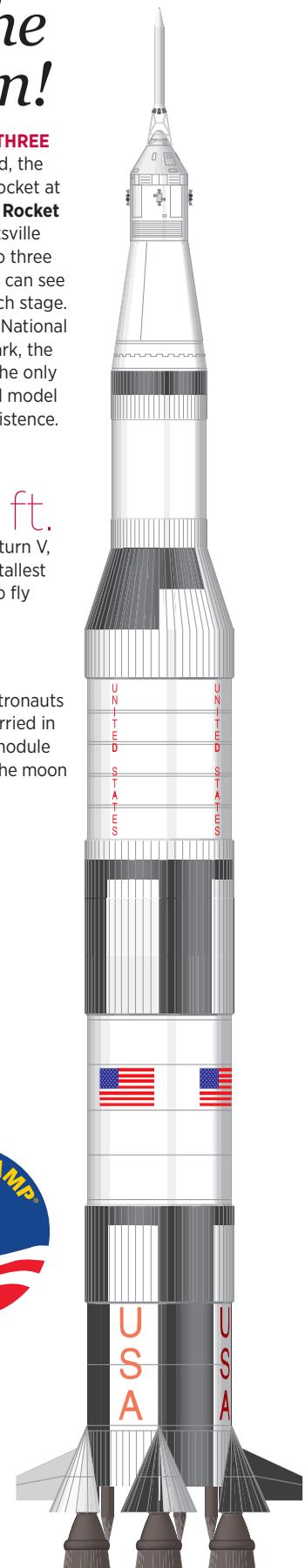
### U.S. Space & Rocket Center – Alabama’s #1 Attraction

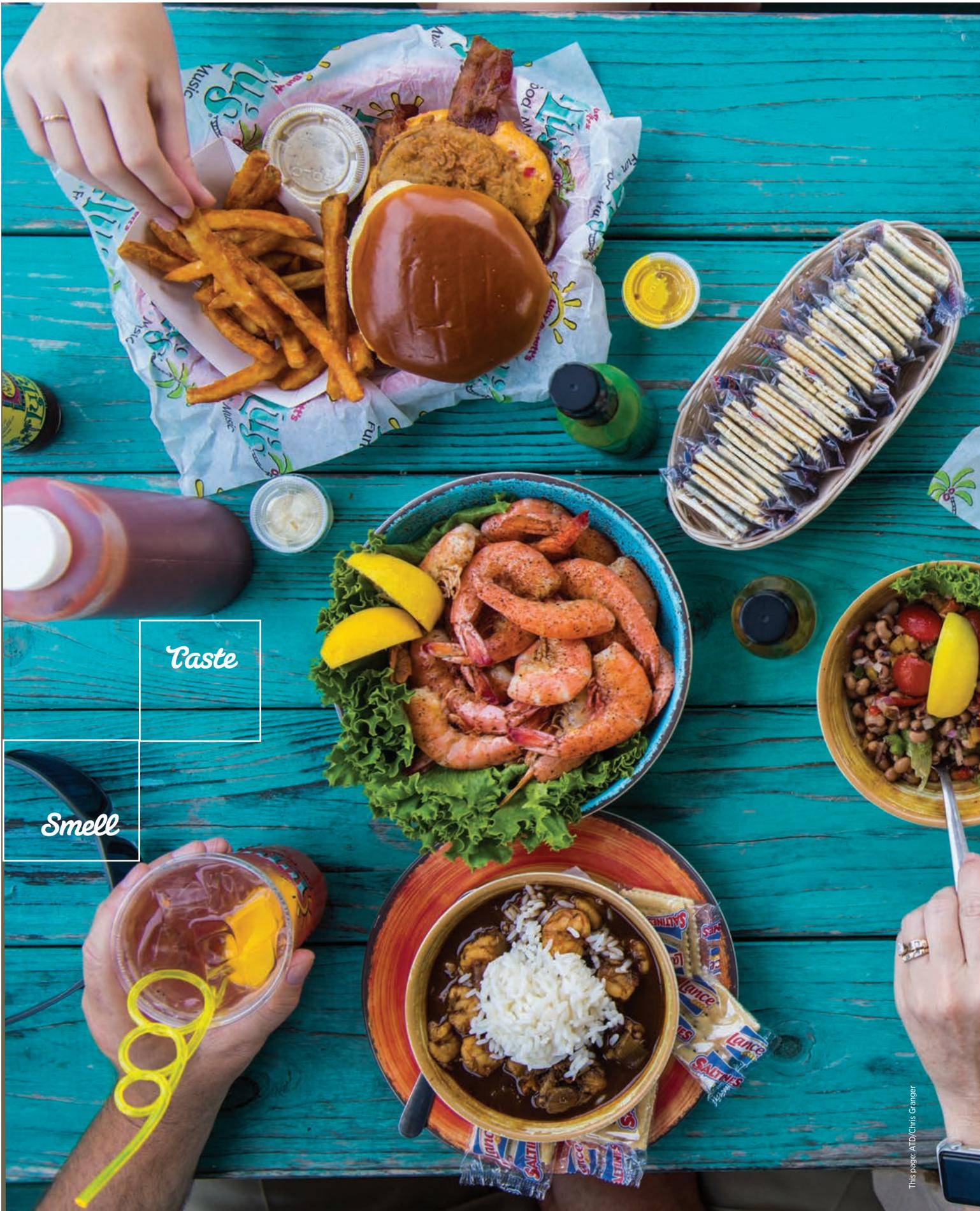
The U.S. Space & Rocket Center, in Huntsville, is the official center for NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center and Alabama’s number one ticketed attraction. It is the only place in the world where you can stand under a “full stack” - space shuttle orbiter, solid rocket boosters and external tank - and the mighty Saturn V. Visitors can feel G-forces on the Spaceshot, view artifacts such as the Apollo 16 capsule, Apollo 12 quarantine facility and a moon rock and experience breath-taking films in the IMAX or 3D theaters

### Space Camp – Where The Mars Generation movie was filmed

People from around the world enroll in Space Camp on the grounds of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Programs offered include Family Space Camp, Adult Space Academy, 6-day Space Camp for groups of 16 or more and Space Camp for individual students, ages 9 to 18. Aviation Challenge and Space Camp Robotics also offered.

View the movie The Mars Generation on Netflix to see the Space Camp experience.





*Taste*

*Smell*

# GULF COAST

*Unwind where the water meets the sky and the things to do (or not do) seem endless.*

For visitors to Alabama's coast, the most compelling natural wonder doubles as the primary reason to visit—the Gulf of Mexico. Its warm waves lap the gorgeous white-sand beaches, setting up a perfect scene for taking a beach walk with a loved one, splashing in the turquoise water or savoring fresh-from-the-boat seafood favorites, such as those served at Lucy Buffett's LuLu's (below). The virtues of this stunning region push inland, where different communities contribute their distinctive qualities: Point Clear offers a luxurious resort getaway, while Fairhope and Daphne rouse romance. Foley brings thrills and shopping. Orange Beach and Gulf Shores lure families with waterfront fun and a side of environmental education, and Dauphin Island presents the area's natural side. In Mobile, the good times roll, just as they have for 300-plus years in this historic city with French roots and a visible Civil War past. "It feels like a whole different state!" visitors have said. In fact, the Gulf Coast brings about a whole different state of mind.



*See*



Feel

See

# Escape for the Senses

*Soft sand. Gentle breezes. Succulent seafood. Briny sea air. Squeals of delight. And so begins a vacation on the Gulf Coast.*

## FEEL

Feeling the coast comes immediately, but inconspicuously. The slight wind lifts your hair as fine grains of sand massage your heels in your flip-flops, even before you've reached the beach. And the sun warms your skin so that a dip in the Gulf of Mexico perfectly refreshes.

## SEE

It's hard to ignore what your eyes reveal first: the kiss between turquoise water and a sunny sky; the surprisingly white strands; and the variety of invitations to do something beachy—parasail, fish, rent a boat or simply lounge on a deck with a favorite drink in hand. Get lost in a pinkish-orange sunset from the pier in Fairhope or the top of Dauphin's restaurant in Mobile. For a dose of visual retrospection, visit the restored Blakeley Civil War Battlefield in Spanish Fort to see where soldiers fought.

## HEAR

At night or in the early morning when it's quiet and you're close to the shore, the splash of the rolling waves casts its spell. By day, giggles and laughter take over, especially when gliding high above Orange Beach on a zipline or riding a Segway around Gulf Shores. Gulls call to one another at the Audubon Bird Sanctuary on Dauphin Island, and concerts resound from The Wharf Amphitheater. Head inland to Foley's Coastal Textile Center to listen and learn how to work yarn through a loom.





**Left to right:**  
 Gulf beaches,  
 Bellingrath Gardens,  
 Hummingbird  
 Ziplines, Jesse's  
 Restaurant

*Hear*

**Engage**

**SMELL THE MARINE AIR ON THE FERRY BETWEEN FORT GAINES AND FORT MORGAN.**



**DINE AT LUCY BUFFETT'S LULU'S TO FEEL LIKE YOU'VE STEPPED INTO A BACKYARD FISH FRY.**

**STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES ALONG THE WILBOURNE ANTIQUE ROSE TRAIL IN FOLEY.**

**LOOK AT STATUES MADE OF SCRAP METAL OUTSIDE DAPHNE'S U.S. SPORTS ACADEMY.**



This page, top to bottom, courtesy of GSOBT/Chris Granger, ATD/Chris Granger (2). Opposite, top to bottom, courtesy of GSOBT/Chris Granger, ATD/Jay Meripol

**SMELL**

Breathe deeply in Theodore at 65-acre Bellingrath Gardens, where spring brings gorgeous azaleas and award-winning roses, followed by fragrant gardenias and more blossoms year-round. Tour the on-site museum home to further appreciate what was originally a humble fishing camp.

**TASTE**

Casual, fine-dining Jesse's Restaurant in Magnolia Springs doesn't list fish on its printed menu for good reason. It serves the freshest fish it can get, often caught the same day, as daily specials. The exception is Gulf shrimp, which is available in every season, thus always on the menu. Oysters, too. Don't leave the region without sampling coconut cream cheesecake from Hope's Cheesecake in Gulf Shores.



Clockwise from top left: Fairhope shopping, Aquarium of Alabama at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, Africatown



### Where the Kids Are

Take a break from the beach or spend a rainy afternoon inside the Aquarium of Alabama at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Through interactive exhibits and experiences, this hands-on, educational aquarium exposes youngsters to four key habitats of coastal Alabama: the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Mobile Bay, the Barrier Islands and the northern Gulf of Mexico. The 7,000-gallon stingray touch pool is a favorite stop.

## A Tour to Try

**THE DORA FRANKLIN FINLEY AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL: MOBILE'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE TAKES CENTER STAGE ON THIS TRAIL. THE CITY'S AND STATE'S DIVERSITY TRACES BACK MORE THAN 300 YEARS WITH PIVOTAL EVENTS, ICONIC CHARACTERS AND SIGNATURE LANDMARKS. ALTHOUGH AVAILABLE**



TO EXPLORE ON YOUR OWN, THE PLACES COME ALIVE WITH A GUIDE'S INSIGHT. TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE AFRICATOWN, THE SITE WHERE THE LAST CARGO OF AFRICANS, ON THE *CLOTILDA*, LANDED IN 1860. THE PLATEAU CEMETERY IS THE FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR MANY OF THOSE SURVIVORS AND INCLUDES THE GRAVE OF CUDJO LEWIS.

## SMALL-TOWN HIGHLIGHTS

Adventure beyond the big cities to appreciate what life is like in the rest of the region. Each of these small towns, plus many others, offers excellent reasons to steer off the beaten path and discover something notable.

### FAIRHOPE

#### Art in Abundance

Founded in 1894 as an experimental economic colony with a "fair hope" of succeeding, modern Fairhope has become a seaside arts hub that *Southern Living* once named the "Best Small Southern Town." It features great shopping and food as well as boutique arts stores, including Page and Palette bookstore and the Eastern Shore Art Center.

### MAGNOLIA SPRINGS

#### Riverside Retreat

Some towns are called backwaters. In Magnolia Springs that is how you get your mail—via the backwater: the town boasts the nation's only river route for full-time mail delivery. The charming, colorful community features Jesse's Restaurant, famed for its aged steaks and fresh-catch seafood, and stately Magnolia Springs Bed and Breakfast, built in 1897.

### BAYOU LA BATRE

#### Fishing Village Charm

Whether you are a fisherman or just someone who loves seafood, head to "The Seafood Capital of Alabama." The picturesque fishing village, which takes its name from when it was a French settlement with an artillery battery, exudes Southern charm with a French flair. Watch fish and shrimp boats return to the docks as gulls soar overhead.

# 5

## THINGS TO TRY ON THE GULF *Fun and Flavor for All*

Jump with joy and hold on tight for high-energy fun, then chow down on coastal cuisine for the best of Foley and Gulf Shores.



**E**xperience the best of the Alabama Gulf Coast with family-fun restaurants, thrilling rides, championship golf courses, natural beauty to explore and much more!

### CRAFT FARMS GOLF RESORT

is home to Alabama's only two 18-hole Arnold Palmer Signature Design courses: Cotton Creek and Cypress Bend. Book your tee time and experience Pure Palmer Golf!

**CraftFarms.com, 800.790.3960**

**OWA** This is your vacation entertainment destination. Minutes from the beach, OWA has it all—from The Park's family-friendly thrills to straight-from-Vegas shows and big-name dining!

**VisitOWA.com, 251-923-2111**



**VISIT FOLEY** Explore a charming downtown with eclectic cuisine, quaint coffee shops and local art. Friendly merchants invite you to enjoy a bite, shop or just say hello. Visit museums, discover outdoor adventure, shop the Tanger Outlets and have a thrill ride at OWA. **VisitFoley.org, 251-943-1200**

A family beach tradition for more than 20 years! **LUCY BUFFETT'S LULU'S** is a family-fun destination restaurant complete with a Mountain of Youth Ropes Course, Water-front Dining, Famous LuLu's T-Shirts, Beach Arcade, Live Music, Sandy Beach with Fountain for Youth and the most extensive Allergy Menu in Alabama! Go online to "Beat the Wait" at **LuLuBuffett.com, 251-967-5858**



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** CRAFT FARMS, LUCY BUFFETT'S LULU'S, OWA, INTERPRETIVE CENTER, CITY OF FOLEY DINING

### LEARNING CAMPUS AT GULF STATE PARK

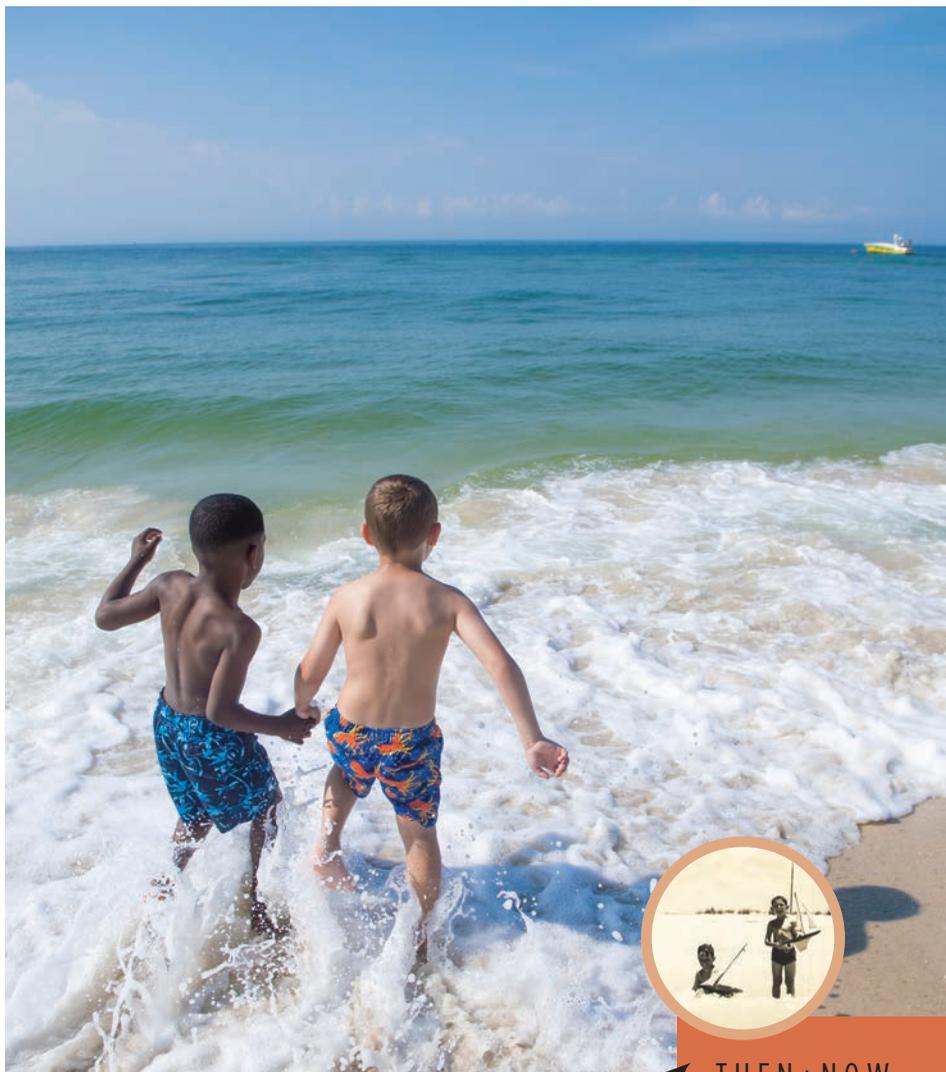
The Learning Campus features a two-cabin Bunkhouse, auditorium, indoor and outdoor classrooms and lab space to explore nature. The Campus serves as an educational base camp for visiting school groups, post-secondary students, teachers, researchers, scout troops, adult learners and other nature enthusiasts. See **learningcampusgsp.com** for upcoming programs.



# Beach Towns

BY AMITY MOORE JOYCE

*Thirty-two miles of white-sand beaches, adrenaline-inducing activities, fresh seafood and more await in Gulf Shores, Orange Beach and Foley.*



## THEN + NOW

### Friday

**AFTERNOON** While the options for lodging run the gamut on the coast—vacation rentals, full-service hotels, and even the beachfront luxury of the **Original Romar House Bed and Breakfast Inn—The Lodge at Gulf State Park** is generating the most buzz. Not only is the 350-room hotel's LEED design garnering accolades, but so are its Eagle Cottages and eco-focused learning programs. Once you've unpacked in your choice of accommodations, find a spot to watch the waves and sink into vacation mode. The pier at **Gulf State Park** is one option. If you'd like a kid-friendly joint with a deck and adult beverages, try **The Hangout**.

**EVENING** Maintain the casual vibe over dinner. Local legend **Doc's Seafood Shack & Oyster Bar** in Orange Beach claims "the best fried shrimp in the entire civilized world" and great oysters on the half shell. It also has opened a second location, **Doc's Seafood & Steaks**,

where steaks round out the menu. Spend some time at **The Wharf**, where you may catch some live music, attempt an escape room or ride the Ferris wheel. In Foley, **OWA** has welcomed Paula Deen's Family Kitchen as well as new rides, which make for a fun night out.

### Saturday

**MORNING** If you're not already staying there, head to Gulf State Park for an easy breakfast with a view at **Woodside Restaurant**. The Armadillo Biscuit Bowl or Beach Mouse Breakfast Sandwich provides fuel for the day's activities. As available, participate in educational programs organized by the **Gulf Coast Center for Ecotourism & Sustainability**. The center recently inked an official

*After the federal government decided the land to Alabama in 1939, the state created Gulf State Park that same year. Ever since, it has lured folks young and old looking for some time at the beach. What was fun in the 1930s and '40s essentially remains the same today.*

partnership with Jean Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society to develop an Ambassadors of the Environment Program for the Gulf Coast. If nothing is scheduled for the morning, consider an afternoon or evening program.

**AFTERNOON** Re-energize at the **Pink Pony**, with its old-school beach atmosphere right on the water, or at **Cobalt, the Restaurant**, which can be reached by water. Food is big here, so it's no wonder that one of the recently launched Signature Experiences highlights cuisine. Sit down to an intimate, upscale multicourse chef's dinner with chef David Pan. Each of the Signature Experiences is intended to delve more deeply into the lifestyle and culture of the Gulf Coast. **High Cotton Bath Co.** has invited patrons to create their own bath, body, home or pet products. Even the **Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo** has taken part. Now in a more inland location, the zoo is the nation's first to be built from the ground up in roughly 20 years. You now have triple the space to explore, and the animals have larger habitats. Learn about the zoo's current programs and

Left to right: courtesy of GSOBT/Chris Granger, courtesy of Alabama Dept. of Archives & History, courtesy of GSOBT/Chris Granger (2), ATD/Chris Granger. Insets: top to bottom: ATD, courtesy of Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, courtesy of GSOBT



**1946**

THE YEAR FORT MORGAN BECAME A STATE HISTORIC SITE



**500+**

ANIMALS AT THE RELOCATED ALABAMA GULF COAST ZOO



**1**

HOURS IT TAKES TO TOUR THE HOLMES MEDICAL MUSEUM



**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** MAKING FRIENDS AT THE BEACH AT GULF STATE PARK NEVER GETS OLD, A KANGAROO ENCOUNTER AT THE ALABAMA GULF COAST ZOO; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** BANANA-WRAPPED SEA BASS FROM COSMO'S RESTAURANT & BAR, ONE OF FOUR GO-KART EXPERIENCES AT THE TRACK FAMILY FUN PARK

other Signature Experiences at [gulfshores.com/signature-experiences](http://gulfshores.com/signature-experiences). To burn some extra energy, try **The Track Family Fun Park** for go-karting, the Skycoaster and more.

**EVENING** Dress for dinner and head to **Fisher's Upstairs**. Here, four-time James Beard Award semifinalist for Best Chef in the South Bill Briand makes mouths water with his seasonally inspired menu that's sure to include fresh fish, Bon Secour oysters and Gulf shrimp. Don't skip dessert.

**Sunday**

**MORNING** After a full day yesterday, it's time to lounge. Claim your spot on the sugar-white sands and just chill. If you must be active, consider parasailing or renting a jet ski, kayak or a stand-up paddle-board. Just stay close the beach; after all, that's the reason you came.

# Mobile

BY LAURA MCGILL

*Alabama's Port City has had more than 300 years to get ready to fill your weekend with amazing food, cultural experiences and bayside views.*



## THEN + NOW

### Friday

**EVENING** Freshen up at your downtown hotel before walking to an upscale meal nearby. Enjoy the lofty views of Mobile Bay from **Dauphin's** on the 34th floor of the RSA Trustmark Bank Building. **The Noble South** and **Southern National** are also tasty choices.

**NIGHT** On Dauphin Street, the options for a nightcap, entertainment and maybe even some shenanigans seem endless. The beer selection at **LoDa Bier Garten** garners global attention. **Eugene's Monkey Bar** is inspired by Mobile's unique character Eugene Walter. Learn his story over a craft cocktail.

### Saturday

**MORNING** Fuel up with breakfast at **Spot of Tea**, where the must-have dish is Eggs Cathedral, a masterpiece of English muffin, crab cake, scrambled eggs and seafood sauce. It is the best of Mobile on

*Take the Bankhead Tunnel under the Mobile River to visit the "Mighty A," the USS ALABAMA Battleship. It set sail February 16, 1942, as shown above. Today, the battleship's Memorial Park includes the WWII submarine USS DRUM, tanks, aircraft and other evocative tributes.*

a plate! Walk off the enormous meal with downtown discoveries at the **History Museum of Mobile**, the **Fort of Colonial Mobile**, the **Mobile Carnival Museum** or one of three historic homes: **Condé-Charlotte Museum House**, **Richards-DAR House Museum** and **Historic Oakleigh Complex**.

**NOON** In the Oakleigh Historic District, pull up a chair at **Callaghan's Irish Social Club**, a friendly pub with an amazing burger. On Old Shell Road, the **Dew Drop Inn** has been serving its world-famous hot dogs since 1924. Save room for a sweet treat at **Cammie's Old Dutch Ice Cream Shoppe**—homemade flavors have been scooped here since 1956.



12

DECORATED OYSTERS  
ON THE OYSTER TRAIL



90+

EXHIBITS AT  
GULFQUEST NATIONAL  
MARITIME MUSEUM



5

COUNTRIES CLAIMED  
MOBILE BEFORE THE  
WAR OF 1812

**NIGHT** Check the schedule for Mobile's historic **Saenger Theatre**, where performances range from ballet to blues music, and beyond. If the theater is dark, just let your ears guide you to one of the downtown hotspots where regional and up-and-coming acts frequently take a stage.

## Sunday

**MORNING** Rise and shine! You still have a few more hours to soak up the best of Mobile. Start with **The Ruby Slipper Café** for a New Orleans-influenced breakfast. Its tale of post-Hurricane Katrina rebirth and growth is inspiring. Look for mouthwatering seasonal specials on the menu. Once done, push back from the table and enjoy a leisurely drive through one of Mobile's historic districts or the campus of **Spring Hill College** to witness the Instagram-worthy Avenue of Oaks.

**AFTERNOON** Make your way south on Dauphin Island Parkway and set your GPS for the **Mariner Restaurant** at the Grand Mariner Marina. You'll be surrounded by savvy locals who know this is the spot to dine on crab claws, shrimp, flounder and crawfish, in season.

**OPPOSITE:** THE *USS ALABAMA* BATTLESHIP FINALLY AT REST IN ITS EPONYMOUS MEMORIAL PARK, PREPARING A DISH AT SOUTHERN NATIONAL; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** FINDING SWEET JOY AT CAMMIE'S OLD DUTCH ICE CREAM SHOPPE, DRESSING UP—BEADS AND ALL—FOR MARDI GRAS AT THE MOBILE CARNIVAL MUSEUM.

**AFTERNOON** By now, you've noticed Mobile's connection to the water and the importance of its port. Get closer to the relationship with a **WildNative Tour** at **Cooper Riverside Park**. From the boat, you can see the port in action. On land, step inside **GulfQuest National Maritime Museum** to engage with interactive exhibits.

**EVENING** An afternoon on or near the water leaves you hungry for fresh, local seafood. You're in luck because some of Mobile's top seafood restaurants stretch along a nearby thin strip of land known as the Causeway. Take your pick from **Bluegill**, **Ed's Seafood Shed**, **Felix's Fish Camp** or **Original Oyster House**. Each one is beloved and delicious, so expect a wait, especially on a Saturday night. Don't worry; the extra anticipation is worth every bite.





*Feel*

*Hear*

# SOUTH

*Get acquainted with civil rights, Southern arts and some fantastic spots to satisfy your wanderlust.*

Alongside the rich Civil War and civil rights histories of South Alabama, travelers discover a wealth of places to commune with nature. Anchored by capital city Montgomery, this region boasts outdoor hotspots, such as Lake Eufaula, known for its excellent bass fishing, and the Coosa River, regarded, in part, for its nearly 50 aquatic snail species that do not exist anywhere else in the world. South Alabama also is recognized for its cultural hubs, like the Montgomery Museum of Art (below), appreciated for its collection of more than 4,000 works, or the Alley Entertainment District, which comes alive at night. Here, in South Alabama, Harper Lee and Truman Capote found inspiration, and George Washington Carver revolutionized agriculture. In all, it is a dynamic area that should definitely be explored.



See



# Escape for the Senses

“We enjoyed a wonderful lunch here...I recommend the Central Burger with bacon jam and a fried green tomato.”

 Kimberly Holder Boucher

*Voices of the past. Rushing rivers. Public art in all shapes and sizes. Candied nuts. Food delicious enough for prime-time TV. The South stimulates body and mind.*

## TASTE

Capital city Montgomery offers no shortage of eateries to bite into something Southern. For an upscale, farm-to-table experience, make a reservation at Central. Bayou crawfish and bean succotash make the dinner menu, while a flatbread loaded with Conecuh sausage, pimento cheese and pickled okra rounds out lunch.

## SMELL

Walk through the Conecuh National Forest to appreciate the scent of longleaf pine hanging in the air, especially thick after a rain. You've got up to 20 miles to choose





Sandwich: ATD/Brit Huckabay; llamas: ATD/Jamie Martin; all others: ATD/Chris Granger

from along the Conecuh Trail. It's a great way to work up an appetite for a fried chicken sandwich from Jackson's Fried Chicken in Camden. Just smelling what's cooking makes your tummy roar.

## FEEL

A giraffe's tongue tickles as it licks a piece of lettuce from your hand at 350-acre Alabama Safari Park in Hope Hull. Feeding these long-necked African natives is just as fun as petting the pigs' wiry hair or the goats' soft fur at this drive-through zoo. For another thrill, dip a paddle into the churning waters

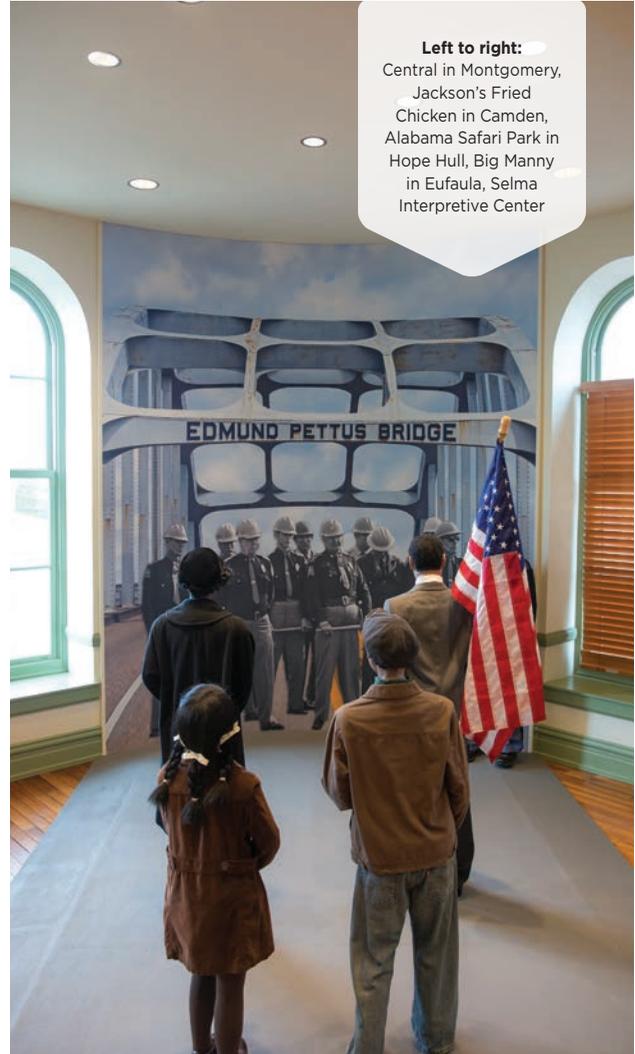
## Engage

**TASTE:** THE MENU CHANGES OFTEN AT BREWTON'S DREXELL & HONEYBEE'S DONATION-ONLY RESTAURANT, WHICH JUST KEEPS PEOPLE COMING BACK.



**SEE:** ENTERPRISE'S BOLL WEEVIL MONUMENT ANCHORS ITS MAIN STREET. THE TOWN, WHICH TODAY APPRECIATES THE PEST, BECAME A MAIN STREET ALABAMA COMMUNITY IN 2019.

**SMELL:** HAY'S EARTHY ODOR FOLLOWS HAYRIDE PARTICIPANTS AT BARBER BERRY FARM IN MILLBROOK.



**Left to right:** Central in Montgomery, Jackson's Fried Chicken in Camden, Alabama Safari Park in Hope Hull, Big Manny in Eufaula, Selma Interpretive Center

of the Coosa River near Wetumpka, named for the Creek Indian word meaning "rumbling waters," to feel its strength and refreshment.

## HEAR

Step into the Selma Interpretive Center to connect with the stories of civil rights marchers as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in support of voting rights. Shared through exhibits, including a film, this part of American history comes alive at this stop on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail. Listen to more about civil rights at the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Tuskegee. These men and women were part of an "experiment" in the early 1940s to determine if African-Americans could fly combat airplanes. They went on to serve admirably during World War II.

## SEE

Regional landmarks highlight an asteroid crash from 83 million years ago in Wetumpka; the picturesque ruins of the state's first capital at Old Cahawba; and excellent fishing in Eufaula—selfies with Big Manny, anyone? More public art dots Monroeville, home of *To Kill a Mockingbird* author Harper Lee. A bronze sculpture trail memorializes the town's literary roots by way of 14 works of art, each representing one of the 10 writers credited with making Monroeville the state's Literary Capital.





**Left to right:**  
 Monroe County  
 Museum in Monroeville,  
 whitewater rafting in  
 Phenix City, bird dog  
 statue in Union Springs



## Adventure Is Waiting

Shut down your smartphone. Lose your laptop. Remember what it feels like to be alive again.

Find your rush at **RushSouth Whitewater Park**. Mild to wild rafting & kayaking, zipline across two states, stand up paddle boarding, fly fishing, 20+ miles of riverwalk & more. **RushSouth.com**



## SMALL-TOWN HIGHLIGHTS

*Adventure beyond the big cities to appreciate what life is like in the rest of the region. Each of these small towns, plus many others, offers excellent reasons to steer off the beaten path and discover something notable.*

**Monroeville** Alabama's Literary Capital is where Harper Lee and Truman Capote grew up. The Old Courthouse Museum's exhibits tell the story of Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and her friendship with Capote, who wrote *In Cold Blood*. For more than 25 years, the city has staged a production of "Mockingbird" in April or May, but buy tickets early. Part of the play is in the Old Courthouse, which Hollywood recreated for the Gregory Peck movie. Download a 30-stop walking tour at [VisitMonroevilleAL.com](http://VisitMonroevilleAL.com).

**Tuskegee** Learn about the impact this small town had on civil rights at the Tuskegee History Center, created by legendary civil rights attorney Fred Grey, or on a new civil rights trail featuring 13 historical markers, including one to Rosa Parks. Tour Booker T. Washington's home, The Oaks, which he built with students and instructors after founding in 1881 what is now Tuskegee University. Visit the George Washington Carver Museum, honoring the Tuskegee professor who revolutionized Southern agriculture.

**Dothan** Due to its strong peanut industry, Dothan proudly celebrates its self-proclamation as the Peanut Capital of the World with more than 70 wacky peanut sculptures around town and The National Peanut Festival each November. But Dothan presents more than peanuts. Kelsey Barnard Clark, who won Bravo's "Top Chef" in 2019, runs the sumptuous restaurant KBC. Browse downtown's 20-plus murals depicting Dothan history and what Guinness World Records deems the world's smallest city block.

## ON POINT WITH UNION SPRINGS

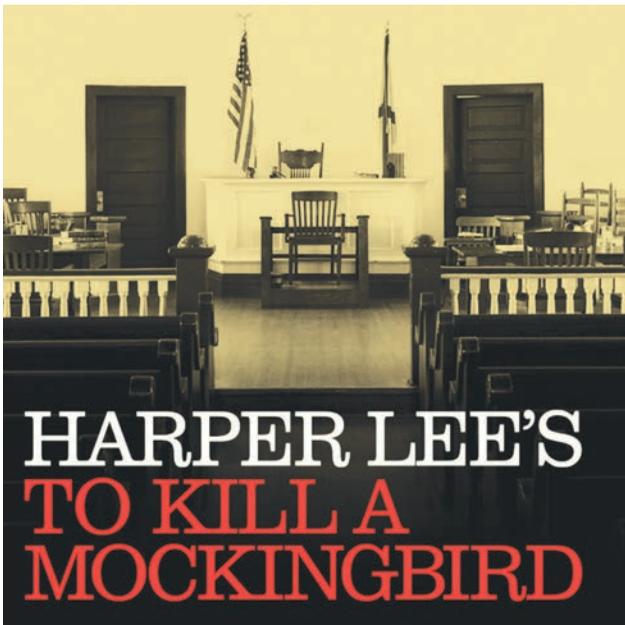
Sandwiched between Montgomery and Eufaula, this small town is chock-full of rural charm. A life-size bronzed statue of an English pointer and a nearby mural pay homage to Alabama's Field Trial history, which is appropriate given that the largest amateur bird dog field trial is held at nearby Sedgewilds Plantation. The Wehle Nature Center, a hidden jewel, allows for exploration of the area's beautiful outdoors, while more than 50 attractions, including historic homes, churches and the beautiful Red Door Theatre combine in such a way that visitors fall in love with Union Springs, aka The Serendipity of the South.

Clockwise from top left: ATD/Chris Granger; courtesy of RushSouth Whitewater Park, ATD/Jeff Greenberg

## GET READY FOR ALABAMA

It's easy and fun to prepare for a trip to the South. Check out these entertaining and delectable ways to better know the Yellowhammer State. by Amity Moore Joyce

LEFT: LEE'S CLASSIC HAS BECOME ONE OF BROADWAY'S BIGGEST HITS



### LISTEN

**À LA CARTE ALABAMA** turns attention to the state's booming food and drink culture. Through interviews with Alabama's top names in the culinary and beverage fields, listeners learn about barbecue, meat-and-threes, Gulf seafood, fine dining and how to properly mix cocktails. Willie Chriesman, executive producer and co-host of the À la Carte Alabama podcast, told BirminghamTimes.com, "We want to explore this topic by telling the stories of the people, places and trends that make the food

and drink scene here so unique and so compelling." The podcast is available on the À la Carte Alabama website at [alacarteal.com](http://alacarteal.com), and at the iTunes store and Google Play Music.

**MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND STUDIO** inaugurated these quarterly podcasts last year to tell the stories of musicians who have recorded at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio. The digital series launched with the story of the studio's first major recording session in 1969, Cher's 3614 Jackson Highway album. Visit [muscleshoalssoundstudio.org](http://muscleshoalssoundstudio.org) to learn more.

**WHITE LIES** is a seven-part investigative podcast series from NPR that attempts to solve the murder of Reverend James Reeb, who was killed two days after Bloody Sunday in March 1965 in Selma. Alabama journalists Chip Brantley and Andrew Beck Grace spent three years trying to put together the pieces of the murder puzzle. As in similar crime-solving podcasts, getting the answers 50-plus years later is hard to do. Still, the reporters persist. Find out what they learned by downloading the podcast from [apps.npr.org/white-lies](http://apps.npr.org/white-lies).

### EAT

**WICKLES PICKLES** originated in Alabama but are distributed across the United States. Find them in boutique markets as well as at major grocery chains. You won't be sorry. The spicy pickles stem from a recipe passed down through owners Will and Trey Sims' family. Try them on a barbecue sandwich or with pimento cheese and Conecuh sausage. Or, deep fry them. 'Cuz almost everything is better fried, right?

**GOLDEN FLAKE** earns nods for its snacks. Although owned by Utz Quality Foods now, Golden Flake began making chips in Birmingham

in 1923. Today, they are still made there fresh daily and are distributed from Texas and Oklahoma to Indiana and Maryland. Pick up your favorite flavor of potato chips, tortilla chips, corn chips, cheese curls or fried pork skins to taste why they've been a staple for nearly 100 years. [alabama.travel/places-to-go/golden-flake-2](http://alabama.travel/places-to-go/golden-flake-2)

### WATCH

It's hard to narrow down the list of top films set against the state's backdrop. Plus, many movies began as books. Anyway, pop the corn and start bingeing: "Fried Green Tomatoes," "Forrest Gump," "Big Fish," "4 Little Girls," "Selma," "Muscle Shoals," "Capote," "Just Mercy" and, of course, "To Kill a Mockingbird" should get you started.

### READ

**TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD** by Harper Lee. Yep, a high school classic. Read it again. It's even better the second and third times.

**THE STORY OF ALABAMA IN FOURTEEN FOODS** by Emily Blejwas. This new release takes a historical look at where and why certain foods became some of the state's signature tastes.

Above: courtesy of Aaron Sorokin's Broadway production of "To Kill a Mockingbird"

# Auburn

BY RICK HARMON

Take 36 hours to get to know this college town and its closest neighbor, Opelika, where golf reigns and the state's first craft distillery in 100 years has opened its doors.



## Friday

**EARLY AFTERNOON** Check into one of Auburn's many unique hotels. The 40-room **Collegiate Hotel** was once the Wittel Dormitory, housing professional women in the early 1900s before becoming Auburn University's first women's dormitory in the 1940s. Now, this boutique hotel combines the nostalgic setting with modern luxuries, such as a rooftop bar. The university owns **The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center**, which serves as a teaching facility for its Hospitality Management Program and recently received the coveted AAA Four Diamond Rating. At **The Crenshaw Guest House**, choose between bed-and-breakfast-style rooms in the house or more private accommodations with separate outside entrances and kitchenettes. The **Auburn Marriott Opelika Resort & Spa at Grand National** not only promises one of the area's most gracious stays, but also **Grand National**, a Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail course that is considered one of the best in the country.

## THEN + NOW

*Show up thirsty at Toomer's Drugs and sample its world-famous lemonade, which Esquire magazine ranked No. 1 in its list of "162 Reasons It's Good to Be an American." Above, James Echols, credited with concocting the recipe, pours syrup to sweeten a lemonade in 1975.*

Head downtown to **Toomer's Corner**, where Auburn fans celebrate sports (read: football) victories by "rolling the oaks," meaning they cover the trees with toilet paper. After stepping into **Toomer's Drugs** for a lemonade, pick up some Auburn Tiger memorabilia at **J&M Bookstore**, a part of college life here since 1953.

**EVENING** "The loveliest village" boasts several elegant restaurants, headlined by **Acre**, which has made *Southern Living's* best restaurants in the South list, was named *Travel + Leisure's* best farm-to-table restaurant in Alabama and whose chef, David Bancroft, won an "Iron Chef Showdown" and is a four-time James Beard Award semifinalist.

Left to right: ATD/Chris Granger, courtesy of Auburn University Libraries Special Collections & Archives Department; ATD/Chris Granger, ATD, courtesy of Collegiate Hotel; inset: top to bottom: courtesy of Auburn-Opelika Tourism; ATD/Chris Granger, courtesy of RTU Golf Trail/Michael Clemmer

## NIGHT

As you might expect from a college town, Auburn has great bars. Consider a nightcap: **Avondale Bar and Tap Room** offers sophistication and handcrafted cocktails; **Sky Bar** is known as one of the biggest and best college bars in the Southeast.

## Saturday

**MORNING** Explore nature among **Chewacla State Park's** 696 scenic acres and 12 trails that climb bluffs, pass Moore's Mill Creek, or lead to the picturesque 30-foot Chewacla Dam Waterfall. All trails are open to hikers and mountain bikers. Next, relive gridiron glory at **Lovelace Hall of Honor**, a section in the Auburn basketball arena where you can see Heisman trophies, a National Championship trophy and the engraved silver cup Auburn won in 1893 after beating Alabama 32-22 in the

**OPPOSITE:** LEMONADE FROM TOOMER'S DRUGS REFRESHES YEAR-ROUND, DISCOVERING DOWNTOWN'S SHOPPING DELIGHTS; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** THE FORMER WITTEL DORMITORY LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT AS THE COLLEGIATE HOTEL; DINING AT ACRE, WHOSE CHEF, DAVID BANCROFT, WAS NAMED AMONG 20 JAMES BEARD AWARD SEMIFINALISTS FOR BEST CHEF IN THE SOUTH LAST YEAR FOR THE FIFTH STRAIGHT YEAR



**87,451**

NUMBER OF SEATS AT JORDAN-HARE STADIUM



**9**

SIGNATURE WHISKEY COCKTAILS STAR ON THE HOUND'S MENU



**32**

HOLES AT GRAND NATIONAL GOLF COURSE HUG LAKE SAUGAHATCHEE

first football game between the schools. **Jordan-Hare Stadium**, with one of the largest football video scoreboards in the country, is next door.

**NOON** Grab lunch downtown at **Amsterdam Café**, known for its Crab Cake & Avocado Sandwich (voted one of the 100 Dishes to Eat in Alabama Before You Die).

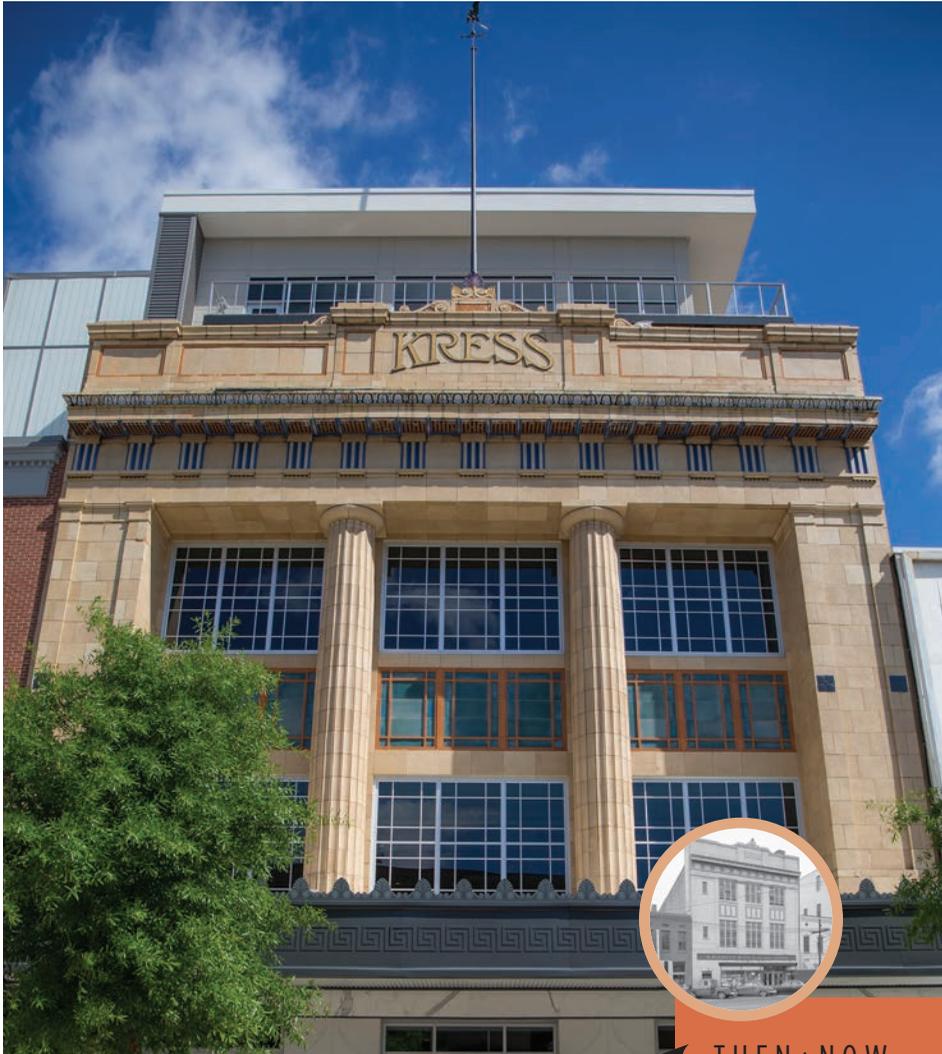
**AFTERNOON** Drive to Opelika, which transformed its old train depot into a center of arts-and-crafts boutiques and excellent restaurants. Whether you like hard liquor or craft beer, it's also a perfect place to stop for a drink at **John Emerald Distilling**, an award-winning small-batch craft distillery, or at **Red Clay Brewery**, where you can drink beer on the patio and watch the trains go by.

**EVENING** Whether you've been shopping or drinking, it's time to refuel with a relaxing dinner. Opelika offers plenty of possibilities, including the shrimp and grits made with house pimento cheese at **Café 123** or the fettuccine alfredo at **Ma Fia's**.

# Montgomery

BY RICK HARMON

Enjoy a long weekend bookended by great food and beautiful landscapes in one of the country's most historic cities, currently headlined by the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.



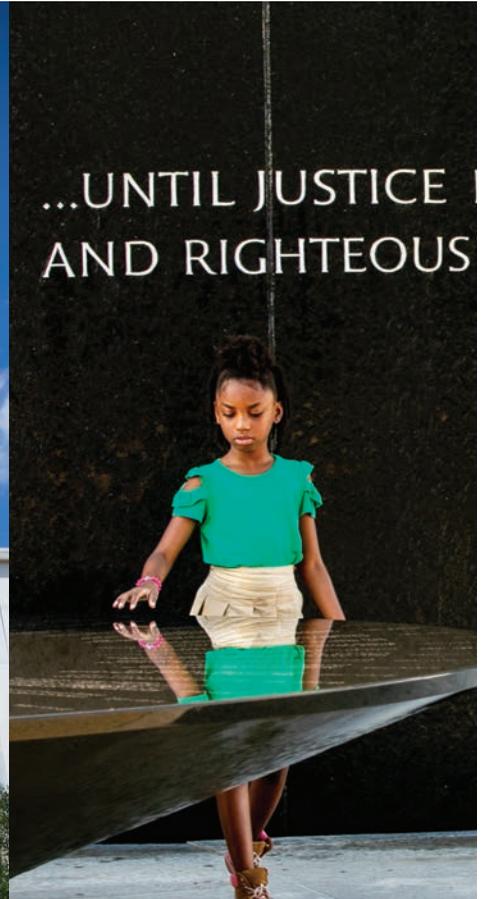
## Friday

**EVENING** Relax with a laid-back dinner and a movie in the Cloverdale entertainment district. Nosh on a spicy, roasted sweet potato taco with goat cheese at **El Rey Burrito Lounge**, a cutting-edge Mexican restaurant with contemporary gourmet flair, before walking next door to the **Capri Theatre**, which opened in 1941 as the Clover Theatre and now shows modern independent films and classics. Afterward, walk north down Boulton Street, located just east of the movie house, and stop at **Leroy**, a secluded bar with a stunning selection of beer, from \$2 Pabst Blue Ribbon to \$60 Baladin Xyauyu.

If you still aren't tired, head downtown for drinks at the **Aviator Bar**, decorated with vintage airplanes and aviator memorabilia, or music at **Sous La Terre**, a subterranean jazz club where the scene doesn't heat up until well after midnight.

## THEN + NOW

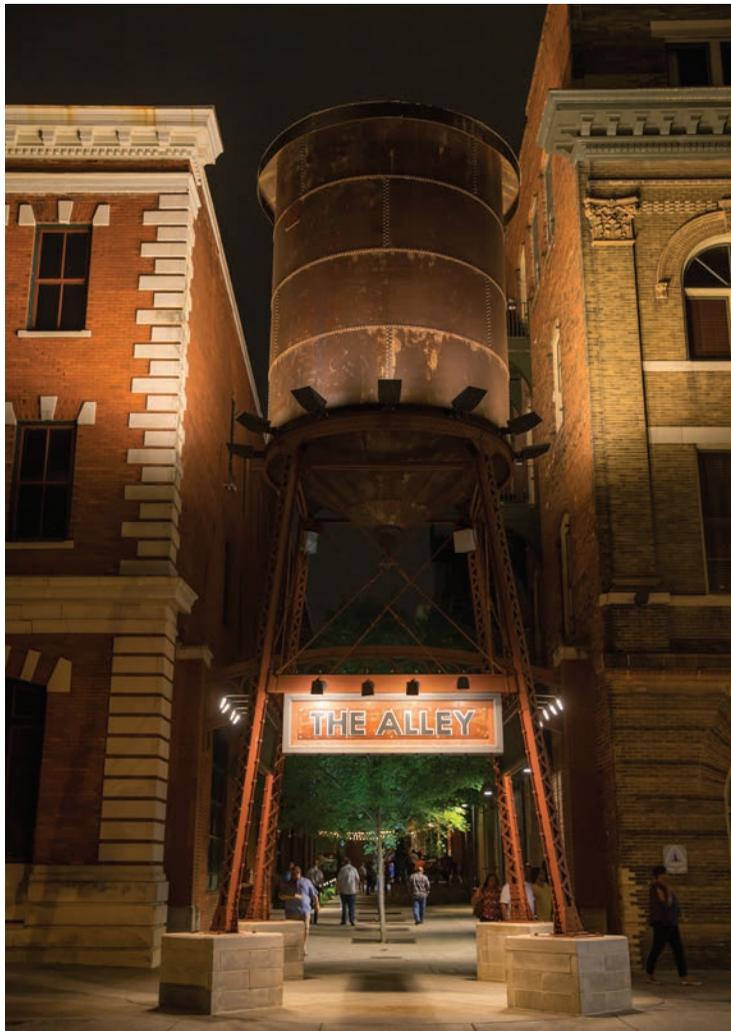
*Start Saturday in the renovated 1920s-era Kress Building at Prevail Union, a coffee shop Food & Wine magazine named as having the best coffee in the state. Touches of the former department store's segregationist past remain as reminders of how far the city has come.*



## Saturday

**MORNING** After coffee, tour the **National Memorial for Peace and Justice**. Since the Equal Justice Initiative memorial to black lynching victims opened on April 26, 2018, it's been called one of the country's most powerful memorials. Afterward, walk to EJI's **Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration**, which examines the lingering effects of racial injustice on today's society. Timed entry tickets are required, so purchase yours in advance online to avoid missing your desired time. As the memorial attests, Montgomery has played a crucial role in America's race relations. Visit the **Alabama Capitol**, where Confederate president Jefferson

Left to right: ATD/Chris Granger, courtesy of Alabama Dept. of Archives & History, ATD/Jamie Martin, ATD/Chris Granger (2); insets, top to bottom: ATD/Rus Baxley, ATD/Art Meripol, ATD/Jeif Greenberg



**17**

SUITS AT THE HANK WILLIAMS MUSEUM



**800+**

RELICS TRACE THE STATE'S PAST AT THE MUSEUM OF ALABAMA



**4,000+**

WORKS HELD IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

**AFTERNOON** Fill a couple of hours at **The Hank Williams Museum**, the **Museum of Alabama** or the **Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts**.

**EVENING** Eat elegantly at **Jubilee Seafood** or **Vintage Year** in Cloverdale, **Central** in downtown Montgomery or **City Grill** in Hampstead. Time dinner to see the hits, either during a **Montgomery Biscuits** baseball game featuring the Tampa Bay Rays' AA team or on stage at the **Alabama Shakespeare Festival**, one of the top Shakespeare theaters in the country.

**Sunday**

**MORNING** Tee off at **Capitol Hill** in Prattville, about 10 miles north of Montgomery. The course is part of Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, ranked by *Golf* and *Golf Digest* as some of the best and most affordable public golf in the country. Conclude your weekend with a stroll through **Jasmine Hill Gardens and Outdoor Museum**, home to more than 20 acres of floral beauty, Greek-inspired statues and a full-scale replica of Greece's Temple of Hera.

**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** THE RECENTLY RENOVATED KRESS BUILDING PRESERVES ITS ORIGINAL EXTERIOR, TOUCHING ENGRAVED NAMES AT THE CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** THE ALLEY PROVIDES HOURS OF DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT, VARIOUS SCULPTURES DOT THE GROUNDS OF THE WYNTON M. BLOUNT CULTURAL PARK.

Davis was sworn in and where Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "How Long, Not Long" speech after the Selma to Montgomery March. Stop at **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church**, from which King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Visit the **First White House of the Confederacy**; Davis and his family lived here. Within walking distance lie the **Rosa Parks Museum**, the **Freedom Rides Museum** and **The Civil Rights Memorial Center**, which features the Civil Rights Memorial designed by Maya Lin.

**NOON** Break for lunch at either **Chris' Hot Dogs**, which for more than 100 years has served hot dogs covered in its secret chili sauce to customers from Hank Williams to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, or **Derk's Filet & Vine**, one of the city's best meat-and-twos.





# CENTRAL

*In the state's heartland, set your sights on urban sophistication and Alabama's highest natural point.*

With three key cities—Birmingham, Tuscaloosa and Anniston—and a host of small towns and hamlets, this region stands out for its big-city lights and small-town charms. It echoes with voices from the Civil Rights Movement and cheers for the University of Alabama. It holds the state's highest point, Cheaha Mountain, where recreation trails wind and quiet overlooks, such as Pulpit Rock (below), are treasured. Hike the Pinhoti Trail or pedal the Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail, both found in this region. Or, stretch your legs (and maybe your comfort zone) by ducking underground at DeSoto Caverns. Once you've had your fill of Ma Nature, turn to some manmade fun on the track at Talladega and save room for the creative culinary concoctions of the James Beard Award-winning restaurants concentrated in Alabama's middle country.



# Escape for the Senses

*The buzz of Birmingham. The sweet smell of peaches. The hum of innovation and the spirit of a juke joint. Central Alabama beckons and inspires.*

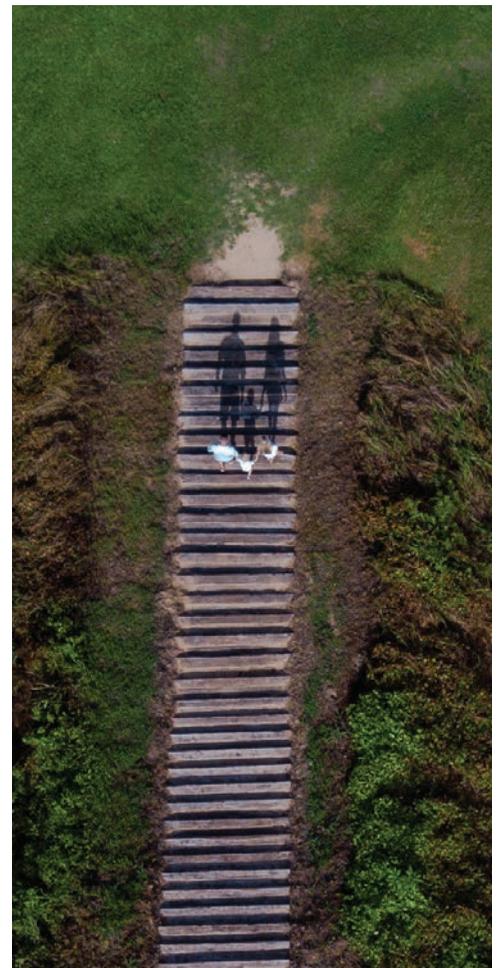


## FEEL

Get your hands dirty as you dig into clay and creativity at Kentuck. This art center in Northport offers hands-on workshops as well as exhibitions and opportunities to watch artists hammer out metal weather vanes or paint images of dogs in colorful sweaters. Discover a similar whimsy in Orr Park in Montevallo, where it is hard to resist running your fingers along the faces carved into the park's dead trees. Over in Anniston, the sense of touch takes a different spin—it burns, in a good way. Hit the Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail to get your heart pumping and set your thighs afire.

## HEAR

Listen as re-enactors at American Village in Montevallo tell tales from the American Revolution. Enjoy the role-playing fun as you join George Washington's Continental Army or follow a famous patriot on a scavenger hunt. In Tuscaloosa, root for the home team, the Crimson Tide, with University of Alabama football fans at Bryant-Denny Stadium.





*Listen*

**Left to right:**  
Kentuck in Northport, Moundville Archaeological Park, American Village in Montevallo, Pizitz Food Hall in Birmingham

*Engage*

**STROKE THE WOOL OF A SHEEP IN THE CHILDREN'S BARN AT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO.**

**SLIP DOWN THE NEW SLIDES AND RIDES AT SPLASH WATER PARK IN BESSEMER.**

**SAMPLE ALL THE ICE CREAM FLAVORS YOU CAN AT SYLACAUGA'S BLUE BELL CREAMERIES.**



**GAPE AT PONCHO VIA, A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD: TEXAS LONGHORN NEAR MILLERVILLE.**



**TASTE**

Oh my, the choices for scrumptious food in this region are so plentiful, your belly will be happily full. Restaurants (Highlands Bar and Grill in Birmingham and Bright Star in Bessemer) and chefs (Chris Hastings, Hot and Hot Fish Club, and Frank Stitt, Highlands Bar and Grill, both in Birmingham; Rob McDaniel, SpringHouse in Alexander City; and Johnny Hontzas, Johnny's Restaurant in Homewood) have won James Beard Awards or been semifinalists. Everything on their menus is worth ordering. Inside the recently opened Pizitz Food Hall downtown, nosh on flavors from around the world. Choose from Israeli kebabs, Ethiopian ye-beg tips, Vietnamese pho, Himalayan dumplings, Indian street food and more. In 2019, Alabaster's ChubbFathers earned national props for its burgers, being named among the best 50 in the nation by bigseventravel.com.



**Top to bottom:**  
 Barber Vintage  
 Motorsports Museum  
 in Birmingham, PieLab  
 in Greensboro

**Opposite, clockwise  
 from top:** McWane  
 Center in Birmingham,  
 Reverie in Marion,  
 Sloss Furnaces in  
 Birmingham

“ When I found out what [PieLab does] for the Greensboro community, I had to give it a try. Community service aside, these pies are LEGIT! Chocolate Bourbon Pecan is a local favorite, but mine has to be the Brown Sugar Buttermilk! ”

 Tyler



## SEE

Civil rights landmarks abound in Birmingham and Anniston and should not be overlooked, but among the region’s obvious must-sees, others await. Take Moundville Archaeological Park, for example. This spot preserves 326 acres where the Mississippian tribe built flat-topped earthen mounds for ceremonial and residential purposes. In Vance, appreciate modern innovation at the Mercedes-Benz plant, where tours take you behind the scenes of automobile manufacturing. Witness more cars and motorcycles at Birmingham’s Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum, where more than 900 motorcycles and multiple Lotus cars are displayed.

## SMELL

Walking into PieLab in Greensboro is like swinging open the back door of Grandma’s house and stepping into the kitchen. It’s warm, inviting and smells delicious. The aroma of fresh-baked pies, some savory but mostly sweet, permeates the downtown eatery. It’s a great place to rub elbows with locals and hear more about PieLab’s role in the community. You could taste an Alabama peach in a pie here, or you could swing by the orchards in Chilton County for a bite and a sniff in May and June when the fruit is at its peak.

# SMALL TOWNS

*Adventure beyond the big cities to appreciate what life is like in the rest of the region. Each of these small towns, plus many others, offers excellent reasons to steer off the beaten path and discover something notable.*



## Where the Kids Are

At the McWane Science Center in Birmingham, interactive exhibits and experiences ignite youngsters' curiosity and natural quest for knowledge. Here, digital butterflies alight on guests' arms, a high-wire bicycle demonstrates the law of center of gravity and tug-of-wars measure strength, to name just a few of the hands-on activities. Demonstrations and special events take experiments further and add to a visit.



## Tours to Try

**RED CLAY TOURS:** TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO BIRMINGHAM'S CIVIL RIGHTS, OR GET AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAGIC CITY. NICHE TOURS INCLUDE BEER, FOOD, MUSIC AND COMMUNISM, WHILE THE GENERAL ONE HITS THE HIGHLIGHTS, LIKE SLOSS FURNACES NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK.



**HONDA MANUFACTURING:** "TAKE A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD" OF HONDA CARS DURING A TOUR OF ITS PLANT IN LINCOLN. ADVANCE RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.

**ANNISTON ALL-ACCESS PASS:** LEARN MORE ON A GUIDED TOUR OF THE ANNISTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, THE BERMAN MUSEUM AND LONGLEAF BOTANICAL GARDENS.

### SYLACAUGA

#### Famous Exports

Stop here to marvel at marble, one of Sylacauga's famous exports. At the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum & Arts Center, see how Italian sculptors have shaped the local, white rock into art. Additionally, the museum has a room dedicated to native son Jim Nabors, who played Gomer Pyle on the "Andy Griffith Show," and an exhibit interpreting the Hodges meteorite that hit the area. Nearby resort Pursell Farms offers golf, shooting, fishing and farm-to-table dinners.

### MARION

#### History Made Here

Laying its claim to history, this town features mansions Reverie and Kenworthy Hall, as well as Marion Military Institute, home to the Alabama Military Hall of Honor Museum. Nearby women's college Judson College houses the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame. By the courthouse, a historic marker explains how the killing of Jimmy Lee Jackson by Alabama state troopers here sparked the Selma to Montgomery March.

### ALICEVILLE

#### Artifacts in Abundance

During World War II, Aliceville had one of the largest German POW camps in the country. The excellent Aliceville Museum displays camp artifacts, the largest collection of its kind, along with other exhibits. Find artifacts of another time—shark teeth about 70 million years old—during fun adventures at Shark Tooth Creek Outdoor Adventures. June to November, attend the town's bustling Farmers Market.

# Birmingham

BY MARILYN JONES STAMPS

*Known as the Magic City for its once-booming iron ore industry and later its transformation as a leader in healthcare, Alabama's largest city is a place where magic still happens—even in just 36 hours.*



## Friday

**AFTERNOON** Begin by checking into one of the city's historic hotels, such as the **Elyton**, a symbol of the city's industrial greatness in 1909 and now part of Marriott's exclusive Autograph Collection. The building was once known as the Empire and was part of "the heaviest corner on Earth," so dubbed because the intersection of 20th Street and First Avenue North held the South's tallest buildings at the time. Another option: the **Redmont Hotel**, which first opened in 1925 and has been renovated to include architectural touches from its original heyday.

**EVENING** The flickering lights of restaurants and entertainment venues beckon you to enjoy the evening sipping cocktails and feasting on succulent foods. Indeed, the city is claiming a place among veteran culinary destinations, thanks to a range of lick-your-fingers barbecue and French-inspired, regional fare. Go casual

## THEN + NOW

*Cast from local iron in 1904, Vulcan overlooks the city from Red Mountain. Including the pedestal, the statue rises 180 feet, making it irresistible to aerialist Carla Wallenda in 1978. She performed a "death slide," descending a high wire from Vulcan's foot to the ground.*

at **Jim 'N Nick's, Saw's** or **Full Moon Barbecue**. Or, embrace sophistication at James Beard Award winners **Highlands Bar and Grill** or **Hot and Hot Fish Club**. Highlands won the award for the country's most outstanding restaurant in 2018 after being a semifinalist several times before. The restaurant's pastry chef, Dolester Miles, won the same year for outstanding pastry chef.

## Saturday

**MORNING** Lace up your walking shoes and explore downtown on foot. Dart in and out of shops, such as **Reed Books**, author Jim Reed's bookstore, where book collectors come for valuable finds. Then, stand where history was made. Stroll through **Kelly**



4

LEVELS OF INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS AT THE MCWANE SCIENCE CENTER



1882-1970

THE YEARS SLOSS FURNACES OPERATED



27,000

WORKS OF ART HOUSED AT BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF ART

**EVENING** Take in a show in the Theatre District, home to the historic **Alabama Theatre**, the restored vaudeville-era **Lyric Theatre** and the resurrected Art Deco **Carver Theatre**. The trio share space with a new addition—the **Sidewalk Film Center and Cinema**. Whether, you want to catch the latest flick, listen to jazz or watch a ballet, this district specializes in that kind of entertainment. Consider a nightcap at the **Paramount Bar**, where beer and cocktails are served in a garage-style atmosphere filled with 20-plus classic and modern arcade games.

### Sunday

**MORNING** Sleep late, then head to **Roots and Revelry**, housed on the second floor of the Thomas Jefferson Tower, for what many locals claim as downtown's best brunch. Chef Brandon Cain changes his menu to serve the region's freshest seasonal ingredients. Power up with Gulf shrimp and McEwen & Sons grits or cut into Eggs Benedict made with buttermilk biscuits. The extra calories will be needed to explore the city's iron ore past at **Sloss Furnaces National Historic Landmark**.



**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** TAKING IN THE VIEW FROM ATOP VULCAN, YOUNGSTERS INTERACT WITH SCULPTURES REPRESENTING THE CHILDREN'S MARCH AT KELLY INGRAM PARK; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** PULLED PORK BATHING IN A POOL OF CHEESE GRITS AT SAW'S BBQ, A PEEK INSIDE THE SWANKY ELYTON HOTEL

**Ingram Park**, which was the site of civil rights demonstrations in the 1960s and is now a place for education and reflection thanks to a mobile phone tour of the park's evocative statues. Learn more about equality and race at the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, or simply stand in front of the **16th Street Baptist Church** and contemplate the 1963 bombing there that killed four African-American children.

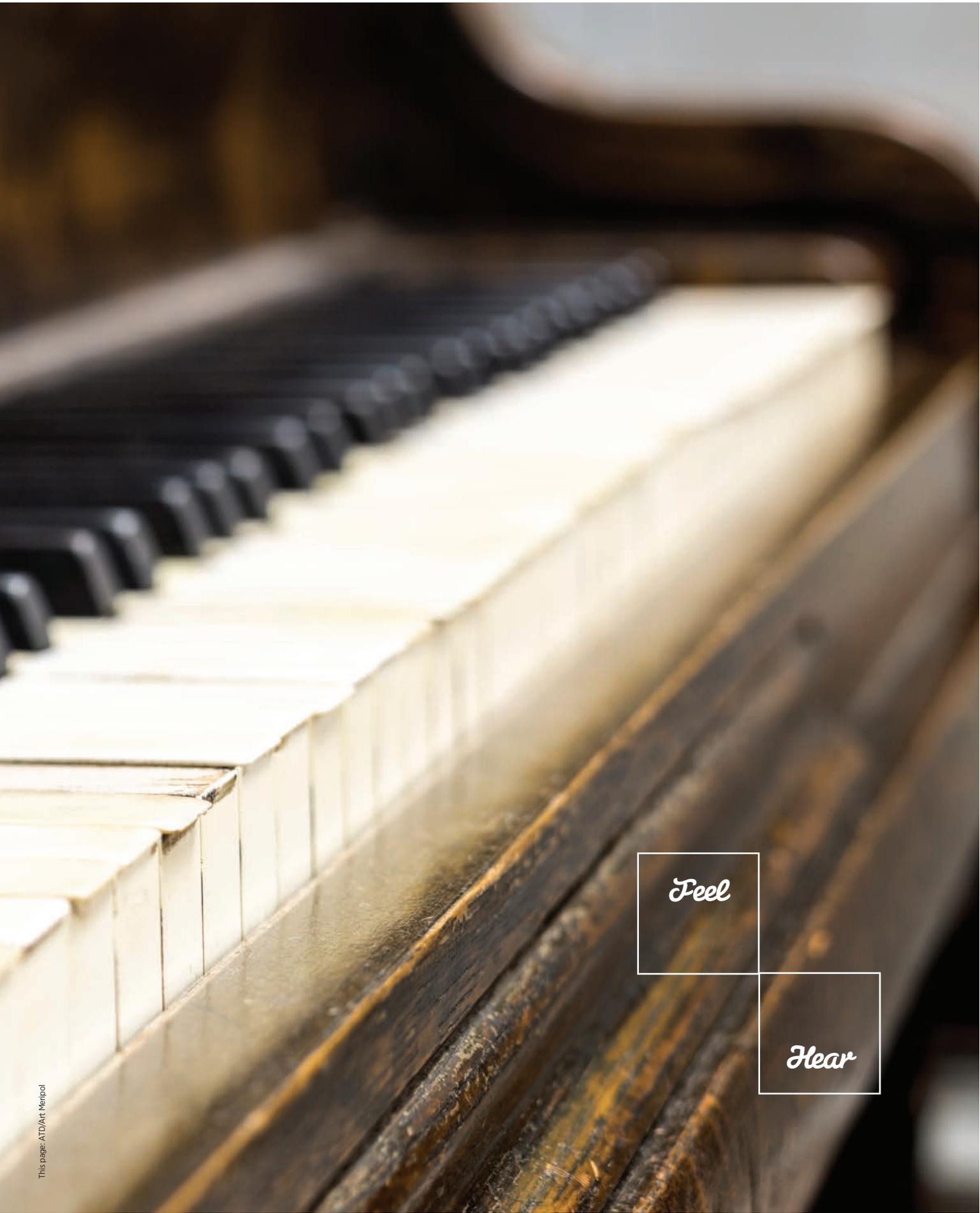
**AFTERNOON** Relax at 19-acre **Railroad Park**, where kids play at two playgrounds within view of passing trains, runners and walkers use a variety of trails, and the community gathers. If you're lucky, you might encounter a special event, such as a concert by the Alabama Symphony Orchestra or a food truck rally. It's easy to see why the park is dubbed Birmingham's Living Room.

# NORTH

*Launch a wilderness adventure or a virtual mission to the moon in the same region that inspired some of America's greatest musicians.*

Waterfalls? Check. Caves? Check. Canyons carved by rushing water? Check. North Alabama promises a slew of natural wonders, many on display and accessible in places such as DeSoto State Park, Cathedral Caverns State Park, Little River Canyon National Preserve, Noccalula Falls Park and the Walls of Jericho, to name a handful. Prefer seeing the beauty with a dash of luxury? Then take it all in from the veranda of The Lodge at Gorham's Bluff. Jesse Owens and Helen Keller grew up in this same region, where rocket scientists and musicians made history. Shake, rattle and roll to blues pianist W.C. Handy's birthplace (below), as well as to music studios that ignited the careers of multiple chart toppers. In Huntsville, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center puts Alabama's role in the nation's space program on display.





*Feel*

*Hear*



## SMELL

The aromas of the north linger in the air like an eagle hanging on the breeze. You whiff one, then move, and another takes its place. At recently renovated Constitution Hall Park, where 44 delegates signed Alabama's Constitution in 1819, fumes from heating iron waft from the blacksmithing shop, encouraging visitors to poke their heads into the historic building to see what the smith is forging. It's a different odor than the smoky-sweet one you get while roasting marshmallows over a campfire in Bankhead National Forest.

## SEE

Turn your attention to manmade intricacy at Ave Maria Grotto near Cullman. Using cement, beads, broken plates and other items, Brother Joseph Zoettl, a Benedictine monk of St. Bernard Abbey, replicated in miniature many of the world's religious sites, including those mentioned in the Bible. In Mooresville, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, survey the whole town, but notice particularly its post office, the state's oldest one still operating.

All images: ATD/Chris Granger

# Escape for the Senses

*The rush of a roaring river. The smell of wood burning in a cabin's fireplace. A towering rocket aimed at the moon. Barbecue slathered in tangy white sauce. The soft cloth that will be sewn into home fashions or ready-to-wear designs desired the world over. Yes, the state's northern stretch engages eyes, ears, noses, mouths and hands with all that is found within its perfect balance of hip cities and pristine backwoods.*





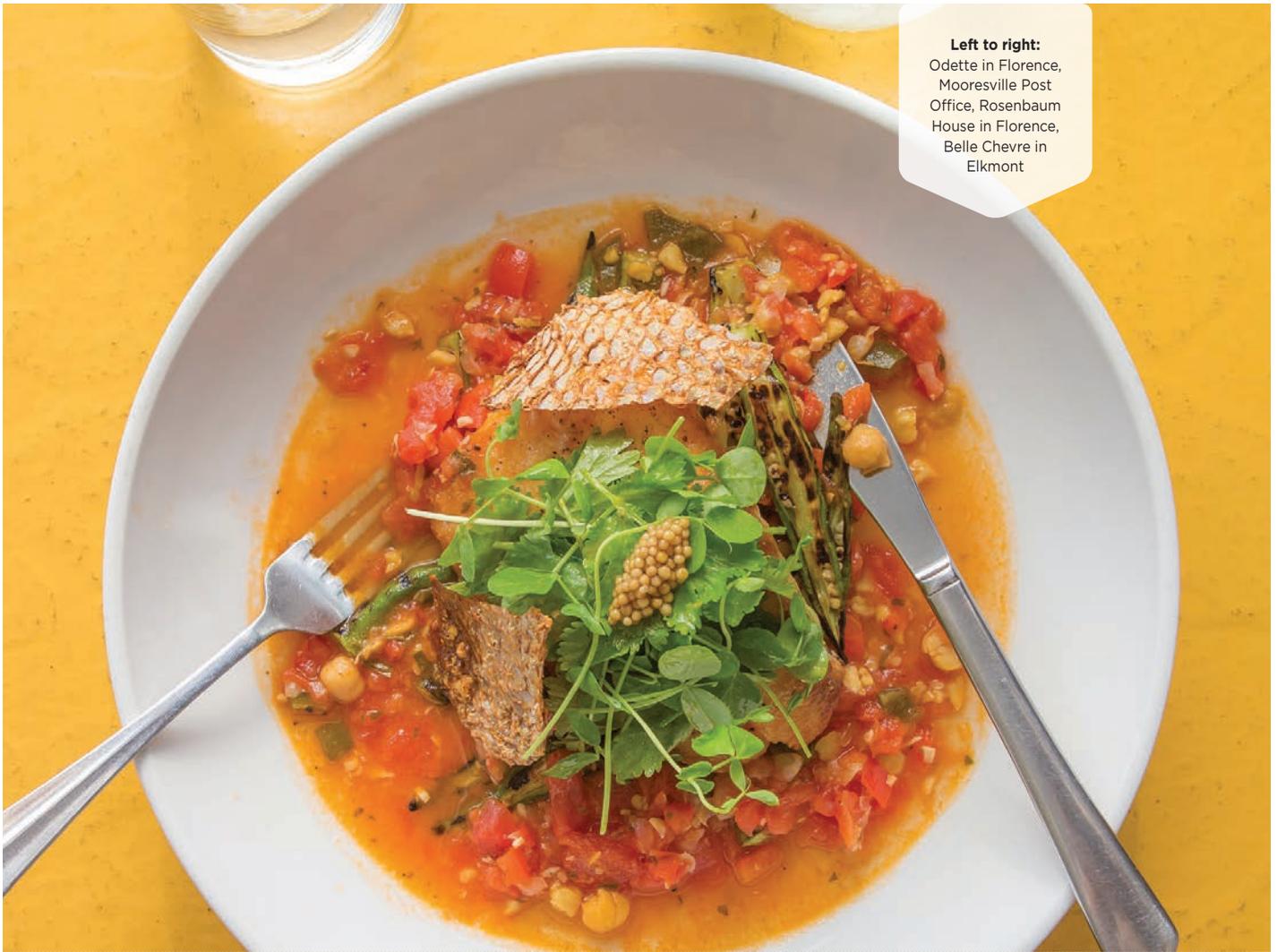
**Left to right:**  
 Constitution Hall  
 Historic Park & Museum in  
 Huntsville, Ave Maria Grotto  
 in Cullman, Gorham's Bluff  
 in Pisgah, horseback riding  
 in Mentone

“ Long before I learned to do a sum in arithmetic or describe the shape of the earth, Miss Sullivan had taught me to find beauty in the fragrant woods, in every blade of grass, and in the curves and dimples of my baby sister’s hand. —Helen Keller. She wrote this as part of her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. In Tuscumba, tour her birthplace and touch the well where she learned her first word. ”



**FEEL**

Grasp the horn wrapped tightly in leather as you climb into the saddle for a horseback ride from Shady Grove Dude Ranch into its 800 wooded acres. The horse moves calmly down the path, its gait an easy clip-clop that loosens and stretches your own legs and hips. It feels good to explore northeast Alabama from this new perspective. Near Steele, gain a bit of altitude, as you clamber among the rocks at Horse Pens 40. Here, avid rock climbers appreciate the awesome holds and solid boulders that have a reputation for being among the best in the South. Almost due north, Lake Guntersville offers a welcome dip in the summer, during which the water temperature is often about 15 degrees cooler than the air temperature. Usually, that puts the water at 75 to 80 degrees.



**Left to right:**  
 Odette in Florence,  
 Mooresville Post  
 Office, Rosenbaum  
 House in Florence,  
 Belle Chevre in  
 Elkmont

*Engage*

**SURVEY THE ITEMS LEFT BY TRAVELERS AT UNCLAIMED BAGGAGE IN SCOTTSBORO.**

**INHALE THE CRISP MOUNTAIN AIR AT BUCK'S POCKET STATE PARK NEAR GROVE OAK.**

**OGLE AUTUMN'S CHANGING LEAVES ALONG THE WAR-PATH RIDGE TRAIL IN HUNTSVILLE.**



**SAVOR ORANGE PINEAPPLE ICE CREAM FROM TROWBRIDGE'S IN FLORENCE.**



**TASTE**

Odette is the obvious choice in the area to please the refined palate. Although located in Florence, far from the from Gulf Coast, this unpretentious neighborhood restaurant won the Alabama Seafood Cook-off last year. Chef Roman Jacobsen took the honors with a Gulf snapper escabeche and Kalamata olive causa. Whet your appetite with pimento cheese deviled eggs, then satisfy it completely with a cheeseburger made with house-ground local beef. Neighboring Sheffield presents recently opened Red Clay Table, which native son and CSCA Cordon Bleu graduate Alan Phillips opened. His menu emphasizes Southern flavors with an international twist. Think caramelized pork served over coconut rice.

**HEAR**

Gorham's Bluff overlooks the Tennessee River, which in Florence and Sheffield native tribes called "the singing river." Listen to its gurgle from a creaking rocking chair on The Lodge's porch. Of course there's plenty of singing to be heard in the region thanks to the Shoals studios. In Decatur, laughter resounds from Point Mallard Water Park.

Top to bottom: ATD/Chris Ganger, ATD, ATD/Art Meripol, opposite, left to right: ATD/Chris Ganger, ATD/Meg McKinney

## GO BEHIND THE SCENES. HEAR ANECDOTES. GET THE INSIDE STORY.

**GUIDED TOURS** unlock the secrets of people and places. At Rosenbaum House in Florence, follow an experienced interpreter to learn about the architectural intricacies of the only Frank Lloyd Wright-designed structure in the state. The Usonian-style home was built for newlyweds Stanley and Mildred Rosenbaum, and then, in keeping with the intention of Usonian architecture (build small but allow for later growth), was expanded when the couple had four sons. Wright's design ethic "form and function are one" would apply in such a busy household. Throughout the tour, the docent explains why Wright made the decisions he did with regard to windows, doors, furniture, lighting and more. Tours last about 45 minutes.



## SMALL-TOWN HIGHLIGHTS

*Explore beyond the popular cities, and get to know other towns that offer excellent reasons to stop and stay awhile.*

**Florence** Once you've checked out the music by touring the studios and birthplace of W.C. Handy, turn your attention to other celebrity figures. Designers Billy Reid and Natalie Chanin have flagship stores, showcasing their latest fashions. In nearby Tusculumbia, visit Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller, to tour her home and in June and July to watch "The Miracle Worker" play.

**Decatur** With its newly opened \$32 million Cook Museum of Natural Science and famous Alabama Jubilee hot air balloon festival, there's a lot more to do in Decatur than eat barbecue. Still, it's known for having some of the best. Besides creating Alabama's famous white sauce, Big Bob Gibson's has won the prestigious Memphis in May barbecue competition five times.

**Athens** Come to Athens for its events, the annual Athens Storytelling Festival and the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention. The latter attracts more than 15,000 people each October to Athens State University. While there, pop into Founders Hall to see the Altar of the New Testament, woodcarvings that took 12 years to complete. Before leaving the area, detour to Elkmont's Belle Chevre, internationally known for its handcrafted goat cheeses.

# Huntsville

BY AMITY MOORE JOYCE

Take off for an out-of-this world 36 hours where rocket scientists helped put man on the moon, craft beer is a favorite beverage and creative ventures abound.



## Friday

**AFTERNOON** Numerous hotels are going up in the city, but the one that has folks packing their pajamas is the new **AC Hotel by Marriott**, located downtown across from the **Von Braun Center**. It is the only such Marriott property in the state, plus a stay comes with incredible views of **Big Spring Park** from some guest rooms, meeting rooms, and a second-floor terrace bar. The hotel's central location makes it an ideal pad from which to launch your weekend.

**EVENING** From April to September, if the Minor League baseball team is in town, go watch the **Rocket City Trash Pandas** play. Their inaugural season throws its first pitch this year. If it's off-season or the team is on the road, head to **Stovehouse**. This multi-purpose dining and entertaining complex appeals to adults seeking an easy evening of locally owned gourmet restaurants (crepes, ramen, Mexican, Italian, Mediterranean and others), yard games, fun murals for selfies

## THEN + NOW

*For 50 years, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center has been educating the public about the nation's space program. The center began in 1970 when Dr. Wernher von Braun floated the idea for a permanent exhibit of space program hardware, including space suits.*

and "Instagram spots," live music, and drinks on the rooftop. All this amusement occupies and gives new life to a former stove factory, thus the complex's name. **Campus No. 805** presents a similar option for a night out. Here, two breweries, **Straight to Ale** and **Yellowhammer Brewing**, anchor the experience housed in a former school; they're also two of the 11 breweries on the **Huntsville Craft Beer Trail**. Complete a beer trail card to earn a Trail Boss bottle opener.

## Saturday

**MORNING** After breakfast, hit another trail. Follow the **Spaces and Places Sculpture Trail** to see public art throughout the city. Many of the pieces are rotated



**148**  
MAKERS' STUDIOS AT  
LOWE MILL



**9**  
COFFEE SHOPS ON THE  
HUNTSVILLE CRAFT  
COFFEE TRAIL



**112**  
ACRES IN THE  
HUNTSVILLE  
BOTANICAL GARDEN

is a must-do, as is standing below an actual Saturn V rocket, suspended above your head. "Good Morning America" staff named it one of the Seven Wonders of America. Watch a 3-D, space-related movie in the National Geographic Theater, meet real rocket scientists and generally marvel at the displays that interpret the history and future of NASA.

**EVENING** At the city's highly regarded restaurants, treat yourself to their dishes that made Eat Huntsville's 2019 list of top 100 things to eat, including Chicken Fried Chicken Plate at **1892 East**; Buttermilk Fried Chicken at **Commerce Kitchen**; Grilled Free Range Chicken Paillard at **Cotton Row**; and Butternut Squash Ravioli at **Pane e Vino**. Cleanse your palate with a divine Lemon Lava Cake from **Grille 29**.

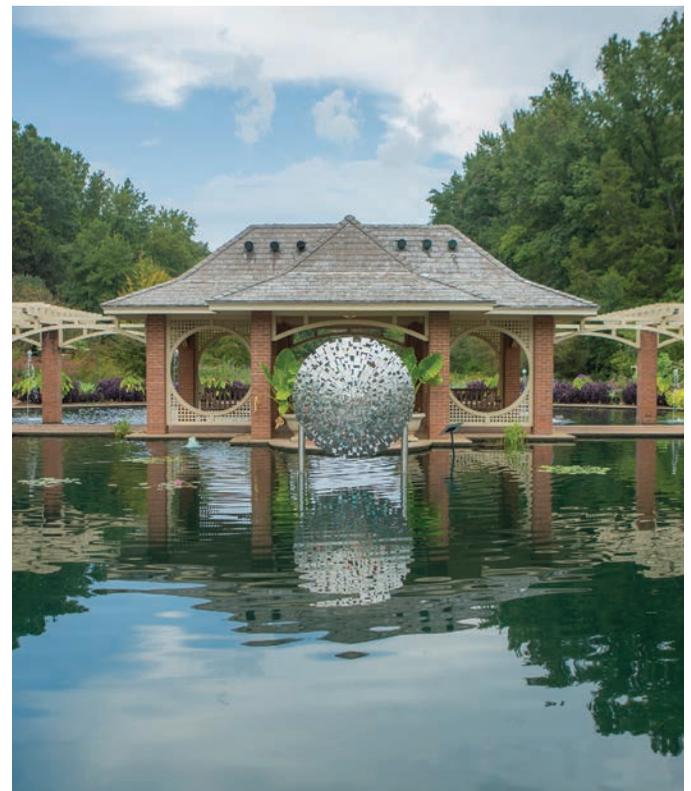
## Sunday

**MORNING** From the top of **Monte Sano Mountain**, watch the city come to life. Descend by noon when the **Huntsville Museum of Art** opens; Andy Warhol's "Moonwalk" makes a fitting conclusion to this Rocket City visit.

**OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT:** A SCIENTIST ANSWERS QUESTIONS AT THE U.S. SPACE & ROCKET CENTER, PEOPLE OF ALL AGES ENJOY THE ACTIVITIES AT STOVEHOUSE; **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** SERVING DECADENT SWEETS AT PIZZELLE'S CONFECTIONS INSIDE LOWE MILL, THE DAMSON AQUATIC GARDEN AT THE HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

regularly, so it's rarely the same artistic eye candy twice. If outer space is more your thing, then step into the moonboot prints of Alan Shepard, the first American to travel into space. They're located in a concrete sidewalk behind **Alabama Constitution Hall Park**. From there, drive what local blogger Buzz Huntsville has dubbed the **North Alabama Rocket Trail**. It leads to retired rockets and things that look like rockets, from the Ardmore Welcome Center to the Children's Garden at the **Huntsville Botanical Garden** and finally to Rocket Park at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**.

**AFTERNOON** Established in 1970, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center turns 50 this year. Join the celebration by visiting the center and engaging with its interactive exhibits and programs. The planetarium





# An Alabama Soundtrack

Noted musicians and industry hit-makers ensure the state's place in the history of American music.

BY RICK HARMON



**IN ALABAMA**, there are routes to carry you to the roots of American music. You can see the home of the father of the blues, the hometown of the father of rock and roll, two music studios that forever shaped the music of the '60s and '70s, the quintessential museum for country music's first superstar, and the birth home of a jazz performer who topped the pop charts—all in about a three-hour drive.

Start your trip in a small area that has had immense impact on the world's music—the Shoals.

Begin at **FAME Recording Studios**, the still-active studio at 603 E. Avalon Ave., in

Muscle Shoals. Here, the late Rick Hall helped create some of the most influential hits of the '60s, such as Wilson Pickett's "Mustang Sally," Percy Sledge's "When a Man Loves a Woman," and Aretha Franklin's "I Never Loved a Man," along with classics by Arthur Alexander, Etta James, Duane Allman and others.

Head next to **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio** at 3614 N. Jackson Highway in Sheffield. Led by the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, made famous as The Swampers in Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama," the studio attracted artists such as the Rolling Stones, Cher, Lynyrd

Skynyrd, Paul Simon, Bob Seger, the Staple Singers, Rod Stewart, Leon Russell, Willie Nelson, Boz Scaggs, Cat Stevens and others, who all came to record there. The studio, fully restored thanks



to a \$1 million gift from Beats Electronics co-founder Dr. Dre, reopened in 2017 and continues to be a working studio open for tours in the daytime. Musicians wishing to record at the studio are encouraged to present proposals, including demos, to the Muscle Shoals Music Foundation, whose board votes on the submissions.

Then, travel about three miles to Florence's **W.C. Handy Birthplace, Museum & Library** at 620 W. College St. Handy didn't just write some of blues' most famous standards, such as "The Memphis Blues" and "St. Louis Blues"; he became the father of the blues by introducing blues music to the world. As one of the first to transcribe blues music to sheet music, he allowed generations of musicians to discover the blues and incorporate it into their own music. His trumpet, handwritten music and the piano on which he composed his hits help you feel his presence in the museum, housed in the log cabin where he was born in 1873. Plan your trip for July 17-26, 2020, and you'll be able to attend the 10-day W.C. Handy Music Festival.

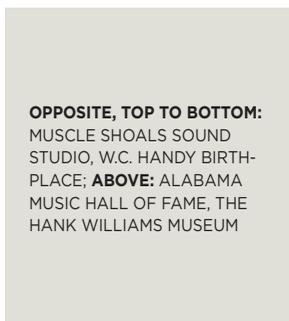
Legendary **Sam Phillips**, the father of rock and roll, was born a few miles from Handy's home. Phillips founded Sun Records, revolutionized rock and roll in the early 1950s, and is credited with recording the first rock-and-roll record—"Rocket 88"

Bottom and opposite: ATD/Chris Ganger; top left: ATD/Art Meripol



by Jackie Brenston and his Delta Cats. A historic marker in front of Florence's Big River Broadcasting, the radio station Phillips owned at what is now 624 Sam Phillips St., tells how he shaped music history by discovering and recording Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Carl Perkins, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf and others. The station's lobby displays rare photos of Phillips and other memorabilia from his career.

Get an overview of Alabama's musical stars at the nearby **Alabama Music Hall of Fame**. The Tusculumbia museum honors more than 1,200 Alabama musicians who have affected America's music scene, from Hank Williams and Sun Ra to the Commodores and Alabama Shakes. Check out the Sun Studio equipment that Phillips used to record Elvis Presley, the tour bus of country music chart-topping group Alabama and a 17-foot-long guitar that plays hits by Alabama artists. Or, record your own song in a vocal studio just for visitors. A recently added hip-hop exhibit explores the contributions of the state's rappers, DJs and producers. The display highlights the accomplishments of artists in the Shoals, Huntsville, Central and South Alabama through text, photography, CDs and more.



**OPPOSITE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** MUSCLE SHOALS SOUND STUDIO, W.C. HANDY BIRTHPLACE; **ABOVE:** ALABAMA MUSIC HALL OF FAME, THE HANK WILLIAMS MUSEUM

Speaking of Hank, visit Williams' hometown and browse **The Hank Williams Museum** at 118 Commerce St. in Montgomery. Displays feature his Nudie (Cohn) suits and other stage costumes, guitars, hats, rare photos, and even the 1952 baby-blue Cadillac in which he took his famous last ride. His gravesite, in the Oakwood Cemetery Annex, is one of the most visited in the state, and visitors gather there each New Year's Day on the anniversary of his death. You also can drive about three miles to see the memorial marker to his mentor Rufus "Tee-Tot" Payne in Lincoln Cemetery.

Finally, drive by the **birth home of Nat "King" Cole**, a jazz performer who earned 30 hits in the Billboard Hot 100 and became the first black performer with a major network variety show. Cole's childhood home was moved

from its original location and placed at the corner of Harris Way and Pineleaf Street and on the campus of Montgomery's Alabama State University. Under renovation, the home is available for curbside viewing only.

*"Home's in Alabama, no matter where I lay my head. My home's in Alabama, Southern born and Southern bred."*

**"MY HOME'S IN ALABAMA"**  
ALABAMA



## OTHER JAZZ, POP AND COUNTRY MUSIC ATTRACTIONS BRING ADDITIONAL HIGH NOTES TO ALABAMA'S ALBUM OF OFFERINGS.

The Alabama Fan Club and Museum in Fort Payne honors the country group Alabama, which had more than 30 No. 1 hits on Billboard's country music charts.

Stroll past memorabilia that remembers Nat "King" Cole, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Erskine Hawkins and others at the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame in Birmingham.

The Commodore Museum in Tuskegee remembers the group led by native son Lionel Richie. The original funk and soul band gained

acclaim with such hits as "Three Times a Lady," "Still," "Sail On," "Brick House" and "Easy."

In honor of the group, the museum, open by appointment, shows off the stage used for rehearsals, original uniforms and costumes, and other artifacts from the group's heyday. The gift shop also has been stocked with one-of-a-kind items.

Find out more at [alabama.travel/experience-alabama/music](http://alabama.travel/experience-alabama/music). Learn about music-related events in the calendar, page 172.



Having a great vacation has a lot to do with where you stay. Make your reservation at one (or some) of the state's notable accommodations. BY RICK HARMON

**THE LODGE AT GULF STATE PARK**, Gulf Shores

Where the Gulf of Mexico laps the white sands of Gulf State Park, this hotel mixes educational environmental programs with luxurious dining, gorgeous water-sky views and an infinity pool. Additionally, its ecologically advanced design may earn it recognition as the world's first hotel with a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum rating.

**HOTEL FINIAL**, Anniston  
Sit down to a breakfast buffet of catfish, grits and Conecuh sausage, or relax at the bar with a whiskey or one of the two types of beer Cheaha Brew Pub crafts especially for Hotel Finial. After more than 125 years and \$2 million in renovations, this Queen Anne-style 1888 home, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, effuses Southern charm. Choose from five specialty suites or 56 exterior hotel rooms.



**THE BATTLE HOUSE RENAISSANCE MOBILE HOTEL & SPA**, Mobile  
*U.S. News & World Report* ranked this hotel as the state's top one in 2019. Built in 1852 on the site Andrew Jackson had used as his military headquarters during the War of 1812, the property today is noted for its spa and salon, rooftop swimming pool, and tennis court, but especially for its Grand Lobby, crowned by a glass-domed ceiling. Enjoy dining at the AAA Four Diamond-rated Trellis Room restaurant while admiring the Tiffany-glass skylight located there.

**RENAISSANCE BIRMINGHAM ROSS BRIDGE GOLF RESORT AND SPA**, Hoover  
 Staying in this 259-room hotel is like a visit to Scotland. Not only does it resemble a Scottish castle, but a bagpiper appears at sunset each day to play Scottish tunes. Plus, guests can tee off on the fifth-longest golf course in the world, an 8,191-yard Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail course that has hosted PGA tournaments. Nongolfers, meanwhile, take advantage of the hot tubs, 12,000-square-foot spa and salon, saltwater indoor and outdoor pools, and activities for children (such as s'mores on the terrace!).

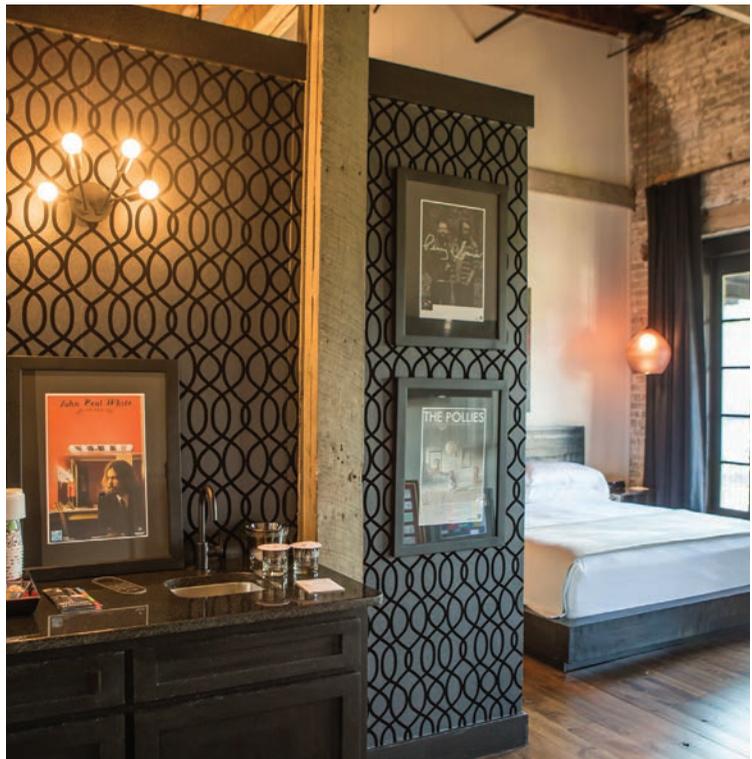
**GRAND BOHEMIAN HOTEL**, Mountain Brook  
 When this property opened in October 2015, it was celebrated as Alabama's first boutique luxury hotel. Five years later, it retains that reputation with its restaurant; rooftop bar and terrace, complete with illuminated ottomans; a wine-blending room; a full-service spa; cooking classes; and a spacious art gallery and attached sculpture garden. The Grand Bohemian earned the No. 3 spot on *U.S. News & World Report's* 2019 list of Alabama's best hotels.

**F. SCOTT AND ZELDA FITZGERALD AIRBNB**, Montgomery  
 Listed on Airbnb, the two-bedroom apartment is part of the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum, which is housed in the bungalow where the famous Jazz Age couple lived from 1931 to 1932. This home—the only site on the Southern Literary Trail where guests can stay overnight—is also where *The Great Gatsby* author wrote *Tender is the Night*.

**GRAND HOTEL MARRIOTT RESORT, GOLF CLUB & SPA**, Point Clear  
 Built in 1847, The Grand Hotel has morphed into a resort where history and luxury merge. Despite Admiral Farragut firing upon it during the Civil War and its stint as a Confederate hospital, the hotel has aged beautifully. An extensive renovation completed in 2018 led it to No. 1 on *U.S. News & World Report's* 2018 list of the Best Hotels in Alabama; it finished at No. 2 in 2019. Meanwhile, the property's two golf courses, the Dogwood and the Azalea, have helped the resort repeatedly make *Golf Magazine's* ranking of "Best Golf Resorts in America." Its top-flight spa, seven bars and restaurants, and family-friendly pools add to its allure.



**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:**  
 F. SCOTT AND ZELDA FITZGERALD AIRBNB, GUNRUNNER BOUTIQUE HOTEL, HOTEL FINIAL, THE LODGE AT GULF STATE PARK



## GUNRUNNER BOUTIQUE HOTEL, Florence

Each of the 10 luxury suites in this downtown hotel highlights the Shoals' spirit of creativity, honoring fashion icon Billy Reid, the Muscle Shoals Sound, rock-and-roll legend Sam Phillips, architect Frank Lloyd Wright and others. Ornate chandeliers mingle with the historical building's brick walls, exposed beams and original wooden floors. Rooms come with custom sound systems, wet bars and refrigerators. Seven of the suites feature private balconies.

# Motorcycling in Alabama

When riding through Alabama you are treated to curvy roads, covered bridges, scenic outlooks, lush forests and cascading waterfalls.

Tour unique towns and villages that make up the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in North Alabama, such as Mentone, Fort Payne, Scottsboro, Gadsden and Anniston. As you ride the highways and byways in this area, you will discover several state parks and a magnificent national park site. Cheaha State Park, near Anniston, is the state's highest point. Inside the park, there are scenic roads and an abundance of natural beauty waiting to be discovered. Just a short distance away is Noccalula Falls in Gadsden.

Venturing into Northeast Alabama, you will discover Little River Canyon National Preserve, part of the U.S. National Park system. Ride the scenic roads past mushroom rock along Little River Canyon. Stop along the route to enjoy picturesque outlooks. Other pleasurable sites that await you are Grace's High Falls, Little River Falls and DeSoto State Park.

In the Scottsboro area, travel Jackson County Road 21 to Jackson County Road 33 and experience a portion of roadway nicknamed "Snake Way." It's the curviest and steepest road in Alabama with six true hairpins turns and incredible elevation changes, all within a

**BELOW:** AUTUMN COLOR ABOUNDS ALONG THE "SNAKE WAY." **OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP,** BARBER VINTAGE MOTORSPORTS IS THE HOME OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MOTORCYCLE COLLECTION. **BOTTOM,** THE RIDE THROUGH CHEAHA STATE PARK TAKES YOU TO THE HIGHEST POINT IN ALABAMA.





one-mile section of the roadway. This roadway is so incredibly challenging that only the best of motorcyclist will dare to ride it. You may want to think twice before attempting to maneuver it.

Head to Huntsville to see the world's largest space museum, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Then travel to the Florence and Muscle Shoals area to see historic FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, where artists such as The Rolling Stones, Aretha Franklin and the Black Keys recorded. Along the way, you will ride across and near the mighty Tennessee River. This portion of your trip will follow the same route as the Trail of Tears annual motorcycle ride, which ends near the Wichahpi Commemorative Stone Wall, a few steps from where the Natchez Trace Parkway routes through Alabama.

Ride through rolling hills, covered bridges, and the wide open cotton fields of Bankhead National Forest as you make your way to Birmingham. In Alabama's Magic City, you'll discover the world's largest collection of motorcycles at the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum and learn about the history of Southern aviation at the Southern Museum of Flight. Other thrilling motor museums in the area include Talladega Superspeedway's International Motorsports Hall of Fame, the Mustang Museum of America in Odenville, and the Heart of Dixie Railroad Museum in Calera.

Highway 31 runs parallel to much of I-65 and is an excellent choice for anyone wanting to take the road less traveled from north to south Alabama. If you travel this route from Birmingham, you could end up at Spanish Fort near Mobile and Gulf Shores. Any motorcyclist would find plenty to enjoy in this part of Alabama, including the infamous Flora-Bama roadside bar and the resort cities of Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, as well as historic Mobile, offering the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park and a number of other attractions.



- |    |  |    |   |    |   |    |   |  |   |
|----|--|----|---|----|---|----|---|--|---|
| 1. |  <b>MT. CHEAHA,</b><br>ALABAMA'S<br>HIGHEST POINT   | 3. |  <b>SNAKE WAY,</b><br>CURVIEST,<br>STEEPEST ROAD<br>IN ALABAMA                           | 5. |  <b>MUSCLE<br/>SHOALS, HIT<br/>CAPITOL OF<br/>THE WORLD</b>  | 7. |  <b>COVERED<br/>BRIDGES,<br/>BLOUNT<br/>COUNTY</b> |  | <b>EAGLE RIDER<br/>RENTAL<br/>LOCATIONS</b> |
| 2. |  <b>LITTLE RIVER<br/>CANYON<br/>NATIONAL<br/>PRESERVE,</b><br>PART OF U.S.<br>NATIONAL PARK<br>SYSTEM | 4. |  <b>U.S. SPACE &amp;<br/>ROCKET<br/>CENTER,<br/>WORLD'S<br/>LARGEST SPACE<br/>MUSEUM</b> | 6. |  <b>BARBER<br/>VINTAGE<br/>MOTORSPORTS<br/>MUSEUM,<br/>WORLD'S<br/>LARGEST<br/>COLLECTION OF<br/>MOTORCYCLES</b> | 8. |  <b>BATTLESHIP<br/>USS ALABAMA,<br/>MOBILE</b>     |  | <b>CITIES</b>                               |
| 9. |  <b>BEACHES,<br/>GULF SHORES/<br/>ORANGE BEACH</b>  |    |   |    |   |    |   |  |   |



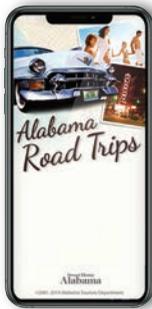
DIGITAL CONNECTIONS

# At Your Fingertips

*With just a tap or swipe, unlock dozens of ways to help plan your visit to Alabama or to stay in the know once you've arrived.*

## Mobile Guides

Download these apps to navigate where to go and what to see.



### ALABAMA ROAD TRIPS

Whether it's a beach drive you seek, shopping in a particular city or a delectable dine-around, you can find the perfect Alabama road trip for you and your family using this free, official app for iPhone and Android.

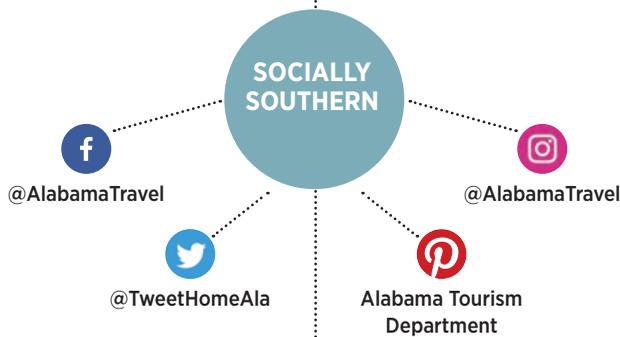
[alabama.travel/road-trips-app](http://alabama.travel/road-trips-app)



### ALABAMA CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL

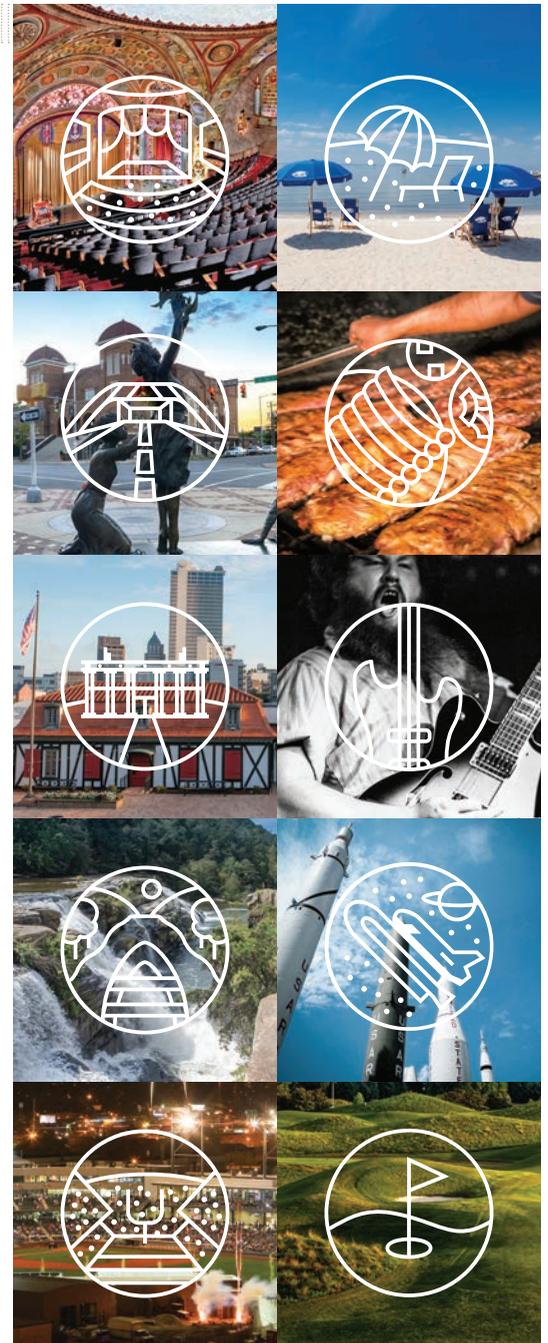
Using this free, official app for iPhone and Android, trace Alabama's role in the struggle—and the progress—for equality by exploring the people, places and events that put the state in the civil rights spotlight.

[alabama.travel/civil-rights-app](http://alabama.travel/civil-rights-app)



When you connect with Alabama, use these favorite hashtags, as appropriate:

[#SweetHomeAlabama](#) [#AlabamaTravel](#) [#AlabamaFood](#)



## Alabama Online

Revamped and updated in 2019, the state's official website, **Alabama.Travel**, makes it easier to plan a trip, engage with other visitors, share photos and generally get to know Alabama. A new, interactive map helps travelers determine where to eat, what to do and where to stay—all within defined areas of the state, such as the Lake Guntersville area in North Alabama or The Wiregrass in South Alabama.

Website users can utilize these trip-planning tools to label favorites and save locations and events, thus completely personalizing their trips. Additionally, they can share the trip with friends and on social media.

If travelers tag their social media posts with **#SweetHomeAlabama**, their images could show up on the website as part of new visitor-supplied content. These photographs show real people having authentic, only-in-Alabama experiences. Take a look to see which ones might inspire your itinerary.