

# LOUISIANA ITINERARIES

## Memphis to New Orleans

While you could drive your car straight down Interstate 55 for a six-hour trip, you'll have a much more memorable experience if you take some extra time to explore the Great River Road. The drive for this particular road trip plan is about 10 hours, not including the time you spend at each of the stops.

While Nashville is known for its country music, Memphis is known as the home of the blues and birthplace of rock 'n roll. During an evening on **Beale Street**, you will be able to hear live music of all kinds in clubs that line the street. Restaurants offer BBQ and other southern delights that are akin to singing the blues. A tour of Sun Studios will give you a taste of the many artists who began their careers in Memphis. Elvis Presley is probably the most world-renowned musical genius from Memphis. You can tour **Graceland** and see for yourself how the king of rock 'n Roll lived.



Beale Street

Other must-see music attractions are **Rock 'n' Soul Museum** and **STAX Museum of the American Soul**. If you are ready for a little levity, catch the Peabody Ducks as they march down their red carpet and into the pond located in the lobby of the **Peabody Hotel**. The ducks swim in the pond all day until they are marched back up to the living quarters at the hotel.

Leaving Memphis, head south on U.S. 61 to Clarksdale, Mississippi. Here you will find actor Morgan Freeman's **Ground Zero Blues Club**. Live music Wednesday through Saturday night will give you a live juke joint experience. It is located on the well-known Mississippi Blues Trail. In Cleveland, Mississippi, just a few miles away, visit the **GRAMMY Museum**. This museum opened in 2016 and is one of two GRAMMY museums in the world - the other being in Los Angeles.

Head farther south to Vicksburg, Mississippi, a river town with great historical significance and an absolute must-stop on your road trip from Memphis to New Orleans. History and Civil War buffs will appreciate the **Vicksburg National Military Park** - on the site of the Siege of Vicksburg - which has over 1,400 monuments, memorials, and works of art dotting the landscape that honor veterans of the siege. For more fun in Vicksburg, check out the **Lower Mississippi River Museum** to learn about the world's fourth-longest river. Then grab a bite to eat at the historic **Walnut Hills Restaurant** for some authentic Southern cooking.

From Vicksburg, cross the Mississippi River into Louisiana. Stop at the **Mound Welcome Center** to pick up information on Louisiana as you continue your trek to New Orleans.

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Just an hour from **Tallulah - Ferriday**, Louisiana, has played a role in the promotion of blues music through the **Haney's Big House** lounge in the African-American community. Almost every Delta Blues musician played at Haney's. Learn more about the history of music in the south at **The Delta Music Museum** in the downtown historic district. The museum contains exhibits on Ferriday natives, such as Jerry Lee Lewis and Mickey Gilley and others who were blues, rock, pop, and country musicians.

While in Ferriday, visit the **Frogmore Cotton Plantation and Gin**. This is a 1,800-acre working cotton farm and museum whose history dates back to 1815. Frogmore Plantation tells the story of cotton and plantation culture, and there is cotton in the fields to pick from mid-July through April.

A few miles away from Ferriday is its sister city, **Vidalia**, which is directly opposite the Mississippi River from the antebellum town of Natchez. One of Vidalia's favorite features is **Vidalia Landing Riverfront Park**, which has landscaped green space on the Mississippi River. You can get out of your vehicle, have a picnic and spend a lazy afternoon watching the Mighty Mississippi - the Father of Rivers - flow past you. There is also free wifi service if you feel the need to stay connected.

Concordia Parish is the northern gateway to the **Atchafalaya National Heritage Area**, a culturally rich natural wonder encompassing 13 parishes in and around the Atchafalaya Basin. The lives and traditions of the people of this region are emphasized.



*Frogmore Cotton Plantation and Gin*

Old River is a distinctive river with a remarkable history. Fifty miles northwest of Baton Rouge, it connects the Red, Atchafalaya, and Mississippi rivers. It was once a part of the Mississippi and would have long ceased to exist had it not been for man. At one time, the Mississippi attempted to divert most of its flow through Old River and down the Atchafalaya. Having flowed in both directions in the past, today Old River functions only as a navigation canal.

Not far from Vidalia, the **Old River Control Structure** is a floodgate system in a branch of the Mississippi River in central Louisiana. It regulates the flow of water leaving the Mississippi into the Atchafalaya River, thereby preventing the Mississippi river from changing course. Completed in 1963, the complex was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a side channel of the Mississippi known as "Old River," between the Mississippi's current channel and the Atchafalaya Basin, a former channel of the Mississippi.

Traveling down US 61, you'll reach the town of **St. Francisville** - once called "the town two miles long and two yards wide" because it was developed atop a narrow ridge overlooking the Mississippi River. It was the commercial and cultural center of the surrounding plantation country. Today, it still has numerous plantations and gardens for visitors to enjoy, including **Oakley Plantation**, which inspired nature artist John James Audubon. Or, visit the **Myrtles Plantation**, the most haunted plantation in America.



*The Delta Music Museum*

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*Louisiana State Capitol*

Driving into Baton Rouge, one of the first sites you will see is the **Louisiana State Capitol Building**. The tallest capitol in the United States, the building is 450 feet high with 34 floors. The Louisiana State Capitol Building was completed after only 14 months in 1932 and stands on a 27-acre tract. Tremendous symbolism is evident throughout the inside and outside design of the building including the Hall and the Senate and House Chambers. The Observation Deck on the 27th floor overlooks the city of Baton Rouge at a height of 350 feet. What began as the dream of one man - Governor Huey P. Long - became a symbol of pride, history, and the spirit of Louisiana people. In 1935, the building that Long built was also the site of his assassination. Senator Long is buried on the grounds and his statue faces the Capitol.

Across the street from the Capitol gardens is the **Capitol Park Museum**. Learn about Louisiana icons and traditions - from Louis Armstrong and Huey P. Long, to Mardi Gras and the fais-do-do. From the nation-building commerce of the Mississippi River to the life-sustaining bounty of the Gulf of Mexico, the Capitol Park Museum provides a panoramic exploration of the most vibrant state in America.

See how American Indians; colonists from France, Spain, and Britain; enslaved Africans and Acadians from Nova Scotia -eventually known as Cajuns - populated and cultivated Louisiana, shaping it into one of the most culturally rich regions in the world.

While still in downtown Baton Rouge, visit the **Old State Capitol Building**, a gothic structure built to look like a castle in 1847. Since 1994, the former statehouse has served as a historical, cultural, civic and educational institution whose primary purpose is to collect, preserve and present, as an educational resource, documents, objects of art and artifacts that reflect the state's politics, history, art and culture.

The museum's multimedia history exhibits engage visitors in an interactive exploration of the events and people that contributed to Louisiana's story, while the award winning "Ghost of the Castle" show explores the tumultuous history of the building.

Continuing down the Louisiana Great River Road, a must-see is **Houmas House Estate & Gardens**, located near Darrow, and soon to be home of the **Louisiana Great River Road Interpretive Center**. Guided mansion tours are offered daily and offer a glimpse of plantation life.

When the Great River Road Museum and Interpretive Center opens on the grounds of Houmas House, visitors will walk through an entrance reminiscent of the massive paddle wheel of a steamboat and into an experience of 1800s-era steamboat grandeur. The museum will highlight the history of the Lower Mississippi River and how it helped create the culture of Louisiana.



*Houmas House Estate & Gardens*

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Each plantation in Louisiana tells its own history and no two are alike. **Oak Alley Plantation**, one of the most iconic Louisiana plantations, is known for its alley of oaks leading from the Mississippi River to the house.

**Laura: A Creole Plantation** was run for many years by a woman, Laura Locoul Gore who became its fourth mistress. She ran the plantation as a sugar cane business until 1891.

After Plantation Country, head over to **New Orleans**, the most unique city in America – the “Big Easy,” as it is commonly known. New Orleans is a feast for the senses – music, world-renowned food, interesting sightseeing and historical architecture everywhere.

In the festival spirit? Check out **Blaine Kern’s Mardi Gras World** – Where Every Day is Mardi Gras. When you begin your Mardi Gras World tour, you’ll get an overview of the history of Mardi Gras in New Orleans before our guides take you through the float den, where artists work year-round to build spectacular floats and props. You never get this close to the floats while they’re rolling in Mardi Gras parades, and this is certainly the only place to see how these amazing pieces come to life each year. When you’re sightseeing in New Orleans or looking for fascinating tours in New Orleans, this is something you just can’t miss. Come see where the Mardi Gras magic is made!



Café du Monde

Whether this is your first time to New Orleans or you’re a seasoned visitor, the city’s infectious spirit is sure to invigorate, captivate and motivate you to jump in and see and do so much. With so many options and many things to do all the time, narrowing the playing field can be a challenge.

Think of it this way: divide how much time you have by what your priorities are – history, art, music, culture, and on and on – and then add in a little time for the spontaneous joy that is the Crescent City’s calling card. Subtract a few hours for sleep, multiply your dining pleasure by at least three times a day, and you have the perfect equation for an amazing New Orleans experience.

There is no shortage of things to do: **the French Quarter, St. Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square, Café Du Monde** for beignets and coffee, museums such as **The Cabildo, The Prebytere, Marie Laveau’s House of Voodoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, New Orleans City Park, Audubon Zoo, New Orleans Museum of Art**, among many, many places to visit – not to mention all the places to eat. New Orleans is an American European City like no other!



Jackson Square

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