

# Travel South USA

All Y'all Are Welcome



**Stories, Flavours, and Adventures of the American South**

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# Welcome To America's Travel South Region

## Hello Friends,

From sun-kissed coastlines to misty mountaintops, the American South unfolds like a beautiful song—serving up Infinite Flavours, Infinite Stories, Infinite Adventures, Infinite Wonders, and Infinite Harmonies.

Here, every mile sings its own verse. Rolling hills whisper of history, rivers carry the rhythms of jazz, blues, country, rock and soul, and bluegrass. Cobblestone streets invite you to linger over the scent of slow-cooked delicacies, chef driven dishes and traditions are not simply remembered—they dance in music halls, bloom in gardens, and greet you at every table with a smile.

The Authentic South is a tapestry of cultures and landscapes, where each journey reveals a new chapter and every flavour tells a deeper story. Whether you seek the hush of hidden trails or the lively heartbeat of city streets, the possibilities are as boundless as your imagination.

We are **One Region with Infinite Possibilities**. Your holiday can be woven into a masterpiece of unforgettable moments—days coloured by adventure, nights rich with discovery, and memories linger like a beloved melody. Bring an open mind and a hearty appetite—there will always be a seat at our table. **All Y'all Are Welcome!**

With heartfelt invitation,

Mark Ezell  
Travel South USA Board Chair  
Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development



# From the Editor

*Lake Martin, Louisiana*

**H**aving called this region home for the better part of a decade, I can tell you firsthand: the South shines with a holy trinity all its own—charm, soul, and storytelling. Deep and complex yet approachable, it can't be explained through pop culture references or boxed into tired clichés.

It simply has to be experienced. It's a feeling that sneaks up on you—when you lose track of time under a canopy of cypress or linger too long beneath blooming magnolias. It's in the smoky depth of a perfect roux, the hush of fireflies on a summer night, the quiet anticipation of crawfish season knowing Mardi Gras is right around the corner.

While history is at the heart of everything we do, don't mistake preservation for stagnation. This is a place where tradition doesn't just live—it evolves. Age-old recipes get fresh new takes from rising-star chefs, and deep cultural roots stretch in unexpected directions. The hospitality isn't just legendary—it's stitched into the very fabric of society.

The people are undoubtedly the South's

greatest asset and something that can't be summed up in a guidebook. There's a warmth—not just in the weather, but in the welcome. It's the casual corner store conversation that becomes a connection, a friendly face waving from the porch, and in the unspoken bond that community is everything.

For international visitors, there's no better time to plan a trip. The region is buzzing with milestones, anniversaries, and once-in-a-generation celebrations you don't want to miss—America's 250th birthday, the FIFA World Cup, and Revolutionary War commemorations that spotlight their pivotal role in history. For culinary enthusiasts, the long-awaited MICHELIN Guide American South finally debuted in the South, honouring the dining gems locals have known all along.

Pack your curiosity and prepare to be surprised in the best way possible. We can't wait to welcome all y'all home.

Cheers,

Lauren Monitz Durie

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## Where the *smoky, spicy, and slow-cooked* are served.

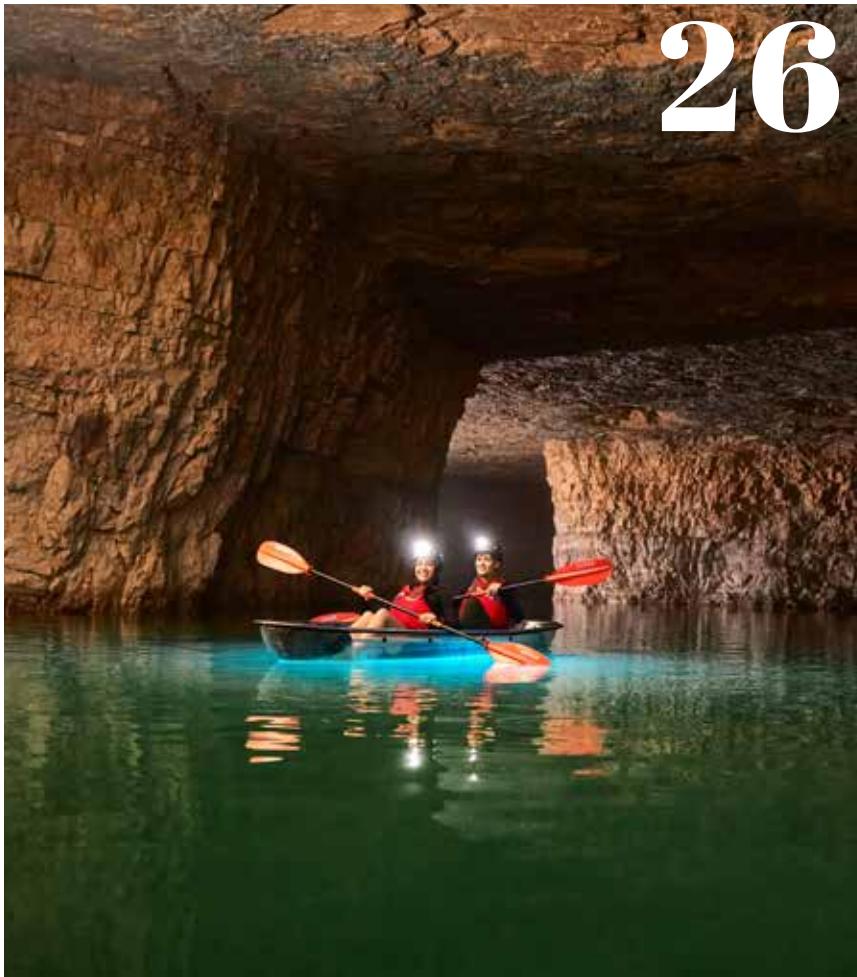
From white-linen feasts curated by expert chefs to peppery tamales hand-wrapped with hospitality and hickory-smoked BBQ that falls off the bone, no culinary scene is as soulful as ours.

📍 Char Restaurant, Jackson

GRAB A PLATE AT  
[VisitMississippi.org](http://VisitMississippi.org)

VISIT  
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# Regional Map



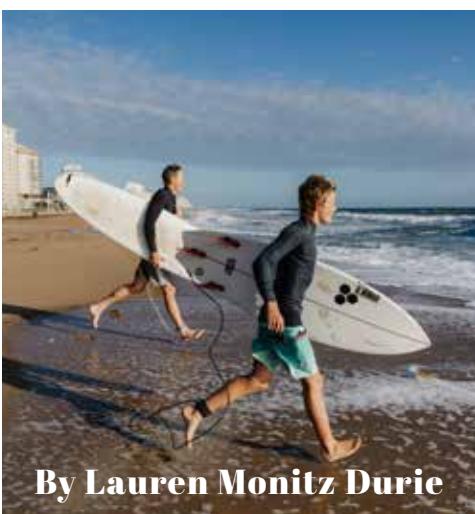
## INTERNATIONAL GATEWAY AIRPORTS

- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL)
- Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT)
- Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport (DFW)
- Kansas City International Airport (MCI)
- Orlando International Airport (MCO)
- Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)
- George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH)
- Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD)
- Lambert-St. Louis International Airport (STL)
- Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU)
- Nashville International Airport (BNA)
- Memphis International Airport (MEM)
- Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY)
- Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG)
- Charleston International Airport (CHS)

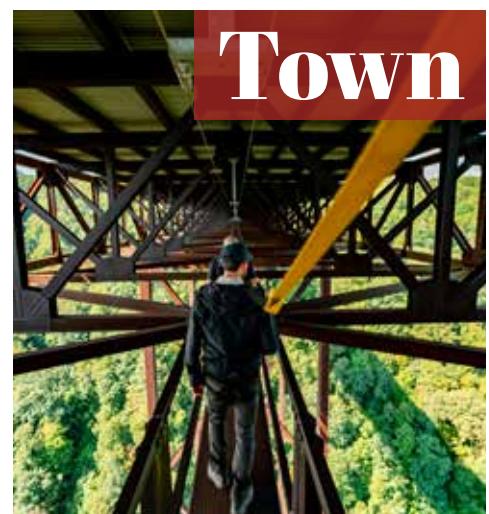




# Talk



By Lauren Monitz Durie



# Town

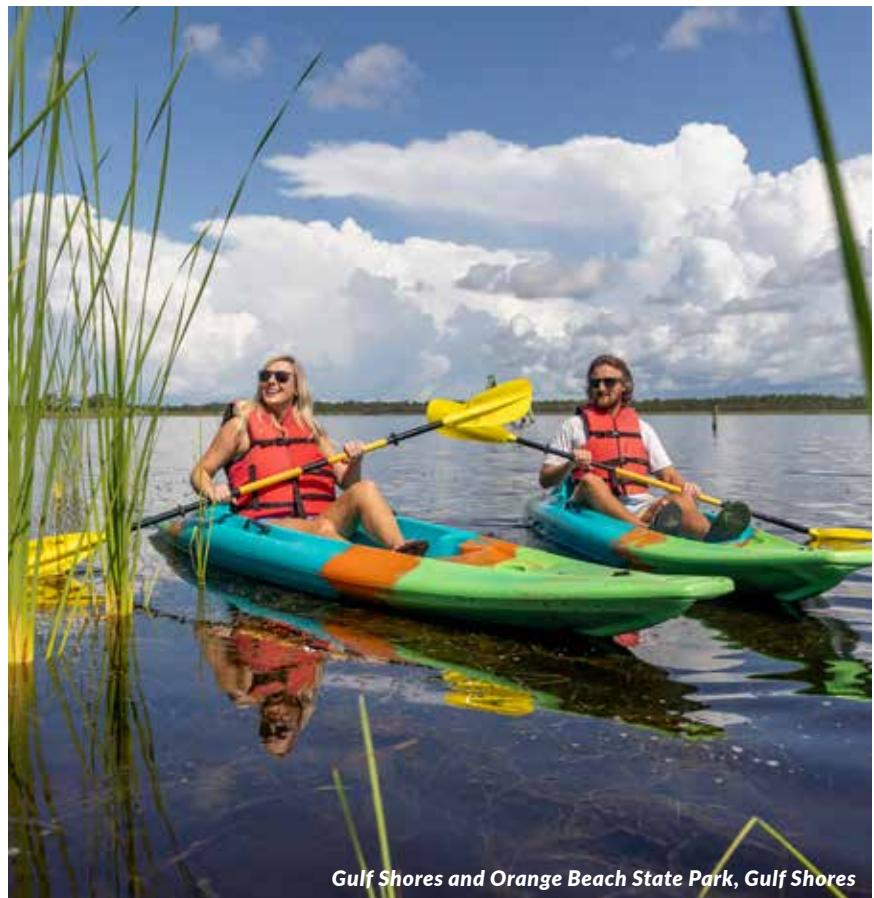


## Alabama

### *Tides Toward Tomorrow*

Alabama is rewriting its narrative, and nowhere is the transformation more evident than the **Gulf Coast Center for Ecotourism & Sustainability**. A nonprofit center adjacent to **Gulf State Park**, it's both a sanctuary and an ecological classroom that's home to a wetland lab, art studio, habitat restoration projects, and challenge course designed to inspire coastal renewal and tourism. Most notably, it is one of just eight "Ambassadors of the Environment" sites in the world, a programme run by Jean-Michel Cousteau, son of legendary marine explorer Jacques Cousteau, affirming Alabama's place among global sustainability leaders.

The state is also going all in, betting on sport. **The Crimson Reserve**, a \$47 million golf training complex, recently opened near the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, setting a new bar for collegiate athletic facilities. But the real game-changer came with the debut of the world's first **Sports Illustrated College Town Resort**. Built along the Black Warrior River, the sprawling 25-acre complex features a luxury hotel, wellness centre, and dining venues – offering visitors a front-row seat to Southern collegiate sport culture.



*Gulf Shores and Orange Beach State Park, Gulf Shores*



*Delta Heritage Trail*

**Delta Heritage Trail**



## Arkansas

### *Living Legends, Forging New Paths*

In 2026, the **Sultana Disaster Museum** is set to debut in a beautifully renovated historic building along the Mississippi River in Marion. This state-of-the-art facility will finally give a voice to America's deadliest maritime disaster: the 1865 explosion of the Sultana steamboat, which claimed nearly 1,200 lives – many of them Union soldiers freed from Confederate prison camps on their way home. With immersive galleries, a theatre, and rotating exhibitions, the museum offers a poignant, long-overdue tribute to a little-known chapter in American history.

Soon, travellers will be able to bike or walk the length of the Delta. The 85-mile **Delta Heritage Trail**, slated for completion by early 2026, will connect Lexa to Arkansas City, tracing a peaceful path through hardwood forests, farmland, and river plains – a slow, soulful journey through the ever-evolving heart of the American South.

Beyond the river, Arkansas continues its work to make nature more inclusive. A partnership with **Accessibility Across Arkansas** has introduced Action Trackchairs – all-terrain, accessible wheelchairs in select state parks, empowering more visitors to explore the rugged trails and scenic vistas.



## Georgia

### *Flying High into the Next Century*

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is marking a once-in-a-century celebration, tracing its journey from an abandoned auto racetrack to the world's busiest airport. The festivities span 18 months and include public art installations, a time capsule, and pop-up activations through September 2026. Meanwhile, Delta Air Lines is also celebrating 100 years of flight with special events, exhibitions, and the 30th anniversary of the **Delta Flight Museum** – a must-visit for aviation enthusiasts.

Atlanta continues to evolve – both above and below sea level. The **Georgia Aquarium**, the largest in the U.S., celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025 with a new immersive exhibition exploring the magic of bioluminescence. The **National Center for Civil and Human Rights** also reopened following a transformative expansion, adding over 2,200 square metres of new gallery space.

Beyond the capital, the gravity-defying "Georgia Gold Rusher" coaster debuted at **Six Flags Over Georgia** – a first-of-its-kind, free-spinning gondola inspired by Georgia's 1885 Gold Rush. At **Valdosta's Wild Adventures**, the "Water's Edge" expansion brings new rides, animal habitats, and entertainment, giving theme park fans plenty of new ground to cover. Even the Smithsonian-affiliated **Tellus Science Museum** in Cartersville is growing, with 1,860 square metres of exhibition space on the way.



*Georgia Aquarium, Atlanta*



*Muhammad Ali Center, Louisville*



## Kentucky

### *Aged to Perfection*

Kentucky deepened its story with the introduction of the **African American Heritage Trail**, a statewide journey spanning more than 50 historic landmarks honouring the profound impact of Black Kentuckians. It begins at the hallowed grounds of **African Cemetery No. 2** in Lexington, where Isaac Burns Murphy, the first African American inducted into the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, and other pioneering Black jockeys are laid to rest. From there, the trail continues on to the birthplace of civil rights leader Whitney M. Young, Jr., before culminating at the globally revered **Muhammad Ali Center** in Louisville, inviting travellers to experience the Commonwealth through an entirely new perspective.

Kentucky's bourbon culture also continues to evolve, embracing innovation while staying true to its roots. In Bardstown, **Heaven Hill** unveiled a \$200 million distillery expansion, welcoming visitors with immersive tours, tastings, and a stylish lounge where spirits flow freely. Just down the road, **The Trail Hotel** debuted as the world's first bourbon-infused luxury resort. Housed in a lovingly restored historic property, the hotel pairs Southern charm with upscale indulgence – complete with a swim club, fine dining, and bourbon butler.



## Louisiana

### *Good Times Just Getting Better*

In Louisiana, the state famous for letting the good times roll is debuting a fresh wave of entertainment, dining, and cultural experiences. On the Texas–Arkansas–Louisiana border, the Shreveport–Bossier area raised the stakes with the \$270 million **Live! Casino & Hotel**, the region's first land-based casino, complete with more than 9,000 square metres of gaming, concert venues and restaurants.

Down south, the iconic **Belle of Baton Rouge** also underwent a dramatic transformation. Recently reopened, the riverboat-turned-resort is home to Vegas-style gaming, new restaurants, a sports lounge, and 242 refreshed guest rooms that blend nostalgia with next-gen luxury. In **Lake Charles**, a \$50 million investment ushers in a trio of new landmark attractions – from the immersive **Port Wonder** to a reimaged **Mardi Gras Museum** and a brewery that toasts to tradition. Meanwhile, Lafayette is marking 20 years of **Eat Lafayette** with a new mobile app that guides visitors to the local gems defining Acadiana and Cajun cuisine – flavours so rich and rooted they've earned the city national recognition as one of America's best food towns.



*The Lunch Box, Lafayette*



*Gulfport*



## Mississippi

### *Rhythm and the Road Less Travelled*

Mississippi invites travellers to slow down and savour the journey – beginning with the return of the **Amtrak Mardi Gras Service**, a seasonal train route between New Orleans and Mobile, with stops in Gulfport, Biloxi, Bay St. Louis, and Pascagoula. This rail revival offers an easy, car-free way to explore Mississippi's coastline, where boutique hotels and new stays are redefining Southern hospitality in destinations like Ocean Springs and Gulfport.

Cultural festivities are also taking centre stage. In Hattiesburg, the quirky and much-loved **Pocket Museum** celebrated its fifth anniversary. Tucked into hidden alleys and street corners, this ever-evolving collection of tiny, whimsical exhibits transforms everyday spaces into scenes of wonder – a big reason it's become one of the state's favourite museums. In Tupelo, you can celebrate the King year-round with the "All Shook Up" passport, a self-guided driving tour of **Elvis's hometown sites**. Looking ahead, the City of Natchez prepares to celebrate its 310th anniversary in 2026. Perched above the Mississippi River, this Southern jewel is among the oldest cities in the United States, home to over 1,000 structures on the National Register of Historic Places – and has plenty of history still to be written.



## Missouri

### *A Season of Celebration*

2026 marks the **Route 66 Centennial**, and Missouri is celebrating 100 years of the Mother Road with blockbuster events spanning the state. From a kick-off concert in Springfield to the **100th Anniversary Festival** in St. Louis and the **World Street Painting Festival** in Joplin, Missouri is embracing nostalgia with vibrant concerts and community to-dos.

Whether it's fútbol or football, Missouri is ready to play host – and play big with a storied sports legacy. Kansas City, one of the host cities of the **FIFA World Cup 2026**, invites the world to **Fan Fest** on the lawn of the **National World War I Museum and Memorial**. With programming all summer long, the celebration promises a global energy – think watch parties under the stars, live music, local food, and thousands of fans united by the thrill of the game.

And to get around a little easier, Kansas City's expanding its **streetcar system**. The first major city to offer free public transportation, downtown will soon connect to cultural hotspots like the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the historic Westport neighbourhood, and Berkley Riverfront Park near CPKC Stadium for a whimsical and stress-free way to explore. American football fans also have reason to cheer as the **Kansas City Chiefs' free summer training camp** in St. Joseph is back again. Running for over 15 years, this exclusive experience offers the public a rare, behind-the-scenes glimpse at one of the NFL's most celebrated teams – and a front-row seat to a uniquely American sporting tradition.



## North Carolina

### *Roots and Revival*

In Raleigh's Village District, the new **Oberlin Hotel** blends boutique hospitality with local storytelling. Drawing inspiration from the historically Black neighbourhood it's named for, the property showcases curated art and narratives that honour the figures who helped shape Raleigh's foundation. Nearby, **Gipson Play Plaza** has become a vibrant gateway to the sweeping 125-hectare Dix Park, with fountains, climbing towers, and gardens designed to engage the community and serve as a dynamic gathering space.

Elsewhere in the state, a spirit of renewal is also underway. **Chimney Rock** lookout reopened, offering sweeping views of western North Carolina's dramatic terrain. Along the coast, the iconic **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** is set to reopen in 2026 to climbers after an extensive restoration. And nearby in Charlotte, the **Latta Place Historic Site** is also set to reopen in 2026 with a revised interpretation that confronts and contextualises its complex past as an antebellum plantation home.

But there's plenty of fun to discover, too. **Cary Park** is quickly earning national buzz as one of the country's best new public spaces – designed for all ages, with interactive installations and water features. At Raleigh's **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences**, the free "Dueling Dinosaurs" exhibition brings prehistory to life with what's believed to be the only fully complete T. rex skeleton in the world. Visitors can get hands-on at the **SECU DinoLab** – the world's first open-air palaeontology lab, and at the **North Carolina Zoo** – the largest natural habitat zoo on Earth – the long-awaited Asia continent expansion promises new wildlife encounters. For families with little thrill-seekers, **Carowinds** recently unveiled two new Peanuts-themed rides: Snoopy's Racing Railway and Charlie Brown's River Raft Blast.



## South Carolina

### *History on the Horizon*

In 2026, South Carolina will unveil the **Revolutionary War 250th Anniversary Trail** with restorations and new interpretive programmes for a fresh look into the state's pivotal role in America's fight for independence. Travellers can follow in the footsteps of patriots and partisans at sites across the state like Cowpens, Camden, and Ninety Six.

In Bluffton, the opening of the **Gullah Cultural Heritage Center** offers an immersive look at the enduring legacy of the Gullah people – descendants of West and Central Africans enslaved in the Lowcountry. Isolated on the Sea Islands for generations, the Gullah preserved more of their African language, foodways, spirituality, and craftsmanship than almost any other African American community in the United States – a cultural legacy that continues to shape the spirit of the South today.

It'll be easier than ever to visit as the **Savannah Hilton Head International Airport** expands to accommodate more visitors. Charleston is also looking to the future with two highly anticipated new properties. **The Nickel Hotel**, offers boutique charm with contemporary touches, while **The Cooper** redefines waterfront luxury with rooftop views, a private marina, and direct access to the city's coastal treasures.



*White Limozene Bar,  
Graduate Hotel, Nashville*

## Tennessee

### *Musical Moments and a Soundtrack for All*

With new immersive experiences and memorable moments, the Music State is offering unprecedented access to legendary greats. **Graceland**'s new "Presley for a Day" tour gives fans a glimpse into Elvis's private world like never before, with a personal concierge guiding them through the mansion and grounds. Nashville is preparing to welcome a Dolly Parton-themed hotel, **The Songteller**, curated by the songstress herself, while **Dollywood** marked its 40th season with a new show and celebratory tour.

Memphis honoured what would have been B.B. King's 100th birthday with a citywide tribute and "100 Days of Blues," while the **Grand Ole Opry** marked its centennial celebration with a year of special shows and guest appearances. In Franklin, music fans can take the experience even further with an overnight stay at **Dark Horse Studio**, where Taylor Swift recorded her debut album two decades ago – the only active recording studio in the country where guests can lay their heads where artists lay tracks.

But Tennessee's greatest innovation may be its commitment to inclusivity. Through a new **accessibility campaign**, initiatives like colourblind viewfinders, lyrical descriptions, all-terrain wheelchairs, and ADA-friendly "Waterfalls for All" and **Night Sky Trails** make it possible for everyone to experience the wonder of the Volunteer State.



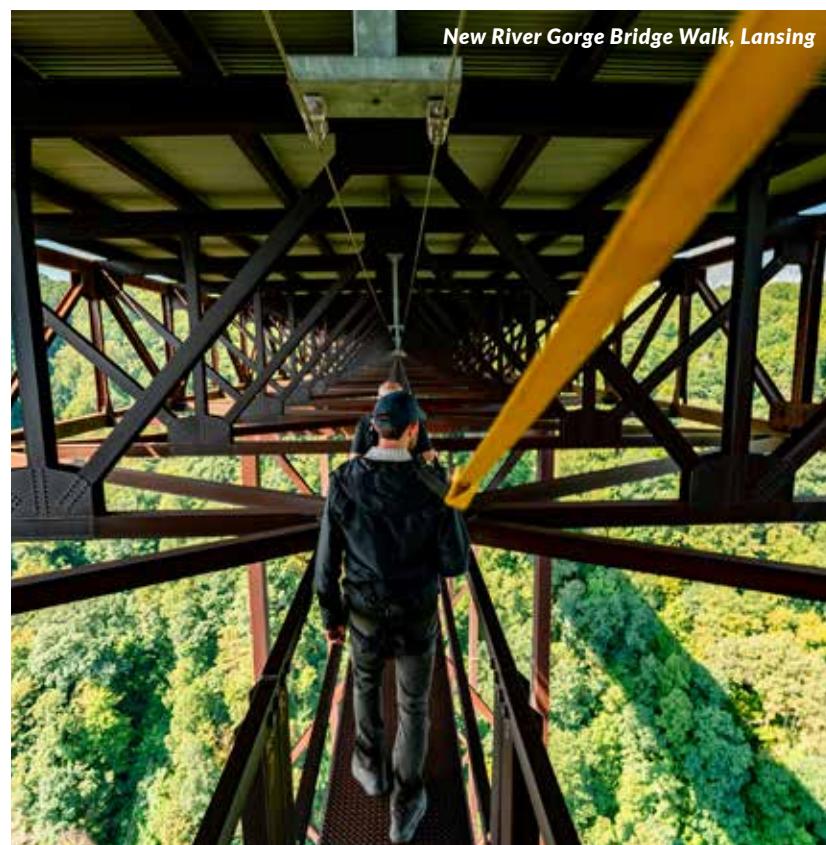
## Virginia

### *For Lovers of Past and Present Wonders*

Virginia isn't just where America began – it's where history is being reimagined in real time. As the nation approaches its 250th birthday, the Commonwealth is leading the charge with **VA250**, a sweeping multi-year commemoration of the founding of the United States. Highlights include the new "Give Me Liberty" exhibition at the **Virginia Museum of History and Culture**, powerful re-enactments of Patrick Henry's iconic speech at **Richmond's St. John's Church**, and a mobile museum designed to share stories across the state.

Cornerstone attractions are also making waves. Thrill-seekers can ride into the future at **Atlantic Park** in Virginia Beach – the birthplace of East Coast surfing – where acclaimed musician Pharrell Williams' new \$350 million surf park and Wavegarden lagoon will deliver year-round excitement. **Kings Dominion** and **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** also celebrated their 50th anniversaries with new adventure rides.

The Blue Ridge is set to become the mountain biking capital of America as it hosts the **2026 USA Cycling Endurance Mountain Bike National Championships**. In 2025, the Virginia Derby joined the ranks of Kentucky Derby qualifiers for the first time. After a strong debut, it will return to the "Road to the Kentucky Derby" series in 2026. Meanwhile, the Chincoteague Pony Swim celebrated its 100th anniversary – a century-old tradition that doubles as a beloved fundraiser for the island's wild horses.



## West Virginia

### *Fresh Adventures and the Wild, Reimagined*

Since its designation as America's newest national park, **New River Gorge National Park** has affirmed West Virginia's status as one of the country's premier adventure destinations. Towering sandstone cliffs, misty ridgelines, and the ancient river that carved them draw climbers, hikers, and rafters. They recently debuted even more ways to explore: a breathtaking **Bridge Walk** beneath **New River Gorge Bridge** and rail bike excursions along **Buffalo Creek** to take in the dramatic landscape.

But the momentum doesn't stop at the Gorge. **The Elk River Trail** – a 73-mile corridor weaving through forests and along the river's edge – is under development and set to become one of the East Coast's longest continuous multi-use trails for cyclists, hikers, and paddlers. It's the kind of trail that invites you to slow down, breathe deep, and discover the soul of the South, one bend at a time.



# Missouri Loves Company

In Missouri, road trips aren't rushed—they're savoured. It's a chance to reconnect with yourself, with others and with the freedom of the open road. And along **historic Route 66**, you won't just pass through towns—you'll become part of them.

As Route 66 approaches its centennial in 2026, there's no better time to cruise Missouri's 280 miles of the iconic Mother Road. The drive is lined with nostalgic motor courts and Americana museums. Celebrate in **Springfield, Missouri** – the official Birthplace of Route 66 – during its annual festival. From glowing neon at the **George M. Reed Roadside Park** in St. Robert to movies under the stars at the **66 Drive-In Theatre** in Carthage, Missouri's stretch of Route 66 delivers a timeless adventure.

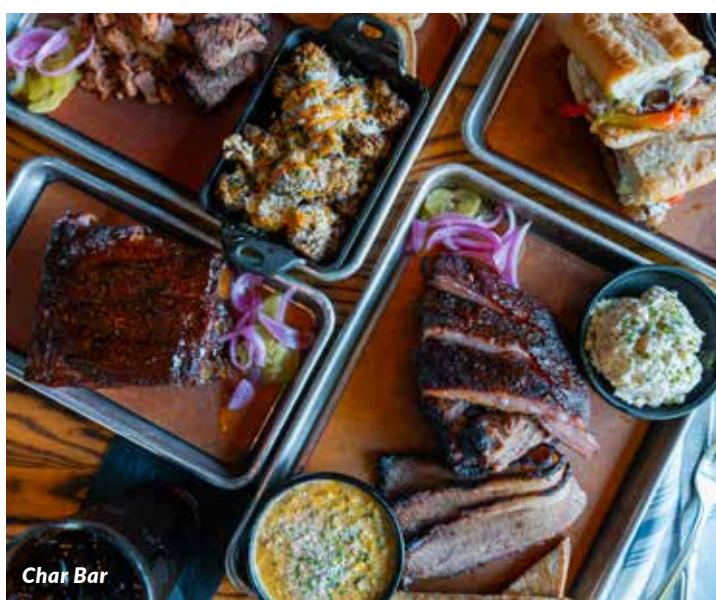
In Kansas City, urban excitement meets neighbourly charm. As a host city for six **FIFA World Cup 26™ matches**, KC is ready to shine. Beyond the stadium, explore a vibrant jazz scene, savour award-winning barbecue and learn about the art form of smoking meat at the **Museum of BBQ**. The City of Fountains is big on heart and rich in culture.



Katy Trail State Park



Gateway Arch National Park



Char Bar

Ride to new heights in St. Louis, as you take a tram to the top of the iconic **Gateway Arch**. Standing 192 metres tall, the observation deck offers breathtaking views overlooking downtown St. Louis and the Mississippi River. Tour the historic **Anheuser-Busch Brewery** and meet the legendary Budweiser Clydesdales. **Forest Park** invites visitors to explore free, world-class museums and attractions before indulging in gooey butter cake, toasted ravioli and St. Louis-style pizza.

In **Branson**, nestled in the Ozark Mountains and surrounded by pristine lakes, music fills the air. The Live Entertainment Capital of Missouri dazzles with theatres and the award-winning **Silver Dollar City** – an 1880s-style theme park with crafts, rides and festivals.

Small-town Missouri offers an authentic glimpse into life off the beaten path. Discover artisan shops, antique treasures and diners where locals linger over coffee and stories. Beyond the blacktop, more than 1,000 miles of trails await. Bike the **Katy Trail** – the nation's longest rail-trail – or float the peaceful waters of the **Ozark National Scenic Riverways**.

Whether you're savouring James Beard-recognized cuisine, swaying to Ozark folk music, or kayaking beneath a canopy of stars, Missouri offers an escape that's both deeply American and wholly unexpected.

*Slow down. Stay awhile. Let the journey change you.*

# Nashville to New Orleans

## through Alabama



**A**labama is the heart of an epic Southern USA road trip. Travel south on Interstate 65 from Nashville to Sweet Home Alabama. First up is Muscle Shoals, home to the famous recording studios where Aretha Franklin, the Rolling Stones, Etta James, and others recorded hit songs, earning it the nickname the **“Hit Recording Capital of the World.”** In Huntsville, visit the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**—the world’s largest space museum—and enjoy an immersive experience in “Rocket City.”

In North Alabama, explore thousands of waterfalls, hiking and biking trails, state parks, wineries, and excellent restaurants. In Central Alabama, savour award-winning cuisine in Birmingham, known as the “Dinner Table of the South,” and visit **Barber Vintage Motorsports**, the world’s largest motorcycle museum. Explore the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute**, **Kelly Ingram Park**, and the **16th Street Baptist Church**—all part of the **National Civil Rights District**. In Montgomery, walk in the footsteps of giants like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and see the **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church** and the **Rosa Parks Museum** on the **U.S. Civil Rights Trail**, along with numerous museums in a friendly, walkable downtown.



Reach the southern end of I-65 in Mobile, a key port city for over three centuries, the birthplace of **Mardi Gras** in America, and one of the country's oldest cities. Stroll through picturesque antebellum homes and neighbourhoods, visit the historic **USS Alabama Battleship & Memorial Park**, and explore **Africatown**, the only surviving community in America founded by Africans and a cultural landmark. Go a few miles east to the beach resort cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, where vast stretches of sugar-white sand beaches meet the warm Gulf waters. New Orleans is just a short drive west of Mobile.



#### Alabama and New Orleans create a perfect Twin City Getaway.

For an easy twin city train holiday, Alabama is the ideal spot. New Orleans and Alabama share a common history, culture, and cuisine. Fly into New Orleans, explore the city, and take the **Amtrak Mardi Gras Service** to Mobile, where you can experience the birthplace of Mardi Gras in America and visit the **Mobile Carnival Museum** year-round. Savour fresh seafood and flavourful dishes influenced by Spanish, French, and African cultures in Mobile, a city "Born to Celebrate"! Add Alabama's beaches for a few more days of relaxing on the sugar-white sands of the Gulf.

**Sweet Home Alabama**



# Experience True Bluegrass Adventure In Kentucky



Natural Arch Loop

Outdoor adventures await in every corner of the Bluegrass State. Explore an outdoor wonderland where you can marvel at the world's longest cave, climb the rugged Red River Gorge, hike to hidden waterfalls and play on some of the South's largest lakes.

Discover the culture and charm of Kentucky's cities and towns. The birthplace of bluegrass is home to iconic music venues, so get tickets to the biggest shows or journey down the **Country Music Highway** to explore the state's legendary musical heritage. Browse impressive collections at museums and galleries, join a workshop, or watch and learn from local artisans specializing in musical instruments, folk art, pottery and more.





Wild Turkey Distillery

Don't miss this opportunity to taste Kentucky's signature foods and flavours at local cafés, upscale restaurants, farm-to-table eateries and craft breweries. Be sure to try local specialties, like fried chicken, barbecue and meaty burgoo stew, a rich Kentucky dish with slow-cooked meat and vegetables. **Bourbon** is much more than a drink in Kentucky; it's also a way of life celebrated in a state that makes 95% of the world's supply. Visit famous distilleries for tours, tastings and a chance to meet master distillers, or join a cocktail class to mix your own drinks with the help of a spirit specialist.

Kentucky is also the **Horse Capital of the World** with picturesque horse farms, fascinating equine museums and legendary racetracks. Explore rolling farms and working barns in the countryside, ride trails by lakes and in the mountains, or tour iconic equine attractions like **Kentucky Horse Park** or the **Kentucky Derby Museum**. Spend an exciting day at the races. After all, this is the home of **Keeneland**, **Churchill Downs** — home of the famed Kentucky Derby — and other iconic tracks.

We've got all that and more in the Bluegrass. Find What Moves You in Kentucky. Learn more at [KENTUCKYTOURISM.COM](http://KENTUCKYTOURISM.COM).



Godolphin at Jonabell Farm



Dome Town Treehouse Rentals



The Amp at Log Still



# FLAVORS SO GOOD YOU'LL COME BACK FOR SECONDS

Start with authentic favorites like North Carolina-style barbecue (be sure to taste both kinds!) and fresh seafood, including sustainably farmed oysters. Then sample menus blending the chefs' own roots with Southern twists, and sip from a deep roster of craft breweries from the mountains to the coast.

**Plan Your Trip**



North Carolina  
[visitnc.com](http://visitnc.com)

# North Carolina – Noteworthy & Graveable

## **From Peaks to the Coast: Adventure Awaits**

From the **Blue Ridge Mountains** to sun-drenched shores, North Carolina is your go-to for outdoor thrills and soulful stillness. Whether you're rafting rushing rapids, hang gliding over **Jockey's Ridge**, or hitting the trails through lush forests and breezy beach boardwalks, every landscape invites exploration—and encourages staying awhile.

## **Savour the Flavour: Bold Bites and Local Libations**

Hungry after all that adventuring? Dive into sustainable coastal eats like freshly shucked oysters or weigh in on the state's mouthwatering barbecue rivalry: Lexington-style's tangy tomato dip vs. the vinegar-forward bite of Eastern-style 'cue. Not into meat feuds? North Carolina's chefs are reimagining Southern staples with global flair, blending roots from Korean to Caribbean into comfort food with serious soul. Pair it all with a locally brewed craft beer—or sip something unexpected at **Asheville's American Sake brewery**, one of the only of its kind in the country.



Grey Eagle Tavern

Eagle Fork Vineyards



Biltmore Estate

## **Culture Curated: Music, Museums and Mansions**

Catch bluegrass legends at **MerleFest** or feel the rhythm at the **John Coltrane Jazz & Blues Festival** for a toe-tapping good time. Culture lovers can wander world-class collections at the **North Carolina Museum of Art** or uncover curiosities at Raleigh's **Museum of Natural Sciences**, before stepping into the storybook splendour of the **Biltmore Estate**.

No matter your vibe—art enthusiast, science aficionado, or history buff—North Carolina hands you the map and says, "Go make it unforgettable."

*The only question is, where will you head first?*

# DISCOVER



## *South Carolina*



From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the golden sands along the Atlantic coast, South Carolina offers the perfect setting for your next adventure. Stroll along historic main streets lined with mom-and-pop shops or stay in a cosmopolitan hotel surrounded by trendsetting restaurants and bustling nightlife—it's all right here.



1

## Charleston

Charleston weaves together rich history, coastal beauty, a vibrant arts scene and unique culinary traditions to create one of South Carolina's most iconic cities.

2

## Hilton Head Island

With miles of trails, world-class golf courses, renowned restaurants and plenty of seaside adventures, Hilton Head Island is one of the best family vacation spots in the country.

3

## Myrtle Beach

Known for its world-class golf, iconic boardwalk and lively entertainment, Myrtle Beach delivers a mix of classic charm and coastal adventure for the whole family.

4

## Greenville

From boutique shops and public art to award-winning cuisine and lush green spaces, Greenville is one of the South's most dynamic small cities.

5

## Columbia

South Carolina's capital city offers a dynamic mix of riverfront adventure, local flavor, vibrant arts and rich history, making it the perfect destination for adventurous families.

4

5

3

1

2

Find everything you need  
to plan your next holiday at

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# Take the Long Way Home

*Fresh Adventures and the Wild, Reimagined*

By Sarah Gilliland

The best travel stories rarely start with, "We stuck to the itinerary." Some of the South's coolest spots aren't headliners or places you've ever heard of, and that's exactly what makes them special. These are the hidden gems, quirky detours, and small towns you find when you ditch the motorway, ask a local, or follow a hand-painted sign for "boiled peanuts" — only to end up in the middle of a shrimp festival.

So, next time you're road-tripping through the Southern states, don't just fly through. Pull over. Give yourself enough time to explore — because more often than not, what starts as "just a quick stop" turns into an all-day adventure and possibly the best part of the trip.

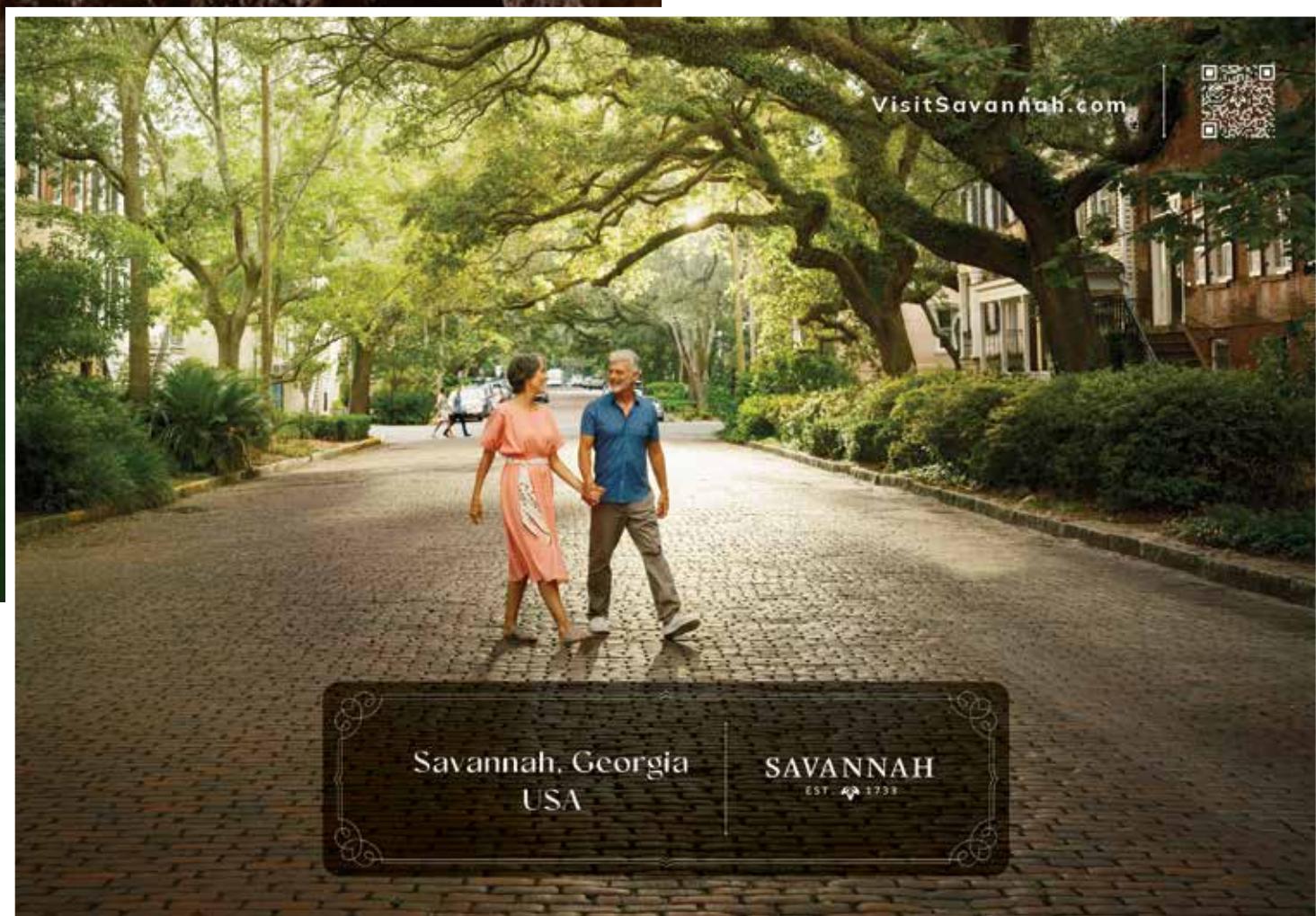
### Gorge Underground, Kentucky



## Alabama

Only in Alabama can you suit up for astronaut training in the morning and shop other people's lost luggage in the afternoon. Yep, you read that right. **Unclaimed Baggage** in Scottsboro celebrated 55 years in 2025, turning abandoned suitcases into a treasure hunt of weirdly wonderful finds you can bring home as your next souvenir. Prefer to browse instead? The small museum inside the store displays some of the craziest things ever discovered in luggage (think a full suit of armour, for starters).

Just up the road, **Huntsville** is home to the world's largest space museum, the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center**. You can hop into a flight simulator or pretend you're on a moonwalk. Then cool off at the wildest bar around, the **Rattlesnake Saloon**, built right into the side of a cave. Think burgers, beers, and bootscootin' under a rock ceiling.



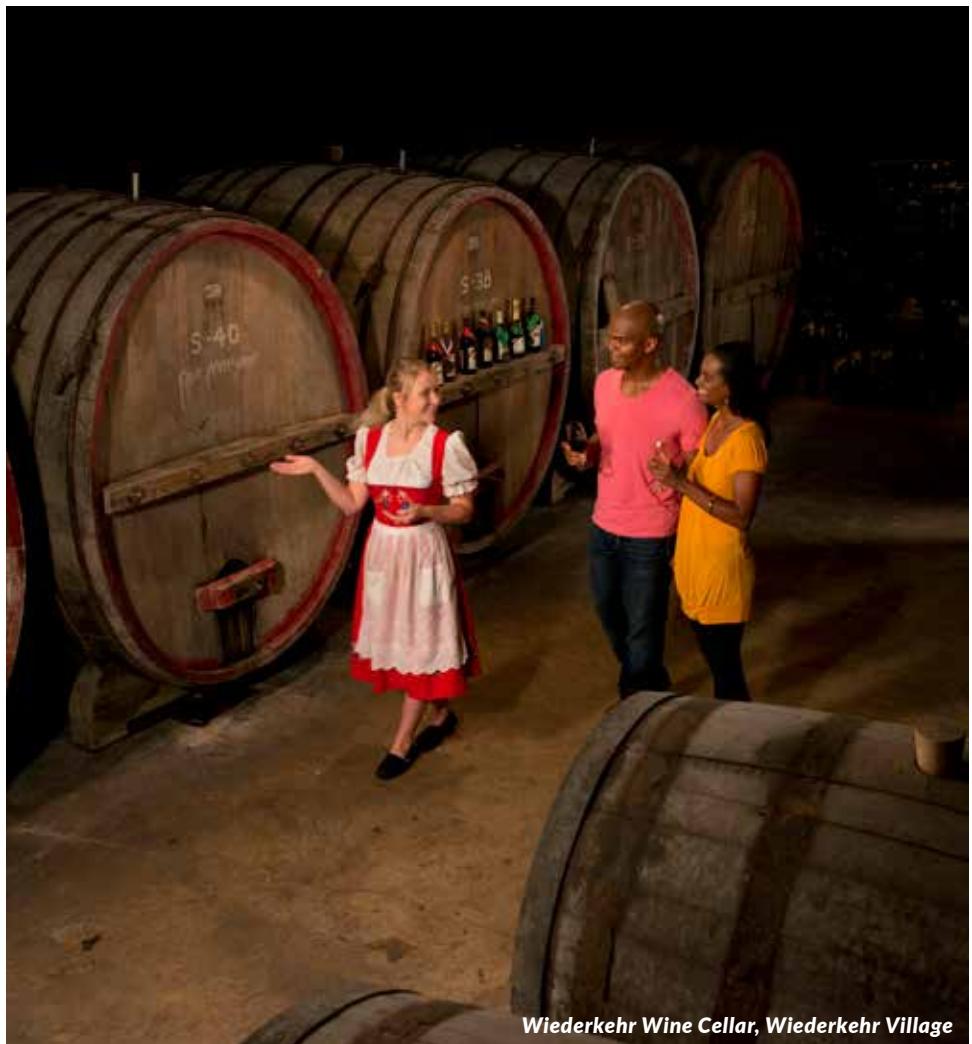


## Arkansas

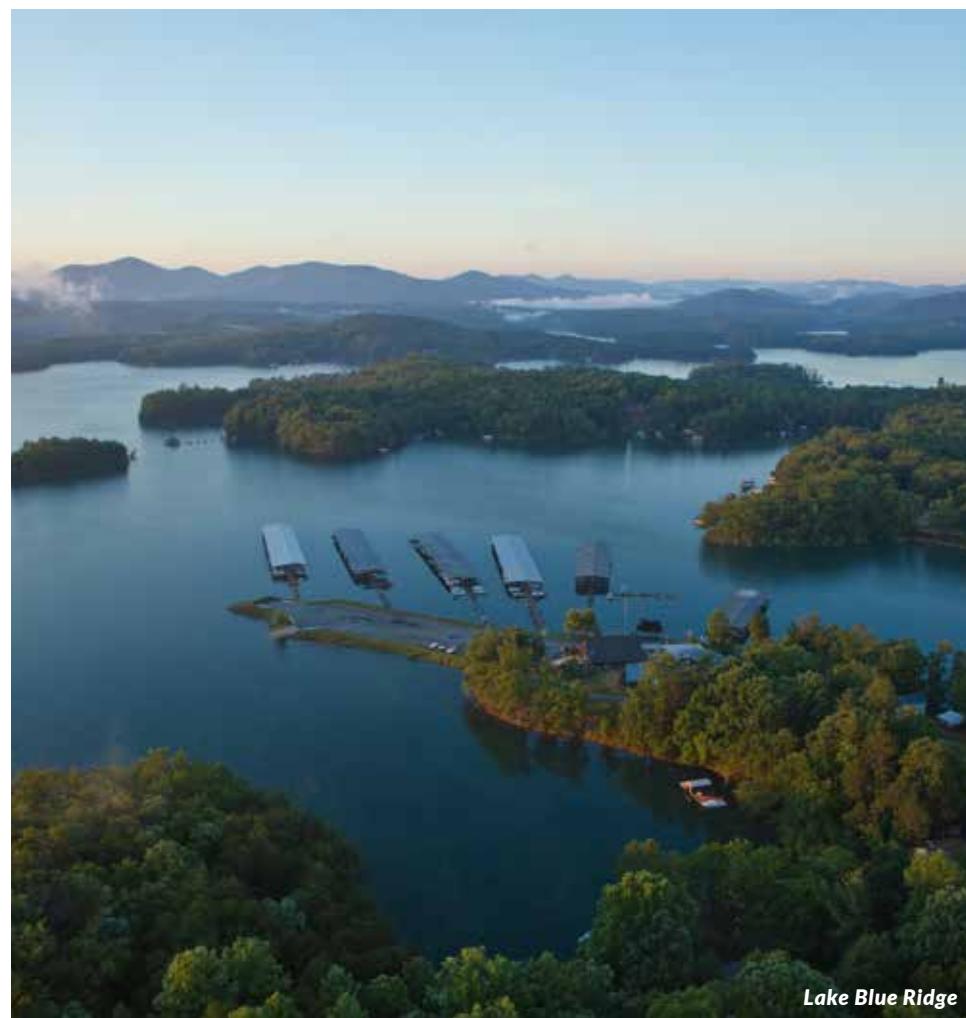
Start along the **Great River Road** in **Wilson**, a reimagined company town that looks like a storybook village brought to life. The buildings are styled in classic Tudor fashion, while the square is anchored by the **Wilson Cafe**, which somehow manages to be both rustic and upscale. Grab a Southern brunch, browse curated finds at a boutique owned by country music legend Hank Williams' granddaughter, and check into the **Louis hotel** where the sheets are spun from local cotton.

Once you've had your fill of charming architecture, head towards the mountains for a taste of the wild. Near **Little Rock**, **Mount Magazine** is the highest point in the state and home to **Skycrest Restaurant**, which offers panoramic views that steal the spotlight from your screen.

Tucked in the Ozarks, the historic **Oark General Store** – Arkansas's oldest continuously operating store since 1890 – serves up comfort food so good it just might make a grown adult weep (in the best way). If you're looking for European vibes in the mountains, make a reservation at the **Weinkeller Restaurant** in **Wiederkehr Village**, where Swiss-inspired dishes are served in a historic wine cellar.



**Wiederkehr Wine Cellar, Wiederkehr Village**



**Lake Blue Ridge**



## Georgia

Atlanta may be the gateway, but head north and you'll find a completely different side of Georgia. Once a Gold Rush hub, **Dahlonega** is now known for wineries, winding trails, and crisp mountain air. A little further afield, **Helen** brings the Alps to Appalachia with gingerbread-style houses, bratwurst, and tubing down the river – cold beer in hand. For a quirky dose of nostalgia, swing by **BabyLand General Hospital** in **Cleveland** – home of the original Cabbage Patch Kids. One of the *Travel Channel's* "Top Ten Toylands," you can watch a "birth" ceremony, adopt a doll, and be transported straight back to your childhood.

Looking to trade noise for nature? **Blue Ridge**, **Ellijay**, and **Clayton** deliver with antique treasures, apple-picking afternoons, and cabins made for cosying up in the woods.

Meanwhile, South Georgia keeps things sweet and simple, with roadside farm stands dishing up peach ice cream, boiled peanuts, and fried hand pies like it's a love language. **Lane Southern Orchards** in **Fort Valley** is the perfect pit stop on your tour down the **Interstate 75**.

In **Savannah**, **America's Only Prohibition Museum** puts the Roaring '20s on full display with cocktail classes and interactive exhibits.



BOURBON  
IS JUST  
THE  
BEGINNING.

LOU<sup>IS</sup>VILLE  
BOURBON CITY

[GoToLouisville.com](http://GoToLouisville.com)

TEAM  
KENTUCKY.



Bernheim Forest & Arboretum, near Louisville

## Kentucky

**Bardstown** is like the Pinterest board of small towns — cobblestone streets, indie boutiques, and bourbon everywhere you turn. As the official *Bourbon Capital of the World*, it's the perfect place to get your tasting glasses ready.

Near **Louisville**, unwind in the whimsical **Bernheim Forest & Arboretum**, where 40 miles of trails wind past artsy sculptures and through an arboretum. Or hop aboard the **Big South Fork Scenic Railway** for coal-mining nostalgia and sweeping views from a vintage train car.

Over in Eastern Kentucky, step back in time at **Mountain HomePlace**, an 1850s working farm, or embrace your inner fangirl at the **Highlands Museum**, celebrating the stars born along U.S. 23 — better known as the *Country Music Highway*.



## Louisiana

Hot sauce? History? Zydeco? Louisiana knows how to party. Kick things off at **Avery Island**, where **Tabasco®** has been made by the McIlhenny family for over five generations. Tour the factory to see the magic happen, then wander the lush **Jungle Gardens**, with or without a guide. After lunch at **1868**, the Tabasco brand restaurant, detour to **Grand Coteau**, a historic gem where time moves a little slower. Hunt for antiques, try the town's signature sweet dough pie, and admire the stunning architecture of its churches, and the photogenic **Jesuit Dairy Barn**. Fun fact: Grand Coteau is home to the only Vatican-recognised miracle in the United States.

In **Lafayette**, immerse yourself in Southern tradition at **Vermilionville**, a living history museum and folklore park that brings Acadian, Creole, and Native American culture to life with costumed interpreters, music, dancing, and food. Need to stretch your legs? Follow the **Creole Nature Trail** all the way to **Lake Charles** for swamp views, roadside seafood, and sunsets so cinematic they feel straight out of a Nicholas Sparks novel.



Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, near Lake Charles



# Lexington, Kentucky – Horse Capital of the World

Horse Farm Tours

**K**nown around the globe for rolling bluegrass hills and top-notch bourbon, Lexington is the pride of Kentucky. With a thriving creative culture, farm-to-table culinary experiences, and a bustling nightlife, Lexington invites visitors to explore it all at their own pace.

As the **Horse Capital of the World**, there's no shortage of equine experiences. Lexington is surrounded by more than 450 horse farms, nurseries and clinics – many available for tours via **Horse Country Tours**, providing an up-close look at these beautiful creatures in their awe-inspiring habitats. Walk among champion Thoroughbreds including the unique opportunity to meet Triple Crown Winners. **Keeneland**, a National Historic Landmark, and one of Lexington's crown jewels, hosts exhilarating Thoroughbred races each April and October, as well as prestigious horse auctions open to the public. The **Kentucky Horse Park** is a must see for horse lovers. Here you will have opportunities to partake in horseback riding, equine museums, exhibitions, carriage rides, events and more. While, nearby, **The Red Mile** offers harness racing steeped in tradition and energy.

Lexington's natural beauty extends beyond the horses. The city's scenic backroads and lush landscapes invite exploration, whether it's through the 100-acre **Arboretum** within the city, **Raven Run Nature Sanctuary** or the dramatic cliffs of **Red River Gorge**. **Boone Creek Outdoors** offers zip lines soaring above Kentucky's hardwood canopy with breathtaking views, and be sure to grab lunch and a drink at nearby **Boonedogs** restaurant, or **Grimes Mill Winery**.

The same beautiful landscape that inspires scenic drives also nourishes Lexington's culinary scene. Fresh ingredients from local farms bring vibrancy to the city's food culture. Chef Ouita Michel's family of restaurants offer refined dishes inspired by the region. Or head over to **The Manchester Hotel**, where James Beard bootcamp alum and Top Chef contestant Chef Paula Endara leads **Granddam**, focused on sustainability and Ecuadorian influences. Don't miss the rooftop bar, **Lost Palm**, offering expansive views of the Distillery District and downtown.



Lost Palm



Raven Run Nature Sanctuary



Castle & Key Distillery

Craft and heritage bourbon brands stand side by side, offering intimate tastings that reveal rich, layered flavours. At **James E. Pepper Distillery**, in the bustling Distillery District, you will find intimate tours bringing bourbon's rich history to life. Explore the restored 1880s distillery, watch distillation, and savour award-winning small-batch bourbons. Nearby, **Woodford Reserve** continues the time-honored tradition with Scottish pot stills amid scenic grounds.

Lexington offers a vibrant mix of local shopping experiences, from charming downtown boutiques to trendy retail districts. Whether you're browsing vintage finds, picking up Bluegrass-inspired gifts near **Clay Avenue**, or spending the day at **The Summit**, featuring regional restaurants and national and local retailers.

Getting to and from the Bluegrass is easier than you think. Whether you're flying or driving, a visit to Lexington is a convenient way to experience a unique American destination that *Condé Nast* named one of the "Top 5 Best Small Cities in the U.S."

# WHERE Journeys HAPPEN.



Journey through the heart of Mississippi, straight to Hattiesburg. A southern university town, Hattiesburg holds a rich history and progressive mindset that reflects our state's unique spirit. An ideal stop on your road trip between Memphis to New Orleans – Hattiesburg is a place where you can immerse yourself in the authentic sites, sounds, and flavors of Mississippi. Plan your big HBURG adventure at [visithburg.org/international](http://visithburg.org/international).



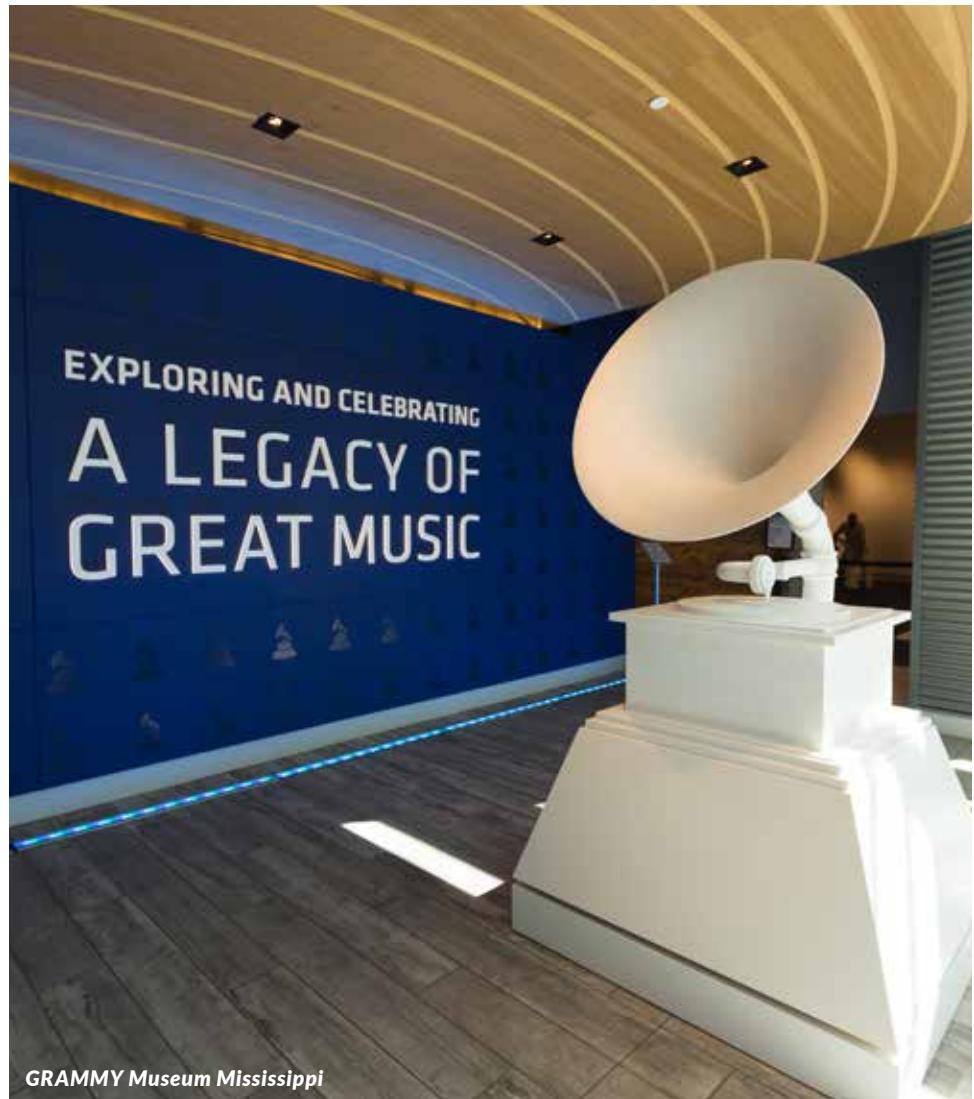
VISITHATTIESBURG  
MISSISSIPPI



## Mississippi

**Natchez, Mississippi** is a whole vibe – think mint juleps, antebellum mansions, and river views that'll flood your camera roll. If you're looking for a reason to "set jet," plan your trip around a favourite film or TV show like *Get on Up*, *Ma* or HBO's *True Blood*, both set in Natchez. Over in **Hattiesburg**, more than 50 vibrant murals on the **Public Art Trail** turn city walls into open-air galleries – perfect for capturing more Instagram-worthy shots.

Just over the Arkansas border across the Mississippi River sits the small town of **Cleveland** – not to be confused with its Ohio cousin. While Tupelo may have Elvis, Cleveland strikes a different chord with the **GRAMMY Museum Mississippi** – the only GRAMMY Museum outside Hollywood and a must for music lovers. Before you leave, take a trip to nearby **Merigold** to pick up a piece of **McCarty Pottery**. Handcrafted from authentic Mississippi Delta clay, these collectors' pieces are true Southern heirlooms you'll want to pass down for generations.



GRAMMY Museum Mississippi



## Missouri

You haven't truly detoured until you've sipped wine in a **19th-century German town** surrounded by rolling vineyards. **Hermann** feels like Europe with a splash of Midwest hospitality. The **Hermann Wine Trail** is all good vibes (and generous pours of Riesling), linking six family-owned vineyards and hosting seasonal events like the **Chocolate Wine Trail** and **Wild Bacon Wine Trail**.

**Saint Charles** was once a frontier stop for pioneers and adventurers, but today it's a vibrant district of shopping, dining, and boutique stays. **St. Charles Historic Main Street** is Missouri's first and largest nationally registered historic district, with 1800s buildings that set the scene for a "Hit the Bricks" tour to learn about the town's local lore—or take a walk on the darker side, with tales of debauchery and the paranormal.

Literary fans should head to **Hannibal**, birthplace of Mark Twain. Visit his boyhood home, explore a cave with his actual signature inside, and hop aboard a riverboat for peak Americana. And don't forget **Sainte Genevieve**, the state's first permanent European settlement, where French colonial houses, wineries, and a dash of *Bridgerton* energy await.

For something a little more offbeat, **St. Joseph** is a former trading post turned museum hub, once a key point of westward expansion where thousands crossed the Missouri River by steamboat or wagon. Today, you can delve into its quirky history at spots like the **Glore Psychiatric Museum** and the **Doll Museum**.



**Labinnah Bistro, Hannibal**



**Treehouse Vineyards, Monroe**



## North Carolina

Western North Carolina feels like an indie film that hasn't streamed yet—think winding mountain drives, waterfall swims, wildflower walks, and small towns pouring pints with a view. **Burnsville** is one of those places that flies under the radar but deserves all the attention. It's artsy and just close enough to **Asheville** to borrow the cool without the crowds. **Hillsborough** has a similar vibe near **Raleigh-Durham** and **Chapel Hill**, where centuries-old streets blend bookshop energy and the kind of cozy cafés that make you want to linger just a little longer.

On the coast, **New Bern** keeps it charming with waterfront parks, pastel-painted homes, and just enough Colonial swagger to feel like you stepped off the silver screen. Nearby, the **Crystal Coast** serves up quiet beach towns and soft sands where the loudest thing you'll hear is your own sigh of contentment. North Carolina might be best known for its beaches and mountains, but it's the small towns in between that steal your heart—and keep you coming back for more.



McClellanville

## South Carolina

In South Carolina's small towns, Southern swag means porch-swing chats, generations-old recipes, and roots that run deep. Head inland to **Ninety Six** (yep, that's really the name), where Revolutionary War re-enactments and storied battlefields bring history to life. Meanwhile, **McClellanville** is a quiet coastal gem tucked between **Charleston** and **Georgetown**, where life moves at the speed of a shrimp boat and oysters are basically their own food group.

**Beaufort** (pronounced BYOO-fert—not to be confused with BOW-fert in North Carolina) is part of the **Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor**, a nationally recognised region preserving the culture of African Americans in the Lowcountry. The Gullah people have maintained more of their African language, traditions, and customs than any other African American community in the U.S. Visitors can dive deeper into their unique cultural legacy by exploring the **Gullah Heritage Trail** or joining a “**Gullah-N-Geechie Mahn Tour**” for stories straight from the source.

In **Edgefield**, you'll find heritage pottery studios, antique shops, and a postcard-perfect square to meander. **Lake City** will surprise you with its modern, artsy edge that includes murals, galleries, and the must-visit **ArtFields** festival each spring. Romance lovers simply must make a stop in **Moncks Corner**, where scenes from *The Notebook* were filmed at the dreamy **Cypress Gardens**—then trade rowboats for a kayak to explore the mysterious blackwater swamps of nearby **Francis Marion National Forest**.

## Tennessee

If cruising with the windows down is your speed, the **Discover Tennessee Trails & Byways** are calling. These 16 curated road trips wind through musical landmarks, moonshine country, and charming towns that don't always make the guidebooks—but should. For a taste of what you'll see, **Paris** has its own **Eiffel Tower**, an annual **World's Biggest Fish Fry** (yes, that's a thing), and bald eagle spotting nearby. **Historic Granville** is whole vibe with an artisan trail, a general store-slash-music venue, and the **World's Largest Whiskey Decanter Museum**.

Then there's **Jonesborough**—Tennessee's oldest town and the undisputed **Storytelling Capital of the World**. Come in October for the annual storytelling festival or drop by any time for costumed tours and **100-Mile Meals**, sourced entirely from farms and fields within a hundred-mile radius, promising porch-rocking good times and a slower pace of life worth savouring.

Or, swap four wheels for two to explore the **Bike Tennessee** pedal trails—52 curated routes that connect small towns, country roads, and state parks. It's the kind of ride where you pass old barns, smoky BBQ joints, and maybe a curious goat or two.



Bike Tennessee



Colonial Williamsburg

## Virginia

In Virginia, history buffs and nature lovers happily high-five over craft coffee and cobblestone. **Staunton** is one of those places with walkable streets, a thriving arts scene, scenic railways, and a calmness that feels tailor-made for long weekends. You'll find colonial vibes in **Williamsburg**, where historic re-enactments are just part of the experience. And then there's **Cape Charles**, a waterfront gem where pastel cottages meet golden hour like a lifelong love story.

When it comes to the great outdoors, Virginia brings the drama. **McAfee Knob** is one of those hikes that stays with you—the kind of view you can't help but share, if only to capture a fraction of what it felt like to stand there. The **Blue Ridge Parkway** delivers endless photo ops, especially in autumn when the trees go full firework mode. Whether you're into scenic road trips, sleepy small towns, or just need a new spot for your weekend escape, Virginia is the kind of place where one detour turns into your new favourite tradition.

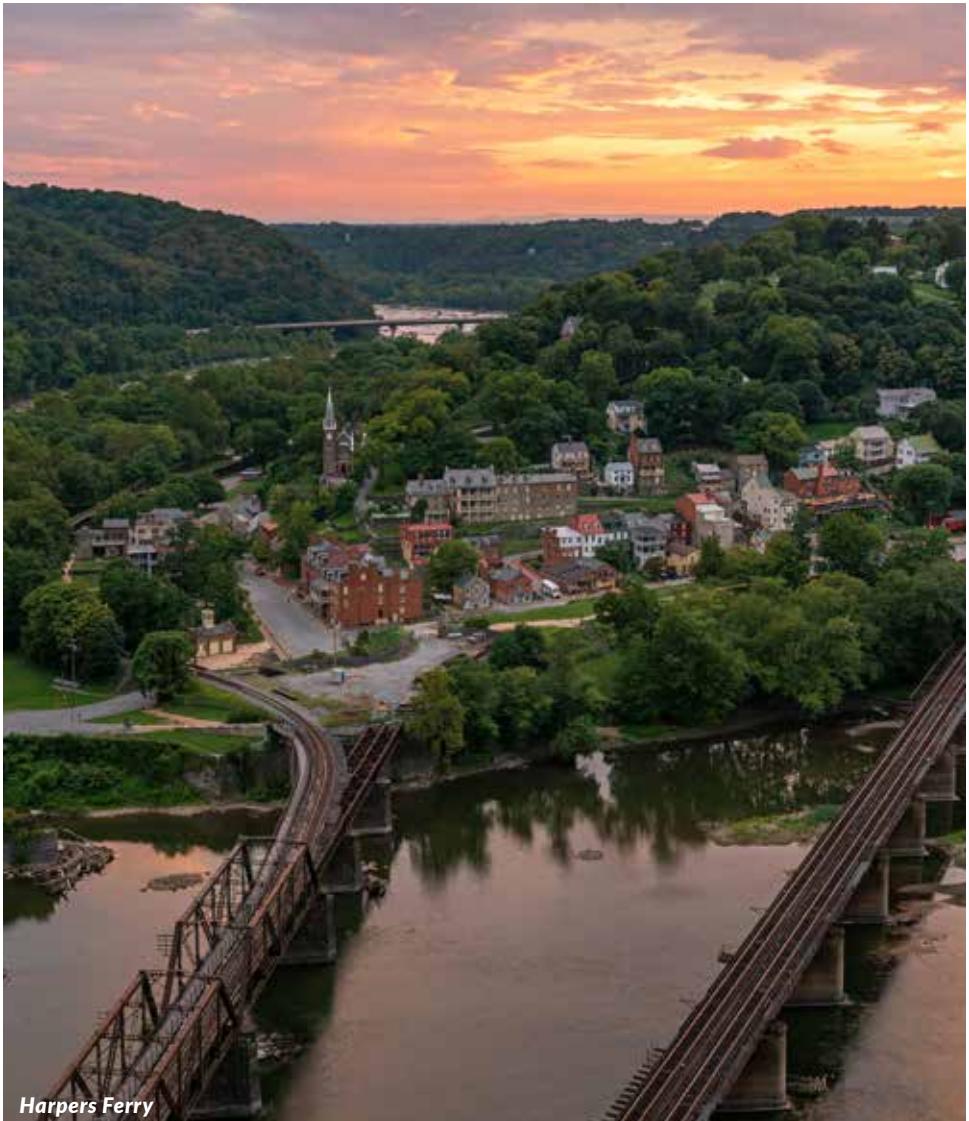


## West Virginia

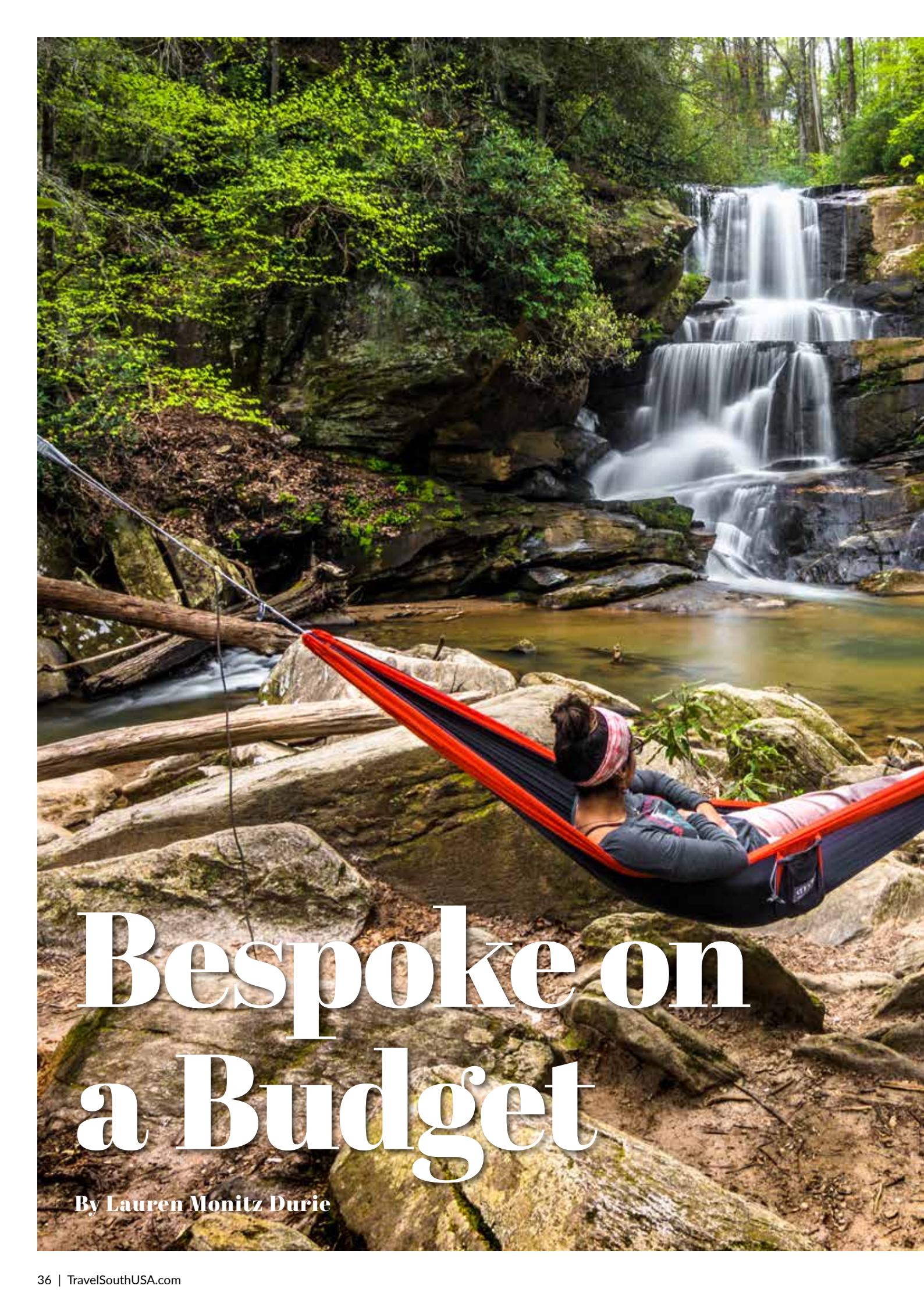
The ultimate "accidentally stayed longer than planned" destination, **Harpers Ferry** was named one of the most underrated holiday spots in the USA, and just so happens to be the headquarters of the **Appalachian Trail**. It's also home to **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park**, the ancestral home of the Tuscarora and Shawnee peoples on the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers. While **John Brown's Fort**—the most visited tourist attraction in West Virginia—might not really be off the beaten path, it might be worth it to say you stood where the beginnings of the Civil War were ignited.

When you're ready to cool off, hit the **West Virginia Waterfall Trail**, where you'll want sturdy boots, a swimsuit, and a camera to capture every cascading moment. Or get your outdoor fix in **Davis**, a launchpad for skiing, hiking, or wooded cabin dwelling.

**Lewisburg** is all charming streets and cosy coffee shops, earning it the title of "America's Coolest Small Town" from *Frommer's*. A quirky stop nearby is the **Greenbrier Resort**, where a top-secret bunker was built for all 535 members of Congress. Conceived under Dwight D. Eisenhower, you can tour the emergency fallout shelter for a fascinating peek behind the curtain of America's Cold War past.



Harpers Ferry

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a pink headband and a dark long-sleeved shirt, relaxing in a red and black hammock. She is positioned on a rocky outcrop overlooking a river. In the background, a waterfall cascades down a rocky cliff into the water. The scene is lush and green, suggesting a tropical or subtropical forest environment.

# Bespoke on a Budget

**By Lauren Monitz Durie**

Little Bradley Falls, North Carolina



There's a particular kind of magic in the South—where the most indulgent moments are often the most unassuming. The region has mastered the art of living well without spending wildly. Whether it's checking into a heritage hideaway, savouring a curated meal rooted in place, or indulging in a behind-the-scenes tour few get to see, the South serves up little luxuries without the hefty price tag. And when your budget goes further you can, too.



Savannah, Georgia

# Stay

## Sleep Unique

**The Kentucky Castle (KY):** Stay in a castle for as little as £220 a night near Lexington. With 18 guest accommodations—including tower suites and tiny homes—this iconic estate is a fairytale escape in the heart of Bluegrass country. Make the most of your visit with a farm tour or by attending one of their renowned events, such as the Lavender Festival or princess tea times, which are open to the public.

**Smithfield Station (VA):** Prefer to make some waves? Spend the night in a replica working Chesapeake Bay-style lighthouse, home to the only two guest suites on the East Coast where you can stay overnight.

**Panther Valley Ranch (AR):** An adults-only, century-old ranch just five miles from historic Hot Springs feels worlds away from the bustle of everyday life. Soak in the jacuzzi, paddle on the private lake, and exhale into the stillness of the Ouachita Mountains.

**Chattanooga Choo Choo (TN):** Spend the night in a historic Pullman car that harkens back to the heyday of train travel. Now a member of Historic Hotels of America, the rooms are housed in the South's first terminal station that opened back in 1909.

**Trail Hotel (KY):** The first and only bourbon-centric hotel in Bardstown, the "Bourbon Capital of the World," is outfitted with whisky-themed suites, a hidden speakeasy, fine dining, and a Bourbon Butler to curate exclusive distillery tours. When you need a break from imbibing, unwind with the golf simulator or recharge in the wellness room, complete with cryotherapy, a sauna, and an oxygen bar.

**Treehouse Grove (TN):** Set high in the Smoky Mountains of Gatlinburg, these intimate one- to four-bedroom treehouses are perfect for camping or glamping, each offering unique touches such as outdoor showers and sleep-under-the-stars hideaways.



## GRAVITATE HERE

A City That Pulls You In

**Huntsville, Alabama**  
Gravitate Here.  
[huntsville.org](http://huntsville.org)



## Boutique Sleeps

**The Admiral (AL):** Downtown Mobile's only luxury boutique property, this reimagined gem nods to the city's French colonial heritage with moody interiors, a rooftop herb garden, and its own resident apriary.

**Marshall House (GA):** For a spirited stay, this Savannah landmark comes with its share of ghostly rumours and tall tales set within a historic inn that includes complimentary afternoon wine at social hour.

**Fort Condé Inn (AL):** A living time capsule of 19th-century elegance, this one-of-a-kind hotel is made up of a collection of historic homes within a private enclave known as Fort Condé Village in Mobile. With cobblestone streets and gas lanterns, it's like stepping into a Southern romance novel brought to life.

**NuWray Hotel & Carriage House (NC):** The oldest continuously operating hotel in North Carolina, the NuWray is a storied gem on the National Register of Historic Places. Freshly restored with new on-site dining, it blends mountain-town magic with modern charm in Burnsville.

**The Painted Lady Hotel (AL):** Named for a local madam rumoured to have run a "boarding house" in the same building, this boutique property is 22 rooms of vintage-meets-contemporary cool near the University of Alabama-Birmingham's old automotive district.

# Play



Kentucky Derby Museum, Kentucky



Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, Alabama

**Off to the Races:** Step into the storied world of **Churchill Downs (KY)** with a complimentary guided tour included in your admission to the **Kentucky Derby Museum**. Go beyond the grandstands for a behind-the-scenes look at "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports" and the traditions of thoroughbred racing. For an elevated experience, upgrade to the **Superstars and Spires** tour, which offers a rare glimpse into exclusive areas not usually open to the public—such as Millionaire's Row, the Stakes Room, and the Turf Club.

**Tee Up:** For golfers who want to play where the scenery rivals the scorecard, Alabama's **Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail** delivers. With 26 courses across 11 cities—including Birmingham, Fairhope, Mobile, and Montgomery—the trail combines championship-level golf with signature Southern hospitality. Eight resorts offer customisable stay-and-play packages, making it easy and affordable to turn a single round into a full weekend—or week—on the green.

**Get Lost in the Gardens:** The **Birmingham Botanical Gardens (AL)** offers 67 acres of beautifully curated landscapes, free for all to enjoy—including a Japanese teahouse and rose garden that feels like Versailles, sans jet lag. In New Orleans (LA), **City Park**—larger than Central Park—exudes Southern grandeur with moss-draped live oaks, nostalgic amusements, and blooming garden paths. And in Hot Springs (AR), **Garvan Woodland Gardens** blends flora and fauna with whimsical fairy gardens across 210 acres of waterfalls, treehouses, glass chapels, and hidden trails.

**Bring the Family:** Pair education with wonder across the South, starting in St. Louis (MO), a city that quietly boasts more free attractions than anywhere in the U.S. outside the capital. From the **Saint Louis Zoo** and **Art Museum** to the **Science Center and Museum at the Gateway Arch**, world-class experiences come without a price tag. Don't miss **Grant's Farm**, a family favourite estate operated by the Anheuser-Busch family, where visitors can admire over 900 animals by tram. Adults can enjoy complimentary beer tastings, and for a small upgrade, meet the iconic **Budweiser Clydesdales**—an experience for the ages.



St. Louis Zoo, Missouri

## Signature Experiences



*U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Alabama*

**Go Behind the Scenes of Music Superdom:** A backstage tour of the **Grand Ole Opry** (TN) is one of the most intimate ways to experience Nashville's country music legacy. Step through the artist entrance, peek inside the dressing rooms, and stand on the iconic stage. Along the way, you'll relive the moments that shaped the soundtrack of the South for more than a century.

**Train like an Astronaut:** Indulge your childhood fantasy of space travel at the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center** in Huntsville (AL). Its immersive Adult Space Academy offers a three-day, two-night experience with mission scenarios, astronaut-style simulations, and hands-on challenges—for about £220 a day.

**Your Own Private Island:** Little Raccoon Key, a private reef off the coast of Jekyll Island (GA), is only accessible by boat. Day trips along the "river of dolphins" include an eco-tour through ancient oyster reefs, encounters with native wildlife, and stories of the region's cultural history—part sanctuary, part anthropology, and completely off the grid. Ship Island (MS) is another barrier island accessible only by ferry that's part of Gulf Islands National Seashore. Located about 12 miles off the coast of Gulfport, it offers striking green waters and a well-preserved Civil War-era fort. For a memorable evening, charter a sunset cruise or join a candlelight tour for a rare experience under the stars.

**Get A Spot of Culture:** For a refined detour into art and architecture, the South offers a host of world-class museums that are as inspiring as they are accessible. At the **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art** in Bentonville (AR), visitors can explore the permanent galleries and wander through 134 acres of Ozark forest trails. The **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art** in Kansas City (MO) showcases an encyclopaedic range of works from nearly every continent and culture. And in Jackson (MS), the **Mississippi Museum of Art** invites visitors into a serene sculpture garden and a rotating line-up of thought-provoking exhibitions—all with no cost of admission.

## Relax and Unwind

**Soak it All In:** The South's spa culture is quite literally steeped in history. In Hot Springs (AR), the storied **Bathhouse Row** invites visitors to unwind in thermal mineral waters, with soaks starting under £40 at the historic **Buckstaff Baths**. For presidential prestige, head to **Berkeley Springs** (WV), where George Washington once took to the healing waters—earning it the title of "America's First Spa." And in Hot Springs (VA), the **Warm Springs Pools**, first opened to the public in 1761, still offer a timeless—and deeply restorative—dip into the past.

**Find your Zen:** Step off the grid and into the stillness of **Congaree National Park** (SC)—one of the last free national parks in the country. Here, forest bathing takes on new meaning beneath a canopy of ancient hardwoods. This immersive Japanese practice invites you to move slowly, breathe deeply, and reconnect with nature through quiet, mindful meditation.

**Salt of the Earth:** Step into a subterranean sanctuary at the **Asheville Salt Caves** (NC), where 20 tonnes of hand-harvested Polish salt crystals create a calming, mineral-rich atmosphere designed for deep restoration. Inspired by ancient Turkish and Moroccan bathing rituals, the hammam and massage treatments are crafted to detoxify and exfoliate, while restoring both body and mind. In Myrtle Beach (SC), the **Himalayan Salt Spa** blends halotherapy with modern wellness offerings such as cryotherapy and foot detox, while **Pomona Salt Cave & Spa** (WV) provides a full mountain retreat—complete with overnight stays and immersive salt therapy inside an 18,000-pound cave.



*Congaree National Park, South Carolina*



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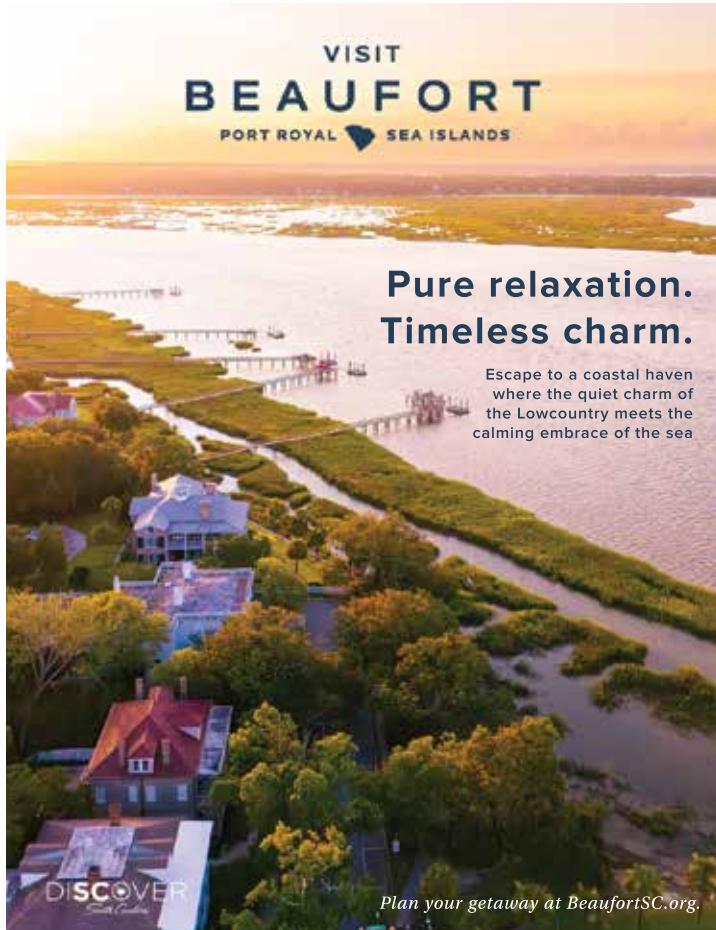
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## Sip, Savour and Imbibe

**Whiskey Tours and Tastings:** Discover elevated, experiential offerings across the Kentucky Bourbon Trail and Tennessee Whiskey Country. At **Buffalo Trace** in Frankfort (KY), guests can enjoy seven complimentary tours and tastings—including the unforgettable **E.H. Taylor Tour**, which takes visitors through “Bourbon Pompeii,” a once-buried 19th-century distilling room uncovered in 2016. At **Bulleit** in Shelbyville (KY), you can create your own custom bourbon blend for around £40—a perfect keepsake for the serious sipper. In Shelbyville (TN), the tour at **Uncle Nearest Premium Whiskey** honours the legacy of Nearest Green, the world’s first-known African American master distiller and mentor to Jack Daniel himself.

**Wine Not?**: Sip and swirl your way through Virginia’s **Shenandoah Valley Wine Trail**, where charming vineyards meet Blue Ridge Parkway views. Select wineries offer complimentary tastings or low-cost flights, with no reservations required. Pro tip: Pick up a graze board or charcuterie box from **Vito’s Italian Market** in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and enjoy a vineyard picnic amid panoramic scenery, live music, and golden-hour sunsets.

**Farm Fresh:** At **Mercier Orchards**, a fourth-generation farm in Blue Ridge (GA), seasonal U-pick days let you indulge in a bounty of fresh fruit. Nearby in Dawsonville (GA), **Fausett Farms** bursts into bloom each autumn with 900,000 sunflowers—a scene as stunning as it is serene. When you’ve worked up an appetite, The Silo Cookhouse at **The Horse Shoe Farm** in Hendersonville (NC) offers refined dining straight from the source, with a menu that evolves with the seasons. Or head to **The Hope Farm** in Fairhope (AL) where cultivated mushrooms, hydroponic greens, and thoughtfully paired wines create a hyper-local meal in an intimate, luxe setting.

**The Largest Free Musical Event in the South:** Every April, New Orleans (LA) comes alive with free performances by more than 1,700 musicians from a variety of musical genres on over 20 stages. Local jazz, blues, Latin, and zydeco artists perform, while pop-up food stalls invite you to savour genuine Crescent City fare at the **French Quarter Festival**.

**Turn Up the Beat:** Every June, Nashville (TN) turns out for the **CMA Music Festival**—a citywide celebration of country music’s biggest stars. While headline performances are ticketed, many of the daytime outdoor stages are free, giving fans the chance to catch live sets, artist meet-and-greets, and surprise pop-ups throughout the city centre.

**Attend a Summer Soirée:** What began as a pageant on the water more than 60 years ago, the **Beaufort Water Festival** (SC) has evolved into a beloved midsummer event and one of the South’s most celebrated summer traditions. Held each July, the multi-day affair now features sailing races, the Regatta Ball, air and water exhibitions, boat parades, and competitive sports tournaments—set against a beautiful coastal backdrop.

**Christmas Artistry:** One of Asheville’s (NC) most iconic properties, the **Omni Grove Park Inn** channels timeless tradition year-round—but is especially enchanting in winter, when the halls are lined with more than 200 intricately designed gingerbread houses for the annual **Gingerbread House Competition**. Open to the public, it’s a rare chance to explore the historic grounds, soak up the seasonal décor, and experience a bit of holiday magic—no overnight stay required. Nearby, the **Biltmore Estate** also goes all out for Christmas, with daytime festivities and nighttime performances that’ll have you feeling like you’re a guest of the Vanderbilts themselves.

**Get in the Holiday Spirit:** Perched high above Eureka Springs (AR), the **Crescent Hotel** transforms into a storybook setting for the holiday season, complete with Santa’s village, an ice-skating rink, sleigh rides, and thousands of twinkling lights. It’s a nostalgic escape wrapped in festive magic—perfect for families, couples, or anyone chasing a bit of winter wonder.





# Southern Flavours: Dishes Worth the Journey

By Rashmi Narayan



There's a reason the South is synonymous with gastronomy: every bite tells a story, and every dish holds a memory. From smouldering barbecue to decadent indulgences, Southern cuisine is more than a regional speciality – it's a celebration of history, identity, and community served with pride. Now gaining global recognition, the MICHELIN Guide American South's debut shines a spotlight on everything from pit-mastered classics to refined takes on soul food. Consider this your invitation to eat your way through the sauces, sides, and signature flavours that define this rich and time-honoured culinary landscape.



Mint Julep, Kentucky



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# Smoke and Sauce: The Storied Tradition of Barbecue

In the South, barbecue is more than a food group—it's a cultural cornerstone, passed down from generation to generation. Perfected over the years from award-winning haunts to roadside jaunts, it represents a legacy that's both fiercely regional and universally beloved. Whether it's slathered in molasses-thick sauce or served dry and smoky, the purist way, barbecue is how the South tells its story: slow-smoked, deeply seasoned, and impossible to forget.

Which city does it best is wildly subjective, but many consider Kansas City a top contender. It's home to the newly opened **Museum of BBQ**—the first institution of its kind dedicated to the history and craft of smoked meats—as well as more than 100 spots for 'cue, so you'll have no trouble finding a favourite.

For a taste of tradition, head to **Arthur Bryant's Barbecue**, a revered local institution that has served everyone from Presidents Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter to Barack Obama, and where the city's legendary burnt ends – smoky, caramelised morsels carved from the point end of the brisket – are believed to have originated. **Gates Bar-B-Q**, **Jack Stack**, and **Joe's** – housed in a classic petrol station – are also popular choices.

Another powerhouse, **Memphis** boasts more than 100 barbecue restaurants, from contemporary establishments to humble shacks. What makes Memphis barbecue special – aside from its deep smoke – is the use of dry rubs: full of flavour, fiercely guarded, and rarely written down. Though famously pork-centric, many modern twists now include meat-free options such as smoked jackfruit, mushrooms, and tofu.

North Carolina has two distinct barbecue styles: **Lexington** (also called **Piedmont style**), which features smoked pork shoulder with a vinegar and tomato base, and **Eastern style**, where a whole hog is cooked over coals, chopped, and served with a tangy vinegar and pepper sauce.



Rendezvous restaurant, Tennessee



Museum of BBQ, Missouri



Pinehurst Brewing Company, North Carolina



Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q restaurant, Alabama

Down in the Heart of Dixie, things get creamy with Alabama's signature white sauce – a complete departure from the rest of the Southern states. The tangy, mayo-based drizzle was made famous at **Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q** over a hundred years ago and is now slathered over everything from chicken to pulled pork. Find your favourite by following the **Alabama BBQ Trail**. One not to miss is **Brenda's Bar-B-Q Pit** in **Montgomery**, a staple since the segregation era.

Kentucky's take on tradition is also distinct, where you'll find slow-cooked **mutton** in **Owensboro**, smoked over hickory wood in a pit. Curate your own trail by visiting renowned spots like **Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn**, **Old Hickory Bar-B-Q**, and **Ole South Barbecue**. And don't miss the **burgoo** – a hearty 19th-century stew found almost nowhere else in the country, made from hickory-smoked meats and believed to be a mispronunciation of "barbecue."

If you find yourself in Arkansas, get up early – the tiny town of **Marianna** dishes out James Beard Award-winning pork sandwiches from sunrise to sell-out at the legendary **Jones Bar-B-Q Diner**. There's no menu; you just have to follow your nose or know about it.

# Coastal Flavours and Seafood Staples

After you've had your fill of smoky meats, head east to Virginia's Chesapeake Bay, where **oysters** steal the spotlight. Briny, plump, and perfectly shucked, Virginia's bivalves are a delicacy worth the detour. While the annual **Urbanna Oyster Festival** draws seafood lovers in droves each November, you'll find fresh local oysters year-round at restaurants and raw bars across the state. North Carolina also takes pride in its **Oyster Trail**, which offers opportunities to tour a working shellfish farm and taste the coast's distinct flavour.

Set off toward South Carolina, where the first dish to seek out is **Charleston's** speciality, **She-Crab Soup** - a hearty blend of crab roe, Atlantic blue female crab, a dash of sherry, and a dollop of fresh cream, whipped into a rich bisque. Stay for the state's **Lowcountry boil**, also known as **Frogmore Stew**, where shrimp (rather than crawfish, another Southern delicacy) is served with spices, potatoes, corn on the cob, and smoked sausage.

Down in **New Orleans**, restaurants like **Pêche** have been making waves with their unique take on **gumbo** made from roasted shrimp shells and heads. Chef de Cuisine Nicole Cabrera Mills adds an Asian spin to seafood dishes, infusing **fried oysters** with kimchi, giving classic Gulf ingredients a global twist.



Seafood Boil, South Carolina



Chargrilled oysters, Louisiana



Biscuit Love restaurant, Tennessee

## Soul Food and Comfort Classics

The heart of the South lies in its comfort food, and throughout the region, you'll find craveable plates like **shrimp and grits**, **chicken perloo**, and **biscuits and gravy**. In Mississippi, expect homegrown dishes of fried **catfish**, braised turnip **greens**, and fall-off-the-bone **ribs** to warm you up. For sides worth a lick, head to **Emerson** in Arkansas, where you'll find an abundance of **purple hull peas** and **fried pickles**, for which the town is known.

Meanwhile, dining at **Dooky Chase's** in New Orleans isn't just a meal – it's a rite of passage. Helmed by Executive Chef Edgar "Dook" Chase IV, grandson of the legendary Leah Chase, this storied restaurant blends culinary heritage with cultural history, having served as a key gathering place during the Civil Rights Movement. Come Easter, it becomes a pilgrimage for foodies with its famed Holy Thursday celebration – a soulful spread of gumbo z'herbes, **fried chicken**, and buttery **cornbread** that's as much about tradition as it is about taste.

For a spicier take, **Nashville** is credited as the birthplace of **hot chicken**. Rumoured to have been created as a "revenge dish" by a scorned lover, today it's served in all its fiery glory at **Prince's Hot Chicken**, where it's said to have originated – or with modern twists like the chicken benedict at **Hattie B's**.

Seek out NOLA fan-favourite sandwiches like **po'boys** at **Parkway Bakery & Tavern**, which opened its doors in 1911, and warm **muffulettas** at **Napoleon House** in the French Quarter, which has been around for more than two centuries. After touring the storied **distilleries** in Louisville, make your way to the **Brown Hotel** for a legendary **Hot Brown**. Invented during the Roaring Twenties as a hangover cure for revellers, this open-faced sandwich layers roasted turkey, crispy bacon, and juicy tomatoes under a blanket of creamy Mornay sauce – then broils it to bubbly, golden perfection.

For a full road trip fuelled by flavour, Louisiana's **Gas Station Eats Trail** is full of hidden gems. Stretching over 1,000 miles in No Man's Land – a lawless region rooted in the Louisiana Purchase – it winds past blink-and-you'll-miss-it fuel stops and humble roadside joints, highlighting 21 of the best "locals know" spots for **boudin balls**, **shrimp po'boys**, and **crispy cracklins**. You'll find even more small-town charm in **South Pittsburg**, Tennessee. Home of the **Lodge Museum of Cast Iron**, visitors can explore the enduring legacy of cast iron cooking – and stay overnight in a restored Victorian train car at Chattanooga's **Hotel Chalet**.



Seabird restaurant, North Carolina

 SOUTHALL FARM & INN – FRANKLIN, TN

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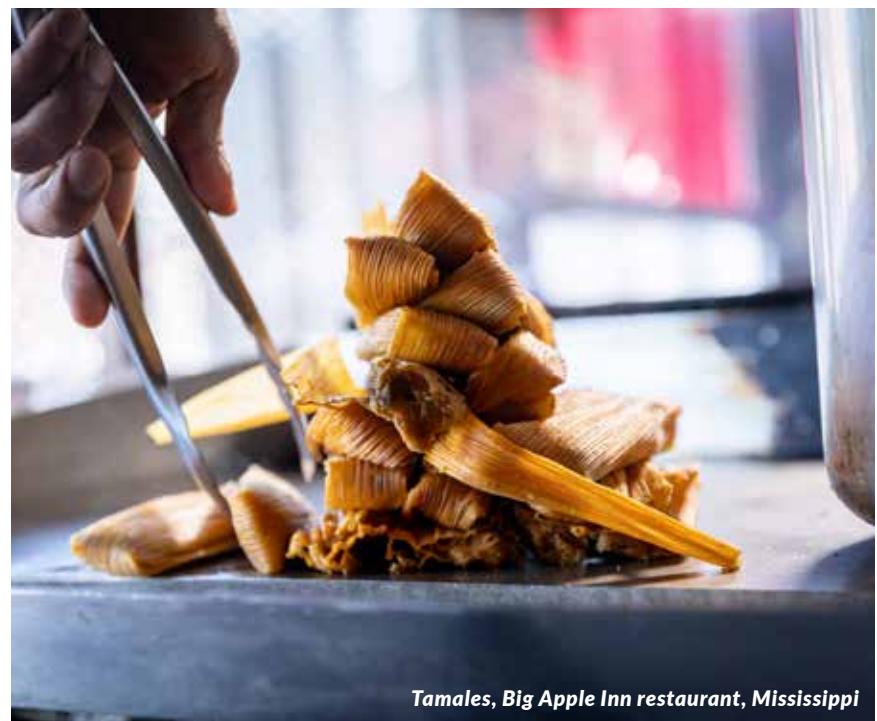
## District Bites

Some dishes defy category – and that's exactly what makes them worth the detour. One to seek out is Mississippi's **hot tamales** from **Doe's Eat Place** in **Greenville**: spiced meat, wrapped in corn husks and steeped in pure Delta tradition. For another unexpected bite, head north to **St. Louis**, where **toasted ravioli** reigns supreme. These crispy, breaded pasta pockets – stuffed with meat or cheese and served piping hot with tangy marinara – are a local invention that turns Italian comfort food into a bar snack staple. **Georgia** is also home to the beloved **Vidalia onion**, a mild, candy-like variety harvested between April and August. Don't be surprised if your avocado toast gets an upgrade – down here, even the onions are a delicacy.

The town of **Natchitoches** made **meat pies** famous. Half-moon-shaped pastry pockets filled with spiced minced meat, they have roots in French, Spanish, and Creole cultures, and are believed to have been first sold by street vendors and at church fairs – now best tasted at **Lasyone's**. For another savoury snack on the go, let the humble hero of West Virginia, the **pepperoni roll**, join your journey. Soft and stuffed with spicy cured meat, it's the unofficial state food – found everywhere from petrol stations to grandma's kitchen. Born out of the coal mining boom, it was originally created by Italian immigrants who needed a hearty, no-frills lunch – one that's now a point of Appalachian pride.

In Louisiana's **River Parishes** region, unforgettable culinary adventures await along the **Andouille Trail**. Follow the links to sample and savour these delightful smoked, slow-cooked sausages in all their glory. For another bite of Southern food history, try the hot dogs at **Chris' Famous Hot Dogs** in **Montgomery**, Alabama – a local institution whose patrons have included Franklin D. Roosevelt, Elvis Presley, Clark Gable, and Hank Williams.

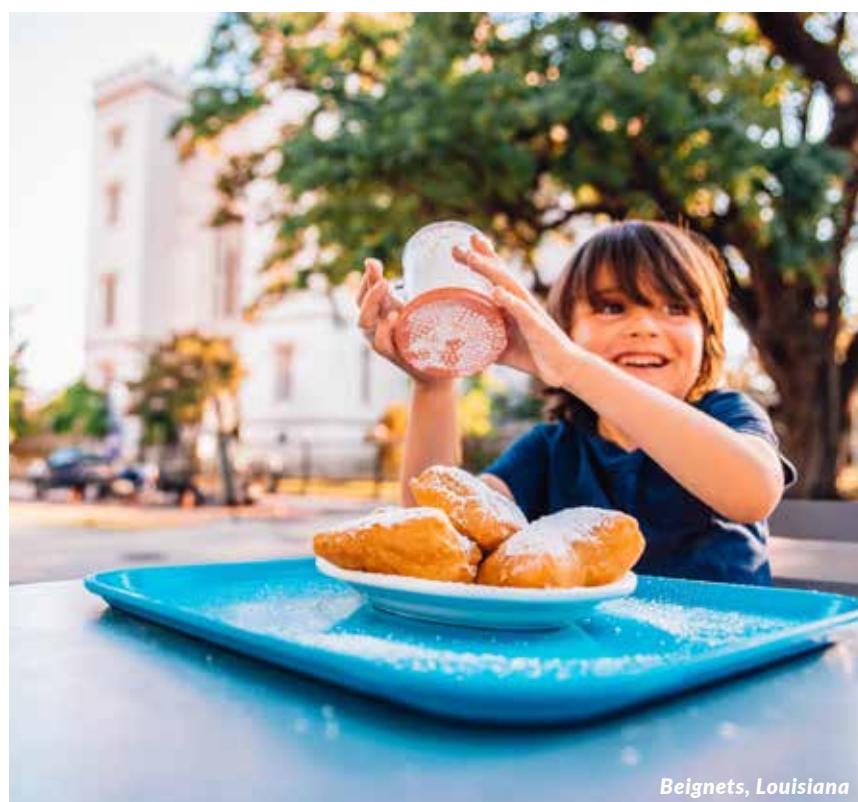
The **Hot Sauce Trail** is another bold and flavourful adventure for travellers – from the birthplace of iconic brands like **Tabasco®** on **Avery Island** near **Lafayette** to small-batch sauce makers tucked throughout the **Mississippi Delta** bayou. Beyond the classic tang of vinegar, some of the more unique variations are infused with rum or tequila, adding a spirited twist to the heat.



Tamales, Big Apple Inn restaurant, Mississippi



TABASCO® Brand Factory Tour & Museum, Louisiana



Beignets, Louisiana

## Sweet Indulgences

Dessert in the South is anything but an afterthought. It's a finale, a ritual, and sometimes the main event – built on generations of passed-down recipes and indulgent fixings. Your sweet tooth might immediately conjure up visions of the legendary **Mississippi mud pie** – layers of rich chocolate custard, fudgy ganache, a cookie crumb crust, and just enough crunch from toasted pecans to keep you coming back for more.

Arkansas delivers its take with **Possum Pie** – a creamy blend of vanilla pudding, chocolate custard, and pecan shortbread – best enjoyed at **Blue Cake Company** in **Little Rock**. While you're here, ask for the resident favourite: **biscuits with chocolate gravy** for an extra treat.

New Orleans, naturally, turns dessert into dinner theatre with tableside flambéed **Bananas Foster** at famous eateries like **Arnaud's**, **Commander's Palace**, and **Brennan's** – paired with nightly jazz. If that's too heavy, the beignets at **Café du Monde** are a fluffy alternative. Meanwhile, **Georgia**'s deep-rooted peach pride shows up in everything from warm, cinnamon-laced cobbler to roadside jars of jam, preserves, and even peach wine – souvenirs that taste like summer in a bottle.



# Northern Kentucky - Gateway to the South

The Cincy Region is a two-for-one destination where North meets South, and Ohio and Kentucky connect. Here, the German heritage and urban vibrancy of Cincinnati, Ohio, blend seamlessly with the Southern charm and cool quirkiness of Northern Kentucky, just a bridge-walk across the Ohio River.

These cultures collide creating wildly different, yet easily accessible experiences. From spaghetti piled high with Cincinnati chili to creative dishes from "best in America" chefs, Cincy's unique cuisine toasts both tradition and new trends. This is where the storied tale of Cincinnati beer brewing meets the famous Kentucky Bourbon Trail® and urban adventure merges with the great outdoors. Explore historical sites like the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, catch an NFL Bengals game and uncover street art around every corner. Easy to navigate, simply stroll through the vibrant neighbourhoods or hop on the free streetcar system to uncover the region's treasures.

Already just a short hop from major East Coast hubs like New York City and less than a day's drive from 60% of the U.S., accessing this dynamic region is now more convenient than ever thanks to direct flights from London Heathrow and Charles de Gaulle in Paris. Learn more and plan your perfect city break at [visitcincy.com](http://visitcincy.com).

**TEAM KENTUCKY**



Queen City Underground Tour



Cincinnati Chili



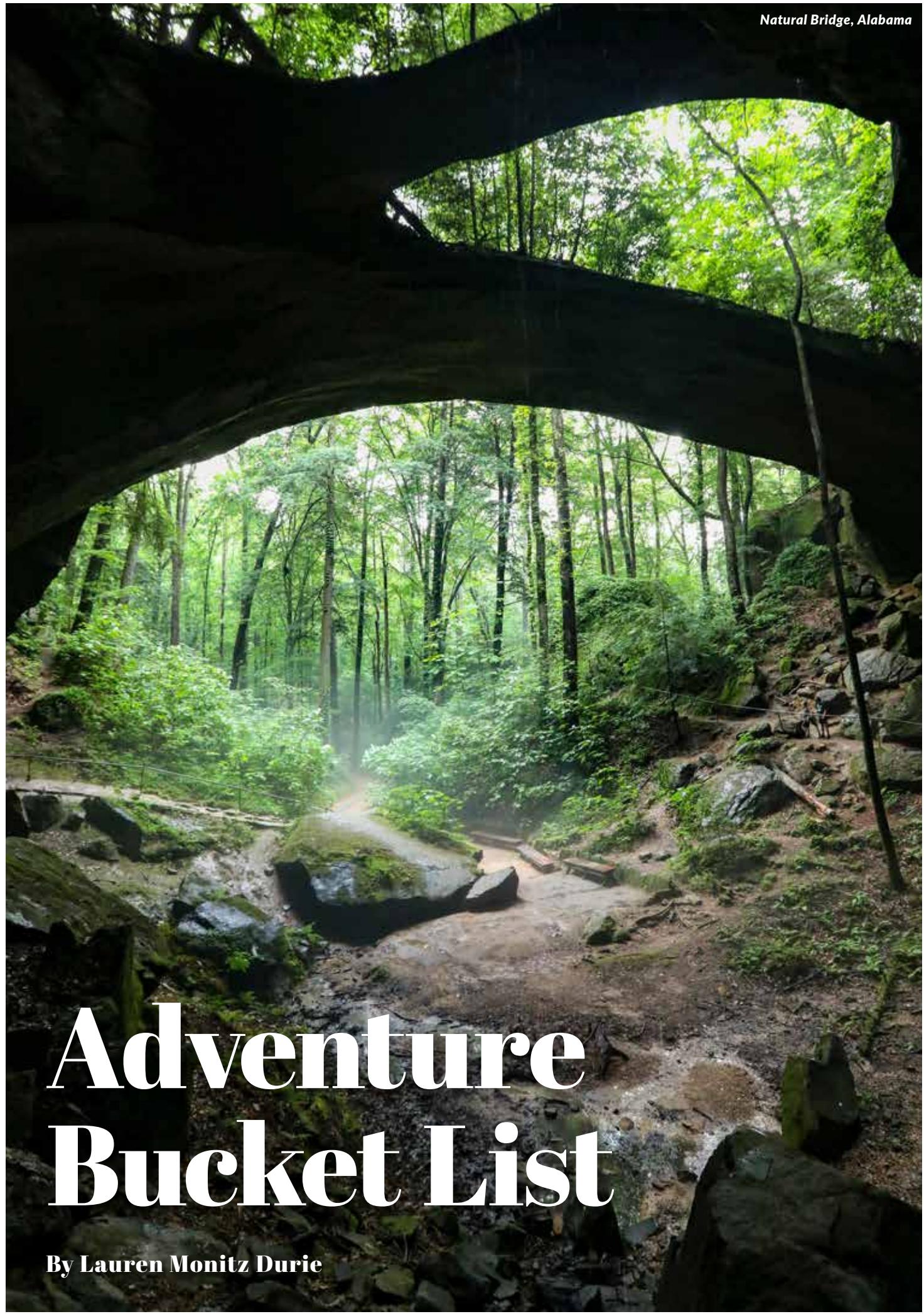
Bengals NFL Football



BLINK Art & Light Fest

# Adventure Bucket List

By Lauren Monitz Durie



# Journey by Land

Outer Banks, North Carolina

## Horse Play

As the undisputed Horse Capital of the World, Lexington (KY) boasts more than 400 horse farms, where you can tour rolling pastures, meet champion thoroughbreds, and see where legends are born. Ride through the rugged beauty of Daniel Boone National Forest (NC), or head to the Outer Banks to spot wild horses roaming free. Prefer to hop in the saddle? Take a scenic beach ride along the sandy shores of Myrtle Beach (SC).

## Rock Climbing

If vertical is more your vibe, the South delivers some of the most iconic climbing in the country. Red River Gorge (KY) is a sandstone playground with routes for every skill level—and is home to the first via ferrata in the U.S. West Virginia's New River Gorge, the nation's newest national park, pairs big walls with even bigger views, while the Chattanooga (TN) area serves up a trifecta of top-tier crags for bouldering and trad climbing.

## Mountain Biking

From buttery singletrack to rocky descents, the South is a pedal-powered playground. Bentonville (AR) claims the title of "Mountain Bike Capital of the World" with more than 130 miles of trails starting right downtown. For long-haul cyclists, Katy Trail State Park (MO) offers 240 miles of scenic rail-to-trail cruising—the longest in the country. Gravity lovers can get their fix at Massanutten Bike Park (VA), while Mulberry Gap (GA) offers a rugged ride-and-recharge escape. For technical terrain, North Carolina's Pisgah and Dupont Forests deliver in spades.

## Hiking

Whether you're going for distance or difficulty, there's no shortage of trails to tackle. Popular day hikes include Craggy Pinnacle (NC) in the Blue Ridge Mountains or Clingmans Dome (NC/TN), the highest point in the Smokies. Explore Missouri's backcountry along the 429-mile Ozark Trail, or make a dent on the iconic Appalachian Trail, which stretches 2,200 miles across 14 states starting in Georgia. For a unique twist, follow Tennessee's Night Sky Trail with a route inspired by your zodiac sign.



New River Gorge, West Virginia



Gators & Friends, Louisiana



Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

## Above and Below

### Fly High

Paraglide over Tennessee's Sequatchie Valley, where ridgelines and farmland stretch for miles. Tour the Smokies by hot air balloon, or spot lighthouses and historical landmarks by helicopter along Georgia's coast in a breathtaking moment of pure elevation and exhilaration.

### Take to the Trees

In the Great Smoky Mountains, WildSide (TN) invites you to soar above the treetops on the longest zipline in America—an adrenaline rush framed by misty mountain backdrops. Down in Louisiana, add a little bite to your flight as you zipline over alligators at Gators & Friends near Shreveport, or elevate the adventure with sky bridges and rappels at The Gorge (NC), America's steepest and fastest canopy tour.

### Caving

Go deep into the subterranean world of Mammoth Cave (KY), the world's longest-known cave system and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Alabama's Cathedral Caverns wows with impressive vaulted chambers, while Dismals Canyon glows with bioluminescent creatures. Missouri, dubbed "The Cave State," boasts over 7,500 recorded caves—about 20 open for tours. Standouts include Onondaga Cave's towering formations, the twisting labyrinth of Cameron Cave, and Fantastic Caverns, which you can view from an underground, jeep-drawn tram in Springfield.

# Get Wet and Wild

## Whitewater Rafting

In Charlotte (NC), the U.S. National Whitewater Center boasts Olympic-level rapids in a controlled environment—ideal for both first-timers and adrenaline junkies. Alabama's new **Montgomery Whitewater Park** brings that same energy in an urban setting just minutes from downtown. Prefer your rapids wild and untamed? Natural rivers across the region—from the **Ocoee** (TN) to the **Nantahala** (NC)—deliver a rush, complete with churning water, dramatic drops, and scenic gorges.



U.S. National Whitewater Center, North Carolina

## Paddle

Called “America’s Amazon,” the **Mississippi Delta** invites you to drift through a vast ecosystem alive with both wildlife and legend. Float the spring-fed waters of Missouri’s **Ozark National Scenic Riverways**—the first federally protected river system in the U.S.—by canoe, kayak, raft, or tube. For a truly unforgettable experience, paddle into Tennessee’s **Nickajack Cave** at sunset, when thousands of bats pour in at twilight—an eerie, awe-inspiring spectacle best witnessed from the water.



Current River, Missouri



Bayou Teche Experience tours, Louisiana

## Chase Waterfalls

**Cumberland Falls** (KY), the “Niagara of the South,” stuns with a 21-metre curtain of water and a rare moonbow—a lunar rainbow found almost nowhere else in the Western Hemisphere. **Whitewater Falls** (NC) and **Tallulah Gorge** (GA) also make a splash, while **South Carolina** quietly boasts more than 100 cascades tucked into its upcountry hills. For the truly adventurous, the waterfalls near **Asheville** (NC) invite you to rappel straight into the heart of the cascade.

## Swamp Safaris and Airboat Tours

Skirt through dense cypress forests and Spanish moss canopies on a **high-speed airboat**—the classic Louisiana way to spot sunbathing gators and migrating birds. While **New Orleans** offers easy access to swamp tours near **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park**, head deeper into the state for quieter, more immersive experiences in nature, like **McGee’s Swamp Tours** in **Henderson** or **Basin Landing** near **Breaux Bridge**.

## Play on the Water

Along the coastline, life moves to the rhythm of the tide. Set sail in **Hilton Head**’s salty breeze, **stand-up paddleboard** through still morning waters, or reel in the day’s catch on a **deep-sea charter** off the **Gulf Shores** where the water is your playground. From Mississippi’s quiet estuaries to Alabama’s sparkling inlets, the best days end with sand between your toes.



Hilton Head, South Carolina

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DISCOVER  
*South Carolina*





# Sevierville, Tennessee

## Discover The Great Smoky Mountains in Dolly Parton's Hometown

Nestled in the foothills of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Sevierville, Tennessee—birthplace of global music icon Dolly Parton—offers a warm welcome to travellers from around the world. This charming mountain town blends Southern hospitality with unforgettable experiences.

Explore the natural beauty of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve. Hike scenic trails, go horseback riding through forested paths, or kayak the peaceful Little Pigeon River. Wildlife viewing, waterfall treks, and stargazing are just a few ways to connect with nature and outdoor adventures abound in every season. At adventure parks like Wildside, explore 11-miles of mountain biking trails, experience the ultimate off-road excursion on a guided UTV tour, and zip across America's longest zipline – at over one mile long!



Great Smoky Mountains National Park



The Apple Barn and Cider Mill



The Dolly Parton statue in downtown Sevierville

Beyond the outdoors, Sevierville offers unique attractions: soar above the treetops on a zipline, visit interactive museums, or meet native animals at discovery zoos. History lovers can stroll through downtown with a free walking tour brochure, stopping at over 40 landmarks—including the bronze statue of Dolly Parton.

Savour local flavours at chef-driven restaurants downtown like The Appalachian, then enjoy cocktails and games at The Pines Downtown, where Dolly played her first paying gig at the age of 10.

Tour local distilleries, wineries, and breweries to sample Tennessee's finest spirits.

When it's time to unwind, Sevierville's lodging options are as diverse as its landscapes. Stay in luxurious cabin resorts with mountain views and private hot tubs or opt for unique accommodations like treehouses and glamping tents. Steep yourself in local history by staying in a downtown boutique hotel or renovated historic home. Travelling with kids (or kids at heart)? Families love indoor and outdoor waterpark hotels like the Resort at Governor's Crossing or Wilderness at the Smokies. For convenience and comfort, national brands like Holiday Inn Express and Home 2 Suites offer modern amenities and easy access to local attractions.

Plan your visit at [VisitSevierville.com](http://VisitSevierville.com).



## One-of-a-Kind Adventures

### Walk the SkyBridge

If you're often told you have your head in the clouds, **Gatlinburg SkyPark** (TN) is the place to prove it. Spanning 207 metres across the Great Smoky Mountains, the **SkyBridge** is the longest pedestrian cable bridge in North America. With glass-floor panels beneath your feet and sweeping views in every direction, it's a walk that's equal parts thrill and awe.

### Witness Synchronous Fireflies

For a few fleeting nights each summer, the woods come alive with nature's own light show. Thousands of fireflies flicker in perfect unison—a rare natural phenomenon found in only a handful of places on Earth. The most magical displays appear in South Carolina's **Congaree National Park** and in North Carolina and Tennessee's **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**, where the forest pulses with rhythm and wonder from late May to early June.

### 1902 Wright Glider Experience, South Carolina



### Race a Car at Talladega Speedway

Adrenaline junkies, strap in and take a lap on **NASCAR's** longest and most legendary oval in Alabama. No lead car, no instructor—just you, the track, and your need for speed. Prefer to leave the driving to the pros? Sit shotgun as a professional hits 150 mph (241 km/h) for a ride that'll leave your pulse racing long after the checkered flag is raised.

### Watch the Hawk Migration

From September to November, the skies above **Caesars Head State Park** (SC) become a theatre of flight as thousands of hawks migrate with instinct and grace. One of the premier raptor migrations in the Eastern U.S., this natural spectacle draws birdwatchers from all over to enjoy a front-row seat to one of nature's greatest aerial shows.

### Ride the Rails

For a slower-paced ride with a view, climb aboard the historic **Virginia Scenic Railway** in Staunton for a timeless trip through the legendary Shenandoah Valley. Choose from two narrated journeys: the Alleghany Special, winding west through farmland and forest, or the Blue Ridge Flyer, which tunnels through the mountains before looping back—especially breathtaking draped in autumn colour.

### Fly a Reproduction Wright Glider

In the **Outer Banks** (NC), you can do more than learn about aviation history—you can live it, piloting a museum-quality replica of the **Wright Brothers'** original 1902 glider, the only one of its kind available to the public and the aircraft that launched human flight.

### Hunt for Treasures

Set against a volcanic crater, **Crater of Diamonds State Park** (AR) is the only public diamond mine in the world where you can dig for real diamonds and keep whatever you find. More than 35,000 diamonds have been discovered to date, making this a memorable real-life treasure hunt. **Virginia Beach's North End** is also one of the best places to hunt for sea glass and Native American artefacts. A beachcomber's delight, its tides have uncovered treasures dating as far back as the 17th century.



Crater of Diamonds State Park, Arkansas



# Raleigh, North Carolina – Where All Are Welcome

Raleigh, North Carolina's capital, emerges as the intellectual, cultural, culinary and innovation hub of the state. With nonstop flights from more than 70 cities around the globe and easy accessibility to the state's beaches and mountains, Raleigh embraces diverse groups and activities in a vibrant city centre. Visitors are greeted with genuine Southern hospitality and kindness, finding elevated experiences and hidden gems at every turn.

Known as the "City of Oaks," for its plentiful tree-lined streets, squares, parks and forests, Raleigh is home to award-winning restaurants, arts, cultural attractions, sports and live music. Recently hailed as one of North America's **Under-the-Radar Foodie Destinations**, Raleigh's food scene is dominated by innovative chefs utilizing locally grown, farm-fresh ingredients. From food halls to fine dining, Raleigh's tables are overflowing with flavourful global eats and, of course, traditional North Carolina whole-hog BBQ.



North Carolina Museum of Art



Ajja

A dynamic mix of live music and eclectic festivals (Pimento Cheese Festival anyone?) keeps the region lively year-round. The area is also home to several free Smithsonian-affiliated museums, including the **North Carolina Museum of Art**, which houses over 5,000 pieces and artifacts and the Southeast's most extensive collection of works by Rodin, and the **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences**, home to the famed Dueling Dinosaurs open-air paleontology lab. Founded in 1792, history buffs will love exploring this capital city's cultural narrative with State Capitol tours and African American heritage attractions.

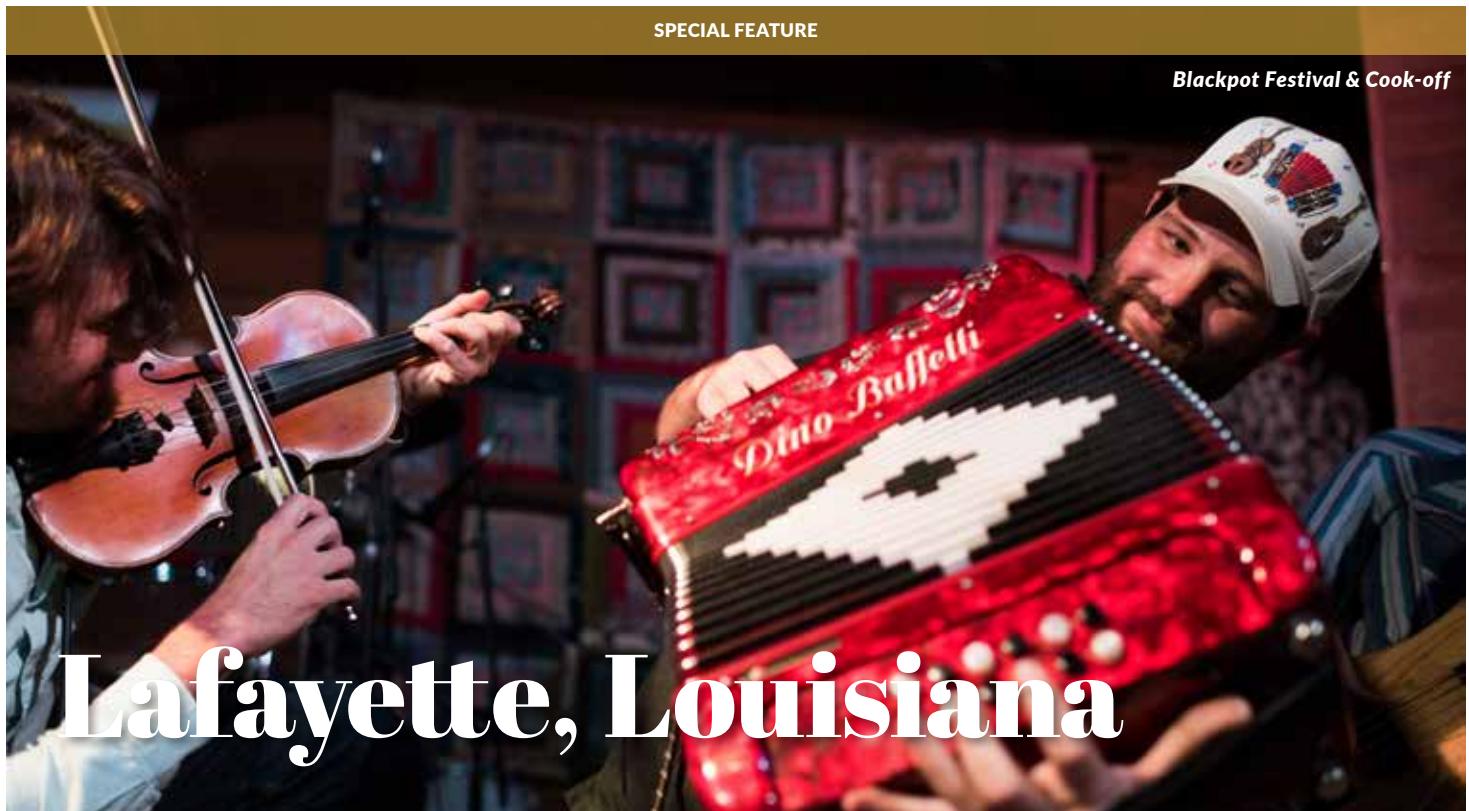
Experience a harmonious blend of urban sophistication, natural splendour and temperate weather year-round as you walk or bike throughout Raleigh and its neighbouring towns. Raleigh's greenway system spans more than 200 miles, providing walking, jogging, biking and hiking trails that connect hundreds of parks throughout the area.

A mosaic of 12 cities and towns welcomes visitors of all ages, backgrounds and abilities with a vibrant energy and unique offerings for every style of visitor. From mouthwatering food to soul-stirring music, to scenic parks and captivating culture, Raleigh, N.C., caters to both the seeker of the extraordinary and the connoisseur of the unconventional. With an approachable and laid-back vibe and experiences that won't break the bank, come see for yourself why "Y'all means all" here in Raleigh!

For more information, visit [visitRaleigh.com/international](http://visitRaleigh.com/international).



La Terrazza



# Lafayette, Louisiana

## Explore Magnificent Trails

When you're ready for an escape, there's a trail in Lafayette for everyone. From our cultural trails like ancient oaks and historical Lafayette to our more interactive trails like dancehalls and public art trail, there's something for every interest. You can find them at [LafayetteTravel.com/Trails](http://LafayetteTravel.com/Trails).

## Savour World-Class Cuisine

Craving delightfully smoked boudin, mouthwatering gumbo, and piping hot crawfish seasoned to perfection? Beyond being delicious, there's a reason Cajun food is known worldwide: because there's nothing like it. Plan your food adventure at [LafayetteTravel.com/FoodiesGuide](http://LafayetteTravel.com/FoodiesGuide).

McGee's Louisiana Swamp & Airboat Tours



Festivals Acadiens et Cr  oles

## Two-Step Through Lafayette

Lafayette is known as the Heartbeat of Acadiana, and with good reason. Their one-of-a-kind mix of Cajun, Creole, and zydeco music can be heard any night of the week. For a weekly playlist and schedule of live music, visit [LafayetteTravel.com/LafayetteWeekly](http://LafayetteTravel.com/LafayetteWeekly). From the rich cultural history and the vibrant flavours of Cajun and Creole cooking to the wealth of ways to enjoy the outdoors, Lafayette is truly uniquely seasoned. Plan your next getaway at [LafayetteTravel.com/Seasoned](http://LafayetteTravel.com/Seasoned).

## Experience Lively Festivals

One of the best ways to immerse yourself in Lafayette's unique heritage is to attend one of its festivals, a treat for all your senses. See below for a list of upcoming festivals or visit [LafayetteTravel.com/Festivals](http://LafayetteTravel.com/Festivals) for a complete list.

- **Mardi Gras** | Annually in January or February
- **Festival International** | Annually the last Wednesday through Sunday in April
- **Crawfish Festival** | Annually the first full weekend in May
- **Festivals Acadiens et Cr  oles** | Annually the second full weekend in October

Poor Boy's Riverside Inn

# Explore the Coastal Vibes of Virginia Beach

Get ready to discover a vibrant escape along the eastern shores of the United States. Where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Chesapeake Bay is Virginia Beach, a favourite beach vacation destination ready to welcome you with a unique blend of seaside charm, natural beauty and memories to last a lifetime.

## A Taste of Local Flavour

At the heart of Virginia Beach lies the longest pleasure beach in the world, where golden sands invite you to relax, swim, surf or simply soak up the sun. The lively **Virginia Beach Boardwalk**, an almost three-mile-long oceanfront promenade, is perfect for strolling, cycling or taking in live entertainment while enjoying stunning ocean views.

Art lovers should head to the **ViBe Creative District** to take in the colourful scene, whether on the walls of a gallery, on the side of a building or by meeting resident artists honing their crafts. Meanwhile, the **Artery District** serves up a taste of creativity through innovative local cuisine, unique shopping and community engagement. Seafood enthusiasts will delight in the region's fresh flavours, enjoying oysters plucked straight from the Chesapeake Bay, daily catches and seasonal farm-to-fork ingredients served in waterfront restaurants. Wash it all down with regional beverages including signature craft cocktails, local spirits and brews.



**Beach camping**



**Pleasure House oyster farm**

## Virginia Beach Boardwalk



## Find Your Favourites

Family-friendly attractions such as the **Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center**, the **Military Aviation Museum** and the brand-new **Atlantic Park** offer interactive fun for all ages. Outdoor enthusiasts will find paradise kayaking through **Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge**, paddleboarding in calm inlets, or enjoying a choice of other water sports. **First Landing State Park**, the most visited state park in Virginia, offers hiking and biking trails through maritime forests and cypress swamps, while dolphin-watching cruises bring you face-to-face with marine life. And when it's time for an intimate couple's escape, you'll find romance on the shores of Virginia Beach, from soothing spas and waterfront dining to countless adventures for two.

Accommodations suit all styles and budgets, from luxurious Oceanfront resorts, cozy inns, modern hotels and rentals to camping in the middle of nature or right on the beach for breathtaking sunrise views.

Whether you're visiting for the first time, or rediscovering a favourite place, Virginia Beach promises something unforgettable. With its warm welcome, diverse experiences and easy-going coastal charm, there's never been a better time to start looking forward to your next getaway.

# Restore

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Where renewal and rejuvenation meet fresh ocean air and remarkable wellness experiences.

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DISCOVER  
*South Carolina*

HILTON HEAD  
ISLAND  
SOUTH CAROLINA

SAVANNAH  
HILTON HEAD  
INTERNATIONAL



# Hilton Head, South Carolina

Beach yoga

## *On Hilton Head Island, Nature and Wellness go Hand in Hand.*

Hilton Head Island native Charlotte Hardwick lived in cities all over the world before the nature and beauty of the Lowcountry lured her back three years ago. "I wanted to get back to living around all of the things I love most," Hardwick recalls. "The ocean, the marshes, being outside—just getting back to that feeling of connection with the land."

A certified yoga teacher and nutritionist, Hardwick took her passion for holistic health and launched **Flow and Nourish**, a wellness company that blends movement and breath work with inspired, seasonal eating. "My cooking and yoga classes tune into what the season does to our bodies" Hardwick says, "and the ways we can use movement and food to support the change of season."

One of the ways she does this is to encourage people to pay attention to their surroundings. "This island invites people to notice and to be curious," Hardwick says. "People come here ready to slow down, and this practice that I'm doing really supports that."

Hardwick crafts personalized wellness experiences for her clients based on their interests and needs, whether that's learning to transform fresh tomatoes from **Spanish Wells Seafood & Produce** into a delicious tomato pie or practicing **yoga on the beach** at sunset. "I think people are looking to have experiences that are different from what they do at home," says Hardwick. "They're travelling with a lot more curiosity, and when I think of Hilton Head Island, I think there's just a natural curiosity here, and that encourages me so much."



**Spanish Wells  
Seafood & Produce**



Kayaking

*"Start with a sunrise beach walk and then take a class at **Jiva Yoga Center** or do a private session with me. For lunch I'd go to **Delisheeyo** - they have the best juices and wraps and salads. End the day with a **kayak** in the tidal creeks, where you can see dolphins. To me, that's just the definition of wellness."*

— Charlotte Hardwick



# From Boot Scootin' to Boogie Beats:

## Music Festivals & Venues that Bring the South to Life

By Davina van Buren



The South isn't just where music was made—it's where music found its soul. Jazz rose from the revelry of New Orleans' Congo Square, the blues were forged in Mississippi's cotton fields, country harmonised its heartbreak in Tennessee's legendary studios, and Atlanta gave hip hop a new beat.

Whether it's a midnight jam session, front porch bluegrass pickin', or a genre-bending megafestival, the South's musical soul is alive and riffing. That rich heritage echoes through legendary venues and historic studios—and thrives in unexpected places like underground caves and indie festivals full of personality. Here are some of the South's most soulful stops to get your groove on.

Memphis, the destination for blues, soul, and rock 'n' roll. Let us help you plan an unforgettable experience in our legendary city. Discover the best attractions and activities, stay updated on what's new in Memphis, and get valuable planning tips. Start your adventure now!

MEMPHISTRAVEL.COM

[MEMPHISTRAVEL.COM](https://memphistravel.com)

## Tennessee

### Start Your Journey in Music City

Nashville is the South's undisputed **Music City**. Beyond the honky tonks on Broadway, the city pulses with creativity—from intimate songwriter sessions at the **Bluebird Café** to the hallowed halls of the **Grand Ole Opry**, the world's longest-running radio show which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2025. Take a tour or catch A-list performers at **Ryman Auditorium**, built in the late 1800s to host large-scale church revivals. For a more underground experience, see emerging acts at venues like **The Listening Room Café** or **Exit/In**, where tomorrow's stars play today.

Head southeast to **Memphis**, where fans of "the King" Elvis Presley can tour **Graceland**, the singer's sprawling mansion and estate. The city's musical DNA runs deep through **Sun Studio**, where Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Jerry Lee Lewis launched their careers, and along **Beale Street**, which teems with Black history. The **National Civil Rights Museum**'s partnership with the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** tells the intertwined story of music and social change that defines the city. Don't miss the third annual **RiverBeat Music Festival** in May, a three-day celebration along the Mississippi River at **Tom Lee Park** that's become a signature Southern event.

The twin city of **Bristol**, which straddles the Tennessee-Virginia border, claims the title "*Birthplace of Country Music*" thanks to the legendary 1927 **Bristol Sessions**. Today, the Smithsonian-affiliated **Birthplace of Country Music Museum** preserves that history, while September's **Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion** festival draws international fans. For a more modern spin, the **Hard Rock Hotel & Casino** has a year-round roster of live performances.



Gibson Garage, Nashville

## Mississippi

### Raised on Blues

Continue heading south into Mississippi's Delta country, where cotton fields and juke joints gave birth to the blues. This is sacred ground for music lovers—the place where **Delta Blues** pioneers like Charley Patton and Skip James gave voice to what would become the foundation of modern American music.

Clarksdale's **Ground Zero Blues Club** (co-owned by actor Morgan Freeman) and Red's juke joint know how to keep the toes tapping. Named after Cornelius Orlando "Big Red" Paden, it's a mainstay that has hosted a long list of artists over the years. The **Delta Blues Museum** features exhibits that explore the people and events that propelled the blues mainstream.

For a truly unique experience, book a renovated shotgun shack at the nearby **Shack Up Inn**, which bills itself as the world's oldest B&B—*bed and beer*—and regularly hosts singer-songwriter workshops. You'll find a few modern conveniences—indoor bathrooms, heating and air conditioning, and a coffee maker—but it's built for traveling musicians, playfully proclaiming: "the Ritz we ain't."

When you're ready to get back on the road, another must-see is the **GRAMMY Museum Mississippi** in **Cleveland**, which celebrates the history and cultural significance of music worldwide while paying homage to Mississippi's influence on the industry. In **Indianola**, the **B.B. King Museum** honours the blues icon's legacy, while **Club Ebony** hosts live performances that would make the legend proud.

Continue following the Mississippi Blues Trail markers east to **Tupelo**, where a young Elvis Presley spent his formative years. A mobile passport programme, "**All Shook Up**," guides visitors through Elvis-related sites—from his modest two-room birthplace to the hardware store where his mother bought his first guitar.

# MAKE YOUR VACATION *Legendary*



**S**tep into the extraordinary life of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. Elvis Presley's Graceland in Memphis is a vacation experience unlike any other. You'll see it all ... classic cars, custom jets, and the world-famous mansion where Elvis lived like a legend.

Turn your visit into a true rockstar retreat with an overnight stay at The Guest House at Graceland, our AAA Four Diamond resort hotel, where Southern hospitality meets Elvis' one-of-a-kind style. Enjoy great dining, live music, and all the comforts of a hotel fit for the king.



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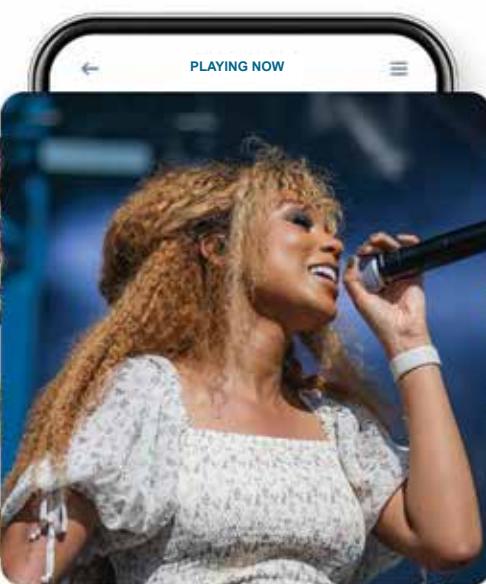
**Graceland**  
THE HOME OF ELVIS PRESLEY



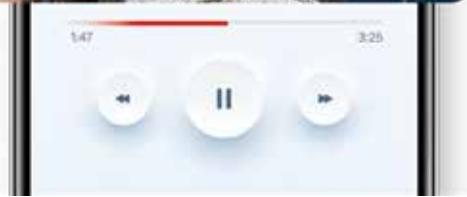
**THE GUEST HOUSE**  
AT GRACELAND

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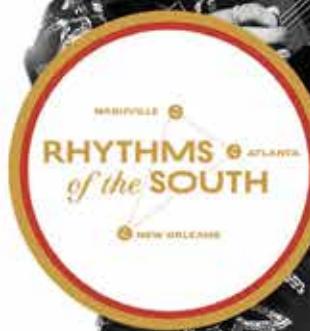


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## Louisiana

### Brass Bands and Bayou Beats

Continue west into Louisiana, where music isn't just entertainment—it's a way of life. **New Orleans** earned its title the "Birthplace of Jazz" through the cultural melting pot of **Congo Square** and the innovation of legends such as Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. Today, that creative spirit lives on, from the intimate acoustics and wooden floors of **Preservation Hall** to the spirited **French Quarter** **second lines** that celebrate everything from weddings to funerals.

But Louisiana's musical landscape extends far beyond the Big Easy. In **Lafayette**, the heart of Cajun country, venues such as the **Blue Moon Saloon** celebrate zydeco and Cajun traditions with festivals like April's **Festival International de Louisiane** and October's **Festivals Acadiens et Créoles**. Don't miss restaurant and music venue **Buck and Johnny's** in **Breaux Bridge**, where you can start the day with a zydeco breakfast (Saturdays only) and dance until the stars come out.

Further west, **Lake Charles** brings the beats at the lively **Panorama Music House**, while **Shreveport's Municipal Auditorium**—considered the finest example of Art Deco in Louisiana—has hosted everyone from GRAMMY winners to tribute acts. Its famed **Louisiana Hayride** broadcasts (1948–1960) launched countless careers, including Elvis Presley and Hank Williams, and the venue's tradition of spotlighting new talent continues today.



**Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Sheffield**



## Alabama

### The Shoals to the Sandbar

Cross into Alabama and step onto hallowed musical ground. The **Muscle Shoals** region, along the Tennessee River, is where legends like Aretha Franklin and Wilson Pickett laid down hits such as *I Never Loved a Man* and *Mustang Sally*. Both **FAME Recording Studios** and the restored **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio**—revived in part by a grant from Dr. Dre and Jimmy Iovine's Beats Electronics—offer behind-the-scenes tours that pull back the curtain on rich history that shaped the region's signature sound.

For something uniquely Alabama, don't miss **Huntsville's World's Longest-Running Cigar Box Guitar Music Festival**. This gloriously offbeat event blends GRAMMY-winning musicians with local talent, hands-on workshops, and the chance to build—and play—your own cigar box guitar. Best of all, it's free, with proceeds supporting music education in Madison County.

Another must-attend event, country megastar Morgan Wallen launched the **"Sand in My Boots" festival** in 2025 as the rebranded "Hangout Music Fest"—already dubbed "the Coachella of the South"—on the sugar-white beaches of **Gulf Shores**. Complete your tour with stops at **Montgomery's Hank Williams Museum** and his childhood home in nearby **Georgiana**, or visit **W.C. Handy's** home in **Florence**, which serves as a museum and library for the "Father of the Blues."



# New Orleans, Louisiana

*Preservation Hall*

## Discover Vibrant New Orleans

For over 300 years, New Orleans has welcomed the world with open arms. Spanish settlers, French colonists, African traditions, and Caribbean rhythms have all left their mark, creating a cultural blend you won't find anywhere else. Here, the sounds of jazz spill from every corner, and every meal tells a story.

Stay in our legendary hotels where famous writers found their muse and jazz legends took the stage. Wake up to the aroma of café au lait and warm beignets dusted with powdered sugar. Wander the French Quarter's wrought-iron balconies and hidden courtyards, then browse Royal Street's antique treasures and local art galleries. For those drawn to mystery, explore our above-ground cemeteries or visit a fortune teller who'll reveal what the cards hold.

French Quarter



BBQ Shrimp



## Embrace The Rhythm of the City

Hop aboard a historic streetcar and roll beneath ancient live oaks while viewing grand mansions that have stood for centuries. Dive into our world-class museums, snap photos with the colourful floats at **Mardi Gras World**, or catch a Mississippi River sunset from an authentic riverboat.

When hunger calls, choose your adventure: savour flavour-rich Cajun gumbo passed down through generations, or try innovative fusion dishes that blend global flavours with local soul. Join the joyful chaos of a second line parade, where strangers become friends as they dance behind a brass band through the streets of the French Quarter. As evening falls, follow the music down **Frenchmen Street** to hear live jazz that moves your feet, then end your night with a carriage ride under the stars.

Whatever draws you here, New Orleans is ready to share her stories with you. Start writing your own chapter today.

Discover more at [NewOrleans.com](http://NewOrleans.com).





## Georgia

### *Rap and Roots*

Travel east into Georgia, where genres collide to ignite musical innovation. **Atlanta** is where hip-hop legends like Outkast redefined rap, and where venues such as **Tabernacle**—a converted church with gospel acoustics and rock-and-roll attitude—host top touring acts in a setting that's part sacred, part rebellious. The city's **ONE Musicfest**, which has featured headliners like Janet Jackson, Pharrell Williams, and Kendrick Lamar, draws more than 100,000 revellers each October in a celebration of diversity and Southern culture.

The state's musical heritage runs deep through its smaller cities, too. **Macon** celebrates its native sons Otis Redding, Little Richard, and the Allman Brothers with museums and annual festivals, while the college town of **Athens** birthed R.E.M., Widespread Panic, and the B-52s. Even today, the latter's historic **40 Watt Club** continues to draw up-and-coming punk and indie rock artists.

Georgia's festival calendar is stacked with headliners that turn the whole state into a stage. Each spring, the **Savannah Music Festival** spans genres from chamber to soul over 17 days, while the **Atlanta Jazz Festival** brings smooth sounds to **Piedmont Park** every Memorial Day weekend. For a taste of emerging regional acts, **AthFest** spotlights the best of Georgia's college music scene, while the **Rome River Jam** blends outdoor recreation with live performances along the Coosa River.



*ONE Musicfest, Atlanta*



*The Carolina Opry Theater, Myrtle Beach*



## South Carolina

### *A Musical Mosaic in the Palmetto State*

Continue down the coast to South Carolina, where musical traditions span the gamut from high culture to honky-tonk. Every May, **Spoletto Festival USA** transforms **Charleston** into a world-class arts destination, featuring opera, experimental music, and jazz performances in the town's magnificent historic venues. George Gershwin found inspiration for the American opera *Porgy and Bess* in the Holy City, and contemporary artists continue to push boundaries today.

The coast offers a different kind of musical experience. **Myrtle Beach** hosts the massive **Carolina Country Music Fest** and the **National Shag Dance Championships**, which celebrate South Carolina's official state dance with top performances and beach tunes. **North Charleston's Riverfront Revival** brings country headliners and local acts together each October for a festival that radiates family reunion vibes.

For a rootsier experience, head inland. The **Albino Skunk Music Festival** in **Greer** is a beloved grassroots gathering every spring and autumn, bringing together bluegrass, folk, and Americana fans for intimate concerts under the stars. And in **Columbia**, the city pays tribute to hometown favourites Hootie & the Blowfish, who got their start at the University of South Carolina, with a guitar pick-shaped monument commemorating their 25th anniversary.



MerleFest, Wilkesboro



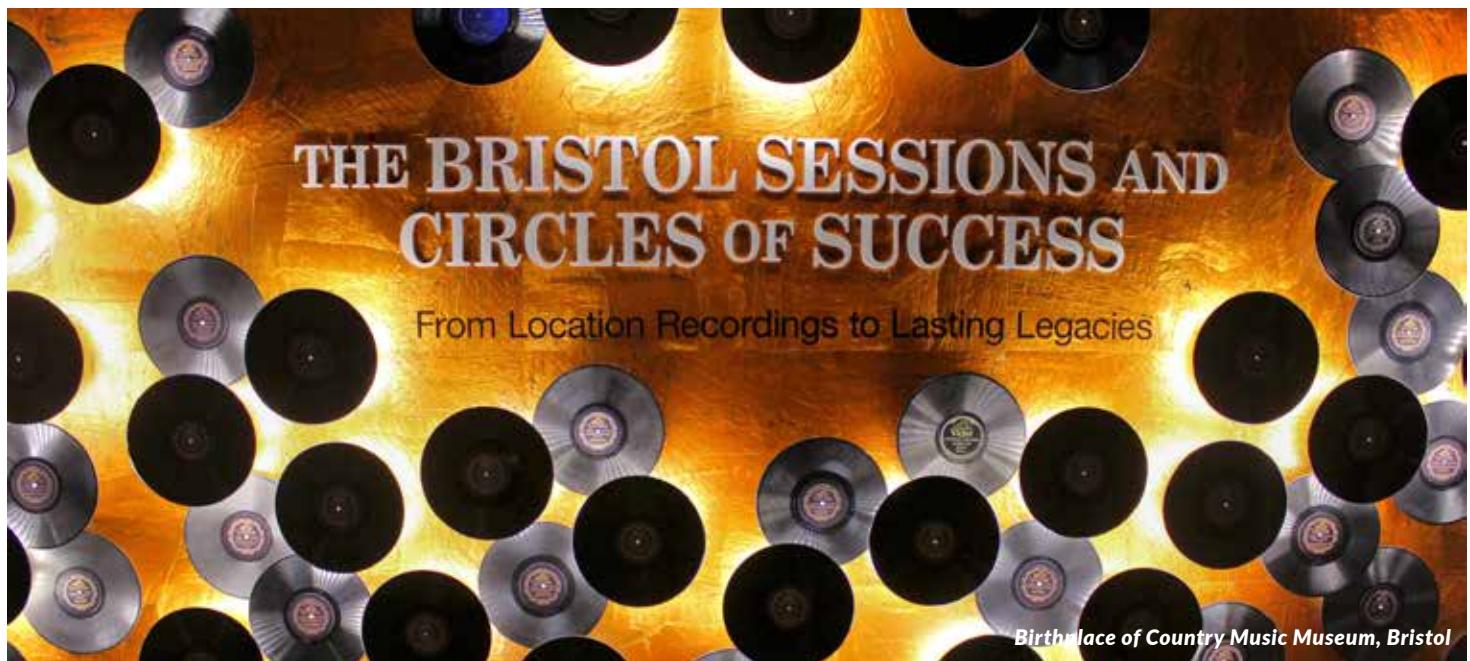
## North Carolina

### *Mountain Sounds, City Rhythms*

As you mosey into North Carolina, music trails wind through mountains and coastal plains. The state's crown jewel is **MerleFest** in **Wilkesboro**, a family-friendly celebration in April that's become one of America's premier folk festivals. Named for the late son of the legendary Doc Watson, it captures the spirit of traditional mountain music while embracing contemporary songwriters.

The Triangle—**Durham**, **Raleigh**, and **Chapel Hill**—boasts polished venues and cutting-edge acts, with **Raleigh** hosting the intimate **Dreamville Festival** (J. Cole's annual event) and **Durham's Carolina Theatre** presenting everything from indie rock to world music. **High Point's John Coltrane International Jazz & Blues Festival**, held every Labor Day weekend, honours the jazz giant's legacy with performances ranging from traditional to avant-garde. And the **Lovin' Life Music Fest** in **Charlotte** is just that, a love letter to the city through music. With more than 10 venues throughout the Queen City, there's everything from intimate theatres to mega auditoriums to catch a show, including the **Bojangles Coliseum**, notably where Elvis had his last live performance.

In the western part of the state, **Asheville** brims with creative energy—from weekly drum circles and buskers on street corners to venues like **The Orange Peel**, which hosts acclaimed touring acts.



Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Bristol



## Virginia

### *Where Every Mile Has a Melody*

Cross into Virginia and follow **The Crooked Road**, a 333-mile driving trail linking dozens of mountain venues and festivals in the southwestern part of the state. Expect everything from blues and old-time string bands to a cappella gospel and centuries-old ballads. This unique route tells the story of how fiddle tunes from Scotland and Ireland evolved into a distinctly American sound.

At the heart of it all is **Bristol**, where the 1927 Bristol Sessions—country music's "big bang"—introduced the world to the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers. Their recordings, now preserved at the **Birthplace of Country Music Museum**, launched the genre we know today. The **Southwest Virginia Cultural Center & Marketplace** offers more opportunities to learn about the region's musical history and catch live performances.

If you time your visit right, you can also catch a live show at the **Rex Theater** in **Galax**. Originally opened in 1940 as a movie palace, the Rex has since been renovated and now serves as a venue for concerts and the home of **Blue Ridge Backroads Live**, a weekly radio show featuring old-time and bluegrass bands broadcast live by local radio station **Classic Country 98.1 FM**.

**FloydFest** attracts an eclectic crowd with everything from klezmer to reggae, while the **Floyd Country Store** hosts legendary Friday night jams featuring traditional bluegrass music and clog dancing. In **Charlottesville**, revelers can grub on smoked meats, pizza and more while enjoying a show at **The Southern Café & Music Hall**. The **Carter Family Fold** in **Hinton**—where June Carter and Johnny Cash once performed together—continues the musical legacy of old-time country and bluegrass music every Saturday night, often featuring descendants of the original Carter Family.



## West Virginia

### *Indie Acts and Appalachian Tracks*

Wind north into West Virginia's mountains, where traditional music drifts from hollers to concert halls. In Charleston, **Mountain Stage**—one of America's longest-running live music radio shows—has been broadcasting since 1983, showcasing both legendary and emerging artists nationwide on National Public Radio.

The state's small-town, intimate venues pack outsized talent. The **Purple Fiddle** in Thomas attracts respected indie artists, while charming **Lewisburg** is home to one of the world's four **Carnegie Halls**. The **Mountain Music Festival** in Fayetteville adds adrenaline to the mix, combining whitewater rafting, camping, and live music at **ACE Adventure Resort** in the heart of the New River Gorge.



*Mountain Stage, Charleston*



*Master Musicians Festival, Somerset*



## Kentucky

### *A Musical Mashup*

Head west into Kentucky, where both bourbon and bluegrass flow freely. **Louisville** anchors the state's festival scene with heavy hitters like **Bourbon & Beyond** in September, featuring headliners such as Phish and Noah Kahan alongside craft spirits and gourmet food. For heavier sounds, **Louder Than Life** attracts metal acts like Slayer and Lamb of God. Meanwhile, the healing power of music takes centre stage at **Ashland's Healing Appalachia**, which raises funds for addiction recovery.

The **Master Musicians Festival** in **Somerset** has grown steadily over the last three decades, perfectly capturing the state's diversity by blending rock, jazz, Celtic, and roots music in a lively outdoor celebration. The state's quirker festivals showcase Kentucky's personality: **London's World Chicken Festival** honours Colonel Sanders with three days of live music (and the world's largest stainless steel skillet), while **Lawrenceburg's Burgoo Festival** dishes out traditional stew alongside performances over a long weekend each October.



**King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena**



## Arkansas

### **Genre Hopping and Boundary Breaking**

In Arkansas, musical traditions range from Delta blues to Ozark mountain sounds. The **King Biscuit Blues Festival** in Helena draws purists to the Mississippi River with a mix of classic, modern, Delta, and Chicago-style blues, while **Eureka Springs** hosts the **Ozark Folk Festival**—the longest continuously running annual folk festival in the U.S.—each autumn.

Modern festivals showcase the state's evolving sound. **FreshGrass** in Bentonville brings progressive bluegrass to **The Momentary**'s museum grounds, while the genre-fluid **Valley of the Vapors Independent Music Festival** in Hot Springs spotlights underground and lesser-known artists from around the globe. In Fort Smith, the **Peacemaker Festival** blends country, rock, blues, and Americana along the Arkansas River, while veteran **MusicFest El Dorado** draws major acts to a small-town stage.



**National Blues Museum, St. Louis**



## Missouri

### **Where Jazz Grew Up and Legends Play On**

End your musical pilgrimage in Missouri, where Kansas City's 18th & Vine Jazz District keeps the swing era alive. The **American Jazz Museum** rightfully claims that while jazz was born in New Orleans, it grew up in Kansas City during Prohibition, when musicians flocked and where the party never stopped. That spirit still thrives at venues like **The Blue Room**, **Green Lady Lounge**, and the **Mutual Musicians Foundation**.

**St. Louis** offers its own musical personality through the **National Blues Museum** and standout venues like **The Pageant** and **Jazz St. Louis**. The city's Soulard neighbourhood thrums with after-hours energy at spots like **1860 Saloon** and **Blueberry Hill's Duck Room**, where Chuck Berry used to perform.

For a completely different experience, **Branson** delivers Vegas-meets-Ozarks entertainment with more theatre seats than New York's Broadway district. Dubbed the "Live Entertainment Capital of Missouri," shows span pop, rock, country, bluegrass, and gospel. Nearby, **Thunder Ridge Nature Arena**—an outdoor amphitheatre carved into the mountains overlooking Table Rock Lake—delivers a transcendental experience in nature.



# Late-Night Listening: Where to Catch Music After Midnight

When the sun goes down, the South's music scene comes alive.  
These venues and traditions keep the party going long after most places have last call.

New Orleans sets the standard with Le Bon Temps Roule's late-night sets, Maple Leaf Bar's nightly shows, and Frenchmen Street's brass bands and jazz combos playing until dawn.

Kansas City's Mutual Musicians Foundation keeps a 1930s tradition alive with midnight jam sessions every Friday and Saturday, open to both artists and spectators.

Little Rock's White Water Tavern may have a humble stage, but its late-night gigs are legendary, spotlighting emerging talent in an intimate juke joint atmosphere.

St. Louis keeps the energy alive in Soulard, where 1860 Saloon, Game Room & Hardshell Café host after-hours sets from local and touring acts.



Green Lady Lounge, Kansas City, Missouri

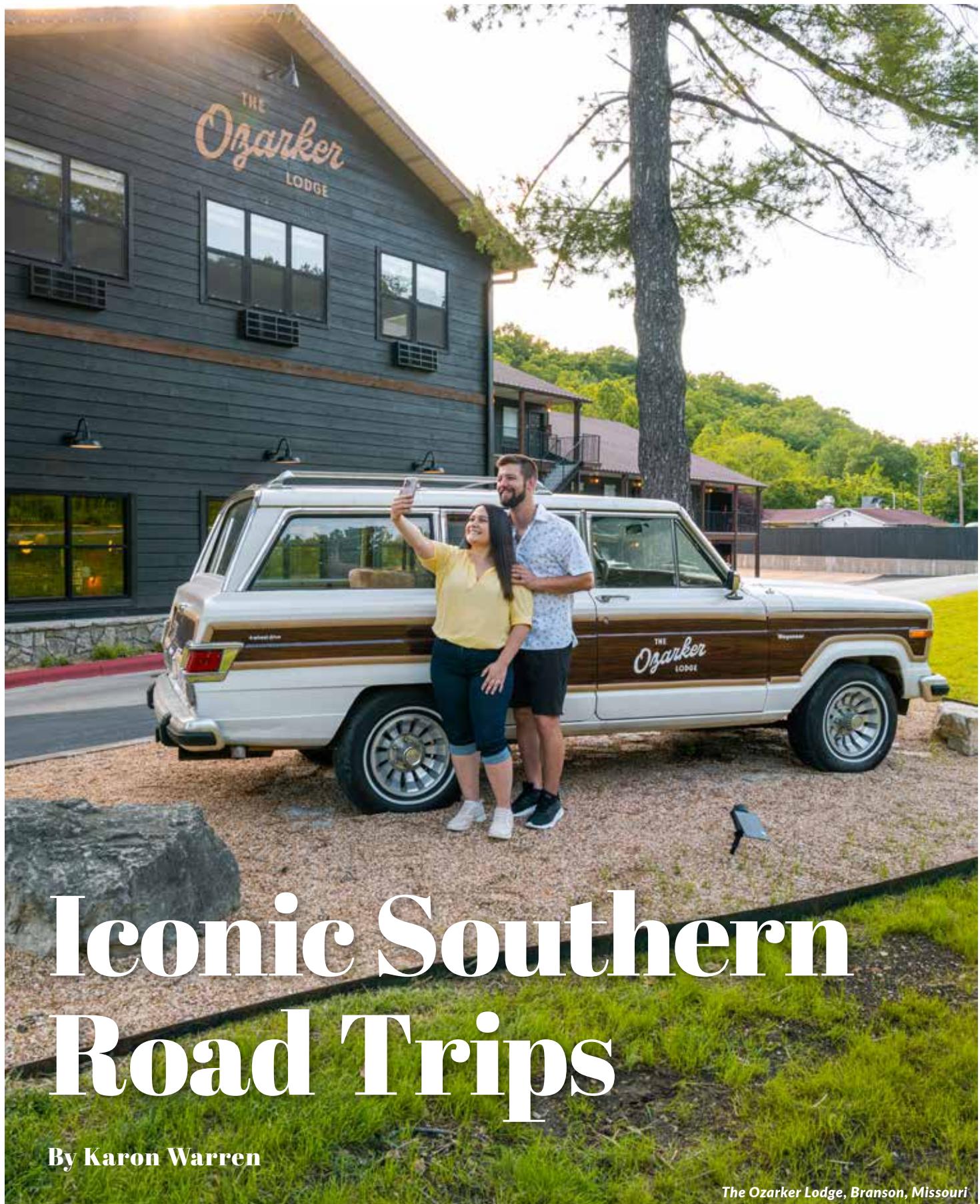


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# Iconic Southern Road Trips

By Karon Warren

*The Ozarker Lodge, Branson, Missouri*

**M**aybe it's the soulful soundtrack of the Delta blues, the scent of barbecue drifting off a roadside pit, or the way the pavement seems to hum with history. The South wasn't just made for road trips—it invites them. From river-carved byways to sun-drenched stretches, mountain switchbacks and highways stitched with song, these storied routes were built for wandering. So crack the windows, cue the soundtrack, and follow wherever the road dares to lead—because down here, every mile is a memory in the making.



**Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory, Kentucky**



**Negro Southern League Museum, Birmingham, Alabama**

## Catch a Vibe on Interstate 65

Start in **Louisville**, hitting hotspots like **Nashville**, **Huntsville**, **Birmingham**, and **Montgomery** en route for a steady stream of culture, history, and character. To get an authentic taste of the South, start with a visit to the **Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory** to see how the iconic baseball bats from America's pastime are crafted—and take home your own souvenir mini bat. Next, board the **Belle of Louisville**, a river steamboat, for a cruise along the Ohio River and a fresh perspective on the skyline.

In Tennessee, take time to explore **Nashville**. One of the best ways to see the city's highlights is on a hop-on, hop-off **Old Town Trolley** tour. For a memorable meal, stop by **Prince's Hot Chicken**, where the famed spicy dish is said to have originated.

Once in **Huntsville**, head to the **Alabama Constitution Hall Historic Park & Museum**, where costumed villagers go about daily tasks such as baking bread over an open fire or working in a cabinetmaker's shop.

From there, it's off to **Birmingham** for a deep dive into African Americans' fight for equality at the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute** and **16th Street Baptist Church**. Another not-to-miss attraction is the **Negro Southern League Museum**, which showcases the stories of Black baseball players who made their mark on the game. Continue your journey in **Montgomery** at the **Civil Rights Memorial Center**, the **Freedom Rides Museum**, and the **Rosa Parks Museum**, which honour those who dared to stand up for equality.

Once you reach **Mobile**, you can go back further in time at **Africatown**, which documents the stories of survivors from the last transatlantic slave ship. Mobile shares another part of its historic past as the birthplace of **Mardi Gras** in the United States, which you can explore at the **Mobile Carnival Museum** through elaborate krewe costumes, photographs, and artefacts.

## The Mother Road

The 100th anniversary of **Route 66** takes place in 2026, meaning there's no better time to plan an All-American road trip with a spin through the Missouri portion. Start in **St. Louis** at the **Gateway Arch**, one of the newest designated national parks. This architectural marvel takes visitors 192 metres into the air, where they can enjoy spectacular views in every direction. Or, play like a kid at **City Museum**, an artist-built playground with installations you can climb on, jump over, and swing through.

The official birthplace of **Route 66**, **Springfield** features sites and attractions that celebrate all the personality and nostalgia of America's most beloved roadway. The **Route 66 Car Museum** houses 75 cars from 1907 through the 1980s, plus a variety of automobiles featured in movies such as *Days of Thunder* and *Batman*. At the **History Museum on the Square**, learn about the site of the first documented shoot-out in the West and its role during the Civil War.

From there, it's off to **Joplin**, in search of art. Follow the **Downtown Joplin Mural Trail**, a loop of 10 public pieces that tell the story of the town. When it's time to imbibe, relax on the patio with a cold beverage from **Chaos Brewing Company**, the city's first microbrewery.



**History Museum on the Square, Springfield, Missouri**



# Southern Hospitality Meets Urban Vibrancy in Charlotte

Optimist Hall

**D**iscover Charlotte, North Carolina, where Southern charm meets urban sophistication. As one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S., Charlotte is bustling with dynamic attractions and diverse communities that are waiting to be explored. With nonstop flights to **Charlotte Douglas International Airport** from more than 185 national and international destinations, you're just a plane ride away from experiencing the welcoming hospitality that the South is known for.

## Charlotte's Royal Treatment

Known as "the Queen City," Charlotte was named after Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the wife of King George III. Experience the royal treatment in Charlotte as you visit the city's world-class museums and one-of-a-kind attractions. Browse collections of fine art and awe-inspiring works at the **Bechtler Museum of Modern Art**, **Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture** and **Mint Museum Uptown**. Step into the fast lane at the **NASCAR Hall of Fame**, where racing history comes to life through historic artifacts and interactive exhibits that put you in the driver's seat.



Whitewater Center



NASCAR Hall of Fame



Mint Museum

When you need to slow things down, book a table to dig into the Queen City's culinary scene. From award-winning restaurants with global influence to Southern favourites with a twist, take your appetite on an epicurean adventure. Grab a slice at **Bird Pizzeria**, named one of the best pizza places in the U.S. by *The New York Times*. Pair smooth beats with handcrafted cocktails at listening bar  **Lorem Ipsum**, recognized by *Esquire Magazine*. Indulge in a bit of everything at **Optimist Hall**, North Carolina's largest food hall, housed in a historic mill. Don't forget to take in Charlotte's dazzling skyline from atop a rooftop bar or restaurant.

Take a break from the city and immerse yourself in some of Charlotte's natural settings. The city is filled with scenic parks and paved greenways that connect neighbourhoods. The **Whitewater Center** offers a respite to walk along trails or enjoy more thrilling pursuits like whitewater rafting, ziplining and climbing.

Whatever your interest, Charlotte has something for you. To learn more and start planning your trip to the Queen City, visit [charlottestotalot.com](http://charlottestotalot.com).

## Where the Mountains Meet the Sky

Take a spin on America's favourite drive, the **Blue Ridge Parkway**, which stretches all the way from **Shenandoah National Park** in Virginia to the **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** in North Carolina.

At **Shenandoah National Park**, spend some time taking in the spectacular views as you hike along the park's trails. The ranger programmes are a great way to learn about the local wildlife, history, and even the stars above. As you travel south, look for the iconic **Roanoke Star** for an overlook that provides panoramic views of the city below. Another way to explore is by cycling the **Roanoke Valley Greenways**, a system of more than 30 miles of paved paths.

At Milepost 176 on the **Blue Ridge Parkway**, snap some photos of **Mabry Mill**, a historic mill where Ed and Lizzy Mabry ground corn, sawed lumber, and practised blacksmithing. During summer and early autumn, you'll find cultural demonstrations on weekends, making it an ideal time to visit.

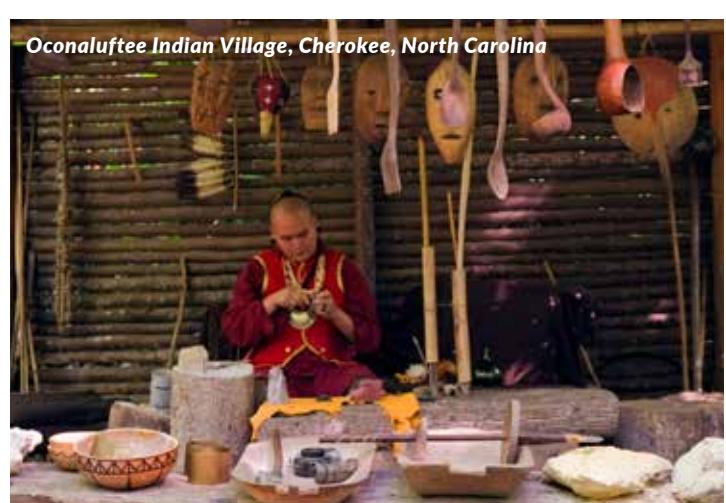
The **Omni Grove Park Inn** in **Asheville** is an ideal place to experience one of the original vagabond routes, where trailblazers Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, and John Burroughs pioneered the great American road trip before stretching your legs in **Waynesville** for a bit of shopping. Pick up handmade goods at **Axe & Awl Leatherworks**, local art at the **Haywood County Arts Council**, or grab a refreshing beverage at **Waynesville Soda Jerks**. Just down the road, check into the **Route 19 Inn**, a restored 1948 roadside motor lodge that brings back the intimacy and kitsch of road-tripping from a bygone era. Before heading back to the parkway, fuel up with fluffy pancakes at **Joey's Pancake House** in **Maggie Valley**.

From there, head west to the parkway's end, just north of **Cherokee**. Take some time to learn about the original settlers at the **Museum of the Cherokee People**. At the **Oconaluftee Indian Village**, you'll get a glimpse into day-to-day life through traditional art and dance performances.

Afterward, stretch your legs in **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** with hiking, picnicking, and wildlife viewing. Or swap highways for train tracks on the legendary **Great Smoky Mountains Railroad**, known as the historic "Steam of the Smokies." You can also wrap up your journey in nearby **Sevierville**, exploring **Forbidden Caverns**' sparkling formations, grottos, and natural chimneys before heading downtown to snap a photo with the iconic **Dolly Parton Statue**.



**Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Sevierville, Tennessee**



**Oconaluftee Indian Village, Cherokee, North Carolina**



**Myrtle Beach SkyWheel, South Carolina**

## A Salty Detour

**U.S. Route 17** runs all the way from Florida through Georgia up to **Wilmington**, North Carolina. Called **The Coastal Highway** along the shores of South Carolina, a great way to experience the route is to start at **Charleston's Historic District** and waterfront. Tour the cobblestone streets by **horse-drawn carriage** for a taste of life in a bygone era before hitting the road.

Once a retreat for the wealthy, **McClellanville** now fancies itself a fishing village. As such, it's no wonder this small town is well known for sumptuous seafood. The first Saturday of May each year, they host the **Lowcountry Shrimp Festival and Blessing of the Fleet**, which is one of the best times to visit. If you prefer more serenity, take a hike through the **Francis Marion National Forest**, accompanied by the sounds of the resident wildlife.

In **Georgetown**, scenic views of **Georgetown Harbour** and the **Sampit River** await as you meander down the four-block-long **Harborwalk**, home to eateries, shops, and art galleries. One not-to-miss is the **Rice Museum**, which explains the importance of rice cultivation in the region through dioramas, paintings, and artefacts.

Wrap up your trip in **Myrtle Beach**, home to 60 miles of sandy shores along the Atlantic Ocean. There's no shortage of things to do, from mini golf to fishing, water sports, dolphin cruises, shopping, and, of course, sunbathing. Finish your day with a sunset ride on the iconic **SkyWheel**, a 61-metre observation wheel for stunning boardwalk views.



National Civil Rights Museum, Tennessee



Gateway Arch National Park, Missouri

## A River Runs Through It

Recently chosen as the Best Scenic Drive in America, the **Great River Road** is a 3,000-mile north-south route that follows the Mississippi River through 10 states. Awarded the highest designation by the Federal Highway Administration, the road is considered a “destination unto itself,” running from Minnesota to Louisiana.

Start your southern journey in **Memphis**, where the **National Civil Rights Museum** at the Lorraine Motel anchors the city’s powerful history. Don’t miss the second building, which investigates James Earl Ray, Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassin, and the subsequent trial. Step out for some fresh air at **Big River Crossing**, the longest public pedestrian bridge over the Mississippi. If you’d like to extend the trip farther north, **St. Louis** offers its own mix of culture, from **Gateway Arch National Park** to the architectural playground of **City Museum** and a burgeoning art scene.

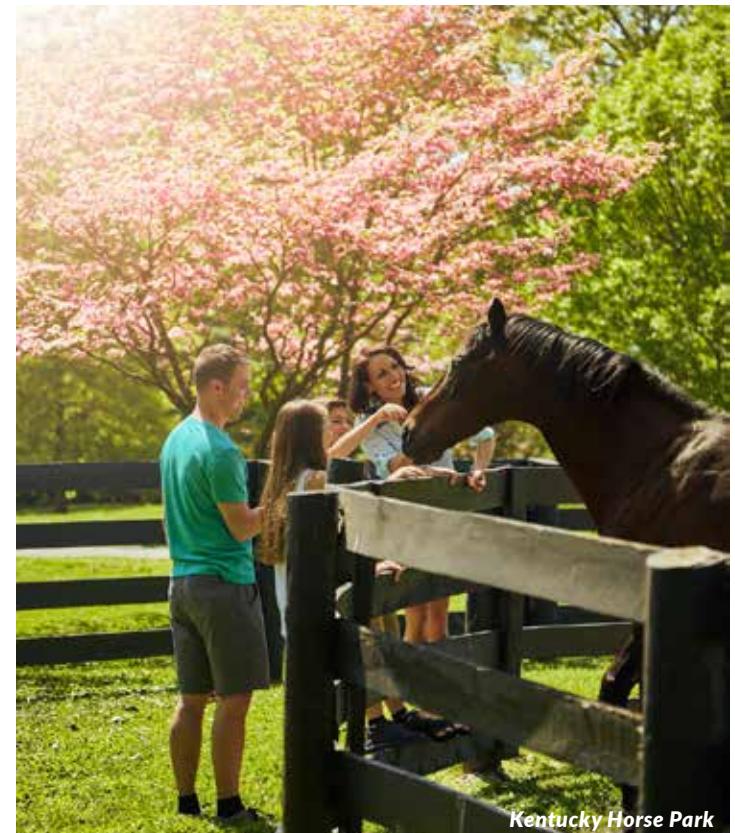
Continue south into the Natural State with a stop in downtown **Helena**. The **Delta Cultural Center** chronicles the region’s rich musical and cultural heritage, while **Freedom Park**—Arkansas’ first site on the National Underground Railroad Network—offers a powerful look into the state’s Civil War history. **Arkansas Post State Park**, the first European settlement in the state, preserves original 1800s log cabins you can tour, while further south, **Lake Chicot State Park** showcases the largest natural lake in Arkansas and the largest oxbow lake in North America, formed centuries ago when the Mississippi River dramatically changed course.

Continuing on to **Baton Rouge**, the **Capitol Park Museum** welcomes you to explore the history, industry, and culture of Louisiana. The museum touches on every era, from Native Americans to the Civil War, jazz, and Mardi Gras and offers a good sense of place.

From there, continue on to **Whitney Plantation** for a tour of a 200-acre former sugar plantation, where you’ll hear about the history of slavery in the United States from the perspective of the enslaved people. It’s a powerful and immersive look into the complicated culture of plantations.

To get up close and personal with some of Louisiana’s most popular residents—its alligators—book a stay in one of the floating cabins at **Bayou Segnette State Park**. Situated right on the bayou, you can watch them meander by your window.

End your journey in **New Orleans** with a stroll through the French Quarter with stops at **St. Louis Cathedral**, the **French Market**, and to see the dueling pianos at **Pat O’Brien’s**. If you’d like more history of the area, the city also is home to some notable museums, including the **Louisiana State Museum – Cabildo** and **Presbytere** and the **National World War II Museum**.



Kentucky Horse Park

## Four Wheels and Four Hooves

For those who love horses, **U.S. Route 60**—known as the **Roosevelt Midland Trail**, the first transcontinental auto trail—runs through central Kentucky and offers the full experience of white-fenced pastures, photogenic barns, and seasonal wildflowers. Start your trip at **Swallowland Farm** in **Shelbyville**, where you can tour the National Register of Historic Places-listed property and see the majestic **Léttleiki** horses from Iceland before heading to **HorseSensing** to learn about equine therapy.

Just north, visit former Triple Crown and Breeders’ Cup winners at **Old Friends** in **Georgetown** to see how they’re enjoying retirement. Of course, you can’t leave town without sampling a famous Kentucky **Hot Brown** open-faced sandwich at **Fava’s 1910 Diner**. You’ll be glad you did!

End your journey in **Lexington**, the Horse Capital of the World. Indulge your love of all things equine at **Kentucky Horse Park** and the **International Museum of the Horse**, where you can explore the connection between horses and humans. Next, grab a seat at the Equine Show at the **Breeds Barn** to learn more about different breeds and what sets them apart.

Afterward, take a walk to the **Hall of Champions** and meet some of the retired champs that call Kentucky Horse Park home, before heading to **Keeneland** to see them race. Horses compete in April and October, so place your bets and get ready for excitement.

# The Wild West Lives on in St. Joseph, Missouri

The legendary spirit of the American West lives on in St. Joseph, Missouri. Located along the Missouri River, this historic city played a pivotal role in some of the most iconic chapters of early American history. You can get a glimpse into fascinating periods of the past by visiting the **King of the Trails**.

On May 14, 1804, explorers **Meriwether Lewis and William Clark** launched their expedition across the uncharted Louisiana Territory. On their return trip, they followed the Missouri River, travelling through what is now the city of St. Joseph. Their mapping efforts helped pave the way for the city to become a jumping-off point for pioneers travelling westward on the California and Oregon Trails in the mid-1800s. The town flourished as a last supply point and a place to rest for those venturing into untamed territory.

When it comes to Western expansion, nothing captures the imagination more than the legendary **Pony Express**. In 1860, this bold mail delivery system launched in St. Joseph, connecting the East to the West like never before. At the **Pony Express National Museum**, you can begin to imagine the courage it took to carry the mail across a wild frontier through the Hall of Riders, filled with authentic saddles, pistols, and stories from the legendary mail service. Interactive exhibits include a replica one-room schoolhouse and The Pony Bar that houses the **Goetz Museum**.



The city's role in the opening of the American West is traced through the **Patee House Museum**. What was once a luxury hotel built in 1858, serving as the headquarters for the Pony Express and the Provost Marshal's office for the Union Army during the Civil War, is now a place where authentic artifacts are displayed in the buildings where these events actually occurred. The historic hotel building is recognized as one of the top 10 Western museums by True West magazine and is a National Historic Landmark.

Outlaws found their place in St. Joseph's past. The infamous **Jesse James Home Museum** marks the spot where the famed outlaw met his end. You can stand inside the Jesse James Home and peer through the bullet hole left in the wall on that fateful day in 1882, drive by the **Buchanan County Courthouse**, where justice loomed for the Ford brothers, and the **Missouri Valley Trust Building**, rumored to be on Jesse's hit list.

St. Joseph is more than a waypoint; it's a living museum of America's frontier. Start planning your visit at [stjomo.com](http://stjomo.com).

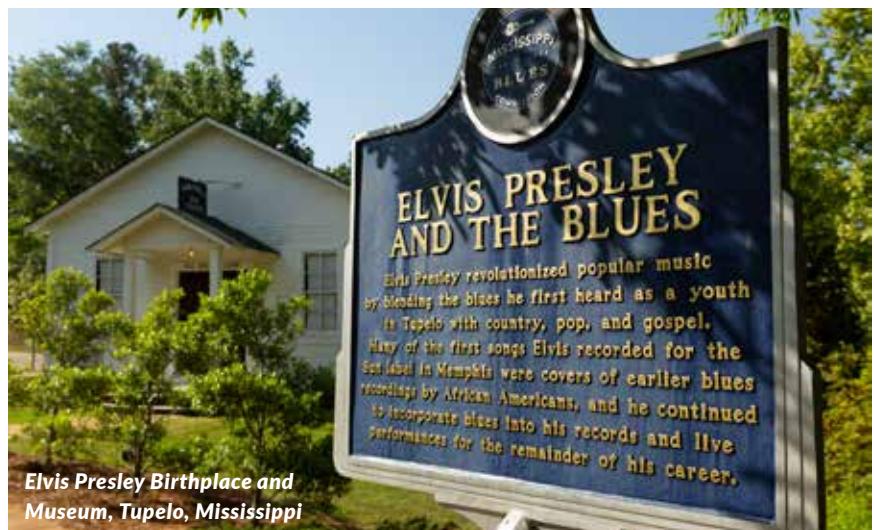
## Natchez Trace Parkway

A designated National Scenic Byway and an All-American Road, the 444-mile route through Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee has seen 10,000 years of North American history commemorating the most significant highway of the Old Southwest. Starting in **Natchez**, take a tour with **Natchez City Sightseeing**, which includes more than 40 sites and attractions, from museums to historic mansions. For accommodations, try one of Natchez's bed-and-breakfasts, many dating back to the 1800s.

Once you reach **Ridgeland**, trade your car for a vintage 1928 Curtiss-Wright Travel Air Biplane and take to the skies with **Vintage Air Tours**. If you're in need of souvenirs, follow the **Ridgeland Retail Trail** to find a variety of handmade wares, the latest fashions, and more.

As the birthplace of Elvis Presley, **Tupelo** invites you to tour the **Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum** to learn more about the King of Rock 'n' Roll. But he's not the only historic figure here. At the **Tupelo National Battlefield Site**, you can also hear about the soldiers who fought in the Battle of Tupelo, the last major Civil War stand in Mississippi.

**Nashville** is known for its musical history, but it's also a place with ample outdoor space to stretch your legs. Spend some time playing in the trees at **The Adventure Park**, where you can conquer challenges on the aerial ropes course. Or set sail on the **Nashville Water Taxi** to cruise along the Cumberland River as you take in skyline views—a relaxing way to end your journey on the Trace.



Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum, Tupelo, Mississippi



Nashville Skyline, Tennessee

A large bronze statue of a young Elvis Presley, wearing a leather jacket and holding a guitar, stands in a park-like setting with trees and a building in the background. To the right, the text "TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI... POSITIVELY THE PLACE" is displayed in large, bold, white letters. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "tupelo" with a colorful, stylized "o" and the website "tupelo.net".

Whether you stand in the room where he was born, savor the food he ate, or walk the streets he strolled, **TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI**, is positively the place to begin your Elvis journey.

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