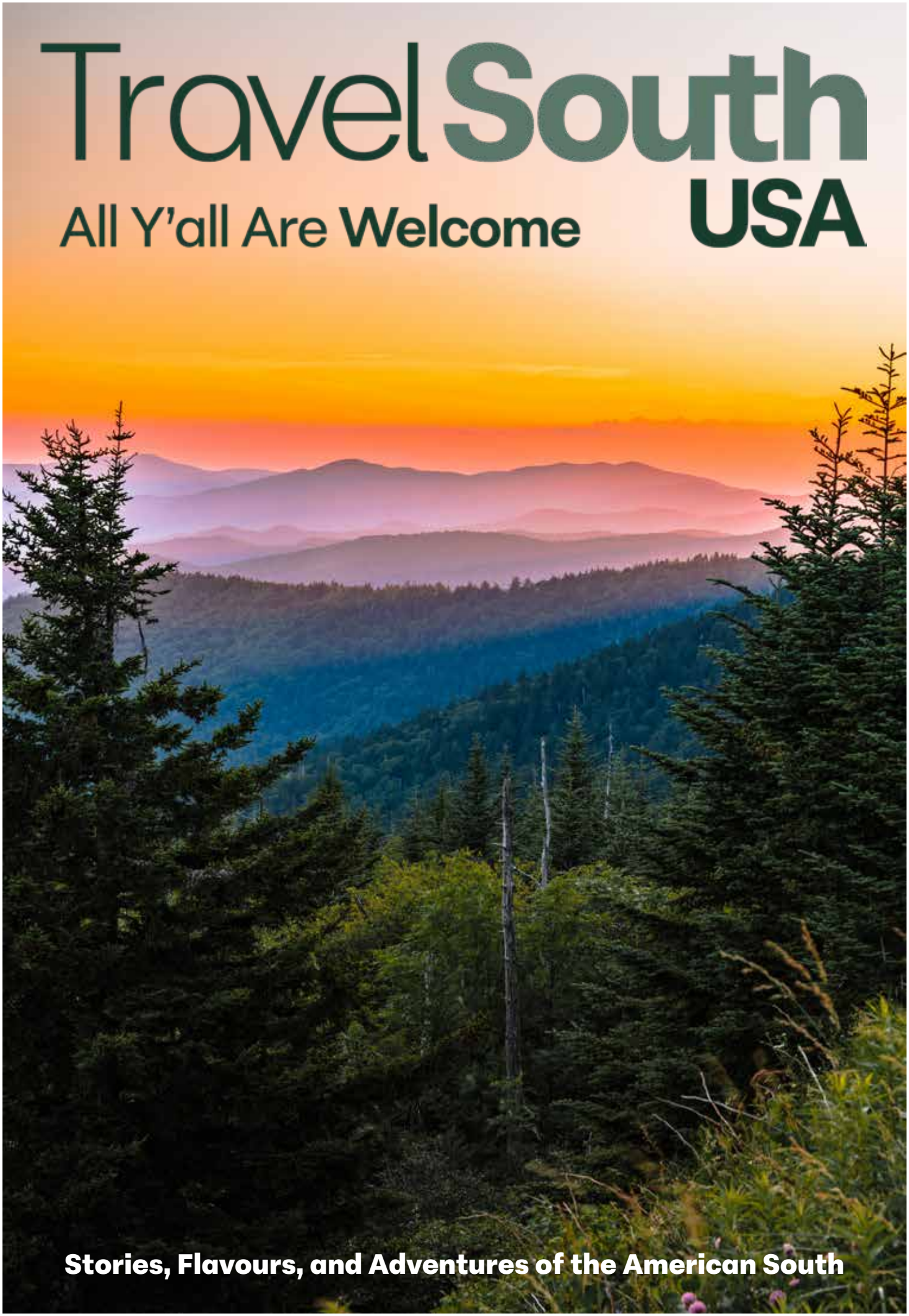
Travel South USA

All Y'all Are Welcome



Stories, Flavours, and Adventures of the American South



WELCOME TO SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY.

MAKE THE JOURNEY PART OF THE DESTINATION.

KEEP CLIMBING

DELTA SKYTEAM



Kentucky Music Hall of Fame Museum

From the Editor

The very mention of the southern states of the USA conjures a kaleidoscope of vivid images: Civil Rights landmarks, blues bars, the Great Smoky Mountains, bourbon, barbecue and front porches brimming with live music. The clichés exist for a reason. But spend time across the South and you'll quickly realise there isn't one homogeneous South at all.

This guide takes you through 12 states, from Alabama and Arkansas to Virginia and West Virginia, each with its own story to tell. Louisiana couldn't feel more different from North Carolina. Mississippi's blues heritage sits worlds apart from Missouri's literary history, while South Carolina's Gullah Geechee traditions bring fresh perspective to the state. That's exactly what makes this region so endlessly fascinating.

Take barbecue, for instance. Every state has its own style, its own wood, its own rub and its own fiercely defended opinion on sauce. You might enjoy the pulled pork and brisket, but then find yourself craving a boudin ball in Louisiana, Springfield cashew chicken in Missouri or even a Kentucky Hot Brown instead.

The same goes for music. The Delta blues of Mississippi sound nothing like the Zydeco of western Louisiana, Nashville's songwriting scene or the soul that poured out of Alabama's Muscle Shoals studios.

History runs through every state too. You'll walk in the footsteps of Civil Rights leaders in Alabama and Tennessee, explore Cherokee heritage in North Carolina, discover presidential history in Virginia and uncover stories of Indigenous communities, entrepreneurs and artists whose influence reaches far beyond the region.

A road trip here includes cheering alongside 100,000 fans at a college football game in Baton Rouge and finally understanding why sports fans take tailgating so seriously, watching golfers chase perfection across the Carolinas or driving from one spectacular landscape to the next, whether that's the Smokies, the Ozarks or the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Across these 12 states you'll find thriving arts communities, world-class museums and places looking firmly to the future. Alabama is building rockets and spacecraft in Huntsville, while North Carolina has become one of the nation's leading centres for technology, research and innovation.

So whether you've driven the Blue Ridge Parkway a dozen times or this is your first journey through the American South, I hope these pages encourage you to look beyond the obvious and discover just how many different Souths there really are.

Rashmi Narayan
Editorial Director

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Welcome to America's Travel South Region

The American South is a place meant to be experienced—one unforgettable kilometre at a time. Across our 12 states, the open road connects more than 100 national and state parks, nearly 300 MICHELIN-recommended restaurants, legendary music destinations, vibrant cities, welcoming small towns, and stories that have shaped America and the world.

Explore mist-covered Appalachian and Ozark mountains, winding rivers including the Mighty Mississippi, ancient forests, swamps and bayous, and sun-kissed coastlines of the Atlantic and Gulf. Follow scenic byways to places where adventure awaits around every bend. Along the way, discover a culinary landscape that ranges from beloved roadside favourites and generations-old traditions to chef-driven restaurants earning international acclaim.

This is also the birthplace of American music—blues, jazz, country, rock, soul, and bluegrass. The South's musical legacy is not confined to history. It lives on through world-class musicians and unforgettable performances in celebrated concert halls, intimate listening rooms, lively honky-tonks, historic juke joints, and festivals throughout the region.

The 2027 Travel South USA Global Vacation Planner is your invitation to experience the freedom of the open road and create a journey as individual as you are. Whether you travel for flavour, adventure, music, history, or the joy of discovering what lies beyond the next turn, the possibilities are endless.

We are One Region with Infinite Possibilities. Come curious, bring your appetite, and stay awhile. There will always be a place for you at our table.

ALL Y'ALL ARE WELCOME!

With heartfelt invitation,

Rochelle Hicks
Director, Visit Mississippi
Chair, Travel South USA Board of Directors



Ajax Diner, Oxford, MS



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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)
- St. Louis Lambert 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)


Chicago O'Hare International Airport
Cincinnati/ Northern Kentucky International Airport
Washington Dulles International Airport
Wheeling
Morgantown
Harpers Ferry
WEST VIRGINIA
Alexandria
Covington
Huntington
VIRGINIA
Charleston
Charlottesville
Richmond
Virginia Beach
St. Louis
Louisville
Frankfort
Lexington
Bardstown
Lewisburg
Beckley
Roanoke
Williamsburg
Ste. Genevieve
Owensboro
KENTUCKY
Cape Girardeau
Cumberland Gap
Bristol
Bowling Green
Paducah
Winston Salem
Greensboro
Raleigh
Outer Banks
Knoxville
Sevierville
Pigeon Forge
Asheville
NORTH CAROLINA
Nashville
TENNESSEE
Murfreesboro
Gatlinburg
Fayetteville
Charlotte
Greenville
Rock Hill
Wilmington
Chattanooga
Memphis
Florence/ Muscle Shoals
Atlanta
Athens
SOUTH CAROLINA
Myrtle Beach
Oxford
Tunica
Huntsville
Columbia
Georgetown
Tupelo
Augusta
Clarksdale
ALABAMA
Charleston
Macon
Birmingham
Beaufort
MISSISSIPPI
Hilton Head
GEORGIA
Greenwood
Greenville
Columbus
Tuscaloosa
Auburn
Columbus
Savannah
Ridgeland
Montgomery
Golden Isles
Vicksburg
Jackson
International Gateway Airport
Capital City
Natchez
Featured City
Mobile
Baton Rouge
Mississippi Gulf Coast
Gulf Shores/ Orange Beach
New Orleans
Houma
Orlando


Twelve

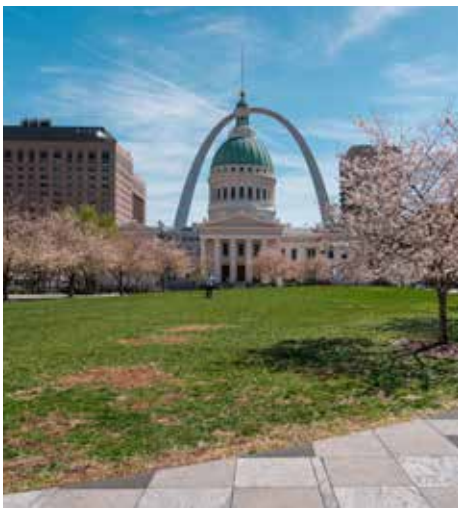







States






One








South

Alabama

LOOK TO THE SKY, THEN LOOK BACK AT HISTORY

Alabama is a state of remarkable contrasts. In **Huntsville**, the **U.S. Space & Rocket Center** traces America's journey into space, with the Saturn V rocket and **Space Camp** offering a suitably out-of-this-world experience. The city also has **Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment**, one of the country's largest independent arts facilities, while the **Land Trust of North Alabama** puts hiking and nature close to the city.

Montgomery, **Birmingham** and **Selma** are essential stops on the **US Civil Rights Trail**. You can walk across the **Edmund Pettus Bridge**, visit the **16th Street Baptist Church** and learn about the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the people who risked everything in the struggle for civil rights.

Muscle Shoals became a recording mecca, attracting artists including Aretha Franklin and the Rolling Stones. Down on the Gulf Coast, meanwhile, 52 kilometres of white sand stretch across **Gulf Shores**, **Orange Beach** and **Fort Morgan**. There are few states where you can contemplate the civil rights movement in the morning and explore the wonders of space in the afternoon.



U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville



Buffalo National River

Arkansas

ART, BIKES AND THE OZARKS

Culture with a little fresh air is what makes Arkansas truly unique. **Bentonville** has emerged as a world-class hub for both art and adventure, home to the striking **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art** and a network of world-renowned mountain biking trails.

Beyond **Northwest Arkansas**, the state's natural beauty takes centre stage. In **Little Rock**, **Little Rock Central High School** offers a pivotal stop on the **US Civil Rights Trail**. Further north and west, the **Ozark and Ouachita mountains** feature ancient thermal springs at **Hot Springs National Park**, vast caves, and canoeing along the pristine **Buffalo National River**.

Arkansas works particularly well for those who do not want to choose between culture and the outdoors. You can have both, preferably before dinner.



Hamilton Turner Inn, Savannah

Georgia

PEACHES, BIG-CITY ENERGY AND THE COAST

Atlanta is a major international gateway with a cultural life of its own, from hip-hop and contemporary food to the **Atlanta BeltLine**. It is also central to the story of the American Civil Rights Movement. The **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park** and the **National Center for Civil and Human Rights** offer important context for understanding the struggle for equality. The city is also a vibrant sports capital celebrated for hosting the 1996 Summer Olympics and boasting passionate fanbases across baseball, American football, and football (soccer).

Savannah provides a very different mood, with its romantic oak-shaded squares, historic architecture and waterfront making it one of the most recognisable cities in the region. **Tybee Island** and the **Golden Isles** offer beaches, seafood and Gullah Geechee (descendants of enslaved Africans) heritage.

Up north is where **Blue Ridge** and **Dahlonega** sit among the **Appalachian Mountains**. The area has vineyards, mountain scenery and scenic rail journeys. Add peaches, fried chicken, Lowcountry boils and you begin to understand why this is a state that has range.

Kentucky

HORSES, BOURBON AND BLUEGRASS MUSIC

Kentucky has many great calling cards: bourbon, bluegrass music, thoroughbreds and Mammoth Cave. The **Kentucky Bourbon Trail®** brings visitors into the world of the spirit that has become synonymous with the state, with historic distilleries scattered through the beautiful countryside.

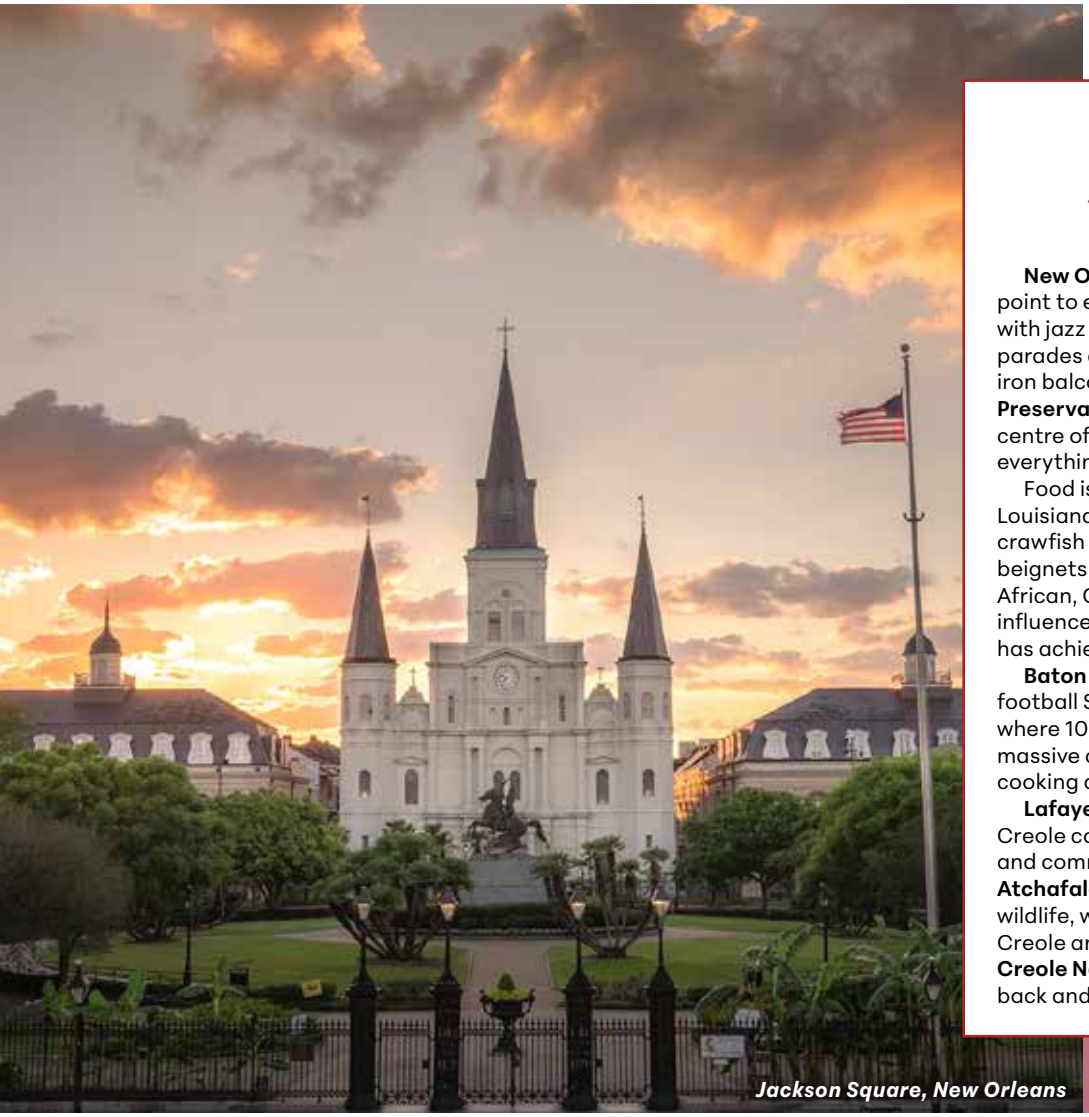
Louisville adds the **Kentucky Derby**, a cultural institution where sport, fashion, tradition and a rather impressive amount of sartorial elegance come together. The city also pays tribute to its most famous son at the **Muhammad Ali Center**, an inspiring museum dedicated to the boxer's life and legacy.

In **Lexington** and **Central Kentucky**, horse country is where you'll encounter farms and equestrian attractions. Horses are very much a part of the landscape and identity.

Don't miss **Mammoth Cave National Park**, home to the world's longest known cave system. Above ground there are trails and cycling routes, while below it is a completely different world of limestone passages.



Spycoast Farm, Lexington



Jackson Square, New Orleans

Louisiana

JAZZ, GASTRONOMY AND BAYOU LIFE

New Orleans is the obvious starting point to explore Louisiana's personality, with jazz clubs, brass bands, second-line parades and the **French Quarter's** wrought-iron balconies. **Frenchmen Street** and **Preservation Hall** keep live music at the centre of the city, while festivals celebrate everything from jazz to local culture.

Food is equally important across Louisiana. Gumbo, andouille sausages, crawfish boils, jambalaya, po'boys and beignets tell the story of French, Spanish, African, Caribbean and Native American influences, while the state's cocktail culture has achieved near-mythical status.

Baton Rouge comes alive on college football Saturdays at LSU's Tiger Stadium, where 100,000 fans turn game day into a massive cultural ritual of tailgating, Cajun cooking and regional pride.

Lafayette is at the heart of Cajun and Creole country, where food, language, music and community remain living traditions. The **Atchafalaya Basin** offers swamp tours and wildlife, while **Lake Charles** sits where Cajun, Creole and Texan influences meet. The **Creole Nature Trail** is the ideal spot to sit back and enjoy nature at its best.

Mississippi

FOLLOW THE BLUES

Mississippi has produced an extraordinary amount of American cultural history. The **Mississippi Blues Trail** stretches across the state with more than 200 markers telling the story of the music that changed the world. In the **Delta**, music, food, storytelling and history are inseparable.

Natchez, perched above the **Mississippi River**, offers grand architecture, while **Oxford** combines literary heritage, live music, dining and the **University of Mississippi**. William Faulkner's **Rowan Oak** sits alongside a lively downtown where you can eat, shop and listen to music.

Coastal Mississippi has seafood, waterfront communities and barrier islands, including **Ship Island**, where beaches and **Fort Massachusetts** provide an unlikely pairing of nature and history. **Ocean Springs** and **Bay St Louis** add galleries, independent shops and restaurants.



Thorny Oyster Restaurant, Bay St. Louis

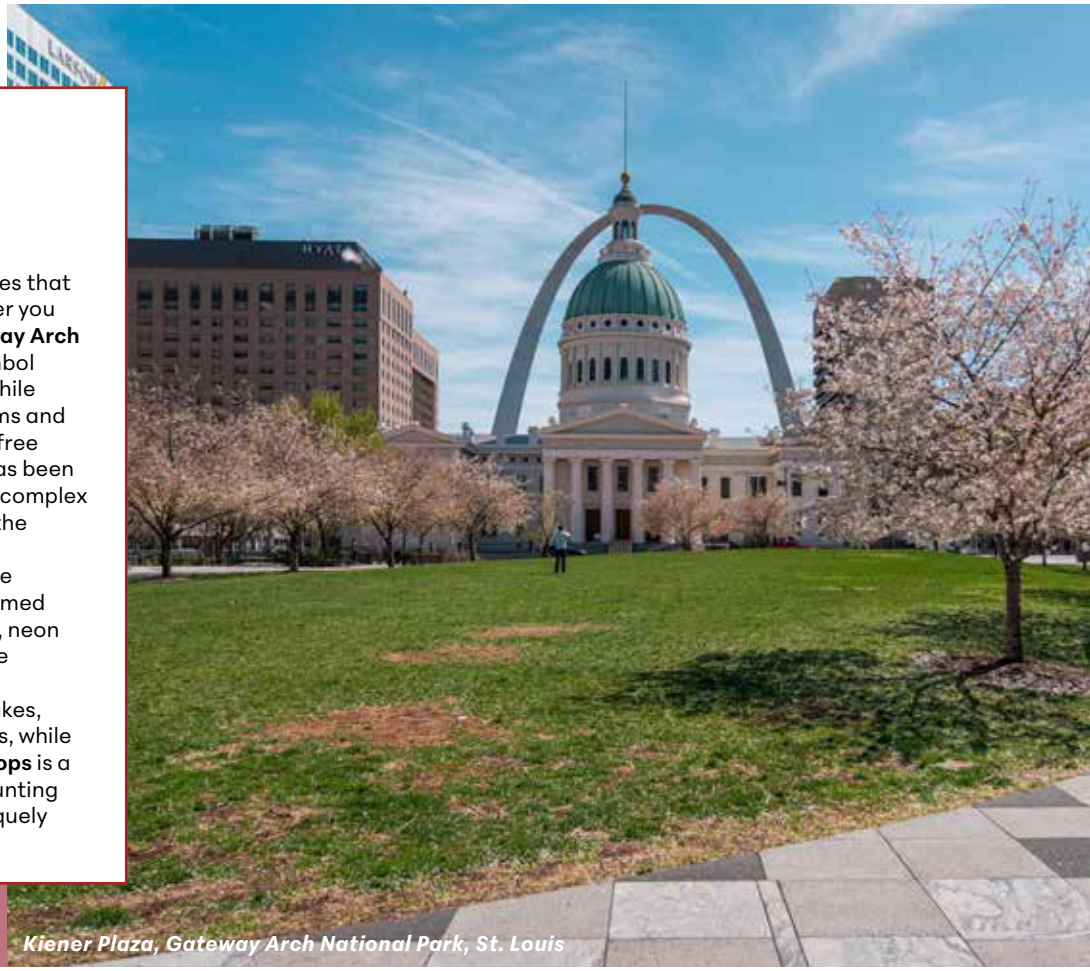
Missouri

FOLLOW THE ROAD, OR STAY AWHILE

Missouri has one of those identities that becomes more interesting the longer you look at it. **St Louis** is home to **Gateway Arch National Park**, the monumental symbol of the USA's westward expansion, while **Forest Park** brings together museums and other major attractions, many with free admission. Historic **Union Station** has been transformed into an entertainment complex with an aquarium, restaurants and the **St Louis Wheel**.

Springfield is the birthplace of the Mother Road, **Route 66**, officially named there in 1926. Today, vintage motels, neon signs, diners, museums and roadside attractions keep its legacy alive.

Further south, the **Ozarks** offer lakes, caves, forests and outdoor activities, while Springfield's enormous **Bass Pro Shops** is a retail universe devoted to fishing, hunting and the great outdoors and is a uniquely American sporting tradition.



Kiener Plaza, Gateway Arch National Park, St. Louis



Bald Head Island

North Carolina

MOUNTAINS, MOTORSPORT AND A LITTLE HOLLYWOOD

North Carolina offers stunning extremes: dramatic mountains at one end and a dune-lined coast at the other. **Mount Mitchell** is the highest peak in the eastern United States, **Jockey's Ridge** has the tallest living sand dune system on the Atlantic coast, and around 60 per cent of the state is covered in woodland.

The **Great Smoky Mountains National Park** and **Blue Ridge Parkway** provide some of the country's finest mountain scenery, while the 1,890-kilometre **Mountains-to-Sea Trail** stretches from the Smokies to the coast.

North Carolina also has petrol in its veins as NASCAR grew from the souped-up cars of moonshine runners who once raced along mountain roads to avoid revenue agents. **Charlotte** remains the centre of the modern story, with the **NASCAR Hall of Fame** and **Charlotte Motor Speedway**. Known as the cradle of American golf, **Pinehurst**'s century-old fairways showcase how the sport's deep-rooted legacy continues to drive modern tourism and community life across the state.

Wilmington has earned the nickname "Hollywood East", with locations associated with shows including *Dawson's Creek*, *One Tree Hill* and *The Summer I Turned Pretty*. *The Hunger Games*, *Forrest Gump* and *Bull Durham* also have North Carolina connections. You may be here for the beach but soon discover you have accidentally wandered onto a film set.

South Carolina

COAST, CULTURE AND CHARACTER

South Carolina is blessed with 60 miles of Atlantic coastline around **Myrtle Beach**, but there is plenty to do once you have removed the sand from your shoes. The **Grand Strand** comprises beaches, golf, entertainment, fresh seafood and family attractions.

Hilton Head Island combines pristine Atlantic beaches, world-class golf courses, and miles of shaded bike trails. Rich in Gullah Geechee heritage, it offers a laid-back coastal escape with dolphin-watching cruises, nature preserves, and fresh Lowcountry seafood dining.

Charleston brings history and contemporary culture together. Pastel houses and cobbled streets sit alongside the **International African American Museum** and **Gibbes Museum of Art**. Its restaurant scene can entice every epicurean, with everything from Southern seafood to Sichuan cooking and omakase.

Greenville provides an easy-going city break. **Falls Park on the Reedy**, the **Swamp Rabbit Trail**, and independent restaurants sit right at the edge of the **Blue Ridge** foothills.



Myrtle Beach



Graceland, Memphis

Tennessee

THREE LEGENDS AND A WHOLE LOT OF MUSIC

Tennessee has quite a line-up: Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton and The Smoky Mountains. **Memphis** is the place for blues, soul and rock 'n' roll, with **Elvis Presley's Memphis at Graceland** providing a deep dive into the life and legacy of the King. In **Sevierville**, Dolly Parton's hometown, a statue honours the singer, while nearby **Pigeon Forge** is home to **Dollywood** and the **Dolly Parton Experience**. **Nashville**, naturally, is the other major musical pillar.

Nearly 30 distilleries form the **Tennessee Whiskey Trail**, including famous names such as **Jack Daniel Distillery** in **Lynchburg**. The state also has a growing food scene, with MICHELIN-recognised restaurants and food festivals.

Beyond the cities, the **Great Smoky Mountains** provide waterfalls, wildlife, hiking and mountain culture and are home to many native species such as the Jordan's Red-Cheeked Salamander and the American Black Bear.



Virginia Beach Boardwalk

Virginia

HISTORY WITHOUT THE MUSEUM GLASS

Virginia is also unusually good for those who prefer not to drive. **Amtrak** links **Alexandria**, **Fredericksburg**, **Williamsburg**, **Norfolk**, **Charlottesville** and **Roanoke**, while the **Virginia Scenic Railway** offers journeys through the **Shenandoah Valley** and **Blue Ridge Mountains**.

Northern Virginia is an easy gateway for visitors arriving through **Washington Dulles International Airport**. **Old Town Alexandria**, **Mount Vernon** and **Arlington** offer different windows into the American past, while **Loudoun County** adds vineyards and countryside.

Further south, **Shenandoah National Park** and **Skyline Drive** provide spectacular mountain scenery. Virginia has more miles of the **Appalachian Trail** than any other state, yet within a few hours you can swap mountain boots for a beach towel in **Virginia Beach**, where oysters, seafood and dolphins take over.

The **Historic Triangle** of **Jamestown**, **Williamsburg** and **Yorktown** brings early American history to life through reconstructed settlements and hands-on experiences.

West Virginia

TAKE THE MOUNTAIN ROAD

Let's face it, the very mention of West Virginia will make you think of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads." The landscape in the 'Mountain State' rises and folds with peaks, rivers and small towns creating the sort of scenery that makes you understand why the gifted singer had a hit on his hands.

New River Gorge National Park & Preserve is the headline act. The **New River Gorge Bridge** dominates the landscape, while rafting, hiking, climbing and mountain biking make the park a playground for adventurous travellers.

West Virginia is also rich in Appalachian culture. Along the **Mountain Music Trail**, traditional music, dance and folkways connect visitors with communities whose traditions have survived generations, while traditional crafts, glassmaking and timber heritage reveal other sides of the state's Appalachian story. Mountain towns like **Lewisburg**, **Thomas**, and **Davis** offer charming bases near **Blackwater Falls** and the **Highland Scenic Highway**.



New River Gorge National Park & Preserve

Alabama - A Perfect Southern Escape


U.S. Space & Rocket Center, Huntsville

The Heart of a Scenic Road Trip

For those who prefer the open road, Alabama shines as the highlight of unforgettable Southern drives. A north-to-south route through the state turns a Nashville to New Orleans trip into an epic adventure — or extends a **Chicago to the Gulf Coast journey** into a true American classic.

Begin in **Huntsville**, known as "Rocket City," and explore the largest space museum at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Continue to **Muscle Shoals** for Legendary Music History, then **Birmingham** for a vibrant food scene and Civil Rights Landmarks. **Montgomery** offers powerful Legacy Sites, followed by the relaxed coastal culture in **Mobile**. End with the sugar-white sands of **Alabama's beaches** in **Gulf Shores** and **Orange Beach** — perfect for sun, seafood, and relaxation.

Whether you choose the effortless train between New Orleans and Mobile or the scenic drive through Alabama's heart, the state delivers history, music, beaches and Southern hospitality in one perfect escape.


W.C. Handy Music Festival, The Shoals


Helen Restaurant, Birmingham


USS Alabama, Mobile



A Twin City Train Holiday

Two vibrant cities. One easy ride. The **Amtrak Mardi Gras Service** makes **exploring New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama** effortless and unforgettable. Launched in 2025, this twice-daily train glides along the Gulf Coast in under four hours, offering a relaxing, car-free way to enjoy a classic twin-city holiday. No driving, no parking hassles — just scenic views and Southern charm from start to finish.

Start in lively **New Orleans**, then hop aboard for Mobile, Alabama's historic port city. **Mobile**, the birthplace of America's original Mardi Gras and one of its oldest cities, delivers rich heritage, beautiful architecture and coastal appeal. Stroll charming downtown streets lined with antebellum homes and live oaks. Tour the legendary **USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park**, explore the Mobile Carnival Museum, or wander the **History Museum of Mobile**. Art lovers will enjoy the expanded **Mobile Museum of Art**, while foodies can savour fresh Gulf seafood.

Visit what is described as America's Amazon with a boat trip along the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and visit **Africatown**, the last surviving community in the USA established by Africans.

Easy access to beaches makes Mobile the perfect relaxed counterpart to New Orleans' energy.

Find out more at ***alabama.travel***

Sweet Home Alabama


ONE TRIP TO
MISSISSIPPI
AND YOU'LL WANT TO
COME BACK
FOR SECONDS.
In Mississippi, a meal is never just a meal. It's a Michelin-recognised tasting menu one night and a Delta hot tamale the next. It's slow-smoked barbecue, Gulf-fresh seafood, and grain-to-glass cocktails poured from locally distilled spirits. Here, every bite tells a story worth savouring. And don't worry, if you don't have a reservation, we saved you a seat.
VISIT MISSISSIPPI
Sacred Ground Barbecue
Jackson, MS
Savor the JOURNEY
VisitMississippi.org

Every Great Missouri Adventure Begins with a Gateway


Downtown St. Louis

In **St. Louis**, ascend to the top of the **Gateway Arch**, tour world-class museums, explore the city's celebrated breweries and experience one of America's great baseball traditions. Across the state in **Kansas City**, **smoky barbecue**, **legendary jazz**, **distilleries** and **championship sports** create an unmistakable energy that has earned the city international recognition. Together, these vibrant cities introduce visitors to Missouri's rich history, culture and unmistakable Southern hospitality.

Beyond the skylines is a different side of Missouri. Follow the innovative **Highway 36**, known for remarkable inventions and visionaries, where welcoming communities, museums and hometown traditions reveal stories found nowhere else. Walk in the footsteps of **Mark Twain**, discover where Walt Disney's imagination first took shape or visit the **Home of Sliced Bread**. Cruise the legendary **Route 66**, stopping at classic diners, vintage motor courts and roadside attractions that capture the spirit of the Mother Road.

Along the **Missouri River**, the rolling vineyards of **Hermann** invite travellers to sip award-winning **Norton wine** while overlooking landscapes first settled by German immigrants. Nearby, **St. Charles** pairs brick-lined streets with the legacy of **Lewis and Clark**, while **Ste. Genevieve** – Missouri's oldest permanent European settlement – offers rare **French Colonial architecture** and centuries of living history.


The Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum, Hannibal


Centre for French Colonial Life, Ste. Genevieve



A Slice of Pie, Route 66, Rolla


Echo Bluff State Park, Ozarks, Eminence

Farther south, the **Ozarks** trade city lights for peaceful lakes, winding rivers and forested hills where mornings begin with mist rising from the water and afternoons are spent hiking, paddling or simply slowing down. In **Branson**, that tranquillity gives way to dazzling live entertainment, family attractions and a music tradition that has welcomed generations of performers to the stage.

Throughout Missouri, unforgettable moments are often the ones travellers never planned. They happen while sharing pie in a small-town café, discovering a local festival, chatting with an artisan or taking the recommendation of someone proud to call Missouri home.

The Gateway Arch and iconic barbecue may inspire the journey, but the roads stretching beyond Missouri's gateway cities reveal the state's greatest treasures. Here, visitors discover not only hidden gems, but authentic communities where warm welcomes, regional heritage and unexpected moments become cherished memories you carry home.


BIJOU THEATRE — KNOXVILLE
TENNESSEE YEAR. IT'S REAL.
COMPLETE YOUR LIVE SHOW BUCKET LIST
TENNESSEE
SOUNDS PERFECT
TNVACATION.COM
Erick Baker

Experience True Bluegrass Adventure In Kentucky

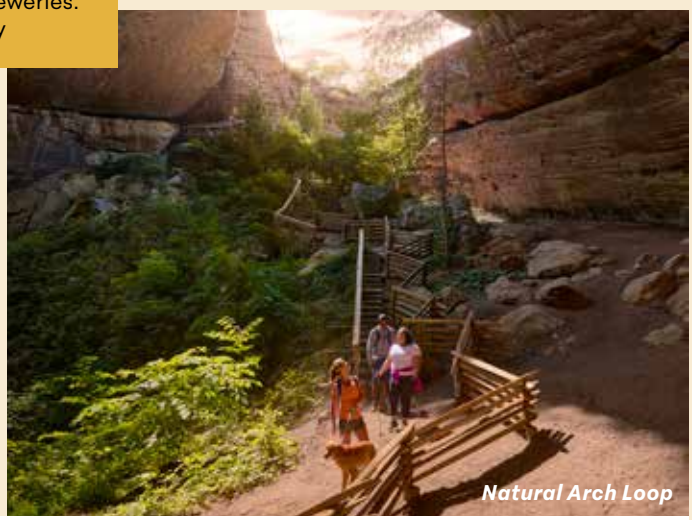

Godolphin at Jonabell Farm

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. 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.


Dome Town Treehouse Rentals


Wild Turkey Distillery


Natural Arch Loop


The Amp at Log Still

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***

DISCOVER South Carolina



From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Atlantic coast, South Carolina offers unforgettable adventures, charming small towns and vibrant cities waiting to be explored.



Find everything you need to plan your next holiday at **DiscoverSouthCarolina.com/united-kingdom**



1 **Charleston**

Historic streets, waterfront views and celebrated restaurants make Charleston a destination full of timeless charm.



2 **Hilton Head Island**

With scenic bike trails, beautiful beaches, renowned golf and waterfront dining, Hilton Head Island is made for family getaways.



3 **Myrtle Beach**

From its iconic boardwalk to family attractions and beautiful beaches, Myrtle Beach is packed with nonstop coastal fun.



4 **Greenville**

Boutique shops, acclaimed dining, public art and vibrant green spaces make Greenville one of the South's most exciting small cities.



5 **Columbia**

South Carolina's capital combines river adventures, vibrant neighbourhoods, local flavour and rich history into one memorable getaway.

Feed Your Soul in Louisiana



Beignets in Musical Legends Park, New Orleans

Step away from the mundane rhythms of ordinary life and cross the threshold into the extraordinary. The people, places, tastes, sounds, and experiences of **Louisiana** aren't just elements of a standard vacation – they are a world entirely of their own. Here, travel transcends the typical itinerary. Louisiana is a state where meaningful, unforgettable, "can't find it anywhere else" moments happen every single day, no matter where your compass points.

Listen closely, and you'll instantly hear the difference. The heartbeat of Louisiana pulses through the spirited wail of a **brass band** parading down a sunlit street, the irresistible, foot-stomping rhythm of a washboard at a **lively Cajun fais do-do**, and the gentle, haunting whispers of the wind moving through a **moss-draped bayou**. Every sound is a live, breathing soundtrack to your adventure, inviting you to let go and join the dance.

Then, there are the flavours – a culinary landscape so rich and deeply rooted that dining becomes a revelatory experience. From the soul-warming depth of a slow-simmered, **dark roux seafood gumbo** to the powder-sugar-dusted perfection of a fresh, **warm beignet**, Louisiana's cuisine is a vibrant celebration of heritage. You don't just eat here; you partake in centuries of tradition, shared over roaring laughter and clinking glasses with locals who welcome you not as a passing tourist, but as a long-lost friend.



Scott Boudin Festival



Louisiana's Old State Capitol, Baton Rouge



St. Louis Cathedral, New Orleans



Kayaking on Bayou Teche, St. Martinville

The places you'll wander are equally spellbinding. Whether you're getting lost in the **centuries-old architectural splendour of the French Quarter**, **kayaking** through the mystical beauty of the **sprawling wetlands**, or discovering the timeless charms of our **historic Main Streets**, the state's inherent magic reveals itself at every turn.

These experiences do more than just entertain – they fundamentally change you. They stir something deep within, fill your cup to overflowing, and undeniably pull you back for more. Long after your visit has ended and you've returned home, you'll find yourself still talking about it, reminiscing over the vibrant energy, and eagerly dreaming up your next adventure.

Visit *ExploreLouisiana.com* and discover all the different ways to **Feed Your Soul** each and every time you travel here.

North Carolina - Noteworthy & Craveable


Bald Head Island

Across North Carolina, travellers go where the spirit moves them. The appeal might lie in natural wonders. The relaxed pace and luxuries of small towns. Or the esprit de corps of sports and games.

Ancient mountains and barrier islands create natural playgrounds that inspire wonder and restore the soul. Watch extraordinary mountain sunsets or synchronous fireflies flickering through dark forests. Practice yoga at a **Blue Ridge Mountain** overlook or slow down entirely with forest bathing among old-growth hardwoods. **Grandfather Mountain**, part of the **UNESCO Southern Appalachian Biosphere Reserve**, supports 16 distinct ecological communities and 73 rare or endangered species within its 1,619 hectares. Along the coast, sunset paddle-board tours turn golden hour into a meditation. Here, adventure and stillness are never far apart. Rich biodiversity and diverse geography offer a bounty of accessible outdoor adventures.

Between the geographic bookends, hidden gems await. Away from city lights, small towns glow with authenticity. In **Highlands** and **Blowing Rock**, mountains frame an experience rooted in resorts and boutique hotels, chef-driven dining and prime shopping. The "home of American golf" tees up 10 championship courses at **Pinehurst Resort** with dozens of other greens nearby. **Fearrington,** the first of the state's **four Relais & Châteaux resorts**, sits 60 km west of Raleigh in the Pittsboro countryside. On the coast, indulgent stays await in the tiny **Outer Banks town of Duck** and on **Bald Head Island**, a car-free getaway at the state's southernmost tip.


Pinehurst Golf Course


Hawksbill Mountain Overlook


San-Lee Park


NASCAR Hall of Fame

To quicken the pulse, turn to sports. Fans **watch top-tier professionals** play in **Charlotte** and **Raleigh** and tap the joy of Minor League baseball with the Durham Bulls, Asheville Tourists and other teams. College basketball rivalries ignite passion while NASCAR extends racing season with year-round experiences at the **NASCAR Hall of Fame** and **Charlotte Motor Speedway**. Travellers can also assume an active role. Cyclists trace routes from the **Blue Ridge Parkway**'s switchbacks down to gentle coastal greenways. Runners can go the distance in a 5K trot or a marathon.

With four distinct seasons, pleasures abound all year long, though spring and fall make a strong case. Smaller crowds pair with wildflowers and mild temperatures in April and May and with blazing foliage and harvest festivals in October. It becomes a joyful question of when — and where — the spirit moves you. Find out more at ***VisitNC.com***

YOU BELONG IN MYRTLE BEACH



VISIT Myrtle Beach SOUTH CAROLINA

DISCOVER South Carolina

There's a second it all sinks in. When chill vacation vibes rush over you like a wave and you realise this is right where you belong.

In Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, these moments happen all the time – whether you're reconnecting with old friends, eating at one of over 2,000 restaurants or exploring 100 kilometres of warm, beautiful beaches.

Find your moment to shine at VisitMyrtleBeach.com

The Many Histories of the American South



Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, Kansas City, MO

BY: RASHMI NARAYAN

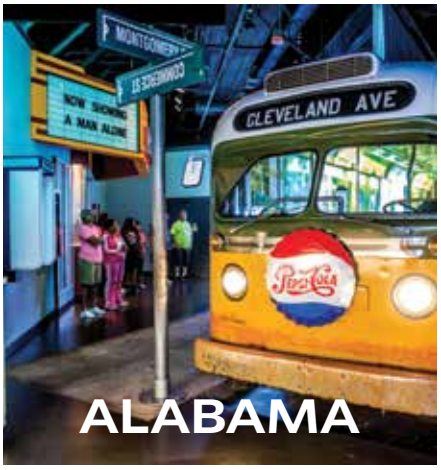
The American South has never been defined by a single narrative. Across its cities, small towns and rural landscapes are stories of resilience, creativity and change that continue to shape the United States today.

Indigenous communities preserve centuries of tradition, civil rights landmarks bear witness to pivotal moments in history and music, literature and craftsmanship remain deeply woven into everyday life.

Moving from town to town, you will encounter the raw, multi-layered stories that define the region today. Historic sites stand alongside living cultural traditions, while museums, neighbourhoods and community spaces introduce you to the people and events that helped shape the country.



Fort Defiance Civil War Park, Clarksville, TN



A Journey Through The Civil Rights Movement

Alabama's history is central to understanding the country's **Civil Rights Movement.** Montgomery, recognised as the birthplace of the movement, and Birmingham, often described as the city that changed the world, form key stops along the **U.S. Civil Rights Trail**. You can walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, visit the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute** and the historic 16th Street Baptist Church, and explore sites connected with Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

In Muscle Shoals, legendary recording studios welcomed artists including Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Percy Sledge and The Rolling Stones, creating music that resonated around the world. Meanwhile, Mobile celebrates another enduring tradition as the birthplace of **American Mardi Gras**. Dating back to the early 1700s, the city's month-long celebrations reflect centuries of cultural exchange along the Gulf Coast.



16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham


Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville

ARKANSAS

Art Through Many Perspectives

Arkansas paints its history as vividly through art as it does through tradition. In Bentonville, **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art** has expanded its galleries to highlight an increasingly diverse collection, including works by Indigenous artists and makers.

Rather than presenting history as a single narrative, Arkansas invites you to explore the diverse voices and traditions that shape the nation's culture. You can experience this firsthand across the state, from watching master artisans preserve generations of craft and music at the **Ozark Folk Center** in Mountain View, to immersing yourself in African American heritage and art at Little Rock's **Mosaic Templars Cultural Center**. As you travel, you will discover a rich tapestry of community art centres, historic Native American mound sites, and regional heritage trails that highlight the many cultural groups defining the American South.


Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta

GEORGIA

A State Shaped by Resilience and Renewal

Beyond the romanticised South depicted in *Gone with the Wind*, Georgia's true history reflects many defining moments in US history. The state played a pivotal role during the Civil War, experiencing widespread destruction as General William Tecumseh Sherman's campaign swept from Atlanta to Savannah.

You can explore Georgia's complex Civil War past at key sites like the **Atlanta History Center** and **Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park**. Heading into the 20th century, Atlanta became a vital hub for social change as the home of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Today, you can visit the Sweet Auburn Historic District to tour the **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park**, where you will find his birth home and Ebenezer Baptist Church, before visiting downtown Atlanta's **National Center for Civil and Human Rights** to see how local activism sparked a worldwide movement.


Ozark Folk Center, Mountain View, AR



Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill

Stories of Leadership and Community

Kentucky's bourbon history is no doubt impressive, but the **Kentucky African American Heritage Trail** links more than 50 sites celebrating Black Kentuckians who helped shape American history, sport, culture and Civil Rights.

In Louisville, the **Muhammad Ali Center** honours the life and legacy of the boxing champion through exhibitions exploring leadership, social justice and global citizenship. Only minutes away on foot, do not miss the **Roots 101 African American Museum**, where lived experiences and rare artefacts offer an unforgettable history lesson.

Further south of Louisville, spend a day at **Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill**, which preserves the country's largest restored Shaker community.



Muhammad Ali Center, Louisville



Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park

Living Traditions Every Day

Louisiana's cultural identity is shaped by generations of communities whose traditions remain part of everyday life. You'll encounter Acadian, Cajun, Creole, African American, Native American, Spanish and French influences through music, food, language and local celebrations rather than museum displays alone.

Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park recreates life in 18th and 19th century Acadiana through restored homes, artisan demonstrations, traditional cooking and live Cajun music. **Maison Freetown** explores the story of one of Lafayette's historic African American neighbourhoods through exhibitions and oral histories.

Elsewhere in the state, Lake Charles celebrates its distinctive heritage through attractions including the **Mardi Gras Museum**, **Historic City Hall** and the **Imperial Calcasieu Museum**, where local art, architecture and stories of Southwest Louisiana come together. In New Orleans, you can continue exploring the state's history at sites including the **Cabildo**, the **Presbytère**, the **Historic New Orleans Collection**, the **Backstreet Cultural Museum** and the colossal **National WWII Museum**.



Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu, Lake Charles



Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, Jackson

Stories of Heritage, Creativity and Resilience

Mississippi's history is shaped by many voices, from Indigenous communities whose roots stretch back thousands of years to the musicians, writers and activists whose work transformed American culture.

In Oxford, follow in the footsteps of Nobel Prize-winning author William Faulkner, explore the **University of Mississippi Museum** and learn about the city's role in the Civil Rights Movement. Sites including the **Lyceum** building and **Mississippi Freedom Trail** markers connected with the integration of the university demonstrate the struggles and progress that made the state what it is today.

Along the Gulf Coast, in Biloxi, the **Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum** tells the story of generations of shipbuilders, shrimpers, oyster harvesters and fishermen whose work shaped the economy and identity of coastal Mississippi. Nearby, the historic **100 Men Hall** in Bay St Louis preserves the legacy of African American communities and the musicians who performed there during segregation, including B.B. King, Ray Charles and James Brown.



Rowan Oak, Home of William Faulkner, Oxford



Crossroads of American History

Across Missouri, you will experience defining chapters of American history, spanning ancient Indigenous civilisations, westward expansion, Civil Rights, classic literature and pioneering modern architecture.

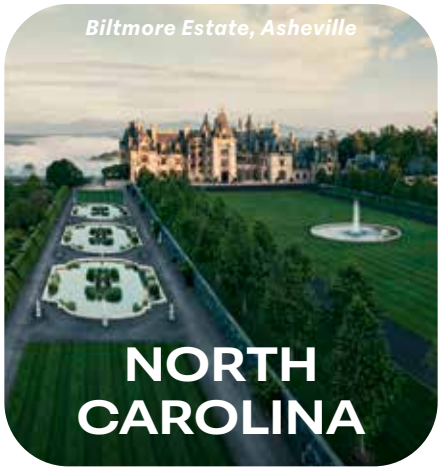
In **St Louis**, **Gateway Arch National Park** and the **Old Courthouse** connect the story of westward expansion with the freedom suits brought by Dred and Harriet Scott. Elsewhere, the **Missouri History Museum** explores subjects ranging from the 1904 World's Fair and aviation to Civil Rights and the city's contribution to American innovation.

Across the Mississippi River, **Cahokia Mounds**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, reveals the scale and sophistication of the Indigenous city that flourished here centuries before European settlement and became the largest pre-Columbian settlement north of Mexico.

Farther west, **St Joseph** adds another chapter to the story of American expansion at the **Pony Express National Museum**, housed in the historic stables where the first westbound Pony Express rider set out in 1860.

In **Hannibal**, the **Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum** takes you through the landscapes and experiences that inspired one of the nation's greatest storytellers. In **Springfield**, **Wilson's Creek National Battlefield** preserves one of the first major Civil War battles fought west of the Mississippi River, while the **History Museum on the Square** explores the city's connections to Route 66, the Civil War and the people who shaped the Ozarks.


History Museum on the Square, Springfield



From Indigenous Heritage to Innovation

Experience North Carolina through the rich traditions, pioneering heritage and artistic voices that define the state. Head to the Qualla Boundary, the sovereign homeland of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, to connect directly with Cherokee heritage. You can visit the **Museum of the Cherokee People**, walk among craftspeople at **Oconaluftee Indian Village** and experience the powerful story of Unto These Hills under the stars. The region offers opportunities to understand Cherokee traditions, storytelling and connection to the landscape, while experiences such as **Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual** celebrate contemporary Indigenous makers.

Greensboro offers an important perspective on Civil Rights history at the **International Civil Rights Center and Museum**, located in the former F.W. Woolworth building where four North Carolina A&T State University students staged a landmark sit-in protest in 1960. Historic Magnolia House shares the story of a Green Book-listed establishment that welcomed Black travellers during segregation and hosted figures including James Brown and Jackie Robinson.

The state is also home to moments of innovation that changed the world. At **Wright Brothers National Memorial** in Kill Devil Hills, you can stand where Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved the first powered flight in 1903. Elsewhere, sites including the opulent **Biltmore Estate**, **Old Salem Museum and Gardens** and the **NASCAR Hall of Fame** will fascinate you with different chapters of North Carolina's cultural identity, from Gilded Age grandeur and Moravian traditions to motorsport heritage.


Oconaluftee Indian Village, Cherokee

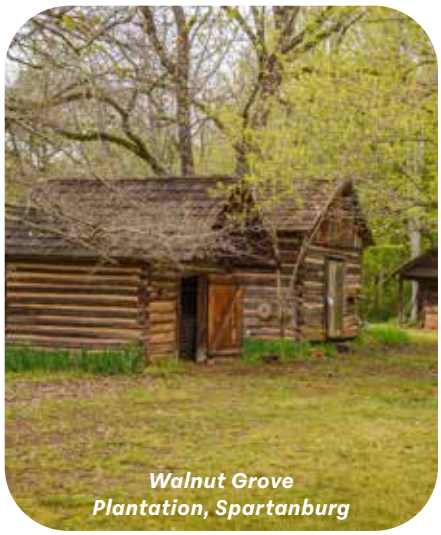


Revolutionary Roots and Living Traditions

South Carolina's history stretches from the Revolutionary War and colonial settlements to the living traditions of Gullah Geechee communities (descendants of enslaved West Africans who preserved their distinct language, crafts and coastal culture), African American heritage and Southern craftsmanship.

On Sullivan's Island, **Fort Moultrie** tells the story of South Carolina's coastal defences, from its role in the Revolutionary War to more than 170 years of military history. The fort's preservation offers visitors a chance to understand the strategic importance of Charleston Harbour and the changing nature of American conflict.

Discover Gullah Geechee heritage, historic rice fields and lush coastal nature at **Brookgreen Gardens**. In Myrtle Beach, **Charlie's Place** preserves the story of an African American nightclub and hotel that welcomed legendary performers including Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday and Little Richard during segregation. The state's official dance, the shag, continues to celebrate the music and community spirit of the coast.


Walnut Grove Plantation, Spartanburg



Stax Museum, Memphis

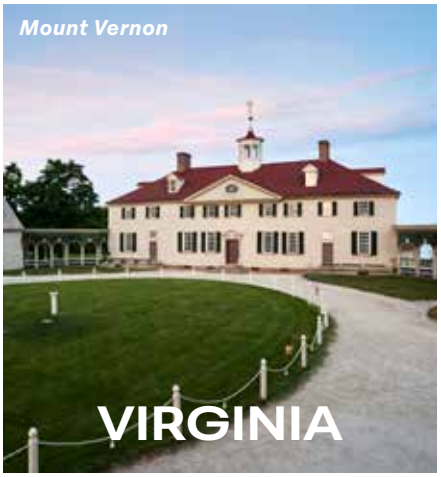
Music and Movements

Tennessee's story resonates far beyond its borders. Across the state, you can explore the birthplace of defining music genres, walk through pivotal civil rights sites and discover Indigenous heritage that continues to shape modern culture.

Along the Tennessee Civil Rights Trail, visitors can explore 17 significant sites including the **National Civil Rights Museum** at the **Lorraine Motel**, **Stax Museum of American Soul Music**, **Jefferson Street Sound Museum** and the **National Museum of African American Music**. These places tell the stories of activists, musicians and communities whose work helped transform society.

You can trace Tennessee's Indigenous heritage along the **Trail of Tears National Historic Trail**, which crosses the state and remembers the forced removal of Cherokee people from their ancestral lands. Sites including **Sequoyah Birthplace Museum**, **Red Clay State Historic Park** and the **Hiwassee River Heritage Center** share Cherokee history, culture and resilience.


Sequoyah Birthplace Museum



Mount Vernon

The Foundations of a Nation

Known as the "Mother of Presidents", Virginia was home to eight U.S. presidents, including four of the first five. At George Washington's **Mount Vernon**, you can tour the 18th-century estate, working farm and restored distillery. Further south, explore Monticello, Montpelier and Highland to balance early American ideals with the realities of plantation life.

Along the James River, you soon discover the story of the batteau, a flat-bottomed wooden boat that once carried tobacco and goods through the state's waterways during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hop on a guided cruise or visit during the annual **James River Batteau Festival**, which celebrates this connection between commerce and community.

Richmond's Jackson Ward, once known as the "Harlem of the South", became a centre of African American entrepreneurship and culture. Discover the legacy of **Maggie L. Walker**, the first African American woman in the US to charter a bank and serve as its president, at the **Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site**, then explore centuries of Black Virginian history at the nearby **Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia**.



Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Mountain Traditions and Resilience

Communities across West Virginia continue to preserve traditional crafts, storytelling and folk music, with makers passing skills such as glassmaking, quilting, woodworking and pottery between generations.

West Virginia also played a significant role during the Civil War, becoming the only state formed by separating from a Confederate state when it was admitted to the Union in 1863. Visit **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park** to walk through the site of John Brown's famous 1859 raid, a flashpoint that dramatically accelerated the country's slide into war.

Discover local culture at **Tamarack Marketplace** in **Beckley**, watch traditional glassblowing at **Blenko Glass Company** in **Milton**, or explore the preserved coal-mining community at **Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine**.


Jamestown Settlement, VA

The Wild West Lives On in St. Joseph, Missouri



Patee House Train

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**.



Jesse James Home


Pony Express National Museum


Patee House Museum


Pony Express National 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 artefacts are displayed in the buildings where these events actually occurred. The historic hotel building is recognised as one of the top 10 Western museums by *True West* magazine and is a National Historic Landmark.

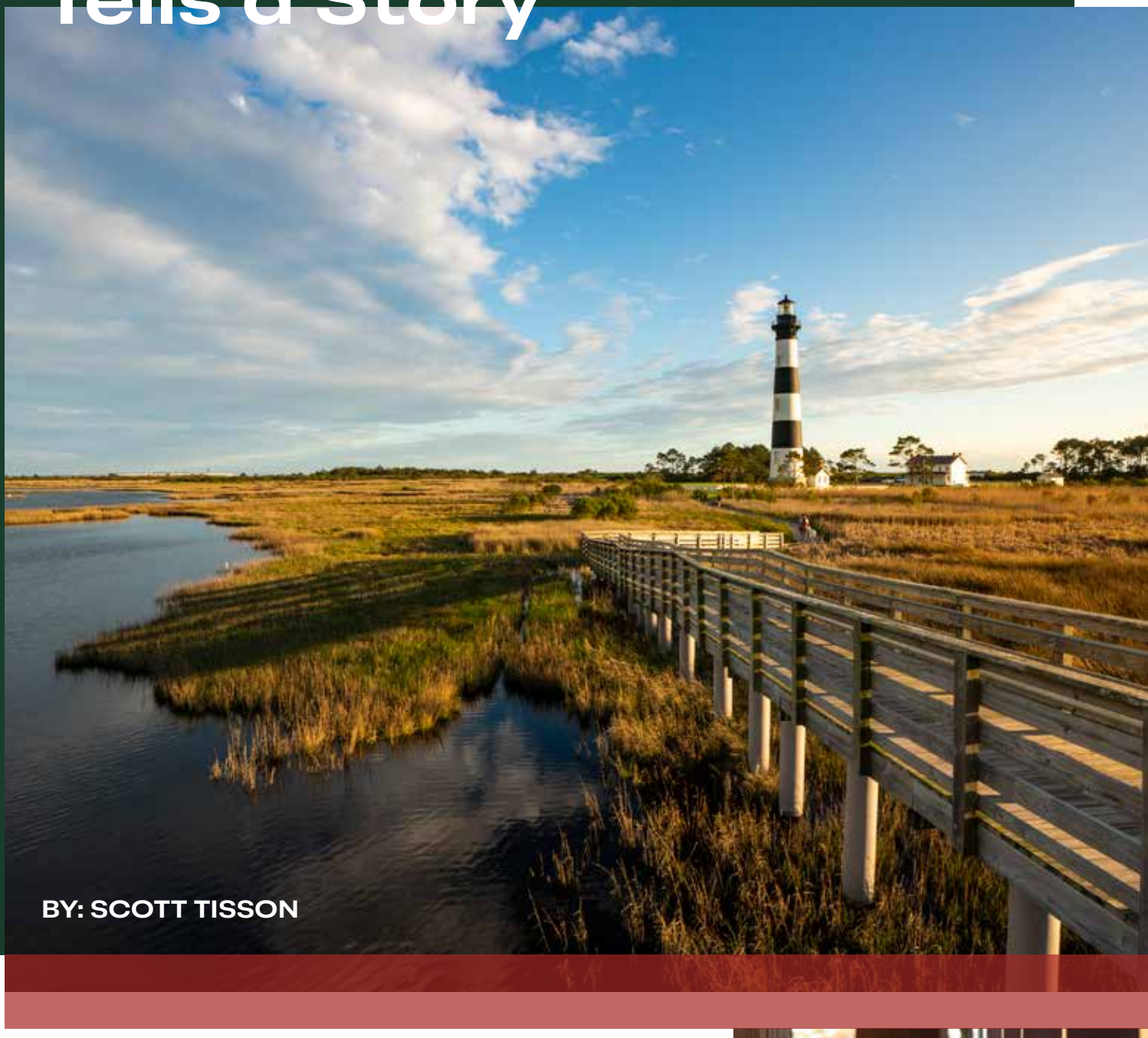
Outlaws found their place in St. Joseph's past. The infamous **Jesse James Home Museum** marks the spot where the famed outlaw met his end. You can stand inside the **Jesse James Home** and peer through the bullet hole left in the wall on that fateful day in 1882, drive by the **Buchanan County Courthouse**, 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***

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Every Mile Tells a Story



Bodie Island Lighthouse, NC

BY: SCOTT TISSON

When you cover more miles in the American South than in your own home country, you start to wonder what keeps drawing you back time and again. There is something endlessly alluring about the great American road trip: the open highway stretching toward the horizon, the changing landscape through the windscreen, and the promise that the next turn might lead somewhere unexpected.

Every journey here delivers an extraordinary culinary scene, history woven deeply through music and civil rights, and magnificent state parks. Above all, you quickly discover that Southern hospitality is genuinely real.

The secret to a memorable trip is leaving room for spontaneity. A flexible itinerary leads to poignant landmarks, but it also opens the door to unplanned detours, casual conversations with locals, and hidden hotspots you would never find in a guidebook. A drive through the South uncovers new passions, rich stories, and unexpected sides of yourself. So slow down, take the scenic route, and discover those secret pockets that exist off the map.



National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, AL


Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, Jackson

The Rhythms and Civil Rights Highway

This multi-state route charts the beating heart of American music, food and history across four distinct states. Begin your journey in **Nashville, Tennessee**, the country music capital of the world. Take time to explore the neon-lit honky-tonks of **Broadway** and the wonderfully immersive **National Museum of African American Music** before pulling out of town on Interstate 40 West.

Interstate 40 carries you west through rolling Tennessee countryside to **Memphis**, where legendary music landmarks await. Spend an afternoon stepping back in time at **Sun Studio**, pay homage to the King of Rock and Roll at **Graceland**, and take in the electric atmosphere of live blues on **Beale Street**. A detour south into the Arkansas Delta brings you to **Helena**, home of the legendary **King Biscuit Blues Festival**.

Leaving Memphis behind, follow **US Route 61 South**, world-famous as the **Blues Highway**, through the Mississippi Delta. Stop in **Clarksdale**, the undisputed home of the Delta blues, where you can hear live blues 365 nights a year at venues including **Ground Zero Blues Club**. For Elvis fans, take a separate detour to **Tupelo**, where you can visit his modest birthplace.

Continuing south towards the state capital of **Jackson**, stop to explore the poignant exhibits at the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum** before heading south to **Hattiesburg** to follow its **Civil Rights Landmark Trail** and learn about the brave local heroes who shaped American history.

From Hattiesburg, continue south towards **New Orleans**, where the journey culminates in Louisiana's most famous city. Do not miss the chance to wander the historic **French Quarter** and other excellent neighbourhoods like **Marigny** and **Tremé**. Stop for a classic New Orleans po'boy, dive into hearty bowls of jambalaya and sample local boudin, a signature spiced pork and rice sausage.

From New Orleans, pick up Interstate 10 West towards **Lafayette**, where the **Cajun Boudin Trail** and **Po-Boy Trail** showcase local markets, smokehouses and neighbourhood favourites. The statewide **Louisiana Hot Sauce Trail** offers another way to taste your way across the state. Here, family-run smokehouses, local markets and humble roadside stops serve up some of the finest boudin in the region, bringing your epic road trip to a delicious final stop.


Gulf Shores, AL

Southern Culture and Coastal Drives

Connecting civil rights history with pristine emerald coastlines, this route begins in **Atlanta, Georgia**, at the **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park**. Leaving Atlanta behind, take Interstate 20 West towards **Birmingham**, where the historic **16th Street Baptist Church** offers a poignant reminder of the city's civil rights history. From Birmingham, follow Interstate 65 South to **Montgomery** to explore the **Rosa Parks Museum** and the **National Memorial for Peace and Justice**, then grab a bite at **Chris' Famous Hotdogs**.

From Montgomery, continue south on Interstate 65, then connect via Interstate 10 and Highway 59 to the white-sand beaches of **Gulf Shores, Alabama**. From there, return to Interstate 10 and travel west through **Coastal Mississippi**.

Continue west along Interstate 10 across the **Atchafalaya Basin**, then on towards **Lake Charles**, where the **Creole Nature Trail** winds through Southwest Louisiana's coastal wetlands. Be sure to enjoy fresh coastal seafood, Alabama barbecue with the state's signature mayonnaise-based white sauce, and a stop at **Chesson's Grocery** near Lake Charles, Louisiana.



Blues Highway, MS


Shrimp Po' Boy, Lafayette, LA


WHERE
Journeys
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HBURG
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**.
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The Lowcountry and Historic Coast

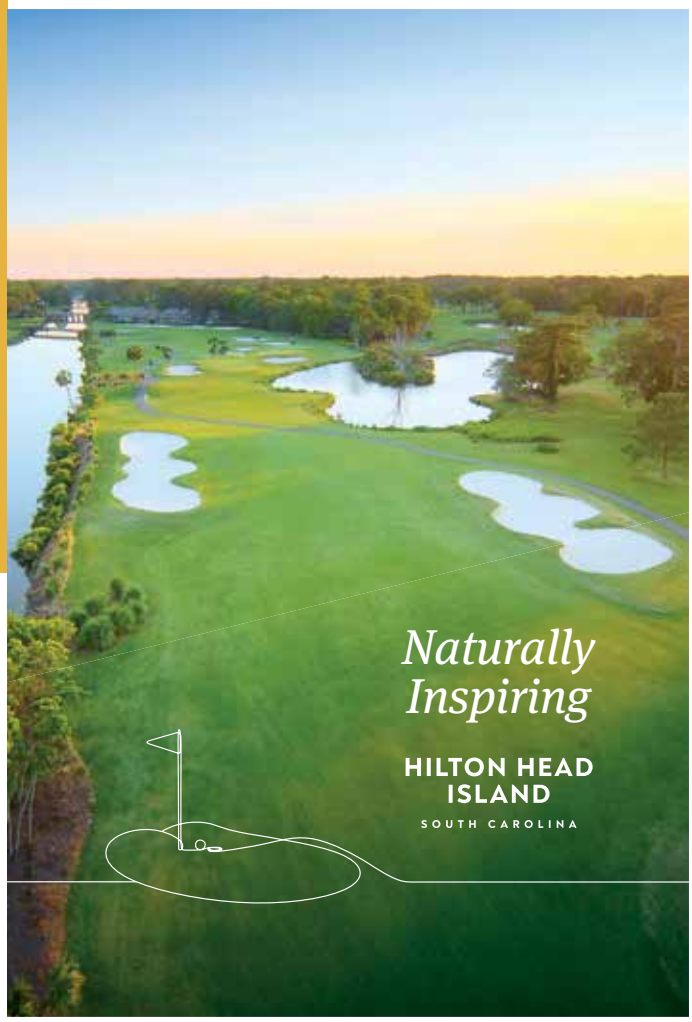
A lush coastal drive celebrating historic architecture, maritime culture, and world-class Southern dining. Starting in Upstate South Carolina near **Table Rock State Park**, follow **Scenic Highway 11** before picking up Interstate 26 East towards the Atlantic coast and the **Grand Strand's** vibrant shores around **Myrtle Beach**.

Spend a few days in historic **Charleston** navigating colonial squares and sampling Lowcountry cuisine, including she-crab soup, and shrimp and grits. Follow US Route 17 South towards the South Carolina coast before taking US Route 278 across to **Hilton Head Island**, where coastal bike trails await, then continue south into Georgia to explore **Savannah's** moss-draped oak trees in **Forsyth Park** and its celebrated seafood dishes.

Throughout this coastal stretch, you will encounter the heritage of the **Gullah Geechee** people, descendants of enslaved West and Central Africans who preserved distinct linguistic, artistic and culinary traditions across the **Sea Islands**. The region is steeped in these Gullah Geechee maritime traditions, South Carolina Beach Music and hyper-local dining at spots like **Husk**.



Hilton Head Island, SC





Bryson City waterfall, NC

The Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains Trail

A dream trip for lovers of mountain air, country music, and heritage railways. Start your journey in **Louisville, Kentucky**, taking time to explore the riverfront and the inspiring **Muhammad Ali Center**. From Louisville, follow Interstate 64 East to **Lexington**, the heart of Kentucky's horse country, before heading south on Interstate 75 towards **Knoxville, Tennessee**.

From Knoxville, follow the roads towards the Tennessee entrance to **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**, where dense forests, mountain vistas and hundreds of miles of hiking trails await. Spanning Tennessee and North Carolina, this protected wilderness features 800 miles of misty hiking trails, ancient hardwood forests, and native black bear habitat, where observant drivers may even spot a bear roaming near the treeline.

Crossing into North Carolina, join US Route 19 to reach **Bryson City**, where a major highlight of this drive awaits – the historic **Great Smoky Mountains Railroad**, operated by **American Heritage Railways**. Sitting back in open-air vintage carriages, passengers take in dramatic canyon vistas, sweeping river passes, and lush valley floors that showcase the Southern Appalachians at their finest.

Head south from the Bryson City area to pick up the scenic, winding curves of US Route 64 East through western North Carolina. Along the way, take a short detour to **Looking Glass Falls** or paddle along the **French Broad River**.

Finally, take US Route 25 South across the state line to finish your mountain run in Upstate South Carolina at **Greenville**, where the urban waterfalls of **Falls Park** on the Reedy River meet a thriving culinary scene and charming tree-lined streets.



Climb Aboard for our Unforgettable Southern Adventures!

OZARK MOUNTAINS
Branson, Missouri

Branson Scenic Railway offers a 1 hour, 45-minute rail adventure where passengers experience train era romance onboard vintage cars. The ride travels through tunnels, over trestles, past ghost towns, and deep into the Ozark Mountains, which are still home to abundant wildlife. Passengers can choose to dine onboard. Travel region is part of the famous Route 66 and includes the musical city of Branson, Silver Dollar City 1880s Theme Park, St. Louis—home of blues music, and Mark Twain's Home & Museum.

bransontrain.com

SMOKY MOUNTAINS
Bryson City, North Carolina

Great Smoky Mountains Railroad takes passengers on a half-day rail adventure through some of the most popular landscapes in America, the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Passengers can choose to dine onboard. Travel region features the Blue Ridge Mountains, Biltmore Estate, Asheville, Pigeon Forge, and Dollywood. Viewing the scenic Smoky Mountains from an iconic train is a memory not to be missed!

gsmr.com

MONUMENTAL

American Icons, All Right Here

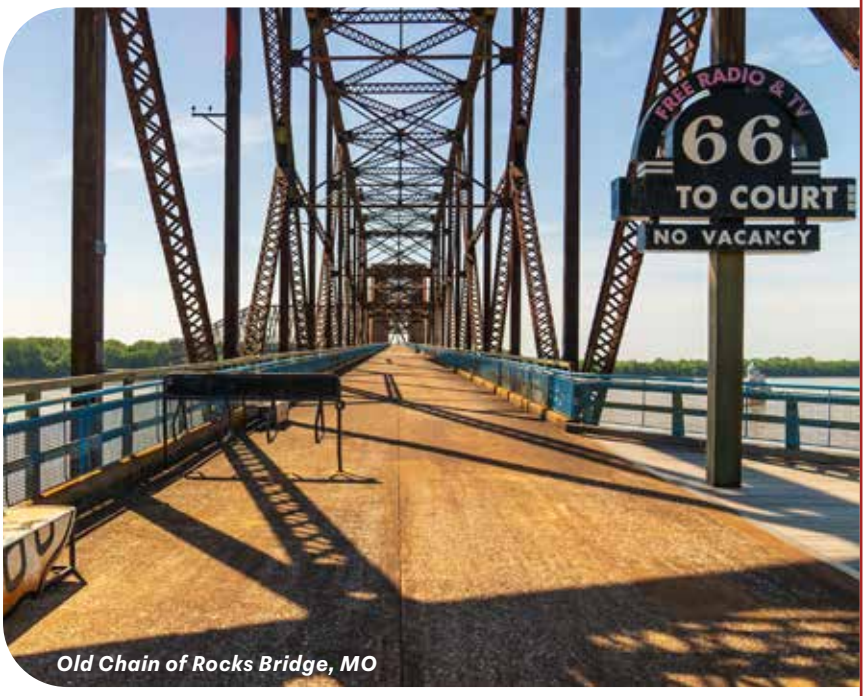
The Gateway Arch. Historic Route 66.
Live blues. Legendary baseball.
Distinctive neighbourhoods. Authentic flavours.
Only in St. Louis can you experience so much of America in one unforgettable destination.



Plan your trip at explorestlouis.com.

monumental EVERY DAY

explore St. Louis



Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, MO


College Street Cafe, Springfield, MO

The Ozarks, Delta & Route 66

If you love open highways, rugged nature and classic Americana, this route delivers. Start in **St. Louis, Missouri**, known as the Gateway to the West, to visit the **National Blues Museum**, **Blueberry Hill** and the **Gateway Arch** before following historic **Route 66** southwest through the **Missouri Ozarks** to **Springfield**, where the road's classic Americana lives on in roadside attractions, diners and historic landmarks.

From Springfield, head south on US Route 65 into Arkansas to explore the rugged bluffs of the **Buffalo National River** before following **Scenic Highway 7** down to the historic bathhouses of **Hot Springs National Park**. From Hot Springs, head east to **Little Rock Central High School** to learn about a pivotal chapter in civil rights history.

From **Little Rock**, the route can continue east towards **Memphis** before turning north towards Kentucky, where **Louisville** offers the legendary open-faced Hot Brown sandwich and the historic **Kentucky Bourbon Trail®**. Regional culinary highlights along the journey include Missouri sweet-sauce barbecue, Arkansas catfish, and hearty Midwestern comfort food.

Roadside Eats Worth the Detour

In the American South, some of the finest culinary experiences are hidden behind fuel pumps and neon roadside signs. In **Oxford, Mississippi**, stop at **4 Corners Chevron** for its famous **Chicken on a Stick**, a hand-battered, deep-fried chicken tender served on a bamboo stick.

In the **Mississippi Delta**, make a pitstop at **Fratesi Grocery & Service Station** near **Leland** to sample its fried-olive po'boy, an Italian-American twist on the Southern sandwich. In **Southwest Louisiana**, stop at **Chesson's Grocery** on the **Creole Nature Trail**, a classic country store and petrol station with a deli serving boudin, burgers, chili dogs and other local favourites.

Continuing into Alabama, pull off the highway in **Montgomery** for a legendary visit to **Chris' Famous Hotdogs**. Serving hungry drivers and Civil Rights icons since 1917, this iconic counter serves hot dogs slathered in a secret family chili sauce. These unassuming pitstops prove you do not need a tablecloth to eat like royalty.

The Journey From Vines to Casks

Celebrate Southern craft liquid heritage with a slow-paced trip by pairing Virginia viticulture with Kentucky bourbon. Start along **US Route 29** in the **Blue Ridge foothills**, exploring a picturesque landscape of plentiful boutique wineries.

To navigate tasting rooms safely while driving, book overnight stays directly on estate vineyards such as **Barboursville**. Here, you can park the car for the evening, wander through historic ruins on foot, and enjoy estate-bottled Viognier alongside fine local cuisine without touching a steering wheel.

From Virginia's wine country, head west on Interstate 64 across the **Allegheny Mountains** and through West Virginia towards Kentucky's **Bluegrass region**. As the soil shifts from granite-rich terroir to limestone-filtered water springs, trade your wine glass for a Glencairn tasting glass along the **Kentucky Bourbon Trail®**.

Explore historic distilleries and rickhouses near **Lexington** and **Bardstown**, taking advantage of organised shuttle tours or travelling with a designated driver.


Lux Row Distillery, Bardstown, KY

A Wilder Side of the South

Lake Martin, LA

BY: SANDRA WICKERT

Sweet tea on the porch, the sounds of blues, jazz and country, smoky barbecue and a bourbon tasting or two: they're all part of the American South. But stay on the veranda and you'll miss its wilder side. This is also a region of deep-cut gorges, wind-sculpted dunes, alligators slipping through swamp forests and star-filled nights when the Milky Way stretches above the cypress trees.



Natchez Trace Parkway, MS

HIDDEN WORLDS

THE WORLD'S LONGEST CAVE: There's big, and then there's **Mammoth Cave**, Kentucky. Some 686 kilometres have been mapped so far, making it the longest known cave system on Earth. Guided tours range from easy introductions to multi-hour adventures through narrow passages and cavernous domed chambers.

For a different kind of underground thrill, **Louisville Mega Cavern** in Louisville, Kentucky lays claim to the world's only fully underground zipline course. Neon lights, suspended bridges and high-speed ziplines make this no ordinary cave tour.

NATURAL MONUMENTS: In northern Alabama, **Natural Bridge** forms an 18-metre-high sandstone arch some 200 million years old. A trail passes beneath the formation, once used as shelter by Indigenous peoples.

Not made of stone, but just as monumental, is **Angel Oak** on Johns Island near Charleston, South Carolina. At least 400 years old, the enormous oak sends gnarled branches down towards the earth before they curve skywards once more.

MUSIC IN STONE: One of the world's most unusual musical instruments isn't in a concert hall. It's underground. At **Luray Caverns**, Virginia, the **Great Stalacpipe Organ** holds the Guinness World Record as the largest natural underground musical instrument. Beginning in 1954, mathematician Leland Sprinkle spent three years locating and tuning stalactites throughout the caves. Press a key and tiny hammers strike the formations, turning the cavern itself into music.



Mammoth Cave, KY



Natural Bridge, AL

COASTAL BREEZES

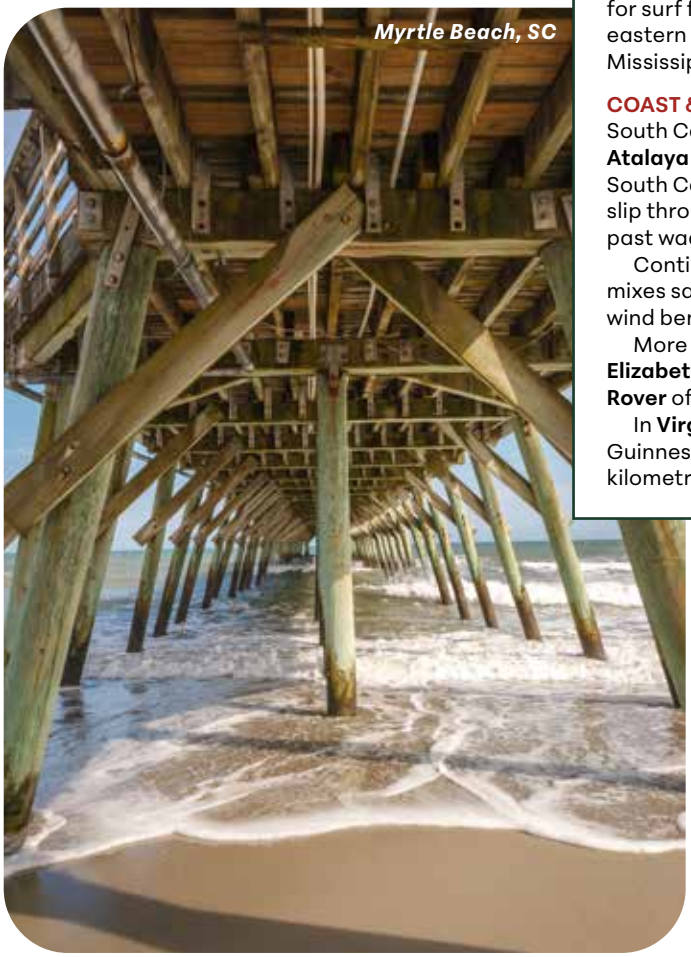
ISLAND ESCAPE: For sand between your toes, make for **Ship Island**, Mississippi. Part of **Gulf Islands National Seashore**, its beaches are popular for surf fishing, long walks and shell collecting, especially towards the island's eastern and western ends. Ferries depart from **Gulfport**, on the Coastal Mississippi shoreline, bound for historic **Fort Massachusetts**.

COAST & CULTURE: At **Huntington Beach State Park** near **Myrtle Beach**, South Carolina, alligators and turtles inhabit protected marshes while **Atalaya Castle** rises beyond the dunes. Further south, **Hilton Head Island**, South Carolina offers more than 110 kilometres of cycle paths, while kayaks slip through the tidal creeks of **Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge**, past wading birds in the salt marshes.

Continue towards **Savannah**, Georgia and **Skidaway Island State Park** mixes salt marsh with woodland, its boardwalks crossing reeds while trails wind beneath pines and moss-draped oaks.

More than 230 kilometres of shoreline wrap around **Norfolk**, Virginia. The **Elizabeth River Trail** follows the water by bike, while the sailing ship **American Rover** offers a slower way to end the day.

In **Virginia Beach**, the Atlantic meets Chesapeake Bay. The city holds a Guinness World Record for the world's largest pleasure beach, with a five-kilometre boardwalk lined with cafés and galleries at its heart.



Myrtle Beach, SC



Coastal Mississippi


Great Falls, Fairfax, VA


Gorge Underground, KY

PEAKS & GORGES

NATURE ON THE DOORSTEP: You don't always have to leave town to find the wild side of the South. In the Raleigh, North Carolina metropolitan area, **William B. Umstead State Park** protects more than 2,000 hectares of woodland, lakes and trails for riders, runners and cyclists, with green corridors linking it to the city centre.

In **Charlotte**, North Carolina the **Whitewater Center** brings whitewater to the city's doorstep. Covering around 525 hectares, it is the largest outdoor centre of its kind in the world, with the world's largest manmade whitewater river alongside hiking and mountain biking trails.

Birmingham, Alabama escapes into **Oak Mountain State Park**, while **Nashville,** Tennessee has the quieter **Radnor Lake State Natural Area**, accessible only on foot and home to herons, turtles and otters.

Near **Lexington**, Kentucky trails through **Raven Run Nature Sanctuary** weave between forest and wildflower meadows, with more than 200 recorded bird species. At **Fellows Lake** near **Springfield**, Missouri, meanwhile, the Ozarks reach almost to the city limits, with hiking, mountain biking, fishing and sailing all on offer.

Few cities wear their green credentials quite like **Greenville**, South Carolina. **Falls Park on the Reedy** brings waterfalls, gardens and the **Liberty Bridge** into the heart of downtown, while the **Swamp Rabbit Trail** continues past cafés, small shops and pockets of city greenery.

Then there's **Bentonville**, Arkansas, where the boundary between downtown and trail almost disappears. In the self-proclaimed "Mountain Biking Capital of the World", single-track and paved routes thread through the city, while **Oz Trails Bike Park** in nearby **Bella Vista** adds lift-served downhill runs.

RUGGED LANDSCAPES: Georgia's "Little Grand Canyon" comes with an unexpected backstory. **Providence Canyon State Park**, Georgia is barely 150 years old, its 16 canyons exposed by poor farming practices over just a few decades. Today, a loop trail leads along the canyon floor.

In eastern Kentucky, sandstone arches and sheer rock walls make the **Red River Gorge** a favourite with climbers. For a slower pace, paddle underground at **Gorge Underground** or hike from one natural arch to another.

Just 24 kilometres from Washington, D.C., the Potomac River crashes through Mather Gorge in **Great Falls Park** near **Fairfax**, Virginia. Over less than two kilometres, rapids surge between canyon walls that narrow to just 20 metres in places.

Missouri offers something rather different at the **Lost Canyon Cave & Nature Trail** in **Ridgedale**. Golf carts cross wooden bridges, roll past waterfalls and rock formations and even stop at a bar inside the cave.

And in West Virginia, **New River Gorge National Park** near **Fayetteville** wraps around an immense river gorge that doubles as one of the finest climbing destinations on the US East Coast.

BACKCOUNTRY BY BIKE: For a journey with history built into every mile, follow the **Natchez Trace Parkway**. The 715-kilometre route starts in **Natchez**, Mississippi, travels via **Jackson** and **Tupelo**, and finishes south of **Nashville**, Tennessee, with cyclists sharing the quiet road with motorists.

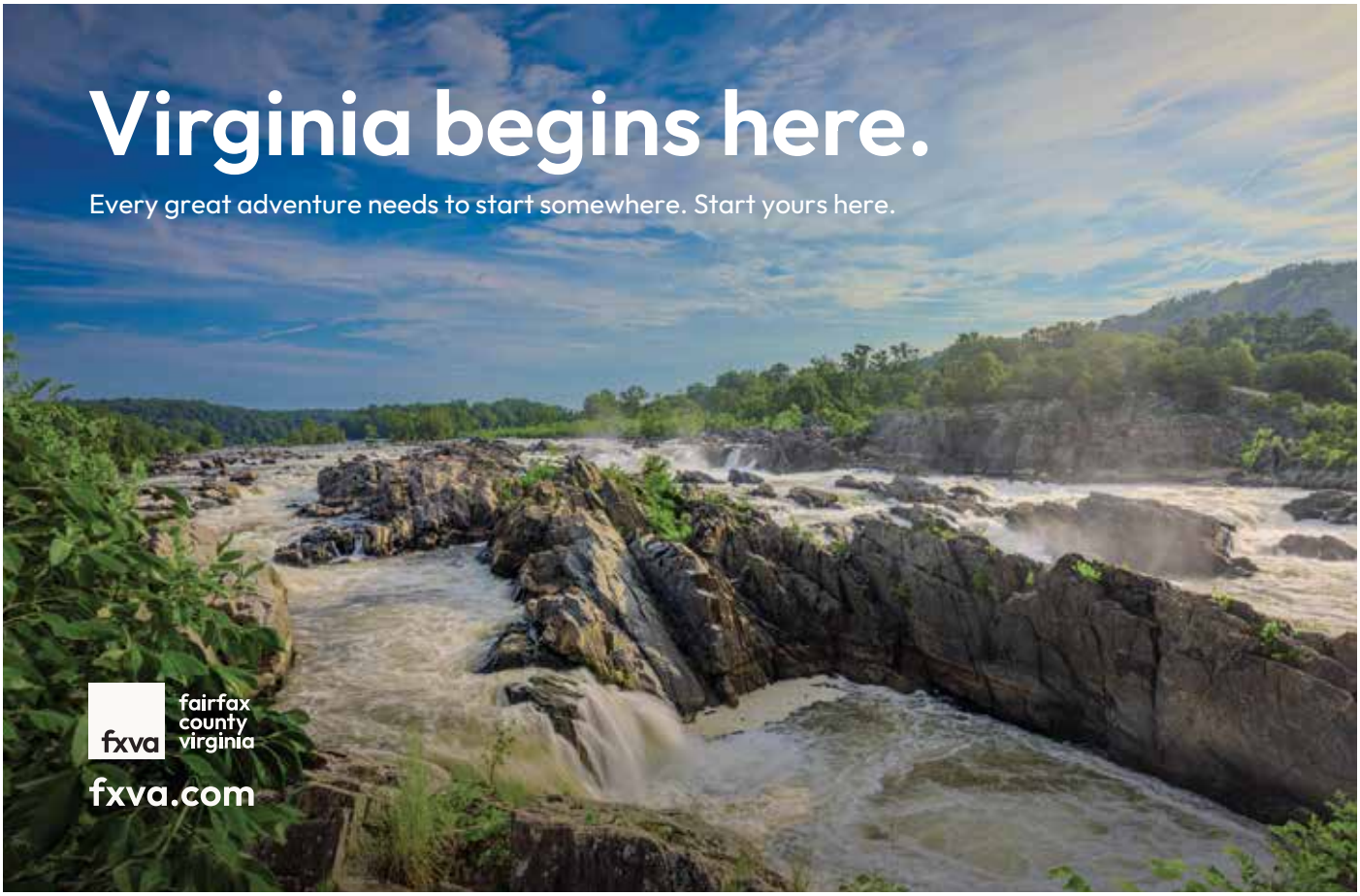
In **Oxford**, Mississippi, the **South Campus Rail Trail** passes through hardwood forest, while the **Bailey's Woods Trail** leads to **Rowan Oak**, William Faulkner's former home.

The **Bike Tennessee** initiative strings together road and gravel routes through small towns, vineyards and forests, while Mississippi's **Longleaf Trace** near **Hattiesburg** follows a former railway for 71 kilometres.

Urban and wild collide spectacularly in **Richmond**, Virginia, where the **James River** runs through downtown and genuine whitewater rapids can be paddled within the city. Prefer dry land? Follow the **North Bank Trail** instead. In **St. Joseph**, Missouri, a 26-mile parkway, around 42 kilometres, links city parks, joined by the newer **River Bluff Trails** for mountain bikers.


Falls Park on the Reedy, Greenville, SC


Whitewater Center, NC


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WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

WILD HORSES: There are few sights more evocative than wild horses against an Atlantic backdrop. In the dunes of **Corolla**, North Carolina, around 100 Colonial Spanish Mustangs still live completely free, believed to be among the last of their kind, with a history stretching back to Spanish expeditions in the 16th century. Guided 4x4 tours head into the dunes in search of the grazing herds.

Swap sand for mountain meadows at **Grayson Highlands State Park**, Virginia, where around 120 ponies roam the high country. Introduced in 1974, they help keep the grasslands open. Then there's **Assateague Island**, where the famous Chincoteague Ponies roam between salt marshes and dunes. For the best perspective, take to the water by kayak.



Lone Elk Park, MO



Great Smoky Mountains National Park, TN

UP CLOSE WITH WILDLIFE: Near **St. Louis**, Missouri, wildlife watching starts before you've even left the car. The scenic drive through **Lone Elk Park** passes through open country where bison and elk roam freely. Next door in **Eureka**, the **Endangered Wolf Center** opens exclusively for guided tours. Its breeding programme is helping safeguard the red wolf, of which only a small number remain in the wild on North Carolina's Albemarle Peninsula. Pups born in Eureka may eventually become candidates for release, helping preserve the genetic diversity of this threatened population.

Birdlife takes centre stage at the **Birdsong Nature Center** in **Thomasville**, Georgia, where controlled burns preserve pine forest habitat and encourage biodiversity. More than 160 species have been recorded here, but the highlight is wonderfully simple: settle in at the **Bird Window** and watch them gather around the watering hole.

SEASONAL SPECTACLES: Timing is everything with some of the South's most memorable natural shows. From mid to late May, **Congaree National Park**, South Carolina flickers into life as fireflies illuminate the darkness. Almost simultaneously, another species performs its own synchronised display in **Elkmont**, Tennessee, inside **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**.

Alabama has its own version of nature's light show. After dark, the walls of **Dismals Canyon** glow an eerie green thanks to rare bioluminescent organisms known as Dismalites. Guided night walks wind through the cool gorge, which in spring and autumn can look as though thousands of tiny stars have settled on the rocks.

Winter is louder at **Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge** near **Huntsville**, Alabama. You'll hear them before you see them: up to 30,000 sandhill cranes descending on the wetlands. Look closely and you may spot something truly rare, a whooping crane descended from the reintroduced eastern migratory population, which numbers only around 70 birds.

For something more delicate, head to the **Cahaba River**, around an hour from **Birmingham**. Between mid-May and mid-June, rare Cahaba lilies turn the shallow rapids white. Each flower lasts just a day.

AFTER DARK

After sunset, the landscape changes again. Above **Okefenokee State Park** in Georgia's **Okefenokee Swamp**, skies rank among the darkest in the country, with the Milky Way glowing above the cypress forest.

Tennessee is another favourite for stargazers. **Pickett State Park** and the unspoilt **Obed River** offer dark skies and astronomy programmes, while the **Tennessee Night Sky Trail** links nine viewing points across the north-east, from a planetarium to **Roan Mountain** on the Appalachian Trail.

West Virginia has its own front-row view of the night sky. **Watoga State Park**, the state's largest, and nearby **Droop Mountain Battlefield Park** enjoy near-pristine darkness. From the historic observation tower on Droop Mountain, the landscape falls away beneath a clear sweep of the Milky Way.




Okefenokee Swamp, GA

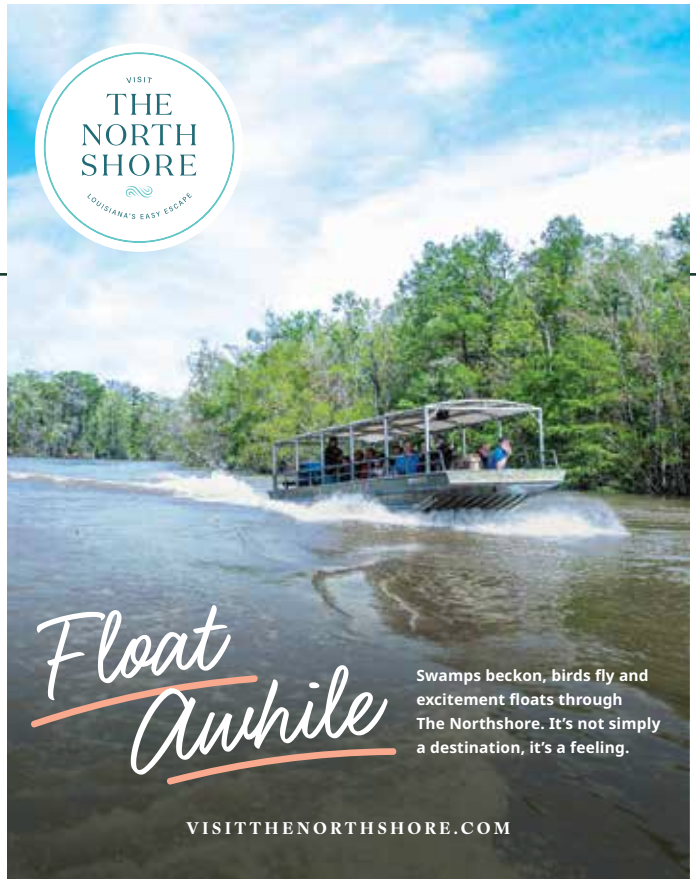
WETLANDS

SWAMP FORESTS: Slip into the waterways outside **Lafayette** and Louisiana quickly starts to feel untamed. Covering around 400,000 hectares, the **Atchafalaya Basin** is the largest wetland of its kind in the USA, a maze of cypress forest where boat and kayak trips reveal alligators, turtles and migratory birds between the trees.

There's a reason the **Mobile-Tensaw Delta**, Alabama is often called "America's Amazon". Explore on foot, by boat or kayak through an extraordinary patchwork of swamps, marshes and cypress-tupelo forest. Just to the north-east, **Splinter Hill Bog** delivers another surprise: more than 12 species of carnivorous plants, including five species of pitcher plant, as well as butterworts and sundews.

Further east, where the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto rivers meet the Atlantic, the **ACE Basin** forms one of the most unspoilt coastal landscapes on the US East Coast, a haven for paddlers, alligators and bald eagles.

BLACKWATER SWAMP: If you really want to disappear into the wetlands, try the **Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge** in south-east Georgia, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2026. An estimated 15,000 alligators live among peat deposits several metres thick that have built up over thousands of years. Multi-day paddling trips head deep into the swamp.




Fontainebleau State Park, LA

URBAN WILDERNESS: A boat? Not always necessary. Inside **New Orleans** itself, the **Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge** covers some 11,000 hectares. From the car park, a wooden boardwalk leads into reeds and wetlands, and within a few steps the sounds of the city begin to disappear.

Upstream in the **River Parishes**, around 50 kilometres away, the **Bonnet Carré Spillway** offers walking trails and a sandy beach along the Mississippi floodplain.

Or go from the **French Quarter** to the great outdoors in just 40 minutes. On the **Northshore of New Orleans**, **Fontainebleau State Park** near Mandeville sits on Lake Pontchartrain with wetlands, a sandy beach, fishing piers and paddling. Nearby, the 50-kilometre **Tammany Trace** follows a former railway line through the countryside, providing a scenic route for cyclists and walkers.

INTO THE OUTBACK: It isn't called "Louisiana's Outback" for nothing. The **Creole Nature Trail** near **Lake Charles** winds for almost 290 kilometres through wild prairie marshes, past alligators and butterfly sanctuaries.


Creole Nature Trail, near Lake Charles, LA

Lafayette, Louisiana



Lake Martin Paddling Tour

In **Lafayette, Louisiana**, culture isn't reserved for museums or special occasions. It's heard in the sound of an accordion at a neighbourhood dancehall, tasted in a bowl of gumbo made from a family recipe, spoken in French around a community table, and celebrated at festivals where visitors are welcomed like locals.

Located in the heart of Louisiana, Lafayette offers international travellers an authentic introduction to **Cajun and Creole culture**. Centuries of Acadian, Creole, African, Native American, French, German, Spanish, and other influences have shaped a destination with its own distinctive food, music, language, traditions, and heritage.

Food is often the best place to begin. Sample **boudin** and **cracklins** from local meat markets, follow the **Lafayette Boudin and Po-boy Trails**, enjoy a traditional plate lunch, or dine at chef-driven restaurants bringing fresh ideas to regional flavours. Here, every meal tells the story of family, community, and generations of tradition.

Music provides the soundtrack to everyday life. **Live Cajun and Zydeco performances** fill dancehalls, festivals, restaurants, and intimate venues year-round, inviting visitors onto the dance floor to experience traditions that remain woven into Lafayette's identity.



Festivals Acadiens et Créoles



Poor Boy's Riverside Inn



McGee's Louisiana Swamp & Airboat Tours



Vermilionville Historic Village

History comes to life through attractions like **Vermilionville**, **Acadian Village,** and **Maison Freetown**, where historic homes, exhibits, music, and demonstrations reveal the stories of the Acadian, Creole, Native American, and African American communities that shaped the region.

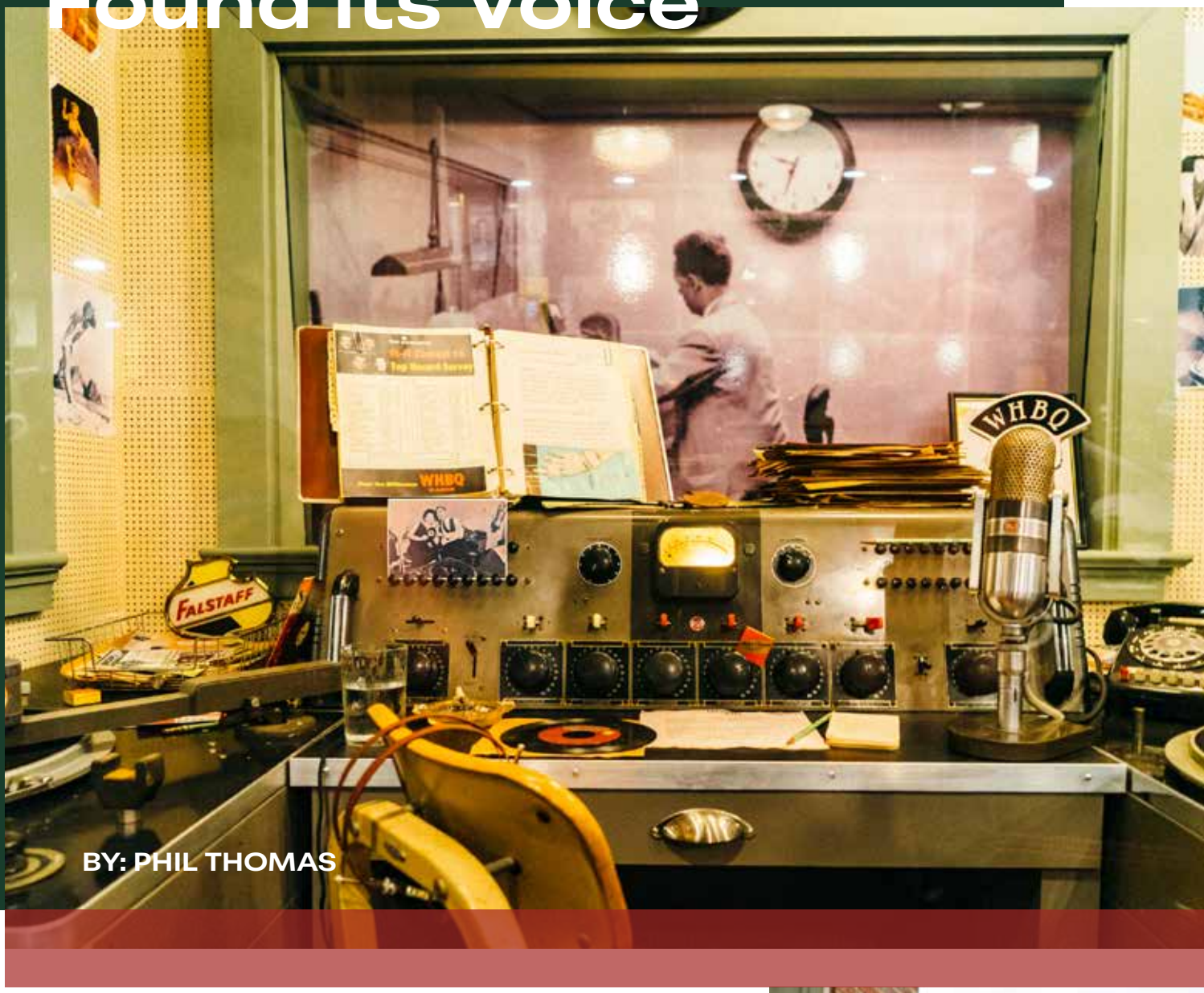
Outdoor adventures offer another perspective. **Paddle the Bayou Vermilion**, explore nearby **Lake Martin**, or take a **guided swamp tour** through cypress-lined waterways rich with wildlife, including alligators, herons, egrets, roseate spoonbills, and other native species.

Creativity thrives throughout Lafayette's museums, galleries, and expanding **Public Art Trail**, while annual celebrations like **Festival International de Louisiane**, **Festivals Acadiens et Créoles**, and **Mardi Gras** showcase the music, food, art, and traditions that define the region.

Come hungry, bring your dancing shoes, and discover Lafayette—a place where food, music, culture, and joie de vivre aren't simply attractions. They're a way of life.

Explore more at ***LafayetteTravel.com/Discover***

Where America Found its Voice



Sun Studio, Memphis, TN

BY: PHIL THOMAS

More than anywhere else in America, the South has shaped the soundtrack of modern life. Its hills, bayous, plains and small towns have produced musical traditions that travelled the world, from jazz and blues to country and soul, while continuing to nurture fiercely local scenes that remain woven into everyday life.

The roll call of artists born here needs no introduction. Nat King Cole was born in **Montgomery, Alabama**. Dolly Parton emerged from the **Smoky Mountains of Tennessee**. Elvis Presley was born in **Tupelo, Mississippi,** before changing popular music forever in **Memphis**.

The region's famous landmarks deserve their place on any itinerary. **Graceland**, **Muscle Shoals** and the **Country Music Hall of Fame** all tell remarkable stories. But this is also a region that rewards those willing to follow the music off the beaten path. In **Lake Charles, Louisiana**, Zydeco and Cajun music, with their fiddles, frottoirs and French lyrics, still fill dance halls with infectious energy, while an impromptu bluegrass session in the Appalachian communities of Virginia or North Carolina can feel almost untouched by time.

Wander into the right bar, community festival or Saturday-night dance and you'll find traditions still evolving and still drawing people onto the dance floor. Join them and there's a good chance it'll be the high point of your visit.



New Orleans, LA

Cities of Sound

Recently designated a UNESCO Creative City of Music, **New Orleans** wears its musical pedigree easily. Not many itineraries survive first contact with the **French Quarter**, where a brass band on **Royal Street** or a jazz quartet drifting through an open doorway can derail even the best-laid plans. You stop for a minute but remain for twenty.

The city's legendary venues continue that tradition after dark. **Preservation Hall** remains one of the world's great homes of traditional jazz, while **Snug Harbor**, **The Spotted Cat** and **Blue Nile** on neighbouring **Frenchmen Street** showcase everyone from rising local talent to internationally acclaimed performers. Time your visit for the **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** (April–May) or the exuberant **French Quarter Festival** (April) and you'll discover the full spectrum of the city's music, from stages to bars to backstreets.

If New Orleans gave America jazz, **Nashville** is a dynamic music hub where legendary country music sits alongside thriving rock, pop, and indie scenes. The nickname "Music City" might sound ambitious until you spend an evening on **Broadway**, where live music spills from almost every doorway from mid-morning until well after midnight. Half the fun lies in wandering between venues, never quite knowing which songwriter or future star you'll stumble across next. When a bass player steps off stage to lead the crowd in a line dance at the **Lucky Bastard Saloon**, you know you've hit the jackpot.

Nashville's musical landmarks tell the story behind the songs. The **Country Music Hall of Fame** charts the evolution of America's best-loved genre, the **Grand Ole Opry** has welcomed performers for a century, and the **Ryman Auditorium**, aka the "Mother Church of Country Music", remains one of the country's most celebrated performance spaces. Visit during **CMA Fest**, held every June, and those venues are joined by stages across the city, creating one of the largest celebrations of country music anywhere in the world.

Across Tennessee, few cities have left a deeper imprint on popular music than **Memphis**. Blues, soul and rock 'n' roll all found defining voices here, creating a legacy that still shapes the city's identity. **Graceland** remains the pilgrimage that draws visitors from around the world, but it's only one chapter of Elvis' story. At **Sun Studio**, you'll stand where he, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis helped change the course of popular music, while the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** tells the story of the artists who gave Memphis its unmistakable sound. Round off the day on **Beale Street**, where live music pours from almost every doorway. Follow your ears, tip the band and, as the city's unofficial anthem promises, you may well find yourself walking home with your feet ten feet off Beale.



Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville,T N



B.B. King's Blues Club, Memphis, TN



Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, TN



American Jazz Museum, Kansas City, MO

Follow the Mississippi River north and the soundtrack begins to change again. **St Louis** helped shape American blues, ragtime and rock 'n' roll, and you don't have to look far to hear their influence. The **Delmar Loop** remains one of the city's liveliest cultural corridors, where independent music venues, record stores and the **St. Louis Walk of Fame** celebrate everyone from Chuck Berry to Tina Turner and Miles Davis. Catch a show at **The Pageant** or wander into a neighbourhood club like **Blue Strawberry** and you'll quickly discover that the city's greatest musical asset is its unpretentious authenticity.

A few hours west, **Kansas City** has been swinging to its own rhythm for more than a century. The city's distinctive style of jazz, improvisational and blues-infused, still echoes through the historic **18th & Vine district**. If that gets you in the mood, visit the **American Jazz Museum**, which traces the stories of Charlie Parker, Count Basie and the musicians who transformed American music. Spend the evening at **The Blue Room** or **KC Juke House** and you'll understand why Kansas City remains a pilgrimage for musicians as much as music lovers. Devotees of Missouri's jazz story should also visit nearby **St Joseph**, home to pioneering saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, whose innovations helped shape modern jazz.



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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.



Café Du Monde


BBQ Shrimp


French Quarter

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***

The Iconic Venues

Outside of its cities, some of your most rewarding Southern music experiences are in small towns, roadside venues and recording studios where the music still feels deeply rooted in the communities that created it.

Take **Muscle Shoals, Alabama**. From the outside, **FAME Recording Studios** and nearby **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio** are surprisingly modest. At FAME, Aretha Franklin recorded *I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)*, while Muscle Shoals Sound hosted The Rolling Stones for tracks including *Brown Sugar*. Tour both studios and you begin to understand how generations of artists found their own distinctive "Muscle Shoals Sound". Just over an hour away is **Huntsville**, where independent venues and a growing live music scene showcase a new generation of Alabama artists, proving the region's musical story is far from over. Further south, **Birmingham** also deserves more attention. Alongside the **Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame**, beautifully restored theatres and an increasingly vibrant live music scene celebrate a city whose contributions span jazz, gospel and Southern soul.

In **Breaux Bridge**, southwest Louisiana, mornings at **Buck & Johnny's** get locals moving early with the celebrated **Zydeco Breakfast**, where accordions, fiddles and washboards tempt diners onto the dance floor. As locals will tell you, you can't dance all day if you don't start in the morning.



Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, AL





Buck & Johnny's, Breaux Bridge, LA



Blue Moon Saloon, Lafayette, LA

In **Lafayette** itself, **Blue Moon Saloon** has become one of the state's most beloved roots music venues, introducing audiences to Cajun, Zydeco and folk musicians in an intimate setting resembling a southern grandma's back porch. Come during **Festival International de Louisiane** (April), the largest free Francophone festival in the United States, or **Festivals Acadiens et Créoles** (October), celebrating Cajun and Creole music and culture, and you'll quickly understand why *allons danser*, "let's dance", feels like a local philosophy. The road between **New Orleans** and Lafayette tells an equally important story. In **Louisiana's River Parishes**, sites including **Whitney Plantation** and the **River Road African American Museum** explore the lives and resilience of the African American communities whose spirituals, work songs and call-and-response traditions became the foundations of jazz, blues and gospel.

Blues' spiritual home is **Clarksdale**, Mississippi, an obligatory stop on any road trip from New Orleans to Memphis. Legends from Muddy Waters to John Lee Hooker all have ties to the **Mississippi Delta**, while the city's famous crossroads has become a pilgrimage site for music fans. Spend an evening at **Ground Zero Blues Club**, co-founded by actor Morgan Freeman, or the intimate **Red's Lounge**, where performances often continue long after the advertised finish time. Further south, **Hattiesburg's** live music scene, from the beautifully restored **Saenger Theater** to the more intimate **Grill & Grocery**, demonstrates that Mississippi's musical story continues well beyond the Delta.



Ground Zero Blues Club, Clarksdale, MS



Elvis Presley's birthplace, Tupelo, MS



Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Owensboro, KY

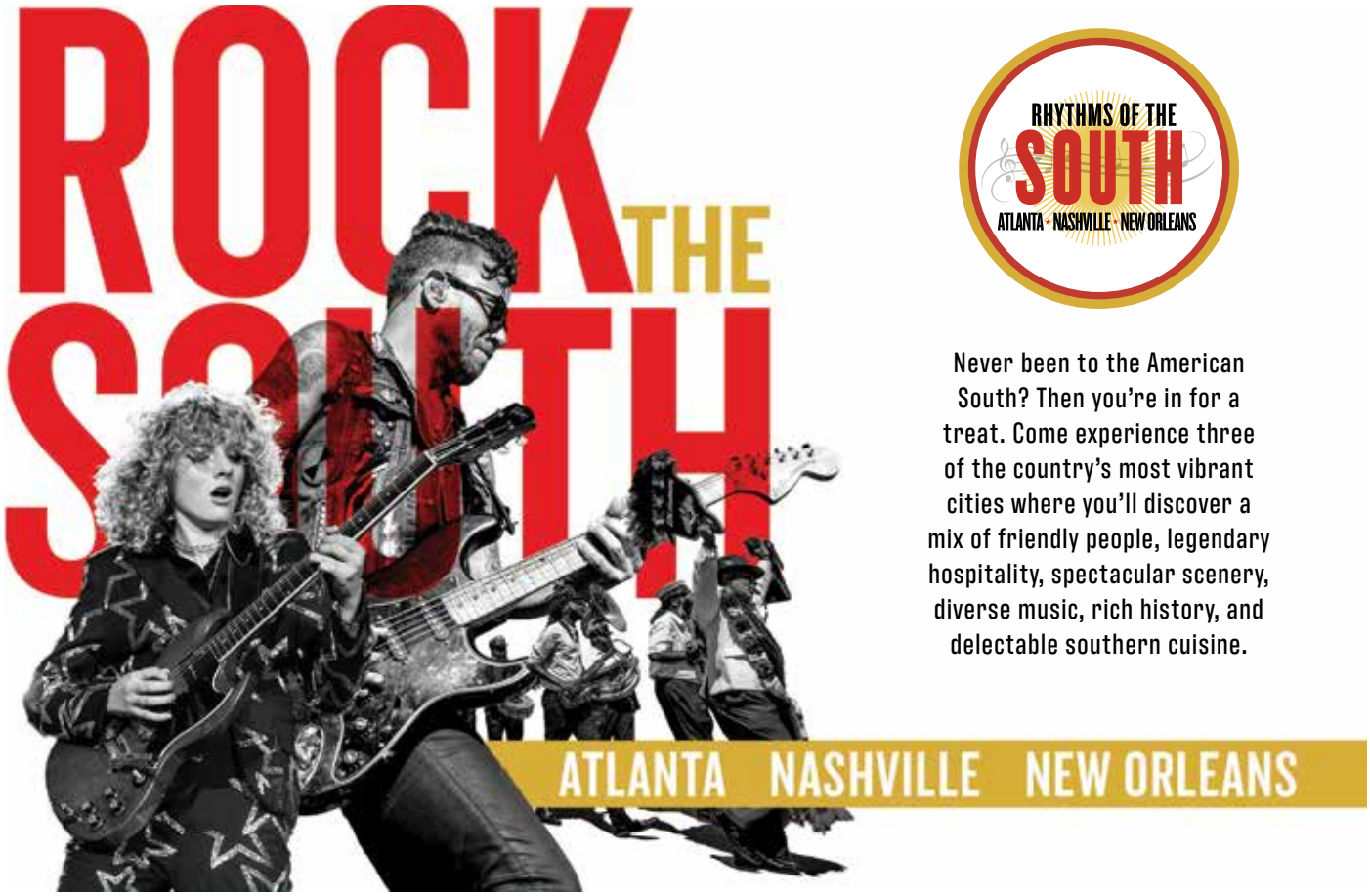
Elsewhere in Mississippi, **Tupelo**, Elvis' birthplace, is where devotees can visit the modest two-room house where Elvis Presley was born and the nearby church whose gospel music influenced his earliest years. Meanwhile, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, **100 Men Hall** in **Bay St Louis** tells another side of Southern music history. The African American benevolent association behind **100 Men Hall** was incorporated in 1894, with the hall itself built in 1922. It later welcomed performers including B.B. King, Ray Charles and James Brown during segregation, providing a stage when many venues remained closed to Black artists.

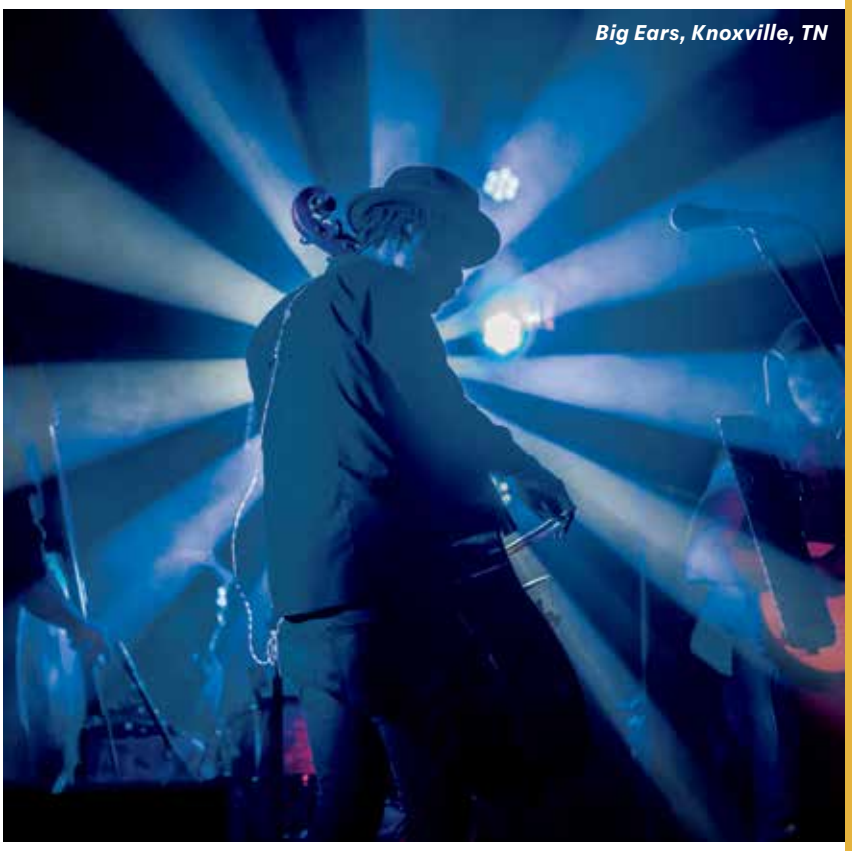
Few parts of the South wear their musical heritage quite so naturally as the **Appalachian Mountains**. Begin in **Lexington, Kentucky**, in the heart of the **Bluegrass Region**. Kentucky gave its nickname to Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys, whose pioneering sound in turn gave bluegrass music its name. Catch an intimate gig at **The Burl**, explore the historic **Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center**, or time your visit for the **Railbird Festival** (June), where major names share the bill with Kentucky's finest Americana and bluegrass performers. Crossing into North Carolina, **Boone** slows the pace, with craft breweries, listening rooms and neighbourhood bars regularly hosting old-time, folk and bluegrass sessions.

Further south, **Asheville** has long punched above its weight musically. Luke Combs grew up here, while nearby **Black Mountain** was the birthplace of Roberta Flack. The city continues to attract acclaimed performers to the legendary **Orange Peel**. The road eventually reaches **Raleigh**, where Appalachian influences meet a thriving contemporary scene. The beautifully restored **Lincoln Theatre** hosts everyone from emerging bluegrass pickers to established touring acts, while summer evenings at **Red Hat Amphitheater** bring major names beneath the downtown skyline.


Railbird Festival, Lexington, KY


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Big Ears, Knoxville, TN



King Biscuit Blues Festival, Helena, AR



Birthplace of Route 66 Festival, Springfield, MO

Year-Round Festivals

Music here rarely stays inside concert halls for long. Throughout the year, festivals spring up in city streets, parks and beachfronts.

Country fans should head for **Carolina Country Music Fest** (June) in **Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**, where some of the genre's biggest names perform just steps from the Atlantic Ocean. For a more eclectic experience, **Big Ears** in **Knoxville, Tennessee** transforms the city's downtown each spring with performances spanning contemporary classical, jazz, rock, folk and experimental music in theatres, churches, clubs and other intimate venues.

For something altogether different, **Spoleto Festival USA** (May–June) transforms historic **Charleston** each spring into one of America's leading celebrations of the performing arts for seventeen unforgettable days and nights. Opera, jazz and chamber music spill into churches, theatres and public spaces, creating an atmosphere as elegant as the Italian festival from which it draws inspiration. No less refined surroundings greet visitors to the annual **Savannah Music Festival** (March-April), which welcomes internationally renowned artists to the city's theatres, churches and public spaces, all throughout the historic centre of the city.

Food and music make natural companions across the South, with local cuisine a mainstay of most festivals. Nowhere is this truer than **Fall for Greenville** (October). While local chefs and restaurateurs showcase the city's flourishing culinary scene, multiple stages host everything from bluegrass and Americana to rock and soul. Dancing certainly works up your appetite!

Bluegrass takes centre stage at **ROMP Festival** (June) in **Owensboro**, Kentucky. Set in Yellow Creek Park, the festival combines internationally renowned performers with workshops and impromptu jam sessions. Elsewhere in Kentucky, **Louisville's** musical calendar reaches its peak when **Bourbon & Beyond** (September) brings global headliners together with bourbon tastings and Kentucky's renowned food culture for one of America's most distinctive festival weekends.

Elsewhere, the **Birthplace of Route 66 Festival** (August) in **Springfield, Missouri**, celebrates the road that shaped American travel with classic cars, nostalgia and live local music. Farther south, the **King Biscuit Blues Festival** (October) in **Helena, Arkansas**, draws tens of thousands of blues fans to the banks of the Mississippi River for three days of performances celebrating the Delta's extraordinary musical heritage. Meanwhile, the **Virginia Arts Festival** demonstrates the state's remarkable cultural breadth through an ambitious programme spanning classical music, jazz, dance and theatre at venues across southeastern Virginia.

For those keen to participate more than simply listening, the **Mississippi Songwriters Festival** (September) and **Alabama's Opelika Songwriters Festival** (March) strip music back to its essentials. Rather than elaborate stage productions, audiences gather to hear the stories behind the songs, offering a rare opportunity to experience the craft of songwriting in the states that helped inspire so much of America's musical heritage. It's hard to imagine a more inspiring setting.

From Roadside Counters to MICHELIN Stars



Elvie's Restaurant, Jackson, MS

BY: RASHMI NARAYAN

Food in the South is rarely just food. It is history on a plate, family recipes and ingredients shaped by the land, coast and communities that call the region home. Across Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia, there are countless ways to eat and reasons to visit.

You might find yourself eating oysters beside the Gulf, tucking into jambalaya in Louisiana, arguing over whose barbecue is best. Crucially, know your terminology before taking sides: in the South, "barbecue" strictly means slow-smoked perfection and if you want to impress the locals, tell them you already know the difference between a smokehouse feast and a casual backyard cookout. Some of the most memorable experiences remain wonderfully unfussy: boudin balls, fried green tomatoes, a bowl of burgoo or a sandwich at the counter of a neighbourhood institution.

Indigenous, African, European, Caribbean and Asian influences have all helped shape the region's culinary identity, while today's chefs bring new ideas to deeply rooted recipes. The MICHELIN Guide American South, published for the first time in 2025, lists more than 220 restaurants spanning 44 cuisine types. Come hungry, ask the amiable locals what they recommend and always leave room for dessert.

Remember, there is no single, homogeneous Southern cuisine. A bowl of gumbo in Louisiana can tell a completely different story from a plate of barbecue in North Carolina, an oyster in Virginia or a hot chicken sandwich in Tennessee, yet all belong to the same broad culinary conversation.

What connects them is an affection for food that is generous, sociable and tied to place. Recipes carry family memories and ingredients truly reflect the landscape. You will find ambitious chefs and MICHELIN-recognised restaurants, but also diners where the menu has not changed in decades and counters where the person serving you knows exactly what you ought to order.

Eat the famous dishes, by all means, but leave room for the unexpected. Ask what is local, try the thing you've never heard of and accept that one meal may turn into two. In the South, there is always something new worth trying.

Louisiana: A Feast of Flavours

Louisiana deserves to be near the top of any Southern food lover's list. **New Orleans** is a culinary heavyweight, where Creole and Cajun dishes meet influences from around the world. Jambalaya, boudin, boudin balls, gumbo and the **po'boy** are essential eating, while beignets and pralines offer something sweeter. The po'boy, piled with everything from fried shrimp to roast beef, remains one of Louisiana's greatest sandwiches with a remarkable history tied to the region's working class.

Beyond New Orleans, **Lafayette** is at the heart of Cajun country, with boudin trails leading to local markets and smokehouses. Trails for crawfish, shrimp, oysters and andouille offer further reasons to eat your way around the state, while the **Hot Sauce Trail** celebrates Louisiana's love of spice. The **Gas Station Eats Trail** points towards back-road stops serving everything from meat pies to fried fish.

Along the coast, Vietnamese-Cajun cooking reflects communities that became part of the Gulf seafood industry, while New Orleans restaurants draw inspiration from international cuisines. Crawfish, oysters, shrimp, crab, redfish and bass make the most of the state's waterways, while the **Sazerac** provides a drinkable piece of New Orleans history.



Randol's, Breaux Bridge, LA



Beignets, Baton Rouge, LA



Sacred Ground BBQ, Flora, MS



White Pillars, Biloxi, MS

Mississippi: From The Delta to the Gulf

Mississippi brings a different flavour to the Southern tapestry. Fried catfish is a classic, while **Delta hot tamales** are smaller and spicier than Mexican tamales, reflecting the movement of workers and cultures through the **Mississippi Delta**. Then there is Mississippi mud pie, which sounds like it was named by somebody who had already eaten two slices.

On the **Gulf Coast**, oysters, shrimp, blue crab and Gulf fish appear in family-run restaurants, seafood markets and waterfront dining rooms. Vietnamese communities have also shaped the coast's food culture, creating a distinctive meeting of Vietnamese, Cajun and Gulf seafood.

Further north, **Oxford** combines Southern favourites with chef-led cooking, while **Tupelo** offers a piece of roadside Americana at **Johnnie's Drive-In**, where Elvis Presley was once a regular. Sit in his booth, order a doughburger and RC Cola and you have lunch with a little musical history on the side.



Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q, Decatur, AL

Alabama: Barbecue with a Difference

In Alabama, food tells stories of African, French, Creole and other cultural influences, but barbecue remains one of the great reasons to pack loose clothing in your suitcase. **North Alabama** has its own calling card, which is the **white barbecue sauce**, a tangy mayonnaise and vinegar mixture traditionally served with smoked chicken. In **Decatur**, **Big Bob Gibson Bar-B-Q** has been serving its version for generations and is credited with creating the sauce.

There is also soul food, with meat-and-three restaurants serving collard greens, turnip greens, grits, cornbread and macaroni cheese. These foods are shaped by Indigenous and African communities, with African American cooks helping create dishes now familiar across the region.

In **Birmingham** and **Huntsville**, these traditions sit alongside a contemporary food scene, with independent restaurants and chef-led kitchens adding new ideas to familiar flavours. Alabama also offers Gulf-to-table seafood and influences ranging from Latin American to Creole. There is more going on here than barbecue, although nobody will complain if you start with that.


Star Hill Provisions at Makers Mark Distillery, Loretto, KY


Armour House, Birmingham, AL

Kentucky: The Beginning of Bourbon

Kentucky may be famous for bourbon, but its food deserves equal billing. **Louisville** is the place to start, with its **Urban Bourbon Trail** pairing the state's signature spirit with a lively restaurant scene. The city is also home to the **Hot Brown**, an open-faced turkey sandwich created at **The Brown Hotel**, while beer cheese, burgoo and **Derby-Pie®** all have their place in Kentucky's culinary story.

Head west to **Owensboro** and the barbecue changes again. Smoked mutton and burgoo form the backbone of a distinctive regional tradition. It is one of those dishes that sounds simple until you realise how much local pride is packed into the bowl.

In **Lexington**, restaurants in horse country make use of Kentucky's agricultural bounty. **Holly Hill Inn**, owned by James Beard-nominated chef Ouita Michel, is one example of the state's exquisite local-produce experiences. Bourbon naturally always finds its way onto the table too.


Hot Brown, Brown Hotel, Louisville, KY









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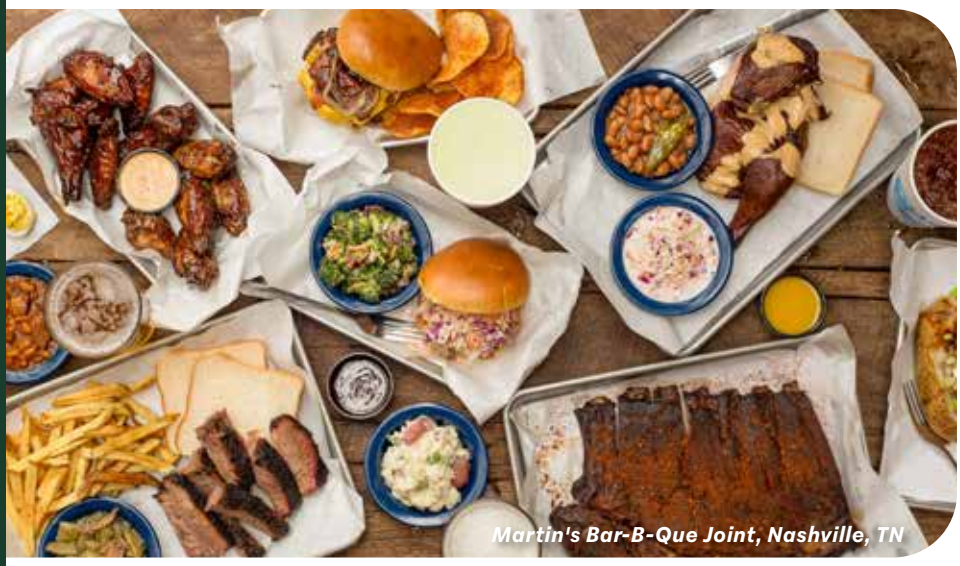
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TEAM KENTUCKY

Tennessee: Hot Chicken, Barbecue and a Little Whiskey

Tennessee has its own answer to almost every Southern food question. **Nashville** has hot chicken, **Memphis** has barbecue and biscuits, while whiskey, wine and craft beer add another dimension. Hot chicken is the dish visitors tend to seek out first, with its crisp coating and varying degrees of chilli heat. Order it mild if you must and be sure to learn the story of how it began at **Prince's Hot Chicken**.

Memphis barbecue is built around slow-smoked pork and ribs, while Tennessee's food and music cultures overlap through projects pairing chefs and musicians. For drinks, follow the **Tennessee Whiskey Trail** or explore the state's craft breweries.



Martin's Bar-B-Que Joint, Nashville, TN



Old Forge Distillery, Pigeon Forge, TN



Kai After Dark, Springfield, MO



Arthur Bryant's Barbeque, Kansas City, MO

Missouri: Barbecue, Rolls and a World of Flavours

Missouri proves that Southern food does not stop neatly at an imaginary line on the map. **Kansas City** is the best place to begin, where slow-smoked barbecue is practically a civic institution, with burnt ends, ribs and sweet-smoky sauces inspiring strong opinions and stronger appetites. However, the state's food story stretches well beyond barbecue.

In **St Louis**, diverse communities have helped create a modern food scene. **Balkan Treat Box** reflects the city's large Bosnian community, while **iNDO** brings Southeast Asian flavours together with Midwestern ingredients. Kansas City's **Café Corazon** celebrates Latin American dishes. Springfield's historic **Commercial Street** adds Peruvian, Dutch, Italian and French-Cajun cooking.

There is room for old-fashioned fun. At **Lambert's Café** in **Sikeston**, famous dinner rolls are literally thrown across the dining room to ravenous customers. In the **Ozarks**, **Finley Farms** brings together a historic mill, gardens and locally sourced dining.

Arkansas: A Fresh Appetite

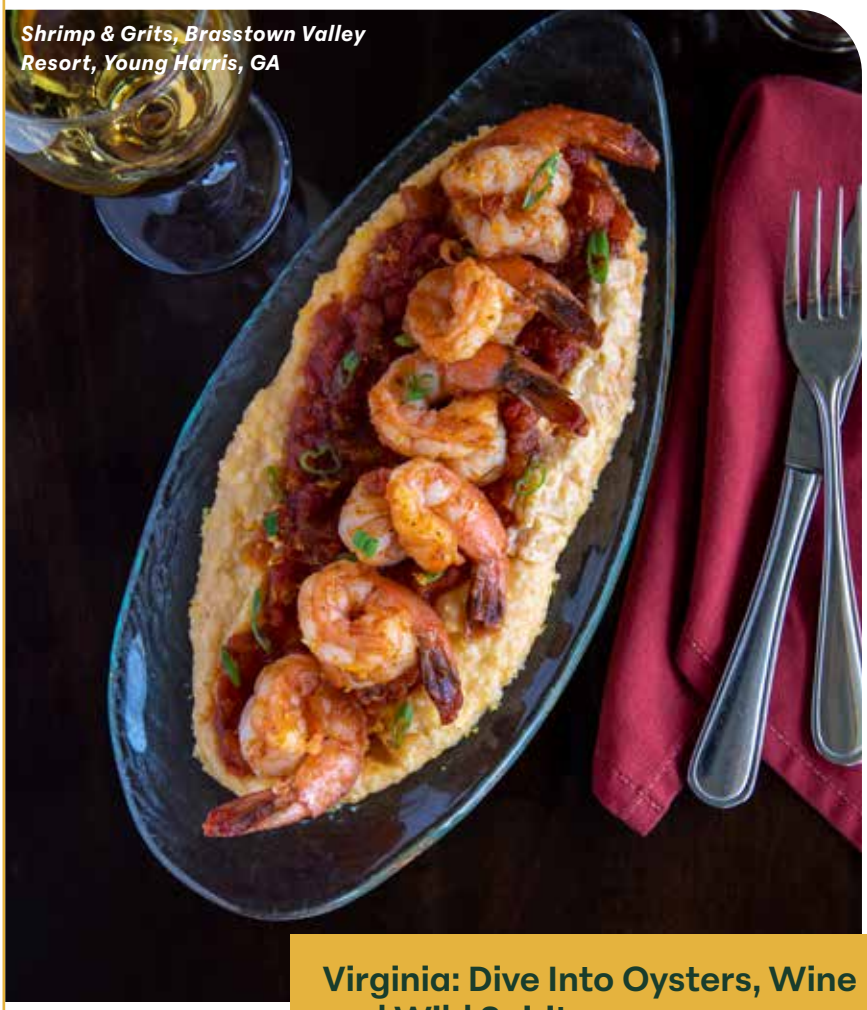
Arkansas brings another side to Southern food, particularly in **Bentonville**, where a chef-driven scene has developed alongside the city's wider cultural growth. Restaurants such as **Conifer** and **Yeyo's** showcase a contemporary approach, while **Bentoville Food Theater** brings several dining concepts and visiting chefs together under one roof.

Elsewhere, traditional Southern flavours remain important, including Delta hot tamales, which share their history with neighbouring Mississippi. The appeal of Arkansas is that food can be rooted in Southern tradition while drawing on influences from elsewhere. You can arrive expecting biscuits and barbecue and leave having found something unexpected.

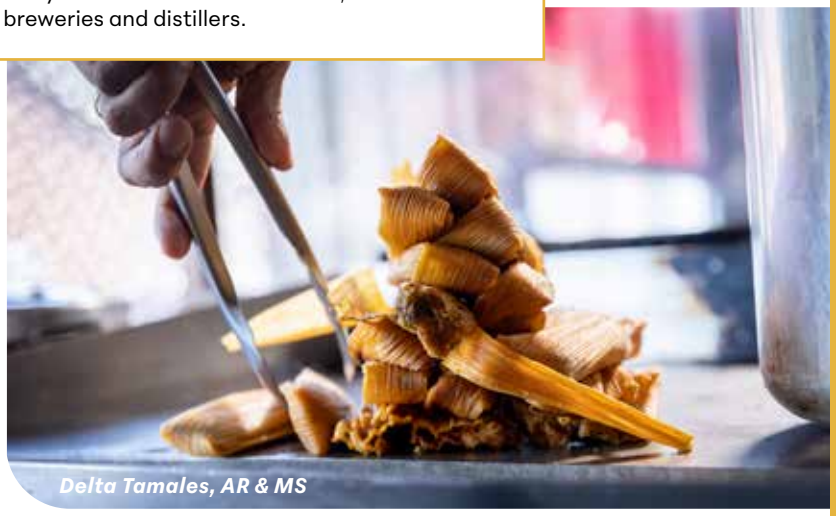
Georgia: From Peaches to Global Flavours

Georgia earns its place with a culinary scene that stretches well beyond its famous peaches. Barbecue, fried chicken, seafood, soul food and farm produce all feature heavily, with sweet Georgia shrimp particularly associated with the coast. **Atlanta** has a well-established international food scene alongside its Southern foundations, while **Savannah** remains a stronghold for dishes such as shrimp and grits and fried chicken.

The state's produce is another reason to eat seasonally. Peaches, apples and strawberries go hand in hand with local honey and preserves, while **North Georgia's mountains** support vineyards and dozens of wineries, as well as craft breweries and distillers.



Shrimp & Grits, Brasstown Valley Resort, Young Harris, GA



Delta Tamales, AR & MS



Pleasure House Oyster Farm, Virginia Beach, VA

Virginia: Dive Into Oysters, Wine and Wild Spirits

Virginia brings together two of the South's great pleasures: seafood and wine. Along the **Chesapeake Bay** and coastal waterways, oysters are central to the culinary culture, while inland vineyards provide an appealing counterpoint.

Norfolk has a lively independent restaurant scene, from neighbourhood diners to chef-led restaurants reflecting the city's diverse population and celebrating Virginia's classic culinary foundations of seafood, cured ham, peanuts, and local produce.

Virginia now has more than 60 distilleries, while **George Washington's Distillery at Mount Vernon** offers a glimpse into America's early whiskey industry. The reconstructed distillery still produces whiskey using traditional methods.

West Virginia: Mountain Food With Character

West Virginia's cuisine is tied to its Appalachian landscape, where food has traditionally been practical, generous and shaped by what is grown, gathered or preserved. The state's most famous contribution may be the **pepperoni roll**, a soft bread roll filled with pepperoni that became a staple of mining communities. It is portable, filling and considerably more exciting than a cereal bar.

Appalachian traditions also appear in dishes made with ramps, beans, cornbread, apples and wild ingredients. Small farms, markets and independent restaurants are giving these staples a new life, keeping the food rooted in the mountains but not stuck in the past.

North Carolina: Barbecue is a Serious Business

In North Carolina, barbecue comes with geography, history and enough regional argument to fuel an entire dinner. The state's wood-smoked tradition dates back to the 1700s, with whole-hog barbecue particularly associated with eastern North Carolina and the shoulder-based style of **Lexington** further west. Both are typically served with vinegar-based sauce, although Lexington adds a little tomato.

Raleigh brings the tradition into the modern day. Pitmasters including Sam Jones and Christopher Prieto continue the city's whole-hog heritage, while restaurants such as **Mala Pata** demonstrate how international influences are reshaping Southern cooking. Its brewery scene gives diners plenty to wash down the barbecue.

Away from the barbecue pit, North Carolina's coast supplies oysters and seafood, while farms provide an impressive range of produce. Tradition and invention share the same table.



Mala Pata, Raleigh, NC



Prime Fish, Charlotte, NC



Hook & Barrel, Myrtle Beach, SC



Lowcountry Boil, SC

South Carolina: From Gullah Kitchens to the Lowcountry

South Carolina's food story is inseparable from its **Lowcountry** landscape and the cultures that have shaped it. Gullah Geechee traditions, rooted in the history and resilience of African American communities along the coast, have helped define dishes and cooking techniques that remain central to the state's identity. Shrimp and grits, she-crab soup, oysters and barbecue are among the dishes visitors should seek out.

Charleston has become one of the South's best-known culinary destinations, but there is much more to the state. **Myrtle Beach** combines fresh seafood with Southern favourites, while **Greenville** has developed a sophisticated dining culture of its own. **Scoundrel** became the city's first MICHELIN-starred restaurant, while **Topsoil** in nearby **Travelers Rest** puts local farm produce at the heart of its cooking.

Peaches, heirloom watermelons, pork and Atlantic seafood all feature heavily, alongside locally produced wine, beer and spirits. From the coast to the Upstate, South Carolina makes a convincing case for eating according to where you are.

Southern Charm & Global Flavours in Raleigh, North Carolina


Ajja Restaurant

For travellers looking to rediscover the United States through authentic local experiences, North Carolina's capital city of **Raleigh** offers an opportunity to explore beyond the expected. Globally influenced cuisine, world-renowned museums and sprawling greenspaces invite visitors to slow down in a destination where Southern hospitality means that all are welcome and no one leaves uninspired.

Known as both the "City of Oaks" and a "city in a park," Raleigh connects **480 kilometres of greenways** and **more than 55,000 hectares of parkland** with acclaimed dining and attractions to create trail-to-table experiences delighting adventurers and adventurous eaters alike.

A **124-hectare urban oasis** in downtown Raleigh, **Dix Park**'s tree-shrouded trails and skyline-backed flower fields house renowned Danish sculptor Thomas Dambo's largest permanent installation in the U.S. – a hidden family of five larger-than-life wooden trolls. The park's **Gipson Play Plaza** pairs gardens, playgrounds and interactive water features with locally made snacks and draft brews at its **House of Many Porches Market**.


The Trolls at Dix Park


Sam Jones BBQ


North Carolina State Capitol


North Carolina Museum of Art

With 14 **MICHELIN-recognised restaurants** and a community of award-winning chefs, Raleigh, N.C.'s culinary landscape is infused with local ingredients, traditional techniques and global flavours. Generational pitmasters continue to honour Carolina's **wood-smoked, whole-hog barbecue heritage**, while the area's immigrant-driven restaurant scene is redefining Southern menus with international inspiration. Visitors can raise a glass at the **Guinness World Record-holding Raleigh Beer Garden**, featuring more than 350 beers on tap, or explore the destination's 40+ craft breweries along the **Raleigh Beer Trail**.

A mosaic of 12 cities and towns, the Raleigh area invites travellers of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and interests to discover an approachable atmosphere and luxury experiences that won't break the bank. Raleigh is home to multiple free, world-renowned museums like the **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences**, the Southeast's largest science museum and home to the **"Dueling Dinosaurs" interactive paleontology lab**. Or embrace the vibrant atmosphere and artistry at the **North Carolina Museum of Art**, filled with 5,000+ historic and modern works alongside the Southeast's most extensive collection of Rodin sculptures.

With easy access to the beautiful North Carolina mountains and beaches, and RDU International Airport's 90 direct flights, Raleigh, N.C., is a vibrant gateway welcoming visitors to a thriving Southern city centre and beyond.

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