



Music & Heritage of the Deep South
Fully Escorted Group Tour Oct 03 – 12, 2016
Guaranteed Departure

Nashville – Country
Memphis – Rock n Roll & Soul
Mississippi Delta – Blues
Lafayette – Zydeco
New Orleans – Jazz & Cajun



You can elect to begin and end the tour in Memphis. You will need to arrive at least one day early and stay at least one extra day. The coach and the tour escort will originate and end in Memphis; so you can ride with them to Nashville to begin the tour and return with them from New Orleans.

Tour Prices Per Person

Single Occ. From £1,895
Double Occ. From £1,445

Detailed Itinerary

Mon, Oct 03 (Nashville)

Arrive Nashville and check-in the GuestHouse Inn Music Valley Drive. You will be greeted by your Sweet Magnolia Tours' escort and motorcoach. **Overnight Nashville.**

Tue, Oct 04 (Nashville)

This morning you will embark on a **Nashville Sightseeing Tour** an enlightening and interesting narrative, which will include the downtown area with some of its colorful history, famous Music Row, the Bi-Centennial Mall, The Ryman Auditorium, the State Capitol, Nashville's Parthenon, and a drive through a residential area showing a few homes of the stars.

This afternoon you will tour the **Country Music Hall of Fame**: Sing Me Back Home is the title of the Country Music Hall of Fame® and Museum's permanent exhibit, an exciting, multi-layered journey through the life of country music. A self-guided tour covering two floors of the Museum, Sing Me Back Home tells the story of country music from its pre-commercial roots in the nineteenth century through its vibrant life in the twenty-first century. Organized chronologically, the story moves through large subjects such as "Country During the War Years," for example, while each glass artifact case has its own theme as well. You can read about the music and its makers if you like, or you can let the powerful photos, instruments, costumes—and especially the music—tell the story by themselves. Sing Me Back

Home is just what the title suggests: an exploration of the power of music to make living history and to connect us to our deepest feelings.

Later you will tour the historic **RCA Studio B** - once the recording home of popular music titans such as Elvis Presley, Chet Atkins, Eddy Arnold, and the Everly Brothers - first became known as one of the cradles of the "Nashville Sound" in the 1960s. A sophisticated style characterized by background vocals and strings, the Nashville Sound both revived the popularity of country music and helped establish Nashville as an international recording center. The storied studio's exterior has been renovated and the interior has been returned to its 1970s era prime as an analog "temple of sound."

Tonight you will attend a performance of the **Grand Ole Opry**, where you'll catch today's hottest stars, new faces, and Opry legends. Showcasing the best in country, blue grass and more, the Opry is an American experience like no other. Located next to the Roy Cuff Museum and sharing the parking lot of the Opry Mill mall and entertainment center. After the show you will remain in the audience and someone from backstage will come out and take you on tour of the backstage. Also, usually you will get to see one or two stars still packing up. **Overnight Nashville.**

Wed, Oct 05 (Nashville to Memphis 210 miles / 338 kilometers)

Today you depart for Memphis. Upon arrival in Memphis you will tour **Graceland**, the home of Elvis Presley. The audio tour of Graceland Mansion is full of music and interesting stories about how Elvis lived in the home he loved so much. You will see the largest privately owned collection of gold records in the world and Elvis' elaborate stage costumes and jewelry. The mansion tour ends with a quiet visit to Meditation Garden where Elvis and members of his family are buried. You can also see Elvis' famous 1955 pink Cadillac in the Elvis Presley Automobile Museum and climb aboard his custom jet the "Lisa Marie." Graceland plaza also offers fabulous shopping and restaurants.

You will then check-in the Sleep Inn Court Square Downtown and have the evening free to explore Beale Street, one of America's most famous streets where W.C. Handy first penned the Blues music of the Mississippi Delta. Located downtown Beale Street stretches several blocks east of the river bluffs. Nightclubs and restaurants offer a variety of food and live music including traditional Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, and Rock'n'Roll. Shops and boutiques throughout the district provide visitors with the opportunity to purchase souvenirs, t-shirts, memorabilia, and novelties. The world-famous street also features a statue of W.C. Handy, a musical "Walk of Fame," and Church Park, built by the South's first Black millionaire, Robert Church. **Overnight Memphis.**

Thu, Oct 06 (Memphis)

This morning you will tour the **Stax Museum of American Soul Music**: Soulsville is a 17,000-square-foot museum on the original site of Stax Records and houses more than 2,000 cultural artifacts, celebrating the music made famous by Otis Redding, Booker T. and the MGs, Isaac Hayes, the Bar-Kays, Al Green, Aretha Franklin, Earth, Wind & Fire and more. In addition to Stax music and memorabilia, you'll also find exhibits dedicated to the artists of Muscle Shoals, Motown, Atlantic and Memphis' own Hi Records.

Next you will tour **Sun Studio**, which is the birthplace of Rock'n'Roll. Today the studio, where Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, B.B. King, Rufus Thomas, Howlin' Wolf, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, and many others launched their careers, is open to the public for tours daily while still operating as a studio by night. Sun Studio Cafe is located next door to the studio. Above the cafe is a new museum/gallery featuring hundreds of rare recordings, memorabilia, photographs, and vintage recording equipment.

This afternoon you will enjoy a **Memphis city tour**. Memphis is the Gateway to the Old South. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the Southern United States. Filled with Southern charm, beautifully restored mansions, sculptured tree-lined parkways, on a setting high on the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff, this river city boasts of glowing sunsets over the Mississippi, the world's finest BBQ restaurants, and the "Red, Hot & Blue" sounds of the Beale Street Historic Entertainment District. Come with us on this inclusive tour to explore the city that is called, "The City of Good Abode." This tour will take you to the Mississippi Riverfront and through downtown Memphis where tradition and modern progress collide to form an exciting modern city filled with historic sites, fun & adventure. Sites include the Mighty Mississippi River Front, Harbor Town, the first residential community built on the Mississippi in the last 100 years, Mud Island, the Pyramid, Historic Cotton Row, Beale Street & South Main Historic District, the National Civil Rights Museum / Lorraine Motel, Sun Studio and Victorian Village. Time permitting we will drive by Overton Park, Brooks Museum, Pink Palace Museum, University of Memphis, Rhodes College, the Medical Complex and the beautiful mid-town homes of Chickasaw Gardens. A featured stop is to tour the Danny Thomas Pavilion at St Jude's Children Research Hospital.

Next see the famous Peabody Duck March, which began in the 1930s, when the general manager placed his live hunting decoys in his lobby fountain and started a tradition. Today the Peabody Ducks have become a world-famous symbol for The Peabody and for Memphis hospitality. Every day at precisely 11 a.m., the ducks arrive marching on their own red carpet to John Philip Sousa's "King Cotton March." The fanfare repeats at 5 p.m. when they retire to their penthouse pond. Throngs of spectators gather daily in the mornings and evenings to witness this charming tradition in the spectacular Grand Lobby of The Peabody Hotel. **Overnight Memphis.**

Fri, Oct 07 (Memphis – Greenwood, MS 130 miles / 210 kilometers)

As you leave Memphis and drive down legendary Highway 61, you will realize that you are in the true "Birthplace of the Blues". Out of these fields came the original blues singers who performed in local honky tonks and juke joints. The best of these brought their talents to Beale Street in Memphis. Highway 61 takes you through the heart of the Mississippi River Delta, which is the world's richest farmland. Our first stop will be in Clarksdale. From the 30's on through the 50's Clarksdale was a major blues town. John Lee Hooker, Ike Turner, Little Junior Parker and Sam Cooke were born here. Robert Nighthawk, Bukka White, "Gatemouth" Moore, Eddie Boyd, Son House, and Charley Patton all once lived in the area. Clarksdale became the center of the blues world by virtue of its location smack in the middle of the Delta and Delta blues still come from this source.

You will get the opportunity of touring the **Delta Blues Museum**, which is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value, and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of the unique American musical art form of the blues. Across the street from the museum is Ground Zero Restaurant, a replica of a juke joint owned by the actor, Morgan Freeman. The intersection of Hwy 61 & Hwy 49 is a famous location for blues music fans. This is where the most famous bluesman of all time, Robert Johnson, is said to have sold his soul to the devil.

Next you will continue on down historic Hwy 61 to B.B. King's hometown of Indianola, where you will tour the outstanding new **B.B. King Museum & Delta Interpretive Center**, which is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value, and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of the unique American musical art form of the blues. It also tells the story of B.B. King's life from a kid without anything but the dream in his heart and a destiny that would take him around the world. Against all odds the kid became the King of the Blues. Next you will continue on to Greenwood and check-in the Hampton Inn. **Overnight Greenwood.**

Sat, Oct 08 (Greenwood to Natchez 180 miles / 290 kilometers)

Today we continue through the rich Delta farmland to the famous river city of Natchez. You will ride on the famous Natchez Trace Parkway, which stretches from the Mississippi River in Natchez through the Shoals area in Alabama and across the Tennessee Valley to Nashville. The Old Trace was first trod by buffalo, then American Indians. In the early 1800's it was the main return route for Ohio Valley traders who, rather than fight the Mississippi currents, sold their flatboats for the value of their timber in Natchez and walked home via the Old Trace. By the mid-1820's, steamboats made the dangerous trek unnecessary, and the Old Trace disappeared into the trees. Today, the 444-mile National Scenic Byway and All-American Road has emerged as one of America's most important examples of our nation's natural and cultural heritage. Administered by the National Park Service, the road's non-commercial environment coupled with a wide variety of historic sites, wayside exhibits and beautiful venues make it a memorable destination for an unhurried trip that both reveals and explains a unique time in our country's history.

You will stay at the Vue Hotel in Natchez. You will have some free time this afternoon to walk around downtown Natchez and enjoy its many quaint shops. Tonight you can walk to Natchez Under-the-Hill, which was the most dangerous landing on the entire Mississippi River. In its day, 165 years ago, Natchez-under-the-Hill was the most notorious river landing on the entire Mississippi. From 1785 until about 1820 Under-the-Hill was the departure point for frontiersmen and their last chance to "whoop it up" before their long trek home on the Natchez trace. **Overnight Natchez.**

Sun, Oct 09 (Natchez to Lafayette 147 miles / 237 kilometers)

This morning you will depart for Lafayette, but first you will tour the beautiful antebellum home, **Monmouth Plantation**. Monmouth is listed as a National Historic Landmark. A 'Breathtaking beauty' marks both the 'lovely grounds' and 'magnificent' 1818 Greek Revival estate, built by John Hankinson in 1818, Monmouth was purchased by General John A. Quitman, a hero of the Mexican War, in 1826 and remained in his family for nearly a century.

Then continue on to Lafayette and tour the **Vermilionville Historic Village**. Vermilionville is a living history museum and folklife park that preserves and represents the cultural resources of the Acadian, Native American, and Creole cultures – from the time period 1765 to 1890. The park sits on a 23-acre site on the banks of the Bayou Vermilion with 19 attractions, including seven restored original homes with more than 13 local artisans that provide demonstrations on a variety of essential crafts performed by the early settlers. Vermilionville Living History Museum & Folklife Park invites visitors to step back in time with a tour or self-guided leisure walk through its historic village. Walkways connect each of the buildings and travel through picturesque moss draped oak and cypress trees along the Bayou Vermilion. The Artisans who work daily in the park provide a glimpse back to a time gone by where Acadians and Creoles provided for themselves and their families. Then check-in the Wyndham Garden Hotel.

Next you will visit **Angelle's Whiskey River Landing** for some authentic Zydeco/Cajun music and dancing. Located on the levee overlooking the Atchafalaya Basin swamp, it has been named one of America's top 50 bars. Very few tourists every find this spot where you can learn the beer drinking, foot stomping Cajun dance from the locals. This is real Americana. **Overnight Lafayette.**

Mon, Oct 10 (Lafayette to New Orleans 137 miles / 220 kilometers)

En route to New Orleans we are going to drive through Cajun back country and make a stop at Avery Island and tour the one and only original, Tabasco Factory. Your next stop will be near Houma for a Cajun Man's Swamp Cruise operated by a real Cajun character, Black Guidry, who is not only a singer, but a former army green beret and Louisiana state trooper.

We will continue on to New Orleans and check-in the Staybridge Suites French Quarter Downtown Hotel. Tonight is free to explore the famous French Quarter. At the heart of New Orleans' enduring allure are the hundred-odd squares of the French Quarter. Alive with history, myth, music and a joie de vivre, the Vieux Carre attracts visitors from around the world to its time worn streets. For jazz, for food, for history or for frivolity the French Quarter is a legendary destination. **Overnight New Orleans.**

Tue, Oct 11 (New Orleans)

This morning you will enjoy a **New Orleans City Sightseeing tour**, where you will visit one of its historic cemeteries, referred to as "Cities of the Dead," and learn about this unique above ground burial system. Marvel at stories of voodoo and piracy on Bayou St. John, the waterway used by Jean Lafitte and his band of pirates, as we make our way to the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. View the longest bridge over water in the world, the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. Follow the path of the St. Charles Avenue streetcar, the oldest continuously operating passenger railway system in the world (until service was disrupted by Hurricane Katrina). See the homes of former Kings & Queens of Mardi Gras, stately mansions and the world-famous, exclusive Garden District.

Your final night in New Orleans promises to be really special. Enjoy an evening as a native New Orleanian and meet people from around the world on this intimate tour of dining and music in the French Quarter! The evening begins with a three course dinner at Tujague's Restaurant, a New Orleans tradition since 1856 and the second oldest restaurant in New Orleans. Your tour guide will then lead you on a stroll along world famous Bourbon Street on your way to a local nightclub to enjoy native jazz music. Enjoy a complimentary cocktail as you listen to the sounds of New Orleans jazz music. The evening winds down with another local tradition - Café Au Lait & Beignets (chicory coffee and French doughnuts). **Overnight New Orleans.**

Wed, Oct 12 Depart for Home

It is time to bid a sad farewell to your many new friends made along the way and head back home.