



Sweet Magnolia

• TOURS •

**Music & Heritage of the Deep South
Fully Escorted Group Tour 8th – 17th October 2018
Guaranteed Departure**

Nashville – Country (2 nights)

Muscle Shoals area – Rock, Pop & Country (1 night)

Memphis – Rock n Roll & Soul (2 nights)

Mississippi Delta – Blues (2 nights)

New Orleans – Jazz (2 nights)

The Deep South is much more than barbecue, bourbon and blues. Join this Deep South Tour, where we offer a behind-the-scenes look into the heart of the South. If you're a fan of the blues, country or rock n roll, consider yourself in for a treat. We visit places like the timeless Grand Ole Opry – the show that made country music famous. Meet one-on-one with one of the original "Swampers" from the Muscle Shoals Rhythm group who brought us "Mustang Sally" and Aretha Franklin's "Respect" and more than 75 Gold & Platinum hits. We even take a tasting tour of the Jack Daniels Distillery in Lynchburg, home of Tennessee bourbon whiskey. You'll visit the birthplace of rock n roll, blues and jazz. From Nashville to Alabama, Memphis to Mississippi, Natchez to New Orleans, this tour was designed for music-loving travelers and those wanting an exclusive experience of the Deep South on a fully escorted tour.

Tour Prices Per Person

Double Occ.	From £1,695
Single Occ.	From £2,295

Detailed Itinerary

Monday 8th October (Nashville)

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

Tuesday 9th October (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, and a drive through a residential area showing a few homes of the stars by a singer/songwriter who is in fact "Living the Dream". This 3 hour tour will showcase highlights of "Music City" as seen through the eyes of a working singer/songwriter. There is also a private performance by your "Singing Guide" at a picturesque spot along the way. The guide will give insight into the songwriters craft and explain how a song gets from Concept to hit recording. This is truly an "ONLY IN NASHVILLE" experience.

This afternoon you will tour the **Country Music Hall of Fame**: The museum, called the "Smithsonian of country music" because of its unrivaled collection, recently unveiled a \$100 million expansion, doubling its size to 350,000 square feet of dynamic state-of-the-art galleries, 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.**

Wednesday 10th October (Nashville to Tuscumbia, AL 190 miles / 305 kilometers)

Today you depart for Tuscumbia, Alabama located in the Muscle Shoals area. En-route you will stop in the quaint town of Lynchburg and have a tasting tour of **Jack Daniels Distillery**. Then continue on to the Muscle Shoals area where you will tour the famous music studio, **Muscle Shoals Sound Studio**. The concrete block building at 3614 Jackson Highway in Sheffield was built around 1946 and was converted to a recording studio in 1969 when a group of musicians called the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section (and affectionately called The Swampers) decided to start their own operation. Over the years, artists who recorded at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio included The Rolling Stones, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Willie Nelson, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Joe Cocker, Levon Helm, Paul Simon, Bob Seger, Rod Stewart, and Cat Stevens. Cher's sixth album was titled *3614 Jackson Highway* (1969) and this became the informal name for the studio in 1969.

A very special feature will be **one of the original "Swampers"** will meet the group at the studio and talk about the history making recording sessions. He will also regale you with behind the scenes stories. He's one of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section studio aces responsible for indelible, singable bass lines such as those on The Staple Singers' gospel-soul jam "I'll Take You There," Bob Seger's rock ballad "Mainstreet," Paul Simon's strummy hit "Loves Me Like A Rock" and Jimmy Cliff's reggae-flecked "Sitting In Limbo." He spent the '60s and '70s laying the foundation for American music, appearing on seminal albums by Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Linda Ronstadt, Boz Scaggs, Rod Stewart, Bob Seger, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, James Brown, and Carlos Santana. They racked up more than 75 gold or platinum hits and were eventually inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame in Nashville as well as the Alabama Music Hall of Fame.

Check-in the Coldwater Inn and this evening enjoy an outstanding Spring Park Light & Water Show. This show offers a spectacular display of dancing waters, with 51 flumes propelling water 150 feet into the air; choreographed to the music of Alabama's nationally known artists with a focus on those who recorded in Muscle Shoals. **Overnight Tuscumbia.**

Thursday 11th October (Tuscumbia to Memphis, 195 miles / 315 kilometers)

Today you depart for Memphis. En-route you will stop in Tupelo, MS and tour the **Elvis Presley Birthplace, Museum, Chapel & Church**. Elvis Aaron Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi on January 8, 1935 to Vernon and Gladys Presley. Born in a two-room house built by his father, grandfather and uncle, Elvis was one of twin brothers born to the Presley's. His brother, Jessie Garon was stillborn. Elvis grew up in Tupelo surrounded by his extended family including his grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. You will also stop in at the **Tupelo Hardware Store**.

In 1946, Elvis and his mother went to Tupelo Hardware where Elvis wanted to purchase a .22 caliber rifle. Gladys persuaded Elvis to look at a guitar, which store employees allowed him to try out. Elvis decided that he wanted the guitar, which his mother purchased for him and the rest is history.

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 Comfort Inn 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. **Overnight Memphis.**

Friday 12th October (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.

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.**

Saturday 13th October (Memphis to Cleveland, MS 115 miles / 185 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 to Cleveland and tour the new Grammy Museum, the only other Grammy Museum outside of Los Angeles. **GRAMMY Museum Mississippi** is dedicated to exploring the past, present and future of music, and the cultural context from which it emerges, while casting a focused spotlight on the deep musical roots of Mississippi. The Museum features a dynamic combination of public events, educational programming, engaging multimedia presentations, and interactive permanent and traveling exhibits, including a Mississippi-centric display that introduces visitors to the impact of Mississippi's songwriters, producers and musicians on the traditional and modern music landscape. Then check-in the Holiday Inn Express. **Overnight Cleveland.**

Sunday 14th October (Cleveland to Natchez 205 miles / 330 kilometers)

Today we continue through the rich Delta farmland to the famous river city of Natchez. First you will drive to **Dockery Farms**. "...You might say it all started right here." - B.B. King. Dockery Farms was established in 1895 to produce cotton, America's biggest export at the time. African Americans who worked at Dockery, including blues pioneer Charley Patton, created a culture that inspired the music we know as the blues. Their songs influenced the development of popular music all over the world. Then continue on 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.

Continue on to Natchez. En-route 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.**

Monday 15th October (Natchez to New Orleans 175 miles / 280 kilometers)

This morning you will depart for New Orleans, but first you will tour the beautiful antebellum home, **Stanton Hall**. In 1857, Irish immigrant and cotton merchant Frederick Stanton began construction on the home of his dreams: a palatial Greek Revival style residence in the heart of Natchez. Officially designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974, the building is now furnished much as Frederick originally intended and offers a glimpse into the domestic life of a wealthy Natchez family.

En-route to New Orleans we are going to make a stop for a **Swamp & Bayou Cruise**. 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.**

Tuesday 16th October (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. Tonight you will enjoy a **Dinner Jazz Cruise on the SS Natchez**, an authentic paddle wheeler. Cruise Highlights: Breathtaking view of the city, enjoy casual buffet-style dining with a choice of two dinner seatings, meals prepared fresh on board, featuring live jazz by the Grammy nominated "Dukes of Dixieland" **Overnight New Orleans.**

Wed, Oct 17th October (Depart for Home)

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