

The Blues Highway.... with a taste of 66

Highlights include:

Mississippi River cruise
National
Civil Rights Museum
Delta Blues Museum
Beale St Memphis
Sun Studios Memphis
Stax
Records Memphis
Cajun and Creole Cooking



500 Klm's of Route 66 from St Louis to Chicago

The Blues Highway, "Old Route 61" the route taken by African Americans as they left the South in search of better lives in the North with its major centres such as St Louis and Chicago.

They journeyed and they took their music with them. It's why one road, Route 61, that tells the story of American music from Southern fields to Northern tenements, has become legendary and contributes to blues folklore throughout the south and into the mid-west..

You'll jive to jazz in New Orleans, maybe dance Zydeco in French Louisiana, feel the roots of the blues in the Mississippi Delta, experience the Civil War battle fields at Vicksburg, sooth at whispering breeze within the cotton plantations of Mississippi, sing into Elvis Presley's microphone in Memphis, and explore the rich heritage and historical scenes of St Louis and Chicago.

This is truly the trip of a lifetime for lovers of history, nostalgia, and American culture alike as we follow the 'lazy muddy river' that is the Mighty Mississippi.

The following is a typical fly/drive itinerary – we are delighted to introduce you to two legendary US journeys – The Blues Highway and Route 66.

Itinerary

Day one.

Arrive at **New Orleans** international Airport and transfer to your hotel in downtown New Orleans. Enjoy the sights, sounds and tastes of this unique city. Explore the French Quarter where you'll hear jazz on every corner, see traditional funeral processions, visit the Jazz Museum, Jackson Square, Bourbon Street, ride the St Charles streetcar. Ride the Cajun Queen paddle steamer on a dinner cruise.

No other

city in America can boast such intrigue or romance as "the Big Easy".

Stay three nights.

Day four.

Pick up your choice of transport or join us in our tour bus as we head off through the bayous and swamps to Baton Rouge, the Louisiana state capital with its old mansions. We continue to follow the Mississippi through the famous sugar plantations and take in the grand mansions of the masters of the day. Yes, you will visit "Oak Alley" where "gone with the wind" is no longer just a movie.

We continue to head north toward the state of Mississippi and **Natchez**, a cotton centre and once the richest town in the US. Natchez is still dripping in antebellum finery with its plantation houses and numerous southern style restaurants and "under the hill" district once described by Mark Twain as home to the roughest bars on the Mississippi but now trendy and inviting.

Stay one night.

Day five.

From Natchez we continue onto Vicksburg, site of the famous Civil War siege where you can travel through the actual battle fields and marvel at the numerous state memorials.

Now we head into the Delta through the cotton fields of Mississippi to Indianola (BB Kings hometown), Morgan City (Robert Johnsons burial site), and onto **Greenwood** where you'll have reason to hum the Ode to Billy Joe at the Tallahatchie Bridge.

Stay one night.

Day six.

We continue our journey through the Blues Delta to Holly Ridge where Charlie Patton was laid to rest and visit Greenville, the country's second largest cotton exchange after Memphis. We'll see the "juke joints" of Greenville's Nelson and Walnut Streets and travel through The Crossroads into **Clarksdale**, America's most significant blues town. Illustrious one time residents include John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters and Ike Turner. We'll visit the Delta Blues museum and the legendary Riverside Hotel where Bessie Smith passed away. We will tour the town's many juke joints, authentic blues bars including Morgan Freeman's Ground Zero blues club and restaurant.

Stay 1 night

Day seven

Today we'll find the Dockery Plantation where Charlie Patton defined the Delta Blues. Finally we follow the Blues Delta Trail on into **Memphis** Tennessee.

Stay two nights.

Day eight.

Highlights of Memphis include:

Beale Street is the most famous street in Memphis and is home to more than 25 clubs and shops as well as numerous restaurants. Here you'll find Memphis Blues souvenirs, enjoy authentic Memphis soul and southern food, listen to live music, or party into the night.

The National Civil Rights Museum is a one of a kind facility that showcases the struggle for civil rights in the United States. The museum is housed in the renovated Lorraine Motel which is the very hotel where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. It is the unique focus of this museum that attracts thousands of visitors every year from all over the world.

Sun Studio was recording home to many artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Ike Turner, and more. Today it still functions as a recording studio, but also as a tourist attraction for music lovers from all over the world. Then there is Stax Records, recording home of Otis Reading, Isaac Hayes and Booker T and the MGs. Without a doubt, Graceland is one of Memphis' most popular tourist attractions. Visitors to Graceland are given the opportunity to tour Elvis' mansion, visit his grave, and even view his collection of automobiles and airplanes.

Day nine.

Today we head east away from the Delta into Tupelo Mississippi where we will visit Elvis Presley's birth place. Continuing on, we will arrive in **Nashville** Tennessee. Here we'll visit the Grand Ole Opry, The Country Music Hall of Fame, RCA studios and The Johnny Cash Museum.

Stay two nights

Day eleven.

Today we will cross out of Tennessee and Kentucky into Cairo Illinois, the "living ghost town", once a major river boat then railway hub situated at the junction of the great Ohio and Mississippi rivers, now a live museum with its grand public buildings and private mansions. Crossing the Ol' Muddy we travel to **Sikeston** Missouri.

Stay one night.

Day twelve and thirteen.

Still in Missouri we'll meet up with 61 again and travel through beautiful farmland and visit St Genevieve where the French settlers built beautiful European style homes and shops before finding themselves part of the US when the Louisiana Purchase was completed. Then onto **St Louis**, America's famous gateway city. Here we will visit the legendary Bud Brewery, roam the famous Soulard district, sample Ted Drewes famous frozen custard, ride to the top of the amazing Gateway Arch, eat at Smokie O's and visit the Jefferson Barracks.

Stay two nights.

Day fourteen. Route 66.

Today we will visit the Chain of Rocks Bridge then leave the great bend of the Mississippi behind as we head into the American mid-west of Illinois along the famous route 66 past the Glenarm Covered Bridge, into **Springfield** Illinois. Here you will see the Route 66 Hotel which boasts being the very first Holiday Inn worldwide. We'll visit the Lincoln Tomb and the original 1860s precinct where Abraham Lincoln lived before becoming president.



Stay one night.

Day fifteen.

Today you'll be tempted to sample the authentic coffee and chocolate at Atlanta, a sample of Thaddeus Stubblefield Grove Nature Reserve and the Maple Sirups at Funks Grove before arriving in **Bloomington Normal**.

Stay one night.

Day sixteen.

By now you'll have become immersed in Route 66 history as you experience the nostalgia and the magic of the mother road while we visit Pontiac with its famous museums, Odell and Dwight with their vintage servos on our way into Joliet and finally along Ogden Avenue through Al Capone country into the 'Windy City', **Chicago**.

Dehire vehicles where scheduled.

Stay one night.

Day seventeen.

Your first full day in the Windy City. Where do you start? You could focus on the South Side's many blues landmarks like Muddy Waters' house and the Checkerboard Lounge or you could head for the mainstream attractions like Michigan Avenue, the lakeshore or Navy Pier at the end of the Chicago River with its 38 moveable bridges.

Perhaps head down to the South Side for a gospel church service at the Pilgrim Baptist Church - the place where Mahalia Jackson and Tom Dorsey defined modern gospel music. Or you could check out Maxwell Street, Chicago's great blues thoroughfare. You could spend the day checking out the Loop and some of Chicago's great museums before a night on the town. Choose between the North Side with its world-famous blues venues or head down to Buddy Guy's club. Then there's the South Side with clubs like Lee's Unleaded where raw electric blues pounds night after night.

Stay one night.

Day Eighteen.

This is your last day on America's music trail and Route 66. Spend the day shopping or visit some of the many iconic attractions that Chicago has to offer; Wrigley Field, The Biograph Cinema, The Chicago Tribune building, cruise the Chicago River, reflect in "the bean" and many others. All this or do some relaxing shopping before meeting your transfer to O'Hare airport and your flight home (two nights).

What's included:

Return flights from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane (please ask us about other departure airports).

17 nights hotel accommodation including room tax.

Breakfast every day and some dinners.

Fully insured car hire or motorcycle hire (as quoted).

Guided bus tour (as quoted).

Tour guide, an Australian who lives and breathes these tours.

A travel pack with maps, applicable vouchers etc.

What's not included:

Travel insurance (we can help you with that).

Admission to some attractions (you choose the things that interest you).

Fuel for your self drive vehicle (US fuel is inexpensive and everyone drives at their own pace).