



Soundtracks of the South

11 days / 10 nights from NZ \$5,299

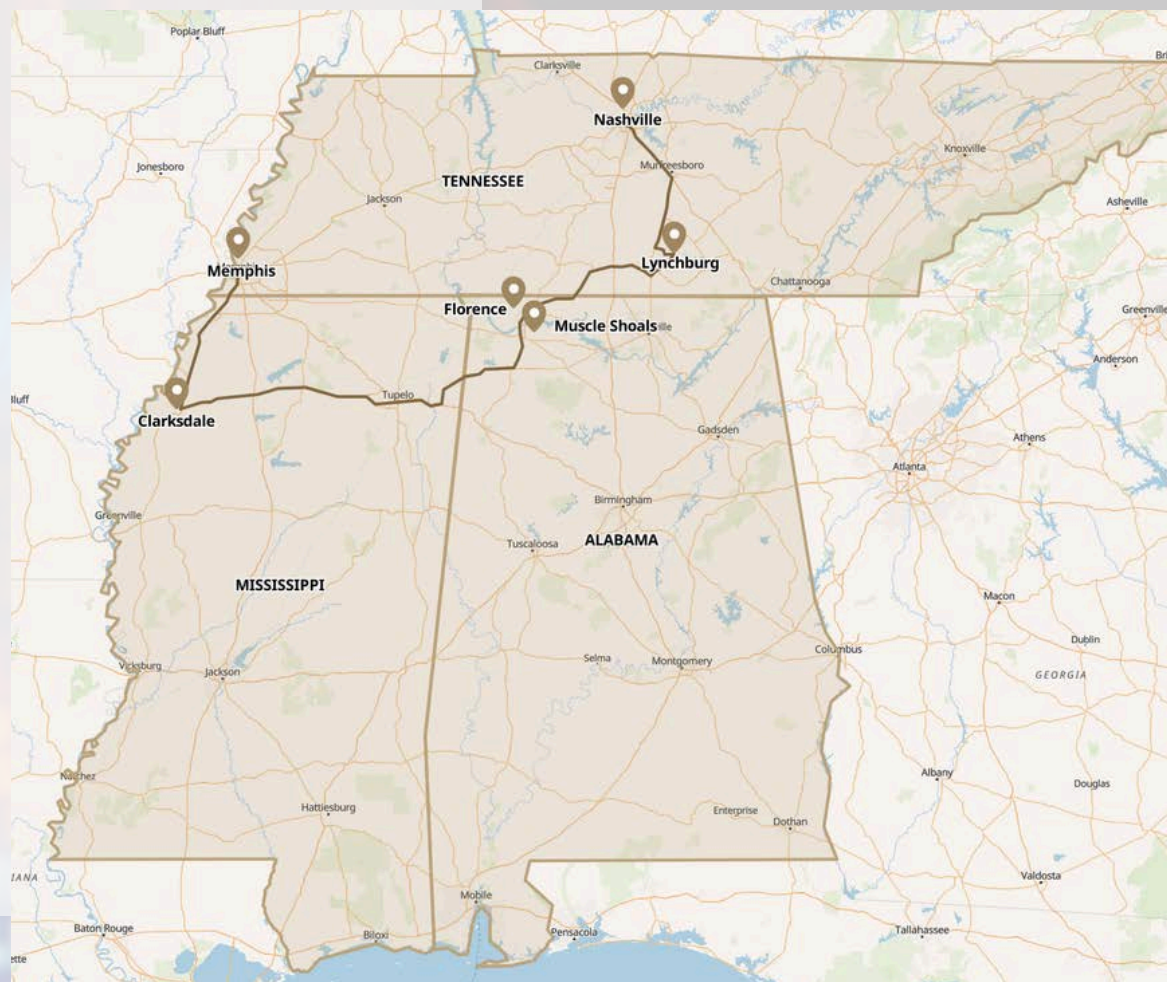
VISIT THE
USA



TRAVEL USA

Soundtracks of the South

Follow the rhythm of America's musical heartland on this Southern journey through Nashville, Muscle Shoals, Clarksdale and Memphis, featuring a collection of carefully selected included experiences along the way. Designed for Kiwi travellers with a love of music, storytelling and authentic regional culture, this itinerary traces the evolution of American sound - from country songwriting rooms and legendary recording studios to the birthplace of the blues and the home of rock'n'roll. Begin in Nashville, where honky-tonk energy and songwriting heritage define the city's creative pulse. Travel south along scenic backroads and sections of the Natchez Trace Parkway, pausing in Lynchburg for a classic Tennessee whiskey experience, before reaching Muscle Shoals, where soul music history was written inside modest studios on the Tennessee River. Continue into the Mississippi Delta, stopping in Clarksdale for raw blues culture and juke joint atmosphere, before finishing in Memphis, where Sun Studio, Beale Street and Graceland bring the city's iconic musical legacy to life. This is the Deep South, told through music, landscape and lived history.



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Broadway Live Music / Nashville Hop-On Hop-Off Trolley / Country Music Hall of Fame / RCA Studio B / Ryman Auditorium / Grand Ole Opry Show & Backstage Tour / Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum / 12South Guided Food Tour / Natchez Trace Parkway / Jack Daniel's Distillery Tour / FAME Recording Studios / Muscle Shoals Sound Studio / Helen Keller's Ivy Green / Blues Highway (U.S. Route 61) / Clarksdale blues juke joints / Delta Blues Museum / Memphis City Tour / Beale Street / Sun Studio / Mississippi River BBQ Dinner & Music Cruise / Graceland – Ultimate VIP Elvis Experience / National Civil Rights Museum / Stax Museum



Day 1: Arrival - First Notes of Music City

Fly from New Zealand to Nashville with our Star Alliance partners, Air New Zealand and United Airlines, on convenient one-stop connections. Arrive in Nashville and transfer to your centrally located accommodation. After a long-haul journey, today is designed as a gentle introduction rather than a full sightseeing day, allowing time to rest and adjust to the rhythm of the American South. Depending on arrival time, enjoy a relaxed walk along the Cumberland River or through downtown, where historic architecture sits alongside modern music venues and rooftop bars. As evening approaches, take your first taste of Music City on Broadway, where live music flows from every doorway and neon lights set the atmosphere. Enjoy dinner at a local favourite such as Acme Feed & Seed or Skull's Rainbow Room before easing into iconic venues like Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, Robert's Western World and The Stage for an introduction to Nashville's legendary live music scene.

Overnight: Nashville - Holston House Nashville or similar

Day 2: Nashville - City Orientation & Country Music Core

Begin the day with the Nashville Hop-On Hop-Off Trolley, the best way to understand the city's layout and key districts without rushing. The route connects major highlights including Marathon Motor Works, Centennial Park and its Parthenon replica, The Gulch, and the Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum, before arriving in the Country Music Hall of Fame precinct. Your included experience brings together admission to the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum and a guided 1-hour tour of RCA Studio B, offering a powerful introduction to Nashville's recording history. Continue to the nearby Ryman Auditorium, the legendary "Mother Church of Country Music," for a self-guided visit that connects the city's performance and recording legacy. As night falls, step into Nashville's live music culture in a more intentional way, exploring a couple of handpicked venues featuring emerging songwriters and traditional country performers for a deeper introduction to the city's sound.

Overnight: Nashville - Holston House Nashville or similar



Centennial Park, Parthenon



Downtown Broadway



Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum



Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum



1230 Club The Rooftop Bar, Broadway



Centennial Park, Parthenon

Day 3: Nashville - Flavours of the South & Grand Ole Opry Night

This morning, enjoy a Guided Food Tour in the 12South neighbourhood, one of Nashville's most stylish and walkable districts. The experience includes five or more tastings such as breakfast tacos, seasonal donuts, brisket quesadillas, Southern hot pork and grits, and a signature secret dish, combining into a relaxed lunch replacement while showcasing Nashville's modern Southern food culture. The afternoon is kept intentionally light, allowing time to unwind or explore at your own pace. You may choose to revisit Centennial Park and its impressive Parthenon replica or alternatively visit the historic Belle Meade Estate for a glimpse into Tennessee's plantation heritage and equestrian history. Early evening is reserved for rest before tonight's highlight - the legendary Grand Ole Opry. Experience a world-class multi-artist live show at the heart of country music history, followed by an included backstage tour offering exclusive insight into one of the most iconic stages in American music.

Overnight: Nashville - Holston House Nashville or similar



Grand Ole Opry



Belle Meade Estate

Day 4: Nashville - Your Day, Your Way

Your final full day in Nashville is designed to give you complete flexibility to explore the city in a way that suits your interests and pace. Music-focused travellers may explore Music Row, the creative heart of the city, along with museums such as the Johnny Cash Museum, the Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum, or the National Museum of African American Music, each offering a different perspective on Nashville's musical story. For those interested in culture, the Frist Art Museum or Tennessee State Museum provide a broader look at art and heritage. Alternatively, enjoy Nashville's neighbourhoods, from boutique shopping and cafés in The Gulch to the murals and relaxed atmosphere of 12South. This evening, choose your final experience: the Listening Room Café (songwriter performances in an intimate setting), the Bluebird Café (legendary acoustic venue where artists like Taylor Swift were discovered), or a return to Broadway for a final taste of live music energy.

Overnight: Nashville - Holston House Nashville or similar



Music Row



Listening Room Café



National Museum of African American Music



Tennessee State Museum



Jack Daniel's Statue



Jack Daniel's Distillery

Day 5: Nashville to Florence (Muscle Shoals) via Natchez Trace, Lynchburg & Jack Daniel's Distillery (400 km)

Collect your rental car this morning and depart Nashville, following a scenic stretch of the Natchez Trace Parkway. This historic route is one of America's most scenic drives, winding through forested landscapes, rolling hills and quiet countryside, and offering a relaxed, immersive start to the journey. Continue along the Parkway before joining, connecting rural roads toward Lynchburg. Arrive in Lynchburg, home of the legendary Jack Daniel's Distillery, where you'll enjoy a guided tour and tasting exploring the heritage of one of the world's most iconic whiskey producers. Continue your journey west and south into northern Alabama, travelling through peaceful countryside toward the Tennessee River region. Arrive in Florence, part of the Muscle Shoals area, in the late afternoon. This riverside region is renowned for its influential recording studios that helped shape soul, rock and R&B. Settle in and enjoy a relaxed evening along the Tennessee River, taking in the slower pace and small-town atmosphere of the Shoals.

Overnight: Florence - The Stricklin Hotel or similar



Tennessee Riverside



Muscle Shoals Recording Studio

Day 6: Muscle Shoals - Soul, Studios & Southern Heritage

Spend the day exploring the musical heritage of Muscle Shoals, one of the most influential recording destinations in the world. Begin at FAME Recording Studios (approx. US\$20), where countless soul and rock classics were recorded, followed by Muscle Shoals Sound Studio (approx. US\$25), home to artists such as The Rolling Stones, Aretha Franklin and Paul Simon. Continue to Ivy Green (house & museum tour approx. US\$25), the childhood home of Helen Keller, offering a powerful cultural contrast to the region's music legacy. Discover how this small Alabama area helped define global music history while also producing remarkable stories of resilience and achievement. This region offers a quieter, more reflective contrast to Nashville, defined by modest studios, river landscapes and enduring creative legacy. The evening is relaxed, offering a welcome pause after Nashville's energy before continuing deeper into the Mississippi Delta and Memphis music story.

Overnight: Florence - The Stricklin Hotel or similar



Ivy Green Home & Museum of Helen Keller



FAME Recording Studio



Ivy Green Home & Museum of Helen Keller



Muscle Shoals Recording Studio



Delta Blues Museum



Legendary Crossroads

Day 7: Florence (Muscle Shoals) to Clarksdale - Into the Delta (280 km)

Depart Muscle Shoals and travel west into Mississippi, joining sections of the historic Blues Highway (U.S. Route 61), part of the wider Mississippi Blues Trail network of heritage routes and markers across the Delta. This road is deeply embedded in American music history and famously referenced by artists such as Bob Dylan as the symbolic highway of the blues. Arrive in Clarksdale this afternoon, widely regarded as one of the spiritual homes of the blues. Visit the Delta Blues Museum (approx. US\$15) and visit the legendary Crossroads (Highway 61 and 49 intersection) before enjoying live music in an authentic juke joint setting.

Overnight: Clarksdale - Travelers Hotel or similar



Highway 61 Blues



Blues BB King Wall Art

Day 8: Clarksdale to Memphis - Blues to Rock 'n' Roll (180 km)

Enjoy a relaxed morning in Clarksdale before driving north through the Mississippi Delta along further stretches of U.S. Route 61, following the Mississippi Blues Trail heritage route - marked by historic towns and musical landmarks. The drive traces the evolution of the blues, from its raw Delta origins to the electrified sound that defined modern rock'n'roll in the city ahead. Arrive in Memphis by late afternoon, return your rental vehicle and settle into your centrally located accommodation. Begin your Memphis experience with a stroll along Beale Street, where live blues, neon lights and street performers bring the Delta story to its Memphis finale.

Overnight: Memphis - Hyatt Centric Beale Street or similar



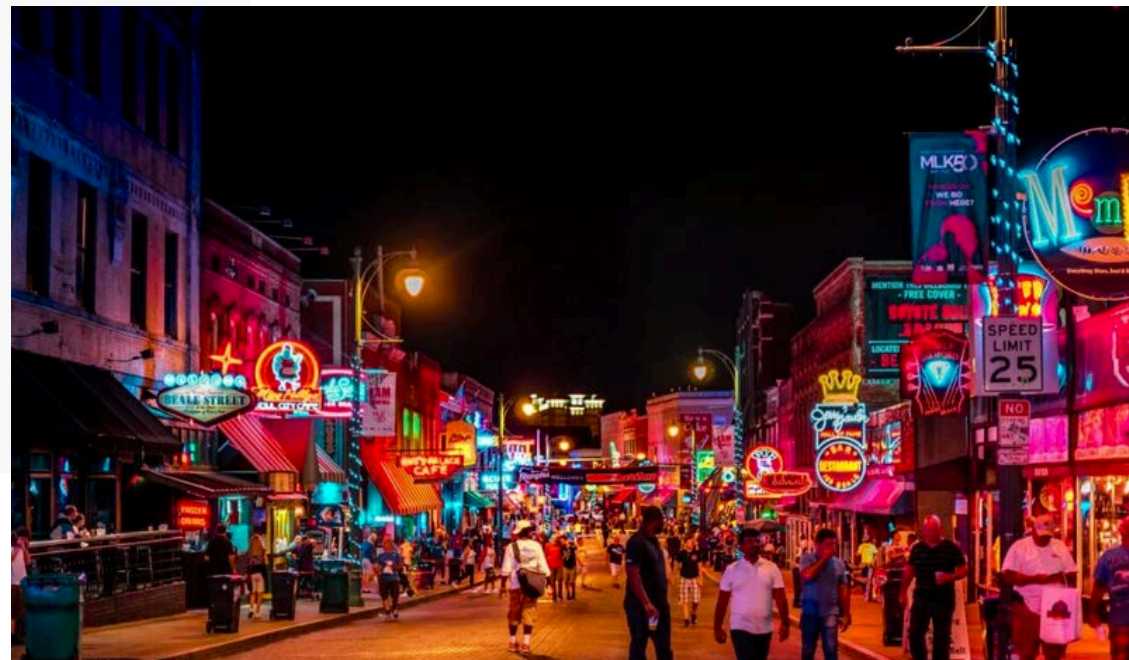
BB King Blues Trail



Beale Street Daytime



BB King's Blues Club Beale Street



Beale Street

Day 9: Memphis - Sun Studio, Blues Heritage & Mississippi River BBQ Dinner & Music Cruise

Begin the day with a guided Memphis city tour, bringing together the city's riverfront, music districts and cultural foundations. Included is a visit to **Sun Studio**, one of the birthplaces of rock 'n' roll, where Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis recorded their earliest hits. Continue through downtown Memphis, passing **Beale Street** and key historic districts that define the city's identity. This afternoon is free, with options including the **Blues Hall of Fame**, the **South Main Arts District**, or simply relaxing along the **Mississippi riverfront** and **Tom Lee Park**. This gives time to slow the pace after the morning touring and absorb the city's atmosphere. This evening, board a **Mississippi River BBQ Dinner & Music Cruise** featuring live blues and jazz, paired with classic Southern BBQ, as you experience Memphis from the water. After returning to shore, those wanting more atmosphere may enjoy a stroll along **Beale Street's** neon-lit live music venues.

Overnight: Memphis - Hyatt Centric Beale Street or similar

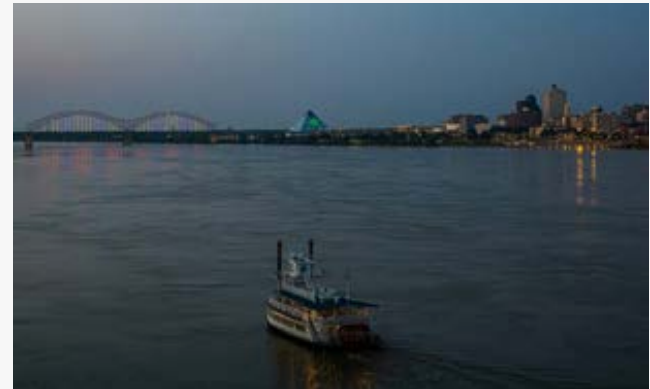


Blues Hall of Fame

Credit: Andrea Zucker



Sun Studio



Mississippi River BBQ Dinner & Music Cruise

Day 10: Memphis - Graceland, Civil Rights & Stax Soul Legacy

Begin the day with an Ultimate VIP Elvis Experience at Graceland, including a guided mansion tour with expert commentary, Elvis's artifact show and tell, access to the private VIP exhibit, exclusive photo opportunity, commemorative VIP badge, entry to the EPM Entertainment Complex, and access to Elvis' custom jets. Your tour also includes a meal voucher for a light lunch on-site before returning to downtown Memphis. Continue to the powerful National Civil Rights Museum, located at the Lorraine Motel, where Dr Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, offering one of the most significant cultural and historical experiences in the United States. In the afternoon, visit the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, completing the city's musical story from blues to soul and rock evolution. This evening is at leisure, with the option to experience iconic Memphis BBQ at Central BBQ or return to Beale Street for live blues and neon-lit atmosphere.

Overnight: Memphis - Hyatt Centric Beale Street or similar



National Civil Rights Museum

Credit: Andrea Zucker



Credit Alex Shansky



Elvis Presley Statue



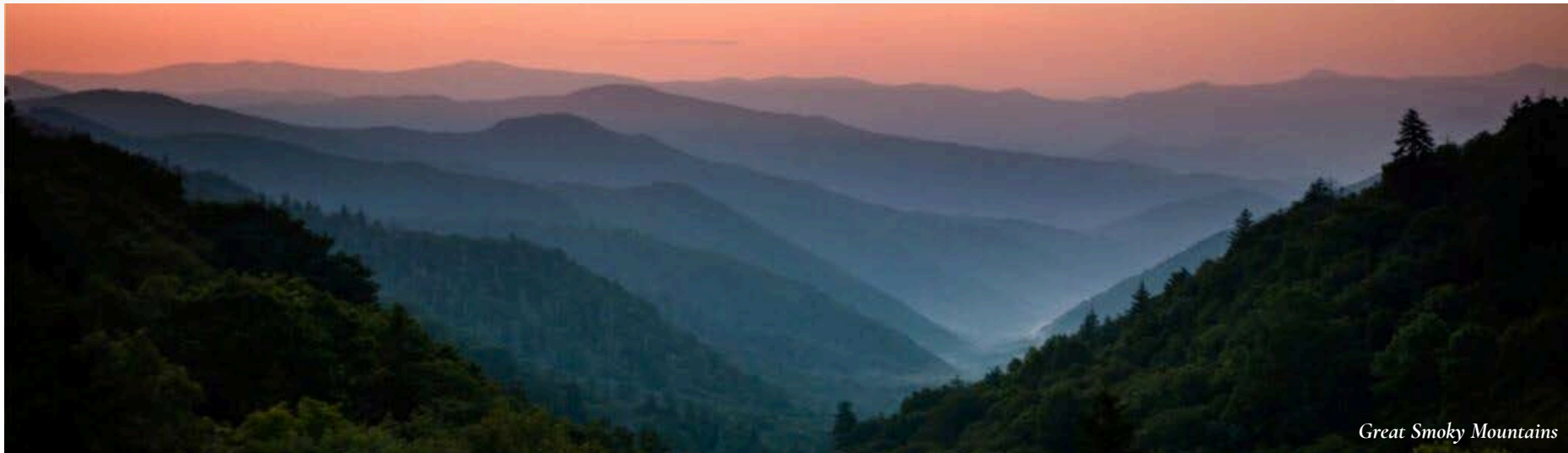
Graceland VIP Experience - Credit: Julian Harper



Chattanooga

Day 11: Departure from Memphis

Enjoy a relaxed final morning in Memphis. Depending on flight timing, take a walk along the Mississippi riverfront, enjoy a final coffee downtown, or revisit Beale Street for a last glimpse of the city's musical energy. When ready, transfer to Memphis International Airport for your onward journey home, travelling with Star Alliance partners Air New Zealand and United Airlines via major U.S. gateway hubs such as Houston, San Francisco or Los Angeles, with onward connections back to New Zealand. Alternatively, if you prefer to extend your adventure, collect your rental car and continue exploring deeper into Tennessee, with easy access to destinations such as **Chattanooga** or the **Great Smoky Mountains** region, including Knoxville, Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville. Your journey concludes after tracing the musical heartbeat of the American South - from Nashville's songwriting rooms to Muscle Shoals' studios, the raw blues of Clarksdale, and Memphis' defining role in rock'n'roll and soul history.



Great Smoky Mountains

What's Included?

- Airport arrival transfer in Nashville & departure transfer in Memphis
- 4 nights' accommodation at the Holston House, Nashville
- Nashville Hop On Hop Off Trolley Tour
- Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum admission
- RCA Studio B Tour
- Guided Food Tour of 12South with 5+ Tastings
- Grand Ole Opry Show Tickets + Post-Show Backstage Tour
- 4-day Alamo Car Rental in a Standard SUV
- Jack Daniel's Distillery Tour
- 2 night's accommodation at The Stricklin Hotel, Florence
- 1 night's accommodation at the Travelers Hotel, Clarksdale
- 3 night's accommodation at the Hyatt Centric Beale St, Memphis
- Memphis City Tour with Sun Studio
- Mississippi River BBQ Dinner & Music Cruise
- Graceland - Ultimate VIP Elvis Experience

Pricing:

All of our pricing is based on dynamic rates meaning we will provide you with the best of the day at the time of booking. Our suggested itinerary has been created using fully refundable rates. Final pricing will depend on factors like month of travel, how early you book, availability and whether you choose non-refundable or fully refundable rates.

NZ\$ pricing for our 11 day / 10 night package

- From \$5,299 - \$5,899 depending on the month of travel

Terms & Conditions apply - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details

This is a suggested itinerary based on our recommendations. There are no fixed departure dates or schedules so you can customise the itinerary to suit your personal preferences and needs. Contact us with your proposed dates and we will create a personalised travel package just for you.



Kings Crossing Bridge Memphis