

## **Insight Vacations: Country Roads of the Deep South - Small Group**

### **Day 1 - Arrive in Nashville**

Welcome to Nashville, the capital of Tennessee and the USA's glittering centre stage. From the Everly Brothers' "Bye Bye Love," to Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman," the streets are paved with talent. Your airport transfer will whisk you to your hotel. Relax and unwind before meeting your Travel Director and mingling with guests at 18:00 followed by a Welcome Dinner with wine.

Accommodations: Renaissance Hotel, Nashville

Meals: Dinner with Wine

### **Day 2 - Take centre stage in Nashville**

Start your day with an orientation tour of music city. You'll visit the picturesque Riverfront Park, Tennessee State Capitol and the 132-acre Centennial State Park, where you'll encounter an exact replica of the Parthenon. Pass by the city's lively honky-tonks and street performers on Broadway. Make your way to historic RCA Studio B, Nashville's oldest remaining recording studio for a guided tour. Studio B became a cradle of the Nashville Sound in the late 1950s and early 1960s with over 35,000 songs being recorded here by iconic artists such as Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, and even more recently, Martina McBride and Carrie Underwood. On this guided tour, you will hear the fascinating stories behind the legendary recordings and view some of the original instruments used in producing over 1,000 hit records. We then continue to another home to Nashville royalty, The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for a self-guided tour. The museum helps to preserve, celebrate, and share the important cultural asset that is country music. Along with changing exhibitions, you'll discover the enlightening "Sing Me Back Home: Folk Roots to the Present." Which tells the story of country music from its pre-commercial roots in the 19th century through its life today. See original artifacts, photographs and recordings. Tonight, head to the famous Grand Ole Opry, the world-renowned country music stage and longest-running radio broadcast in U.S. history for even more Country fun.

Accommodations: Renaissance Hotel, Nashville

Meals: Breakfast

### **Day 3 - Choose your Nashville Exploration**

Around lunch time, we make a stop at the Nashville Farmers Market and Market House to explore its artisanal crafts and produce. Explore Nashville with Insight Choice. Choose to visit Nelson's Green Brier, a local Tennessee distillery and home of the Original Tennessee Whiskey for a guided tour of the distillery a tasting of the product as they learn about the family's rich history with the spirit and the story of how it began on a German passenger ship bound for the America's. MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® with your visit to the National Museum of African American Music, the only museum dedicated to preserving and celebrating the many music genres created, influenced, and inspired by African Americans. This is for music lovers of all generations and inspires, educates, and transforms your appreciation of American music all while celebrating the central role African Americans play in creating the American soundtrack. Tonight's dinner at Puckett's Grocery & Restaurant will introduce you to the colourful flavours of Nashville such as the crabmeat cheesecake.

Accommodations: Renaissance Hotel, Nashville

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### **Day 4 - Heading back home to Memphis**

This morning you'll head to Memphis. Whether it's your first or hundredth time visiting this vibrant city, you'll be drawn in by the lively melodies coming from Beale Street. Spend the morning on a sightseeing tour of the city, followed by a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience at the National

Civil Rights Museum. While there, you'll be guided through five centuries of The Civil Rights Movement history and its impact on our culture today. End your day by joining a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience with a private evening at the Stax Museum of American Soul Music. The museum is part of The Soulsville Foundation, which aims to prepare young adults for life success and inspire future artists.

Accommodations: The Guest House at Graceland, Memphis.

Meals: Breakfast

### **Day 5 - A day dedicated to the King**

This morning it's off to Graceland, where you will get to explore the mansion, the private retreat of the King of Rock 'n Roll, where he went for reprise when not on the stage or in the movies. The tour of Graceland Mansion includes the living room and the famous Jungle Room. Then visit the Entertainer Career Museum with hundreds of artifacts and photos from significant events in Elvis' life as well as the Presley Motors Automobile Museum. Then we continue onto Sun Studios for an authentic guided tour led by a local musician. Learn all about the recording studio where Elvis got his start along with so many of the greatest and therefore known as "The Birthplace of Rock'n'roll." Dinner this evening will be served at The Beauty Shop, a former parlour turned whimsical New American eatery where Elvis' ex-wife, Priscilla, was said to get her hair done.

Accommodations: The Guest House at Graceland, Memphis.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

### **Day 6 - Memphis to Greenwood**

Travel through the Mississippi Delta down the Mississippi Blues Trail, a route that tells the stories of businessmen and women. Your Travel Director will give you background information on Greenwood's significance in the Civil Rights Movement, being a center for protests and voter registration struggles from 1962 to 1965. We then head to the Viking Cooking School, for a hot-tamales cooking class. Where we learn how it became a regional specialty. Later dine on a mouthwatering dinner at James Beard Award Finalist restaurant that features southern inspired dishes that include produce local of the area.

Accommodations: The Alluvian, Greenwood.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

### **Day 7 - Moving on to Natchez**

Learn more about Southern history and hospitality as you head to Natchez. Tour the historic antebellum mansions, and discover the preservation efforts of later generations to tell the story of African-Americans through the decades, understanding that slavery and cotton allowed plantation owners to build these mansions. Test your mixologist skills as you concoct a traditional Southern cocktail, the Mint Julep. Minty, cooling and with a touch of sweetness, you're sure to learn a few party tricks to bring back home with you. Enjoy an evening to yourself. Ask your Travel Director for restaurant suggestions and discover one of the wonderful options in town.

Accommodations: Monmouth Historic Inn and Gardens.

Meals: Breakfast

### **Day 8 - Natchez to Lafayette**

Move on to Lafayette for a taste of the Cajun and Creole Countryside. Get ready for a boat tour of a lifetime through moss-draped cypress trees, where graceful egrets perch just out of the reach of lingering alligators! While on the excursion, you'll explore the diverse natural beauty and rich ecological systems of America's largest and most mysterious swamp ecosystem, the Atchafalaya Basin Swamp. A Native Cajun tour guide will explain from personal experience what it is like to live on a houseboat or survive off the swamp, while pointing out the abundant plants of the area and getting you up close and personal with the wildlife. Then learn about Cajun and Zydeco music from

a local Cajun accordion maker and musician at Martin Cajun Accordions. Martin Jr. has been building accordions for more than three decades. You get to celebrate with Cajun music, Country music, Gospel and Zydeco as your personal soundtrack and get taken back to the early 1900's with the old fashion authentic accordion music.

Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Lafayette.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

### **Day 9 - Lafayette for foodies**

Start the day with a crawfish farm tour just outside the city. You will be joined by a Local Expert who will help you catch your lunch the old-fashioned way, using hand nets. You'll be taught how to prepare a traditional boil, before sitting down to enjoy your authentic meal. If crawfish are out of season, you'll take part in a boil experience with seasonal seafood. (Alternative will be provided for guests that don't eat Seafood) Then it's onto the Acadian Cultural Center to learn more about the people, music, and sounds that give Lafayette its distinct and charming character. The Acadian Cultural Center tells stories of the origins, migration, settlement, and contemporary culture of the Acadians (Cajuns).

Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Lafayette.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

### **Day 10 - Welcome to the Big Easy**

New Orleans is a lively and dynamic city, known for its vibrant culture and electric jazz festivals. On the way down south, take a spicy stop at the Tabasco® Factory for a self-guided tour and discover how the world-famous red hot pepper sauce is made. A family recipe - TABASCO® Brand products are made by McIlhenny Company, founded by Edmund McIlhenny in 1868 on Avery Island, Louisiana. This afternoon, head to the Southern Food and Beverage Museum where you will enjoy a guided tour from one of SoFAB's curators and learn about the history of the food of the South. Galleries include exhibits on 13 Southern states, Popeye's Restaurant, Absinthe and Louisiana's connection to Europe, and the Museum of the American Cocktail. The guided tour is followed by a pop-up lunch, often hosted by the Museum's Chef in Residency Program, with open bar.

Accommodations: Kimpton Hotel Fontenot, New Orleans.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

### **Day 11 - Festivities in New Orleans Relaxed Start**

Get to know the city with a Local Expert, as you discover each neighborhood's unique architecture and explore the vibrant art scene. See how the community comes together through celebration. Enjoy an exclusive behind the scenes tour of Mardi Gras World, where the magic happens and the extravagant, vibrant floats are built each year. One of the Mardi Gras World certified artists will lead you through designing your very own Mardi Gras mask and creating your masterpiece, premium felt backed mask with glitter, feathers and more to take back as an eclectic memento of your time in The Big Easy. Show off the piece of art you just made by enjoying a masquerade themed dinner on the Mardi Gras Plaza, which boasts a stunning view of the Mississippi River.

Accommodations: Kimpton Hotel Fontenot, New Orleans.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

### **Day 12 - Depart New Orleans**

It's time to say goodbye to your fellow travellers as your adventure comes to an end. Departure to the airport will be at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast