

## Musical Roots of the South

Texas - Louisiana - Mississippi - Alabama - Tennessee  
- North Carolina - Georgia - South Carolina



### Dallas, Texas

Start your journey in the metropolitan city of Dallas. Specifically, make a beeline to historic Deep Ellum, where more than 30 live music venues in the multi-block area make the entertainment district one of the largest in Texas. It's a place where you can see big-name singers in the massive Bomb Factory, request a favorite song at a dueling piano bar, admire street art and dine al fresco in a neighborhood café. It all began in the 1920s, when Deep Ellum was known as a mecca for Blues and Jazz, patronized by fans of icons such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter and Bessie Smith. By the 1970s, the area was in economic decline with vacant storefronts, but the music scene reignited in the 1980s. The opening of the Trees concert venue in the 1990s further invigorated the area by attracting popular bands like Nirvana, Pearl Jam and Radiohead. Today, the internationally known district draws people eager to listen to music, engage with local artists, shop and eat. Experience the area at its finest during the Deep Ellum Arts Festival, a three-day street party in April. *2 Nights Accommodation Dallas, Texas*

## Dallas, Texas – Austin, Texas

Arrive in Austin on any night of the week and you're guaranteed to find a spot to listen to live music in a variety of genres, including Country, Blues and Rock. With more than 2,000 musicians contributing to the diversity of the city's soundtrack, you'll soon learn why Austin is nicknamed the "Live Music Capital of the World." The TV show "Austin City Limits" debuted in the mid-1970s and continues to bring attention to a destination where acts like Janis Joplin, Jamestown Revival and Stevie Ray Vaughan gained popularity. Since 1987, the annual South by Southwest music festival has drawn thousands of talented musicians and fans from throughout the world. Austin is home to large venues, such as the Paramount Theatre, which books headline acts on world tours, and also to classic venues, such as the Continental Club, Sahara Lounge and The Nook Amphitheater, where you can catch local bands. Popular entertainment districts include Rainey Street, Sixth Street and the South Congress neighborhood. *2 Nights Accommodation Austin, Texas*



## Austin, Texas – San Antonio, Texas – Houston, Texas

En route to Houston, stop in San Antonio to experience its vivid and diverse music scene. The city, known for its Tejano and Heavy Metal genres, also has deep Jazz roots at places like the Shadowland Ballroom and the Plaza Hotel. Major venues for famous touring acts

include AT&T Center and The Paper Tiger, but smaller clubs in the urban oasis host nightly live music for all tastes. Continue to Houston, famous for launching the careers of artists as diverse as Lyle Lovett, ZZ Top and Destiny’s Child. The live music scene includes such venues as the Continental Club, which started in Austin, and now has a major presence on Main Street, a popular spot to finish the night. The historic Fitzgerald’s, once a Polish dance hall a century ago, hosts an open microphone night for budding musicians on Wednesdays, and established bands play live Fridays and Saturdays. One of the newest destinations in Houston is White Oak Music Hall, which has booked top bands like The Lumineers since opening in 2016. Choose from three stages, both indoors and outdoors, that offer spectacular views of downtown and the Little White Oak Bayou. *1 night Accommodation Houston, Texas*

## Houston, Texas – Port Arthur, Texas – Lafayette, Louisiana – New Orleans, Louisiana



While driving along the Gulf of Mexico coastline, stop in Port Arthur to visit the Museum of the Gulf Coast, home to a hall of fame that enshrined native Janis Joplin and other Gulf Coast icons such as Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, ZZ Top, and Edgar and Johnny Winter. Continue to Lafayette, a vibrant south central Louisiana city settled by French Canadians

in the 18th century that is known as the capital of Cajun Country. See bands playing Cajun tunes and Zydeco music at local venues, or time your visit to one of the many cultural festivals. Your final destination is New Orleans, where musical roots run deep. In clubs and on street corners, you're likely to hear everything from Jazz and Afro-Cuban to Dixieland, Rhythm and Blues, and Zydeco. At Preservation Hall, a rotating lineup of fabulous musicians play traditional New Orleans Jazz in the most intimate environment; arrive early for standing-room-only space or buy in advance one of the venue's limited seats. Another hub for live music, Frenchmen Street, is lined with venues such as The Spotted Cat Music Club, which features as many as three Jazz bands nightly. Visit the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park for insight on the city that is known as the birthplace of Jazz. Cuisine and the cocktail culture are vital to the New Orleans experience. From open-air cafés to fine-dining restaurants, you'll find countless interpretations of local signature dishes, such as sugar-dusted beignets, aromatic jambalaya, and spiced, smoked Andouille sausage. Plan your journey to coincide with the Jazz & Heritage Festival or Mardi Gras. *2 Nights Accommodation in New Orleans, Louisiana*



## New Orleans, Louisiana – Baton Rouge, Louisiana – Natchez, Mississippi – Indianola, Mississippi

Follow the Mississippi River north along the Mississippi Blues Trail. Stop in Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana, a perfect hub to explore the eclectic culture of the state. Baton Rouge houses over 300 years of history, much of which can be tasted in the delectable food, seen in the distinct architecture and learned through the unique culture. Continue on the Mississippi Blues Trail through Natchez, Vicksburg and Indianola, the region known as the Mississippi Delta. In Indianola, learn about the history of Blues music as told at the B.B. King Museum, dedicated to the legendary singer and guitar player. Visitors will learn how African-Americans created the genre while working in cotton fields and playing at juke joints. *1 Night Accommodation in Indianola, Mississippi*



## Indianola, Mississippi – Tupelo, Mississippi – Birmingham, Alabama

Departing Indianola, take a slight detour north along the Mississippi Blues Trail to Dockery Farms in Cleveland to continue learning about the advent of Blues music. African-Americans working there in the early 1900s included Blues pioneer Charlie Patton. At the next stop, Tupelo, spend some time at the birthplace of Elvis Presley. The home where the “King of Rock ‘n’ Roll” was born is part of an attraction that includes a chapel, museum and park. Continue to Birmingham, where Jazz is still very much alive in downtown nightclubs, such as Ona’s Music Room, where you may be lucky enough to catch a performance by owner Ona Watson, the youngest person inducted into the Alabama Jazz

Hall of Fame. For an authentic experience, visit one of the last juke joints in existence, and hear known artists and locals play Saturday nights at Gip's Place in nearby Bessemer.

*1 Night Accommodation Birmingham, Alabama*

## Birmingham, Alabama - Chattanooga, Tennessee

Before leaving Birmingham, stop by the art-deco building housing the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame, a museum honoring Jazz artists with links to Alabama. Inside, visit the Carver Theatre, where many of the greats performed. You will enjoy a Jazz music history tour of legends such as Nat King Cole, Lionel Hampton and Duke Ellington. On the two-hour drive north, cross the Georgia state line before arriving in Chattanooga, where Bessie Smith was born and Usher was raised. Stop at an attraction that opened in 2017, the Songbirds Guitar Museum, to see guitars from the 1920s through the 1970s. *1 Night Accommodation Chattanooga, Tennessee*

## Chattanooga, Tennessee - Gatlinburg, Tennessee



Tennessee is known for its great music destinations and history, and Gatlinburg will not disappoint. Every summer, artists and music fans converge on Gatlinburg for the Smoky Mountain Songwriter's Festival. Top songwriters in the music industry vie for awards. In addition to great music, Gatlinburg also offers venues, including distilleries, where you can hear live music while sipping spirits. Make time for a down-home meal at Atrium Pancakes, which serves breakfast and brunch; try the baked apple pancake or country-fried steak and gravy. Cap off a trip by visiting the Dollywood theme park in Pigeon Forge. Spend time exploring the grounds and water park, and take in the many shows and attractions. The park also offers on-site accommodations for anyone looking to stay a

little longer. To welcome Country star Dolly Parton home, join the crowd at the annual Dolly's Homecoming Parade. Music lovers will want to plan a visit to coincide with the annual Dollywood Barbeque and Bluegrass Festival. *2 Nights Accommodation Gatlinburg or Pigeon Forge, Tennessee*

## Gatlinburg, Tennessee - Great Smoky Mountains, Tennessee/North Carolina - Atlanta, Georgia



Leave the music trail in Gatlinburg to explore the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Straddling the border of Tennessee and North Carolina, the park offers hiking trails through forests and wildflower meadows, along streams and rivers with waterfalls and spectacular viewpoints. After leaving the Great Smokies, go to Georgia for the college town vibe of Athens, forever linked to bands like the B-52s and R.E.M. A variety of shows still grace the stage of the Morton Theatre, which opened as a vaudeville theater in 1910, and where music icons Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong once performed. Continue to Atlanta, a destination famous for contemporary Hip-Hop and Rhythm and Blues. Little Five Points has long been a hotspot, and the Variety Playhouse is a great venue to catch live music and events. *2 Nights Accommodation Atlanta, Georgia*

## Atlanta, Georgia - Charleston, South Carolina

Charleston's signature is its antebellum mansions painted in a rainbow of colors and featuring elaborate ironwork. Do not miss the opportunity to join a walking tour along cobblestone streets for the best view of these homes, their gardens and the Battery, Charleston's historic waterfront promenade. Perhaps the name Charleston is familiar to you because of the city's namesake dance popular in the Ragtime era in the early 1900s and by those grooving to Jazz beats in the 1920s. Grammy Award-winning singer Darius Rucker, a native of the city, even named one of his albums "Charleston, SC 1966." The renovation in the 1990s of the Charleston Music Hall, also known as The Tower Depot, provided the city with a top-notch live music venue. For a low-key evening, step inside



historic downtown bars or beach taverns to see a host of talented musicians on stage.

*1 Night Accommodation Charleston, South Carolina*

---

**For more trip inspiration and travel ideas throughout the USA, go to [VisitTheUSA.com](http://VisitTheUSA.com).**