

Rhythms of the River

Illinois - Minnesota - Wisconsin - Iowa - Missouri - Tennessee -
Mississippi - Louisiana

Option 1: Start your trip in Chicago, Illinois



Cloud Gate ('The Bean'), Chicago, Illinois

Begin in Chicago, Illinois

Start with a visit to some of Chicago's iconic attractions such as the *Cloud Gate* sculpture (a.k.a The Bean) at Millennium Park, the Ledge glass balcony at Skydeck Chicago off the 103rd floor of Willis Tower, and the new Centennial Wheel at Navy Pier. Interactive, educational museums abound in Chicago, from The Field Museum and Shedd Aquarium to the Art Institute of Chicago. Rock out at the annual Chicago Blues Festival or at clubs such as Buddy Guy's Legends - no matter your musical taste, you'll find it live in Chicago every night of the week. In Chicago, you'll be able to choose from more than 200 live music venues and clubs - with everything from intimate musical experiences to major concert venues and historic music halls. Enjoy a deep-dish pizza at Gino's East or Lou Malnati's, or enjoy a Chicago hot dog at locations throughout the city. Delve into Chicago's thriving craft brewery scene with a tour and a pint at a neighborhood brewery such as Half Acre. *Accommodation: Chicago, Illinois*

Chicago to Springfield, Illinois

From Chicago, head out on historic Route 66 for a true slice of Americana. The famous road, which winds from Chicago to Los Angeles, traverses nearly 300 miles (483 kilometres) in Illinois and is dotted with homey cafés, quirky shops and unique roadside attractions. Snap a photo in front of the towering Railsplitter Covered Wagon in Lincoln or the huge pink elephant near the Pink Elephant Antique Mall in Livingston. Explore Route 66 memorabilia at the Route 66 Association of Illinois Hall of Fame and Museum in Pontiac. From here, drive about two hours south to learn about Abraham Lincoln's life in Springfield at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum, the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. *Accommodation: Springfield, Illinois*

Springfield, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri



Enjoy a root beer float or a giant banana split at Doc's Soda Fountain in Girard, Illinois on Route 66 (just about 30 minutes from Springfield) on the way to St. Louis, where you can visit the Gateway Arch, the tallest man-made monument in the USA. The arch has welcomed visitors for 50 years with its iconic shape. The vision of renowned architect Eero Saarinen, the Gateway Arch commemorates Thomas Jefferson's vision and St. Louis' role in the westward expansion of the United States. St. Louis is also renowned for its diverse music scene. Visit the Soulard neighborhood for stellar live

music, enjoy a delicious meal and music at a trendy suburban bistro, or spend an evening exploring the Loop, with its music clubs, ethnic restaurants and unique boutiques. Take time to visit Blueberry Hill (where Chuck Berry played regularly) or The Beale on Broadway to see live Blues, Soul and R&B, and do not miss the National Blues Museum. *Accommodation: St. Louis, Missouri*

Option 2: Start your trip in Minneapolis/Bloomington, Minnesota

Begin in Minneapolis/Bloomington, Minnesota

Follow the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, exploring a rich and diverse music culture along the way. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, immerse yourself in the music of Prince at First Avenue, a former Greyhound Bus depot, and now the hub of the city's live music scene (it's also the place where Prince performed regularly, experimenting with his eccentric new sounds). In 1983, the album version of the song *Purple Rain* was recorded here, and it was also the backdrop for his movie of the same name. Paisley Park is where you'll find Prince's recording studio and residence, now offering daily tours where visitors can see his iconic outfits, awards and other memorabilia. Don't miss the mural at 26th and Hennepin, painted by artist Rock "Cyfi" Martinez after Prince's death. Extend your stay in Minneapolis to follow a Bob Dylan Tour along Highway 61. Visit Dylan's birthplace in Duluth, Minnesota as well as his boyhood home in Hibbing, then continue on to venues near the University of Minnesota campus where Dylan's unmistakable sound was developed. Finish the day at The Armory Arts & Music Centre, which marks the end of Duluth's Bob Dylan Way, a 1.8-mile (nearly 3-kilometre) cultural pathway through the city centre of Duluth. *Accommodation: Minneapolis/Bloomington, Minnesota*

Minneapolis/Bloomington, Minnesota to Dubuque, Iowa

Follow the Great River Road to La Crosse, Wisconsin. Here, enjoy majestic views at Grandad Bluff, with its 600-foot (183-metre) bluff overlooking the Mississippi River Valley; visitors can see Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa from this impressive location. Enjoy historic and beautiful Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, the second-oldest community in Wisconsin and home to the Prairie Dog Blues Festival in late July. Cross the river to visit Effigy Mounds National Monument, Iowa, located in one of the most picturesque sections of the Upper Mississippi River Valley, and preserving more than 200 prehistoric mounds built by Native Americans. Travellers will enjoy seeing the

mounds, many of which take the form of birds and bears. Continue to Dubuque, Iowa's oldest city, to see how the community has remade its Mississippi Riverwalk area into a lively destination. Experience The Smithsonian-affiliated National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium and, in summer, hear live music at the riverside amphitheater.

Accommodation: Dubuque, Iowa

Dubuque, Iowa to Hannibal, Missouri

Continue south to Hannibal, Missouri. Explore this historic river town where famous American writer Mark Twain lived in his youth. First, explore the world-famous Mark Twain Cave and The Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum, then catch a show, take a ghost tour and explore unique art galleries. Embark on a riverboat dinner cruise and experience the mighty Mississippi, just as Twain did. *Accommodation: Hannibal, Missouri*

Dubuque, Missouri to St. Louis, Missouri

The Gateway Arch in St. Louis is the tallest man-made monument in the USA, welcoming visitors to the city for 50 years with its iconic shape. The vision of renowned architect Eero Saarinen, the Gateway Arch commemorates Thomas Jefferson's vision and St. Louis' role in the westward expansion of the United States. St. Louis is also renowned for its diverse music scene. Visit the Soulard neighborhood for stellar live music, enjoy a delicious meal and music at a trendy suburban bistro, or spend an evening exploring the Loop, with its music clubs, ethnic restaurants and unique boutiques. Take time to visit Blueberry Hill (where Chuck Berry played regularly) or The Beale on Broadway to see live Blues, Soul and R&B, and do not miss the National Blues Museum. *Accommodation: St. Louis, Missouri*

Both Option 1 and Option 2 continue on from St. Louis, Missouri

St. Louis, Missouri to Nashville, Tennessee

No music tour would be complete without a visit to Nashville, Tennessee, home to Country music. At the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, recordings, touch screens and memorabilia trace Country music from its roots to the present. The museum also offers tours of RCA Studio B, where artists such as Dolly Parton recorded songs. The Grand Ole Opry is the place to see today's Country music stars perform. For a variety of genres, catch a concert at the Ryman Auditorium, the historic church building that was once the home of the Opry. Nearby, new art flows regularly into the Frist Center for the Visual Arts (its Art Deco architecture is worth a stop for its own sake). Hungry? Find a meat-and-three restaurant, where you'll select one meat and three side dishes from a list of homespun choices (try golden-fried chicken, creamy mashed potatoes, corn, and collard greens accented with pork). Extend your stay in Nashville to see all the city has to offer. *Accommodation: Nashville, Tennessee*



Nashville to Memphis, Tennessee

Head back to the Great River Road and the Mississippi River toward Memphis, Tennessee. In this pilgrimage city for music-lovers, tour Sun Studio to stand where Blues and Rock legends such as B.B. King and Elvis Presley recorded some of their earliest hits. For an intimate look at Presley's life, tour his Graceland estate. At the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, the rhythm shifts to Soul and Gospel. View memorabilia from Stax artists including Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes, whose gold-plated Cadillac is displayed. For a sampling of Memphis' contemporary sounds, walk Beale Street, where live music seems to drift from every open door. The aroma of barbecue fills the air, too. Savour local specialties that include dry-rubbed ribs and smoked pulled-pork sandwiches. *Accommodation: Memphis, Tennessee*



Memphis, Tennessee to Cleveland, Mississippi

Follow the Mississippi Blues Trail to Clarksdale, Mississippi, located at the intersection of highways 61 and 49 ('the crossroads'). Clarksdale and the surrounding Delta region are known as 'the land where the blues began', making this the perfect home to the Delta Blues Museum. Continue south to Cleveland, Mississippi, home to Dockery Farms, which was established in 1895 to produce cotton. Charley Patton was among the African Americans who worked here; he later contributed to a culture that inspired the Blues, a true American art form. Also in Cleveland is the GRAMMY Museum Mississippi. *Accommodation: Cleveland, Mississippi*

Cleveland to Natchez, Mississippi

En route to joining the Natchez Trace Parkway, stop at Indianola, Mississippi. Visit the B.B. King Museum to learn about the man who helped popularize the Blues, a truly American art form. Join the Natchez Trace Parkway as you continue your journey to Natchez, Mississippi, the oldest settlement in Mississippi. The journey will take you past bygone plantations and restored antebellum mansions. Take time to explore some of these incredible homes that tell the stories of the South. *Accommodation: Natchez, Mississippi*



Natchez, Mississippi to New Orleans, Louisiana

The last leg of your road trip will take you to New Orleans, Louisiana where the mighty Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Along the way, make a stop in Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital city and the hub of all things Louisiana. Baton Rouge is the perfect place to explore the eclectic culture of this amazing state. The city has more than 300 years of history, much of which can be seen in distinct architecture, tasted in delectable food, and learned through its unique culture.

After visiting Baton Rouge, head to New Orleans. With its centuries-old cottages and elaborate, historic cemeteries, the city is a photographer's delight. Guided tours are an ideal way to learn about this special place. Join a stroll through the historic French Quarter or take a tour of New Orleans' cemeteries, voodoo and ghost lore.



New Orleans is also a musical city. At Preservation Hall, a rotating lineup of fabulous musicians plays traditional New Orleans Jazz in the most intimate, acoustic environment. Queue up early for standing-room-only space or plan to purchase one of the venue's limited seats. Elsewhere in the city, Frenchmen Street is a hub for live music, lined with venues such as The Spotted Cat Music Club. The cozy room packs as many as three bands nightly, spotlighting various forms of Jazz. Cuisine and the cocktail culture are vital to the New Orleans experience, too. 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. Home to Jazz fest, Mardi Gras and the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, a visit to New Orleans is the perfect way to finish your journey. *Accommodation: New Orleans, Louisiana*

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