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RHYTHMS OF THE RIVER

OPTION 1 CHICAGO START

DAYS: 9 NIGHTS: 8 | FROM: CHICAGO TO: NEW ORLEANS



AMERICANTOURS INTERNATIONAL, LLC



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- + 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.
- + 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.
- + 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.

Chicago River



RHYTHMS OF THE RIVER: OPTION 1 CHICAGO START

CHICAGO - ARRIVAL

Day 1: Welcome to Chicago. The "Windy City" as it is often called, lies along the shores of Lake Michigan and is known for its vibrant arts scene, cultural attractions, shopping, and stunning architecture. Upon arrival, transfer independently to your hotel. 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.

CHICAGO - SPRINGFIELD

Day 2: This morning, pick-up your rental car and 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 kilometers) in Illinois and is dotted with homey cafes, 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.

Driving Distance: 217 MI / 349 KM

SPRINGFIELD - ST. LOUIS

Day 3: 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 Souldard 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.

Driving Distance: 117 MI / 188 KM

ST. LOUIS - NASHVILLE

Day 4: 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.

Driving Distance: 323 MI / 519 KM

NASHVILLE - MEMPHIS

Day 5: 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 goldplated 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. Savor local specialties that include dry-rubbed ribs and smoked pulled-pork sandwiches.

Driving Distance: 257 MI / 413 KM

MEMPHIS - CLEVELAND

Day 6: 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.

Driving Distance: 151 MI / 243 KM

CLEVELAND - NATCHEZ

Day 7: 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.

Driving Distance: 204 MI / 328 KM

NATCHEZ - NEW ORLEANS

Day 8: 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 cafes 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.

Driving Distance: 176 MI / 283 KM

NEW ORLEANS - DEPARTURE

Day 9: Return your rental car prior to your departure flight.



② NIGHTS | ● TOUR CITY

New Orleans Crescent City Bridge Over Mississippi River



Memphis Beale Street (Photo Credit: TN Tourism)

