



American Music Cities

Cities: Kansas City, St. Louis, Branson
Optional: Memphis, Nashville

You may choose to extend your trip by traveling on to Memphis and Nashville.
The complete itinerary can be broken into shorter itineraries based on your interests or time available.

- **Kansas City, Missouri - 2 nights**
- **St. Louis, Missouri - 2 nights**
- **Branson, Missouri - 2 nights**
- *Memphis, Tennessee - 2 nights*
- *Nashville, Tennessee - 2 nights*

Day 1 – Kansas City

Arrive in Kansas City, Missouri, and check into your hotel. www.visitkc.com

Experience Kansas City's most famous traditions — jazz and barbecue — both of which have roots in KC that date back to the 1920s. Belly up to the bar and sample the heavenly 'cue at some of the city's 100+ barbecue joints. Then, discover how Kansas City jazz defined an era through KC legends like Charlie Parker, Count Basie and Big Joe Turner.

Located in the Historic 18th & Vine Jazz District, the **American Jazz Museum** showcases the sights and sounds of jazz through interactive exhibits and films, the Changing Gallery exhibit space, Horace M. Peterson III Visitors Center, Blue Room Jazz Club and Gem Theater. As the only museum in the world solely focused on the preservation, exhibition and advancement of jazz music – the museum is a must for music fans. www.americanjazzmuseum.org

Dinner at **Fiorella's Jack Stack BBQ**, Kansas City tradition since 1957. Jack Stack's has one of the most extensive BBQ menus in the country. www.jackstackbbq.com

Overnight in Kansas City.

Day 2 – Kansas City

The **Arabia Steamboat Museum** is a true time capsule of frontier life in the 1800s. The Arabia was headed up the Missouri River in the fall of 1856 when she struck a tree snag and sank just north of Kansas City. Her cargo hold was full of 200-tons of supplies bound for general stores and pioneer settlements. As the years passed, the river changed course and left the Arabia buried beneath a Kansas cornfield. Finally, in 1988, a group of modern-day adventurers uncovered the lost Arabia and her magnificent bounty. They were amazed to find fine dishware, clothing and even bottled food all preserved in remarkable condition. Their find has been called the “King Tut's Tomb of the Missouri River.” So, if you're looking for an adventure the whole group will enjoy, discover the treasures of the Steamboat Arabia. www.1856.com

Lunch at **Arthur Bryant's Barbecue**. Arthur Bryant, the legendary King of Ribs, is the most renowned barbequer in history. He created a sauce that has attracted the likes of former Presidents Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter to his restaurant. www.arthurbryants.com

Founded in 1989, **Boulevard Brewing Company** has grown to become the largest specialty brewer in the Midwest. Their mission is simple -- to produce fresh, flavorful beers using the finest traditional ingredients and the best of both old and new brewing techniques. Tour the brewery before sampling some of their most popular beverages. www.boulevard.com/visit-us/brewery-tours

The **Gangster Tour** features an interactive look at the Pendergast-era from 1920 to 1945. “Gangster TV” highlights this wild and wooly era with historical film and photographs from the period. You'll learn and see how the “Pendergast Machine” controlled the political system and the very fabric of life in Kansas City. The tour highlights infamous crimes like the Union Station Massacre, shows the locations of speakeasies and gambling halls and explains how liquor flowed freely during prohibition. The homes and workplaces of crime bosses and the sites of major turf wars are also featured on the tour. Sounds like an “offer you can't refuse.” www.kansascitytransportationgroup.com/kc-gangster-tour

In addition to the Blue Room jazz club, experience a “jam session” at **The Mutual Musicians Foundation** - located in the heart of Kansas City's historic jazz district. Originally home to the Black Musicians' Protective Union Local 627 A.F. of M., the Foundation continues its grand tradition as a living tribute to the city's long and illustrious musical history. Jazz greats and popular local players alike continue to show up every weekend, playing the night away just as they have since the 1930s. www.mutualmusiciansfoundation.org

Overnight in Kansas City.

Day 3 – St. Louis

Kansas City to St. Louis, 250 miles

Travel to St. Louis. Along the way - via Interstate 70 - stop at **Warm Springs Ranch**, a breeding and training farm for the Budweiser Clydesdales, resting on 300-plus acres of lush, rolling hills in the heart of Missouri. Established in 2008, it features a mare/stallion and foaling barn, veterinary lab and 10 pastures, each with a customized, walk-in shelter. The facility is home to more than 70 Clydesdales. Whether you choose a guided tour or a V.I.P. tour, here's your chance to go behind the scenes at Warm Springs Ranch and get up close and personal with the Clydesdales! Explore the 25,000-square-foot facility and find out what it takes to breed a legend. www.warmspringsranch.com

A stop in St. Louis is not complete without visiting the **Gateway Arch National Park**. The property includes an enhanced riverfront region, spaces designed for events and a park over the highway connecting the Arch to the historic Old Courthouse. The **Museum at the Gateway Arch**, located beneath the Arch, interprets westward expansion from a variety of cultural perspectives. The functionality and accessibility of the grounds has been enhanced with new bicycle trails, walking paths and performance venues. Later, get a feel for Ol' Man River with a relaxing one-hour sightseeing cruise aboard **Riverboats at the Gateway Arch**. www.gatewayarch.com

For an overview of St. Louis' past, visit the **Missouri History Museum** in Forest Park where Lindbergh, Lewis & Clark and the Louisiana Purchase come to life. You'll see artifacts from Colonial St. Louis, the Lewis & Clark expedition, Civil War and the opening of the American West. Galleries featuring cultural icons like Katherine Dunham Miles Davis, Tennessee Williams and others who lived and worked in St. Louis also reflect the modern influences on St. Louis and world culture. www.mohistory.org

Your evening can consist of a famed St. Louis blues club, an elegant dinner or a chance to try your luck at a St. Louis casino. www.explorestlouis.com

Day 4 – St. Louis

Visit the **Anheuser-Busch Brewery**, the single largest brewing complex in the world. Tours include a visit with the famous Clydesdales and a taste of the variety of brews. www.budweisertours.com

Travel to one of St. Louis' many unique neighborhoods and see firsthand what is considered by many to be the greatest example of Byzantine architecture in the world at the **Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis**. www.cathedralstl.org

Enjoy lunch in the Central West End or as the locals say, the CWE. Chock full of great local restaurants and specialty shops, the CWE is one of those places that the time can get away from you.

This ain't your grandma's museum. Step into the anything-but-ordinary world of **City Museum**, a museum made entirely from recycled pieces. The museum building itself is repurposed, having started life as a shoe manufacturing factory and warehouse. Items that would have become landfill now fill the floors of the quirky and innovative warehouse of artistic fun. Remnants of old buildings were transformed into the museum's gift shop, retired heating coils from area breweries provide access to ceiling-high habit trails for kids and adults. An in-house circus troupe performs beneath a Big Top festooned with old neckties and CD disks. The rooftop – complete with access to a 10-story slide through the building – adds sky-high elements of fun including a Ferris wheel and gravity-defying school bus that appears to teeter over the roof's edge. City Museum proves that everything old can be new again. www.citymuseum.org

The **National Blues Museum** dedicated exclusively to preserving and honoring the history and legacy of Blues music and its impact on American and world culture. A “must-see” attraction, the museum features artifact-driven exhibits, live performances and interactive galleries to perpetuate blues culture for future generations of artists, fans and historians.

In addition to the National Blues Museum, music-lovers will definitely want to hear some authentic St. Louis blues. Blues bands abound with most of the region's blues clubs featuring local bands on weekends as well as occasional touring artists. For guaranteed live blues, seven days a week, check out BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups; The Beale on Broadway and Broadway Oyster Bar. www.nationalbluesmuseum.com

To really get a feeling of St. Louis, stop by the **Delmar Loop** neighborhood to grab a bite to eat and catch a local band at one of the many live music venues. Voted one of the “10 Great Streets in America” by the American Planning Association. www.visittheloop.com

Day 5 – Branson

St. Louis to Branson, 250 miles

En route to Branson, be sure to explore **Meramec Caverns**, one of the largest caves in the country, the oldest stop on Route 66 and the reported hideout of outlaw Jesse James. www.americascave.com

Boasting more theater seats than Broadway, there is music from nearly every era and style performed daily by both rising young entertainers and legendary stars in **Branson**. The many choices of music include: Pop, Country, Rock 'n' Roll, Gospel, Patriotic, Broadway, Western, Big Band, Swing, Bluegrass, Jazz, Classical and more.

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Music made famous by classical composers, cowboy poets, cinematic blockbusters, '50s heartthrobs, '60s pop bands, and today's Top 40 performances can be enjoyed from early morning until late at night. Comedians are a Branson mainstay, both as headliners and as specialty acts during some of our zany variety shows.

Branson offers entertainment to please everyone and many well-known favorites include: Presleys' Country Jubilee, The Duttons, The Haygoods, Legends in Concert, Clay Cooper, Six and Raiding the Country Vault. In addition, a number of major touring artists can be seen throughout the year. www.explorebranson.com

After the show, grab a late dinner or drinks at the popular **Branson Landing**. www.bransonlanding.com

Day 6 – Branson

Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, a 10,000-acre expanse of rugged unspoiled Ozarks landscape, features trout fishing, walking and biking on the canyon floor. Tram tours and old west cattle drives meander through hilltop prairies and may include chuck wagon meals. Horseback riding and cabin rentals are available. www.dogwoodcanyon.org

Hop aboard an electric cart for an exhilarating two-and-a-half mile nature trail journey, which overlooks Table Rock Lake. Beginning at the Welcome Center of **Top Of The Rock Lost Canyon Cave And Nature Trail™**, visitors are surrounded by the breathtaking natural beauty of the Ozarks. The tour provides a one-of-a-kind nature park experience, where you will pass through covered Amish bridges, marvel at dramatic natural rock formations, waterfalls and caves. The first stop along the way is the jaw-dropping, four-story cave. Try a specialty drink, like the signature John L's Lemonade, at the cave bar tucked among the cascading waterfalls and enjoy the rest of your journey through the Ozarks. www.topoftherock.com

Silver Dollar City has been Branson's #1 attraction for over 50 years. This internationally awarded 1880s-style theme park treats guests to an experience unlike any other. Nestled amidst the naturally beautiful Ozark Mountains, Silver Dollar City features six world-class festivals, a dozen delightful restaurants, 40 live shows daily and 60 unique shops. Known as "The Home of American Craftsmanship", you can meet over 100 craftsmen demonstrating the art of woodcarving, glass blowing, pottery, blacksmithing and so much more. www.silverdollarcity.com

As you enter the **Titanic Museum Attraction**, each person is given a boarding pass featuring the name of an original passenger. You can try to find out more about your passenger as you move throughout the museum before discovering whether or not that person actually survived the catastrophe at the end of your visit. It adds a very personal aspect to what otherwise might seem like just a long-distant event in history.

As you move through the museum, you'll climb through various sections of the ship, many of which are built to actual scale of the original vessel — like the dramatic Grand Staircase. From the engine room to cramped lower-class quarters and then up to more spacious first-class cabins, the museum mixes detailed reproductions with actual artifacts and ephemera related to the ship. There are haunting, original life preserver vests, personal letters and other items that have survived more than a century since the ship's collision with an iceberg. A number of interactive exhibits deepen your understanding of that night. Guests have the chance to sit in a full-sized lifeboat like those found on the ship, dip a hand in 28-degree water, try to maintain balance on different slopes of ground that reflect the angle of the ship as it sank and explore the replicated ship's bridge. There is nothing quite like it! www.titanicbranson.com

Day 7 – 8 Memphis

Branson to Memphis, 300 miles

Day 9 – 10 Nashville

Memphis to Nashville, 213 miles

Day 11 – Depart for home