



Houmas House  
Plantation



# The Grand Deep South

March 13 - 25, 2024 (13 days)



Enjoying the white sand of Biloxi's coast



Beautiful time of year to explore the South!

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Civil War Sights of Vicksburg
- Antebellum Mansions & Cotton Plantation
- Lafayette Cajun Country Sights
- 3 nights New Orleans
- Natchez Pilgrimage Tour of Homes
- New Orleans Luncheon Cruise
- Mardi Gras World with Mask Making Workshop
- Court of Two Sisters Jazz Brunch
- New Orleans Narrated Swamp Tour
- Biloxi Shrimping Demonstration
- Graceland Tour

## MAP AT A GLANCE



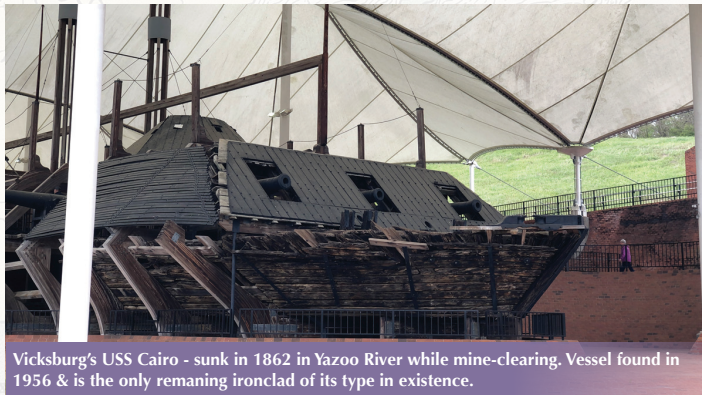
Lafayette's 500 year old oak tree



SPRING  
11

*"I know that traveling with R&J Tours is always a quality experience. This tour to the Grand Deep South definitely lived up to that expectation."*  
Jerry, Rochester

# Civil War History Cotton Plantation Antebellum Mansions Cajun Country The French Quarter



Vicksburg's USS Cairo - sunk in 1862 in Yazoo River while mine-clearing. Vessel found in 1956 & is the only remaining ironclad of its type in existence.

## Day 1 - Home to Independence, MO

Today we begin our journey to exciting Cajun Country and the Deep South. Enjoy the Drury's "Kickback" Reception, which is a complete light meal.

**Included Meals:** Drury Kickback

**Hotel:** Drury Inn

## Day 2 - Independence to Little Rock, AR

Take a scenic drive with sweeping vistas of the lovely Ozark Mountain country. We'll stop for a light lunch in Branson before our afternoon journey to Little Rock, Arkansas.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Hotel:** Holiday Inn

## Day 3 - Little Rock to Natchez, MS

Travel deep into the south to Vicksburg, steeped in ambiguous history. Tour the Vicksburg National Military Park, one of the best preserved Civil War Battlefields in America. It's here that one of the Civil War's most devastating battles took place. Tour the historic monuments, miles of reconstructed trenches, the restored Union gunboat USS Cairo, and see the Vicksburg National Cemetery. Make our way to historic Natchez, with magnificent mansions from the booming days of the cotton industry. Experience true southern hospitality this evening with dinner at a lovely restaurant.

**Included Meal:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Hotel:** Natchez Grand (2 Nights)

## Day 4 - Natchez

A local guide joins us for the Natchez Spring Pilgrimage Tour of Homes as we tour beautiful antebellum mansions, which are more plentiful here than anywhere else in the United States. The homes we will tour are hand-selected by the garden clubs. Many of these historic homes are personally owned and still lived in today. We will be immersed in history when we enter these homes, complete with original furnishings, and listen to great stories about those who called these antebellums "home." Be sure to take in the beautiful lawns around you. One truly cannot get a better look at personally owned, historic antebellum homes than here in Natchez. This afternoon we travel out to Frogmore Cotton Plantation to experience the history of cotton and plantation life then and now. This evening we will enjoy entertainment provided by the Natchez Theatre.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast



Swamp Boat Tour - we spy a big creature!



New Orleans - iconic St. Louis Cathedral



Frogmore - a hands on experience in the world of cotton



Martin Accordians



Mardi Gras World



Elvis' 1969 Mercedes-Benz 600 limousine



Longwood - largest octagonal house in America. Construction was halted by the Civil War and never fully completed.

“R&J Tours is a great Tour Company - always well organized and selects a variety of events and highlights in all stops. The tour guide Denise and bus driver Jesse were amazing. This is our 3rd trip with R&J and will use them again in the future!”  
Bob & Sandy - Savage, MN  
2023 Grand Deep South Travelers



One of Houmas House's historical treasures



Beale Street in Memphis

### Day 5 - Natchez to Lafayette, LA

Today we motor deep into the heart of Cajun Country to an area first settled by French Acadian farmers. We'll meet our step-on guide then enjoy a scrumptious Cajun lunch! After lunch our guide takes us on a city tour of Lafayette which includes the downtown area, St. John's Cathedral & cemetery, 500 year old St. John live oak, and Alexandre Mouton Mansion & gardens where we'll see costumes of past Kings & Queens of Lafayette's Mardi Gras. Next up is Martin Accordions where we'll not only tour the family's workshop that builds & ships accordions throughout the globe, but also be treated to a live family musical performance of all genres of Cajoun and Zydeco music! This visit is sure to be a great highlight! We'll end our afternoon with a legendary daiquiri before we check into our hotel. This evening is on your own to partake in the Kickback Reception.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Drury Kickback**

**Hotel: Drury Inn**

### Day 6 - Lafayette to New Orleans, LA

Today we travel the Old Spanish Trail, with mossy trees, swamps, and the misty, moody basin of the Atchafalaya River. Visit the beautiful Houmas House Plantation and Gardens on Louisiana's historic river road. Experience the original French provincial house, the mansion and carriage way to the grand home, described as "The Sugar Palace." Enjoy a delicious lunch and some time to walk through the beautiful gardens. Later, we will make our way to New Orleans. Your hotel is close by the French Quarter giving you opportunity to truly experience this exciting area first hand.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Drury Kickback**

**Hotel: Drury Inn (3 Nights)**

### Day 7 - New Orleans

Today we begin with our guide circling the sights of the French Quarter, including St. Louis Cathedral and its adjoining Cabildo, Bourbon Street Jazz District, French Market Place, Garden District, and the bustling harbor front. Then we'll step on board the "City of New Orleans" Steamboat for their jazz and brunch cruise. We will cruise from the heart of the French Quarter back in time to when life was as slow and graceful as the current on the

Mississippi. Later, you may have the option, at your own cost, to visit the WWII Museum or take a relaxing carriage ride around the French Quarter. You may also wish to stop in at historic Cafe Du Monde for the famous Cafe Au Lait coffees and French beignets.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Brunch, Drury Kickback**

### Day 8 - New Orleans

Experience a jazz brunch served at the famous Court of Two Sisters, where the food is great and the entertainment is grand. This afternoon we will take a swamp tour down the river and bayou area. Your captain is a native of the swamps and fully narrates your tour. Later stroll along Bourbon Street as the wonderful sounds of jazz and Dixieland music, and the delightful aroma of Creole and Cajun cooking fill the air! The rest of the day is at your leisure.

**Included Meals: Light Breakfast, Brunch, Drury Kickback**

### Day 9 - New Orleans to Biloxi, MS

This morning you'll have a chance to see what Mardi Gras is all about when we tour Mardi Gras World and participate in a mask making demonstration. Then we make our way along the sparkling Gulf Coast of Biloxi, a resort city famous for its shrimp and fishing fleets. Following lunch on our own, we are off for a shrimping demonstration. We will cruise along the scenic coastline and learn first hand the art of shrimping. We'll then check into the Hilton Garden Inn, perfectly situated on the Gulf of Mexico. We have a delicious Cajun dinner planned, then enjoy the evening on your own. Our hotel is located directly across from the harbor and sandy beaches of the Mississippi Sound, so perhaps a scenic stroll is in order!

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**

**Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn**



Catching more than shrimp on our shrimp tour!



Court of Two Sisters - delicious brunch with jazz entertainment awaits!

### Day 10 - Biloxi to Memphis, TN

Arrive in Memphis and visit famous Beale Street. Listen to the music of Beale Street, Historic Entertainment District, with its enticing "Red, Hot, and Blue" rhythms. A delightful dinner featuring southern delicacies at King's Palace is planned. After our enjoyable evening, we'll check into the Guest House at Graceland.

**Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner**  
**Hotel: Guest House at Graceland**

### Day 11 - Memphis to St. Louis, MO

This morning after breakfast we'll tour Graceland, the beautiful estate of the "King of Rock-n-Roll," Elvis Presley. We'll then make our way to St. Louis for the evening.

**Hotel: Drury Inn**  
**Included Meals: Breakfast, Drury Kickback**



Steamboat Natchez - can you see New Orleans' St. Louis Cathedral?

### Day 12 - St. Louis to Coralville, IA

This morning following breakfast, we'll discover over 200 years of St. Louis & American history as we explore the Gateway Arch Museum. Meet the nose (dog nose that is!) behind the Lewis & Clark Expedition and uncover the history behind the first St. Louis "superhighway." We'll also watch an interesting documentary film that details the Arch's design, shares compelling stories from the builders, and more. Although it is on your own, we've planned lunch at a really cool place! Motor up through Missouri and into Iowa to Coralville, a suburb of Iowa City, where we will check into our hotel.

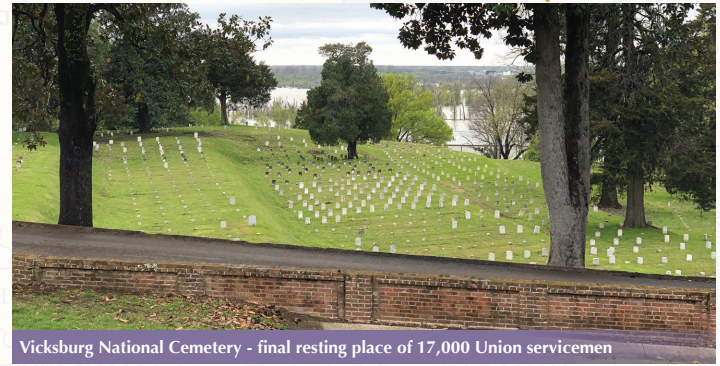
**Included Meals: Breakfast**  
**Hotel: Holiday Inn Express**

### Day 13 - Coralville to Home

After breakfast we make our final stretch home with Grand Deep South memories!

**Included Meals: Breakfast**

### The Grand Deep South



Vicksburg National Cemetery - final resting place of 17,000 Union servicemen



Lafayette's St. John's Cathedral



Visit the Gateway Arch Museum



Beautiful staircases! L: Houmas House; R: Guesthouse at Graceland (look familiar?)



## 2024 DATES & PRICES

DATES:	March 13 - 25, 2024 (13 Days)	
PRICE PER PERSON:	\$3,799 Double \$3,539 Triple	\$4,829 Single \$3,369 Quad
PRICE INCLUDES:	20 Meals & 6 Manager's Receptions, Hotels & Activities as stated in brochure, Luxury Motorcoach	
DEPOSIT DUE PER PERSON:	\$100 deposit per person at time of reservation. Full payment due 30 days prior to departure.	
OPTIONAL TRAVEL PROTECTION P/P:	\$240 Double per person	\$317 Single
TRAVEL BUCKS:	\$50 per person on future travel with R&J	
TOUR PACE:	Moderate Walking (See page 9 for description)	