Road of Blues Motorcycle Tour





A vibrant itinerary full of flavors and rhythms, along the **Blues Route**, following in the footsteps of Robert Johnson, BB King & Co. Starting from **Chicago** on the shores of Lake Michigan, head for **Route 66** through **Illinois** and **Missouri**, then **St. Louis**, **Memphis**, **Clarksdale** & its legendary clubs in the **Mississippi Delta**, then **Natchez**, Cajun country, and the **Louisiana Plantation Trail**! End the trip in **New Orleans**, the beautiful and buzzing Creole city.



Day 1

Arrival in Chicago.

Transfer to your downtown hotel and first discovery of the city, one of the most beautiful in the country.

Enjoy your late afternoon by heading up to the top of the Willis Tower. Face your vertigo on the Sky Deck.

Overnight in Chicago.

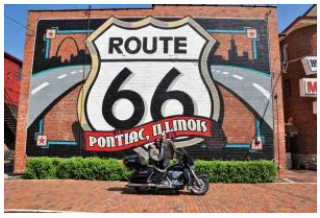


Day 2

In the morning: transfer to the rental agency (drivers) and pick up the motorbikes. Back to downtown. Nothing beats a boat ride on the Chicago River to discover the city's typical architecture and its bridges. Stroll along Michigan Ave, the local "5th Ave".

The Loop is the city's economic heart. It is bordered by the Chicago River and the many bridges that cross it, with dozens of skyscrapers and its famous elevated subway. North of the Magnificent Mile (Michigan Ave), go up to the top of the photogenic Hancock Tower, home to the impressive tilting glass platform of "360° Chicago".

Walk in Grant Park or Lincoln Park, near the lively Old Town District. If the weather is good, rent a bike and ride along the lakefront (the Riverwalk...). Or why not sunbathe on the beach (yes, really!)... As for your evenings in the “Windy City”, there are plenty of excellent spots for blues lovers, such as Buddy Guy's Legends. Overnight in Chicago.

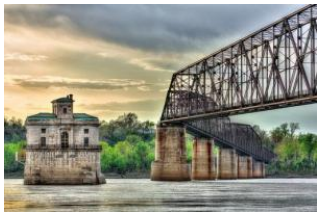


Day 3

Meet at Lou Mitchell, considered the “official” starting point of Route 66. Ride to Joliet, the city of the Blues Brothers, with its theater, station and Ruby Street bridge.

Head to Pontiac, an iconic Route 66 town, to admire its beautiful wall paintings (“Murals”). In Wilmington, you pass the Gemini Giant, a 10 m-tall astronaut holding a rocket. Further on, Dwight features a few old Route 66 gas stations, such as the Ambler's Gas Station. Further south, Springfield is the capital of Illinois. Stop at the Shea's Gas Station Museum, a vintage station turned museum, where the owner Bill Shea will flood you with anecdotes.

Stroll through the beautifully restored area that includes Abraham Lincoln’s birthplace (guided tours possible). Overnight in Springfield.



Day 4

On Old 66, pass through Litchfield, with its famous SkyView Drive-in Theatre and the Ariston Cafe.

In Staunton, stop at the surprising Henry's Rabbit Ranch, a must on the “Mother Road”!

The itinerary heads to the Chain of Rocks Bridge. Built in 1936 and over 1,600 m long (with a 22° bend in the middle), it remains one of the most iconic remnants of Route 66, even though vehicles no longer cross it today.

Arrival in St Louis, at the confluence of the Missouri and the Mississippi. A major stop on Route 66, it is the city of Chuck Berry and Johnnie “B. Goode” Johnson.

The vibe around the University district is very pleasant.

And of course, there’s the capsule ride to the top of the Gateway Arch: a must!

Overnight in St Louis.



Day 5

The first part of today's route offers beautiful views over the Mississippi. You take the back roads, with a black-yellow-red touch that will take you through the small town of... Waterloo, then the hamlet of... Belgique.

In Chester, the small town of the famous Popeye, you will learn everything about the "Sailor Man" and his crew! Stop in Cape Girardeau, on the Mississippi, to admire the murals. This is where the movie Gone Girl was filmed, notably with Ben Affleck.

Arrival in Paducah, on the banks of the Ohio River. We love the atmosphere of this town, with its downtown lined with trees and red-brick facades. You can also find beautiful murals along the Riverfront. Paducah is home to an unusual museum dedicated to the "quilt", i.e. the art of patchwork. Overnight in Paducah.



Day 6

At the border of Kentucky and Tennessee, the road crosses Reelfoot Lake State Park, famous for bird watching and water activities (paddle boards, kayaks and canoes can be rented in Samburg). Hunting is also practiced here.

The itinerary meets the majestic Mississippi River near Tiptonville, at Marijac Memorial River Park.

If the weather is nice, it is an ideal place for a picnic by the river.

Arrival in Memphis, the city where King Elvis made his first steps.

It is also here that another King, Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated on April 4, 1968, at the Lorraine Motel.

In the evening, head to one of the many blues clubs on Beale Street for a lively musical atmosphere!

Overnight in Memphis.



Day 7

Don't miss a visit to the legendary Sun Studio, where the greats recorded: Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Roy Orbison, and even U2...

Stax Records is another iconic place in the city, keeper of the famous "Memphis Sound", with a very distinctive tone — the signature of many

artists such as Isaac Hayes or Otis Redding.

Other nice spots: the Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum and the small Fire Museum...

And of course Graceland, Elvis' home, south of the city (booking essential: contact us).

For "King" fans, it's a must. For others, it's like Vegas: you have to see it at least once (the house is worth it — it's quite moving)...

Overnight in Memphis.



Day 8

After Sardis Lake, you reach Oxford, a small university town with a pleasant center laid out around its "Square".

So pleasant that William Faulkner, Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949, made it his home base (his house can be visited). John Grisham also owns a house there, among other renowned writers.

Arrival in Clarksdale, considered by some as the true birthplace of the blues.

Many musicians were born here, lived here, or simply passed through. Visit the Delta Blues Museum (housed in an old train station), which pays tribute to all these greats, and don't miss paying respects to the two guitars standing in the middle of the Crossroads...

In the evening, it happens at the Shack Up Inn, Ground Zero or the Red!

Overnight in Clarksdale.



Day 9

Small detour to Tutwiler, where W.C. Handy reportedly first "encountered" the blues on the platform of the small train station. Informational panels and faded murals bear witness to it.

You reach Dockery Farms, near Cleveland. This former plantation, of which only a few remains are left (and a charming gas station...), is now a memorial site on the Mississippi Blues Trail. Probably one of the birthplaces of the blues, according to B.B. King himself!

Head to Indianola, home to the museum dedicated to the legend B.B. King. You can even try playing a few chords.

Arrival at Belmont Plantation, in Greenville.

Overnight in Greenville (or nearby).



Day 10

Head to Yazoo City with its main street lined with colorful facades, then on to Bentonia, one of the iconic places on the Mississippi Blues Trail.

Opened in 1948, it hosted improvised concerts (long forbidden) by great bluesmen such as Skip James, Jack Owens and Sonny Boy Williamson.

The route then takes you to Vicksburg, a city with a typically southern atmosphere, on the former territory of the Natchez people.

Take the opportunity to visit Vicksburg National Military Park, which very precisely retraces the battle of Vickburg, where Union troops led by General Grant defeated the Confederates after 47 days of siege in July 1963!

Overnight in Natchez.



Day 11

The route of famous Highway 61, also called the Blues Highway, mirrors the migration of Black populations from the southern states to the industrial cities of the North.

After a stop in charming Woodville, where time seems to have stood still, head to St. Francisville on the eastern bank of the Mississippi. It's an adorable town with beautiful historic homes nestled among magnolias, azaleas and centuries-old oak trees.

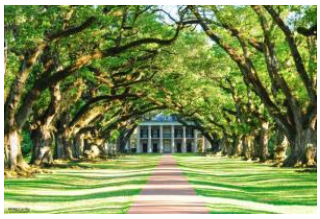
Ride to Lafayette, capital of Cajun country, where French is still spoken by some. Acadian Village is a fine reconstruction of a Cajun village with authentic houses. Vermilionville celebrates the culture, crafts and history of the Cajun people, notably through costumed activities.

Overnight in Lafayette.

Note: possibility to add 1 extra night in Lafayette or Cajun country.

Day 12

Follow the Old Spanish Hwy, passing through a few lovely small towns, to reach the Mississippi and the Plantation Route along the river. Among the



must-sees: Laura Plantation (French tour possible), and a bit further on, Oak Alley Plantation with its majestic avenue of centuries-old oak trees. Head to New Orleans airport to return the motorcycles to the rental company.

Transfer to your downtown hotel. Welcome to New Orleans, a city we love! Its unique Creole and colorful atmosphere is unlike anywhere else in the United States. Hard not to fall under its spell... Overnight in New Orleans.



Day 13

The French Quarter, also known as the Vieux Carré, is the historic district, laid out by a French architect in the early 18th century.

After violent fires struck the city at the end of the 18th century, most houses were rebuilt by the Spanish, which explains the architecture being more Hispanic than French.

Bourbon Street also runs through the Vieux Carré. Originally home to many jazz clubs, this street has become very touristy and lively. You'll find everything: street performers, bars, big restaurants, jazz clubs, café-concerts...

Tip: instead, stroll along the Mississippi and head to the very interesting Audubon Aquarium... Or wander by bike or streetcar through the Warehouse District and the leafy, upscale Garden District.

In the evening, prefer Frenchmen Street with its jazz and blues clubs rather than Bourbon Street.

Overnight in New Orleans.



Day 14

Transfer to New Orleans airport.

Return flight to Europe.

Arrival the next day.

Stay extension or itinerary change: contact us

Accommodation