

Elvis' Graceland & America's Deep South



TRIP OVERVIEW

America's Civil Rights Movement, music heritage and space exploration all came to a head in the explosive and exuberant atmosphere of the 1960s. Our tour encompasses the highlights and tragic lows of this era through the country music of Nashville, the rock 'n roll and jazz of Memphis and the rhythmic blues of New Orleans before concluding at the Houston Space Centre.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to America. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Nashville

Depart London on your scheduled direct flight to Nashville. On arrival, you will be met by a local tour director and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the evening at leisure in Nashville, 'Music City USA', a city set amidst rolling farmland and known worldwide as the home of country music.

DAY 2: Nashville

This morning, embark on a tour of Tennessee's rhythmic capital, Nashville, whose energetic ambience is characterised by its vibrant music scene, neon-lit avenues and bustling honky-tonks. For music lovers, your tour begins with a visit to Studio B, Nashville's oldest surviving recording studio regularly used by stars such as Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings and The Everley Brothers, to name just a few. You will then head to the Country Music Hall of Fame; a huge museum of all things country and western and home to films, videos, costumes and Elvis Presley's solid gold Cadillac, continue to the Johnny Cash Museum to admire historical documents, awards and costumes before delighting in the chance to visit one of Nashville's famous honkytonks playing live country music, as well as the impressive Parthenon - the only full-scale replica of the Greek Parthenon and the reason behind Nashville's nickname 'Athens of the South'. Finish the day at the amazing Grand Ole Opry Show.

DAY 3: Nashville D

Having seen the highlights of Nashville spend a day at leisure to further explore one of the world's great musical cities. This evening have dinner at Ole Red Nashville for a great night of Southern food, musical sounds and hospitality.

DAY 4: Nashville to Memphis D

The tour will head for Memphis, yet another highlight of this Southern Musical Medley tour. Travel through central Memphis and admire architectural landmarks such as Court Square Fountain, the Lincoln American Tower and Calvary Episcopal Church whilst your guide entertains you with tales about this rowdy riverside town and its inhabitants. This afternoon, take a trip to the National Civil Rights Museum built on the spot where Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968. Telling the story of the fight for freedom from slavery through to the Civil Rights Movement of the early fifties and sixties, prepare yourself for an emotional and unforgettable experience. In the evening, head to the old-school Blues City Café for blues music and soul food.

DAY 5: Memphis

Experience another first for the music lover - a visit to Graceland, the iconic home of Elvis and final resting place of The King. Enjoy an audio

tour through the decadent and quirky rooms including the 'jungle den' where he used to watch football games and kung-fu movies. This afternoon visit Sun Studios, where Elvis recorded his first hit and where Jerry Lee Lewis's piano still stands. Tonight, is at leisure for you to explore and experience the many bars, restaurants, and music scene of Memphis.

DAY 6: Memphis to New Orleans D

Today the tour leaves Memphis and follows the path of the mighty Mississippi River and travels deep into the heart of the Mississippi Delta via Jackson before crossing the border into Louisiana. Driving across Lake Pontchartrain on the longest causeway in the world you will arrive in New Orleans, a melange of European style and Caribbean flavours and a city full of flamboyance, festivities and a whole lot of soul. We've arranged to take you to the New Orleans School of Cooking this evening for an entertaining demonstration from one of their Creole/Cajun experts with dinner included and the chance to try a New Orleans speciality such as gumbo, jambalaya or pralines.

DAY 7: New Orleans B

In the morning, visit some of New Orleans' highlights including the famous French Quarter taking in Bourbon Street, the art galleries and antique shops of Royal Street and Jackson Square with its many artists, museums and fortune tellers. From here you will take a visit to a local distillery and savour the tastes of up to three different spirits. The rest of the day and evening are for you to enjoy at your leisure, but make sure you live the New Orleans' motto 'Laissez les bons temps rouler' - let the good times roll!

DAY 8: New Orleans B

Today is a free day for you to enjoy New Orleans in your own time. Stroll around the market in the French Quarter, stop for some lunch at one of the many oyster bars and restaurants, shop for antiques and trinkets or book yourself a tour through the Louisiana bayou aboard an airboat. This evening you can take your pick of the many excellent bars, eateries and music venues for which this laidback city, The Big Easy is world renowned.

DAY 9: New Orleans to Houston B

This morning it's time to leave New Orleans and travel to Houston to catch your return flight to the UK the next day. There will be a stop along the way in Lake Charles for an hour or so for you to stretch your legs and have some lunch. Arriving in Houston in the early hours of the evening there will be a short orientation tour before returning to the hotel.

DAY 10/11: Houston to the UK or Extension B

The final day includes a visit to Houston's Space Centre, home to NASA and the world's largest collection of moon rocks and lunar samples on public view. You'll also see Mission Control that guided the first moon landings as well as original Saturn, Mercury and Apollo rockets that have been at the forefront of space exploration since the early sixties. Sadly, your southern tour of music, culture and history is at an end and it is time to depart for the airport to catch your overnight return flight back to London or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and America. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

In the USA, the triple room will be a double room with two queen size beds in the room. Most hotels don't have additional space in the room to add any rollaway bed or sofa bed.

Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Nashville you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Destination America**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/**Destination America** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Destination America

Address: 5551 Katella Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630

Email: daoperations@destamer.com / stephen.marshall@destamer.com

/ silvia.campo@destamer.com

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Destination America
24 hour telephone number: 001 310 617 6635

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas and Passport advice - Important

You will need to obtain an ESTA visa. This must be applied for at least 7 days before you are due to land in the USA. All UK passport holders must have a biometric epassport and your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date you are expected to arrive back in the UK. Important note: if you do not have a bio-metric epassport, you will be refused entry into the USA. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be who will be able to arrange the ESTA visa on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250590 and quote 'Mercury Holidays'. The cost of the visa is approximately £46.50.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Tour Guides - National Guide

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times. Should the tour not meet minimum numbers, then it will be operated with local guides only.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

It is at your customary/discretion to tip both your driver and guide. We

would recommend to tip approximately \$8-11 USD per person per day. This is a total of \$72-99 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips will be collected at the beginning/end of your tour. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Elvis' Graceland & America's Deep South is challenging. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spent at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our guides will always endeavor to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 25, and the maximum will be 45. If in the unlikely event there are less than 25 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in America is the United States Dollar (USD). We recommend

that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £600- £800 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated

approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Passport Information

Your Passport Information is required for this tour. This information is required at least 90 days prior to your departure. Failure to provide this information on time may result in your booking being cancelled with loss of deposit.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- A plug adaptor - 2 flat pins and the voltage in America is 120 V
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Binoculars

- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- Small day pack for excursions
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater and jacket for the cooler months

FLIGHT INFORMATION

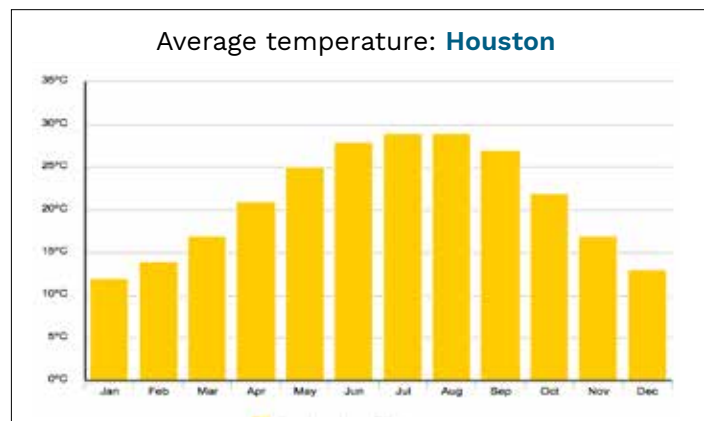
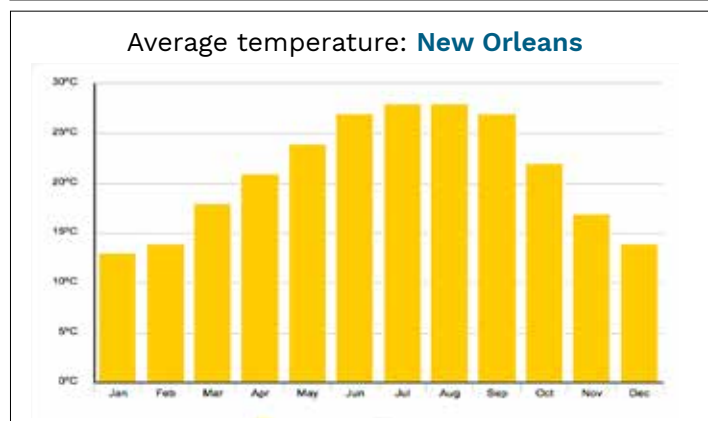
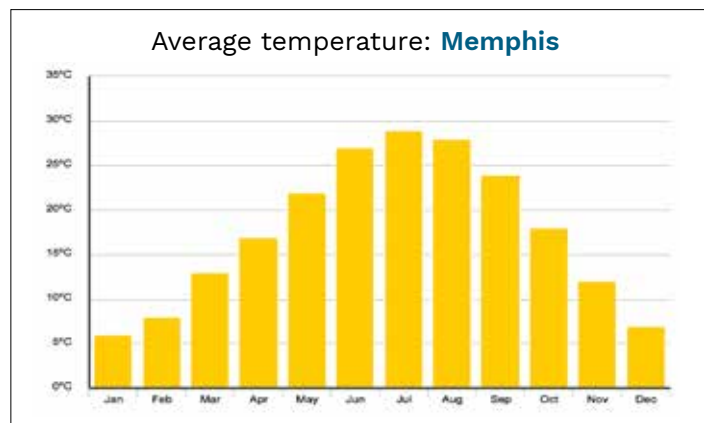
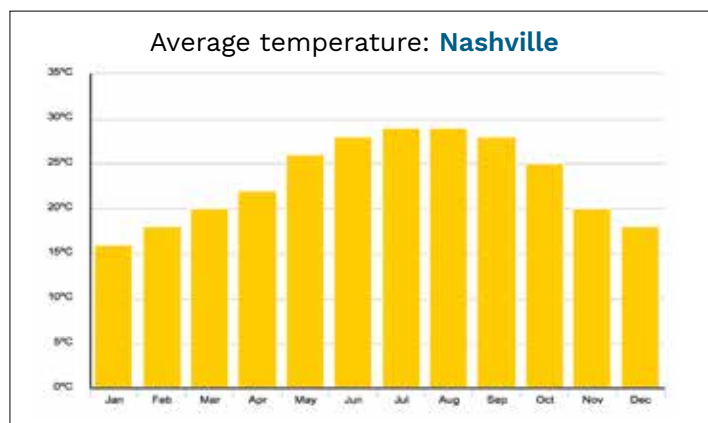
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Houston Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

As Texas' biggest city, Houston is home to some of the finest museums, performing arts and entertainment in the United States. Your 2 night extension in this sprawling city, gives opportunity to further experience the culture or treat yourself on a trip to one of the many shopping malls.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your add-on to Houston.

Houston (2 nights)

Houston is a sprawling, brash, friendly, prosperous city which is arguably Texas's most cosmopolitan. There are over a staggering 8,000 restaurants to choose from in the city, representing a huge diversity of cuisine – so you certainly won't go hungry in Houston! Explore the history of NASA's manned space flight program and the cultural districts of Chinatown and the Mahatma Gandhi District. Transformed after the discovery of oil in 1901, Houston's sheer energy and relentless Texan pride have led to its showpiece skyscrapers and swanky art galleries, which include the Menil Collection, a staggering grouping of ancient and modern artwork.

Hotel Information

Your stay will take place at:

3★ Holiday Inn Houston Downtown on Bed & Breakfast.

Hotel address: 1616 Main St, Houston, TX 77002, United States

Contact number: 001 713-658-8888

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses

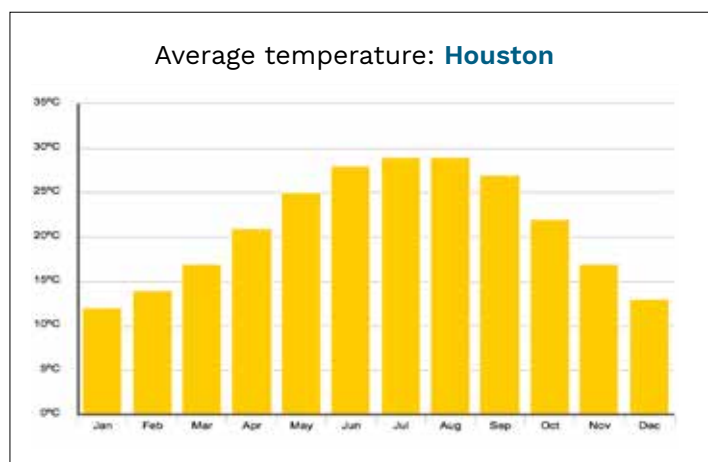
You will need to take money with you to cover any lunches and dinners, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Houston is not escorted by a tour guide and your time will be free to explore the city at your own pace. Transfers are included.

Please note:

This extension takes place after your main tour.



Sheraton Suites Houston

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**