

Romance of the South



11 Days: October 6-16, 2010

This travel package planned by Rick Brannen & Mary Egger, escorted by Mary Egger.

Experience the timeless wonders of the South, where the Blues, history, culture and natural beauty take on a different pace.

October 6 we begin our journey as we pick up through our guaranteed departure cities and travel to St. Louis. Upon arrival at our hotel we will be able to unwind after a day of travel with snacks and beverages. Enjoy one of the local restaurants nearby.

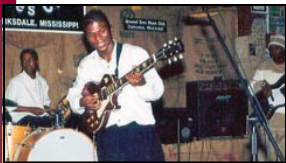


October 7 help yourself to **breakfast** before we motor our way to **Memphis**, where the Blues are alive and well and where some say Rock and Roll died. We will watch as the Duckmaster parades his family of Mallards through the lobby of the landmark **Peabody Hotel**. Enjoy a **tour** of the Blues Capital of the World, with a **local guide**. We'll also take the **Platinum Tour of Graceland**, the home of Elvis Presley. Your experience will include: an audio-guided tour of the mansion and grounds as well as self-guided tours of Elvis' two custom airplanes, the Automobile Museum, Hollywood Exhibit, King and Pop Culture Exhibit, Private Presley Exhibit and the '68



Special Exhibit.

October 8 after **breakfast**, our journey will then take us to the Mississippi Delta and Clarksdale, the boyhood home of actor Morgan Freeman. We will enjoy a night's stay at "**The Shackup Inn**," a converted cotton gin turned hotel, where you get a "Moon Pie" instead of a mint on your pillow at the place billed as Mississippi's first and only "bed and beer." Once settled into your unique accommodations, we will enjoy **dinner** at Morgan Freeman's own



Madidi. In a turn-of-the-century building, we'll have an excellent dinner amid walls decorated with artwork from the Delta's many artists. We'll also visit **Ground Zero Blues Club**, where they showcase the best of today's Delta Blues musicians, who continue the tradition of their musical forefathers Charley Patton, Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker by jamming at Ground Zero.

October 9 after **breakfast** (and some great southern hospitality!) we continue our trek to historic **Vicksburg**, MS. We'll enjoy a **tour of Vicksburg National Military Park**, which commemorates the 47-day 1863 siege of the city. More than 1,300 memorials, a restored iron-clad "Union" **gunboat** and a 16-mile road tour will unfold in front of us. We will also explore the downtown area of Vicksburg and the **Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum**, where Coca-Cola was first bottled in 1894. We'll have a chance to check out a children's art park and other unique shops and restaurants before checking in for the night.



October 10 enjoy **breakfast** before motoring to the deepest part of Mississippi's Delta region to **Natchez**. Enjoy a **tour of antebellum mansions** during the city's **Fall Pilgrimage** celebration. Step back in history as we visit three mansions (all National Historic Landmarks).



Dunleith (1867) is the only house in Mississippi that is completely encircled by a colonnade. On the edge of a 40-acre park within the city limits, it has an array of out-buildings associated with antebellum life, including a 3-story brick dependency with an antebellum bathroom, a 2-story poultry house, a 2-story carriage house and stable, and an original hot house for the garden. **Longwood** (1861) is a 6-story, 30,000 square foot mansion designed for wealthy planter Haller Nutt. The Civil War began

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as the house was nearing completion. Workmen dropped their tools and went home. Haller died in 1864 and his wife Julia continued to live in the finished first floor that today contains many original family furnishings. The upper five stories are an architectural wonder - a magnificent work in progress where time just stopped. Longwood is known as "the grandest octagonal house in America." **Stanton Hall** (1857) was completed at the height of antebellum prosperity for wealthy planter and cotton broker Frederick Stanton. A preservation project of the Pilgrimage Garden Club, it is furnished with Natchez antiques and many original furnishings of the



Stanton Family. Then take a stroll through the historic downtown area. We dine this evening at **the Cock-of-the-Walk** and enjoy their unique southern way of serving some of the best **catfish** and **chicken** you will ever experience.



October 11 help yourself to **breakfast** before we start back toward the north over the historic **Natchez Trace**. Once traveled by the Natchez, Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians as well as the French and Spanish, seeking a new world and way of life, it's now a 440-mile long road and part of the National Parks Service. The **Natchez Trace Parkway** will take us through many historic landmarks, cities and towns over the next

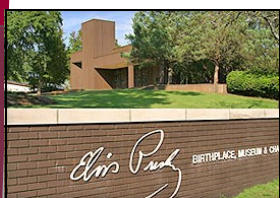


four days. The fall colors should also await us as we make many stops along the way. We will begin with a short tour of **Historic Jefferson College**, the first educational institution of higher learning in Mississippi and now on the National Register of Historic Places. We will view the restored west wing, kitchen buildings and Prospero Hall. We'll visit **Springfield Plantation**, the oldest grand plantation house in the Mississippi Valley, built in 1786-91. We rejoin the Trace as we proceed to the **Windsor Ruins**, a grand mansion built in 1861 which



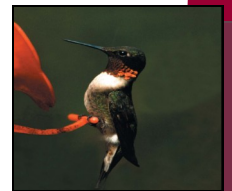
was once the largest antebellum plantation house in Mississippi. The home was all but destroyed by fire in February of 1890, leaving only 23 great columns and ironwork. We then break for lunch and stroll through the **Port Gibson Historic District** which is famous for its lavish 19th century homes, old storefronts and battlefields that recall the days of plantations and old southern hospitality. We then make our way along the Trace to **Jackson, MS**, the "City of Soul" where we are joined by our **step-on guide** for a **city tour**. We have restaurants near our hotel tonight.

October 12 after **breakfast** we stop at the **Mississippi Crafts Center** where we'll be able to view and purchase unique creations of some of the most talented area artisans. We will then motor back to the Trace where we will make brief stops at the **Reservoir Overlook** of the Ross Barnett Reservoir to enjoy some of the south's fall foliage and the **Cypress Swamp** where bald cypress trees have been standing in water for hundreds of years. We will proceed to **Historic French Camp, MS**, where we will have a tour of



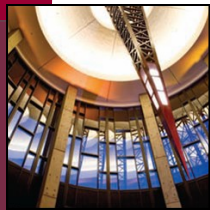
French Camp Academy, a Christian based home for boys and girls ages 5-18. **Lunch** is included at the **Council House Café**. We continue to **Tupelo**, where we will visit the birthplace and museum of **Elvis Presley**. Following our visit to the "King's" boyhood home, we drive just down the street to **Tupelo Hardware** where we will walk through the doors of the very place where Elvis bought his first guitar as Howard the proprietor describes the very day the event occurred. Tonight, the **pizza** is on us as we unwind for the evening.

October 13 have **breakfast** before a presentation at the **Natchez Trace Parkway Visitor Center**. A ranger will explain the creation of the pioneer trail that aided in the lives of so many. We then cross into Alabama, to **Rock Spring**, where we may be lucky enough to experience a migration of **hummingbirds**. We will stop for lunch in Florence, AL, then continue along the Trace and into the great state of Tennessee to where famed explorer **Meriwether Lewis** died under suspicious circumstances in 1809. We'll



We'll learn more about Lewis from a National Parks Service Ranger. We continue along the final miles of the Natchez Trace Parkway, enjoying the beauty of the fall colors. We will stop for an early **dinner at The Loveless Cafe** where they have been serving some of the best fried chicken since 1951. We will spend the next two nights in **Nashville**, "Music City."

October 14 another day begins with **breakfast** at the hotel followed by a **guided tour** of the city including the **Country Music Hall of Fame**. Spanning an entire city block, this \$37 million facility tells the story of one of America's most endearing art forms through video, recorded music and displays. We'll also take a **lunch cruise on The General Jackson Showboat** and take in the **Opry Country Classics** show at the historic **Ryman Auditorium**.



October 15 after **breakfast** we continue our homeward trek but have one more unique experience on our way to St. Louis where we spend the night. Just east of St. Louis in O'Fallon, IL, is the home of **Jack Moelmann**. This wouldn't mean much to most people however, Col. Jack Moelmann, USAF Retired, has a fully restored and "tweaked" **theater organ** in his basement and he will provide us some late afternoon entertainment. Jack has been seen on *60 Minutes* as he was made famous because of his dream of playing the theater organ at Radio City Music Hall. He fulfilled his dream and spent over \$100,000 of his own money to rent the Hall and play its organ for some close friends. He is quite a gifted entertainer and has many surprises that await you as he opens his home for a self-guided tour and entertainment.



October 16 after one last **breakfast**, we make our way back home with great memories, wonderful new friends and a true appreciation for the music, history, beauty and "**Romance of the South.**"

Your 11-day Romance of the South travel package includes: Luxury motor coach transportation, lodging for 10 nights, tickets/admissions to bolded attractions, gratuities to step-on guides, 10 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners (meals inclusive of tax and gratuities).

\$1,849 per person, double occupancy

\$1,789 per person with 3 or 4 persons sharing a room with 2 beds

\$2,352 single room accommodations

Reservations: anytime as long as space remains

Deposit: \$185 per person, due with reservation

Balance due: September 3

Cancel by: September 6 for full-refund cancellations

Early Booking Discount: \$50 per person discount applied to final payment if deposit is received by February 8

Peace of Mind Protection: 5% of trip cost, due with deposit or **Travel Insurance** is available at a group rate for this travel package. Call for details and prices.

Guaranteed Departure Cities: Fort Dodge, Webster City, Williams, Ames, Des Moines, Newton, Coralville, Decorah, West Union, Independence, Cedar Rapids, Clear Lake, Charles City, Waverly and Waterloo