



**INSIDER
GUIDES**
from VisitTheUSA

THE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TRAIL

TENNESSEE – MISSISSIPPI – ALABAMA – GEORGIA

THE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TRAIL



Nashville to Henning and Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis to Oxford, Sumner, Money, and Jackson, Mississippi

Jackson to Philadelphia, Mississippi and Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Tuscaloosa to Selma and Montgomery, Alabama

Montgomery to Tuskegee, Alabama and Albany, Georgia

Albany to Midway and Savannah, Georgia

Savannah to Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta, Georgia, to Anniston, Alabama, and Birmingham, Alabama

Birmingham, Alabama, to Scottsboro, Alabama, and Nashville, Tennessee

3 hours and 3 minutes / 341km

2 hours and 56 minutes / 337km

2 hours and 42 minutes / 299km

1 hour and 50 minutes / 166km

2 hours and 50 minutes / 251km

3 hours and 37 minutes / 361km

3 hours and 31 minutes / 399km

2 hours and 9 minutes / 237km

2 hours and 40 minutes / 308km

Day 3

To explore the civil rights history of Memphis, start at the **National Civil Rights Museum**, constructed around the Lorraine Motel. Learn about key milestones in civil rights history, including Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus, Jim Crow segregation laws, the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till and marches in Selma, Alabama. Appropriately, the final exhibit is Room 306 of the Lorraine Motel, re-created from 1968, when civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated there on April 4 on the balcony outside his room. It's impossible to visit Memphis and not include **Beale Street**, at one time the heart and soul of the city's African-American culture, and now the entertainment hub for live music and great dining. The **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** is a celebration of everything from church Gospel music to uplifting anthems that were the backbone of marches,

giving hope to those fighting for civil rights. Stax Recording Studios was among the first to employ African-American artists, including Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes, giving a voice to Blues and Gospel music and becoming famous for launching their careers. Other must-see places on a tour of civil rights history in Memphis include the historic **Beale Street Baptist Church**, built by and for freed slaves in the late 1800s and a key meeting place for civil rights leaders through the ages. At **The Four Way**, order some hearty soul food – perhaps country fried steak, a catfish sandwich and turnip greens followed by sweet potato pie. Beginning in the 1940s, the restaurant was a meeting spot for civil rights activists as well as famous musicians such as B.B. King and Aretha Franklin due to its location near Stax Recording Studios.

Accommodation: Memphis, Tennessee



Beale Street

Day 5

Discover a wealth of civil rights history in Jackson. Start at the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum**, opened in 2017, which details civil rights struggles in Mississippi. See archive film of protests and demonstrations as well as artifacts such as the rifle used to murder Medgar Evers at his home in 1963. The NAACP field secretary's house has been restored and is now the **Medgar Evers Home Museum**. North of Jackson, visit **Tougaloo College**. The historically black college was a hub of support for the civil rights movement, leading to the boycott of many Jackson businesses, protests against segregation and peaceful sit-ins. The **Greyhound bus station on Lamar Street**, which has since been restored, was the catalyst for the Freedom Rides throughout the South after the arrests in 1961 of 27 riders who challenged racial segregation.

Accommodation: Jackson, Mississippi

JACKSON TO PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI AND TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

● ● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 42 minutes / 299km

Day 6

Drive northeast for about 90 minutes to Philadelphia, site of the 1964 killings of three civil rights activists, one African-American man and two white men, which became known as the Mississippi Burning murders. The national headlines provided the final push to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Continue to Tuscaloosa, where then-Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace stood at the entrance of the **University of Alabama** in 1963 to block the admission of two black students, determined to keep his promise for the university to remain segregated. President John F. Kennedy intervened, dispatching troops to protect the students, allowing them to enroll and sending a message to segregationists across the South. Known as the site of the "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door" incident, the university's **Foster Auditorium** became a National Historic Landmark in 2005.

Accommodation: Tuscaloosa, Alabama

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Downtown Jackson, Mississippi

TUSCALOOSA TO SELMA AND MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

● ● ● ● ● 1 hour and 50 minutes / 166km

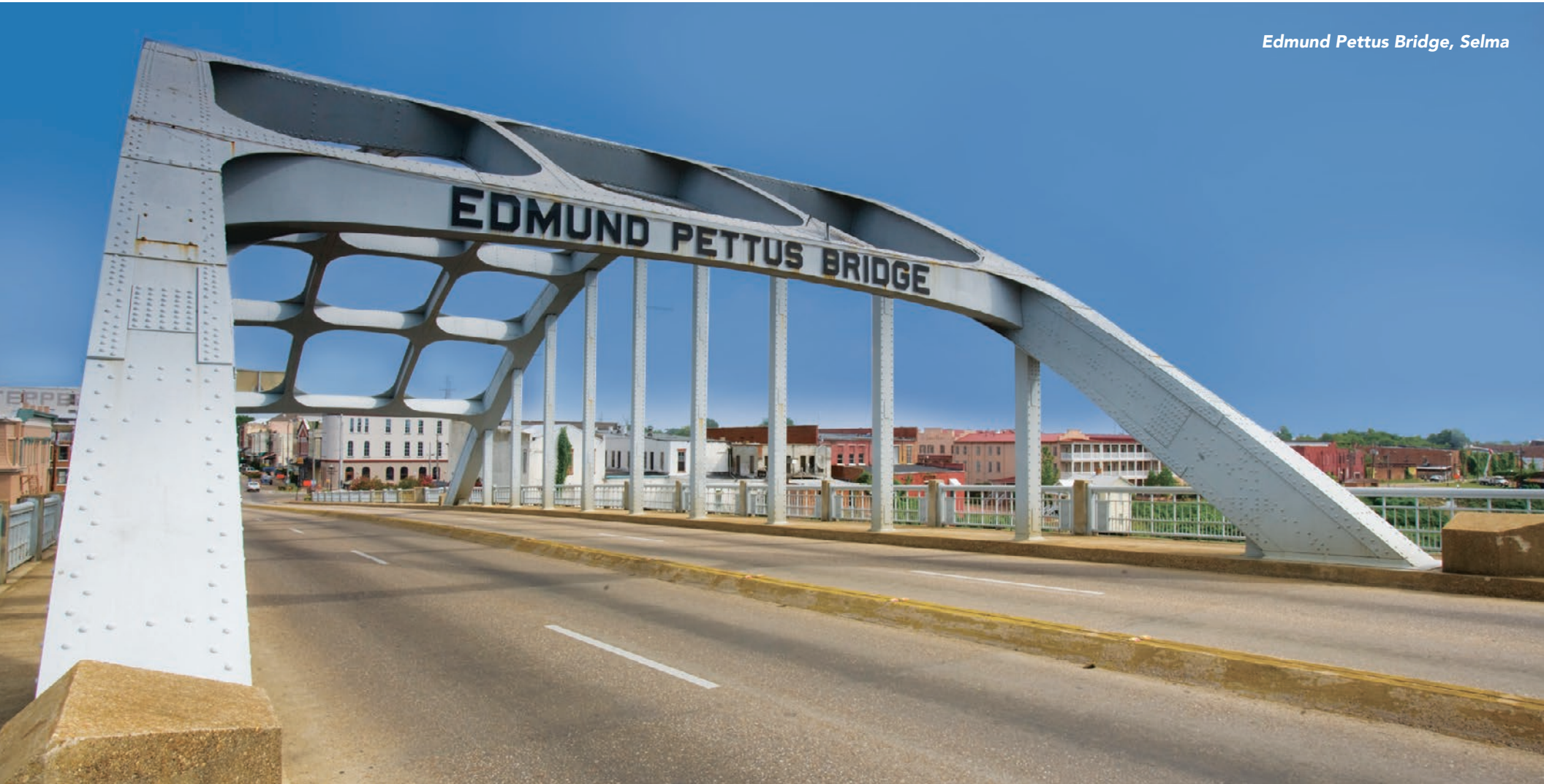
Day 7

Drive 90 minutes south to reach Selma, the starting point of three 1965 right-to-vote marches. On March 7, about 600 marchers were met with violence from local law enforcement and vigilante gangs. News broadcasts countrywide of "Bloody Sunday," coupled with the death of an activist after a march two days later, led to thousands of supporters converging on Selma. President Lyndon B. Johnson pledged support to the marchers on national TV and expedited the Voting Rights Act. On March 21, troops protected 8,000 marchers as they set out along U.S. Route 80, arriving three days later in Montgomery, where they were greeted by over 50,000 supporters. The path of their journey became a National Historic Trail in 1966. Montgomery

had been thrust into the public conscience in 1955 by one African-American woman's refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus, and visitors can see a 1955 city bus at the **Rosa Parks Museum**. Montgomery stayed at the forefront of the civil rights movement. It's home to the **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church**, where Martin Luther King Jr. preached and organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott. A mural in the church's basement depicts King's life, beginning with his crusade for racial equality in Montgomery and ending in his untimely death in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Accommodation: Montgomery, Alabama

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Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma



Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

ATLANTA, GEORGIA TO ANNISTON AND BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 9 minutes / 237km

Day 12

Departing Atlanta, follow the westward route of members of the Congress of Racial Equality who boarded a Greyhound bus in 1961 to challenge segregated seating as part of the Freedom Rides movement. In Anniston, Alabama, an angry mob attacked the bus and slashed its tires, forcing it to stop outside of town. The bus was set on fire, and the fleeing riders were beaten. The site is marked with the **Freedom Riders National Monument**. Drive about an hour west to the next stop, Birmingham, a city at the heart of the civil rights movement, most famously Project C, better known as the Birmingham Campaign. Peaceful lunch counter sit-ins, boycotts and marches were met with such violence that they're widely accepted as key turning points in the civil rights movement. Today, the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute** tells the story of the city's role in the struggle for equality. Across the street, in **Kelly Ingram Park**, fire hoses and dogs were turned on peaceful protesters; it's now a site honoring leaders of the civil rights movement with statues and monuments. The nearby **Civil Rights National Monument** was established in 2017 to commemorate this important time in U.S. history. Further explore the city, set in the beautiful Appalachian foothills, where outdoor recreation and dining and entertainment options abound.

Accommodation: Birmingham, Alabama

BIRMINGHAM TO SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA AND NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

● ● ● ● ● ● 2 hours and 40 minutes / 308km

Day 13

The next stop, Scottsboro, is a two-hour drive north. This is where nine black teenagers were falsely accused of the sexual assault of two white girls aboard a Southern Railroad freight train from Chattanooga to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1931. The ensuing trials, convictions, retrials, verdicts, appeals and blatant injustice accorded the boys was the basis for much legal reform for the right to a fair trial. Visit the **Scottsboro Boys Museum & Cultural Center** in the 133-year-old former Joyce Chapel United Methodist Church – it contains documents and other artifacts that support the trial as the beginning of the civil rights movement. Your journey ends today where it began nearly two weeks ago; make the three-hour drive back to Nashville.

Accommodation: Nashville, Tennessee

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Nashville, Tennessee

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