

# SPIRIT OF THE DEEP SOUTH

## Classic Flex Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 1

Atlanta (1N) – Great Smoky Mountains (2N) – Chattanooga (1N) – Nashville (2N) – Memphis (2N) – Natchez (1N) – New Orleans (3N)

Dive into the spirit of the USA's Deep South on a journey exploring civil rights history, legendary music, vibrant cultures and spectacular scenery. From Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains and the musical heritage of Nashville and Memphis to the rich Creole culture and lively streets of New Orleans, this tour brings the Deep South to life.

- Visit the National Center for Civil & Human Rights
- Explore the spectacular Great Smoky Mountains
- Experience the legendary Grand Ole Opry
- Step inside Elvis' Graceland
- Savour the flavours of the Deep South

## TOUR MAP




## TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Most meals
- Most sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## CLASSIC FLEX TOURS:

Classic Flex tours let you see the iconic sites and signature experiences of each destination on an excellent-value, fully escorted group tour, with a little more freedom to do things your own way. Your international flights, accommodation, transportation, touring and most meals are all arranged, so you can travel with complete peace of mind.

Where it works best for the destination, personal time is woven into the itinerary, giving you the chance to explore independently, seek out a local restaurant, or simply relax at your own pace. Throughout, your National Escort's unparalleled knowledge will bring each destination to life and turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for enjoying the cities, historic sites and natural areas visited on this tour.

'Spirit of the Deep South' is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required, with regular sightseeing on foot and time spent exploring cities, attractions and historic sites. You will be getting on and off coaches, walking on a variety of surfaces and occasionally spending several hours on your feet.

Please consider:

- Some sightseeing may involve walking on uneven surfaces, particularly when visiting the Great Smoky Mountains and Oak Alley Plantation.
- You will need to get on and off coaches independently, sometimes using steps.
- Some days involve longer coach journeys between destinations, with stops at attractions and places of interest along the way.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour and they are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travellers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights or 13 days in duration based on 'Land Only'. Join the tour on Day 1 in Atlanta and end the tour on Day 13 in New Orleans.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 1: Fly to Atlanta** Meals: D



On arrival in Atlanta International Airport, you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer to your hotel.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our reservations team to book.

An informal Welcome Dinner will be held tonight.

**Destination Information**

**Atlanta** – Georgia's capital and largest city, Atlanta has played an important role in the history of the American South. It was a major centre of the Civil Rights Movement and is home to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park, while the city is also the birthplace of Coca-Cola.

**Day 2: Great Smoky Mountains** Meals: B, D



This morning, visit two of Atlanta's civil rights sites, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park, which includes Dr King's birth home, and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, where you'll have a private tour.

Allow approximately 3 hours for the drive from Atlanta to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, crossing the border into Tennessee and travelling into the wilderness of the park, where you will find glorious landscapes of mountains and temperate rainforest. Continue through the park to the cosy mountain town of Gatlinburg, arriving later in the afternoon.

**Destination Information**

**National Center for Civil and Human Rights** – A museum in downtown Atlanta examining the history of the American Civil Rights Movement and wider human rights struggles. Exhibits include photographs, documents and personal stories from the movement, including material relating to Martin Luther King Jr.

**Great Smoky Mountains National Park** – Straddling Tennessee and North Carolina, this UNESCO-recognised national park covers more than 800 square miles of forested mountains. It is the most visited national park in the United States and protects historic homesteads, churches and mills alongside a diverse range of wildlife and more than 1,600 species of flowering plants.

**Gatlinburg** – A mountain town at the northern entrance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, surrounded by the Great Smoky Mountains. Its downtown is lined with shops, restaurants and attractions, while the town provides access to hiking trails and scenic areas within the national park.

**Day 3: Gatlingburg** Meals: B, L



Learn about Appalachian crafts at a specialist centre, where you will watch artisans at work, demonstrating woodworking, pottery and weaving. Enjoy lunch before returning to Gatlinburg for some free time. Take the free trolley to explore downtown Gatlinburg, perhaps visiting the Space Needle, a 407-foot observation tower offering panoramic views over the town and the Smoky Mountains.

Allow around 2–3 hours for the crafts centre visit and demonstrations, with the remainder of the afternoon free to explore Gatlinburg at your own pace.

**Destination Information**

**Appalachian Craft Center** – A craft centre showcasing the traditional arts and crafts of the Appalachian region, including pottery, weaving, woodwork and other handmade pieces. It provides an introduction to the area's craft traditions and the skills passed down through generations of Appalachian communities.

**Day 4: Chattanooga** Meals: B, D

Leave the Great Smoky Mountains behind and travel approximately 2 hours 30 minutes through the Great Appalachian Valley to Chattanooga, on the shores of the Tennessee River. Ride the historic Lookout Mountain Incline Railway to the summit for panoramic views before an orientation tour of the city, then explore Chattanooga's local brewery scene on the Chattanooga Beer Trail before dinner.




**Destination Information**

**Chattanooga** – A city in southeastern Tennessee on the Tennessee River, known for its role in the American Civil War and its location at the foot of Lookout Mountain. Today, the city is home to attractions including the historic Walnut Bridge, and the Chattanooga Choo Choo. Once a major railway hub, the station has since been transformed into a hotel and entertainment complex, with original railway features and historic carriages still found on site.

**Lookout Mountain Incline Railway** – A historic funicular railway climbing Lookout Mountain from St Elmo to the summit. Opened in 1895, the railway travels up a gradient of almost 73 per cent, making it one of the steepest passenger railways in the world.

**Chattanooga Beer Trail** – A popular route connecting independent breweries, taprooms and pubs across Chattanooga. The city's craft beer scene includes breweries producing a range of locally made ales, lagers and seasonal beers.

**Day 5: Travel to Nashville** Meals: B, L

Depart Chattanooga and travel approximately 2 hours to Lynchburg for a guided tour of the Jack Daniel's Distillery, learning about the history and production of the famous Tennessee whiskey. Continue for around 1 hour 30 minutes to Nashville for an orientation tour, taking in some of its iconic sights and landmarks. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to relax or explore more of Music City.



**Destination Information**

**Jack Daniel's Distillery** – Located in Lynchburg, Tennessee, this is the home of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, which has been produced here since 1866. Visit the historic distillery to learn about the whiskey-making process, including the use of charcoal mellowing that gives Tennessee whiskey its distinctive character.

**Nashville** – The capital of Tennessee and a major centre of country music, earning the nickname 'Music City'. The city is home to the Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame and historic recording studios, while Broadway is lined with live music venues and honky-tonk bars.

**Day 6: Country Music Hall of Fame & Grand Ole Opry** Meals: B

Visit the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, exploring the history and traditions of country music, before visiting historic RCA Studio B, where artists including Elvis Presley and Dolly Parton helped shape the "Nashville Sound". Continue to Goo Goo Chocolate Co for a chocolate-making experience before an evening at the world-famous Grand Ole Opry, the live country music radio show and stage performance that has been broadcast since 1925.



**Destination Information**

**Country Music Hall of Fame** – Located in downtown Nashville, this museum traces the history of country music through recordings, instruments, costumes and memorabilia. Its collection includes more than 2.5 million artefacts, including items associated with artists such as Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Hank Williams.

**RCA Studio B** – One of Nashville's most famous recording studios, where artists including Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton and Roy Orbison recorded music during the 1950s and 1960s. More than 35,000 songs were recorded here, helping establish Nashville as a major centre for country music.

**Grand Ole Opry** – The world's longest-running live radio programme, first broadcast from Nashville in 1925. The show helped establish country music as a major American genre and has featured generations of performers, including Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash and Patsy Cline.

**Day 7: Memphis** Meals: B, L, D

From the country music capital to the birthplace of rock 'n' roll, travel approximately 3 hours to Memphis. Visit Sun Studio, where artists including Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and B.B. King recorded music, before heading to Beale Street, the "Home of the Blues," for an authentic Memphis BBQ dinner.



**Destination Information**

**Memphis** – A city on the Mississippi River in southwest Tennessee, Memphis is closely associated with the development of blues, soul and rock 'n' roll music. It is also known for its barbecue traditions and landmarks including Beale Street, Sun Studio and the National Civil Rights Museum.

**Sun Studio** – Often called the 'Birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll', this Memphis recording studio opened in 1950 and became famous for early recordings by Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and B.B. King. Elvis recorded his first single here in 1954.

**Beale Street** – A historic street in downtown Memphis that became an important centre for African American music and culture during the early 20th century. Its clubs and music venues played a major role in the development of the Memphis blues, with performers including B.B. King and Louis Armstrong appearing here.

**Memphis BBQ** – Memphis is particularly known for its slow-cooked pork barbecue, traditionally seasoned with a dry rub and cooked over a low heat. Barbecue is served in restaurants and historic barbecue joints across the city, with pulled pork and ribs among the local specialities.

## Day 8: Graceland

Meals: B

Visit Graceland, the iconic home of Elvis Presley, and discover its famous rooms, including the legendary Jungle Room. Continue to the Elvis Entertainment Complex, with fascinating exhibits and Elvis' custom jets. The remainder of the day is free to explore Memphis at your own pace, perhaps visiting the National Civil Rights Museum at the historic Lorraine Motel, where Dr Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968.



**Destination Information**

**Graceland** – The former home of Elvis Presley in Memphis, where he lived from 1957 until his death in 1977. The mansion is now a museum, with tours of the house, grounds and Elvis Presley's collection of cars and aircraft, while his gravesite is located in the Meditation Garden.

## Day 9: B.B. King Museum & Natchez

Meals: B, D

Depart Memphis and travel approximately 2 hours into Mississippi to Indianola, hometown of B.B. King, where you'll visit the B.B. King Museum and learn about his life and career and the history of the Mississippi Delta. Continue for around 2 hours 30 minutes to historic Natchez, set on the Mississippi River, before an evening at Monmouth Historic Inn, a former antebellum mansion built in 1818.



**Destination Information**

**B.B. King Museum** – Located in Indianola, Mississippi, this museum tells the story of blues guitarist and singer B.B. King and his life in the Mississippi Delta. Exhibits cover his childhood, music career and influence on the blues, with the museum housed in a former cotton gin where King worked as a young man.

**Mississippi Delta** – A flat, fertile region between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers and an important birthplace of the blues. The area's history is closely connected to cotton farming and African American culture, with towns such as Clarksdale and Indianola playing an important role in the development of Delta blues.

**Natchez** – A historic Mississippi River city founded by French settlers in 1716 and known for its collection of antebellum homes. More than 1,000 historic buildings survive in and around the city, including grand houses built by wealthy cotton planters before the American Civil War.

## Day 10: New Orleans' French Quarter

Meals: B, L

Cross into Louisiana and travel approximately 2 hours to Baton Rouge, the state capital, for lunch and some free time to explore. Continue for around 1 hour 30 minutes to New Orleans, where you'll take a private guided walking tour of the historic French Quarter, learning about its heritage as you pass colourful buildings with cast-iron balconies and glimpses of the city's Creole culture. Enjoy the evening at leisure in the French Quarter.



**Destination Information**

**Baton Rouge** – The capital of Louisiana, located on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and the Mississippi state line. Its name comes from the French 'Bâton-Rouge', meaning 'red stick', and the city is home to the Louisiana State Capitol and the USS Kidd.

**New Orleans** – Louisiana's largest city, situated near the mouth of the Mississippi River and known for its distinctive French, Spanish and Creole heritage. It is closely associated with jazz, Mardi Gras and Creole cuisine, with historic neighbourhoods including the French Quarter and Garden District.

**French Quarter** – The oldest neighbourhood in New Orleans, established by French settlers in the early 18th century and later shaped by Spanish rule. Its streets are lined with Creole townhouses, wrought-iron balconies and historic buildings, including Jackson Square and St Louis Cathedral.

**Day 11: New Orleans – Flex** Meals: B



Today has been left free for independent explorations of New Orleans – a city renowned for its French and Spanish heritage, distinctive architecture, jazz traditions and Creole and Cajun cuisine. From your hotel, you may wish to:

- Stroll through the French Quarter, where colourful Creole townhouses, wrought-iron balconies and historic streets surround Jackson Square and Bourbon Street.
- Visit the National WWII Museum, one of the country's leading museums dedicated to the Second World War, with exhibitions covering the American experience during the conflict.
- Explore the New Orleans riverfront, following the Mississippi River along the Moon Walk promenade or visiting the historic French Market for local food and crafts.

**New Orleans Optional Excursion**

**Swamp & Bayou Tour** – Head beyond the city into Louisiana's wetlands by boat, with opportunities to see alligators and learn about the wildlife and ecosystems of the bayou.

Your National Escort is available to help you plan your explorations and is always happy to point you towards the things that capture your interests, whether that's a particular local food, a specialist sight or activity, or some retail therapy.

**Day 12: Oak Alley Plantation** Meals: B, L, D



Take a guided tour of historic Oak Alley Plantation, a National Historic Landmark, and visit its 1830s Greek Revival mansion. Explore interpretive exhibits about the lives and work of those enslaved here, and learn about the history and process of sugarcane cultivation. Return to New Orleans for an evening farewell dinner featuring the authentic heritage flavours and culinary traditions of the region.

**Destination Information**

**Oak Alley Plantation** – A historic plantation on the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, named after the double row of 28 mature live oak trees leading to its Greek Revival mansion. Built in the 1830s, the estate was a sugarcane plantation worked by enslaved people, whose history is documented through exhibitions and tours of the grounds.

**Days 13 - 15: Depart New Orleans to New Zealand** Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to New Orleans International Airport, according to the departure time of your international flight, arriving home two days later.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

## NORTH AMERICA TRAVEL INFORMATION

### VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders are currently permitted entry to the United States without a visa for stays of up to 90 days, but must obtain an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) online before departure. The ESTA must be completed by each traveller and is not included in the cost of your tour. Wendy Wu Tours can offer general guidance on the application.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back in New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

### GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 20 or more travellers and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. On Classic Flex Tours, there will be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu Tours groups while you are travelling. Dedicated Solo Departures have a maximum group size of 18 passengers.

### EATING IN THE UNITED STATES:

On our Classic Flex tours, most meals are provided from your arrival until the day of departure, giving you the opportunity to experience the wide range of regional flavours and specialities found across the United States. American cuisine varies considerably between regions, from fresh seafood and clam chowder in New England to barbecue in the Deep South, Cajun and Creole dishes in Louisiana, Tex-Mex in the Southwest and fresh produce and seafood on the West Coast. You may also encounter classic American dishes such as burgers, steaks, fried chicken, apple pie and regional specialities along the way.

Breakfasts are generally served buffet-style at hotels, with a choice of cooked and continental options. Lunches may be served at restaurants, cafés or as packed lunches on longer touring days. Evening meals are typically served in local restaurants or hotels, with menus offering a mixture of regional American and international dishes.

The United States is well equipped for a wide range of dietary requirements, although choices can become more limited when travelling through rural areas or smaller towns. If you have specific dietary needs, please let us know when booking so these can be communicated to our local partners in advance.

## ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation in the United States is carefully selected for its location, comfort and character, with a mixture of well-established hotels, locally owned properties and larger city hotels possibly used throughout your journey. Accommodation will generally be of a good three- to four-star standard, comparable with what you would expect in New Zealand, although individual hotels may vary in style, facilities and size.

All group tour hotels have private Western-style bathroom facilities, air conditioning or heating, a TV and Wi-Fi. In some smaller towns or more remote areas, hotel facilities may be simpler than those found in the major cities, but all properties are selected to provide a comfortable base from which to explore the destination.

If you experience any difficulty during your stay, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide. All hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly reviewed by our staff and local partners to ensure they meet our standards.

## TRANSPORT:

**Coaches:** Air-conditioned coaches are used for sightseeing, excursions and longer journeys throughout this tour. Coaches generally have comfortable reclining seats and an onboard toilet, although facilities vary between vehicles. The US is a vast country and some journeys involve several hours of driving, particularly when travelling between national parks and smaller towns. Journey times are approximate and may be affected by traffic, road conditions, weather and scheduled stops.

## TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and the United States is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time.

In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

## INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

## VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

## AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Updated November 2026