CIVIL RIGHTS—A JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

The Alabama cities of Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma birthed the national leadership of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, when tens of thousands of people came together to advance the cause of justice against remarkable odds and fierce resistance. In partnership with the non-profit Alabama Civil Rights Tourism Association and in support of local businesses and communities, Orbridge invites you to experience the people, places, and events igniting change and defining a pivotal period for America that continues today. Dive deeper beyond history’s headlines to the newsmakers, learning from actual foot soldiers of the struggle whose vivid and compelling stories bring a history of unforgettable tragedy and irrepressible triumph to life.

Please note: The information contained in this document is current as of 11/1/2022
Program Highlights:

- Journey through the Deep South accompanied by an Orbridge Travel Director to gain an enhanced understanding of the historic and continued struggle for racial equality in the United States.

- Visit prominent locations integral to the Civil Rights Movement many have only read about in books, including Kelly Ingram Park in Birmingham and the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.

- Retrace the footsteps and learn more of central figures, including Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth.

- Treasure the opportunity to hear first-hand the powerful accounts of foot soldiers' struggles and triumphs with interactive discussions.

- Meet quiltmakers from Gee's Bend to discuss their art.

- Join choir members for a musical program that outlines the origins of traditional African-American spirituals. Learn how these songs were integrated into the first independent Black churches and how choirs supported Dr. King on his trips around the U.S. Afterward, enjoy a delicious dinner with the group.

- Visit the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice—two institutions that have taken diverse and complementary approaches to telling the rich and moving stories of the Civil Rights Movement and of America's history of racial inequality.

- Gather together at Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church.

- Celebrate the accomplishments of pioneering African American aviators at the Tuskegee Airmen Historic Site.

- Delight in a farewell lunch accompanied by true southern hospitality at the private restored antebellum home of Ms. Sandy Taylor, the retired Superintendent of the National Park Services Tuskegee Site.

- **What's included:** 4 nights accommodations; 4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners; full guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director; all activities as described in the program itinerary, including admission; private deluxe motor coach with air conditioning and comfortable seating; gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, and wait staff for included meals; and airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times.
Itinerary:

We endeavor to follow the published itinerary, but there may be exceptional circumstances when it is not possible to do so. Because our tour arrangements are made well in advance, changes may be necessary. We reserve the right to modify the itinerary as needed.

Day 1: Arrive in Birmingham, AL
Welcome to Alabama—a state many consider hallowed ground for the civil rights movement. This afternoon features the first of several planned activities and engaging discussions.

Did you know Birmingham was named after Birmingham, UK, and is the only place in the world where all three raw ingredients for steel (coal, limestone, and iron ore) occur naturally within a 10-mile radius? Overlooking the city is Vulcan, the largest cast-iron statue in the world. The statue was commissioned to advertise Birmingham’s steel industry at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Packed with history, the "Magic City" welcomes you!

Dependent on scheduling with museum hours of operation, today/tomorrow we will explore key sites in Birmingham, including the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is a cultural and educational research center promoting a comprehensive understanding of civil rights in Birmingham. Here at this state-of-the-art facility, be enveloped in an impactful maze of moving audio, video, and photography exhibits telling the story of racial segregation to present-day racial progress. Examine basic issues of morality, law, justice, and responsible citizenship.

Also visit Kelly Ingram Park, site of rallies, demonstrations, and confrontations in the 1960s. This park became the focus of civil disobedience for citizens demanding equality. Footage of police attack dogs and high-powered fire hoses remain indelibly imprinted on those who survived the experience or have seen the images. Walk this pivotal place in the struggle for desegregation where racial injustice shocked the conscience of the nation and the world. History is depicted with powerful monuments and sculptures.

This evening, for dinner on your own, guests may choose one of the many excellent and diverse restaurants in the area or have the evening meal onsite at the hotel. The bus will make scheduled drop-offs and pick-ups at Five Points South for your convenience. This National Register of Historic Places neighborhood is one of Birmingham’s first street-car-lined suburbs, boasting more than 40 culinary destinations and 30 retailers. Award-winning James Beard restaurants and historically significant architecture await you in this vibrant food hub.
Dining establishments include Highlands Bar and Grill, Hot and Hot Fish Club, Bottega, Chez Fonfon, Ocean, Jim ‘N Nicks, Dreamland BBQ, and many more. Advance reservations may be required at some restaurants.

Overnight: The Tutwiler Hotel

Day 2: Birmingham
Following breakfast, embark upon a driving tour to see significant historic sites, including the Birmingham Jail, Dynamite Hill, Linn Park, Phillips High School, the Black business district, and more.

Birmingham was a stronghold of segregation, enforced by law, custom, and violence. See the Birmingham Jail where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. penned a famous letter after being imprisoned as a participant in nonviolent demonstrations against segregation. King's eloquent document explains why he chose to come to the city. In it he writes, "...I am in Birmingham because injustice is here... I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned... injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Historian, educator, and foot soldier, Dr. Martha Bouyer gives an overview of the program and vividly brings to life how segregation in Birmingham unfolded, perhaps challenging your assumptions and formal education knowledge of the civil rights movement.

Connect with history and local residents with a special opportunity by briefly popping into the morning praise and worship services at 16th Street Baptist Church. At this sobering site critical to the civil rights movement, uncover the story of four young lives lost through an unimaginable act. Learn how this domestic terrorism produced political pressure that helped ensure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This legislation eliminated the official segregation of public accommodations. Gaze upon an iconic stained-glass window depicting a Black Christ with a right hand pushing away hatred and injustice, and a left hand offering forgiveness. Donated to the church by the freedom-loving people of Wales, this heart-warming image appears with a rainbow of racial unity.

Pausing for lunch, we board the bus for time on your own at a local restaurant.

Later, learn how important mass meetings were for the movement by visiting Bethel Baptist Church and Shuttlesworth parsonage. Bethel Baptist Church, where Dr. Bouyer serves her community as the Director of the Historic Bethel Baptist Church Foundation, was at the forefront of the church-led civil rights movement of the 1950s, using nonviolent mass techniques to affect social change. Find out how the congregation was crucial to the success of the 1961 Freedom Rides. Bethel, led by Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth from 1953-1961,
was bombed repeatedly between 1956 and 1962. In 2008, the Birmingham municipal airport was re-named the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport in honor of his contributions. The church is included within the National Monument boundaries designated by President Barack Obama in 2017.

Return to the hotel to rest and refresh before an included dinner and engaging conversation with the group this evening.  
*Overnight: The Tutwiler Hotel (B,D)*

**Day 3: Birmingham / Montgomery / Tuskegee**  
After breakfast, travel south to Montgomery and explore the Rosa Parks Museum. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, an active leader in the Montgomery chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was arrested for refusing to vacate her bus seat for a white passenger. The timing of her arrest aligned with plans from a number of individuals and organizations hoping to test Montgomery’s segregation laws in court. The Women’s Political Council, a civic organization for African-American women, was the first to call for a boycott—a controversial call that was later adopted broadly within Montgomery and neighboring African-American communities. The Montgomery Bus Boycott lasted from 1955-1956 and marks one of the events beginning the modern civil rights movement. Relive this tumultuous era with a video, artifacts, historical documents, a life-size statue of Mrs. Parks, and a replica of the bus in which she sat that day.

Next, depart Montgomery and travel east to the town of Tuskegee. At the height of the civil rights movement, Tuskegee was part of a landmark voting rights case, *Gomillion v. Lightfoot,* which found the gerrymandering of districts to limit the African-American vote to be unconstitutional. Fun fact: did you know activist Rosa Parks, singer-songwriter Lionel Richie and television journalist Robin Roberts are from Tuskegee?

A special lunch serving generous helpings of southern hospitality awaits at the private, restored antebellum home of husband and wife owners, Sandy Taylor and Harvey Mattox. Taylor is the retired Superintendent of the National Park Services’ Tuskegee Site. Built around 1855, discover eight fireplaces, five bedrooms, and nearly 5,000 square feet of living space along with meticulously hand-striped floors and vibrantly painted walls. See the dining room, adorned by two different shades of lavender that influenced the home’s name—The Lavender Inn, Tuskegee’s Historic Cobb House. Unwind with an imaginative and delicious meal among wonderful company for additional discussion in a setting beautifully incorporating old and new.

While in this city, take a rolling tour of key sites. Survey the Tuskegee History Center and the
campus of Tuskegee University. It is the first Black college to be designated as a Registered National Historic Landmark (April 2, 1966), and the only Black college to be designated a National Historic Site (October 26, 1974). The institution is the offspring of two American giants—Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver.

Pause for a group photo at the statue Lifting the Veil of Ignorance, which depicts Booker T. Washington and is inscribed, "He lifted the veil of ignorance from his people and pointed the way to progress through education and industry." Washington was born into slavery, and after emancipation, he overcame immense challenges to devote his life to promoting the advancement of African-Americans.

Washington recruited the best and the brightest to come and teach at Tuskegee, including George Washington Carver, the institute’s most celebrated professor. Carver, too, was born into slavery but became a prominent scientist and inventor. Carver’s innovations in agriculture, especially with peanuts, were important in the South’s economic growth. Amazingly, he devised hundreds of uses for the peanut, including milk, plastics, paints, dyes, cosmetics, medicinal oils, soap, ink, and wood stains.

Many also do not know the true story of the Tuskegee Airmen. Start with Moton Field, the site of primary flight training for these pioneering World War II pilots. Cadets trained in Stearman PT-17 biplanes, aircraft tough enough to withstand the rigors of learning. African-Americans trained here in a system set up for them to fail. The program had been created to prove these men didn’t possess the physical and mental abilities to lead, fly military aircraft, or fight in war. In the skies over Europe, however, this was heartily proved incorrect, and success paved the way for the integration of the U.S. military, federal government, and the nation overall. Gain insight into the challenges overcome and the accomplishments celebrated through stories of some of America’s most important citizens.

Depart Tuskegee for Montgomery and check-in to the hotel. Dinner this evening is on your own with several options nearby.

Overnight: Springhill Suites by Marriott (B,L)
Day 4: Montgomery / Selma / Montgomery

As the civil rights generation matures, preserving the personal stories of those in this social justice movement takes on a sense of urgency. Today’s planned activities feature additional speakers and foot soldiers who share firsthand, authentic accounts crucial to how we experience and understand history. Captivating and unflinching, as well as warm and welcoming, they offer insight into the past found nowhere else.

Following breakfast, take a short drive to Selma, a small town of around 18,000 people, located in central west Alabama. Dianne Harris, Selma native and former student activist in the Voting Rights march, joins the group. Visit Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, the first A.M.E. church in Alabama and the headquarters for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the 1965 Voting Rights campaign. It was the site of preparations for the march to Montgomery on March 7, 1965, a day that became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Six hundred marchers were violently turned back with whips, horses, and tear gas by state troopers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Originally the plan had been to march to the capitol building in Montgomery to demand voting rights from Governor George Wallace. Feel history come alive listening to vivid stories of that day and of the victory 14 days later on March 21, when thousands of demonstrators successfully crossed the bridge. Today you will have the opportunity to walk this same structure in the footsteps of brave men, women, and children who risked everything.

On a drive through Selma’s neighborhoods, see First Baptist Church—originally referenced as the First “Colored” Baptist Church that was host to the Dallas County Voters League, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and mass meetings. Also see the Sullivan and Richie Jean Sherrod Jackson home where Dr. King and other prominent leaders stayed and strategized while in Selma.

Discover Tabernacle Baptist Church. Begun in 1884, its members were active in the Dallas County Voters League that invited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Selma in 1964. Grasp the statement African American architect David T. West made by designing the church with two identical entrances. Meet foot soldier Dr. Verdell Lett Dawson for an oral history and learn about the underground work and sacrifices everyday working people made to bring the march on the bridge to fruition.

Break for lunch before a special meeting with quilters. Imagine a remote community surrounded on three sides by water with only a few hundred residents, many of whom are the descendants of slaves. This describes Gee’s Bend. Discover how the women have combined skill, faith, and family into quilt masterpieces dating from the early 20th century to the
present. Women, who have lived in three square miles with no stores and a ferry once burned as punishment for attempting to vote, have created bold, beautiful art displayed in museums and galleries all over the world. Improvised patterns crafted from recycled work clothes and dresses, feed sacks, and fabric remnants represent an incredible story of resilience and creativity.

Traverse the landmark Edmund Pettus Bridge with Dianne Harris, retracing the footsteps of voting rights marchers. Feel a sense of history sweeping over you. Picture the scene marchers found awaiting them on the other side of the bridge on "Bloody Sunday" and acknowledge the fear and courage they had. The late civil rights icon and Georgia congressman John Lewis was there, and described the law enforcement presence that day as a "sea of blue." He was beaten so badly that he suffered a broken skull. In 2020, he paid tribute to the 55th anniversary of the event by crossing the bridge again at the age of 80. Currently a petition is gaining signatures and traction to rename the civil rights landmark after John Lewis. It’s currently named for a Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan leader.

On the return to Montgomery, sites of note will be pointed out which are dedicated to those who peacefully marched the 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery for voting rights. The Lowndes Interpretive Center contains a collection of memorable and educational displays showcasing the journey, including "Tent City," which housed Black sharecropper families evicted for attempting to and/or registering to vote. Learn about civil rights activist Viola Gregg Liuzzo, who was shot and killed by the Ku Klux Klan near this center. Mrs. Liuzzo, a white mother of five from Michigan, had traveled to Alabama in March 1965 to help the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with its efforts to register African-American voters.

For dinner this evening, meet with the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church’s warm and effervescent Tour Minister, Wanda Battle, for a musical tribute at the historic Bricklayers Hall.

*Overnight: Springhill Suites by Marriott (B,L,D)*

**Day 5: Montgomery / Birmingham / Depart Birmingham**

This morning join Wanda Battle at Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, where we will learn more about this unassuming red brick National Historic Landmark and see the modest pulpit where Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. first preached his message of hope and brotherhood.

Dr. King served as pastor here from 1954-1960, leading the 1955-1956 Montgomery bus boycott. Wanda's knowledge and positive energy bring to life the history of the church and its impact as an integral thread woven in the community’s fabric. Prepare to be engaged with
inspiration, smiles, and Wanda joyfully erupting in song at this key civil rights site.

Lunch today will be on your own at the Equal Justice Initiative's pavillion. The Equal Justice Initiative opened the first comprehensive facility in our nation dedicated to the thousands of African-American victims of lynching, segregation and Jim Crow, and presumptions of guilt and police violence. It features more than 800 hanging steel monuments, each engraved with the name of a U.S. county and a list of people lynched there. Soak in the significance of those memorialized with a self-guided visit. There will also be time to browse the bookstore and coffee shop.

Did you know from 1850 until the end of the Civil War, Montgomery was the Southern port most active in slave trading— even more than New Orleans? Visit the history-rich area of the Court Square-Dexter Avenue District, where human beings were auctioned off during the slave trade, Rosa Parks was arrested, and the telegram calling for the strike on Fort Sumter was issued to trigger the Civil War.

Nearby, experience the Legacy Museum. This 11,000-square-foot facility was built on the site of a former warehouse where enslaved Black people were imprisoned. Just past the entrance, a ramp slopes down to holding pens where holograms tell their stories. Leaving the cages, learn how slavery after Reconstruction was "dusted off and repurposed" in the American penal system. Emotion and evidence combine to engage guests with a stunning and necessary message of the role of slavery and its enduring impact of racial oppression.

Visit the powerful National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Created as a somber and meaningful place for people to gather and reflect on America's history of racial inequality, this six-acre site uses sculpture, art, and design to help contextualize racial terror.

Afterward, return to Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport for flights home. Alternatively, and if applicable, guests continuing on to the optional Muscle Shoals post-tour will depart the airport for Florence, Alabama. (B)

*Note: Due to the inherent nature of this cultural exploration, (including varying hours and services from the National Park system and non-profits), itineraries are guidelines and may change in order to maximize enrichment opportunities.*

(Itinerary subject to change.)
Activity Level:

Moderate

It is our expectation that guests on this program are able to walk a mile at a moderate pace, walk up and down a flight of stairs, and get in and out of a motor coach without assistance.

What's Included:

- 4 nights accommodations
- 4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- Full guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director
- All activities as described in the program itinerary, including admission
- Private deluxe motor coach with air conditioning and comfortable seating
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, and wait staff for included meals
- Airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times
Your Guide(s):

Orbridge Travel Director

Every departure is accompanied by one of our premier Travel Directors, all of whom have extensive knowledge and experience as guides.

Enriched by their accompaniment and enthusiasm, enjoy the cultures and locations you explore with added confidence, understanding, and appreciation.

Dianne Harris – Civil Rights Featured Speaker

When Dianne Harris was 15 years old, she walked off the Alabama Lutheran campus with a group of 14 other students to join the student arm of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma. The year was 1965. It was the first time Dianne had openly disobeyed any authority at school.

"We wanted to be a part of the student movement and the student march and that was the only way that we saw fit to do that because our instructors and administrators—I think they were really trying to protect us from violence and that type of thing and they feared for our safety—but all the other students in the Selma city area were participating and we wanted to participate."

Although Dianne will be the first to tell you that disobedience is never a good decision without due cause, she is happy she made the decision to leave campus that year. For about a week, Dianne and the other Alabama Lutheran students participated in nightly meetings at the historic Brown Chapel AME and daily marches. As a result, she was arrested twice and stuck in the arm with a cattle prod.

Today Dianne remains active in the Selma community. She has received the Congressional Foot Soldier Medal and Certificate, as well as numerous other medals and awards for her ongoing fight for racial equality. She is a passionate public speaker, appearing on NBC Today in 2015, and is often interviewed by newspapers, magazines and other media outlets for her unending vigil for justice. She remembers her involvement in the movement like it was yesterday. She particularly remembers listening to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the events of Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama.
Dr. Martha Bouyer – Civil Rights Featured Speaker

Dr. Martha Bouyer will lead guests to explore sites of the Civil Rights Movement, including the Birmingham Jail, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Linn Park, Phillips High School, Freedom Riders attack site, and the Black Business District. Learn why Dr. King chose to come to Birmingham and how important mass meetings were for the movement by visiting the historic Bethel Baptist Church and Shuttlesworth parsonage bombing site.

Joyce O’Neal – Civil Rights Featured Speaker

Joyce O’Neal, a Selma native and lifelong pursuer of equality through her career in social work, is a faithful member of Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Selma. She was baptized there as an infant and has been an active member ever since. She remembers attending mass meetings at the church with her family in the 1960s. Hear her tell of her experiences during the marches in Selma and the events of Bloody Sunday.

Mrs. O’Neal has been awarded with several honors, including: Outstanding Service Rendered to the Youth Motivation Task Force at Stillman College (2000), Outstanding Lay Person of the Biennial (2007-2009), Foot Soldier Recognition at the U.S. Capitol (2016), Permanent Member of the Senior Citizens’ Hall of Fame (2017), and the Alabama Social Work Hall of Fame (2017). Mrs. O’Neal was also the first African-American elected to the Alabama State Personnel Board (2006 and 2010).

Peggy Wallace Kennedy – Civil Rights Featured Speaker

Peggy Wallace Kennedy is the daughter of the late George C. Wallace, the former governor of Alabama who became known as one of America’s most ardent segregationists.

A native of Clayton, Alabama, Kennedy graduated from Troy University in 1973 with a Bachelor of Science degree in special education. She taught in Alabama’s public schools, raised two sons, and also spent years supporting her husband’s political career as an Alabama Supreme Court Justice.

Later in life Kennedy embarked on a personal journey of her own. She stepped from
beneath the shadow of "the schoolhouse door" as she came to grips with her family's legacy and her own personal beliefs. She has since written and spoken on issues relating to justice and equality, most recently releasing a new book, *The Broken Road*, which is a memoir that reckons with her father George Wallace's legacy of hate and illuminates her journey towards redemption.

Kennedy has been widely hailed as the “symbol of racial reconciliation” (*Washington Post*). In the summer of 1963, though, she was just a young girl watching her father stand in a schoolhouse door as he tried to block two African-American students from entering the University of Alabama. This man, former governor of Alabama and presidential candidate George Wallace, was notorious for his hateful rhetoric and his political stunts. But he was also a larger-than-life father to young Peggy, who was taught to smile, sit straight, and not speak up as her father took to the political stage. At the end of his life, Wallace came to renounce his views, although he could never fully repair the damage he caused. But Peggy, after her own political awakening, has dedicated her life to spreading the new Wallace message—one of peace and compassion.

**Sandy Taylor – Civil Rights Featured Speaker**

Sandy Taylor, the retired Superintendent of the National Park Services Tuskegee Site, will host a celebratory lunch at her private, restored antebellum home in Tuskegee. In this town where Rosa Parks was born and the Tuskegee Airmen thrived, Taylor's home was built around 1855. She and her husband purchased the historic property and lovingly brought it to life with hand-stripped floors, multi-colored walls, and convivial gatherings. Lunch will feature recipes from Tuskegee scientist George Washington Carver and include locally grown ingredients.
Join Ms. Wanda Battle and friends for a night of special music. Wanda is the tourism director of Dexter-King Baptist Church. She, along with a host of others from the choirs at Dexter, Brick-A-Day, and others, will have dinner with guests. Enjoy a musical program where she outlines the origins of traditional African American spirituals, how these songs were integrated into the first independent Black churches, and how choirs supported Dr. King on his visits around the United States.
Accommodations:

Hampton Inn and Suites Birmingham-Downtown Tutwiler

Traditional southern charm with up-to-date convenience awaits guests of the Hampton Inn and Suites Birmingham-Downtown Tutwiler. This property’s namesake originally began hosting dignitaries in 1914 and today features 149 modern rooms, historic photographs, a grand marble entrance, mahogany furniture, views of the cityscape, snack shop, and restaurant. Enjoy the ease of staying under a half mile from downtown Birmingham attractions, including the Museum of Art and Civil Rights Institute along with onsite complimentary Wi-Fi and fitness room.

Room Amenities: Individual climate control, writing desk, flat-screen TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, alarm clock, phone, coffee maker, iron and ironing board, and en suite bathroom with sundries and hair dryer.

SpringHill Suites by Marriott Montgomery Downtown

This outstanding property combines modern décor with an industrial vibe. Located across from the Legacy Museum in the heart of Montgomery’s downtown dining and entertainment district, this all-suites property re-purposed from warehouse space offers spacious rooms, a market open 24/7 for snacks and necessities, and a fitness center.

Room Amenities: Individual climate control, writing desk and chair, cable/satellite TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, alarm clock, phone, coffee and tea maker, refrigerator, microwave, iron and ironing board, and en suite bathroom with sundries and hair dryer.

(Accommodations subject to change.)
Optional Post-Tour:

MUSCLE SHOALS

The Shoals—the quad cities of Florence, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, and Tuscumbia—are rich in musical and cultural history and noted for having a magnetic feel and incredible connection with water. Learn how landscape influences life and life reflects landscape.

Tour studios where hit records were recorded by legends, including Aretha Franklin, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Rod Stewart, Etta James, Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Clarence Carter, Willie Nelson, Steve Winwood, and Little Richard. Learn about the influential and talented "Swampers," the nickname of the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section that provides the country-funk magic heard on popular cuts, such as Aretha Franklin's "Respect," Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock and Roll," and Wilson Pickett's "Mustang Sally."

At the Alabama Music Hall of Fame—a must-visit for music fans—check out the exhibits and personal memorabilia of inductees Nat King Cole, Hank Williams, Percy Sledge, Jim Nabors, and many more.

Honor the "Father of the Blues," W.C. Handy, by touring his home and museum that features the world's most complete collection of Handy's personal papers and artifacts. Creator of beloved songs, including "St.
Louis Blues" and "Beale Street Blues," this musical prodigy was influenced by sounds found in nature, listening to Cypress Creek and visualizing birdcalls as notes on a scale.

Stop by inspirational **Ivy Green**, the birthplace of one of history's most remarkable women, Helen Keller. Stricken with a severe illness at the tender age of 19 months, she was completely deaf, mute, and blind. Communicating with the world through gestures, fittingly, the first word she learned here in the Shoals was "water." Touch the actual well pump where Keller, at age seven, made her breakthrough. See mementos, including Keller's Braille typewriter, and discover her amazing life of trials and triumphs dedicated to improving the conditions of blind and deaf around the world.

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**Itinerary:**

**Day 5: Birmingham / The Shoals / Florence**
Welcome to Florence! The city was surveyed for the Cypress Land Company in 1818 by Italian Ferdinand Sannoner who named it after the capital of the Tuscany region of Italy. Florence is home to several museums, historical sites, and numerous parks to serve residents and guests.

Arrive early evening to check in to the hotel.

Dinner is at leisure, with a wide range of options from elevated dining, to delicious barbeque, to sandwich shops. Those wishing to relax and stay "in" may explore the hotel's upscale gaming space, called The Boiler Room, for entertainment and an assortment of sandwiches, salads, and a full bar.

*Overnight: The Stricklin Hotel*

**Day 6: Florence / Muscle Shoals / Florence**
Begin the day with a hearty meal at Big Bad Breakfast, a restaurant adjoining the hotel. Experience chef and founder John Currence's love affair with the "most important meal of the day" and gain a greater sense of the role food plays in the culture of the South. Currence won the James Beard Award in 2009 and is the author of two cookbooks,
including, *Pickles, Pigs and Whiskey: Food from My Three Favorite Food Groups and Then Some.* Savor southern staples, such as fresh biscuits, preserves, and locally roasted coffee.

The Athenian philosopher Plato said music "gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything." Celebrate music by embarking upon a journey to visit one of the most influential areas in American music history. People often associate such a lofty description with Nashville or Memphis, but equally deserving are a grouping of towns dotted along the Tennessee River—Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, Tuscumbia, and Florence—known collectively by locals as simply, "The Shoals."

To appreciate the depth and vitality of music here, one must understand its rich and fertile roots. Archaeological evidence suggests music played an important role in the lives of Native American peoples who inhabited these lands before the arrival of the first European settlers. Legend holds the Tennessee River was referred to as the "singing river," home to a spirit who sings louder when the water is flowing quickly and softer when the body is peaceful. The Cherokee were one of the three major nations residing in the Tennessee Valley before the abominable Indian Removal Act. For some Native Americans, the voice of the river was said to be a guide back home.

Later, many white settlers who moved into the region were of Scots-Irish descent and brought with them Celtic traditions and a love of the fiddle. Meanwhile, African slaves working the cotton fields of area plantations exhibited their own musical traditions, including chants and spirituals. The resulting sound of this "melting pot," as described by Florence native and Sun Records founder Sam Phillips perhaps explains it best: "When I was growing up, we heard it all... in the fields we heard the Black man’s blues, in the churches we heard Black spirituals and white gospel, and on the radio we heard the Grand Ole Opry... out of that we created a sound that's hard to define... because it includes the best elements of all those tremendous sources."

Experience the enduring and powerful legacy of local sound by visiting the recording studios that shaped some of the greatest music ever made. In the 1960s, notable hits, such as "When a Man Loves a Woman," were recorded with artists of different races coming together when the rest of the country was divided. With the power of music able to leap across barriers and unite people of different cultural backgrounds, learn why Irish band U2’s frontman Bono has described the Muscle Shoals area studios as "humble shells ... [that] contained an empire that crossed race and creed ... It was revolutionary." Discover the stories of songwriters and musicians whose work earned this area of Alabama the nickname
as the "Hit Recording Capital of the World."

Still a working facility, FAME Recording Studios was co-founded by pioneer Rick Hall and host to artists such as Percy Sledge, Tom Jones, Wilson Pickett, Mac Davis, and Candi Staton among many, many others. In late 1961, Hall produced Muscle Shoals' first hit record with Arthur Alexander. Hall also produced Etta James' acclaimed *Tell Mama* album. Aretha Franklin, after being dropped from her music label because no one knew what to do with her amazing voice, cut a song here and found an essence that led her to become the "Queen of Soul." In the last 50 years, FAME recorded or published music selling more than 350 million copies.

Following FAME, tour a small, nondescript building in Sheffield known as the Muscle Shoals Sound Studio at 3614 Jackson Highway. Not your typical museum, guests can inspect the piano used by the Rolling Stones to record "Brown Sugar" and "Wild Horses."

The house band, known affectionately as the "Swampers" (who originally formed to play for FAME studios), is widely regarded as one of the most important American recording studio bands in the golden age of rock and soul. Artists who have collaborated with these talented musicians and benefitted from the area's lack of distractions include a "who's who" of rock and roll and rhythm and blues: Dire Straits, Big Joe Turner, Carlos Santana, Joe Cocker, Gregg Allman, Jimmy Buffett, Melissa Etheridge, Johnnie Taylor, and Bobby "Blue" Bland. Hear interesting tidbits about favorite songs that you won't learn anywhere else! Bob Seger's nostalgic song "Mainstreet" was recorded with the Swampers, as was a demo of "Old Time Rock and Roll." Did you know Seger recorded "Old Time Rock and Roll" with his own band, but didn't feel it had the same sound? He bought the demo from the Swampers and laid his vocals over it. Paul Simon came to Alabama planning to record one song for his album *There Goes Rhymin' Simon.* But the Swampers' chameleon-like ability to blend with differing artists meant they picked up on Simon's music quickly and ended up recording five songs, including the well-known "Kodachrome." The Swampers are referred to in the lyrics of "Sweet Home Alabama" by Lynyrd Skynyrd and appear on the cover of Cher's 1969 album, *3614 Jackson Highway.*

Lunch is at leisure today before rounding out the studio visits with Cypress Moon Studios. Located on the beautiful Tennessee River, the Swampers moved here in 1977 after outgrowing the building on Jackson Highway. Step inside where Dr. Hook, The Commodores, and Julian Lennon, son of John Lennon, have found inspiration. Lennon penned his lyric "Sitting on a pebble by the river playing guitar" for the song "Valotte" after spending time in the Shoals. Today Cypress Moon is a concert venue, recording
studio, and film production facility. Movies produced by the studio include *When I Find the Ocean*, recipient of five Dove Awards, and *The Story of Bonnie and Clyde*.

Afterwards, return to the hotel to rest and refresh before relishing an afternoon of independent exploration and dinner on your own. With its own unique brand of southern charm, Florence is a welcome haven for musicians, artists, designers, chefs, and entrepreneurs. Fashion designers Billy Reid and Natalie Chanin both have flagship stores here. Guests never know who they might encounter! *Overnight: The Stricklin Hotel (B)*

**Day 7: Florence / The Shoals / Birmingham / Depart Birmingham**

Enjoy a final breakfast at Big Bad Breakfast before heading out to discover more lives of Alabama natives who have changed the world.

At the home of educator and humanitarian Helen Keller, learn how she overcame the adversity of being blind and deaf to graduate cum laude from college and co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union. Did you know at age 75 she embarked upon a 40,000-mile, five-month trek across Asia? Witness the well pump where teacher Anne Sullivan miraculously reached into the dark and silent world of young Helen Keller’s mind in this remarkable life story of determination. Stroll the home’s grounds nestled beneath a canopy of English boxwoods, magnolia, and mimosa trees accented with flowers and English Ivy (from which the estate receives its name).

Next honor the legacy of Florence native William Christopher Handy, the Father of the Blues, by stopping at the W.C. Handy Home and Museum. Born in 1873, as the son and grandson of Methodist ministers, he showed his love of music at an early age. While his father was staunchly opposed to secular musicianship for his son, W.C. held fast and became a bandleader in 1896, traveling the U.S. and Cuba to perform. Delight in the opportunity to behold Handy’s original sheet music, famous trumpet, and personal piano on display. His work continues to shine in music today, with his songs continually reinterpreted in idioms of blues, jazz, and pop.

Lunch is at leisure. Check out nostalgic shops, such as Trowbridge’s, which has been open for more than a hundred years and is the state’s oldest ice cream parlor. Perhaps try the orange-pineapple ice cream included in the guide, “100 Dishes to Eat in Alabama Before You Die” produced by the Alabama Tourism Department.

Round out this musical adventure with a stop at the Alabama Music Hall of Fame en route
back to Birmingham. Honoring all styles of music and dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Alabama’s musicians, this facility showcases talented individuals and their accomplishments. View the interesting and informative collections that include the tour bus for the band named Alabama. For a small fee, live the life of a music star (if only momentarily) by creating your very own demo recording in the studio!

Guests will then take the complimentary group transfer to Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport for flights home. *(B)*

B = Breakfast

*This post-tour is not escorted by an Orbridge Travel Director. Included sightseeing is accompanied by a local guide. Transportation of various types and sizes may be utilized during the tour, including a historic city trolley. Space is limited, so it's recommended to reserve early for best availability.*

(Itinerary subject to change.)

**Activity Level:**

**Moderate**

It is our expectation that guests on this program are able to walk a mile at a moderate pace, get in and out of a motor coach, and walk up a flight of stairs without assistance.
Accommodations:

The Stricklin Hotel

Relaxed, air-conditioned rooms featuring all-king beds (only), wooden floors, and exposed brick walls provide guests of the Stricklin Hotel in downtown Florence, Alabama, an inviting place to unwind and re-charge. While dining at the restaurant for breakfast, guests may choose among such rich staples as homemade biscuits, grits, and chicken and waffles, or opt for leaner options, including avocado toast, steel-cut oatmeal, and sun-dried cranberry and almond granola. Guests will find entertainment in the basement of the building at The Boiler Room—an upscale gaming space with vintage-style bowling lanes, foosball, skeeball, shuffleboard, darts, live music on select nights, and more for a fun option to cap off the day.

Room Amenities: Individual climate control, king beds only in all rooms, writing desk and chair, cable/satellite TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, alarm clock, phone, coffee and tea maker, mini-fridge, minibar, safe, iron and ironing board, and en suite bathroom with sundries and hair dryer.

(Accommodations subject to change.)

What's Included:

- 2 nights accommodations at The Stricklin Hotel with a Southern-style breakfast each morning
- Admission and fees for included activities
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers
- Airport transfers for guests departing during the suggested times
Terms and Conditions

THE FOLLOWING TERMS AND CONDITIONS ARE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2022.

Note: Travel credits and transfers are subject to the Terms and Conditions agreed upon at the time of the original reservation.
Reservation Cancellation and Refunds...
Travel Insurance. Orbridge strongly recommends that you purchase travel and cancellation insurance to protect your investment in the event of unexpected or unforeseen circumstances. In addition, we recommend that you consider obtaining a policy(ies) that will cover emergency medical evacuation insurance and cancel for any reason insurance. Travel and cancellation insurance policies and dates by which policies must be purchased vary by provider/insurer, maximum coverage (including cancel for any reason) is generally only available for purchase within 14 days of your reservation being confirmed. It is advised to determine your insurance needs and make necessary arrangements soon after reserving on tour. If you do not have, but are interested in purchasing, travel and cancellation insurance please contact us.

Program Cancellations or Postponements. All programs are subject to cancellation or postponement by Orbridge prior to the scheduled departure date for reasons such as, but not limited to, insufficient participation, or logistical problems that, in Orbridge’s sole judgment, may impede program operations or represent conditions or events that may expose program guests and/or Orbridge to undue risk of harm, injury, damage or inconvenience. In the event of program cancellation or postponement by Orbridge, Orbridge may offer you alternative arrangements such as the option to join the same tour on a different date or a different tour. If the price of your alternative booking is lower than your original booking price, Orbridge will refund the difference within 30 days of the alternative program’s departure date. If it is higher than your original booking price, Orbridge will invoice you the difference and you will be responsible therefor. Transferred guests are subject to the terms of the original tour. Except for force majeure, if a program is cancelled or postponed by Orbridge, Orbridge will refund all payments made within 30 days of notice of program cancellation or postponement if an alternative arrangement is not offered.

Itineraries. Accommodations, the itinerary, travel directors or expedition leaders, lecturers, hosts, faculty or organization representative, and arranged excursions are subject to change or substitution at any time due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond Orbridge’s control. Reasonable efforts will be made to operate programs as planned, however adjustments, substitutions and changes may occur after the final itinerary has been issued. Orbridge may, in its sole discretion, withdraw a program or any part of it, make such alterations or substitutions to the itinerary or program inclusions as it deems necessary or desirable, and pass on to program participants any expenditures or additional costs caused by any such adjustments, or by delays or events beyond its reasonable control.

Not Included. Unless otherwise specifically noted in the itinerary, program prices do not include the following expenses, which if applicable are your sole responsibility to pay and satisfy: trip cancellation insurance and passenger travel protection plan; domestic, international, and internal airfares except as indicated in program inclusions; transfers and luggage handling fees except in connection with scheduled group flights; costs associated with obtaining passports or entry visas; airport departure taxes; airline ticketing fees; airport transfers when arriving/departing on other than scheduled group dates; excess baggage charges; any new value added taxes or other taxes added to program costs by applicable governmental authorities; gratuities to drivers, guides, or ship's crew not specified; meals and beverages other than those specified as being included in the itinerary; sightseeing not included in the itinerary, personal expenses such as laundry, communication charges and optional activities (which are subject to availability); ship, air, or transportation fuel surcharges, if applicable; any items not on the “included” list of the tour documents.

Health and Fitness to Travel. Through your participation in your tour, you assume responsibility for your own health, safety, and welfare and acknowledge that Orbridge cannot absolutely guarantee your safety or health. Your physician can provide guidance on your personal health risk and precautions to take while traveling. Some programs include physically active elements. To enjoy these programs as intended, a minimum level of fitness is required and Orbridge will require all guests to follow local, state, national and/or World Health Organization health and safety mandates. Accordingly, you must be in good physical and mental condition to participate. You represent that you have no physical, mental or other condition, impairment or disability that may or will cause or create a risk of injury or other hazard to yourself or others in respect to any aspect of the program you have selected. Orbridge may, in its sole discretion, limit, restrict or prohibit participation in any aspect of any program any individual that it considers in its sole discretion to be impaired or unsuitable due to fitness level. In addition, Orbridge may, in its sole discretion and at the participant’s sole expense, remove the guest from the program, or restrict the program-related activities of any individual whose physical or mental condition may or is likely to cause a hazard to himself/herself or others, or otherwise impair the enjoyment of other program participants. Any physical condition requiring special attention, diet, or treatment must be reported in writing to Orbridge at the time a program reservation is made. Should you have any questions or need any clarification about a specific program, please ask for details at the time of registration. Orbridge will try to accommodate your situation if possible.

Accessibility. Orbridge cannot guarantee that the transportation, lodging, and entertainments/sightseeing accommodations will be accessible to all persons regardless of their physical and mental condition. In addition, many of the activities involved in each program include walking or the like for some distance on uneven ground or pavement or moving water as well as the ability to walk up and down stairs without assistance. Should any individuals seeking to participate in a travel opportunity need special accommodations to ensure their enjoyment of the trip, kindly provide notice at the time the reservation is submitted, and we will see if your participation is feasible. Please understand that the Americans with Disabilities Act is inapplicable outside the United States.

At the time of reservation, Orbridge needs to be notified to determine if the special needs of an individual traveler can be met through special arrangements. It is possible that minor modifications to the services can be provided, but only if Orbridge is made specifically aware of anticipated needs. This notification should be made in writing no less than two weeks prior to the planned travel. Neither Orbridge nor any of the providers of transportation, lodging, or other services can provide special accommodations without this advance notice.

Where an individual with certain specific needs will be traveling with a group, it is necessary for other members of that person’s group to be available to assist as necessary. Neither employees of Orbridge nor any suppliers of services can allow any of their employees to provide physical assistance to any guests.

Travel Advisories. The State Department and the Centers for Disease Control periodically issue statements and advisories about risks to travelers. These statements are country specific and contain important information. The State Department information can be found at www.travel.state.gov, and the CDC statements can be found at http://www.cdc.gov. Orbridge highly recommends everyone to review these sites.

Children. Orbridge welcomes the participation of children in most of its programs. However, in the event you do include your children or other minors for whom you serve as legal guardian (“Dependents”) in your travel plans, you hereby agree that you are and shall be at all times solely responsible for their care, actions, safety and protection during the program and any pre-tour and/or post-tour. Should you have any questions whether a particular program or inclusion is possible or suitable for your Dependent(s), please contact us.

Baggage. Program rates include the price of one piece of policy-compliant baggage per person during the land, cruise or rail portion of the program only unless specified in the itinerary. Air carriers and motor coaches often impose significant other restrictions or limitations on the number of pieces, size and weight of luggage and may require or impose additional fees on luggage exceeding such limitations or restrictions. All such fees are your sole cost and responsibility. In addition and regardless of location or transportation method, your baggage and personal effects are and shall at all times be at your sole risk throughout the entire program. Please check with your air carrier for other applicable baggage restrictions and limitations.

Travel Documents. All guests are responsible for possessing and maintaining necessary travel documents. These documents shall be valid under state and federal law and as required by foreign countries being visited. Orbridge is not responsible for invalid travel documents and repercussions thereof.

For U.S. citizens, valid passports are required for travel to foreign destinations and some countries require specific visas prior to entry. Please direct any questions in respect to visa requirements to Orbridge, which shall use commercially reasonable efforts to provide answers as a courtesy, provided that it shall remain your sole responsibility and obligation to obtain and verify that you have all required travel documents, including visas, necessary and appropriate for the program location(s) and sufficient blank pages in your passport for
visas and immigration stamps. In addition, some countries require your passport to have an expiry date of not less than six months after your anticipated return to the United States. Orbridge disclaims all liability for any expenses or costs you may incur due to your prohibition or restriction from entering a country on the program itinerary or reentering the United States at the conclusion of the program. If travel documents fail to meet these requirements, boarding of aircraft or ship to any international destination may be denied and entry into such countries may be denied.

Photos and Videos. Orbridge may take photographs and/or video of its trips and participant grants Orbridge permission to do so and for it to use such for promotional or commercial use without payment of any compensation to participant. In addition, Orbridge may use, without compensation, any photographs or video taken by tour participants and submitted to Orbridge or to SmugMug without payment of any compensation. In submitting any such photographs or video to Orbridge or SmugMug, participant warrants that he or she took the image and that the dissemination of same does not violate the copyright rights of any person.

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Other. Dates, program details and costs are based on tariffs, exchange rates and other information current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time. While we do not anticipate material revisions of the itinerary or its included features, we do reserve the right to substitute accommodations or modes of transportation and to make any changes in the itinerary Orbridge, in its sole discretion, deems necessary and in that case any additional expense or cost will be paid by the individual guest. Your baggage and personal effects are your sole responsibility at all times. It is prohibited by federal law and Orbridge policy to bring illegal drugs, firearms, or other contraband (including marijuana for medical or recreational purposes) on any program.

Orbridge may at any time and without notice modify these terms and conditions, and any modification so made will be effective for all reservations made from and after the posted Effective Date.

In the event any term in these terms and conditions is deemed unenforceable the unenforceable clause shall be interpreted to give effect to the parties’ intentions to the greatest enforceable extent, and all other provisions hereof shall remain fully enforceable according to their terms.

Binding Arbitration. I agree that any dispute concerning, relating, or referring to this contract, the brochure, or any other literature concerning my trip, or the trip itself shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in Seattle, Washington, either according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association or pursuant to the Comprehensive Arbitration Rules & Procedures of the Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, Inc. (JAMS). Such proceedings will be governed by substantive (but not procedural) Washington law. The arbitrator and not any federal, state, or local court or agency shall have exclusive authority to resolve any dispute relating to the interpretation, applicability, enforceability, conscionability, or formation of this contract, including but not limited to any claim that all or any part of this contract is void or voidable. By agreeing to these terms and conditions, both parties are waiving their right to a trial by jury. Any arbitration commenced against Orbridge must be on behalf of only the individual(s) to this Agreement and his or her immediate family members travelling with them, such as a spouse or child. Under no circumstances can participant be part of a class or other joint action.

Acceptance of Contract. ANY PAYMENT TO ORBRIDGE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DEPOSITS OR FULL PAYMENTS, CONSTITUTES YOUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AND AGREEMENT TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH ABOVE AND IN MORE SPECIFIC TOUR DOCUMENTS.

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