



From state-of-the-art interactive exhibits to a three-room shack with a tin roof, blues museums across the country celebrate the music, history and artists of the blues. Take this directory of must-see U.S. blues destinations to help guide your tour – whether you’re a blues novice or aficionado, there’s something for everyone! Note: Be sure to check with the facilities in advance to confirm offerings, admission times and rates. Happy travels!

ALABAMA

W.C. Handy Home, Museum & Library

Florence, AL
Phone: 256/760-6434

visitflorenceal.com/things-to-do/w-c-handy-birthplace-museum-library

W.C. Handy, the “Father of the Blues,” composed such well-known blues jewels as “St. Louis Blues,” “Beale Street Blues” and “Memphis Blues.” Visit the simple cabin in Florence, AL, where he was born in 1873, which now houses a large collection of his personal papers, memorabilia and artifacts, including his trumpet, piano and handwritten music sheets.

ARKANSAS

Delta Cultural Center

Helena, AR
Phone: 870/338-4350 - www.deltaculturalcenter.com

The Delta Cultural Center is dedicated to interpreting and presenting the cultural heritage of the Arkansas Delta region through exhibits, educational programs, annual events and guided tours. Blues fans will particularly want to explore the Delta Sounds Exhibit featuring the gospel, rockabilly and blues legends of the Arkansas Delta, and the *King Biscuit Time* Exhibit about the longest running blues radio show in the nation.

GEORGIA

Ma Rainey House & Blues Museum

Columbus, GA
Phone: 706/653-4960

parks.columbusga.gov/Parks/MA-Rainey-Home

Visit the Ma Rainey House & Blues Museum to learn about legendary “Mother of Blues,” Gertrude “Ma” Rainey. As one of the earliest professional blues singers who made over 100 recordings with Paramount Records, Ma Rainey unquestionably played a key role in the development of the blues.



W.C. Handy Home, Museum and Library in Florence, AL.

Photo courtesy of The George F. Landegger Collection of Alabama Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith’s America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

LOUISIANA

Delta Music Museum

Ferriday, LA

Phone: 318/757-4297 - www.deltamusicmuseum.com

The Delta Music Museum's mission is to collect, preserve and exhibit the musical heritage along the Mississippi River Delta region. Visit the museum to see the memorabilia, learn the history and watch video performance clips of each regional musical celebrity.

MISSISSIPPI

B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center

Indianola, MS

Phone: 662/887-9539 - bbkingmuseum.org

The B.B. King Museum may be the most inspiring stop you'll ever make. Through thousands of rare artifacts, award-winning films, computer interactives and more, the museum's exhibits bring you along the journey of Riley B. King's life as he became a blues legend who was always connected to the Delta.



The Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, MS.

Photo by Ken Murphy for Belinda Stewart Architects

Delta Blues Museum

Clarksdale, MS

Phone: 662/627-6820 - www.deltabluesmuseum.org

Celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, the Delta Blues Museum preserves, interprets and encourages a deep interest in the story of the blues. Explore the museum's blues artifacts, memorabilia, photographs, stories and art portraying the blues tradition, as well as multimedia exhibits dedicated to pioneers of the Delta blues.

The Delta Center for Culture and Learning

Delta State University, Cleveland, MS

Phone: 662/846-4311 - deltacenterdsu.com

The Delta Center advances Delta State University's participation in promoting and celebrating the unique heritage of the Delta, while also addressing the longstanding social, economic and cultural challenges that inhibit regional advancement. Of particular interest to blues fans, check out the Center's International Delta Blues Project – featuring an International Conference on the Blues, a Blues Studies program and a Blues Leadership Incubator.



The Delta Cultural Center in Helena, AR. Photo courtesy of the Delta Cultural Center

Delta State University Archives

Cleveland, MS

Phone: 662/846-4780

deltastate.edu/library/departments/archives-museum

The Delta State University Archives Department collects, preserves and makes accessible historical manuscript collections that document the history and culture of Mississippi in general, and the Mississippi Delta region, in particular. In addition to exhibits on the region's history, blues lovers should be sure to see "A Cast of Blues" – a collection of 55 life-masks of legendary blues musicians by artist Sharon McConnell.

Dockery Farms Foundation

Cleveland, MS

Phone: 662/719-1048 - dockeryfarms.org

Peruse the historic property and beautifully restored buildings of Dockery Farms, a cotton plantation of the Mississippi Delta established in 1895, that was known for offering its laborers fairer contracts and treatment. African Americans who worked at Dockery, including blues pioneers Henry Sloan and Charley Patton, created a culture that inspired the blues. To arrange a tour, contact Bill Lester: wclester@gmail.com.

Elvis Presley Birthplace

Tupelo, MS

Phone: 662/841-1245 - elvispresleybirthplace.com

Elvis revolutionized popular music by blending the blues he first heard as a youth in Tupelo with country, pop and gospel. Many of his first recorded songs were covers of earlier blues recordings, and he continued to incorporate blues into his music for the remainder of his career. The Elvis Presley Center includes the house where he was born, the Elvis Presley Museum and Memorial Chapel, and Elvis Presley Park.

Gateway to the Blues Museum

Tunica Resorts, MS

Phone: 888/488-6422 - www.TunicaTravel.com/Blues

At Tunica's Gateway to the Blues Museum, see the story of the blues come to life. You'll experience interactive exhibits,



Gateway to the Blues Museum in Tunica Resorts, MS.
Photo courtesy of the Tunica Convention & Visitors Bureau

artwork and more – including a recording studio where you’ll learn the basics of blues music with a chance to record your very own blues song. This must-see attraction for all music lovers will tell the remarkable story of how the blues was born and the role Tunica played in building the genre’s legacy.

GRAMMY Museum Mississippi

Cleveland, MS

Phone: 662/441-0100 - www.grammymuseumms.org

GRAMMY Museum Mississippi aims to educate individuals about the history and cultural significance of American music, and to inspire the next generation to explore and create new forms of music using the roots that have existed in this country for centuries. The Museum accomplishes this through innovative programming, cutting-edge interactives and exciting exhibitions.

Highway 61 Blues Museum

Leland, MS

Phone: 662/686-7646 & 866/285-7646

www.highway61blues.com

Housed in the old Montgomery Hotel, this small blues museum honors around 80 mid-Mississippi Delta bluesmen with photos and memorabilia. If you’re lucky, bluesman Pat Thomas, son of James “Son” Thomas, will play guitar as you peruse the exhibits. The Leland Blues Project, an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, runs the museum and puts on two festivals each year to help support it.

Howlin’ Wolf Museum

West Point, MS

By appointment only, contact Jeremy Klutts: 662/295-8361

www.wpnet.org/index.php/attractions/howlin_wolf

Run by the Howlin’ Wolf Blues Society of West Point, MS, the Howlin’ Wolf Blues Museum houses memorabilia and promotes the historical blues education of North Mississippi, perpetuating the musical achievements of Chester Arthur Burnett – The Howlin’ Wolf – as well as other regional musicians.

Jimmie Rodgers Museum

Meridian, MS

Phone: 601/485-1908 - www.jimmierodgers.com

Jimmie Rodgers, also known as the “Father of Country Music” and “The Blue Yodeler,” was the first major star of country music, but also introduced the blues to a far wider audience than any other artist of his time. The museum, which houses Jimmie

Rodgers’ memorabilia, photographs and history, will reopen in the Historic Train Depot in downtown Meridian in Fall 2019.

Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience

Meridian, MS

Phone: 601/581-1550 - www.msarts.org

The Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience, also known as The MAX, showcases Mississippi’s legacy in every area of the arts – including the blues – honoring Mississippi’s legends in arts and entertainment through exhibitions, performances, classes and events, including a Mississippi Walk of Fame.

Mississippi John Hurt Museum

Carrollton, MS

Phone: 803/645-6898 - facebook.com/johnhurtfoundation

Built inside the humble three-room shack that was John Hurt’s home, visit the museum dedicated to the life and music of John Hurt, the gentle songster who enraptured the world during the folk blues revival of the 1960s with his syncopated fingerpicked rhythms and kindly voice. You’ll find the house filled with artifacts and memorabilia from his life and career, as well as his gravesite nearby.

North Delta Museum

Friars Point, MS

Phone: 662/902-7642 - facebook.com/northdeltamuseum

Described by the Memphis Commercial Appeal like “crawling through someone’s attic,” the North Delta Museum is an interesting stop to check out artifacts from the Mississippi Delta, ranging from prehistoric fossils to early 20th century agricultural and household items, including visuals from the steamboat days of the historic Friars Point port.

University of Mississippi Blues Archive

Oxford, MS

Phone: 662/232-7753

olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/archives/blues

The Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi acquires and preserves blues and blues-related materials in a variety of formats for scholars of the blues, African American studies and Southern culture. With 60,000+ sound recordings, 20,000+ photographs, 1,000+ videos, 34,000+ books, periodicals and newsletters, and numerous manuscripts and ephemera, the Blues Archive houses one of the largest collections of blues recordings, publications and memorabilia in the world.

MISSOURI

National Blues Museum

St. Louis, MO

Phone: 314/925-0016 - www.nationalbluesmuseum.org

The National Blues Museum is the only museum dedicated exclusively to preserving and honoring the national and international story of the blues and its impact on American culture. Through interactive displays, photographs, memorabilia, traveling exhibits and live music events, the National Blues Museum explores and preserves the historic significance of the

blues as the foundation of American music, celebrates the genre's various styles and recognizes the musicians who created, sustain and continue to advance the art form.

TENNESSEE

Bessie Smith Cultural Center

Chattanooga, TN

Phone: 423/266-8658 - www.bessiesmithcc.org

Chattanooga-born Bessie Smith, "The Empress of the Blues," forever changed the game for African American blueswomen. In addition to featuring artifacts and exhibits about Smith and other notable figures, the Bessie Smith Cultural Center preserves and celebrates African American history and culture in Chattanooga through art, education, research and entertainment.

Blues Hall of Fame Museum

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/527-2583 - blues.org/hall-of-fame-museum

The Blues Hall of Fame Museum features robust exhibits and in-depth history. It exposes, educates and entertains visitors with "all that is blues" culture, while highlighting over 400 inductees. There are 10 individualized galleries with interactive touchscreen displays, along with three master databases to hear music, watch videos and read the stories of each inductee. In addition, each gallery houses one-of-a-kind iconic memorabilia. You'll enjoy viewing hard-to-find album covers and photographs, important awards, unique art, musical instruments, costumes, tour jackets and more.

Graceland

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/332-3322 - www.graceland.com

The blues was Elvis Presley's earliest musical influence. Visit Graceland to fully immerse yourself in the life and career of the rock star he would become – explore the beautiful mansion, walk the gardens, tour his aircraft and be sure to visit Elvis Presley's Memphis entertainment/exhibit complex featuring legendary costumes, artifacts and personal mementos from Elvis and his family.

Memphis Rock & Soul Museum

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/205-2533 - www.memphisrocknsoul.org

The Memphis Rock 'n' Soul Museum, created by the Smithsonian Institution, presents the birth of rock and soul music and the story of musical pioneers who, for the love of music, overcame racial and socio-economic barriers to create the music that shook the world. The museum's 300+ minute digital audio tour – spanning Memphis' musical history from the rural field hollers and sharecroppers of the 1930s, to the explosion of Sun, Stax, and Hi Records, to Memphis' musical heyday in the 70s, to its global musical influence – guides visitors through seven galleries featuring three audio-visual programs, over 100 songs, 30+ instruments, 40 costumes and other musical treasures.

Stax Museum of American Soul Music

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/942-7685 - staxmuseum.com



The Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, TN. Photo by Ronnie Booze

The Stax Museum offers a tremendous experience that includes state-of-the-art interactive exhibits, music videos, instruments, items of stage clothing, records, filmed interviews, vintage recording equipment and other items of memorabilia that tell the story, from beginning to present, of American soul music, with particular focus on Stax Records – which also released gospel, funk and blues recordings.

Sun Studio

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/521-0664 - www.sunstudio.com

Sun Studio is known worldwide as "The Birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll." It is the discovery location of musical legends and genres of the 1950s from B.B. King and Elvis Presley, to Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis; from blues and gospel to country and rock 'n' roll. In addition to hearing the inside stories of B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Ike Turner, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Roy Orbison, view priceless memorabilia, hear the voices of musicians from outtakes of recording sessions, and feel the energy of the music created here by the musical legends who were all drawn to the "Sun Sound."

W.C. Handy Memphis Home & Museum

Memphis, TN

Phone: 901/527-3427 & 901/522-1556

www.wchandymemphis.org

Step back to Old Beale Street in a tour of W.C. Handy's turn-of-the-century home, which depicts the humble beginnings of the "Father of the Blues" through artifacts, memorabilia and a featured exhibit.

TEXAS

Houston Blues Museum

Houston, TX

Phone: 713/489-4628 - houstonbluesmuseum.org

The Houston Blues Museum is dedicated to the acquisition, historical preservation, study and education of art and artifacts honoring the rich blues heritage in Houston, TX, and the surrounding area. While working to secure a permanent space, the museum sponsors temporary exhibits in the Houston area and increases community awareness and involvement by collaborating with local institutions.

