America’s Tennessee River Valley

There is an Adventure to Be Discovered

Tour Itineraries

Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee
Welcome to America’s Tennessee River Valley

Explore the range of experiences to be found in this spectacular geologically diverse valley sometimes called the “Great Lakes of the South.” From white water to flat water paddling, from bouldering to wildflower hikes, from wakeboarding to sailing, from antiquing to live music, there is an adventure waiting to be discovered by you.

The Tennessee River Valley is the watershed of the Tennessee River, one of the major tributaries of the Ohio River. Flowing 652 miles through 7 states—Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee, the river derives its name from the Cherokee town of Tanasi. An important river “highway” for travel, commerce, and exploration, the area was settled as early as 8000 years ago and explored by Spanish expeditions in 1540.

Today, the Tennessee River Valley is bursting with authentic places to go and things to do that is pure Americana and rich in natural and cultural heritage.

About the Tennessee River Valley Steward Council

The Tennessee River Valley Steward Council (TRVSC) is a volunteer organization formed in 2011. Members are tourism professional from the seven southeastern states the beautiful Tennessee River flows through.

TRVSC’s purpose is to further the goals of geotourism to sustain and enhance the geographical character of local and regional communities and related public lands as tourism destinations.

TRV empowers destinations to tell the stories of people and places that instill reverence for landscape and culture, as well as stimulating local economic and community sustainability.

In partnership with National Geographic, the TRV MapGuide is an interactive online guide for destination information about authentic cultural, heritage, and recreational tourism. The MapGuide features Points of Interest nominated by locals, including: historic, cultural, and natural landmarks; music and arts festivals; outdoor adventures; and more.
Day 1  
Year tour begins in the heart of America's most visited national park, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the home of the country music star who has captured America's heart, Dolly Parton.

- Start the day at the Sevierville Welcome Center. Murals provide the history & heritage of the area.
- Spend the day at Dollywood theme park for thrills, laughs, and music performances.

Day 2  
Sugarlands Visitor Center is the primary point of contact for visitors entering Great Smoky Mountains National Park. View extensive natural history exhibits and a free 20-minute film about Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

- The Old Mill, dating back to the 1800's and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the most photographed mills in the country.
- The Cradle of Country Music Walking Tour takes approximately two hours. Includes jazz, blues, rock and roll, and the top of the mountain. The Cradle of Country Music Walking Tour offers a 3-dimensional presentation of Chattanooga's Civil War history featuring theater-seating and audio tape presentation.
- Ruby Falls, Discover a World of Wonder! Ruby Falls, a thundering 145-foot (44.196 meter) waterfall, is located deep within Lookout Mountain and has been thrilling visitors for over 80 years.

Day 3  
Cradle of Country Music Walking Tour in downtown Sevierville. Walking tour takes approximately two hours. Includes jazz, blues, rock and roll, and country music history. This free self-guided walking tour explains Knoxville's ties to Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Howard Armstrong, Dolly Parton, the Everly Brothers, Roy Acuff, and others.

- WVDS Blue Plate Special® is a live performance radio show held at noon at the WVDS studio inside the Knoxville Visitor Center Monday through Thursday and again on Saturday.
- Three Rivers Ramble. This vintage steam engine train takes guests on a 90-minute excursion through some of Knoxville's most historic and beautiful countryside.
- Travel to Dollywood, Tennessee for evening meal and accommodations.

Day 4  
Songbirds Guitar Museum. a world-class vintage guitar museum that features two venues for weekly live performances! The guitar collection is unsurpassed in quality.

- Tennessee Aquarium, Chattanooga's most visited attraction and rated the #1 aquarium in the country for visitor satisfaction. Sharks, otters, butterflies and penguins are the most popular amongst the 10,000+ animals in two separate buildings on the Chattanooga waterfront.

Day 5  
Ride the The Lookout Mountain Incline Railway to the top of Lookout Mountain. One of the steepest passenger railways in the world. Ride takes approximately 15 minutes.

- Battles for Chattanooga Museum. Located on top of Lookout Mountain. Offers a 3-dimensional presentation of Chattanooga's Civil War history featuring theater-seating and audio tape presentation.
- Ruby Falls. Discover a World of Wonder! Ruby Falls, a thundering 145-foot (44.196 meter) waterfall, is located deep within Lookout Mountain and has been thrilling visitors for over 80 years.

Day 6  
Depart for Fort Payne, Alabama. 53 miles / 85.29 km

- ALABAMA band fan club and museum. Newly remodeled, state of the art museum, featuring over 50 years of music memorabilia.

- City Park, feature life size statues of the music supergroup ALABAMA.

- Drivnig tour along the river of Little River Canyon National Preserve.

- Optional stop at the Little River Canyon Center.

- Travel to Huntsville, Alabama for evening meal and accommodations. 68 miles / 109 km.

Day 7  
Burritt on the Mountain. Unique museum of regional history is housed in a 14-room mansion built in the shape of an X in the 1930s. The Historic Park contains restored farm buildings which interpret rural life during 1850 and 1900.

- Alabama Constitution Hall Historic Park & Museum. Step inside the picket fence and be transported back to 1819. 90-minute guided tours at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm recommended for ages 12 and up.

- Depart from Huntsville International Airport or travel to Nashville International Airport, Nashville, Tennessee (111 miles / 179 km) for departure.
Dedicated to Sequoyah, who gave his people a gift that will endure forever. He gave them a writing system, so that the history of the people, places and events that shaped this region. He gave Sequoyah Birthplace Museum.

• Travel to your choice of accommodations in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Day 2
• Travel to Oakville, Alabama. 88 miles / 141 km
• 1935 Rose Hill Place. Built for the 1982 World’s Fair (one of the last successful World’s Fairs), this iconic feature of the Knoxville skyline is the only structure of its kind.
• Visit the Birthplace of Tennessee, the Grainger Museum of Science and Energy. Learn how 75,000 people kept a secret during World War II in an effort to end the war. From the frontier of the nuclear age, you’ll learn about Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Day 3
• Travel to Oak Ridge, Tennessee.
• American Museum of Science & Energy. Experience Southern Appalachian regional history dating from Cherokee history up to today in an exciting, interactive exhibit called the River of Time.
• Tukaleechee Caverns. These caverns were discovered in the mid-19th century and were opened to the public by Bill Vananda and Tommy Myers in 1953.
• Overnight in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Day 4
• Travel to Chattanooga, Tennessee.
• Historic Homes of Knoxville. From log cabins to frame houses to stately stone mansions, these 7 Knoxville landmarks invite you into the past to experience the times and events that shaped our state.
• Travel to Appalachian Heritage Center and Historic Railroad Tunnel. Featuring the one and only engineering marvel of its time, the Western and Atlantic Railroad tunnel, as well as the Tunnel Museum and the Cool Ridge House Museum.
• Chattanooga National Military Park (NMP). The oldest and largest of America’s Civil War parks, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (NMP), commemorates the 1863 battles for Chattanooga that marked a major turning point in the war.

Day 5
• Hwasseo River Rail Adventure. The “Old Line Railroad, known today as the ‘Old Line,’” is the railroad line in the state of Tennessee located in a Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
• Visit the Chattanooga History Museum. Chattanooga’s most visited attraction and rated the #1 aquarium in the country for visitor satisfaction. Sharks, octopuses, butterflies and penguins are the most popular amongst the 10,000+ animals in two separate buildings on the Chattanooga waterfront.
• Overnight in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Day 6
• Travel to Cleveland, Tennessee. 31 miles / 49 km
• Museum Center at Five Points. Experience Southern Appalachian regional history dating from Cherokee history up to today in an exciting, interactive exhibit called the River of Time.
• Mount Sunks & Mudhouse. Visit the National Park Service Visitor Center and Museum.

To customize your tour or to extend your visit combine the East & West itineraries into a 10 day plus tour to allow for extra travel time.

Day 1
• Travel to Shiloh, Tennessee. 76 miles / 122 km
• Drive through the battlefield of the Battle of Shiloh. The two-day battle took place on April 6 and April 7, 1862.
• Overnight in Shiloh, Tennessee.

Day 2
• Travel to Hurricane Mills, Tennessee. 136 miles / 218 km
• Travel to Nashville International Airport, Nashville, Tennessee (179 miles / 288 km) for departure.

Day 3
• Travel to Eva, Tennessee. 173 miles / 278 km
• Visit the Tishomingo State Park.

Day 4
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Day 6
• Travel to Eva, Tennessee. 173 miles / 278 km
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Day 7
• Travel to Oakville, Alabama. 88 miles / 141 km
• Visit the Tishomingo State Park.

Day 8
• Travel to Eva, Tennessee. 173 miles / 278 km
• Visit the Tishomingo State Park.

Day 9
• Travel to Hurricane Mills, Tennessee. 136 miles / 218 km
• Visit the Tishomingo State Park.

Day 10
• Travel to Eva, Tennessee. 173 miles / 278 km
• Visit the Tishomingo State Park.

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To customize your tour or to extend your visit combine the East & West itineraries into a 10 day plus tour to allow for extra travel time.
Arrival
- Nashville International Airport, Nashville, Tennessee
- Travel to your choice of accommodations in Knoxville, Tennessee. (179 miles / 288 km) for departure.
- Please note all of the dams listed include Visitor Centers.

Day 1
- Travel to Fontana Village, North Carolina. in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. 29 miles / 47 km
  - Fontana Dam. At 480 ft. (146 meters), Fontana Dam is the tallest concrete dam east of the Rocky Mountains. Offers beautiful scenery in the area.
  - Sevier County Courthouse and Dolly Parton statue. Sevierville is Dolly’s hometown and the scenic statue is one of the most photographed spots in the region.
  - Great Smoky Mountains National Park. A must see is the observation tower at the top of Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park at 6,643 feet (2024.786 meters).

Day 2
- Norris Dam. Located north of Knoxville. Norris features numerous hiking trails. The River Bluff Trail is the longest at 3.1 miles and offers rich pockets of wildflowers.
  - Travel to Gatlinburg. 29 miles / 47 km
  - Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts. The public is welcome year-round to visit the campus and view artwork by local, national, and international artists in the school’s five galleries.
  - Overnight in Knoxville.

Day 3
- Travel to Lenoir City, Tennessee. 26 miles/41 km
  - Melton Hill Dam. Melton Hill Reservoir has a nationally recognized rowing course and is a spring training site for collegiate teams from throughout the eastern United States. The reservoir has hosted a number of national championships.
  - Continue on to Chattanooga, Tennessee for evening meal and accommodations.

Day 4
- Raccoon Mountain/Laurel Point Dam. West of Chattanooga. The visitor center features maps, videos and displays explaining Raccoon Mountain, TVA’s history and its activities today. The overlook at the visitor center offers a spectacular view of the river gorge. The area around Raccoon Mountain is a state-designated Wildlife Observation Area.
  - Southern Belle Riverboat. Sightseeing and dinner cruises in Chattanooga.

Day 5
- Travel to Guntersville, Alabama. 73 miles / 141 km
  - Tour Guntersville Dam. Construction of Guntersville Dam began in 1935 and was completed in 1939.
  - Cathedral Caverns State Park. Originally called Bat Cave, Cathedral Caverns was opened to the public by Jacob Gurley in the 1950’s. The cave was renamed because of its cathedral-like appearance. The massive entrance measures 126 feet wide and 25 feet high (38m x 7.6 m), a possible world record for commercial caves.
  - Overnight Lake Guntersville State Park Resort.

Day 6
- Travel to Decatur, Alabama. 44 miles / 72 km
  - Tour Cook Museum of Natural Science. The 62,000 square foot Cook Museum offers an interactive immersion into North American Biomes, from deserts to oceans, to arctic tundra to hardwood forests.
  - Lunch at the Cook Museum of Natural Science.
  - Travel to Florence, Alabama driving over Wheeler Dam enroute. 48 miles / 67 km
  - Tour Wilson Dam. Construction of Wilson Dam began in 1918 and was completed in 1924.
  - Overnight in Florence overlooking Wilson Dam.

Day 7
- Tour Helen Keller Home and Museum. The plantation home and birthplace cottage dating back to the 1820s are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
  - Depart for Nashville International Airport, Nashville, Tennessee. 117 miles / 188 km

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A DAM GOOD TOUR (AND NICE PLACES TO SEE)

TVA operates 49 dams in the river valley. This tour selects a few of the unique ones. Tour may be expanded to include more destinations.

More Customized Tours and Assistance with Accommodations and Dining Options.
TRVSC would be more than happy to assist you with customized tour itineraries such as Backroads, BBQ and Brews, Spectacular Museums and Stunning Gardens, and River Excursions and Resorts.
Explore More in America’s Tennessee River Valley.