



VISIT MOBILE

press kit



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INTRODUCTION

Mobile has nearly 325 years of stories we could tell you, But we think these are some angles to get you started.

OUR RICH HISTORY

Founded in 1702, Mobile is the birthplace of the original Mardi Gras celebration, which adds centuries of traditions and heritage that make us truly and wholly born to celebrate. For a coastal city older than the State of Alabama and the oldest city in the state, the Mobile culture is infused into our history, art and cuisine. Mobile's cultural heritage is a tapestry of its diverse historical influences, vibrant traditions and dynamic community life—a respite from the ordinary. The city's early French and Spanish settlers left a lasting impact, while our significant African American population, with deep roots in the city's history, contributed to its music, food and cultural festivals. Mobile is home to a variety of walking, driving and boat tours to help you delve deep into our history.



OUR CULINARY CULTURE

In Mobile, the catch of the day may be fish, shrimp, crabs or oysters and you can guarantee it's Gulf-to-table fresh. Our local chefs are celebrated for their eclectic takes on cuisine, whether it's old-school, Southern contemporary or the family-secret BBQ recipe.

OUR BETTER-THAN-GREAT OUTDOORS

Located on the Gulf Coast, Mobile's ecosystem biodiversity is unlike most. Part of the larger Mobile-Tensaw Delta, this area is one of the most ecologically significant wetland systems in the United States. It includes swamps, salt marshes and flooded forests with a wide variety of plant and animal species. If you want some beach time, we urge you head 45 minutes south of the city to quaint Dauphin Island. every member of your family – including pets – is welcome on these public beaches.



OUR ART SCENE

Mobile is in a creative class all its own. We love the diversity of our visual and performing arts offerings, from exclusive collections to quirky shows and everything in between. Considering the amount of talent here, it's not at all surprising that Mobile is a canvas for artistic expression. From public art, diverse galleries, monthly ArtWalk events and a world-class art museum, you will find your muse in Mobile.

OUR BIG BRAGGING RIGHT

Mobile is the birthplace of America's original Mardi Gras. That's right, Mardi Gras originated in 1703 right here in our port city. It was revived after the Civil War when citizen Joe Cain, fed up with post-war misery, led an impromptu parade down city streets. We've been doing it ever since and we mark the annual occasion with majestic parades, colorful floats and flying MoonPies. Celebrate from January 6 to the day before Ash Wednesday!



HISTORY

The history of Mobile stretches a full 117 years before the State of Alabama was founded. As the oldest city in Alabama, we're very proud of our nearly 325 years of history and we like to share the stories of those who got us to this point.

A great place to start your travel experience is at the [History Museum of Mobile](#), in the stately Southern Market/Old City Hall building. Its permanent collection of artifacts reveals the city's rich history authentically and transparently. It's an understanding of who we are, where we came from and how we all got to where we are today.

All around the city, you'll find historic homes and districts, battlegrounds and battleships, lovingly preserved and ready to be explored. Mobile is home to a variety of [walking, driving and boat tours](#) that will help you delve deep into our history, ideally finding part of YOUR story in the process.

Discovering immersive cultural heritage in Mobile is a storytelling experience.

One of our most poignant stories is that of the Clotilda. In 1860, 52 years after the international slave trade had been outlawed, the secretly outfitted schooner Clotilda was used to smuggle 110 enslaved Africans into the United States, landing along the

banks of the Mobile River. In an attempt to conceal the crime, the schooner was burned and scuttled. The Clotilda is the last known slave ship in the United States. In 2019, the schooner was discovered in the waterways just north of downtown Mobile. The History Museum of Mobile opened the long-awaited [Clotilda: The Exhibition](#) in the [Africatown Heritage House](#). The exhibit contains artifacts from the schooner and tells the story of the extraordinary people who survived enslavement and founded a town of free people called Africatown. [Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail](#) takes visitors to more than 40 key sites and counting. The trail winds its way through the city, including schools and churches; places with ties to Civil Rights and desegregation.

Other historic homes show the grandeur for which Southern properties are known but also reveal the influences of several different cultures. The Italianate-style [Richards-DAR House Museum](#) has an amazing cast iron façade and is filled with Revolutionary-era décor; the [Condé-Charlotte Museum](#) features colonial-era furnishings; and the [Bragg-Mitchell Mansion](#), built in the Greek Revival-style, withstood all kinds of drama during the Civil War. [The Historic Oakleigh House Museum](#), is now home to one of the last surviving structures built during Reconstruction after the Civil War; today the Union Barracks on the property tells the stories of post-Emancipation life in and around Mobile.



Shifting gears from homes to fortresses, our military history spans the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. [Colonial Fort Condé](#) is a reconstruction of a fort built by French explorers in 1723, and which acted as both Mobile's seat of government and its primary means of defense during the Revolutionary War. Fort Gaines, played a key role in the Battle of Mobile Bay. It was during this battle that David Farragut uttered what have become perhaps the most famous words in U.S. Naval history: "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Today guides at the fort recount

the story of the battle fort to be haunted by many soldiers who continue to prepare for battle.

Speaking of the afterlife, many visitors are fascinated by our cemeteries, which reflect the diversity of religious beliefs and socio-economic conditions here in Mobile. Some of our cemeteries boast truly elaborate monuments and incredible sculptures, and it's easy to spend hours wandering among them.





CULINARY

In Mobile, the catch of the day may be fish, shrimp, crabs or oysters and you can guarantee it's Gulf-to-table fresh. Our local chefs are celebrated for their eclectic takes on cuisine, whether it's old-school, southern contemporary or the family secret BBQ recipe.

Take, for example, "West Indies salad," a crabmeat salad that was invented by Bill Bayley, founder of Bayley's Seafood in 1947. He thought to combine some simple ingredients - fresh crabmeat, layers of onions, and a good soak of oil and vinegar - and invented a dish that is classically Mobilian. You can find it at Bayley's, and also at some of our downtown restaurants, including [Dauphin's](#) and [Felix's Fish Camp](#).

Restaurants that have withstood the test of time include a popular spot for hot dogs, burgers and onion rings, The Dew Drop Inn, which is the oldest restaurant in the metro area (it dates all the way to 1924!) and [Wintzell's Oyster House](#), a fan favorite that's been around since 1938. This is where to go if you want to try some of our very famous Gulf Coast oysters.

[The Royal Scam](#) is a restaurant that reinvented itself during the pandemic into a more upscale dining experience that's really something special. Other interesting dining experiences around town include The Hummingbird Way Oyster Bar and [Squid Ink Eclectic Eats & Drink](#) (where the traditional "S.O.S." takes on an entirely new personality ... Squid on a Shingle!). On the more casual side, [Debris Po Boys and Drinks](#), which opened in the midst of the pandemic, is a truly proper po-boy shop and Greer's St. Louis Market which opened a rooftop patio to complement its restaurant and bar last summer as a way to encourage the downtown crowd to grab drinks and dinner and do their shopping all in one place.

Another noteworthy restaurant is [The Noble South](#), where Chef/Owner Chris Rainosek takes the experience to an entirely different level with farm- and Gulf-to-table freshness in every dish. The Cheese Cottage is always finding clever new ways to incorporate all types of cheese into sandwiches, soups and salads.



ART

Mobile is in a creative class all its own. We love the diversity of our visual and performing arts offerings, from exclusive collections to quirky shows and everything in between. Considering the amount of talent here, it's not at all surprising that Mobile is a canvas for artistic expression.

The city's deep roots take shape at some of the finest historical institutions in Alabama, and the [Mobile Museum of Art](#) is a prime example. The museum boasts inspiring and frequent programming for all ages and abilities alongside some of the Gulf Coast's most diverse permanent and rotating exhibits.

In case you just can't get enough inside the Mobile Museum of Art, the outdoor sculpture trail is a nice respite on a beautiful day. The museum grounds in [Langan Park](#) are home to more than 20 pieces of modern art in a variety of media including steel, metal and aluminum. These displays are free to the public, so pack a picnic and appreciate the view.

Mobile is home to plenty of additional outdoor art, meaning you don't even need to visit a museum to appreciate all the beauty and inspiration in the city. Our phenomenal public art begs for photo ops, and colorful murals, sculptures and statues contribute to the city's vibrant downtown art scene.

If you're up for a true [self-guided mural tour](#), add "Love Wins," "Souls of Mobile," "LoDa Bier Garten" and "Dauphin Street Blues Company" to your list.

If you decide that indoor art is more your scene, [Alabama Contemporary Art Center](#) is located right downtown, providing

a home to an array of temporary exhibitions, adult education programs, and artists in residence. Throughout the rest of downtown, you'll find shops and galleries that give our incredibly creative community plenty of places to display and sell their work to art lovers from near and far.

Lower Dauphin is the art district on Dauphin Street and it's where the popular [LoDa ArtWalk](#) is celebrated in a big way. On the second Friday of every month, galleries, restaurants, shops and other businesses in the LoDa Arts District open their doors for a family-friendly evening, all in support of local artists and arts organizations. Seasonally, we close our streets to vehicular traffic and turn Bienville Square into a giant skating rink light show, DJ, and, of course, the hokey pokey!

Mobile's music scene is making noise, and we're here for it! From music festivals to charming neighborhood pubs and bars, Mobile's stage is set. Local venues like Alabama Music Box, [Cedar Street Social](#), [Callaghan's Irish Social Club](#), The Peoples Room of Mobile, and the Soul Kitchen are great places to catch homegrown musicians.

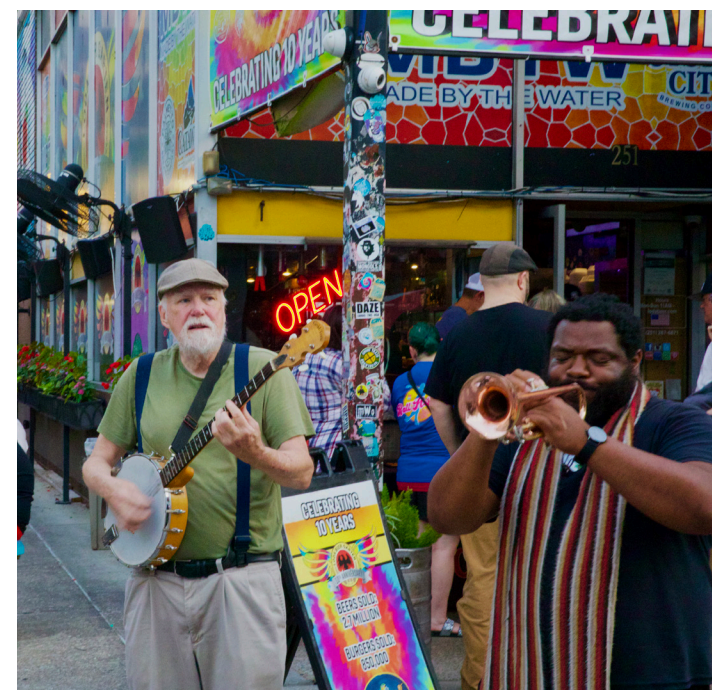
The historic [Saenger Theatre](#) is the official home of the [Mobile Symphony Orchestra](#), one of the nation's top regional orchestras. Their inspiring concerts feature a variety of musical styles ranging from beloved classical masterpieces to exciting modern works. Elsewhere around town, [Mobile Opera](#) makes that genre accessible to each member of the audience, taking steps to ensure that even novices can quickly understand and appreciate what's happening on stage. Meanwhile, [Mobile Ballet](#) does the same... going so far as to operate the city's most charming and

nurturing ballet classes for everyone from the youngest member of the family to seniors.

The [Joe Jefferson Players](#) is one of the historic gems of Mobile's performing arts community. It opened in 1947 to restore the city's waning theater scene and today is Alabama's oldest continually operational community theater. Playhouse in the Park celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2021 and remains Mobile's premier youth

theater. The newest addition to the city's live arts scene is The PACT Theatre Company, which opened in 2018. It's a performing arts center that trains in theater, dance, voice, music, art and more.

Whether it's an avant-garde performance in one of our live music venues, a cool public art installation or stunning exhibition, or even the opportunity to discover or reintroduce yourself to your own artistic side, Mobile's art scene should be YOUR scene, too.



OUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Mobile’s outdoor offerings has something for everyone, from picturesque beach days to fast-paced airboat tours to casual walks through parks and gardens.

Many of Mobile’s outdoor activities center round the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, also known as “America’s Amazon” because of its rich biodiversity. It’s the largest river delta and wetland in the state of Alabama and the second largest in the country. You can find up to 40 species of mammals, 300 species of birds and 500 species of plants as you explore from a kayak, an airboat or Delta tour.

Mobile offers great floral blooms all year round, but visit in the spring and you’ll quickly figure out why Mobile earned the nickname “Azalea City.” Each spring, thousands of azaleas spread breathtaking colors throughout the city. Experience azaleas is by visiting [Mobile Botanical Gardens](#), a 100-acre paved garden area that’s home to one of the largest collection of plants anywhere on the Gulf Coast. [Bellingrath Gardens](#) is a 65-acre public garden that offers its own stunning display of azaleas in the spring. In the fall, visitors are treated to the country’s largest outdoor display of cascading mums.

Just a quick 45-minute drive from downtown Mobile lies [Dauphin Island](#), a beach town that’s perfect for every member of your family, even the four-legged ones. The best way to explore the island is by bike or walking trails, but if your sea legs need to be stretched, kayaking and fishing are popular aquatic activities. With white sand beaches, local shops, restaurants, and attractions that highlight the natural beauty of the area, there’s no shortage of things to do in this charming beach town.

The [Audubon Bird Sanctuary](#) offers unbeatable birdwatching opportunities and the [Alabama Aquarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab](#) finds innovative ways to educate its visitors about how humans can impact the environment – in both bad and good ways. The aquarium is home to interactive exhibits that provide a fascinating overview of Mobile.

With 72 holes of legendary Robert Trent Jones greens and dozens more courses, see why Mobile is your elite golf destination.

We take our public green spaces very seriously and you’ll find statues, water features and impressive landscaping in the parks and squares all around town. An especially popular location is Bienville Square, a historic park that’s home to the ornate Ketchum Fountain.

So, pack your kayak, your sneakers, your golf clubs, your beach chair or just your sunglasses and get ready to enjoy the fresh air and bountiful outdoor activities in and around Mobile.





MARDI GRAS

Mobile invites you to experience our cultural connections—the events, experiences and extras that make us “So Mobile.” So Mobile is an elevated feeling encompassing the convergence of a certain coastal culture. Where history, art and cuisine arise from the birthplace of **Mardi Gras** in a city that’s flown under six flags.

Our Carnival is a family-friendly season of parties, balls, majestic parades and revelry. During the Mardi Gras season, which lasts from January 6 (the end of the Christmas season) until Ash Wednesday (the start of the Easter season), more than 40 parades roll through the streets of downtown Mobile. Elaborate themed floats escorted by masked mystic societies, mounted police and marching bands wind through Mobile and its surrounding areas, entertaining nearly a million revelers each year.

To fully appreciate Mardi Gras in Mobile, begin your adventure at the **Mobile Carnival Museum**. Housed in a historic mansion, the museum is a perfect way to learn more about Mardi Gras in its true U.S. birthplace. The museum features 14 galleries, video presentations, a pictorial hallway and an interactive float area. Here you’ll discover the arts of costume design and float construction, witness the pomp and pageantry of past coronations, and even experience what it’s like to be on the parade route by climbing aboard a rocking float.

The next time you consider Mardi Gras, we encourage you to think about where it all began in the United States, here in Mobile.





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