



# **ESSENTIAL RV MISSISSIPPI:** **MOTORING THROUGH THE BEST OF MISSISSIPPI**

by Suzanne Wright

**“Don’t miss out” is the slogan for Mississippi tourism. And for good reason. The Magnolia State has a multitude of charms. This is the birthplace of the blues, the catfish capital of the U.S., and the home of literary titans past and present, including William Faulkner, John Grisham, and Eudora Welty. Laced with numerous rivers, including the Mighty Mississippi, the state’s subtropical climate nurtures a rural, unrushed lifestyle. From its manicured lawns to its untamed places, from the Appalachian foothills to the Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi is a mannerly, memorable, and family-friendly ramble.**



## 1 NORTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Passing through three states, the 444-mile long [Natchez Trace Parkway](#) is one of the most acclaimed of America's National Scenic Byways. It dates back to the early 1700s when it served as a footpath used by Native Americans. Notable stops include Bynum Indian Mounds south of Tupelo; the Cypress Swamp (alligator alert!) elevated trail at milepost 122; and Witch Dance, at milepost 233.2, known for paranormal activity. Nineteen impeccably maintained antebellum homes (all private residences) are open during fall and spring, when colorful, showy azaleas and dogwoods punctuate the roadways.

Tupelo is best known as the [humble birthplace](#) of the King of Rock n' Roll, Elvis Presley. The picturesque town of [Oxford](#), christened the "Cultural Mecca of the South," is a hub for the creative class and a foodie's dream. We like the upscale-but-downhome [Bouré](#), chicken-on-a-stick at the [Four Corners Chevron](#), and Old World Italian at [Tarasque Cucina](#). [Corinth](#), located at the crossroads of two rail lines important during the Confederacy, oozes small-town ambiance. No matter how off-putting the name sounds, don't leave without tasting a regional delicacy, the "slugburger," a beef or pork patty made with an "extender" like soy flour, deep-fried, and topped with chopped onions and mustard. Just 30 minutes south of Memphis, [Tunica](#) boasts a string of casinos featuring renowned entertainment.

**Where to Stay:** In Tupelo, [Tombigbee State Park](#) offers 20 scenic paved pads, while the [Campgrounds at Barne's Crossing](#) can accommodate 54 RVs in a wooded setting. [Tishomingo State Park](#) takes its name from the leader of the Chickasaw Nation; massive rock formations and fern-filled crevices distinguish this landscape from all others in the state. There are 60 sites on Haynes Lake. All three are conveniently located off the Natchez Trace.







## ② CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI

The [Noxubee Hills Route Scenic Byway](#) stretches through 43 miles of wooded countryside, affording opportunities for bird watching, fishing, and hunting. Jackson and the Capitol region has a concentration of walkable cultural attractions, including the [Mississippi Civil Rights Museum](#) and the [Museum of Mississippi History](#). [Vicksburg National Military Park](#) and [Vicksburg National Cemetery](#) are moving experiences that provide insight into the hard truths of America's Civil War past. If you're feeling lucky, you're in luck in Philadelphia. The [Pearl River Resort](#), built by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, hosts an impressive casino and hotel, spa, water park, and two highly-rated golf courses.

**Where to Stay:** [Roosevelt State Park](#) in Morton, between Meridian and Jackson, offers 109 RV sites with picnic tables and grills. The dramatic onsite overlook of Bienville National Forest is especially appealing when crisp temperatures and autumnal color prevail.

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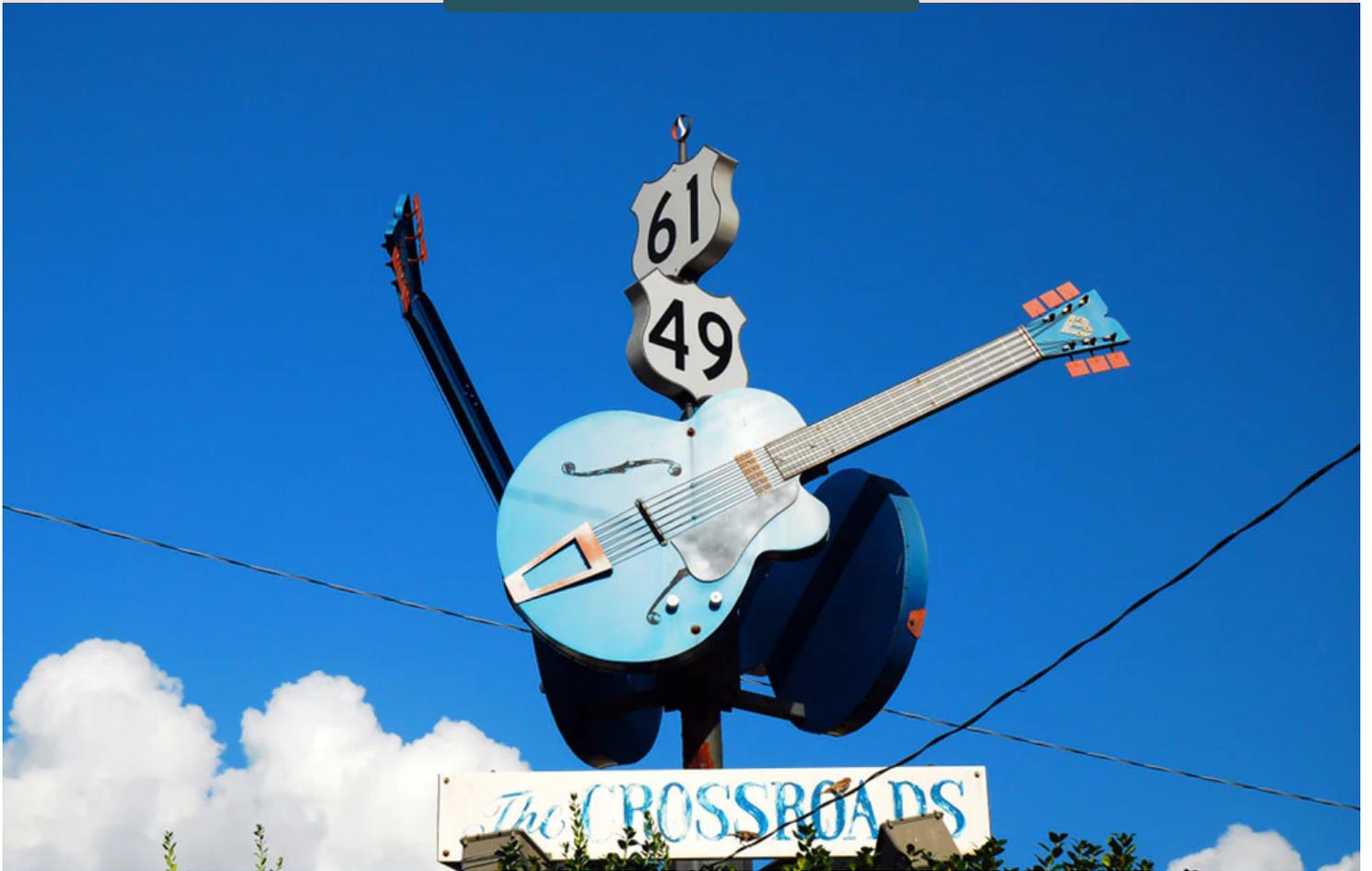


### 3 MISSISSIPPI DELTA

The blues were born in the northwest part of the state, between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers. John Lee Hooker, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, and Lead Belly are just a few of the legends that hail from this soulful soil. The [Delta Blues Museum](#) in Clarksdale is a fantastic introduction to the unique sound of America. Located on the campus of Delta State University, the 28,000-square foot [GRAMMY Museum](#) offers an interactive and inspirational experience that celebrates all genres of music. In Indianola, the [B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center](#) immortalizes the contributions this legend gave to the world. There are some sensational culinary specialties in this region. Foremost are Delta tamales, spicy, smaller versions of Latin tamales, simmered instead of steamed. Always—always—order catfish, fried pickles, and custard-like chess pie in these parts. Some of the richest farmland in the world is found in the southern half of the Delta. The [Delta National Forest](#) is the nation's only bottomland hardwood forest, surrounded by bayous, rivers, and lakes. ATV riding, canoeing, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing are among the myriad outdoor pursuits.

**Where to Stay:** There are plenty of RV parks—from rustic to developed—scattered throughout the [Mississippi Delta](#).







## ④ COASTAL MISSISSIPPI

Life is especially breezy south of I-10. Studded with old-growth magnolias and paralleling the Gulf of Mexico, Beach Boulevard (also known as U.S. Highway 90) is a Sunday drive any day of the week. Each of the Sunbelt communities dotting the coast are unique in their own way. [Bay St. Louis](#) and [Ocean Springs](#) are like two sisters: the first, a funky, free spirit; the other, more of a Southern debutante. Both have wonderful shopping and dining and are graced by notable architecture. You'll dodge a shower or two during your visit; precipitation is the reason the state is so lush. We recommend heading to the co-located [Cat Island Coffeehouse](#) and [Pass Christian Books](#) to while away a rainy afternoon browsing the many volumes from past and present local authors. The \$100 million [Mississippi Aquarium](#) in Gulfport ties together the stories of the state's waterways, while Biloxi's [Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum](#) highlights the heritage and history of the coast. Deep sea fishing charters are an option, as is the ever-fun [Biloxi Shrimping Tour](#). The primitive barrier islands off the coast, save for Ship Island, are accessible only by private boat, but they afford splendid solitude and wildlife watching if you can swing a charter. If not, [Ship Island Excursions](#) operates ferry service from mid-March to mid-October, weather permitting. The [Pascagoula Audubon River Center](#) offers guided boat tours; more adventurous travelers will enjoy the peaceful intimacy kayaking these waterways provide. Get your fill of fried seafood—we really love the oyster poboy—at [Bozo's Seafood Grocery & Grill](#).

**Where to Stay:** This is a booming area, popular year-round, especially during October's [Cruisin' the Coast](#), the nation's top car show, with many long-stay snowbird RVers, so reservations are vital. Fortunately, there are more than 45 RV parks in the area. [Majestic Oaks RV Resort](#) has a slate of extensive amenities, including concierge service and an onsite propane station. Looking for something more low-key? Centrally located [Davis Bayou Campground in Gulf Islands National Seashore](#), is nestled amid live oaks and pines, and adjacent to a saltwater marsh, making it ideal for bird watching and picnicking.



