



## **MO Civil Rights & Cultural Sites**

Cities: St. Louis, Jefferson City, Independence, Kansas City

### **Day 1 – St. Louis**

A visit to St. Louis is not complete without visiting the **Gateway Arch National Park**. The grounds of the Gateway Arch feature an enhanced riverfront region and park acreage spanning over the highway, connecting the Arch to the historic Old Courthouse. The underground **Museum at the Gateway Arch** includes interactive technology, helping tell the story of westward expansion through the perspectives of various cultures. Scenic riverboat cruises are also available at scheduled times. [www.gatewayarch.com](http://www.gatewayarch.com)

The **National Blues Museum** is dedicated exclusively to preserving and honoring the history and legacy of Blues music and its impact on American and world culture. A “must-see” attraction, the museum features artifact-driven exhibits, live performances and interactive galleries to perpetuate blues culture for future generations of artists, fans and historians. [www.nationalbluesmuseum.org](http://www.nationalbluesmuseum.org)

Enjoy lunch downtown before heading to the Griot. The **Griot Museum of Black History** is the first black history wax museum in the Midwest and features more than 5,000 years of culture and history. You can take a walk through life-size wax figures, other art, artifacts, and memorabilia to interpret the stories of notable African Americans with a regional connection that has contributed to the development of our country. <https://www.thegriotmuseum.com/>

Embark on a walking or bus tour with **See STL Tours**, who offers various themes. Learn about St. Louis’ music roots, Civil Rights history, or cultural neighborhoods – to name a few. <https://mohistory.org/learn/see-stl>

After dinner, make your way to a music venue to enjoy authentic St. Louis blues. Popular sites include BB’s Jazz, Blues & Soups, The Beale on Broadway, and Broadway Oyster Bar. The National Blues Museum also has a performance venue on-site, where they host weekly open jam sessions.

### **Day 2 – St. Louis & Jefferson City**

After breakfast, make your way to **Missouri Botanical Garden** and board the garden’s tram for a narrated tour through the beautiful gardens. Founded in 1859, the Missouri Botanical Garden contains 79 acres of scenic landscaping and sculptures. Highlights include: the Climatron® tropical rain forest; Linnean House, Japanese Garden, and the Grigg Nanjing Friendship Chinese Garden. [www.missouribotanicalgarden.org](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org)

Travel to the one of St. Louis' many unique neighborhoods and see firsthand what is considered by many to be the greatest example of Byzantine architecture in the world at the **St. Louis Cathedral Basilica**. <http://cathedralstl.org/>

Make your way to **City Foundry STL** for lunch, where the European-style Food Hall offers 17 kitchens to choose from; cuisines include Creole, Afro Caribbean, Indian, American, Latin American, Mexican, and Asian. <https://www.cityfoundrystl.com/food-hall>

For an overview of St. Louis' past, visit the **Missouri History Museum** in Forest Park where Lindbergh, Lewis & Clark, and the Louisiana Purchase come to life. You'll see artifacts from Colonial St. Louis, the Lewis & Clark expedition, Civil War and the beginning of the American West. Galleries featuring cultural icons like Katherine Dunham, Miles Davis, Tennessee Williams and others who lived and worked in St. Louis reflect the modern influences on St. Louis and world culture. [www.mohistory.org](http://www.mohistory.org)

A driving tour of **Forest Park**, where the famous 1904 World's Fair of 'Meet Me in St. Louis' took place, offers such sights as the Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis Zoo, Jewel Box, World's Fair Pavilion, The Muny outdoor amphitheater and the St. Louis Science Center. [www.forestparkforever.org](http://www.forestparkforever.org)

Depart for Jefferson City.

*Option: En route, take a detour to the German settlement of Hermann – 15 miles off Interstate 70. The eclectic town boasts a thriving wine industry. Groups can schedule a winery tour/tasting, shop antique stores or sample German cuisine.*

When you arrive in Jefferson City, check into your hotel for some down time before heading to dinner.

Overnight in Jefferson City.

### **Day 3 – Jefferson City, Independence & Kansas City**

After breakfast, make your way to **Soldiers Memorial** at Lincoln University where a staff member will talk about the history of the campus. Following the end of the Civil War, former enslaved soldiers of the 62nd and 65th United States Colored Infantries founded the college. Taught to read and write while in the army, they wanted to offer the same opportunity to newly freed slaves and donated their wages and time to open the school in 1866. College-level coursework started to be offered in 1877. The Soldier's Memorial sculpture honors the founding fathers. Additional artifacts can be seen in the Inman E. Page Library – such as documents on the *Gaines v. Canada* Supreme Court case, the Abraham Lincoln Mural by Thomas Hart Benton and the 1886 biography *Harriet, the Moses of Her People*.

Decommissioned in 2004, the **Missouri State Penitentiary** is open to the public for history and paranormal tours. Before it closed, MSP was the oldest continually operating penitentiary west of the Mississippi. Opened in 1836, the prison was 100 years old when Alcatraz began taking inmates. The tour showcases cells including those of famous inmates such as heavyweight champion Sonny Liston, who learned to box during his time in the big house, and James Earl Ray. In 1967, Missouri State Penitentiary was infamously named the "bloodiest 47 acres in America" by *Time* magazine because of the incredibly high number of serious assaults on the

grounds between 1963-1964. Operates March to November. Tours include complimentary admission to the neighboring **MSP Museum**, which houses memorabilia from behind the walls (open weekdays). [www.missouripentours.com](http://www.missouripentours.com)

Carrying on the theme, grab a bite to eat at **Prison Brews** before hopping back on the coach to depart for Independence. <https://www.prisonbrews.com/>

Arrive at the **Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum**, dedicated to preserving the history of our nation's 33rd President. With an exhibit dedicated to Civil Rights, visitors learn about Truman's efforts towards equality in the United States – from desegregating the federal workforce and the military to establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. The site is also the resting place of President Truman and his wife, Bess. [www.trumanlibrary.gov](http://www.trumanlibrary.gov)

Retrace the path of pioneers aboard a covered wagon as you tour Independence. **Pioneer Trails Adventures** regales passengers with tales as you see historic sites and learn about outlaws who wreaked havoc in the area. At the end of the tour, it's time to dig in during a chuck wagon dinner. <https://www.pioneertrailsadventures.com/>

Overnight in Kansas City.

#### Day 4 – Kansas City

Trace your roots at the **Black Archives of Mid-America**. The archive houses one of the largest African American historical collections in the region – including oral histories with civil rights activists, original documents freeing slaves and pictures of prominent figures. There are also various exhibits for guests to peruse.

Experience Kansas City's most famous traditions — jazz and barbecue — both of which have roots in KC that date back to the 1920s. Located in the Historic 18th & Vine Jazz District, the **American Jazz Museum** showcases the sights and sounds of jazz through interactive exhibits and films. The museum's sole focus is on the preservation, exhibition and advancement of jazz music. Don't miss the **Negro Leagues Baseball Museum**, the world's only museum dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history of African-American baseball and its impact on the social advancement of America. Housed in the same facility as the jazz museum, NLBM was recently added to the U.S. Civil Rights Trial. [www.americanjazzmuseum.org](http://www.americanjazzmuseum.org) | <https://www.nlbm.com/>

Lunch at **Arthur Bryant's Barbecue**. Arthur Bryant, the legendary King of Ribs, is the most renowned barbequer in history. He created a sauce that has attracted the likes of former Presidents Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama to his restaurant. [www.arthurbryants.com](http://www.arthurbryants.com)

The **Gangster Tour** features an interactive look at the Pendergast-era from 1920 to 1945. "Gangster TV" highlights this wild and wooly era with historical film and photographs from the period. You'll learn and see how the "Pendergast Machine" controlled the political system and the very fabric of life in Kansas City. The tour highlights infamous crimes like the Union Station Massacre, shows the locations of speakeasies and gambling halls and explains how liquor flowed freely during prohibition. The homes and workplaces of crime bosses and the sites of

major turf wars are also featured on the tour. Sounds like an “offer you can’t refuse.”

[www.kansascitytransportationgroup.com/kc-gangster-tour](http://www.kansascitytransportationgroup.com/kc-gangster-tour)

The **Arabia Steamboat Museum** is a true time capsule of frontier life in the 1800s. The Arabia was headed up the Missouri River in the fall of 1856 when she struck a tree snag and sank just north of Kansas City. Her cargo hold was full of 200-tons of supplies bound for general stores and pioneer settlements. As the years passed, the river changed course and left the Arabia buried beneath a Kansas cornfield. Finally, in 1988, a group of modern-day adventurers uncovered the lost Arabia and her magnificent bounty. They were amazed to find fine dishware, clothing and even bottled food all preserved in remarkable condition. Their find has been called the “King Tut’s Tomb of the Missouri River.” So, if you’re looking for an adventure the whole group will enjoy, discover the treasures of the Steamboat Arabia. [www.1856.com](http://www.1856.com)

Enjoy dinner before returning to the hotel

Overnight in Kansas City.

## **Day 5 – Kansas City**

Coffee connoisseur’s will “perk” up with a factory tour of **The Roasterie**. After the world’s best coffee beans are sourced, this Kansas City business unlocks the optimum flavor profile by air-roasting the beans at a perfect temperature. Get a behind-the-scenes look at their factory and learn about their cupping, roasting and blending processes before sampling their fresh java.

<https://www.theroasterie.com/about/tours>

Learn more about the legacy of WWI with a visit to the **National World War I Museum and Memorial**. The museum uses its comprehensive, world-class historical collections to inspire its strategic efforts in the areas of exhibition, education, research and interpretation.

[www.theworldwar.org](http://www.theworldwar.org)

Grab a bite to eat before making your way to **The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**, recognized internationally as one of the world’s finest art museums. With a collection of nearly 40,000 pieces, you’ll find the diverse assortment has something that appeals to everyone!

<https://www.nelson-atkins.org/>

Shopping enthusiasts won’t want to miss **Country Club Plaza** - a premier retail area designed after Seville, Spain. Interesting architecture and fountains abound on every corner. Spend some time exploring the Plaza and indulging in retail therapy before grabbing a bite to eat at one of the many restaurants. <https://countryclubplaza.com/>