

Celebrate Mardi Gras in Style

Day 1: Arrival in the Birthplace of Jazz, New Orleans

After a flight across the Atlantic, you arrive in New Orleans, where the unique Southern atmosphere, the sounds of jazz and the city's colourful history set the stage for the beginning of your journey.

From the moment you arrive, you can feel that this is no ordinary American city. Founded in 1718 by French colonists, the city has since been under French, Spanish and American rule. This diverse past has left a clear imprint on the city's architecture, cuisine, religion and music.



Day 2: French Quarter and Departure from New Orleans

The day begins in the heart of New Orleans, in the French Quarter – the city's oldest and most atmospheric neighbourhood. It was here that jazz music first developed in the early 1900s, created by African-American musicians as an expression of pain, hope and creativity. Narrow streets, hidden courtyards and wrought-iron balconies characterise a district where the past sits alongside today's lively bars and music venues.

During a walk through the Quarter, you may see the iconic horse-drawn carriages that slowly make their way through the streets, offering a nostalgic glimpse into the city's past. At the centre of it all is Jackson Square with the beautiful St. Louis Cathedral, North America's oldest cathedral, which has been a religious and cultural gathering place for more than 300 years.

In the afternoon you board the ship, which will be your base for the days ahead on your cruise. At 4:00 pm the ship sets sail on the Mississippi River, and as New Orleans slowly disappears into the horizon, the journey towards the Western Caribbean begins.



Day 4: Cozumel: Mayan Culture, Coral Reefs and Caribbean Ambience

You arrive in Cozumel, an island deeply rooted in the Pre-Columbian Mayan civilisation. For the Maya, this island was a sacred place, especially dedicated to the fertility and moon goddess Ix Chel, whom women travelled here to worship. The remains of temples and shrines still testify to the island's religious significance in Mayan culture.

There are opportunities to visit archaeological sites such as San Gervasio, where you will gain insight into Mayan society, their beliefs, ceremonies and understanding of the cosmos. The Maya were known for their impressive knowledge of astronomy, calendrical systems and architecture – knowledge that still fascinates researchers today.

In addition to its cultural heritage, Cozumel boasts some of the most beautiful coral reefs in the Caribbean, lying close to the shore and offering outstanding snorkelling and diving opportunities. Alternatively, the day can be enjoyed in the island's charming town environment with local markets, beaches, colourful shops and Mexican hospitality.



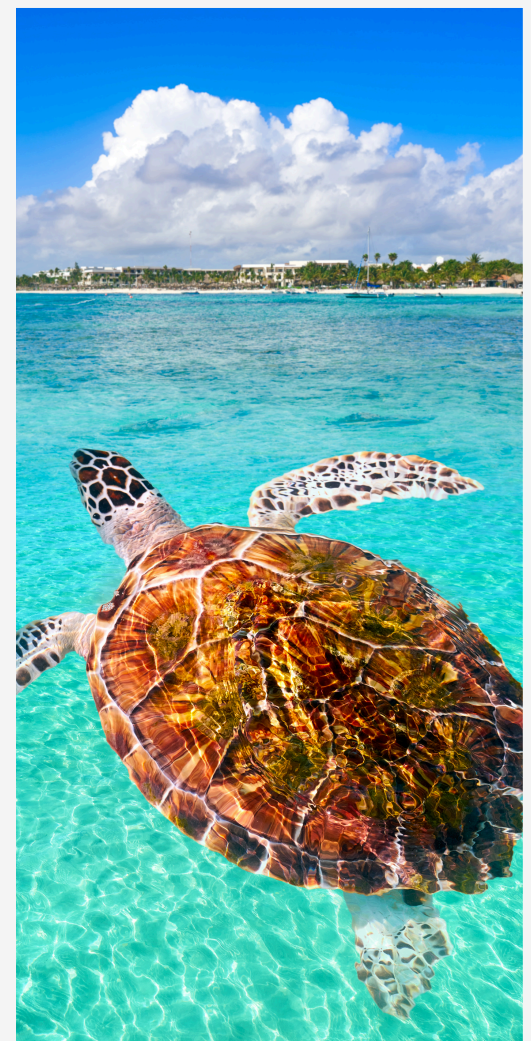
Day 5: Roatán, Honduras: Caribbean History, Nature and Underwater Life

You arrive in Roatán, part of Honduras and the largest of the country's Bay Islands. Here lush nature and a relaxed Caribbean lifestyle come together in stunning surroundings. The island's history has been shaped by Indigenous peoples, European colonial powers and pirates who used the island as a hideout during the 1600s and 1700s.

Later, Roatán came under British influence, which can still be seen in both language and culture.

Roatán is especially known for its rich underwater life and lies in the heart of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, the world's second largest coral reef system. Here you will find colourful fish, corals and an impressive marine ecosystem that make the island a paradise for snorkellers and divers – including beginners, as the reef lies close to the coastline.

Inland, the island offers lush jungle, small villages and local markets where you can gain insight into everyday life in Honduras. There are opportunities to visit traditional communities, experience local culture and enjoy the relaxed Caribbean atmosphere. For those who prefer tranquillity, the white sandy beaches and turquoise waters invite you to relax with a view that stretches as far as the eye can see.



Day 6: Relaxation on the Private Island of Harvest Caye, Belize

Harvest Caye is a private island owned by Norwegian Cruise Line, serving as an exclusive gateway to Belize. The island has been developed as a peaceful and comfortable retreat, where beach life, tropical nature and excellent facilities provide the setting for a relaxing day in the Caribbean.

Belize stands apart from its neighbours with its British colonial history and English-speaking culture, yet it also embraces a strong Caribbean identity and rich Mayan heritage. The area around Belize was once the centre of several important Mayan city-states. Inland, archaeological sites such as Altun Ha, Lamanai and Xunantunich rise from the jungle, bearing witness to a highly developed civilisation with extensive knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and architecture.

Belize is also known for its exceptional natural beauty, including rainforests, rivers and mangrove forests, as well as abundant wildlife. The country is home to the Belize Barrier Reef, the second largest coral reef in the world, offering excellent snorkelling and diving experiences.

On Harvest Caye itself, you can enjoy the day in peaceful surroundings with beach areas, pool facilities and Caribbean atmosphere. The island's amenities provide opportunities for both relaxation and light activities, while the crystal-clear water dictates the days pace.



Day 7: Costa Maya: Mayan History, Lagoons and Beach Life

On Mexico's Caribbean coast lies Costa Maya, an area where ancient Mayan history and tropical nature shape the day's experiences. The region was an important part of the classic Mayan civilisation and contains several archaeological sites that testify to a society with extensive knowledge of astronomy, architecture and mathematics.

From Costa Maya there is the opportunity to visit impressive Mayan ruins such as Chacchoben, where temples and pyramids rise out of the jungle. Here you will gain insight into Mayan ceremonies, social structures and daily life, and guided tours tell the story of a civilisation that flourished for centuries before the arrival of Spanish colonisers.

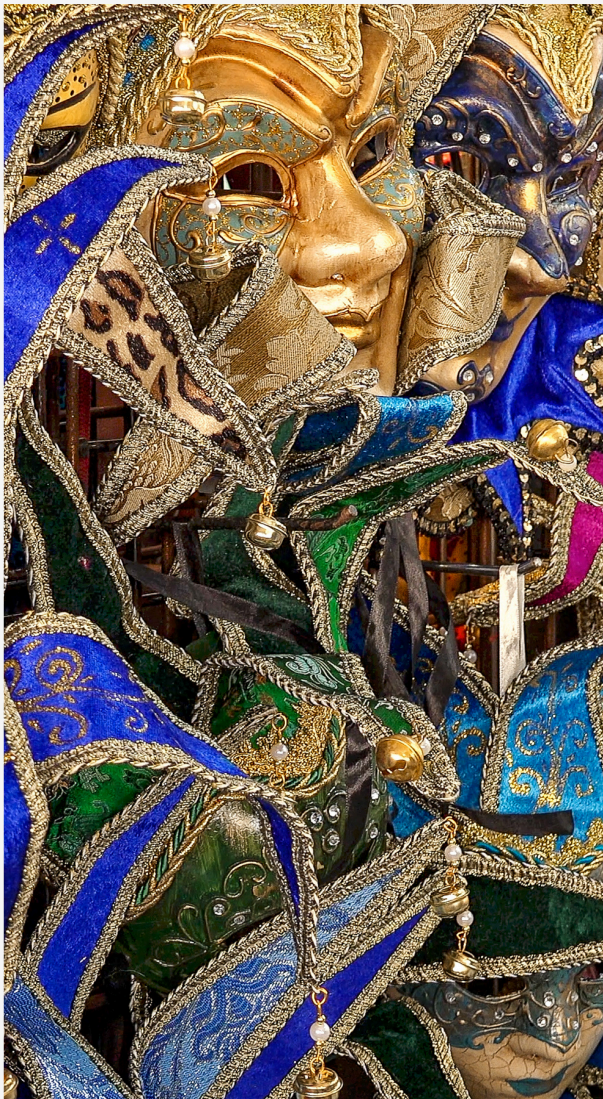
The region also offers beautiful lagoons and mangrove forests, where fresh and salt water meet to create a rich and vibrant ecosystem. Here you can experience nature's unhurried pace – whether on boat trips through mangrove channels or by relaxing along the coastline.

For those who prefer a more leisurely day, Costa Maya's beaches invite you to unwind with soft sand, swaying palms and the turquoise Caribbean Sea. Small beach bars and local eateries present the chance to sample Mexican specialities and enjoy the laid-back local atmosphere.

Day 8: Enjoy a Day at Sea

After exciting days ashore, the journey once again returns to open sea. A day aboard Norwegian Breakaway gives you the chance to slow down and enjoy the cruise's comfort and many facilities. The ship is known for its modern design, wide selection of restaurants and relaxed atmosphere.

Spend the day relaxing by the pool area, enjoying the sea views from the deck, or indulging yourselves in the ship's spa. There is also ample opportunity for entertainment, shopping and culinary experiences – whether you prefer international specialties or classic favourites. A day at sea also gives you time to let your Caribbean experiences settle in while the ship sets course back towards New Orleans, and the journey slowly moves into its next chapter.



Day 9: New Orleans: Southern Architecture, History and Atmosphere

After the cruise ends, you return to New Orleans, where there is now time to explore the city's many facets. New Orleans is one of the United States' most distinctive cities – shaped by centuries of French and Spanish colonial rule, African traditions and American Southern culture.

Today offers the opportunity to experience the elegant Garden District, known for its broad oak-lined avenues and beautiful 19th-century mansions. A special highlight is the historic St. Charles Avenue streetcar, one of the oldest continuously operating streetcar lines in the world, offering an atmospheric glimpse into the city's architecture and daily life.

The city's unique relationship with life and death is evident in its historic cemeteries, where graves are built above ground due to the moist soil near the Mississippi River.

You can also choose to experience the city from the water on an atmospheric jazz cruise aboard a classic paddle steamer on the Mississippi River, where live jazz music accompanies the journey and underscores the river's importance to the city's history and culture.

Day 10: French Quarter & the Cradle of Jazz

Today you will experience a city brimming with anticipation for tomorrow's Mardi Gras – a celebration that is not merely an event but a cultural expression of New Orleans' identity and history.

Mardi Gras has its roots in medieval European carnival traditions, where carnival was a final lavish celebration before the fasting period of Lent. Masks and costumes temporarily suspended normal social rules and made room for festivities, music and role-play.

These traditions were brought to Louisiana by European colonists – especially the French – in the early 1700s, and Mardi Gras has since evolved into a central and cherished part of city life. Preparations begin months in advance with planning of parades and building of elaborately decorated floats. Costumes and masks continue to play an important role, and shops and markets fill with colourful feathers, bead necklaces and masks.

In the weeks leading up to Mardi Gras, the city is adorned with the traditional colours of purple, green and gold, and restaurants and bakeries prepare seasonal specialties – including the traditional King Cake. Today is free for you to soak up the atmosphere in anticipation of the year's biggest event.





Day 11: Mardi Gras: A Historic Festival in Gold, Purple and Green

Today you will experience Mardi Gras in New Orleans – one of the world’s most famous and colourful celebrations. Mardi Gras means “Fat Tuesday” and marks the final day before Lent, but in New Orleans the festival extends far beyond a single day. It is the climax of several weeks of festivities rooted in both European carnival traditions and the city’s unique cultural heritage.



Throughout the day, the city’s streets fill with spectacular parades organised by the so-called krewes – social and cultural associations, some of which have existed for over 150 years. The parades feature elaborately decorated floats, marching bands and participants in colourful costumes who throw bead necklaces, coins and small gifts to the crowd. The classic Mardi Gras colours – purple, green and gold – symbolise justice, faith and power, and are reflected in costumes, decorations and the city’s streets.



The atmosphere is festive and inclusive, with music everywhere – from brass bands and jazz to modern rhythms – and the streets buzz with life. You may encounter street parties, spontaneous dance performances and a city that for a day leaves everyday routine behind to celebrate community, creativity and joie de vivre.

Day 12: By Train Through the Deep South from New Orleans to Memphis

Today you leave New Orleans behind, letting the rhythms of jazz and the colours of Mardi Gras fade into memory. As you travel inland, the scenery gradually shifts and you’ll have the chance to experience the varied landscapes of the American Deep South. The views include rivers, swamplands, wooded stretches and small rural communities where time seems to move a little more slowly.

The Deep South is the birthplace of blues, jazz and rock’n’roll, and this route connects two cities that have each left an indelible mark on the development of music.

Later in the day you arrive in Memphis, beautifully situated on the banks of the Mississippi River and known as the home of both blues and Elvis Presley.



Day13: Memphis: Blues, Civil Rights & Rock'n'Roll

Memphis is inseparably connected with the development of blues music and has played a central role in the history of the music that later gave the world rock'n'roll. On the famous Beale Street, the distinctive musical sounds were born that became the foundation of new genres. Today, the street still stands as a living symbol of the city's African-American cultural heritage.

A visit to Sun Studio provides insight into the musical revolution where young artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis recorded music that changed popular music forever. For Elvis, Memphis became both the beginning and the centre of his career. Graceland, Elvis Presley's iconic home, offers a unique look behind superstar life — from his early years to global fame. Today, Graceland stands as one of the most visited private homes in the United States and testifies to Elvis's enormous influence on music and popular culture.

Memphis also holds a significant chapter in American civil rights history. The Lorraine Motel, where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, is now home to the National Civil Rights Museum and offers a powerful perspective on the struggle for equality and freedom.

This day offers a comprehensive understanding of why Memphis continues to be regarded as one of the United States' most culturally significant cities.

Note: Tickets for Graceland and Sun Studio are recommended to be booked in advance:

www.graceland.com/ticket-information

www.sunstudio.com/tickets-1



Day14: Through Tennessee Towards Nashville

Today you leave Memphis and continue your journey toward Nashville, Tennessee's vibrant music metropolis — a city that grew up as a railway hub and later became known as the home of country music.

Nashville is famously known as "Music City" and for decades has been a gathering place for songwriters, musicians and artists from across the country.

The journey, which takes place by Greyhound bus, offers a great insight into the region's rural landscapes and forms a natural transition between two cities that have both played a central role in the history of American music — each with its own unique identity.

Day 15: Nashville: The Heart of Country Music

Nashville rightly carries the nickname “Music City” and is widely regarded as the world’s centre for country music. The city’s musical heritage stretches back more than a century and is closely linked to the American dream of music and talent.

A visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame provides an in-depth look at the development of country music — from its roots in folk and gospel to today’s stars. Here, you’ll hear the stories of the artists, songwriters and songs that have helped shape the genre and make Nashville a musical destination.

The musical journey continues at the legendary RCA Studio B, where some of the biggest names in country and rock history recorded their songs. The studio is especially known for Elvis Presley’s many sessions and stands as an icon of the so-called “Nashville Sound,” which in the 1950s and 1960s helped bring country music to a wider audience.

The day can finish on the atmospheric Honky Tonk Row along Broadway. Here, classic bars and live music venues sit side by side, with live music pouring out from morning until late night.

Note: Tickets for Country Music Hall of Fame and RCA Studio B are recommended to be booked in advance:

www.countrymusichalloffame.org/select-your-experience



Day 16: Nashville for All the Senses

Today offers the opportunity to get to know the city’s creative side — from art and culinary specialities to legendary music — in short, everything that makes Music City so special.

Visit the charming 12 South neighbourhood, where colourful and iconic murals decorate the streets. This area is full of creativity and functions as a large outdoor gallery where art, cafés and local life blend together.

Next, head to the trendy The Gulch, a former industrial area that has been transformed into one of Nashville’s most fashionable districts. Here, you can enjoy a stylish brunch. You might also want to try the city’s famous spicy signature dish, hot chicken, which has achieved cult status far beyond Tennessee’s borders — a flavour experience that both warms and challenges.

The day concludes with a visit to the iconic Ryman Auditorium, known as “The Mother Church of Country Music.” Here, the Grand Ole Opry was broadcast live every Saturday night from 1943 to 1974, and these concerts helped bring country music to audiences across the United States. Ryman remains one of the nation’s most respected concert halls and has hosted countless music legends.

Day 17-18: Return Journey & Homecoming

Your journey now draws to a close, and you begin your return home with many impressions and experiences in your luggage. Along the way, there will be time to look back on the many cultural encounters, historical stories and memorable moments. After arrival back in London, the trip officially ends — but the memories of your many experiences will live on.



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