

Casino Lights by Night, a Painter's Colony by Day — A 3-Day Mississippi Gulf Coast Road Trip

A 3-day Mississippi long weekend built around Biloxi's beachfront casino strip, a ferry out to a barrier island inside Gulf Islands National Seashore, and Ocean Springs' small-town art colony — with real stops and 2026 prices throughout.

DURATION	BEST TIME TO GO	FROM
3 Days	Mar–May spring or fall — warm enough for the beach and before peak summer humidity and hurricane season	\$330 USD for 2 people

Day 1

Arrive & Biloxi Casino Row

Fly into Gulfport-Biloxi, settle onto the beachfront casino strip, and spend the evening at the oldest restaurant on the coast before the lights come on along the Strip.

Airport Arrival — Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport

~10–15 minutes to Biloxi casinos · Rental car recommended

A small regional airport a short drive inland from the beach — renting a car here is the easiest way to cover the three towns on this trip, none of which are more than 20 minutes apart.

Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Afternoon

Free to walk the casino floor and gardens · Gaming extra

The coast's flagship casino resort, with a 32-story tower over the beach, an indoor Tuscan-style garden atrium, and a casino floor that anchors Biloxi's whole Strip.

Beau Rivage Resort & Casino · <https://www.beaurivage.com>

Dinner — Mary Mahoney's Old French House

~1.5 hours · Est. \$35–\$55 USD / person

A Biloxi institution since 1964, set in a French colonial-era courtyard house dating to the 1730s, famous for a gumbo recipe that hasn't changed in six decades.

Mary Mahoney's Old French House · <https://www.marymahoneys.com>

Overnight — Beau Rivage Resort & Casino

From \$150–\$220 USD / night, for 2 people

A beachfront tower room with Gulf views puts every stop on this trip within a short drive, with the casino's restaurants and pools covering any downtime.

Beau Rivage Resort & Casino · <https://www.beaurivage.com>

Day 2

Ship Island & the Gulf

A day trip out to a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico, then an afternoon back on the mainland at a hands-on marine research center.

Ship Island Excursions — Ferry to West Ship Island

~1 hour each way · from \$35 USD / adult round-trip

A passenger ferry out to a slender barrier island inside Gulf Islands National Seashore, with an 1860s brick fort, a snorkel-clear sandbar, and almost no development beyond a single snack bar.

Ship Island Excursions · <https://www.msshipisland.com>

Fort Massachusetts & the Beach, West Ship Island

~3–4 hours on the island · Free with ferry ticket

A Civil War-era brick fort right at the ferry dock, and beyond it miles of undeveloped Gulf-side beach with some of the clearest water on the Mississippi coast.

Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, Gulfport

~1.5 hours · from \$12 USD / adult

A working dolphin rescue and research facility that also runs public presentations — a chance to watch a rehabilitation pool session with resident bottlenose dolphins up close.

Institute for Marine Mammal Studies · <https://www.imms.org>

Overnight — Beau Rivage Resort & Casino

From \$150–\$220 USD / night, for 2 people

Second night back at the same beachfront tower.

Day 3

Ocean Springs & Home

A last morning in Ocean Springs' walkable art-colony downtown before the short drive back to the airport.

Walter Anderson Museum of Art, Ocean Springs

~1 hour · from \$10 USD / adult

A small museum built around the murals and watercolors of Walter Anderson, the reclusive Gulf Coast artist who rowed alone to Horn Island for weeks at a time to paint its birds and storms.

Walter Anderson Museum of Art · <https://www.walterandersonmuseum.org>

Shearwater Pottery, Ocean Springs

~30–45 minutes · Free to browse, pottery for sale

A working pottery studio founded by the Anderson family in 1928, still hand-throwing and selling glazed stoneware from the same shaded compound off the highway.

Shearwater Pottery · <https://www.shearwaterpottery.com>

Lunch on your own — Downtown Ocean Springs

Est. \$15–\$25 USD / person

Washington Avenue's few walkable blocks hold most of the town's cafes and lunch counters, an easy last stop before the drive back to the airport.

Drive to Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport

~25 minutes from Ocean Springs

A short final run back down Highway 90 along the beach road closes out the loop.