

Honky-Tonks by Night, Then Elvis's Graceland — A 3-Day Nashville & Memphis Road Trip

Interstate 40 runs dead straight for roughly 210 miles across Tennessee, connecting the two cities most responsible for American popular music: Nashville, the modern capital of country music, and Memphis, the birthplace of rock and roll and the blues. This three-day road trip runs from Broadway's neon honky-tonks and the Country Music Hall of Fame to a self-drive west across the state, Elvis Presley's Graceland, and the studio where Sun Records first recorded him. A real rental car, real honky-tonks, and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION

3 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

April – June & September – October

Spring and fall bring mild temperatures and smaller crowds to both cities' outdoor attractions and walking districts; summer is hot, humid, and the most expensive season for hotels, while winter is quieter but colder.

FROM

\$550 USD / person

for 2 people, incl. 1 night in Nashville, 1 night in Memphis, a one-way rental car between the two cities, and admission to the Country Music Hall of Fame, Ryman Auditorium, Graceland, and Sun Studio (excl. flights and most meals)

A first night in Music City, with the genre's two essential shrines waiting within walking distance of each other.

Graceland — Elvis Experience Tour

~3 hrs, self-guided · \$85 USD/person

A self-guided tour through Elvis Presley's mansion and grounds, including the Jungle Room and his grave in the Meditation Garden, plus the separate Elvis Presley's Memphis entertainment complex across the street.

Graceland · +18002382000 · www.graceland.com

Sun Studio Tour

~45 min, guided · \$20 USD/person

The working studio where Sam Phillips recorded Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, B.B. King, and Jerry Lee Lewis, still used for recording sessions between daytime tours of the control room and original microphones.

Sun Studio · +19015210664 · www.sunstudio.com

Dinner — Central BBQ

~1 hr · ~\$15–20 USD/person

A Memphis barbecue favorite near Beale Street, known for its dry-rubbed ribs and a nacho plate piled with smoked pulled pork.

Central BBQ · cbqmemphis.com

Beale Street Evening Walk