



Simply Wander

THE LATEST TRAVEL GUIDE TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRIP

## 11 Bucket List Things to Do in Nashville, Tennessee

### 1. Listen to Live Music on Honky Tonk Highway

No visit to Nashville is complete without exploring the famous Honky Tonk Highway.

This lively stretch along Lower Broadway is lined with neon lights and honky-tonk saloons. There is such a fun energy in the air with live music pouring out of the open windows and doors.

You can even find a Taco Bell with a live music stage just around the corner!

One of the best things to do in Nashville is go bar hopping on Broadway. Even if you don't drink, it is still so fun to pop into the different honky tonks and listen to the live music.

A few iconic bars include Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, a world-famous honky tonk that opened in 1960. Willie Nelson used to have an apartment above the bar and got his first songwriting gig here.

Legends Corner is also a popular hot spot with performances by country music favorites like Toby Keith, Darius Rucker, Luke Bryan, and many more.

The walls of this dive bar are plastered with music memorabilia, including a guitar that once belonged to Johnny Cash.

Honky Tonk Central is also worth a stop. This 3-story venue has live music on every floor, including the rooftop bar where you can soak in views of Broadway at sunset.

There is no cover charge to visit the honky tonks, but bring cash to tip the bands! You must be over 21 to go inside the bars, so be sure to bring your ID.

### 2. Catch a Show at The Grand Ole Opry

Watching a show at the Grand Ole Opry is one of the best things to do in Nashville!

The Grand Ole Opry show is the longest running radio program in the world.

It has been on the air for nearly a century and everybody who is a somebody in the country music industry has performed on the Grand Ole Opry stage.

Every show is taped live and is structured with a variety of different performers. There are even commercial breaks in between the performances.

Even if you don't recognize any of the performers in the line-up, it's still worth going.

On the night we went, we hadn't heard of the majority of the performers but were blown away by the talent.

We saw performances by Charlie McCoy, a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and one of the best harmonica players in America.

He has recorded with Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton, Bob Dylan, and so many more.

Chrissy Metz from the TV Show, *This is Us*, and Barry Williams who played Greg Brady on *The Brady Bunch* also performed. I had no idea that either one of them had put out a country album.

We had a special treat when Riders In The Sky performed. We had never heard of them before but immediately recognized their music from the *Toy Story* movie soundtrack.

They were so cute and it was fun to hear them share about how they were discovered by Disney and their experience working on the film.

The only name we did recognize that night was Carrie Underwood and she was phenomenal!

Be sure to book tickets in advance to attend a live show and witness the magic that has made the Grand Ole Opry a symbol of Nashville's musical heritage.

Another fun option is to take a [backstage tour](#) of the Grand Ole Opry to learn more about its history.

### 3. Walk Around Gaylord Opryland Resort

Gaylor Opryland Resort is located right next to the Grand Ole Opry.

If you are planning to watch a show at the Grand Ole Opry, I would recommend arriving early and taking some time to walk around this resort next door.

As an insider tip, the best place to park is at the Opry Mills Mall. There is plenty of free parking and it is located right by the resort and the Grand Ole Opry.

The [Gaylord Opryland](#) is a massive resort and convention center. It's a great place to stay, but even if you don't book a room it's still worth walking around and admiring the beautiful 9-acre indoor garden atrium.

You can even take a boat ride along the river that runs through the garden, and kids will especially love the [indoor waterpark](#).

If you want to grab a bite to eat before the show, there are several dining options including a steakhouse, Italian restaurant, Mexican restaurant, and more.

## 4. Visit the Country Music Hall of Fame

Nashville is synonymous with country music, so a stop at the Country Music Hall of Fame is a must when you're visiting the city.

Here, you'll get a chance to delve into the history of country music.

You'll find a vast collection of artifacts, exhibits, and interactive displays that chronicle the evolution of country music from its early beginnings in the 1920s until today.

A few of our favorite exhibits include Elvis Presley's gold-plated Cadillac which was painted with 24K gold highlights and crushed diamonds.

It even had a phone, refrigerator, record player, and a gold-plated TV!

The Wall of Gold Records is also pretty cool to see in person.

There are also many outfits and instruments belonging to some of country music's most iconic artists that you may recognize.

The Country Music Hall of Fame Museum is massive with exhibits spread across 350,000 square feet and 3 different floors. Plan for about 2 hours to visit the museum.

The best place to park is at the Music City Center Parking Garage. It is the most affordable parking in downtown Nashville and is only \$15 for the whole day.

It's within walking distance of many of downtown Nashville's main attractions, so you can explore more of the city after visiting the museum.

## 5. Take a Tour of RCA Studio B

When booking tickets for the Country Music Hall of Fame, you'll have the option of adding on a tour of the RCA Studio B.

I would highly recommend making reservations for a guided tour of this historic recording studio, it was one of the highlights of our Nashville trip.

This historic studio, operated by the renowned RCA Records, is located on Music Row so you'll take a shuttle bus to reach it.

Music Row is where you'll find the majority of Nashville's record label offices, recording studios, and radio stations. Keep your eyes open, you never know who you'll see driving down this road!

Studio B is a small and unassuming recording studio, but it holds so much history. As you take a guided tour, the stories and history will come to life.

RCA Studio B opened its doors in 1957 and quickly became one of the most influential recording studios in the world. Today, it is the oldest surviving recording studio in Nashville.

The studio served as the creative haven for music legends like Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Chet Atkins, and the Everly Brothers.

Elvis recorded over 200 songs within its walls. Some of his most enduring hits, such as "Are You Lonesome Tonight" and "It's Now or Never," were brought to life in this very studio.

His favorite piano, and the very piano that he played while recording, is still in the studio. You can also stand at his favorite spot where he thought that the acoustics sounded the best while singing.

Our tour guide, Ron, was amazing. He shared so many cool stories and insights, like when Elvis recorded "Are You Lonesome Tonight" in the early hours of the morning, he insisted on doing it in the pitch dark.

Our guide turned the lights off and played the song and it felt like Elvis was right in the studio singing. It was such a cool experience!

## 6. Visit the Johnny Cash Museum

If you are a Johnny Cash fan, then you'll want to visit the Johnny Cash Museum and pay homage to one of country music's greatest legends.

You will appreciate diving deep into the life and career of The Man in Black through exhibits featuring the largest collection of Johnny Cash memorabilia and artifacts in the world.

I will say that if you are not a big fan, then you will be fine skipping this stop.

The museum is well done, but tickets are a little pricey and the tour is self-guided so there is a lot of reading. I would have loved a guided tour with more stories and real-life accounts.

If you do plan to visit, I would recommend watching the movie, *Ring of Fire* before visiting the museum so that you can brush up on your Johnny Cash history.

## 7. Purchase Tickets for The Bluebird Cafe

The Bluebird Cafe is a small venue with a big reputation.

This is where Taylor Swift was discovered when she performed for the first time at age 14.

A few other big names that got their first big break here include Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, Dierks Bentley, Keith Urban, and Lady Antebellum.

The intimate venue only has seating for 90 people and the tickets go fast.

Tickets for Tuesday through Thursday shows are [available to purchase](#) at 8 a.m. one week in advance. Tickets for Friday through Sunday shows are available on Monday at 8 a.m. of that week.

On Monday night, there are two shows at 6 p.m and 9 pm. Both of the shows are on a first-come-first-serve with no reservations available.

If you plan to go to a Monday show, people start lining up as early as 2-3 hours before the show to be guaranteed a spot. I would come at least an hour or two early.

This [article](#) has more helpful tips for snagging tickets.

There is also a great [documentary](#) that I would recommend watching before your visit to truly appreciate the experience.

Food is available during the show and the menu includes basic dishes like pizza, salads, and sandwiches. There is a \$10 minimum food or drink purchase per person, so plan to enjoy dinner with your show.

If you would like more food recommendations, see our guide [8 of The Best Places To Eat in Nashville](#).

## 8. Take Photos at Printer's Alley

Printer's Alley is an iconic historic district known for its jazz and blues clubs.

Around 1915, it was the hub of Nashville's printing industry with 23 publishers and printers located here, including Nashville's two largest newspapers, *The Tennessean* and the *Nashville Banner*.

In addition to the publication buildings, there were also hotels, restaurants, and saloons that became speakeasies during the Prohibition.

By the 1940s, Printer's Alley was known for its swanky nightclubs. Over the years, talented performers such as The Supremes, Hank Williams, and Jimi Hendrix all played in clubs located in this alley.

Today, Printer's Alley is still a vibrant entertainment hub that holds a piece of Nashville's music history. Visitors can enjoy live music and unique bars lining the photogenic narrow alley.

## 9. Tour Ryman Auditorium

Ryman Auditorium is a cherished landmark nestled in the heart of downtown Nashville.

This historic venue is often referred to as the "Mother Church of Country Music".

It was built in 1892 as the Union Gospel Tabernacle, but soon became known as a premier

concert hall.

The acoustics of the Ryman are said to be unparalleled, creating a magical and almost reverent ambiance that makes each performance unforgettable.

In 1943, the Grand Ole Opry began airing from the Ryman which solidified its reputation as one of the most iconic music venues in Nashville, and even the world.

Over the years, the Ryman has hosted an array of legendary artists spanning various genres, from bluegrass and folk to country and rock & roll.

Artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Joan Jett, Lizzo, Harry Styles, and Ed Sheeran have all graced its stage and stood in the famous wooden circle.

Ryman has even hosted acts by Houdini and Charlie Chaplin and speeches by Booker T Washington, MLK, and Teddy Roosevelt.

One of the best things to do in Nashville is to [watch a live performance](#) at the Ryman Auditorium. I would also highly recommend [booking a tour](#).

There are a few different tour options including a self-guided tour, a guided backstage tour, a VIP tour, and special tours throughout the year such as a haunted history tour.

## 10. Walk Across the John Seignthaler Pedestrian Bridge

The John Seignthaler Pedestrian Bridge is one of the longest pedestrian bridges in the world. It spans 3,150 feet, approximately 0.6 miles, across the Cumberland River.

This iconic bridge offers great views of the Nashville skyline, especially at sunset.

The bridge leads to Cumberland Park, an expansive 6.5-acre riverfront park. Highlights of the park include an innovative playground, a climbing wall, water features, and an amphitheater.

It was originally called the Sparkman Street Bridge and was built in 1909. The bridge was closed to vehicles in 1998 due to safety concerns.

Instead of demolishing the bridge, they converted the historic structure into the Shelby Street Pedestrian Bridge.

The bridge was renamed in 2014 in honor of John Seignthaler, a journalist for *The Tennessean* who prevented a man from jumping off the bridge to his death while he was reporting.

## 11. See the Stars at the Music City Walk of Fame

The Music City Walk of Fame Park is Nashville's version of Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

This city park is located across from the Country Music Hall of Fame where you'll find 61 stainless steel and terrazzo stars embedded in the sidewalk.

The stars are in honor of music legend inductees, such as Elvis Presley, Trace Adkins, Alabama, Dolly Parton, Garth Brooks, Faith Hill, Johnny Cash, Jimi Hendrix, and even Kid Rock!

More stars are always being added and the induction ceremonies are always free to the public. Check the [Visit Music City](#) website for upcoming events.

I hope this guide will help you discover the best things to do in Nashville, enjoy your trip!