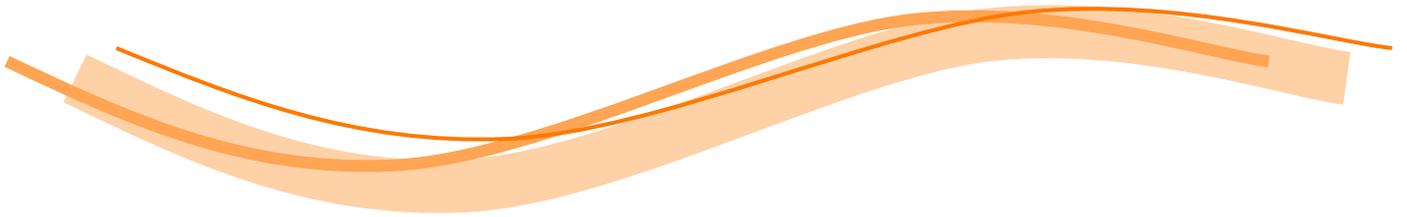




MISSOURI





MISSOURI

The Midwestern US State of Missouri has beautiful State Parks, rivers, caves and rolling wine country. Missouri's rich history - dating from westward expansion in the US and the Civil War - compliments today's exciting art, culture and jazz scene.

Check out www.visitmo.com to discover casinos, wineries, museums, golf courses in abundance - plus fascinating cities such as St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield and of course, the music capital of Branson.

There is truly something for everyone in the diverse state Missouri. There are outdoor activities such as boating and golf. You can explore quaint small towns rich in history and cosmopolitan cities. And you will discover every type of music including Kansas City Jazz, St. Louis Blues and the incredible variety of shows in Branson.

With 88 state parks and historic sites, Missouri State Parks has something for everyone. Visit the homes of famous Missourians, Civil War battlefields, and reminders of yesterday such as gristmills and covered bridges. The State parks also protect and preserve the state's most outstanding landscapes - deep forests, glades, prairies, blue streams and clear lakes - for everyone's enjoyment.

A trip to Missouri is to travel through time – journey from the days of the explorers Lewis and Clark who opened up Westward expansion, to the of-the-moment glitz of Branson's bright lights. And your journey takes you across varied landscapes from the Eastern boundary of the State formed by the Mississippi River to the Western boundary with Kansas and Oklahoma.

Astride the Mississippi, St Louis is a joy to visit. One of the most popular sights is the famous Gateway Arch, which celebrates Lewis and Clark's great adventure and defines St. Louis as the "Gateway to the West". This stainless steel architectural masterpiece is the icon of the city and arguably of the State itself. The Arch grounds have been the focus of an extensive, multi-year renovation project. The last major pieces of the project are the museum exhibits and expanded visitor center under the Arch.

The new visitor centre at the Arch will be expanded by 46,000 square feet and include all new, interactive and engaging exhibits that tell the story of America's westward expansion and the important role that St. Louis played. The new museum at the Gateway Arch will invite visitors to experience exhibits including Jefferson's Vision, Riverfront Era, New Frontiers, Manifest Destiny, Colonial St. Louis and Building the Arch.

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	<p>The most perplexing aspect about St Louis is which of the many attractions to visit. America's largest brewery, the Anheuser- Busch Brewery, also has its home in St Louis. Home to Budweiser, the tour of this huge complex is entertaining and informative – from the Clydesdale horses to the mysteries of the brewing process. And a visit to the Saint Louis Zoo is great fun. It is set in 90 acres of beautiful Forest Park and the Zoo is home to more than 600 species of animals, many of them rare and endangered. It is also one of the few free zoos in the nation.</p> <p>Did you know that Kansas City is a great place for a BBQ meal? The legend has it that is Kansas City barbecue began in the early 1900s in an old trolley barn at 19th and Highland. A gentleman called Henry Perry created an aroma that attracted daily crowds to the back of the barn, where he slow-smoked ribs and sold them, wrapped in newspaper, for 25-cents a slab. There are now nearly 100 barbecue joints smoking in Kansas City, with a melding of flavors and styles from across the country.</p> <p>A four billion dollar construction boom has created a new energy in Kansas City and resulted in some magnificent architectural additions to the Art Deco skyline. Visitors to the National World War One Museum will discover themselves on a glass floor suspended over a field of poppies one minute, then immersed in the sights and sounds of the trenches the next. This is America's official national WWI Museum and truly represents a remarkable piece of history, focusing on the sacrifices of people involved in what at the time was known as "The War to End All Wars".</p> <p>As well as taking in Missouri's cities, any visit to the Mid-West has to include a road trip and some outdoor adventure! And Missouri has a rich history to explore, including three hundred national historic districts. You can retrace the steps of outlaw Jesse James, revisit the Pony Express, relive the river adventures of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer and walk the Santa Fe Trail.</p> <p>Visitors keep returning to Missouri. And when you come back, there's always something new.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Missouri is located in the Midwestern United States. It is bordered by eight states Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. Missouri was originally purchased from France as part of the Louisiana Purchase. The Missouri Territory was admitted into the union as the 24th state in 1821.</p>

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Geography	The soft hills of the northern plains to the Ozark Mountains in the south, and the many rivers and lakes in between...the geography of Missouri is as varied as the people who live there.
Name	A large tribe of Indians called the OuMissouri lived upstream of the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri. The name had been given to them by their enemies, the Fox tribe of Algonquins, and in the Fox language means "people with big canoes."
Population	The state total resident population is 6.1 million, ranking Missouri 17th among all U.S. states The five largest ancestry groups in Missouri are: German (23.5 percent), Irish (12.7 percent), American (10.5 percent), English (9.5 percent), French (3.5 percent).
Language	English
Currency	Currency: \$1 CDN = 77 cents US (July 2017)
Tipping	The custom of tipping is a common practice in Missouri: 15% to 20% for waiters; 10% to 15% for taxi drivers; \$1 per bag for bellmen. Occasionally gratuities are automatically added to restaurant checks, but not usually.
Government	The current constitution of Missouri, the fourth constitution for the state, was adopted in 1945 and provides for three branches of government, the legislative, judicial and executive branches. The legislative branch consists of two bodies, the House of Representatives and the Senate. These bodies comprise the General Assembly of the State of Missouri.
Documentation	Passports are required for Canadian visitors
Time zone	Central Standard Time, one hour behind EST
Health	Excellent services available but ensure that you have travelers health insurance as health costs in the US can be very high
Safety tips	Missouri is relatively safe for the tourist. One should use the same precautions as when traveling anywhere - try not to travel alone and avoid deserted areas at night

CLIMATE	
General climate	Missouri generally has a humid continental climate, with cold winters and hot and humid summers.
Today's weather	Today (10 th July 2017) is 36C and sunny in St. Louis
Best time to visit	Spring, summer and fall

GETTING THERE	
Airports	There are three main airports in Missouri: Kansas City International Airport was recently completely renovated and now offers WiFi access in the terminal; Lambert-St. Louis International Airport; and Springfield-Branson National Airport. I flew into St Louis and out of

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	Springfield, an arrangement that worked particularly well. Branson also has a regional airport, just 13km from the centre of Branson.
Cities	<p>The ten largest cities and their populations are: Kansas City, 444,965; St. Louis, 344,362; Springfield, 150,298; Independence, 110,208; Columbia, 91,814; Lee's Summit, 80,338; St. Joseph, 72,661; O'Fallon, 69,694; St. Charles, 62,304; St. Peter's, 54,209</p> <p>St. Louis: Established as a French trading post in 1764, St. Louis served as a gateway to the west after the Louisiana Purchase and as a major port for steamboats traveling the Mississippi. Today the city's landmark is the soaring, shining steel Gateway Arch, designed by Eero Saarinen in 1966 to commemorate Thomas Jefferson's vision of westward expansion. Though visitors often make it their first stop, there's plenty more beckoning, including expansive Forest Park with its first-rate museums, one of the nation's top botanical gardens, and numerous attractions geared toward children, many of them free, making St. Louis a prime family destination.</p> <p>Kansas City: A \$4 billion construction boom across metropolitan Kansas City has created an energy which can be felt in almost every part of the city, shaping a positive impression on Kansas City which will last for decades to come. Magnificent architectural additions to the city's Art Deco skyline in the Kansas City Live! Downtown Entertainment District, at the Sprint Center Arena, the Performing Arts Center and the Convention Center is drastically changing Downtown Kansas City.</p>
Distances	<p>St. Louis to Kansas City: 380 kms St Louis to Branson: 400 kms</p>
Boats	<p>For a lunch or dinner cruise on Table Rock Lake in Branson, board the showboat Branson Belle, 4800 Mo. 165 (tel. 800/831-4FUN; www.silverdollarcity.com), a luxury paddle-wheeler boat offering 2-hour cruises with dining, music, comedy, and entertainment April through December.</p>
Trains	<p>Amtrak (tel. 800/872-7245; www.amtrak.com) offers two lines in Missouri. The Kansas City Mule runs daily between St. Louis and Kansas City, and the Ann Rutledge line goes from Kansas City to Chicago, both lines making stops in St. Louis, Kirkwood, Washington, Hermann, Jefferson City, Sedalia, Warrensburg, Lees Summit,</p>

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	Independence, and Kansas City.
Car Rental	All the major car rental companies are represented in the major cities and at the airports
Buses	The cities have excellent urban bus service, whilst the state is crisscrossed by efficient long distance coach services

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	<p>The Missouri Division of Tourism website has a helpful search engine for accommodations; you can pick the type of place you'd like to stay, the city or region, and the time of year and it will provide you with options based on your selections.</p> <p>From resorts to motels and from spa retreats to B & B's, you'll find the accommodation to suit your needs in Missouri!</p>
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	<p>Worlds of Fun, Kansas City has the longest, tallest inverted roller coaster</p> <p>YouZeum: A new attraction in Columbia is the YouZeum, a fascinating interactive learning environment designed to give visitors a better understanding of the workings of the human body and the healthful choices they can make.</p> <p>Bring the whole family to St. Louis for thrill rides, animal encounters, a trip to the moon and more. Sure - lots of cities claim to be "family-friendly" or "kid-centric," but St. Louis means it. Not only are there plenty of activities and attractions that are geared toward kids of all ages, but many of those attractions are free, which makes St. Louis a budget-friendly destination for families. Some of St. Louis' most popular attractions offer free admission, including the Saint Louis Science Center, Missouri History Museum, Saint Louis Art Museum, Grant's Farm, Saint Louis Zoo, Purina Farms, Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, and the Anheuser-Busch Brewery Tour.</p>
Teens	<p>Six Flags St Louis: Six Flags St. Louis continues its tradition of bringing new thrills to the popular theme park. On the exciting Wahoo Racer attraction, riders race head-first on sled-type mats down 262-feet of steep drops and rolls reaching speeds of 55 kph. In addition to the wet 'n' wild world of Wahoo Racer, Six Flags has added a spectacular nighttime parade, appropriately named "Glow in the Park." The festivities feature six custom-designed floats, two additional mobile units and 65 "lighted" performers. The vibrant, multicolored lights illuminate the streets, and scores of drummers, puppeteers, singers, dancers and kinetic stilt walkers will surround the floats.</p>
Romance	There are many period inns and quiet resorts set in lush countryside that make for perfect couple retreats from the hectic world
Zoomers	With a population of slightly more than 6,000 and a quaint, historic downtown, Branson attracts more than seven million visitors a year,

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primarily retirees, families, and RV-ers drawn by the irresistible lure - and improbable pairing - of outdoor recreation and big-time entertainment. Surrounded by three pristine lakes in the scenic, wooded, mountainous region of the Ozarks in southern Missouri, Branson offers fishing, swimming, golfing, and boating, and is also home to big-name entertainers who present everything from country music to comedy and magic acts in more than 100 live shows daily. If that's not enough, Branson also boasts theme parks such as Silver Dollar City and some unique museums.

Famous Missourians

Mark Twain: Samuel Clemens, growing up in Hannibal, watched riverboats on the Mississippi. It was from riverboat jargon that he took his pen name – Mark Twain. His love for the river and for his Missouri boyhood is best reflected in his stories about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. The Twain Home and a statue of Tom and Huck can be seen in Hannibal today. In nearby Florida, Mo., Twain's birthplace is preserved as a state historic site.

Harry S. Truman, 33rd president of the U.S., is one of Missouri's most famous native sons. Born in Lamar, Mo., in 1884, Truman was a Jackson County judge, U.S. senator and vice president before serving as president, 1945-1953.

Jesse James, notorious outlaw, was born in Missouri on Sept. 5, 1847. The farm home where Jesse and his brother, Frank, were raised in Kearney. Also in Kearney is Jesse's grave. The best known site associated with Missouri's most infamous citizen is the St. Joseph home where Jesse was shot and killed in 1882 for a \$10,000 reward. Standing today on the grounds of the Patee House Museum, the small frame home has been preserved much as it was when Jesse James lived there as "Mr. Howard."

Surprising

Iced tea: At the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, Richard Blechyden, served tea with ice and invented iced tea. Also, at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, the ice cream cone was invented. An ice cream vendor ran out of cups and asked a waffle vendor to help by rolling up waffles to hold ice cream.

Neighbourly: Missouri ties with Tennessee as the most neighbourly state in the union, bordered by 8 states.

Caves: Bonne Terre Mine; Tour a cavernous room supported by giant rock pillars where miners dug with picks and shovels from 1864 to 1962. The temperature is 62 degrees year-round. Take a boat tour of the "Billion Gallon Lake," the largest subterranean lake in the world;

Fantastic Caverns: Springfield Region; America's only ride-through

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	<p>cave is located just northwest of Springfield. Tour follows the path of an ancient underground river. Enjoy the beauty of a natural cave without the long walks or steep climbs;</p> <p>Meramec Caverns: only 45 minutes SW of St. Louis, this is a stunning show cave with huge caverns and massive cave formations. Guided tours of this seven story natural wonder are professionally conducted and include reference to the fact that this was a Jesse James hideout.</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>Retrace the expedition of Lewis and Clark, revisit the Pony Express, relive the river adventures of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, walk the Santa Fe Trail and more. There are 300 national historic districts in Missouri.</p> <p>Here's a brief timeline: Claimed for France by La Salle 1682; First permanent settlement (Ste. Genevieve) 1735; Louisiana Purchase 1803; Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804-1806; Organized as territory 1812; Admitted to the Union (24th State) 1821</p> <p>Historically, Missouri has always been a spot for those with a sense of adventure. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their famous western expedition on the banks of the Missouri River in St. Louis. Years later, the towns of Independence and Westport marked the start of the Sante Fe, California, and Oregon Trails, routes that marked the westward starting point of the over 250,000 pioneers who settled the wild frontier, and thus gave Missouri one of its nicknames, the "Gateway to the West." With all those covered wagons heading into unknown wilds, it's fitting that some of the most famous adventurers of page and place hailed from here, like author Laura Ingalls Wilder, explorer Daniel Boone, outlaw Jesse James, and military commander John J. Pershing.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain gives the reader a wonderful sense of the place.</p>
<p>1000 Places to see before you die</p>	<p>Arthur Bryant's Barbecue, Kansas City</p>
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Gateway Arch in St Louis is America's tallest monument, this graceful rainbow of shining steel soars 630 feet above downtown and the Mississippi River, commemorating westward expansion in the 1800s. Tram rides to the top can involve lengthy waits in the summer and on weekends; come first thing in the morning to purchase tickets (or order tickets in advance online at www.gatewayarch.com), then take in the Museum of Westward Expansion, which traces the journey of Lewis and Clark and those who followed. Extra fees are charged for the Arch</p>

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	<p>Odyssey Theatre, which features changing, 45-minute movies on a giant IMAX screen, and the Monument to the Dream film documenting the Arch's construction</p> <p>Silver Dollar City, Branson: About 8 kms west of Branson, this is the biggest and best of the area's theme parks, featuring more than a dozen thrill rides (such as the Wildfire roller coaster with its 15-story vertical drop and speeds up to 105 kph), imaginative playgrounds, live entertainment at a dozen arenas (from gospel to country and bluegrass), restaurants featuring traditional cuisine, about 60 specialty shops, and nearly 100 resident craftspeople practicing their trades, all in a wooded, 1880s mountain-town setting. Marvel Cave, the site's original attraction, has 50 kms of passages, which you can explore with a guide on a 1-hour tour (included in the admission price to Silver Dollar City).</p>
<p>New in Branson</p>	<p>Fritz's Adventure is a dynamic family attraction that brings the excitement and challenges of outdoor adventure into a multi-dimensional indoor environment. Experience three stories and 80,000 square feet where you can experience elements of the world around you that, anywhere else, would be prohibited or discouraged. All ages are encouraged to explore the family adventure together.</p> <p>Fireman's Landing at Silver Dollar City is centered around the headquarters of "Fire Station #3," and includes Fire Spotter; Fire Wagon Frenzy; FireFall; Roundabout; Up the Ladder and Fireman's Flyers. Your family will enjoy Firehouse Splash Yard; Firefighter's Fire Drill; Firefighter's Fire Escape and Firefighter's Junior Fire Escape.</p> <p>Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, an advocate for education, preservation, and conservation, opens a working gristmill, general store and restaurant with a patio and waterfall view. An education center features classrooms with a connected treehouse opening this summer.</p> <p>The Escape Branson is a new, simple, and fun live escape game designed for small groups of 2-6 people. You have 60 minutes to climb a mountain of puzzles and mysteries inside a room. The goal is simple yet challenging: get out in time! Or else you could be trapped. During this engaging and challenging game team members truly live and breathe in unison for an hour.</p> <p>Stone Hill Winery is changing its name to "Curling Vine Winery" in the spring. They will continue to offer tours and tastings for visitors and groups. They are remodeling and adding Twisted Copper Moonshine Still Museum. It will be the world's largest collection of moonshine stills</p>

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	<p>in public view which includes 100+ stills.</p> <p>Crown Valley Distillery, based in St. Genevieve, Missouri, plans to locate its newest operation on the Strip in Branson. They will not only distill their own whiskey and give distillery tours, but customers will have the chance to experience other Missouri-made products produced at the company's St. Genevieve operation. Those products include wine, beer, spritzers, deli meats and cheeses, fruit, craft sodas and roasted coffee. Customers will have the chance to taste test and purchase the array of items. Branson is a family destination and the distillery will be family-friendly and inviting to children.</p> <p>Mountain Adventure Resort is a new adventure park that features rides brand new to the Ozarks. It's located along Highway 165 in what used to be known as "Butcher Hollow." The project embraces the extreme topography with a 400-foot elevation change, a zip coaster, zip lines and a ropes course along with a thing called a mountain coaster. A zip coaster is very similar to a zip line except it's not a straight line, but more of a circuitous route that can take curves.</p> <p>Spirit of 76 is Branson's dream of a bigger, brighter, more amazing Branson experience than ever before with spacious walkways, landscaping, park benches, interesting landmarks, and amazing spaces for visitors to explore and enjoy. Over the next eight years, Branson plans to invest more than \$75 million and transform 8 kms of Hwy. 76 into a more vibrant, dynamic, fun, attractive and interactive entertainment corridor certain to delight and amaze the next generation of Branson visitors.</p>
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<p>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>For sports fans, there are all those pro sports teams – with St. Louis and Kansas City each boasting teams. The NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, baseball's Kansas City Royals and St. Louis Cardinals, and there's also hockey's St Louis Blues who came into being with the NHL's first expansion.</p>
<p>Golf</p>	<p>If you're in Missouri, you're close to a golf course. Links range from major resort courses designed by the big names – Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player – to small 9-hole, sand-green, municipal sites. To quote Hale Irwin, World Golf Hall of Fame member: "I've played all over the world, and I can tell you no place offers the incredible variety from course to course like Missouri." Some of the Branson area's seven 18-hole golf courses, open to the public year-round, are described in the brochure "Branson Golf" available at the Welcome Center. A favorite is the 9-hole par 3 Top of</p>

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	<p>the Rock, 150 Top of the Rock Rd. It's owned by Big Cedar Lodge, was designed by Jack Nicklaus, has great views of Table Rock Lake, includes a practice facility and a good restaurant, and is one of the few courses in the nation to be recognized as an Audubon Signature Cooperative. Eighteen-hole Branson Creek Golf Club (www.bransoncreekgolf.com) is one of Missouri's top public courses.</p>
Fishing	<p>Black bass, catfish, crappie, muskellunge, rainbow and brown trout, walleye or white bass; Spin-cast anglers and fly-fishermen have amazing sprawling lakes and winding streams to explore, many with convenient public access.</p> <p>Fisherfolk in Branson favour Table Rock Lake for bass and Lake Taneycomo for trout.</p>
Horse riding	<p>Stables abound in the countryside with riding suitable for all skill levels</p>
Hiking	<p>The Katy Trail is a wonderful recreational outdoors trail that pretty much connects St Louis and Kansas City. It is a recreational rail trail that runs in the right-of-way of the former Missouri–Kansas–Texas Railroad. It's the longest rails-to-trails project in the U.S., stretching 483 km across the heart of Missouri. Currently the trail comes to within about 24 kms of St Louis on the eastern end and stops some 130 kms away from Kansas City on the western end. The trail parallels the Missouri River and offers scenic views of both the river and river valley.</p> <p>Serious hikers should be sure to hit the Ozark Trail (www.ozarktrail.com), Missouri's answer to the popular Appalachian version (without the teeming mass of other hikers, they like to tell you). The trail is a hefty 880 kms long with another hundred and change still planned, and stretches from St. Louis all the way into Arkansas. A 30-mile section overlooks the lovely Current River, while the rest the trail traverses through tall pine trees, spring-fed creeks, and the ridge of Stegall Mountain, as well as touches on the highest point in the state, Taum Sauk, where the views of the Ozarks are nothing less than stunning.</p>
Cycling	<p>Missouri's rolling countryside is perfect for bike trips of all kinds, like the Katy Trail above.</p> <p>And how about this for a unique event for cyclists: The Annual Moonlight Ramble...Location: Downtown St. Louis For more information call: (314) 644-4660 www.moonlightramble.com</p> <p>This is the World's largest nighttime bicycle ride and it rambles through the streets of St. Louis.</p>
Watersports	<p>Almost every kind of water-sport is available on the many lakes in Missouri. Table Rock Lake is only minutes from Branson and offers boat rentals, waterskiing, pontoon boats, Bass Boats, WaveRunners, wake boarding, para-sailing, catamaran and even scuba diving! See www.stateparkmarina.com for all the details.</p>

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CULTURE

Music has always been important in Missouri – and not just in Branson. Ragtime got its early boost in Sedalia, Missouri thanks to Scott Joplin. Missouri is an important centre for Jazz and Blues - and Missouri also played a part in the evolution of Country Music.

To underline this musical heritage **The National Blues Museum** has opened in St. Louis. It's no accident that St Louis was chosen as the site for this new museum. When an infusion of southern blues music merged with the St. Louis traditions of ragtime and jazz, a new version of the genre was formed: the St. Louis Blues. And St. Louis has served as the home of musicians such as W. C. Handy, Henry "Mule" Townsend, Chuck Berry, Miles Davis, Ike & Tina Turner, Albert King and Little Milton.

Few forms of American music can claim a history as long, as tradition-rich, and as complex as the Blues. Since its origins in the Deep South long ago, the Blues has been the bedrock for virtually all American popular music of the last hundred-plus years. The National Blues Museum is the only museum dedicated exclusively to preserving and honoring the national and international story of the Blues and its impact on American culture in the United States.

As visitors progress through the museum, they are taken on a chronological journey of the development of the blues, from its roots in the American South during the late 1800s to its prominence as an essential musical and cultural component of 21st century America.

Continuing Missouri's musical legacy, Kansas City played a major role in the development of Jazz, thanks to artists like Charlie "Bird" Parker, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie. People say that jazz may have been born in New Orleans, but it grew up in Kansas City.

Kansas City is home to the **American Jazz Museum**. From world class performances, award winning venues and exceptional educational programming - to striking jazz art exhibitions and stunning film collections – this is the destination for all things Jazz! The New York Times called the American Jazz Museum "an interactive paradise" with its many listening stations, touch-screen adventures and custom-mixing soundboards.

Keep your eyes peeled for Charlie Parker's saxophone, a gift to the museum from former president Bill Clinton. You can sample KC's signature sound at the district's acclaimed "Jammin' at The Gem"

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	<p>series, or inside the museum's working jazz club "The Blue Room". And Night Owls are in for a real treat at the "Mutual Musicians Foundation", where the late-night sounds bebop until 5 a.m.</p>
<p>Arts</p>	<p>St Louis Art Museum: The Saint Louis Art Museum is one of the nation's leading comprehensive art museums, containing more than 30,000 works of art. Our collections include works of exceptional quality from virtually every culture and time period. Areas of notable depth include Oceanic art, pre-Columbian art, ancient Chinese bronzes, and European and American art of the late 19th and 20th centuries, with particular strength in 20th century German painting. The Museum also offers a full range of featured exhibitions, a research library, a varied schedule of special events, and community and educational programming. Admission to the Museum and its collection is free every day.</p> <p>Admission fees to featured exhibitions vary; admission to featured exhibitions is always free on Fridays. www.slam.org</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>The music capital of Branson is a remarkable vacation destination. It has 49 magnificent live performance theatres, more than 100 shows, pristine lakes, 10 championship golf courses, an award-winning theme park, dozens of attractions and museums, shopping galore, varied dining options and a host of hotels and resorts... all cradled in the beautiful Ozark Mountains.</p> <p>The current \$80 million dollar project to transform West Highway 76 will add even more fun and a unique sense of place to an already memorable visitor experience. This includes the magnificently restored Branson Ferris Wheel that was moved here in 2016 from the Navy Pier in Chicago. More exciting news is the opening of the new Tiger Woods designed golf course at Big Cedar Lodge in Ridgedale, just south of Branson.</p> <p>Branson is a great destination for fun family with indoor and outdoor water parks, museums and many fun eating places. Branson Landing Mall is home to over 100 shops and restaurants, as well as the Hilton Promenade Hotel and a \$7.5 million water and fire spectacular.</p> <p>Kids and grown-ups alike will also love "Titanic" - billed as the world's largest museum attraction. This is a brilliantly interpreted self-guided tour through the tragic voyage of 1912, in which the visitors assume the identity of one of the passengers or crew. It personalizes the experience, generating a new level of respect and understanding for this fascinating disaster.</p> <p>From the past to the here-and-now: Branson is the entertainment capital</p>

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	<p>of the Mid-West. For more than 50 years, live shows have been a staple of a vacation in Branson. Morning, afternoon and night, Branson offers a variety of entertainment options for every member of the family from comedy shows to classic country shows.....and from magic to music. All are good, wholesome family entertainment. No showgirls here – you can take your kids and your grandma to any of them.</p> <p>The Presley Family Branson continues to reinvent itself each year with an exciting new line up of shows. This year is a very special year for the Presley family who are celebrating 50 years in Branson. Lloyd Presley founded the first live music theatre in Branson in 1967 - and generations of Presleys have been performing in Branson ever since. Lloyd started playing music when he was 10 years old when his brother Don swapped a hound dog for a guitar. Lloyd created an “underground music scene” – quite literally - because early performances were held in caves in the Missouri Ozark hills. And the caves were packed with audiences eager to enjoy a mixture of Bluegrass, Country and Gospel music.</p> <p>Comedy has always been an intrinsic part of the show as well. In 1962, Lloyd’s son Gary, just 15 years old at the time, created the comedy Hillbilly character “Herkimer” - named after a Carter family song “Herkimer and the Bull”. The Carters, of course were a founding family of Country Music.</p> <p>The current “Presleys’ Country Jubilee” has four generations of the family on stage with their unique blend of soul-stirring music and side-splitting comedy.</p>
Films	Much of Tom Sawyer was shot in the state where the story was set.
Museums	<p>Over 400, all over the state!</p> <p>Visitors to the expanded National World War I Museum in Kansas City will discover themselves on a glass floor suspended over a field of poppies one minute, then immersed in the sights and sounds of the trenches the next. Known for most of its 80 years as the Liberty Memorial Museum, the landmark is the nation’s only public museum dedicated exclusively to the history of World War I. Major renovations completed in 2006 added 25,000 square feet of colourful, “sound-full” experiences. For the first time, the public is able to see the museum’s comprehensive collection of World War I memorabilia.</p> <p>http://www.theworldwar.org</p>
Festivals	<p>Missourians take their involvement in westward expansion as a point of pride, and they celebrate the starting point of the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon Trails with Santa-Cali-Gon Days www.santacaligon.com , a 4-day festival in Independence with historical reenactments, an arts</p>

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	<p>and crafts show with over 350 exhibits, and country music acts, like Grand Ol' Opry favorite Mel McDaniel.</p> <p>In early November, local artists open up their studio doors along 50 miles of Route 79 along the Mississippi River for the 50 Miles of Art Tour (www.50milesofart.com). This 2-day celebration of Missouri artists and craftspeople links together the towns of Hannibal, Clarkesville, and Louisiana, allowing visitors to check out working studios, art in progress, and finished pieces for sale.</p>
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<p>ATTRACTIONS</p>	<p>One way to celebrate the outdoors and explore the countryside is the tradition of the great American Road Trip. Missouri is beautiful driving country with very varied landscapes – for instance close to Branson you will discover the lakes and rolling hills of the Ozarks, while northern Missouri is wide open ground with ample farmland and views that go on for miles.</p> <p>Missouri is home to more than 450 kms of Route 66, one of the most famous highways in the United States. And the Missouri section features some of the Route’s most historic tourist attractions as it meanders through the South West corner of the State. Springfield is just a 45 mins drive from Branson. It’s situated on historic Route 66 – and there is a fabulous Museum in Springfield that celebrates “The Mother Road”. With more than 70 vehicles on display and plenty of Route 66 memorabilia, it’s a fun trip down America’s memory lane.</p>
<p>Beaches</p>	<p>At many of Missouri’s lakes there are beautiful beaches to enjoy in the summer months</p>
<p>Wildlife</p>	<p>The top-rated and free to enter St. Louis Zoo, Forest Park (www.stlzoo.org), features Big Cat Country, Jungle of the Apes, River's Edge with elephants and hippos, Penguin and Puffin Coast, the 1904 Flight Cage aviary, fascinating Insectarium with everything from giant cockroaches to a butterfly house, and animal-contact area called Children's Zoo, and a mini-train ride connecting it all up for you.</p>
<p>Parks</p>	<p>Missouri has some of the most spectacular state parks, forest and conservation areas in the country. From thriving springs and incredible rock formations to grist mills and natural bridges, Missouri's natural areas have something for everyone to explore. With 88 state parks and 1.5 million acres of national forest land, you'll find hiking trails and campgrounds that accommodate all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts.</p> <p>While there are tons of great outdoor options in Missouri, one of the most unique is Elephant Rocks State Park, a billion-year-old set of massive, granite rock formations that actually look like elephants. The biggest one, aptly named Dumbo, soars 27 feet high and weighs 680</p>

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tons. And in one of the coolest moves ever made in a park, the 1-mile trail through the 129-acre park has information plaques in Braille, describing this amazing natural wonder.

Echo Bluff

Echo Bluff State Park is Missouri's newest (and 88th!) State Park and an outdoor destination to experience all that the Ozarks have to offer. Whether you prefer a rustic campsite, one of 62 full-service camping sites or a night in the park's iconic lodge, will have something for everyone. Fill your days with floating, hiking, swimming, fishing or just relaxing in the shadow of the park's namesake, Echo Bluff. <http://echobluffmissouri.com/>

Outside of the State Park system there are many outdoor adventure opportunities in Missouri as well. **Dogwood Canyon Nature Park** covers 10,000 acres of pristine Ozark Mountain landscape and the park has miles of crystal-clear trout streams and dozens of cascading waterfalls. Acquired by Bass Pro Shops' founder Johnny Morris in 1990, the park is managed by the Dogwood Canyon Foundation. Activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, Segway tours, fishing and more!

Another project by Jonny Morris, the founder of Bass Pro Shops, is the **Wonders of Wildlife National Museum and Aquarium** is opening in Springfield. It is a truly expansive wildlife experience and it promises to be the largest, most immersive, fish and wildlife attraction in the world. The scale of this attraction is awe inspiring! Visitors will enjoy a 1.5 million gallon aquarium showcasing 35,000 live fish, mammals, reptiles and birds. You will also be able to wander 2kms of trails and explore exhibits spanning 320,000 sq ft. - plus more than 70,000 square feet of immersive wildlife galleries and dioramas.

Other exciting outdoor adventures in Missouri include a ride aboard an electric cart for an exhilarating two-and-a-half mile nature trail journey when you visit the "**Lost Canyon Cave and Nature Trail**" **at the Top Of The Rock in the Ozarks**. Pass through covered Amish bridges and marvel at dramatic natural rock formations, waterfalls and caves. You can even enjoy a specialty drink at the cave bar tucked among the cascading waterfalls. Dining, accommodation at Big Cedar Lodge and golf are also available here.

<http://www.topoftherock.com/attractions/lost-canyon-en.html>

Dogwood Canyon

Aside from a few amenities to make Dogwood Canyon Nature Park

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	<p>more accessible to guests, the rugged landscape has been left untouched and, with just a little imagination, you can travel back to a time when European settlers first entered the area or, even further, to explore the mark that Native Americans left on these Missouri hills and hollows.</p> <p>The first parcels of the property were acquired in 1990 by Johnny Morris, the founder of Bass Pro Shops. It was his dedication to conserving the natural environment that has become the cornerstone for development of this spectacular wilderness experience. So many opportunities await you at this incredible 10,000 acre Ozark paradise. The park is managed by the Dogwood Canyon Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the canyon's natural plant and wildlife environment. The Foundation promotes environmental conservation by maintaining the park and providing the public with an unspoiled setting for exploration and the enjoyment of various outdoor activities.</p> <p>You can find Dogwood Canyon just to the southwest of Branson at 2038 West State Highway 86, Lampe, Missouri. http://www.dogwoodcanyon.org/</p>
Gardens	<p>Missouri Botanical Garden: Opened in 1859, this is the country's oldest and one of its best botanical gardens: a 79-acre delight featuring the nation's largest Japanese strolling garden, a Chinese garden, a geodesic-domed rainforest greenhouse, an 1882 brick conservatory housing camellias, a scented garden for the visually impaired, a sculpture garden with works by Carl Milles, a hedge maze, a home-gardening resource center, and themed gardens ranging from a Victorian garden to an English woodland garden. A must-see for gardeners, who can easily spend 2 or 3 hours of bliss here. www.mobot.org</p>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Kansas City's premier shopping district (and the country's first suburban shopping center) is Country Club Plaza, centered around 47th Street and Ward Parkway. Built in 1922 to resemble a Spanish marketplace, it's a tree-lined, 14-square-block area with more than 180 shops, restaurants, and nightspots. Crown Center, is an 85-acre business and residential complex owned by the world's largest greeting-card company, Hallmark. It contains specialty shops, restaurants, hotels, theaters, and the free Hallmark Visitor Center, which chronicles 90 years of history with displays of Keepsake Ornaments and other Hallmark products and memorabilia, educational exhibits, and excerpts from Hallmark Hall of Fame television movies</p>
Markets	<p>Kansas City: City Market, at 5th and Main streets north of downtown and I-70, is an outdoor market in operation since the 1850s. It's busiest</p>

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	<p>on Saturday, when 150 vendors offer everything from vegetables and flowers to live chickens and T-shirts, while Sundays May through August feature an arts and crafts market. The outdoor market is surrounded by 37 permanent indoor specialty shops, international groceries, and restaurants occupying an Art Deco building.</p>
Nightlife	<p>Much of the Kansas City's nightlife can be found downtown, in Westport, and at Country Club Plaza. In the historic 18th and Vine District, the best spots offering live blues and jazz include the Blue Room, a smoke-free venue (the better to protect its displays of jazz memorabilia) featuring jazz on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; and the Mutual Musicians Foundation, a National Historic Landmark where musicians have been meeting for decades to jam after midnight - Fridays it's blues, Saturdays it's jazz.</p> <p>Then there's Branson - 'The Live Entertainment capital of America' – there's more live entertainment on the streets of Branson than there is on Broadway. And before you start stereotyping – yes, it is an older crowd, but far from all blue rinsed. And, with that rapidly growing Zoomer market, you can send them off to hear the music they grew up with, including Andy Williams, Ann-Margaret, Glen Campbell, The Righteous Brothers, the Platters and there's even the Dick Clark American Bandstand Theatre. A lot of big names play Branson, so it's always worth checking at www.Branson.com</p>
Casinos	<p>Twelve, including Ameristar Casino St. Charles brings the finest gaming and entertainment to the banks of the Missouri River, serving the entire metropolitan St. Louis area.</p> <p>Riverboat Gambling - Riverboat gambling takes place on non-cruising boats along the banks of the Missouri River, including Argosy, Route 9 and I-635, Riverside; Harrah's Casino, U.S. 210 and Chouteau Trafficway, North Kansas City; Ameristar Casino, I-435 and Route 210; and the Isle of Capri Casino.</p>

CUISINE	
Food	<p>If you go to Kansas City and don't eat the hickory-smoked barbecue, you may as well have just stayed home! Check out Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbecue, 101 W. 22nd St. (www.jackstackbbq.com), in the recently renovated Freight House, a 119-year-old brick warehouse with great views of the Kansas City skyline in the Crossroads Arts District.</p>
Wine and Beer	<p>Wineries: there are 57 in total!</p> <p>Stone Hill Winery and Restaurant is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Missouri wine country. Stone Hill, perched dramatically on a hill overlooking the beautiful German-American town of Hermann, invites guests to take a guided tour of the winery's cavernous arched underground cellars before settling in for a wine tasting in one of three</p>

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	<p>historic tasting rooms. Stone Hill's tranquility is accented by the spectacular scenery. The Vintage Restaurant serves gourmet German and American cuisine.</p> <p>Anheuser-Busch, one of the world's largest beer brewers, was established at a site in St Louis the 1860s, and many architectural gems from that time period remain. Tours of the brewing process take in the 1885 Clydesdale stable, the historic 1892 Brew House, and the packaging plant, ending with free drinks. Personally recommended!</p>
Restaurants	<p>Spend the day in Hermann enjoying locally made wine and German sausage or visit Kansas City for savory barbecue and ribs. From Southern fried food to ethnic culinary delights, Missouri has it all. Try Candlestick Inn near Branson for great food combined with great views over downtown Branson across Lake Taneycomo,</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	<p>Contact the Missouri Division of Tourism, P.O Box 1055, Jefferson City, MO 65102 (tel. 800/519-2100; www.visitmo.ca), and ask for the Missouri Vacation Planner, which includes an official highway map of the state.</p> <p>Missouri Travel Guide: https://www.visitmo.com/official-missouri-printed-travel-guide-order-form.aspx</p> <p>Branson also produces an excellent guide: www.ExploreBranson.com And so does St. Louis: www.ExploreStLouis.com</p>
Contacts	<p>Website: www.visitmo.com Tel: 1-855-VisitMO (1-855-847-4866) Email: tourism@ded.mo.gov Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VisitMO Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/visitmo/ Twitter: https://twitter.com/visitmo You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/user/VisitMO/videos</p>
Current Deals	<p>Get valuable coupons today from www.VisitMOCoupons.com</p>

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	<p>Missouri Road Trip: St. Charles – First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site www.mostateparks.com and Museum, Lewis and Clark restaurant www.lewisandclarksrestaurant.com , antique shops and the old town. St. Louis – Tour of the Anheuser-Busch Brewery www.budweisertours.com , St. Louis Zoo www.stlzoo.org and visit to the top of the Gateway Arch www.gatewayarch.com and the fabulous museum at the bottom. Hotel Hyatt Regency in the old rail station www.stlouis.hyatt.com and www.stlouisunionstation.com .</p>
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Route 66 – Portions of the old Route 66 in SW Missouri
www.historic66.com ; Meramec Caverns and Jesse James hideout
www.AmericasCave.com ; East to west traverse of Missouri
Joplin - Joplin Museum Complex www.JoplinMuseum.org , Joplin Heritage area
Branson – The Hilton Promenade Hotel at Branson Landing
www.promenadebransonlanding.hilton.com and the new Branson Landing complex.
The Jim Stafford Show www.JimStafford.com , and The Andy Williams Show featuring Ann-Margret www.AndyWilliams.com
The Titanic Museum: www.titanicbranson.com ;
Silver Dollar City – thrill rides and The Magic of Peter Gossamer magic show; www.silverdollarcity.com
Table Rock Lake State Park and the Showboat Southern Belle
www.showboatbransonbelle.com

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