

10-Day Biking Itinerary Natchez Trace Parkway



Night 1 - Arrive in Nashville, TN

- Trace Bikes
8080B Highway 100; Nashville, TN 37221
- Milepost 444 – Begin ride after Trace Bikes assembles bike
- Milepost 438 - Double Arch Bridge - Completed in 1994, the double-arched bridge that spans Birdsong Hollow received the Presidential Award for Design Excellence in 1995 for its innovative design that rises 155 feet above the valley. The bridge carries Trace travelers 1,648 feet across the valley and Tennessee Highway 96. The bridge can be viewed from two locations. We recommend taking in both views. Just north of the bridge there is a parking area with a view of the bridge and the valley below. Just south of the bridge is an exit ramp that takes you down to Tennessee Highway 96. At the bottom of the hill there is a parking area with a view looking up at the entire length of the bridge. The bridge leads to the town of Franklin, which has a beautiful historic downtown area with significant Civil War history.
- Milepost 429 - Leiper's Fork at TN Hwy 46 go east .8 miles and take a left on Old Hillsboro Rd where you will overnight
- Overnight at the Brigadoon

Night 2 - Bike from MP 429 Leiper's Fork to MP 355 Collinwood (74 total miles on the Parkway)

Attractions to note:

- [Explore Leiper's Fork](#) - Keep your eyes open for the Judds and numerous other celebrities who call the Fork home; they don't broadcast living here. Joe's Natural Store is a great stop as is Serenite Maison, and Puckets is a legendary place for live music.
- Milepost 428 – Garrison Creek
- 407.7 Gordon House – 1 of 2 structures from the Trace's 1800 history (exterior only)
- 405.1 – Bakers Bluff Overlook – should be a beautiful shot with foliage
- 400.2 – Sheboss Place – Stand, Indian History
- Milepost 385.0 Meriwether Lewis site

- 364.5 Glenrock Branch
- Milepost 355 town of Collinwood – great visitors center for bikers; Dragonfly Emporium is fun with local buys and coffee shop; where you will overnight
- Overnight at Miss Monetta’s Country Cottage

Night 3 - Bike from MP 355 Collinwood to MO 338 Florence, AL (17.8 total miles on the Parkway plus more into town)

- Possibly visit Colbert Ferry and TN River
- Meet Georgia Turner (call me from Tom's Wall and I could come to get you while you are touring (Cell: 256-710-9717). Tom's Wall, which is located right off the Trace, then Georgia will take you and bike to FAME Studios, 3614 Jackson Highway, Helen Keller’s Birthplace, and Alabama Music Hall of Fame (if time). Tom's Wall, a memorial to Tom Hendrix's great-great-grandmother who walked back to Florence after being banished during the Trail of Tears. This site was featured in the [New York Times](#).

There would only be ONE TURN off the Trace to get to the Wall, left on County Rd. 8 at Milepost 338.

Attraction details:

- [FAME Studios](#) (tours M-F at 9am; 4pm; 5pm; Saturdays anytime from 10am - 4pm). ---
- 3614 Jackson Highway (original Muscle Shoals Sound Studio - open Friday and Saturday 10 am - 4 pm)
- [Alabama Music Hall of Fame](#) (open Tues-Sat. 9am - 5pm)
- [Helen Keller Birthplace](#) (open Mon-Sat. 8:30am - 4pm)

- Overnight at the Florence Marriot Shoals

Night 4 – Explore the Shoals Region, Overnight in Tuscumbia, AL

- Overnight at Coldwater Inn on Hwy 72 with easy access to the NTP in the morning; down the road from the Rattlesnake Saloon and Coondog Cemetery (on Sweet Home AL movie)

Night 5 - Bike from MP 320 Tuscumbia, AL to Tupelo, MS - MP 266 (just over 60 miles on the Parkway)

Attractions to note:

- MP 308.8 – Bear Creek Mound
- MP 304 - Tishomingo State Park (this would be a little riding in the park to see it);

Tishomingo is named after Chief Tishomingo of the Chickasaw tribe, who signed the Treaty of Pontotoc in 1832. He died on the infamous 'Trail of Tears.' His son, Iuka, is the namesake of the county seat of Tishomingo, County, Mississippi.

- MP 286 – Pharr Mounds – bathroom available. Pharr Mounds is the largest and most important archaeological site in northern Mississippi. Eight large dome shaped burial mounds are scattered over an area of 90 acres (100 football fields). These mounds were built and used about 100-1200 A.D. by a tribe of nomadic Indian hunters and gatherers who returned to this site at times to bury their dead with their possessions.
- MP 269.4 – Confederate Gravesites
- MP 266 - Tupelo Visitors Center MP 266
- Perhaps allow the Natchez Trace Compact to show you Tupelo by car to see the birthplace of Elvis, Tupelo Hardware where Elvis got his first guitar, Tupelo Buffalo Park and/or Tupelo Automobile Museum, and plenty of dining. [Tupelo National Battlefield](#) commemorates the 1864 Battle
- Overnight at Comfort Inn on McCullough Blvd

Night 6 - Tupelo, MS - MP 264 to Houston, MS MP 230 (just over 34 miles on the Parkway)

- See Tupelo Elvis
- 261.8 Chickasaw Village Site - Here once stood an Indian village of several houses and a fort. During the summer they lived in rectangular, well-ventilated houses. In the winter they lived in round houses with plaster walls. In times of danger, everybody - warriors, women, children - sought shelter in strongly fortified stockades. Original foundations of four of these structures are overlaid with concrete curb on the ground. The Chickasaw Nation, population about 2000, lived in the Chickasaw Old Fields, a small natural prairie near Tupelo, Mississippi. Although their villages occupied an area of less than 20 square miles, the Chickasaw claimed and hunted over a vast region in northern Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Chickasaw were closely related to the Choctaw, Creek, and Natchez, as well as some the smaller tribes of the Mississippi Valley. De Soto's followers were the first Europeans to see the Chickasaw with whom they fought a bloody battle in 1541. The Chickasaw, after ceding the last of their ancestral lands to the United States, moved in 1837-1847 to Oklahoma to become one of the 5 civilized tribes. The English-French Conflict 1700-1763 - England and France, after the founding of Louisiana fought four wars for control of North America. The Chickasaw became allies of the British, who used them as a spearhead to oppose French expansion. This tribe, with British help, not only remained independent, but threatened French shipping on the Mississippi. The French conquered or made allies of all the tribes along the Mississippi except for the Chickasaw. They made great efforts to destroy this tribe, sending powerful forces against them in 1736 and 1740 and incited the Choctaw

and other tribes to do likewise. The Chickasaw successfully resisted and remained a thorn in the side of France it lost all North American possessions in 1763. During the French-Chickasaw War of 1736, the Chickasaw threatened French communications between Louisiana and Canada, and urged the Choctaw to trade with the English. Bienville, leading the French, decided to destroy the Chickasaw tribe. In 1735, he ordered a column of French and Indians led by Pierre D'Artaguet from Illinois to meet him near Tupelo. Bienville, leading a French Army joined by the Choctaws, proceeded via Mobile up the Tombigbee River. Arriving at the Chickasaw villages on May 25, 1736, he saw nothing of D'Artaguet - he was dead. Two months earlier the Chickasaw had defeated and killed him while forcing his followers to flee. Ignorant of D'Artaguet's defeat, Bienville attacked the fortified village of Ackia on May 26, 1736. Bloodily repulsed, he withdrew to Mobile, leaving the Chickasaw more dangerous than ever.

- 233.2 Witch Dance (bathroom stop)

- 232.4 – Bynum Mounds (Indian Mounds) - Raw materials and articles from distant areas reached the Indians of the Bynum site by trade along prehistoric trails that were the forerunners of the Natchez Trace. Spool shaped objects made of copper filled with lead were found with Bynum materials. Flint for tools and weapons came from as far away as modern-day Ohio. Green stone for polished celts (axes) was obtained from the Alabama-Tennessee Piedmont. Marine shells came from the Gulf Coast. Living from the land, the Indians hunted, fished, and gathered wild berries, nuts, and fruit. They supplemented these activities with farming. Deer was the most common game animal. The Indians used the bones for tools and the skin for clothing. Cooking pots were made of clay mixed with sand or grit. The surfaces were decorated with the impressions of fabrics or cords. You may see specimens from the Bynum Mounds in the Parkway Visitors Center near Tupelo. Summer Shelters. In summer the Indians probably lived largely out of doors under temporary brush lean-to shelters. Most of their time was spent caring for their crops, hunting, and gathering wild plants, fish, and shellfish from the surrounding area. New winter homes were built as necessary. Foundations were built by placing timbers upright in a circular pattern, weaving willow or reed stems into them and finally plastering mud on the outside, something we know as three permanent house foundations were discovered during archaeological excavations. Roofs were thatched with grass and bark with a center hole that allowed smoke to escape.

- Overnight in Houston, MS MP 230

Night 7 - Houston, MS MP 230 to Kosciusko, MS MP 160 (70 miles)

- 221.4 – Old Trace - Preserved here is portion of a nearly 200-year-old road, the Old Natchez Trace. Maintaining this 500-mile-long wilderness road in the early 1800s was a difficult if not hopeless task. As you look down the sunken trench, note the large trees growing on the edge of the 10-foot-wide strip we clear today. These trees are mute testimony to the endless struggle between man to alter and change and nature to reclaim, restore, and heal.

- MP 193 – Jeff Busby Park - On February 15, 1934, while serving as U.S. Congressman from Mississippi, Thomas Jefferson Busby (1884-1964) introduced a bill authorizing a survey of the Old Natchez Trace. Four years later, the historic road was designated a unit of the National Park System. This area is named in Busby's honor to commemorate his part in the Parkway's establishment. The ridges and valleys are part of a geological land form called the Wilcox series that extends northeast into Alabama. Some 50 million years ago the Wilcox existed as layers of sand and mud. Pressure of overlying sediments and early upheavals have resulted in those layers being tilted and converted into sandstone and shale. More resistant to erosion than the shale, the sandstone portions are the present-day ridges. On a clear day from atop Little Mountain you can see about 20 miles unimpeded. A one-half mile long loop nature trail, walkable in about a half-hour, descends into a shady hollow. Of course, the more time you allow the more you will see and hear. Walk gently and give the forest residents a chance to welcome you into their home. A one-half mile long side trail from the loop leads to the campground.
- MP 180 – French Camp Historic District sits alongside the Natchez Trace. Come discover how early American life was lived in this quaint log cabin village. The Huffman Cabin Gift Shop and the French Camp Log House Museum are open to the public Monday - Saturday from 9:00am to 4:00pm. The Council House Cafe is open Monday - Saturday from 10:30am to 7:00pm. The French Camp Historic District and French Camp Bed and Breakfast are part of the adjacent French Camp Academy, a Christian boarding school-home dedicated to creating a warm and nourishing environment for its students. Other historic buildings include the Colonel James Drane House, The LeFlore Carriage House, Black Smith Shop, Welcome Center, and Bread Bakery. French Camp also has four bed and breakfast cabins.
- MP 160 Kosciusko, MS – birthplace of Oprah Winfrey; Information Center at MP 160
- Overnight in Kosciusko, MS Maple Terrace Inn

Night 8 - MP 160 Kosciusko, MS to MP Ridgeland, MS MP 100-102 (about 60 miles on the actual Parkway)

- See Kosciusko if not done
- 128.4 Upper Choctaw Boundary
- 122.6 – River Bend – bathroom available. In 1698, the French Explorer, Pierre LeMoyne Sieur d'Iberville, found pearls upon sailing into the mouth of this river, which he named 'River of Pearls'. The Natchez Trace, 100 years later, avoided the marshy lowlands by following the ridge between the Pearl River and the Big Black River for 150 miles. The last 75 miles of the river course have served since 1812 as a boundary between Mississippi and Louisiana.
- 122 - Cypress Swamp – Here water tupelo and bald cypress trees can live in deep water for long periods. After taking root in summer when the swamp is nearly dry, the

seedlings can stay alive in water deep enough to kill other plants. This trail leads to an abandoned river channel where the cypresses will eventually be replaced as silt, vegetation, black willow, sycamore, red. But no need to hurry – the change will take several hundred years.

- 105.6 – Reservoir Overlook – beautiful shots. This 50 square-mile reservoir is formed by an earth filled dam administered by the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, an agency of the State of Mississippi. Access from the Parkway is by way of state and county roads. Bicyclists, walkers, and joggers enjoy the Natchez Trace Multi-Use Trail, accessible from the Reservoir Overlook's parking area at the northern terminus of the trail. Further south the trail joins the Ridgeland Multi-Use Path. From here, you can walk or bike south for several miles paralleling the parkway all the way to the Choctaw Agency at milepost 100.7. This route will help bicyclists avoid heavy car traffic on the Trace through the Jackson/Ridgeland/Madison area.
- 104 - The exit will lead you the Mississippi Craft Center,
- 102.4 – Parkway Information Cabin – bathroom available
- MP 100-102 Ridgeland, MS
- Overnight at the Hyatt; great dining choices abound nearby

Night 9 - Ridgeland, MS MP 100 to Port Gibson, MS MP 40 (60 miles)

- See the MS Craft Center if you haven't, then leave Ridgeland on the multi-purpose bike trail to avoid the main Parkway's most congested area
- MP 88.5 - Clinton, MS Visitor Center
- MP 79 - Raymond Military Park (bike a bit to see it)
- MP 78.3 - Battle of Raymond
- MP 40 Port Gibson – Many of Port Gibson's historic buildings survived the Civil War – legend has that's because Grant believed the city, "too beautiful to burn."
- Overnight at Issabella B&B in Port Gibson

Night 10 - Port Gibson, MS to Natchez, MS (40 miles)

- MP 30 - Windsor Ruins - Built in 1859-61 by Smith Daniell, who only lived in the large mansion for a few weeks before he died. The Windsor Plantation once sprawled over 2,600 acres. Legend says that from a roof observatory, Mark Twain once watched the

Mississippi River in the distance. During the Civil War the mansion was used as a Union hospital and observation post, thus sparing it from burning by Union troops. However, after the Civil War, during a house party on February 17, 1890, a guest left a lighted cigar on the upper balcony and Windsor burned to the ground. Everything was destroyed except 23 for the columns, balustrades, and iron stairs. From the Natchez Trace Parkway take Mississippi Highway 552 at milepost 30. Go west and follow the signs.

- MP 17 – Coles Creek – bathroom available
- MP 15 – Mount Locust – bathroom available; see Mississippi State Society, DAR marker at Mount Locust. Constructed circa 1780, this home is one of the oldest structures in Mississippi. It functioned as both a working plantation and as an inn, where travelers on the Natchez Trace could rest for the night. Mount Locust is the only surviving inn of the more than 50 that existed during the period of greatest use of the Old Natchez Trace. The site has its roots in the American Revolution, which caused several thousand British sympathizers to move into the Natchez District. During the American Revolution, Spain moved against Britain and seized Natchez in 1779. John Blommart, a retired British naval officer, is believed to have built Mount Locust about 1780.
- MP 10 – Emerald Mound - This is the second largest Native American Temple Mound in the United States. It was built and used between 1300 and 1600 A.D. by the forerunners of the Natchez Tribe. These inhabitants used a natural hill as a base, which they reshaped by trimming the top and filling the sides to form a great primary platform, 770 feet long, 435 feet wide, and 35 feet high. At the west end still stands a 30-foot secondary mound once topped by a ceremonial structure.
- MP 0 – Reach the Southern Terminus of the Trace in Natchez, MS and exit for the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians - From the Natchez Trace Parkway travel to the southern terminus onto Liberty Road. Turn onto U.S. Highway 61 South (Seargent S. Prentiss Drive). Turn left onto Jefferson Davis Boulevard. The Grand Village of the Natchez Indians will be on your right. The Natchez Tribe lived in present-day southwest Mississippi circa AD 700-1730. According to historical and archaeological evidence, Grand Village was their main ceremonial site beginning around 1682. The early French inhabitants of the area described the ceremonial mounds built by the Natchez on the banks of St. Catherine Creek as the "the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians." In 1729, after several disagreements and acts of violence, the Indians provoked war with the French and were largely destroyed as a people. The 128-acre Grand Village site features a museum accredited by the American Association of Museums, a reconstructed Natchez house, and three ceremonial mounds. Two of the mounds, the Great Sun's Mound and the Temple Mound, have been excavated and rebuilt to their original sizes and shapes. A third mound, called the Abandoned Mound, has been only partially excavated. **Hours of operation:** Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday 1:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- See downtown Natchez and MS River (Natchez Cemetery – location of many Greg Isles' books; [Antebellum Homes](#) are amazing;

- Overnight - Natchez Grand Hotel
- Drive to Bike shop to package bike, open till 530. Trippe's Western Auto 180 Sgt. S. Prentiss Drive, Natchez, MS 601.445.4186

Night 12 - Fly out of Jackson, MS

- Explore Natchez
- Natchez CVB escort to Pearl – Jessica Cauthen - 601-416-1972
- Accommodations – Pearl Ramada

Contacts:

Leiper's Fork/Franklin – Deborah Warnick – 1-615-423-1656

Hohenwald, TN – Janet Johnson or Shelia – 1-931-628-9294

Collinwood, TN – Rena Purdy - 931-722-3575

Florence, AL – Georgia Turner - 256-710-9717

Tupelo, MS – Kim Foster Collins – 662-321-1043

French Camp, MS – Summer Poche - 662.547.6835

Kosciusko, MS – Tonya Threet - 601-416-1972

Ridgeland, MS – Mary Beth Wilkerson – 1-601-942-4049

Natchez, MS – Jessica Cauthen - 601-416-1972