

# EXPLORE



## Mississippi River Country along the Great River Road in Illinois National Scenic Byway



Long before America reached her ocean shores to the west, the banks of the mighty Mississippi River marked its jagged western edge. This untamed frontier, known as Mississippi River Country, was a magnet to Native American tribes, fur traders, French explorers and river pirates. It was a world as unpredictable as the river itself, one steeped in adventure that left an undeniable mystique in its wake that is still felt today. Now pulsing through America's heartland, the Mississippi River has reinvented itself once again. Worlds old and new collide along the Great River Road in Illinois National Scenic Byway.



## DAY 1 & 2 Chicago

The history of Chicago and Illinois comes alive during the Chicago Architecture Center's Architectural River Cruise. Learn why Chicago is



known for its innovative architecture. Be sure to take in the Field Museum of Natural History, Art Institute of Chicago, Adler Planetarium and Shedd Aquarium.

## DAY 3 & 4 Galena

[169 mi – 2hr 30min]

The area's rich history can be traced back to the Black Hawk Wars between the Native Americans and settlers. In the 1800s, Galena grew quickly with the discovery of lead in the surrounding hills. Today, over 85 percent of the town is on the National Register of Historic Places and Galena has been noted as one of the

"Top 10 Most Romantic Small Towns in North America." The Historic Main Street shopping



district boasts 100 merchants, including restaurants and boutique shops. Don't miss President Ulysses S. Grant's home, a State Historic Site. Enjoy sweeping views of the rolling countryside by taking a hot air balloon ride. Along the way to Rock Island, see the river from atop the bluffs at Mississippi Palisades State Park. Visit the windmill "de Immigrant" in Fulton and the Albany Indian Mounds State Historic Site in Albany.

## DAY 5 Moline, Rock Island

[84 mi – 1hr 50min]



Travel south to Moline and Rock Island to experience how John Deere changed the

way the world's food supply moved from farm to table. Moline is home of the Deere & Company World Headquarters and the John Deere Pavilion. Be sure to visit the Pavilion to sit in the driver's seat of a giant combine, try one of the cutting edge simulators and learn about the farming pioneer's historic past. In East Moline, take the 1.5 hour factory tour at the John Deere Harvester Works and watch a massive combine being built. In Rock Island,

visit the Black Hawk State Historic Site where Native Americans and nineteenth-century settlers once lived. See boats pass through a working lock and learn about navigation on our nation's largest river at the Mississippi River Visitors Center Locks and Dam 15 and at the Rock Island Arsenal. During winter, the locks are a great place to spot bald eagles.

## DAY 6 Nauvoo, Quincy

[187 mi – 3hr 50min]

The 1800s come to life at Nauvoo's Family Living Center. Tour Historic Nauvoo, view the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple and see the family properties of Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Nearby, over 30 restored historic buildings have been furnished with period items providing insights into pioneer life. Many are open to the public and offer live demonstrations. Those sites available for viewing include a post office, bake shop, brickyard, gunsmith, drug and variety store, school, blacksmith and many more. In the evening, relax and unwind at Baxter's Vineyard and Winery. Established in 1857, it is Illinois' oldest winery. Then journey to the city of Quincy, filled with over 3,600 architectural landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Explore the East End Historic District with its restored homes from the 1850s that tell the story of Quincy's beginnings. Quincy's oldest house, built in 1835, was a stop on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War.



## DAY 7 Hannibal

[20 mi – 25min]

Take a short drive across the bridge south of Quincy to Hannibal, Missouri. Step inside the home of Samuel Clemens, known to most as legendary writer Mark Twain, at the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum. Walk down Historic Main Street with its local shops. Then go underground for a guided walk through the caverns at Mark Twain Cave.

## DAY 8 Grafton, Alton, Collinsville

[129 mi – 2hr 20min]

Pere Marquette State Park in Grafton is a great place to take a short trail to the top of the bluffs. Nearby, the village of Elsah is a step back in time with its well preserved homes. Stand in awe of the Mississippi River in East Alton at the National Great Rivers Museum at Melvin Price Locks and Dam 26. Towering eight stories above the water, this is one of the largest lock and dam structures on the Mississippi River. See the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers from 150 feet above on a viewing deck at the Lewis and Clark Confluence Tower near Hartford. Close by, visit the Lewis and Clark State Historic Site, the "point of departure" for Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery. In Collinsville, at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site and UNESCO World Heritage Site, learn about the largest prehistoric native settlement in North America. Be sure to walk to the top of the 100 foot tall Monks Mound.



## DAY 9 Collinsville to Cairo

[157 mi – 3hr]

Visit a reconstruction of Fort de Chartres, near Prairie du Rocher. Originally built in 1753, it contains a restored powder magazine believed to be the oldest building in Illinois. In Chester, home of Popeye creator Elzie Segar, travel the Popeye Character Trail and snap your photo with statues depicting characters from the show. Get a taste of local flavor at Scratch Brewing, devoted to foraged beers, it's been called "America's Coolest Microbrewery" by *Men's Journal*. Experience some of the most breathtaking views along the byway at LaRue-Pine Hills near Wolf Lake. From below enjoy views of the 300-foot cliffs, then follow Inspiration Point Trail for panoramic views of the Mississippi River valley and Big Muddy bottomlands. On the way to Cairo and the southernmost point of the state, stop in Makanda at Giant City State Park to hike the "Giant City Streets," where trails wind among massive sandstone blocks that formed 12,000 years ago.

## Great River Road in Illinois National Scenic Byway

GreatRiverRoad-Illinois.com 1-877-477-7007

