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# Blues, Barbecue and Elvis Presley - a Girls Getaway to Memphis, TN

By: [Jan Ross](#)

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We stepped out of the car, stretching and ready to experience Memphis in all its glory and then we all gasped aloud at the humid heat that slapped us in the face like a wet washcloth. We had chosen Memphis on a whim for our Girlfriend Getaway since it was fairly close to our home base of Lexington, Kentucky and my sister-in-law was dying to visit Graceland, home of the famous Elvis Presley.

What we had not done was research just how hot Memphis could be in the summer, assuming

it would be similar to Kentucky. It was pretty warm but we quickly adjusted and set our sights on settling into our lovely room in the River Inn at Harbor Town.

Overlooking the lazy Mississippi River and with a quiet air of sophistication, the [River Inn at Harbor Town](#) is the perfect place to stay on a girlfriends getaway. Close to town, but just far enough away from the wonderful craziness of [Beale Street](#), the River Inn not only has marvelously luxurious rooms, but they also include a full, hot, and quite delicious breakfast at Paulette's Restaurant in your room rate. It was a refreshing change to order breakfast every morning instead of choosing from the ubiquitous buffet you normally get in a hotel.



With 28 guest rooms and suites with the most comfortable 4-poster beds I have ever slept in, bedecked with Frette linens, puffy duvets and six luxurious pillows, you will be tempted to never leave your room. The hotel kindly provided us with a rollaway bed since there were three of us and we still had plenty of room to move around.

Decorated with a beautiful Southern and European décor, 32" flat-screen televisions and including amenities like a glass of Champagne or wine on arrival, Port Wine and chocolate truffles at Turn-Down (which are delicious, by the way), luxury bathroom

amenities, a daily national newspaper, free high-speed wireless Internet access, local phone calls, and use of the Fitness Room, you will not want for anything at the River Inn.

The River Inn knows women love to 'R&B' (relax and beautify) when they travel and they've added a [Ladies Travelers Amenities](#) page to their website, showcasing local spas and female friendly activities.

One of the nicest places in the hotel is the library-style seating on each floor, furnished with comfortable chairs and a large selection of books, in case you forgot to bring your own. We kept meaning to take advantage of this comfy area but were way too busy learning all about Memphis.

### Finding Our Blues Groove

When you are ready to tour Memphis, you absolutely have to take the Mojo Tour with [Backbeat Tours](#). It was when we climbed on the bus and saw the guy with a guitar perched on a stool at the front of the bus that we knew that was going to be a truly unique tour. And it was. Unique, funny, interesting - all this and more, thanks to our great tour guide, [Memphis Jones](#).

If you take a Mojo Tour with Backbeat Tours you should try to get him as your tour guide. He was seriously great. We drove all over Memphis visiting different historic locations and the whole time he had the bus either laughing, listening to his songs or singing along. I have taken a lot of tours in a lot of places and this was one of the best I have ever taken. Before the tour even started, he handed out tambourines and shakers so the crowd could get involved in the music and you would have thought we were a bus full of kindergarten students instead of adults the way we got into those instruments.

We learned all about the colorful musical history of Memphis in an easygoing way that

made learning fun. Backbeat Tours offers a variety of musical tours -which seemed appropriate for Memphis - and are very conveniently located on Beale Street, which you have to visit to enjoy the shops, restaurant and music. The ticket office for Backbeat Tours is right on the main street at the Blues City Cafe - you can't miss it.

### Best Barbeque in Memphis!

After your fabulous tour, get off the bus at Beale Street and walk right into the [Blues City Cafe](#). They have a fabulous menu of choices, including a very spicy and delicious Gulf Coast Cajun-style shrimp appetizer that might very well take the top of your head off with its spiciness. So be prepared. Just make sure you order barbecue at the Blues City Cafe because it is their specialty.

I have never had barbecued ribs with meat so tender it was actually slipping off the bones until I ate here. Then, just about the time we thought we might be able to get up and waddle out of the place, they encouraged us to order the Apple Dumpling with ice cream, which is their specialty dessert. Honestly. Could you pass this up? Baked apple wrapped in pastry seared with butter in an iron skillet. Drizzled with cinnamon sauce and served with vanilla ice cream.

After lunch, spend some time just wandering around Beale Street. There's lots of places to buy souvenirs, get a cold drink and just enjoy the live music drifting out of every restaurant.

### Graceland and Elvis

Our second day in Memphis was spent marveling over the fabulous [Graceland](#). You don't need to schedule a tour to Graceland, it's very easy to go on your own. Plan several hours though, as there is a lot to see. You can tour Elvis Presley's private jet, see the car museum and peruse the many gift shops but the real treat is the house itself.

I had the preconceived idea that it would be a huge mansion, but it's really not that large and, as you walk through, it becomes obvious that this was actually a home. The furnishings are dated and some are pretty amusing but when you consider that it was decorated years ago, the shag carpeting and crazy color choices begin to make sense. The family graves are in a lovely,



quiet area with a burbling fountain. It's amazing that thousands of people tour Graceland each year from all over the world. There were fresh flowers, small stuffed animals and notes on the graves - a testament to the fact that Elvis and his music are still well-loved.

After Graceland, we headed to the [Peabody Hotel](#) and their famous ducks. Get there early because there are plenty of other people who want to see the ducks and it may be difficult to get a good seat. It's a lot of fun when the official duck conductor - in full uniform - steps out of the elevator and herds the ducks into the fountain. He will also give you a little history about the ducks and how they have their own private penthouse in the hotel.

We should have scheduled just one more day because we would have liked to visit Mud Island, take a Steamboat Cruise, do more shopping and work in a spa visit. We'll just have to schedule another trip to the River City - preferably when it's not quite so hot!

*Jan Ross is a freelance travel writer who has been traveling the world since way back before she can even remember. Her dad was in the Marine Corps so she is used to packing up at a moment's notice! She loves writing hotel and restaurant reviews since it means she gets to stay in fabulous places and eat wonderful food. She especially loves writing spa reviews because that means she gets phenomenally pampered and, seriously, who does not like that? She has visited lots of places but still gets a thrill of excitement when she boards a plane, steps into a new hotel room, or sees a new location for the first time. And she hopes that thrill never, ever goes away.*

For more information on Jan, visit her website at [WanderlustWonder.com](#).



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