

**INSIDERS'**  
GUIDE®

# Nashville

Tenth Edition



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## About the Author

An award-winning journalist, **Jackie Sheckler Finch** has covered a wide array of topics—from birth to death with all the joy and sorrow in between. She has written for many publications and has been named the Mark Twain Travel Writer of the Year by Midwest Travel Writers a record five times—in 1998, 2001, 2003, 2007, and 2011. She shares her home with her resident entertainer and watchdog, Pepper. One of her greatest joys is taking to the road to find the fascinating people and places that wait over the hill and around the next bend.

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# Acknowledgments

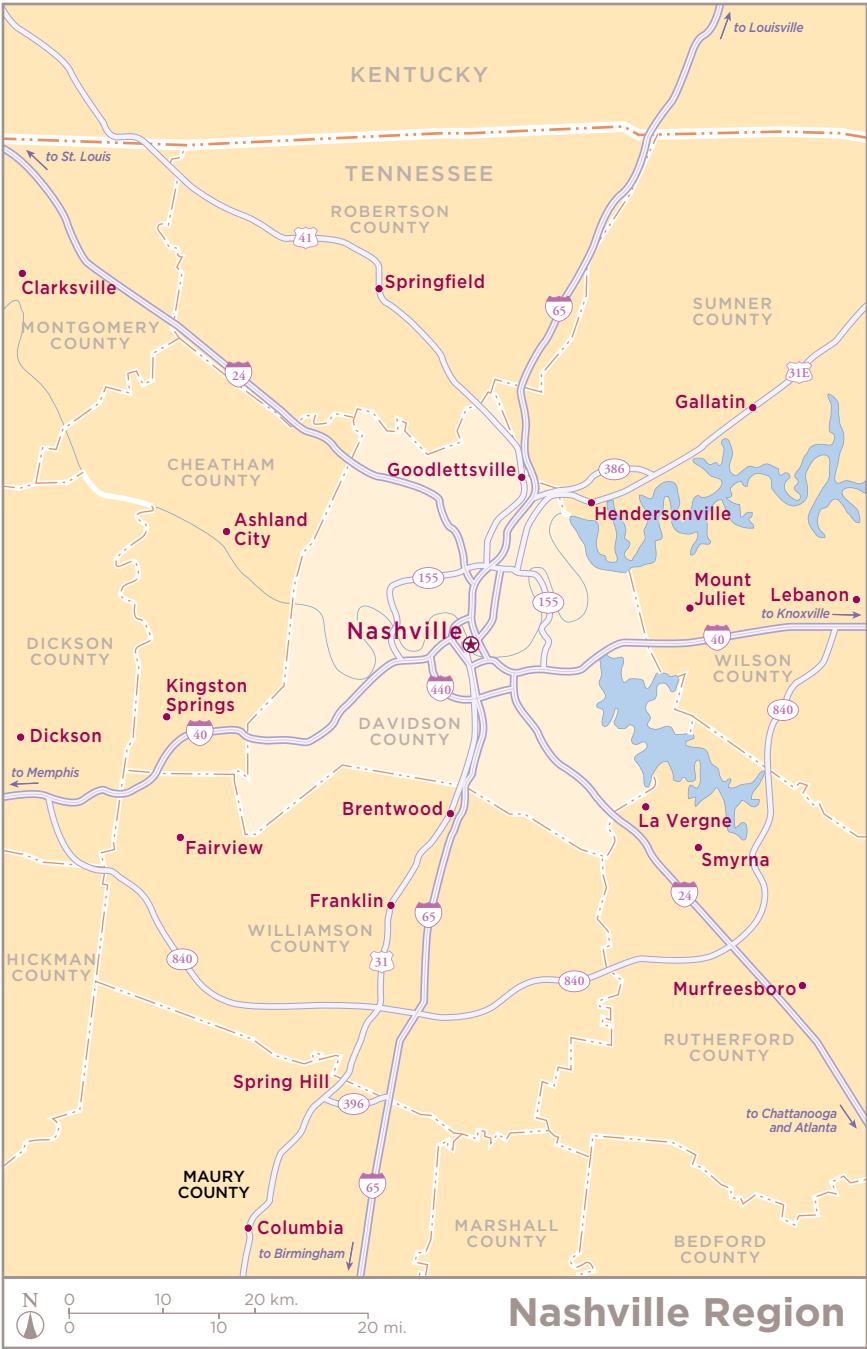
Many thanks to Nashville residents, public-relations officials, and business owners who took the time to help me update this book. Thanks especially to Heather Middleton of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau for her patience and answers to my endless questions and to Dan Rogers for sharing his awesome knowledge.

My gratitude to my Globe Pequot editor, Sarah Parke, and to my project editor, Emily Chiarelli, for their encouragement and keen attention to detail.

This book is dedicated to my family: Kelly Rose; Mike Peters; Sean and Emma Rose; Stefanie, Will, Trey, and Arianna Scott; and Logan and Grayson Peters.

A special remembrance to my husband, Bill Finch, whose spirit goes with me every mile and step of the way through life's journey.

—Jackie Sheckler Finch



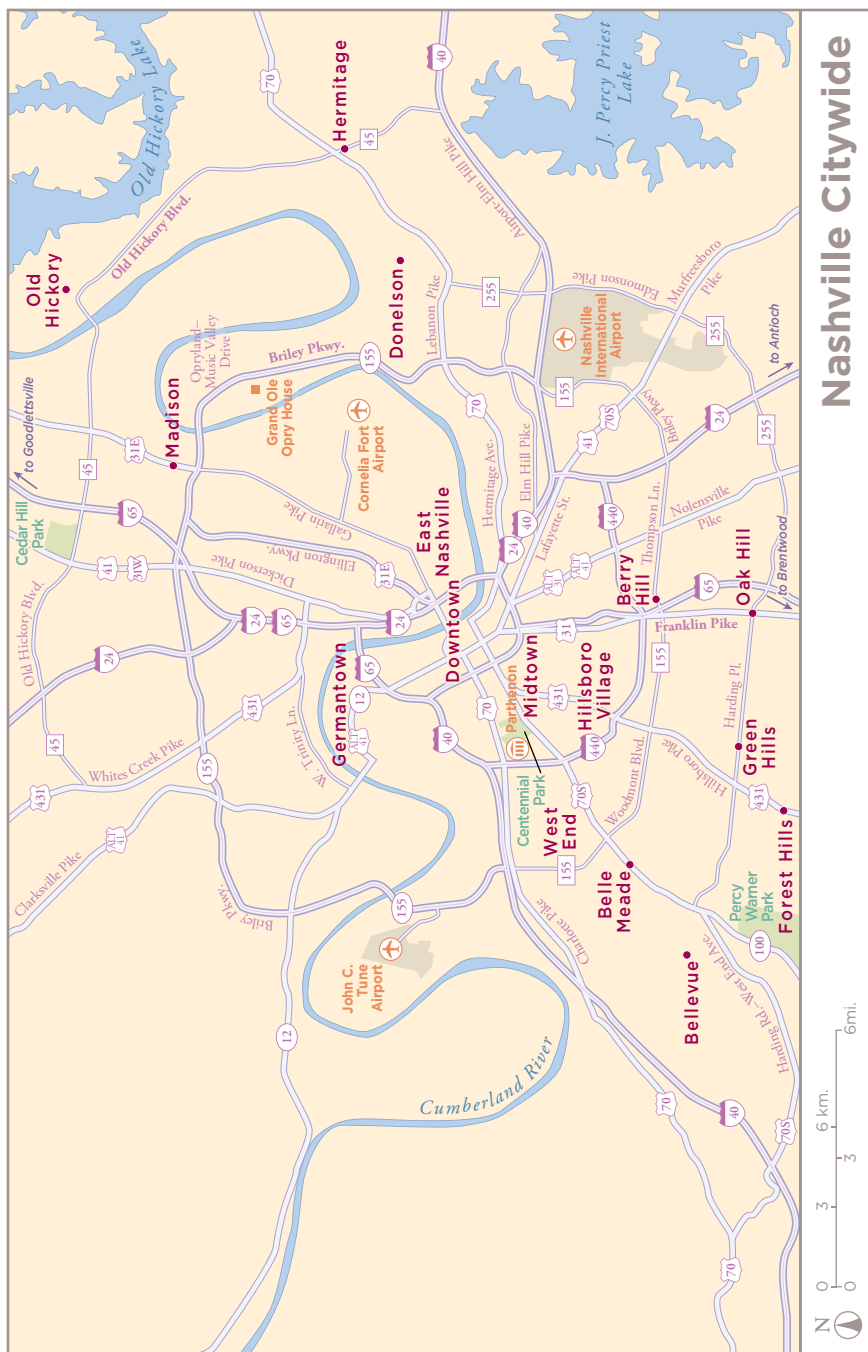
**Nashville Region**



## Downtown Nashville & Midtown



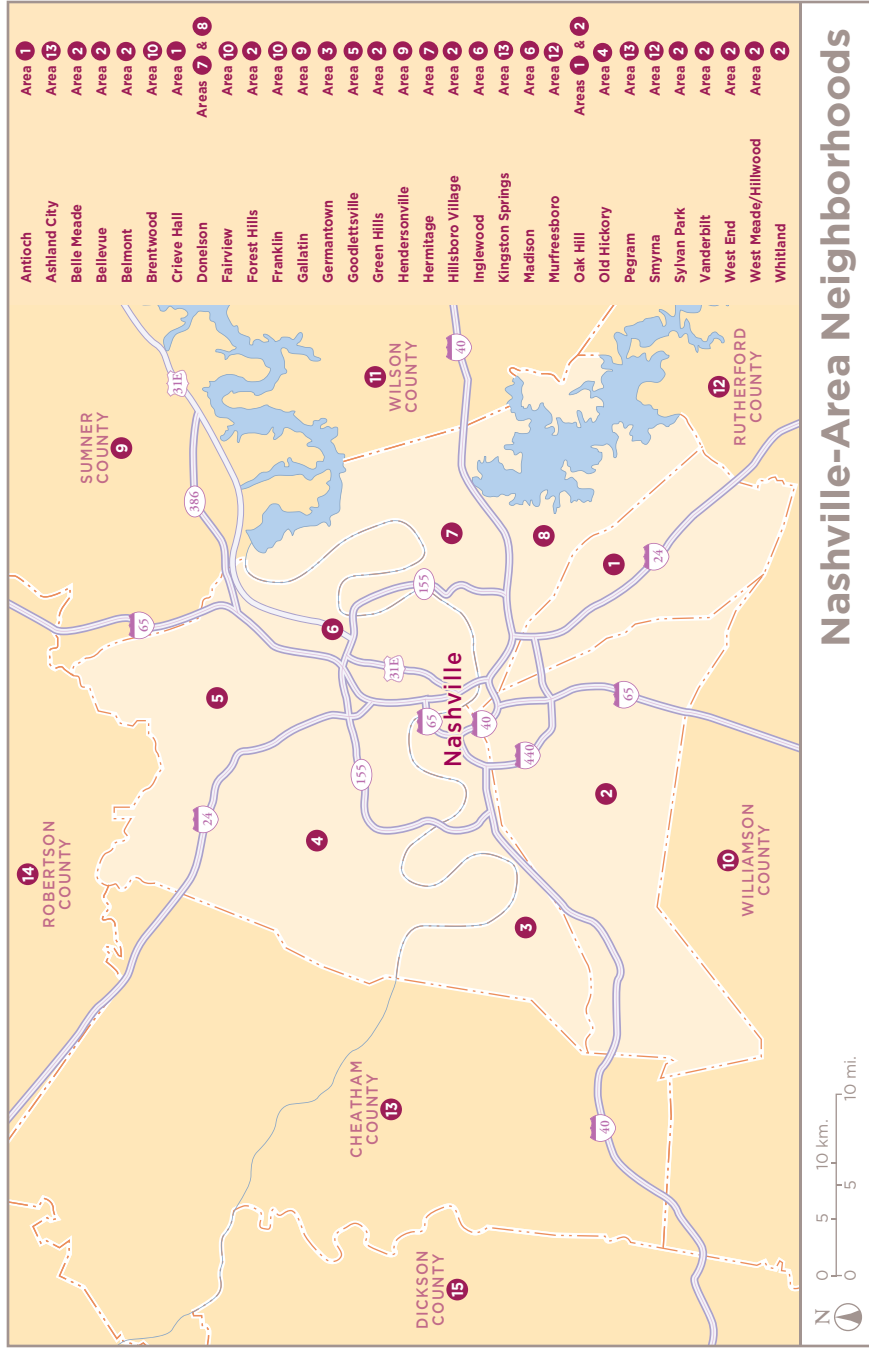




# Nashville Citywide







# How to Use This Book

*Insiders' Guide to Nashville* is meant to be used, and used often. It is not a coffee-table book (even though we believe it will add a certain grace and elegance to your table—and when friends ask about it, you can tell them where to get one of their own). Just be sure to take it with you whenever you go out, so you can avoid potentially unpleasant conversations like this:

“Honey, what was the name of that little barbecue place that sounded so appetizing?”

“It’s in our *Insiders' Guide*. Didn’t you bring it?”

“I thought *you* had it.”

“Aarrggghh!”


Obviously, how you use the book is not nearly as important as that you use it. That said, we’d like to make a few suggestions that will help you make the most of this book, so you soon will feel like an Insider yourself.


First of all, feel free to experience the book on your own terms. Obviously, if you and the family are hungry right now, you’ll want to go immediately to the **Dining** chapter. If you’re looking for something exciting to do, turn to **Attractions, Kidstuff, Recreation, or Entertainment**. In the mood to discover why Nashville is known worldwide as “Music City”? We’ve devoted a hefty chapter to that subject, too, and you may be surprised at the diversity of sounds you can find here. Need a way to get from point A to point B? Then you may want to go first to the **Welcome to Nashville** chapter. Or you might choose to take the casual approach and simply flip through the book, skimming the pages to see what catches your eye. We’ve designed *Insiders' Guide to Nashville* to be self-contained. That means each chapter essentially stands on its own, so wherever you start reading, you’ll find the information you need to enjoy that aspect of Nashville life. And there are lots of cross-references.

While our primary focus is Nashville and Davidson County, we’ll also take you through parts of the 14-county Metropolitan Statistical Area—including Cannon, Cheatham, Dickson, Hickman, Macon, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Maury, and Wilson Counties. You’ll visit towns and communities such as Hermitage, Old Hickory, Brentwood, Franklin, Hendersonville, Goodlettsville, Murfreesboro, Lebanon, Springfield, Smyrna, and Madison, to name a few. And our **Itineraries** chapter will give you tips on how to enjoy specific aspects of Music City. Moving to the Nashville area or already live here? Be sure to check out the pages at the back of the book,

where you will find the **Living Here** appendix that offers sections on relocation, education and child care, retirement, and media.

Within all chapters, you will find frequent cross-references and even, for the sake of convenience, some cross-listings.

Throughout this book you'll find **Insider's Tips** (indicated by an ) , which offer quick insights, and **Close-ups**, which provide in-depth information on topics that are particularly interesting, unusual, or distinctly Nashville.

You'll also find listings accompanied by the  symbol—these are our top picks for attractions, restaurants, accommodations, and everything in between that you shouldn't miss while you're in the area. You want the best this region has to offer? Go with our **Insiders' Choice**.

Don't hesitate to personalize this book—make it your own! Scribble notes in the margins, circle places you have visited, underline points of interest. You might also discover some diner or nightclub that has escaped our notice. Make a note of it and, if you would be so kind, share it with us so we can include it in our next edition.

Please remember that, in a rapidly growing metropolitan area such as Nashville, things are bound to change. By the time you read this book, there will be new places to visit and experiences to savor—and, unfortunately, some old favorites that might have bid us farewell. Menus will be revised and schedules altered. It's always a good idea to call before visiting an attraction or restaurant.

We're pleased that, whether you're a visitor, a newcomer, or perhaps even a longtime resident wanting to see whether you've been missing anything, you have chosen us to be your companion here in Nashville. We sincerely hope we're able to make your experience a memorable one.

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## WELCOME TO Nashville

In the more than 200 years since its founding in 1779, the community now known worldwide as Nashville, Tennessee, has earned fame and prestige in many areas and, in the process, gained a proportionate number of nicknames. “Music City” . . . “Athens of the South” . . . “Wall Street of the South” . . . “The Buckle of the Bible Belt” . . . “City of Parks”—those are just a few of the names Nashville has been given throughout its history.

The problem we have with such nicknames is that each is severely limited, generally paying tribute to only one facet of what is truly a multifaceted metropolitan area. At the same time, we appreciate that each of these names, in its own way, serves as a tribute to some of the accomplishments that have made our city great. In other words, it is significant that Nashville has inspired so many terms of endearment, and so we’ll look at these nicknames in greater detail later in this chapter. But first, we’d like to take time to point out something that, although you probably already know it, can occasionally get obscured by all the hype. And that is: Nashville is a *wonderful* place to live or to visit.



*The “Batman Building” rises over Broadway.* Jackie Sheckler Finch



With its two pointy peaks and dark facade, the tallest building in Nashville quickly got a nickname—the Batman Building. Actually, the Commerce Street skyscraper is the AT&T Tower, but hardly anyone calls it that because it resembles the shape of the comic book hero's mask. Built in 1994, the eye-catching \$94 million structure is 632 feet tall and was originally designed for BellSouth by architects at Earl Swensson Associates. The architects have said the Batman resemblance wasn't intentional, and they did not even notice it on the small models prepared for the project.

You might say that Nashville is the embodiment of Southern hospitality. Waitresses call you “honey” while serving you down-home delicacies such as fried chicken, made-from-scratch biscuits, grits, and country ham. People smile and speak to you on the street and are generally willing to give you the time of day or directions if you need them. Adding to the laid-back hospitable atmosphere are a few antebellum mansions, some of which could have been used as sets for *Gone With the Wind*; elegant Victorian homes; and lush flowering gardens. Nashville is a casual place, and many businesspeople wear cowboy boots with their suits. If you're thinking now that we're merely catering to stereotypes, rest assured that these scenes are all very real, although they're only a part of the big picture. There are, of course, plenty of Nashvillians who wouldn't be caught dead in cowboy boots, for example, and many who prefer to dine on continental cuisine and live in modern condominiums. Such is the diversity that characterizes this town.

This is a place where, fortunately, quality of life and cost of living don't go hand in hand. According to the ACCRA Cost of Living Index, for midyear 2018 Nashville's cost of living was 68.48 percent of the national average. In Tennessee you pay no state income tax—although this may someday change.

Of course, with attractions like the *Grand Ole Opry*, the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum, the Ryman Auditorium, historic Belle Meade Plantation, the Hermitage estate of Andrew Jackson, and countless museums, art galleries, and outdoor recreational activities, Nashville remains a top tourist destination among Americans as well as visitors from other countries.

## SOME BASIC FACTS

Nashville, the capital of Tennessee, is the center of a 14-county metropolitan statistical area (MSA) with a population of more than 1.9 million, which makes it the most populated MSA in the state. The Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro MSA covers the counties of Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Maury, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Wilson, and Williamson, as well as five counties that were added when the area's MSA was expanded in 2003: Cannon, Hickman, Macon, Smith, and Trousdale.

In addition, Montgomery, with its county seat of Clarksville, is considered part of the "Nashville Economic Market."

Nashville–Davidson County has a combined metropolitan government. According to the US Census Bureau, the 2017 population of Nashville–Davidson County was 659,042. That population makes Nashville the largest city in Tennessee. In 2016, Nashville gained the population crown from Memphis with its population of 652,717. Nashville's 533 square miles make it one of the United States' largest cities in area.

Nashville is one of the fastest-growing large cities in the nation, with vigorous population growth that has continued for more than three decades. What brings so many people here is a strong economy that even in times of economic slowdown has bucked national trends, maintaining below-average unemployment rates and luring big corporate employers.



Close to 40 historical markers decorate the roadsides and neighborhoods of west Nashville. They commemorate significant sites in the Battle of Nashville, the last major battle of the Civil War.



Tennessee ties Missouri as the most neighborly state in the nation. Eight states border Tennessee: Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, and Virginia.



## A PROGRESSIVE & SOPHISTICATED CITY

When Nashville and Davidson County formed their combined city-county metropolitan government in 1962, it was one of the first of its kind. The act served a dual purpose: increasing a tax base that had been dwindling because of numbers of people moving from the city to the suburbs and eliminating much duplication of services, thus resulting in a more efficient form of government. Still, several cities located within the boundaries of Metro Nashville opted to remain separate from the new metropolitan government. These include Belle Meade, Berry Hill, Goodlettsville, and Forest Hills. While located within the Nashville city limits, they maintain their own city governments and provide different levels of service to their residents.

Downtown Nashville today is a vibrant, thriving area that is a blend of old and new. While many of the old buildings that line Broadway have changed little since the turn of the 20th century, steel-and-glass skyscrapers loom nearby. Just down the street from the legendary honky-tonks where many of yesterday's country singers and songwriters first plied their trade, you'll also find newer attractions such as the Hard Rock Café, Jason Aldean's Kitchen + Rooftop Bar, John Rich's Redneck Riviera, Luke's (Bryan) 32 Bridge, Dierks Bentley's Whiskey Row, FGL (Florida Georgia Line) House, Blake Shelton's Ole Red



*Nashville skyline* Courtesy of Tennessee Department of Tourist Development

Nashville and A.J.'s (Alan Jackson)  
Good Time Bar.

The Ryman Auditorium, a true landmark since its completion in 1892, has served as a tabernacle, assembly hall, and theater as well as onetime home of the *Grand Ole Opry*. The beautifully restored building still plays host to a variety of entertainers, including modern-day legends such as Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan.



Nashville is one of the largest cities in the United States in terms of area. It occupies 533 square miles. In comparison, Los Angeles covers 468 square miles.

## Nashville Vital Statistics

- **Founded:** 1779 as Fort Nashborough; established as town of Nashville by North Carolina Legislature in 1784
- **Mayor/governor:** Mayor David Briley and Governor Bill Lee
- **Population:**  
Nashville–Davidson County: 659,042  
Nashville–Davidson–Murfreesboro Metropolitan Statistical Area: 1.9 million  
Tennessee: 6.7 million
- **Area:**  
Nashville: 533 square miles  
Nashville Economic Market: 5,225 square miles
- **Counties in the Nashville area (with major cities and county seats):**  
Davidson County (Nashville is the capital)  
Cannon County (county seat Woodbury)  
Cheatham County (county seat Ashland City)  
Dickson County (Dickson, county seat Charlotte)  
Hickman County (county seat Centerville)  
Macon County (county seat Lafayette)  
Maury County (county seat Columbia)  
Montgomery County (county seat Clarksville)  
Robertson County (county seat Springfield)

Rutherford County (Smyrna, county seat Murfreesboro)  
 Smith County (county seat Carthage)  
 Sumner County (Hendersonville, Portland, county seat Gallatin)  
 Trousdale County (county seat Hartsville)  
 Williamson County (Brentwood, county seat Franklin)  
 Wilson County (county seat Lebanon)

- **Major airport/major interstates:** Nashville International Airport; I-24, I-40, and I-65 converge in Nashville
- **Nickname:** “Music City”
- **Average temperatures:**  
 Winter: High 39°F, low 30°F, mean 39°F  
 Summer: High 88°F, low 67°F, mean 78°F  
 Annual: High 70°F, low 48°F, mean 59°F
- **Average annual precipitation:** Rainfall: 47.3 inches; snowfall: 11.0 inches
- **Major colleges and universities:**  
 Nashville: Vanderbilt University, Belmont University, Fisk University, David Lipscomb University, Meharry Medical College, Tennessee State University, Trevecca Nazarene University  
 Nashville area: Austin Peay State University, Cumberland University, Middle Tennessee State University
- **Major area employers:** Vanderbilt University and Medical Center, HCA Holdings Inc., Nissan North America, Kroger Company, Saint Thomas Health Services, Randstad Staffing, Shoney’s Inc., Electrolux Home Products
- **Famous sons and daughters:** Andrew Jackson, Wilma Rudolph, Kitty Wells, Pat Boone, Miley Cyrus, Gregg Allman, Shooter Jennings, Bill Belichick, Edwin Starr, Kitty Wells, Julian Bond, Reese Witherspoon
- **Public transportation:** WEGO Public Transit operates intercity bus lines, downtown trolleys, and 2 downtown land ports
- **Military base:** Fort Campbell, on the Tennessee-Kentucky state line at Clarksville, Tennessee, and Fort Campbell, Kentucky

- **Driving laws:**

General speed limits: 70 mph on interstates in rural areas, 55 mph in urban areas, 20–45 mph in residential and business areas. When it's raining or snowing, the law requires use of headlights as well as windshield wipers.

HOV lanes (marked with a diamond): Two or more people must be in your vehicle for use from 7 to 9 a.m. Mon through Fri (inbound), and 4 to 6 p.m. Mon through Fri (outbound).

- **Alcohol laws:**

You must be 21 to legally purchase or consume alcoholic beverages.

The blood alcohol level at which one is legally presumed to be intoxicated is 0.08.

Beer can be purchased in grocery and convenience markets on Sun, but liquor stores are closed.

Liquor-by-the-drink is available in restaurants on Sun after 10 a.m.

Bars can remain open until 3 a.m.

- **Daily newspapers:** *The Tennessean*

- **Weekly newspaper:** *The Nashville Scene*

- **Taxes:** State sales tax is 7 percent. With a local option tax of 2.25 percent, combined 9.25 percent tax applies in most counties to almost all purchases. Hotel-motel occupancy tax is 14.25 percent, plus \$2 city tax in Nashville–Davidson County.

- **Chamber of commerce:** Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, 211 Commerce St., Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37201; (615) 743-3000; [nashvillechamber.com](http://nashvillechamber.com)

- **Visitor center:** Nashville Convention and Visitors Corporation, One Nashville Place, 150 Fourth Ave. N., Suite G250, Nashville, TN 37219; (800) 657-6910; [visitmusiccity.com](http://visitmusiccity.com)

- **Time/weather:** National Weather Service: [weather.gov](http://weather.gov); Central Standard Time



*A large street mural honors Nashville.* Jackie Sheckler Finch

## **“MUSIC CITY”**

From Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Ernest Tubb, and Hank Williams to Garth Brooks, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, and Shania Twain, Nashville has long been known as the world’s capital of country music. But while country music remains Nashville’s signature sound, other styles of music call Nashville home as well. Music City is headquarters for the growing contemporary Christian and gospel music industry, and stars of the genre—such as Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith,



Union soldiers brought baseball to Nashville during the Civil War, playing in the area where the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park now stands. In the early 1900s Nashville had a Southern Association team that played at Sulphur Dell Park, in the same area, and won championships in 1901, 1902, and 1908.

Jars of Clay, and dc Talk—all live or spend large amounts of time here. Premier jazz and classical label Naxos USA moved its US headquarters from New Jersey to the Nashville area in 1998.

Record labels, recording studios, music publishers, video production firms, booking agencies, management companies, and more support all this activity; in turn, these industries increase the city's appeal to artists, musicians, songwriters, and executives from around the world.

Nashville is a great place to make music, learn, work, worship, play, or be yourself. At the risk of sounding like a broken record (which we suppose is appropriate), we'll again state that Nashville is a wonderful place to live or to visit. Whatever your reason for being here (or planning to be here), for however long, enjoy your stay. This city has a lot to offer. Welcome!



# Getting Here, Getting Around

Question: How do you get to the *Grand Ole Opry*? Answer: Practice, practice, practice!

Okay, it's an old joke, slightly paraphrased. But we use it to make the point that, with just a little practice and some practical knowledge, you'll soon find your way without problem to the Opryland area, the downtown/Music Row area, or anywhere else you want to go in metropolitan Nashville.

If you do happen to lose your bearings, don't lose your cool. Stop and ask directions—remember, you're in the land of Southern hospitality! It's reassuring to note that, in Nashville, it seems almost everyone is originally from somewhere else, which means that, like you, they've been lost before and will surely get lost again. Once you understand a few of the ground rules, such as the names and directions of the interstates and primary crosstown routes, you'll discover that getting around in Nashville is a bit like life itself: You're bound to make a few wrong turns along the way, but you'll be wiser for the experience. (Hey, do you think there might be a song in that?)

Of course, if you prefer, you can leave the driving to somebody else. Nashville has a number of transportation alternatives. We'll tell you about them later in this chapter.

## ARRIVING BY AIR

**NASHVILLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BNA), 1-40 and Donelson Pike, 8 miles southeast of downtown, 1 Terminal Dr., Nashville, TN 37214; (615) 275-1675; [flynashville.com](http://flynashville.com).** Nashville International Airport has 15 airlines serving more than 50 North American cities and several overseas with 380 daily arrivals and departures. The airport, which prides itself on efficiency and customer service, is generally known for on-time performance. In addition to visual arts, Nashville International Airport hosts some of the best local talent that Music City has to offer. On four stages located in the terminal, the airport features live musical entertainment ranging from jazz to country—this is Music City, after all. Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the terminal.



*The Nashville airport pays homage to its Music City roots.* Jackie Sheckler Finch

Airlines serving Nashville International Airport include the following:

**Air Canada**, (888) 247-2262, [aircanada.com](http://aircanada.com)

**American Airlines**, (800) 433-7300, [aa.com](http://aa.com)

**Delta**, (800) 221-1212, [delta.com](http://delta.com)

**Frontier Airlines**, (801) 401-9000, [flyfrontier.com](http://flyfrontier.com)

**Southwest**, (800) 435-9792, [southwest.com](http://southwest.com)

**United**, (800) 241-6522, [united.com](http://united.com)

### *Getting to & Leaving from the Airport*

Nashville International is about 8 miles southeast of downtown Nashville at I-40 and Donelson Pike. It's also near the intersection of two other major interstates: I-65 and I-24.

Once you've driven onto the airport grounds, simply follow the signs to short-term, long-term, or satellite parking; arrivals; or departures. If you're waiting to pick up someone from an arriving flight, look for the blue and white

signs leading you to the free “Waiting Area,” a parking pull-off where you can watch the arrival boards. There are a number of parking spaces in front of baggage claim on 10-minute timers. You must stay with your vehicle when parking in these spaces. When your 10 minutes are up, you will immediately be asked to leave.

### ***Parking at the Airport***

You'll pay up to a maximum of \$28 a day in the valet area, up to \$18 a day in the long-term area, or up to \$9 a day in the satellite “economy” lot about a mile from the terminal. If you park in the long-term or satellite lots, you can catch a complimentary shuttle to and from the terminal.

### ***Ground Transportation***

Various taxi services are available at the ground level; just get out by the curb and wait. Please note, however, that the ground transportation area is one level below the baggage claim area, so you'll have to take the escalator or elevator after picking up your luggage.

Taxi meters start at \$7 and are \$2.10 a mile afterward. There is a flat rate of \$25 to the downtown area and Opryland Hotel area, plus an additional passenger charge of \$1 when accompanying one original passenger proceeding to same destination. Most hotels in the Briley Parkway/airport area offer free shuttle service to their guests. Jarmon Transportation is the official shuttle service for the airport. Shuttles depart every 15 minutes. The Downtown-West End Express is \$25 for a round-trip or \$14 for one way.

If you'd prefer to captain your own ship, on-site rental car agencies include:

**Alamo** (800-331-1212; [alamo.com](http://alamo.com))

**Avis** (800-331-1212; [avis.com](http://avis.com))

**Budget** (800-527-0700; [budget.com](http://budget.com))

**Dollar** (800-800-4000; [dollar.com](http://dollar.com))

**Enterprise** (800-736-8222; [enterprise.com](http://enterprise.com))

**Hertz** (800-654-3131; [hertz.com](http://hertz.com))

**National** (888-826-6890; [nationalcar.com](http://nationalcar.com))

**Payless** (800-729-5377; [paylesscar.com](http://paylesscar.com))

**Thrifty** (800-367-2277; [thrifty.com](http://thrifty.com)).

All of these rental agencies have convenient locations at the airport.

## GETTING AROUND

### Knowing the Laws

A night in jail, or even a ticket from a police officer, might be fodder for a great country song, but you'd still probably rather avoid these situations if possible. Therefore, it pays to know the following laws pertaining to getting around in the fine state of Tennessee.

**Driving under the influence.** Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs in Tennessee is a serious no-no. The minimum penalty for a first conviction is 48 hours to 11 months and 29 days in jail, a \$350 to \$1,500 fine, court-ordered DUI school, and the loss of your license for a year. In addition, there can also be considerable court costs, increased insurance premiums, and other expenses. So just don't do it.

**Buckling up.** State law requires the driver and all front-seat passengers to wear a seat belt. Under Tennessee's child restraint law, children under 1 year old or those weighing 20 pounds or less must be placed in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system; children 1 through 3 and weighing more than 20 pounds must be placed in a forward-facing child passenger restraint system. Children 4 through 8 and those less than 5 feet tall must use a belt-positioning booster system. Additionally, children through age 12 should be placed in a rear seat if available. Older children and those taller than 5 feet must be sure to buckle up.

**Turning right on red.** Tennessee law permits right turns at a red light after coming to a complete stop, unless otherwise posted.



As you make your way around town, look for the Wayfinding signs. Placed in strategic locations, the markers will help you to locate attractions and places of interest.

### Highways

Nashville's location at the confluence of three major interstates means that getting into or out of town by ground is generally convenient. That's not to say that you won't run into congestion during peak hours—you will, although state and federal highway officials are always working on ways to make area traffic flow more smoothly. (We're giving the Tennessee Department of Transportation, commonly known as TDOT, the benefit of the doubt here; in the interest of full disclosure, however, you'll often hear TDOT described in less-than-flattering terms when road construction projects—like the ongoing work on Interstates 24, 40, and 65—result in major gridlock.)

I-65, which runs north–south, connects Nashville with Bowling Green, Kentucky, and, ultimately, the Chicago area to the north. Going south, it leads to Huntsville before winding up in Mobile, Alabama. Nashville-area exits, from north to south, include Old Hickory Boulevard/Madison (exit 92), Briley Parkway/Dickerson Pike (exit 89), Trinity Lane (exit 87), James Robertson Parkway/State Capitol (exit 85), Shelby Street (exit 84), Wedgewood Avenue (exit 81), Armory Avenue (exit 79), Harding Place (exit 78), and Old Hickory Boulevard/Brentwood (exit 74).

I-40, a major east–west connector, links Nashville with Knoxville and, eventually, Wilmington, North Carolina, to the east; and with Memphis and—if you’re in the mood for a *long* drive—Barstow, California, to the west. Nashville-area exits, from east to west, include Old Hickory Boulevard (exit 221), Stewarts Ferry Pike (exit 219), Nashville International Airport/Donelson (exit 216), Briley Parkway (exit 215), Spence Lane (exit 213), Fessler’s Lane/Hermitage (exit 212), Second Avenue/Fourth Avenue (exit 210), Demonbreun Street (Music Row)/Broadway/Charlotte Avenue/Church Street (exit 209), 28th Avenue (exit 207), 46th Avenue/West Nashville (exit 205), Briley Parkway/White Bridge Road/Robertson Avenue (exit 204), Charlotte Pike (exit 201), Old Hickory Boulevard (exit 199), and Bellevue/Newsoms Station (exit 196).

I-24 is a diagonal route running northwest–southeast. It will take you from Chattanooga in the southeast to Clarksville or, going farther northwest, to near St. Louis. Nashville-area exits include, from northwest to southeast, Briley Parkway (exit 43), Murfreesboro Road (exit 52), Briley Parkway/Airport (exit 54), Harding Place (exit 56), Antioch/Haywood Lane (exit 57), Bell Road (exit 59), and Hickory Hollow Parkway (exit 60).

I-440 is a major bypass connecting I-40 in west Nashville to I-65 in south Nashville and I-24 in the southeastern part of the city. Its exits are at West End Avenue (exit 1), Hillsboro Pike/21st Avenue (exit 3), and Nolensville Road (exit 6).

Opened in 2012, the Highway 840 loop about 30 miles outside Nashville runs from an I-40 interchange near Lebanon to an I-40 interchange near



In 1978, Tennessee became the first state in the nation to require the use of safety seats for children who are passengers in motor vehicles. Within a decade, all 50 states passed laws mandating some form of child restraint in automobiles.

Dickson, along the way connecting I-40, I-24, and I-65. Extending from TN 46 to TN 246, the \$753 million Tennessee National Guard Parkway took 26 years to complete.

Other major highways running through Nashville include US 31, 41, and 70.

Briley Parkway, also known as Highway 155, encircles Nashville and bisects all three of its major interstates.

Beginning in the east at its juncture with Charlotte Avenue, it runs north-east to meet I-65; heads southeast, briefly

following the Cumberland River through the Opryland area and meeting I-40 near Nashville International Airport; then continues south before turning back east, crossing I-24 and becoming one with Thompson Lane. Thompson Lane becomes Woodmont Boulevard, which becomes White Bridge Road northeast of West End Avenue and runs to Charlotte Pike, completing the Highway 155 loop.

Harding Place begins in the southwestern part of the city as Harding Pike (US 70 S.), then branches east from US 70 S. and becomes Harding Place. After crossing Granny White Pike (12th Avenue) in south Nashville, it inexplicably becomes Battery Lane for a brief stretch before resuming the name of Harding Place when it crosses Franklin Road, which is known as both Eighth Avenue and US 31. Harding continues east, then veers northward and becomes Donelson Pike.

Old Hickory Boulevard is even more perplexing. Beginning in the southwest, at Highway 100 on the west side of Percy Warner Park (see our **Recreation** chapter), it runs east until it crosses Nolensville Road (also known as Fourth Avenue or US 31 Alternate) and changes its name to Bell Road. But wait . . . it's far from through. Back near where we started, Old Hickory also heads north



Nashville's famous skyline can help you get oriented if you momentarily lose your way. Or you can always stop and ask someone for directions—remember, you're in the land of Southern hospitality.



Don't make the mistake of using one of those gigantic broadcast towers you see to get your bearings—Nashville is ringed by several, each identical and prominently placed atop a conspicuous hillside. Plenty of newcomers have gotten lost at night by using a broadcast tower as an orientation point.



from Highway 100 at Edwin Warner Park (see Recreation) before turning into River Road. It also seemingly materializes just east of Charlotte Avenue's juncture with I-40, then heads north. Up north, *way* north, Old Hickory masquerades as Highway 45. It passes, from west to east, across Dickerson Pike (known variously as US 31 W., US 41, and Highway 11), I-65, and Gallatin Pike (aka US 31 E. and Highway 6), through the Madison and Old Hickory areas of metropolitan Nashville. It then heads southeast, crossing Lebanon Pike (US 70, Highway 24) in the Hermitage area, and, still acting as Highway 45, crosses I-40 near J. Percy Priest Lake on its way out of town. (Finally!)

A word to the wise: Just because you've been on Old Hickory once before and are now on it again doesn't necessarily mean that you're anywhere near where you were the first time. In other words, you probably shouldn't use this boulevard as an orientation point.

## Local Streets

The Cumberland River, which played such an important role in the founding of Nashville, remains an important orientation point for residents and visitors. If you're trying to figure out how the streets are laid out, start at the river, which runs north-south through the center of town. West of the river, or on the downtown side, numbered avenues run parallel to the river. East of the Cumberland, however, it is streets and not avenues that are numbered, though they still run parallel to the river.

Five bridges cross the Cumberland in the downtown area. From north to south, they are Jefferson Street, Victory Memorial, Woodland Street, Shelby Avenue (for pedestrians and bicyclists only), and the Gateway Boulevard Bridge. Additionally, a railroad bridge crosses the river between the Jefferson and Victory Memorial Bridges.

Primary downtown streets running perpendicular to the numbered avenues include James Robertson Parkway, which circles the State Capitol; Union Street; Church Street; and Commerce Street. Broadway serves as the north-south dividing line.

You'll notice that in the downtown area many of the numbered avenues are one-way, so pay attention to make sure you're not turning the wrong way.

The numbered avenues generally change names as they head out of town. For example, First Avenue becomes Hermitage Avenue and then Lebanon Road; Second Avenue actually merges with Fourth Avenue before changing into Nolensville Road; Eighth Avenue becomes Franklin Road. This phenomenon is not limited to numbered avenues downtown, either. It's a simple fact of Nashville that many roads change names, some several times. After a while, you'll get used to it. You'll also notice that many a road is referred to as both

a “pike” and a “road” or an “avenue,” depending on which sign or map you’re looking at. For example, Charlotte Avenue is also Charlotte Pike, Hillsboro Pike is also Hillsboro Road, and Murfreesboro and Nolensville Roads are also known as pikes. There are many other examples of this. In some cases the “pike” designation is more common; in other cases “road” or “avenue” is favored. The “pike” references are holdovers from older days when roads were often known as turnpikes. Don’t worry too much about which word you use.

## Buses

If your group would like its own bus for travel inside or outside Nashville, you can find dozens of companies listed in the yellow pages under “Buses—Charter & Rental.” Many of these offer guided tours of the Nashville area. For more information see our **Music City** chapter.

**GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL**, 709 Fifth Ave. S., Nashville, TN 37203, (615) 255-3556, [greyhound.com](http://greyhound.com). From its Nashville terminal, Greyhound offers service to more than 2,000 destinations in the continental United States, including Memphis, site of the closest Amtrak station.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

### Regional Transportation

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE**, 430 Myatt Dr., Nashville, TN 37115, (615) 862-8833, [musiccitystar.org](http://musiccitystar.org). The RTA serves Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson Counties. The RTA organizes carpools and vanpools throughout those counties and operates regional bus routes between downtown Nashville, Hendersonville, and Mt. Juliet. Commuters can park for free at one of the many park-and-ride lots located throughout the area, then connect with their carpool, vanpool, or bus. Fares are \$5.25, except Donelson which is \$2. Students, senior citizens, and



The Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau partners with several area hotels to offer visitors discounts on hotel rates. You can also get discounted attraction tickets through the CVB. For details check out the CVB’s website, [visitmusiccity.com](http://visitmusiccity.com), or call (800) 657-6910.

people with disabilities pay reduced rates. Special 10-trip ticket packages are available. For other rates, contact the RTA or visit the website.

## Taxis

Taxi fares in Nashville are regulated by law. The meter starts at \$7 when you get in the cab, and you'll pay \$2.10 a mile to your destination. A \$1 charge per additional passenger is added to the total. A fare from the Opryland area or the airport to a downtown location will run about \$25.

It's best to reserve your cab at least 30 minutes in advance. You'll often find taxis waiting at the curb near popular downtown restaurants, however, so you might not have to call. By law, taxis are not supposed to "cruise" for customers, but visitors from big cities generally don't know this, and the law is not regularly enforced.

Many companies take credit cards, but others do not; sometimes that decision is left to the discretion of the individual driver, so it's a wise idea to specify that you plan to use a credit card when you call or before climbing into a cab.

Some Nashville cab companies include **Taxi Taxi of Nashville**, (615) 333-3333, [nashvillecab.com](http://nashvillecab.com); **American Music City Taxi**, (615) 865-4100, [musiccitycab.com](http://musiccitycab.com); **Checker Cab**, (615) 256-7000, [nashvillecheckercab.com](http://nashvillecheckercab.com); and **Yellow Cab Inc.**, (615) 256-0101, [yellowcab-nashville.com](http://yellowcab-nashville.com).

## Limousines

Nashville is a town of stars and special occasions, which means it's a limousine kind of town. The yellow pages list dozens of limousine services, most of which are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All accept major credit cards. As with any other service, you get what you pay for, and prices cover a wide range. Expect to pay more during peak times such as prom and graduation season, the December holiday season, and during big events—don't even try getting a last-minute limo for the Country Music Association Awards, for example. For such times, reservations have to be made as much as 4 months in advance.

Prices range from about \$85 an hour for a 6-person model to \$130 or more an hour for a 10-person stretch with all the amenities. Also plan to add a driver gratuity of 15 to 20 percent; some companies will automatically add this to your bill. Most companies have a 3-hour minimum on weekends and a 2-hour minimum during the week. Weeknights during nonpeak seasons are generally a little cheaper; if you can, plan your special night during the week to increase your chances of getting what you want.

Here are a few of Nashville's limo companies: **Allstars Limousine**, (615) 516-5701, [allstarslimousine.com](http://allstarslimousine.com); **Grand Avenue**, (615) 714-5466, [grandavenueworldwide.com](http://grandavenueworldwide.com); and **Signature Limousine Service**, (615) 244-5466, [nashvillelimo.com](http://nashvillelimo.com).

# History

The history of Nashville is a tale of drama and adventure as rich as any to be found in a theater or on television. Filled with fascinating characters, the Nashville tale has spellbinding plots with action, battles, victories, defeats, mysteries, political intrigue, and romance. In this chapter we tell you about Nashville's past and highlight some of the people and events that made Nashville the interesting, dynamic city it is today. Pull up an easy chair, sit back, and learn about this fascinating city.

## THE SETTLEMENT

The first settlers arrived here in 1779, but they weren't the first to inhabit the area. The land was first a home, hunting ground, and burial ground for prehistoric Indians. In the late 1600s and early 1700s, French traders from Canada and what would become Louisiana established a trading post next to a high bluff along the Cumberland River near a salt lick (where animals came for a necessary supply of salt) and a sulphur spring. The spot, later known as French Lick, was just north of where the downtown area is today.

Around 1769, while the area was still being shared by various tribes, another French-Canadian fur trader arrived. Jacques-Timothe De Montbrun, a tall, athletic, dark-skinned man, came to French Lick from Kaskaskia, Illinois. He built a hut at French Lick and spent many winters buying furs from the Indians, which he would then sell in New Orleans. He finally settled in the area in the late 1780s and later operated a store and tavern at the square, where Second Avenue N. is today. De Montbrun, later known as Timothy Demonbreun (pronounced de-MUN-bree-un), is often referred to as the "first citizen" of Nashville.

As Demonbreun and the other traders bartered with the Indians at French Lick, others ventured into the area in search of food and furs. Between 1769 and 1779, "long hunters"—explorers from the colonies of North Carolina and Virginia who lived and hunted in the wilderness for months or even years at a time—could be found here. Some of the long hunters, including Uriah Stone, for whom the Stones River is named, are legendary. Local lore has it that Thomas Sharpe Spencer, a large man known as "Big Foot," lived for months in a hollow sycamore tree. Spencer, who planted corn at Bledsoe's Lick, where

Sumner County is today, is credited with being the first settler to plant in Middle Tennessee.

During the 1770s the colonies along the East Coast in Virginia and North Carolina were becoming crowded. Settlers began hearing the call of the West. In those days, the area we now know as east Tennessee was “the West,” and some people settled there in the early 1770s. In 1783 the American Revolution came to an end. The colonies had won their freedom. Also that year the North

Carolina Legislature created Davidson County. A year later the legislature established the town of Nashville; the population was 600. In the years that followed, Nashville grew rapidly, evolving from a frontier crossroads into an influential western town.



In 1784 Nashborough became Nashville. The English “borough” was replaced with the French “ville,” most likely as a sign of appreciation for France’s assistance during the American Revolution against Great Britain.



*The new Fort Nashborough opened in 2017 on the site of the original Nashville settlers’ fort on the Cumberland River.* Jackie Sheckler Finch

## THE JACKSON ERA

In 1796 Tennessee became the 16th state in the Union. Nashville's first church—a Methodist church near the courthouse, jail, and stocks—was built that year, too. Three years later, the town's first newspaper was printed. Between 1796 and 1800, Davidson County's population grew nearly 170 percent, from 3,600 to 9,600. Andrew Jackson is credited for much of the city's growth and influence during the first half of the 19th century. After arriving as a 21-year-old public prosecutor, he achieved success quickly and, in part because he often accepted land grants as payment for his services, became very wealthy. Upon his arrival in town, he boarded at the home of John Donelson's widow (Donelson was mysteriously killed in 1786 while en route from Kentucky to



Tennessee got its nickname as the Volunteer State during the War of 1812 when volunteer soldiers from Tennessee displayed uncommon valor fighting under General Andrew Jackson to defeat the British at the Battle of New Orleans.



*Music City Center hosts conventions and events.* Courtesy Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation



## Notable Events in Nashville History

**December 25, 1779:** Fort Nashborough is founded.

**1784:** North Carolina Legislature establishes town of Nashville, population 600.

**June 1, 1796:** Tennessee becomes the 16th state in the Union. Also, Nashville's first church is built.

**1806:** Nashville is incorporated as a city.

**1850:** Nashville's population tops 10,000. The Adelphi Theater opens.

**1854:** Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad is completed.

**June 8, 1861:** Tennessee becomes 11th and final state to join the Confederacy.

**February 24, 1862:** Nashville is captured by Union troops.

**April 15, 1865:** President Lincoln dies; Andrew Johnson becomes the 17th US president.

**December 2, 1865:** Battle of Nashville, the last major conflict of the Civil War, is fought.

**July 24, 1866:** Tennessee is first state to be readmitted into the Union.

**1866:** Fisk School (now known as Fisk University), a free school for African Americans, opens.

**1873:** Vanderbilt University is founded, opening its doors in 1875.

**1876:** Meharry Medical College, now the country's largest private medical school for African Americans, opens.

**1892:** Union Gospel Tabernacle, later renamed Ryman Auditorium, opens.

**November 28, 1925:** The *WSM Barn Dance* (later named the *Grand Ole Opry*) makes its radio premiere.

**1943:** Roy Acuff and Fred Rose establish Acuff-Rose Publishing, a leader in the publishing of country songs.

**1952:** Owen Bradley opens a studio on 16th Avenue S., the beginning of Music Row.

**1957:** Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley begin developing the “Nashville Sound.”

**1957:** Nashville public schools are desegregated.

**1958:** The Country Music Association is founded.

**May 10, 1960:** Nashville becomes Tennessee’s first major city to desegregate public facilities.

**1962:** Voters approve the merger of Nashville and Davidson County governments.

**1972:** Opryland USA theme park, the start of the Opryland complex, opens.

**March 16, 1974:** *Grand Ole Opry* leaves the historic Ryman Auditorium and moves into the *Grand Ole Opry* House at Opryland. President Richard Nixon participates.

**1993:** The renovated Ryman Auditorium reopens.

**1996:** Nashville Arena opens (it is renamed Gaylord Entertainment Center in August 1999) and became Bridgestone Arena in 2010.

**1997:** Opryland theme park closes. NFL’s Houston Oilers (later the Tennessee Titans) relocate to Nashville, becoming Tennessee’s first NFL team.

**April 16, 1998:** Tornadoes strike downtown and east Nashville.

**May 11, 2000:** Opry Mills opens on the site of the former Opryland theme park.

**2000:** Native son Al Gore becomes the Democratic nominee for president and loses to George W. Bush in the closest presidential race in US history.

**May 17, 2001:** The new Country Music Hall of Fame Museum opens downtown.

**June 9, 2001:** The new downtown library opens.

**June 2006:** The Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum opens.

**October 2006:** The Schermerhorn Symphony Center opens.

**September 2007:** The Barbershop Harmony Society opens its headquarters.

**May 1 & 2, 2010:** Powerful thunderstorms produced record rainfall, flooding hundreds of businesses and forcing the evacuation and rescue of hundreds of people from their homes.

**May 2013:** Music City Center convention complex opens.



*Andrew Jackson and his wife Rachel are buried at the Hermitage.*

Jackie Sheckler Finch

Nashville), where he met and fell in love with the Donelsons' daughter Rachel, who had separated from her husband, Lewis Robards. Jackson and Rachel Donelson Robards were married in 1791 and repeated their vows in 1794 after discovering—amid something of a social scandal—that Rachel's divorce from her first husband had never been made official. The Jackson marriage remained a topic of gossip for quite some time.

Meanwhile, Jackson, who had served in the US Senate and as a justice of the state supreme court, was preparing for battle. In 1812 Congress declared war on Great Britain, and the War of 1812 began. Jackson, a colorful figure described as both a "roughneck" and a "gentleman," became a national hero for his role in the war. He led American troops to victories over the Creek Indians (British allies) and over the British themselves in New Orleans in 1815. News of a peace treaty signed two weeks before the New Orleans battle didn't reach the combatants in time, so Jackson's last and greatest military victory was actually won after the war had ended.

Jackson had a reputation among his troops as a tough-as-nails military man, and, after one of his soldiers said he was as tough as hickory wood, Jackson's nickname became "Old Hickory." Numerous reminders of the nickname remain throughout Nashville today.

In 1824, despite winning the popular vote, Jackson lost his bid for the presidency of the United States to John Quincy Adams. But he returned victorious in 1828, becoming the first man from west of the Appalachian Mountains to be elected president. More significant, however, was his role in the founding of a new Democratic party characterized by a spirit of reform and interest in the welfare of the common man. The roots of today's Democratic Party date from this time. Jackson was elected to a second term as president, serving through 1837. His wife, Rachel, died of a heart attack in December 1828, before his first inauguration.

Having a hometown hero in the White House did much to boost Nashville's reputation. While president, Jackson made several trips to his plantation, the Hermitage, 12 miles northeast of Nashville, often entertaining renowned guests there. When his term was up, he returned to the Hermitage. Jackson died at his home June 8, 1845, and is buried next to his wife in the Hermitage's garden.

Nashville saw much progress during the Jackson era. By 1840 the city had a population of 6,929—a 25 percent increase from the 1830 census. In 1843 Nashville was named the permanent capital of Tennessee. There was much to enjoy about life in Nashville in the mid-1800s. The city was thriving. In 1860, it was the eighth largest city in the South and had two publishing houses, five daily newspapers, five banks, and numerous mills, factories, breweries, and wholesale houses. But the city's growth and prosperity were about to come to a four-year halt.

## Capitol Houses Legislators and Dead People

Children have a favorite bit of trivia about the **Tennessee State Capitol**. “A man is buried in the wall,” a boy visiting the landmark said to no one in particular. He is right. But there is more than one person entombed in the stately building. Our tour guide quickly let us know what the children were chattering about.

“There are two people buried in the building and two buried in the lawn,” our tour guide said.

But the building is an impressive place for reasons other than that. Construction on the Greek Revival-style building began in 1845 and was completed in 1859. Its architect, **William Strickland** of Philadelphia, began his career as an apprentice to Benjamin Latrobe, architect of the US Capitol in Washington, DC

They chose the highest hill in downtown Nashville. Legend says that the property’s owner, Judge George Washington Campbell, acquired it in 1811 as part payment of a debt for a cow. The capitol is one of only a few in the nation still in use today. Tours are free during the week.

The building houses the governor’s offices, the Chambers of the State Senate, House of Representatives, and Constitutional Officers. On legislature meeting days, visitors can view the Senate and House from their galleries, accessed by the second-floor stairwells.

When Strickland died in 1854 before the capitol was finished, he was buried in the northeast wall of the building near the north entrance—as he had requested.

The structure was made of hewn stone quarried nearby. It was modeled after a Greek Ionic temple and stands 236 feet long, 109 feet wide, and 206 feet from the ground to the tower top. The porticoes at each end resemble the Erechtheum in Athens, and the tower is patterned after the monument of Lysicrates in Athens. When it was completed, it was one of the most magnificent public buildings of its time.

Then the **Civil War** broke out. During the Union occupation of Nashville (1862-1865), the capitol was transformed into Fortress Andrew Johnson.

The artillery located there never had to be fired in battle but was used for drills and celebrations. Early photographs from that period show a large number of soldiers perched on the roof.

Another reminder of the War Between the States is located halfway up the first flight of stairs on the right. A chip in the handrail is a scar from a bullet fired from the stairs above during a particularly bitter fight in the legislature over the ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1866. The amendment, which granted citizenship to African Americans, was opposed by many in the General Assembly. The opposition didn't have enough votes to block passage of the amendment, so they tried to run from armed guards so there wouldn't be a quorum. The guards' willingness to shoot made them abandon that strategy and the amendment passed. Therefore, Tennessee became the first Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union.

The capitol is also filled with historic portraits, murals, ceiling frescoes, and original gasoliers, chandeliers which were converted from gas to electricity around 1895. First-floor offices have period carpeting, draperies, some antique furniture, and accent pieces. One office also contains photos of Memphis resident Elvis Presley when he was honored by the legislature.

On the east side of the building is a large statue of Andrew Jackson on horseback. If it looks familiar, it is because it's the same as one in Jackson Square in New Orleans. The one in Nashville is the first of three casts of "Old Hickory," the original designed by sculptor Clark Mills and erected in 1880.

On the north side of the lawn is the tomb of **President James K. Polk** and **his wife Sarah**. It was designed by William Strickland and was originally erected on the grounds of their home, near the corner of Seventh Avenue North and Union Street. The tomb was moved to its current location after Sarah's death in the 1890s.

And the fourth grave? **Samuel Morgan** is buried there.

If the name isn't familiar, Morgan was a Nashville businessman who served as chairman of the Capitol Building Commission when the building was being constructed. When legislators, worried about the rising cost tried to cut back on expenses, such as substituting wood for the marble in the hallways, Morgan led the fight to keep the grand and enduring materials.

He died June 10, 1880, and is buried in a corner wall of the State Capitol. "He worked pro bono (for free) here for 14 years," our guide said. "He deserved to be buried here."



*The Tennessee State Capitol is the seat of state government.* Jackie Sheckler Finch

## THE CIVIL WAR YEARS

Nashvillians had long discussed the issue of slavery, and they watched as the nation became divided over it. Though slavery was allowed in this Southern city, slave owners made up a minority of its total population of 16,988 in 1860. Included in that number were 3,211 slaves (nearly 19 percent of the population) and 719 free African Americans.

Tennessee was the last state to secede from the Union and the first to rejoin after the war ended. As its young men signed up for battle, Nashville mobilized



quickly and became a key center for the manufacture and storage of weapons and other supplies to support the Southern army. But Nashville didn't remain a Confederate city for long. When Union troops captured nearby Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, gaining control of the Cumberland River to Nashville, they had a clear shot at the city. The Army of Tennessee could not defend the capital, so the Confederate commander ordered his troops to exit. When the troops abandoned

Nashville, the city panicked. Some citizens boarded the first trains out of town; others packed what belongings they could onto wagons and carriages and fled.

On February 24, 1862, after federal troops had closed in, Nashville mayor Richard B. Cheatham surrendered the city.

Serving as a Union base took a toll on Nashville. Buildings and homes were destroyed to make room for forts. Churches and other buildings were taken over to serve the military's needs. More than half of the city's trees were cut down. Some of the citizens managed to make a living by providing residents and the military with supplies and services or working for federal operations.

On November 30, General John B. Hood's Confederate soldiers met with a Union force at the Battle of Franklin. Hood attacked, and in less than 6 hours, the Confederate army suffered about 7,000 casualties (including those killed, wounded, or captured); the Union casualty count was 2,500. The Battle of Franklin was known as one of the bloodiest hours of the Civil War.

The Union force withdrew to Nashville. Hood advanced. By December 2 the Confederates had settled into a position in the hills just south of town. They waited. Thomas waited, too, unwilling to attack until the time was right. On December 8, Nashville was hit by a severe ice storm. Both armies were immobilized but remained ready. On December 15, after the ice thawed, Thomas and his Union soldiers attacked the Confederates. Moving from the river toward the south and the east, the federal forces pushed Hood's troops back. One day later, Thomas wiped out three Confederate positions, and the rest of the Southern forces retreated to the south. The Battle of Nashville resulted in 6,000 Confederate casualties, many of whom were captured on the battlefield, and about 3,100 Union casualties.

The Battle of Nashville was the last major conflict of the war. On April 9, 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee, leader of the main Confederate army, surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.



**Demonbreun Street** is named for French-Canadian fur trader Jacques-Timothe De Montbrun, who is often referred to as the "first citizen" of Nashville. The street is on the area that was once his farm.



## The Maxwell House: Much More than Coffee

When **John Overton Jr.** began construction on his downtown luxury hotel in 1859, many locals derisively referred to the project as “Overton’s Folly.” After all, Nashville at that time had a population of fewer than 17,000 and little apparent need for such a showplace. Time would prove these naysayers wrong, however, as the **Maxwell House Hotel** would develop a national reputation—and a name that today lives on, most notably in a popular-brand beverage.

But we’re getting ahead of the story. The completion of Overton’s hotel, designed by Isaiah Rogers of Cincinnati, was significantly delayed by the outbreak of the Civil War. The first residents of the unfinished building were Confederate troops, who dubbed it **Zollicoffer Barracks** in honor of Gen. Felix K. Zollicoffer, a former Nashville newspaperman who had joined the rebel army as a volunteer. By 1862 the building, like the rest of Nashville, had fallen into the hands of Union troops, who used it first as a barracks, then a hospital, and, finally, a prison. It was in this last configuration that tragedy struck the building, as several Confederate prisoners reportedly were killed when a stair collapsed in September 1863.

After the war, construction resumed, and in September 1869 the Maxwell House Hotel officially opened at the corner of Cherry (now Fourth) and Church Streets. It didn’t take long for the new hotel to establish itself as a place for the elite to meet. The dining room became famous not only for its menu’s quality but also for its quantity, with sumptuous spreads of rich foods, especially during holidays and other special occasions. “Christmas menus might offer a choice of as many as 22 meats, including roast quail, Minnesota venison, Cumberland Mountain black bear and broiled pheasants,” according to a history of the hotel prepared by today’s hotel (more on that later).

Several US presidents stayed at the Maxwell House, including Tennessee’s own Andrew Johnson, Hayes, Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson. The wide range of other prominent politicians, civic and business leaders, socialites, and entertainers who sampled

the hotel's hospitality includes social reformer Jane Addams, actress Sarah Bernhardt, orator William Jennings Bryan, Wild West star Buffalo Bill, opera star Enrico Caruso, inventor Thomas Edison, automaker Henry Ford, and the famous midget Tom Thumb.

As you've probably guessed by now, the hotel also became noted for its coffee, provided by local entrepreneur **Joel Cheek**. That Cheek-Neal brand of coffee was served to **President Theodore Roosevelt** when he visited Nashville on October 22, 1907. This was a major event to Nashvillians, and crowds lined the streets to watch the popular president arrive. After speaking briefly at the Ryman Auditorium, Roosevelt traveled on to the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's former home, where he had breakfast. Asked for his opinion of the Cheek-Neal coffee he had been served, the president pronounced it "good to the last drop." Advertising copywriters have been known to kill for phrases like that, of course, and those words have served as a slogan for the Maxwell House brand ever since.

On August 1, 1928, the giant **General Foods Corporation** bought the Cheek-Neal Company for a price—in cash and General Foods stock—that was reported to be around \$45 million, at the time the largest financial transaction in Nashville history. The fortune generated by this sale, incidentally, lives on in **Cheekwood Botanical Garden & Museum of Art**. Cheekwood is the former estate of entrepreneur Leslie Cheek, who earlier had the foresight to invest in his cousin Joel's coffee company. (For more information about Cheekwood, see our **Attractions** chapter.)

As for "Overton's Folly," the original Maxwell House Hotel lived on for many more years, being converted into a residential hotel in its later years. The Maxwell House literally went out in a blaze of glory on Christmas night 1961, when it was destroyed by fire. The corner of Fourth and Church Streets is now occupied by a bank and office building commonly referred to as the SunTrust building. But the Maxwell House name lives on, not only in a best-selling coffee brand but also in another Nashville hotel. In 1979 the **Clarion Maxwell House Hotel** opened at 2025 MetroCenter Blvd.; in 1991, under new ownership, it became the **Regal Maxwell House**. In 2002 the hotel was renovated and underwent another name change, becoming the **Millennium Maxwell House**, which advertises "the Southern traditions of gracious hospitality." Enjoy a meal in Praline's, the hotel restaurant, and be sure to try the coffee, which remains "good to the last drop."

## ATHENS OF THE SOUTH

After the Civil War ended, Nashville began its restoration. It had fared better than some other Southern cities during the war, but there was damage to repair. The next two decades would produce a truly revitalized Nashville, a city that would be a leading commercial center and a growing center of higher education for blacks and whites.

Nashville would soon become known as the Athens of the South for its abundance of colleges and universities. The postwar period marked the opening of such institutions as Fisk University, Vanderbilt University, Meharry Medical College, and Peabody College.

The year 1892 marked the premiere of one of Nashville's most famous landmarks—the Union Gospel Tabernacle, later renamed Ryman Auditorium. Riverboat captain Thomas G. Ryman built the facility after being inspired by Georgia evangelist Sam Jones, a traveling Southern Methodist minister. Ryman wanted a permanent site for Jones's revivals and other religious gatherings. Jones preached there on a few occasions, but by 1900 the building was gaining a reputation as a premier theater in the South. It hosted theatrical and musical productions and political rallies. After Ryman died in 1904, the venue was



*Fisk Memorial Chapel was erected in 1892.*

Jackie Sheckler Finch

i

To learn more about Nashville's role in the civil rights movement, visit the Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library. The downtown library, at 615 Church St., is located at the site of several downtown restaurants where African Americans were once refused service and mistreated before the historic sit-ins of 1960.



Native son Andrew Johnson, who never attended school but became president after Abraham Lincoln was shot, held virtually every local, state, and federal office. He was an alderman, mayor, state representative, state senator, governor, congressman, senator, and vice president before becoming president of the United States.

renamed for him. It was home to the *Grand Ole Opry* from 1943 to 1974 and, in recent years, has begun serving as host to special engagements of the *Opry*. Today it is on the National Register of Historic Places, and since reopening in 1993 after a renovation, it is one of Nashville's most popular entertainment venues. (See our **Music City** and **Attractions** chapters for details.)

### GRAND OLE OPRY

During the 1920s a new type of music was beginning to develop: old-time music, later called hillbilly music and eventually known as country music. A Nashville-based radio program would have a lot to do with the development of this emerging genre.



*Ryman Auditorium* Courtesy of Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation

Nashville's famed *Grand Ole Opry* premiered in 1925. Interested in radio as an advertising medium, the prosperous National Life and Accident Insurance Company launched radio station WSM on October 5, 1925. The station's call letters came from the insurance company's slogan: "We Shield Millions." The station played a mixture of classical, jazz, and other pop music, with a few banjo players, fiddlers, and other performers of the newly popular "old-time tunes" thrown in here and there. Soon after WSM hit the airwaves, popular Chicago radio announcer George D. Hay came to Nashville's fledgling station and started a show similar to the *WLS National Barn Dance* he had hosted in Chicago.

On November 28, the station showcased the talents of 78-year-old fiddler Uncle Jimmy Thompson and his niece/piano accompanist, Eva Thompson Jones. With 1,000 watts, WSM had one of the strongest signals of any station in America, and that night, listeners from around the country called and sent telegrams with their enthusiastic praise of the program. The *Grand Ole Opry* was born.

The *WSM Barn Dance*, as it was called for a time, began airing its old-time music program every Saturday night, mainly featuring local amateur acts. Among the early stars the show produced were Thompson and Uncle Dave Macon. The *Barn Dance* became the *Grand Ole Opry* in December 1927. The name change came about when, one evening, after an NBC classical music program from Chicago had aired, Hay introduced a short program of music from *Barn Dance* regulars by saying, "For the past hour, we have been listening to the music taken largely from Grand Opera, but from now on we will present the *Grand Ole Opry!*" Soon after that the program expanded to a 4-hour broadcast, and WSM became a 5,000-watt station reaching 50 percent of America.

After relocating a few times, including a stint at the War Memorial Auditorium, the *Grand Ole Opry* moved to the 3,000-seat Ryman Auditorium in 1943. The Ryman became known as "the Mother Church of Country Music." In 1974, the *Opry* moved to a specially built, state-of-the-art production facility at what was then the Opryland theme park, where it continues to entertain country music fans old and new and remains the longest-running radio program in America. (See our **Music City** chapter for details.)

## WORLD WAR II

When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, igniting World War II, Nashville was on its way toward recovery from the Depression. The war gave the city the push it needed to get back on its feet. While thousands of residents headed off to war, area manufacturers went into wartime production.



Erected in 2003 in the center of the Music Row Roundabout, nine larger-than-life nude figures cavort and prance 40 feet in the air. Named “*Musica*,” the sculpture features a naked woman at the top holding aloft a tambourine. *Musica* is said to be the largest bronze figure group in America. Created by Nashville artist Alan LeQuire, *Musica* celebrates the history and diversity of music in Nashville. *Musica* in Latin means “arts of the muses.” Since Nashville is often called “the Buckle of the Bible Belt,” the nude figures will sometimes have a scarf or other piece of clothing tossed over their naked parts by some concerned person.

The Middle Tennessee area, with its varied terrain, was chosen as the site of the world’s largest military training efforts, which brought in hundreds of thousands of army personnel. Thousands more, stationed at nearby military camps, descended on Nashville on the weekends for entertainment. More than 1 million came through the city during the first year of war.

By the early 1960s the city was home to eight insurance companies that had more than \$2 billion in assets.

The postwar period also saw Nashville’s growth as a religious center. A number of missionary-training colleges were opened, religious publishing houses flourished, and denominational headquarters were established in the city. Nashville had a huge number of churches. The “Protestant Vatican” and “Buckle on the Bible Belt” were added to the city’s list of nicknames.

The 1950s brought the interstate highway system, which would greatly influence the lives of Nashvillians as well as Americans everywhere. In 1950 WSM radio announcer David Cobb referred to Nashville as “Music City USA” for the first time. In other music news, country music fans mourned the death of 29-year-old Hank Williams, who was found dead in the backseat of his car January 1, 1953.

Tennessee marked its 100th anniversary as a state in 1896 but had to wait until 1897 for the party. From May 1 to October 31, 1897, Nashville hosted the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in West Side Park, now Centennial Park. Officials had begun planning the event in 1893, but a lack of funds forced them to delay the festivities for a year. Support from the railroad companies helped ensure the exposition would be a success.

The six-month celebration, produced at a cost of more than \$1.1 million, featured numerous exhibits, amusement rides, dancers, and a dazzling display of lights. The centerpiece of the exposition was a replica of the Parthenon, the temple of Athena, goddess of wisdom, that stands on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece. Nashville's replica, built following plans provided by the king of Greece, was intended to be a temporary structure, like the exposition's exhibit buildings that were constructed of wood and plaster. During the Centennial Exposition, the Parthenon housed works of art.

The Tennessee Centennial Exposition was hailed as a success. It welcomed more than 1.7 million visitors from around the world and was the first such event in America to earn a profit.

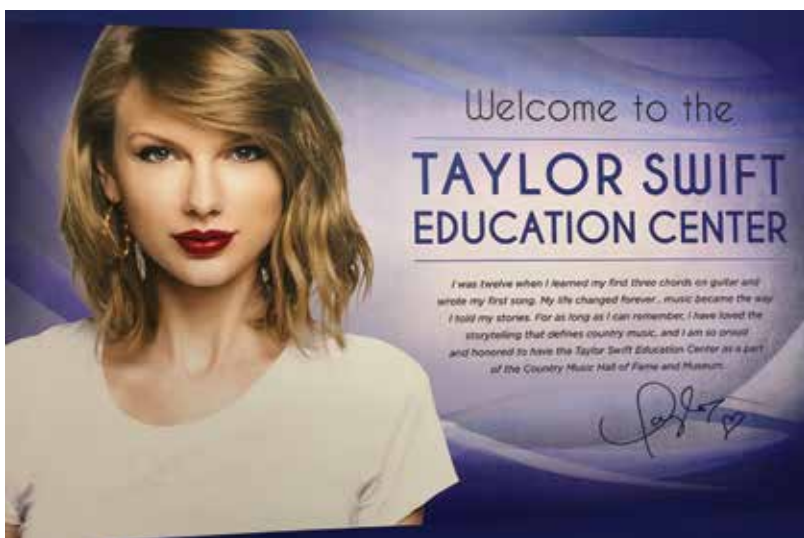
After the exposition, the exhibit buildings were torn down, but Nashvillians were fond of their Parthenon, a symbol of the city's reputation as the Athens of the South, and let it stand. The City Parks Board rebuilt the facility out of concrete after it began to deteriorate in the early 1920s. A wide selection of art can be found in the Parthenon's art gallery. In 2001 a \$13-million-plus renovation of the Parthenon was completed. (See our **Attractions** chapter for more information.)

## MUSIC CAPITAL

By the 1960s, Nashville had already become a music city. The *Grand Ole Opry* had been introducing the nation to new country performers for years, and other industry-related businesses had begun operating. Acuff-Rose Publishing, a leader in country-song publishing, was established by Roy Acuff and Fred Rose in 1943. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, RCA Victor, Decca Records, Capital Records, and Mercury Records had set up shop in Nashville.

In 1957 Chet Atkins, a versatile musician who could play country, jazz, classical, or pop, was producing records and beginning to develop what would become known as the "Nashville Sound," a new style of country music. Atkins and Owen Bradley used new recording techniques and blended pop elements such as background vocalists and horns into their country recordings to produce a more modern sound that became popular with music fans.

As the recording business grew, other music businesses began operating in Nashville. Song publishers, performing-rights organizations, and booking agencies came to town. The Country Music Association was founded in 1958 to promote the growing industry. Country stars also began recording television shows. Jimmie Rodgers, Fred Rose, and Hank Williams were the first inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Pop, rock, and folk music artists could



*Taylor Swift funded the interactive Taylor Swift Education Center at the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum.* Jackie Sheckler Finch

be found in Nashville studios, too. Bob Dylan, for example, recorded an album here in the mid-1960s.

While it is undoubtedly the country music capital of the world, Nashville also boasts a strong tradition of gospel and pop music. Today Nashville is the center of the growing contemporary Christian and gospel music industry, and each spring the city hosts the Gospel Music Association's Dove Awards show. You can find every genre of gospel here, from traditional black gospel to Christian rock, pop, country, folk, and rap to Southern gospel.

A number of pop and rock artists come here to record, and some call Music City home. Don't be surprised if you find rockers such as Kid Rock, Bon Jovi, or John Mellencamp sitting beside Amy Grant or Vince Gill at a music club or restaurant.



# Accommodations

Accommodations are in demand year-round, but with just a bit of planning, you shouldn't have any trouble finding a place to stay in Music City. Most likely your biggest problem will be choosing from among our numerous and varied lodging options. The Nashville area has about 350 hotels and motels with more than 42,000 rooms combined. We have everything from the spectacular Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center to elegant luxury hotels in historic buildings to budget motels and long-term corporate lodging.

When choosing your accommodations, keep in mind that Nashville covers a wide area. For convenience, you might want a hotel that's closest to your primary interests. Properties are concentrated in three areas: Opryland/Music Valley, near the airport, and downtown. In addition, as you travel away from downtown in any direction, you'll find a number of motels and a few hotels, most of which are near interstate exits. Do you want to stay near the *Grand Ole Opry* and Music Valley? Or would you prefer the Midtown (West End/Vanderbilt) area, close to the heart of Nashville's music industry and Music City's top restaurants and nightspots? Maybe you're here on business and would like to room somewhere near the airport or in the downtown business district. Downtown Nashville is also a good choice if you plan to do lots of sightseeing—you'll be within walking distance of historic Second Avenue, the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum, the State Capitol, and other attractions.

## HOTELS & MOTELS

Nashville-area hotels and motels serve more than 14 million visitors annually, including tourists and convention delegates. Since it is the country music capital of the world, Nashville welcomes thousands of country music fans each year. There are so many hotels and motels in Nashville; we have chosen just a small, representative portion of the properties in various areas of town. If you have a favorite trustworthy chain and don't see one of its properties listed here, check the chain's central hub to find out if there is a location in Nashville.

Unlike most chapters in this book, this chapter is divided into six geographic categories—Downtown, Midtown (West End/Music Row), East (Opryland/Airport), North, South and Southeast, and West; that's to help you quickly locate a suitable property in your preferred area. We have listed a variety of properties in all price ranges.