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Nashville City Guide



By Apryl Chapman Thomas

As sophisticated as any large metro city, Nashville also has a certain small town charm to it. One of the jewels of the South, it is an EXciting place to visit. Regardless of what state of "EX" you might be in, you will find something to do or to see.

For a quick EXit away from the city, J. Percy Priest Lake offers the perfect respite for those in **EXile**. Located about 15 minutes from downtown Nashville, the park not only offers a lake to relax around, but numerous hiking trails as well.

If you are looking for **EXile** in the city, [Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and Museum of Art](#) (615-356-8000; [www.cheekwood.org](#)) is a great getaway for reflection. Walk the 55-acres filled with different gardens, including a water garden and a color garden. View the unique sculptures on the Carrell Woodland Sculpture Trail. When done with the outside, head inside to the art museum. Centennial Park is home to [Nashville's Parthenon](#) (615-862-8431; [www.nashville.gov/parthenon/](#)), the city's art museum filled with American art. The Park itself is home to free concerts, plays, and other activities.

EXplore all what Nashville has to offer by taking a tour. The city's Historical Commission (615-862-7970) provides a free brochure/guide titled, City Walk, a perfect companion for a self-guided tour that includes the State Capital and the Tennessee State Museum. For a spook-tacular (excuse the pun) tour, [Nashville Ghost Tours](#) (615-256-4247; [www.nashvilleghosttours.com](#)), guides take you on the spirit side of Nashville. For a more lively tour, check out [NashTrash](#) (800-342-2132; [www.nashtrash.com](#)), where two one-of- a-kind ladies take you on a one-of- a -kind adventure, I mean, tour. If you like gossip, this is the tour for you.

EXperience country music at its best; after all they don't refer to Nashville as the Music City for nothing. Even if you are not a country music fan, you can't help but be

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intrigued by its musical heritage. Start your musical tour at the [Country Music Hall of Fame](#) (615-416-2001; www.countrymusichalloffame.com). From documentaries to exhibit, this large museum will educate you on everything country music wise.

At [Ryman Auditorium](#) (615-889-3060; www.ryman.com), you will learn that its history is about as interesting as the people. Commonly referred to as the “Mother Church of Country Music”, Ryman was THE home to the Grand Ole Opry. Today, concerts are still held at the Ryman. Don't miss your chance to catch a concert or show taping at the [Grand Ole Opry](#) (800-733-6770; www.opry.com) – 80 years old and still going strong.

EXpress yourself by learning how to line dance. The large dance floor at [Wild Horse Saloon](#) (615-902-8200; www.wildhorsesaloon.com) IS the place to shuffle your boots. Don't worry if you have never done this before, lessons are provided. Want to be around creative types, or perhaps you have penned a song, and while you are not ready to send a demo to RCA, you might perform it in front of a smaller crowd. On Monday nights, the [Bluebird Cafe](#) (615-383-1461; www.bluebirdcafe.com) sponsors Open Mic night for amateurs; if you want to be inspired by up and coming professionals, each Sunday night is Writers Night, performers and writers who audition to play at the cafe.

EXhale at Relâche, the [Spa at Gaylord Opryland](#) (615-458-1SPA; www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylordopryland). Indulge your senses with an aromatherapy massage, or maybe you would like to try the Chai Tea Mud Mask. When you are finish, don't hurry away yet. Take you time and wander around the Gaylord Opryland Hotel grounds. Not your typical hotel, it is more like a small city. Divided into four distinct southern sections (names like Delta and Magnolia), it is easy to get lost among the crowds. Don't be shy, ask for a map. You can do everything under this roof – grab a bite to eat, shop, or just relax. Be sure to take the Delta Boat ride to learn more about the grounds.

From music to art and much more, you will find what you need to have an EXtraordinary time in Nashville.

Apryl Chapman Thomas

Apryl Chapman Thomas is a freelance writer who lives in Watkinsville, GA (outside of Atlanta, GA). Her work has appeared in a variety of publications. When she is not writing (which is not too often), she enjoys traveling and reading.

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info@exinthecity.com

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