



EDITORIAL SUGGESTIONS

Unique Festivals and Events

Mississippi River Country, USA (MRC) has a vast array of festivals and events during the entire year. From wildlife and birding to shopping and music, MRC has an event for everyone. Visit Nashville, Tennessee for the Jefferson Street Jazz & Blues. Jefferson Street has always been at the hot spot for good music, good food and good friends. The atmosphere at this event is great and everyone can let their hair down and dance. Or take in the French Quarter Festival in New Orleans, Louisiana. This is a free event in historic Vieux Carre and Riverfront. Music is on 15 stages and features the world's largest Jazz brunch. Stay for a second-line parade, fireworks and children's area. Wisconsin offers Milwaukee's Summerfest, billed as the world's largest outdoor music festival. Held in downtown Paducah, Kentucky from May to September is Downtown After Dinner. Enjoy six blocks of live entertainment on Saturday nights, as well as music, shopping, antique cars, horse drawn carriage rides and fine dining. America's quintessential state fair, the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, showcases traditional livestock competition, intermixed with first-rate musical entertainment and topped off with everyone-under-the-sun served on a stick! Over a million attendees can't be wrong. See the Events & Attractions on our website, www.mrcusa.com, for more interesting events and details.

Shopping at its Finest

MRC has an abundance of shopping: antique stores, shopping malls, small boutiques, giant department stores and much more. Go to Springfield, Missouri and check out Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World, the world's greatest sporting goods store and America's largest Tracker boat dealership. The decor brings the outdoors indoors for an exciting shopping experience with four-story waterfall, giant aquariums and mounted wild game. Another place to see is America's largest shopping and entertainment complex, the Mall of America, located in Bloomington, just outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Mall not only has shops, but a movie theatre, a wide assortment of restaurants and nightlife, Camp Snoopy the nation's largest indoor family theme park and LEGO Imagination Center in an enormous four-story LEGO showplace. Or if you're looking for antiques, MRC has that too! Hazel, Kentucky located on the Kentucky/Tennessee border is famous for its abundance of antique stores. Plan to stay the afternoon browsing through the unique collections of antiques from all periods of time. For other shopping attractions, go to www.mrcusa.com.

The Great Outdoors

All ages and interests will find an outdoor activity in MRC Outdoors. Each state has parks with very unique scenery and features. Most of the parks have campgrounds, and many have opportunities for other outdoor recreation, including fishing, birding, hiking and biking. All ten states have an ample supply of fish in their rivers, lakes and streams, including bass, catfish, crappie, muskellunge, rainbow and brown trout, walleye, white bass and more. Birding enthusiasts will love MRC for the wide variety of bird species. Wisconsin's 32,000-acre Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge is the largest freshwater marsh of its type in the United States. The marsh is also home to more than 265 species of birds, including egrets, blue heron, sandhill cranes and tundra swans, as well as other wildlife including deer, coyote, fox and mink. Nestled between Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley in western Kentucky, Land Between the Lakes is a great place to camp, view the bison and elk, hike, fish and enjoy nature at its finest. Another unique outdoor attraction is Arkansas's Crater of

Diamond State Park, which is the only site on the North American continent where visitors can play “finders keepers” as they search for these precious gems. The park staff provides free identification and certification of diamonds and interpreters present programs about diamonds, the geology of the gem-bearing diamond pipe, the park's history and its diversity of plant and animal species. Go to www.mrcusa.com for more outdoor attractions.

Golf Adventures

Picturesque golf courses surround mountains and prairie and rivers and lakes in MRC states. Enjoy the scenery, ambiance, as well as the fine service at any one of the many golf courses. Five courses in the Magnolia State, Mississippi, garnered distinction from Golf Digest Magazine in its annual list of “America’s Greatest Course.” Dancing Rabbit’s Azaleas Course and Old Waverly were ranked by Golf Digest among America’s 100 Greatest Courses. Kohler, Wisconsin hosts four world-class, 18-hole championship golf courses at the American Club. Its bent grass greens and lush fairways meander through mounds, ponds and natural grasses along Lake Michigan; Whistling Straits played host to the 2004 PGA Championship and is a challenge for amateur and professional golfers alike. Along the Great River Road, Thunder Bayou Golf Links, an 18-hole championship course in Blytheville, Arkansas, features five set of tees, water on seven holes, more than 80 bunkers, and is part of Arkansas’ new “Natural State Golf Trail.” Kentucky also offers great golf at its state parks, such as Kentucky Dam Village State Resort Park Golf Course, par 72, 6,930-yard with a gently sloping terrain. Or try Greystone Golf Club, considered to be one of Tennessee's premier 18-hole golf courses, located in the hills of Tennessee. And, for fabulous golf in the spring and fall check out the dozen courses at the Lake of the Ozarks in central Missouri. See more golf courses under Attractions on www.mrcusa.com.

Experience Arts, Culture & History in Mississippi River Country, USA

In the states surrounding the Mississippi River, there are many opportunities for art, history and cultural experiences. Art galleries with exhibits featuring local artists are located in all ten states, as well as museums with beautiful architecture housing well-known masterpieces. Historic sites, buildings and museums in MRC attribute much to the region’s historical significance. Visit the boyhood home of Mark Twain in Hannibal, Missouri. The collections and exhibits perpetuate the memory of Twain and the town that inspired “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”. Also visit the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Born in a log cabin, this native Kentucky rose from his humble beginnings to become one of the most famous Presidents of the United States. Wisconsin’s Lake Pepin is the setting for the Laura Ingles Wilder series of frontier adventures. Other historic sites include theatres; many of which offer tours, as well as performances. At the Delta Blues Museum in Clarksdale, Mississippi, the sound of the blues gently fill the room as visitors learn about the culture and the people of the blues. It utilizes photos, instruments, written word and local artifact to tell the story, experience and growth of the area. Visit www.mrcusa.com for more information about Arts, Culture & History.

Wineries and Breweries

Did you know that wine making and tasting while unusual in the central United States, is on the rise? It is the unexpected discoveries that make traveling so much fun, so check out the wineries and breweries as you make your travel plans to Mississippi River Country. Each of MRC's ten states boasts wineries that host thousands of visitors each year. Most surprising are the vineyards in the Upper Mississippi River Valley, which meet the challenge of the sub-zero winters with a genuine passion and a knack for creating amazing new flavors. In Illinois, the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail features six wineries: Alto Vineyards, Von Jakob Vineyards, Pomona Winery, Winghill Vineyard, Owl Creek Vineyard and Inheritance Valley Vineyard. These are all surrounded by the scenic Shawnee National Forest. For those that have ever enjoyed that ice cold blend of barley, hops, malt, yeast and water, there are numerous micro-breweries in all ten states, as well as two major breweries: Anheuser-Busch, maker of Budweiser, in St. Louis, Missouri, or Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee,

Wisconsin. A tour of one of these facilities would make an enjoyable day trip. Many offer brewery tours, tasting and a historical look at one of the world's most popular alcoholic beverages. Go to www.mrcusa.com for more information.

Be Entertained

For a little excitement, such as a night on the town with friends, a romantic getaway or a ball game for the entire family, MRC is the place to find it. With professional sports teams, and an assortment of specialty music and entertainment options, it's easy to be entertained in MRC. Some of the most recognizable places for music in the nation are located here: Memphis, Home of Blues and the Birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll; Nashville, Music City USA; and Branson, Live Entertainment at its Best. Or attend the King of Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas is internationally known for its blues performances. Romantics will love the cozy bed and breakfasts, resorts and spas, as well as intimate restaurants. At the Pheasant Run Resort and Spa, in St. Charles, Illinois, more than 200 soothing treatments await you at the Mario Tricoci Hair Salon & Day Spa. Amenities include an in-house diner theater and comedy club, gift shops, a golf course, swimming pools and fitness center. Or cheer on the home team at one of the professional sporting leagues in the ten states. Try a Twins game at the HHH Metrodome in Minneapolis, Minnesota or a Cubs game at historic Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois. For more entertainment options go to entertainment on www.mrcusa.com.

Take the Scenic Route

Enjoy the scenery and historic sites along the Great River Road Scenic Byway, which runs along the Mississippi River all the way from the headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. Nearly 3,000 miles long, the Great River Road shares the river valley's great history, the blending of cultures, and a host of recreational options to travelers. The river in each state tells a unique story and offers up an experience all on its own; from charming river towns to lush forest, from bluff to lowland; big city to sprawling rural vistas, the diversity of this American treasure is yours to explore. Other scenic routes in the ten states include the Loess Hills Scenic Byway in Iowa, Crowley's Ridge Parkway in Arkansas and Missouri, and Creole Nature Trail in Louisiana. There are also special events on the scenic route. Travel Historic Highways 68-80 from the Mississippi River in western Kentucky to the Ohio River in northern Kentucky. Sixty communities have come together and are holding a 400-mile sale across the state. Enjoy yourself by finding a treasure or just taking in the historic towns along the way. Visit www.mississippiriverinfo.com or www.mrcusa.com for more details.