



## AMERICAN QUEEN STEAMBOAT COMPANY

Cruise Planners/Easy Access Travel will be Rollin' on the Mississippi River December 12 - 20, 2015. Our adventure begins in New Orleans with a hotel stay and ends in Memphis. Post-cruise options are available. Won't you join us?

We have 9 accessible cabins; 2 inside, and 7 with verandas. Pricing is as follows:

Category G Inside \$2423.15 per person (1)

Category F Inside \$2593.15 per person (1)

Category D Outside with Veranda \$2763.15 per person (4)

Category A Deluxe with Veranda \$4038.15 per person (2)

Category AA Superior with Veranda \$4123.15 per person (1)

*All prices are based on double occupancy and include port charges. Cabins hold a maximum of two persons. Complimentary beer and wine served at dinner. We strongly suggest purchasing travel insurance for your trip.*

**JEWELS OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI** - Explore the land of bawdy blues and Southern belles. This journey showcases the diversity and drama of the Lower Mississippi River. From New Orleans to Memphis, the river rolls slowly and expansively, smooth as a southern drawl. The bayous and woodlands along the shore create dramatic landscapes that are virtually unchanged since the days of the French fur traders. Gracious towns with palatial mansions and tree-lined streets abound. History is everywhere - in silent Civil War cemeteries, in the soulful gospel blues of Helena and virtually everywhere you turn in Memphis, best known for jazz, barbeque, and of course The King of Rock and Roll and his home at Graceland.

**Theme:**

- Old-Fashioned Holidays

### Itinerary

#### Day 1: Hotel Stay - New Orleans



Hotel Stay - New Orleans

Your journey begins with a deluxe hotel stay in New Orleans. Tomorrow, you will board the *American Queen*.

## Day 2: New Orleans, LA



Departure 9:00 PM

New Orleans, LA

Enjoy the sights and sounds of New Orleans today. This afternoon, you will board the *American Queen* to begin your voyage.

- Premium Shore Excursions

### Pre-Cruise: New Orleans Highlights & Katrina Rebuilding Tour

*A portion of all proceeds benefit "Project Homecoming" to help rebuilding efforts.*

Join us for a 4 hour American Queen Exclusive and experience New Orleans' rich historic past, its eclectic beauty, and its return to glory after a devastating hurricane. After our convenient boat check in for the American Queen, on the morning of your cruise at your American Queen Pre Stay Hotel, our Luxury Motorcoaches will transport you and your carry-on luggage on a guided tour exploring this great city dubbed "The Big Easy".

Explore the history of New Orleans including the first settlers, religion, culture, and Mardi Gras. Included is a driving tour with views of the French Quarter, Jackson Square, and the Garden District; where elegant mansions stand as a testament to Greek revival, Italianate and Queen Anne Victorian styles. While in Jackson Square guests can enjoy some free time to explore the local restaurants and enjoy lunch at one of New Orleans historic restaurants. Then we will travel down St. Charles Avenue, along the famous street car line, where we find New Orleans' most prestigious colleges; Tulane University and Loyola University. Guests will then get a view of Audubon Park, a 400-acre park located in uptown New Orleans between St. Charles Avenue and the Mississippi River, built on the site of the 1884 World's Fair.

At 1,300 acres, City Park is one of the largest urban parks in the United States as well as one of the oldest. Here, we can take a short break to grab a coffee, a beignet, use the restroom or simply enjoy the beauty of the park.

No trip to New Orleans would be complete without a stop at St. Louis Cemetery # 3, known better as the “The City of the Dead”. Here we’ll stop for to explore the ornate tombs and discover the unique way New Orleans cares for its past residents.

On August 28, 2005, a disaster in the form of Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Learn about the challenges facing neighborhoods and homeowners in their struggles to return home. Through the American Queen’s Exclusive Partnership with Project Homecoming, you will experience how these natural forces threatened the levee protection system and the causes as to why this system failed. Project Homecoming’s successes and obstacles to the city wide recovery were featured on the CBS Evening News, and guests will learn how there is a continued need for assistance to rebuild homes and communities throughout the city.

Our Experience ends at the American Queen’s dock. This Experience offers guests the opportunity to check in for the cruise at the hotel before departure, check out of the hotel, spend quality time exploring their embarkation city, and the convenience of arriving at the gangway for boarding at 3:00 p.m.

*Project Homecoming is a community development organization based in New Orleans committed to building quality homes for families who are low-income, uninsured, underinsured, disabled, and elderly. They are committed to facilitating a culture of care in targeted communities through: safe, durable, affordable and environmentally sensitive construction; community driven partnerships; service and fellowship.*

*All shore excursions, prices, and information are subject to change without notice.*

**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$59.00

**Duration**

5 hours

**Tour Capacity**

100 guests

**Day 3: Oak Alley, LA**



Oak Alley, LA

Located in the Saint James Parish, Oak Alley is a much-photographed plantation that combines architectural splendor and the natural wonder of its 300-year-old oak trees. Spend time strolling

beneath the canopy of these trees, and learn about the rich history and culture of this southern estate.

**Included Tour (No Hop-On, Hop-Off Option):**

Disembark from the American Queen and walk across the street to enjoy the beauty of Oak Alley's rich past. Located on the Mississippi River between the historic Louisiana cities of New Orleans and Baton Rouge, **Oak Alley Plantation** has been called the "Grande Dame of the Great River Road". Nowhere else in the south will you find such a spectacular setting! The quarter-mile canopy of giant live oak trees, believed to be nearly 300 years old, forms an impressive avenue leading to the classic Greek-revival style antebellum home. Oak Alley's setting will remind you of the movie "Gone with the Wind" and makes you feel like you are on a Hollywood movie set. During this included tour, enjoy a guided tour of the Big House and explore the magnificent grounds while sipping a Mint Julep, a quintessential southern staple.

- Premium Shore Excursions

**Laura: A Creole Plantation - Oak Alley**

Begin this exclusive plantation experience with a guided tour of the Big House at Oak Alley before setting off through the sugar cane fields in a luxury motorcoach to Laura Plantation. Upon arrival, enter the fascinating world of true Louisiana Creoles who, at this historic site, lived apart from the American mainstream for over 200 years. Surrounded by fields of sugarcane and hosting 12 buildings on the National Register, your 90-minute guided visit takes you through the newly restored Big House, the grounds, the formal French Parterre, the vegetable & fruit gardens, the Banana Land grove, and the 170-year-old slave cabins where the west-African folktales of Compair Lapin, known in English as the legendary "Br'er Rabbit," were recorded.

Laura's acclaimed tour, named the "Best History Tour in the US," by Lonely Planet Travel (UK), is based upon personal, compelling accounts found in the French Archives Nationales as well as from Laura Locoul's own Memories of the Old Plantation Home; of the plantation's Creole owners, women, slaves and children. Before leaving, be certain to stop in at the Laura Plantation gift shop, located in one of the historic buildings on the grounds, the Laura gift shop is loaded with treasures from books referencing the grounds, pralines and hand-made wares from local artists and craftsmen.

Don't miss this truly memorable experience!

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**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$59.00

**Duration**

4 hours

**Tour Capacity**

100 guests

**Life in the Bayou Cajun Swamp Tour**

Today we explore a true Cajun Experience away from the *American Queen*. As we travel into plantation country, our local guide will enlighten us on the affluent southern Louisiana lifestyle during the era when cotton was king. After our 45-minute narrated tour of the river, we will arrive in La

Place, Louisiana; home to the 250-acre ecosphere called Manchac Swamp. For the next hour and a half we will be guided through this ecological environment by our knowable Cajun Captain. Because our boats are exclusive to this river, the swamp critters have learned to recognize them as part of their habitat. At the beckon of the Captain's call, they emerge from the draping mossy Cypress trees to greet us. This ecosphere harbors American alligators, nutria, ibis, turtle, herons, raccoons, egrets, and species unique to Southern Louisiana. Get up close and personal with baby alligators as they come aboard the boat. When we return from our Swamp Tour spend some time in the Cajun Pride gift shop to pick up a memento of this unique experience before returning to the American Queen.

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**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$59.00

**Duration**

4 hours

**Tour Capacity**

100 guests

**Day 4: St. Francisville, LA**



St. Francisville, LA

This quaint town located on the bluffs of the Mississippi River is your window to the past. With over 140 buildings on the National Register, beautiful plantation homes nestled in the rolling countryside, and bustling Main Street shops, you'll find plenty to keep you on the go in St. Francisville.

**Included Hop-On Hop-Off Tour:**

Hop on our deluxe motorcoach, and begin your tour at Royal Street where you can hop off at our first stop; **The Republic of West Florida Site**. Choose to enjoy the park or stroll into Grandmother's Buttons, a unique southern boutique. Next, we can visit the **Old Market Hall** and explore the art, jewelry, handmade items and music of the region. When we reach **Commerce Street**, hop off for lunch, snacks, spirits, coffee or ice cream from one of the many cafés and restaurants they have to offer. After that, hop back on the bus to the **Spring Creek Shopping Center**. Finally, we will visit the **West Feliciana Historical Society Museum** on Ferdinand Street and the **Grace Episcopal Church**.

- Premium Shore Excursions

**Redemption & Rehabilitation at Angola Prison**

Travel into the Tunica Hills of Louisiana where we will embark on a tour of second chances, rehabilitation and redemption. Experience a first-hand look inside the secure gates of Angola Prison—Formerly America’s most dangerous penitentiary. Angola is known today as a model facility and takes great pride in the faith-based rehabilitation of its inmates, most of which will never regain their freedom.

Our exclusive tour begins when a knowledgeable guide boards our motorcoach before passing through the yellow gates at the prison entrance to begin our journey through Angola’s vast, rich farmland where over five million pounds of produce are harvested by inmates each year. As we wind through the small roads in the tight community of the prison, aptly knick-named “The Farm”, we’ll pass prisoner housing, cattle herds, the K9 training facility and the Rodeo Arena as we learn about the history of this plantation turned prison made famous for its troubling history, annual Rodeo and numerous sightings in Hollywood movies including the blockbuster; Dead Man Walking.

As we approach our first stop in front of Angola’s first and most famous cellblock, we’ll step off the bus for an exclusive guided tour of the Red Hat Cellblock. Listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, the penitentiary’s first cellblock was home to the escape artist Charlie Frazer and was the site of 11 executions by electric chair.

A stop at the Prison’s largest chapel includes an opportunity to hear the inside stories from long term inmates regarding life in prison. Sit comfortably in a prison chapel pew as inmates share their personal testimonies and provide personal insight into how the philosophy of moral rehabilitation changes what was once known as the “bloodiest prison in the country.”

Our exclusive excursion ends with a stop at the prison’s on-site museum. While here, learn more about the ongoing effort to change the prisons in America, the history of Angola and pick up a unique souvenir as a reminder of the ongoing effort to ensure public safety.

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**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$59.00

**Duration**

4 hours

**Tour Capacity**

50 guests

**Day 5: Natchez, MS**



Natchez, MS

Step into the plantation lifestyle of the antebellum south in Natchez, site of numerous restored mansions. Visit historic Jefferson College, or just amble down the Natchez Trace.

**Included Hop-On Hop-Off Tour:**

Natchez is the center of the Antebellum South. From Spring Pilgrimage to Christmas, there's no shortage of excitement in this small town as we tour the antebellum mansions of this quiet river town. First, we will stop at the **Natchez Visitors Center** for their gift shop, bookstore and exhibits including a film about this historic port. Or, if you'd rather, relax and simply enjoy the spectacular views of the Mississippi River. A narrated tour of the city includes admission to the antebellum mansions: **Magnolia Hall, Stanton Hall, Rosalie Mansion** and the **William Johnson House**. While in route through the historical town, we'll pass by Twin Oaks, home of the American Queen's Culinary Director; Regina Charboneau. As we head back to the boat, you'll have the opportunity to explore Downtown Natchez as well as a stop for some shopping opportunities at the **Eola Hotel** as well as included admission to the **Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture Museum**.

- Premium Shore Excursions

**Entertaining Southern Style with Regina Charboneau**

Enter the ornate parlors of Twin Oaks; private home of the *American Queen's* Culinary Director and Chef de Cuisine; Regina Charboneau. Chef Charboneau opens her home exclusively for guests of the *American Queen* for an afternoon of southern hospitality and entertainment. Relax within the walls of this historic home as Regina entertains with the history Twin Oaks and shares her secrets to effortless entertaining with a southern flair. Enjoy cocktails and a sampling of gourmet sweet and savory treats prepared by Regina. This unique southern afternoon tea concludes as Regina explains the epicurean delights offered, answers guest's questions and provides guests a CD full of decadent southern recipes and antique menus to inspire your own cocktail party.

**Note:** This tour sells out quickly and we suggest booking early.

*All shore excursions, prices, and information are subject to change without notice.*

**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$79.00

**Duration**

2.5 hours

**Tour Capacity**

36 guests

**The Story of Cotton in the Antebellum South**

Named one of the top "Can't Miss Destinations" in the Rand McNally Southeast Getaway Guide, Frogmore Plantation offers a look back to the 1800's and the life of plantation workers in the fields. We'll begin with an inspirational music performance in an original plantation chapel as the Mistress of Frogmore narrates tales of plantation life and simulated plantation workers sing the trials and triumphs of life on the plantation. Then, we'll all become guests at a wedding as we experience a slave wedding as actors illustrate how marriages were formed under the watchful scrutiny of the plantation owners. As the chapel performance comes to an end, we'll continue through the plantation on a walking tour of the grounds including tours of the 18 restored antebellum structures and

authentic slave cabins and learn even more about the daily life on a plantation as the Mistress guides us along the edges of the plentiful cotton fields. Here, we'll have the opportunity to tour the quaint, historic cotton gin including guided tours of the evolution of change, decade by decade from the 1790's and beyond. We'll learn how the war affected the cotton industry and explore pre-civil war cotton gin equipment recognized by the Smithsonian Institute as the rarest of its kind in existence.

Return to Natchez while our guide explains the continuation of southern music through ragtime, blues, and jazz. Rounding off our exclusive tour we'll stop at Longwood, a historic antebellum octagonal mansion and the largest of its shape in America. Also known as "Nutt's Folly", this unique mansion remains unfinished and stands symbolically in representation of the last burst of southern opulence. A reminder of a time before war brought the cotton baron's dominance to an end. After surviving decades of neglect and abandonment, Longwood stands strong today and is a can't-miss stop when visiting this southern town.

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**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$79.00

**Duration**

4 hours

**Tour Capacity**

50 guests

**A Jeweled Christmas in Natchez**

Join us for lavish Christmas experience in one of America's most beautiful historic homes. This experience includes a tour of The Towers, a beautifully restored antebellum mansion in Natchez, Mississippi. Situated on almost 5 lush and manicured acres, this Italianate style home was built in 1858 and once served as the headquarters for the Union Army during the Civil War. This tour includes a complete tour of the home, festively decorated in a dazzling display of antique jewelry, exquisite garlands and 100 decorated Christmas Trees. Immerse yourself in a festive wonderland as you continue through the mansion and into the stately dining room where refreshments will be offered. Enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres and decadent desserts with a southern flair. To complete your Christmas experience, a local pianist will offer merry music for a jolly holiday sing-along.

*All shore excursions, prices, and information are subject to change without notice.*

**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$69.00

**Duration**

3 hours

**Tour Capacity**

48 guests

**Day 6: Vicksburg, MS**



Vicksburg, MS

Discover a unique blend of old and new in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Take in the diversity from National Historic Landmarks to the Waterways Experiment Station. Billed as the “Red Carpet City of the South,” Southern hospitality is alive and well and awaiting your arrival.

#### **Included Hop-On Hop-Off Tour:**

Vicksburg, Mississippi is a place bursting at the seams with local culture, character, art, entertainment and outdoor adventure. With sweeping views of the Mississippi River, Vicksburg perfectly blends Southern culture and heritage with exciting modern-day attractions. Board our deluxe Hop-On Hop-Off motorcoach as it heads towards its first stop at the **Vicksburg’s shopping district**. Next we will stop at **The Church of Holy Trinity**; a place of spiritual refreshment to Vicksburg for over 125 years. Followed by a stop at Anchuca Mansion, named from the Choctaw word meaning “happy home,” Anchuca is one of the most significant homes in Vicksburg, Anchuca is an impressive Greek Revival antebellum home. As we come back into the downtown area, we will continue to the **Old Court House Museum**, which showcases thousands of artifacts from pre-Columbian times to Civil War implements. Then we will stop at **Washington Street** for some more shopping as well as an included admission to **Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum** and the **Yesterday’s Child Doll and Toy Museum**. Next stop; the **Lower Mississippi River Museum**, where we can find out how different communities, farming families, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have all utilized the river. Finally, The Old Depot Museum, a preservation museum run by the Vicksburg Battlefield Museum and highlights the Siege of Vicksburg.

- [Premium Shore Excursions](#)

#### **On the Front Lines of the Civil War**

Experience the site of the Civil War battle that would become one of the most pivotal moments in America’s history. Aptly described by President Lincoln as “the key to victory,” the Siege and Battle at Vicksburg is a landmark in time that shaped our country and how wars would forever be fought.

Our exclusive tour begins onboard the American Queen where guests can view an informative orientation video in the Grand Saloon before continuing into the town of Vicksburg. Enjoy a narrated tour of this historical town and learn of its connection to the war and the importance of victory before continuing on to the Vicksburg National Military Park. Here, we will travel the 16-mile road that weaves through the 1,300 monuments and markers, all of which denote important victories or milestones from the siege.

As our luxury motorcoach navigates the bluffs and fields that once served as crucial battlegrounds, we’ll cross both Union and Confederate lines and make a few stops to allow for a close-up experience at some of the key points of interest along the way. Stops include the USS Cairo and Museum; the Illinois State Monument, the largest of the 27 state monuments; the Iron Clad River Boat as well as the National Cemetery, with the largest quantity of Civil War burials in the country, and the Vicksburg Battlefield Visitor’s Center.

*All shore excursions, prices, and information are subject to change without notice.*

**Transportation**

Included

**Price**

\$69.00

**Duration**

4.5 hours

**Tour Capacity**

150 guests

**Day 7: Scenic River Cruising**



Scenic River Cruising

Enjoy the sights and sounds of river cruising as you spend a leisurely day onboard.

**Day 8: Helena, AR**



Helena, AR

Let gospel voices lift your heart, hear soulful Delta blues, and sample King biscuits and sausage during an eventful day.

**Included Hop-On Hop-Off Tour:**

Our tour of this historic city begins with a drive through Cherry Street Historic District. An area so picturesque it was used in several scenes of “Walk the Line”, a 2005 Johnny Cash biopic. Along the way you’ll find more treasures from the same film, including the The Malco Theater as well as several boutiques; **The Delta Gypsy Caravan** and the **Cotton and Kudzu Mall**. We’ll have the opportunity to shop **The Handworks Boutique**, featured on “ABC World News Tonight.” Also, **Gist Music Company** whose rare collectibles will transport you back in time.

Then, discover museums that beautifully represent the heritage of the 27-county region of eastern Arkansas at the **Delta Cultural Center**. Then, stop at the **Moore-Hornor House** and the nearly full-sized replica of the **Union’s Fort Curtis**, rebuilt just a short distance from where it originally stood. Our next stop highlights some of the most beautiful historic architecture in the region at the **Pillow-Thompson House**. This late 19th century mansion has been beautifully restored and is a fine

example of Queen Anne Architecture. Our last stop is the **Helena Museum** and its eclectic collection of artifacts from prehistoric times through the Civil War and on to the present.

- Premium Shore Excursions

### **Mississippi Delta Gospel and the Birthplace of the Blues**

Experience the Blues, un-filtered and un-refined, as we set off on the Blues Trail to the place where it all began. Today's tour takes us to Clarksdale, Mississippi—known as the “Birthplace of the Blues”, and rightly so, as many instrumental blues musicians call this small southern town home. The tour begins as we depart the American Queen and set off for Clarksdale, Mississippi on a 45-minute narrated drive. Once we arrive, we'll visit the Clarksdale Railroad Passenger Depot.

After touring the Clarksdale Railroad Passenger Depot, take a short stroll through the streets of Clarksdale to the Delta Blues Museum. Explore the history and heritage of a uniquely American musical art form; the Blues. Exhibits showcase local blues legends such as Sam Cooke, Muddy Waters and Tennessee Williams, born and raised in the region. Learn all about Clarksdale and why it has been named the “Epi-Center of the Blues,” how it received its prominent spot on the Mississippi Blue Trail and the local culture of the Delta Region.

After our tour through the Delta Blues Museum, we'll board the motorcoach and begin a guided tour of this quintessential southern town and explore all of the highlights and points of interest that put it on the map on the Blues Trail. Don't expect to see sky scrapers, elaborate statues or perfectly pruned gardens on this city tour. Clarksdale doesn't have anything to hide and is so passionate about its Blues roots that the buildings and sidewalks ooze that gritty feeling evoked by the music of the region. From the weathered store fronts, guarded by well-used furniture and covered in faded paint—Mthis town is proudly displaying its culture.

As the guided tour comes to an end—we'll arrive at Blues Alley in the heart of historic downtown Clarksdale. Here, we'll visit the Ground Zero Blues Club. This famous juke joint is owned by Golden Globe winning actor Morgan Freeman and accurately showcases the nuances of the Blues. Upon entering this dimly lit musical haven, you'll experience the authenticity that is portrayed on every inch of the building. From the mismatched furniture, to the artwork and artifacts adorning the already too cluttered walls lit only by strings of lights hung from the exposed beams on the ceiling—we're offering a complete cultural emersion as guests can feel, see, hear and taste the culture that is the Blues. Grab a chair and belly up to the table as a sampling of traditionally southern snacks are offered for your enjoyment. Forget the diet on this trip, you won't find salad on the menu. We're talking full-flavored fried bits of tantalizing taste morsels to satisfy the vacationer within you. While delving into your southern snacks, save some room for an exclusive live musical performance by a local Blues legend offering a unique cultural experience to complete your cultural tour of the birthplace of the Blues.

*All shore excursions, prices, and information are subject to change without notice.*

#### **Transportation**

Included

#### **Price**

\$79.00 additional

#### **Duration**

4.5 hours

#### **Tour Capacity**

100 guests

## Day 9: Memphis, TN



Memphis, TN

Disembark in Memphis and begin your journey home or consider extending your stay with our three day, two night **American Music City Stay** package.

### Premium Shore Excursions

- See more at: <http://www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com/Destination/lower-mississippi/new-orleans-memphis-2015dec12/#sthash.6LoWxclt.dpuf>

Ready to sign up? Please contact Debra Kerper for more information and to reserve your space now. 800.920.8989 951.202.2208 cell [debra@easyaccesstravel.com](mailto:debra@easyaccesstravel.com)

