THE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TRAIL

TENNESSEE – MISSISSIPPI – ALABAMA – GEORGIA

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THE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TRAIL

Nashville to Henning and Memphis, Tennessee	3 hours and 3 minutes / 341km
Memphis to Oxford, Sumner, Money, and Jackson, Mississippi	2 hours and 56 minutes / 337km
Jackson to Philadelphia, Mississippi and Tuscaloosa, Alabama	2 hours and 42 minutes / 299km
Tuscaloosa to Selma and Montgomery, Alabama	1 hour and 50 minutes / 166km
Montgomery to Tuskegee, Alabama and Albany, Georgia	2 hours and 50 minutes / 251km
Albany to Midway and Savannah, Georgia	3 hours and 37 minutes / 361km
Savannah to Atlanta, Georgia	3 hours and 31 minutes / 399km
Atlanta, Georgia, to Anniston, Alabama, and Birmingham, Alabama	2 hours and 9 minutes / 237km
Birmingham, Alabama, to Scottsboro, Alabama, and Nashville, Tennessee	2 hours and 40 minutes / 308km

National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Day 1

The Civil Rights Trail stretches across 14 U.S. states, encompasses more than 100 locations and highlights the USA's civil rights story. Our story starts at **Woolworth on 5th**, a restaurant that pays homage to the Nashville sit-ins – nonviolent protests against segregated public places in the city in 1960. One of the sit-ins targeted the lunch counter in the Woolworth store, where the restaurant operates today in a meticulously restored building. Learn more about the era by sitting at a symbolic lunch counter to read the sit-in protesters' Ten Rules of Conduct and other historical accounts in the **Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library**. Visit the **Davidson County Courthouse**, where a peace-ful march ended with then-Mayor Ben West conceding that segregation was immoral, the first step toward the city's desegregation of public facilities. Next to the courthouse are the **Witness Walls**, concrete murals featuring events, including Freedom Rides, marches and sitins, that spurred desegregation in Nashville.

Accommodation: Nashville, Tennessee

NASHVILLE TO HENNING AND MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

3 hours and 3 minutes / 341km

Day 2

Depart Nashville, drive for an hour and stop in Henning to visit the **Alex Haley Museum and Interpretive Center**. The museum – the childhood home of the "Roots" author – is dedicated to African-American history and contains a life-size replica of a slave ship. Continue an hour more to reach downtown Memphis, set on the Mississippi River. Go to the Burkle Estate, known as the **Slave Haven Underground Railroad Museum**, once part of the Underground Railroad network, which helped people escape slavery. Exhibits include displays of slave auction advertisements, information about slave trade history and artifacts highlighting racial profiling of the time. The main feature is the dark cellar, where men and women hid for hours or days until riverboats were available to take them to safety and freedom in northern states.

Accommodation: Memphis, Tennessee

Day 3

To explore the civil rights history of Memphis, start at the **National Civil Rights Museum**, constructed around the Lorraine Motel. Learn about key milestones in civil rights history, including Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus, Jim Crow segregation laws, the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till and marches in Selma, Alabama. Appropriately, the final exhibit is Room 306 of the Lorraine Motel, re-created from 1968, when civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated there on April 4 on the balcony outside his room. It's impossible to visit Memphis and not include **Beale Street**, at one time the heart and soul of the city's African-American culture, and now the entertainment hub for live music and great dining. The **Stax Museum of American Soul Music** is a celebration of everything from church Gospel music to uplifting anthems that were the backbone of marches, giving hope to those fighting for civil rights. Stax Recording Studios was among the first to employ African-American artists, including Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes, giving a voice to Blues and Gospel music and becoming famous for launching their careers. Other must-see places on a tour of civil rights history in Memphis include the historic **Beale Street Baptist Church**, built by and for freed slaves in the late 1800s and a key meeting place for civil rights leaders through the ages. At **The Four Way**, order some hearty soul food – perhaps country fried steak, a catfish sandwich and turnip greens followed by sweet potato pie. Beginning in the 1940s, the restaurant was a meeting spot for civil rights activists as well as famous musicians such as B.B. King and Aretha Franklin due to its location near Stax Recording Studios.

Accommodation: Memphis, Tennessee

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Beale Street

Memphis, Tennessee

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE TO OXFORD, SUMNER, MONEY, AND JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

2 hours and 56 minutes / 337km

Day 4

About 90 minutes south of Memphis, stop at the Oxford campus of the **University of Mississippi** and seek out the civil rights monument created by Oxford resident Rod Moorhead. The statue portrays James Meredith, the first African-American student to be admitted to the university, after his racial discrimination case was supported by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1962. President John F. Kennedy deployed 31,000 troops to quell protests and protect Meredith when he arrived at the school. Meredith graduated the following year with a bachelor of science degree. The drive to Jackson follows the 1966 "March Against Fear" route Meredith planned to walk alone to protest racism and the fear that kept black people from registering to vote. Near Hernando, a historical marker documents where he was shot three times by a white sniper on the second day. Over 15,000 supporters had joined the march by the time Meredith recovered and met them 20 days later in the state capital. In Money, all that remains of **Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market** is the ruin of the storefront, but this is where Emmett Till, a 14-year-old from Chicago, Illinois, who was visiting relatives, came to purchase candy in 1955 and was accused of whistling at Carolyn Bryant, the 21-year-old white shopkeeper. Bryant's husband and his half-brother abducted Emmett, beat and shot him, then threw his body into the Tallahatchie River. Emmett's mother insisted on an open coffin at his funeral to highlight the savagery of the attack. The ensuing public outcry is credited with igniting the civil rights movement. Go to Sumner to see the **Tallahatchie Courthouse**, where the murder trial took place; both men were acquitted. Then drive about two hours south to reach Jackson.

Accommodation: Jackson, Mississippi

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Day 5

Discover a wealth of civil rights history in Jackson. Start at the **Mississippi Civil Rights Museum**, opened in 2017, which details civil rights struggles in Mississippi. See archive film of protests and demonstrations as well as artifacts such as the rifle used to murder Medgar Evers at his home in 1963. The NAACP field secretary's house has been restored and is now the **Medgar Evers Home Museum**. North of Jackson, visit **Tougaloo College**. The historically black college was a hub of support for the civil rights movement, leading to the boycott of many Jackson businesses, protests against segregation and peaceful sit-ins. The **Greyhound bus station on Lamar Street**, which has since been restored, was the catalyst for the Freedom Rides throughout the South after the arrests in 1961 of 27 riders who challenged racial segregation.

Accommodation: Jackson, Mississippi

JACKSON TO PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI AND TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2 hours and 42 minutes / 299km

Day 6

Drive northeast for about 90 minutes to Philadelphia, site of the 1964 killings of three civil rights activists, one African-American man and two white men, which became known as the Mississippi Burning murders. The national headlines provided the final push to pass the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Continue to Tuscaloosa, where then-Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace stood at the entrance of the **University of Alabama** in 1963 to block the admission of two black students, determined to keep his promise for the university to remain segregated. President John F. Kennedy intervened, dispatching troops to protect the students, allowing them to enroll and sending a message to segregationists across the South. Known as the site of the "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door" incident, the university's **Foster Auditorium** became a National Historic Landmark in 2005.

Accommodation: Tuscaloosa, Alabama

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Downtown Jackson, Mississippi

TUSCALOOSA TO SELMA AND MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

1 hour and 50 minutes / 166km

Day 7

Drive 90 minutes south to reach Selma, the starting point of three 1965 right-to-vote marches. On March 7, about 600 marchers were met with violence from local law enforcement and vigilante gangs. News broadcasts countrywide of "Bloody Sunday," coupled with the death of an activist after a march two days later, led to thousands of supporters converging on Selma. President Lyndon B. Johnson pledged support to the marchers on national TV and expedited the Voting Rights Act. On March 21, troops protected 8,000 marchers as they set out along U.S. Route 80, arriving three days later in Montgomery, where they were greeted by over 50,000 supporters. The path of their journey became a National Historic Trail in 1966. Montgomery had been thrust into the public conscience in 1955 by one African-American woman's refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus, and visitors can see a 1955 city bus at the **Rosa Parks Museum**. Montgomery stayed at the forefront of the civil rights movement. It's home to the **Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church**, where Martin Luther King Jr. preached and organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott. A mural in the church's basement depicts King's life, beginning with his crusade for racial equality in Montgomery and ending in his untimely death in 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Accommodation: Montgomery, Alabama

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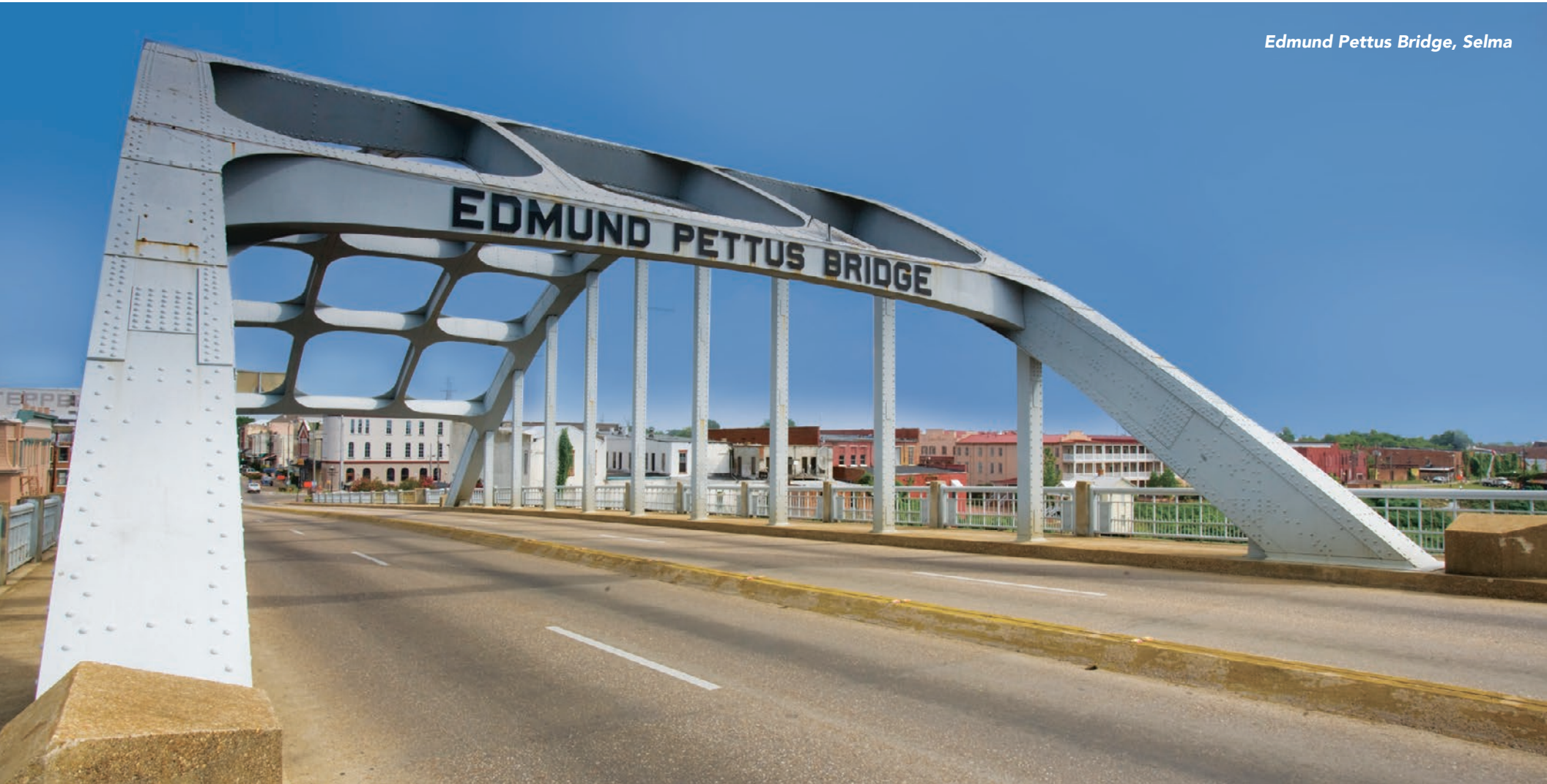


Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma

MONTGOMERY TO TUSKEGEE, ALABAMA AND ALBANY, GEORGIA

2 hours and 50 minutes / 251km

Day 8

From Montgomery, travel 40 minutes east to Tuskegee, home of the Tuskegee Airmen, the country's first African-American military aviators, who fought in World II. Visit the **Butler Chapel AME Zion Church**, a 1950s meeting place for people fighting for voting equality in Alabama, and arrange for a tour of the museum in the church's basement. The **Tuskegee History Center** traces the region's civil rights crusade and multicultural roots. Continue southeast about two and a half hours to reach Albany, home of the Albany Movement, a group fighting for voters' rights and desegregation, and the first mass movement in the civil rights era to fight for the desegregation of an entire community. Martin Luther King Jr. lent his support, was arrested and said the campaign failed, but residents said many lessons learned led to successful campaigns elsewhere. Learn more about this historic time at the interactive exhibits at the **Albany Civil Rights Institute**, where the Freedom Singers give monthly concerts.

Accommodation: Albany, Georgia

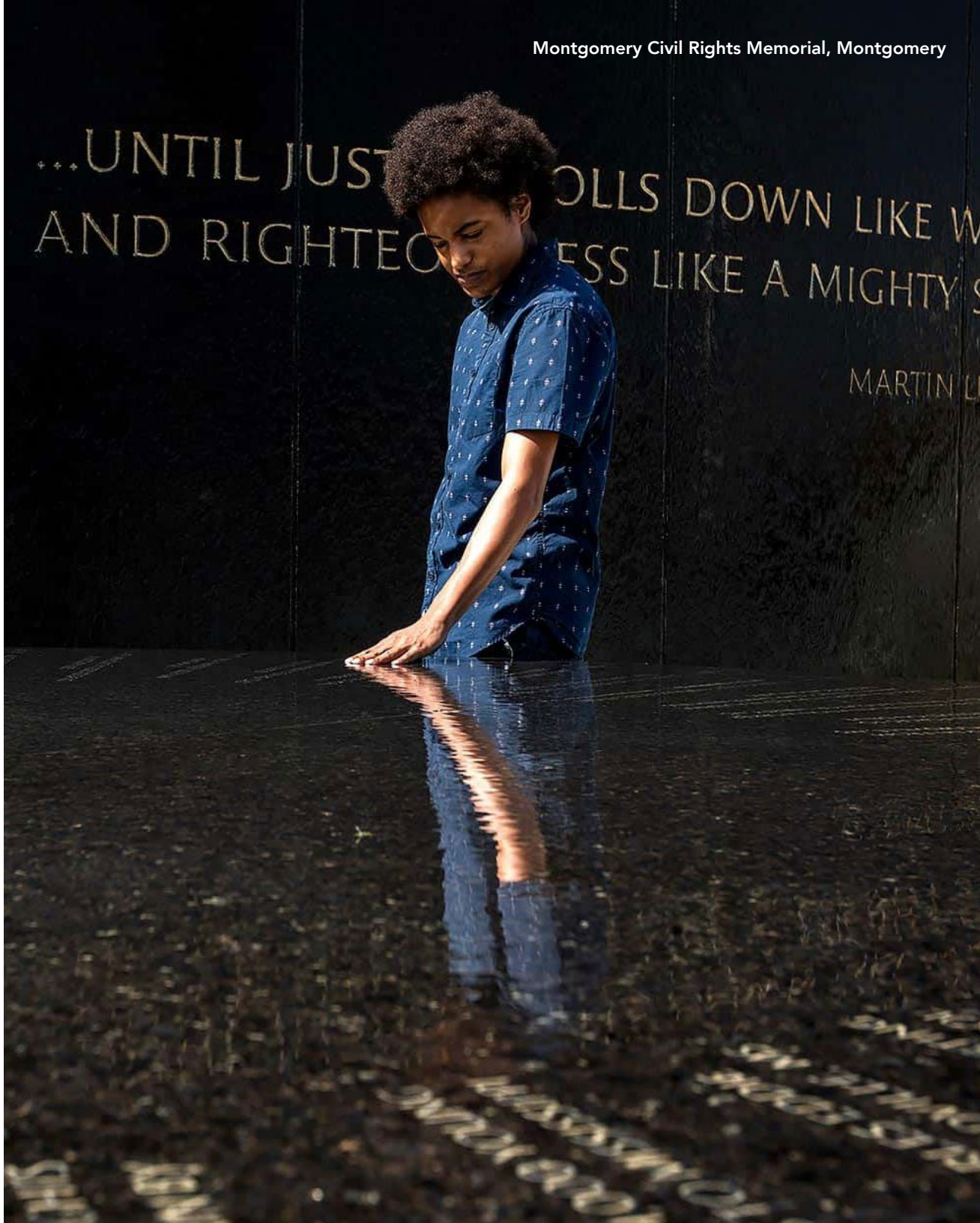
ALBANY TO MIDWAY AND SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

3 hours and 37 minutes / 361km

Day 9

Enjoy views of the Georgia countryside on the drive east to the Atlantic Ocean coast. After about four hours, stop in Midway to visit the museum at **Historic Dorchester Academy**, a key site where the Southern Christian Leadership Conference trained its teachers and leaders, who then took the message to their home communities. The final stop today is Savannah, home of the **Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum**, which tells the story of local African-American history and the Savannah Protest Movement, where students staged sit-ins at downtown lunch counters in 1960, resulting in a boycott of businesses and leading to desegregation. It's housed in the building that once was the area's largest bank for blacks. Stroll around lovely and historic Savannah, so charming with its cobblestone streets, pretty parks and squares, boutiques and trendy restaurants.

Accommodation: Savannah, Georgia



Montgomery Civil Rights Memorial, Montgomery

Womsloe State Historic Site, Savannah

SAVANNAH TO ATLANTA, GEORGIA

3 hours and 31 minutes / 399km

Day 10 and 11

Drive inland for about four hours to the birthplace of Martin Luther King Jr. in Atlanta and his final resting place at **The King Center**. Upon arrival, visit the new **Center for Civil and Human Rights**, a suitable place to begin your discovery of Atlanta's civil rights history, which includes the Martin Luther King Jr. Collections as well as exhibits about today's human rights issues. While you're downtown, must-see attractions include the **Georgia Aquarium**, **World of Coca-Cola** and **Centennial Olympic Park**. This cosmopolitan city brims with great restaurants and lively nightlife hotspots.

Explore the wealth of civil rights history in Atlanta, starting at **The King Center**, which includes an exhibition hall and the home where Martin Luther King Jr. was born, and Fire Station No. 6, which was one of the first firehouses in the South to be desegregated. Listen to some of King's sermons and speeches at **Ebenezer Baptist Church**, and then enjoy quiet contemplation at the nearby **World Peace Rose Garden** and reflecting pool, home to the "Behold" monument. Visit the **Eternal Flame** and the crypts of King and his wife, Coretta, and explore the **International Civil Rights Hall of Fame**, where you can tread in the footprints of civil rights leaders and pioneers. Spend time in the Sweet Auburn District at the **APEX Museum**, which traces the African-American experience through videos, photographs and artifacts.

Accommodation: Atlanta, Georgia

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Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA TO ANNISTON AND BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

2 hours and 9 minutes / 237km

Day 12

Departing Atlanta, follow the westward route of members of the Congress of Racial Equality who boarded a Greyhound bus in 1961 to challenge segregated seating as part of the Freedom Rides movement. In Anniston, Alabama, an angry mob attacked the bus and slashed its tires, forcing it to stop outside of town. The bus was set on fire, and the fleeing riders were beaten. The site is marked with the **Freedom Riders National Monument**. Drive about an hour west to the next stop, Birmingham, a city at the heart of the civil rights movement, most famously Project C, better known as the Birmingham Campaign. Peaceful lunch counter sit-ins, boycotts and marches were met with such violence that they're widely accepted as key turning points in the civil rights movement. Today, the **Birmingham Civil Rights Institute** tells the story of the city's role in the struggle for equality. Across the street, in **Kelly Ingram Park**, fire hoses and dogs were turned on peaceful protesters; it's now a site honoring leaders of the civil rights movement with statues and monuments. The nearby **Civil Rights National Monument** was established in 2017 to commemorate this important time in U.S. history. Further explore the city, set in the beautiful Appalachian foothills, where outdoor recreation and dining and entertainment options abound.

Accommodation: Birmingham, Alabama

BIRMINGHAM TO SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA AND NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

2 hours and 40 minutes / 308km

Day 13

The next stop, Scottsboro, is a two-hour drive north. This is where nine black teenagers were falsely accused of the sexual assault of two white girls aboard a Southern Railroad freight train from Chattanooga to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1931. The ensuing trials, convictions, retrials, verdicts, appeals and blatant injustice accorded the boys was the basis for much legal reform for the right to a fair trial. Visit the **Scottsboro Boys Museum & Cultural Center** in the 133-year-old former Joyce Chapel United Methodist Church – it contains documents and other artifacts that support the trial as the beginning of the civil rights movement. Your journey ends today where it began nearly two weeks ago; make the three-hour drive back to Nashville.

Accommodation: Nashville, Tennessee

Nashville, Tennessee

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