

2023 missouri travel guide

2023 Missouri Travel Guide: Missouri is a state rich in history, natural beauty, and cultural experiences that beckon travelers from all over the country. Whether you're drawn to its vibrant cities, picturesque landscapes, or captivating attractions, this guide will help you navigate the best that Missouri has to offer in 2023. From the rolling hills of the Ozarks to the bustling streets of St. Louis, prepare for an unforgettable journey through the Show-Me State.

Getting to Missouri

Missouri is centrally located in the United States, making it easily accessible by air, road, and rail. Here are some options for reaching this diverse state:

By Air

- Major Airports:
 - St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL)
 - Kansas City International Airport (MCI)
 - Springfield-Branson National Airport (SGF)
- Airlines: Major airlines operate flights to and from Missouri, including American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and Delta Air Lines, providing travelers with numerous options.

By Car

- Interstate Highways: Missouri is well-connected by several major highways. Key routes include:
 - Interstate 70 (I-70) running east-west through the state.
 - Interstate 44 (I-44) connecting St. Louis to Tulsa, Oklahoma.
 - Interstate 64 (I-64) providing access from the east.
- Scenic Drives: For those who appreciate a leisurely road trip, consider taking scenic routes like the Great River Road along the Mississippi River or the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

Top Cities to Explore

Missouri boasts a variety of cities, each with its own unique charm and attractions. Here are some must-visit urban destinations:

St. Louis

- Gateway Arch: This iconic monument stands 630 feet tall and offers breathtaking views of the city and the Mississippi River from its observation deck.
- Forest Park: Larger than New York's Central Park, it houses several attractions, including the St. Louis Zoo, Art Museum, and Science Center, all with free admission.
- Historic Soulard: Known for its vibrant nightlife and historic charm, Soulard is the perfect spot for dining and live music.

Kansas City

- Cultural District: Home to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, this area is a haven for art enthusiasts.
- BBQ Scene: Don't miss out on the city's famous barbecue, particularly at iconic joints like Joe's Kansas City Bar-B-Que and Gates Bar-B-Q.
- Country Club Plaza: This shopping district features Spanish-inspired architecture and is a great place for dining and high-end shopping.

Springfield

- Route 66: Springfield is known as the birthplace of Route 66, and you can explore its history at the Route 66 Car Museum.
- Fantastic Caverns: Take an underground tour of these beautiful caves to see stunning rock formations and unique wildlife.
- Dickerson Park Zoo: A family-friendly destination featuring over 500 animals and various exhibits.

Natural Attractions

Missouri is home to numerous natural wonders and outdoor activities. Here's a look at some of the best places to experience nature in 2023:

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

- Activities: Enjoy canoeing, kayaking, and tubing on the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. The area is also perfect for hiking and wildlife watching.
- Scenic Views: The Ozarks are known for their stunning landscapes, including limestone bluffs, clear rivers, and lush forests.

Mark Twain National Forest

- Hiking Trails: With over 750 miles of trails, it's a hiker's paradise. Popular trails include the Ozark Trail and the North Fork of the White River Trail.
- Camping: Numerous campgrounds are available for those wishing to immerse themselves in nature.

Ha Ha Tonka State Park

- Unique Features: This park is famous for its karst features, including sinkholes and springs.
- Castle Ruins: Explore the ruins of a stone castle that offers spectacular views of the Niangua River.

Family-Friendly Activities

Traveling with family? Missouri has a plethora of attractions that cater to all ages:

Theme Parks

- Silver Dollar City: Located in Branson, this 1880s-themed park features thrilling rides, live entertainment, and craft demonstrations.
- Worlds of Fun: In Kansas City, this amusement park offers a variety of roller coasters, water rides, and family attractions.

Educational Experiences

- Saint Louis Science Center: An interactive science museum that offers hands-on exhibits and an IMAX theater.
- Missouri Botanical Garden: A beautiful garden in St. Louis where families can explore nature and learn about plant conservation.

Local Cuisine and Dining

Missouri's culinary scene is as diverse as its landscape. Here are some regional specialties to try:

St. Louis Style BBQ

- Ribs: Known for their unique preparation and sauce, St. Louis ribs are a must-try.
- Pork Steak: A local favorite, this cut of meat is grilled and served with a tangy sauce.

Kansas City BBQ

- Burnt Ends: A delicacy made from the point of the brisket, typically served with a sweet sauce.
- Sauces: Kansas City is famous for its tomato-based BBQ sauce, a staple in many local restaurants.

Local Breweries and Wineries

- Brewery Tours: Take a tour of local breweries like Boulevard Brewing Company in Kansas City.
- Wine Trails: Missouri has several wine trails, particularly in the Hermann and Augusta regions, where you can taste local wines and enjoy beautiful vineyard views.

Festivals and Events

Missouri hosts numerous festivals throughout the year, celebrating everything from music to food. Here are a few notable ones:

St. Louis Mardi Gras

- When: February
- What to Expect: A vibrant celebration featuring a parade, live music, and plenty of food and drinks.

Kansas City Jazz and Heritage Festival

- When: May
- What to Expect: A celebration of jazz music with performances, art displays, and local food vendors.

Branson's Summer Concert Series

- When: June to August
- What to Expect: A series of concerts featuring renowned artists, held at various venues in Branson.

Travel Tips for 2023

To ensure a smooth trip, consider the following tips:

- Best Time to Visit: Spring (April to June) and Fall (September to October) are ideal due to pleasant weather and vibrant foliage.

- Transportation: Renting a car is advisable for exploring rural areas and national parks.
- Accommodations: Missouri offers a range of lodging options, from luxury hotels in cities to cozy cabins in the Ozarks.
- Local Etiquette: Missourians are known for their friendliness, so don't hesitate to engage with locals for recommendations and tips.

In conclusion, the 2023 Missouri Travel Guide provides an exciting overview of the adventures, culture, and experiences awaiting you in this diverse state. Whether you are an outdoor enthusiast, a history buff, or a foodie, Missouri has something to offer everyone. So pack your bags, hit the road, and get ready to explore the enchanting landscapes and vibrant cities of the Show-Me State!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the top attractions to visit in Missouri in 2023?

Some top attractions include the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Silver Dollar City in Branson, the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, and the scenic Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

What outdoor activities can I enjoy in Missouri this year?

Missouri offers numerous outdoor activities such as hiking in the Mark Twain National Forest, fishing in Lake of the Ozarks, kayaking on the Missouri River, and exploring the numerous state parks.

Are there any major events happening in Missouri in 2023?

Yes, notable events include the St. Louis Art Fair, the Kansas City Irish Fest, the Branson Music Festival, and various county fairs throughout the summer months.

What are some recommended local foods to try while traveling in Missouri?

Travelers should try St. Louis-style barbecue, toasted ravioli, gooey butter cake, and the famous Kansas City-style ribs while exploring the state's culinary scene.

What is the best time of year to visit Missouri?

The best times to visit Missouri are during the spring (April to June) and fall (September to November) when the weather is mild and the landscapes are particularly beautiful.

Are there any unique cultural experiences to explore in Missouri?

Yes, visitors can explore the rich cultural heritage through visits to the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the historic sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail.

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