



## CITY OF NEW ORLEANS ROUTE GUIDE



CHICAGO • MEMPHIS • JACKSON • NEW ORLEANS

We hope you enjoy reading this guide and learning about points of interest along our route. It is written starting from the northern terminus of the train in Chicago and proceeds to points south, ending in New Orleans. If you boarded in New Orleans, just read the guide in reverse, remembering to look in the opposite direction referenced.

AMTRAK STATIONS are shown in all capital letters, as opposed to upper and lower case for towns and geographical areas through which the train travels but does not stop. The Amtrak System Timetable or the City of New Orleans panel card should be consulted for actual station times. While all service presented in this guide was accurate at the time of publication, routes and services are subject to change. Please contact Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), or call your travel agent for the most current information.

Good Morning America, How are you?  
Don't you know me, I'm your native son,  
I'm the train they call the City of New Orleans,  
I'll be gone five hundred miles when the day is done.

--Steve Goodman

Folksinger Arlo Guthrie recorded this famous paean to long-distance rail travel in 1972. Today, with only minor route changes, the 926-mile overnight trip still links three of the most important music capitals in America: Chicago, Memphis and New Orleans. It is fitting that music determines the name of this route because it was in these cities that the "Blues" grew up. Some say the music came from a plantation in Mississippi and journeyed northwest on the train. Others contend that it was born in Memphis and later carried forth in other directions.

This service, between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, explores some of the country's most unique and historic regions between Illinois central farmlands, the western corner of Kentucky, the forests of Tennessee and Mississippi and the famous bayous of Louisiana. So relax and enjoy this unique view of the fabled American South from your picture window.



# WELCOME ABOARD



Kankakee, IL

Welcome aboard the historic *City of New Orleans*. Explore the beauty, romance and exciting history of the Mississippi River Basin, the heartland of America and “all that jazz.”

We are also proud to introduce you to the **Cross Country Café**, featuring our All-Day Menu, as you enjoy your choice of beverage, including wine by the glass or bottle. What’s new about the Cross Country Café? We’re glad you asked:

- **We have longer hours of service** – Come join us for dinner one hour before the train departs Chicago.
  - **An expanded All-Day menu** – with regional specialties, such as Red Beans & Rice, Jambalaya, Bread Pudding dessert and tasty regional appetizers
  - **Your choice of beverage** – from soft drinks to wine by the glass or bottle
  - **Reduced pricing** – Dining on Amtrak has never been more affordable
- We hope the Cross Country Café makes your time on the *City of New Orleans* even more enjoyable. Because it’s our goal to make les bon temps quite literally roulez.

On board the *City of New Orleans* you will experience the comfort and relaxation of train travel and watch the prairies, farms, plantations, famous cityscapes and small towns go by. We are happy to have you aboard today and want to ensure your trip is everything you want it to be. If there is anything that can be done to make your trip more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to call on any train employee.

**THE TRAIN STAFF:** The staff of the *City of New Orleans* is here to make your trips a special and unique experience.

The **Conductor** is in charge of the entire train and is primarily responsible for the safe operation of the train, the safety of the passengers and responsible for the collection of tickets. He or she can generally be found walking the train, or during late night hours and prior to sunrise; the Conductor will be located in the Cross Country Café. If you need assistance or have an emergency, contact the Conductor or any uniformed crew member.

The **Lead Service Attendants** are responsible for providing service in the Cross Country Café, located directly behind the Sleeper Cars and directly in front of the Coach Cars. They will greet you and provide seating for Sleeping Car passengers who desire full meal service and will assist Coach passengers at the Cross Country Café service counter.

The **Sleeping Car Attendant** is responsible for providing all service for passengers ticketed in Sleeping Car accommodations, including room preparation, luggage service and any assistance necessary to ensure a comfortable journey. Contact your Sleeping Car Attendant if you desire drinks before dinner – or a special appetizer. They will also take your Dinner reservations or arrange for your meal to be served in the privacy and comfort of your accommodations.

The **Coach Train Attendant** is responsible for providing service for passengers ticketed in coach. This includes seat assignment, pillow service, luggage service and assistance to ensure a comfortable journey. Please see your Coach attendant if you desire Take Out Service from the Cross Country Café or have any questions regarding services available.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Superliner Sleeping Car** accommodations provide a range of private room with amenities for day and night use. From roomette to bedrooms featuring a private lavatory and shower, Sleeping Car accommodations will suit any need and can be described in more detail by any member of the crew. Please ask to speak to the Conductor regarding the availability of rooms. Amtrak’s Metropolitan Lounge is available in Chicago and a private waiting area is available in New Orleans for Sleeping Car passengers.

**Coach** seating provides a wide reclining seat with a leg rest, folding tray table and overhead lights. Free pillow service is also available.

**Cross Country Café** service offers traditional full meal service as well as an All-Day Menu.

**HOST RAILROADS** are the freight and commuter railroads that Amtrak contracts with to operate Amtrak passenger trains. Chicago-New Orleans-Canadian National (CN).

*Information contained in this route guide as well as described amenities and other on board features are subject to change without notice. Tipping is certainly not required, but it is a much appreciated way to let employees know they have made your trip more enjoyable.*



**CHICAGO** is the nation's third largest city, famous for its ethnic neighborhoods and cuisine as well as its colorful history. As the train heads south, look to your left for a dramatic view of the towering city skyline, dominated by the Sears Tower, Daley Center and the domed Wrigley Building, among many magnificent structures. In 1885, the first skyscraper in the U.S. was constructed after the Chicago Fire of 1871 had destroyed the entire central business district. Chicago Union Station, completed in 1909, is the only surviving example of Chicago's great turn-of-the-century train stations. Chicago is one of the largest marketing and transportation centers of the Midwest, as well as one of the largest rail centers in the U.S., the first railway having opened in 1848.

As you continue south, you'll cross the Chicago River, famous as the world's only river that flows backwards because of its westward course away from Lake Michigan. Sanitary engineers reversed its flow in the early 1900s in an attempt to prevent a recurrence of epidemics. The city had been the first in the U.S. to construct a comprehensive sewer system, causing a problem of untreated waste to flow into Lake Michigan. The Chicago River was largely responsible for Chicago's early settlement, following the discovery by French explorers Louis Joliet and Pere Jacques Marquette in 1673. The first settler, an Italian, arrived in the 1770s and founded a trading post on the site. In 1833, the Town of Chicago was organized with a population of 350. Soon, you'll be able to catch a glimpse of Lake Michigan, the largest body of fresh water in the U.S.

**Chicago State University** is well known as a progressive educational institution, the campus of which you will see as you leave town. After passing some of Chicago's giant steel mills, we cross the Calumet River, flowing into Lake Calumet, one of Chicago's largest harbors.

**HOMEWOOD** Amtrak's charming stucco station with its red tiled roof sets the tone for the attractive Chicago suburb, which retains its "country town" flavor. Its affluence is attributed to an excellent educational system. The town took its name in 1869 after the woods among which most residents lived. In the 1870s, country clubs brought in trains just for golfers, leading many families to establish first or second residences here.

**KANKAKEE** is set along the banks of the Kankakee River, many vestiges of early French influence still pervading its look. Ornate stonework, domes and spires mark many of the town's buildings. Frank Lloyd Wright, one of America's greatest architects, designed two houses in Kankakee, both excellent examples of his famous Prairie Style. Film and TV actor Fred MacMurray was born in Kankakee.

From here to **Rantoul**, you'll begin to see the farms that dot the gently rolling Till Plains. The region extends southward through Carbondale and is part of the great Corn Belt extending westward from Ohio to Kansas and Nebraska. Corn has been the chief crop of Illinois since pioneer days and grows on one of every three acres. Illinois also raises more soybeans than any other state.

Rantoul was settled in 1848 and originally named "Neipswah" by the Illiniwek Indians, meaning "where the minks are."

**Chanute Air Force Base** was once one of the largest technical training centers of the U.S. Air Force. Closed in 1993, aircraft and missile exhibits are the focus of its museum and successful transition to civilian use.

**CHAMPAIGN-URBANA** Illinois' "twin" cities, known colloquially as Champaign, appear to be one but have retained their independence since the mid-19th century. Champaign has evolved into a commercial, industrial and technology-startup center and the hub of the so-called "Silicon Prairie," while Urbana is college-oriented with the University of Illinois lying mostly within its boundaries. This university, chartered in 1867, was the first school west of the Allegheny Mountains to offer architectural instruction and opened the first state-supported school of music in 1897. In addition, the school organized the first engineering experiment station in 1903 and was the building site for the first betatron electron accelerator in 1940. The rock group REO Speedwagon hails from Champaign, while film critic Roger Ebert is a well-known Urbanite.

**MATTOON** is an industrial community and service center for surrounding farmlands. It is also a convenient stop for students attending Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. In 2007, the city was chosen to be the site of the U.S. Department of Energy's Future Gen zero emissions power plant. It is also known as the home of the "original" Burger King, a local shop registered in the state of Illinois in 1957.

**EFFINGHAM** is a small service, manufacturing and transportation center for the even smaller agricultural communities surrounding it. It was named after Edward Effingham, who resigned his commission as a general in the British Army in 1775, refusing to serve in the Revolutionary War.

**CENTRALIA** was founded by the Illinois Central Railroad in 1854. Towering above Centralia's business district is one of the largest carillons in the world, sporting 65 bells, the largest of which weighs 5.5 tons. The city's boys' high school basketball team has held the best record in the U.S. for 70 years, with 1,937 wins and 814 losses. Notable natives include James Brady, former Press Secretary to President Ronald Reagan and outspoken gun control advocate.

**CARBONDALE** is the train's last stop in Illinois, in the middle of the night. It lies in the Shawnee Hills region, often called the Illinois Ozarks. Here, the land ranges from 300 to 1,065 ft. above sea level. The city sits in the midst of extensive coal fields that provide the basic industrial staple of this community. The home of Southern Illinois University with a long history of political activism, Carbondale is a short distance from the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. In addition to being a popular recreation area, the refuge is home to hundreds of Canadian Geese each winter. Here, too, is Bald Knob, a high point in the Ozarks overlooking three states.

**Cairo** (pronounced kay-ro) is a river port at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Early settlers nicknamed this region "Little Egypt" because the land resembled the Nile River delta near the ancient city of the same name. It was here that Union General Grant established his Civil War headquarters because it afforded him complete command of the waterways that split the slave and free states. Many slaves escaped across the "wide Ohio" as they followed the Underground Railroad to Canada. Reaching Cairo was the goal of Huck and Jim in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, because as a river port, the two could there catch a steamboat north to freedom. After Cairo, the train crosses into Kentucky.

#### Illinois/Kentucky State Line

**FULTON**, Kentucky is the twin city to Fulton, Tennessee, separated only by a street that runs through the two towns, and was once known as the "Banana Crossroads of the U.S." The majority of banana shipments to middle America stopped at Fulton while refrigerator cars were re-iced and the fruit was prepared for distribution. Although this practice has since been discontinued, bananas continue to dominate Fulton lore.

#### Kentucky/Tennessee State Line

**NEWBERN-DYERSBURG** was created in 1823 following consummation of an 1818 treaty between the Chickasaw Indians, Andrew Jackson and Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky. Dyersburg was once the fourth largest port in Tennessee.

The Great American Pyramid is across the high bluffs toward Memphis on the east bank of the Mississippi River on your right – a gleaming 32-story fusion of modern technology and ancient mystery. This mixed-use development connects to Mud Island on the Mississippi. Here you'll find boat rides, a river museum, restaurants and a 5,000-seat outdoor amphitheater. Watch for colorful steamboats lining the shores. To the left is Cotton Row, where the price of cotton was once set. The area between the tracks and Cotton Row is known as Confederate Park, site of Civil War gun emplacements during the short Battle of Memphis.

**Beale Street** As the train nears the Memphis station, you'll see Beale Street. Covering 15 city blocks, Beale Street once offered all that was legal and illegal in the New South. Beale Street's renovation is one of the nation's best examples of public/private partnerships creating one of the hottest entertainment districts in the country and the number one tourist

attraction in the state. One of the area's most unique and only remaining original business is the venerable Schwab's, selling everything from shoes to voodoo supplies since 1876. Beale Street created its own music to accompany the powerful and intense economic and social evolution Memphis underwent at the turn of the century. It was the attraction of this area that lured W. C. Handy here in 1912 to create America's first original music, the Blues.

**MEMPHIS**, the largest city in Tennessee, is known as the "Birthplace of the Blues." Notable musicians Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson and B.B. King hail from the area. It is also known as the home of the "King," Elvis Presley. It is here that he purchased Graceland, a mansion on grounds originally owned by the publisher of the Memphis Daily Appeal, S. E. Toof. Named for his daughter Grace, the land was given to a niece who, with her husband, had the colonial American mansion built in 1939. It was here that Elvis ultimately came to rest in 1977. Writers from Memphis include Civil War historian Shelby Foote and playwright Tennessee Williams. The city is also known as one of the world's busiest cargo airports, serving as primary hub for Fed Ex shipping worldwide. Named after the first capital of ancient Egypt, Memphis is also the birthplace of Piggly Wiggly supermarkets, the nation's first self-service grocery stores. Memphis' Central Station, constructed in 1914, has been beautifully restored, and a vintage trolley car line once again stops at the station's front door, serving the Beale Street and downtown areas. Now we cross the Tennessee/Mississippi state line.

**Jackson, Tennessee**, 90 miles east of Memphis, is the home and museum of Casey Jones, the heroic railroad engineer of the Illinois Central who is said to have stuck to his post and lost his life during a disastrous collision between his southbound passenger train and a stationary freight train at Vaughn in April of 1900. Jackson is also the home of Isaac Tigrett, founder of the Hard Rock Café, singer Carl Perkins, game show host Wink Martindale, and ex-footballer Ed "Too Tall" Jones of the Dallas Cowboys.

**Lower Mississippi Delta Region** hosts historic small towns and farms. The ever-present porch reflects not only the Delta climate's high temperatures and humidity but also the influences of Caribbean and African architecture. The region represents an enduring theme in great American literature – the source of fiction, travel, history and tales – and an inspiration to generations of writers, including Mark Twain and William Faulkner. Famous Deltans include musician Ike Turner, actor Morgan Freeman, and Muppets creator Jim Henson.

**Cottonlandia Museum** is where your discovery of the Delta begins. The museum focuses on the five As – art, archaeology, agriculture, antiques and animals. The museum boasts the largest collection of Native American trade beads in the Southern U.S. You can also experience a life-size walk-through diorama of a Mississippi swamp. The museum's gallery space is regularly booked two years in advance.

**Aberdeen Junction** crossroads lead to Oprah Winfrey's hometown, Kosciusko, Mississippi. In five minutes, we enter Wades Bottom, your first real taste of the eerie beauty of a Southern swamp.

#### Tennessee/Mississippi State Line

**GREENWOOD** area has a reputation as a cotton producer dating back to pre-Civil War times. Located next to the Yazoo River, the city grew steadily from a busy river landing to one of the largest cotton markets in the world. Today, its historic downtown boasts upscale shops, unique dining experiences, a boutique hotel, galleries, museums and a retained small-town, deep-South hospitality.

**Florewood River Plantation State Park** is the recreation of an 1850s antebellum cotton plantation.

**YAZOO CITY** is a community on the Yazoo River that relies on agriculture. It is known as the place where "The Delta Meets the Hills." Attractions include the Oaks African American Cultural Center, the Triangle Cultural Center and the Confederate Memorial Monument. Also nearby is the Delta National Forest and Panther Swamp Wildlife Refuge. Yazoo City was the main location for the book and the movie *My Dog Skip*.

**JACKSON** You will notice the tracks rising as we pull into Jackson Station. Beginning as LeFleur's Bluff, a trading settlement on the banks of the Pearl River, in 1821 it was chosen as the state capital and named in honor of Andrew Jackson. The city grew in prominence, only to be invaded by General Sherman three times during the Civil War and burned to the ground. Some folks say that "Chimneyville," as it came to be called, was where Sherman practiced for the burning of Atlanta. The city, however, refused to die and is now the state's largest and the hub of trading and transportation. It sits upon an extinct volcano, the only capital city or major population center to have this feature. The volcano's peak is 2,900 ft. below the Mississippi Coliseum. Attractions include the Governor's Mansion (which served at least once as a dinner venue for General Sherman and his men during the Civil War), the Dizzy Dean Museum, the Old Capitol Museum, the Mississippi Petrified Forest (the only such forest in the Eastern U.S.), Mynelle Gardens at the Oaks, and Jackson's oldest antebellum cottage (which was occupied by General Sherman during the siege of the city). About ten miles west in Clinton, on the campus of Mississippi College, is Provine Chapel. Here, the basement served as a stable for Union horses and the upstairs was converted to a hospital. As the train leaves Jackson, we see the skyline distinguished by the gold dome of the state capitol. Built in 1903, this beautiful building is topped by a golden eagle. Its design closely follows that of the nation's capitol in Washington, D.C. Further on are the Arts Center and the Planetarium. South of the city, we see pine trees of the famous Piney Woods. This area provides some of the raw materials for a huge output of products that make Mississippi a leading forest industry state, producing pine, oil rosin and turpentine.

**HAZELHURST** was surveyed, laid out by and named for George H. Hazelhurst, chief engineer for the railroad. It is the home of Annie C. Peyton, founder of Mississippi State University for Women, the first state-supported college for women in the U.S. and school of the Honorable Burnita Matthews, the first woman federal judge. It is also the birthplace of Robert Johnson, the most influential blues artist in rock and roll history. About 12 min. south of town, watch for Copiah-Lincoln University.

**BROOKHAVEN** A recruiting and hospital center during the Civil War, it has flourished since completion of the railroad. Today, industrial development is focused around the region's natural resources of petroleum and wood pulp. Just before the station, you see a Delphi Automotive Systems plant to your left. As you pull into Brookhaven Station, note the regal magnolia trees, beautiful azaleas and fragrant camellias. You may also see a small monument on the right that offers a brief account of the town's history. After leaving the station, notice the fanciful Victorian homes. The Bogue Chitto River makes the first of several brief appearances on the left. Notable natives include Robert Pittman, founder of MTV and former CEO of AOL.

**McCOMB** was named for Colonel Henry Simpson McComb, president of the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad. He spearheaded reconstruction of the track following the Civil War. At the station, you can see some of the historic old cars of the Illinois Central Railroad. McComb enjoys the distinction of being the "Camellia City of America," as no city can boast of a larger variety. It is also renowned as the home of the Lighted Azalea Festival. Each year since 1953, residents have placed tiny lights around the delicate pink and white blossoms of their bushes. Famous people from McComb include music and recording artists Bo Diddley and Brandy.

**Magnolia** once served as a popular resort for wealthy New Orleanians, who enjoyed its fresh air and sparkling creeks. Two colonial mansions can be seen on the right through the trees. Minutes later, we cross the Tangipahoa River, which then follows intermittently on your left. Soon we pass through Osyka, the last town before crossing the state line into Louisiana.

**Camp Moore** Further on we pass Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery. Once a major training camp for 25,000 Louisiana soldiers before they entered combat for the Confederate Army, this site is now a museum of Civil War relics. Beautiful estates grace the landscape just south of Tangipahoa.

**Amite** displays the last vestiges of French influence in the curlicues and trelliswork adorning the town's homes. At the fire station on your left, look for the colossal old bell enshrined out front. This entire region and southward is known as the "Florida Parishes," so named because the area belonged to Florida until 1810, six years after the Louisiana Purchase.

**Independence** Note on the southern outskirts of the city the intriguing cemetery. Like many of Louisiana's gravesites, tombs are positioned above ground due to the high water table. The town has a large Italian American community and boasts an Italian festival each April. Watch for Southeastern Louisiana College, founded in 1925.

### Mississippi/Louisiana State Line

**HAMMOND** is one of the "Strawberry Capitals of America" and the town from which the old Crimson Flower used to make its run to Chicago, racing the fresh strawberries north. During the Civil War, the town's shoemaking industry supplied the Confederates.

**Louisiana Bayou** Suddenly we are in the bayou – Louisiana's famous exotic swamps. Here, amidst the haunting beauty of moss-laden cypress trees, an entire Acadian culture has survived. The early French-Canadian settlers arrived in the late 1700s, having been driven from their homes in Eastern Canada after the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War. Their descendants came to be known as Cajuns and have greatly influenced the culture in and around New Orleans. Another group that makes up much of the population is the Creoles, descendants of the original French and Spanish settlers.

On a sunny day, we can see alligators sunning themselves on floating logs. Keep an eye out for pelicans, so abundant in the marshes that Louisiana is nicknamed the "Pelican State." Soon we cross the Pass-Manchac waterway, connecting Lake Maurepas with Lake Pontchartrain. Covering 625 square miles, the lake is big enough to accommodate fresh water on its west side and salt water on its east side. Across the lake, we can see the skyline of New Orleans, the cradle of jazz. On the right, note beautiful fields of lavender water lilies that grow so abundantly here. This is also the beginning of the longest single railroad curve in the United States, extending over nine miles.

**NEW ORLEANS** After paralleling the shore of massive Lake Pontchartrain for several miles, we arrive in "Nawlins" just as its restaurants and jazz clubs are coming to life. Also known as the Big Easy, the City that Care Forgot, and the Crescent City, the city has existed under four different flags since its founding in 1723 – French, Spanish, Confederate States, and U.S. One of the nation's greatest ports, the city preserves the flavor of the Old South with a distinctly French accent. It is famed for its filigree wrought iron balconied Vieux Carre (French Quarter) and festive Mardi Gras celebrations that herald the beginning of Lent. Considered the birthplace of jazz, it is also home to some of the best restaurants in the world. With so much to offer, it's easy to see why it is known as America's Most Interesting City, and a city that never sleeps. Shop at the beautiful River Walk, where you can see the lights of the Greater New Orleans Bridge cross the Mississippi into Algiers. Take a ride on the street car line dating to 1835 with cars dating to the 1920s. Visit Jackson Square at the heart of the Quarter, where the gray spires of the St. Louis Cathedral tower high in the air. Canal Street is downtown's business district, running northward from the river. The street ends in an area called the Cemeteries, which house some of the city's oldest and most historic graveyards. The French Quarter is the oldest and most famous section of town, looking much as it did in the 1700s and 1800s with buildings crowding the edge of narrow sidewalks. Here is the infamous Bourbon Street, where the music never stops! The Garden District is an area filled with flowers, trees and some of New Orleans' grandest homes. Uptown New Orleans is a pleasant residential area centering on Audubon Park and the campuses of Tulane and Loyola universities. Prepare for a unique and entertaining visit to this crown jewel of the South!

**Amtrak Guest Rewards®. Free travel fast.**

When you're a member of Amtrak Guest Rewards®, you're on the fast track to good things. You're taking part in exclusive promotions. You're earning your way to rewards like free Amtrak travel, hotel stays, car rentals and more. So join the program that is your express route to free travel. Enroll now at [AmtrakGuestRewards.com](http://AmtrakGuestRewards.com) or call 1-800-307-5000.

**Amtrak Vacations®**

With Amtrak Vacations, you can travel to a wide variety of exciting destinations. Just one call will take care of all the details, from reservations and tickets to hotels, sightseeing, car rentals and more. Select one of our popular vacation packages or create your own itinerary. For reservations, information and to request your free Amtrak Vacations brochure, call 1-800-AMTRAK-2.

**Amtrak Children's Activity Book**

The Children's Activity Book is an exclusively designed, 24-page fun-filled Amtrak activity book for our young travelers. The book is available for sale in the Lounge Car. The activities, games and stories are for children ages 6-11.

**Amtrak Gift Certificates**

Give the gift of travel. Amtrak gift certificates are available in denominations of \$50 to \$1,000 and are instantly redeemable for Amtrak travel. Purchasing online is easy. Just visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com).

**Amtrak Store**

Amtrak has an online store filled with branded merchandise! You'll find everything from bears to hats, jackets, shirts and much more. Visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) and click the Amtrak Store icon at the bottom of the page.

Amtrak, Amtrak Guest Rewards, Amtrak Vacations and City of New Orleans are registered service marks of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

© National Railroad Passenger Corporation 2008

